

GROTESQUE, CARICATURE, AND THE
SENTIMENTAL IN THREE OF DICKENS' NOVELS

by

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Grotesque, Caricature, and the Sentimental in Three of
Dickens' Novels

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Abstract

The terms caricature, grotesque and sentimental are defined as psychological mechanisms which are manifested as distinctive styles. Caricature is a product of consciously held values which define the self, while the grotesque and the sentimental are a result of denial and projection. These definitions are applied to three of Dickens' novels, Old Curiosity Shop, Bleak House and Great Expectations, noting both the similarity and progression in Dickens' handling of style in each of the novels. The choice of style is seen to be determined by biographical as well as cultural factors.

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Theoretical Introduction

In this paper, an examination of three of the major stances that Dickens adopts in his novels is offered as a means of appreciating The Old Curiosity Shop, Bleak House, and Great Expectations more fully. Caricature, grotesque and the sentimental are discussed as styles with the emphasis being placed on the psychological processes that are involved in their creation. Some attempt is made to relate these different stylistic modes to a gestalt that is common to most of Dickens' writings. The discussion also includes the manner in which cultural conditions influenced Dickens' perception of his society and how his novels contributed to the maintenance and modification of established values and attitudes. The three novels selected for intensive consideration have been chosen with a view to presenting a cross-section of Dickens' work from one of his earliest to one of his latest novels, noting a progression in the treatment of the themes with which he is concerned.

The definition of the terms grotesque, caricature and sentimental is not approached strictly in the literary sense of the word style as a detailed description and analysis of imagery, vocabulary, rhythm, etc. The emphasis is more on an analysis of the mechanisms involved in the act of perception which construes the world as grotesque or

caricatural or sentimental. Imagery and vocabulary are among the ways in which a style can be identified, but the focus in this paper is not on a discussion of the style itself, but rather on an analysis of the style.

Freud's discussion of jokes in Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious is relevant because the way in which he approaches the subject is similar to the one that is favoured in this paper, and also because jokes have a close affinity to caricatures. The similarity between jokes and caricatures is noted by Freud: in fact, he treats caricatures several times as a specialized type of joke. "The joke...represents a rebellion against...authority, a liberation from its pressure. The charm of caricatures lies in this same factor: we laugh at them even if they are unsuccessful simply because we count rebellion against authority as a merit." ¹ For Freud, one of the main pleasures that arises from a joke is the emotional release that joking allows us. In his words, the saving on suppression is pleasurable in itself and is the main, if not the only, motivational factor in jokes. This is easily observed in tendentious jokes which allow a release of aggression, or obscene jokes which allow a release of sexual energy (sometimes mixed with aggression). Even in "innocent" jokes where it is not so easily observable, the joke is a vehicle of expressing thoughts and attitudes that are central to

the teller's emotional life. "Jokes, even if the thought contained in them is non-tendentious and thus only serves theoretical intellectual interests, are in fact never non-tendentious. They pursue the second aim: to promote the thought by augmenting it and guarding it against criticism."²

The joke not only allows emotional release of some kind, but does so in a way that supports what we conceive to be our own interests. The fact that jokes are an ego function, that they do promote attitudes and feelings that are identified with the self, is expressed by Freud who suggested that a joke, unlike a dream, is social in nature and that "the condition of intelligibility is therefore binding on it."³ In jokes, "a preconscious thought is given over for a moment to unconscious revision and the outcome of this is at once grasped by conscious perception."⁴

Some of the features of the joke are condensation, exaggeration and selection of details according to the interests and purposes of the teller.

It is to be expected that in the process of condensation a few of the elements subjected to it will be lost while others, which take over the cathetic energy of the former, will become intensified or over-intensified through condensation.⁵

Essentially the same characteristics are to be found in caricature.

Ernst Kris defines caricature as that which is overcharged with distinctive features. This definition stems logically from the Italian and French verbs "caricare" and "charger" from which the noun "caricature" is derived.⁶ The Oxford English Dictionary definition of the term also takes the essence of caricature to be "the grotesque representation of a person, etc. by over-emphasis on characteristics".⁷ In common usage, as well as in the definitions already offered, the term denotes a negative import: caricatures are usually unflattering cartoons that ridicule an unfavorable aspect of someone's personality. They are generally tendentious in nature, stemming from hostile impulses on the part of the caricaturist.

Kris accounts for the pleasure which is derived from caricature thus: "the saving in mental...energy is evidently to be regarded as a saving in expenditure on suppression,⁸ or as one resulting from a liberation of aggression". However, what distinguishes caricature from other methods of liberating aggression is the fact that the caricature expresses what are felt to be self-interests. In Kris' words, regression occurs in the service of the ego.

The appeal of caricature is not aimed at realizing action directly; it is rather, an appeal, as Kris says, "to accomplish a particular effort of imagination".⁹ The

person's likeness is transformed in the perception of the caricaturist. The effect desired is a sharing of the aggression expressed with the spectators. This serves the function of reinforcing self-identity by finding confirmation and approval of a set of values with others. The establishment of an ordered set of perceptions with which to view the environment is also pleasurable in itself.

Kris' discussion of caricature includes material from many different sources -- sociological data from the history of caricature, clinical material, and observations made on children -- emphasizing primarily the graphic caricature. While none of these are directly applicable to a study of the verbal caricature found in Dickens' writing, Kris' analyses are relevant, nevertheless, to this study. By defining the mechanism of caricature itself, which remains the same although the content may vary under different historical conditions, Kris offers a method of investigation readily adaptable to literary purposes.

We have learned to define caricature as a process where -- under the influence of aggression -- primitive structures are used to ridicule the victim. Thus defined, caricature is a psychological mechanism rather than a form of art, and we can now easily understand why, once having come into existence, it has remained always the same in principle. Caricatures like those of Louis Phillippe as a pear are at bottom nothing but visual puns, and the taste in puns may change but their mechanism remains the same.¹⁰

In Dickens' description of Mr. Tangle in the first

chapter of Bleak House, the adaptation to a linguistic medium of those elements that are distinctive to the drawn caricature, are easily discernible.

"Mr. Tangle," says the Lord High Chancellor, latterly something restless under the eloquence of that learned gentleman.

"Mlud," says Mr. Tangle. Mr. Tangle knows more of Jarndyce and Jarndyce than anybody. He is famous for it -- supposed never to have read anything else since he left school.

"Have you nearly concluded your arguments?"

"Mlud, no -- variety of points -- feel it my duty tsubmit -- ludship," is the reply that slides out of Mr. Tangle.

...(Mr. Tangle crushed.)

...Mr. Tangle on his legs again. 11

"Begludship's pardon -- dead."

Mr. Tangle's name has been selected to ridicule the fact that the barrister is a man entangled and bogged down in the legalisms of British law. His speech patterns are obviously an exaggeration of a specific type of jargon, the only manner of speaking, it would appear, of which Tangle is capable. The other characteristics of caricature, that it is incomplete or sketchy, allows the artist to select only those details which will add to the impression he wishes to convey. This is achieved by Dickens through his elliptical use of parentheses which allows him to omit the transitional words and phrases of Tangle's speech. In addition, the transitive verbs in two sentences describing Tangle are deleted -- "(Mr. Tangle crushed)" and "Mr. Tangle on his legs again" -- further emphasizing the hieroglyphic quality of the

depiction of the lawyer.

Another aspect of caricature, not fully discussed by Kris, is important to note at this juncture. Its comic quality indicates that the tension between the existing world and the values of the caricaturist have been successfully resolved; the victim of the caricature is, so to speak, put in his place. The threat that is posed, the threat that arouses hostility in the first place, is allayed by ridiculing its potential for evil. Thus Mr. Tangle is reduced to nothing more than a bag of clichés. Though he is a lawyer in the Court of Chancery which has ruined many people, Tangle's own role within that structure is minimized to that of a puppet. "Eighteen of Mr. Tangle's learned friends, each armed with a little summary of eighteen hundred sheets, bob up like eighteen hammers in a pianoforte, make eighteen bows, and drop into their eighteen places of obscurity."¹² An essential aspect of a successful comic resolution of the hostility latent in caricature would appear to be a presentation of the person caricatured in a light that shows him to be as much a victim of his own bad qualities, as he is a victimizer of others. The threat has been successfully defended against by disarming its potentially negative aspects. It can be weighed against the value structure of the viewer without serious disruption to his principles. The caricature of Tangle, for example,

reaffirms Dickens; distrust of large institutions on the basis that involvement in them is not conducive to becoming a man of independent mind and purpose. This seems to apply equally well to the examples of caricature cited by Kris: the one in which Louis Phillippe is reduced to a pear, and the one which depicts Napoleon's head seething with human bodies, and his heart as battle plans.

The process of condensation, sharpening, and what Allport calls assimilation -- the selection of details according to habit and motivational interests -- that are characteristics of caricature, are also of validity to more general psychological functioning. In his discussion of jokes, Freud noted that the principles of operation in jokes also applied to the operation of memory.

Apart from the dream-work and the technique of jokes, there is another kind of mental event in which...condensation is a regular and important process: namely, the mechanism of normal (non-tendentious) forgetting; those that are analogous in any way are being forgotten by being condensed in regard to their points of resemblance. Confusion between analogous impressions is one of the preliminary stages of forgetting.¹³

Allport's discussion of rumour also points to the same conclusions: in rumour, the distortion results from condensation, sharpening and assimilation. Selectivity and distortion can even be noted, although to a more limited degree, in the normal perception of relatively insignificant situations. However Allport also provides a formula

for the amount of distortion that one would expect to exist. The amount of rumour in circulation and the discrepancy between fact and the content of rumour is related to the level of motivational interest in those spreading rumour, and the extent to which accurate information is available. These two factors, degree of interest and degree of ambiguity, also influence the extent of the distortion that we would expect to be present in the case of normal forgetting, caricature and grotesque. With time, details become obscure, and our memory tends to become increasingly selective. Events highly important to us are remembered as we wished (or feared) them to be. We do not expect an intimate analysis and examination of a person's character to be depicted through caricature. Neither do we expect a highly threatening person to be depicted "fairly" by means of a caricature. The more important an event or person is to our emotional interests, (given also the factor of ambiguity), the more that predisposition will influence the perception.

The same processes of levelling or condensation, exaggeration and assimilation are observable in the grotesque. Dickens' description of Quilp emphasizes the unusual size and characteristics of the dwarf, and suggests that his physical distortion extends to his character.

The child was closely followed by an elderly man of remarkably hard features and forbidding aspect, and so low in stature as to be quite a dwarf, though his head and face were large enough for the body of a giant...But what added most to the grotesque expression of his face, was a ghostly smile, which, appearing to be the mere result of habit and to have no connection with any mirthful or complacent feeling, constantly revealed the few discoloured fangs that were yet scattered in his mouth, and gave him the aspect of a panting dog.¹⁴

Dickens adds a distorted face with the tongue lolling

¹⁵

out, and a gastronomic capacity to devour hard eggs,

shells and all, gigantic prawns with the heads and tails on,

¹⁶

and to drink boiling tea without winking. This descrip-

tion of Quilp is incongruous with most people's expecta-

tions of 'reality'. Quilp is a dwarf but he has the

head of a giant. Though he is described as elderly, he

is possessed of energy and physical prowess that is

exceptional even for a prime specimen. Clearly, the

degree of exaggeration is very high; the details of physical

distortion are sharpened and become the organizing prin-

ciple of Dickens' portrait of Quilp. To this picture of

physical deformity, Dickens attributes equally unpalata-

ble motives. The few discoloured fangs (not teeth) give

Quilp the aspect of a panting dog. His incredible

appetite, his sadistic love of violence in the persecu-

tion of his wife, his licentiousness in making sexual

overtures to the cherry-cheeked little Nell all point to

the fact that Quilp is obscene. The interest he has for Dickens lies in the fact that he exhibits both sexual and aggressive characteristics to a marked extent.

Quilp is also a highly ambiguous figure. He is a dwarf and that in itself contributes greatly to his dubiousness. Dwarfs are very rare phenomena and are outside most people's range of experience. In the novel, Quilp frequents unsavoury neighborhoods and that too, was (and is) unfamiliar to most middle-class people and so becomes added cause for speculation. Dickens emphasizes Quilp's mysteriousness even further by having the ugly dwarf appear and disappear almost at will throughout the novel. He frequently pops up in the most unlikely places to pursue and persecute little Nell inexplicably.

The more ambiguous the situation, the greater is the tendency for the account to reflect subjective interests. The relationship between the interest and the content (whether in rumour or grotesque) may be identified so closely that the process occurring is that of projection where an almost totally subjective emotional condition is superimposed on a set of perceptions. One of the purposes served by projection is that of evading guilt. The emotions that are inconsonant with the self-image are

denied and subsequently become projected onto others: the degree of denial is paralleled by the urgency of the need to create a scapegoat.¹⁷ It is true that the selectivity of perception involved in the creation of caricature is also a form of projection; however in its psychoanalytic sense, projection is not usually applied to the process of assimilation until the identification of mental images with objective reality reaches more marked proportions as in dreams or highly ambiguous situations like Rorschach ink blot tests. The fact that denial of certain emotions or attitudes is important to projection can also be a factor in increasing ambiguity. Ambiguity may arise simply because of lack of accurate information, but it can also arise because certain features of an actual situation are prevented from becoming known because they must be denied.

It is therefore not surprising that the theoreticians of the grotesque have often noted that one of the characteristics of the grotesque is its dream-like quality. Both the dream and the grotesque are largely projective in nature, arising "within the subject as a compromise between mental forces struggling in him".¹⁸ The grotesque, unlike caricature, does not arise from an assimilation to ego (self) interests; it conforms to interests and emotions that are denied by the individual, and therefore, not

easily capable of becoming conscious.

This point, that the regression is no longer totally under the control of the ego, has been approximated in other definitions of the grotesque. Ruskin cites three basic psychological processes from which grotesque art arises: "Healthful but irrational play of the imagination in times of rest; irregular and accidental contemplation of terrible things; or evil in general; and the confusion of the imagination by the presence of truths which it cannot wholly grasp."¹⁹ What is important to note is the combination of ambiguity (irrational, irregular, accidental, confusion), and highly motivational material (terrible things, evil in general, truths) in the grotesque in all three definitions which Ruskin offers. The other hallmark of the grotesque, its demonic quality, is also noted by Ruskin: "The moment any real vitality enters them, they are nearly sure to...connect themselves with the evil-enjoying branch."²⁰

Essentially the same points are stressed by Wolfgang Kayser in his book, The Grottesque in Art and Literature, in which he takes as the fundamental attribute of the grotesque "the power of evoking in audience or reader a sense of the radical alienness of the world, its 'estrangement' from man, its essential absurdity. The grotesque

effects this by depicting a world at least intermittently under the sway of 'demonic forces.'²¹ Both Ruskin and Kayser tacitly recognize the fact that the grotesque is a psychological manifestation involving denial: for Ruskin the grotesque is irrational, while for Kayser the world is estranged in the grotesque.

In caricature, the emotions that are directed toward the victim of the caricature are usually recognized and resolved by the artist. The threat is reduced by means of comic technique. For example, Tangle is seen as an ineffectual puppet of Chancery. However in the grotesque no such resolution is possible. Even though the feelings and attitudes are those of the creator of the grotesque, they are not recognized as such. The projection is so complete, that they are viewed as objectively real. The impulses which are denied because they threaten the self-concept are projected outwards so that the source of the threat is seen as arising from external reality. However, it becomes impossible for the creator to reduce the threat, simply because it exists totally outside his frame of reference. Because it is aggression that has been denied and projected, it remains unresolved, a threat to his self-concept, rather than an affirmation of his values. In its purest form the grotesque is perceived as totally alien, and arouses extreme anxiety or terror.

It is, however, impossible to distinguish absolutely between caricature and grotesque: it is quite possible to create an intermediate, the comic grotesque, in which elements of the caricature and the grotesque are both present. Since these definitions are based on the concept of processes operating within the psyche there can be no rigid distinction between the extent to which aggression has been assimilated to a concept of the self. Grotesque covers a range of phenomena from pure horror to a mixture of the horrible and the comic.

The conclusion arrived at in my 1955 dissertation, a conclusion which still seems applicable, is that, since not only current usage of the word 'grotesque' but also the historical fluctuations of meaning show a dichotomy of the fearsome and the comic, it is reasonable to suppose that some essential interrelation of these attributes is central to the concept 'grotesque' and hence is operative in our reaction to phenomena thus designated and probably also in their production. The grotesque is the demonic made ludicrous; it manifests itself most clearly not in complex structures but in concrete humanoid figures of the gargoyle type. The theory assumes a demonic fear current which is disarmed, or disarms itself at the moment of its translation into imagery, by the imposition of comic, trivial or ludicrous features. The balance is the important thing; if the disarming is carried to completion, the result is only something ludicrous not something ludicrous-demonic.²²

To use two of Dickens' grotesque characters as examples, Quilp and Krook are both insidious figures who are threats to the other characters in the novels and to a normative functioning of social processes. However, the sexual-sadistic tendencies of Quilp and Krook cannot be accommo-

dated within Dickens; frames of reference. Both remain shadowy, half-real characters on the fringes of possibility. They are frightenly precisely because their grotesqueness arises as a result of Dickens; own projected fears and hostilities. To the extent that some of the aspects of Quilp and Krook are reduced by suggesting that Quilp is only a dog, and Krook, simply the proprietor of a back-alley decrepit Bottle Shop, a comic effect is achieved. However, Quilp's potential for evil is not eliminated by calling him a dog, and Krook's insignificance is belied by the comparisons between Krook and the Lord Chancellor and between his shop and the Court. The depiction of Quilp and Krook lies somewhere between the comic and the grotesque but the dominant impact is that of the grotesque.

So far, I have dealt with two aspects of style, caricature and grotesque, both of which employ regression in the service of the ego to effect a liberation of aggression. In the one, the aggression is assimilated to ego-interests, and the effect is comic; in the second, the assimilation is limited, and the effect created is a feeling of anxiety or terror. It is also possible to make a distinction between caricatures which are marked by aggression, and those in which the aggressive component is not so evident. The second may be called the "comic

caricature." The distinction between the caricature and the comic caricature is made on the same basis that Freud distinguished between aggressive and obscene jokes, and those he termed "innocent". Although both are tendentious in the sense that they are motivated by self-interest, in the innocent joke, the teller is not defending himself against an immediate threat to his values: the motivation in the innocent joke is to reaffirm and augment existing values and interests. What is true of innocent jokes is also true of the "innocent" (less aggressive) comic caricature. An example will serve to illustrate this. Some of the features that provide amusement in a clown's routine are the lack of co-ordination, ignorance of what is expected, and an unsuspecting innocence which borders on stupidity. Positive enjoyment is derived from this display of clumsiness, incongruity and gullibility, because the audience is able to dissociate itself from the ineptitudes exhibited. Freud suggests that the pleasure originates from a comparison of our more mature egos with our earlier more childish ones. The comic caricature can be defined, therefore, as regression to the service of the ego to reaffirm mastery. The same characteristics found in the caricature, exaggeration, condensation and assimilation, are present in the comic caricature. While one attempts to defend against threats to the ego, the comic caricature

attempts to reaffirm our sense of ourselves where no immediate threat exists.

The relationship between the comic caricature and the sentimental is the same as the one that exists between the caricature and the grotesque. The dominant emotion in the two latter styles is that of aggression against threats, real and projected, while the dominant motive in the comic caricature and the sentimental is that of self-assurance, real and projected. In the creation of a comic caricature, the artist deliberately simplifies and exaggerates appearance and behavior in order to indicate that someone is a bungler. However, in the case of the sentimental, the process of assimilation occurs largely unconsciously. The identification of the desires of the perceiver with what is perceived is so complete that it is almost impossible to distinguish between them. In the sentimental, the perceiver projects his interests and values almost totally onto a situation or another person. This is accomplished through the process of omitting details which do not conform with one's wishes, and the exaggerating of certain traits or images which do agree with them. As in the case of the grotesque, the tendency to sentimentalize is more pronounced when there is a high degree of emotional investment in the material and when there is ambiguity. It is

far easier to project an inner state upon an outer object if the outer object lacks a firm structure of its own. Denial also plays an important part in the sentimental as well as the grotesque.

Projection cannot take place unless and until the inner (insightful) perception of the situation is somehow blocked... Repression means the exclusion of all or part of a personal conflict situation from consciousness and from adaptive response. Anything unwelcome to consciousness may be repressed, especially those elements in a conflict that would lower our self-esteem.²³

Dickens in Three Novels

The denotation of the literary terms, grotesque and sentimental, bears a striking similarity to symptoms observed in clinical psychoanalytic situations. What psychoanalysts call idealization or sublimation can be compared with the sentimental; symptoms similar to the manifestations of the grotesque in literature are usually diagnosed as evidence of guilt. Both are symptomatic of repression. Two such clinical cases are examined by Charles Rycroft in Imagination and Reality. One involves a female patient of his, and the other is a discussion from a clinical perspective of an Italian early nineteenth century poet. Both the patient and Leopardi had personal histories of sexual problems, a tendency to idealization, recurring periods of disillusionment followed by reinstatement of another ideal. Ambivalent feelings regarding the mother were observable in both cases. Rycroft's explanation of this similar neurotic formation is that in the early relationship between mother and child, frustration is experienced by the child. The conflict between love and hate is avoided by a withdrawal from reality and the positing of substitute gratification in an hallucinated imago. The process as he describes it, is one in which the deprivation of fulfillment leads to introjection.

According to Freud it is based on the activation of memories of past satisfaction (and not on the presence of any innate idea of an object from which satisfaction is expected and which is automatically cathected in states of instinctual tension). Since the hallucinatory gratification is presumed to be an experience of pure pleasure, this involves dissociation of the memories of past satisfaction from those of past pain, even though the pain and pleasure will both have arisen in relation to the same external object. One must add, therefore, that splitting of introjected object-imagos (memories) into ideal good and ideal bad imagos is also involved. In other words the hallucinated imago is formed by a double process of introjection and splitting.²⁴

In the case of Rycroft's female patient, her history indicated an early frustrating relationship with the mother who had difficulty with breast feeding. The symptoms that led to analysis were a series of idealized infatuations with older women accompanied by the fantasy of a witch residing in her own body. In Leopardi's case, biographical information indicates that he was impotent, had a very ambivalent relationship with his mother and also tended to have a series of idealized lovers, both in his personal life and in his poetry.

According to Rycroft, the ideal hallucinated imago is a substitute fulfillment for the drives and desires that have been denied by the environment. But the idealized imago, perhaps because it stems from an activation of past gratifications (as Freud thought) is noticeably without some of the components that would satisfy. Idealization

is very similar to sublimation -- and as such the content of the fantasies is desexualized. Freud also thought, however, that there is a "return of the repressed," that hallucinatory gratification of wishes involved regressive cathexis of memory-traces. It would seem that a degree of socialization must be present to account for the splitting initially and for the regressive nature of neurotic illnesses. This socialization may originate from the environment, but it is also learned, and forms the substance of the superego. The ideal bad hallucination is a denial of libido and aggression, and forms a defence against it. Thus the patient denies those feelings which she cannot accept and defends against them by projecting them onto the witch who lives in her body.

This particular pattern of neurotic defense against anxiety is interesting to the study of the grotesque and the sentimental, and specifically to the patterns of defense found in Dickens' novels. It suggests why grotesque and sentimental structures can exist within the same perceptual field, and goes further in explaining how they are in fact dynamically related to each other. It provides a way of understanding the aggressive and libidinous content of much of the grotesque, and also why the sentimental is desexualized. Both are extremes stemming

from an early frustration; in Rycroft's terminology, they are hallucinations stemming from the primary processes. The grotesque and the sentimental then, are manifestations of repressed emotions. The grotesque is a defense against these impulses by disowning them and projecting them onto someone or something else, while the sentimental is an accommodation to the repression, by projecting an idealized self-image.

There is one other way in which Rycroft's analysis of illusion and disillusion can affect our understanding of the grotesque. In much of the theoretical discussion of the grotesque two different stylistic modes have been attributed to it. It can take the form of that which is evil or demonic, but it can also take the form of what Kayser calls "an unimpassioned view of life on earth as an empty meaningless puppet play or a caricatural marionette theatre".²⁵ Jennings also makes a distinction between the two types of perception.

The order-chaos categorization is primarily a philosophical one, and it is inadequate to deal with the various immediate, emotionally-coloured ways of viewing life...They range from magical enlivenment to flatness and depletion. The latter extreme is usually accompanied by apathy or vague distress, and the characteristic view of man is that of an assemblage of robots or puppets going about senseless but precise and elaborate tasks. The enlivened world may represent a joyous enhancement of reality in the

direction of a paradise vision, but more typically persons and things take on threatening physiognomies, progressing to the typical scenery of hell, and the accompanying feeling is one of terror. Expressions of Weltschmerz usually evoke the imagery domains of demonic enlivenment and of the flat puppet world...²⁶

The expression of a world that is flat or unrelieved, a puppet world, is symptomatic of a withdrawal from reality. Rycroft's analysis would indicate that a cathexis with the split hallucinated imagos is a further result of frustrations, leading to a neurotic or psychotic disturbance. That the two views of life often occur together, therefore, is not unusual. The marionette quality in the grotesque is a result of withdrawal from reality while the demonically possessed quality results from a projection of one's worst emotions. The two need not be synchronous, although they often are.

Allport also recognizes the importance of the early filial relationship in the formation of a personality disposed toward projection. Hatred, especially of parents, may cause extreme anxiety. The resulting trauma may be so severe that all aspects of it are repressed. The denied aggression is then projected, usually onto little known, lower-status persons. The desire for an affiliative relationship is also displaced and projected onto little known, often higher-status persons who are capable of

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enhancing self-esteem. Allport also notes other factors which can be significant in leading to the adoption of this particular type of defense mechanism. Past actions that would cause guilt if faced, as well as earlier feelings of guilt and shame, and sexual desires of a disapproved order, may also create a level of anxiety that cannot be recognized and resolved.

It is difficult to isolate the causes of splitting and projection in a personality to either purely personal factors relating to an individual's case history or to purely social factors. Hatred of one's parents relates by and large to idiosyncratic causes. Guilt and shame, however, including guilt and shame regarding sex, are usually discriminations that are acquired from the cultural environment. From what can be learned in accounts of Dickens' biographers, all three factors were likely important in shaping Dickens' predilection for the grotesque and the sentimental in his novels: personal factors relating to the circumstances and accidents of his family's fortunes served mainly to emphasize the repressive tendencies in Victorian society.

Dickens' experience in the blacking warehouse where he was sent to work as a child, while the rest of the family

resided in Debtor's Prison, was extremely significant for him. So painful did he find the memory that he never confided the story to his wife, and only told it to one of his closest friends near the end of his life. Years after the incident, Dickens still recalled his loss of status, his humiliation, with shame and guilt and horror. He was at an age where he was capable of realizing the public disgrace of being poor, but undoubtedly, personal feelings must have also been very important in making the experience traumatic. He must have lost much of his faith and trust in parents as guarantors of security and well-being. Little is known about Dickens' early years but, by the time he was eight, he must have had very ambivalent feelings about both his parents. His father was a failure by society's standards and plunged the whole family into economic and social disgrace by his inability to handle financial matters successfully. The young Charles never forgave his mother for suggesting that he should continue working at the blacking warehouse after the family had been bailed out of Debtor's Prison. A further source of conflict for Dickens which resulted in denial and splitting was the question of sex. Since almost any sexual desires in middle-class mid-nineteenth century England were of a disapproved order, it is certain that Dickens must have experienced some ambivalence in this regard. His method of handling sexual matters is denial.

in conformity with prevailing cultural beliefs and practice.

The blacking warehouse episode had the further effect of making the young Dickens acutely conscious of the difference between himself and the lower-class boys with whom he worked. He saw himself as infinitely superior to them and he bitterly resented the fact that he had to associate with those of lower breeding. The middle class values which Dickens would have taken for granted if he had remained in a homogenous social setting became a matter of great concern to him. For most people, ethnocentric frames of reference never become ego-involved because they are never challenged; however, a threat to a frame of reference previously taken for granted results in a high degree of ego-involvement. Insecurity due to economic instability, lowered self-esteem, or a disturbance in an affiliative relationship, will lead to increased identification with values of the group to which one belongs. Dickens' experience in the blacking warehouse conforms very well to this pattern. It came at a time when both he and his family were very insecure, financially, socially, and, for Dickens, emotionally. It must have activated in Dickens a strong awareness of being middle-class and a necessity to defend those values

against erosion or subversion.

In the discussion of caricature, it was mentioned that the aim of caricature is to augment one's sense of self by sharing the emotions expressed with a receptive public. Dickens was able to articulate the precise traits and characteristics that constituted being middle-class in his society, due in part, at least, to the fact that defending his class identity had become a matter of importance to him. However, the guilt and shame of having almost fallen to a lower status group must have created some insecurity in Dickens as well, leading to a need to reassure himself and others of his allegiances and identity. His ability to create caricatures may also have come to serve other purposes -- to correct social injustice and to ridicule hypocrisy. First, however, caricatures serve the function of defining "in" people as opposed to "out" people, and "good" traits as opposed to "bad" traits; through the technique of his caricatures, Dickens is asking for self-validation in the approval and laughter of his audience.

Hauser points out that Dickens is one of the few novelists whose greatness is intricately involved in the question of his popularity.²⁸ The affinity between the

novelist and his public is rooted in the fact that Dickens remained one of them.

What is called the popular conscience was on Dickens' side, and he had the immense advantage of being able to raise a hearty laugh even whilst pointing his lesson. Among the rarest of things is this thorough understanding between author and public, permitting a man of genius to say aloud with impunity that which all his hearers say within themselves dumbly and inarticulately. Dickens never went too far; never struck at a genuine conviction of the multitude. Let us imagine him, in some moment of aberration, suggesting criticism of the popular idea of sexual morality! Would it have availed him that he had done the state some service? Would argument or authority have helped for one moment to win him a patient hearing? We know that he never desired to provoke such antagonism.²⁹

There is ample evidence from biographical data that Dickens took great care to preserve a very close relationship with his audience: he worried about his slipping popularity when sales of his publications were down; he delighted in giving dramatic readings of his works before live audiences; and he more than once changed sections of his work on the advice that they would not find public favour.

One area in which Dickens' values are clearly middle-class in nature is in his treatment (or lack of treatment) of anything pertaining to sex. Dickens' novels were praised because they were always acceptable for family readings in the Sunday parlour. Needless to say this repression results in absurd situations where lower-class

heroines speak in a dialect and use a vocabulary that is highly unlikely. The effect of this repression, however, is not limited to superficial questions of his choice of language. As Humphrey House observes, there is also a censorship of ideas involved.

In much of his description of what he considered to be the grosser kind of social evil there seems to be a contest between a frank acceptance of it as an unwelcome fact, and the desire to minimize it because it was unwelcome. There is an open sincerity in his manner when he is attacking injustice, cruelty, humbug and so on, which is lacking when he attacks the cruder consequences in sex, drink, and dirt of bad social conditions. It is this perhaps more than anything that stamps him with the morality of a middle, an ambiguous class.³⁰

In his writings, there is an uncritical allegiance to the rigid distinction between sex-roles; the dichotomy between what is masculine and what is feminine is one of the main mechanisms of maintaining sexual repression. In doing so, Dickens was only reflecting the values which prevailed in Victorian England. A man was to be strong, firm, but kind; his role as head of the family was that of protector and enforcer of authority. A woman was to be soft, understanding and emotional but still efficient in executing the duties that fell within the domain of personal and family responsibilities. Any inadequacy in the functioning of this arrangement is interpreted as a failure on the part of one sex or the other. On the other hand,

Dickens attempts to show the efficacy of such an arrangement by creating ideal couples who find fulfillment and contentment. Since the personality of men and women is seen to be almost entirely discrepant, and since the roles are split between an active one that deals objectively with the world, and a passive one that deals subjectively with private life, there is little contact between men and women outside of the roles that each attempts to assume. As a result, the knowledge of what men and women are like (as opposed to what is masculine and what is feminine) is extremely limited; the lack of concrete evidence facilitates the projection of idealized masculine and feminine roles.

Women who do not live up to the cultural ideal are caricatured by Dickens, sometimes rather viciously. Miss Sally Brass is one female who exhibits the type of unfeminine behavior to which Dickens strongly objects.

Miss Sally Brass, then, was a lady of thirty-five or thereabouts, of a gaunt and bony figure, and a resolute bearing, which if it repressed the softer emotions of love and kept admirers at a distance, certainly inspired a feeling akin to awe in the breasts of those male strangers who had the happiness to approach her.³¹

She "carried upon her upper lip certain reddish demonstrations which, if the imagination had been assisted by her attire, might have been mistaken for a beard..."³² In short, she resembles "the fabled vampire"³³ in Dickens'

eyes. Mrs. Snagsby receives similar treatment for her unlady-like propensity to usurp the male position of dominance. It is she who "manages the money, reproaches the tax-gatherers, appoints the times and places of devotion on Sundays, licenses Mr. Snagsby's entertainments, and acknowledges no responsibility as to what she thinks fit to provide for dinner."³⁴ "Mr. and Mrs. Snagsby are not only one bone and one flesh, but to the neighbor's thinking, one voice, too."³⁵ Dickens' appraisal of the situation is that the 'one voice' should belong to the man if domestic harmony is to prevail. Mr. Snagsby also comes in for his share of criticism for being too meek and mild, but it is against Mrs. Snagsby that Dickens directs most of his ammunition.

Molly in Great Expectations is Dickens' example of the wonders that can be accomplished when a man is strong enough to impose his will on a woman. A lion tamed, Molly has become an acceptable complement to Jaggers' household.

Her entrapped hand was on the table, but she had already put her other hand behind her waist.

"Master," she said, in a low voice, with her eyes attentively and entreatingly fixed upon him, "Don't."

"I'll show you a wrist," repeated Mr. Jaggers with an immovable determination to show it.

"Molly, let them see your wrist."

"Master," she again murmured. "Please!"

The moment he ceased, she looked at him again. "That'll do, Molly," said Mr. Jaggers, giving her a slight nod; "you have been admired, and can go."³⁶

The other extreme of womanhood is not acceptable either. ✓

Not only must she be unworldly and delicate, she must be efficient and hard-working within the limited sphere of domestic duties. Mrs. Pocket's ineptness in child-rearing and all things practical, is attributed to the fact that she has aristocratic connections. In any case, she is not a help to her husband, one of the more serious charges that Dickens makes against the fairer sex. With such a wife, how can a man "quite see his way to putting anything straight?"³⁷

Dickens' opinion as to what constitutes manliness can be deduced from a comparison of his portrayal of Bucket on whom Dickens lavishes praise and admiration, and his portrayal of Skimpole for whom Dickens has suspicion and contempt. Bucket is, above all, cheerful, well-mannered and efficient. He identifies closely with his public role as a police officer: nothing is allowed to interfere with the performance of his duties. Even when he is required to do things distasteful to his personal feelings, his sense of public responsibility triumphs with little conflict or difficulty. Although the police officer hounds Jo continually and is eventually indirectly responsible for his death, although he pursues Gridley, and arrests George for murder although he suspects that George is innocent, although he goes out at

Tulkinghorn's order to track down Lady Dedlock, he is seen as an admirable character because he does his job efficiently. Throughout, Bucket impersonalizes himself; he refuses to acknowledge any responsibility for his participation in the unjust and authoritarian system whose interests he serves, at the same time disclaiming any personal malevolence in what he does.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Bucket, "you'll excuse anything that may appear to be disagreeable in this, for my name's Inspector Bucket of the Detectives, and I have a duty to perform."³⁸

His jocular intimacy with Gridley only masks the fact that the relationship is one of pursuer and pursued. Bucket views the situation as a game, although Bucket has nothing to lose and Gridley stands to lose a great deal. Even viewed as a game, Bucket's behavior is hardly sporting since there is great inequity in the distribution of chance. "You'll lose your temper with the whole round of 'em again and again," Bucket assures Gridley, "and I shall take you on a score of warrants yet, if I have luck...Why, Lord bless your soul, what times we have had together!"³⁹

The gentility and good-breeding with which Bucket executes his duty only serve to accentuate the shallowness of manners and respectability. After he has handcuffed the trooper, Bucket asks: "How do you find them? Are they comfortable? If not, say so, for I wish to make things as pleasant as is consistent with my duty, and I've got

another pair in my pocket."⁴⁰ Dickens' positive evaluation of Bucket has been cited as evidence of Dickens' own authoritarianism. His cheerful acceptance of authority and duty is related to his concept of masculinity. The degree to which Bucket is admired finds its counterpart in the degree to which Dickens attacks Skimpole. Where Bucket glossed over his exercise of power with gentility, Skimpole exposes the amorality of Bucket's position with his own philosophy of childlike expediency. Despite Skimpole's self-professed innocence into the ways of the world, he is aware that power is the predominant concern of society. In his perception of Bucket, he is not misled by Bucket's charm; he sees the man for what he is:

Skimpole reasons with himself, this is a tamed lynx, an active police-officer, an intelligent man, a person of a peculiarly directed energy and great subtlety both of conception and execution, who discovers our friends and enemies for us when they run away, recovers our property for us when we are robbed, avenges us comfortably when we are murdered. This active police-officer and intelligent man has acquired in the exercise of his art, a strong faith in money; he finds it very useful to him, and he makes it very useful to society... Skimpole deems it essential, in its little place, to the general cohesion of things, that he should think well of Bucket. The State expressly asks him to trust Bucket. And he does.⁴¹

Skimpole is a blend of the same qualities as Bucket -- expediency and charm. The primary difference between the two men is that one uses his abilities in accordance with

society's interests, while Skimpole attempts to make his way by taking advantage of society. Dickens' sense of morality is so closely tied up with social convention that he does not seem to realize that one is as amoral as the other. Esther's response to Skimpole is one of extreme distrust and suspicion, but she is not sure why. "I showed that I was of a different opinion, though I had not the capacity for arguing the question;"⁴² and later: "I had nothing to offer in reply to this exposition, and therefore took my leave."⁴³ Skimpole is suspect because he does not accept and conform to society's role expectations -- as far as society is concerned, he is irresponsible and amoral. Bucket, however, is admirable, because he has internalized cultural values; how 'moral' these values are is questionable.

Much of the grotesque in Dickens' novels is a projection of Dickens' own preoccupation with repressed sexual interests. Sadistic sexuality is the explanation that is offered for Quilp's torture of his wife. When Mrs. Quilp becomes the victim of her husband's cruel whims, Quilp becomes horribly grotesque: his features assume the appearance of a "horribly grotesque and distorted face with the tongue lolling out."⁴⁴ Despite the fact that he is physically and morally repugnant, he is still able to

exert a strange magnetism on women. In her conversations with the ladies, Mrs. Quilp asserts that "the best-looking woman here couldn't refuse him if I was dead and she was free and he chose to make love to her."⁴⁵ Quilp also eyes little Nell and imagines her as the second Mrs. Quilp: "a little cherry-cheeked, red-lipped wife."⁴⁶ Although the nature of Quilp's motives in pursuing little Nell across the countryside are never made explicit in the novel, there are strong sexual undertones in the chase of the pure delectable virgin by the ugly monster defiler Quilp.

In Bleak House, Krook also exhibits perverse sexual desires. When Krook asks Richard: "And why do you think they call me the Lord Chancellor, and my shop the Chancery?," his answer is to the point: "'You see,' said the old man, stooping and turning around, 'they -- Hi! Here's lovely hair! I have got three sacks of ladies hair below, but none so beautiful and fine as this. What colour, and what texture!'"⁴⁷ And in Great Expectations, although Pip's relationships with Biddy and Estella are completely asexual in nature, the no-good Orlick always manages to intrude to destroy the perfect picture. When Pip is out walking with Biddy, Orlick begins to lust after Biddy; she confesses her horror of Orlick, who, she is afraid, "likes

[her]," and who dances at her whenever he catches her eye.⁴⁸

Pip also has a rival in winning Estella's affections in Bentley Drummle, who is almost as detestable as heavy-limbed, morose Orlick whom he resembles.

Bentley Drummle, who was so sulky a fellow that he even took up a book as if its writer had done him an injury, did not take up an acquaintance in a more agreeable spirit. Heavy in figure, movement and comprehension in the sluggish complexion of his face, and in the large awkward tongue that seemed to loll about in his mouth as he himself lolled about in a room -- he was idle, proud, niggardly, reserved and suspicious.⁴⁹

Drummle's intentions toward Estella are less than pure and honorable. Like Quilp's and Krook's, Drummle's sexual interest in women takes the form of sadism. Once he and Estella re married, he treats her terribly. Pip's interest in Estella, on the other hand, is of the purest quality.

....what pain it gave me to think that Estella should show any favour to a contemptible, clumsy, sulky booby, so very far below the average. To the present moment, I believe it to have been referable to some pure fire of generosity and disinterestedness in my love for her, that I could not endure the thought of her stooping to that hound. No doubt I should have been miserable whomsoever she had favoured, but a worthier object would have caused me a different kind and degree of distress.⁵⁰

An acceptable relationship between a man and a woman cannot, for Dickens, include any overt sexual motivation. However, the grotesque personages in the novel are proof that the existence of sexual desires was of great interest

to Dickens, although he was not able to recognize the fact that he was projecting his own emotions. Invariably, sex is equated with sadism for Dickens: it is something that is grotesque and ugly and inhuman. The distortion in the depiction of the grotesques is not objective; the descriptions of Quilp and Krook borrow heavily from traditional stock grotesques, misshapen, physically deformed creatures with the tongue lolling out. This points to the conclusion that, for Dickens, certain expectations had already been created and that his own conditioning, rather than observation, is responsible for his perceptions. He believes also that any man who would entertain sexual desires in connection with somebody is a low creature, hardly human -- a mere dog, like Orlick or Drummle. The extent of the distortion is a reflection, not of reality, but of Dickens' fears of his own sexuality and his necessity to deny it, and to dissociate himself from it.

The ideal for which Dickens longed was a completely desexualized relationship in which the male acts as a guardian, buffering the woman from the cruel, hard world; and the woman, innocent and fragile, worships the man for his solicitous care of her. In The Old Curiosity Shop, little Nell is held up as a model of selfless dedication

to her grandfather's needs and desires, despite the fact that he is half-crazy. In return, she is surrounded by a soft halo of divinity; her self-abnegation becomes a source of inspiration and worship. Dickens believes that a man can find a veritable heaven in a relationship with a woman-child who is pure, totally innocent and naive. The description of Nell's and her grandfather's journey, although in actual fact becoming more and more of a nightmare, is recounted as though they were approaching perfection, in a spiritual sense.

....she bounded on before, printing her tiny foot-steps in the moss, which rose elastic from so light a pressure and gave it back as mirrors throw off breath; and thus she lured the old man on, with many a backward look and merry beck....for the further they passed into the deep shade, the more they felt that the tranquil mind of God was there and shed its peace on them.⁵¹

To escape from the defiler Quilp, little Nell recedes further and further into ethereality; her journey is really an escape from reality into a world of dreams.

The fact that the village to which the schoolmaster brings Nell and her grandfather is a dream-world is stated explicitly in the novel.

It was for such a spot the child had wearied in the dense, dark miserable haunts of labour. Upon her bed of ashes, and amidst the squalid horrors through which they had forced their way, visions of such scenes -- beautiful indeed, but not more beautiful than this sweet reality -- had been always present to her mind. They had seemed to

melt into a dim and airy distance, as the prospect of ever beholding them again grew fainter; but as they receded, she had loved and panted for them more.⁵²

Gradually, there is a reversal between what is dream and what is reality. The idyllic place is first presented as an embodiment of her past dreams; thirty or forty pages later, it is the village church which is the reality and little Nell thinks "of her past fortunes as if they had been a dream and she only now awoke."⁵³ A few pages later this process is complete: the past is "only as some weary dream that has passed away..."⁵⁴

"Hush!" said the old man..."no more talk of the dream, and all the miseries it brought. There are no dreams here. 'Tis a quiet place, and they keep away. Let us never think about them, lest they should pursue us again."⁵⁵

When all remembrance of reality is suppressed, Nell reaches her zenith of purity and passivity. Her ethereality is the escape which is found from "sin and sorrow,"⁵⁶ even though it is also a denial of life. What Dickens calls a place of "peaceful beauty," a place "sacred to all goodness and virtue," a tranquil place of rest "where nothing evil entered,"⁵⁷ is, when all is said and done, the grave.

The ideal male and female roles in The Old Curiosity Shop indicate that Dickens has suppressed the reality of sex. Little Nell is little more than a child and the men

are unmarried and much older. In the type of fantasy that he creates, Dickens preserves the cultural sex roles of a protective superior male and a submissive female, combined with an almost total repression of sex. The relationship between little Nell and the idealised males is almost parental in nature. It is the grandfather's devotion to the child, the Single Gentleman's self-appointed role as her protector, and the teacher-student relationship on the part of the Bachelor that capture Dickens' interest and imagination. What makes this description of little Nell's death sentimental is the fact that Dickens projects his own values and desires onto the account with almost no attention to verisimilitude. Any child who is so oblivious of the demands of reality as little Nell supposedly is, would be autistic. Any adult male who gave such emotional importance to a protective relationship with a child -- who, in fact, made it substitute for a more mature heterosexual relationship -- has failed to develop normally. To eulogize death as a way of transcending life is escapist.

Dickens may have realized, in fact, that he was dealing with fantasy. However, he would not be so ready to admit that his fantasy stemmed from denied sexual energy which had been sublimated. Nor would he be likely to admit that the ideal was not worth pursuing. In cele-

brating the dubious virtues of little Nell, Dickens is asking his audience to reaffirm their allegiance to an ideal which serves to perpetuate the sexual repression of which they are both victims and agents.

In Bleak House, Esther is not much older than little Nell. Here, again, the ideal male is a father-figure; in fact, Jarndyce is Esther's legal guardian, and Esther addresses him as Guardian. A marriage is almost enacted between this father and child. However, at the last moment, Esther is bestowed on Allan Woodcourt, without her prior consent or knowledge. Their marriage is stereotypically blissful, Esther eternally grateful to her husband for loving her, and Allan Woodcourt blessed by his family's adoration and by the public esteem in which he is held. In Great Expectations, Pip assumes that Estella has been arranged for him. When this illusion collapses, he is able to view the relationships between men and women slightly more realistically. The alternate ending to the novel has Pip, in one case, become the protective Bachelor and Single Gentleman of The Old Curiosity Shop; however, there is a sense of loss involved. In the second ending, he and Estella substitute sentiment for sex, and live happily ever after.

Ambivalent feelings toward parental figures is a second result of Dickens' repression of the blacking warehouse episode. In his novels, many of the protagonists are children: little Nell, Pip, Oliver Twist, Tiny Tim, and Esther Summerson. All of these children are orphans. Dickens' choice of parentless children is perhaps related to the fact that, in suppressing most of the conflict he felt in regard to parents, he had almost denied their existence. The novels also abound with substitute parental figures. In The Old Curiosity Shop, the relationship between the grandfather and the child is endangered by the grandfather's mania for gambling. Little Nell accepts the rationale that the grandfather offers -- that the financial ruin he caused was motivated by his overwhelming concern for her. The roles then become reversed; it is little Nell who becomes the guardian-protector and the grandfather, the child. At Nell's death, the grandfather becomes conscious of the role-reversal that has occurred. "I have remembered since, she walked behind me, Sir, that I might not see how lame she was -- but yet she had my hand in hers, and seemed to lead me still."⁵⁸ In this early novel, the child assumes the burden of an unsatisfactory filial relationship; little Nell sacrifices herself for the sake of an irresponsible parent. The tragic element in the novel, in one light, can be an attempt to manipulate by creating guilt

reactions. Basically, Dickens' stance is a more sophisticated version of "you'll be sorry when I'm dead!"

"Oh, it is hard to take to heart the lesson that such deaths will teach, but let no man reject it, for it is one that all must learn, and it is a mighty, Universal Truth. When Death strikes down the innocent and young, for every fragile form from which he lets the panting spirit free, a hundred virtues rise, in shapes of mercy, charity, and love, to walk the world and bless it."⁵⁹

The nobility and selflessness of little Nell's death did evoke a flood of tears. However, the motivation behind the tale of woe is, in part, a reflection of Dickens' reworking of his childhood hardships as the wronged and villified child who was faithful to his father to the end. The theme of wronged children who are forced to assume adult responsibilities because of parental inadequacies occurs frequently in Dickens' works, Caddy Jellyby and Charlie being two examples.

Esther Summerson also assumes the burden of a parent's misdeeds. It is she who bears the disfiguring scars that are the symbol of her mother's guilt. However, some degree of ambivalence can be detected toward the maternal figure. Esther has two mothers, Miss Barbary and Lady Dedlock. The first of these is not Esther's real mother; she is referred to as a perverted version of the god-mother in fairy stories. Miss Barbary, with her puritanical religious

beliefs, makes Esther wish she had never been born. The real mother is beautiful and rich, but guilty of having borne an illegitimate child. When Lady Dedlock recognizes Esther as her child, she is moved to acknowledge her guilt, and is full of remorse. Esther's scars still remain, however; like little Nell, she bears them nobly and is rewarded for her self-sacrificial attitude. However, Esther's reward comes in this life, not in the next, and it is the mother who dies, not the child.

Pip is an orphan who has two sets of parents: his imagined parents who are dead, and his functioning parents. Pip's anger against the maternal figure is largely repressed and projected onto other figures, especially onto Miss Havisham. In attempting to find a suitable father-figure, Pip alternately looks to Joe, Jarndyce and Magwitch. Ultimately the Oedipal conflict situation is not capable of being resolved, and Pip recreates the primal scene in fantasy, with an overhauled Joe, a kind and loving mother in Biddy, and a new Pip.

The third major area of conflict connected with the blacking warehouse which Dickens never really resolved, was his social and political attitudes. His experience of having suffered adversity as a child made him sympathetic

toward the plight of all people who were victims, especially children. Both in his novels and in his personal life, Dickens campaigned for the improvement of living conditions for the poor, and attacked the abuse of power. Despite his outspoken criticism of social ills, however, Dickens was not radical. Basically, his position is that of a middle-class liberal. He was not interested in radically altering the nature of English society; his position was that of a moralist whose morality was derived from middle-class realities.

The truth is that Dickens' criticism of society is almost exclusively moral. Hence the utter lack of any constructive suggestion anywhere in his work. He attacks the law, parliamentary government, the educational system, and so forth, without ever clearly suggesting what he would put in their places. Of course it is not necessarily the business of a novelist, or a satirist, to make constructive suggestions, but the point is that Dickens' attitude is at bottom not even destructive. There is no clear sign that he wants the existing order to be overthrown, or that he believes it would make very much difference if it were overthrown. For in reality, his target is not so much society as 'human nature'. ...indeed, its tendency if anything is pro-capitalist, because its whole moral is that capitalists ought to be kind, not that workers ought to be rebellious. Bounderby is a bullying windbag and Gradgrind has been morally blinded, but if they were better men, the system would work well enough -- that, all through is the implication.⁶⁰

Dickens' necessity to repress his early brush with the lower classes made it difficult for him to view society objectively. He has an ambivalent attitude toward both the

class below and the class above him. On the one hand, he champions the cause of the poor because he identifies with them as victims, but he does not understand the full extent of the horror. He is also afraid of the lower classes, of the threat of contagion and the threat of rebellion. He sees the lower classes through his own eyes, not through the eyes of the poor.

In Bleak House, Dickens paints a pathetic picture of a slum-child, Jo, who is continually ordered to move on, move on, with nowhere to go.

Homely filth begrimes him, homely parasites devour him, homely sores are in him, homely rags are on him: native ignorance, the growth of English soil and climate, sinks his immortal nature lower than the beasts that perish.⁶¹

The eulogy at Jo's death, however, is a call to the Heavenly compassion in people's hearts to stop the suffering, primarily of children. It is an emotional appeal to individual sentiment, rather than a call for social reform. Furthermore, Dickens has a rather sentimentalized view of what a child like Jo would be like. He underestimates the negative impact that continual exposure to the slum conditions existing in England at that time would have on one's personality development. Dickens is projecting himself as a child in the blacking warehouse, in Jo, when he creates the pathetic picture of a child who is good by

middle-class standards and through happenstance, is poor and dirty.

One of the problems with which he was concerned in one way or another in nearly all his novels was the influence of the environment, especially in childhood, upon habits and character... It is perhaps unnecessary to emphasize the contribution of Oliver's gentle birth to this result, because a similar thing on a smaller scale, happens to poor Jo whose parents are not genteel. The spark of goodness was kept glowing in him by *Hawdon* and *Snagsby*, and was fanned at last to a tiny flame by *Allan*. Nearly all modern readers find these conclusions thoroughly unconvincing; and they could not have seemed convincing even to contemporaries if the full horror and grossness of the life that such children must have lived had been displayed.⁶²

The fact that attention was focused on the bad social conditions existing at the time, and that public sentiment was aroused, can be credited to Dickens' novels. However, Dickens did not channel the concern and emotion which his novels stirred up towards any type of constructive change. Orwell points out that in Dickens' life-time, few concrete steps were taken to alleviate the abuses which he recounted in his novels. Dickens appealed to his audiences' sense of compassion and pity; people are to be saved as individuals from an evil society but he does not suggest that society needs to be reformed. As Humphrey House observes, there is even an element of snobbery in the manner in which Dickens expresses his concern for the lower classes.

And further, the increasing difference between the incomes and social habits of the middle and working

classes put the pleasures of doing good within the reach of greater numbers as surely as it provided a wider field for their exercise. The power to patronize is one of the most delightful consequences of going up in the world: the snobbery of a rising middle class works both more subtly and more thoroughly in its attitude to what has been left below, where the ground is known and understood, than in the upward journey, where a slip may lead to disaster or ridicule.⁶³

When some of Dickens' other passages dealing with the poor are examined, it becomes clear that Dickens is more concerned with the poor as victims than with the poor themselves.

But night-time in this dreadful spot! -- night,when the people near them looked wilder and more savage; when bands of unemployed labourers paraded in the roads, or clustered by torch-light round their leaders, who told them in stern language of their wrongs, and urged them on to frightful cries and threats; when maddened men, armed with sword and firebrand, spurning the tears and prayers of women who would restrain them, rushed forth on errands of terror and destruction, to work no ruin half so surely as their own... -- night, which, unlike the night that Heaven sends on earth, brought with it no peace, nor quiet, nor signs of blessed sleep -- who shall tell the terrors of the night to that young wandering child!⁶⁴

Visiting the slums in Bleak House is tantamount to an experience of Hades: "the crowd...hovers round the three visitors, like a dream of horrible faces and fades away up alleys and into ruins, and behind walls; and with occasional cries and shrill whistles of warning, thenceforth flits about them until they leave the place."⁶⁵ These accounts are not unsympathetic, but the main images in the passages

are those of anger and turmoil and a ghostly unreality. By presenting the slums in this way, Dickens creates the impression of something grotesque and irrational -- his solution is not to discover the causes, but to escape an oppressive and recurring nightmare.

The upper classes are cast as sadists who are responsible for social injustice. The Lord Chancellor, Tulkinghorn and Wholes are examples of Dickens' attempts to affix personal responsibility for his feelings of persecution. To these mysterious personages, Dickens attributes personal malevolence. These figures, especially Wholes, are to some extent grotesque. The projection in these cases is complimentary; that is, Dickens creates the type of people who, he feels, are capable of causing the social ills which are almost beyond comprehension in the terror which they evoke. These characters are a product of paranoia on Dickens' part. For example, Dickens' own emphasis on sentiment is reflected in the portrait of Tulkinghorn. Anyone who possesses power and is theoretically capable of remedying matters, or at least is capable of refusing to participate in Chancery, and does not, must be a man who is totally without emotion or 'heart'. As he is presented, Tulkinghorn is obsessed with gaining power over people's lives. He moves "the red bit, the black bit, the inkstand top, the other inkstand top,"⁶⁷ silently working out people's des-

tinies in his mind. He is a man totally concerned with facts: "To say of a man so severely and strictly self-repressed that he is triumphant, would be to do him as great an injustice as to suppose him troubled with love or sentiment, or any romantic weakness".⁶⁸ Even his name reflects the fact that Dickens perceives him as a vulture preying on the weak and defenceless.

Like a dingy London bird among the birds at roost in these pleasant fields, where the sheep are all made into parchment, the goats into wigs, and the pasture into chaff, the lawyer, smoke-dried and faded, dwelling among mankind but not consorting with them, aged without experience of genial youth, and so long used to make his cramped nest in holes and corners of human nature that he has forgotten its broader better range, comes sauntering home.⁶⁹

An aura of mysteriousness surrounds Tulkinghorn. Lady Dedlock explains to Esther that he is inscrutable, and thereby more terrifying and more powerful. "His calling is the acquisition of secrets, and the holding possession of such power as they give him, with no sharer or opponent in it."⁷⁰ Because of the lack of concrete information about Tulkinghorn, about his motives, his character, even his movements, much of what is attributed to Tulkinghorn must necessarily be a result of projection on Dickens' part.

As if it whispered to him of its fifth years of silence and seclusion, it shuts him up the closer. More impenetrable than ever, he sits, and drinks, and mellows as it were, in secrecy; pondering, at that twilight hour, on all the mysteries he knows, associated with darkening woods in the

country, and vast blank shut-up houses in town: and perhaps sparing a thought or two for himself, and his family history, and his money, and his will -- all a mystery to every one...⁷¹

The reality of a secretive, powerful, conservative old gentleman is combined with Dickens' presuppositions that the reason why society is unjust is because power is exercised by heartless vultures such as Tulkinghorn who are dedicated to the pursuit of the chase, and who delight in the kill. As a model for sociological analysis, even as a study in psychology, the depiction of Tulkinghorn is naive. The one over-riding factor in Tulkinghorn's personality that leads to his "evilness" is the fact that he has no emotions, that he is dry and dusty. Since Tulkinghorn's heartlessness reflects very strongly Dickens' own emphasis on sentiment, and since Tulkinghorn is also presented as inscrutable, there is room to suppose that Dickens' suspicions of the upper classes find confirmation in a complimentary projection.

Many of the same images are repeated in descriptions of Vholes, who is also a lawyer for the Court of Chancery. He is secretive, "buttoned-up," dressed all in black, and looks at his clients "as if he were looking at his prey and charming it".

Mr. Vholes' office, in disposition retiring and in situation retired, is squeezed up in a corner

and blinks at a dead wall... He never misses a chance in his practice; which is a mark of respectability. He never takes any pleasure; which is another mark of respectability. His digestion is impaired, which is highly respectable. And he is making hay of the grass which is flesh, for his three daughters.⁷³

Like Tulkinghorn, Vholes is repressed, emotionless, and cannibalistic. How little Dickens understands this is indicated by the gruesomely uncanny description of Vholes taking "off his close black gloves as if he were skinning himself," and lifting "off his tight hat as if he were scalping himself".⁷⁴ 'Uncanny' comes from the Gaelic root 'ken' and means, literally, beyond one's understanding. To Dickens, Vholes is as incomprehensible as Tulkinghorn in his own way; these highly ambiguous personages become the focus for Dickens' distrust of society and social institutions. They are, in part, a reflection of the paranoia of a rising middle class in conflict with a conservative established class.

How people ideally should be, is also offered as a counterpart to how Dickens fears they are. The good figures in the novel are socially disengaged and independently wealthy characters who rescue deserving individuals from the morass of social injustices. In The Old Curiosity Shop, the Single Gentleman is intrigued by the plight of little Nell, and, out of charity, makes strenuous exertions on her be-

half. A race between the forces of good and the forces of evil comprises a large part of the plot: as Quilp attempts to track down the grandfather and the child, the Single Gentleman is also using his influence and power to reach them in time. On a more plebian scale, Kit is rescued from poverty and obscurity by an elderly couple who recognize his innate goodness, and take him into their home. Similarly in Bleak House, Jarndyce's home becomes the haven for deserving unfortunates who are saved by his generosity. The belief that goodness is rewarded and that evil is thwarted in life is very hard to accept for most adult readers. It is also perplexing that these benevolent gentlemen seem to have no claims on their time other than to look for people whom they can help. The ideal of a life of leisure devoted to good works seems to be based on Dickens' supposition that wealth can buy freedom -- freedom even from social forces. For example, it is never explained how Jarndyce has managed to escape from the case before Chancery in which he would have been one of the prime litigants. However, he does. His character is not ruined, his financial resources are not exhausted by the case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce. The only explanation in the novel is that he has chosen to act as though Chancery does not exist, and, as a result, he miraculously escapes from its influence.

In Bleak House, however, even Dickens is able to see that his solution to social injustice is limited. Jarndyce is unable to save everyone. Richard's compulsion to fight Chancery is stronger than Jarndyce's enveloping and protective charity. Jo also dies because he was pirated away from Bleak House when he had the fever. Nevertheless goodness radiates from Bleak House and most of those touched by its influence lead a changed existence. In Great Expectations Dickens presents a much more cynical view of the independently wealthy benefactors. Much to his horror, Pip discovers that Miss Havisham's motivations in adopting him are not selfless. His wealthy patron turns out to be a convict who is using him to fulfill his own ambitions vicariously. Even though Pip renounces Magwitch's money and refuses to become "his" gentleman, he nevertheless becomes a gentleman. Once again, his wealth and position allow him to become independent from society, although the sphere of action is severely restricted to a small circle of family and friends. The ideal of becoming a self-sufficient gentleman is never repudiated in Dickens' novels, although the expectation of what it can accomplish becomes very much reduced. Dickens begins to realize that one can not save the world by this route, but he still thinks that one can save oneself.

In his novels, Dickens urged a disengagement from social forces, a withdrawal from reality to an individual moral life. Unable to face the reality of class, he attempts to negate the implications of the class structure by embracing a vague humanitarianism, an inner circle for the deserving. In The Old Curiosity Shop, little Nell's flight from the city to the country is accompanied by a corresponding flight from a social to a spiritual reality, from a nightmare to a vision of paradise. The main target of the social criticism is the machine which dehumanizes, blights, and sterilizes.

On mounds of ashes by the wayside, sheltered only by a few rough boards, or rotten pent-house roofs, strange engines spun and writhed like tortured creatures; clanking their iron chains, shrieking in their rapid whirl from time to time as though in torment unendurable, and making the ground tremble with their agonies... Then came more of the wrathful monsters, whose like they [the people] almost seemed to be in their wildness and their untamed air, screeching and turning round and round again; and still, before, behind, and to the right and left, was the same interminable perspective of brick towers, never ceasing in their black vomit, blasting all things living or inanimate, shutting out the face of day, and closing in on all these horrors with a dense dark cloud.⁷⁵

It is a strange and terrifying land for Dickens where "the noise and dirt and vapour of the great manufacturing town, reeking with lean misery and hungry wretchedness, hemmed them in on every side, and seemed to shut out hope, and render escape impossible."⁷⁶

In all three novels, the same lurid glare from the kilns denotes the confrontation with the social evil.

They raised their eyes, and saw a lurid glare hanging in the dark sky, the dull reflection of some distant fire... They had proceeded thus in silence for some quarter of an hour, and had lost sight of the glare to which he had pointed, in the dark and narrow ways by which they had come, when it suddenly burst upon them again, streaming up from the high chimney of a building close before them.⁷⁷

Compared to the following from Bleak House:

Towards London, a lurid glare overhung the whole dark waste; and the contrast between these two lights, and the fancy which the redder light engendered of an unearthly fire, gleaming on all the unseen buildings of the city, and on all the faces of its many thousands of wandering inhabitants, was as solemn as might be ... The kilns were burning, and a stifling vapour set towards us with a pale blue glare.⁷⁸

Both passages have the same nightmarish quality about them.

The landscape is coloured by a reddish or bluish glow from the fires of the kilns, making the industrial society, in both cases, a vision of hell.

In Great Expectations the locale has changed from the heart of the industrial towns but the same image reoccurs. In Pip's confrontation with Orlick, "the lime was burning with a sluggish stifling smell, but the fires were made up and left".⁷⁹ When Pip is discovered and rescued by Herbert, "the white vapour of the kiln passed from them as [they] went by, and, as [Pip] had thought a prayer before, [he]

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 thought a thanksgiving now. From the point in the novel when the protagonist comes face to face with the awareness of an evil society, from that point on, little Nell, Esther and Pip all are radically changed. After Nell passed through the industrial town, she entered into a trance-like state. She was "so very calm and unresisting that she had no thought of any wants of her own, but prayed that God would raise up some friend for her grandfather":⁸¹ "...even hunger was forgotten in the strange tranquility that crept over her senses... It was not like sleep -- and yet it must have been, or why those pleasant dreams of the little scholar all night long..."⁸² When she has reached this somnambulant state, she is whisked away in a coach, toward the culmination of her journey, "moving onward with no trouble or fatigue, and hearing all these sounds like dreamy music, lulling to the senses."⁸³

Immediately after Esther's image of London in the distance, and immediately before her contagion with smallpox, she also undergoes a profound change. "But I have always remembered since, that when we had stopped at the garden gate to look up at the sky, and when we went on our way, I had for the moment an undefinable impression of myself as being something different from what I then was."⁸⁴ A long period of penance intervenes, in Esther's case, from the

direct experience with a hellish reality, to her being transported to a better one. In searching for her mother with Inspector Bucket, Esther meets Allan Woodcourt:

It was so unexpected, and so -- I don't know what to call it, whether pleasant or painful -- to come upon it after my feverish wandering journey, and in the midst of the night, that I could not keep back the tears from my eyes. It was like hearing his voice in a strange country.⁸⁵

This meeting presages Esther's ensuing marriage to Woodcourt. As his wife and the mistress of the second Bleak House, Esther's world is freed from the guilt and terrors of her earlier life.

A similar pattern emerges in Great Expectations.

After Pip's encounter with Orlick on the marshes, in which Pip denies his complicity in any evil deed, he is rescued by Herbert. "At these words, the face of him who supported me looked over into mine, and I saw my supporter to be --
'Herbert; Great Heaven!'"⁸⁶ In all three cases, the protagonist is saved from an overwhelming social reality by a 'good' friend -- the Bachelor, Allan Woodcourt, and Herbert. And in all three cases, the protagonist's fortunes suddenly change for the better, so that their dreams become realized.

As Pip looked along the clustered roofs, with church towers and spires shooting into the unusually clear air, the sun rose up, and a veil seemed to be drawn from the river, and millions of sparkles burst out upon its waters. From

him too, a veil seemed to be drawn, and he felt strong and well.⁸⁷

The escape from social involvement which seems impossible, is found in fantasy.

Dickens' ambivalent attitude toward the upper and the lower classes reflects what he fears they might be, and how he hopes they are. That strong personal reactions condition his social attitudes is evident in the fact that he cannot tolerate ungentlemanly behavior. Essentially, Dickens' sociological analysis is a moral one. The upper classes ought to change society, and the evil that is created in society as a result of the injustices, will be the instrument of judgement. The lack of emotion which Dickens attributes to the upper classes is a reflection of Dickens' own feeling that someone should have rescued him from his plight in the blacking warehouse, and that no one did. The demonic possession which is attributed to the slums reflects Dickens' distaste for the roughness and coarseness and barely suppressed aggression which he sensed in the lower classes. According to Dickens, the solution lies with private acts of benevolence. Social forces acting on individuals are simply evil, and discredited as such. Thus Dickens always advocates escape -- escape from the city to country in The Old Curiosity Shop, escape from the web of

Chancery to a country cottage, and in Great Expectations,
the renunciation of British society in favour of a personal
existence in the colonies.

The Old Curiosity Shop

In the first chapter of The Old Curiosity Shop, Dickens makes quite explicit one of the drives which lead to his creativity. Fantasy is viewed as a defense against reality by the narrator. The subsequent story of little Nell is related as an adventure which the gentleman encountered in one of his night ramblings: in fact, it would be quite possible to view the entire story of The Old Curiosity Shop as a fantasy of the narrator. It is presented as fact, but the narrator himself says that he is given to creating imaginative constructions in his excursions.

Night is generally my time for walking... I have fallen insensibly into this habit, both because it favours my infirmity and because it affords me greater opportunity of speculating on the characters and occupations of those who fill the streets. The glare and hurry of broad noon are not adapted to idle pursuits like mine; a glimpse of passing faces caught by the light of a street lamp or a shop window is often better for my purpose than their full revelation in the daylight, and, if I must add the truth, night is kinder in this respect than day, which too often destroys an air-built castle at the moment of its completion, without the smallest ceremony or remorse.⁸⁸

The reason why "air-built castles" are preferred is also furnished by the narrator. It is because he, for some unspecified reason, finds that reality is without meaning, or if we may phrase the matter slightly differently, that he no longer is able to invest reality with any meaning.

That constant pacing to and fro, that never-ending restlessness, that incessant tread of feet wearing the rough stones smooth and glossy -- is it not a wonder how the dwellers in narrow ways can bear to hear it! Think of a sick man in such a place as Saint Martin's Court, listening to the footsteps, and in the midst of pain and weariness obliged, despite himself (as though it were a task he must perform) to detect the child's step from the man's, the slipshod beggar from the booted exquisite, the lounging from the busy, the dull heel of the sauntering outcast from the quick tread of an expectant pleasure-seeker -- think of the hum and noise being always present to his senses, and of the stream of life that will not stop, pouring on, on, on, through all his restless dreams, as if he were condemned to lie dead but conscious, in a noisy churchyard and had no hope of rest for centuries to come.⁸⁹

That reality is oppressive for the gentleman is fairly obvious from this passage -- it wears away the individual's resistance as the constant tread of feet wears away stones. There is also a suggestion of a compulsion to detect order in the environment ("a task he must perform"),⁹⁰ that is a description of a state of mind in which there is no longer much contact with reality: as a result, energy is channeled into the night musings which the gentleman prefers.

In the preface to The Old Curiosity Shop it is apparent that fictional characters are invested with a reality of their own. A substitute reality is found in imaginative constructions. Dickens talks about little Nell as though she almost existed: he tells us that his novel has an interest in his mind "which is not a public one, and the

rightful place of which appears to be a more removed
⁹²
 ground".

I have a mournful pride in one recollection associated with 'little Nell'. While she was yet upon her wanderings, not then concluded, there appeared in a literary journal, an essay of which she was the principal theme, so earnestly, so eloquently, and tenderly appreciative of her...⁹³

Dickens also states his intention in writing the novel, an intention which accords well with the pattern of repression followed by splitting.

I will merely observe, therefore, that in writing the book, I had it always in my fancy to surround the lonely figure of the child with grotesque and wild, but not impossible companions, and to gather about her innocent face and pure intentions, associates as strange and uncongenial as the grim objects that are about her bed when her history is first foreshadowed.⁹⁴

At the crisis of the book, the same conflict between goodness and evil reemerges, with much the same resolution. There is a realization of the inherent 'evilness' of life, with a consequent withdrawal from reality. This moment is preceded in Nell's travels by the boat ride crewed by drunken men in which she is forced to entertain them. This episode, in its turn, is preceded by Nell's resolve to take her grandfather from the temptation of gambling. From this point on, the journey takes on a different tone. No longer are they just fleeing from London, wandering around the countryside: now their flight occurs in a metaphysical dimension (or psychological landscape) that moves from a

hell to a heaven. The grotesque and sentimental description differs sharply from the essentially realistic countryside that they had traversed earlier.

In a large and lofty building, supported by pillars of iron, with great black apertures in the upper walls, open to the external air; echoing to the roof with the hissing of red-hot metal plunged in water, and a hundred strange unearthly noises never heard elsewhere; in this gloomy place, moving like demons among the flame and smoke, dimly and fitfully seen, flushed and tormented by the burning fires, and wielding great weapons, a faulty blow from any one of which must have crushed some workman's skull, a number of men laboured like giants.

Others, reposing upon heaps of coals or ashes with their faces turned to the black vault above, slept or rested from their toil. Others again, opening the white-hot furnace doors, cast fuel on the flames, which came rushing and roaming forth to meet it, and licked it up like oil. Others drew forth, with clashing noise upon the ground, great sheets of glowing steel, smitting an insupportable heat, and a dull deep light like that which reddens in the eyes of savage beasts.⁹⁵

There are here two levels on which the flight from reality operates. On one, the cause is the necessity to remove her grandfather from the environment which has corrupted him. This necessity is recognized when Nell finally admits his guilt. On the other level, Nell is made aware of base sexual desires in her encounter with the drunken men and with brute physical aggression in the industrial factory.

The same isolation from an inhuman reality is experienced at this point: life is inexorable but for Nell there is no human contact, no hope of gratification.

The throng of people hurried by, in two opposite streams, with no symptom of cessation or exhaustion; intent upon their own affairs; and undisturbed in their business speculations, by the roar of carts and wagons laden with clashing wares, the slipping of horses' feet upon the wet and greasy pavement, the rattling of the rain on windows and umbrella-tops, the jostling of the more impatient passengers, and all the noise and tumult of a crowded street in the high tide of its occupation: while the two poor strangers, stunned and bewildered by the hurry they beheld but had no part in, looked mournfully on; feeling amidst the crowd a solitude which has no parallel but in the thirst of the shipwrecked mariner, who, tossed to and fro upon the billows of a mighty ocean, his red eyes blinded by looking on the water which hems him in on every side, has not one drop to cool his burning tongue.⁹⁶

The emotional state of mind described in the passage above could be termed alienation, as well as a withdrawal from reality, depending on whether a sociological or psychological approach is used to comprehend the phenomenon. It is understandable that anyone would withdraw in horror from these early industrial towns where people sacrificed their lives to feed the jaws of the machines. Dickens presents these places as unfit for human habitation in their weary sameness, the filth and the degradation.

A long suburb of red brick houses, some with patches of garden-ground, where coal-dust and factory smoke darkened the shrinking leaves, and coarse rank flowers; and where the struggling vegetation sickened and sank under the hot breath of kiln and furnace, making them by its presence seem yet more blighting and unwholesome than in the town itself, -- a long, flat, struggling suburb passed, they came by slow degrees upon a cheerless region, where not a blade of grass was seen to grow; where not a bud put forth its promise in the spring; where nothing green could live but on the surface of the stagnant pools,

which here and there lay idly sweltering by the black roadside.⁹⁷

What can be criticised, however, is Dickens' method of dealing with the objective situation. His withdrawal from reality is accompanied by the repression of erotic and aggressive impulses leading to the formation of an ideal (sublimated) imago. A negation of the first means that there can be no possible gratification: there can only be a worship of a higher, more spiritual being. Negation of the latter nullifies any energy which could be used to transform reality: there can only be a resignation to life as it is, insulated from its grosser injustices by the utopias created from longings, dissatisfaction, and resentment. It is not that Dickens offers us an alternative reality; it is the nature of that reality which is unacceptable; for it is nothing more than a dream which is incapable of being realized and incapable of satisfying, precisely because it results from instinctual renunciation.

The withdrawal from reality in The Old Curiosity Shop is occasioned by a necessity to deny sexual instincts, to deny a nightmarish social reality, and above all, to deny an unfulfilling affiliative relationship. All that Dickens felt to be lacking in his own relationship with his parents is projected onto little Nell and her grandfather. The guiltless child assumes the responsibility for the grand-

father who has been turned into a compulsive gambler by a corrupt society. One of the main reasons for little Nell's flight from the cities and towns is "to lead her sacred charge further from guilt and shame".⁹⁸ However, through her selflessness, Nell is able to transform her grandfather into a doting and selfless parent.

From that time, there sprang up in the old man's mind, a solicitude about the child which never slept or left him. There are chords in the human heart -- strange, varying strings -- which are only struck by accident; which will remain mute and senseless to appeals the most passionate and earnest, and respond at last to the slightest casual touch... From that time, the old man never for a moment forgot the weakness and devotion of the child: from the time of that slight incident, he, who had seen her toiling by his side through so much difficulty and suffering, and had scarcely thought of her otherwise than as the partner of miseries which he felt scarcely in his own person, and deplored for his own sake at least as much as hers, awoke to a sense of what he owed her, and what those miseries had made her. Never, no, never once, in one unguarded moment from that time to the end, did any care for himself, any thought of his own comfort, any selfish consideration or regard distract his thoughts from the gentle object of his love.⁹⁹

However, the grandfather's realization that he has failed to fulfill his parental responsibilities is too late. Little Nell is well on the way to dying before he recognizes the effect he has had on the child.

The grotesque forces in the novel are those which threaten to destroy the ideal relationship of parent and child. Quilp is the one who forecloses on the grandfather's

shop, forcing Nell and her grandfather to flee. The fact that Quilp has the law on his side, and that he uses it vindictively, serves as a further indictment on Dickens' part of all that is legal as opposed to moral. The other two personages, Sally and Sampson Brass, who aid Quilp in his designs, are also villified. A further threat to the idealized relationship is Quilp's sexuality. In terms of the novel, his pursuit of little Nell can not be explained by any monetary rewards Quilp may hope to gain. He lusts after the innocent young virgin. The development of sexuality in adolescence usually marks the lessening in importance of the filial relationship. It leads to the desire for independence and a choice of a suitable mate. Thus little Nell must die a prepubescent heroine, innocent of ever having desired to betray the parental figure. Not only the grandfather's avarice and the law conspire against the realization of a completely fulfilling relationship; time is also an enemy with the emergence of sexuality.

The novel is tragic in the sense that the ideal is achieved just as little Nell is dying. However, no other ending would be suitable for Dickens' purposes. It is the passage of time, ultimately, which is seen as the enemy to an indefinitely prolonged symbiotic relationship. In the stasis of Heaven, however, the ideal can finally and

eternally be achieved.

It is not...on earth that Heaven's justice ends. Think what it is, compared with this World to which her young spirit has winged its early flight, and say, if one deliberate wish expressed in solemn terms above this bed could call her back to life, which of us would utter it.¹⁰⁰

Bleak House

The split imagos that were found in The Old Curiosity Shop are manifested in the split narrative structure in Bleak House. The third-person narrator is disillusioned and cynical; one can not however accurately describe the perspective as objective. Esther's narrative reflects the tendency to sublimation, although she is also realistic to some extent. In many ways, Bleak House is one of Dickens' most interesting novels because of the level of conflict that forced Dickens to adopt the two perspectives which exist independently of each other. The one narrative structure exhibits values consistent with the masculine stereotype, the latter with the traditional feminine role. Esther is concerned with individuals, rather than social issues; she experiences guilt, rather than outrage; she is an optimist, not a cynic; she is subjective, not objective. There is a tendency among some critics to renounce Esther's part of the novel, while seeing the third-person narration as more realistic; the argument is that the cynical denunciation of social abuses carries more weight than Esther's sentimental posture of individual good works and a cheerful heart. However, as in the case of Quilp and Nell, the two perspectives exist in dynamic relation to each other. The extent to which the third-person narrator is cynical, is the extent to which Esther is sentimental. The solution advoca-

ted objectively -- that the evil in the world will spontaneously combust itself, or that the social abuses will be annihilated by natural forces -- is no more realistic than Esther's. In both perspectives, there is a withdrawal from reality and the splitting still remains. In one perspective, the hallucinated bad imago is projected onto the evils of society; in the other, the hallucinated good imago is projected onto the angelic Esther Summerson and her values. The withdrawal from an unfulfilling social reality is conditioned by the nature of the society itself. The repression is not transcended; escape is found in the positing of an ideal good reality. However the repression that enables the sublimation also leads to a projection of irrational fears. The overall perspective is somewhat less resplendent than the tragic triumph in The Old Curiosity Shop, as the title, Bleak House, indicates.

In the first few pages of Bleak House, the cryptic style and the deletion of transitive verbs suggest that the narrator is observing things that are not only unorganized into a spatial or temporal continuum, but are incapable of being organized by a rational consciousness.

Fog everywhere. Fog up the river where it flows among green aits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex marshes, fog on

inanimate objects
 inanimate
 ANIMISM
 THINGIFICATION
 people human things

the Kentish heights... Chance people on the bridges peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog, with fog all round them, as if they were up in a balloon, and hanging in the misty clouds...¹⁰¹

The principle of an organizing consciousness is restricted to the awareness that reality is a series of isolated perceptions related to each other only by virtue of the fog in which they are suspended. J. Hillis Miller notes the same points in greater detail in his discussion of Bleak House:

...the substitution of participles for verbs in the first three paragraphs of the novel has a further effect: it removes the spectator and narrator from the scene, or at least it seems to reduce him to an anonymous and detached observer, a neutral seeing eye. To say "the fog creeps" much more actively involves the spectator in a perception and judgement than to say "fog creeping". The latter expression suggests that the activity is happening, but somewhere outside the immediate area of sensation. I know that the fog is creeping, but I do not directly and intimately know it. I dissociate myself from the activity and contemplate it from a distance.¹⁰²

The image of the fog itself contributes to the sensation that the narrator is a dispassionate and passive observer; his perceptual field consists of a jumble of objects which remain dissociated.

The fog, a fog that is both a physical mist and a spiritual blindness, forms an opaque barrier between any one place and any other... What is seen forms a tableau in which everything is present at once in a pell-mell disorder, like the cows and people in a painting by Chagall. Things are visible, outlines in the fog, but nothing is related to anything else. Each new object is

simply added to the others in a succession which makes more and more obvious their disconnection... Confronted with a complexity which exceeds the senses and the mind, the spectator ends it may be, like Baudelaire, at the sight of seven identical old men appearing one by one out of the fog, 'blessé par le mystère et par l'absurdité'.¹⁰³

To this apparent disorder and stagnation, Dickens attributes a malevolent purpose, with natural forces acting as agents and human beings, the victims. It is as though natural reality were conspiring against the human race.

As much mud in the streets, as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill. Smoke lowering down from chimney-pots, making a soft black drizzle with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snow-flakes -- gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun... Foot passengers, jostling one another's umbrellas, in a general infection of ill-temper, and losing their foot-hold at street-corners, where tens of thousands of other foot passengers have been slipping and sliding since the day broke (if this day ever broke), adding new deposits to the crust of mud, sticking at those points tenaciously to the pavement, and accumulating at compound interest.¹⁰⁴

Chancery, which is used metaphorically for the whole of society, has been infected by the demonic forces of mud and fog. It has an ambiguous significance in the novel: it is a real Court, and, at the same time, it is an instrument of evil. For Dickens, this does not appear to pose any contradictions. Reality is perceived as morally (and therefore purposefully evil). Chancery is the "most pestilent of

hoary sinners"; ¹⁰⁵ the warning about the Court, "Suffer any wrong that can be done rather than come here!" is the same as the inscription above Dante's Hell.¹⁰⁶

A second way in which Dickens establishes the Court as evil is to draw comparisons between Chancery and Krook. The grotesque figure in this novel is sadistic, manipulative and hoarding, not unlike Chancery. He is called the Lord Chancellor, and his shop is known as Chancery. The explanation that is offered for Krook's alias is the essential similarity between the Rag-and-Bottle Shop and the Court. Just as the Court of Chancery "has its decaying houses and its blighted lands in every shire; which has its worn-out lunatic in every mad-house, and its dead in every churchyard; which has its ruined suitor, with his slipshod heels and threadbare dress," ¹⁰⁷ so Krook's shop buys everything and sells nothing, and lets everything fall to dust and decay, "rags and bottles, marine stores, bones, iron, kitchen-stuff, ladies and gentleman's wardrobes, human hair and lawbooks".¹⁰⁸

"You see, I have so many things here...of so many kinds...wasting away and going to rack and ruin, that that's why they have given me and my place a christening. And I have so many old parchments and papers in my stock. And I have a liking for rust and must and cobwebs. And all is fish that comes to my net. And I can't abear to part with anything I once lay hold of...or to alter anything, or to have any sweeping, nor scouring, nor cleaning, nor repairing going on about me. That's why I've got the ill-name of



Chancery. I don't mind. I go to see my noble and learned brother pretty well every day, when he sits in the Inn... There's no great odds betwixt us. We both grub on in a muddle."¹⁰⁹

The analogy is reinforced by the fact that the shop "had in several little particulars, the air of being in a legal neighborhood, and of being, as it were, a dirty hanger-on and disowned relation of the law".¹¹⁰ The Court of Chancery is situated where "the raw afternoon is rawest, and the dense fog is densest and the muddy streets are muddiest".¹¹¹ Krook's shop has a similar locale: "foggy and dark, and... blinded by the wall of Lincoln's Inn, intercepting the light within a couple of yards."¹¹² The Rag-and-Bottle Shop also specializes in the accoutrements of the legal profession.

There were a great many ink bottles. There was a little tottering bench of shabby old volumes... labelled "Law Books, all at 9d"... A little way within the shop door, lay heaps of old crackled parchment scrolls, and discoloured and dog's eared law-papers. I could have fancied that all the rusty keys, of which there must have been hundreds huddled together as old iron, and once belonged to doors of rooms or strong chests in lawyers' offices. The bands and gowns torn up. One had only to fancy...that yonder bones in a corner, piled together and picked very clean, were the bones of clients to make the picture complete.¹¹³

The two features that have been noted about the style in Bleak House when Dickens is discussing Chancery are the dissociation combined with elements of the grotesque -- the fantasy of an elephantine lizard waddling up Holborn Hill,

the mud and fog have a moral significance, and the association of Chancery with Krook and his shop. In the first paragraph of the novel, the sense of discontinuity is accompanied by the sense of a nightmare reality; inanimate objects possess human traits while the people jostle themselves about like ants drowning in mud. The comparison of the soot with snowflakes tends to remove the focus from the fact that the soot, unlike snow, is produced as the result of human actions. The comparison between the accumulation of mud and the accumulation of money suggests that both are due to uncontrollable forces to which people fall victim. By equating cultural and natural phenomena, Dickens suggests that the grotesqueness originates in the inalterable nature of things. The style in this first paragraph suggests that the narrator has dissociated himself from reality, that the center of his thoughts and actions lies somewhere outside of the fog, and that he views the state of the world as being incongruous. However, because the style also has overtones of evil, there is also unconscious projection of repressed emotions in the description of Krook, and by analogy, Chancery. The belief that something purposeful is keeping everything bottled up, and letting the world fall into rack and ruin, is a projection on Dickens' part to explain the frustration and anger that he feels. The only way for Dickens to comprehend the world is to see Chancery as a

cancer. "The one great principle of English law is to make business for itself... Viewed by this light it becomes a coherent scheme and not the monstrous maze the laity is apt to think it."¹¹⁴ The image of a controlling force may also be a defense against a repressed fear that the world is, in fact, a chaos. Thus onto the disconnected objects that he perceives, Dickens projects unifying and malevolent ordering principle. He has then created the energy that he subjectively feels must exist in order to rationalize the disorder and injustice that he sees around him. If the world is a mess, it is because something is making and keeping it that way.

The image of stagnation centers around Chancery and the image of demonic enlivenment centers around Tom-all-Alone's. A black nightmare has encamped in the slums.

Darkness rests upon Tom-all-Alone's. Dilating and dilating since the sun went down last night, it has gradually swelled until it fills every void in the place. For a time there were some dungeon lights burning, as the lamp of life burns in Tom-all-Alone's, heavily, heavily, in the nauseous air ... The blackest nightmare in the infernal stables grazes on Tom-all-Alone's, and Tom is fast asleep. ... There is not an atom of Tom's slime, not a cubic inch of any pestilential gas in which he lives, not one obscenity or degradation about him, not an ignorance, not a wickedness, not a brutality of his committing but shall work its retribution, through every order of society, up to the proudest of the proud, and to the highest of the high. Verily what with tainting and plundering and spoiling, Tom has his revenge.¹¹⁵

Dickens' fears take two forms -- fear of repression and fear of the repressed. Thus, the extremes of stagnation and uncontrolled energy are both shunned; both are projected as evil. This is not to suggest that either Chancery or Tom-all-Alone's in Eleak House is simply an hallucination on Dickens' part. Both are real phenomena which he is describing. However, when elements of the grotesque start appearing in the descriptions, Chancery and Tom-all-Alone's become suffused with subjective impressions. Neither is ever fully understood, and partly because they are quasi-mysterious, Dickens is unable to suggest social change as a viable alternative. The manner in which Dickens attacks Chancery and the slums, primarily by aligning them with the grotesque forces in the novel, also limits a rational examination of the nature of that society. The fact that Krook is grotesque means that Dickens' handling of sado-sexual impulses is to deny and disown them. On a social level, he does precisely the same thing. He advocates that one withdraw from society to escape the destruction that Chancery and Tom-all-Alone's create, and to denounce them as evil. However, in disowning Krook, Dickens advocates a measure of self-repression as a method of escaping from psychological and social complicity. If Chancery perpetuates itself by means of repression, then Dickens' alternative is to advocate the same -- self-repression and sublimation -- as a

way of escaping from Chancery. For Dickens, the problem is a vicious circle to which there is no solution.

It is against this picture of an evil reality that Esther must work out her destiny. In Bleak House, Esther is more successful than little Nell in claiming a realm of independent action for herself.

In Bleak House, then, Dickens shows the possibility of a truly moral life. In the early novels the choices were passive expectancy or selfish activity. To act was, except for semi-divine human providences, like Mr. Brownlow or old Martin Chuzzlewit, inevitably to act immorally, to impose a vigorous and coercive form on the world and on other people. It was to deceive them, and to be either self-deceived or consciously deceiving. Now in Bleak House, Dickens goes beyond this. He sees that there is something between these two extremes, that there is a way in which human beings can act morally. Between the two extremes of a passivity which allows the world to return to primeval slime, or a rigid and coercive will which imposes an inhuman fixity on the world, there is glimpsed the possibility of a voluntary action which constitutes the world as an order.¹¹⁶

But Miller also is aware of the limitations of Esther's transformation to an authentic human being; what Esther chooses is a "narrow and conventional morality".¹¹⁷

To Dickens the fear of a broad, imaginative, daring moral life seems to have presented itself as a sense that the will would find great difficulty in operating at all, or in operating other than destructively, once it was liberated into self-consciousness. Therefore the unself-conscious, instinctive goodness of Esther seemed to him the only possibility.¹¹⁸

The limits of Esther's world can perhaps best be understood by an examination of the psychological mechanisms involved

in Esther's achievement of a role for herself.

Esther's sense of guilt stems ostensibly from the fact that she is an illegitimate child. Even before she knew the cause of her particularly austere upbringing, Esther had internalized the knowledge that she was not clever or pretty or worthy. Her self-effacement, in retrospect, is partially a reproach of her godmother who would have been an angel if she had ever smiled. Dickens is aware that a forbidding and repressive environment such as Esther's leads to a withdrawal of expectation from reality and results in the formation of a substitute. Esther's secret longings and fears are confided to her doll who becomes an idealized mother and friend to her.

And so she used to sit propped up in a great arm-chair, with her beautiful complexion and rosy lips, staring at me--or not so much at me, I think, as at nothing--while I busily stitched away, and told her every one of my secrets.

My dear old doll! I was such a shy little thing that I seldom dared to open my lips and never dared to open my heart, to anybody else. It almost makes me cry to think what a relief it used to be to me, when I came home from school of a day, to run upstairs to my room, and say, "O you dear faithful Dolly, I knew you would be expecting me!" and then to sit down on the floor, leaning on the elbow of her great chair, and tell her all I had noticed since we parted.¹¹⁹

In recalling the anguish and loneliness that forced her to rely on her doll for companionship, Esther sees both

the comfort which she gained, and the pathos of the total situation.

In retrospect, Esther is aware of the consequences of her repressive childhood. She realizes that she has accepted uncritically the fact of her own guilt and that she has attempted to atone for this by being an ideal child, "industrious, contented and true-hearted ...to win some love".¹²⁰ At Greenleaf, though, shere ? Esther does gain some acceptance, she is still plagued with nagging self-doubts about her own worthiness to be loved.

At last whenever a new pupil came who was a little downcast and unhappy, she was so sure-- indeed I don't know why--to make a friend of me, that all newcomers were confided to my care. They said I was so gentle, but I am sure they were! ...indeed, indeed, I felt almost ashamed to have done so little and have won so much.¹²¹

Esther's puritanical upbringing has resulted in self-repression; this, in turn, has led to the formation of two opposed self-concepts. One is that of an ego-ideal that is derived from culturally desirable values, but along with this idealized image, there is also one of worthlessness, inadequacy and guilt. Esther fluctuates between these two extremes--at times, she presents herself in a virtuous, self-ennobling light, but this is always undercut by her self-effacing disclaimers.

When Esther is treated by her godmother as though she is set apart by her guilt--"a guilt of which [Esther] confessedly felt guilty and yet innocent"¹²²--she tries to be a better girl. Her only respite from the burden of being gorn in uncommon "sinfulness and wrath"¹²³ is by becoming uncommonly good. But when her behavior earns her respect and affection, she feels she is not deserving enough. The process of Esther's development in the novel is not one that frees her from this pattern. Esther comes to accept a level of guilt. She internalizes the repression and accomodates her ambivalent self-concept within a culturally acceptable marriage relationship.

As a child, Esther is unaware of the reason why her godmother thinks it were better if she had never been born. When Esther realizes that she is the product of an illegitimate union, and that her mother has been guilty of a sin of passion, Esther is able to understand why she has been made to feel guilty. She never questions the fact of her mother's guilt. The voyage of discovery to find Lady Dedlock does not provide a reunion of mother and child--it establishes the irreconcilable distance between the two.

She had put herself beyond all hope, and beyond all help. Whether she preserved her secret un-

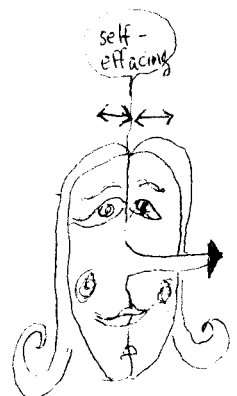
til death, or it came to be discovered and she brought dishonour and disgrace upon the name she had taken, it was her solitary struggle always; and no affection could come near her, and no human creature could render her any aid.¹²⁴

Esther escapes from the guilt of having been born out of wedlock by the change which she has undergone; "when I saw her at my feet on the bare earth in her great agony of mind, I felt, through all my tumult of emotion, a burst of gratitude to the providence of God that I was so changed as that I never could disgrace her by any trace of likeness; as that nobody could ever now look at me, and look at her, and remotely think of any near tie between us".¹²⁵ Although in this passage, Esther's ostensible concern is that she not disgrace her mother, an equally important concern is the fact that the mother's sins not be visited upon the child. Esther's handling of the situation is, at times, to accept the guilt intropunitively, and to wish that she were dead:

That I had a terror of myself, as the danger and the possible disgrace of my own mother, and of a proud family name. That I was so confused and shaken, as to be possessed by a belief that it was right and had been intended, that I should die in my birth; and that it was wrong, and not intended, that I should then be alive.¹²⁶

...I could not disentangle all that was about me; and I felt as if the blame and the shame were all in me, and the visitation had come down.¹²⁷

However, an alternate response is to dissociate herself from her mother, and handle the guilt extropunitively--



esther
Sommerson

it is her mother who is guilty and must suffer the consequences.

...I was passing quickly on, and in a few moments should have passed the lighted window, when my echoing footsteps brought it suddenly into my mind that there was a dreadful truth in the legend of the Ghost's Walk; that it was I, who was to bring calamity upon the stately house, and that my warning feet were haunting it even then.¹²⁸

Esther casts herself in two alternate roles: one is to see herself as the helpless victim of her mother's sins; the second is to see herself as an agent of revenge. Neither is satisfactory; ultimately Esther achieves a compromise. Although in one sense she is innocent of her birth, in another sense, both she and her mother are guilty. The issue is referred to a higher authority, with Esther seeking forgiveness before her "Heavenly Father".¹²⁹

The visible sign of Esther's guilt are the scars which result from the smallpox. These scars serve a very complex purpose in the novel. To some extent, they represent Esther's awareness of a guilty world in which she is complicit. The smallpox is contracted from Charley when Esther is nursing her; in turn, Charley contracted the disease from her visit to the bricklayers' wives who were sheltering the infected Jo. The smallpox is part of the instrument of retri-

bution spawned in Tom-all-Alone's. Jo, however, likely contracted the disease from his visit to the cemetery in which Nemo is buried. The scars which Esther bears can be traced both to her mother's guilty secret, and to the evilness of society. Esther is intricately involved in both, and her scars are the outward sign of her acceptance of guilt.

The hallucinations in Esther's illness are preceded by a withdrawal from her past life.

I lay ill through several weeks, and the usual tenor of my life became like an old remembrance. But this was not the effect of time, so much as of the change in all my habits, made by the helplessness and inaction of a sick room. Before I had been confined to it many days, everything else seemed to have retired into a remote distance, where there was little or no separation between the various stages of my life which had been really divided by years. In falling ill, I seemed to have crossed a dark lake, and to have left all my experiences, mingled together by the great distance, on the healthy shore.

The main theme in Esther's account of her feverish dreams is the impossibility of resolving her conflicts, and the desire to be "let off the hook".

At once a child, an elder girl, and the little woman I had been so happy as, I was not only oppressed by cares and difficulties adapted to each station, but by the great perplexity of endlessly trying to reconcile them... I laboured up colossal staircases, ever striving to reach the top, and ever turned, as I have seen a worm in a garden path, by some obstruction, and labouring again... Dare I hint at that worse time when, strung together somewhere in great black

space, there was a flaming necklace, or ring, or starry circle of some kind, of which I was one of the beads! And when my only prayer was to be taken off from the rest, and when it was such inexplicable agony and misery to be a part of that dreadful thing!¹³¹

That this change in Esther is profound and outlives the temporary delirium, is evident from the passage in which Esther's illness is foreshadowed. When she saw the lurid glare of London, she had "for a moment an undefinable impression of [herself] as being something different from what [she] then was". "I had no thought that night--none, I am quite sure--of what was soon to happen to me."¹³² A second reference to Esther being a changed person occurs in her confrontation with her mother when she is grateful to Providence for having destroyed the likeness between mother and child.

The change in Esther's character seems to consist of a conscious recognition and acceptance of personal and cultural guilt. The acknowledgement allows Esther to escape from the starry necklace of her dream. The suffering caused by the contagion of smallpox is a recognition of the inescapable complicity in a guilty social order, but it allows her to atone for the burden of guilt by her small acts of kindness and of love. When Esther parts her hair to look in the mirror after her

illness, she accepts her altered state.

I had never been a beauty, and had never thought myself one; but I had been very different from this. It was all gone now. Heaven was so good to me, that I could let it go with a few not bitter tears, and could stand there arranging my hair for the night quite thankfully.¹³³

The same motif is also used for the recognition of her mother's guilt--when Esther discovers her mother's body, the act of parting the hair reveals the reality beneath. Psychologically, the scars are a sign of Esther's acceptance of guilt, and yet her disfigurement allows her to renounce the stigma of illegitimacy.

Before her meeting with her mother, Esther felt guilt without knowing the reason why; afterwards, her scarred face gives her ample cause to feel unworthy and ugly with justification.

When my guardian left me, I turned my face away upon the couch, and prayed to be forgiven if I, surrounded by such blessings, had magnified to myself the little trial that I had to undergo. The childish prayer of that old birthday, when I had aspired to be industrious, contented and true-hearted, and to do good to some one, and win some love to myself if I could, came back into my mind with a reproachful sense of all the happiness I had since enjoyed, and all the affectionate hearts that had turned towards me... I repeated the old childish prayer in its old childish words, and found that its peace had not departed from it.¹³⁴

Esther's extreme fluctuations between trying desperately to be good, and fearing that she is not, may be

reduced, but the conflict remains. She reaffirms her need to win some love for herself through selflessness; as an adult, the attempt becomes associated with total dedication to duty.

I was perfectly restored to health and strength, and finding my housekeeping keys laid ready for me in my room, rang myself in as if I had been a new year, with a merry little peal. "Once more, duty, duty, Esther", said I: "and if you are not overjoyed to do it more than cheerfully and contentedly, through anything and everything, you ought to be. That's all I have to say to you, my dear!"¹³⁵

That Esther still possesses ego-centred desires is evident in the relationship between Esther and Ada. Ada functions almost as Esther's alter-ego--she is still beautiful and guiltless, a state Esther longs for, despite her statements to the contrary.

I look along the road before me, where the distance already shortens and the journey's end is growing visible; and, true and good above the dead sea of the Chancery suit, and all the ashey fruit it cast ashore, I think I see my darling.¹³⁶

Thinking about what she could have been, Esther projects her ideal on to Ada, whom she calls her own Pridel¹³⁷ and darling. The fantasy of a relationship between Esther and Allan Woodcourt is expressed through Ada and Richard.

After I had Allan's flowers in my hand, I saw my beautiful darling, through the open door, lying asleep, and I stole in to kiss her.

It was weak in me, I know, and I could have no reason for crying; but I dropped a tear upon

her dear face, and another, and another. Weaker than that, I took the withered flowers out, and put them for a moment to her lips. I thought about her love for Richard; though indeed, the flowers had nothing to do with that.¹³⁸

When Ada becomes less frank and open, Esther assumes that Ada is grieved on her account. Esther attributes her own disappointment in no longer being a fit match for Allan Woodcourt, to Ada.

How I persuaded myself that this was likely, I don't know. I had no idea that there was any selfish reference in my doing so. I was not grieved for myself: I was quite contented and happy. Still, that Ada might be thinking-- for me, though I had abandoned all such thoughts-- of what once was, but was now all changed, seemed so easy to believe, that I believed it.¹³⁹

The role of tragic heroine, wronged by fate but purified by suffering is reserved for Ada.

I think my darling girl is more beautiful than ever. The sorrow that has been in her face-- for it is not there now--seems to have purified even its innocent expression, and to have given it a diviner quality. Sometimes, when I raise my eyes and see her, in the black dress that she still wears, teaching my Richard, I feel--it is difficult to express--as if it were so good to know that she remembers her dear Esther in her prayers.¹⁴⁰

Esther has not entirely renounced this role for herself though she claims to have. This contradiction in her character can be interpreted as a modest innocence, or more harshly, as a lack of honesty on her part.

A less glorious view of Esther's role is suggested

in Caddy who models herself after Esther.

Over and above this, Caddy was very anxious "to learn housekeeping" as she said. Now, Mercy upon us! the idea of her learning housekeeping of a person of my vast experience was such a joke, that I laughed, and coloured up, and fell into a comical confusion when she proposed it. However, I said, "Caddy, I am sure you are very welcome to learn anything that you can learn of me, my dear"; and I showed her all my books and methods, and all my fidgety ways. You would have supposed that I was showing her some wonderful inventions by her study of them; and if you had seen her, whenever I jingled my housekeeping keys, get up and attend me, certainly you might have thought that there never was a greater imposter than I, with a blinder follower than Caddy Jellyby.¹⁴¹

One is tempted to take Esther's assessment of the situation literally, especially in view of the fact that Caddy is very ill-rewarded for her pains. There is even a note of condescension in Esther's praise of Caddy. "So self-denying, so uncomplaining, so anxious to get well on their account, so afraid of giving trouble, and so thoughtful of the unassisted labours of her husband and the comforts of old Mr. Turveydrop; I had never known the best of her until now".¹⁴² What is most disturbing, however, is the depiction of the child which Caddy bears.

Caddy was now the mother, and I the godmother, of such a poor little baby--such a tiny old-faced mite, with a countenance that seemed to be scarcely anything but cap-border, and a little lean, long-fingered hand, always clenched under its chin. It would lie in this attitude all day, with its bright specks of eyes open, wondering (as I used to imagine) how it came to be so small and weak. Whenever it was moved it cried; but at all

other times it was so patient, that the sole desire of its life appeared to be to lie quiet, and think. It had curious little dark veins in its face, and curious little dark marks under its eyes, like faint remembrances of poor Caddy's inky days; and altogether, to those who were not used to it, it was quite a piteous little sight.¹⁴³

The child turns out to be deaf and dumb, a grotesque touch to the resolution of the novel. It is difficult to account for this macabre child. Perhaps it is introduced as a reminder that injustice is meted out indiscriminately, and that suffering borne selflessly is ennobling. Whatever, Caddy is afforded the opportunity to prove her goodness in Esther's manner, by accommodating herself uncomplainingly to an unmerited misfortune. "I believe there never was a better mother than Caddy, who learns, in her scanty intervals of leisure, innumerable deaf and dumb arts, to soften the affliction of her child."¹⁴⁴ These two characters, Caddy and Ada, provide a foil to Esther's character. Ada is a romanticized image of the woman who acquires stature and dignity and even beauty through suffering. Caddy, who is as innocent and selfless, earns only a deaf and dumb child. Esther combines elements of each. She does not have the tragic dimensions of Ada because her guilt is one that is consciously accepted. However, unlike Caddy whose life is rather pathetic, she earns true happi-

ness through her self-willed abnegation. Unfortunately, instead of being a happy compromise between self-assertion and submissiveness, Esther's narrative often sounds falsely modest or hypocritical. The realm of action that Esther finds for herself rests on a contradiction. The humility which Esther acquires by acknowledging her guilt leads to a supposedly fulfilling life as Woodcourt's wife. After her illness, Esther says about her relationship with Woodcourt:

...I could go, please God, my lowly way along the path of duty, and he could go his nobler way upon its broader road; and though we were apart upon the journey, I might aspire to meet him, unselfishly, innocently, better far than he had thought me when I found some favour in his eyes, at the journey's end.¹⁴⁵

Although Esther may make an ideal wife, there is room to doubt whether she is very successful as a person. Any self-respect she may have is defined in terms of Allan Woodcourt. When, as a suitor, Allan expressed his regards, Esther "felt a dignity rise up within her that was derived from him".¹⁴⁶ The egoism which Esther denies in herself can only be comfortably expressed for the cause which she serves.

The people even praise Me as the doctor's wife. The people even like Me as I go about, and make so much of me that I am quite abashed. I owe it all to him, my love, my pride! They like me for his sake, as I do everything I do in life for his sake.¹⁴⁷

However this picture of the ideal wife and mother is also accompanied by Esther's persistent and nagging self-doubts about her own attractiveness and worth.

I did not know that; I am not certain that I know it now. But I know that my dearest little pets are very pretty, and that my darling is very handsome, and that my guardian has the brightest and most benevolent face that ever was seen; and that they can very well do without much beauty in me-- even supposing--148

The guilt which Esther accepts is a result of the repression implicit in the culture. Esther's 'happy ever after' life is a sentimentalized view of the feminine role; it is based on the mistaken assumption that fulfillment can be achieved by living through other people. Esther forsakes independence for a life sheltered and protected by equally idealized male figures. She forsakes an active involvement with life, for a passive expectation that she will be endowed with love, security and prestige by her husband. She forsakes autonomous choice for a naive belief in Divine Providence. Wherever Esther turns, she is surrounded by the power of goodness. When Jarndyce rescues her from the care of Mrs. Barbary, the mysterious turn in events is attributed to a benevolent Deity.

It was so tender in them to care so much for me; it was so gracious in that Father who had not forgotten me, to have made my orphan way so smooth and easy, and to have inclined so many youthful natures toward me; that I could hardly bear it.149

The demonic power which is seen to possess the world in the third person narrative has its counterpart in the charity and kindness which continually surround Esther. In one, the conspiracy is evil and insidious; in the other, it is a conspiracy to make Esther happy and everybody seemed to be in it.¹⁵⁰

The setting for this happy resolution is one which necessarily must be removed from the guilty social world. The escape is found in the second Bleak House located in the midst of a pastoral paradise. If it is described as a doll's house, it is because the defense against the corrosive world is one of voluntary naivete. Esther is surely not ignorant of the ways of the world entirely, but the way to happiness is to choose to remain passive, subjective, sentimentally optimistic, and emotional.

We went on by a pretty orchard, where the cherries were nestling among the green leaves, and the shadows of the apple-trees were sporting on the grass, to the house itself,--a cottage, quite a rustic cottage of doll's rooms; but such a lovely place, so tranquil and so beautiful, with such a rich and smiling country spread around it.¹⁵¹

When the will is disengaged from reality as in the second Bleak House, then fantasy is the result. The peace and tranquillity of the place is a sign, not of its life, but of its inertia.

Great Expectations

In Great Expectations the process of withdrawal from reality and the consequent splitting occurs at a level that is much more accessible to insight and control. The young Pip is the one with illusions--with great expectations--which are viewed as a direct result of his repressive upbringing and his sense of guilt. Because the story is told through the mature point of view by the older and disillusioned Pip, Dickens is able to throw considerable light on the development of the neurosis in Pip's early years. At the end of the novel the fulfillment which Pip finds is viewed as much less satisfactory than either Nell's or Esther's; yet Pip is able to see himself far more realistically than any of the other heroes or heroines examined thus far. Given the limitations of nineteenth century society, the most liberating statement of man's fate is the recognition of his loss.

The most overt source of Pip's disillusionment is attributed to his foster-parents, Mrs. Joe, in particular. Having been brought up "by hand", with all that phrase entails in the context of the novel, Pip suffers from a feeling of injustice.

AS to me, I think my sister must have had some general idea that I was a young offender whom an accoucheur policeman had taken up (on my birthday) and delivered over to her to be dealt with according to the outraged majesty of the law. I was always treated as if I had insisted on being born in opposition to the dictates of reason, religion, and morality, and against the dissuading arguments of my best friends. Even when I was taken to have a new suit of clothes, the tailor had orders to make them like a kind of reformatory, and on no account to let me have the free use of my limbs.¹⁵²

Tickler, euphemistically named, is also a vivid and recurring reproach against Pip's treatment at the hands of Mrs. Joe. When Pip received two one-pound notes, he had "an impression that they were to be contributed eventually towards the liquidation of the national debt, but [he knew he] had no hope of any personal participation in the treasure",¹⁵³ The apron that Mrs. Joe wore, stuck full of pins and needles, was a sign of the invisible barrier that prevented both Joe and Pip from the close warm relationship that Pip, especially craved. In his later years Pip reflects on the effect Mrs. Joe had on his character:

Within myself, I had sustained, from my babyhood, a perpetual conflict with injustice. I had known from the time when I could speak, that my sister, in her capricious and violent coercion, was unjust to me. I had cherished a profound conviction that her bringing me up by hand gave her no right to bring me up by jerks. Through all my punishments, disgraces, fasts and vigils, and other penitential performances, I had nursed this assurance, and to my communing so much with it, in a solitary and unprotected way, I in great part refer the fact that I was morally timid and very sensitive.¹⁵⁴

The anger that builds up as a result of this injustice

is not attributed to Pip. Throughout the novel, Pip is presented as helpless, victimized, weak and timid; this type of behavior would, in fact, be typical of a personality that suffers in silence, repressing most of the overt hostility and rebelliousness. However the anger is present in the novel--it is attributed to the undesirable Orlick. The surly fellow is introduced rather mysteriously in the middle of the fifteenth chapter: he is Joe's apprentice, "a broad-shouldered loose-limbed swarthy fellow of great strength, never in a hurry, and always slouching... like Cain or the Wandering Jew... He lodged at a sluice-keeper's out on the marshes, and on working days would come slouching from his hermitage."¹⁵⁵ The fact that Orlick is said to be in league with the Devil, combined with his unnaturally ugly physiology, disposition and habits, indicates that Orlick is another grotesque, a projection of repressed drives.

An unsatisfactory affiliative relationship is the original cause of Pip's withdrawal from reality to fantasy. Much of the conflict surrounding the disturbance is denied, however. Pip is able (partially in retrospect) to recognize the grievances that he had against his foster-parents, but he is unable to admit to con-

sciousness the full extent of his hostility. The distortion in the depiction of Orlick is evidence of the fear involved in recognizing the extent of the rage. It is assumed that, unless his anger is repressed, Pip would become a surly sulky brute like Orlick. But it is the repression of the anger rather than the anger itself which makes Orlick grotesque.

The repression and the withdrawal from reality lead to the formation of idealized good and bad fantasies. Pip assumes, on the one hand, that he is morally blameless, and that he is wantonly persecuted by Mrs. Joe. On the other hand, he is tormented by feelings of overwhelming guilt which seem totally unwarranted by the circumstances. The experience with Magwitch on the marshes, in which Pip is led to steal food and a file, is the occasion rather than the cause for such feelings. In the novel, the sense of guilt is rather unsatisfactorily attributed to the fact that Pip is about to steal from Mrs. Joe. Even though the file is stolen from Joe, his foster-father is excused because Pip "never thought of any of the housekeeping property as his".¹⁵⁶ Only if there were some sympathy with the crime, some pre-existing impulses whose expression was triggered by the coincidental meeting with Magwitch on the marshes,

' need Pip feel the extent of guilt that he does. "For the fugitive out on the marshes with the ironed leg, the mysterious young man, the file, the food, and the dreadful pledge I was under to commit a larceny on the sheltering premises rose before me in the avenging coals."¹⁵⁷ Evidence has already been cited which indicates the smouldering resentment which Pip feels for his surrogate mother. It is not unreasonable to assume that Pip's guilt arises from the fact that he does not feel grateful for having been brought up by hand, for which he is continually admonished by Pumblechook. Pip would have been willing to steal from his sister and a lot more besides, as a way of evening up the score. The rebellion which Magwitch expresses in escaping from the law, is paralleled by Pip's desire to escape from the tyranny of Mrs. Joe. While the theft may not technically be an act of aggression, psychologically it most certainly is. Joe is excluded from the act of thievery because Pip feels no aggression towards him. The sympathy which Pip has for the cause of rebellion is the source of his guilt. He and the convict are, in that respect alike.

I felt fearfully sensible of the great convenience that the hulks were handy for me. I was clearly on my way there. I had begun by asking questions, and I was going to rob Mrs. Joe... If I slept at all that night, it was only to

imagine myself drifting down the river on a strong spring-tide to the hulks, a ghostly pirate calling out to me through a speaking-trumpet, As I passed the gibbet-station, that I had better come ashore and be hanged there at once and not put it off.158

Although the association between Magwitch's crime and Pip's guilt is very strong in the novel, it is not made explicit. This is because in the final analysis, Pip cannot recognize that the same desire motivates both--self-assertion in defiance of social law, both written and unwritten.

That Pip participates psychologically in the theft of the food and the file, is evident indirectly by the way in which that episode is related. When Pip stole the brandy for the convict, he replaced what he took with what he thought was water. However, by a telling coincidence, it turned out to be tar-water, a remedy frequently inflicted on Pip himself. The enjoyment which the retelling of this occasion arouses, is not unmixed with sadistic overtones.

Instantly afterwards, the company were seized with unspeakable consternation, owing to his springing to his feet, turning round several times in an appalling spasmodic whooping-cough dance, and rushing out at the door; he then became visible through the window, violently plunging and expectorating, making the most hideous faces, and apparently out of his mind.159

Pip immediately fears that he has murdered him somehow.

with the unconscious reaction of one who has harbored murderous desires. Having felt enraged at Pumblechook's interminable lectures, Pip is particularly prone to the fear that someday he might unwittingly act upon his fantasies. Dickens is aware of the narrow gap separating pre-conscious and conscious activities.

Since that time, which is far enough away now, I have often thought that few people know what secrecy there is in the young, under terror. No matter how unreasonable the terror, so that it be terror. I was in mortal terror of the young man who wanted my heart and liver; I was in mortal terror of my interlocutor with the iron leg; I was in mortal terror of myself, from whom an awful promise had been extracted; ...I am afraid to think of what I might have done on requirement, in the secrecy of my terror. 160

The episode of brandy and tar-water ends when Pip, unable to stand his guilt anymore, runs into the arms of the party of soldiers, one of whom is holding out a pair of handcuffs. Although they are after the convict, it is Pip who they find, a greater culprit perhaps than Magwitch, because of his rebellion against the unwritten law of familial obedience and gratitude.

The manner in which Pip's guilt manifests itself is also a good indication of its source. His method of acquiring food for Magwitch is to secret his daily allotment of bread and butter down the leg of his trousers. "Conscience is a dreadful thing when it accuses man or

boy; but when, in the case of a boy, that secret burden co-operates with another secret burden down the leg of his trousers, it is (as I can testify) a great punishment."¹⁶¹ The frequency with which the leg of Pip's trousers or Pip's clinging to table legs, is mentioned in reference to the theft, gives it a significance beyond the mere action itself.

...I had to stir the pudding for next day, with a copper-stick, from seven to eight by the Dutch clock. I tried it with the load upon my leg (and that made me think afresh of the man with the load on his leg), and found the tendency of exercise to bring the bread-and-butter out at my ankle quite unmanageable.¹⁶²

The load on Pip's leg is equated with the iron and chain on the convict's. The expression of hostility has led for both to an imprisonment by guilt. In all the ways in which Pip tries to assert himself, he is met with disapproval. Mrs. Joe is not over particular about having scholars on the premises, and even asking questions is, in Mrs. Joe's mind, the initial step in the formation of a criminal character: "People are put in the hulks because they murder, and because they rob, and forge, and do all sorts of bad; and they always begin by asking questions".¹⁶³ Pip's sympathy with the convict's rebellion against being beaten down and caged up, as Pip is, is a further step in Pip's self-assertion. When the moment of discovery of the

theft approaches, Pip clings desperately "to the leg of the table, under the cloth with both hands".¹⁶⁴ The table-leg is mentioned three times in the next couple of pages, until Pip surrenders to his sense of guilt and "release[s] the leg of the table".¹⁶⁵ Clutching at his own genital regions in order to withstand the onslaught of guilt which he experiences, is in keeping with the fact that Pip's crime is one of self-assertion. In his subsequent deception of his two major tormentors, Pumblechook and Mrs. Joe, he relates his fabrications about Satis House "with an obtrusive show of artlessness on his countenance" and "plait[s] the right leg of [his] trousers with [his] right hand".¹⁶⁶

An idealized self-image is also a result of the repression. A belief in his exemplary character allows Pip to fall prey to Miss Havisham's designs. With little substance for his assumptions, he is convinced that he is destined to become a gentleman, and that Estella is destined to become his wife. After his first visit to Miss Havisham's, he entertains and impresses his family with stories of black velvet coaches, and dogs eating veal outlets from a silver basket, the whole scene romantically embellished with flags, swords, and pistols. To some extent, Pip is aware that he is com-

pensating for his own feelings of unworthiness and that the overt lies he tells are connected in some way with Pumblechook and Mrs. Joe.

And then I told Joe that I felt very miserable and that I hadn't been able to explain myself to Mrs. Joe and Pumblechook, who were so rude to me, and that there had been a beautiful young lady at Miss Havisham's who was dreadfully proud, and that she had said I was common, and that I knew I was common and that I wished I was not common, and that the lies had come of it somehow, though I didn't know how.¹⁶⁷

Despite his confession to Joe, Pip continues to dream, in what he calls his unthankful state, of being uncommon. Satis House still holds out its promise of satisfaction for Pip.

The point of view in Great Expectations is that of the more mature Pip recounting his earlier formative experiences. There are present two measures of experience--that of the childhood vision, with commentary provided by the voice of experience. The title of the novel, "great expectations", is ambiguous. It can be taken to mean that the process of becoming 'disillusioned' is necessary to achieve a realistic and mature point of view. However, as an adult, Pip becomes increasingly aware of failures and frustrations, so that the title also connotes a jaded, ironic and somewhat cynical perspective. This ambiguity is inherent in the

word 'disillusionment' as it is commonly used.

The close and complex inter-relationship existing between idealization on the one hand, and withdrawal of cathexis from external reality on the other is illustrated by the fact that in every day speech the word "disillusion" is used to describe two psychological processes that at first sight seem to be psychopathologically quite distinct. It is used to denote not only loss of illusions, i.e., the discovery that things are not as one had incorrectly imagined and hoped them to be, but also loss of the ability to find value and interest in things as they actually are. Indeed, the latter is probably the commoner use of the word. In this paper I have so far used it in the first sense to describe the disenchantment that is the emotional hazard of those whose stability is based on the over-use of idealization. I could, however, equally well have used it to describe the initial disturbance in object-relationships that starts the tendency to idealization going.¹⁶⁸

Pip is 'disillusioned' in both senses of the word. In recalling his youthful dreams of becoming a gentleman, he is forced to recognize that he has been victimized by his misconceptions. At the same time, there is a withdrawal from reality, accompanied by the feeling that life has been a disappointment. In the one ending of the novel, Pip can only find a vicarious value in the life of Biddy and Joe and the younger Pip. In the second ending, Pip recovers Estella, but a greatly changed Estella. In her once proud eyes, there is a "saddened, softened light".¹⁶⁸ In other words, Estella has also experienced the pain of disillusionment and both she and Pip are sadder but wiser. Their newly

regained love for each other, however, is more a consolation in a hostile world, than a transformation. Even assuming Estella's conversion to be as realistic as Pip's, Dickens is forced to admit the failure of his expectations. Either ending is a failure if it is viewed as an attempt at a reaffirmation of life in which new and better cathexes are formed with reality, since both endings offer different substitute illusions: that Pip can live his life again through the younger Pip; or that he and Estella together can realize the substance of Pip's iniatiuations. What Estella and Pip have is a dream fostered by their unhappinesses, a relationship based on the knowledge that personal fulfillment is not destined for men or women. As Northrop Frye points out in his introduction to the novel, Pip, as an orphan "is both the typical Dickensian hero and a characteristic figure of modern literature, the alienated man, a product of his civilization but somehow detached from it, lonely, wishing to belong, but unable to feel at one with it".¹⁷⁰ Dickens' earlier attempts to resolve the conflicts which troubled him offer less than the resolution in Great Expectations, although paradoxically, the sense of loss is strongest in that novel. Dickens' customary happy ending is tempered by an awareness of the limitations of what is possible.

Magwitch and Miss Havisham are both directly involved in Pip's expectations. One becomes for the young Pip, the exaggerated sense of his own evilness, and the other, his exaggerated notion of his hidden potentials.

I had sadly broken sleep when I got to bed, through thinking of the strange man taking aim at me with his invisible gun, and of the guiltily coarse and common thing it was to be on secret terms of conspiracy with convicts-- a feature in my low career that I had previously forgotten. I was haunted by the file too... I coaxed myself to sleep by thinking of Miss Havisham's next Wednesday; and in my sleep I saw the file coming at me out of the door, without seeing who held it, and I screamed myself awake.¹⁷¹

As Pip becomes better acquainted with the facts regarding his situation, his view of Magwitch softens, and his perception of Miss Havisham becomes macabre. Both perspectives, the illusioned and the disillusioned, are present in the depiction of his early experiences.

The first description of Magwitch on the marshes bears some resemblance to little Nell's and Esther's experience with Quilp and Krook. The convict is possessed with the same demonic energy of the two earlier grotesques. His presence is elemental; he arises suddenly from among the graves and threatens to tear Pip's heart and liver out. When he picks his way through

the churchyard, it is as if "he were eluding the hands of the dead people stretching up cautiously out of their graves to get a twist upon his ankle and pull him in".¹⁷² Like Quilp and Krook, Magwitch is also attributed with an almost sadistic sexual appetite: in surveying Pip, he licks his lips and notes what fat cheeks Pip has.¹⁷³ Dickens manages to convey the voracious monstrosity of Magwitch by associating Magwitch and Compeyson, but he allows for the later 'humanization' of Magwitch by attributing most of the vileness to Compeyson.

That young man hid with me, in comparison with which young man I am an angel... That young man has a secret way peccoliar to himself of getting at a boy, and at his heart, and at his liver... A boy may lock his door, may be warm in bed, may tuck himself up, may draw the clothes over his head, may think himself comfortable and safe, but that young man will softly creep his way to him and tear him open.¹⁷⁴

However, the young boy Pip does not make any fine distinctions between the one convict and the other initially. To the young boy, Magwitch appears to be an animal.

I had often watched a large dog of ours eating his food, and I now noticed a decided similarity between the dog's way of eating and the man's. The man took strong sharp sudden bites, just like the dog. He swallowed, or rather snapped up every mouthful, too soon and too fast; he looked sideways here and there while he ate; in all of which particulars he was very like the dog.¹⁷⁵

[The image of Magwitch being a dog is gradually replaced by the awareness that he is treated like a dog.] Pip is

not without empathy for the convicts, for he realizes that they have been stripped of their humanity.

The great numbers on their backs, as if they were street doors; their coarse mangy ungainly outer surface, as if they were lower animals; their ironed legs, apologetically garlanded with pocket-handkerchiefs; and the way in which all present looked at them and kept them from them; made them... a most disagreeable and degraded spectacle.176

In his imagination, Pip recalls "the boat with its convict crew waiting for them at the slime-washed stairs; again heard the gruff 'Give way, you!' like an order to dogs; again saw the wicked Noah's Ark lying out on the black water".177 To the extent that Pip is able to see Magwitch as a victim rather than a rebel, he is able to feel compassion for his convict. [The revelation that Magwitch has been ruthlessly exploited by his upper-class partner in crime, Compeyson, justifies Pip in his sympathy and pity for Magwitch.]

As I watched them while they all stood clustering about the forge, enjoying themselves so much. I thought what terrible good sauce for a dinner my fugitive friend on the marshes was. They had not enjoyed themselves a quarter so much before the entertainment was brightened with the excitement he furnished. And now, when they were all in lively anticipation of "the two villains" being taken, and when the bellows seemed to roar for the fugitives, the fire to flare for them... [the pale afternoon outside almost seemed in my pitying young fancy to have turned pale on their account, poor wretches.178

For the young Pip, Satis House and Miss Havisham were predominantly invested with belief and trust. The fact that it is a romantic dream, a sublimated expression of fulfillment, is evident from the kind of imagery which is associated with it. Contrasted to the stagnant marshy countryside of the Forge, Satis House is associated with clear flowing water and sunlight.

It was pleasant and quiet out there, with the sails on the river passing beyond the earthwork, and sometimes, when the tide was low, looking as if they belonged to sunken ships that were still sailing on at the bottom of the water. Whenever I watched the vessels standing out to sea with their white sails spread, I somehow thought of Miss Havisham and Estella; and whenever the light struck aslant, afar off, upon a cloud or sail or green hill-side or water-line, it was just the same. Miss Havisham and Estella and the strange house and the strange life appeared to have something to do with everything that was picturesque.¹⁷⁹

However, the disgraces that Pip endured uncomplainingly because of his belief that Miss Havisham was his benefactress, that she would endow him with wealth and love, that he was destined to be a gentleman, and that Estella was destined to be his wife, are recalled by the elder Pip with bitter resentment.

To stand in the dark in a mysterious passage of an unknown house, bawling Estella to a scornful young lady neither visible nor responsive, and feeling it a dreadful liberty so to roar out her name, was almost as bad as playing to order.¹⁸⁰

He realizes that he was treated in the same way that

Magwitch was treated by his captors: "[she] gave me the bread and meat without looking at me, as insolently as if I were a dog in disgrace. I was so humiliated, hurt, spurned, offended, angry, sorry--I cannot hit upon the right name for the smart--God knows what its name was--that tears started to my eyes... so sharp was the smart without a name, that needed counteraction".¹⁸¹ Instead of being indulged, he is commanded to play 'Beggars my neighbour'. Although Satis House is not what he expected, the young Pip maintains his faith in Miss Havisham's establishment by depreciating himself. If things are not quite as they should be, it is because he calls jacks, knives, because his boots are too thick, and his hands too coarse. His humiliation leads him to view everything connected with his former life with shame--himself, his life at the Forge and Joe.

It is the maturer consciousness of the later Pip which provides a commentary on his early experiences, so that Satis House is presented as a monstrosity of human values, somewhat pathetic, yet still, a corruption. The name of the house becomes a bitterly ironic reminder that there is not enough of anything there. In retrospect, Satis House is linked to the marshes through the use of similar imagery to describe both.

A fire had been lately kindled in the damp old-fashioned grate, and it was more disposed to go out than to burn up, and the reluctant smoke which hung in the room seemed colder than the clearer air--like our own marsh mist. Certain wintry branches of candles on the high chimney-piece faintly lighted the chamber, or it would be more expressive to say, faintly troubled its darkness... An épergne or centre-piece of some kind was in the middle of this cloth; it was so heavily overhung with cobwebs that its form was quite indistinguishable and as I looked along the yellow expanse out of which I remember its seeming to grow like a black fungus, I saw speckled-legged spiders with blotchy bodies running home to it...182

That this association between the marsh mists and the gloom that hangs over Satis House is deliberate can be seen by comparing the above passage with a description of the marsh mist.

Now I saw the damp lying on the bare hedges and spare grass, like a coarser sort of spiders' webs, hanging itself from twig to twig and blade to blade.183

In both passages, the imagery of a clammy cobweb of fog is present. Both are also 'spidery'. Miss Havisham's spiders which make her wedding-cake home have more overt connotations of sexual repression than the spiders' webs in the passage quoted later. However the mist is also a web of guilt which threatens to capture Pip.

On every rail and gate, wet lay clammy, and the marsh-mist was so thick that the wooden finger on the post directing people to our village... was invisible to me until I was quite close under it. Then, as I looked up at it, while it dripped, it seemed to my oppressed conscience like a phantom devoting me to the hulks.184

Just as the marshes are in Pip's case an indication of his disillusionment, so the gloomy mist in Miss Havisham's house is a sign that she too has been bitterly disappointed. Her withdrawal is even more extreme than Pip's. Everything in the house remains as it was on the day that Miss Havisham was jilted by her lover. The clocks are stopped at twenty to none; she has one shoe on and one shoe off; she still wears her wedding dress, although it is yellowed with age and tattered with wear; the bridal chamber remains unchanged, although it is rotten, decayed and overrun with spiders. Since the description of Satis House falls under the category of the grotesque, the description also indicates that the older Pip has repudiated his belief in Miss Havisham's. That he is not exactly sure of the exact nature of the web in which he was caught as a child, is evident from the uncanniness of the description.

Accompanying this changed perspective of Magwitch and Miss Havisham is an examination of Pip's struggle with parental injustice which is viewed as a contributing, if not the causative factor, of his initial expectations. But it is questionable whether Pip gives full vent to the anger and frustration that he experienced at the hands of Pumblechook and Mrs. Joe. The

blame for the disruption in the parent-child relationship is not attributed totally to his foster-parents.

Pip accounts for his feelings of alienation from a warm and loving family circle, by the fact that he is an orphan.

My first and most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found out for certain that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard; and that Philip Pirrip, late of this parish, also Georgiana wife of the above, were dead and buried; and that Alexander, Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant children of the aforesaid, were also dead and buried; and that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes, and that the low leaden line beyond was the river...¹⁸⁵

The association between the graves, the bleak landscape, and Pip's fear is made by temporal and spatial contiguity. Throughout the novel, the marshes are a recurrent theme whenever reality is seen as bleak and dismal. They are the site of terrifying confrontations, for example between Magwitch and Pip, between Orlick and Pip, and between Magwitch and Compeyson. The initial source of Pip's bleak perspective is, however, his disillusionment with family life. Later, when he has begun to feel ashamed of home, he "used to stand about the churchyard on Sunday evenings, when night was falling, compar-

ing [his] own perspective with the windy marsh view, and making out some likeness between them by thinking how flat and low both were, and how on both there came an unknown way and a dark mist and then the sea".¹⁸⁶

The theme of exile from home reappears several times in the novel. When Pip has been bestowed with expectations, he also feels guilty for forsaking Joe: "I put my light out, and crept into bed; and it was an uneasy bed now, and I never slept the old sound sleep in it anymore".¹⁸⁷

It is a most miserable thing to feel ashamed of home. There may be black ingratitude in the thing, and the punishment may be retributive and well deserved but that it is a miserable thing, I can testify.¹⁸⁸

Upon receiving the cryptic note from Wemmick telling him not to go home, all Pip's old fears and guilts are re-activated.

...the eyes on the wall acquired a new expression and in every one of those staring rounds I saw written, DON'T GO HOME.

Whatever night-fancies and night-noises crowded on me, they never warded off this DON'T GO HOME. ...When at last I dozed, in sheer exhaustion of mind and body, it became a vast shadowy verb which I had to conjugate, imperative mood, present tense; Do not thou go home, let him not go home, let us not go home, do not ye or you go home, let not them go home. Then, potentially: I may not and I cannot go home; and I might not, could not, would not, and should not go home; until I felt that I was going distracted, and rolled over on the pillow, and looked at the staring rounds upon the wall again.¹⁸⁹

Pip's ambivalent feelings about his foster-parents are reflected in his attitude toward home. He is delighted to escape from Mrs. Joe's tyranny, but he is terrified of betraying Joe's trust in him.

Home had never been a very pleasant place to me, because of my sister's temper. But Joe had sanctified it, and I believed in it. I had believed in the best parlour as a most elegant salon; I had believed in the front door as a mysterious portal of the Temple of State, whose solemn opening was attended with a sacrifice of roast fowls; I had believed in the kitchen as a chaste though not magnificent apartment; I had believed in the forge as the glowing road to manhood and independence.

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Even though Pip feels miserable and dejected at home, his one consolation is that he never breathed a murmur of his discontent to Joe. The conflict between Pip's ties with Joe and his resentment against Mrs. Joe pervades Pip's own assessment of the cause of his alienation. Sometimes it is seen as having been thrust upon him--he is an orphan, and that is the reason he associates the view of the dismal marshes with his own prospects. When Pip receives the note from Wemmick, he is afraid that he is forbidden from going home. However, the fault is also Pip's. It is he who has betrayed Joe by his aspirations. He is an ungrateful, thankless child who has even dismissed his own father for being common. When his expectations turn out to be insubstantial, he feels even more strongly that his conduct

has been inexcusable, his desires unforgiveable.

Miss Havisham's intentions toward me, all a mere dream; Estella not designed for me; I only suffered in Satis House as a convenience, a sting for the greedy relations, a model with a mechanical heart to practise on when no other practice was at hand; those were the first smarts I had. But--sharpest and deepest pain of all--it was for the convict, guilty of I knew not what crimes and liable to be taken out of those rooms where I sat thinking, and hanged at the Old Bailey door, that I had deserted Joe.¹⁹¹

All Pip's regrets about having forsaken home center around Joe.

I would not have gone back to Joe now, I would not have gone back to Biddy now for any consideration--simply, I suppose, because my sense of my own worthless conduct to them was greater than every consideration. No wisdom on earth could have given me the comfort that I should have derived from their simplicity and fidelity; but I could never, never, never, undo what I had done.¹⁹²

When such contradictory emotions stem from the same source, from the family, it is likely that the level of conflict will be such that it cannot be tolerated, and some aspects will be repressed. The anger which Pip feels toward his sister is so extreme that it is attributed to Orlick. The association between Orlick and Pip is noted, and, at the same time, vigorously denied by Dickens. Though the murder of Pip's sister occurs on the afternoon when Pip has asked for a half-holiday to visit Estella; though the crime is com-

mitted with Magwitch's sawed-off leg-iron, for which Pip is responsible; though the crime occurs as the story of George Barnwell who murdered a near relation is told to Pip; though the guns from the hulks blaze away at the discovery of the crime, Pip professes his innocence. However, he is not innocent of the inclination.

With mt head full of George Barnwell, I was at first disposed to believe that I must have had some hand in the attack upon my sister, or at all events that as her near relation, popularly known to be under obligations to her, I was a more legitimate object of suspicion than anyone else.¹⁹³

It is difficult to determine to what extent Dickens recognized the connection between Orlick and Pip. The association between Orlick and Pip's activities is very strong, but Orlick is the most grotesque figure in the novel. Since the grotesque arises from the repression (and the attempt to disown) feelings of aggression, it was likely very important for Dickens to preserve the autonomy between Pip and Orlick. Not only is Orlick responsible for the murder of Pip's sister, he is also responsible for robbing Pumblechook's cash-box, drinking his wine, slapping his face, pulling his nose, and stuffing his mouth full of flowering annuals. Although no mention is made of any grudge that Orlick has against Pumblechook, there is ample evidence to attribute a motive to Pip.

Pip is continually accused of being ungrateful but he cannot admit how ungrateful he really is. Thus the guilt of the psychological matricide is borne by Orlick. There is even an attempt to deny the horror of the deed, by suggesting that Mrs. Joe is happier after being forcibly subdued. Orlick becomes a favourite--symbolically represented by a hammer. Even Mrs. Joe's attitude to Pip is greatly improved.

She made signs to me that she wanted him to sit down close to her, and wanted me to put her arms round his neck. So I put them round his neck, and she laid her head down on his shoulder quite contrite and satisfied. And so she presently said "Joe" again, and once "Pardon", and once "Pip", 194

This scene in which a woman who was practically murdered becomes grateful to her assailant and learns penitence, is rather appalling. It presupposes a strictly masculine view and a limited understanding of women. Even though Pip is not presented as being the attacker, it is clear that he has no compunctions about benefiting from a woman being put in her place, even by such brutal means.

Pip's repressed aggression against Mrs. Gargery forms the basis of a more generalized response toward women who do not fulfill Pip's expectations of what constitutes maternal affection. If Miss Havisham was

a fairy godmother to the naive Pip, his realization that she is not the source of his great expectations does not transform her into an objectively perceived person. There is admittedly some empathy with her because her sadism is explained in terms of her victimization by Compeyson, but she is not forgiven for inflicting that smart without a name on the sensitive Pip. The fact that Dickens is unable to give the hurt a name is significant. Pip suffered a vicious blow to his male ego. Because Dickens is unable to recognize the sexual repression in male-female relationships, he is unable to countenance the profound hatred against men which Miss Havisham fosters. Miss Havisham's hatred is not restricted to Compeyson; it is directed against all men. She attempts to enforce on men the same code of behavior that is expected from women. Real love, Miss Havisham tells Pip, "is blind devotion, unquestioning self-humiliation, utter submission, trust and belief against yourself, and against the whole world, giving up your whole heart and soul to the smiter--as I did!"¹⁹⁵ Because Dickens is unable to acknowledge that the relationship between men and women in his society is based on a caste system maintained by sexual repression, (because he himself accepts the repression and sees it as natural), there is a great deal of aggression latent in

his handling of Miss Havisham. His desire to do away with Miss Havisham is given expression in the form of a fantasy.

I turned my eyes... towards a great wooden beam in a low nook of the building near me on my right hand, and I saw a figure hanging there by the neck. A figure all in yellow white, with but one shoe to the feet... and that the face was Miss Havisham's with a movement going over the whole countenance as if she were trying to call me.¹⁹⁶

The association between Pip's fantasy and Miss Havisham's death is made explicit in the novel. Just before Pip discovers the fire, "a childish association revived with wonderful force in the moment of the slight action, and I fancied that I saw Miss Havisham hanging to the beam. So strong was the impression that I stood under the beam, shuddering from head to foot before I knew it was a fancy--though to be sure I was there in an instant."¹⁹⁷ The close approximation of Pip's fantasy and Miss Havisham's death connotes a strong psychological implication. Being the subject of one of Pip's aggressive fantasies is the equivalent of receiving the kiss of death, and situation is no exception. All the characters against whom Pip harbours murderous feelings are injured, not by Pip's hands, but certainly as a result of Pip's having wished them ill. When Miss Havisham's death does occur, it is caused by natural means.

Although Pip ostensibly attempts to save her, the description of the scene, taken alone, could very well be the description of a murder.

I had a double-caped great-coat on, and over my arm another thick coat. That I got them off, closed with her, threw her down, and got them over her: ...that we were on the ground struggling like desperate enemies, and the closer I covered her, the more wildly she shrieked and tried to free herself; ...I still held her forcibly down with all my strength like a prisoner who might escape, and I doubt if I even knew who she was, or why we had struggled, or that she had been in flames, or that the flames were out, until I saw the patches of tinder that had been her garments, no longer alight, but falling in a black shower around us... 198

Not only is Miss Havisham's death considered a blessing in disguise in the context of the novel, her reaction to her trial by fire is exactly the same as Mrs. Joe's reaction to her assailant. Unable to speak or move, she communicates her penitence, even her gratitude, to Pip.

Toward midnight she began to wander in her speech, and after that it gradually set in that she said innumerable times in a low solemn voice, "What have I done!" And then, "When she first came, I meant to save her from misery like mine." And then, "Take the pencil and write under my name, 'I forgive her'"... At about six o'clock of the morning, therefore I leaned over her and touched her lips with mine, just as they said, not stopping for being touched, "Take the pencil and write under my name, 'I forgive her'". 199

Women are, it seems, happier and more fulfilled when they have learned submission, even if it is necessary to subdue the more resentful of the female species, by striking

them dumb and motionless.

For Pip, Joe represents the ideal of strength in submissiveness. His stoical suffering and his empathy for Pip's misfortunes, become a touchstone of virtue.

"I wish it was only me that got put out, Pip; I wish there warn't no ficker for you, old chap; I wish I could take it all on myself; but this is the up-and-down-and-straight on it, Pip, and I hope you'll overlook shortcomings." Young as I was, I believe that I dated a new admiration of Joe from that night. We were equals afterwards, as we had been before; but, afterwards at quiet times when I sat looking at Joe and thinking about him, I had a new sensation of feeling conscious that I was looking up to Joe in my heart.²⁰⁰

Overlooking Joe's shortcomings is precisely the course that Pip follows. When his expectations collapse, he repents of his folly of wanting something better. Joe, at least, has remained faithful to him, despite his rejection of Joe. Thus, Pip regresses to an infantile state in order to regain the one sure source of security and affection he has ever known. He attempts to re-enact the relationship between doting parent and child.

For the tenderness of Joe was so beautifully proportioned to my need that I was like a child in his hands. He would sit and talk to me in the old confidence, and with the old simplicity and in the old unassertive protecting way, so that I would half believe that all my life since the days of the old kitchen was one of the mental troubles of the fever that was gone.

We looked forward to the day when I should go out

for a ride, as we had once looked forward to the day of my apprenticeship. And when the day came, and an open carriage was got into the lane, Joe wrapped me up, took me in his arms, carried me down to it, and put me in, as if I were still the small helpless creature to whom he had so abundantly given of the wealth of his great nature.²⁰¹

Pip repents of any of those desires he had for autonomy and self-fulfillment and accepts Joe as a man without moral blemish--"O God bless him! O God bless this gentle Christian man!"²⁰² In this reversion to the game of "little Pip"²⁰³ and the gentle protecting father, Pip recovers his physical strength at the expense of his intellectual or emotional well-being.

Such an arrangement can not continue indefinitely, be it only a concession to verisimilitude. Forever expelled from the garden of paradise, Pip must learn to live in an alienated state. However the ideal is not attacked in itself. In Joe, educated out of his most distressing symptoms of commonness, and Biddy, Pip finally realizes what are, to him, ideal parents. Though it is too late for him, the younger Pip has the kind of childhood that Pip feels he should have had. Instead of meeting a convict in the cemetery, a benevolent uncle places little Pip on the tombstone.

I touched the old kitchen door so softly that I was not heard, and I looked in unseen. There, smoking his pipe in the old place by the kitchen firelight, as hale and as strong as ever, though

a little grey, sat Joe; and there fenced into the corner with Joe's leg, and sitting on my own stool looking at the fire was--I again.²⁰⁴

Though there is no direct fulfillment postulated for Pip, he is allowed to share in this sentimentalized family group, if only vicariously. However a fantasy of being able to change the past by reliving it through the younger Pip is hardly an adequate substitute.

Pip goes through the same struggle between his repugnance toward commonness, and the feeling that he ought to be grateful, with Magwitch.

Nothing was needed but this; the wretched man after loading me with his wretched gold and silver chains for years, had risked his life to come to me, and I held it there in my keeping; If I had loved him instead of abhorring him, if I had been attracted to him by the strongest admiration and affection, instead of shrinking from him with the strongest repugnance, it could have been no worse.²⁰⁵

Pip's conflict is not made easier by the realization that he is being used, in part, as a tool of revenge. Though Magwitch has been humiliated and beaten down, the dream that sustained him was to make Pip a gentleman: "that there hunted dunghill dog wot you kep life in got his head so high that he could make a gentleman".²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, Magwitch has sacrificed much to provide for Pip, as his pseudonym, Provis, indicates. Pip realizes he ought to feel grateful for Magwitch's

loyalty and devotion, but the vision of "the slouching fugitive on the marshes"²⁰⁷ always intrudes.

...he dragged one of his legs as if there were still a weight of iron on it, and... from head to foot there was convict in the very grain of the man.

The influences of his solitary hut-life were upon him besides, and gave him a savage air that no dress could tame; added to these were the influences of his subsequent branded life among men, and, crowning all, his consciousness that he was dodging and hiding now. ...in these ways and a thousand other small nameless instances arising every minute in the day there was prisoner, felon, bondsman, plain as plain could be.²⁰⁸

Pip's dilemma of having to acknowledge publicly that his benefactor is a criminal, is finally resolved. At Magwitch's death, Pip professes to see him in a changed light.

For now my repugnance to him had all melted away, and in the hunted wounded shackled creature who held my hand in his, I only saw a man who had meant to be my benefactor, and who had felt affectionately, gratefully, and generously towards me with great constancy through a series of years.²⁰⁹

The changed relationship is due as much to the change in Magwitch as it is to a change in Pip. Instead of being rebellious, Magwitch becomes submissive and resigned. Previously he refused to accept his lot passively and sought retribution through making Pip a gentleman. Later, however, he confesses his guilt, and becomes a reformed criminal.

The kind of submission or resignation that he showed was that of a man who was tired out. I sometimes derived an impression from his manner or from a whispered word or two which escaped him, that he pondered over the question whether he might have been a better man under better circumstances. But

he never justified himself by a hint tending that way, or tried to bend the past out of its eternal shape.²¹⁰

In the novel, Magwitch's repentance is not seen strictly as an acknowledgement of social standards and judgments. But accommodation to society is certainly a part of it. At his trial, Magwitch redeems himself by saying, "My Lord, I have received my sentence of death from the Almighty, but I bow to yours",²¹¹ Pip is only able to sympathize with victims when they accept their lot passively. This is the reason that Joe is idealized, and it forms the basis of Pip's forgiveness of the rebels. Only when Mrs. Joe, Miss Havisham and Magwitch are beaten down and more than half-dead, are they exempted from Pip's aggression. Although each of these has been victimized, each is also guilty: "O Lord, be merciful to him a sinner",²¹² The only emotion that is tolerated is remorse--the only response, pity.

Pip's acceptance of the social norms also leads to sexual repression and sublimation. When he is out walking with Biddy on the marshes, he begins to entertain romantic notions toward her. Intellectually he realizes that a relationship with Biddy would be more appropriate than one with the beautiful but cruel Estella.

"If I could only get myself to fall in love with you--...."

"But you never will, you see", said Biddy. It did not appear quite so unlikely to me that evening as it would have done if we had discussed it a few hours before. I therefore observed I was not quite sure of that. But Biddy said she was, and she said it decisively. In my heart I believed her to be right, and yet I took it rather ill, too, that she should be so positive on the point.²¹³

At this crucial moment Orlick rises up from the primeval ooze. And the looming of Orlickian desires effectively negates the 'continuance of a relationship with Biddy. Pip's response is one of outrage on hearing that Orlick dances at Biddy whenever he catches her eye: "I was very hot indeed upon Old Orlick's daring to admire her; as hot as if it were an outrage on myself".²¹⁴ Pip warns Biddy that he would have no opinion of her "if he danced at [her] with her own consent."²¹⁵

Generally speaking, however, it is Estella who captures Pip's romantic fancies. Her distance from him, socially and emotionally, is conducive to a sublimation of sexual drives. It is more difficult to romanticize the familiar than the unfamiliar, and, in addition, the sublimation is encouraged by enhancement of self-esteem; winning a lady is more prestigious than wooing a commoner. At first Estella is associated with Satis House and the prospects it represents, but the adoration which Pip feels for her outlasts his disillusionment.

Truly it was impossible to dissociate her presence from all those wretched hankerings after money and gentility that had disturbed my boyhood--from all those ill-regulated aspirations that had first made me ashamed of home and Joe--from all those visions that had raised her face in the glowing fire... In a word, it was impossible for me to separate her, in the past or in the present, from the innermost life of my life.²¹⁶

Pip maintains that from his childhood Estella has been a guiding star to him, in keeping with her name. "I saw her pass among the extinguished fires and ascend some light iron stairs, and go out by a galley high overhead, as if she were going out into the sky."²¹⁷ Even though she inflicted untold humiliations and degradations him, Pip asserted his own commonness in relation to her. His masochism does not exist without some resentment. Just as Orlick is a projection of Pip's repressed drives, so Drummle represents Pip's repressed aggression and eroticism. The blotchy, sprawly, sulky Drummle, nicknamed Spider, takes to following Pip like a shadow, with no apparent motive other than sheer malice. When Pip and Herbert are out rowing, Drummle would follow in their wake, under the overhanging barks and among the rushes "like some uncomfortable amphibious creature".²¹⁸ Pip's self-repression, manifested in his view of Drummle, leads to an idealized image of himself as the romantic tragic hero.

...what pain it gave me to think that Estella should show any favour to a contemptible, clumsy, sulky booby, so very far below the average. To

the present moment, I believe it to have been referable to some pure fire of generosity and disinterestedness in my love for her, that I could not endure the thought of her stooping to that hound. No doubt I should have been miserable whomsoever she had favoured, but a worthier object would have caused me a different kind and degree of distress.²¹⁹

Pip's continued ardor for Estella, even though she has chosen to marry Drummle, is accomplished by his conscious decision to split his vision of Estella into what he wishes to see and what he wishes to ignore. His final words to Estella before her marriage are the following:

"Estella to the last hour of my life, you cannot choose but remain part of my character, part of the little good in me, part of the evil. But in this separation I associate you only with the good, and I will faithfully hold you to that always, for you must have done me far more good than harm, let me feel now what sharp distress I may. O God bless you, God forgive you!"²²⁰

The evil that Estella has done to Pip is attributed to Miss Havisham's influence. Like Pip, Estella has been duped and victimized. It is on this basis that the reconciliation occurs between Pip and Estella. With "a saddened and softened light in her once proud eyes",²²¹ Estella has acknowledged the error of her ways and has become resigned like Pip. ~~The relationship is an alliance of masochists.~~ It is because of Pip's professed innocence in his regard for Estella that the second ending is so unsatisfactory. He wins what can only be a pale shadow of his expectations. Both Estella and he are desexualized: the bathos of sentimentiment which Dickens offers as a substitute is hardly an adequate

compensation for the loss. The rising of the evening mists is not a sign of a recathexis with reality: it is a reinstatement of a further idealization, and the tranquillity is an accomodation to self-denial. The original ending exhibits a regression to an earlier stage of development, if only in fantasy. The first ending is a sentimental re-enactment of the past; the second ending is a romanticized view of what is possible in the future. The source of both endings is implicit in the novel: Pip's failure to come to terms with either himself or his society.

Throughout the novel, Orlick follows Pip like a shadow, displaying the erotic and aggressive impulses which Pip denies in himself. Whether Dickens is aware that he has embodied Pip's repressed desires in Orlick is difficult to determine. However the fact that repression is advocated as a means of dealing with them is clear. When Pip and Orlick confront each other on the marshes, the roles are reversed. It is Orlick who accuses Pip of undermining his existence. It is Pip who is the wolf; he is accused of causing Orlick to be fired from Satis House, of coming between Orlick and Estella, of disrupting Orlick's relationship with Bidy by determining to have Orlick driven out of the country. Orlick also

accuses Pip of being responsible for his sister's death by having been the favoured child at the Forge. In this scene Pip proves himself to be a man of virtue by asserting that he would do everything possible to kill Orlick, even if it meant his own death. If the scene is read as a struggle between Pip and his repressed desires, then Pip is reaffirming his own self-repression in continuing to detest Orlick. Not surprisingly, Pip's reaffirmed sense of guilt results in a desire to atone for his sins.

Softened as my thoughts of all the rest of men were in that dire extremity; humbly beseeching pardon as I did, of Heaven; melted at heart, as I was, by the thought that I had taken no farewell, and never now could take farewell of those who were dear to me, or could explain myself to them, or ask for their compassion on my miserable errors.²²²

In one passage in the novel, Pip questions overtly the contradictions which seem to entangle him.

I consumed the whole time in thinking how strange it was that I should be encompassed by all this taint of prison and crime; that in my childhood out on our lonely marshes on a winter evening I should have first encountered it; that it should have reappeared on two occasions, starting out like a stain that was faded but not gone, that it should in this new way pervade my fortune and advancement. While my mind was thus engaged, I thought of the beautiful young Estella, proud and refined, coming towards me, and I thought with absolute abhorrence of the contrast between the fall and her. I wished that Wemmick had not met me, or that I had not yielded to him and gone with him, so that, of all days in the year on this day, I might have had Newgate in my breath and on my clothes. I beat the prison dust off my feet as I sauntered to and

fro, and I shook it out of my dress, and I exhaled its air from my lungs. So contaminated did I feel, remembering who was coming, that the coach came quickly after all, and I was not yet free from the soiling consciousness of Mr. Wemmick's conservatory, when I saw her face at the coach window and her hand waving to me. What was the nameless shadow which again in that one instant had passed?223

However the questions remain unanswered. During his illness Pip is distracted by nightmare visions of Magwitch's attempted escape and Miss Havisham's death, reflecting his own desire to escape from the contradictions that his experiences have forced him to become aware of.

That I had a fever and was avoided; that I suffered greatly, that I often lost my reason, that the time seemed interminable, that I confounded impossible existences with my own identity; that I was a brick in the house wall, and yet entreating to be released from the giddy place where the builders had set me; that I was a steel beam of a vast engine, clashing and whirling over a gulf, and yet that I implored in my own person to have the engine stopped, and my part in it hammered off...224

Pip, like little Nell and Esther, becomes disillusioned with reality. Because aggressive and erotic impulses are not assimilated as an ego function the resolution of the themes with which Dickens deals leads to a sublimation. The fact that Orlick embodies Pip's repressed drives indicates that Dickens is unable to realize how damaging is his cultural environment to the attainment of fulfillment. Pip accepts and reaffirms his guilt by dissociating himself from Orlick. In a society which is responsible for the limiting of human potential, Pip chooses a withdrawal from that society, rather than a transformation of

society. Although the withdrawal is not even as extreme as it is in Bleak House, the problems still seem insurmountable. At the end of the novel, Pip withdraws to the colonies and becomes successful in the business establishment of Clarriker and Co. If one examines Pip's occupation historically, it is clear that he has not evaded the claims of his society. He participates in the colonization of the underdeveloped world which was an important factor in the success of the British Empire. However an historical analysis is not of central importance in understanding the role which Pip finally adopts. Like the withdrawal from reality that little Nell undergoes, or the withdrawal from Chancery that Esther chooses, Pip's move to the East is an indication of his disillusionment.

In Great Expectations Pip is presented as being more sinned against than sinning. The understanding of the forces that shaped Pip's destiny, Pip's ability to empathize with Miss Havisham and Magwitch as victims, and the realization of the interrelationships between early childhood experiences and social ambition, give this novel depth and poignancy. Dickens presents his hero as a man who has evaluated himself and his society in the light of his experiences. Even though Pip chooses to accommodate

himself to the predominant values of his society, the suggestion of loss in the novel is a powerful criticism of the terms which Pip is forced to accept.

In the analysis of caricature, sentimental and grotesque, it was suggested that caricature reflects those values which are conscious and define one's identity. Sentimental and grotesque, on the other hand, are the product of denied emotions which are seen as not-self. A relationship exists between these three stylistic mechanisms: if the values that are consciously held are repressive, they will tend to lead to the manifestation of the grotesque and/or the sentimental. Much of that which is considered ego is derived from one's cultural environment. This is not to say that the ego is entirely a product of social forces, but the roles that predate the individual, the roles to which he is expected to conform, are a strong determinant of his self-image. In the discussion of caricature, it was noted Dickens had a similar value-structure to that of much of his audience. His early misfortunes, it was observed, accentuated rather than diminished his identification with his class role, with its emphasis on sexual repression, and allegiance to the family. There is also evidence of great antagonism and frustration in the novels that is occasioned by the

attempt to conform to the attitudes and values which are culturally desirable and have been adopted as a self-concept. These conflicts and the ensuing emotions cannot be consciously admitted for fear of destroying self-esteem. Therefore they are repressed and projected onto culturally unacceptable figures. Ideals are also continually being erected in order to assure self-esteem by projecting cultural and self-expectations. Thus the grotesque can be seen as an unconscious caricature of what is most feared about the self, while the sentimental expresses an idealized view of the self and others. Both the sentimental and the grotesque must be viewed in relation to the consciously held values.

It is important to note that the processes described in Dickens' novels do not occur in a static or neutral environment. The tendency to repression and sublimation existed in the society and Dickens absorbed the predominant values of his culture in order to preserve his self-identity and self-esteem which was seriously endangered by his early traumatic experiences. While it is important to note the specific biographical data that gave rise to certain conflicts and motivations, the total cultural impact on an individual cannot be overlooked.

Historical and social forces, we said, shape the function of art in general and more specifically that of any given medium in any historical setting, determining the frame of reference in which creation is enacted. We have long come to realize that art is not produced in an empty space, that no artist is independent of predecessors and models, that he no less than the scientist and the philosopher is part of a specific tradition and works in a structured area of problems. The degree of mastery within this framework and, at least in certain periods, the freedom to modify these stringencies are presumably part of the complex scale by which achievement is being measured. However, there is little which psychoanalysis has as yet contributed to an understanding of the meaning of this framework itself; the psychology of artistic style is unwritten.²²⁵

An attempt has been made in this paper to explore the psychology of style within the rather narrow context of three of Dickens' novels. The choice of styles is seen as a product of the interaction of personal and social factors. The conflict, which could not here be fully explored, between Dickens' values and his experiences results in his choice of caricature, grotesque and sentimental. Dickens did attempt to examine his society by the standards which he himself had inherited from that society, and he found it lacking. However the path he advocates is to withdraw from society. Unable to tolerate vulgarity, commonness, overt sex or aggression, his understanding of the mechanisms by which social structures and attitudes are maintained, is limited. An examination of his novels from his earlier to his later ones

indicates, however, that Dickens was able to become much more specific about the nature and the source of the conflicts with which he was involved. After little Nell's desperate flight from a hostile and unfulfilling reality, Dickens is able to postulate a way of existing more independently with more awareness. Paradoxically, as insight increases, Dickens is able to express his disillusionment more openly. In Great Expectations, though Pip achieves more than any other of the three protagonists discussed, the ironic title of the book indicates that it is not enough. In their own way, Dickens' novels are documents for personal and social change more eloquent and more forceful than any polemic, because they detail, with humour and pathos and understanding, the difficulties of realizing a full human existence.

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- 3 Ibid, p. 179.
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- 6 Ernest Kris, Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art, p. 174.
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 48 Charles Dickens, Great Expectations, p. 129.
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 65 Charles Dickens, Bleak House, p. 236.
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