SOME GROTESQUE PATTERNS IN THE NOVELS OF CHARLES DICKENS
AND IN THE BRITISH POPULAR ARTS OF THE LATE
EIGHTEENTH AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURIES

by

ELIZABETH ANTONINA KOZAKIEWICZ
B.A., University of Manitoba, 1965

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department
of
English

We accept this thesis as conforming to the
required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
May, 1972
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Head of my Department or by his representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of English

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

Date May 3, 1972
ABSTRACT

Recognizing that the grotesque is a common characteristic of much popular art, and recognizing that grotesque images are integral to the sensual world of Dickens' novels, the thesis seeks to discover what grotesque images are shared by Dickens and contemporary popular artists, and whether similar meanings can be attributed to their use in the caricatures, the pantomime, the gothic novels, and childrens' literature and in Dickens' fiction. The essence of grotesque art can best be understood from a survey of historical grotesque images and the thesis traces these briefly. The grotesque image usually involves the double face, two or three beings united within one formal structure. It may however be typified by its extreme ugliness, its deviance from aesthetic standards of beauty. Or it may exist as a mimic re-creation of man in man-made terms, through costume or mask, or as a puppet, robot or doll.

The grotesque humour in the caricatures, the pantomime and the nursery rhymes, with its dispensing with boundaries between the animate and the inanimate and mimic re-creation of the world in new forms, implies a delight in the sensual qualities of the material world. In the gothic novels the grotesque images, particularly the complex of images revolving around prisons, are seen to function as physical manifestations of the obsessive reasoning and fears that plague the characters. The grotesques in the fairy tales are related essentially to the role of magic, supernatural power in these tales being wielded.
either through object-talismans or by grotesque figures.

Dickens merges grotesques from all these sources into one fictional universe, and consequently any one grotesque in Dickens' work may recall imagery from several of these art forms, as well as the traditional images.

The thesis does not attempt a comprehensive study of the grotesque in Dickens' novels. It examines only three novels, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Our Mutual Friend*, and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, with reference to *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Hard Times*, analyzing the thematic patterns that revolve around the grotesques. In *The Old Curiosity Shop* the grotesque hallucinations of Nell, her grandfather, and the narrator are linked to their passivity, their fear of confronting or having to manipulate a naturalistic reality. Quilp and the other natural grotesques are, on the other hand, seen to resemble clowns, in their use of the grotesque image as a source of comedy, and in their skill at using this humour to control their environment. *Our Mutual Friend* is approached from one viewpoint only, though it is one considered vital to the nineteenth century British imagination, the relationship of its grotesque imagery to children's art. Through meshing picturesque figures of innocence with the vicious, the deformed and the decaying, Dickens establishes a vision of beauty growing out of the destruction of innocence and the imaginative vitality of anarchic grotesques. In *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* the architecture of the cathedral city gives material shape to the type of obsessive thinking that permeates *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and concurrently functions as a spell-bound environment.
for those who seek to deny their relationship with the brutal or ugly. As with the prisons of the gothic novels, this architecture breeds grotesque figures whom Dickens employs for a dual purpose, to represent the hallucinations of his spiritually trapped characters, and as a natural artistic counterpart to the cold rigidity of the cathedral.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. GROTESQUE IMAGES AND THE POPULAR ARTS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction: History of Popular Grotesque Images</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grotesque Images in the Popular Arts of the Late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE BOURGEOIS AND THE CLOWN: The Old Curiosity Shop (with reference to A Tale of Two Cities)</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE MAIMED CHILD: Our Mutual Friend</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE SPELL-BOUND CITY: The Mystery of Edwin Drood</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Roman buffoon</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Roman mimic fool</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Roman wall caricature</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Gargoyle</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Mediaeval comic devils</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Mediaeval comic devils</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Mediaeval animal carving satirizing clergy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Mediaeval fools</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Pietr Brueghel, from 'The Seven Deadly Sins'</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Pietr Brueghel, from 'The Seven Deadly Sins'</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Jacques Callot, etching of commedia figures</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Jacques Callot, etching of commedia figures</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Jacques Callot, etching of commedia figure</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Dance of Death, Hans Holbein</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Dance of Death, Hans Holbein</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Hieronymous Bosch, 'The Temptation of St. Anthony'</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>William Hogarth</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>William Hogarth</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>James Gillray</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Thomas Rowlandson</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>James Gillray</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

vi
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22. John Henry Fuseli</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Thomas Rowlandson</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. James Gillray</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Francisco Goya</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Isaac Cruikshank</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. George Woodward and P. Roberts</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. James Gillray</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. George Cruikshank</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. George Cruikshank</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. George Cruikshank</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. George Cruikshank</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Richard Newton</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. John Tenniel</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Pantomime poster of Joseph Grimaldi</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Illustration from Struwwelpeter</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Illustration from Struwwelpeter</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Giovanni Piranesi, 'Carceri' etching</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. John Tenniel, illustration for Alice's Adventures Through the Looking Glass</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Kate Greenaway</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Beatrix Potter</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Ralph Caldecott</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to express my deep appreciation to Dr. Patricia Merivale for the time she spent in reading earlier drafts, for her many helpful criticisms, her suggestions on source material that proved invaluable to the thesis, and for her extreme patience. I would like to thank Dr. Michael Goldberg for his advice on the shaping of the thesis.
SOME GROTESQUE PATTERNS IN THE NOVELS OF CHARLES DICKENS
AND IN THE BRITISH POPULAR ARTS OF THE LATE
EIGHTEENTH AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURIES
CHAPTER I

GROTESQUE IMAGES AND THE POPULAR ARTS


The purpose of this thesis is to place the novels of Charles Dickens in a tradition of grotesque popular art, and to compare the moral values he invests in his grotesque images with those borne by similar images in the popular arts of the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century, the caricature, the pantomime, the gothic novels and the children's literature. Isolating these grotesque images provides us with a tool for a new way of contemplating Dickens' novels. It leads to an analysis of the several different purposes for which he employs the grotesque and of certain thematic patterns in its use.

Even when the popular arts of his day are not actual sources for Dickens' novels they grow out of the same cultural milieu and display therefore many of the same preoccupations and images; and so I am interested in these art forms themselves for a deeper revelation of the contemporary imagination, even in instances where there is at first no obvious relationship between their grotesque imagery and that of Dickens' novels. Likewise certain themes in these art forms, specifically in the fairy tales, in which the grotesque plays an integral subsidiary role, are repeated in Dickens' work and these will be analyzed despite the fact that they are not exclusively involved with the grotesque.
At this stage the thematic patterns to emerge in the evolution of the thesis can only sketchily be hinted at. The grotesques, it will be seen, often figure as collections of vital, anarchic, semi-comic torturers, varying in appearance from clowns to gargoyles to demons to toys, who taunt the beautiful, the harmonious, the powerful and the rich through an ugly, destructive mimicry of their appearance, or through serving as physical manifestations of the social conflicts and savagery with which the former deny their relationship. At other times the grotesques are the hallucinations springing from the minds of spiritually imprisoned characters. These may be expressive either of thwarted, trapped passions, or may be the fearful response of characters dependent on a rigid social structure with fixed moral values, when confronted by figures of moral ambivalence. These ugly tortuous visions are physical expressions both of the characters' own obsessive reasoning and of their extravagant fear of the power which other people and places wield over them through their physical image.

The 'grotesque,'* in literary or artistic terms, is the depiction of a certain sort of physical deformity, or distortion of actuality, a particular method of representing the sensuous world, which creates an emotional response that includes both fascination and repulsion or humour and fear. The grotesque is to be seen as a distortion of conventional relationships between things. It is a distortion of reality to point out a deeper reality, to reveal additional perceptions, show multiple layers of meaning.

*See O.E.D. for definitions. See also Arthur Clayborough's The Grotesque in English Literature for semantic development of the word.
Every artist's perception of the world, is, by its very uniqueness, deviant from a hypothetical norm. The grotesque however is not an exclusively personal artistic distortion. Dependent upon commonly recognized norms of reality sufficiently elastic to encompass most individual artistic visions, its own recognized deviations from these standards take on familiar forms. For this reason the artistic sources of Dicken's imagery and the influences upon it become important. This relationship of any grotesque art to a common tradition, and Dickens' own role as a popular artist, lead us into the preoccupations of the nineteenth-century British middle class whose imaginative life found expression in pantomime, melodrama, gothic horror tales, fairy stories and satirical etchings. It will be seen that the grotesque is a significant feature of these 'low arts.'

In its contemporary usage the word 'grotesque' can be applied to any art characterized by

its rejection of the 'natural conditions of organization' and the combining of heterogeneous forms. Natural physical wholes are dis-integrated and the parts fantastically redistributed to suit the taste of the artist.1

Because of general disapproval of the style of Renaissance art to which the word was first applied, the grotesque acquired the pejorative cast of 'an objectionable strangeness,' 'an absurdity,' or 'a distortion of nature,' a connotation which it has retained, though with reference to content rather than artistic value. During the Romantic period when the extraordinary and the fantastic became greatly valued, the word
assumed close ties with 'the gothic' and gained the nuance of fearful and terrible.

For a critical appreciation of the emotional power of grotesque art we must turn to nineteenth-century critics. Their analyses give the grotesque a moral value. Once we have established how, and from what sources, Dickens develops his grotesques, we will be able to see whether Dickens does also.

It is not as the creating, but as the seeing man, that we are here contemplating the master of the true grotesques. It is because the dreadfulness of the universe around him weighs upon his heart that his work is wild and therefore through the whole of it we shall find the evidence of deep insight into nature. His beasts and birds, however monstrous, will have profound relations with the true. He may be an ignorant man, and little acquainted with the laws of nature; he is certainly a busy man, and has not much time to watch nature; but he never saw a serpent cross his path, nor a bird flit across the sky, nor a lizard bask upon a stone, without learning so much of the sublimity and inner nature of each as will not suffer him henceforth to conceive them coldly.  

\[\text{(John Ruskin)}\]

--the grotesque is, in almost all cases, composed of two elements, one ludicrous, the other fearful; that, as one or the other of these elements prevails the grotesque falls into two branches, sportive grotesque, and terrible grotesque--there are hardly any examples which do not in some degree combine both elements.  

\[\text{(John Ruskin)}\]

It appears to us as a jumble and distortion of other forms. If this confusion is absolute the object is simply null; it does not exist aesthetically, except by virtue of materials. But if the confusion is not absolute, and we have an inkling of the unity and character in the midst of the strangeness of the form, then we have the grotesque. It is the half-formed, the perplexed, and the suggestively monstrous.  

\[\text{(Santayana)}\]

In isolating the grotesque element in art, one must recognize
its kinship to two other non-naturalistic representations of reality, caricature and the fantastic. Both are capable of an independent existence which is not grotesque. Caricature, derived from the Italian 'caricare'—to overcharge, is essentially a technique of pictorial representation of character, dependent upon exaggeration of salient features or qualities. Producing explicitly humorous, often mocking, recognition of natural phenomena and behaviour, it emphasizes rather than diminishes the rules by which the natural world works. The fantastic does exactly the opposite, reshaping external formal structures into new forms expressive of the artist's subjective or spiritual world. Fantastic art trafficks in monsters—satyrs, centaurs, ghosts, fairy tale figures; it is a sensuous representation for the most deeply experienced and least communicable of its creator's emotions. Yet both caricature and the fantastic are integral to grotesque creations, and, as Ruskin has said, the grotesque is endowed with the emotional values of both.

The affinity of the grotesque to the fantastic is reflected in a quotation from William Axton's *Circle of Stage Fire*, a study of Dickens' theatrical techniques, and debt to the contemporary popular theatre:

The most important trait of grotesque style, perhaps, as that of Dickens and of the popular nineteenth century theatre, is its tendency to estrange reality without dispensing with it. The grotesque aims to subvert the familiar world (as distinct from the fairy tale which creates its own special world) by means of sudden surprising transformations of its elements, so that the processes normally associated with the working of everyday life are undone, or the conventional relationships between things are dislocated.
Grotesque art has a tradition much older and more characterized by constant recurring images and motifs than one would gather from the semantic history of the word 'grotesque.'

Tracing the grotesque images historically, we come to realize the extent to which Dickens' work is within a tradition of grotesque popular art, and we are then equipped to recognize the variations on some of these traditional images that nineteenth-century artists devised— the recurring importance of the 'doll' or toy for instance.

Thomas Wright's massive History of Caricature and the Grotesque published in 1865, is a useful starting point for researching a tradition of recurring grotesque images and motifs found in Western European art. This book provides a compendium of the factual knowledge on the grotesque and caricature that was available to the mid-Victorians.

Three essential characteristics of grotesque art were displayed by the Egyptians in their tomb paintings, papyrus scrolls, and statues. These are the caricature of people as animals whom they resemble, the depiction of animals carrying out human activities, and the face or mask deformed by a ludicrous expression such as the tongue hanging out. All three have significance for Dickens. The pharaoh's habit of maintaining court-dwarfs as entertainers was an actual rather than artistic instance of fascination with the grotesque. Centuries later, court-dwarfs were closely associated with another grotesque tradition, that of the court-fool. In himself however the dwarf is representative of the role of natural human deformity in the grotesque tradition.

Greek drama introduced another common grotesque image, the
actual mask. Masks were first employed in the theatrical trilogies at the Dionysian festivals. As they were used in tragedies, comedies and satirical plays, it might be argued that the mask is not grotesque, but an image of any theatrical performance, and, indeed, in *A Tale of Two Cities* Dickens uses the mask for his characters without in those instances creating a grotesque effect. The mask belongs to the realm of the grotesque in the sense that there is an incongruity between it and the person underneath; if the mask in any way gives a sensual impression of this incongruity it then becomes the grotesque. It has, furthermore, the quality of being a disembodied face, and of being in itself a mimic representation of man, a species of grotesquerie which it shares with the puppet, the robot, and the doll.

A theatrical tradition of non-literary mimic comedy was initiated by the Greeks and continued by the Romans. Little terra cotta figures and paintings on vases present grotesque characters that it is assumed come from the mimes, and that anticipate two important grotesque roles of later mimic theatre (see Figures 1 and 2). The sannio or buffoon is the antecedent of the modern clown; notice the mask. The mimic fool at times was recognized by his shaven head, at other times by his peaked hat (similar to Punch) or his hunchback.

From early Saxon times to the thirteenth century the gargoyles found in Gothic churches (see Figure 4) were a popular expression of the grotesque spirit. They derived their grotesque power from their ugliness, and from the strange fascination with their dual nature, the man/beast image.
The gargoyles are rightly viewed within their relationship to the sublime religious edifices that house them. Yet the fascination with an ugly mocking face is not bounded by a particular era. Ruskin chooses the gargoyles as exemplary of grotesque art. Contemporary with Dickens, Victor Hugo developed a whole novel, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, from the connection between a living gargoyle, Quasimodo, and his cathedral home. In *The Old Curiosity Shop* the image of the gargoyle is omnipresent. At the Feast of Fools that initiates Hugo's book the following event occurs:

> each in his turn goes and puts his head through a hole and makes faces at the other; he that makes the ugliest face according to general acclamation, is chosen Pope.\(^7\)

For Dickens Quilp is a veritable gargoyle:

>'Am I nice to look at?' . . . he treated her with a succession of such horrible grimaces as none but himself and nightmares had the power of assuming.\(^8\)

Sometimes the grotesque nature of the gargoyle comes from being disembodied, a face carved, for instance, into the end of a church pew. In this case the power lies in the hallucination of an inanimate structure with a semi-human spirit trapped in it. It will become clear that the relationship of Dickens' characters to their physical environment is one of his constant, though often unspoken, preoccupations in his use of the grotesque, and that, several times, for different reasons, he falls back on the concept of the gargoyle to express it.

In the Middle Ages the art of demonology provided a home for
the popular grotesque spirit. The old Roman masks and the Teutonic images of imps, goblins and their ilk were incorporated, in the typical grotesque mingling of incongruities, with the Christian vision of the devil. This diablerie (Figures 5 and 6) is found in manuscript illuminations, wall decorations, mystery plays, and carvings in churches. It employed the concept of beasts with human qualities, and vice versa, although the beasts are of the wondrous kind. Wright says of their comic grotesqueness:

It must not be supposed in subjects like these, the drollery of the scene was accidental; but on the contrary, the mediaeval artists and popular writers gave them this character purposely. The demons and the executioners—the latter of whom were called in Latin 'tortores' and in popular Old English phraseology the 'tormentours'—were the comic characters of the time.

It will be seen that these comic torturers find descendants in nineteenth-century art in a curious reincarnation—as puppets and toys who come to life and carry on the demons' gleeful, taunting dancing gestures, and an important use of this idea of toys and dolls as a species of grotesque demon is in fact in Dickens himself, in what shall be seen as one of the dominant grotesque threads in his work.

Two cycles of grotesque popular art, the reign of Folly and the Dance of Death, flourished in the early Renaissance. The peculiar glorification of Folly had two aspects—the court fools and dwarfs, and the Feasts of Fools with their mock popes and cardinals. The two no doubt enriched and influenced each other, but, in one case a solitary individual served as the constant personification of Folly, in the other the whole community during an annual period of
license turned the social order topsy-turvy and payed homage to the ridiculous and the irreligious. In each case however, reason and moral values were cast aside and laughed at within the social structure.

The role of the court fool and the imaginative power of his image are too complex for us to more than generalize on the nature of his power. Much of his effect comes from his abnormality, his distinction from his fellows, his real or assumed madness or idiocy, or his physical deformities. He has been seen as having ties with the sacrificial victim of ancient rituals who was the most expendable member of the community. It has been suggested that he could ward off the 'evil eye' from his associates since no more misery was likely to occur to such a subnormal specimen of humanity. His creativity and 'innocent' truth telling are allied to the religious; yet his vulgarity, his foppish costume (Figure 8), its animal headdress and mockery of the cowl show him to be deeply rooted in the sensual world.*

However this is merely a search for rational explanations for a figure whose essence is grotesque, and therefore irrational. His power, particularly his power in our imaginative conception of the fool, is primarily sensual. It is linked with the deformity, assumed or otherwise, of possessing a man's body without his mind. In his most effective manifestation, he has the additional abnormality of being a dwarf. Welford in The Fool, his Social and Literary History has

---

*Jung's analysis of the trickster archetype is interesting in connection with this grotesque image. The trickster is responsible for deliberately undermining human attempts at nobility or genius; he is the backwards-pulling side of the human personality, the 'shadow.'
differentiated between the fool and the parasitical buffoon, who may perform the same jests but is not distinguished from other men by deformity, mindlessness or even costume. Nonetheless he is a variant of the fool in that "... he earns his living by an openly acknowledged failure to attain the normal standard of human dignity."^{10}

Dickens depends strongly on the image of the fool and even more so on the fool's functions. Quilp mocks everyone with the gleeful sadism encouraged in court fools whose role was to insult their master's guests. He adopts his satirical function in defense, because he is a dwarf, and yet he depends on the ugliness of his dwarfism for his power. Personifying the creative spirit of the deformed fool he is as Dickens calls him "the small lord of creation."^{11} Jo in *Bleak House* is a 'natural fool,' the simpleton who, by the response he evokes in the people he meets, serves as a touchstone for the behaviour of his society. Trabb's boy in *Great Expectations* is a mimic fool. His taunting imitation of Pip 'the gentleman' is linked with Dickens' analysis in that novel of the grotesque qualities of role-playing, exemplified in Miss Havisham and Wemmick.

Yet occasionally Dickens' artistry instinctively creates complete costumed fools, their appearance and behaviour a licensed visual parody of the dominant figures in their society, and unlike the clowns or comic demons who exist alongside them, sharing in the same dreams and failings as the society they mock. The two characters who obviously play this role and whose function will be better valued later are Jenny Wren, in *Our Mutual Friend* and Durdles in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. 
The Dance of Death was the name given early in the fifteenth century to church decorations, woodcuts and verse tales, vignettes of everyday life in which the figure of Death, as a skeleton, carried away the principal character who was representative of a specific social class or occupation. If the use of the skeleton can be considered grotesque rather than merely allegorical or fantastic, it is because of the incongruity implied in the name and in the dancing, mock-comic attitudes of the skeleton, and in the attribution of living human gestures and facial expressions to what is normally considered inanimate. Hans Holbein's woodcuts (Figure 14 and 15) were among the best known series of this nature. Though the popularity of this subject was at its zenith in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, artists have continued to produce variations on the theme. Rowlandson used the same concept in a series of social caricatures produced in the 1790's, a few years before Dickens was born.

The image of the Dance of Death reinforces the fact that gesture and movement are integrally tied to the grotesque, something that will become more obvious with the commedia figures. It is also a physical manifestation of that fear of sudden transformation of form, uncontrollable by the victim, that is the essence of much grotesque art.

Although our image of grotesque art as it has existed since the Renaissance has been partially shaped by the creations of known individual artists who probably aimed their work at an intellectual audience, nonetheless the grotesque has remained a potent aspect of popular art, in circuses, in the theatre and in post-Hogarthian caricature.
The commedia dell'arte in its varied forms has been one of the most significant frameworks for the grotesque in the past four centuries. Its grotesque side existed in the masked characters, Pantalone, the duped old man, Dottore, the pedant, and the comic servants or Zanni, Arlecchino (Harlequin), Scapino, Pedrolino, Pulcinella, and the many, many variants by name of these stock types. The mask, as was previously said, is not in itself grotesque. However several factors combine to make these characters so. The intermingling of masked and straight characters provides that association of the actual and the fantastic which is integral to grotesque art. Secondly the masked characters are defined essentially by their physical presence, and that presence both is and is not of this world. The masks of Pantalone and Pulcinella were caricatures. Arlecchino was recognized by a tight-fitting suit embroidered with coloured patches, a demon-like black half-mask and his stick. The costumes and gestures of the characters were highly stylized. Contemporary paintings of Pantalone emphasize his fluid, dance-like movement. Callot's drawings (see Figures 11, 12 and 13) capture the grotesque effect of caricatured mask and dance-like stance. Records remain of the carefully choreographed hand and head movements of Arlecchino.

*This improvised comedy that started in northern Italy in the mid-sixteenth century was the dominant theatrical mode in Italy and France for the following two hundred and fifty years, and influenced theatre in most of Europe. It was not grotesque in form. The original plays were comedies of wit and ribald humour revolving around entangled love affairs. Yet, both in its original form and in the evolutions it underwent, it was a source of grotesquerie.
The comedies in which they performed altered with the troupes that performed in France; the roles and appearance, particularly of L'Arlequin and Pierrot, Pedrolino's French descendent, became more ethereal, more expressive of the spirit of Bohemia and the fantastic. Later, in the Harlequinade, the English adaptation of the commedia to the British pantomime, the whole form of the plays in which these figures took part was grotesque.

For Dickens' work and this thesis, the relevance of the commedia and mimic theatre in general lies in two aspects, the importance of gesture in creating a grotesque effect and the manner by which costume and mask become grotesque when they actually become the man they adorn, when the character in appearance is a man-made representation of a man, mannequin-like, puppet-like, robot-like (provided, to return to Axton's quote, he is operating in an essentially naturalistic universe; there is no grotesque effect, for instance, in the revolutionary scenes in *A Tale of Two Cities*, where all the characters wear masks as in a staged ritual). This use of costume is important, for instance, in a clown's grotesque effect, his mouth not a human mouth but a man-made exaggeration of a human mouth weeping or grinning, his cheeks a man-made reproduction of rosiness.

In *Pickwick Papers* the comic use of eccentricities of fashion, "... a green coat that had been a smart dress in the day of swallow tails ... an old stock, without vestige of shirt collar," becomes the grotesque as the clothes become uniforms that wholly define their owners. Thus Weller says when newly outfitted by Pickwick...
'I wonder whether I'm meant to be a footman, or a groom, or a game-keeper or a seedsman. I looks like a sort of compo of everyone on'em.'

and Snodgrass at the masquerade ball in blue satin trunks and white silk tights, is described as being dressed in the known costume of troubadours down through the ages, an early attempt at comic mime that foreshadows the more grotesque role-playing of later novels when Wemmick who works as a clerk adopts the wooden-featured, post-office-mouthed mask he believes has the necessary decorum for his role, and Miss Havisham becomes indistinguishable from her rotted bride's dress. It is perhaps in Our Mutual Friend that we shall see in its most refined form the characters becoming man-made representations of man; Lady Tippins and Twemlow have no existence apart from their foppish clothes, and the drunks and corpses are merely rags in a state of organic decay, while numerous characters adopt the mock-human attributes of dolls, or the man-made members of wooden legs.

Reproductions of the work of three significant Renaissance artists are shown in Figures 11-13, 16, Hieronymus Bosch [d. 1516], Pietr Brueghel [1516-1569] and Jacques Callot [1592-1664]. The work of all three has a recognizably grotesque power over us, although we cannot actually account for it. When we examine them carefully we can see how these individual artists have depended upon the grotesque forms common to the popular arts that have been discussed.

Bosch's illustration is a crowded, seething panorama which suspends reality while retaining an obviously strong fascination with the objects of the material world. It mixes Christian iconography, homely
details, the macabre and the amusing, yet unlike surrealist art, it never resorts to total rejection of a natural framework. The air of crowded confusion that grows from this dispersing with the boundaries between realms of existence, inanimate, human, animal, and spiritual, anticipates precisely the effect we gain from the settings and characterizations of Dickens' later novels, such as the fog in *Bleak House* or the monstrous Smallweeds in the same novel.

The single figures of Brueghel and Callot display a skillful mélange of the image patterns we have seen as integral to grotesque art. Examining them closely we realize that, particularly with Brueghel's creations, we do not know whether we are confronted with men, demons or animals, so adroitly does their appearance suggest all three. And we see that they incorporate the characteristic misshapen masks and costumes appropriate for jesters. Callot's subjects are a natural source of the grotesque, but his work is more than good reportage.

This brief pictorial history has shown that all the essential grotesque images, the interchangeability of men and beasts, the mask, the fool, natural physical deformity, the face distorted by ugliness or caricatured as an animal or object, the ambivalent camaraderie with devils, find expression in popular art or art valued by the masses. Today similar images are common in the popular arts of the comic strip and science fiction.

It now becomes necessary to see how such images take their place

*His three series of etchings are of beggars, commedia figures, and gypsies.*
in the popular arts of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, and in the novels of Charles Dickens, and to see what variations of them develop, and what moral value if any, is attributed to them.

Part B: Grotesque Images in the Popular Arts of the Late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Four areas of popular art of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with which Dickens has much in common are the caricatures, the pantomime, the gothic novels and the children's literature. They share with Dickens similar patterns of grotesque imagery and similar thematic preoccupations growing out of or expressed by this imagery.

This chapter will deal with each art form separately, though their approaches to grotesque images are not necessarily distinct from each other, one theme often recurring in several artistic media. Thus the caricature, the pantomime, and the nursery rhymes will be seen to share a common response to their sensual environment, and this is manifested in their grotesque images. Likewise both the gothic novels and the traditional fairy tales express a fear of moral ambivalence, and in both this fear is given physical shape through grotesque supernatural beings. In the traditional images one of the recurrent threads seemed to be the function of grotesque figures as semi-comic torturers; this was a role performed by the mimic fools of the stage in their exaggerated imitations, by the comic devils in their open torture, and by the taunting figure of Death himself in the Dances of Death. In the popular arts of Dickens' day, the images of the caricature and the
pantomime clowns function largely in this role.

Caricature flourished in England from 1720, the start of Hogarth's productive period, until 1840. Caricature shops were set up, their windows serving as minor art galleries. Printed engravings became popular decorations in the homes of every class. In their mélange of social satire and fantasy these graphic arts worked with a concept integral to Dickens' fiction, that of the 'double face,' the uniting of at least two beings within one formal structure. This is a core technique of the grotesque.

The best work in this medium predated Dickens, although George Cruikshank and Tenniel were still drawing when he was writing. Dickens' literary techniques have more relationship to the earlier graphic artists than to the illustrators of his own books, Cruikshank excepted.

Reprints of some of this 'low art' have been included, since it is felt that their varied styles of drawing figure as almost self-explanatory explanations of how Dickens' art grew out of and reflected the popular taste. As a tool in approaching Dickens' art, the primary use of the caricatures is to reveal the development of his grotesque techniques and their difference from those of purely comic art. Though not of primary importance to this thesis, since the concern is with images and themes rather than with stylistics, they serve as an enriching background to his grotesque art.

Hogarth (Figures 17 and 18) saw his works as character sketches rather than caricatures; yet in his own engraving 'Characters and Caricaturas' the difference he conceived between the two seems one of degree
rather than kind. His works are satirical but the satire grows out of the narrative qualities of the pieces. The features of his subjects are not sufficiently deformed to rank as caricature. His portraits are not dominated by one physical feature nor are the features fantasized and made to resemble objects other than what they are. One exception to this is seen in Gin Lane (Figure 17) where the wretched man (at the lower right-hand side) with his skeleton visible through his skin resembles Death in the Danse Macabre. Hogarth usually chooses to characterize people through the emotions reflected on their faces rather than through distortion of their appearance. He remains what may be called a comic naturalist, though his stern morality may cause us to question the extent to which he is comic.

Figures 19 and 20 are variations on the Hogarthian theme by James Gillray and Thomas Rowlandson. Both show less concern for truthful rendering of external details. Their lines have a sketchiness or looseness, that is not nearly as scathing as Hogarth's precise depiction. Yet the figure of Death is buried unobtrusively in the foreground of Rowlandson's print, one of a series in which he appears.

Caricaturists like Gillray and Rowlandson have absorbed two incongruous artistic tendencies. See Figure 22; Fuseli's painting exhibits a romantic expressionism that is also found in the later work of his Spanish contemporary, Goya, and in his Italian predecessor, Piranesi. The latter (see Figure 38) was best known for a series of etchings of nightmarish, prison-like architecture. We can see how these involve a reliance on the fantastic. Major illustrators who succeeded Hogarth
shared this expressionism, particularly the concept of expressing spiritual states through an exaggeration of physical features and through a style of 'pathetic fallacy' between their landscapes and their characters: see the animated 'bed of roses' in Figure 24. Concurrently their comic sense forbade them to consider such romantic art seriously, as can be seen in Figure 23, Rowlandson's parody for satirical purposes of Fuseli's picture. When the physical distortion and the fantastic elements of such art are adopted, but the comic intelligence and care for details colours the work, these caricatures become brilliant grotesques, as in Figures 21 and 24. Fuseli's animation of the nightmare is reused in Rowlandson's print, but in the latter she bears much more resemblance to a plough horse. The monsters in Figure 21 are very domesticated. Though there is scarce possibility of actual influence at work, we see these mental processes reflected in the difference between Goya's 'Saturn devouring his children' (Figure 25) and Isaac Cruikshank's cannibal, General Surovov. In the former the cannibal has only the abstract monstrous features of a mythical figure. In the latter the human features, though exaggerated to indicate their significant qualities, are clearly delineated. The human food does not simply disappear into a black cavern; it is impaled on a fork.

Dickens' art seems to have followed a similar pattern, drawing on a tradition of literary humour corresponding to the comic naturalism of Hogarth and on a macabre imagery common to the romanticism of Fuseli and Goya.

Figures 27 and 28 are variants on the by now familiar technique
of the mask or 'double face' or transformation of character. Depending upon whether one receives a strong impression of emotional incongruity from their double identity, one may or may not consider them grotesque. Figure 26 is a veritable gargoyle.

Several reproductions of the work of George Cruikshank (1792-1878) have been included. Cruikshank was a brilliant social satirist whose settings were a close visual counterpart to those of Dickens. As one critic commented:

He could draw a landscape fit for fairies to live in or one that seemed to predict a murder, or one where an evil spirit could feel at home. . . . He could, as Thackeray said, at a pinch provide a countenance for a gentleman out of any given object.14

Like Dickens he breathed life into surroundings, and sometimes made the emotions of his people only minor offshoots of a black energy radiated by the environment (see Figures 29-31). For Dickens too, characters sometimes become just a reflection of the landscape:

The chief features in the still life of the street are green shutters, lodging-bills, brass door-plates and bell-handles: the principal specimens of animated nature the pot-boy, the muffin youth, and the baked-potato man.15

(Figure 32 has been included to show the continuity of the historical grotesque images; the comic devils of the middle ages have been degraded in function, but their appearance and droll character have not altered substantially.)

The development of the grotesque in the caricatures is reflected in the visual creations in Dickens' earliest novel, *Pickwick Papers.*
The comic appearance, as with Hogarth, usually grows from the facial expression or eccentricities of dress, rather than from the grotesque techniques of the 'double face' or distortion of features:

A solemn silence: Mr. Pickwick humorous, the old lady serious, the fat gentleman captious, Mr. Miller timorous.\(^{16}\)

'You don't mean to say, Mr. Tupman, that it is your intention to put yourself into a green velvet jacket, with a two-inch tail?'

'And if any further ground of objection be wanting,' continued Mr. Pickwick, 'you are too fat, sir.'\(^{17}\)

Fantasy and physical expressionism are common however in the little tales. The Madman believes himself accompanied by demons and a ghost: "large dusky forms with sly and jeering faces . . . tempting me to madness."\(^{18}\) Gabriel Grub has an encounter with goblins and Tom Smart with an old man who metamorphoses out of a chair; in both cases the fantastic seems to have a psychological function in clarifying the character's situation. The distortion of physical expression to reveal mental suffering is employed: "such fierce ravages on his face and form, in that one night, that his companions in misfortune shrunk affrighted from him as he passed by."\(^{19}\) The gloomy, enclosed rooms and cells in which the dreariest of these tales take place are reflections of the characters' mental state.

By the end of *Pickwick Papers* Dickens is already meshing this physical expression of suffering with a comic naturalist's eye for the physical details of objects, and in doing so creating the grotesque:

his bones sharp and thin. God help him! the iron teeth of confinement and privation had been slowly filing him down . . .\(^{20}\)
tall, gaunt straggling houses, with time-stained fronts and windows that seemed to have shared the lot of eyes in mortals, and to have grown dim and sunken with age.21

The eighteenth century, or at least the years from 1720 to 1764 when Hogarth was active, was characterized in England by a large prosperous 'middling' class who were not in fact differentiated from the poorer or wealthier by any very rigidly defined barriers. The Industrial Revolution created changes which produced a large, very poverty-stricken working class and distinct middle class, both very aware of the distinctions of gentility. By mid-nineteenth century caricature had deteriorated. Class lines between the gentility and the working class had calcified and the bonhomie of an earlier time, as in Newton's Figure 33, had disappeared. Illustrators expressed the anger and fear of the times in woodcuts such as Tenniel's (Figure 34), or resorted to the gentlemanly parodies that the editors of the early issues of Punch stated it was their aim to create. Cruikshank rejected social comedy and illustrated fairy tales. The sentimental replaced the eighteenth-century joie-de-vivre as a dominating vision of 'the good.' Dickens continued the comic grotesque tradition of a slightly earlier era, but he also expressed part of his personality in sentimental indulgence.

In the caricatures the technique of the double face is of course used generally for satirical purposes, but the extravagance of the imagery suggests less political anger than a delight in humorously manipulating physical characteristics. Furthermore Gillray's creations are less comic 'humours' than characters with an individualized sensual presence like Punch and Harlequin.
Dickens shares with the images of the caricature a delight in ugliness, and investment of energy and vitality in ugly and deformed creations, from the dancing of John Bull and his friends to the greediness of Gillray's and Isaac Cruikshank's monsters, even when they are wasted creatures as in Gillray's 'begone dull Care.' This is typical of grotesque art; it will be seen later that a character like Pinocchio, even when he is the victim of the most unpleasant mutilations, exercises a power over us because of those mutilations that suggests he is undergoing them to taunt and frighten us.

Rigid licensing laws for 'legitimate' theatre drama channeled the entertainment talents of Victorian playwrights and actors into the production of theatrical extravaganzas, burlettas, melodramas, and pantomimes. Riots at Drury Lane in 1806 over seat prices in the pit led to a disenchantment with the theatre among the upper classes: the audiences were therefore primarily working class and lower middle class. Dickens was a sturdy supporter of the popular non-literary aspects of the theatre; not an unusual attachment when we reflect on the similarities between one of its branches, the pantomime, and the style of his own work.

The pantomime, is, of course, linked to a major grotesque tradition, the commedia dell'arte.

In the early eighteenth century John Rich, the manager of Covent Gardens, had begun to produce pantomimes, mixed media spectacles that incorporated a love story or legend, dancing, elaborate stage scenery, and a comic Harlequinade in which British versions of the Italian masked
characters participated. Rich initiated the tradition of a non-speaking Harlequin, choreographing elaborate acrobatics and gestures for him. His stick became a magic bat with which he could transform his surroundings. In the form in which the pantomime existed in the early 1800's, the 'commedia' figures shared the stage with a varied crew of talking animals, nursery rhyme personages, fairy queens, policemen, demon kings, and later a Principal Boy who was always played by a girl. After the story had proceeded to a certain point the Fairy Queen enchanted these characters into the members of the Harlequinade. Until they were transformed into these figures with their stylized costumes, the actors often were giant papier-mâché heads.

In the early 1800's, with the performances of Joseph Grimaldi,* a new character, the Clown (Pierrot), gained prominence in the Pantomime. His graceless costume and slapstick reflected the dominant tone of the performances, which were incongruous nonsense, in defiance of all theatrical conventions including plot. The transformations of characters into Harlequin figures were accompanied by transformations of them into objects, and metamorphoses of the settings. The prevailing tone was a sort of comic sadism demonstrated in a few staple jokes:

a policeman elongated by a mangle into a shapeless figure, the swell in white trousers whose legs were dipped into a mixture labelled 'Raspberry jam,' the foreign gentleman whose coats were torn from his back by rivals touts, the red-hot poker and the inevitable buttered slide artfully prepared by Clown for the benefit of the unwary pedestrian.22

* Though Dickens cannot have seen this artist at his peak, he edited Grimaldi's memoirs.
Extreme emotional flexibility would have been demanded of the audience:

There is the famous case of the Demon King who, after consigning the Principal Girl to the dungeon, desisted from villainy awhile, and coming to the footlights sang with great feeling and tenderness 'When the Angelus is Ringing.'

an incident that reminds us of Wegg 'dropping into poetry,'

... and a pantomime in which the Fairy Queen made an entrance as a strapping Gordon Highlander.

The pantomime titles reinforce the sense of a comic grotesque: Rodolph the Wolf or Columbine Red Riding Hood, Harlequin and Friar Bacon, Harlequin Bacchus, Harlequin and Poonoowingkeewonaflibedeeedeeflobeedeebuskeebang, King of the Cannibal Islands.

The most famous of all pantomimes was 'Harlequin and Mother Goose or the Golden Egg,' by Thomas Dibdin, performed in 1806. The plot of the 'serious' half of the play is typical romantic comedy. To help avoid a disastrous marriage between the heroine and a rich squire, Mother Goose, riding on a gander; bewitches the characters into the stock figures of the Harlequinade; the hero and heroine into Harlequin and Columbine, the father into Pantaloon, the hated suitor into Clown. The 'comic' business of the play begins, an assortment of fanciful incidents and magical tricks, accompanied by Morris Dancers and a mock opera by Harlequin and Clown. At various times Harlequin turns into a St. Giles Fruit Girl, Pantaloon cuts a pie and a live duck flies out, tables and chairs ascend into the air. The cottage of a poor woodcutter appears; Harlequin saves him from being arrested for debt by turning a wheel into a wheel of fortune which pours out money. The scene
transforms itself at intervals into a pavilion by moonlight, a flower
garden, a Golden Square, and St. Dunstan's church. The characters'
possessions are conglomerations of several objects; the Clown drums on
a large fishkettle with a ladle and a whisk. The incidents are fre­
quently slapstick:

Harlequin enters, changes the letter-box into a lion's head. The
clown advances, puts his hand in to get more letters, and is caught
fast in the mouth of the lion. He endeavours to extricate himself
and draws out of the box a little Postman who annoys the Clown
with his bell. (extracted from the stage directions)25

The form of the pantomime was continually changing. In the
1840's and 1850's it became both topical and faintly moral. In The
Birth of the Steam Engines or Harlequin Locomotive and Joe Miller and
his Men, produced in 1847, Watt was credited with inventing the steam
engine to gain his bride, the daughter of a blacksmith, and upon winning
her became changed into Harlequin. In some stagings Clown carried ad­
vertising signs for London merchants.

The transformations essential to pantomime (Figure 35), describ­
ing people as objects and animals or endowing them with dual personal­
ities, are also Dickens' distinguishing technique of characterization.
Often his characters are tenuously identified with several other forms
of being, as with the Smallweeds, or like Krook, characterized by dual
roles, one an objective existence in Victorian London, another as a
personage from a fairy tale, nursery rhyme or carnival world.

In Pickwick Papers Dickens acknowledges his debt to the grotesque
theatrical tradition:
The door flew open, in he ran,
The great, long, red-legg'd scissor-man.
Oh! children, see! the tailor's come
And caught out little Suck-a-Thumb.
Snap! Snap! Snap! the scissors go;
And Conrad cries out — Oh! Oh! Oh!
Snap! Snap! Snap! They go so fast,
That both his thumbs are off at last.

Just look at him! There he stands,
Whit his nasty hair and hands.
See! his nails are never cut;
They are grim'd as black as soot.
He was dressed for the pantomime in all the absurdity of a clown's costume. The spectral figures in the Dance of Death, the most frightful shapes that the ablest painter ever portrayed on canvas never presented an appearance half so ghastly. His bloated body and shrunken legs—their deformity enhanced a hundredfold by the fantastic dress—the glassy eyes contrasting fearfully with the thick white paint with which the face was besmeared; the grotesquely ornamented head, trembling with paralysis, and the long skinny hands, rubbed with white chalk.26

In this case the man is actually an actor in clown's costume. In later novels he would display a like appearance, but would probably be at the same time a butcher or office clerk whose clothes lent themselves to the fantasy of a harlequin figure. This image with its conjunction of carnival costume and physical decay anticipates in fact one of the most significant grotesque image patterns in Dickens' work. Deformed or decrepit creatures will be seen to be the bearers of the humour and dancing gestures of the novels, while crippled or death-associated characters give the impression of being decked in stage costumes; contrastingly, glittering, harlequin or mannequin-like figures are a source of putridity and rotting flesh, and the movements of dolls and cripples are rendered indistinguishable.

Like his characters and like the settings and stage props in the pantomimes, Dickens' physical surroundings undergo metamorphoses; Dickens endows both the most concrete details and the most whimsical imaginings with an equal reality. Thus Wholes' office in Bleak House is seen as:

Symond's Inn, Chancery Lane: a little, pale, wall-eyed, woebegone inn like a large dustbin of two compartments and a sifter. Mr. Wholes' office, in disposition retiring and in situation retired,
is squeezed up in a corner, and blinks at a dead wall. There is a loose outer surface of soot everywhere, and the dull cracked windows in their heavy frames have but one piece of character in them, which is a determination to be always dirty and always shut, unless coerced. This accounts for the phenomenon of the weaker of the two usually having a bundle of firewood stuck between its jaws in hot weather.27

Axton in Circle of Stage Fire, Dickens' Theatrical Vision* has made a detailed analysis of the verbal techniques underlying these grotesque transformations of settings. Axton's book implies that the figure of the clown is important on the stage and in Pickwick Papers, but he does not expand on the function of this grotesque character to the extent that Dickens' complex use of the figure deserves. And, in rejecting the thesis that the breaking down of formal structures, the dehumanizing of characters and the animation of objects represents a vision of an alienated world and displacement of power from people to objects, he is failing to account for the fact that in many of Dickens' works the people do abdicate their powers and responsibilities to the object world or, on the other hand, make the objects of their environment tools for their manipulation of others.

*Axton sees the theatre's grotesqueness and Dickens' recreation of it as limited to the incongruity of the transformations and the counterpointing of music, dialogue and extravagant tableaux that give an effect called burlesquerie by Axton, and described by Dickens as resembling the streaky layers in a side of bacon. The pantomime techniques and images in Dickens' works are seen mainly as convenient tools for fictionally staging the real world as a 'pantomime in mufti,' for renewing the audience's or reader's perceptions by deliberate theatricality in the form of humorous grotesque incongruities. For Axton the transformations highlight the moral value of the things transformed, but the fact of transformation in itself seems to bear no meaning.
A number of characters who, for want of a better term, I shall call the clown-figures, and who include people like Quilp, Swiveller, and Jenny Wren, seek to absorb their whole environment inside themselves. Furthermore they are the initiators of unanticipated and meaningless confusion, since they deliberately break down constructed or abstract patterns of organization.

In seeking to absorb their environment they are in no way like Mr. Pickwick in his desire to see and experience the world. Their perception and absorption is highly sensual. It is bored by a wisdom that approaches the world with preconceived constructs; the clown's intelligence is of the sort nurtured in young Weller by his father:

'I know a young'un as hasn't had a half nor quarter your eddication—-as hasn't slept about the markets, no, nor six months—-who'd ha' scorned to be let in, in such a vay.'

Their approach is repeated in the imprisoned cobbler who treats the four legs of his table as a quite adequate four-poster bed. His creative manipulation of a disastrous environment, which is repeated in Rigaud in *Little Dorrit*, is a truly clown-like function. In Dick Swiveller, even in Quilp with his hideously comic transformations of his surroundings, there is less raison d'être for this fancifying:

'It was not precisely the kind of weather in which people usually take tea in summer houses, far less in summer houses in an advanced state of decay.'

The natural clown is the one who finds logic, even logical fancies like Kit's imagining of a fairy tale second world (see Chapter
II), in need of overhaul without requiring any social reason for his destructiveness or personal re-creation. It is this spirit which permeates the pantomime humour, and that of the traditional nursery rhymes, this spirit which can co-exist quite happily with a state of total uncertainty, which finds destruction of logic, reduction of the material world solely to its sensual characteristics, colours, textures, sounds, and the re-creation of new forms as the only bases for creative freedom, even when the result is 'nonsense.'

For the clown an object has no power outside of its own unique nature and the aesthetic characteristics of that that allow him to manipulate it. Yet at the same time the uniqueness of its nature has an overwhelming power in that it is the only ultimate reality. So the clown's greatest delight is in his mimetic powers, or in the mimetic powers themselves, since they reinforce but enrich his perception of uniqueness through the almost spiritual experience of 'recognition.'

Look at Figure 35, the poster of Grimaldi and his grotesque creation, the fruit and vegetable man. For me, these figures are the archetypal grotesque images of the pantomime that Dickens absorbed into his own work: the clown, who is grotesque in himself, and the grotesque creation, a product of the clown's mind. In the former the clown, a human man, has become his fantastical theatrical costume, his humanity has not been diminished but he has become transmuted into a bizarre sensual spirit that resembles a man-made representation of a man, a toy, a child, a fairy, a shadow of man in his many dream forms. In the latter we have a typical creation of the clown mentality, seeing no
need to accept inanimate functions as being permanently defined (Why can a turnip not be a head?), yet delighting in mimicry.

The works of Fuseli, Piranesi and Goya mentioned earlier bridge the gap to another art form that was a fertile source of grotesque images in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This is the gothic novel. The popularity of this genre was initiated by Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764). From 1770 to 1820 numerous novels and tales of this species were published, and were devoured by the reading public. The majority are quite unknown today; the most commonly heard of being Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1795), Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). Yet in themselves, in the intensity and complexity of the emotions they dissect, and for their obvious effect on nineteenth-century artists, both in England and on the continent, the gothic novels deserve much due.

The usual accoutrements of the plots of the novels were a mediaeval setting, haunted castles, monasteries that doubled as prisons, supernatural beings—particularly devils—and instruments of torture. Yet more than in plot their similarity to each other exists in their psychological preoccupations; the mental torture of the outcast, the effects of spiritual and physical imprisonment (particularly within a massive stone edifice with tortuous underground tunnels), the power of deprivation in engendering furious uncontrollable passions (*Frankenstein's* monster, Ambrosio in *The Monk*, Monçada in *Melmoth*), a voluptuous fascination with the suffering of the innocent, an ambivalent but
intrigued attitude towards the existence of the supernatural, much puzzling over the nature of evil and pacts with the devil, and a consequent regard for the way in which appearance reflects moral character.

Because most of these themes preoccupied Dickens, and because they are an obvious source of visual images that are grotesque, they demand deeper examination.

Original gothic art developed in a culture whose very social order was seen as part of a religious order and for which both the angelic and the diabolic actually did exist. The gothic novelists could make no such claim, and they frequently felt compelled to dismiss the value of their own creations. It follows that the type of grotesques produced by such works would be totally different in kind from those of original gothic art. That which rendered the mediaeval devils grotesque was that which made them comic, that which made them abnormal religious figures, endowed with human frailty. In an era such as that in which the gothic novels were written, an era in which the existence of demons is questioned, the imaginative leap to be made would be to depict the very existence of the devil, not to accept his existence as natural and depict him and his minions as human. It is not the human or quixotic nature of the religious and the supernatural that will be represented, but the inhuman, almost supernatural power and uncontrollability of human actions and passions.

With Mrs. Radcliffe this uneasiness with respect to the supernatural takes the form of accounting rationally for all apparently fantastical occurrences. Thus at the end of The Mysteries of Udolpho the
music that haunts the chateau is explained as being that of Laurentini wandering in the woods. The ghostly figure in the recess behind the black veil is not a worm-eaten corpse but a wax replica. Lewis does not have the same scruples as Mrs. Radcliffe about introducing the fantastic; the existence of the demons in The Monk reinforcing the psychological situation, and having spiritual if not rational raison d'être. However the intensely complex self-analyses that the characters subject themselves to or are subjected to by the narrator in both The Monk and Melmoth lead one to recognize that the supernatural presences, in fact much of the material environment, are primarily manifestations of psychological realities.

The most powerful theme in all the novels mentioned except Otranto is imprisonment. In The Mysteries of Udolpho Emily is imprisoned by a psychopath within an apparently haunted castle, and in Frankenstein the monster's sensitive and sociable spirit is imprisoned within his totally repulsive body. The most recurrent form of imprisonment is in a cloister, as an unwilling monk or nun. Even in Otranto there are glimmerings of this hideous punishment, and in Melmoth and The Monk the concept takes over the novels.

Definitely this imprisonment stands to a large degree for the role any repressive social environment or authority inflicts on the free and searching human spirit, and for the tortuous shapes the passions assume when they are trapped in this fashion. The lengthy manner in which Monçada describes his imprisonment, for instance, is a verbal representation of the twisted, irrelevant and unprogressive
agonies that the mind inflicts on itself when it is permitted no outlet for its energy.

The concept of imprisonment within a cloister is a curious one, because a desire to escape implies a desire not to spend one's life doing service for the ultimate good, the love of God. This rejection of what is socially recognized as good, a rejection which can also involve breaking vows, even if they were vows imposed upon one as a child, breeds guilt and self-hatred, since the prisoner should in fact honour the prison he is in. The cloister-prison reveals itself as the perfect metaphor for dictatorial but apparently benevolent authority, whether it be a repressive social structure or a rigid super-ego.

Out of this theme of imprisonment grow several motifs common to the gothic novels. These include the physical appearance of the prison, the extreme and obsessive way in which the captives view their relationship with people both inside and outside the prison, and the relationship with devil-figure that offers release.

In *Opium and the Romantic Imagination* Alethea Hayter examines the imagery of literature written in the nineteenth century by artists who were known users of opium. One of the recurring images she discovers is the 'sunken city,' a self-contained city whose buildings form an overpowering architectural vision, quite isolated from the natural world.

Two attributes of this image have relevance for the gothic novels. The first is the inconstant aesthetic and moral nature of the image. Sometimes it is a thing of almost perfect beauty, as in Kubla
Khan, created however from hard, glittering inhuman surfaces, ice, jewels and the like. At other times it is a subterranean prison city, full of dark, maze-like passages, vaults and locked doors. According to Hayter the image seemed to assume different shapes according to the length of time the artist had been using opium and the dependency which he had built up. As the artist's addiction developed, what had been an exquisite vision of beauty began to transform itself and assume emotional overtones of oppressiveness. Gradually its appearance too would change and it would look and feel like both a material and emotional prison. In terms of a relationship to the material world, this transformation of image is not uncommon, and not restricted to the intense form it takes under drug hallucinations. Every attempt to construct and maintain perfection in the form of an external environment or structure can breed after a time feelings of sterility and enclosure. The second point of interest is that two of the artists, Coleridge and De Quincey, themselves found a visual representation of their hallucinations in Piranesi's series of drawings, the 'Carceri' (1741, 1765). These (see Figure 38) are of gigantic stone edifices with terrifying iron ladders between stories, enclosed passages and balconies, exotic instruments of torture, and trapped people wandering incommunicado. Now considering that there is no record of the major gothic novelists experimenting with opium, the frequency with which fictional variations of Piranesi-type architecture appear in these novels is remarkable.

The hallways, secret rooms, locked towers and covered recesses of Udolpho were succeeded by the monastic cells, the madhouse and
Inquisition prisons of *Melmoth*, and by the underground sepulchre that joins the convent of St. Clare and the monastery of St. Francis in *The Monk*, which houses a murder, an incestuous rape, and the appearance of a fallen angel. Within this subterranean burying ground is the cavernous dungeon which can be entered only through a fake statue containing a trap door, and in which Agnes' baby is born and dies.

The birth and monstrous death of Agnes' baby becomes therefore a powerful grotesque image of these abortive gestures towards freedom,

It soon became a mass of putridity, to every eye was a loathsome and disgusting object; to every eye but a mother's. . . . Hour after hour have I passed upon my sorry couch, contemplating what had once been my child. I endeavoured to retrace its features through the livid corruption with which they were overspread.30

In other words, the scenes of passionate activity almost always occur within these enclosed spaces. Now whether these actions and emotional tempests represent the unconscious or merely a certain freedom for action, it is obvious that in the world of the gothic novel the outlets for such are stopped up and the passions are forced to wander fearfully along dark, maze-like tunnels and passage-ways.

In darkness, in total darkness, and on my hands and knees, for I could no longer stand, I followed him. . . . He growled a curse, and I instinctively quickened my movements, . . . My habit was now in rags from my struggles, my knees and hands stript of skin. I had received several severe bruises on my head, from striking against the jagged and unhewn stones which formed the irregular sides and roof of this eternal passage.31

or at a later time,

I am convinced, that, had the passage been as long and intricate as any that ever an antiquarian pursued to discover the tomb of
Cheops in the Pyramids, I would have rushed on in blindness and desperation, till famine or exhaustion compelled me to pause.32

As early as Otranto this role of maze-like passages was anticipated in Mathilda's escape from the castle via the vaults, and in the connecting caves in which she hides outside the castle.

For Dickens also imprisonment is an important motif, starting with the prisoners in the little tales in Pickwick Papers, in Mr. Pickwick's imprisonment, in Manette's being buried alive, in the central image of Little Dorrit, and even in the maze-like fashion in which the connections in a novel like Bleak House are tied together. Yet it is not until his very last novel, The Mystery of Edwin Drood, that Dickens senses the power that can grow from developing a physical projection for the state of spiritual imprisonment. That novel, as will be seen in Chapter IV, revolves around a gothic cathedral and a series of stony vaults that serve as literal and fanciful prisons for the characters. The characters' behaviour is determined for them by the hard exteriors they bear, either literally like Durdles with his stone grit, or metaphorically attributed to them by the narrator.

That a wall or a building can be an apt metaphor for a trained pattern of behaviour is revealed in fanciful form in Our Mutual Friend in the description of Headstone's mind:

He could do mental arithmetic mechanically, sing at sight mechanically, blow various wind instruments mechanically. ... From his early childhood up, his mind had been a place of mechanical stowage. The arrangement of his wholesale warehouse, so that it might be always ready to meet the demands of retail dealers--history here, geography there, astronomy to the right, political economy to the
left—natural history, the physical sciences, figures, music, the lower mathematics, and what not, all in their several places—this care had imparted to his countenance a look of care; . . . He always seemed to be uneasy lest anything should be missing from his mental warehouse, and taking stock to assure himself. . . . Yet there was enough of what was animal, and of what was fiery, still visible in him . . . \textsuperscript{33}

This image, though not particularly grotesque, draws on the two artistic sources common in Gillray's work—it employs the 'fantastic' concept of physical structures symbolizing the workings of a mind, and it uses the comic exaggeration of the caricature that renders men and states into objects.

Within the trapped mental states of the characters in both the gothic novels and in Dickens' work, the characters visualize each other in an extreme, obsessive fashion, and there is a violent inconstancy about their responses to each other. Thus Frankenstein's monster, trapped within his fleshy prison, exclaims:

\begin{quotation}
Was man, indeed, at once so powerful, so virtuous and magnificent, yet so vicious and base? He appeared at one time a mere scion of the evil principle, and at another as all that can be conceived of as noble and godlike. To be a great and virtuous man appeared the highest honour that can befall a sensitive being; to be base and vicious, as many on record have been, appeared the lowest degradation, a condition more abject than that of the blind mole or harmless worm.\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quotation}

A mind subject to such idealism is a potential victim of grotesque hallucinations as he tries to balance in his mind two such contradictory visions, the grotesque being so closely allied with the double-face and the transformation of form.

Concurrently with an extravagant image of other people goes the
granting to them of great powers over oneself because of their image. Thus while Mathilda first holds for Ambrosio the position of a Madonna whose portrait he worships, she soon assumes the figure of harlot. But correspondingly with Mathilda's becoming a prostitute in his eyes, he finds himself uncontrollably under the power of a figure of utter innocence, Antonia:

The monk retired to his cell, whither he was pursued by Antonia's image... how enchanting was the timid innocence of her eyes! and how different from the wanton expression, the wild luxurious fire, which sparkles in Mathilda's! Oh! sweeter must one kiss be, snatched from the rosy lips of the first, than all the full and lustful favours bestowed so freely by the second.35

The power of her image which causes him to kill and rape her is an almost hypnotic power, though Antonia has no conception that she exercises it. Monçada also attributes an overwhelming mental power over himself to someone else's image. There can be no rational reason for the mental agony he undergoes at the idea of sharing his escape with a parricide,

'To him! Oh, my God! what I felt when I said this to myself! The conviction thrilled on my soul,—I am in his power.'36

The fear reveals perhaps his dark alter ego, his shadow personality and the lack of control he feels he exercises in accompanying the brutal character, and which the man plays upon by suggesting their equal guilt as parricides.

The images that offer release from the constricting structures, the free spirits outside the prisons, usually take the shape of devil
figures, or else of men who have sold their soul to the devil, like the Wandering Jew and Melmoth.

The figure of Lucifer in *The Monk* has many artistic ancestors, in the gargoyles, in the Temptations of St. Anthony, in Milton's Satan, but his grotesque power is nonetheless from the common image of a man with the attributes of a beast.

The two sides of the devil in *The Monk* give physical form to the preoccupation with duality that harasses the characters. As Ambrosio becomes most preoccupied with the sacrificial appearance of his image when his inner self is deeply involved in indulgence of the senses, so the devil reflects the two sides of 'evil,' almost innocently exquisite beauty in the fallen angel and a repulsive physical ugliness in Lucifer. But this beauty, though approaching perfection of form, is cold, depends on inanimate things like jewels and coloured fire:

It was a youth scarce eighteen, the perfection of whose form and face was unrivalled. He was perfectly naked: a bright star sparkled upon his forehead, two crimson wings extended themselves from his shoulders, and his silken locks were confined by a band of many-coloured fires, which played round his head, formed themselves into a variety of figures, and shone with a brilliance far surpassing that of precious stones. Circlets of diamonds were fastened round his arms and ankles, and in his right hand he bore a silver branch imitating myrtle...37

On the other hand, the sublime ugliness of Lucifer reflects intense animal passions:

A swarthy darkness spread itself over his gigantic form: his hands and feet were armed with long talons. Fury glared in his eyes, which might have struck the bravest heart with terror. Over his huge shoulders waved two enormous sable wings: and his hair was supplied by living snakes, which twined themselves round his brows with frightful hissings.38
The Bleeding Nun (*The Monk*), though she is said to actually exist, seems like a projection of Agnes. The idea of Lorenzo grasping her in his arms as his blooming bride, and discovering he is holding the corpse of a bleeding nun, an almost perfect image of sterility, seems to suggest that age-old fear of transformation, of sure things uncontrollably changing form. At the same time she could represent one of the negative faces of Lorenzo's anima archetype of which Agnes represents a positive image. Or, since Agnes does become a nun, and like the spectre, breaks her vow of chastity, she could be just a mocking figure of fate mimicking Agnes' future troubles.

Like the two sides of Lucifer, the coldly inanimate and the repulsively bestial, Agnes' stone prison brings into being ugly animal figures with grotesque characteristics. Her baby was mentioned as an expression of the deforming of her own life forces. But the prison itself seems to taunt her with the nature of these forces in the shape of reptile tormentors:

> I felt the bloated toad, hideous and pampered with the poisonous vapours of the dungeon, dragging his loathsome length along my bosom. Sometimes the quick cold lizard roused me, leaving his slimy track upon my face, and entangling itself in the tresses of my wild and matted hair.\(^{39}\)

This union of cold, stony or lifeless images with repulsive but powerful bestial ones exists also in *Frankenstein*, where the monster with his gross physicality exiles himself to the ice and snow bound mountains and Arctic regions.

This juxtaposing of such images is very frequent in Dickens'
noveis. In *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Nell, who is morbidly fascinated by old grey, churches, so much so that she becomes a cemetery custodian, flees Quilp's ugly animality. In *Great Expectations*, as numerous critics have noted, Estella, 'star,' and the dog-like convict, Magwitch, are juxtaposed, and Miss Havisham's power comes from the mingling of the cold purity of a bride's costume with her decayed flesh. In *A Tale of Two Cities*, Lucy stands in the snow terrified by what are for her the bestial dances of the revolutionaries. In *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens' most powerful grotesque images are a counterpointing of exquisite objects and images from children's literature with the bestial forces of the river people. In *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, Dickens analyzes in depth the function of stony prison-like structures and the forces they breed.

In *Melmoth the Wanderer* two powerful grotesques from *Our Mutual Friend* are anticipated. In the latter, grotesque deformity (in this case, a part of the body having life separate from the rest of the body) implies passion; Bradley Headstone is described

seamed with jealousy and anger, and torturing himself with the conviction that he showed it all and they exulted in it, he went by them in the dark, like a haggard head suspended in the air: so completely did the force of his expression cancel his figure.40

Monçada views the parricide who leads him through the underground vaults in a similar manner:

The light fell only on his face and one hand, which he extended towards me. The rest of his body, enveloped in darkness, gave to this bodyless and spectre head an effect truly appalling.41
Venus' shop with its articulated skeletons, bottled embryos and smiling stuffed alligator is anticipated in the old Jew's underground laboratory:

around the room were placed four skeletons, not in cases but in a kind of upright coffin, that gave their bony emptiness a kind of ghastly and imperative prominence, as if they were the real and rightful tenants of that singular apartment! Interspersed between them were the stuffed figures of animals I knew not then the names of,—an alligator—some gigantic bones, which I took for those of Sampson, . . . Then I saw figures smaller, but not less horrible,—human and brute abortions, in all their states of anomalous and deformed construction, not preserved in spirits, but standing in the ghastly nakedness of their white diminutive bones, these I conceived to be the attendant imps of some infernal ceremony, . . .

These figures and Venus' articulated skeletons function with a similar purpose. They are mimic fools of a particularly gruesome nature. As the old Jew says,

These be the skeletons of bodies, but in the den thou has escaped from were the skeletons of perished souls. Here are relics of the wrecks or the caprices of nature, but thou art come from where the cruelty of man . . . hath never failed to leave the proofs of its power in abortive intellects, crippled frames, distorted creeds, and ossified hearts.

In *Our Mutual Friend* the skeletons serve as mimics of the crippled minds and hearts of London society, but it will be interesting to see whether Dickens applies a moral value to the grotesque skeletons themselves, the "skeletons of bodies," and to the grotesque figures who in general play the role of mimics.

The popular art form that seems to have done even more than the gothic novel towards shaping Dickens' grotesque vision is that of children's literature. The imagery of stories, rhymes and illustrations
that Dickens re-used, either unchanged or grotesquely transformed, suggest that he retained a child's visual perception of the world. Dickens is quoted as stating:

>If we all knew our own minds (in a more enlarged sense than the popular acceptance of that phrase), I suspect we should find our nurse responsible for most of the dark corners that we are forced to go back to against our wills.44

Prior to the nineteenth century, The Arabian Nights and the tales of Charles Perrault were the only literary forms of the fairy tale found in England. In 1823 Grimm's Fairy Tales appeared and in 1846 Hans Christian Andersen was translated. The adult Victorian was very ambivalent about the value of the traditional fairy tale, fearing that they would prevent the child from distinguishing between illusion and reality and resenting the fact that they did not teach a useful lesson. Dickens publicly praised the foreign fairy tales for what he felt was their particular moral value:

>It would be hard to estimate the amount of gentleness and mercy that has made its way among us through these slight channels. Forbearance, courtesy, consideration for the poor and aged, kind treatment of animals, the love of nature, abhorrence of tyranny and brute force.45

Yet this statement ignores the native violence and grimness of the traditional folk tales.

Throughout the century there is a dual compulsion to use and become involved with the form of the fairy tale, and at the same time, to force it into an ethical mold. Tentatively it may be suggested that the adult Victorian found himself peculiarly susceptible to fairytale
fantasies. The use of magic to achieve one's ends reveals a desire for an essentially amoral existence—a situation where responsibility and guilt are non-existent, a state close to though not identical with the state of innocence, that presumably of the youngest readers. The writers both honoured and resented this desirable innocence of children, and sought to destroy it with a sense of morality.

Connected with the grotesque are the transformations caused by spells in the fairy tales, and the magical figures responsible for those spells.

It is within the framework of the transformation as one aspect of the Self or personality of the spell-bound victims that the fairy tales should be recognized. Occasionally this is explicitly recognized in the tales, as in Andersen's *The Marsh King's Daughter*:  

some magic power had a terrible hold over her. In the day time she was as beautiful as any fairy, but she had a bad wicked temper; at night on the other hand she became a hideous toad, quiet and pathetic with sad, mournful eyes. There were two natures in her, both continually shifting. The reason of it was that the little girl by day had her mother's form and her father's evil nature; but at night her kinship with him appeared in her outward form, and her mother's sweet nature and gentle spirit beamed out of the misshapen monster.

In *The Queen Bee* the people turned to marble by spell are those who have stone hearts already, and have refused pleas for help from the animals.

Like the trapped state of some of the characters in the gothic novels, the spell-bound state is often a manifestation of weakness, of the victim's being taken over and possessed by a passivity and inertia which has made them easy pawns of black forces of energy outside
themselves. The wizards and ogres of the tales are therefore energy figures, and their primary function is to render their victims immobile, passive, object-like. Thus when there is no grotesque transformation of appearance, there is often a change into a statue-like figure, as with Sleeping Beauty and Snow White.

Dickens will be seen to use the concept of spells in his preoccupation with hypnotic powers, and the frequency with which his more passive characters attribute such powers over them to others. Occasionally this unconscious choice to let oneself become spell-bound can involve, as will be seen in The Mystery of Edwin Drood, the adoption of a semi-grotesque statue-like appearance.

If a person is partially responsible for the physical transformations he undergoes, it could follow that, as in the gothic novels, he is also partially responsible for the image of the magic figure (witch, ogre, godmother) that is presented. This is reinforced by the ambivalent moral character often possessed by such figures, Rumplestiltskin, for instance, whose grotesquely impish appearance is truly an expression of his intangible character. He does the princess a great favour, and quite rightly demands payment. Any evil nature attributed to him grows out of the princess' reluctance to pay her dues, and her own feeling that she is being imposed upon. The princess' response to him anticipates Nell's attribution of a negative moral value to Quilp's ugliness and his power.

The grotesque in the fairy tales is usually associated with figures of power, or is a manifestation of the presence of power. For
instance, the witch in 'Jorinda and Jorindel' is described as "pale and meagre with great staring eyes and a nose and chin that almost join." Her ugliness bears no actual relationship to her talent for turning maidens into birds; it is mainly an expression of her unhampered power. When the grotesque appearance is associated with the hero, it is also a sign of power or occasionally of wisdom (Riquet with the Tuft). Thus in The Queen Bee the clever, good brother is a dwarf, and it is his alliance with the animal world that breaks the marble spell cast on his brothers. In Good Sultan the old dog extricates himself from an unmanageable situation through the grotesque appearance of the three-legged cat:

every time she limped, they thought she was picking up a stone to throw at them; so they said they should not like this way of fighting, and the boar lay down behind a bush, and the wolf jumped up into a tree.

In The Golden Goose Dumpling wins a princess for a wife because the comic grotesque appearance of the procession of people stuck to him is the only thing that can make her laugh.

The spell-breakers are also energy figures but their techniques for breaking spells take several forms. The first is that they themselves enter into an alliance with the grotesque or at least with beings, dwarfs, or beasts, of ambivalent moral value. In nearly every Grimm story the acquiring of magic powers by the hero or heroine is preceded by an alliance of this sort; and in many cases the predestined hero or heroine is distinguished from his lesser brothers or sisters by the fact that he agrees with blind faith to follow the advice of the fairy.
or theomorphic spirit. These pacts should not be seen as either escapism, innocence or naïveté; they are quite often a recognition that under certain blocked or impossible circumstances the only alternative is the undertaking of the unusual or apparently ludicrous, the opposite of what might be considered the normal solution.

Thus in *The Frog Bride* the youngest brother is offered a small piece of dirty linen by a frog:

> the prince was told to take it away with him. He had no great liking for such a dirty rag: but there was something in the frog's speech that pleased him much, and he thought to himself, 'It can do no harm, it is better than nothing.'

Of course it turns out to have magical properties that transform it into the most wonderfully fine cloth. In *Bearskin* the soldier uses similar reasoning and a willingness to risk his soul when he agrees to disguise himself in the bearskin for seven years.

If the spell-bound character has himself been rendered grotesque, then it becomes a prerequisite for the success of the hero or heroine to accept them in that state. For instance, in both *Beauty* and *The Beast* and *Bearskin* the brides agree to marry the suitors while knowing them only in their animal state.

The grotesque as a source of power and alliances with the grotesque to gain power exist in more naturalistic forms in Dickens' novels. The grotesque appearance of the figures with supernatural power finds expression in Dickens' novels in the interior vision held by his more passive characters of people who hold power, often only psychological, over them, and whose moral value is either negative or
ambivalent. Thus Nell is more preoccupied with Quilp's deformed ugliness than with his evil, Lucie sees the vitality and moral ambivalence of the full-blown revolutionaries as physically ugly, and Jasper is preoccupied by what he sees as the gargoyles-like ugliness of the Opium Woman.

Likewise, the fairy tale pacts with benevolent grotesques find form in Dickens' novels. In *The Old Curiosity Shop* many characters are dependent for their survival on their alliance with the grotesque in the form of puppets and freaks, and those such as Nell who reject such an alliance become 'losers.' In *A Tale of Two Cities* the Manettes are completely dependent on their grotesque servant, Miss Pross. Lizzie Hexam realizes that the source of her strength is her alliance with Jenny Wren and the bestial. Little Dorrit seems to find strength in her constant companionship with the mongoloid, Maggie.

Nonetheless, if the grotesques are one representation of power in the fairy tales, there is a second such focus of power in the tales, and it is of a very different nature. In many of the stories, probably a majority, spells are broken and magic powers are invoked through the intermediary of magic talismans—beautiful objects from the material world that possess supernatural powers. What they have in common are usually, but definitely not always, their beauty, their hardness, their roundness, the air they possess of self-containment. Thus in *Jorinda and Jorindel* Jorindel can step within the boundaries of the witch's spell-bound house only when he possesses a beautiful purple flower with a pearl at the centre. In *The Enchanted Beasts* the talisman is a round
white pebble. In one tale it is a blue light, in another a tinder box, in yet another a food grinder. Sometimes the hero is not gifted with the object but has to gain possession of it before he can release the spell-bound from their state.

The power possessed by such objects is made more comprehensible when we think of them all working essentially on the principle of Aladdin's lamp—the smooth, hard exterior only a container for the energy spirit contained within. Thus there are the Genie of the Ring in the Aladdin story and the black imp of the blue light in another Grimm's tale. A variation on the imagery is seen in Grimm's The White Snake in which a king, renowned for his wisdom is brought every evening a covered silver dish. Inside is a white snake which he eats; this act gives him the power of communicating with the animal world and in this way he has made his fortune. In certain tales, however, The Snow Queen and Dickens' The Mystery of Edwin Drood, for instance, it will be seen that the relationship of magical objects to the forces contained within can be more complex. Aside from that, it is remarkable how often Dickens' bourgeoisie ally themselves with objects which they expect to serve them as talismans, and which, uncannily often, bear strong physical resemblances to the fairy tale talismans.

In other children's literature of the time, the technique and obsessions of many writers indicate a very ambivalent attitude towards children--and hence towards the state of innocence--which Dickens seems to have shared.* In the 1820's and 1830's British writers started to

*See bibliography for list of nineteenth century children's books consulted. Early editions of these books are found in the Marion Thompson Collection, Vancouver Public Library.
create 'fairy tales with a purpose' of which it has been said:

two of the most unattractive features of the nineteenth century fairy tales [were] the tendency to gloat over the physically grotesque, and a determined insistence on punishment.51

This use of the grotesque as a tool of authority for punishing misbehaviour against the social order is seen in Struwwelpeter (Figures 36 and 37), published in 1844, translated into English in 1848. Other gleeful verses tell of Sugary Tom, a glutton who turned into sugar and melted, and a nightwandering child who was transformed into a bat. In Little Red Shoes the small girl who disobeys her blind grandfather and spontaneously buys red shoes instead of black is forced to dance until her feet are cut off and replaced by wooden ones. In Pinocchio, written in Italian ten years after Dickens' death but very much in the tradition, the mutilations that occur to him for misbehaving are having his feet burnt off, having his nose grow long each time he tells a lie, being turned into an ass for not going to school, and being threatened with being skinned alive. The implication seems to be that the physically mutilated or grossly ugly have disobeyed the rules of society, and are also morally deficient. However, concurrently, a figure like Pinocchio, a puppet who serves as a mimic fool, embodying in his appearance the spiritual assaults and batterings a human boy undergoes in growing up and being scourged into conformity, turns back on his oppressors and with the perceptual power of a child turns the ugliness of his mutilations into a weapon. He seems to have deliberately undergone the mutilations in order to turn himself into a grotesque torturer
who in his anarchic ugliness taunts the rigidity and fears of his oppressor with that same lack of respect for the appearances and rules of society which had caused the latter to inflict punishment in the first place.

Grotesque imagery, not however employed for moral purposes, was common in the nursery rhymes. The comic songs, vendors' calls, and political satires of the previous two centuries, as well as many verses created by nurses to amuse children, had by the early nineteenth century received literary form. The earliest published nursery rhymes were Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book of 1744, Mother Goose's Melodies of 1760 with a preface by Goldsmith, and Gammer Gurton's Garland of 1784. By the early nineteenth century most of the common rhymes had been published.

These rhymes embody powerful attacks against authority, aesthetic ideals, and the dominance of logic. Their basic tone is a humorous geniality. They may express self-evident propositions, a mockery of high-sounding, manipulative uses of logic:

Little Jack Jingle
He used to live single
But when he got tired of this kind of life
He left off being single, and lived with his wife. 52

or folk wisdom:

The north wind doth blow
And we shall have snow
And what will the robin do then
Poor thing? 53
Most often they are vignettes, genre pieces:

Cheese and bread for gentlemen
Hay and corn for horses
A cup of ale for good old wives
And kisses for young lasses.

The dominant characteristic of the rhymes is a fascination with rhythm and rhyme, and logical meaning is often subordinated to these; thus the frequency of one or two nonsense lines at the beginning or a nonsense refrain:

Hey diddle dinkety, poppety pet,
The merchants of London they wear scarlet.

Diddle, diddle dumpling, my son John,
Went to bed with his trousers on.

This sensual delight is carried over into the visual images and other sensual properties of the objects described. This can be seen in the following old rhyme in which the refrain reveals an equal pleasure in the musical qualities of words and in evoking the taste or scent or texture of the objects they describe.

Can you make me a cambric shirt,
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
Without any seam or needle work?
And you shall be a true lover of mine.

Can you reap it with a sickle of leather,
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme,
And bind it up in a peacock's feather?
And you shall be a true lover of mine.

This delight with the material world, with comic possible situations,
The man in the wilderness asked me,
How many strawberries grew in the sea?
I answered him, as I thought good,
As many as red herrings grew in the wood.

develops into devising comic impossible situations, variations on the usual relationship between objects,

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe
Who had so many children she didn't know what to do

If all the world was apple-pie
And all the sea was ink
And all the trees were bread and cheese
What could we do for drink?

Dickens seems to have absorbed their penchant for mingling people, animals, and inanimate objects within one fantasy environment:

Hey diddle diddle
The cat and the fiddle
The cow jumped over the moon
The little dog laughed
To see such sport
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

or for incorporating the most fanciful with the most mundane,

The man in the moon
Came tumbling down
And asked his way to Norwich
He went by the south
And burnt his mouth
With supping hot pease porridge.

If they sometimes threaten frightening retribution, it is hardly for the sins that the moralists worried about,

*"it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill. Smoke . . . with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snowflakes—gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun." (Bleak House, Ch. I, p. 1)
Tell Tale Spit
Your tongue shall be slit
And all the Dogs
Shall have a Bit.63

Dickens was not the only mid-century Victorian fascinated with the nursery rhyme grotesque vision of the object world coming to life. Alice in Wonderland in large part revolves around the antics of those haughty playing cards,

The Queen of Hearts
She baked some tarts
All on a summer's day
The Knave of Hearts
He stole those tarts
And took them clean away.64

Yet while, throughout most of the tale, Carroll lets the Cards carry out their fantastic ritual, lets them assume the shapes of certain black forces in his and Alice's minds, still, in this dream-world we never quite lose sight of the fact that the whole experience is a mental game with terror, an aesthetic counterpart to the mathematical puzzles that delighted Carroll, and that Alice will not finally become the masochistic victim of the hypnotic forces she projects into the world outside herself. At the crucial moment Alice is thoroughly capable of saying "You're nothing but a pack of cards,"65 and the fantastic game is revealed to have been nothing more than that.

Like Alice, the nursery rhymes have no trouble confronting death and violence. The almost ritual death of Cock Robin is carried out with loving dignity,*

*It has been suggested that this old rhyme was indeed originally linked to seasonal rites celebrating the dying of the summer.
Who killed Cock Robin?
'I' said the sparrow, 'with my little bow and arrow,
I killed Cock Robin.'

'Who saw him die?'
'I' said the fly, 'with my little eye,
I saw him die.'

Yet two obvious attributes of the rhymes that occupied Dickens' imagination also are anthropomorphism and an obsession with food. The former is not identical with employing an animal fable to illustrate a moral; it does not reinforce the essential animal traits but rather, endows the creatures with human personalities. Originally this may have been a fanciful technique for domesticating the fierce aspects of the animal world. Animals must be decked out, as in Alice in Wonderland (1865) with top hats and pocket watches (Carroll is actually not guilty of the coyness that permeated later works such as the Peter Rabbit tales; his animals are always a source of intense passion, and in fact, fantastic dream creatures), or conversely, as in Dickens, may exist only in the comic animal aspects of Perker, Snubbin, Miss Flite, Miss Pross—"an unruly charger in harness of string." In children's literature this form of the grotesque can be charming fantasy. In an adult it is reflective of a severe alienation from the sources of animal power that are part of our nature. It is an asexual vision which seeks for entertainment in the eccentricities, idiosyncrasies and deformities of people who have also had their basic animal nature destroyed or twisted.

Animals as toy-figures, children as fey, the moments of greatest enjoyment invariably feasts (Herbert and 'Handel's' feast in Great
Expectations, Bella and John's engagement—the 'Feast of the Three Hob-goblins'—in Our Mutual Friend), and a cast of prettiness over all; this was a minor strain in the nursery rhymes, yet one that Dickens seems to have absorbed and made his own. Particularly in Bleak House and Great Expectations he draws upon images from the nursery rhymes and children's literature for his idyllic scenes. Dickens in fact shares, or in many cases, anticipates, a general fascination with the quaint idyllicism that can be read into the rhymes—the whole exquisite tradition of little mice and rabbits dressed up in aprons and spectacles that was indulged in by Beatrix Potter (Figure 41) and many later writers, and which led to the creation in the 1890's of such toy figures as Teddy Bear, and to occurrences such as the première of James Barrie's Peter Pan (1904) when an adult audience burst out clapping at Peter Pan's plea for faith in fairies.

The rhymes that illustrate most clearly the strain I am talking are ones like the following:

I saw a ship a-sailing
A-sailing on the sea,
And oh it was all laden
With pretty things for thee.

There were comfits in the cabin
And apples in the hold
The sails were made of silk
And the masts were all of gold

The four and twenty sailors
That stood between the decks
Were four and twenty white mice
With chains about their necks.
Ginny, goosey, gander,
Where shall I wander?
Up stairs, down stairs,
And in my lady's chamber:
There I met an old man,
Who would not say his prayers;
Take him by the left leg,
Throw him down the stairs.

41. Beatrix Potter
40. Kate Greenaway
42. Ralph Caldecott
The captain was a duck
With a packet on his pack
And when the ship began to move
The captain said, Quack, Quack!

This rhyme reminds one of Walter Crane's illustration of the white mice loading a nutshell with almonds, and has a successor in Walter de la Mare's *Ships of Yule*. But Dickens anticipated both in *Our Mutual Friend* in the scene where Bella, the Boofer Lady, and her clerk-father Pa, alias the Cherub, watch the boats on the Thames:

Now, Pa, in the character of owner of a lumbering square-sailed collier, was tacking away to Newcastle, to fetch black diamonds to make his fortune with . . . that ship being towed out by a steam-tug? Well! where did you suppose she was going to? She was going out among the coral reefs and cocoanuts and that sort of thing, and she was chartered to a fortunate individual of the name of Pa . . . and she was going, for his sole profit and adventure, to fetch a cargo of sweet-smelling woods, the most beautiful that ever were seen, . . . the lovely woman who had purchased her and fitted her expressly for this voyage, being married to an Indian Prince who was a Something-or-Other; and who wore Cashmere shawls all over himself, and diamonds and emeralds blazing in his turban, and was beautifully coffee-coloured and excessively devoted.

The great exponents of this grotesquerie of innocence ("the toys were yet grouped as the children had left them . . . and in their innocent grotesqueness and incongruity, they might have stood for the children's dreams"—*Our Mutual Friend*, Bk.2, Ch.9) were the illustrators. Of these the three most famous were Walter Crane (1846-1886), Ralph Caldecott (1845-1915), and Kate Greenaway (1846-1891). Compare their work to that of Tenniel's Jabberwock designed for *Alice's Adventures Through the Looking Glass* (Figures 39-42), a truly grotesque dream figure which succeeds in confronting the fearsome and the intangible by
giving it visual form. The later illustrators avoid any such confrontation with or even recognition of the dark forces. Like one face of Dickens, they recreate from the nursery rhymes and children's literature a world of unnatural innocence as their own personal image of goodness, even perfection, such as we see in Greenaway's drawing of the giant shoe that houses the Old Woman, Caldecott's animated dish and spoon, eloping together, Crane's illustrations of Don Quixote in exquisite violets, blues, and apple greens.

Having set the stage for Dickens' works both in terms of a tradition of recurring grotesque images in western European popular art, and in terms of grotesque images and techniques common to the contemporary folk culture, it now becomes possible to use these images as tools for analyzing some of the novels, in particular, The Old Curiosity Shop, Our Mutual Friend, and The Mystery of Edwin Drood, and for determining what grotesque patterns develop and what particular meaning Dickens seems to attribute to such patterns.
FOOTNOTES


3 Ruskin, p. 126.


6 Illustrations 1-13 are reprinted from Thomas Wright, *History of Caricature and the Grotesque* (New York: Frederick Ungar, reprint 1968). The original sources of Wright's illustrations are:
   1. engraved gem, reproduced from Dissertatio de Larvis Scenicis, Ficoroni, 1754. Ficoroni's book is source material for both Wright and Allardyce Nicoll. It is an interesting storehouse of information on Roman masked figures. There is a copy in the Main Library, University of British Columbia.
   2. engraved onyx, same source.
   3. wall painting, Temple of Venus, Pompeii. A common method of visual satire among the Romans, these dwarfs are really midgets with the heads of comparative giants on minute bodies. Unless there are normal humans for comparison, the artist tends to make any dwarfish humans midget-like if he is seeking a grotesque effect. This is a technique in much later caricature and one which Daumier, Dickens' contemporary, relied on frequently.
   4. Cathedral of Wells.
   5. mural by William of Cologne, in Cathedral of Treves, fifteenth century.
   6. Queen Mary's Psalter, manuscript in British Museum.
   7. from stall in Church of Nantwich, Cheshire. Reformation satirists drew on a mediaeval tradition of animal carvings satirizing the clergy (as in this illustration) in designing popular woodcuts such as the Pope-ass and the Monk-calf.
   8. carvings in St. Leven, Cornwall, near Land's End.
   9. engraved plate by Breughel.
   10. from series of prints on Pride, Sloth, etc., by Breughel.


9 Wright, p. 70.


11 The Old Curiosity Shop, Ch. IV, p. 35.

12 Charles Dickens, Pickwick Papers (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1944), Ch. II, p. 9. Hereinafter cited as PP.

13 PP, Ch. XII, p. 136.


15 PP, Ch. XXXII, p. 372.

16 PP, Ch. VI, p. 61.

17 PP, Ch. XII, p. 171.

18 PP, Ch. XI, p. 122.

19 PP, Ch. XXI, p. 246.

20 PP, Ch. XLII, p. 508.

21 PP, Ch. XLIX, p. 586.


23 Wilson, p. 23.

24 Wilson, p. 23.


26 PP, Ch. XXIII, p. 321.

28 PP, Ch. II, p. 11.
29 The Old Curiosity Shop, Ch. LI, p. 381.
31 Robert Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer, Vol. 2 (London: R. Bentley and Sons, 1892), Ch. 8, p. 39.
32 Maturin, Vol. 2, Ch. 13, p. 158.
35 Lewis, Ch. VI, p. 243.
36 Maturin, Vol. 2, Ch. 8, p. 23.
37 Lewis, Ch. VII, p. 273.
38 Lewis, Ch. XII, p. 412.
39 Lewis, Ch. XI, p. 395.
40 Our Mutual Friend, Bk. 3, Ch. 10, p. 521.
42 Maturin, Vol. 2, Ch. 13, p. 159.
43 Maturin, Vol. 2, Ch. 13, p. 165.
45 Charles Dickens, "Frauds on Fairies," Household Words (Oct. 1, 1853).
46 One children's story of the time, George MacDonald's The Lost Princess (1875), comes vividly to mind as a link between the spell-caused transformations of the fairy tales and the duality of many gothic novel characters.


52-64 All nursery rhymes taken from The Annotated Mother Goose (Clarkson: N. Potter Inc., 1962).

65 Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland (Norwich: Fletcher and Sons Ltd., 1965), Ch. 12, p. 133.

66 Mother Goose.


68 Mother Goose.

69 Our Mutual Friend, Bk. 2, Ch. VIII, p. 306.
CHAPTER II

THE BOURGEOIS AND THE CLOWN: The Old Curiosity Shop

(with references to A Tale of Two Cities)

In Chapter I a similarity between The Old Curiosity Shop and Victor Hugo's Notre Dame de Paris was suggested. In fact, Hugo has analyzed the nature of the grotesque in terms which seem particularly applicable to this Dickens novel, especially with regard to the idea that a deformed appearance implies spiritual deformity. For him grotesques are chaotic, demonic, anarchic images which are the opposite of the sublime, and a prerequisite for comprehending it:

le grotesque soit un temps d'arrêt, un terme de comparison, un point de départ d'où l'on s'élève vers le beau. . . . Le salamandre fait ressortir l'ondine; le gnome embellit le sylphe.²

For Hugo the folktale, 'Beauty and Beast,' shows how the popular mind grasped this conception in archetypal terms. Critics have already mentioned that this tale seems applicable to the relationship between Quilp and Nell, and it seems even more fitting for the situation of Quasimodo and Esmeralda in Notre Dame de Paris. In describing the perceptions and reasoning of his deformed anti-hero, Hugo provides a fictional framework for the ideas he expressed in the 'Preface.' It will be interesting to discover whether Dickens attributes the same characteristics to the mind of his monster-figure, Quilp, to see the extent

*This analysis is found in the 'Preface' to his drama Cromwell.
to which the grotesque image holds identical meanings for diverse artists. Hugo says of Quasimodo:

were it possible for us ... to throw all at once a strong light upon the Psyche chained down in that drear cavern--doubtless we should find the poor creature in some posture of decrepitude, stunted and rickety, like those prisoners that used to grow old in the low dungeons of Venice, bent double in a stone chest too low and too short for them

His brain was a peculiar medium; the ideas which passed through it issued forth completely distorted. The reflection which proceeded from that refraction was necessarily divergent and astray.

The first effect of this fatal organisation was to disturb the look which he cast upon external objects. He received from them scarcely any immediate perception. The external world seemed to him much farther off than it does to us.

The second effect of his misfortune was to render him mischievous. He was mischievous, indeed, because he was savage; and he was savage because he was ugly.3

Notre Dame de Paris was written in 1830, The Old Curiosity Shop in 1840. The spiritual predecessor for both novels seems to be Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, 1816, in which the deformed monstrous outcast makes his statement of self-pride:

'the human senses are insurmountable barriers to our union. Yet mine shall not be the submission of abject slavery. I will revenge my injuries; if I cannot inspire love, I will cause fear.'4

In The Old Curiosity Shop Dickens seems to have sought to attribute moral values to Little Nell's beauty and to the grotesque appearance of the other characters. Quilp is the obvious example of the latter:

'I not a choice spirit,' cried Quilp. 'Devil a bit sir,' returned
Dick. 'A man of your appearance couldn't be. If you're any spirit at all, you're an evil spirit.'

The narrator sees Nell's beauty as a manifestation of an angelic nature and gives a moral value to the grotesqueness of her acquaintances:

'. . . to imagine her in future life, holding her solitary way among a crowd of wild grotesque companions: the only pure, fresh, youthful object in this throng.'

Yet, although she is said to exist in "a kind of allegory" in which the carny folk, the grotesques, the waxworks are necessary to her 'pilgrim's progress,' the difference between Nell and the grotesques is not that they typify abstractions like goodness and evil. The distinction seems rather to be one of approach to controlling or manipulating one's universe. The individual grotesque characters in this novel are all, like Nell and her grandfather, rootless and without a defined position in the social order. Yet, for none except Nell and her grandfather is this uprootedness a signal for them to throw themselves upon society and become beggars. They manage, unlike the two central victims, to survive and thrive. These figures tend either to be 'natural' grotesques who turn these unprepossessing qualities to their advantage or normal-looking characters like Dick Swiveller or Tom Scott who adopt a grotesque, clown-like behaviour to secure a position for themselves, or characters who consolidate a certain amount of power by attaching to themselves grotesque reproductions of humanity. Thus the grandfather was secure as long as he had the shop with its curious carved figures, Codlin and Short have Punch, and Mrs. Jarley has the waxworks.
The black imagination that claims Nell, the addiction to gambling that possesses the grandfather, grow out of the fact that they are essentially 'losers.' They are totally unmanipulative and they assume that what they want will come to them either as their right, or simply because they will it. Nell says, "'we'll turn our faces from this scene of sorrow, and be as free and happy as the birds'"; and the grandfather views the chance to become rich through gambling as his right, since he does it ostensibly for Nell:

'I have felt that from the first, I have always known it, I've seen it, I never felt it half so strongly as I feel it now. Quilp, I have dreamed, three nights, of winning the same large sum, I never could dream that dream before, though I have often tried.'

When they are no longer shored up by the bulwarks of a genteel position, they can neither visualize themselves as fighting for a living in a London slum as does Mrs. Nubbles, nor using shrewdness to win at cards, as do the other gamblers. Consequently the viciousness, or merely the sense of competition, which they should possess to manipulate their environment, is turned back within themselves, into morbid and self-destructive hallucinations. Hallucination is used here to mean a comprehensive distortion of a generally accepted reality, and the hallucinations of Nell and her grandfather are worth examining at some length.

Structurally the novel is interesting because it incorporates Nell's vision into the very framework of the fiction. The narrator of the first few chapters reveals his own approach to Nell to be that of a hallucination, and describes the type of imagination it involves. And, in the later scenes with Nell, Dickens seems to merge his point of view
with hers. It is in essence a nighttime vision. The narrator tells us "'saving in the country I seldom go out until after dark.'" Then he says that he depends on this darkness because it leaves him freer to mold what he sees through his encompassing imagination, rather than to come to grips with it on its own terms:

'day which too often destroys an air-built castle at the moment of its completion, without the least ceremony or remorse.'

'the theme was carrying me along with it at a great pace, and already I saw before me a region on which I was little disposed to enter.'

Nell's hallucinations attribute an enormous power to personality, whereby the relationship between two people is a hypnotic one, with one person playing the role of master, the other that of slave. Her grandfather in his senility also tends to respond to relationships in this way. Nell's flight from Quilp is her escape from a relationship which she can only visualize in hypnotic terms. Yet her relationship to her grandfather is similar.

After the grandfather's illness, Nell plays the adult role as he lapses into second childhood:

'I can do nothing for myself, my darling,' . . . 'I don't know how it is I could once, but the time's gone. Don't leave me, Nell.'

She supports them by taking care of the money, by begging, by working at the waxworks. Yet when the grandfather meets the gamblers at the inn, a complete switch of roles occurs:
'What money have we, Nell? Come! I saw you with money yesterday. What money have we? Give it to me . . .' 'Do not take it' said the child. 'Pray do not take it dear. For both our sakes let me keep it or let me throw it away . . .' She took from her pocket a little purse. He seized it with the same rapid impatience which had characterized his speech, and hastily made his way to the other side of the screen.14

The change in the grandfather is not so interesting as that in Nell. Under the influence of his old addiction he regains some vigour. Yet there seems no reason why Nell's protest should be conducted with such a defeatist air. Since she has previously made all the decisions, why does she say 'Do not take it' instead of 'I won't give it to you?' Totally aware of the consequences, why does she remove her purse almost as if he compels her to do so? It can only be that she considers herself unworthy to control her world, or does not wish to succeed in doing so. Once the self-destructive act has been performed, the grandfather recaptured by the gambling-spell, she is capable of withholding the rest of the money from him.

Curiously, when it is Mrs. Jarley's situation that is at stake, Nell recovers her ascendancy over her grandfather. She does so not through persuasion or reasoning, but through an almost supernatural power of personality. She forces him to flee the men who want him to rob Mrs. Jarley:

While he, subdued and abashed, seemed to crouch before her, and to shrink and cower down, as if in the presence of some superior creature, the child herself was sensible of a new feeling within her, which elevated her nature, and inspired her with an energy and a confidence she had never known.15
The nature of this power of hers over the grandfather is illustrated by the words she uses to 'will' him to leave.

'I have had a dreadful dream . . . It is a dream of grey-haired men like you, in darkened rooms by night, robbing the sleepers of their gold. Up, up!'\(^1\)

The story is fact, but gains power by being transposed into the realm of dreams and second sight. When they arrive in the midlands, the grandfather refers back to this scene: "'We came from a quiet part. Why did you force me to leave?'\(^2\) [italics mine]. Though the only force used was force of will or personality, he assumes that he had no power to resist her. Likewise Nell had assumed she had no power to resist her grandfather when she relinquished her purse to him. Mrs. Hiniwin abdicates her will to Quilp in similar fashion: "it [sticking out his tongue] made him appear such a little fiend, and withal such a keen and knowing one, that the old woman felt too much afraid of him to utter a single word."\(^3\) So does Dick Swiveller:

'If you had seen him drink and smoke, as I did, you couldn't have kept anything from him. He's a Salamander . . . '.\(^4\)

This response to a hypnotic power that manifests itself only on occasion leads the characters to a preoccupation with 'image,' with visual appearance as a manifestation of moral character. For Nell, her grandfather when he becomes a thief assumes a grotesque form, projects a totally new 'image.' For her the idea of the double or 'shadow' personality takes on a material existence:
the man she had seen that night, . . . lurking in her room, and counting the money by the glimmering light, seemed a monstrous distortion of his image, a something to recoil from, and be the more afraid of, because it bore a likeness to him, . . . 20 [italics mine]

Nonetheless, this change in the grandfather is as much in Nell's response, Ruskin's 'seeing man,' as in his own appearance:

the phantom in her mind so increased in gloom and terror, that she felt it would be a relief . . . even to see him and banish some of the fears that clustered round his image. 21 [italics mine]

This fear of transformation of moral value so strong it creates a hallucination of grotesque transformation of appearance is a sign of the passivity that makes her completely dependent on others for the quality of her environment. Interestingly the passivity or inertia that controls her vision causes her to view people in the same extravagant, idealized manner that was seen in Frankenstein's monster, whose capacity for actual communication was totally sealed off.

This concern with visual representation of personality is not restricted to Nell. The grandfather asks: "'Whose image sanctifies the game?'" 22 and the single gentleman responds to his visual impression of Nell, "'trace the same sweet girl through a long line of portraits—never growing old or changing—the Good Angel of the race.'" 23

The incredible power that Quilp's ugliness holds for Nell, the ugly second shape that she sees in her grandfather are very much in the tradition of imagery attributed to the figures of ogre and witch in the fairy tales or to the supernatural figures of the gothic novels. No spells exist in their arsenal, yet Nell chooses to behave as if they
do, and allows herself to become spell-bound.

From another point of view her recognition of people as images—her dream in which Quilp, Mrs. Jarley, the waxworks and the barrel-organ are indistinguishable—renders them statue-like or robot-like, in fact dehumanizes them and pushes them back into the scenery.

Yet for Nell the natural world exists primarily as a vision giving physical form to the black forces that control her mind, like the pictures in the factory fire of the madman who tends it:

'*You don't know how many strange faces and different scenes I trace in the red hot coals. It's my memory, that, fire, and shows me all my life.*'24*

It is for this reason that she lays such stress on sunshine and greenery, and professes such hatred of the city and the factory town. In the latter she sees the actual talismans or charms which set in vibration the corresponding forces in her mind:

there was a crooked stack of chimneys on one of the roofs in which, by often looking at them, she had fancied ugly faces that were frowning over at her.25

Thus Nell's conscious mental calm is shattered by the least confusion in the external world. With the noisy but harmless bargemen:

*This image also anticipates Louisa Gradgrind, Lizzie Hexam and Mr. Grewgious for whom the fire is a sign of their imaginations and also a truth-teller that helps them see things clearly. For Louisa and Grewgious, trapped within a stonier world, the fire, the source of energy and passion that they cannot share, beneficently throws up images that serve them as substitutes—like Jenny Wren's birds and flowers.*
listening to their boisterous hosts with a palpitating heart and almost wishing herself safe on shore again, though she should have to walk all night.26

and in a very different sort of crowdedness, she reacts similarly:

'if we get clear of these dreadful places, though it is only to lie down and die, with what a grateful heart shall I thank God for such mercy.'27

The grandfather in his senility shares her responses. As they leave London he is "murmuring that ruin and self-murder were crouching in every street,"28 and when they reach the industrial Midlands after fleeing Mrs. Jarley's, he says "I cannot bear these close eternal streets,"29 an obvious echo of the feeling of claustrophobia expressed in the gothic novels.

To say these things about Nell is to present her as a frightened creature with little capacity for comprehending reality, whereas she is after all a child overtaxed by responsibility and scenes of real suffering. Yet inasmuch as she is not a child, but a rosy budding young woman and Kit's "Miss Nell," predecessor of a line of helpless, middle-class heroines, her response to any situation is to avoid conflict. Her primary gesture is flight. In the very real inferno of the factory town and the wasteland around it, her reaction is totally bourgeois. Though her mind is stirred to horror, it is because it is an ugly and confused nightmare that she must undergo. She in no way identifies with the suffering people she sees. She receives no strength from feeling that her position is less pitiable than their, or even one with theirs:
'Why had they ever come to this noisy town, when there were peaceful country places in which, at least, they might have hungered and thirsted with less suffering than in this squalid strife! They were but an atom, here, in a mountain heap of misery, the very sight of which increased their hopelessness and suffering.'

She retains a middle-class detachment. The whole wasteland scene passes like a terrifying mirage.

This intense reaction to place is carried to an extreme when the material world and her unconscious become fused. Partly this exhibits itself in her vivid dream-life:

Quilp who throughout her uneasy dreams was somehow connected with waxwork, or was waxwork himself, or was Mrs. Jarley and waxwork too, or was himself, Mrs. Jarley, waxwork and a barrel-organ all in one, and yet not exactly any of them either.

This surrealistic re-creation of her world is a source of horror for Nell. But the breakdown of formal structures is not really that different from the imaginative transformations of objects in the pantomime and caricature, where the emphasis is on and the delight is in the new grotesque creation. At other times the world of fact so closely assumes the characteristics of a dream that Nell's sense of rootedness is quite lost:

tall chimneys crowding on each other and presenting that endless repetition of the same dull, ugly form, which is the horror of oppressive dreams, poured out their plague of smoke, obscured the light, and made foul the melancholy air.

This recalls Piranesi's architecture, the repetition of walls and tunnels, a stony maze without any apparent escape. Both are physical manifestations of an obsessive state of thinking that becomes terrified
by its own tortuousness.

The narrator's early hallucinations about Nell's fate are replaced in the plot by her own hallucinations of future trouble. When she is working for the waxworks and their difficulties seem over; "Now she could not help considering what would become of them if he fell sick, or her own strength were to fail her." When she sees the church gatehouse where they are to live with the schoolmaster, she says, "A quiet happy place—a place to live and learn to die." The role of churches in the novel is complex. In their beauty, their aura of order, they are like the fairy talismans, the objects outside herself in which Nell has to place her trust. Yet they bear resemblances to the architecture of the gothic novels. The world of change exists outside them, as her conversation with the old woman at the grave shows, and Nell fears change, transformation. Yet another side of her does not want to die, but feels powerless to resist a hypnotic quality she attributes to the churches. She believes, in her paranoid willed way, that the world of objects which chose to taunt her in the midlands has now ordained her own death, and she must learn to accept it:

Upon these tenements the attention of the child became exclusively riveted. She knew not why . . . from the moment when her eyes first rested on these two dwellings she could turn to nothing else.

Nell has one very obvious spiritual descendant. This is Stephen Blackpool in *Hard Times*. Like Nell he is clearly a 'loser.' He clings desperately to the rightness of authority at the same time that subservience to it is destroying him. In other destructively
divided characters like Headstone, Jasper, to an extent Pip, the values of their particular society are explicitly said to be responsible for their duality, which is linked to their desires for social advancement or esteem. This is not the case with Stephen. He suffers from grotesque hallucinations like those that torment Nell:

Filled with these thoughts—so filled that he had an unwholesome sense of growing larger, of being placed in some new and diseased relation towards the objects among which he passed.  

he was the subject of a nameless, horrible dread, a mortal fear of one particular shape which everything took. [italics mine]

Like Nell and like the characters of the gothic novels, the torment that goes on in his mind causes him to view other people in extreme and extravagant ways. His drunken wife and his gentle girlfriend are pictured in images that make of one his good angel and of the other his bad, in what Jung would surely speak of as the two extremes of his anima archetype. Since both counsel obedience to the social order, though one does so out of taunting sadism, the other out of resigned rationality, they could in effect be projections of Stephen's own response to authority, contradictory expressions of how he feels about his self inflicted subservience. Furthermore, true to the reactions of the trapped victims in the gothic novels, and to the relationship between Nell and her grandfather, and to the interpretations suggested for human behaviour in the fairy tales, Blackpool views his power for action in terms of forces wholly outside himself, in terms of magic and 'possession.' Thus as his drunken wife reaches to swallow the poison: "All
this time, as if a spell were on him, he was motionless and powerless, except to watch her."

Nell's fears of a chaotic environment and her obsessive self-destructive reasoning are common to a group of characters in a much later novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*. These characters however have evolved techniques for coping with their fears, and Dickens for some reason has provided them with an environment in which this is possible.

The story of the Manettes is a fairy tale, an external rendering of inner states of mind. The physician and his daughter have no human reality. Their actions never have mixed motives nor any apparent quality of choice to them. Their internal conflicts are rejected or suppressed, and therefore take on an external 'being,' becoming objects or actions in the world outside themselves, over which they have no control. For instance, Manette's divided attitude to his son-in-law is never expressed, either by the doctor or the storyteller, and his revenge is carried out through his letter of accusation written and hidden years before meeting Darnay. Likewise his divided loyalties are given an external presence through his triple roles, all traditional folk tale ones, the father, the physician, the shoemaker, each of which maintains a separate existence in his life. When there is no external weapon to act for him, and obvious conflict forces itself into his consciousness, as at the time of the wedding, the doctor opts for madness, or lack of 'consciousness,' rather than imperfection, and reverts to his task of shoemaker, his unspoken expression of his community with the revolutionaries.
Lucie, Manette and Darnay are provided with a 'golden world' setting in which no tension exists between their characterization and their environment:

A quaintier corner than the corner where the Doctor lived, was not to be found in London... It was a cool spot, staid but cheerful, a wonderful place for echoes, and a very harbour from the raging streets... In a building at the back attainable by a courtyard where a plane-tree rustled its leaves, church-organs claimed to be made, and silver to be chased, and likewise gold beaten by some mysterious giant who had a golden arm starting out of the wall of the front hall.39

When Darnay later enters prison, his fellows in crime are not a vulgar Old Bailey crowd, but aristocratic ghosts:

So strangely clouded were these refinements by the prison manners and gloom, so spectral did they become in the inappropriate squalor and misery through which they were seen that Charles Darnay seemed to stand in the company of the dead. Ghosts all!40

Dickens' bourgeois fairytale people in this novel create a tightly structured micro-community with its own orderliness and standards of artistic charm as its raison d'être. Yet Dickens' artistic integrity causes him, at least subconsciously, to recognize that others must assume the responsibilities and dangers that the Manette circle abdicates. That Darnay, for instance, should escape his third trial is fitting for a hero, but he does not deserve his third escape, being heir to and therefore responsible for the guilt of the Evrémondes. Consequently the destructive forces of society, despite being provided with a scapegoat in Carton, are not appeased. Similarly, to safeguard Lucie and Darnay, Manette must sink into madness. Gratuitously Miss
Pross' hearing is sacrificed. And instinctively, though he shows no conscious awareness of it in the novel, Dickens realizes how, to protect Lucie's innocence and well-being, someone else must die, must pay her dues to the revolution; so the little seamstress serves as scapegoat.

However, within the fairy tale framework that Dickens has established for them, the characters set up their own protections very like those that Dickens employs. Aptly, considering this little community's vision of the world with its passionate emotions, premonitions of conflict and danger are all things or objects. As Dickens says of the house, it is pregnant with echoes, and their world is touched only with artifacts of real life: but these are never incorporated into themselves in the form of a capacity to accept evil. These artifacts come to operate as artistic symbols, talismans telling of the characters' fairytale existence in relation to what exists outside Soho. That is, enraged crowds are not seen as people like themselves with human desires, but only as footsteps. The Doctor's years of horror have been concentrated and transmuted into his tools and craft as shoemaker: "in a corner, stood the disused shoemaker's bench and tray of tools" which he is psychologically unable to destroy. The few visitors to Soho are objectified into 'hundreds of people.' The curtains, "long and white, and some of the thundergusts which whirled them into the corner (and) caught them up to the ceiling and waved them like

*Thus the destruction of the tools is described in terms of the murder of an old friend, without the link between the tools and the revolution ever being explicitly expressed.
spectral wings" could represent a death aura that the characters intuitively realize hangs over their scene.

The dream world they exist in is reinforced by the author: "Mysterious backs and ends of houses peeped at them as they talked, and the plane-tree whispered to them in its own way." Strange acoustical properties of the place cause echoes from footsteps far away of which Lucie says: "I have sometimes sat here of an evening listening, until I have made the echoes out to be the echoes of all the footsteps that are coming by-and-by into our lives."

The effect on Manette of Lucie's innocent marriage to an Evrémonde is seen by Lorry in fantasy terms:

Mr. Lorry had observed a great change to have come over the Doctor; as if the golden arm uplifted there had struck him a poisoned blow. [italics mine]

The tendency of these gentle people is therefore to displace their feelings, or the feelings of others, onto substitute objects and thus diminish their power; we see this function in process when Darnay, whom Manette has refused to recognize as Evrémonde, narrates an incident about an executed prisoner in the Tower burying a message beneath his cell floor. The old doctor dismisses his open agitation by saying, "No, my dear, not ill. There are large drops of rain falling, and they made me start."

We see in the Manettes how the traditional fairy tale investment of so much power in objects, magic talismans, must have first come into being.
These buried feelings make their virtues useless and parasitical because they cannot express contrary emotions such as rage or revenge, emotions that would allow them to give their virtues positive force. The only way they can preserve their pleasant feelings and gentleness is within a cocoon of order. To maintain this it is necessary for them to deny any link with the outside community:

"All sorts of people who are not in the least degree worthy of the pet are always turning up," said Miss Pross. "When you began it. . . ."
'I began it, Miss Pross?'
'Didn't you? Who brought her father to life?'
'Oh. If that was beginning it—-' said Mr. Lorry.
'It wasn't ending it, I suppose? I say, when you began it, it was hard enough; not that I have any fault to find with Dr. Manette, except that he is not worthy of such a daughter."47

As a correlative to this, they have established false causes for grief and pity which divert their energy from the channels of real feeling, both to lessen their capacity for being hurt, and to act as magic charms that ward off chances of real sorrow occurring for them. Thus Lucie fantasizes:

Among the echoes, then, there would arise the sound of footsteps at her own early grave; and thoughts of the husband who would mourn for her so much swelled to her eyes, and broke like waves.48

This indulgence in the prettiness of dying and self-sacrifice is a constant attachment to their life. Correspondingly, there is no real and legitimate sorrowing for the little boy who dies; his dying is made to seem much more beautiful and natural than his life:

he said, with a radiant smile, 'Dear papa and mama, I am very sorry to leave you both, and to leave my pretty sister; but I am called,
and I must go!' Those were not tears all of agony that wetted his young mother's cheek as the spirit departed from her embrace that had been entrusted to it.\textsuperscript{49}

However, though such objects and projections can serve as convenient touchstones for absorbing their ambivalent feelings, they are, unlike the elaborate social institutions of the cathedral in The Mystery of Edwin Drood, unable actually to provide active protection for the characters. For this, following the pattern of the traditional fairy tales, they are dependent on the care and wiliness of grotesque servants, figures like Miss Pross and Cruncher.

Miss Pross plays a multi-sided role in the fairy tale. She is, to begin with, a grotesque when none of the others are--in appearance a cross between a British grenadier and a Stilton cheese. She also seems to be the commedia dell'arte character La Ruffiana, the ugly bad tempered, faithful servingwoman dressed in red.

Miss Pross is apparently a link between two worlds. If a grotesque can be explained as a person who exhibits his very natural human tensions on the surface in his appearance and idiosyncrasies of speech, then that is exactly the role Miss Pross performs for the persons around her, who bury and deny half of their personality.

Because they are handsome, gentle-tempered, and financially independent, and she is none of these things, she has a freedom, which they have not, to express feelings that they have chosen to ignore or kill.

Her appearance is honest about her true nature as an unfulfilled woman. Sometimes described in terms of animals, her animal nature, like
that of all the Manette circle, has been perverted, and the descriptions are a cartoonist's picture of the animal world:

Lo, Miss Pross, in harness of string, awakening the echoes, as an unruly charger, whip-corrected, snorting and pawing the earth under the plane tree in the garden.50

As guardian of the scene, she feeds them all; but her cooking is described in terms of enchantment rather than healthy, gluttonous eating.

Miss Pross' friendship being of the thoroughly practical kind, she had ravaged Soho and the adjacent provinces, in search of impoverished French, who, tempted by shillings and half-crowns would impart culinary mysteries to her. From these decayed sons and daughters of Gaul she had acquired such wonderful arts, that the woman and girl who formed the staff of domestics regarded her as quite a Sorceress, or Cinderella's Godmother: who would send out for a fowl, a rabbit, a vegetable or two from the garden, and change them into anything she pleased.51

The language in this paragraph reveals the perversion (though Dickens would not call it that) of the scene. Food normally comes from the countryside; the 'provinces' where Pross gleans her dishes are London boroughs around Soho. Cooking, the most legitimate and popular of all creative arts is referred to as 'mysteries.' Her recipes come not from satisfied mothers and wives but 'decayed sons and daughters.' Nor is it sufficient that a fowl, rabbit or vegetable remain a fowl, rabbit or vegetable, but they must be enchanted into something else. The language employs the same whimsical transformation of identity that was seen in the anthropomorphism of the late Victorian children's writers.

However Miss Pross also understands and interprets the vulnerability of the scene. She makes Lorry realize the depth of Manette's
hurt. When Darnay comes to visit and is greeted kindly by Manette, Miss Pross, who shares the doctor's instincts about the man, expresses them for him:

Miss Pross suddenly became afflicted with a twitching in the head and body; and returned into the house. She was not infrequently the victim of this disorder, and she called it, in familiar conversation, a 'fit of the jerks.'

In their projection of feelings onto the object world around them, and in their dependence on the powers and servitude of others to maintain their pleasant isolation, Lucie and her group serve as a link between the characters of the actual fairy tales with their dwarfs and magic talismans, and the characters of a more realistic novel like *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* in which there is a superstructure of inanimate objects, genteel possessions, and social institutions like the Cathedral, which carry out the characters' social conflicts.

In *The Old Curiosity Shop* Dickens does not provide Nell with the protection granted the Manettes. He lets Nell's hallucinations, and those of the narrator, work out to their inevitable conclusion. This conclusion, however, depends on the roles of the 'natural' grotesques. In the confrontation between the forces of innocence represented by Nell and a series of grotesque torturers represented by Quilp, the carvings and the carny folk's properties, Dickens reveals his own ambivalent attitude towards the state of innocence. This ambivalence was earlier noted as common in nineteenth-century children's
literature. Though these grotesques are anti-Nell, they are not necessarily inherently evil. Partly this is demonstrated by allowing several morally neutral characters to partake in the grotesquerie—Dick Swiveller, Tom Scott, the Marchioness. In the interactions of these 'natural' grotesques with each other, with their environment, and with Nell, can be traced two or three patterns of imagery that both place Dickens in the grotesque popular tradition and make a moral judgement on the type of imagination possessed by Nell and her descendants.

Except in Nell's imagination, the conflict is not between Nell and her grandfather and the grotesques. Rather both groups seem the targets of some malevolent social deity whom the grotesques are capable of handling. Nell and her grandfather, who are society's victims, partially bring on their own downfall by refusing to ally with the grotesques, or to learn from them.

For example, when they lose their money, Nell says, "'Let us wander barefoot through the world.'" and then becomes terrified by what a barefoot wanderer encounters. Swiveller, when he finds himself penniless says:

'No money, no credit, no support from Fred, who seems to turn steady all at once; notice to quit the old lodgings—staggerers three, four, five and six! Under an accumulation of staggerers no man can be considered a free agent. No man knocks himself down; if his destiny knocks him down, his destiny must pick him up again.'

and then proceeds to behave like a very free agent:

he commanded [a beer-boy] to set down his tray and to serve him with a pint of mild porter, which he drank upon the spot and
promptly paid for, with the view of breaking ground for a system of future credit and opening a correspondence tending thereto.\textsuperscript{55}

These characters, though they differ from each other in values, become a collection of clowns in that they all employ the power of the grotesque image as a source of comedy and furthermore realize that this is their only tool for survival, whether they gain worldly power by fascinating others or merely amuse themselves. The clown may often be cruel and crude, but also, as long as he is gaily costumed and as long as he is also slightly shabby, or awkward or pitiful, and funny, then his cruelty is for the most part overlooked.

Their alliance with clowns is seen in the slapstick manner in which they relate to each other:

between this boy [Tom Scott] and the dwarf there existed a strange kind of mutual liking. How born or bred, or how nourished upon blows and threats on one side and retorts on the other, is not to the purpose. Quilp would certainly suffer nobody to contradict him but the boy, and the boy would assuredly not have submitted to be so knocked by anybody but Quilp, when he had the power to run away any time he chose.\textsuperscript{56}

Quilp encounters Swiveller in slapstick style,

no sooner in the arms of the individual whom he had taken for his wife, than he found himself complimented with two staggering blows on the head, and two more, of the same quality, in the chest... he clung tight to his opponent, and bit and hammered away with such goodwill and heartiness, that it was at least a couple of minutes before he was dislodged.\textsuperscript{57}

and attacks Kit similarly via the figurehead, "aiming a shower of blows at the insensible countenance and covering it with deep dimples."\textsuperscript{58}
Their behaviour when they are alone is often a mimicking of clown's gestures:

the boy revenged himself by dancing on his head at intervals on the extreme edge of the wharf during the whole time they crossed the river.59

Quilp, after tricking Dick,

withdrew into a dismantled skittle ground behind the public house, and throwing himself upon the ground, actually screamed and rolled about in uncontrollable delight,60

and when Dick is confronted by Miss Brass' brown head-dress:

From rubbing his nose with the ruler, to poising it in his hand and giving it an occasional flourish after the tomahawk manner, the transition was easy and natural. In some of these flourishes it went close to Miss Sally's head; ... advance it but an inch, and that great brown knot was on the ground ... 61.

Occasionally direct parallels are drawn:

three or four little boys dropped in on legal errands ... whom Mr. Swiveller received and dismissed with about as professional a manner, and as correct and comprehensive an understanding of their business as would have been shown by a clown in a pantomime under similar circumstances. These things done and over he got upon his stool again and tried his hand at drawing caricatures of Miss Brass.62

Dick Swiveller has an imagination which spontaneously creates visual grotesques. His mind, like that of Dickens, the clown-narrator, replaces incidents with grotesque images, which serve him invaluably:

She dragons [Sally Brass] in the business, conducting themselves like professional gentlemen; plain cooks of three feet high appearing mysteriously from underground.63
He makes his own peculiar use of the technique of the double face:

There is no doubt that, by day, Mr. Swiveller firmly believed this secret convenience to be a bookcase and nothing more; that he closed his eyes to the bed, resolutely denied the existence of the blankets, and spurned the bolster from his thoughts.64

Occasionally he resorts to nonsense grotesques of the kind discovered in the nursery rhymes:

he had observed a pig with a straw in his mouth issuing out of the tobacco shop, from which appearance he augured that another fine week for the ducks was approaching.65

This is in contrast to Kit's conventional fairytale fantasies that underlines their differing social values. Dick's supreme grotesque creation is, of course, the Marchioness and her scullery-palace. He turns an already grotesque figure into a triple-faced grotesque, a little girl, a plain-cook, and a marchioness. The reason he gives for his grotesque fancy is "To make it seem more real and pleasant."66

A twentieth-century master of the grotesque, Federico Fellini, has attempted to account for the vitality and function of the clown-figure:

He is a caricature of man in his aspects of animal and child, mocker and mocked. The clown is a mirror in which man is revealed as a grotesque, deformed, comic image. He is indeed a shadow. He will always be. . . . To make a shadow die you have to have a perpendicular sun above your head. Behold: completely illuminated man has made his ludicrous buffoonish, deformed aspects disappear. Faced

Kit finding his employer's home deserted, fantasizes on what might have happened in terms of ogres and princesses being tied up by their hair.
with such a highly realized creature, the clown would no longer have a reason for being. But on the other hand he would not actually disappear, he would only be assimilated. Thus, in other words, the irrational, the infantile, the instinctive would no longer be seen with a deformed eye—the thing that renders them deformed.67

Speaking from a culture in which clowns are possibly more highly developed and individualized, Fellini recognizes two clown-figures, Pierrot, the white clown, and Auguste. These terms can only be applied awkwardly to Anglo-Saxon clowns, Harlequin being a white clown, Punch and Joey, the pantomime Clown, being Augustes. Nonetheless it is a useful distinction to be aware of:

the former is elegance, grace, harmony, intelligence, lucidity—which are presented moralistically as indisputable gods. Hence the negative aspect of the system: for the white clown, in this way becomes Mother, Father, Teacher, Artist, Lover: in short, that which ought to be. So Auguste, who would experience the fascination of these perfections if they were not displayed with so much severity is revolted. He sees that the spangles are shining brightly, but the arrogance with which they are offered, makes them unattainable.

Auguste is the child who shits on himself, rebels against perfection, gets drunk and rolls on the ground; and his spirit, for this reason, is a perpetual challenge.*

In short, the white clown is a bourgeois, and that is why he tends to appear dressed in a style calculated to amaze.68

Quilp's response to Nell's idealism, Swiveller's treatment of Sally Brass' assumed power, even the grandfather's resumption of his gambling, his re-adopting of his shadow personality are all Auguste-clown.

* Boris Karloff who performed as Frankenstein's monster has stated that letters concerning the performance that came from children always sympathized with the monster.
functions. Fellini's recognition of an alliance between the drive for perfection and the bourgeois personality reinforces the remarks made earlier about Nell's behaviour in the midlands.

Dickens describes the provincial town in which the waxworks sets up as "very clean, very sunny, very empty and very dull," and another way of viewing the grotesques is in opposition to this sterility.

Quilp, that great banisher of dullness, for instance, represents the dirt of the city and has definite links with garbage. His counting house, a "dirty little box," contains an ancient almanac, an inkstand with no ink, and an eight-day clock that had not gone for eighteen years; he eats shrimps and also their heads, eggs and even their shells; he scratches with a rusty nail. In other words he finds a use for garbage and rejected things. He even incorporates garbage into his body, becomes a storehouse for garbage.

Yet this is rightly seen as his natural greediness:

chewed tobacco and water-cresses at the same time and with extraordinary greediness, drank boiling tea without winking, bit his fork and spoon till they bent again!71

He is like a porous substance that will absorb anything into his body. He seems to reject nothing of the world as part of himself. This includes even Nell:

'Ah!' said the dwarf, smacking his lips, 'what a nice kiss that was--just upon the rosy part!'72 [italics mine]
His incredible contortions and grimaces and the multitudinous images Dickens uses to describe them are his way of reflecting how much that he has absorbed into his flesh and his brain finds external expression in his grotesque appearance.

His grotesqueness is the creativity of an artist, mimicking his surroundings, or recreating them in new shapes:

rubbing his hands so hard that he seemed to be engaged in manufacturing, of the dirt with which they were encrusted, little charges for popguns.73

with a grin on his features altogether indescribable which seemed to be compounded of every monstrous grimace of which men or monkeys are capable.74

staring in with his great goggle-eyes, which seemed in hers the more horrible from his face being upside down . . . she was quite unable to resist the belief that Mr. Quilp did in his own person represent and embody that Evil Power.75

embracing the case-bottle with shrugged up shoulders and folded arms, stood looking to his insensible wife like a dismounted nightmare.76

swollen with suppressed laughter, he looked puffed and bloated into twice his usual breadth77

looking like the evil genius of the cellars come from underground upon some work of mischief78

seated, like an African chief, on one of these pieces of matting, the dwarf was regaling himself in the parlour, with bread and cheese and beer.79

a chair, into which he skipped with uncommon agility . . . one leg cocked carelessly over the other, his chin resting on the palm of his hand, his head turned a little on one side, and his ugly features twisted into a complacent grimace . . . both she and the old man, . . . half doubting its reality, looked shrinkingly at it.80
Food plays a large role in Quilp's self-creation, as many of these quotations reveal. He is constantly described as drinking boiling liquor or smoking furiously, and sneering at Brass for being unable to imitate him. Although he may not actually be devouring humans, the spirit and relish is one of cannibalism; "'O you nice creature!' were the words with which he broke silence; smacking his lips as if this were no figure of speech, and she were actually a sweetmeat." And, just as the sacred value invested in cannibalism by tribal societies was that, in devouring someone else, one gained his dominant qualities, so Quilp becomes that which he devours, both physically and spiritually.

In this may be recognized a very close tie to the images of caricature. Isaac Cruikshank's cannibal (see Chapter I) is a midget, Quilp-like grotesque who with his enormous head, miniature body, and fleshy face could not have failed to have inspired Dickens if he had seen it: Gillray's monsters, often shown in the posture of devouring, have their very identity matched up with what they eat--Jean Frog and John Bull--and this can in turn determine their appearance--Jean Frog's frog-like webbed feet.

Paradoxical as it may seem, Quilp's deformity is not an expression of incompleteness, of a limited human spirit, but of extraordinary richness, of being not only himself but also shrimps with heads and dogs' smiles and boiling grog and chairs and towers and the carriage window he attaches himself to, by implication, the whole urban sprawl itself.

A grotesque figure, when contrasted to an idealized character,
may indeed, as Miss Pross showed, be the one who displays his very natural human contradictions on the surface in his appearance. In Quilp's case this is extended to show the very stuff of which he is made.

This perhaps overstates the situation; Quilp is of course limited in that he has nothing of the 'calm and classical' that Mrs. Jarley attributes to her waxwork, nothing of the purity and innocence that exemplify Nell. However we are not presented with a simple duality, Nell good, Quilp evil. It is rather that Nell's drive for perfection, for orderliness, is incompatible with Quilp's sensual greediness; the success of one implies the destruction of the other. Dickens uses the grotesque image as a representation of the latter, and is himself ambivalent as to which he is most attached.

In understanding Quilp's absorption and re-creation of London within himself, Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris* is again enlightening. Notre Dame has two inhabitants, Quasimodo, and the archdeacon, Claude Frollo. Both let their life be shaped by the cathedral. Frollo is a scholar, involved in the esoteric knowledge of alchemy. From a conceptualized structuring of how the world should be, he approaches and studies the architecture of the cathedral. Quasimodo's experience of the cathedral is solely through his senses and perceptions, limited but, perhaps for that reason, more intense. He absorbs the rough grimness of the architecture into himself, and falls in love with the bells. So thoroughly does he come to comprehend the building that all its qualities are absorbed into himself, and he becomes a gargoyle who contains
Notre Dame's essence within himself and his appearance,

receiving every hour its mysterious impress, he at length came to resemble it, to be fashioned to it. . . . Between the old church and himself there was an instinctive sympathy so profound--so many affinities, magnetic as well as material--that he in some sort adhered to it, like the tortoise to its shell. . . . Not only did his body seem to have fashioned itself according to the cathedral but his mind also. 82

In like manner does Quilp assume the shape and form of the object world around him. When Quasimodo rings the bells, the cathedral molds itself to him:

There seemed to escape from him--so at least said the exaggerating superstitions of the multitude--a mysterious emanation, which animated all the stones of Notre Dame, and heaved the deep bosom of the ancient church. To know that he was there was enough to make you think that you saw life and motion in the thousand statues of the galleries and doorways. The old cathedral did indeed seem a creature docile, and obedient to his hand. She waited his will to lift up her loud voice; she was filled and possessed with Quasimodo as with a familiar spirit. . . . Egypt would have taken him for the god of this temple--the Middle Ages believed him to be its demon--he was in fact its soul. 83

And so here too is the concept of a living gargoyle-like, grotesque expressing the spirit of a place, the function that it is suggested Quilp performs for the urban confusion of London.

As the spirit of the filthy, vital city, he is accompanied by lesser gargoyles, or less complex spirits of place. The grandfather among his old curiosities for instance, seems like the gnome of his shop:

The haggard aspect of the little old man was wonderfully suited to the place; he might have groped among old churches and tombs, and deserted houses and gathered all the spoils with his own hands. 84
The Marchioness with her stunted appearance is integrally linked to her underground scullery:

the small servant always remained somewhere in the bowels of the earth under Bevis Marks, and never came to the surface unless the single gentleman rang his bell, when she would answer it and immediately disappear again.85

At the conclusion of the story, the Brasses, having retained their deformed character and manners, but lost their legal power, remain as spirits of the garbage-and-refuse undercurrent of the city:

two wretched people were more than once observed to crawl at dusk from the inmost recesses of St. Giles', and to take their way along the streets, with shuffling steps and cowering forms, looking into roadside kennels as they went in search of refuse food or disregarded offal. These forms were never beheld but in those nights of cold and gloom, when the terrible spectres, who lie at all other times in the obscene hiding places of London, in archways, dark vaults and cellars, venture to creep into the street; the embodied spirits of Disease, and Vice, and Famine.86

There are in The Old Curiosity Shop a collection of grotesques that fit under the general category of puppet or robot. These are, for the most part, inanimate objects, imitations of human forms that may or may not be able to mimic human motions, but become more than statues in that they function dramatically in the fiction. Even Mrs. Jarley's waxworks which claim to present living likenesses can change character with great ease:

altering the face and costume of Mr. Grimaldi as clown to represent Mr. Lindley Murray as he appeared when engaged in the composition of his English Grammar.87
Moreover it is their caricatured rendering of the human physiognomy that gives them their power.

These figures include the carvings in the curiosity shop, the Punch puppets, the waxworks, and the giant wooden figurehead that Quilp attacks. They may be extended to include Gerry's dancing dogs, Vuffin's giant and armless and legless woman, and the stilts of 'Grinder's lot' which are a variation on wooden legs that give their owners a marionette-like appearance.

These puppet/robot figures have two functions in the novel. The proprietors of the oddities gain a certain social prestige from owning them; and in themselves they are characters, mimic fools and voodoo figures.

These creations become more or less inanimate extensions of the owners, and the latter share in the power which such grotesquerie claims: "'If there were only one wooden leg, what a property he'd be.'" Inasmuch as the owners are rootless people without landed property of any kind, or without families to sustain them, they are, within the context of the story, to be admired for fending for themselves by trafficking in the grotesque. Mrs. Jarley raises the issue with Nell of beggary versus the life of the carny folk:

'You amaze me more and more,' said Mrs. Jarley, after remaining for some time as mute as one of her own figures.
'Why, what do you call yourselves? Not beggars?'
'Indeed ma'am, I don't know what else we are,' returned the child.
'Lord bless me,' said the lady of the caravan. 'I never heard of such a thing. Who'd have thought it!' . . . And yet you can read and write, too, I shouldn't wonder,'
'Yes, ma'am,' said the child, fearful of giving new offense by the
confession. 'Well, and what a thing that is' returned Mrs. Jarley. 'I can't.'

As characters in their own right, the puppet figures function mainly as mocking mimics of the mechanical qualities of the humans in the story. They also provide a reverse movement to Nell's unconscious transformation of people into objects and 'images.' While they are allied to the clowns through their spangled costumes and their recognition of humour and exaggeration as a force for survival, their wooden and waxen and machine-like aspects, the extent to which they resemble ghosts and corpses, are a criticism of such qualities in the flesh-and-blood characters. Hence Mrs. Jarley says of the waxworks,

'I won't go so far as to say, that, as it is, I've seen waxwork quite like life, but I've certainly seen some life that was exactly like wax-work.'

and Nell sees them as both living and dead, "'so like living creatures, and yet so unlike in their grim stillness and silence,'" "'their death-like faces.'" All "looking intensely nowhere and staring with extraordinary earnestness at nothing," their detachment is hardly different from the crowds in the factory town; Nell and her grandfather find no more humane response from the crowds, than from the waxworks: "they watched the faces of those who passed, to find in one among them a ray of encouragement or hope." The earnest staring is not more blind than that of the inhabitants of the factory town. As one woman cries of her criminal son, "'He was deaf, dumb, and blind to all that was good and right from his cradle . . . who was there to teach him better?"
The old curiosities in the shop "with their grinning faces all awry,"95 "distorted figures in china, and wood, and iron and ivory,"96 are no less human than the false grins of Sampson Brass, "his blandest smiles were so extremely forbidding that . . . one would have wished him to be out of temper that he might only scowl,"97 and Quilp often refers to his monkey-face, a brass monkey with a false smile. Punch's "usual equable smile"98 counters Quilp's "ghastly smile"99 which "added most to his grotesque expression . . . appearing to be the mere result of habit and to have no connection with any mirthful or complacent feeling."100 Punch's expression in its immobility hardly differs from that of Codlin, his master:

[Codlin] breathed a hornpipe tune into . . . a mouth-organ, without at all changing the mournful expression of the upper part of his face, though his mouth and chin were, of necessity in lively spasms.101

The huge figurehead that Quilp uses as a voodoo image for Kit, differs from the other robot figures, "thrusting itself forward with that excessively wide-awake aspect, and air of somewhat obtrusive politeness, by which figureheads are usually characterised."102 This figure is peculiarly distinguished by its gentility and impassiveness; it shares some qualities with the waxworks, supposed to be "calm and classical,"103 described as "great glassy-eyed figures,"104 who also pay homage to society's heroes by attempting to imitate them. (However the waxworks destroy much of their own presumption by imitating mainly anti-heroes, murderers, and clowns). In their arrogant, immobile, lifeless aspects, the figurehead and the waxworks could be
representations of what Fellini described as 'white clowns'; more specifically they are minions of the established social mores.

The removal of human power from the people presupposes that it will be invested in the environment, and we see in the industrial scenes, where the machinery is envisioned as semi-human, robot-like, that

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.105

Yet it is not so much a total shift of power as a vision, essentially Nell's, that energy is transferable from one form of being to another:

then came more of the wrathful monsters, whose like they almost seemed to be in their wildness and their untamed air; screeching and turning round and round.106

And much of Nell's fear seems to be a fear of this energy that is revealed or released in the process of grotesque distortion.

That the grotesque is vitally tied to gesture was suggested in Chapter I in connection with the commedia. In The Old Curiosity Shop Quilp's involved contortions are essential to his visual power:

Mr. Quilp planted his two hands on his knees, and straddling his legs out very wide apart, stooped slowly down, and down, and down, until, by screwing his head very much on one side, he came up between his wife's eyes and the floor.

... 'Am I nice to look at?'

... 'Yes, Quilp!'107

A gesture that recurs in several of Dickens' novels is that of the dance. In The Old Curiosity Shop a series of dance gestures or
dance-like movements thread their way through the action. They are nearly always associated with the grotesques.

Quilp, for instance, despite his ugliness, is a master of agility, even grace. And many times his sudden entrances have the quality of choreographed movements, particularly as, even if he is perfectly still, his limbs adopt carefully stylized postures (see earlier quotation concerning Quilp on the chair). Several direct references are made to the dancelike character of his movements:

he rose, and with his arms a-kimbo, achieved a kind of demon-dance round the kennel, just without the limits of the chair, driving the dog quite wild.108

'I'll [Quilp] be a Will o' the Wisp, now here, now there, dancing about you, always starting up when you least expect me, and keeping you in a constant state of restlessness and irritation.'109

Tom Scott, the tumbling boy, turns his acrobatics into a dance:

the boy revenged himself by dancing on his head at intervals, on the extreme edge of the wharf, during the whole time they crossed the river.110

And the imaginativeness of Dick Swiveller's fancy is accompanied, on occasion, by gymnastic grace:

Mr. Richard Swiveller performing a kind of dance round him and requiring to know 'whether he wanted more?'111

Certain of the grotesques exist because they are dancers. There are the dancing dogs in their spangled coats, and the waxwork representation of the old lady "who died of dancing at a hundred and thirty-two."112
These dancing figures could be extended to include the Punch puppets because the movements of a puppet usually resemble caricatures of a dance.

In fact, *The Old Curiosity Shop* may be visualized as a variation on the fantasy of the child wandering into the toyshop or nursery, and the toys, or puppets, coming alive and beginning to dance around her. This was a common nineteenth-century fantasy. It is the theme for instance, of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Ballet* (1892), which was in turn based on E. T. A. Hoffmann's *The Nutcracker and the King of the Mice*, published in 1813. In this the child encounters not only live toys but also a large-mouthed nutcracker and a seven-headed mouse king. In another Hoffmann tale, *The Sandman*, a mechanical dancing doll literally hypnotizes the hero, though it is never clear if her power is a figment of his own imagination. Hans Christian Andersen also wrote tales in which the toys became animated; *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*, for instance has as a grotesque hero a one-legged tin soldier, as heroine a beautiful paper ballerina, as villain an imp. In none of these sources is the grotesqueness of the hero a sign of his personal evil or spiritual deformity. It is either a result of a transformation caused by an evil spell, or with Andersen, a potent way of personifying pain. Like Quasimodo and Esmeralda, like Quilp and Nell (though Quilp is more imp than deformed hero), the tin soldier and his ballerina perish at the end of the story. In the death of the hero and heroine, and in their unconsummated relationship, these three stories differ from the traditional folk tales like *Beauty and the Beast*, *Bearskin*, *Bearskin*.
and The Frog Prince, where the heroine's love has the power of enacting a change in the hero's grotesqueness.

The demand on the heroine and on the child is that she not be repulsed by the grotesque appearance. The child's response in Tchaikovsky and Hoffmann is disbelief, wonder, and eventual participation in the world of the toys. The child recognizes that the right response to her situation is to make friends with the monsters, whether they are figments of her own imagination or energy forces outside herself.

The live toys seem in fact to be the nineteenth century descendants of the comic demons or 'tortores' of the demonology, the particular shape that a certain form of grotesque torture assumed in the imagination of many nineteenth century artists; as for instance in the grim humour of some of Tenniel's illustrations for the Alice books, the fascination with the sadistic behaviour of the Punch and Judy shows, in which the puppets can be considered particularly ugly toys and Wegg in Our Mutual Friend seen as a German wooden toy and at the same time as the evil genius of the house of Boffin. Even in Pinocchio much of the fascination arises from the grotesque transformations of appearance that Pinocchio, the puppet-toy, undergoes, an ugly power that causes us to forget Pinocchio is actually the victim of and not responsible for the mutilations.

In The Old Curiosity Shop Nell continues to be repelled by the grotesqueness, the dance becomes macabre, the toys or puppets, who are most of the grotesque figures in the novel, are malicious, either in
motive or in Nell's eyes. The outcome of their weird, unworldly dance around Nell is her death.

The certainty that this is in no way a contrived comparison grows out of an instinctive understanding of the tie in the story between the animate and the inanimate, the puppet and the puppet-like man, the waxwork figures that resemble men and the men of flesh that resemble objects, and the way in which all these figures are part of and, at the same time, the spirit of their environment; and that, in her intense passivity, Nell recognizes them—the waxworks no less than Quilp, Brass no less than Punch—as being alive and gesturing around her in threatening dance-like movements, and simultaneously as being no more than wooden objects.

The instinctive feeling that this is the interior vision Dickens had of the first part of the novel, with Little Nell danced 'at' and around by a series of colourful toys or puppets, comes too from the carefully choreographed spatial sense of the work. Nell's 'pilgrimage' or linear movement through the novel is dotted by little circular movements around her of the puppet/toy figures. They appear once, never to be seen again (like Grinder's lot), making it seem as if they come alive in only one setting, or reappear in her life, as Quilp does, from nowhere, with no apparent continuity of existence between his visits. Dickens has reinforced the strangeness of his vision by the brilliant alliances he has established between the grotesques and their particular settings. In the manner in which Nell finds herself hounded from place to place by the presence of these animated
figures, that recurring grotesque image, the danse of death, is one reflection of the structure of the story.
FOOTNOTES

1 A. E. Dyson's article "The Old Curiosity Shop: Innocence and the Grotesque" (see bibliography) does not mention Nell's imagination as being in any way involved with the grotesque, nor does he comment on the links between all the 'natural' grotesque and clown-figures in the novel.


6 OCS, Ch. I, p. 13.

7 OCS, Ch. I, p. 13.

8 OCS, Ch. XII, p. 94.

9 OCS, Ch. IX, p. 75.

10 OCS, Ch. I, p. 1.

11 OCS, Ch. I, p. 1.

12 OCS, Ch. I, p. 13.

13 OCS, Ch. XV, p. 117.

14 OCS, Ch. XXIX, p. 221.

15 OCS, Ch. XXXIII, p. 320.

16 OCS, Ch. XXXII, p. 318.

17 OCS, Ch. XXXIV, p. 327.

18 OCS, Ch. V, p. 40.

19 OCS, Ch. XXII, p. 173.
119

20 OCS, Ch. XXXI, p. 230.
21 OCS, Ch. XXXI, p. 231.
22 OCS, Ch. XXXI, p. 233.
23 OCS, Ch. LXIX, p. 524.
24 OCS, Ch. XLIV, p. 331.
25 OCS, Ch. IX, p. 69.
26 OCS, Ch. XLI, p. 323.
27 OCS, Ch. XLV, p. 335.
28 OCS, Ch. XV, p. 115.
29 OCS, Ch. XLIV, p. 327.
30 OCS, Ch. XLIV, p. 327.
31 OCS, Ch. XV, p. 335.
32 OCS, Ch. XXIX, p. 217.
33 OCS, Ch. XXVII, p. 208.
34 OCS, Ch. XLVI, p. 348.
35 OCS, Ch. III, p. 386.

36 Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1854), Ch. XII, p. 96.


38 *Hard Times*, Ch. XIII, p. 102.


40 TTC, Bk. 3, Ch. II, p. 287.

41 TTC, Bk. 2, Ch. VI, p. 112.

42 TTC, Bk. 2, Ch. VI, p. 114.

43 TTC, Bk. 2, Ch. VI, p. 112.
44 TTC, Bk. 2, Ch. VI, p. 115.
45 TTC, Bk. 2, Ch. XVIII, p. 219.
46 TTC, Bk. 2, Ch. VI, p. 114.
47 TTC, Bk. 2, Ch. VI, p. 107.
48 TTC, Bk. 2, Ch. XXI, p. 238.
49 TTC, Bk. 2, Ch. XXI, p. 239.
50 TTC, Bk. 2, Ch. XXI, p. 241.
51 TTC, Bk. 2, Ch. VI, p. 111.
52 TTC, Bk. 2, Ch. VI, p. 118.
53 OCS, Ch. XII, p. 94.
54 OCS, Ch. XXXIV, p. 254.
55 OCS, Ch. XXXIV, p. 254.
56 OCS, Ch. V, p. 42.
57 OCS, Ch. XIII, p. 99.
58 OCS, Ch. LXII, p. 461.
59 OCS, Ch. VI, p. 47.
60 OCS, Ch. XXI, p. 164.
61 OCS, Ch. XXXIII, p. 252.
62 OCS, Ch. XXXIII, p. 255.
63 OCS, Ch. XXXIII, p. 258.
64 OCS, Ch. VII, p. 51.
65 OCS, Ch. II, p. 17.
66 OCS, Ch. LVII, p. 427.
68 Fellini.
69 OCS, Ch. XXVIII, p. 211.
70 OCS, Ch. V, p. 43.
71 OCS, Ch. V, p. 40.
72 OCS, Ch. IX, p. 72.
73 OCS, Ch. V, p. 34.
74 OCS, Ch. XLVIII, p. 358.
75 OCS, Ch. XLVIII, p. 361.
76 OCS, Ch. XLIX, p. 369.
77 OCS, Ch. XL, p. 447.
78 OCS, Ch. XLVIII, p. 356.
79 OCS, Ch. XIII, p. 104.
80 OCS, Ch. IX, p. 72.
81 OCS, Ch. IV, p. 35.
82 Notre Dame de Paris, Ch. 3, p. 141.
83 Notre Dame de Paris, Ch. 3, p. 146.
84 OCS, Ch. I, p. 5.
85 OCS, Ch. XXXV, p. 271.
86 OCS, Ch. LXXIII, p. 549.
87 OCS, Ch. XXIX, p. 216.
88 OCS, Ch. XIX, p. 143.
89 OCS, Ch. XXVII, p. 204.
90 OCS, Ch. XXVII, p. 203.
91 OCS, Ch. XXIX, p. 217.
92 OCS, Ch. XXVIII, p. 214.
93 OCS, Ch. XLIV, p. 326.
Angus Wilson's *The World of Charles Dickens* (London: Martin Sacher and Warburg, 1970), which was not consulted until after completion of the thesis, proposes that toys played a large role in Dickens' artistic development, and describes certain toys which had a terrifying hold over young Dickens. He also stresses the importance of the nursery tales Dickens encountered, including one mentioned by Stone (see Chapter I), 'Captain Murderer,' in which a man baked and ate his wives in pieshells they had made themselves. He quotes Dickens as saying, "'Little Red Riding Hood was my first love.'"
CHAPTER III

THE MAIMED CHILD: Our Mutual Friend

In Our Mutual Friend Dickens creates many of his grotesque images by meshing deformed or bestial characters with colours, forms or folktale personages that have connotations of beauty or aesthetic appeal. Since he explicitly, even indulgently, describes their chaotic, savage or decaying appearance, there is in this coupling the suggestion of evil as a source of beauty. Concurrently he attacks and parodies most of the scenes of innocence that he establishes.

This is only one of several dominating preoccupations in the novel, but it is one which has been generally disregarded in analyses of the birds of prey, the river and dustheaps, and the city as wasteland. I wish to point out the recurrences of the imagery, rather than to draw them into any forced, imposed pattern, since I am not sure any such pattern exists in the novel. Nonetheless, this destruction of innocence and creation of a new vision of beauty is important to mention, as it is the culmination of certain patterns of the grotesque that are at work in Dickens' other novels.

In The Mystery of Edwin Drood it will be seen that the techniques of social control practised by the bourgeoisie are so strongly in ascendancy that even the anarchic characters who spring into existence as a reaction against the social order are decorated with bourgeois physical characteristics; in Our Mutual Friend, on the other
hand, the forces of grotesque anarchy have permeated the whole society, and, instead of specified clown-figures such as existed in The Old Curiosity Shop, here everyone, at one time or another, plays the clown or mimic fool of someone else. One character may consciously mimic or imitate another, or a highly idiosyncratic physical trait or behaviour may be repeated in two or three otherwise unconnected characters.

There are of course the obvious instances of the dolls and skeletons as mimic fools, of Headstone and his Shadow personality, Riderhood, and of doubles such as Fledgeby and Riah. A whole collection of potential transformations of identity revolve around 'rags'; Mr. Dolls dead as a "bundle of torn rags," Headstone regaining his own personality by fishing up his rags from the canal, the rags of the alcoholics being compared to the vegetable refuse of Covent Garden, the latter becoming a giant wardrobe, Jenny sewing rags into fashionable dolls' dresses, Lady Tippins as nothing more than the clothes she wears, and the grotesque relationship, via the image of the skeleton rattling in her clothes, between the glittering society-women and the ragged corpses of the river.

There are however less obvious mergings of identity or appearance. As the light flickers on them, Venus' skeletons seem to move in a paralytic manner; Mr. Dolls is called a paralytic scarecrow. These clumsy grotesque movements are joined by those of the wooden legs, Gruff and Glum, Wegg, and Jenny whose crutch stick is a species of wooden leg. The Veneerings' baby and Bella's baby are rendered identically puppet-like, each having her mother's thoughts and speeches.
imposed on her. Mrs. Podsnap destroying her daughter's childhood re-
sembles a majestic rocking horse; the toy that entices little orphan
Johnny to the bourgeois world is a horse.

There are three little seamstresses, each in her impotence
adopting her needle as a defensive weapon. Bella becomes a seamstress
only after society has rendered her doll-like, "like a sort of dimpled
charming Dresden-china clock by the very best maker";²

Mrs. John Rokesmith sat . . . beside a basket of neat little
articles of clothing, which presented so much of the appearance
of being in the dolls' dressmaker's way of business, that one
might have supposed she was going to set up in opposition to
Miss Wren.³

She continues the doll-making in her own baby. Jenny makes actual
dolls, and figuratively uses her needle to attack her enemies. Miss
Peecher has trained herself to be adept at socially valued functions
without having any authority over what those functions are; society
has rewarded her by giving her the attributes of objects valued by the
society:

a little pincushion, a little housewife, a little book, a little
workbox, a little set of tables and weights and measures, and a
little woman all in one.⁴

She has no dolls; instead she sews clothes for herself, turns herself
into a mannequin, and turns her needle's viciousness inward:

stitched at the neat little body she was making up by brown paper
pattern, for her own wearing.⁵
[she] transfixed that part of her dress where her heart would have been if she had had the dress on, with a sharp, sharp needle.6

Jenny's vision is of flowers and birds:

'I smell roses till I think I see the rose-leaves lying in heaps, bushels, on the floor. . . . And the birds I hear! Oh!' cried the little creature, holding out her hand and looking upward, 'how they sing!'7

Yet Bella desires and receives a domesticated, Arabian Nights version of the same dream:

they came to a charming aviary, in which a number of tropical birds, more gorgeous in colours than the flowers, were flying about; and among those birds were gold and silver fish, and mosses, and water-lilies, and a fountain, and all manner of wonders.8

In this sharing and mimicking of physical characteristics, particularly such highly visual ones, can be seen a development of the power of gargoyles like Quilp and Quasimodo to absorb and reproduce in their appearance their environment. For Dickens' characters in this novel seem unconsciously to be carrying out a sensual absorption of each other.

Patterns do however exist within this welter of transformation and imitations. A central image of Our Mutual Friend is that of a maimed child. The dominant personality, spirit or animus of the novel is Jenny Wren. The imaginative rendering of the social order that the story presents is often that of the world seen through the imagination of a deformed child, essentially cruel and black, but this cruelty and blackness given verbal expression through the medium of images from children's art.
They were in a neighbourhood which looked like a toy neighbourhood taken in blocks out of a box by a child of particularly incoherent mind and set up anyhow; . . . here another unfinished street already in ruins; there, a church; here an immense new warehouse; there . . ., rank field, richly cultivated kitchen-garden, brick viaduct, arch-spanned canal, and disorder of drowsiness and fog. As if the child had given the table a kick and gone to sleep.9

The grotesque image of the maimed child does not mysteriously spring to existence in Our Mutual Friend. It has been a thread throughout Dickens' novels, and in fact in his expression of his ultimate attack on the assumed innocence of his middle-aged gentility such as the Tale of Two Cities characters. The maimed child bears an affinity to the imagery found in the Smallweeds, Dickens' picture of mutilated fancy, of fantasies from children's art rendered grotesque by alliance with a brutal, ugly scene. In Nicholas Nickleby maimed children made their appearance en masse at Dotheboys Hall. Usually however his maimed or twisted children are potent creative forces, quite in contrast to the passivity of Nell. There is the Marchioness, part child, part shrew, part dwarf, part sexual object; there are the little old children of Bleak House:

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.10

there is Bartholomew Smallweed, and finally there is Jenny Wren, "a child—a dwarf—a girl—a something—sitting on a little old-fashioned arm-chair."11 These characters bear a tie to the acrobatic children of the slums, to Tom Scott in The Old Curiosity Shop and Deputy in The Mystery of Edwin Drood.
In endowing these children with ugly or antic qualities Dickens is destroying the possibility of their innocence. In the debate mentioned earlier (see Chapter I) on the proper literature for children, on whether they should be handed cold, hard facts, or stories of fantasy, Dickens sided with those who advocated fantasy, and his own art depends much on such fantasy sources. Yet the qualities which he attributed to children as a result of reading fairy tales, mercy, gentleness, forebearance, courtesy, are qualities quite denied children like Marchioness and Jenny and Tom and Deputy. Furthermore his own images borrowed from children's art are often used in conjunction with negative or vicious imagery. Dickens thus reveals that he shares with the children's writers of the century their ambivalence both towards the innocence and towards the anarchic spontaneity of children.

In *Hard Times* Dickens conceived of fancy as a maimed robber:

He went to work in this preparatory lesson, not unlike Morgiana in the Forty Thieves: looking into all the vessels ranged before him, one after another, to see what they contained. Say good M'Choakum-child. When from thy boiling store thou shalt fill each jar brim full by-and-by, dost thou think that thou wilt always kill outright the robber Fancy lurking within or sometimes only maim and distort him?

A correlative to this metaphor would be that his fanciful people are grotesquely crippled by the establishment. Sleary, the circus leader, the chief expression in that novel of the value of fantasy for its own sake, is indeed seen as maimed, "with one fixed eye, one loose eye." Sleary's eye means other things as well however. The personal freedom that Sissy never really expresses, though Louisa quite deeply
manifests its conscious loss, finds visual form in Sleary's wandering eye. So clearly does he not feel himself fettered by preconceived concepts of behaviour, of how the world should work, that his very eye does not feel bound to follow the normal dictates of physiology.

The robber mentioned above, though he is an Arabian Nights robber, nonetheless links the imagination with the criminal or anti-bourgeois elements. He thus shares with The Marchioness and Jenny Wren the link with childhood, with the criminal or vicious (The Marchioness has links with Quilp and Sally), with the stunted or twisted, and with the imaginative. And as with Sleary's wandering eye, the maiming, the stuntedness, the twisting manifests in one sense the attempts of the materialistic, possession-proud, people in power to destroy the spirit of anarchic freedom; but more strongly, the very twists and deformities are the expression of freedom and rebellion, the rejection of the socially-approved patterns of thinking, and norms of appearance ruled by conventionality.

In Our Mutual Friend Dickens explicitly endows some of his characters with a children's world to move in, as the chapter headings themselves show: 'The Golden Dustman Falls into Bad Company,' 'The Feast of the Three Hobgoblins.' In the Pa and Bella, 'Cherub and Lovely Lady,' scenes, the characters provide themselves with a consciously childlike reproduction of their environment. They visualize their world in terms typical of the whimsical bourgeois children's art that was popular late in the century. They practise their own form of unnatural transformation, quite similar to the anthropomorphism. Bella's
father becomes a Cherub, and her 'bad boy'; Bella becomes her Pa's courted Lovely Lady; the ships of the Thames become fortune ships out of Arabian Nights and a meal of bread and milk in a City office becomes a goblin's feast. Bella refers to her very ungreedy, unknawish father as Little Jack Horner and the Knave of Wilfers. Bella vents her deepest anger through a totally impotent, coy epithet: "If any true friend and well-wisher could make you a bankrupt, you would be a Duck; but as a man of property you are a Demon." She even idyllicizes the story of the Three Bears: "It was . . . without their thunderous low growlings of the alarming discovery, 'Somebody's been drinking my milk!'

Yet, though Dickens in this novel builds whole roles out of this children's imagery, instead of making the occasional image reference, he seems to realize that the characters he is dealing with are not children's story book characters, that if they themselves assume such roles it is a perversion of their humanity, and that a grotesque effect occurs from the meshing of a toylike presence with the blackness of contemporary London. And so he counterpoints their scene with that of Jenny Wren.

The dying Johnny dreams of the toys over his bed in the hospital:

the toys were yet grouped as the children had left them, when they last laid themselves down, and in their innocent grotesqueness and incongruity, they might have stood for the children's dreams.

One of these, a doll-figure, could represent a future self:
Yet the doll's dressmaker who costumes dolls and sends them out into society has a very different dream. She hates children, including herself, "Don't talk to me of children. I can't bear children.", she doesn't play, "I never play! I can't play!" She associates play with the horrible, bestial forces, "circumstances over which no control," of her drunken father which are in fact responsible for her crooked back and deformed legs. She says of him, "I had nothing to do but work, and so I worked. I couldn't play. But my poor unfortunate child could play, and it turned out the worse for him." And so Jenny's dream is "Come up and be dead, Come up and be dead." Jenny's dolls are in fact voodoo figures, and hideous though the implication is, it is almost as if the toys and dolls in Johnny's dreams are directly linked with the doll's dressmaker's chant, "Come up and be dead, Come up and be dead."

That Jenny associates herself with the powers of voodoo and that she uses her dolls as projections of her power we see several times. When Headstone protests the innocence of his motives towards Lizzie, Jenny says of a doll:

'This is Mrs. Truth. The Honourable Full-dressed . . . I stand the Honourable Mrs. T. on my bench in this corner against the wall, where her blue eyes can shine upon you.' pursued Miss Wren, doing so, and making two little dabs at him in the air with her needle, as if she pricked him with it in his own eyes.

Through the medium of her clergyman doll she hopes to find a husband.
The clergyman doll succeeds apparently, because she is sent Sloppy; it is artistically right that Sloppy's reason for meeting her is to pick up a doll.

This maimed child has mysterious voodoo powers apart from her dolls. She threatens her father that if he does not behave he deserves to be bottled:

'A muddling and a swipey old child, . . . fit for nothing but to be preserved in the liquor that destroys him, and put in a great glass bottle as a sight for other swipey children of his own pattern, . . . '24

And, since he continues to misbehave, that is his eventual fate:

the window becoming from within, a wall of faces, deformed into all kind of shapes through the agency of globular red bottles, green bottles, blue bottles, and other coloured bottles . . . with a strange mysterious writing on his face reflected from one of the great bottles, as if Death had marked him: 'Mine.'25

Jenny's power is a form of evil, despite the trueness of her affection for Lizzie and Riah, and despite the almost religious beauty of her dreams:

the children that I used to see early in the morning were very different from any others that I ever saw. They were not like me: they were not chilled, anxious, ragged, or beaten; they were never in pain. . . . All in white dresses, and with something shining on the borders, and on their heads, that I have never been able to imitate with my work though I know it so well. They used to come down in long, bright slanting rows, and say all together, 'Who is this in pain! Who is this in pain! . . . they swept about me and took me up, and made me light. Then it was all delicious ease and rest . . . '26

Her dreams are, after all, of the beauty of earthly death. And even to
Lizzie who has linked herself inseparably with her father's occupation and the river, and derives her strength from them, Jenny can be very ugly:

The person of the house was the person of a house full of sordid shames and cares, with an upper room in which that abased figure was infecting even innocent sleep with sensual brutality and degradation.  

Of course to the servants of respectability she can be nothing else. Charlie Hexam calls her "pert crooked little chit," "a little crooked antic of a child, or old person, or whatever it is."

Yet it is her deformed person that Dickens endows with the most powerful images of sensual beauty in the story, in a quixotic parody of Bella, the self-conscious Boofer Lady. Bella for instance prizes her hair, but all we are told of her loveliness is that

Her pretty hair was hanging all about her, and she had tripped down softly, brush in hand, and barefoot, to say goodnight to him. 'My dear, you most unquestionably are a lovely woman,' said the cherub.

whereas Jenny is several times drawn in the most radiant images:

she [Lizzie] unfastened a ribbon that kept it back while the little creature was at her work, and it fell in a beautiful shower over the poor shoulders that were much in need of such adorning rain. . . . Jenny so managed a mere touch or two of her nimble hands, as that she herself laying a cheek on one of the dark folds, seemed blinded by her own clustering curls to all but the fire. . . . Something sparkled down among the fair hair resting on the dark hair; and if it were not a star—which it couldn't be—it was an eye; and if it were an eye, it was Jenny Wren's eye, bright and watchful as the bird's whose name she had taken.

The sensual power does not lie with the innocence of Johnny's Boofer
Lady or Pa's Lovely Lady, but with a maimed child-woman, granddaughter of the terrible old drowned man in a nightcap and slippers.

Jenny has a double in Mr. Venus, for whereas he constructs human replicas from their skeletons, Jenny does so from their clothes. Both are descendants of Krook, that species of mimic fool in Bleak House with his rag-and-bone shop. Once again an image of innocence, of the dolls, is linked with an image of ugliness and fright, the skeleton. Mrs. Truth oversees the conversation of Jenny and Headstone in the same way in which the 'French gentleman' oversees those of Mr. Venus and his visitors. Venus always speaks of the construction of his skeletons as 'articulation'; yet in the nineteenth century that was also the term used for making a doll. Jenny's threat to bottle her father is matched by Venus' "Hindoo baby in a bottle, curved up with his big head tucked under him."32

Jenny is only one of the visions in the book in which images of innocence are bestowed on facts of ugliness and sordidness (it should not be forgotten that the dolls retain qualities from their whimsical origin in a children's dreamworld--"singing a mournful little song which might have been the song of the doll she was dressing"),33 and in which sensual beauty is invested in ugly, even evil, creations.

Mr. Dolls, Jenny's father, is christened such by Eugene, but thereafter in the story he retains the nickname. Yet here the name does not signify any unspeculative painted piece of wood, as it does when referring to the staring doll barmaids in the Jolly-Fellowship-Porters, or even to him himself when he is dead, "there, in the midst
of the dolls with no speculation in their eyes, lay Mr. Dolls with no speculation in his. For Mr. Dolls is a vital, though decaying, specimen of humanity, and until the end when he becomes a bundle of rags he is characterized by his movements, shuffling, flailing:

The shaking figure, unnerved and disjointed from head to foot, put out its two hands a little way, as making overtures of peace and reconciliation.

The very breathing of the figure was contemptible, as it laboured and rattled in that operation.

Through his allies in poverty and drink, the Covent Garden habitués, he is connected with organic matter,

it may be the companionship of the trodden vegetable refuse which is so like their own dress that perhaps they take the Market for a great wardrobe; . . . Such stale vapid rejected cabbage-leaf and cabbage-stalk dress, such damaged orange countenance, such squashed pulp of humanity, are open to the day nowhere else.

This is a very different use of the doll-image from the cold innocence of the Dresden china dolls in The Mystery of Edwin Drood, or Jenny's brilliant court dolls.

Not only is Mr. Dolls a most unlikely figure for a nursery toy, but his presence as a "bad boy" undermines the quaintness of Bella's references to her father as a mildly errant child. Thus in Jenny's presence:

Abject tears stood in its eyes, and stained the blotched red of its cheeks. The swollen lead-coloured underlip trembled with a shameful whine. The whole indecorous threadbare ruin, from the broken shoes to the prematurely grey scanty hair, grovelled.
Not with any sense worthy to be called a sense, of this dire reversal of the places of parent and child, but in a pitiful expostulation to be let off from a scolding.39 [italics mine]

But Bella also reverses roles with her father, and Pa is also characterized by his inability to dress himself well:

'And what do you do with yourself when you have got your learning by heart, you silly child?'
'Why then I suppose I die.'
'You are a bad boy. . . . Now you are something like a genteel boy! Put your jacket on, and come have your supper.'40

Yet even Mr. Dolls, mindless and smelling though he is, has his claims to a world of beauty. Just as his behaviour mocks the innocence of dolls, so the connection with dolls romanticizes his decrepitness, renders it picturesque.

In the passage above he is given further picturesque overtones by the implication that he is a clown. His shabbiness, his comic exaggeration of the gestures of fear and servility lack dignity, are a 'shadow' of humanity in the way that Fellini associated with the clown (see Chapter II): "a most disgraceful shadow of a man, shaking from head to foot, and clothed in shabby grease and smear."41 Yet the colourful, theatrical character of the clown also exists in the description by virtue of one phrase, 'stained the blotched red of its cheeks'; with a writer as deeply influenced by the images of the popular theatre as Dickens, this cannot have failed to have represented in his internal vision a clown's makeup.* Tears do not normally stain

*See 'The Pantomime of Life,' Sketches by Boz in which Dickens forces the reader to guess whether the physical descriptions he gives are those of actual people or of pantomime clowns.
flesh; they do however stain makeup. This passage is a mature development of the dying pantomime clown seen in *Pickwick Papers*. In that passage Dickens conjured up all the spangles and paint required to dress the traditional grotesque image, and then visualized the gay figure with a paradoxical version of his acrobatic movements, the tremblings and rattlings of death. Here the delirium tremens of a bedraggled alcoholic have in their appearance the barest suggestion of a clown figure, a theatrical carnival beauty in human decay.

When he dies, though he distinctly retains connections with the bestial, "laid about him hoarsely, fiercely, staringly, convulsively, foamingly," his death is staged in an awesome, even beautiful scene, surrounded by coloured bottles:

> the window becoming from within, a wall of faces, deformed into all kinds of shapes through the agency of globular red bottles, green bottles, blue bottles, and other coloured bottles. A ghastly light shining upon him that he didn't need, the beast so furious but a few minutes gone, was quiet enough now, with a strange mysterious writing on his face, reflected from one of the great bottles, as if Death had marked him: 'Mine.'

His funeral continues this unlikely connection with beauty and elegance, for the torn bundle of rags receives a dignified burial through the sale of fashionable dolls. At his funeral "half a dozen blossom-faced men, . . . shuffled with him to the churchyard, and . . . were preceded by another blossom-faced man, affecting a stately stalk, as if he were a Policeman of the D(eath) Division." There is satire in the dignity of Mr. Doll's funeral contrasted with the cabbage-stalk dress and damaged orange countenance of his Covent Market doubles with whom he had
been the evening before. Yet the effect is not primarily satirical, but rather another, perhaps unconscious instance of potential beauty growing out of the most battered flesh.

Mr. Wegg is the final character who in his appearance attacks the world of a child's dream. Like Wemmick and Gregious he is wooden:

it was an easterly corner—the stall, the stock, and the keeper were all as dry as the Desert. Wegg was a knotty man, and a close-grained, with a face carved out of very hard material. . . . Sooth to say, he was so wooden a man that he seemed to have taken his wooden leg naturally.45

Yet Wegg is the only one of the three compared to a toy figure, "he looked like a German wooden toy."46 Nonetheless in his choice of an enemy, Boffin the Golden Dustman, who inhabits a world of fairy tale fortunes and who makes possible nurseries furnished in a rainbow of colours, and in the unstated commentary he serves on Gruff and Grim, the wooden-legged witness at Bella's wedding, the 'German wooden toy' seems to be enragedly attacking any apparent innocence of a toy world.

When Boffin first hires Wegg as his reader, he views the wooden leg as an eccentric decoration that he has acquired too: "'A literary man—with a wooden leg' he bestowed an admiring look upon that decoration, as if it greatly enhanced the relish of Mr. Wegg's attainments."47 This is hardly different from the harmless toy-like role that Bella's consciousness foists on the wooden-legged pensioner:

He was a slow sailor on a wind of happiness, but he took a cross-cut for the rendezvous, and pegged away as if he were scoring furiously at cribbage . . . but for the two wooden legs on which Gruff and Glum was reassuringly mounted, his [Wilfer's] conscience
might have introduced, in the person of that pensioner, his own stately lady disguised.  

scrambling up on his two wooden legs to salute, hat in hand, shipshape, with the gallantry of a man-of-wars-man and a heart of oak.  

Even without Wegg to point this out by serving as his double, there is something coyly perverse in the old cripple forgetting his suffering merely upon sight of the Boofer Lady: "long on the bright steps stood Gruff and Glum, looking after the pretty bride, with a narcotic consciousness of having dreamed a dream."  

Both Wegg and Mr. Dolls function in the same way as the grotesquely punished characters of the children's literature, figures such as Struwwelpeter and Pinocchio. That the nature of their society is responsible for Wegg's wooden leg and Mr. Doll's alcoholism is implied, and yet the ugliness of their deformities is a definite taunt against their oppressors, whose genteel attempts to construct an aesthetically pleasing environment deny such crudeness.*  

Interestingly Wegg recognizes that his wooden leg is incompatible with gentility, reclaiming his natural leg from Venus when he becomes a 'literary man.' Yet, for Dickens, the source of Wegg's passion lies in his wooden leg:  

So gaunt and haggard had he grown at last, that his wooden leg showed disproportionate and presented a thriving appearance in contrast with the rest of his plagued body.  

*Podsnap's favourite expression on any subject to be discussed is: "would it bring a blush into the cheek of the young person?" (Bk. 1, Ch. XI, p. 129).
Dickens does not indicate that any lesser emotional value is invested in this grotesque appendage than in the gargoyle-like separation of the enraged Headstone's face from his body (see Chapter I, p. 54).

In the gothic novels the cold, inanimate appearance of the architecture, the cold, glittering beauty of a fallen angel, brought into existence, deformed, passionate, animal figures, reptiles, putrid corpses, the bestial Lucifer. In *Our Mutual Friend* the decaying organic matter found in the river scenes "where the accumulated scum of humanity seemed to be washed from higher grounds, like so much moral sewage," and the animal powers of the river people, "He was a hook-nosed man, and with that and his bright eyes and his ruffled head, bore a certain likeness to a bird of prey," are counterpointed by many exquisite glittering objects with which the other characters choose to associate themselves. It is important that these glittering objects are by no means restricted to being the possessions of the satirized social climbers like the Veneerings.

For instance, when Bella leaves the Boffins her moral value is defined by her father in terms of the objects associated with her:

I admire this mercenary young person distantly related to myself, more in this dress than if she had come to me in China silks, Cashmere shawls, and Golconda diamonds.

Yet in fact these are exactly the objects Bella desires to be surrounded by. When she and her father daydreamed over the ships at Greenwich, it was exactly this type of *Arabian Nights* treasure that they imagined for her (see Chapter I, p. 71). And after her supposed reform, when Harmon
pushes her to express what she would like most in the world, what she wants and receives are treasures of just this nature: "an ivory casket, and in the casket were jewels the like of which she had never dreamed of." Likewise the caged and colourful birds that Bella receives bear a relationship to Jenny's sweet-singing dream birds that reminds one of the relationship that the artificial nightingale in the fairy tale bore to the sweet-singing little grey real bird: "a charming aviary, in which a number of tropical birds, more gorgeous in colours than the flowers, were flying about."

Bella's desire for such possessions, which have no power in themselves, suggests that she wishes to associate herself with reflections of power, without wanting to get caught up in the brutality involved in wielding power. She endows these glittering jewels and other riches with a certain magical potency (recalling the fairy tale talis-mans) through which she can order her universe.

The attachment to objects reflecting wealth, to reflections of power, is emphasized in the comparison of Mrs. Veneering with her "flashes of many-coloured lightning from diamonds, emeralds and rubies" to a pawnshop window, and in the Boffins' most frequent activity after they receive their fortune, their window-shopping.

In her own love for such glitter, Jenny Wren shows herself to be a genuine fool figure. Unlike Quilp her creative imagination is captured by these baubles of bourgeois culture, the fancy dresses, the dolls, and not just mockingly in a maimed child's reproduction of a toy-world:
Jenny twisted her venerable friend aside to a brilliantly-lighted toy-shop window, and said: 'Now look at 'em. All my work.' This referred to a dazzling semi-circle of dolls in all the colours of the rainbow. . . . 'Pretty, pretty, pretty.' said the old man . . . 'Most elegant taste.'

So while she is like a clown in manipulating and creatively reassembling her environment on the basis of its physical characteristics, she becomes a fool in her determined association with objects of beauty, her hair, her dolls, her dreams. Her frequent use of nursery rhymes stresses these dual roles. On the one hand they are a mocking mimicry of the people she encounters:

'Who comes here?
A grenadier.
What does he want?
A pot of beer.'

she says satirically of Eugene's assumed innocence. '"Bee, Baa black sheep'" is her rhyme for Mr. Dolls, countering his infantile snivelling with that verse's philosophy for an autocratic upbringing: "And none for the little boy who cries down the lane." To Fledgeby she says "Little Eyes, Little Eyes," the rhythm of which recalls the rhyme 'Pussycat, Pussycat" whose last line goes "And frightened a little mouse under a chair." This of course precisely sums up Fledgeby's actions towards Twemlow.

On the other hand the rhymes tie her to the world of everyday childhood that she can never share; and the nursery rhyme punishments she concocts for Fledgeby, the pepper in the vinegar-and-brown-paper poultice, and her remark that she wished she had given him "Cayenne
pepper and chopped pickled Capsicum,\textsuperscript{64} show her essential impotence in
the face of his actual crimes.

Likewise if the attachment to the exquisite objects mentioned
earlier can be seen as a movement away from the bestial ugliness of
the river scene, Jenny's 'bottling'\textsuperscript{*} of the damaged orange countenance
and squashed pulp humanity of Mr. Dolls, and Venus' bottling of abor-
tions are grotesque mocking parodies of the same process.

In Chapter II I quoted Frederico Fellini's description of the
attitude of the Auguste clowns to the 'white' clowns, the clowns whose
major function is to exhibit the resplendency of their costumes. The
only role of the white clowns is to parade, displaying the spangles and
fabrics of their elaborate dress. The scene at the Podsnaps where
Society dances is reminiscent of a parade of white clowns, even though
Dickens' satirical rendering does not emphasize the exhibition of con-
spicuous wealth:

the discreet automaton . . . played a blossomless tuneless 'set,'
and sixteen disciples of Podsnappery went through the figures of--
1, Getting up at eight and shaving close at a quarter-past--2,
Breakfasting at nine--3, Going to the City at ten--4, Coming home
at half-past five--5, Dining at seven, and the grand chain.\textsuperscript{65}

However the reader has early been made aware of the glitter, the rich
fabrics, the gems that deck these society people: "Mrs. Veneering . . .
gorgeous in raiment and jewels; . . . Mrs. Podsnap . . . majestic head-
dress in which Podsnap has hung golden offerings."\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{*} The link between jewels and jewel boxes and the coloured bottles
that trap Mr. Dolls may seem obscure unless one associates both with the
form of the talismans in the fairy tales and with the role of jam jars
in the later \textit{Mystery of Edwin Drood}. 
after her, appears Alfred . . . to make a pasty sort of glitter, as if he were constructed for candlelight only, and had been let out into daylight by some grand mistake . . .

In the Podsnap dance scene the characters' desire to amaze through their appearance and its reflections of wealth is displayed indirectly through the comparison of the guests to the Podsnap plate:

'but I am so many ounces of precious metal worth so much an ounce; wouldn't you like to melt me down?' . . . Four silver wine-coolers, each furnished with four staring heads, each head obtrusively carrying a big silver ring in each of its ears, conveyed the sentiment up and down the table, and handed it on to the pot-bellied silver salt-cellars.

The majority of the guests were like the plate, and included several heavy articles weighing ever so much.

The Auguste clowns' response to such an exhibition would be a caricature of its stiltedness, while costumed in their mocking version of the rich fashions, rags. And throughout the novel we see exactly this in Dickens' stress on the movements of his anarchic clowns.

Jenny displays her walk to Sloppy, "'This is the way. Hoppetty, Kicketty, Peg-peg-peg. Not pretty; is it?'"

Gruff and Glum is described as pegging away as if he were scoring at cribbage. Wegg, hunting the dustmounds, "hints at an inherent tendency in that timber fiction, when called into action for a promenade on an ashy slope, to stick itself into the yielding foothold, and peg its owner to one spot."

And though Mr. Dolls is indeed partially characterized by the continuous movements, shuffling, gesturing, that contradict his name, on occasion these movements are endowed with the mechanical, stilted quality of an
animated doll; "The shaking figure, unnerved and disjointed from head to foot."\textsuperscript{72}

The movement of the grotesque in \textit{The Old Curiosity Shop} created a pattern which could be seen as a dance of the toys. In this novel there are many grotesques who resemble, or rather are a parody of, toy figures. But the taunting gaiety, even grace, of the dance has been lost, and the dance of the toys has been gruesomely transformed into the hobbling gait of cripples and wooden legs. The outcome of the dance in \textit{The Old Curiosity Shop} was implied to be evil, causing the death of Little Nell, but the responsibility for it lay as much in her response as in the anarchic vitality of the grotesques.

In \textit{Our Mutual Friend}, while the movements of the anarchic grotesques are partially a satire on the stiltedness and ugly rigidity of the established powers, there is no question that they are also a deliberate attack on the innocence which toys represent for Bella and Pa and the Boffins.

One final pattern of whimsical transformation of identities employs images from children's art. The story of Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf winds its way through the novel, and the face that little Red Riding Hood confronts assumes more than the two shapes of grandmother and wolf; for the wolf variously becomes the filthy waters of the dockside, Lammle, Riah, and Fledgeby.

Little Red Riding Hood deals largely with cannibalism, but the images of the folktale, the little girl's red cloak and basket, the picture of the wolf disguised in the grandmother's nightclothes, the
poetic appeal of the dialogue between the little girl and the wolf are exquisitely picturesque: "'What big eyes you have, grandmamma! The better to see you with, my dear.'" In adapting them to the varieties of evil he is dealing with, Dickens strengthens the vision he has already created, of evil glimmering through and assuming the contours of an imagination associated with childhood.

For Eugene and Mortimer, searching for the corpse of Hexam, himself a finder of corpses, the filthy London waterside and docks assume the role of the cannibal wolf:

all the objects among which they crept were so huge in contrast with their wretched boat as to threaten to crush it. Not a ship's hull, with its rusty iron links of cable run out of hawse-holes long discoloured with the iron's rusty tears, but seemed to be there with a fell intention.... Not a sluice gate, or a painted scale upon a post or wall, showing the depth of water, but seemed to hint, like the dreadfully facetious Wolf in bed in Grandmamma's cottage, 'That's to drown you in, my dears!'73

Yet if the picturesque wolf at one moment dwells in the dregs of the Thames, at another time he glitters at a Society breakfast table in the form of Lammle, who was previously described as sparkling like Harlequin:

pervadingly too much nose of a coarse wrong shape, and his nose in his mind and manners; too much smile to be real, too much frown to be false; too many teeth to be visible at once without suggesting a bite.74

At another time he vacillates between Fledgeby, the moneylender, and Riah, his masochistic front:
'godmother, [says Jenny to Riah] it strikes me you have come back. I am not quite sure, because the wolf and you change forms. I want to ask you a question or two, to find out whether you are really godmother or really wolf.'

As for the innocent and kind-hearted Red Riding Hood in this peculiar and apparently meaningless distortion of the tale, she is grotesquely transformed into Rogue Riderhood:

little Rogue Riderhood—I am tempted into paraphrase by remembering the charming wolf who would have rendered society a great service if he had devoured Mr. Riderhood's father and mother in their infancy.

The grandmother/wolf switch in this tale is not truly a fairy tale transformation. The tale is rather a confrontation with reality, much like 'The Emperor's New Clothes,' the questions and answers being Red Riding Hood's slow realization of the conflict between what she wants to believe and what her eyes tell her is there. Nor is the transformation that Dickens is concerned with that of the grandmother into wolf, except in the case of Riah, in which Riah's relationship to Fledgeby is indeed one of being spell-bound. In one sense the cannibalism of the wolf is an apt metaphor for the social roles of the river and of money speculators like Lammle and Fledgeby. But the grotesque transformation that Dickens' personal imagination projects is of vicious real men, money lenders, merchants, who inhabit a grim concrete and smog-infested city, "A grey dusty withered evening in London city has not a hopeful aspect. The closed warehouses and offices have an air of death about them, and the national dread of colour has an air of mourning," and who at the same time wear the outlines of a wolf
from a picture book. It is of a filthy, barge-ridden, steamboat and
industry-dominated river which concurrently has correspondences with a
fantasy wolf in a lace nightcap, and of a dirty, violent thief and
waterman, dressed in "an old sodden fur cap, formless and mangey, that
looked like a furry animal, dog or cat, puppy or kitten, drowned and
decaying,"78 who shares his name with a little girl in a red cloak.

The nature of the evil described lies in the grotesque imagina-
tion and, more important, considering Dickens' role as a popular
writer, in the society that can yank together such disparate objects
within one image. These images are the culminating expression of
Dickens' anti-bourgeois imagination. Inasmuch as we are deeply touched
by the fantasy pictures embedded in filth and vice, we are witnessing
Dickens' acceptance of his own attachment to the destructive, the
anarchic, the violent, the dirty, or, in other words, his acceptance
of the fact that for him a figure like Jenny Wren in order to remain
potently beautiful must remain deformed.
FOOTNOTES

1 Charles Dickens, Our Mutual Friend (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), Bk. 4, Ch. 8, p. 730. Hereinafter cited as OMF.

2 OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. XI, p. 743.

3 OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. XI, p. 743.

4 OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. I, p. 219.

5 OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. I, p. 232.

6 OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. I, p. 232.

7 OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. II, p. 239.

8 OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. XII, p. 767.

9 OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. I, p. 218.


11 OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. I, p. 222.

12 Charles Dickens, Hard Times (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1854), Bk. 1, Ch. II, p. 11.

13 Hard Times, Bk. 1, Ch. VI, p. 43.

14 OMF, Bk. 3, Ch. XV, p. 597.

15 OMF, Bk. 3, Ch. XVI, p. 609.

16 OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. IX, p. 330.

17 OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. IX, p. 329.

18 OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. I, p. 224.

19 OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. II, p. 239.

20 OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. II, p. 241.

21 OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. IX, p. 732.
OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. VI, p. 282.
OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. XI, p. 342.
OMF, Bk. 3, Ch. X, p. 533.
OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. IX, p. 731.
OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. II, p. 239.
OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. II, p. 243.
OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. XV, p. 392.
OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. I, p. 228.
OMF, Bk. 3, Ch. XVII, p. 616.
OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. XI, p. 347.
OMF, Bk. 1, Ch. VII, p. 79.
OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. VIII, p. 714.
OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. IX, p. 731.
OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. II, p. 241.
OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. II, p. 241.
OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. IX, p. 729.
OMF, Bk. 3, Ch. X, p. 533.
OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. II, p. 241.
OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. V, p. 685.
OMF, Bk. 3, Ch. X, p. 537.
OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. IX, p. 730.
OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. IX, p. 731.
OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. IX, p. 733.
OMF, Bk. I, Ch. V, p. 45.
OMF, Bk. 3, Ch. VII, p. 491.
47 OMF, Bk. 1, Ch. V, p. 53.
48 OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. IV, p. 665.
49 OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. IV, p. 667.
50 OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. IV, p. 666.
51 OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. XIV, p. 780.
52 OMF, Bk. 1, Ch. III, p. 21.
53 OMF, Bk. 1, Ch. I, p. 3.
54 OMF, Bk. 3, Ch. XVI, p. 608.
55 OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. XIII, p. 778.
56 OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. XII, p. 767.
57 OMF, Bk. 1, Ch. X, p. 120.
58 OMF, Bk. 3, Ch. II, p. 435.
59 OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. II, p. 234.
60 OMF, Bk. 3, Ch. X, p. 532.
61 Mother Goose.
62 OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. VIII, p. 717.
63 Mother Goose.
64 OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. IX, p. 727.
65 OMF, Bk. 1, Ch. XI, p. 137.
66 OMF, Bk. 1, Ch. II, p. 10.
67 OMF, Bk. 1, Ch. X, p. 117.
68 OMF, Bk. 1, Ch. XI, p. 131.
69 OMF, Bk. 1, Ch. XI, p. 131.
70 OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. XVI, p. 810.
71 OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. VI, p. 303.
72 OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. II, p. 241.
73 OMF, Bk. 1, Ch. XIV, p. 171.
74 OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. XVI, p. 415.
75 OMF, Bk. 4, Ch. IX, p. 725.
76 OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. XVI, p. 413.
77 OMF, Bk. 2, Ch. XV, p. 393.
78 OMF, Bk. 1, Ch. XII, p. 148.
CHAPTER IV

THE SPELL-BOUND CITY: The Mystery of Edwin Drood

Moving from Our Mutual Friend to The Mystery of Edwin Drood is moving into a much sparer world. To say that in the last novel Dickens has finally recognized a personal duality and social schizophrenia is to state a truism. Nonetheless it is important, and even more important is the fact that, by actually recognizing and accepting this duality, he has made a paradoxical but nonetheless complementary move towards simplification of and unity in his imagery. At one point in the novel Grewgious characterizes a person in love "as leading both a doubled and a half life"; by logical extension those not in love, not in a situation of such human correspondence, or not capable of such a state, would display a self-sufficient, and self-contained image. Images of this type are common in this novel, very common in fact, but they are used not to portray the loveless but the established powers of Cloisterham society, including its dominating physical structures. And their awesome self-containment seems to imply that they are not in a state of sympathetic correspondence with themselves and with all the forces of their being.

The grotesques in the earlier novels were, at their most powerful, changeable, spontaneous, a constant dream-like shifting of forms from one distortion to another. Of these images Quilp and the Smallweeds

153
stand out, the one as an active force, the other as a revealed energy pattern, like a kaleidoscope, or an image on an oscilloscope, as simultaneously expressive of richness and of potential for change.

Grotesque images occur in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* that are common in the earlier novels. Yet, whereas, in the earlier works, they may have recurred several times within a story, each use having an independent suggestive meaning, in *Edwin Drood* the image is firmly tied to one psychological or spiritual situation, and if they are repeated, it is with an identical meaning. The doll, for instance, is a popular grotesque image for Dickens in *Our Mutual Friend*, but there it is used to characterize people as unalike as Mr. Dolls, the old drunk, and Bella, the ideal wife, and situations as diverse as little Johnny's dreams and Jenny's satirical mimicry of the society-women. In *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, it is only Mrs. Crisparkle, the canon's mother, and her mirror-image twin sister who bear the image of a doll; in their case it is one made of Dresden china.

*The Mystery of Edwin Drood* seems to be a continuation of the preoccupations that oppressed Dickens in *The Old Curiosity Shop*. To a large extent in *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens sought in contemporary political or social structures for the sources of social malaise and techniques of social interaction he had observed. Here however he reverts to his concern for that interior life that molded Nell's vision of the natural world.

The world of Cloisterham is 'given' as an objective situation which formally works itself out. Yet though Dickens acts as impersonal
narrator, there is the closest of bonds between the world he draws and the world as it appears to Jasper. Jasper seems to be reacting to the world that Dickens provides, but he is, also, the creator of that world. So, when the narrator speaks of "the oppressive respectability of Cloisterham, which speeds vagabonds and beggars instinctively on their way," there is more than a touch of warm love for the security of such a world, and that love is Jasper's as much as Dickens'. It is 'oppressive' in Jasper's image of the environment as much as in any actual role or function of oppressiveness. And Jasper's idea of it as oppressive, like the well-worn nervous path of an obsession, which can see a situation in only one light, accounts partially, as we shall see, for the unchangeability of its grotesque imagery.

Jasper's mind shares with Nell's an obsessiveness and a morbid-ity, "'A man leading a monotonous life,' Jasper proceeds, 'dwells upon an idea until it loses its proportions. That was my case with the idea in question.'" However their interior lives would not generally have been in sympathy. Nell would have found in the architecture and society of Cloisterham just the haven of carefully structured calm that her distracted mind needed.

The structure of The Old Curiosity Shop was characterized by the linear character of Nell's flight and the dance of the grotesques. In The Mystery of Edwin Drood the spatial sense is also most important. It is dominated by the presence and rigidity of the cathedral, and Jasper's forced entrapment within its confines. (I am choosing to ignore any proposed conclusions for the novel, and am working only with
the imagery of the fragment. Is Jasper trapped by his own mental inertia, or by the mental world of an opium trance, or by some sort of social pressure that he reveres? Whatever the reason, Jasper does not have the opportunities of flight presented to Nell, and the imagery of the novel is a reflection of his reaction to this spatial enclosure.

The world of Cloisterham is characterized by the stoniness and rigidity of the cathedral. The cathedral is often referred to by its "massive, gray, square tower" and its square, enclosing character is carried through into the city, which it dominates:

Fragments of old wall, saint's chapel, chapter-house, convent and monastery have got incongruously or obstructively built into many of its houses and gardens.

The streets are described as stony enclosures, "being mostly disappointing yards with pumps in them and no thoroughfare--exception made of the Cathedral-close and a paved Quaker settlement." Much of the action takes place in the secluded nooks of the Precincts of the cathedral. Other scenes take place in the crypt and in the tower itself, and the presence of locked gates and underground tunnels is overpowering when Durdles and Jasper take their night tour. The preoccupation with the enclosed vaults of the tombstones completes the picture.

Notice that the characters of the novel are not connected to the cathedral only by vocation or religion. They all live in extensions of it, little cells that it has, as it were, propagated. And the walls of their dwellings assume excessive importance. It is told of the Crisparkle residence:
Red brick walls . . . latticed windows, panelled rooms, big oaken beams in little places, and stone-walled gardens where annual fruit yet ripened on monkish trees, were the principal surroundings of pretty old Mrs. Crisparkle and the Reverend Septimus.7

The Topes' 'cathedrally' lodgings are described as having the "character of a cool dungeon. Its ancient walls were massive and its rooms rather seemed to have been dug out of them, than to have been designed beforehand with any reference to them."8

The enclosing role of the massive cathedral finds parallels, in the early nineteenth century, in two other literary expressions of the same situation.

In the gothic novels the immovable power of a massive containing edifice and its psychological parallel in the monks and nuns closed within a monastery in opposition to their desires seem to be recurrent motifs. Melmoth the Wanderer analyzes in detail the psychological changes Monçada undergoes, first by having his freedom of choice removed by being made a monk, and secondly having his communication with others stopped by being placed in a dungeon. In a sense what is being set up is the duality between a rigid exterior world as it may exist in any social situation and the varieties of passion of the spirit that dwell within it.

That Dickens implies correspondences between his characters and the incarcerated figures of the gothic novels is revealed in several statements. Of the nun's house, now Miss Twinkleton's Academy, he says,

Whether the nuns of yore . . . were ever walled up alive in odd angles and jutting gables of the building for having some ineradicable leaven of busy mother Nature in them which has kept the fermenting world alive ever since.9
and Jasper compares his own position to that of the monks: "No wretched monk who droned his life away in that gloomy place, before me, can have been more tired than I am."^10

This image of the 'sunken city,' at first beautiful, gradually becoming ugly, propagating its tunnels and dungeons in a way that turned the city into a prison, was found likewise in the work of Romantic writers who were known opium users. The cathedral is present in Jasper's opium visions, though it does not dominate them. Yet for him, the cathedral in his waking or conscious life functions in exactly this role.

In the gothic novels the characters who offered release from the prisons often possessed supernatural attributes; in this novel the character most unwillingly bound by the stony city attributes such qualities, we shall see, to the Opium Woman who offers him a temporary release, and to Deputy, who seems unaffected by the city's powers.

Now these remarks may seem scattered and hardly conclusive, but the unity of the imagery throughout the novel will slowly grow apparent.

The spatial framework of the novel is static and everything in the story, both the object world and a certain group of people that Jasper must confront, repeat in their appearances this rigidity of the cathedral.

The imagery used to describe the characters suggests that many of them have a hard, unchangeable shell. Mrs. Crisparkle is a Dresden china doll, and her sister completes a matching pair:

What is prettier than an old lady--except a young lady--when her eyes are bright, when her figure is trim and compact, when her face
is cheerful and calm, when her dress is as the dress of a china shepherdess: so dainty in its colours, so individually assorted to herself, so neatly moulded on her?\textsuperscript{11}

In this case the doll image is an ornament of a genteel sitting-room, decorative, essentially useless but treated with an unnecessary delicacy.

Her excessively healthy, excessively boyish, excessively happy son, who proceeds to destroy Neville's capacity for spontaneous passion, and who thinks it of importance that he correct the grammar Tope uses to speak to the Dean, receives a fairly complex treatment:

'Neville,' hinted the Minor Canon, with a steady countenance, 'you have repeated that former action of your hands, which I so much dislike.'
'I am sorry for it, sir, but it was involuntary. I confessed that I was still as angry.'
'And I confess,' said Mr. Crisparkle, 'that I hoped for better things.'\textsuperscript{12}

Nonetheless one image in the same vein as the ones we have been noticing is employed in connection with him. His name brings to mind the word 'crystal,' though it also has a relationship to 'Christmas' and 'sparkle.' The word seems strangely delicate and cold to apply to a man seen,

feinting and dodging with the utmost artfulness, and hitting out from the shoulder with the utmost straightness, while his radiant features teemed with innocence, and soft-hearted benevolence beamed from his boxing gloves.\textsuperscript{13}

Yet it is not an imagined comparison, because in fact, Jasper says to Crisparkle, "'You are always training yourself to be, mind and body, as clear as crystal, . . . whereas I am a muddy, solitary, moping weed.'"\textsuperscript{14}
Crystal however is treasured usually not only for its clearness, but for the perfection of its shape and for its hardness. One critic* has suggested that Crisparkle is an example in the novel of the perfect or completed man in whom the capacity for sympathy with the external world and the demands of the inner self are kept in harmony; but both in the transparency of crystal and in the boyish behaviour of Crisparkle, "taking a trot at his favourite fragment of ruin," these lower depths seem non-existent.

The closest suggestion that there is another facet to his personality is the description of the Dean and Crisparkle as two rooks in conversation: "divers venerable persons of rook-like aspect dispersing, two of these latter retrace their steps, and walk together in the echoing Close." The rooks are however less a comment on his whole personality than on the negative social effect of his crystal-like side whose hardness is shared by the Dean. The rooks, black animal powers, are brought into existence by the cold, inanimate structures of the cathedral, much in the way Nell's grotesque hallucinations were brought into being by her overpowering drive for perfection, and much in the way that it will be seen that the city of Cloisterham brings into being anarchic grotesque figures like Deputy.

The odd contradiction between the image of Crisparkle's rosy health and that of crystal is reinforced by his setting himself in opposition to crystal-like substances, "having broken the thin morning

* Charles Mitchell, see bibliography.
ice near Cloisterham with his amiable head,"\textsuperscript{17} or "boxing at a looking glass with great science and prowess,"\textsuperscript{18} which causes his mother to warn that he will "'Break the pier-glass or burst a blood-vessel.'"\textsuperscript{19} Nonetheless, in taking Crisparkle into account, it is necessary to remember this connection with crystal, a cold hard substance like the massive walls of the cathedral, or like the Dresden china image that contains his mother.

It seems as if Crisparkle, like Agnes in the children's story \textit{The Lost Princess},\textsuperscript{20} has two sides. Agnes' worm-like inner self, like Crisparkle's boyishness, is not necessarily her natural self. It is molded into its ugly form by the exterior self she is trained to present. Likewise with Crisparkle, the exterior crystal forms he is allied with has deformed his natural passionate manhood into a boisterous boyishness.

These two are not the only characters with rigid, inanimate surfaces. Jasper's name is that of a stone, though the image receives no further elaboration. However jasper is a stone which figures often in the exotic riches of \textit{Tales of the Arabian Nights}, and Jasper's imagination is spell-bound by a vision of cold, clear beauty that he associates with the Orient, "Ten thousand scimitars flash in the sunlight."\textsuperscript{21} The cold loveliness of the gem is mirrored in the cold, technically perfect beauty of Jasper's singing.

Durdles seems to have adopted a stony covering from the tombstones he works with, "Durdles is a stonemason; chiefly in the gravestone, tomb, and monument way and wholly of their colour from head to foot."\textsuperscript{22} He is known to the urchins as Stony Durdles, and spends his
waking hours in the crypt of the cathedral. He lives in "a little antiquated hole of a house,"

supposed to be built, so far, of stones stolen from the city wall. To this abode there is an approach, ankle-deep in stone chips, resembling a petrified grove of tombstones, urns, draperies, and broken columns, in all stages of sculpture.

And when he is seen out after ten he has arranged that an urchin throw stones at him until he goes home.

The final character endowed with a hard exterior is Mr. Grewgious, who, besides referring to himself as "a particularly Angular man," says, "I seem to have come into existence a chip. I was a chip—and a very dry one—when I first became aware of myself." He is pictured as chopping his words out of himself as if they were wood. There is an incompleteness about his exterior which, though said to mean that Nature did not bother to endow his appearance with sensibility, implies instead a contradiction in his character; "she [Nature] has impatiently thrown away the chisel and said, 'I really cannot be worried to finish off this man; let him go as he is.'" It is almost as if, of the five, Grewgious' surface is the only one that has a break in its grim texture.

These inanimate surfaces are in fact a final variation on the uses of costume that have fascinated Dickens for years. In this novel the costumes have not just become the man, trapped the man into a social role, they have turned into a literal stony prison within which the man shrivels and dies. And the emphasis is on the man, rather
than on the clothes. It is not a satire on masks interacting, as were the passages on the Merdles in *Little Dorrit* or on the Veneerings in *Our Mutual Friend*. In the latter, even when Lady Tippins has turned into a species of death mask, the flutter of her fan reminiscent of a skeleton rattle, she still retains ties with the traditional caricature figure of the lady of fashion. In *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, the person seems given no choice about his costume, and cannot rid himself of it. This is seen in Grewgious, who recognizes that his wooden appearance denies him the right to any fancies of the heart:

> Dimly catching sight of his face in the misty looking-glass, he held his candle to it for a moment, 'A likely someone, you, to come into anybody's thoughts in such an aspect!' he exclaimed. 'There, there! Get to bed, poor man, and cease to jabber!'

In comic form it is seen in Durdles who is always wandering off to 'clean up,' but is unable to do so:

> This going home to clean himself is one of the man's incomprehensible compromises with inexorable facts; he, and his hat, and his boots, and his clothes, never showing any trace of cleaning, but being uniformly in one condition of dust and grit.

These are of course only five out of the many characters in the novel, but that five major personages should be allied with such rigid, unchanging, inanimate objects is of significance in itself. So also is the large role assumed in the story by such objects themselves.

In addition to the tombstones which are Durdles' pride, (of those poor who have none he says, "'All safe and sound here, sir, and all Durdles' work!" Of those common folk that is merely bundled up in
turf and brambles, the less said the better."[italics mine], there are the regular rains of stones with which Deputy pelts Durdles. The whole object in the life of the urchin is to throw stones, and when he has no available living target, he is seen stoning the dead. The Sapsea monument, with poor Mrs. Sapsea inside, is another object of the kind we have been noticing. It is suggestive that Edwin receives no real physical description; if it were to have been revealed that Jasper buried him in the Sapsea Monument, that would have become his physical appearance. Resenting the fact that Edwin was in no way tied to Cloisterham and was journeying to the East, Jasper might have seen poetic justice in preventing this by trapping him as deeply as possible within the stony confines of Cloisterham.

The most ecstatic vision of sensuality in this peculiar society is reserved for objects, Mrs. Crisparkle's jams and spices; once again the image is of containers with the essence or spirit preserved within. That the joys of living reach their height in the storage space of an old lady's dining room is a due reflection on the world Jasper and Dickens have created and are reacting to:

It was a most wonderful closet, worthy of Cloisterham and of Minor Canon Corner. . . . The upper slide, on being pulled down, revealed deep shelves of pickle-jars, jam-pots, tin-canisters, spice-boxes, and agreeably outlandish vessels of blue and white the luscious lodgings of preserved tamarinds and ginger. . . . The pickles, in a uniform of rich brown double-breasted buttoned coat, and yellow and sombre drab combinations, announced their portly forms, in printed capitals, as Walnut, Gherkin, Onion, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Mixed, and other members of that noble family. The jams, as being of a less masculine temperament, and as wearing curlpapers, announced themselves in feminine calligraphy like a soft whisper, to be Raspberry, Gooseberry, Apricot, Plum, Damson, Apple, and Peach. . . .
Lowest of all, a compact leaden vault enshrined the sweet wine and a stock of cordials: whence issued whispers of Seville Orange, Lemon, Almond, and Caraway-Seed.31

This Thanksgiving for the abundance of the fruits of the earth is for them in their most 'civilized' form, sugared and jellied and preserved in jam jars. Later in the novel that benevolent magical figure, Tartar, who leads Rosa to a 'Jack and the Beanstalk' world is also closely associated with jam jars and drawers. At the same time the spices and exotic fruits remind one of the shiploads of riches that are usually brought home by Sinbad in the Arabian Nights, and the hardness, the beauty, the containing character of the jars is reminiscent of the magic talismans.

The presence of the Old 'Uns in the walls of the cathedral, which is by far the most obvious image of the kind that have been examined, is not therefore merely a grotesque indulgence on Dickens' part. Their exact role is related to Durdles' character, but they derive meaning from the less obviously grotesque parallels among the living inhabitants of Cloisterham and their possessions.

In The Mystery of Edwin Drood Dickens once more creates a representation of those powerful bourgeois, middle class, or genteel personality traits that were so present in The Old Curiosity Shop and in A Tale of Two Cities. Here however they themselves have hardened into forms which, while serving as protections against the vulgar, carrion-scented likes of the urchin Deputy, also trap the essential spirit of the place and of the inhabitants inside permanent prisons. And just as the jams and pickles have been slightly altered by being
preserved, so the spirits of a society within such barriers have been imperceptibly altered.

That Cloisterham is a world characterized by rigid exteriors is further revealed by the form given to the forces contained by them. As Jasper and Durdles walk through the cathedral at night Jasper lights a match, "by drawing from the cold hard wall a spark of that mysterious fire which lurks in everything." Here one is reminded of the genie of the lamp, the energy figure that resides mysteriously in the magic container, and of the madman's fire in *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

In *The Old Curiosity Shop* the madman who was born and had grown old in the factory, saw in the factory fire his memory and his imagination—places and scenes that he would never see in fact, and horrors that were most bearable transmuted into the images of a dream. Louisa Gradgrind and Lizzie Hexam both read stories in the flames. Mr. Grewgious is the last in the line of Dickens' characters who can connect with the sources of passion in the flames:

there was something dreamy (for so literal a man) in the way in which he now shook his right forefinger at the live coals in the grate, and again fell silent.

More often, however, this fire is transmuted into a reflected form, for instance into the colours of jewels and gems:

gloomy shadows began to deepen in corners; ... and jewels cast upon the pavement of the nave from stained glass by the declining sun, began to perish.

See how bright these stones shine [the diamond and ruby ring of Rosa's mother] ... If I had any imagination I might imagine that the lasting beauty of these stones was almost cruel.
or into the rich liquor that expresses so much of the potential pas-
sions of Mr. Grewgious that his wooden exterior has destroyed:

[Grewgious] had brought up bottles of ruby, straw-coloured, and
golden drinks, which had ripened long ago in lands where no fogs
are, and had since lain slumbering in the shade.36

Even for Rosa that 'mysterious fire' has been changed into a
gentle form:

The atmosphere of pity surrounding the little orphan girl . . .
had always adorned her with some soft light of its own; . . . now
it had been golden, now roseate, and now azure.37

Lobley, Tartar's man, who rows them up the river one enchanted
afternoon, resembles not the sun itself, but an artistic representation
of the sun:

He was a big, jolly favoured man, with tawny hair and whiskers,
and a big red face. He was the dead image of the sun in the old
wooden cuts, his hair and whiskers answering for rays all round
him.38

Finally Durdles, who, is of a quite different order of humanity
from the other Cloisterham inhabitants, has at one point bestowed upon
him a jewel-like mask:

Here, the moonlight is so very bright again that the colours of
the nearest stained glass window are thrown upon their faces. The
appearance of the unconscious Durdles, holding the door open for
his companion to follow, as if from the grave, is ghastly enough,
with a purple band across his face, and a yellow splash upon his
brow.39

Dickens' use of jewels to indicate a certain spiritual state
finds a parallel in two stories of Hans Christian Andersen. In The Snow Queen the boy with the heart of ice at first says of the snowflakes:

'Do you see how clearly they are made.' . . . Much more interesting than looking at real flowers, and there is not a single flaw in them. They are perfect. If only they would not melt!'40

but the snowflakes are later shown to be quite different:

they took the most curious shapes. Some looked like big horrid porcupines; some like bundles of knotted snakes with their heads sticking out. Others again were like fat little bears with bristling hair, but all were dazzling white and living snowflakes.41

In another tale, The Travelling Companion, the ogre's cave is filled with the most glorious gems, inside which are seen repulsive monsters. Obviously the grotesque is more closely allied to the monsters and knotted snakes than to the gems and snowflakes. However there seems in Andersen's mind a link between the two, whereby the most perfect, intricate, yet cold, inanimate exterior calls into being its opposite, ugly, brutish forces. * The interesting point here is, however, the similarity of the imagery to that of The Mystery of Edwin Drood, to that for instance of Jasper's remark to Crisparkle that the latter is like crystal whereas he is an ugly moping weed. Yet this is only Jasper's hidden nature; his exterior is handsome, hard like his name, and his art is of great stylistic beauty. In these cases the grotesque

*A variation of this alliance was of course seen in the relationship of jewels and fabric to rotting organic matter in Our Mutual Friend.
is not the opposite of the sublime, as was posited by Hugo; it is a necessary complement of it, as he suggested, but it is brought into being by the very attempt to achieve an outward perfection of form.

Thus Jasper rejects any alliance with impoverished humanity:

'It's not the opposite of the sublime, as was posited by Hugo; it is a necessary complement of it, as he suggested, but it is brought into being by the very attempt to achieve an outward perfection of form.'

Yet his best visions depend on and need the old woman with her filthy courtyard, just as the graciousness of Cloisterham brings into existence the illogical destructiveness of Durdles and Deputy to complete its artistic structure. Nonetheless their behaviour is carried out within the highly structured social order of Cloisterham, and using its idiom, stones and tombstones—as the monsters remain 'white and dazzling snow-flakes.' The appearance of the Snow Queen in fact reflects a nature quite similar to Jasper's; 'She was made completely of ice. . . . Her eyes were glittering stars, but there was no rest or peace in them.'

In terms of outward behaviour this transformation of fire into jewels finds a parallel in Jasper's singing. The opium woman tells him 'What a sweet singer you was when you first come.' Perhaps at that point the opium could dissolve his statue-like exterior world and let the song issue out. Yet the Jasper who sings before the murder of Edwin is still a skilled singer. Crisparkle says, 'nothing unsteady, nothing forced, nothing avoided; all thoroughly done in a masterly manner with perfect self-command.' The emphasis has shifted from
the emotional content of his voice to the technical powers. This is backed up by the narrator's remark on Jasper's personality:

[performing] an Art . . . which could not have been pursued unless he and they had been in the nicest mechanical relations and unison, it is curious to consider that the spirit of the man was in moral accordance or interchange with nothing around him.46

Jasper is still taking opium. It seems however as if its powers have shifted.

The opium has in fact taken over or possessed Jasper in a spell; whereas at first it may have offered a release from the equally potent spell of Cloisterham into something approaching a whole or completed man, it has, with time, set up its own spell, its own unreality. What the new reality of the opium is can never be exactly known. Nonetheless that its spell would correspond to the stoned-in spell which Cloisterham has thrown up around its inhabitants seems likely, that it would perhaps be represented by the cold reflected beauty of the stones, the cold, ritualistic beauty of Jasper's singing.

Continuing with the suggestion that the opium establishes its own reality for Jasper, a highly structured repressive society, as Cloisterham obviously is, with its gentility, its daily cathedral services, its 'Alternate Musical Wednesdays,' can do something other than cause its inhabitants to run amuck occasionally, giving full vent to their unconscious desires. It can train them to do what the suffering poor or mistreated in Dickens' other novels did, to create an imaginative rendering of their situation, in the tradition of Wemmick and Jenny Wren. This happens in Miss Twinkleton's two states of existence,
"'Foolish Mr. Porters' . . . [who] revealed a homage of the heart'"\(^4^7\) one season at Tunbridge Wells, assumes the proportions of an extensive social career, whereas her globes strive to make her and her friends believe in her passion for learning. The Reverend Crisparkle turns his natural vigour and passion into a boy's version of them, boxing with himself in the mirror and with his mother's hat, and priding himself on his athletic habits,

manly fellow! . . . there was no more self-assertion in the Minor Canon than in the schoolboy who had stood in the breezy fields keeping a wicket.\(^4^8\)

"He knew every hole and corner of all the depths"\(^4^9\) of Cloisterham Weir, and substitutes such physical venturing for any possible questings of the imagination or spirit.

Jasper's imaginative rendering of Cloisterham, however, is to turn it into a ritual, sacred to himself if not to any particular deity.* For, though his spirit is in moral accord with no other being, it is very much in accord with the mechanical beauty of the music. And he turns all the conformism of his surroundings into tools for a sacred ritual that he must undergo in order to complete himself. We see something of this in his second visit to the opium den. Here he enacts the same ritual each time. If the vision of murdering Edwin is part of that opium ritual, then the actual murder of Edwin is merely giving material form to the artistic representation of the ritual that

*Literary sleuths who have proposed that the murder was to be part of the Thug ritual, a service to the goddess Kali, may or may not have been factually correct, but they rightly assess his psychological state.
he undergoes in daydreams and in opium trances. As the drugged conversa­tion with the opium woman reveals,

'I'll warrant you made the journey in many ways, when you made it so often?'

'Yes! I always made the journey first, before the changes of colors and the great landscapes and glittering processions began. They couldn't begin till it was off my mind. I had no room for anything else till then.'

The implication seems to be that the journey is made, as a propitiatory ritual, in order to experience the great landscapes and glittering processions. Yet a great delight is taken in the journey (or murder) itself, which probably means a delight in its very rigid ritualistic quality, "'Time and place are at hand.'"51

The murder of Edwin is no welling up of uncontrollable black or brutal forces, such as would be implied by Jasper's calling himself a moping weed or referring to his unmanageable humours; it is a delight in turning what are for Jasper the weapons an enclosing society wields against him into the tools of a difficult spiritual journey.* (Ceremony is a way of reinforcing one's function in a society as much as a way of expressing it. It makes the position real as much as it celebrates its reality.) Notice that not only the time, but the place must be as the ritual demands. Only Cloisterham Cathedral could function in Jasper's hazardous ceremony. The symbols of walls, barriers, precious gems that were pointed out earlier become therefore symbols both of the bourgeois urge for social graces and attractiveness, and

*Notice how he transforms Sapsea into something ridiculous by appearing to agree with him.
for the rituals of a much more demanding nature that Jasper inclines towards.

This suggests that Jasper is not merely schizophrenic, one face a respectable choir-master who loves his nephew, the other full of passionate jealous hatred: it is that both these sides exist, but are joined by a third, a psychopath who performs his actions amorally, for the sake of the ritual. The implication is that a restrictive, in this case, bourgeois, social structure is a natural breeding-ground for a psychopath who can abstract the dominant qualities and vices of that society and turn them into what becomes for him a beautiful ritual.

It is however necessary to remember that Jasper's emotions are, at the same time, involved in the murder. In real life he has always played the adoring, passive role to his nephew, waiting for his visits, worrying about his health. The murder is therefore also a materialized daydream which asserts the power that Jasper feels he abdicates in his actual dealings with Edwin. Unfortunately for Jasper, the victim does not react in the desired way, "'No struggle, no consciousness of peril, no entreaty.'" 52

A simplification in the imagery of the grotesque characters accompanies the general simplifying of the imagery, the one-to-one correspondences between people and objects and between the cathedral and a specific spiritual state. There is none of that spontaneous form changing that was seen in characters like Smallweed or in settings like the fog in Bleak House or Vholes' office. Except for Mr. Grewgious,
who looks as if "he could be ground into high-dried snuff,"[53*] there are only three grotesque humans in the story, Durdles, Deputy and the Opium Woman. In an odd similarity to the rigid social structure of mediaeval times, which channeled its ambivalent, irrational imaginings into set, accepted grotesque forms such as the court fool, the annual festival of folly, the gargoyles, and the devil-figures, in this world of entrenched, calcified social mores, the grotesques are endowed, both by the characters and the narrator, with traditional images. Thus Deputy is specifically designated as an imp and a demon (Quilp of course was called similar names, but only as two of the many qualities ascribed to him):

the enchanted hour when Mr. Durdles may be stoned home, having struck; he had some expectation of seeing the Imp who is appointed to the mission of stoning him. In effect that Power of Evil is abroad. Having nothing living to stone at the moment, he is discovered by Mr. Datchery in the unholy office of stoning the dead, through the railings of the churchyard.[54]

'What! Is that baby-devil on the watch there!' cries Jasper ... so violent that he seems like an older devil himself.[55]

The term demon, or even Imp, however convenient it may be in Cloisterham society for summing up and dismissing the antics of one small urchin (see illustrations in Chapter I), encompasses a much more complex range of feelings. It stands in fact for all the emotions and

*Grewgious is in the Dickens/Hans Christian Andersen tradition of Wemmick and Miss Pross, whose ungainly object-like appearance visually expresses their human weaknesses at the same time that it engages our sympathy by implying that such weaknesses are out of their control or are created by society.
passions, and vices, and imagination that such a society denies the existence of:

'No wretched monk who droned his life away in that gloomy place, before me, can have been more tired than I am. He could take for relief (and did take) to carving demons out of the stalls and seats and desks. What shall I do? Must I take to carving them out of my heart?'

says Jasper. In his intense hatred for Deputy, "'I shall shed the blood of that impish wretch! I know I shall do it!''' we feel that he recognizes Deputy as a living grotesque manifestation of that part of his heart he has had to carve out.

The relationship of Jasper to Deputy raises the problem for Jasper of the extent to which Jasper has personal control over Deputy's power. If Deputy is a real demon, a real source of evil and magic powers, and has chosen Jasper as his victim, then Jasper is helpless, even if the limit of the evil to which he is driven is "to shed the blood of that impish wretch." If Deputy's power is a creation of Jasper's imagination, then at least Jasper is responsible for his actions.

In The Sandman, E. T. A. Hoffmann tackles an identical situation, but verbalizes the problem more openly. His hero attempts to analyze the romantic imagination and account for the reality of the spectres that haunt him:

'everyone who imagined himself free was really the plaything of dark and cruel powers; it was useless to rebel, we all had to bow humbly to our destiny.

Coppelius was an evil spirit, as he had realized when he eavesdropped upon him from behind the curtain, and that this abominable demon would wreak havoc with their happiness.'
To this his fiancée replies:

'once we have surrendered ourselves to the dark physical power, it frequently draws inside us external figures thrown in our path by the world; then it is we ourselves who endow these figures with the life with which, in wild delusion, we credit them.'\textsuperscript{59}

'Coppelius is an evil, malignant spirit; he can exercise the terrible powers of a demon incarnate; but only if you do not banish him from your mind.'\textsuperscript{60}

Nell's imaginative response to Quilp and the gambling grandfather and to the power of the church ruins was an earlier manifestation of the same preoccupation.

The opium woman's role is obviously complex. She says of herself "'Well, there's land customers and there's water customers. I'm a mother to both. Different to Jack Chinaman t'other side the court. He ain't a father to neither. It ain't in him.'"\textsuperscript{61} and the narrator likens her to a cat watching a half-slain mouse. Nonetheless, when she enters the confines of Cloisterham, the form she is recognized as possessing is that of the material of which the city is built. She is looked upon as a gargoyle.

As ugly and withered as one of the fantastic carvings on the under brackets of the stall seats, as malignant as the Evil One, as hard as the big brass eagle holding the sacred books upon his wings, she hugs herself in her lean arms, and then shakes both fists at the leader of the Choir.\textsuperscript{62}

Two processes are at work here. Material and hence constricting forms or names are given to complicated spiritual forces, as Jasper does with reference to the demons in his heart. This in one way signifies
the reality of their existence, the fact that, though these fierce passions originate within himself, the obsession with them possesses his mind as if they are inflicted on him from outside. The very fact of 'naming,' of giving a simple image to a complicated feeling, gives him a degree of power or control over them.* Within the total structure of Cloisterham the names given, those of carved demons, imply the actual impotence of Jasper's emotional rebellion, its almost decorative role within the stony framework.

At the same time there is an attempt to contain the irrational energy of certain rich, complicated human beings who act out all the powers denied the people of Cloisterham, by describing them in traditional ecclesiastical or literary images, as is done by calling the opium woman a gargoyle and Deputy an Imp. The obvious connection of these images with the imagery of the Cathedral is a technique for pretending that these uncontrollable characters have been absorbed into the general stony prison. The very instinct to describe people in terms of such imagery reveals exactly how well the imaginations of the inhabitants have been molded.

*This power of naming is very closely tied to the whole process of creating grotesque imagery. As Santayana said, the new grotesque creation must hint at some formal structure. The grotesque is integrally tied to the fact of transformation, to the unpredictable and apparently motiveless change from one form to another. By giving a visual artistic shape to this transformation as do, say, Bosch and Brueghel, where it is impossible to tell if the creations are animal, human or object, or as do the clowns and nursery rhymes with their emphasis on the comic nonsense of such transformations, the artist is in fact controlling his own fear of such change; a feat that Nell is unable to do, resulting for her in visions of surrealist chaos.
In *The Old Curiosity Shop* it was suggested that the clown-figures were anti-bourgeois in their gleeful taunts against genteel values and manners. In *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* the potential clowns, the grotesque figures, Durdles, Deputy, and the opium woman, though working class or sub-proletarian, establish alliances with the genteel world, or unwittingly mimic its behaviour. At the same time they do mock its politeness and pretensions to virtue. Their role is further rendered ambivalent by the stolid face of their society, which, in its very impassiveness, causes them to direct much of their spontaneous humour and fancifulness towards the dead.

Deputy shows a true commercial sense in stoning away competition. Durdles has only gruff words for the poor folk buried in grass and brambles, and in building tombs for the newly dead he seems to continue the wall-building propensities of the culture. He prides himself on finding his pitch when searching the walls, as Jasper finds his pitch in the singing.

Sometimes however the mimicry implies a malicious minor world openly acting out the complicated motives of the dominant society. For instance, after arriving at Cloisterham, Neville reveals his hard boyhood and impetuous temper to Crisparkle, giving as reason for his confession, "'everything around us being so old and grave and beautiful, with the moon shining on it--these things inclined me to open my heart.'" Yet the opium woman, in viciously manipulating the drugged Jasper into talking, knowingly uses a similar technique, "She seems to know what the influence of her perfect quietude would be." Jasper
in the opium den listens to the ramblings of the opium woman, the Chinaman and the Lascar and, in his intellectual pride, murmurs, "'Unintelligible.'"65 Moments later the world of these three reaches out and captures him through involuntary mimicry:

He notices that the woman has opium-smoked herself into a strange likeness of the Chinaman. His form of cheek, eye, and temple, and his colour are repeated in her. As he watches the spasmodic shoots and starts that break out of her face and limbs, like fitful lightening out of a sky, some contagion in them seizes upon him: insomuch that he has to withdraw to a lean arm-chair and to sit in it, holding tight, until he has got the better of this unclean spirit of imitation.66

It has already been noticed with reference to Jasper's behaviour that The Mystery of Edwin Drood is to a large extent a representation of the psychological power of spells, a state of being that figured largely in the literary fascinations of the mid-Victorian bourgeoisie. In Grimm's Fairy Tales and Tales of the Arabian Nights, casting a spell is the most frequent means of gaining power. It is not farfetched to suppose that the idea of spells would be absorbed, transformed, into the work of an author who was so influenced by the images of the popular culture. The hypnotism that Jasper almost definitely practises, and that was a fad in Dickens' day, is only a scientific term for an age-old tradition of one person exerting an unnatural influence over another, or for a person behaving in an obsessive fashion that seems to originate outside himself. Dickens' preoccupation with this state of being began much earlier; in The Old Curiosity Shop the grandfather and Nell, both essentially unmanipulative, when they were desperate to obtain their own way would each employ a form of hypnotic power or
spiritual energy over the other. In this novel the power that the ancient city of Cloisterham possesses over the inhabitants is another kind of spell. In fact it follows in the tradition of countless tales in which spells render their victims immobile, or turn them into stones, or inanimate objects.

Hypnotism in order to work requires a sympathy of minds. No one can be hypnotized against their will, or hypnotized to do things that contradict their moral values. But under hypnotism one may do many things that he would not normally do because of inhibitions or fears. In other words, by allowing oneself to be hypnotized or brought under a spell, one may do what one wishes to do without accepting the responsibility for such actions. In slightly different words, by letting oneself be absorbed by the personality of another, one can remain will-less, childlike, but still obtain one's desires.

In A Tale of Two Cities it could be seen how Lucy and Manette, hating conflict or confrontation, transferred their feelings and behaviour to the objects around them, and because Dickens himself did honour to these characters he allowed the objects to carry out for them their desired actions and vengeance. In The Mystery of Edwin Drood we are shown a very old society, built up from generations of people like the Manettes; and these people too have transferred their anti-social feelings, their viciousness, to the object world. So successful have they been that the objects around them, and the bureaucratic institutions such as the church, which are as much outside themselves as the rocks of the cathedral, have in fact become the most
powerful forces in the community. They make the decisions of the people for them. This can be seen when the Dean tells Crisparkle not to harbour Neville since he may be a possible criminal; he turns it into a demand of the church and at the same time makes it the responsibility of the church:

'The days of taking sanctuary are past. This man must not take sanctuary with us.'

'You mean that he must leave my house, sir?'

'Mr. Crisparkle,' returned the prudent Dean, 'I claim no authority in your house. I merely confer with you, on the painful necessity you find yourself under, of depriving this young man of the great advantages of your counsel and instruction.' . . . It does not become us, perhaps,' pursued the Dean, 'to be partisans. Not partisans. We clergy keep our hearts warm and our heads cool, and we hold a judicious middle course. . . . In point of fact, keeping our hearts warm and our heads cool, we clergy need do nothing emphatically.'

Similarly Mrs. Crisparkle as hostess has the nature of her hospitality determined for her by the dining room and the table:

'Would eight at a friendly dinner at all put you out, Ma?'

'Nine would, Sept,' returned the old lady, visibly nervous.

'My dear Ma, I particularize eight.'

'The exact size of the table and room, my dear.'

Occasionally in the fairy tales it is the very innocent who are trapped by the ogre's and witch's spells. Although generally their rescuers are of as innocent a temperament as the spell-bound are, they recognize that in order to succeed they must ally themselves with magic forces that are not innocent though they are benevolent. Thus there would be one other instance in the natural world in which a person would be susceptible to a spell, and that would be if the person were
will-less, unaware of his own rights to assert his desires. Rosa is in this position. With her the spell of Cloisterham has taken the form of allowing her image of 'self' to be founded on the image others have of her. She sees herself with her schoolmates' eyes, on the arm of a sailor, out with Edwin in his unfashionable boots. Her instincts have not been warped, as she shows when she ends her engagement to Edwin. Yet, her unsureness in the power of her own self to make decisions and function independently renders her quickly susceptible to what she can only recognize as another magic spell:

never afterwards quite knowing how she ascended to his [Tartar's] garden in the air, and seemed to get into marvellous country that came into sudden bloom like the country on the summit of the magic beanstalk.

A major function of the grotesque figures in this novel is as spell-breakers. The opium-woman in fact serves as a type of reality-principle between two spell-bound worlds. Although in terms of the plot, she is a witch-figure who induces the opium spell in Jasper, "'nobody but me . . . has the true secret of mixing it'" and the special knowledge she claims was illegally gained from him under such a spell, still she is not responsible for Jasper's taking opium, and her witchlike character is an 'image' imposed on her by Jasper and Dickens observing from the 'respectable' world much as Charley Hexam imposed a witch's image on Jenny Wren. Furthermore her own experience with opium does not figure in the story, since we never confront her in a tranced state.

The opium woman in her hovel is not visually grotesque in the
double or triple-faced manner that characterized Dickens' earlier grotesques. She is merely lean, haggard and withered. Yet she has a grotesque power, and it is derived from her ugliness in contrast to the dignity of the cathedral and the exotic loveliness of the Eastern processions. In Jasper's vision as he leaves the opium spell, her world is the rusty spike of the bedstead surrealistically intruding between these two. And the comic or ludicrous aspect of her grotesque power comes from something as miserably real as her ruined health and her illiterate speech:

she finds the candle, and lights it before the cough comes on. It seizes her in the moment of success, and she sits down rocking herself to and fro, and gasping at intervals: '0 my lungs is awful bad! my lungs is wore away to cabbage-nets!' until the fit is over.

Jasper wants no part of a naturalistic reality and he dismisses her world easily; "'unintelligible' is again the comment of the watcher, made with some reassured nodding of the head." It is only fitting that these grotesque powers should pursue him and exact revenge, as it seems likely the opium woman is about to do.

How do these figures break spells? It is not through the imaginative fancy, for Grewgious, Rosa and Jasper are all possessed of that and in many cases it merely reinforces their situation. Rather it is through the power of rejecting logic, and in a more intense form, through illogical destruction. If this includes establishing a new fanciful creation, it is always an outrageous or illogical one. Thus Deputy gives a fanciful, story-book name to the opium woman, but unlike Rosa's and Dickens' 'Jack and the Beanstalk' world, it is in no way an
extension of her position or characterizes it; he calls her 'Er Royal Highness the Princess Puffer. Likewise, Durdles calls Deputy's attacks on him a national scheme of education, obvious satire on mid-century public education endeavours, but at the same time a totally ridiculous comparison, and he himself realizes it:

'I don't know what you may precisely call it.' It ain't a sort of a--scheme of a--National Education?'
'I should say not,' replies Jasper.
'I should say not,' assents Durdles; 'then we won't try to give it a name.'73 [italics mine]

Deputy is supreme in this assault on reason. His chant is as illogical and as catchy as any nursery rhyme. And at first it seems even more nonsensical than it is:

Widdy widdy wen!
I - ket - ches - Im - out - ar - ter - ten
Widdy widdy wy!
Then - E - go - then - I - shy,74
Widdy Widdy Wake-cock warning!

Similarly he always speaks of the Cathedral, that old stony spell-binder as the KIN-FREE-DRAL, a perfect phrase for breaking a spell of authority. His stoning, except for his ritual bombardment of Durdles, is objectless. His dancing, which makes him a direct descendent of acrobatic Tom Scott in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, is either done without motive, "then chants, like a little savage, half stumbling and half dancing among the rags and laces of his dilapidated boots,"75 or in opposition to any hint of solemnity, "on the happy chance of his [Datchery] being uneasy in his mind about it, to goad him with a demon dance
expressive of its irrevocability." or to express his intense glee at a totally illogical occurrence, such as the opium woman's visit to the cathedral, "not finding his sense of the ludicrous sufficiently relieved by stamping about on the pavement [he] breaks into a slow and stately dance." Of course the movements of the dances set up their own spatial motif within the novel in contrast to the immobility of the cathedral. One more parallel between the behaviour of the 'respectable' citizens and those considered vagabonds can be noticed here, for Deputy's dance is not unlike Crisparkle's boxing with the mirror or diving through the ice.

Hovering around the activities of the whole story is the figure of Durdles. Of the grotesque characters he is the most obviously endowed with the characteristics of Cloisterham society, "covered from head to foot with old mortar, lime and stone grit." He thinks of himself as a wise man: "Durdles comes by his knowledge through grubbing deep for it, and having it up by the roots when it don't want to come." Inasmuch as Durdles' appearance is an actual fact in the story, whereas the inanimate appearances of the others are imaginative comparisons made by the narrator, Durdles is set apart from his community by costume as a type of mimic fool. This position is recognized by the community in the license granted him as the "chartered libertine" of Cloisterham, his drunken peculiarities acceptable to society. Furthermore in giving himself up to Deputy to be stoned he serves as a 'sacrificial victim.' His mimic activities are confined to his tombstone
building, a fool's parallel of the activities of the powers of Cloisterham since the people he buries are dead.

Like mediaeval fools with their cowls, his costume is an extravagant rendering of the appearance of the established powers of his society. The fool normally operates within the rules of society. In his smashing of the cathedral walls to reveal old corpses Durdles allies himself with the anti-social spell breakers. However, in that the people he releases are already corpses, he shows himself both impotent and a fool. Durdles is not one of Dickens' more brilliant creations, and in his lack of verbal wit of the type found in fools like Quilp and Skimpole, he indicates how much his society has calcified, fossilized its inhabitants, smothering imagination even in its fools.

Yet concurrently Durdles is a source of wisdom. For the corpses that he discovers disintegrate on contact with air,

'Durdles come upon the old chap,' in reference to a buried magnate of ancient time and high degree, 'by striking right into the coffin with his pick. The old chap gave Durdles a look with his open eyes, as much as to say 'Is your name Durdles? Why, my man, I've been waiting for you a devil of a time!' And then he turned to powder.'

He has demonstrated to the world that, after all the work of breaking down the walls, what is inside cannot exist without them. The final irony of what he discovers is, to paraphrase Durdles himself, 'Inside solid, hollow.'

The harlequin-like mask created by the jewelled bands of light
on his stony countenance (see page 53) is a death mask, and when he mentions his 'tombatism' Dickens shows that he recognizes his alliance with death. It is reminiscent of Mr. Dolls' death mask in Our Mutual Friend, his distorted face viewed through the coloured glass bottles.

Yet the difference between these two descriptions underlines the basic change in Dickens' approach to the grotesque in his last novel. For the grotesque has, since earliest Egyptian art, allied itself with the bestial, the animal; the power of Mr. Dolls comes from the merging of dead flesh with the mysterious beauty of inanimate forms. In Quilp one was never allowed to forget his alliance with the flesh, his movements, his eating. In the graphics of Brueghel and Callot (see illustrations in Chapter I) even when they depended on theatrical costuming and popular imagery of imps and demons, the animal-like, even sexual, implications of the figures were always dominant, in their resemblances to insects and reptiles and in their sinuous, snake-like projections. But in the image of Durdles any trace of the flesh has been built over, obliterated, and Dickens presents a man made of stone dust with a mask of jewelled light. The grotesque in this novel is not the creative ugliness of uniting a man in one image with the forms of other animals and the structures of his own man-made culture, his homes, his machines, his costumes. The man and the animal have been transformed totally into stone grit; the mask of light decorates not a man but a statue.
FOOTNOTES


2 ED, Ch. III, p. 17.
3 ED, Ch. XIV, p. 161.
4 ED, Ch. I, p. 1.
5 ED, Ch. III, p. 18.
6 ED, Ch. III, p. 18.
7 ED, Ch. VI, p. 49.
8 ED, Ch. XVIII, p. 204.
9 ED, Ch. III, p. 18.
11 ED, Ch. VI, p. 48.
12 ED, Ch. X, p. 101.
13 ED, Ch. VI, p. 48.
14 ED, Ch. XIV, p. 162.
15 ED, Ch. IX, p. 99.
16 ED, Ch. I, p. 5.
17 ED, Ch. VI, p. 47.
18 ED, Ch. VI, p. 47.
19 ED, Ch. VI, p. 47.

20 See Chapter I, footnote 46; the author says of Agnes:

some smiles are like the ruddiness of certain apples which are owing to a centipede, or other creeping thing, coiled up at the heart of them. Only her worm had a face the very image of her
own, which looked so simpering and self-conscious and silly . . . if she were not made humble her growing would be to a mass of distorted shapes all huddled together, so that, although the body she now showed might grow up straight and well-shaped and comely to behold, the new body that was growing inside of it . . . would be ugly and crooked.

21 ED, Ch. I, p. 1.
22 ED, Ch. IV, p. 36.
23 ED, Ch. IV, p. 37.
24 ED, Ch. IV, p. 37.
25 ED, Ch. IX, p. 85.
26 ED, Ch. IX, p. 87.
27 ED, Ch. IX, p. 82.
28 ED, Ch. XI, p. 123.
29 ED, Ch. XII, p. 128.
30 ED, Ch. V, p. 41.
31 ED, Ch. IX, p. 97.
32 ED, Ch. XII, p. 134.
33 ED, Ch. XI, p. 120.
34 ED, Ch. XII, p. 133.
35 ED, Ch. XI, p. 121.
36 ED, Ch. XI, p. 116.
37 ED, Ch. IX, p. 78.
38 ED, Ch. XXII, p. 248.
39 ED, Ch. XII, p. 133.


41 Andersen, p. 141.
42 ED, Ch. I, p. 3.
43 Andersen, p. 112.
44 ED, Ch. XXIII, p. 258.
45 ED, Ch. XIV, p. 162.
46 ED, Ch. XXIII, p. 254.
47 ED, Ch. III, p. 19.
48 ED, Ch. XVII, p. 189.
49 ED, Ch. XVI, p. 180.
50 ED, Ch. XXIII, p. 260.
51 ED, Ch. XXIII, p. 261.
52 ED, Ch. XXIII, p. 261.
53 ED, Ch. IX, p. 84.
54 ED, Ch. XXIII, p. 267.
55 ED, Ch. XII, p. 137.
57 ED, Ch. XII, p. 137.
59 Hoffmann, p. 11.
60 Hoffmann, p. 15.
61 ED, Ch. XXIII, p. 256.
62 ED, Ch. XXIII, p. 270.
63 ED, Ch. VII, p. 60.
64 ED, Ch. XXIII, p. 269.
65 ED, Ch. I, p. 3.
66 ED, Ch. I, p. 3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>ED, Ch. XVI, p. 183.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>ED, Ch. VI, p. 52.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>ED, Ch. XXI, p. 234.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>ED, Ch. I, p. 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>ED, Ch. XXIII, p. 257.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>ED, Ch. I, p. 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>ED, Ch. V, p. 42.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>ED, Ch. V, p. 40.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>ED, Ch. V, p. 40.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>ED, Ch. XVIII, p. 204.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>ED, Ch. XXIII, p. 269.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>ED, Ch. VII, p. 138.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>ED, Ch. V, p. 43.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>ED, Ch. IV, p. 36.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>ED, Ch. IV, p. 36.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSION

The stated purpose of the thesis was to place the novels of Dickens in a tradition of grotesque popular art, and to compare the grotesque images he uses with those of the popular arts of the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century. These images and image patterns were seen as tools for a new approach to analyzing some of Dickens' novels.

The significant technique underlying most grotesque images is the double or triple face, two or more beings united within one formal structure. The historical images that were of significance in the popular arts were the man/beast, the mask, the figure of the fool, the comic buffoon, the face distorted through ugliness, or caricatured as an animal or object; the gargoyles, the devil as a species of comic torturer, the Dance of Death, and the masked figures of the commedia dell'arte.

With a knowledge of the traditional grotesques, it became possible to assess the nature of the grotesque as it existed in the caricature, the pantomime, the gothic novels, and children's literature.

The humour of the caricatures, like that of Dickens, was seen to grow from a delight in ugliness and a use of the deformed and ugly as a source of energy and power. Like Dickens the later caricaturists seemed less concerned with comedy of humours or types than with the comic possibilities of manipulating the physical characteristics of the material world into new forms.
This latter trait was shared by the pantomime, in the continuous transformations of form and identity that occurred to the characters and settings. Dickens absorbed these traits, and came to depend very strongly on the grotesque figure of the Clown, who in the pantomime symbolized this anarchic humour. The nursery rhymes, with their humorous, perceptual response to the material world, manipulating its physical characteristics into comic grotesque images or nonsense, are clearly spiritually related to the pantomime.

The gothic novels exhibit grotesques of a very different quality. The dominant theme in these novels is imprisonment, particularly imprisonment within a cloister, and the effect on the imagination and behaviour of the characters so imprisoned. These prisons could be seen as a physical manifestation of a carefully constructed, oppressive environment, or rigid way of thinking.

Within these prisons the characters saw themselves tortured by deformed, reptile-like creatures, or surrounded by corpses. Their response to other people was extravagant, idealized; they became preoccupied with the 'image' of other people, to which they often granted almost hypnotic powers. Occasionally they were visited by devils, grotesque supernatural beings who offered freedom. The dual images of the devil in The Monk, one cold, and exquisitely beautiful, the other passionate and bestial, and the presence of the reptile tormentors in the dungeons, suggest that grotesque figures, whether they are images of fear, or whether they represent thwarted passions, breed naturally in a cold, rigid environment.
In the fairy tales grotesque ugliness is used as an image of moral ambivalence and power, and is attributed to the supernatural beings, whether they function as spell-casters (hypnotizers) or spell-breakers. An equally potent source of power in the fairy tales are however objects, magic talismans by which the owners can order their universe. As in the gothic novels, cold, stony objects are thus juxtaposed with the bestial grotesques, and this is a pattern of imagery that occurs in all of the Dickens novels that are examined.

In *The Old Curiosity Shop* Dickens' artistic imagination merges grotesque images from all these very different sources into one moral universe. The imagination that possessed the characters in the gothic novels, their obsessive reasoning, their belief that they are being tormented by deformed, bestial creatures, is shared by Nell and by Dickens himself in the persona of the narrator. Her fears, unlike theirs, grow not from being imprisoned, but from her total passivity and lack of manipulativeness. She sees characters other than herself as possessing a terrifying energy, and consequently grants them a hypnotic, almost spell-binding power over her. Her total dependency causes her to visualize other people in extreme or idealized fashion, and to see their human viciousness or even moral ambivalence as being monstrous deformities that manifest themselves in hallucinations of a grotesque appearance, such as the grandfather's shadow personality or Quilp's devil-like presence. Concurrently she sees the natural world as a physical reflection of the obsessive fears and black forces that control her mind, and is terrified by any chaos or ugliness in her external
environment, which assumes a surrealistically grotesque form.

It was implied, but not stressed, that Nell's fears and her alienation from her surroundings are bourgeois, that they are the sort of imagination expected in one very dependent on the rules of authority and on inanimate extensions in the form of property or servants to protect her from having to become involved in any social conflicts or manipulativeness. In fact Nell does have descendants in the genteel Manette circle of *A Tale of Two Cities*, who react to their environment in a similar manner, but who transfer their fears onto objects around them, much like the fairy-tale investment of power in magic talismans. As in the alliances with benevolent grotesques in the traditional tales, the Manettes are dependent on the manipulativeness of a grotesque servant who expresses in her physically caricatured appearance the weaknesses and ugliness with which the Manettes deny any connection.

On the other hand the figures whom Nell views as terrifying tormentors, the 'natural' grotesques, Quilp, the waxworks, the freaks, the carny folk, are not necessarily evil. Their difference from her lies in their capacity for manipulating their environment through their fascination with and awareness of its physical characteristics. These characters are dependent for their survival on the comic power of the grotesque image, whether they use this to awe others or to amuse themselves. They may, like Quilp, use their deformed appearance for this purpose, or, like Swiveller, employ comic verbal fantasies. In fact their humour reveals them to be in the tradition of the pantomime clowns, and their slapstick behaviour to each other reinforces it. Their
gleeful ugliness, viciousness, and irresponsibility are seen to be a natural reaction to what they view as the bourgeois arrogance of the idealized virtues honoured by Nell.

The traditional image of the gargoyle exists in the story, reincarnated in Quilp's deformity and its relationship to his environment. His association with garbage, his implied cannibalism, the images of objects and animals that Dickens uses to describe him, suggest that his deformity is not a sign of deprivation as much as a symbol of his sensual greediness, of his absorbing the sensual characteristics of the vital, ugly city of London, and reflecting them in his deformed appearance. He becomes a gargoyle, embodying the spirit of the city. This role of the grotesque image is reinforced by a contemporary of Dickens, Hugo, in *Notre Dame de Paris*, where Quasimodo performs a similar role for the cathedral.

Nell's tendency to dehumanize people, to see them as part of the environment, is ironically countered by a collection of puppet or robot figures, who function as mimic fools parodying the inhuman, or mechanical qualities of the people around them.

Out of this tie in the novel, between people who resemble their environment and an environment which assumes human powers (as in Nell's hallucinations), grows a pattern of grotesque imagery that has links with several traditional images, a dance of the toys, in which all the grotesques and those who ally with them resemble toys come to life and dancing around Nell. In spirit they are like the mediaeval comic devils. This dance of the toys is a fairly common nineteenth-century
image, but Nell, unlike the child or heroine in other representations of it, refuses to make friends with the monsters, and sees them as torturing her to insanity. Her death hence seems a direct outcome of the dance; thus the image of the Dance of Death becomes one vision of the novel.

In *Our Mutual Friend* the anarchic, comic grotesque torturers have moved into ascendancy. Instead of specially designated clown-figures or mimic fools, as in the earlier novel, in the universe that Dickens has created here most of the characters play at some point the mimic fool of someone else, parodying or adopting their costumes, gestures or social roles.

Within the welter of transformations that occur, one distinct image stands out, that of the maimed child. The world of *Our Mutual Friend* seems to be that of a world seen through the eyes of a crippled child, cruel and ugly, but this cruelty envisioned in images from children's art. There is in this the suggestion of beauty growing out of evil and ugly creations. The spirit of the novel is maimed Jenny Wren, the doll's dressmaker. Like Marchioness and the Smallweeds, she unites within one image the child, the anti-bourgeois or criminal, the maimed, and the imaginative, and her deformity, its twistedness and deviance from usual appearances, functions as a sign of her imaginative freedom as much as a symbol of her victimized social role.

Yet at the same time the novel contains a group of characters, the Boffin-Bella-Pa circle, who, like the earlier Manettes, choose to retain their innocence by rejecting any alliance with the real viciousness
of their environment. They do so by visualizing themselves and their life in images reminiscent of the whimsical children's art of the late nineteenth century.

Their world is parodied by Jenny. There are implications that the dolls she makes are voodoo figures responsible for the death of the one real child in the story, Little Johnny. But though she is the symbol of anti-innocence, it is she whom Dickens invests with the novel's strongest images of sensual beauty, in her hair, her dreams, and her court dolls. (Yet in her own attachment to such beauty she becomes a costumed fool-figure, an imitation of the innocence she attacks.)

Mr. Dolls, her drunken father, and Wegg, the vicious wooden-legged 'German wooden toy,' carry on Jenny's mockery of childhood innocence and her parody of those genteel adults who seek to associate themselves with it.

The structure of the novel imitates the grotesque structure of these characters, counterpointing the bestiality of the river scenes with exhibitions of glittering carnival-like objects, dolls, jewels, rich fabrics. The two are meshed in the powerful mask image of Mr. Dolls' dead flesh seen through the beautiful coloured bottles.

The dance of the toys in this novel is transformed into the movements of cripples and wooden legs, a parody of animated toys that simultaneously attacks both innocence and the stilted dance movements of the wealthy society-circle. The toys/cripples in this novel are direct descendants of the mutilated children and puppets in the children's literature, whose ugliness turned back on their oppressors and
taunted them with its vitality.

The final image pattern within this grotesque thread is the use of the children's tale of Red Riding Hood as an apparently illogical counterpointing of the activities of the thieves, money lenders, and corpses who dominate the novel. Both in the beauty of this image pattern and in the beauty of Jenny Wren herself, Dickens seems to be making a strong assertion of his attachment to and belief in the beauty of anarchic, bestial forces.

In The Mystery of Edwin Drood Dickens withdraws power from the spirits of anarchy, and reinvests it in a collection of genteel figures reminiscent of the Manettes. However since these characters are in control of their society, objects like those onto which the Manettes projected their feelings have become much more powerful, have in fact taken over and dominated their community, and become the social institutions by which the members of the community define their behaviour.

The dominant object to play this role is the cathedral, but its square, stony character has extended to the whole city; all the main characters live in stony, cell-like extensions of it.

Likewise its physical characteristics are repeated in their physical characteristics, in their cold, hard exteriors. Thus Mrs. Crisparkle is likened to a Dresden china doll, her son is compared to crystal, Mr. Grewgious is said to be made of wood, Jasper is given the name and qualities of a cold beautiful gem, and Durdles the tombstone maker is covered with stony grit. The city seems spell-bound and made statue-like by the cathedral.
Their possessions, the Old 'Uns buried in the walls, and their most treasured objects, the jam jars and spice boxes, repeat this pattern.

The architecture of the city reminds one of the prison architecture of Piranesi and the gothic novelists. As in the gothic novels, the rigidity of the city breeds anarchic, grotesque characters, Deputy, the Opium Woman, Durdles, who spring into being as a direct reaction against its coldness and graciousness. Yet in Deputy's destructiveness, the Opium Woman's naturalistic ugly reality, and Durdles' freeing of the corpses, they function as spell-breakers.

However the images used to describe Deputy and the Opium Woman, unlike the rich, diverse imagery used to characterize earlier anarchic figures (Quilp, for instance, who could be seen as absorbing much of his environment into his appearance), place them in alliance with the gentility; when they are within the bounds of Cloisterham, their environment draws them into the general stony spell, calls the Opium Woman a church gargoyle, and Deputy that traditional mediaeval figure of Demon or Imp.

Unlike the other characters who choose to be hypnotized by the spell, Jasper's response to his surroundings is like that of the unwillingly cloistered. Like them his trapped state seems partially a psychological one, a result of inertia or a divided mind. The healthy passions and dreams that are denied him partly take shape outside himself in the form of complicated irrational humans like Deputy. He speaks of cutting demons out of his heart and sees in Deputy a living
manifestation of these.

However, for the most part, the powers of the cathedral are so strong that the characters instead sublimate their desires into an imaginative rendering of their situation. Crisparkle transforms his passionate manhood into an adventurous boy's boisterousness. Jasper abstracts the rigid monotonous qualities of his environment and renders them into a beautiful ritual in which his singing, his opium visions and the murder of Edwin figure. The murder becomes a psychopath's ritual murder, a necessary preliminary so that Jasper may enjoy his opium visions of an Arabian Nights universe.

As does Jenny in Our Mutual Friend, Durdles in this novel plays the role of licensed, costumed fool. He is identified with the established powers through his appearance and his tombstone-building, and allied with the clowns or anarchists in his breaking down of the cathedral walls to release the Old 'Uns, and in his actual rather than metaphorical stone costume, which becomes a mimicry of the established powers. He provides the fool's wise comment on his society, since he proves that the people he releases from the walls cannot exist without them.

It may seem that, in the course of the thesis, the emphasis changed from an analysis of simple grotesque images and image patterns experienced in the popular arts to an analysis in which the grotesque was relevant only inasmuch as it served the theme of the novels. Yet no change of intention was involved. The analysis of historical images, and of image patterns used in the contemporary folk culture, was a
necessary basis for the discussions of The Old Curiosity Shop, Our Mutual Friend, and The Mystery of Edwin Drood, since the first technical step in approaching all of these novels was a search for familiar images and patterns.

As can be seen, each novel has a very individual framework within which these grotesques function. In The Old Curiosity Shop it is the contrast between Nell's and Quilp's imaginations, in Our Mutual Friend, the attacks of the anarchists on the representatives of innocence. In Edwin Drood these innocents regain ascendency by establishing their own spell-bound city. Yet in all these novels the grotesque images seem to mean essentially the same things, to act as revelations or visualizations of the characters' relationships to their environment and to their own capacity for accepting and controlling it.

Aside however from this essential function of the grotesque in Dickens' novels, two grotesque image patterns stand out, both in Dickens' novels and in the contemporary folk arts.

The children's literature used the grotesque as a weapon of punishment, but the grotesquely maimed or crude figures remained to taunt the conformity of their oppressors with the ugliness of their punishment. Likewise, in each of the Dickens novels, the particular shape which the grotesque torturers assume is a distortion of the material images that represent the most valued beliefs espoused by Dickens and his non-grotesque characters in that novel. Thus in The Old Curiosity Shop, both the narrator and many of the characters, Nell, the single gentleman, the village people, the grandfather, show an
unnatural preoccupation with image, with physical appearance as expressive of moral character. Consequently one of the most recurrent forms of grotesque torture in the novel is the face, the object most responsible for one's image. Thus Nell imagines faces mocking her from the chimneys, Quilp continually uses his essentially undeformed face as an instrument of grotesque torture, and much is made of the ghastly smiles, grins, or corpse-like stares of the robot figures. In Our Mutual Friend the ultimate good that Bella, Pa, the Boffins, and occasionally Jenny, can envision is the world recreated in images from children's art. In that novel, toys and images from such art become the grotesque instruments of torture. In The Mystery of Edwin Drood, for most of the characters, beauty and goodness lie in the cathedral and in recreating themselves in its image. And so the grotesque torturers take the form of the traditional accoutrements of a gothic cathedral, the gargoyles and the demons carved in pews. However because Dickens in this novel recognizes his own personal duality and his own ambivalence to the way of life of the Cloisterham gentility, the grotesque torturers are ascribed with their stony character by the people in power. Paradoxically, this self-awareness seems to diminish the grotesques' artistic potency, and it is the semi-grotesque character of the cancerous cathedral structures themselves which are the real instruments of torture in the novel.

In recognizing the tendency for the grotesques to take a physical shape that is an ironic distortion of the images most valued by their society, it should be remembered that the grotesque was seen as a natural reaction against perfection, or as growing out of an attempt
to achieve perfection of form. This was obvious in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, in which its grotesque images are a response to the gracious coldness of the cathedral and to Jasper's attempts to fashion his life into a beautiful ritual. The association of bestial grotesque images with jewels and jewel-like objects is a pattern of imagery that gives physical form to this relationship. This motif was seen in Hans Christian Andersen's "Snow Queen" and "The Travelling Companion," in Lewis' *The Monk* with the exquisite bejewelled fallen angel and the snake-haired Lucifer, and in Fellini's remarks on the response of the Auguste clowns to the spangles of the 'white' clowns. In *Our Mutual Friend* and, of course, in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* Dickens employed a similar juxtaposing of jewel-like images and savage, flesh-bound grotesques.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. THE POPULAR ARTS


Ficoroni, Francesco. Le Maschere sceniche e le figure comiche d'antichi romani descritte brevemente. In Roma: A. de'Rossi, 1736.


Grimm, Jakob Ludwig Karl and Wilhelm Karl Grimm. German Popular Stories, with illustrations after the original designs of George Cruikshank,


1. Children's Literature


Cervantes, Miguel. Don Quixote, retold by Judge Parry. Illustrations by Walter Crane. Altrincham: John Sherrat and Son, [n.d.].


* Nineteenth century editions of these books are found in the Marion Thompson collection, Vancouver Public Library.


*Nineteenth century editions of these books are found in the Marion Thompson collection, Vancouver Public Library.*
1. Primary Sources


———. "Frauds on Fairies," *Household Words* (Oct. 1, 1853).


2. Selected Critical and Biographical Works, and Periodical Criticism


Cox, Arthur J. "'If I hide my watch--'," Dickens Studies, III (1967), 22-37.


Smith, Sheila M. "Anti-Mechanism and the Comic in the Writings of Charles Dickens," Renaissance and Modern Studies, III (1959), 133-144.


