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The Houses that Charlés Built:
The House as Symbol in David Copperfield,
Bleak House, and Great Expectations

A Thesis

Presented to the Department of English
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Toni Johnson-Woods

June, 1992

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

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Abstract

Because of his work's enduring quality, Dickens has been subjected to much critical scrutiny. Slater examines Dickens' women; Herst explores Dickens' heroes; Thurley considers the myth in Dickens; Collins traces crime and education in Dickens. Each study adds a richer understanding of either his characters, his symbolism, or his craft. The research seems extensive, and it would appear that little remains to be said; however, after reading Bleak House the title suggested to me another area for further interpretation. To date, few have examined the Dickensian house in detail. Frances Armstrong considers Dickens' concept of home, and Alice van Buren Kelley concentrated on the houses in Bleak House. All excellent works, but they stopped short of thorough investigation of each house's relationship with its occupants. I believe that Dickens utilized the house, and its variants, as outward manifestations for his characters. x

The sheer amount of space and detailed attention Dickens gives to his houses indicates their importance. x Indeed, Dickens' precise description of a character's home often parallels his description of that character. Dickens utilized the house as outer shells to garment his characters, as retreats from a harsh world, as evidence of the occupant's social class, and as symbols of man's complex interaction with his private world and public pose. In

seeking the novels which best typify the symbolic use of architecture, David Copperfield, Bleak House, and Great Expectations were chosen as being the most representative. In these novels, I believe Dickens presents the home as fact, fantasy, and fiction.

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Introduction

Wholesome whores, cutthroat thieves, destitute orphans, simpering virgins, malevolent old maids, and greedy skinflints--the Dickensian gallery of rogues is filled with memorable characters; everyone remembers the miser at Christmas and the boy who asked for more. Dickens brings each one of his creations to life; they are rich, exotic, improbable yet believable, from the pleading Oliver to the niggardly Scrooge. Few authors have created such immortal stereotypes. A hundred years after their inception, they appear in movies and even MTV music videos. Consequently, much ink has been spilled in their honor: Slater examines Dickens' women; Herst explores Dickens' heroes; Manheim concentrates on his fools and madmen. But Dickens' novels contain more than amusing characters, which has led other scholars to examine his multiple symbols: Reid and Kotzin look at the fairy tale elements; Thurley considers the myth in Dickens; Vogel documents Dickens' allegorical components; van Amerongen discusses the dramatic Dickens; Collins traces crime and education in Dickens. Each study reveals another facet which adds a richer understanding and demonstrates the skill with which Dickens crafted his stories. The research seems extensive, and it would appear that little remains to be said; however, after reading Bleak House the title suggested another area for interpretation. To date, few have examined the house in

detail: Alice van Buren Kelley's excellent article explores the bleak houses of Bleak House, and Frances Armstrong's book considers the Dickensian concept of home. However, they did not see the house as I did--as a symbol. Dickensian houses have both the uniqueness of his characters and the consistency of his symbols; they present microcosmic looks at personal lives which reveal macrocosmic truths. The sheer amount of space and detailed attention Dickens gives to houses indicates their importance. Thus, the humble house, like Dickens' characters, becomes a definitive symbol for each novel.

Since time immemorial man has sought shelter as a protection from the elements. Readers agree with Dickens' assessment of the importance of shelter because for centuries pithy adages: "Home Sweet Home," "Be it ever so humble there's no place like home," "Home is where the heart is," and "an Englishman's home is his castle" all demonstrate the powerful magnetism of home. "Architecture is a physical representation of the psychological and functional condition of an individual, culture, class, and period," and the house "is a nonverbal manifestation of a preconscious condition" says Knapp in the introduction to Archetype, Architecture, and the Writer (viii; vi) . One only has to consider Kubla Khan's exotic palace, Poe's falling house of Usher, the brooding Wuthering Heights, the gothic castles of Dracula and Otranto to acquiesce. For

almost every character-type one can imagine a complementary home; for example, the prim cottage of a spinster, the decaying manse of an eccentric, the bachelor apartment of a young man making his way in the world, and the quiet home of domestic harmony. Therefore, Dickens' uniqueness lies not in his use of architecture as a principal feature but in his ability to deftly weave character, plot, and theme into his structures.

If "Dickens' whole career was an attempt to digest [his] earlier shocks and hardships" and that in order to understand "the meaning of Dickens' word . . . it is necessary to see him as a man," then one must examine Dickens' personal history with houses and homes (Wilson 8-9). Biographers, Peter Ackroyd and Edgar Johnson, detail Dickens' nomadic lifestyle which gives the reader some insight as to why the house became such a focus in his novels. Certainly in the semi-autobiographical novel David Copperfield, the novel Dickens admitted to be the closest to his heart, the sheer number of dwellings in which the young Copperfield lives seems astounding. David Copperfield's itinerant beginnings may mirror the transient childhood of the young Charles Dickens. Poor Jo in Bleak House is always told to keep "moving on," a sad refrain highlighting the fact that Jo has no home, nor does he ever find one. Magwitch and Pip spend most of Great Expectations searching for a home; their success is certainly ambiguous. Dickens

underscores the horror of the homelessness many times throughout his books, and the search for home often constitutes a subtext. So it comes as no surprise that, while writing these novels, Dickens himself moved around; for example, he commenced David Copperfield in Brighton, continued writing on the Isle of Wight, and finished the book in Paris; while writing Bleak House Dickens spent time in London, Folkestone, Dover, and Boulogne (Ackroyd 660). Not unusual for Dickens, yet atypical for one so orderly in habits (see below), but his roving reflects a learned childhood habit of adaptability (Ackroyd 660). His love of travel extended beyond England: he travelled to Belgium, France, Italy, Ireland, Switzerland, America, and Canada. Therefore, Dickensian characters move freely from place to place and home to home reflecting Dickens' own nomadic behavior.

Dickens had very definite views about what he felt constituted a home; these beliefs echo and re-echo throughout his novels, and a glimpse at his own living arrangements sheds light on his fictional houses. In 1837 he moved into 48 Doughty Street which he describes as a "frightfully first-class Family Mansion [sic]" (Ackroyd 221). The "Dickensian touches" include pink-painted woodwork, a veined marble hearth, and bright flowered carpets; he furnished the house in Regency and William IV style because he disliked "sober mid-Victorian interiors"

(Ackroyd 221-222). He "loved candle-light" and "installed mirrors in whichever house he occupied" (Ackroyd 929;222). "He was a good carpenter and handyman" and he had a mania for opening windows to allow in fresh air (Ackroyd 929). In his semi-fictional essay, "Our French Watering Place," Dickens devotes much praise to a landlord's tiny rooms furnished with great neatness and arranged with dexterity; therefore, his idea of perfect comfort was "always that of a small room, like a ship's cabin, carefully arranged" (Ackroyd 671). "'Doll's house' was always a term of praise" from Dickens, and thus, the whimsical house of Dora and David becomes a cheerfully inept place rather than a diatribe against incompetent housekeepers (Ackroyd 671). Nearly every one of these preferences appears in his novels.

Dickens' personal idiosyncracies also reappear in various forms throughout his books. He "'believed in' cold water as a sovereign remedy for all sorts of conditions" and had the unusual habit of bathing every morning (Ackroyd 571). Because "order was of extreme importance to him," he inspected his children's rooms daily--two things he could not bear were "noise and untidiness" (Ackroyd 222; 879). He was always "the perfection of neatness" and often tidied up after others (Ackroyd 222). On the other hand, there exists a fine line between neatness and meanness which is apparent in his books. For example, Heep and Smallweed both live in dwellings which epitomize tidiness, but their houses hardly

compare to the neatness of Agnes Wickfield or Esther Summerson whose houses deserve the description "home"-- Dickens had a clear idea of the distinction between a home and a house, between cleanliness and meanness. His own study was "sacred" and always kept "locked when he was not occupying it," rather like Tulkinghorn's (Ackroyd 929). He could not commence work until all the

appurtenances of his desk arrived . . . his
goose-quill pens and his blue ink . . . the bronze
images of two toads duelling . . . a dog-fancier
with the puppies and dogs swarming all over him .
. . . a paper-knife, [and] a gilt lead with a rabbit
upon it. (Ackroyd 503)

Likewise, Dickensian heroes love knick-knacks and the corners which contain them.

Armed with such knowledge, it becomes easy to identify the two main types of Dickensian homes--a dichotomy resulting from his love of contrast and duality (Wilson 64). The "good" houses exemplify all that Dickens enjoyed: open windows, neatness, cleanliness, corners loaded with interesting knick knacks, wonderful views (usually situated near water), filled with small snug rooms and presided over by warm, caring, generous people who sometimes had a gruff exterior (perhaps a Dickens *persona*). On the other hand, "bad" houses typically displayed the antithesis: barred windows, untidiness, grimy places, replete with predators

and ruled by cold, selfish, miserly characters who had evil personalities.

Even more than personal likes and dislikes, the homes of David Copperfield, Bleak House, and Great Expectations can be seen as manifestations of Dickens' life. David Copperfield's search for home and a family is reflected in the window motif where David stands looking to the future; this reflects the younger, hopeful Dickens. Bleak House, with its cry for social reform, utilizes the house as an outward symbol of the occupant's social status; this mirrors the politically aware Dickens. In Great Expectations Pip ponders his errors and learns truths in front of emblematic fireplaces; this illustrates the mature reflective Dickens. Thus, the novels themselves become reflections of three stages of Dickens' life.

Even Dickens' writing style resembles the construction of a home. He built his novels from a solid foundation of fact reworked to present a fictional image. Ackroyd describes this process:

He [Dickens] had the architectural plans drawn up . . . but he needed to build freely and instinctively. He began with the story and with the ideas the story suggested . . . then the characters come and settle within the narrative, bringing with them their own lines of force which complicate the essential plot. (560)

Often his inspiration came from the houses he saw during his walks; for example, Peggotty's boat comes from the Yarmouth boat, "an odd structure with its roof made from the bottom of a boat" (Ackroyd 555). "I could not think of a place without seeing it . . ." thus Dickens designed his homes after mulling them over for a considerable time--they were not accidents but deliberate symbols (Ackroyd 560).

Dickens utilized the appeal of the home and its variants as a "pantification" device which Empson defines as "treating the symbol as everything that it symbolizes which turns out to be everything" (70). In other words, buildings become an absolute emblem for his characters, society, and ultimately life itself; houses act as outer shells to garment characters, retreats from a harsh world, evidence of the occupant's social class, and symbols of man's complex interaction with his private world and his public pose. They are as meaningful, diverse, and enchanting as his characters. Therefore, Dickens adds another dimension to the simple domestic structure because he proffers the home as a center of procreation, implicitly organic with its own perpetuating power (Armstrong 21).

As each of Dickens' books has been subject to much critical enquiry, it has been necessary to discard much information in order to keep focused on the symbolism of the home. In seeking the novels which most typify the symbolic use of structure David Copperfield (David), Bleak House

(Bleak), and Great Expectations (Great) were chosen as the most representative. Other novels offered interesting variations of the theme but lacked the diversity of these three books. Original sources of inspiration and biographical events have been largely ignored unless they offer specific insights into the home-symbolism. Obviously families (usually dysfunctional families) reside in each home; however, the function of this paper is not to consider the socializing aspects of the occupants, merely how the house symbolizes what type of occupants they are, or how living in a certain house affects them as a family. Non-homes such as Salem House Boarding School, David and Pip's apartments, Krook's shop, and Courts of Chancery have been treated as homes because they house people or they are perceived as being home-like. By highlighting the house, I hope to add another dimension for the Dickens reader; for his books, like his houses, are not the simplistic structures which we first perceive.

(Internal citations of each Dickens' novel are marked with Chapter first, followed by page number, i.e., Bleak 3,11).

David's Digs

Everyone knows that Dickens' favorite child was David Copperfield, an orphan whose life so mirrored Dickens' own life that it becomes difficult to say where fiction ended and truth began. Many critics speculate as to the psychological motivation which prompted Dickens to re-write his childhood; whatever his motivation, critics agree that The Personal History, Adventures, Experience & Observation of David Copperfield The Younger of Blunderstone Rookery (Which He never meant to be Published on any Account) is the most personal and autobiographical of all Dickens' novels and stands as a landmark in the writing of a portrait of the artist as a young man. Ackroyd believes, "the whole period of his childhood had re-emerged within him [Dickens]" following the deaths of sister Fanny, his first publisher Hall, and the fictional death of Paul Dombey (551); therefore, at thirty-seven years of age, facing mortality perhaps for the first time, Dickens revived his "abandoned" autobiographical fragment (Bloom, David Copperfield 6). Consequently, Dickens created a child-*persona* with his own inverted initials, David Copperfield, and attempted to purge himself of his ever-present past.

Wilson dismisses David Copperfield as "not one of Dickens' deepest books: it is something in the nature of a holiday" (43). Though an element of lightheartedness exists, the novel is hardly less critical than the overtly

social novels: Bleak House and Great Expectations. David Copperfield is merely more subtle. As John Jordan observes, the social themes are not absent, merely "repressed" (63). David's experiences at Salem school and the bottling warehouse, Mr. Micawber's imprisonment for debt, and the ironic Doctor's Common provide commentary on the prevailing social conditions which stand as precursors to the more obvious critiques in Bleak House. Perhaps the overt fairy-tale elements infuse David Copperfield with a blitheness which subordinates the more serious social criticism. The result is an enchanting *bildungsroman* of a search for self.

Dickens' use of first person narration lends David Copperfield an intimacy hitherto missing in previous books. The adroitly interwoven double perspective of first person and omniscient narration yields a unique blend of reminiscence and recall. David's childhood recollections perfectly reconstruct a childlike sense of wonder which gives the early chapters a ring of truthfulness. The reader believes David's remembrances; however, he can be naive and perhaps even unreliable. For example, he depicts Steerforth as a hero, but the audience perceives Steerforth's actions to be selfish and domineering. Likewise, David's lofty description of a shoddy London apartment amuses the reader. Thus, David's intimate quasi-picaresque adventures combine fact with fantasy as he embarks on his journey--a tripartite journey.

Each home lends itself to several interpretations, depending upon the reader's understanding of the novel: fairy-tale, religious, and archetypal images unify under the roofs of the houses. A fairy-tale reading suggests that David is a "disinherited prince," cast out by his wicked step-family, who battles the evil forces of the world (Heep and Steerforth) and lives happily ever after with the maiden he saves (Dunn 25); then the various dwellings can be defined as variations of a fairy-tale's castles and fortresses. Similarly, the same houses can be seen as religious structures; for example, the purgatorial Rookery and the hellish Heep home contrast to the spiritual Wickfield house. Furthermore, David may be seen as a mythological hero who "undergoes a series of excruciating ordeals in passing from ignorance and immaturity to social and spiritual adulthood . . . [in] three distinct phases (1) separation, (2) transformation, and (3) return" (Guerin 162). Therefore, David commences his rite of passage when he leaves his birthplace and undergoes ordeals in other homes on his journey to maturity. During these trials, David encounters the three archetypal women who reside in appropriate abodes: the Good Mother in the forms of Peggotty and Trotwood who live in delightful homes that nurture David; the Terrible Mother represented by Miss Murdstone and Rosa Dartle, who occupy gloomy, austere houses that frighten David; the Soul Mate Agnes resides in a serene

home that soothes David. Thus, the Wickfield house encompasses the qualities of a castle, a temple, and a refuge. Overall, Dickens' consistent blending of the three differing elements underscores his ability to transform a single structure into a complex symbol.

Dickens also crafts each domicile as a projection of the occupant's personality. Accordingly, the spiritual Wickfields live in a sanctified temple, the ingratiating Heeps reside in an 'umble 'ome, and the dignified Steerforths occupy an aristocratic brick building, etc. Indeed, Dickens uses as many words describing the residences as he does describing the residents. The importance of the home cannot be overlooked in David Copperfield: the sheer number of dwellings (thirteen) indicates not only David's nomadic existence, but also forms a basic structure for the novel as David encounters different adventures under each roof. Each new encounter provides essential experiences for David's growth; indeed, his maturation results from the variety of people he encounters and the number of places he lives. Vanden Bossche points out that David's pilgrimage is a "quest to regain social legitimacy through the discovery of a family" (88). Therefore, David's search for self evolves around his search for a family to love and a comfortable home in which to live.

David's childhood years can be roughly divided into three phases, all of which correspond to him leaving one

dwelling and making a new beginning in another home. The child-David is shunted from the Rookery to Salem to commence school, then the boy-David suffers the indignity of ejection from his birth home in order to earn a living in London, lastly an older youth-David seeks a family at Dover. Often chapter titles reflect his transience: "I Am Sent Away from Home," "I Make Another Beginning," "The Beginning of a Long Journey," "The Wanderer," and "The Beginning of a Longer Journey." Thus, from the day David is ousted from his birth-home, he seeks shelter, and the novel ends only when David finds a hearth he can call his own.

Despite the variety of homes, they all possess two recurring elements: windows and keys. Windows suggest the public pose of a house; outsiders can peer in and occupants can look out. Their increased importance in this novel suggests the ambivalent feelings of a man approaching middle age (Dickens was thirty-seven when he wrote David)--was Dickens simultaneously reviewing and evaluating his life? Windows come in all shapes and sizes from the diamond shaped panes of Wickfields to the razor-shaped glass in Salem House. Whatever their configuration, the transparent glass forms a vital link to the outside world. David often stares out pondering his departure and what lies ahead, or he gazes in seeking admittance wondering if this is the home for which he searches. Westburg's study of the mirror imagery highlights the reflective qualities of the window--when

David looks out during the tempest he sees his alter-ego looking back at him and not the storm raging outside (44). Dickens rarely waives the chance to either describe a window or to place his characters in strategic positions at windows for symbolic effects. While windows signify the public pose, keys represent the hidden inner-self. Characters rattle emblematic keys which reveal truths about them. Miss Murdstone's jailer's keys clang noisily by her side, Miss Agnes' sanctuary keys rest serenely in her basket, David's independence keys jingle merrily in his pocket, and Dora's ornamental keys lie neglected in her basket. Thus, these two repetitive elements are neither co-incidental nor unifying literary devices: windows and keys present the dichotomy of writing an intimate novel--what to reveal and what to hide.

"No adroit reader could prefer the last four paragraphs of David Copperfield to the first three," states Bloom (David Copperfield 7). Certainly David's remembrance of Blunderstone Rookery delights readers; however, his boyhood home is hardly idyllic. Initially the Rookery seems a wonderful house filled with life and fun, from the Edenic yard to the smells of the storeroom; however, something is awry. Dickens' wonderful adoption of name to purpose alerts readers that Blunderstone is going to be a house of errors (blunder) and death (grave stone). The enigmatic name "Rookery" suggests a cozy nest filled with young birds but

nothing could be further from the truth--there are no rooks; the dog house has no dog; a pigeon-house accommodates no pigeons; in other words, the Rookery lacks the familial feel of a nest. Careful scene setting predicts the disintegration of the family. Furthermore, the name rook, according to the OED, can be a disparaging term used to refer to cheats, defrauders: a perfect description for the Murdstones. Their name Murd(er)stone illustrates their despicable natures; they murder Clara Copperfield with their cruel treatment and almost succeed in killing the love between mother and son. Therefore, the Rookery assumes the aspect of a doomed home.

Externally, the house seems an Edenic paradise filled with lush fruit, presenting a rich image of growth and habitation; David remembers

beyond the yard . . . a very preserve of
butterflies . . . where the fruit clusters on the
trees, riper and richer than fruit has even been
since, in any other garden, and where [David's]
mother gathers some in a basket, while [he]
stand[s] by, bolting furtive gooseberries . . .
[a] great wind rises, and the summer is gone in a
moment. (David 2,13)

However, the garden lacks animal life. The shortage of fauna highlights the unhealthiness of the Rookery. Flora and butterflies can survive without human help, but birds,

dogs, and little boys need care. The careful construction of a divided house anticipates David's forced exile from his nest. In truth, David cannot remain because he has to commence his maturational journey. The high fence and padlocked gate further isolate the inhabitants keeping unwanted guests out and setting the family apart from the rest of the community. The Rookery's environment becomes a Rappaccini's garden of poisoned delight.

Even the interior of the house offers no solace for young David. He dashes past the dark store-room because he "[doesn't] know what may be among those tubs and jars and old tea-chests," and even the grand front parlor has a "doleful air" (David 2,12). So, though the house contains his two favorite people, his mother and Peggotty, David feels uncomfortable. This harsh judgement of what appears to be a happy home prepares the reader for the arrival of the cruel Murdstones, a change David senses the moment he returns from Yarmouth. The dog house has a new occupant, a "great dog--deep-mouthed and black-haired like Him--and he was very angry at the sight of [David], and sprang out to get at [David]"; clearly, the dog represents David's stepfather (David 3,37). When introduced to Mr. Murdstone, David immediately turns to the window and "look[s] out there at some shrubs that [are] drooping their heads in the cold" (David 3,37); David's emotions are projected through the window panes. He feels his spirits flag under the wintry

welcome of Mr. Murdstone. The whole atmosphere of the house "altered" with Mr. Murdstone's arrival (David 3,37).

David's bedroom changes too. He no longer sleeps in a closet in his mother's room; his new room "a long way off" looks "blank and strange," and David senses rejection in the "cracks in the ceiling . . . the flaws in the window-glass making ripples and dimples," and the room's "discontent" air (David 3,37; 4,38). The whole house, which was never truly warm, now becomes decidedly cold. The death knell sounds for David and his mother with the arrival of "metallic" Miss Murdstone and her black, coffin-like boxes (David 4,41). Unfortunately, Clara Copperfield's compliant nature cannot withstand two commanding Murdstones; she is helpless to protect David. Mr. and Miss Murdstone delight in persecuting David; they are Dickensian renditions of the fairy-tale, evil step-parents, and his once happy castle develops into a cold fortress.

The first conspicuous sign of the Murdstones' dominance occurs when Clara Copperfield relinquishes control of the house keys to Miss Murdstone. The ownership of the house becomes a vital question as Miss Murdstone sternly corrects Clara's impudent referral to the Rookery as "her" house rather than "our" house (David 4,43). Clara and her sister-in-law fight for supremacy, but the obdurate Murdstone wins and usurps the Rookery. The walls close around David; his home becomes a prison controlled by harsh wardens and

reverberates with the callous sound of clanging keys--the first of many prisons which will confine David. (Later the bottling warehouse and his marriage imprison David.) In an effort to escape the mean Murdstones, David retreats to his bedroom to embark on literary voyages reading Voyages and Travels, Tom Jones, and Robinson Crusoe, all adventure stories (of lone wanderers) which predict the travel he will do later. After David commits the ultimate crime of biting Mr. Murdstone on the hand, his new father incarcerates David in his bedroom where David sits at his window crying, yearning for release, while outside Miss Murdstone jangles the atonal keys. His unforgiving jailers exile David to Salem House, the first of the book's many expulsions (Heep from Wickfield's, Trotwood from Dover, and the Micawbers from just about everywhere).

During these early years, David returns to the Rookery many times, a clear indication of the strong bond of home (which reemerges in Great Expectations with Pip's return journeys to Joe Gargery's cottage). No matter how indifferent that home may be, it is still a constant for David. After his first excursion to Yarmouth, David ironically remembers "how eager [he] was to leave [his] happy home"; the home will never be "happy" for David again, Mr. Murdstone has arrived (David 3,38). When he comes home from Salem House for holidays, he first looks to the windows to see if the Murdstones are home. Their

absence momentarily revives the Copperfield's home, but with their return the Murdstones bring "a cold blast of air into the house which [blows] away the old familiar feeling like a feather" (David 8,99). After the bareness of Salem House, one anticipates that the Rookery would be a home of warmth, but David does not enjoy his holidays and eagerly returns to London, a harsh condemnation of the Rookery. Finally, when he returns for his mother's funeral, David notices the altered demeanor of the Rookery.

Following Clara Copperfield's death the Rookery becomes "shut up and hushed," and the "solemn windows . . . blindly" look on David in his grief; indeed, the sight of his mother's bedroom windows moves David to tears (David 9,110). Furthermore, when he turns from the graveside the sight of the Rookery causes renewed mourning because "before [him] stands [his] house, so pretty and unchanged, so linked in [his] mind with the young idea of what is gone, that all [his] sorrow has been nothing to the sorrow it calls forth" (David 9,113). Consequently, the house and its windows reflect David's sorrow. By leaving David "under the old elm-trees looking at the house in which there [is] no face to look on [his face] with love or liking any more," Dickens gives the Rookery its fullest personification (David 10,128). The house had been an integral part of David's childhood and now orphaned, homeless, and abandoned by both his parents, David must leave his home. Dickens carefully

prepares the reader for David's rejection by creating a harsh home with intimidating occupants--a home anyone would be pleased to leave. As David heads for London, he looks back at his birth home diminishing "in the distance" and the "the grave beneath the tree is blotted out by the intervening objects" (David 9,132). The shrinking scenery bespeaks David's growth both physically and mentally, and though David never forgets his birth home, he has taken his first steps to maturity. David's childhood is over; he is too big for the nest and leaves to embark on his trip to adulthood.

David makes one last visit to the Rookery, and he notes the "great changes in [his] old home"; the slow decline which began after Mr. Copperfield died and advanced during the Murdstone occupation culminates with Clara's death (David 22,272). The structure has no spirit because the Murdstones are soulless people who bleed the love from a home leaving only a shell. Dickensian houses are only alive when the occupants are good, happy people; if the inhabitants are greedy, discontent people then the building slowly deteriorates. Thus, as he watches the new occupant, a "poor lunatic gentleman . . . always sitting at [his] little window," David sees an empty man in an empty house (David 22,272-3). Naturally, the new owner takes David's place at the bedroom window which overlooks the graveyard: apparently nothing inside the house warrants his attention.

As can be noted, the Rookery windows form vital links with the outside world. David's predilection for windows seems predestined when Miss Trotwood peers in through the parlor window; she unnerves a very pregnant Mrs. Copperfield, inadvertently inducing her labor. Therefore, a face at a window causes David's birth. The virginal, austere, unconventional Miss Trotwood comes to the parlor window rather than the front door confidently seeking entry. On the other hand, the widowed, indulgent, traditional Clara Copperfield weeps in the front room uncertain of her future. As Miss Trotwood and Mrs. Copperfield eye each other through the parlor window, Dickens presents two extremes of womanhood. One is sterile, mature, and practical whereas the other is pregnant, young, and idealistic. More importantly perhaps than the immediate impression is the later contrast. Clara Copperfield, the loving mother, often deserts David, firstly by marrying Mr. Murdstone, then by sending him away and finally by her death; however, Miss Trotwood, the callous aunt, becomes a true mother to David when she adopts him and invites him into her home and life.

The parlor window also witnesses Mrs. Copperfield's betrayal of David's father when she accepts Mr. Murdstone. Mrs. Copperfield offers Mr. Murdstone the "famous geranium [they] had in the parlor window"; she presents her most notable flower, an indication she is offering her love (David 2,18). A gift he accepts. Generally flowers are

considered romantic symbols, and the gift proffered, a humbler "bourgeois" plant and not a noble rose, suggests the banality of this relationship (de Vries 214). Why does the flower come from the window box? The location, in the window of the formal parlor, signifies Mr. Murdstone's acceptance into the house; he is no longer a stranger who stands outside the house. He becomes an inhabitant as he takes the Copperfield's most prized floral possession, and its owner. The public stance for this subtle proposal signifies the importance of the window imagery. The "firelight at the Rookery, after all, is only a few yards from the graveyard," so obviously Clara Copperfield only has to look through the window to be reminded of her first husband's recent demise; but, tactlessly (for maybe her husband's ghost lurks nearby) she stands at the window and agrees to marry Mr. Murdstone (Dunn 39). Other people too can see in through the window demonstrating the public nature of the proposal. By accepting a new man, Mrs. Copperfield openly renounces her widowhood. Conversely, Mrs. Copperfield can look out of the window, indicating she looks to her future: she can see her dead husband's grave, and she has a child to raise, a man around the house would be most acceptable. Therefore, two important events take place at the Rookery parlor window.

David's bedroom window also affords interesting insights into his perceptions of the changing Rookery.

Before the advent of the Murdstones, David sits at his bedroom window, inhaling the "sweet-smelling" air and looking down at his father's grave, a constant reminder of death (a precursor to Pip's living close to his parent's graves) (David 2,13). From his "little window," he and Peggotty spy on his mother and Mr. Murdstone (David 2,19). Peggotty sees the increasing intimacy between the two, something David, in his naivete, fails to grasp. When he returns from Salem House for his mother's funeral, the sad sight of his small bedroom window which "in better time, was [his]" reminds David of his losses; he had lost his bedroom when Clara remarried and now he has lost his mother (David 9,110). Many years later, on his final visit to the Rookery, David watches the mad occupant who sits at the bedroom window and stares into the graveyard. The man's loneliness and solitude parallels the Rookery's spirit. David never returns to his birth-home again.

David's first long-term departure from the Rookery occurs when he attends school in London at Salem House. Mr. Murdstone, in order to cleave the strong bond between Mother and son, sends David to boarding school. On his journey, David passes through village where he contemplates "what the insides of the houses [are] like, and what the inhabitants [are] about . . . [he] wonder[s] whether their fathers were alive, and whether they [are] happy at home"; David projects himself into the living rooms because intuitively

he realizes that Blunderstone Rookery is no longer his true home (David 5,61).

David's new residence, Salem House, resembles a prison with its barred door, high brick wall, and barren appearance; however, the most telling symbol is "a long ghastly gash of a staircase window" (David 5,66). The symbolic guillotine shape of the window represents the severed tie between David and his mother. The bare playground, dirty schoolrooms, neglected animals, and dank atmosphere indicate Dickens' disgust with such establishments. Salem House presents one of Dickens' typically grim pictures of boarding schools, much like Dotheboys Hall and Gradgrind's model school. Dickens seemed to have little tolerance for an educational system which required children being separated from their parents. Naturally the boarder's quarters contrast unfavorably to the proprietor's luxurious apartments because to place lonely children in pleasant surroundings would undermine David's sad plight. However, as misery likes company, David forms lifelong friendships with two other inmates: pleasant Traddles and superior Steerforth. They share many things besides loneliness including a moonlit midnight feast where Steerforth presides as host while David stands in the moon's shadows. (A similar scene is repeated later when Steerforth supervises a meal in David's Buckingham Street flat.) Despite the dismal surroundings, anything is better than the

home that "was not home," and David eagerly returns to Salem House after his unpleasant holidays at the Rookery (David 8,93). Eventually, after his mother's death, David leaves Salem for good, effectively ending his boyhood because the next time David arrives in London he encounters a fate worse than boarding at Salem House.

David enters the second phase of his maturation bereft of both father and mother--he is a true orphan. Condemned to child-labor in Murdstone's warehouse, David travels to London. The warehouse where David works echoes Warren's blacking factory where Dickens' father condemned him to work at the age of twelve. Dickens allows his disgust for the Murdstone and Grinby's warehouse to show in his description of the "crazy old house . . . discolored with dirt and smoke of a hundred years . . . decaying floors and staircase . . . dirt and rottenness," the antithesis of a pleasant home (David 11,132). The rotting structure, whether it be a home or a building, recurs often throughout David Copperfield, Bleak House, and Great Expectations. Though David recounts little of his trials as a child worker, the grim working conditions constitute a social attack on child labor.

Strangely enough, little is recounted of David's accommodation in London. The shabby Micawber house with its grandiose exterior and elaborate brass plate declaring the house to be "Mrs. Micawber's Boarding Establishment for Young Ladies" is an exact replica of the name Dickens'

mother gave to their home when they were forced to take in boarders (David 11,136; Ackroyd 65). David's minimal portrayal of his new dwelling highlights the personality of the Micawbers whom Johnson believes to be "dissolutions and refusions of Dickens's own actual parents or of facets of his feelings about them" (679). The fluxes in their financial situation necessitate a nomadic lifestyle which is Dickens' prime target; they are always moving (on, perhaps?) from pressing debts; thus their homes are of little significance. All the reader learns is that David lives in a "close" chamber at the back of the house, and in this instance, small does not mean snug (David 11,135). (Maybe the past was too painful for Dickens.) Eventually David moves into his own place "in the same neighbourhood . . . a quiet back garret with a sloping roof, commanding a pleasant prospect of a timber-yard . . . [he thinks] it quite a paradise" (David 11,143). Though the quarters David describes hardly seem to warrant the religious appellation "paradise," the name serves a dual purpose. For David his new rooms represent a retreat from the responsibility of the Micawbers' debt and serve as a contrast for the hellish conditions of the blacking warehouse. Though the Micawber's "adopt" David, they hardly constitute an ideal family; hence, David eventually leaves to find his aunt.

The third and final phase of David's boyhood begins when he leaves London to search for his only living

relative. After David's harrowing experiences in London, he returns to the sea for renewal. Like the Yarmouth boat, Trotwood's Dover cottage is located by a rejuvenating ocean. Both places are transitional abodes for the hero and represent his need for purification after a sullyng incident. They are sanctuaries from the world, somewhere to revitalize, contemplate, and to be reborn. Dickens indulges in rich sensual descriptions of the Trotwood cottage to reflect David's heightened physical awareness because of David's rebirth. He recalls the smell of aromatic flowers, the feel of crisp muslin curtains, the sight of the "neat little cottage with cheerful bow-windows," and the tastes of "aniseed water, anchovy sauce and salad dressing" (David 13,161-3). He describes a house of intense sensation. (Even Mr. Dick partakes in the feel of the house by licking his windows.) Like a new-born child, David's senses reel, and his heightened impressions predict the strong emotional attachment which will form between David and his new mother. Betsey Trotwood adopts David (his second adoption) and renames him, a common event in Dickensian fiction: Pip is adopted three times and Esther twice.

David glances up to see the window-licking Mr. Dick whose "eyes [catches his], squint[s] at [him] in a most terrible manner, [he laughs] and [goes] away" (David 13,163). His delightful antics amuse David, and Miss Trotwood's tolerance indicates her innate goodness. Why

does Mr. Dick lick the window? Perhaps it is a symptom of madness, or more likely, the window, after Mr. Dick's cleansing, will no doubt be cloudy enough to distort Mr. Dick's view, and certainly he does not see the world as other people view it--he views the world through different eyes, as we all do. Mr. Dick's bizarre behavior demonstrates a child-like, harmless madness and provides a refreshing contrast to the austere characterizations of Miss Trotwood and the Murdstones. He cares not for the wealth the Murdstones seek, yet he seems to have money. He lacks Betsey's practicality, yet she turns to him for advice. He is the Fool through whom the truth is spoken, and his eccentric habits parody human nature. Dickens pokes gentle fun at the mad scholar who spends years writing impossible books, the legal profession whose mundane tasks can be completed by a madman, and practical people who rely on a dolt's advice. The quixotic Mr. Dick works as a foil for the practical, unkind people David encounters in his young years; who doesn't prefer Mr. Dick to the Murdstones and Heeps?

The other occupant of this wonderful cottage is a straight-out-of-a-fairy-tale-character: Miss Trotwood, a unique blend of fairy-godmother and wicked step-mother. After the night of David's birth, Miss Trotwood stamps out of the Rookery, leaving the impression of an unforgiving woman disappointed in her brother's choice of wife and

embittered by her sister-in-law's inability to produce a female heir. She is like her home: neat, tidy, immaculate, but not inviting, that is until one gets inside: therein lies a heart of gold. Miss Trotwood's predilection for beating donkeys and trespassers with a large stick hardly seems humane, yet she shows unflinching devotion to a crazy relative and an orphaned nephew.

The inside of the cottage provides a composite of a perfect Dickens dwelling, indicating his approval of the owner. The neatness, fascinating "tall press guarding all sorts of bottles and pots," pets (two canaries and a cat), "brightly rubbed" furniture, and perfumed air wafting in through open windows all comprise an ideal Dickensian habitat (David 13,166). David's room at the top of the house, overlooks the sea. Here too the moonlight streams in, much as it did in Salem house; however, instead of being in the shadows, David stands directly in the moonlight--symbolizing his growth. In his white-curtained bed his evocative prayer underscores his search for a family and a home; he prays, "[T]hat [he] never might be houseless any more, and never might forget the houseless" (David 13,170). David has survived the trials of being ejected from his home, the harsh discipline of boarding school, the indignity of working in a bottling factory, and tramping from London; he now enters the happiest period of his life because he has found a family.

David's fortuitous phase continues and even extends to his relocation to a new, better school. When he moves from the tranquil cottage by the sea to continue his abruptly terminated education, David does not return to another stern school in London but to a rural retreat, Canterbury. While attending Dr. Strong's enlightened establishment, he boards at the Wickfield's residence which seems more like a human being as it "leans forward, trying to see who was passing on the narrow pavement below" (David 15,187). From the outset, this delightfully "spotless" house with its twinkling brass knocker, white stone steps and "quaint . . . windows . . . as pure as any snow that ever fell upon the hills" welcomes David (David 15,187). Cleanliness represents religious purity, and the Wickfield residence becomes one of Dickens' most powerfully spiritual homes. Fresh from his baptism at Dover cottage, David fittingly moves to the rarified atmosphere of Canterbury; under the shadow of the famous Canterbury cathedral, David can develop spiritually.

Agnes' "angel in the house" quality highlights the church-like atmosphere of the Wickfield home. David infuses her with Madonna-like qualities: she is a "placid . . . quiet, good, calm spirit," whose keys are quiet--in direct contrast to the noisy Miss Murdstone's rattling jailer's keys (David 15,191). On the ascent to David's bedroom, when Agnes stops and turns around on the broad staircase, he sees her "in the grave light of the old staircase [and thinks of]

tranquil brightness" (David 15,191). Such a picture could be seen as a symbol of David's religious climb to heaven, with Agnes as his angelic but earthbound guide. She will be David's perfect temporal and spiritual mate, but his immaturity does not allow him to recognize this yet.

Besides the welcoming occupants of the house, the contents of his new home fascinate David. The nooks and corners contain:

some queer little table, or cupboard or bookcase, or seat or something or other, that [makes him] think there [is] not such another good corner in the room, until [he] look[s] at the next one and [finds] it equal to it, if not better. (David 15,191)

Clearly, the knick-knacks cast an almost magical spell on David as he seeks them out fascinated by their contents. Corners and such artifacts fascinated Dickens; his characters find their most amusing items in them, and they become areas of infinite interest to David, so his favorite child's homes should be replete with such areas to explore. David's "glorious old" bedroom delights him, and the diamond shaped window panes are symbolic shapes of the wealth he finds within this home (David 15,191). The transparent glass suggests that the treasures of a comfortable home can be easily overlooked because too often people look outside, through windows, yearning for other riches; but after his

many trials David knows the value of a warm, loving home. Dickens reflects an emotional evenness in the woodwork: the steadfastness of the sturdy oak floors, the old oak seats, the shining oak floor, and protective oak-beamed ceilings (David 15,191). Oak is considered the mightiest of trees; therefore, Dickens' selection of such material gives the interior a respectable, enduring quality.

The Wickfield home assumes three roles: a religious temple, a castle, and a familial environment for David. The careful attention to small details such as windows, woodwork, and furniture all underscore the serenity of the house. However, as at the Rookery, a note of discord strikes when David first glances through the ground-floor window; the grotesque appearance of a "cadaverous face at the small window on the ground floor" frightens him (David 15,187). A house with turrets resembles a fairy-tale castle, but the appearance of the deathly face transforms the home into a gothic castle similar to those of Dracula and Otranto. Furthermore, when they first meet, Heep extinguishes a light, leaving David to stumble over Heep's stool in the dark. Such a mean trick demonstrates Uriah's malevolent personality and establishes that Uriah will try to block David's path and prevent him from usurping Heep's position in the Wickfield home. Heep plots to seduce David as he does the Wickfields and invites the reluctant hero to his home.

After he takes tea at the Heep's "umble dwelling," David recalls that the "low, old-fashioned room . . . half-parlor and half-kitchen" was "not at all a snug room," and no "individual object had a bare, pinched, spare look, but . . . that the whole place had" (David 17,218). David's unworldliness prevents him from recognizing that the austere apartment mirrors the Heeps' personality. The niggardly appointments do not indicate poverty but express a meanness of spirit. Dickens utilizes external surroundings to disclose the heart of the occupants because the humble abode often provides a "stepping stone to more ambitious domiciliary accommodation" (David 39,481). Therefore, the Heeps "rape" the sanctified home with their pseudo-modesty (Dabney 70). The once tranquil dwelling takes on their unwholesome nature, transforming the church-like temple into a gothic haunted house. Such a metamorphosis was anticipated in the earlier scene when Heep's image at the window scared David.

When David visits Canterbury during the zenith of Heep-power, he notices there is "no one in the quaint old drawing-room, though it present[s] tokens of Mrs. Heep's whereabouts [sic]" (David 39,483). David does not specify what tokens bespeak Mrs. Heep's presence; in the same way, the Heeps themselves are not flagrantly offensive, but are, all the same, repulsive. Other changes wrought by their advent are not so subtle. Uriah possesses a "new plaster-

smelling office, built out in the garden, looking extraordinarily mean," but the distant location of the office indicates Heep's exclusion from the Wickfield family (David 39,486). Heep knows that in order to be welcomed inside he has to marry Agnes; therefore, he exploits his control of Mr. Wickfield's finances. David is shocked to learn that Uriah occupies David's old room, a clear indication that Heep has usurped David's place. As a result of the alterations, David observes that mother and son are "two great bats hanging over the whole house and darkening it" (David 39,488). Such a gothic description suggests that the Heeps are like vampires draining the Wickfields. Dickens hated bats, so I believe his choice of predatory animal reveals his feelings for such sycophantic people (Ackroyd 934). Agnes and Mr. Wickfield become captives in their own home, and David's responsibility as hero is to expel the Heeps.

All is not lost for the Wickfield family because the house's lattices and gables are touched with gold, giving the house "some beams of its old peace" (David 52,635). The defiled Wickfield abode awaits redemption with David cast in the role of savior/prince. After he has freed the house "from the presence of the Heeps . . . [he lies] in [his] old room, like a shipwrecked wanderer come home"; phrasing in fairy-tale terms, Dickens indicates that David has saved the distressed maiden in the castle, claimed her for his

princess, and should marry her in order to live happily ever after (David 54,670). However, David still looks out of windows searching.

David's third trip to London marks his entry into manhood--he has completed his schooling and seeks gainful employment. In order to assert this new independence, he leases a "compact set of chambers forming a genteel residence for a young man" in Buckingham Street (David 23,302). Situated at the "top of the house," the apartment "consist[s] of a little half-blind entry where [he can] see hardly anything, [and] a little stone-blind pantry where [he can] see nothing at all" (David 23,302). The obstructed interior illustrates David's blindness: he envisions himself a man of the world, but he still neither discerns Steerforth's true personality nor Agnes' worthiness. His modest working-class apartment contrasts to Steerforth's opulent aristocratic home. David ingenuously assesses his chambers as "noble," whereas he describes a rather shabby residence (David 23,302). In misguided pride, David struts around London rattling "the key of [his] house in [his] pocket" (David 24,303-4).

Again David finds the top of a home the most comfortable. Like his bedrooms at Trotwood's, the Rookery, Canterbury, and his earlier London paradise, David likes to be tucked up in the attic of a home, far from the cares and woes below. Now David has a "lofty castle" for his home,

but he wearies of his lonely life, and so he invites friends to a dinner party (David 24,303). The party is a disaster: David gets drunk, the hired help take advantage of him, and he demurs to the superior Steerforth (much as he had at Salem House). The next day a remorseful David believes that his room has betrayed him and grows disgusted at the "very sight of the room where the revel has been held"; he cannot take the responsibility for his poor judgement (David 24,310).

Other visitors also disrupt Buckingham Street's ambience. After Uriah Heep's visit, David orders Mrs. Crupp to "leave the windows open, [so] that [his] sitting-room might be aired, and purged of his [Heep's] presence" (David 24,310). On the other hand, when Miss Trotwood comes to stay, her "improvements in [the] domestic arrangements" make his chambers appear "richer instead of poorer" (David 37,459). This coincides with David's experiences and indicates his maturity; he begins to see that possessions mean wealth.

His loneliness leads David to contemplate marriage. David's thinking seems logical but childish: he has a home; therefore, he needs a wife; he even considers Rosa Dartle! This desperation explains his readiness to fall in love with Dora; his immaturity explains why he does not select the most obvious choice, Agnes. He remains in Buckingham Street until the fateful day when he marries Dora Spenlow.

Dora hails from the tranquil countryside; sequestered from the sophisticated London, she too is immature. In David Copperfield Dickens discriminates between the good rural areas and the evil suburban city, though in later novels the lines of demarkation become more fluid. At his boss' house in Norwood, David meets his future bride. On the beautifully kept lawn, surrounded by clusters of trees and flowers (geraniums, linking David's love with his mother's infatuation with Mr. Murdstone), their romance blossoms in a veritable garden of Eden; a germane garden for an idyllic love, there is nothing earthly or realistic about David and Dora's love. Smitten David mimics the love-lorn suitor when he returns to blow "kisses at the lights in the windows" of the cheerfully lit house and childishly goes "round and round the house, without ever touching the house," his only companion the reoccurring moon which shines on him in important moments (at the Salem house feast and his first night in Dover) (David 33,405;404).

David earlier played the role of an infatuated lover when he embarked on an equally fated romance with the eldest Miss Larkins. David, the lover, often finds houses a barrier to consummating his desires; however, windows often help him. While in love with the "eldest Miss Larkins," David paces outside the Larkins' house in a "sickly, spoony manner" (David 18,230). He envisages a mock-heroic event in which he would rescue her from a fire (naturally using her

window) and die attempting to recover an item for her. Lingering outside the Larkins' residence demonstrates David's exclusion from their society and his wish to be included, to be invited in for their soiree. David, still the outsider, yearns to be fully accepted into a family's bosom. A wish he isn't granted until he marries and starts his own family.

Dora's inability to keep house reflects her immaturity and contrasts to Agnes' homemaking expertise. David describes to Dora his imagined living arrangements of a "frugal home. . . [with his] aunt in her room upstairs," a picture which distresses Dora who wishes his aunt to keep in her "own room a great deal" (David 37,461). Even this veiled glimpse at the selfishness of his fiance does not deter the determined David because he sees her as he wishes and not as she is. Dora portrays one of the typically romantic Dickens' heroines who incorporates the values of beauty, ornamentation, and empty headedness (like Volumina and Mrs. Pocket). The reader senses this marriage will not survive any great hardships.

Even before David and Dora marry, there are many instances which point to future troubles. The redoubtable Miss Trotwood warns David, "[S]o you think you were formed for one another, and are to go through a party-supper-table kind of life, like two pretty pieces of confectionery," which uncannily mirrors their married life (David 35,429).

She mutters under her breath, "[B]lind, blind, blind" but, to soften her harsh judgement, Miss Trotwood offers to make their house beautiful (David 35,430). David notes his aunt's words and speaks to Dora about acquiring some practical experience; Dora responds by fainting which hardly bodes well for their future. Even when David visits Dora's aunts to ask for her hand, Dora stands "behind the same dull old door" and blocks her ears rather than face meeting Traddles, Agnes, Miss Trotwood (David 42,521). Even their setting up house indicates later problems, for while David looks at practical furniture, Dora selects a Chinese dog house for her dog, Jip. David's honest reports of Dora's inability to cope with such situations and household budgets exhibits his mature increased awareness of her faults--he has become less "blind."

Eventually they marry and move into David's little cottage (sensibly, Betsey Trotwood lives close by). The house itself is a perfect setting for their fairytale marriage, from the floral (Garden of Eden) carpet and rose-colored furniture to the trappings of Dora's usefulness: a guitar-case, her gardening hat, and Jip's huge Pagoda. When David states that he is "quite unable to regard [him]self as its master," he speaks the truth--neither he nor Dora master the art of homemaking (David 43,537). Dora's housekeeping is deplorable; they are cheated at every turn by their "long line of Incapables," and David despairs of her ever

attaining domestic skills, for even his gentlest chides upset Dora no end (David 44,547). Here one senses the frustration of a tidy Dickens when David describes a house where a dog walks on the table during mealtimes and nothing has a place of its own. In fact, David recalls he loved his "wife dearly, and [he] was happy, but the happiness [he] had vaguely anticipated, was not the happiness [he] enjoyed" (David 48,594). As David matures, he obviously senses his child-wife is not the perfect partner for him, and he contrasts their house with "the contented days with Agnes, in the dear old house" (David 48,595). Dora does try however, she takes

possession of the keys . . . and [goes] jingling about the house with the whole bunch in a little basket . . . [David] seldom found that . . . they were of any use except as a plaything for Jip . . . but Dora [is] pleased . . . by this make-belief of housekeeping." (David 44,553)

Dora's amusing keys contrast to the threatening keys of malicious Miss Murdstone, the serene keys of angelic Agnes, and the happy jingling of independent David; keys become a subtle motif for their owners. Her keys, her puerile name, and her infantile reactions to unpleasant situations exhibit her immaturity; the reader is caught between genuine affection for the beautiful toy whom everyone pets and frustration when she fails to complete the most mundane

task. Dora's delicacy is not for this cruel, harsh world, and her death comes as no surprise. She dies in the house where their love never flowered, a death as innocuous as Dora herself (David 53,658).

Other houses in which David seeks temporary shelter as a child include those of his childhood nurse, Peggotty, and the Yarmouth boat-house. These two homes become associated for the child David with homes of love and devotion contrasting sharply to the coldness of the Blunderstone Rookery. When faithful Peggotty marries, she occupies a new home which represents her new life. David explores Peggotty's "beautiful little home" and is most impressed by the "movables," the bureau with hidden drawers and a copy of Foxe's Book of Martyrs, which he devours and which he always associates with Peggotty's house (David 10,127). Such a book supports Dickens' religious imagery and foretells the amount of suffering David endures, but David is not a martyr, rather his sufferings remind the reader of the tribulations he will encounter at the persecuting hand of a harsh world. Peggotty promises David the ultimate gift: a room she will always keep in readiness should he ever need it. The pathos in this section is unmistakably Victorian fairy-tale: the orphaned boy, rejected by cruel step-parents is comforted by his kindly nurse before being deposed from his rightful home/throne, and the casual mention of a book of "dismal horrors" is utilized to heighten sympathy for the

orphan so that his expulsion from Blunderstone is not pathetic but incensing (David 10,127).

When Clara marries she ships David off to Yarmouth, which indicates her callous attitude toward her only son; apparently, Mrs. Copperfield finds it easier to send her son away rather than talk to him about her important decision to marry. David stays with Peggotty's family in a boat, his first transitional residence and first encounter with a content family. Peggotty's boat is one of Dickens' more whimsical buildings which had its foundation in truth: the Yarmouth boathouse was "the strangest place in the wide world," a famed structure with "its roof made from the bottom of a boat," and Dickens actually encountered this curious sight on a walk from Yarmouth to Lowestoft (Ackroyd 555). Peggotty's boat enchants David, and he recalls:

[he] could not have been more charmed with the romantic idea of living in it. There was a delightful door cut in the side, and it was roofed in, and there were little windows in it, but the wonderful charm of it was that it was a real boat which had no doubt been upon the water hundreds of times, and which had never been intended to be lived in on dry land. (David 3,25)

The description of his bedroom provides another example of Dickens' preferred rooms because his "idea of perfect comfort was . . . always that of a small room, like a ship's

cabin, carefully arranged," and surely this is an exact description of David's bedroom aboard Peggotty's boat (Ackroyd 671). David reminisces:

it was the completest and most desirable bedroom ever . . . with a little window . . . a little looking-glass, just the right height for me . . . a little bed, which there was just room enough to get into . . . the walls were whitewashed . . . and the patchwork counterpane made my eyes quite ache with its brightness. (David 3,26)

A room brimming with Dickens' most sought after qualities: brightness, smallness, and tidiness. Peggotty's boat is tailor-made for David, not only is everything in the bedroom his size (as opposed to the vastness of his Rookery home), but also the brightness of the rooms represents both the lightness of love and the warmth that emanates from this delightful house. The love the occupants share and the fact that the other two children are orphans (and David is soon to become one too) complete his attachment. It is clearly a far superior place in which to live than the Rookery, the very warmth of its description, and the delight young David expresses indicates his preference. The Yarmouth boat becomes a home for David, even though he stays for only a fortnight; the "delicious retreat" becomes a constant in David's life for it represents stability and family love (David 3,27). Indeed, David is so enamored with Yarmouth

that at the end of his visit he realizes how little he had thought of the Rookery, feels guilty, and imagines that he had been "ungrateful to my home again and thought little or nothing about it" (David 3,36). When he returns to the Rookery, the "a cold grey afternoon, with a dull sky, threatening rain" betoken the changes that have occurred in his absence: his mother's marriage (David 3,36).

The Yarmouth upturned boat provides a haven to which David often returns. After his mother's death, David visits Yarmouth where his grief intrudes upon the pleasure of visiting his favorite place in the world. David remarks, "[I]t did not impress [him] in the same way . . . [he] felt rather disappointed," a clear indication that his mother's death has matured David, for as he grows older he is less captivated by the things of his youth (David 10,121). When David goes to sleep, the wind reminds him of "those who were gone . . . [and he thinks] of the seas that had risen, since [he] last heard those sounds, and drowned [his] happy home" (David 10,123). The death of his mother and the destructive sea combine to awaken in David a realization of the fleetingness of life--the ebb and flow of time. When David next visits, however, he brings with him a force as destructive as the sea.

Steerforth corrupts the Yarmouth boat much as he corrupted David's Buckingham Street apartment when he ruined David's dinner party. Steerforth defiles David's "perfect

abode" by eloping with innocent Em'ly (David 3,26); however, his crime seems more a violation of Em'ly's home and family than a sexual crime against her. Em'ly's pathetic letter stresses Dickens' belief in the home because leaving her "dear home--[her] dear home--oh, [her] dear home!" seems to worry her more than the imprudence of her elopement (David 31,386). She brings her note, not with an apology for her immoral action or regrets for jilting Ham, but with a tripartite lament addressed to the house. Mr. Peggotty knows that Em'ly's love for her home will guide her back, so he leaves a burning candle in "its old pane of glass that if she should see it, it may seem to say 'Come back, my child, come back'"; he removes the candle when Emily returns (David 32,390). Likewise, when he goes to London to search for Em'ly, Mr. Peggotty sits by his window "in which he kept a few plants" and looks out for her return (David 32,390). Em'ly's departure shatters David's childhood illusions about his favorite habitation, and ruins the Yarmouth boat forever.

David finds Emily (she is re-christened with the adult version of her name because she is no longer the innocent child) ensconced in a prison-like building reflecting the moral depths to which she has plunged. Dickens describes her surroundings, perhaps drawing from his visits to such places for fallen women with Burdett-Coutts (Ackroyd 530):

the houses were once fair dwellings in the

occupation of single families but . . . have long degenerated into poor lodgings let off in rooms . . . [the] tokens of past grandeur were miserably decayed and dirty; rot, damp and age, had weakened the flooring . . . it was like the marriage of a reduced old noble to a plebeian pauper . . . several of the back windows on the staircase had been darkened or wholly blocked up. In those that remained, there was scarcely any glass . . . [he] saw though other glassless windows . . . a wretched yard which was the common dust-heap of the mansion. (David 50,611-12)

Like the once grand houses that surround her, Emily aspired to greatness (like Pip), but Steerforth eroded her dream of being a lady by refusing to marry her (David 50,612). The facade of their relationship crumbled, and Emily now looks at the world through darkened windows which are blackened by her degrading experience.

When jealous Rosa confronts Emily, Rosa demands, "Do you ever think of the home you have laid to waste . . . [not] *your* home . . . you were part of the trade of your home . . . I speak of *his* home" (David 50,614-5). Again Emily's disgrace is equated with the effects on the homes not on the ignominy of her seduction. Rosa suggests that Emily "had best seek that home of [hers] . . . and hide [her] head among those excellent people [her folks]" (David

50,616). But Emily's home has been violated, and Mr. Peggotty comments that he "never could have thowt the old boat would have been so strange!" (David 40,500); Emily tries to make amends by praying "for [their] happy home with [her] last breath" (David 40,501). The damage has been too great, however, and the Peggottys decide to leave their home (and England).

When the Peggottys empty the boat-house of its furniture, only the solemn wind remains creeping "around the deserted house with a whispered wailing that was very mournful" (David 51,632). The melancholy sounds foreshadow the terrible storm which claims Steerforth's life; his broken body lies in the shattered ruins of the Yarmouth boat. Steerforth's desecration of the Yarmouth boat resembles Heep's rape of the Wickfield's home and Murdstone's violation of Blunderstone. Steerforth has stolen and seduced its most precious occupant; the defiled house has to be abandoned to its fate. Also David has matured, so the perfect home of his childhood should be destroyed because it does have no place in his adult life; he has other homes (Betsey's, Dora's, and Agnes') which are more appropriate than an upside down boat. The cycle is complete: the house desecrated by the wicked ways of the city cannot survive, so it must be left, a skeleton of its former vital self, on the beach to rot and eventually returning to the sea--where it belongs; Steerforth, the

perpetrator of the decline of the Yarmouth boat, lies in its ruins, the earthly sacrifice to justice.

An examination of Steerforth's home renders a fuller understanding of his motivation for ruining young Emily. Steerforth's Highgate house perched on the "summit of a hill" illustrates the societal level of the owner (David 20,249). The "genteel old-fashioned house, very quiet and orderly," affords a view of London and appears to be a home of repose; indeed, Steerforth's room is a "picture of comfort, full of easy-chairs, cushions and footstools worked by his mother's hand" (David 20,249). The house, in effect, is a shrine, a temple, dedicated to the heir apparent, Steerforth, the only male member of the household. The acquiescence of the females surrounding him makes his life easy--too easy. There is the quiet, evil reproach of Rosa Dartle (who is described as "a little dilapidated--like a house," not only can the residence reflect the owner's personality, but vice versa), the gullible Em'ly, and his indulgent mother (David 20,250). Steerforth has learned to take from women because women have always given to him. When he returns to Steerforth's home after his elopement, David finds the house appropriately "dismal, close shut" (David 46,568). Steerforth's aristocratic residence has become a blank house without the illuminating presence of Steerforth; his mother, so shamed by his behavior, shuts the windows as she closes herself and refuses to see anyone.

The home is haunted by "broken shadows of disappointment"; again the home (not merely people) is defiled by evil (David 46,568). This house precedes Chesney Wold and Satis Manor, the consummate emblems of eroding classes and values, and Steerforth displays the cruel and uncaring attitude of a class which takes that which it believes is its due, in this case Steerforth stole the innocence of a naive girl with social aspirations.

In contrast, Tommy Traddles' infinitely more interesting establishment demonstrates the fertility of a poorer, yet more honest class. His top-of-the-stairs rooms abound with life and fun when his wife and her sisters move in. Tommy diligently saves for two seemingly unrelated items: a flower pot and a marble inlaid table (David 27,347). These odd objects reflect a more sensible approach to homemaking: the aesthetically pleasing flower pot (for geraniums perhaps) which is to be placed in the parlor window (!) and the more practical book/tea cup table are tangible ingredients of a *home*. David's love is far more romantic by comparison, yet the reader senses that Tommy's marriage will be more successful. When David visits this "capital little gipsy sort of place," the Traddles are snug in what must be most crowded accommodations (David 50,707). David envies the comfort and happiness that radiate from the occupants, but his own happiness is near.

David, the returning man matured by his European

experiences, sits at Miss Trotwood's Dover cottage, looks out at the moon on the sea, and ponders his future. He has saved the princess and her castle and can now claim her for himself. After three years absence, he returns to Canterbury and stands with Agnes at the window looking "across the ancient street at opposite houses" reflecting on the houses of his past (David 60,718). At long last, David proposes to Agnes while she sits by "one of the old-fashioned windows," and he declares that he "returned home, loving [her]" (David 62,738). The two stand together at the window, look out at the moon and the future; David recalls that "long miles of road then opened out before [his] mind" (David 62,738). He had unconsciously predicted the importance of Agnes throughout various stages of his maturation, from the first impression of an angelic Agnes, to his impression that "Agnes [was] one of the elements of [his] natural home" (David 34,419). Fittingly, Agnes sat quietly by David's London window listening to him talk of Dora while underneath the window a beggar cried, "Blind! Blind! Blind!" (David 35,444). She has waited patiently by many windows for David to finish his journey because she knows he will come back to her--where he rightly belongs (David 35,443).

In the last chapter, David finds happiness surrounded by children and his guardian-wife Agnes: the woman whom the readers knew all along to be his perfect companion. David

has reached the end of his journey and found his perfect partner; he is not blinded by cloudy windows; he can see through crystal panes and selects his love not for beauty, money, or social position but chooses someone of sense and tranquility.

The final two house images of the novel contrast two disparate lifestyles. Julia Mills' lifestyle includes "a stately house, and mighty company and sumptuous dinners every day . . . no green growth near her, nothing that can ever come to fruit or flower"; here is the barren society Dickens deplored (David 64,749). On the other hand, laughter and people fill Traddles' fecund home; the sheer energy Dickens' imparts to this descriptions indicates his preference. And what of our hero and his bride? Because the novel has come the full cycle, there is no mention of windows because David will no longer stand and seek the horizons; he has earned his place by the hearth of his own home.

Bleak Homes

Bleak House (1852) surprised critics and Dickensian readers alike; suddenly, delightful heroes did not embark on picaresque journeys filled with lighthearted fun and characters. Instead, a sardonic, omniscient narrator blended his voice with that of an idealistic female narrator to comment on (and generally condemn) English society of the mid-Nineteenth century. Thus, energetic adventures were supplanted by social criticism. As a consequence, the comic caricatures, so loved by Dickensian readers, also changed; they were replaced with humorous synecdochal representations of given types. The house, now highlighted in the title, becomes more than a hero's refuge or the outward manifestation of the owner--the house becomes a totalitarian structure encompassing and exposing all classes of society. The English countryside had been a refuge from an unhealthy London for David and other protagonists; however, in Bleak House the by-products (factories, slag heaps, unhealthy workers) of the Industrial Revolution have wrecked the landscape, leaving a polluted England. The emergent, darker voice marks Dickens' "middle period." In his most complex novel, dense in plot and character, Dickens focuses on urban London.

The complex structure of the novel drew critical attention. Contemporary critics did not appreciate the intricacy of the plot--the Rambler noted its

"superficiality," Bentley's Miscellany decried the "disagreeable exaggeration," Lewes attacked the implausibility of spontaneous combustion (Page 18; 19; 22). Bleak House seemed to confuse critics, they deplored the "absolute want of construction" and missed the subtle plot manipulation and interconnectedness appreciated by modern critics (Page 21). Despite the harsh reviews, Dickens' combination of detective story, romantic fiction, and social commentary appealed to his faithful readers, and the sales of Bleak House outperformed earlier novels. His Victorian audience sensed something the critics did not: they appreciated the innovative totality of Bleak House, today considered Dickens' most "modern novel" (Page 17). Hence, the darker Dickens writes harshly but with fidelity, recreating England of the mid-1850's. A world encompassed in the suitably drear title: Bleak House.

The pertinent title supplies a simple statement of the themes of the novel. The word "bleak" evokes a sense of hopelessness and, when combined with usually comforting "house," the resultant image is of a futureless, desolate building, not a home, but a barren place of four walls. They are, however, emblematic walls, not necessarily household walls, but the prison walls that society creates: the factories that enslave the workers, the slums that suppress the poor, and the mansions which protect the aristocracy. Ultimately, the most important houses are

those which shelter organizations such as the Courts of Chancery which entrap the greedy, and the "Houses" of parliament which suspend needed social reforms. Despite such gloomy associations, the novel ends affirmatively, thus suggesting the title's paradoxical nature. The title evolved from Tom-All-Alone's to The Solitary House That Never Knew Happiness to The Solitary House Where the Grass Grew, indicating that Dickens himself was ambiguous about the dichotomy in themes: hope and despair (Ford 773-5). His final choice succinctly encapsulates the despair of the first unhappy Bleak House and the hope of Esther's thriving Bleak House.

Homes were very much on Dickens' mind during this period. Certainly, Dickens' own home life was in a state of flux because of the expiration of the lease on his Devonshire Terrace house. He had been house-hunting since Spring 1851; eventually, the family moved into Tavistock House (Storey 32). While remodeling Tavistock house, Dickens dreamed that he was a carpenter; thus, during this period, "houses, homeyness, and houseless" dominated his thoughts (Newsom 103). Of course, these were not new themes; they surface in most of his novels; remember, homelessness constitutes a major concern for young David Copperfield; however, in Bleak House Dickens pushes the subtle home to the foreground by its prominent appearance in the title.

Both contemporary issues and personal events provided Dickens with material for Bleak House. Butt and Tillotson and many other critics have covered the "topicality" of Bleak House. Notwithstanding, Ackroyd posits another topical fact hitherto overlooked: a scientific theory. A year earlier, the new science of thermodynamics postulated that "energy is converted into heat rather than useful work and so moves ineluctably toward its quietus, how the entropy of closed systems leads ultimately to disorder," a statement which succinctly describes the major theme of Bleak House (Ackroyd 663); Dickens obviously believed that Britain was ripe for such combustion, and hence, Krook's symbolic explosion best represents Dickens' desire that Chancery Court would disappear in the same way. He had previously satirized the legal profession and in Bleak House cruel caricatures of solicitors abound; however, Chancery becomes far more sinister than any single lawyer. Likewise, the condemnation of the political system reaches a zenith with Dickens' portrayals of the ridiculous Boodle, Coodle, and Doodle in the *House* of Lords. An increasing workload meant Dickens had to reject a third appeal to stand for Parliament (Ackroyd 649). Perhaps Dickens believed he could be just as effective through his most successful public forum: the popular written word. Also, Dickens most scathing novel coincides with his public reading tours which brought him into direct contact with the conditions and peoples of the

industrial North (Ackroyd 666); England's desecration disturbed him to the extent that he created a blighted English landscape. I believe Dickens deliberately placed Tom-All-Along's in an area bordering middle-class homes in order to shock his readers, but more importantly, in an effort to open their eyes to the reforms that were needed in Great Britain, rather than to the plight of those in foreign parts. His involvement in philanthropic housing projects resulted in "home affairs, not foreign affairs, [being] the center of [Dickens'] attention [I]n home affairs, homes themselves were a dominant theme, the wretched, overcrowded, unsanitary homes of the poorest people," people whose poverty he understood because he had experienced their sufferings and humiliation in his own childhood (Clark 9); a childhood fresh in his mind after the completion of David Copperfield. Purged of childhood guilt after writing David Copperfield and weary of his more boyish enthusiasm for humorous caricature, he was poised to write a novel with an eye to the future, a desolate time he eulogized in the dank, crumbling houses of Bleak House.

The perfect vehicles to epitomize the fast altering structure of English society were the homes in which the representatives for each class lived. Increased social mobility resulted in a "fragmented society" (Harvey 146). For centuries England had accepted a strict caste system, but the increased power of the middle classes challenged the

their pitiful quarters with Krook and Smallweed and those miserly people who choose to live in squalor, their blindness results from greed not ignorance.

Precariously balanced at the top of the social strata are the aristocratic Dedlocks whose dying country estate acts as a motif for their decaying power. Water surrounds the Dedlock's Home, Chesney Wold, in Lincolnshire:

[t]he waters are out in Lincolnshire. An arch of the bridge in the park has been sapped and sopped away. The adjacent low-lying ground, for half a mile in breadth, is a stagnant river, with melancholy trees for islands in it, and a surface punctured all over, all day long, with falling rain." (Bleak 2,11)

In one effective (and often quoted) scene, Dickens manages to superimpose two messages: one literal and the other inferred. Obviously, the landscape alters because of the heightened water levels, but really the tides of change are not literal floods, but the tides caused by the rising power of the middle class. The trees represent Dedlocks and other aristocrats who stand in a politically stagnant river (House of Lords) who are being swept away. By depicting the Dedlock's surroundings in such monotonous sepia, Dickens underscores the anemic appearance of the countryside. The aristocracy's pastoral property is dying because they drain the country and its inhabitants through their political

mismanagement. So too the flora and fauna die in the "deadened world [whose] growth is sometimes unhealthy for want of air" (Bleak 2,11). The soaking deer, the mouldy church, and continuing rain all bespeak a rotting world where "a general smell and taste . . . of the ancient Dedlocks in their graves" permeates the Lincolnshire countryside (Bleak 2,11). Dickens describes the Dedlock's estate in flat, two dimensional, photographic detail in order to emphasize the shallowness of the upper classes. Death permeates not only the dreary surroundings, but also the impressive Dedlock mansion.

The Dedlocks live in a "death house" (Bleak 2,11). Chesney Wold is not a true home in the accepted sense of the word; described as "beautiful from without," Chesney Wold resembles its mistress: it lacks heart (Bleak 40,498). Lady Dedlock stands at her bedroom window and gazes across the bleak landscape into a retainer's warm home filled with children and life. The contrast between the humbler, happier house and the grander, cold mansion reminds Lady Dedlock what a sham her life has been: she has no legitimate offspring to inherit the estate and title--she and her husband are as barren as the scenery. Indeed, Lady Dedlock is "bored to death," and she has no verve because her shallow life saps her strength (Bleak 2,11); the artificial courtly world destroys creative and intellectual urges, much as the rain drains the land. Beautiful, cold Lady Dedlock

oversees a colorless world of "Indian Ink" from her bedroom window (Bleak 2,11); she senses her personal desolation, the emptiness of her life, as she gazes from the bedroom window. As the estate crumbles physically, so too the occupants decline morally.

Lord and Lady Dedlock's ancestral portraits comprise their warped family. The images are scarcely adequate substitutions for children, but Lady Dedlock forfeited her right to descendants when she married for position. Again Dickens uses flat imagery, to stress the family's lack of substance. The two dimensional paintings suggests the nobility's shallowness, therefore, not only does the Dedlock's lifestyle, but also their symbolic family lacks depth. The emblematic paintings stand as symbols for generations of breeding and reminders of their ancestry-- ironically a heritage which will not be passed on. Although the summer sun almost thaws the dead portraits, the pictures fail to come to life because they represent "the past and present but not the future" (Bleak 40,498). Even the family name predicts its demise. The Ded-locks will die because they are locked into a system bound for failure; like the second law of thermodynamics, Dickens suggests the nobility "moves ineluctably to its quietus" (Ackroyd 663). Another inhabitant exists: the obviously symbolic spirit who paces the Ghost Walk. The restless spirit "will walk [in Chesney Wold], until the pride of this house is humbled" (Bleak

7,84). The curse represents a bygone era, a time that refuses to die, much as the hierarchial class system survives as a reminder of a long past era. If the portraits and ghost symbolize the Dedlock's past, then the cousins stand for the present state of the gentry.

Visitors or "cousins" who frequent Chesney Wold represent the worst traits of the aristocracy and provide human illustrations for the uselessness of the class system. Normally cousins are welcome additions to family occasions, but this noble family consists of self-serving sycophants and self-interested belles, and these people are not true, loving relatives but empty imitations. The gathering at the Dedlocks, therefore, represents a flat reproduction (like the portraits on the walls)--a bastardized caricature. They arrive in January, typically the coldest month, and similarly the cousins lack warmth; however, the visiting cousins do manage to liven the house with their noisy guns and vacuous voices--they almost warm the chilly church, and the mirrors reflect their different countenances, but their guns suggest death, and their reflections represent shallowness. By portraying these characters as empty-headed fools living lives devoid of meaning, Dickens iterates his Chesney Wold as England imagery--an empty, dying home/nation filled with meaningless people performing useless activities. Even Sir Leicester, perhaps the most sympathetic character, is "in the cousinship of the

Everybodys . . . [and] in the cousinship of the Nobodys"; though he knows everyone, they themselves are of little consequence (Bleak 28,347). Perhaps the most representative visitor, Volumina Dedlock, best epitomizes the overeducated, underuseful patrician woman; her chief talents, "cutting ornaments out of colored paper . . . singing to the guitar in the Spanish tongue, and propounding French conundrums in country houses," are hardly worthwhile occupations (Bleak 28,347-8). She is a vain, overpainted, overadorned personage with a propensity for screaming, a useless appendage resulting from years of unhealthy breeding and antiquated ideals. Like her brother Volumina has no children, an indication that the Dedlocks (and others like them) have no future as they move toward self-combustion.

Besides the occupants of Chesney Wold, Dickens uses the interior of the house to emphasize the coldness within. In the "glorious house of gold:"

the fire of the sun is dying . . . the floor is dusky and shadow slowly mounts the walls, bringing the Dedlocks down like age and death . . . [Lady Dedlock's picture] turns pale . . . (Bleak 40,498).

Thus, the warm description quickly disintegrates with the setting sun, and mounting shadows warn of impending death and disgrace for the Dedlocks. Despite the fact "hot-water pipes . . . trail themselves all over the house . . . [they]

fail to supply the fires' deficiencies"--the cold atmosphere of the Dedlock home results not from its insufficient heating but from its cold inhabitants (Bleak 28,347). Fires do not warm the home, rather they raise "ghosts of grim furniture on wall and ceiling" (Bleak 28,349). The row of windows in the long drawing-room "like a row of jewels set in a black frame" represents the cold sparkle of gems surrounded by a black border of death (Bleak 12,144). Even the summer sun fails to brighten the dreary and solemn mansion; it may bathe the house in gold, but it is an artificial color lacking depth. The setting sun warns of the mutability of time; Chesney Wold its occupants and visitors have passed their prime.

Lady Dedlock's death acts as the catalyst for Chesney Wold's demise. The chambers become "darker and colder"; a "heavy cloud upon the rooms which no light will dispel" lingers, and even the mirrors assume a "desolate and vacant air" (Bleak 43,693; 43,694). Sir Leicester too dies a spiritual death, and he stands before Lady Dedlock's portrait leaving Volumina to haunt the house. Eventually, the greater part of the house is shut up, no longer a show house for visitors and "cousins," so all that remains is a "labyrinth of grandeur . . . a place of echoings and thunderings . . . unused passages and staircases . . . no visitors, passion and pride . . . have died" (Bleak 66,766-7); Chesney Wold has become a crumbling shell, devoid of

life, left to the ghost of Ghost Walk who finally takes ownership.

The scant amount of space allotted to the description of the Dedlock's London residence establishes its secondary importance; nevertheless, the house serves as a foil for Chesney Wold.

The house in town, which is rarely in the same mind as Chesney Wold at the same time; seldom rejoicing when it rejoices, or mourning when it mourns, excepting when a Dedlock dies; the house in town shines out awakened. As warm and bright as so much state may be, as delicately redolent of pleasant scents that bear no trace of winter as hothouse flowers can make it; soft and hushed, so that the ticking of the clocks and the crisp burning of the fires alone disturb the stillness in the rooms; it seems to wrap those chilled bones of Sir Leicester's in rainbow-coloured wool.

(Bleak 29,357)

Though the contrasting home seems warmly welcoming, it resembles its country cousin in that it is a "[f]airyland to visit but a desert to live in" (Bleak 2,13). All in all, the London home is another elaborate, glamorous facade lacking depth. The rooms are "very brilliant in the season and very dismal out of it," revealing the Dedlocks' fantasy world where all that glitters is not gold (Bleak 29,357).

The house reflects the aristocracy's haughty demeanor as it "stares at other houses in the street of dismal grandeur and gives no outward sign of anything going wrong within" (Bleak 56,667). The two Dedlock homes, despite their disparities in location and temperament, still protect their occupants by presenting to the outside world the facade of happiness.

Chapter Forty, "National and Domestic," provides an important bridge between the two Dedlock houses and the many themes. The chapter opens with a satiric version of the reasons for the lack of national leadership and Sir Leicester's opinion on same. The connection between the Dedlocks and the antiquated Westminster government reminds the reader that Sir Leicester, thanks to his ancestry, is a member of the House of Lords. The fact that the Dedlocks have no children suggests Lord Dedlock's sterility or impotency, an inability to perform his conjugal duties, which correlates with the inability of the House of Lords to perform its duties, i.e., instigate necessary social and political reforms, which constitutes a major sub-text for the novel. From the halls of Westminster, the narrator returns to Chesney Wold where Mrs. Rouncewell prepares for the Dedlock's arrival. By juxtaposing the two families, the Dedlocks and the Rouncewells, Dickens subtly connects Mr. Rouncewell's parliamentary defeat of Sir Leicester. While Mr. Rouncewell transgresses the Dedlock political territory, his mother represents the servile attitude of the loyal

feudal servant; shackles which her younger son has no trouble shedding. Mrs. Rouncewell still firmly believes in the wholesomeness of Lincolnshire estate when she loyally declares that: "Chesney Wold will set my Lady up [sic] there is no finer air and no healthier soil in the land" (Bleak 50,499). Interesting words which illustrate her blindness to the manor's damp decay at hand and to her son's increasing power at large. For all her good intentions, Mrs. Rouncewell demonstrates a lack of insight similar to that exhibited by Mrs. Jellyby, Harold Skimpole, and the other blind occupants of the house of England.

Not everyone is so unaware of the rapidly changing world. Bridging the gap between the upper classes and the independent middle classes is one of Chesney Wold's most important visitors, Mr. Tulkinghorn, whose room is always ready for his arrival--a clear indication of his importance. Because he was not born to this world, Mr. Tulkinghorn's room in the "third order of merit" stands separated from the other rooms (Bleak 12,146). Filled with unspoken secrets, this room has perhaps the most activity (albeit mental activity) in Chesney Wold. Tulkinghorn's plain but comfortably furnished quarters indicate that he needs not the trappings of wealth because his wealth is of a different sort: the wealth of forbidden knowledge, and with that knowledge comes a power infinitely more potent than money or ancestry. Unknowingly, the Dedlocks welcome a visitor who

presents another threat to their stronghold.

The Dedlock's opulent decay starkly contrasts to the rich fertility of the middle classes evidenced in Jarndyce's Bleak House and Boythorn's property. Representative of the growing middle class, Boythorn's healthy house with its fertile grounds containing a flower garden, a vegetable patch, and a well-stocked orchard is an oasis which borders the Dedlock desert and leads to many laughable territorial disputes which demonstrate that the Dedlocks still cling to their sovereignty. Such prelapsarian imagery alerts the reader to the Edenic qualities of this ex-Parsonage, an origin which invests the home with a special spirituality--not the holiness of the city-dwelling Wickfields, rather the "stillness and composure . . . within the orderly precincts of the old red wall" suggest a more natural, country spirituality. In keeping with the book's thematic chaos, the inside of the house displays a robust disorder due to rapid growth, a far cry from Krook's unhealthy disarray. By describing Boythorn's home as wearing an "aspect of maturity and abundance," Dickens emphasizes his respect for such houses and their owners (Bleak 18,222). Nearby, the title house, Bleak House, receives as much attention as the decaying Dedlock mansion because Bleak House too presents a tripartite picture of time.

The story of Bleak House's past, of great-uncle Tom Jarndyce and his obsession with the Chancery suit, provides

the ultimate exemplar for the book. Because of his fixation, Tom Jarndyce had shut himself away "day and night, poring over the wicked heaps of papers in the suit"; he cared so little about anything other than the will that he allowed his home to crumble (Bleak 8,89). The Peaks, as it was then known, became

dilapidated, the wind whistled through the cracked walls, the rain fell through the broken roof, the weeds choked the passages to the rotting door, the brains seemed to have been blown out of the house too; it was so shattered and ruined. (Bleak 8,90)

As a consequence of its forlorn appearance, The Peaks was renamed Bleak House. The residence, like the Dedlock house, figuratively died, that is until John Jarndyce, a person unmoved by the court case, returned the house to its former glory. Perhaps hope remains for the dying Dedlock property. John Jarndyce retained the dismal name and retells the story to remind his wards of greed's destructive capabilities: avarice can destroy not only a man's soul, but also his material possessions. Consequently, Dickens deliberately places Bleak House on the top of a hill because it represents the ideal home, a beacon safe above Lincolnshire's marshy waters.

Esther's first impression of the three-peaked, old-fashioned home covered in roses and honeysuckle, with its

streaming lights suggests another home of growth and welcome reminiscent of Boythorn's parsonage. The circular driveway leads visitors to the front porch; the "gush of light" and glowing fire warm the interior; burgeoning vegetation threatens to completely cover the home--roses for love and honeysuckle for generous, devoted affection and sensual appeal--the lush growth predicts the healthy proliferation of Jarndyce's wards (Greenaway 22). Even the assortment of windows reflects an abundance of different occupants, and each room's windows reflect the personality of the owner: John Jarndyce's are open, and Ada's are expansive.

The vines covering the exterior of Bleak House, parallel the meandering hallways inside. Esther describes Bleak House as

one of those delightfully irregular houses where you go up and down steps out of one room into another, and where you come upon more rooms when you think you have seen all there are, and where there is a bountiful provision of little halls and passages, and you find still older cottage-rooms in unexpected places, with lattice windows and green growth pressing through them. (Bleak 6,62)

This maze-like interior differs from the empty passages and staircases of Chesney Wold; the delightful puzzle box of twists and turns offers the occupants avenues to explore rather than echoing, barren corridors. On a symbolic level,

the journey Esther undertakes in the passageways parallels her story. The crooked stairs, shallow steps, confusion, and final arrival at her destination may represent her "narrative" which unravels a mystery as convoluted as the passageways. Naturally, the corridors connect all the bedrooms, further indicating the interdependence of the occupants and the interconnectedness of the plot of Bleak House. Thus, Dickens' adjective "bountiful" reflects not only the prolific halls and passages, but also the complexity of his novel (Bleak 6,62).

At the heart of the house stands Esther's bedroom. This delightful room has

more corners in it than [Esther] ever counted afterwards, and a chimney (there was a wood fire on the hearth) paved all around with pure white tiles, in every one of which a bright miniature of the fire was blazing

 there were oval engravings of months--ladies haymaking . . . half-length portraits . . . [of] four angels . . . and a composition in needlework, representing fruit, a kettle and an alphabet . . .
 [all in] perfect neatness (Bleak 6,62-4)

Therefore, her bedroom is the epitome of homeliness from the clean linen to the cozy neatness. The multiple fires in the hearth and surrounding the chimney protect Esther from the

cruel east wind and create a feeling of warmth and comfort. The engraved calendar, pictures of angels, fruits, a kettle, and alphabets which decorate the room symbolize different facets of Esther's personality: the calendar for time, the angel for goodness, fruits for fertility, a kettle for domesticity, and the alphabet for children. Pervasive too are the feminine smells of rose-leaves and lavender; rose-leaves for love and lavender for tranquility and purity (Bremness 88). All in all, a delightful room full of suggestive images carefully crafted into seemingly ordinary, but delightful furnishings. Most importantly, the bedroom is the place where Esther first begins to "see" life.

Early one morning Esther stands in her room surrounded by "unknown objects" and, as she looks from her window, the dawn light not only lightens the view, but also symbolically reveals truths to her much as the objects in her room become clearer (Bleak 8,85). If this scene seems familiar, one should remember Lady Dedlock who stands at her window contemplating a dreary landscape. Both occupy different worlds and therefore, overlook different scenery; they both "see" things differently. As Lady Dedlock looks into a darkened, wet world of decay, Esther oversees an enlightening, lush landscape of growth. Esther, in her youth, observes the future with youthful optimism, whereas Lady Dedlock, with her experience, beholds the past with mature regret. Deliberately, Dickens repeats the same scene

with different emphasis. Even his method of description varies: Lady Dedlock's view resembles a static, sepia photograph of times past, while Esther views a more active, colorful painting of times to come. Hence, Dickens takes a simple moment and reframes it to reflect their mother/daughter relationship while superimposing their disparate lifestyles and outlooks. The reader deduces that Lady Dedlock has not chosen wisely and perceives that Esther will not make the same mistakes her mother made. Esther's bedroom links her with the past and her future, for here she undergoes her rite of passage into womanhood during her bout of smallpox. During her near fatal illness, Esther's self-confinement to her bedroom allows her to readapt to her new looks--she learns the transitory nature of beauty. Ravaged by smallpox, she survives, physically decayed but morally unchanged, even beautified by her gruelling illness. Esther, in this way, resembles Bleak House: the corruption (smallpox) brought from Chancery cannot mar honest Esther; she triumphs over her illness. Esther's bedroom, therefore, transcends being a room--it encompasses her life past, present, and future: the warmth and homeliness contrast with her previous cold environment, one scene provides a direct comparison between Esther and her mother, and the furnishings anticipate the fecundity of her marriage. All of which is emphasized by the significant events which occur within the room's walls.

A joint sitting-room unites Esther and Ada's bedrooms because their lives and personalities are intertwined: both of them represent the beauty which they observe in the garden underneath this room--Ada the physical and Esther the spiritual. They are fertile women who will produce the next generation of wholesomeness. The green colored sitting-room suggests fertility, new life, and growth. Even the ornithological pictures (Miss Flite's bird motif) that adorn the wall predict the freedom Esther and Ada enjoy--they never become entrapped in Chancery. Ada's sleeping-room is "all flowers--in chintz and paper, in velvet, in needlework, in the brocade of two stiff courtly chairs . . ." (Bleak 6,63); however, the two dimensional flowers, like the Dedlock family portraits, lack life, which suggests that Ada's future may not be as promising as Esther's. Ada's view of "a great expanse of darkness lying underneath the stars" indicates that she looks not down or across but up to the future, for Ada lacks Esther's practicality and marries the idealist Richard even though she senses his fate (Bleak 6,62). Ada's room lacks the detailed description and vitality of Esther's room, a sure sign of her secondary importance.

The males' austere quarters also suit their inhabitants. Richard's multiple personality "part library, part sitting-room, part bed-room" apartment seems indeed a "comfortable compound of many rooms" and predicts his many

occupations before he succumbs to the spell of Chancery (Bleak 6,62). On the other hand, Mr Jarndyce lives in a "plain room . . . where all the year round he [sleeps] with his window open and his cold bath gaping for him in a smaller room adjoining" (Bleak 6,62). An austere room which closely resembles the type of room Dickens himself preferred (Ackroyd 503). The open window allows in the east wind breezes John Jarndyce so keenly feels, and the cold bath standing in the corner awaits for his punishing, cleansing/baptismal ritual which he performs to remove the contamination from an unhealthy dose of Chancery. The lack of comfort reflects John Jarndyce's moderate needs; his interest in the Will is not pecuniary. His indifference stems from his experience with the people destroyed by Chancery. The small room next to his bedchamber, nicknamed the Growlery, contains a library of books and papers and a museum of boots, shoes, and hat-boxes; John Jarndyce admits the Growlery is the most used room in the house because when he is out of "humour" he can "come and growl" there (Bleak 8,87).

The countryside homes of Jarndyce, Boythorn, and Dedlock achieve a delicately wrought blend of symbolism and reality. The cyclical nature of time: birth, growth, death, and renewal continues interminably in such emblematic homes. Dedlock manse crumbles and dies whilst Bleak House and the Parsonage prosper and grow. The countryside simultaneously

decays and grows in Dickens' complex theme of chaos. Similarly, in the city, homes and people come under the influence of the encompassing building, that of the putrid Courts of Chancery.

The opening scenes of Bleak House introduce the High Court of Chancery as the novel's pivotal area, and though this court does not represent a home in the usual sense of the word, with its (court)rooms and corridors, the stagnant institution of Chancery certainly resembles a house. The ominous warning cautions: "[s]uffer any wrong that can be done you, rather than come here" (Bleak 1,7). John Jarndyce's description of a moldering London property depicts the court's devastation:

[I]t is a street of perishing blind houses, with their eyes stoned out, without a pane of glass, without so much as a window-frame with bare blank shutters tumbling from their hinges and falling asunder; the iron rails peeling away in flakes of rust; the chimneys sinking in, the stone steps to every door (and every door might be Death's Door) turning stagnant green; the very crutches on which the ruins are propped, decaying. Although Bleak House was not in Chancery, its master was, and it was stamped with the same seal. (Bleak 8,89)

All in all, a stark picture of a desolate area destroyed by

equity court. Dickens solution to Chancery? Burn it.

If all the injustices it has committed, and all the misery it has caused, could only be locked up with it, and the whole burnt away in a great funeral pyre--why so much the better

(Bleak 1,10)

Chancery also houses those helpless individuals who hope to benefit from the famed Jarndyce and Jarndyce suit--people such as Miss Flite, Gridley, Richard Carstone, and the countless numbers of other people who succumb to the Chancery spell. Despite the havoc wrecked by the court, Dickens' description lends the court a vaguely religious atmosphere: the colorless stained glass window, its "wasting candles," "crimson cloth and curtains," and ceremonial genuflecting overseen by the High Priest/Chancellor (Bleak 1,6). Fittingly, the establishments in the immediate vicinity of Lincoln's Inn belong to those who utilize the courts: solicitors such as Tulkinghorn and Vholes. Dickens consciously places all of his characters in appropriate locations in London; a fact which comes to light when one examines maps (such as Shatto's) of the Chancery area.

Tulkinghorn resides in a sumptuous office/home located in Lincoln's Inn Fields. During a visit, Hawthorne noted that this area of London was "almost a field, right in the heart of London, and as retired and secluded, almost as if

the surrounding city were a forest" (qtd in Shatto 101). Tulkinghorn works in his home because his occupation and life are one; he never forgets he is a lawyer. His quarters are appropriately dignified because Tulkinghorn does not work for the general public; he balances at the uppermost end of the middle class, and so his rooms should be those "traditionally inhabited by the nobility" (Shatto 101). His large house, "formerly a house of state," has been divided into "shrunken fragments of its greatness," one of which Tulkinghorn occupies (Bleak 10,119). The diminished size of the ex-house of state may refer to the crumbling of institutions in general, or the partitioned house may serve as an analogy for the decreasing power of the state, that is to say, self-serving politicians who fractionalize the power of government by their inability to act as a cohesive group. Perhaps Dickens may be iterating the law of thermodynamics; however, within the literal confines of the novel, the vanishing size of Tulkinghorn's home predicts the size of the Jarndyce settlement when the case is settled. Whatever meaning is deduced, one concludes Dickens ultimate wish is for an Ozymandian fall of the mighty. Furthermore, the grotesque simile that "lawyers lie like maggots in nuts" characterizes the unhealthy closeness of the legal profession, an incestuous group who live and work under the same roof (Bleak 10,119). Not only do the attorneys live together, but also they are parasites feeding

on the flesh of their clients, people who cannot escape because clients need their solicitors, and so they patronize a profession they despise, and in doing so they become encased in prison-like shells. Thus, Tulkinghorn imprisons Lady Dedlocks with his wealth of information about her past. Tulkinghorn's home is more than a work place, his residence symbolizes the entire grasping legal profession and the crumbling state of England.

Considering his occupation, it is appropriate that Tulkinghorn's surroundings constitute a symbolic jail: externally the cramped "prison-like yard" and internally an interior prison of "passages and ante-chambers" (Bleak 48,583; 10,119). At the nucleus of his private room "Allegory, in Roman helmet and celestial linen, sprawls among balustrades and pillars, flowers, clouds and big-legged boys," the only intruder Tulkinghorn permits into his private life (Bleak 10,119). Allegory plays an important role because she oversees Tulkinghorn's work, she shares his secrets, and she witnesses his murder as she points to his spilled blood. Tulkinghorn's practical furnishings reveal his true personality. The

[h]eavy broad-backed old-fashioned mahogany and horsehair chairs . . . obsolete tables . . . thick and dingy Turkey-carpet [which] muffles the floor where he sits . . . two candles in old-fashioned silver candlesticks, that give a very insufficient

light . . . everything that can have a lock has got one, no key is visible . . . [h]e keeps no staff. (Bleak 10,119-20)

The sturdy chairs, heavy tables, expensive carpet, and old candlesticks give the room an aura of stolid respectability. Undoubtedly this is the room of a hard working, old-fashioned person disinterested in ostentatious displays of wealth. The lack of staff, attenuating carpet, poor lighting and abundant locks all bespeak secrecy--Tulkinghorn wants no one to know what he is doing or have access to his papers. Tulkinghorn shares nothing in his insular world of concealment: he is incarcerated in a prison of his own creation: his "nut." He sits amidst foreboding furniture, fearful that anyone should take the secrets he covets. The dim candlelight causes him to strain to read, but he is used to performing close scrutiny, he watches Lady Dedlock (and, one assumes, all his other clients) with minute care. Obviously he may be "in the light" about his clients' pasts, but he is surely "in the dark" about human kindness. Because of the secretive nature of the legal profession, Tulkinghorn becomes "a reservoir of confidences," but he turns these to his advantage and uses secrets to gain control over his clients (Bleak 10,120). Hence, Tulkinghorn lives in darkness because his life is given over to hidden pasts, skullduggery, and deceit--nothing is illuminated in his legal finagling. Tulkinghorn's rooms are similar to

those of Jagger's in Great Expectations. Both locations are close to Chancery, and their gloomy austerity makes them fitting places for their closemouthed owners.

Though both Tulkinghorn and Vholes are lawyers, their dissimilar offices exhibit their legal and social differences. Tulkinghorn's practice consists solely of gentry, whereas Mr. Vholes works for the general public. Therefore, Tulkinghorn occupies spacious quarters in a traditionally uppercrust area; on the other hand, Mr. Vholes inhabits a confined office in Symond's Inn, nearer the grime of Chancery. Perhaps the most telling difference lies in the fact that Mr. Vholes does not live at his work place; his family home, in "a damp garden at Kennington," is near Millbank Penitentiary (Shatto 300-1). Vholes frequently mentions his home and family in conversation, and his comments indicate that he comes from a working class background and constantly worries about his social and financial position. Vholes desires to improve his fiscal status, while Tulkinghorn craves power. His living in the vicinity of the prison hints that Vholes visits there frequently, which leads one to assume that either Vholes is not as competent a lawyer as Tulkinghorn and, therefore, more of his clients go to prison; or his working-class clients do not have the financial resources to keep out of jail, i.e. they are imprisoned for debt, they cannot pay the fines imposed on them. Whatever reason or combination of

reasons for Vholes' family and office locations, Dickens chose the location carefully. He knew the Inns of Court area from his days working as a law clerk in Vholes' Symond's Inn (Shatto 230). Located in the Chancery necropolis, Vholes' office exhibits the decaying signs of being in such close quarters to Chancery. From the inn constructed of "old building materials, which took kindly to the dry rot and to dirt and all things decaying and dismal," to his office smells of "unwholesome sheep, blending with the smell of must and dust" and the "stale and close" atmosphere, Dickens utilizes a graveyard image to iterate the dangers of Chancery suits (Bleak 39,482). The cracked, shut, dirty windows and jet black, coffin-lid door further entomb the occupants of the chthonic office. Even Vholes' desk reverberates like a hollow coffin as he intones an ashes to ashes pronouncement to Richard Carstone when he seeks Mr. Vholes' help. This visit marks the beginning of Richard's decline, an event witnessed by Mr. Weevle (one of Vholes' clerks) who comments on Richard's "smouldering combustion" (Bleak 39,489).

Eventually Richard, seduced by the suit, moves into a flat upstairs from Vholes' office, and this proves to be the final nail in his coffin. In a "dull room" of faded furniture, Richard works amid "dusty bundles of papers," entombed behind a front door which bears his name in great white letters on a hearse-like panel (Bleak 51,611). When

Ada moves in she shines "in the miserable corner like a beautiful star," but even fertile Ada cannot revitalize a dying man seduced by greed (Bleak 51,611). Chancery's temptations prove too great for the weak.

In direct contrast to the active, upward social mobility of Tulkinghorn and Vholes, characters such as Jellyby, Turveydrop, and Skimpole function as representatives of the declining middle class. They never resolve their financial difficulties because they embody the useless byproducts of inherited wealth: unaffordable luxuries, misguided charity, and vain dandyism. In keeping with the theme of degeneration and decay, their homes evidence signs of their moral erosion.

The neglected Jellyby home perfectly suits a misguided philanthropist. Mrs. Jellyby exists in foreign lands, not in the "very untidy and very dirty . . . miserable rooms [of her home] . . . with their marshy smell" (Bleak 4,37). Originally an Inn of Chancery, Thavies Inn has caught the disease of corruption and metaphorically crumbles because of its close proximity to the unscrupulous law courts. Literally, it decays because of Mrs Jellyby's misplaced humanitarianism; she allows her family and home to disintegrate while she concentrates on foreign spiritual matters. Mr. Jellyby eventually loses his wretched, confused house, and one cannot help but feel sorry for the man so entrapped by an indifferent wife that he finds his

comfort in walls. These walls are his prison, but they are also his reality, and his only physical solace in a madhouse. Esther notes that "nothing belonging to the family . . . [is] unbroken," and when she tries to tidy up the house for Caddy's wedding "wonderful things came tumbling out of the closets . . . bits of mouldy pie . . . sour bottles . . . letters . . . books with butter sticking to the binding"; the house sounds remarkably like Krook's shop (Bleak 30,373). Dickens employs the Jellyby's descent from middle-class comfort to bankrupt wretchedness as a warning to those women who put others above their familial obligations. The moral is clear: charity begins at home. Dickens underscores his message in the ironical scene where Jo breakfasts on the steps of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (another building which houses people of distorted aims). Dickens wanted to redress the im-"balance between the home mission and the foreign mission" (Letter to Rev. Henry Christopherson, Dickens Bleak House 887). He believed that "Christianity at home" was far more important than the "white man's burden" (Speech to Metropolitan Sanitary Association, Dickens Bleak House 916). However, not all is lost in the Jellyby household, for when Caddy marries Prince Turveydrop they escape the confines of their misguided households which allows them to restore their social position, and they eventually move to the middle class West End of London

(Shatto 296).

Mr. Turveydrop's house in Soho Square, like Tulkinghorn's residence, was once the province of the nobility; however, time and fashion have taken their toll--the fine house has disintegrated into a dingy, smoky residence. The ironically named "Academy," complete with busts and archways, provides Dickens with another opportunity to continue his themes of decay. By placing Turveydrop in the same building as a drawing-master, a coal-merchant, and a lithographic artist, Dickens subtly underscores Turveydrop's ambiguous social position--he is neither working class (he does not work, he deports) nor has he the lineage to be considered upperclass. Mr. Turveydrop's "bare resounding room" smells of the stables, and one can imagine the smell to which Dickens refers (Bleak 14,170)! The vacuous room duplicates the emptiness in Mr. Turveydrop's head--a foppish gentleman who possesses the unproductive drawing-room skills of a bygone era. Miss Flite's telling remark that Turveydrop "fully believes he is one of the aristocracy" indicates his social pretentiousness (Bleak 14,174). Mr. Turveydrop comments that England has "nothing to succeed us, but a race of weavers" which shows his contempt for the working classes and underscores his awareness of the breakdown of the social strata (Bleak 14,175). Turveydrop never works; he merely deports himself and allows his family to work themselves to death to support

him. His descent down the social scale is not only welcomed by the average working class citizen, but also desirable for he has nothing to contribute to society. His most important contribution to society has been to instill in his son a strong work ethic, and Prince's subsequent rise to middle-class respectability can largely be attributed to his father's incompetence.

Like Turveydrop's rooms, Skimpole's residence too is in a "state of dilapidation" (Bleak 43,523). Appropriately, he lives in the Polygon in Clarendon Square which was originally built for "middle-class professional people," but by mid 1820s the Polygon had "become an area of shabby gentility" (Shatto 242). The neglected exterior contrasts with the luxuries of Skimpole's sanctum. His "consulting" room contains extravagant "hothouse nectarines," "grapes," "sponge cake," and wine--all the accoutrements of a wealthy man (Bleak 43,523). The furnishings, items such as a piano, books, drawing materials, and an easy chair replete with comfortable pillows, would be more appropriate in the drawing room of a middle class family than in his shabby chamber. Even kindly Esther asserts that Skimpole's "own apartment was a palace to the rest of the house" (Bleak 43,529). Skimpole's complete self-absorption and disregard for others are encapsulated in his living arrangements. He pampers himself regardless of expense, even though he has no money, merely indulgent friends who bail him out. Though

such reliance seems vaguely amusing, he is, in reality, an unproductive parasite. Like Turveydrop, Skimpole has no skills to survive in the new industrialized England where inherited money soon dissipates; Dickens suggests their ilk should disappear with the aristocratic Dedlocks and their inherited place in society. Thus, Dickens places both Turveydrop and Skimpole in residences reflecting their social descent: decaying structures trying to maintain a facade of gentility.

Passing the descending middle class are members of the rising working class. People such as the Necketts and Trooper George work diligently and try to better themselves, but life is a constant struggle for them, and debtor's prison is never far away. Dickens allows them to prosper because of their productive contribution to society; they offer the hope of a future society where honest work secures a place rather than the inherited places assumed by those of the feudal system.

The orphaned Necketts (Charley, Tom, and Emma) live in the Bell Yard, near Chancery. After their father's death, Charley works at Smallweeds to support the family; she locks the younger children in their "poor room, with a sloping ceiling, and containing very little furniture . . . there was no fire" (Bleak 15,187-8). The stark conditions move John Jarndyce (one must remember he has already adopted three orphans). When Esther, Dickens' model for the ideal

charity worker, stands at the window and looks out, she sees the Neckett's bleak future in their neighbor's "blackened stack of chimneys . . . and the poor plants . . . and the birds in little cages" (Bleak 15,190). Probably young Tom will have to work as a chimney sweep, a job which maims and often kills the small boys who undertake this dangerous occupation. The poor plants and caged birds symbolize the stunted growth and captivity of families who try to survive in these conditions. Dickens shows how rewarding small acts of correctly applied charity can be, for when John Jarndyce "adopts" Charley as Esther's maid, he secures a devoted servant. Perhaps the greatest rewards are those which society receives because Charley, Tom, and Emma become productive citizens: Charley marries a respected miller, Tom becomes her husband's apprentice, and Emma takes Charley's place as Esther's maid. They constitute the healthy fruit of a new working class. This simple act of charity is a far cry from the misguided philanthropy of Mrs. Jellyby and Mrs. Pardiggle whose efforts seem to yield no such return.

Another soon-to-be fruitful member of society is Trooper George whose Shooting Gallery in Soho (between Haymarket and Leicester Square) plays a vital role because Gridley and Jo die here. At this time in London, "shooting galleries where men could practice or challenge each other to contests by firing at targets, flourished . . ." (Shatto 176). In this area "the streets were laid out and the

square railed around" to accommodate the duels of the seventeenth century; however, by the mid-nineteenth century the area "had become squalid and shabby" (Shatto 176). Thus, Gridley and Jo die in a place where men practice survival skills in the game of life; indeed, Gridley came to the gallery to fire fifty rounds in an effort to relieve the stress of the Jarndyce case. Gridley finally loses his duel with Chancery; he has been fighting the courts for his share of the Jarndyce will in the hope it will bring him money, but no one wins against Chancery, and Gridley pays with his life.

Jo dies at Trooper George's because it is not a "real" home, and Jo has never lived in a "real" home, so to die in one (such as Bleak House) would be too ironical; it is more fitting that Jo dies in a half-way home--a place where people come to improve their chances of avoiding death. Miss Flite suggests that Allan Woodcourt take Jo to George's because she remembers George's kindness to the dying Gridley. Sadly, Allan observes "in the heart of a civilized world this creature in human form should be more difficult to dispose of than an unowned dog (Bleak 47,560).

Furthermore, Jo, Gridley, and George form an important plot connection; they are linked to Tulkinghorn. Tulkinghorn has a warrant for Gridley's arrest; he seeks Jo in order to question him about the mysterious lady; he wants to speak to George regarding Nemo's murder; therefore, Gridley, Jo,

and George are the fruit of the nut which the maggot Tulkinghorn devours. Jo and George also know Inspector Bucket; the detective has terrified Jo, and George compassionately understands the boy's apprehension. Thematically too George and Jo have much in common; they, like the Jarndyce wards and the Neckett children, are orphans. Jo is a *de jure* orphan who has never been given a chance, whereas George is a *de facto* orphan whose chances in life are running out as Smallweed threatens closure of his humble gallery. But George is not long for London: dispirited by the failure of his business and the saddened by the two deaths, he returns to the country because home life calls; he believes "a family home however small it is, makes a man like [him] look lonely" and wishes to be reunited with his family (Bleak 27,345).

Ultimately George, Ada, Esther, and the Necketts survive because of the kindness of others, but Jo's lowly birth and lack of education severely limits his chances of survival. Also, all of them have received some form of practical education which helps them; conversely, Turveydrop and Skimpole fail to thrive because of their useless skills. Dickens believed that the "introduction of well-educated, active men" into the *House* of Commons would force the inert into action and break the hold of "the old established political families," the *House* of Lords members such as Sir Leicester (Brown 33). His dream was fulfilled

the year he died when a national educational system was introduced (Brown 150). Therefore, education not only links these characters in Bleak House, but constitutes a major theme repeated throughout his works: consider Salem House, Mr. Wopsle's great-aunt's establishment, Dotheboys' Hall, Nun's House, and Gradgrind's model school.

Seemingly sharing Trooper George's working-class status, the Smallweed family and Krook present the darker side. Necketts may live in bare surroundings, but Smallweed and Krook occupy spiritually meaner homes. They are included in the working class largely because of their poor living conditions rather than their actual financial resources. Trooper George and the Necketts benefit from their exposure to poverty, they strive to improve themselves; however, Smallweed and Krook demonstrate no such desire; strangely enough they seem content with their lot.

Smallweed threatens foreclosure on Trooper George's loan not because he needs money, but because he represents the worst excess of greed: usury. Yet, despite their implied wealth, the stunted Smallweeds live in a dingy residence demonstrating their mean spiritedness; they would rather hoard than spend. The Smallweeds' ironically euphemistic Mount Pleasant home is far from pleasant, either for its inhabitants or for its surroundings; indeed Dickens selected this name from an actual dust heap in the same area

(Shatto 169). Naturally this dismal place lies within the precinct of Chancery, as do the majority of decrepit houses. Moreover, Mt. Pleasant's location echoes Vholes' office in its sepulchral situation: "a little narrow street, always solitary, shady and sad, closely bricked in on all sides like a tomb" (Bleak 21,257). The Smallweeds' chthonic, underground location complements their troll-like appearance--their stunted size suggests an unhealthy growth which is further endorsed by the limited family fertility, both of which can be attributed to their strict monetarist policies. The "grim, hard, uncouth parlor, only ornamented with the coarsest of baize table-covers, and the hardest of sheet-iron tea-trays" could easily be replaced with more expensive items, but they fear squander (Bleak 21,258). The harsh metallic implements reflects their hardened souls. Grandfather Smallweed diligently guards his few possessions with the watchfulness of the spider he resembles. When Mr. George visits he comments to Charley that she brings a "wholesome look" to the mausoleum, and his physical presence consumes the parlor because he is bigger morally and physically than these small rodent-like people who prey on the hardships of others (Bleak 21,266). But Trooper George triumphs because goodness and kindness outwit the Smallweeds. Ultimately, the unhealthy environment of Chancery takes its toll on all those buildings and houses within the vicinity of the courts, the Jellyby's house, +

Vholes' office, Richard's rooms, and Tulkinghorn's working apartment, but the most obvious parallels lie between Chancery and Krook's Marine Shop.

Krook's Rag and Bottle Warehouse provides the most potent example of the blighted, crumbling state of England. J. Hillis Miller reminds the reader of the "great number of disorderly, dirty, broken-down interiors," and Krook's "unlucky . . . destined house" is surely the epitome of England's entropy (Dickens Bleak House 948; Bleak 33,414). Littered with the discarded documents and implements of the legal profession, Krook's rooms are a physical actualization of the judicial system because he hoards the remains of the courts in the same way he collects the bones and skins of animals; little wonder the shop is nicknamed Chancery. Krook's epithet "Lord Chancellor" underscores his inability either to "part with anything . . . or to alter anything" obviously bespeaks the grasping nature of the law and its consistent inertia (Bleak 5,50). Like the solicitors in the courts, Krook creates his own business by his incessant purchasing, but how can he survive when he buys everything but sells nothing? The answer lies in the "one great principle of English law": "to make business for itself" (Bleak 39,482). Krook's cold appearance and his avarice parallel the necessary qualities of successful lawyers such as Vholes and Tulkinghorn. Even his cat, Lady Jane, stays not as a comforting pet for Krook, but as a potential

murderer of Miss Flite's birds. She also reminds him of his one-time generosity: he did not skin her and sell her coat for money, an act he regards as most unChancery-like. Likewise when Nemo dies, Krook is positively vampiric in his excitement because his house has gained another soul, much as the Court seems to gain strength as it claims more victims. However, as the law of thermodynamics states, eventually things feed on themselves, so Krook's behavior draws him ineluctably towards Spontaneous Combustion. Dickens intones the same fate for all Lord Chancellors and all "authorities . . . where false pretenses are made and where injustice is done," they will fall victim to the "corrupted humours of the vicious body itself" and the death sentence: Spontaneous Combustion (Bleak 32,403). (Richard's slower combustion indicates the differences between those who perpetrate injustice and those who fall prey to it.) Hence, both the shop and owner are microscopic versions of the nearby courts and microcosmic glimpses of the legal and social state of Britain. The concentric circles to Mr. Krook's hell are occupied by people whose fates are inexorably bound to Chancery: Miss Flite and Nemo.

Miss Flite lives on the top floor because, though entangled in the Jarndyce suit, she has not sunk to Gridley and Richard's deadly depths--her "madness" protects her, and so Dickens places her over the hellish shop below. Also by positioning Miss Flite's room above Chancery, Dickens infers

her moral superiority. Though Miss Flite has succumbed to the temptation of the will she never submits entirely to its greed. The clean room provides another distinction between her apartment and the disorderly shop--they both contain legal books and documents but one reflects orderliness and the other chaos. Furthermore, the lack of personal artifacts indicates Miss Flite's obsession with the case that sustains her. Miss Flite's lonely lodgings seldom see "[y]outh, and hope, and beauty" (Bleak 5,48); her only companions, the caged birds at the window, will be released upon the closing of the probate case; Dickens places imprisoned animals near a window where they can see freedom, but the birds are confined in a cage. Similarly, those entrapped by the judicial system are always free to forget their court case, but their greed ties them to Chancery's invisible bonds. While Miss Flite's room is a clean place of hope, full of light and life, underneath her lives another who occupies dirty, dark, deadly rooms of despair.

On the second floor lives Nemo who has sold his soul to the devil and, as a consequence, lives in closer proximity to Krook's hell. Nemo's appalling living conditions bespeak the depths to which he has sunk. His small room, "nearly black with soot, and grease, and dirt," asserts a physical representation of corruption, and the same fetid air that fills Nemo's room lingers in Vholes' chambers and Krook's shop (Bleak 9,124). The "skeleton" grate, the "wilderness"

desk, the "starved" portmanteau, a "perishing" mat, and "bare" floor all point to the emaciation of Nemo's existence (Bleak 9,124). Nemo has been using opium to alleviate the pain he feels in life because he has been spiritually dead since Lady Dedlock's rejection of their child and his love. He seeks physical death. The discovery of his body sets the detective story in motion because his mysterious death raises the questions: who was he and was his overdose accidental or intentional? In his debilitated state, Nemo has sought refuge in the most desolate of surroundings, for he believed Krook's residence mirrored his life. However, Nemo had lived in better surroundings, unlike the poorest wretches of Bleak House.

The eocenic division of England's social system is reserved for the new class of itinerant workers whom the Industrial Revolution created. No longer sheltered by the feudal system, yet not educated enough for the factory system, a substrata of people such as Jo and the brickmakers try to find a niche in the new social hierarchy. Within hailing distance to Boythorn's, Jarndyce's, and the Dedlocks, the brickmakers and their families live in a "cluster of wretched hovels in a brickfield, with pigsties close to the broken windows, and miserable little gardens before the doors, growing nothing but stagnant pools"; not only a literally despicable sight, but also an indication that the social conditions are so destructive that nothing

can grow in this mire (Bleak 8,90). The broken windows indicate broken dreams, and the stagnant pools suggest the water that floods the Dedlock's estate is equally damaging to those occupying the lowest level of the social scale. The inability of the water to nourish anything explains their indifference to their living conditions; the brickmakers have been subjugated for so long they lack the physical strength and political representative to improve their lot. Dickens painted a profound picture of poverty to alert his readers to the unspeakable conditions in England. So both the uppermost and lowermost ends of the social scale are unable to help themselves: the nobility refuses to see the tumultuous changes and relies on centuries of inherited tradition, while the poor are unable to concentrate on anything other than ground-level survival.

Jo and the brickmakers do not seek to live in their residences, their limited finances restrict them to the most pitiful of homes. In London, Jo's "home," Tom-All-Alone's is a

black, dissipated street, avoided by all decent people; where the crazy houses were seized up when their decay was far advanced by some bold vagrants who took to letting them out in lodgings. Now these tumbling tenements contain by night a swarm of misery. (Bleak 16,197)

Again Chancery is to blame for the state of Tom-All-Alone's

because the "ruined houses [were] abandoned in a Chancery suit" (Hayward 155). This London ghetto highlights the public's blindness to the poverty problem because Tom-All-Alone's does not stand apart from London, rather it is flanked by the rich courts of Chancery and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. But what is most depressing is that the poor are beginning to feed on their fellow sufferers. Slum landlords form another group of grasping merchants who further bleed the class to which they recently belonged. Thus, the bleakest of Dickens' bleak houses are actually fertile breeding grounds for further exploitation.

Despite Dickens grim depiction of England--and he offers no solutions--he ends the novel on an optimistic note. As anticipated, Chesney Wold has been "abandoned to darkness and vacancy . . . passions and pride have died away from the place in Lincolnshire and yielded it to dull repose" (Bleak 66,767). On the other hand, the second Bleak House thrives. The final chapter documents the prosperous activities of Esther, Ada, and the Nocketts, all representatives of a wholesome, fertile generation. Esther describes Allan's success in appropriately homely terms; she "never goes into a house of any degree, but [she] hear[s] his praises" (Bleak 67,769). Ada and her son survive Richard's death; his unholy alliance with Chancery eternally severed by his death, this allows his family the

chance to flourish in the old Bleak House with generous John Jarndyce. He claims, "[B]oth houses are your home, my dear [Ada]. . . but the older Bleak House claims priority. When you and my [sic] boy are strong enough to do it, come and take possession of your home" (Bleak 67,767). Their presence guarantees the continuation of a healthy Bleak House. Jarndyce christened Esther's new home with the ironical name because he has seen the regeneration of the original Bleak House and believes it to be a good omen. The final picture is a scene of domestic harmony, fertility, and growth. The rotten kingdom has been purged of the cancerous growths: symbolically Chancery has combusted, the aristocracy gasps its last breaths, even parliament contains worthier occupants. Now a healthier regime can begin, like a phoenix rising from the funeral pyre ashes of Chancery Court.

Pip's Places

With the advent of Great Expectations (1860), in my opinion Dickens' most mature novel, he returns to the episodic adventure of a male-child protagonist. Dickens' fuses David Copperfield's (David) childlike personality with Esther Summerson's (Bleak) maturity to form his most sympathetic and believable hero: Pip. Pip and David may share many common characteristics, but I believe no reader ever confuses the two. Sanguine David successfully searches for a home and family, while guilty Pip vainly seeks fame and fortune. David embodies the hopefulness of the future, whereas Pip personifies the frustration of failed dreams. Both David and Pip "move on" from house to house, but for differing reasons: David's expulsions from the majority of his childhood homes emphasize his lack of expectations--the lone orphan seeks shelter in a true home of love and protection; while Pip voluntarily relocates to learn the art of gentlemanly conduct, as befits a man of expectations--this orphan's travels teach him that he had built castles in the air. David's battles occur within houses against their occupants; Pip's growth is a steady, unified development toward the truth. He does not fight with the occupants of his abodes but wages war with his inner self. Pip's thoughtfulness replaces David's energy. David stands at doors looking out for his next world to conquer, his next sight to see; Pip muses by firesides contemplating what a

fool he had been, how he wasted his hopes. Pip's reflective stance comes from the imagination of a more mature writer; David's animated journey suggests a writer actively seeking answers. Dickens had experienced both the energy of David and the idealism of Esther. Perhaps both had failed him. Dickens wrote Great Expectations with his feet on the hearthstone, peering into the fire of his past, weighted with the maturity of fifty years' experience. The melding of the two previous novels results in Dickens' most consolidated *bildungsroman*.

In David Copperfield the owner's characteristics defined the house, and alterations in the owner's character, or the introduction of a new owner, radically altered the home; in Bleak House the owner did not change, generally the house symbolized the social status of the inhabitant, and its state of decay or growth spoke for the social ascent or descent of the owner. Great Expectations combines both techniques and melds the owner's characters to his/her social status, focusing less on the social commentary and more on the inhabitant's characteristics. This blending results in houses painted with broader, softer strokes, and the world becomes less a place of black and white residences and more a world of ambivalent outlines: Dickens' love of contrast softens into mutability. For example, Joe's cold x cottage evolves into a home of love and warmth with the advent of Biddy; at the outset Satis scares Pip with its

dark, confusing interior, but he learns to understand the inner workings, and the witch-like Miss Havisham becomes more human after Estella's rejection, making Satis far less intimidating; Pip's London flat, though cheerless, becomes a homely abode for him because of the friendly Herbert Pocket. Even Dickens' characteristic love for fairy-tales and gothic elements softens, resulting in even more believable situations and people. The houses of many shapes and sizes which permeate the novel share one common element: the hearth, a symbol which echoes and reechoes throughout Great Expectations.

The fireside becomes the dominant area in many of the homes. The hearth becomes an confessional where secrets are told, where plans are made, and where disappointments are realized; from the warmth of Joe's forge to Temple Inn, fireplaces bear silent witness to Pip's maturational milestones. Pip displays his learning by the fireside for Joe's pleasure, the first visible sign of Pip's superiority to the illiterate Joe; Pip and Drummle stage an epic battle before the Blue Boar's fire in a wonderfully farcical scene; Pip learns the truth of his inheritance by the side of the Temple Inn hearth. The fire itself becomes a vital ingredient in climactic moments: the forge fire consumes Pip's indenture papers, Miss Havisham's feasting room fire ignites her bridal dress, and characters often muse in front of the fires. Overtly, a fire often marks an ending: the

literal burning of Pip's papers and the fire that consumes Miss Havisham. Covertly, a fire often symbolizes less obvious changes: Pip's initiation into the world may be considered a baptism of fire, a conflagration which eventually consumes his wealth and hopes as his expectations disintegrate into ashes, and Miss Havisham's demise signals the end of an era. Even more subtle are the connections between different fires: Pip's indenture papers' embers smoulder until they burst into Miss Havisham's climactic inferno. The ashes which resulted from the symbolic funeral pyres of Bleak House (the wished-for fire which would destroy Chancery) reappear as the remains of Pip's hopes in Great Expectations.

Pip's divided first home reflects the disparate personalities of the owners: Mr. and Mrs. Joe. The forge and Joe represent the heart of the house, a place where Pip learns humble but worthwhile skills. Here Pip and Joe work in a harmony of equality and friendship. The forge becomes a confessional for Pip when Joe recalls his marriage proposal to Mrs. Joe, and his generous offer of a "room for *him* [Pip] at the forge"--Pip's first adoption (Great 7,44). The fire stands as the centerpiece of their sanctuary and when Pip's indentures are burned, the ashes prophesy Pip's expectations. The smoke becomes a symbol of the forge fire, the place where Joe's and Pip's relationship was formed; yet the forge represents Pip's future, a humble occupation

not suitable for the winning of a princess such as Estella, so Pip has to reject the forge. Through all his woes Pip, however, never truly abandons the forge, and it seems inevitable that Pip will return, not to physically work at the forge, but to the values the forge represents: the important work of humble men like Joe and the values they exemplify, the values of hard-earned, honest money.

The forge represents not only the heart of the house, but also attains a religious significance. Joe, like his namesake Saint Joseph, works at a humble but useful occupation infusing the forge with a type of holiness. Pip even describes Joe's influence in sacred terms when he recalls that

[h]ome had never been a very pleasant place . . .
[b]ut Joe had sanctified it, and [he] believed in it. [He] believed in the best parlor as a most elegant saloon; [he] believed in the front door, as a mysterious portal of the Temple of State whose solemn opening was attended with a sacrifice of roast fowls; [he] had believed in the kitchen as a chaste though not magnificent apartment; [he] had believed in the forge as the glowing road to manhood and independence. Now it was all coarse and common, and [he] would not have had Miss Havisham and Estella see it on any account.
(Great 14,100)

Thus, does Pip reject his working class occupation after his visits to Satis. The contrast between secular Satis and the spiritual forge emphasizes the different social standings and religious beliefs of the occupants. While Joe works diligently, the Satis brewery lies idle. The Gargery cottage, while by no means perfect, suggests a humbleness more closely aligned to a Christian home than does the impressive Satis mansion with its artificial emblems of greed and avarice. At his altar Joe hums a homely song to his patron saint: a hymn which, when transposed to Satis, echoes vacuously throughout the spiritually abandoned house. Never will the forge be blessed for Pip as it is for Joe; worldly Satis with its temptations to greed and avarice contaminates Pip. Pip dreads Estella seeing him at his humble trade because now he yearns to be a gentleman. Joe and Pip seek refuge at their work place because here they can escape Mrs. Joe.

If the forge demonstrates Joe's kindness, then the cottage, especially the kitchen, exhibits facets of Mrs. Joe's personality. The Gargery kitchen may have a fire, but the house lacks familial warmth; the house may be clean, but the scrupulous cleanliness reflects Mrs. Joe's strident rule rather than the good tidiness of other homes. Mrs. Joe controls the house with the iron hand of a dictator, making Pip and Joe's life a cold hell and subjecting them both to the rigors of her hand. Mealtimes become hellish under Mrs.

Joe's watchful eyes as she lords over the kitchen table looking for the slightest transgression. Eventually Mrs. Joe receives a cruel comeuppance in her beloved kitchen. One night Joe and Pip discover Mrs. Joe lying on the kitchen floor insensate, she had been struck from behind "when she stood facing the fire" (Great 16,113). Mrs. Joe never really recovers from the vicious attack and so, after her death, they lay her body by the kitchen fire. Consequently, she perverts the room most often associated with familial warmth and maternal nurturing, and the Gargery's cottage resembles a prison more than a home.

While Pip finds refuge at the forge, he suffers in the kitchen. The Satis menace infiltrates when Mrs. Joe shoves Pip against the kitchen wall and subjects him to an inquisitorial cross-examination after his first visit to Miss Havisham's. Furthermore, Pip's awareness of his lowly heritage makes him embarrassed when he realizes that the Gargerys dine in the kitchen, a practice which Pip believes demonstrates their working-class demeanor. He knows Miss Havisham and Estella never commit the unpardonable, lower-class sin of eating in the kitchen. In this unpleasant room, Pip talks with Joe after his second "adoption" by an unknown benefactor; he realizes that he will leave the cottage because his future lies elsewhere. Pip and Joe can discuss this painful subject more easily in the cold, uncaring kitchen rather than the homely forge. Likewise,

they cannot dine in the kitchen after Mrs. Joe's wake but eat in the formal front parlor, an act that acknowledges Mrs. Joe's domination even after her demise--neither of them feel comfortable until they retire to the forge. Pip muses that though Mrs. Joe no longer physically rules here, her ghost remains to haunt the fire. Pip's first home provides a juxtaposition of contrasts: the grim, hellish house and the welcoming, heavenly forge.

The central kitchen fire becomes the scene of many conflicts. Pip sees his forthcoming larceny in the "avenging coals" which "glow and flare" as they remind Pip of his pledge to help Abel (Great 2,8;10). Mrs. Joe's body is laid to rest in front of her fireplace. In a cold home of little love, the kitchen fire mocks the warmth of other hearths. Eventually however, the kitchen renews when the angelic Biddy resanctifies the hearth. Even after his departure, Pip remembers the cozy kitchen fireside talks of Biddy and Joe. The change from unholy home to purified temple reflects the transforming effect the right occupant can have on a home (David Copperfield, Agnes Wickfield, John Jarndyce, and Esther Woodcourt have the same purifying ability). With the advent of Biddy, the *house* transforms into a *home* engulfed in warmth and goodness.

The other rooms of the house are largely ignored, highlighting the importance of the kitchen and the forge; however, the front parlor and Pip's bedroom play minor

roles. The front room suggests the public pose, a place where inhabitants meet outsiders, where occupants are on their best behavior; therefore, the front parlor is suitable only for guests and special occasions (such as Christmas and Mrs. Joe's funeral), which reflects the Gargery's working-class mentality because, in Dickens, only the wealthy truly use their front rooms as carelessly as any other room. If the front room represents the Gargery's public face, then the bedroom is the most personal room of a house: a chamber where the occupant can be his/her private self. Only in his bedroom can Pip give full reign to his private wishes. He retires there after his visit to Satis to contemplate his embarrassed feelings about his limited circumstances. The bedroom affords a gloomy view of the misty moors because Pip's yearnings for wealth distort his outlook: if only he had enough money to win Estella, then everything would be all right. The harsh home, never a pleasant place, becomes a prison for Pip, like the hulks he sees from the window. The walls become barriers he cannot transgress, and his bedroom becomes haunted with feelings of frustration because Pip cannot imagine how he will ever escape Joe's cottage or the working-class values he now detests. All this changes, however, with the appearance of a generous patron, but instead of Pip joyously retiring to his room, Pip becomes pensive, intuitively sensing that his expectations will not make him happy. He recollects that he

sat down and took a long look at it [his bedroom], as mean a little room that [he] should soon be parted from and raised above, for ever. It was furnished with fresh young remembrances too, and even at the same moment [he] fell into much the same confused division of mind between it and the better rooms to which [he] was going. (Great 18,137)

Pip obviously feels he has betrayed Joe when he accepts the opportunity to go to London; as Pip sits in his room, Joe stands below, but Pip cannot call down to Joe: his guilt causes him to withdraw back into his bedroom. As Pip watches Joe's smoke-ring blessing through the open window, he discerns the fragile, unspoken bond between them, a bond he intends to physically sever by moving to London. Perhaps he fears that his expectations might prove as fragile as the smoke which rises from Joe's pipe. Pip ponders "that the first night of [his] bright fortunes should be the loneliest night [he] had ever known" (Great 18,137); thus, Pip begins to realize the extent of the sacrifices he has to make in order to become a gentleman.

Despite Pip's eagerness to quit Joe's cottage, he never really leaves it, unlike David who quits the Rookery forever. On his first night in London Pip recalls that in the London streets, so crowded with people and so brilliantly lighted in the dusk of evening, there

were depressing hints of reproaches for [he] had
 put the poor old kitchen at home so far away . . .
 and, in the dead of night, the footsteps . . .
 fell hollow on my heart (Great 22,175)

So, in spite of Pip's excitement at being in London, something pricks at his conscience; he senses a loss and his thoughts often return home. The reader anticipates Pip's return to the simplicity of Joe's forge and values, but Pip has to experience life and undergo much soul searching before he can appreciate the simplistic lifestyle. Pip does, however, visit the cottage often, and usually with disastrous results. When he returns for Mrs. Joe's funeral, the pathos of the closed windows and silent forge alerts Pip to the eternal silencing of Mrs. Joe and, after the mourners have left, the house sheds the pall of death and becomes "wholesomer" (Great 35,267). Pip suffers a restless night at the cottage because he knows he has neglected Joe; he wishes to forget his humble beginnings which remind him that he was not born a gentleman. So, though the lowly house reminds Pip of his humble beginnings, it also stands as a symbol for Joe's kindness, a benevolence not easily dismissed, even by materialistic Pip.

Early in the novel Joe Gargery's landlocked house contrasts to the watery Hulk. Interestingly enough the occupants of both places seem unhappy. The "wicked Noah's ark" presents a perverted echo of the Peggotty's upturned

good ark (Great 5,36). After Abel's capture, he stands fireside in the small hut and exonerates Pip by confessing to stealing from Gargery's pantry. Abel's humble apology demonstrates his true, kind nature; he is not a hardened criminal who deserves the terrible fate that awaits him, but a person thwarted by circumstances. Christian Joe forgives the "poor miserable fellow-creatur [sic]," and Pip's guilt, rather than abating, increases for he cannot confess his part in the crime as he fears he would never "see him [Joe] at the fireside . . . without thinking that he was meditating on it [stealing the vittels]" (Great 5,36; 6,37). Though unaware of it, Pip stands with his two greatest allies in the small hut (again by a fire). This small episode marks the turning point in Pip's life: Abel never forgets Pip's kindness and carries the memory of the young boy to his Australian home where he commences to build the fortune that will sustain Pip's dreams. Abel Magwitch presents another form of the perverted fairy-godperson, and his best intentions go awry. His black hulk home warns Pip of the consequences of crime and suggests that perhaps not all criminals are as hardened as the prisons into which they are condemned.

Despite the fact that the Gargery's have neighbors and seem to live in a community, Dickens' description of Joe's cottage isolates the house and its inhabitants from the rest of the rural population. This seems to be a popular device

of Dickens' because Bleak House, Boythorn's Parsonage, and Miss Trotwood's cottage all have the same insular location, by doing this Dickens presents his homes as islands. By strategically placing the desolate moors residence between a graveyard and the prison hulks, Dickens underscores the mutability of time: the graveyard recalls the past and the hulks portend the future. In the graveyard Pip sits by the bodies of his deceased parents--a reminder of the past and the inevitability of a future death; for the graves represent Pip's solitude. Deserted by real parents and living in a remote area, the young boy arouses sympathy as he muses over what he has never known: a complete, loving family. The looming hulks portend future imprisonment, for Pip believes himself to be a sinner after he steals for Magwitch, a message reinforced by Mrs. Joe's warning that people who ask questions always go on to greater crimes which result in imprisonment--possibly in the menacing hulks. Though the barren setting of Joe's cottage reflects Mrs. Joe's distant affection for Pip, it also reflects his glum perceptions of his future: death and/or imprisonment.

Great Expectations incorporates one of Dickens' most memorable environs: Satis Manor. Like Chancery, the monster Satis reaches into people's lives and almost destroys them. Satis becomes a symbol for the novel's theme: its evil corrupts all those who visit, especially Pip and Estella who fall prey to the spell in different ways: Estella changes

after years of Miss Havisham's influence, and Pip changes the moment he sees Estella. After his first visit Pip begins to fantasize about having enough money to capture Estella's heart, and this in turn affects how he views his home, his family, his whole life. From Satis Pip commences his maturational journey and to Satis he returns again and again, just as hopeful suitors of the Jarndyce case return to Chancery. Pip perceives his mission in fairy-tale terms: in his immaturity he imagines he should "restore the desolate house, admit the sunshine into the dark rooms . . . in short, do all the shining deeds of the young knight of romance, and marry the Princess" (Great 29,219). From its early introduction, the monolith manor orchestrates Pip's life, loves, and fortunes. Pip can be compared to a modern Daedalus who, by his own construction, traps himself in a labyrinth of expectations and hopes and, like Daedalus, Pip crashes to the ground when he flies too high on the wings of his social expectations.

The apt name Satis reveals the symbolic potentiality of the house. Satis, according to Oxford Latin Dictionary, means: "enough . . . sufficient. . . . people of sufficient power. . . . security, guarantee . . . better or preferable." Here lives a woman with enough money and sufficient power, whom Pip thinks will secure for him the preferable life of a gentleman. Estella comments to Pip: "[I]t meant, when it was given, that whoever had this house,

could want nothing else. They must have been easily satisfied in those days" (Great 8,51). These enlightening remarks subtly warn Pip (and the reader) of the folly of human vanity; however, Satis bears more than one title, it is also known also as the Manor House, a name which reveals another purpose. According to the OED, a manor is an English territorial unit, from where a feudal lord extracts his fee and controls his minions. Certainly, Pip's subservience to the owner's whims and Miss Havisham's ability to control her charges gives credence to the applicability of the alternative name. To Pip the title "manor" must have intimidated him because it suggests an imposing and aristocratic residence, a left-over from the ancient days of feudalism. Dickens had satirized the antiquated nobility, and now he turned his attention to the greedy middle class.

The physical description of the Manor House has two functions: it is the physical manifestation of the owner, and symbolically it represents Dickens' social feelings about a grasping mercantile class. Externally the crumbling red brick residence suggests the respectability but not the durability of its aging owner; the decaying house reminds people of the transience of money and position. The chained entrance and many iron bars indicate Miss Havisham's wish to keep people out--or are the bars to imprison its inmates? Pip finally sees that "in seclusion, she had secluded

herself from a thousand natural and healing influences" (Great 49,377-8). The manor recalls other prison-like buildings, such as Blunderstone Rookery, Chancery and the blacking warehouse. The rusty, walled-up windows increase the atmosphere of solitude and lack of use. No one can see into this gloomy residence, emphasizing the superiority of an occupant who can watch and manipulate what goes on outside, and who cares nothing for the changes of the external world. The chained doors and unwelcoming windows of an imposing house, no matter how old or crumbling, impress an unsophisticated Pip who comes in through the servant's entrance, a secondary door which indicates his lower social status. Dickens takes great care describing the external appearance and naming a moldering old mansion in order to alert the keen reader to its significance.

As the proprietor of the imposing manor, Miss Havisham becomes an emblem for the greedy mercantile class, even her ironical name--have is sham--indicates the futility of such greed. Miss Havisham runs this single-sex household like a manager runs a business. She orchestrates everyone's life. From the moment she sends for Pip, much as an employer sends for a hireling, she irrevocably alters not only his life, but also the lives of those around him. She needs Pip because she needs a male for Estella to reject; this practice ensures that Estella will never be as emotionally vulnerable as Miss Havisham was to Compeyson. Therefore,

Pip becomes her puppet; Miss Havisham believes her social situation and money allow her the right to exploit Pip. She torments and teases him with Estella and subtle insinuations of monetary rewards; she treats him like an animal whom she can teach to sit up and beg--a role Pip reluctantly adopts. Miss Havisham's gothic appearance emphasizes the darkness and decay which surrounds her; she even admits to having "sick fancies" (Great 8,54). Clearly, her ultimate fantasy is the destruction of two human hearts. Miss Havisham transforms from vampire/crone to fairy-godmother, when Pip believes her to be responsible for his change of fortune. So, Miss Havisham becomes another of Dickens' aberrant benefactors, much as Miss Trotwood was in David Copperfield and Abel Magwitch proves to be later in the novel. The occupant of a decaying manse and the embodiment of evil, Miss Havisham controls the lives of Pip and Estella, but even her best laid plans cannot entirely corrupt Pip, for when he learns the truth, his kind heart forgives her.

The maze-like interior stands as a complex psychological symbol. Darkness in a Dickensian home often suggests ignorance. The many dark corridors and passages confuse Pip on his first visit; he needs a candle to guide him through the dimly lit passageways because he is a confused and uncertain rural lad. Their complexity defeats Pip time and time again, until he admits that Satis is his "poor labyrinth" (Great 29,219); however, as Pip attains

more experience (in London), he finds his way more easily and does not need a light because he has learned how to unravel the mystery of the corridors. Knowledge provides the light Pip needs, and when he understands more about life, Pip finds his way more easily. This enlightenment occurs when Pip realizes two significant truths: Estella will never marry him and his patron's identity. Such truths lead Pip to the most important revelation of all: money does not solve everything. The intricate interior also reflects the warped convolutions of Miss Havisham's mind, a brain "grown diseased as all minds do and must and will that reverse the appointed order" (Great 49,378). Miss Havisham's deformed designs affect everyone who enters Satis. She keeps her relations in the dark about their inheritance; her deliberate manipulations block Pip's path to emotional maturity (by causing him to love Estella); she emotionally cripples Estella effectively curtailing her capacity for love. Unlike other more welcoming homes whose brightly lit interiors are free from menace, Satis' darkness suggests hidden secrets. For example, Bleak House's brightly lit but maze-like interior confuses no one, but the majority of corridors lead to Richard's room, suggesting that his journey is complicated by his own weakness. Therefore, Satis' interior provides another physical example of a mental state.

Inside Satis Pip first meets Miss Havisham in her

dressing room which admits no "glimpse of daylight," a room suspended in time (Great 8,52). Miss Havisham's untidy dressing table reveals much of her personality; usually Dickens' villains surround themselves with physical evidence of their moral decay, and nowhere is decay more evident than in Miss Havisham's dressing room. The disarray (a mess which provides a stark contrast to the cleanliness of Pip's home) infers a careless disrespect for Godliness. The careful placement of the Prayer Book amidst her trinkets reveals that the religious book is merely a token, an item she was to carry on her wedding day and nothing more, for it lies unused in the godless room. Nothing in the room seems complete: Miss Havisham wears one shoe, her veil remains partially arranged, and she does not wear the watch and chain which sit on the table by her side because time stands still; she broods endlessly on the past and to finish dressing infers she has forgotten her disappointment and is getting on with her life. Such small details indicate Dickens' careful scene setting. The Aladdin's cave of glistening jewels and expensive dresses dazzles Pip, but upon closer inspection, he notes that everything "had lost its lustre and was faded and yellow" (Great 8,53). The faded white reflects the loss of innocence and Miss Havisham's abandonment of human kindness in her quest for revenge. The room's most prominent feature, the gilded looking glass, reflects Miss Havisham's vanity: she often

gazes into it admiring herself. Pip remarks on her profound unfitness for this earth on which she was placed, in the vanity of sorrow which had become a master mania, like the vanity of penitence, the vanity of remorse, the vanity of unworthiness, and other monstrous vanities that have been curses in this world. (Great 49,378)

So Miss Havisham's preoccupation with herself suggests any obsessive human trait. In her monomaniacal desire for revenge, she manipulates others without considering the consequences of her action; her needs supersede all else and, to the reader, this desire to revenge something that happened so long ago seems as unrealistic as the imitation guilt surrounding her symbolic mirror. Instead of forgetting her past, she revels in the constant reminders of her jilting, for amidst the spoilage, she sits and agonizes over her revenge--an unhealthy and un-Christian pastime. The mirror also reflects the disorder of the room, but Miss Havisham chooses not to see the mess she creates as she fixates on her own desires, much as rich merchants cannot see how they exploit their employees and look only for profits. Eventually, Pip becomes the mirror when he confesses his love to Estella, and Miss Havisham admits that "until [he] spoke to her the other day, and until [she] saw in [him] a looking-glass that showed [her] what [she] once felt [herself], [she] did not know what [she] had done"

(Great 49,378). Dickens holds a mirror up for all people to consider the repercussions of their deeds, whether as a warning to someone driven by one passion (no matter how noble the ideal) or to any group of people whose ambition leads them to focus on themselves and forget mankind in general. The dressing room fire suggests a hellish fire surrounded by emblems of greed and vanity. A room in which time has stopped as the malevolent owner forgets God, love, and other human beings in her obsession for revenge. Strangely enough, it is not the room which ultimately destroys her; across the landing death awaits.

Across the hall the dark, funeral feasting room, filled with cold misty air mimics the marshes surrounding Pip's home. The fire fails to warm the room, and the smoke obstructs vision. In other words, the room resembles an indoors, gothic moors filled with mystery and mold. The darkness shrouding the room differs from the confusing darkness of the rest of the house; the chthonic room reeks of death. Originally Miss Havisham planned to celebrate her wedding in the feasting chamber, but now the room anticipates her death. She intends to be laid out on the wedding table so that her family will "come and look at [her] here" (Great 11,79); she has even organized their seating. Because she knows her relations will attend to gloat over her death, she plans a deviant wedding celebration; her funeral will become a banquet where

mourners "come to feast upon [her]" (Great 11,82). The careful planning and seating echo the earlier wedding arrangements when people were to come and celebrate her acquisition of a husband; now she imagines they will come to celebrate acquiring her wealth. More activity occurs in this room than in the dressing room. Ghoulish creatures (mice, blackbeetles, and spiders) scurry around the large table which dominates the room, and the wedding cake centerpiece houses a menagerie of suitably predatory animals which echo Miss Havisham's parasitic nature. This small animal world could be seen as a mirror for the world outside Satis: a world where people destroy the things that surround them. Pip senses the destructive forces at work when he "ha[s] an alarming fancy that Estella and [he] might presently begin to decay" (Great 11,83); Pip realizes that Satis might destroy him, but his observation comes too late because Pip's moral confusion began the moment he set eyes on Estella. In her final scene, Miss Havisham sits by the feasting room's fire contemplating Estella's desertion. She drops to her knees and begs herself at Pip's feet. She had not meant to harm Pip; she had meant to "save [Estella] from misery like [her] own" (Great 49,378). When Pip returns to save Miss Havisham from the fire which engulfs her, he arrives too late--she has lost the will to live. Miss Havisham is finally laid out in the feasting room, just as she had planned. The two rooms in which Miss Havisham

lives extract their vengeance: one destroys her soul and the other takes her life.

From the moment he enters Satis, Pip accepts his subservient role because the house fosters his feelings of inadequacy. The imposing house and brewery remind the community of the great days of the brewery and how the proprietor's money and power commanded a great respect. So when Pip steps inside, naturally he allows everyone to order him around: his servile acceptance reflects his humble beginnings; he is used to taking orders. Miss Havisham orders Pip to push her garden chair around her dressing room, across the landing, and into the feasting room; she orders him to beggar himself to Estella; she commands him to walk her round the feasting room while she rants at her relations. These monotonous duties, performed at the behest of Miss Havisham, imply the tedious tasks daily performed in the factories of England: where the working class supports the middle class in a continuous cycle of subservience, a difficult cycle to break. The cycle is about to be broken, however, and Pip eventually triumphs over Satis and Miss Havisham. Dickens infers that if Pip can shed the shackles of servitude, then so too can others. The night Pip confronts Miss Havisham with the truth about his inheritance he uses terms reminiscent of a work contract:

I suppose I did really come here, as any other chance boy might have come--as a kind of servant,

to gratify a want or a whim, and I paid for it . . .
. I was liberally paid for my old attendance here
. . . in being apprenticed. (Great 44,340-1)

Miss Havisham responds: "You made your own snares. I never made them," which is true because Pip's yearning for wealth and position directed him (Great 44,341).

How Pip, as a representative of the working-class, achieves his ascendancy over Miss Havisham, proves a curious rejection of the very class Miss Havisham embodies. When her family gathers at Satis one day, Miss Havisham calls for Pip before anyone else, indicating his superior role which greatly offends Sarah Pocket who senses the new order in the house and fears disinheritance. Estella commands Pip to wait in a room with the "toadies," and he stands looking out of the window, listening to their conversation (Great 11,79). A banal discussion accents their shallowness; they consider death an occasion for contemplating appearance and not mortality. Plainly Miss Havisham cannot trust these people to bury her properly. Miss Havisham's contempt for her family causes her to turn to Pip; she likes being Pip's mentor, which explains why she never tells Pip she is not his benefactor, for to reveal he owes her nothing will destroy her power over him, and power is her principal life source. Similarly, she probably enjoys leading her relatives a merry dance. Wealth certainly did not bring Miss Havisham happiness: the one man she loved deserted her.

To her, money means little, like those who have always had wealth she places little emphasis on its importance. On the other hand, Pip believes that money will solve his problems: it will make him a gentleman and allow him to properly court and win Estella. Herbert Pocket attains far more from his life totally lacking in expectations than does hopeful Pip. So despite Pip's sycophantic attendance on Miss Havisham, he never fully receives his expected rewards.

Destructive as Satis is for Pip, the events he witnesses in Satis help him on his maturational pathway. Miss Havisham serves as an example of the corruption of wealth and the emptiness of a loveless life; she personifies whom not to be. In the beginning Miss Havisham's social position impresses Pip, and he yearns to emulate her lifestyle which he believes will lead to happiness. The night of Estella rejects Miss Havisham's love, Pip stands at the bottom of a Satis staircase (as her social inferior) and watches Miss Havisham traipsing back and forth "never ceasing the low cry" (Great 38,293); her actions mesmerize him, but he cannot find his way out, he is lost in the symbolic darkness of the passageways and has to wait until daylight. Miss Havisham's plaintive performance demonstrates she is unhappy, despite her wealth. This should warn Pip of the futility of acquired wealth, but he flounders in the darkness of his greed and needs experience to guide him. When he goes to London, Pip begins making his

own decisions, and not blindly following others who may seem to provide the answers, but don't. So Miss Havisham's role as mentor becomes important because through her evil interference Pip becomes a man who has experienced and rejected greed; from these lessons Pip attains more than mere wealth; he achieves maturity. In his most selfless act, Pip demands compensation for Herbert Pocket, and Miss Havisham "gradually withdrew her eyes . . . and turned them on the fire," silently agreeing to help Herbert (Great 44,342). On his last visit, Miss Havisham explains to Pip that she had tried to protect Estella from pain, and he forgives her. Now Pip is freed from all influence of Satis and can return to London and truly begin his own life as his own master. Therefore, Miss Havisham provides the vital impetus for Pip's corruption and regeneration.

Pip and Estella are not the only two who fall under the spell of Satis; everyone who enters changes in some way. The variety of its influence highlights the pervasiveness of this residence. Joe Gargery's astonishment when he visits results in an inability to talk to Miss Havisham. Instead he relays everything through Pip, much to Pip's annoyance and embarrassment, but this episode illustrates Pip's increasing mastery of social etiquette and confidence by contrasting his ease to Joe's awkwardness. Mr. Jaggers, the family lawyer, attains a "determined reticence" by keeping to himself, rarely speaking, and looking at no one (Great

29,228). Orlick becomes a dormouse caged in his "slovenly" room when he works as the porter at Satis (Great 29,220). Miss Havisham's relatives, the Pockets, become toadies and humbugs waiting for Miss Havisham's money/goodwill (Great 11,75).

To the side of Satis stands a large brewery "patently symbolic of stagnant commercialism," a deserted place of "sour remembrance of better days lingering," but it becomes a shelter for Pip (Thurley 281; Great 8,58). From the moment Pip enters the deserted brewery, it scares him: "the cold wind seems to blow colder there than outside the gate; and it made a shrill noise in howling in and out at the opened sides of the brewery"; Estella's warning that enough beer remains to "drown the Manor House" suggests the power of the idle brewery (Great 8,51). The brewery has "no pigeons in the dove-cot, no horses in the stable, no pigs in the sty, no malt in the store-house" and Estella further remarks, "[T]he place will stand as idle as it is, till it falls" predicting the ultimate demise of the shattered building of a bygone era (Great 8,58). Therefore, the brewery becomes an appropriate place for Miss Estella's and Miss Havisham's ghosts to haunt Pip. During Pip's lunch on his first visit, he sees Estella "everywhere," at the end of the "yard of casks," and even "among the extinguished fires" (Great 8,58). Pip is so obsessed with Estella that he cannot get her out of his mind. Furthermore, he turns to

see "a figure hanging there by the neck . . . the face was Miss Havisham's . . . she [was] trying to call to [him]" (Great 8,59); Pip flees from the apparition, but he changes his mind and runs towards it, but the apparition disappears. An relevant premonition of the web Satis and its owner will weave around Pip. First Pip distances himself from Miss Havisham because she scares and humiliates him, but eventually he turns to her when he believes her responsible for his good fortune, but just as he reaches an understanding with her, she dies, leaving Pip to cope with life alone. The hanging can be viewed in two lights: either it represents Miss Havisham's suicide which she committed when she cut herself off from life and love, or Pip projects his suppressed wish to hang Miss Havisham because she had injured his pride. The brewery becomes a refuge for Pip, for here, away from the sinister Satis, he can cry when he realizes his social shortcomings. In the brewery Pip seeks shelter from his wealthier tormentors and gazes longingly up to the high gallery yearning for Esther and riches. On his eventful last night, Pip leaves via the brewery and sees the hanging ghost again; the "mournfulness of the place and time" upsets Pip enough that he returns to "assure [himself] that Miss Havisham [is] as safe and well as [he] had left her," and this premonition almost saves Miss Havisham's life because he returns in time to see her dress ignite (Great 49,380). Ironically Pip's heroic efforts demonstrate his

superiority to Miss Havisham: she seeks his forgiveness after her emotional breakdown, and she needs him to save her from the vengeful spark.

Though Satis lacks the homely atmosphere of the forge, the fire and fireplace still serve an important, though negative function. In the feasting room "reluctant smoke" cools the atmosphere; thus, the fire takes heat--entirely in keeping with its perverted function as wedding/funeral room (Great 11,78). In front of the fire, Miss Havisham hears of Estella's pending marriage; she witnesses Pip's heartfelt proposal; she acquiesces to Pip's request for money for Herbert; and she succumbs to the fire which causes her death. When Pip visits for the last time, a spark ignites Miss Havisham's papery bridal dress, and though Pip tries to save her from the flames, she never recovers because Estella's cruel betrayal has crushed her spirit. Fire represents the "sick fancies," which eventually consume and devour Miss Havisham (Great 8,54). Again Dickens uses the destructive power of fire in a symbolic ending.

The neglected garden at the back of Satis also plays an important role. Freed from the Satis spell, Pip can assert himself in the rank garden. Here Pip, the Noble Savage, battles and triumphs over civilized middle class when he defeats the pale gentleman. On his second visit, Estella commands Pip to stand at the window "till you are wanted,"

and he views the

most miserable corner of the neglected garden . . .

.

[t]here has been some light snow, and it [lies] nowhere else to [his] knowledge; but, it [has] not quite melted from the cold shadow of this bit of the garden, and the wind [catches] it up in little eddies and [throws] it at the window, as if it [pelts Pip] for coming there. (Great 11,74)

The wintery image reflects Pip's feelings. The bleak image of a garden cold enough to preserve snow that has melted elsewhere exhibits the frigid temperatures surrounding Satis, but the snow taunts Pip by pelting the window as if to tell him to go away. At the apex of Pip's fortunes, he and Estella walk around the garden talking, and her presence so delights him that even the arid garden blooms because Pip still hopes that he and Estella will marry some day. Later, after Pip has been subjected to much disappointment, he returns to the garden and perceives that the ruined garden mirrors his dashed hopes: for like the dead blooms, so too his hopes to marry Estella have died.

Satis becomes the controlling element in Great Expectations. The potent residence transcends other homes because the mansion controls so many destinies: a manor fascinating in its decaying grandeur, a facade symbolic of many things. Though Pip's first visit changes his life, his

final visit is the most satisfying--when all the vestiges that intimidated a humble boy are gone and a man remains in a crumbling postlapsarian garden. But Pip moves onward and upward (as all Dickens' heroes do), and he leaves Satis and the Gargery cottage to realize his fortunes in London. The homes of London are a decidedly more interesting contrast than their country cousins.

Pip's first London residence, Barnard's Inn, hardly fulfills the elegant expectations of a gentleman, and Pip's full description underscores his disappointment:

[He] found Barnard ['s] . . . inn the dingiest collection of shabby buildings ever squeezed together in a rank corner . . . We [Pip and Wemmick] entered this haven through a wicket-gate, and were disgorged by an introductory passage into a melancholy little square that look to [him] like a flat burying-ground. [He] thought it had the most dismal trees in it, and the most dismal sparrows, and the most dismal cats, and the most dismal houses . . . that [he] had ever seen. [He] thought the windows . . . were in every stage of dilapidated blind and curtain, crippled flower-pot, cracked glass, dusty decay, and miserable makeshift; while To Let To Let To Let, glared at [him] from empty rooms, as if no new wretches ever came there, and the vengeance of the soul of

Barnard were being slowly appeased by the gradual suicide of the present occupants and their unholy interment under the gravel. A frouzy mourning of soot and smoke attired this forlorn creation of Barnard, and it had strewed ashes on its head, and was undergoing penance and humiliation as a mere dust-hole. (Great 21,162-3)

A careful perusal of this description reveals its complexity: firstly, the grime underscores the foulness of the city; secondly, the burial ground highlights the moral death of Pip; thirdly, the loneliness reflects the isolation Pip will encounter; lastly, the penitent imagery predicts the penance Pip will do after he discovers the truth about his expectations. Wemmick sees the shock on Pip's face and suggests to Pip that the rotting Barnard's Inn reminds him of the country--a harsh condemnation of the rural. More than an unwelcoming exterior, Pip's London residence also rejects him when the staircase window almost decapitates Pip as he surveys the foggy view of an overrated city. Such an inauspicious beginning to the life of a gentleman should have served as a warning to Pip, but it does not.

Though Pip finally achieves what he has yearned for, London fails to meet Pip's expectations. Pip's roommate, Herbert Pocket renames Pip "Handel," a lovely musical name denoting Pip's harmonious personality. Pip's new

appellation indicates his initiation to London: a name such as Handel suits an urbane gentleman. When Herbert explains the temporary nature of the flat's utensils, he provides an important lesson for Pip: not everything is always as it seems. Pip's expectations prove as much a facade as the borrowed items. Their first meal, the shoddy luxury, and implacable servants, all ironically suggest the inconsistency of money--money does not automatically bring respect or guarantee good taste. Pip's lavish redecoration of the apartment exhibits his inability to handle money and his childlike attitude toward possessions--he wishes to display his new found wealth; however, everything has its repercussions, and the debt he incurs eventually leads to his financial ruin, teaching Pip the value of money. Moreover, Pip's eager acquisition of material possessions suggests his growing capitalistic desires. Avarice corrupts Pip as he turns from the honest forge, yet his thoughts often return to Joe's, and he wishes that "[Magwitch] had left [him] at the forge--far from contented, yet, by comparison, happy!" (Great 39,306). Joe too feels the same way and had always felt "not favorable to [Pip's] being taken from the forge" because a simple country man like Joe fears the corruption of the big city and easy money (Great 12,97); Joe knows everything has its price. When Joe visits London and notices Pip's altered demeanor, he addresses Pip as sir because he feels awkward in Pip's

apartment with its shabby elegance. So Joe stays at a nearby inn because he feels more comfortable there. Joe's disapproval of Barnard's Inn echoes Pip's dismissal of the forge; Joe rejects London and the trappings of money, whereas Pip spurns the countryside and an honest living. On the other hand, unlike Pip who "was not designated for any profession" and has no qualms about accepting money for doing nothing, Herbert plans to make his own fortune (Great 24,186); Herbert's self-reliance elicits more admiration than Pip's ready acquisitiveness. Despite their differences, the two form a solid friendship, and Herbert helps Pip when his true benefactor arrives.

By the time Magwitch reveals himself to Pip, Pip and Herbert have moved to Temple where they occupy chambers in "Garden-court, down by the river" (Great 39,298). The location of Temple Inn, by the river, proves to be a critical site for the Magwitch's tumultuous arrival. On the night of Pip's reunion with his patron, the wind shakes the house, the river pounds its embankment, and the rain rattles the windows: the blustery night anticipates Pip's mental tempest when he discovers the humble origins of his prosperity. Magwitch becomes associated with inclement weather, and Pip recalls that he doubted if a ghost "could have been more terrible . . . up in those lonely rooms in the long evenings and long nights, with the wind and the rain always rushing by" (Great 40,320). Pip is so scared

that he imagines he hears pursuers and "knocking and whispering at the outer door" (Great 39,308). Even after his relocation, Magwitch's ghost haunts his vacated chair; his presence has transformed the rooms, and both Pip and Herbert shudder at his memory. Provis arrives in a cacophony of storms; his presence irrevocably alters Pip's life.

With the advent of Provis, the hearthside in Temple Inn becomes a site of importance, like Joe's forge. Magwitch stands on the hearthstone, scrutinizes Pip and divulges the source of Pip's expectations. (He is pleased with the outcome, much as Joe must have admired Pip at the forge.) After the shocking revelations, Pip sits gazing into the fire "too stunned to think," and remembers such terrifying childhood images of Magwitch that he goes in to check on him sleeping, only to return to the fire and fall asleep on the hearth (Great 39,307). Pip seems to gain solace from the hearth and prefers to sleep in front of the fire rather than in his bed (much as the forge is the only place at Joe's where Pip feels comfortable). When Pip wakes the next day, he rekindles the raw, pale flames which reflect his state of sensibilities: the fire of enthusiasm has dimmed because his money is not "pure" aristocratic money, rather it is the tainted reward of a convict, so the expectations which enticed Pip from the forge disintegrate into ashes similar to the ashes of his indenture papers. Pip spends the early

hours in front of the fire waiting for Magwitch to wake so they can decide what to do. Sitting by the fireplace, Pip reluctantly accepts Magwitch and chooses to call him Provis, an avuncular adoption which indicates the emergence of Pip's maturity: he adopts Provis and accepts responsibility for his well being, despite his natural dislike for the man. Pip is truly growing up. Interestingly enough, later that day, Pip and Jaggers stand by the legal hearth discussing Provis; this placement is not co-incidental but links the fireside confessions. When faithful Herbert Pocket returns, the triumvirate sits before the fire while Pip explains what has happened; he seeks Herbert's valuable advice because Herbert is the London equivalent of wise Joe. Eventually Pip and Provis reconcile in front of the fire when Provis wins Pip's admiration after revealing his pitiful life story. But Provis' arrival and disclosures have so altered Pip's life and contaminated his home, that the night he receives a warning from Wemmick, Pip is almost relieved to have to seek alternate lodgings.

Wemmick's cryptic note: "DON'T GO HOME" forces Pip to spend the night in a most unusual inn (Great 44,346). The noisy room with its whispering closet, sighing fireplace, and ticking washing-stand reflect the crowded thoughts in Pip's head--he projects his chaotic thoughts into the room's inanimate furnishings (Great 44,347). Fresh from Satis and learning of Estella's wedding plans and witnessing Miss

Havisham's despair, Pip spends his epiphanic night in an extraordinary room unable to sleep; instead, Pip passes the night altering Wemmick's message a thousand different ways because he does not know what anything (even language) means anymore; he cannot make sense of his world. When he awakes the next day, he visits Wemmick's castle in order to seek help.

Provis' need to change London dwellings reveals the hazards he faces as an ex-convict returning to his home of exile. The first few nights he passes in Temple Inn, then he moves to a nearby "respectable lodging-house in Essex Street," and finally he stays in Mrs. Whimple's house in Mill Pond Bank (Great 40,316). This nomadic resettling reflects Provis' pitiful life, like Jo of Bleak House, Provis has always "moved on," and he admits, "[T]here warn't many insides of houses known to me" (Great 42,328). Provis feels most at home in his two fresh, airy cabin rooms at the top of Mrs. Whimple's house--an environment perfect for Provis because of its nautical ambiance and its riverside location. This Thames-side home is the epitome of comfort, a cross between Peggotty's boat and Miss Trotwood's Dover cottage: homely, clean, and near cleansing water. In fact, Pip notes that the house "softens" Provis (Great 41,357). (Has the house a tenderizing effect, or has Pip changed since learning of Estella's pending marriage?) When Pip and Herbert return to Temple, they stand at the window and

imagine the river flowing down to Mrs. Whimple's place, which comforts them because they believe Provis is secure in his new home, perhaps his first true home.

Herbert Pocket's family also reside in a tranquil riverside abode. Their house represents another transitional abode: here Pip sloughs off the London commercial grime. This delightfully confusing house combines both Jellyby's (Bleak) and David's and Dora's (David) home. The Pocket's are completely at the mercy of the clever servants who run the topsy-turvy house. Mrs. Pocket's careless parenting results from her aristocratic upbringing: she is "highly ornamental, but perfectly helpless and useless" (Great 23,179); in other words, an older Dora (David) and a married Volumina (Bleak). Mr. Pocket echoes Mr. Jellyby's confusion and pulls his hair in frustration at his incompetent, simple wife. Houses such as these present a complex mixture of fun and dread: the haphazard, tumbling upbringing of the children delight those of a puerile imagination; however, the careless play with "instruments of self-destruction" frightens those of a more cautious nature (Great 23,181); the combination of such disparate elements demonstrates Dickens' ability to turn the ludicrous into the menacing. Pocket's home provides a pleasant interlude for Pip; here he can escape the more somber influence of his London solicitor, Mr. Jaggers.

In London Pip first stops at Jaggers' offices which are

located in allegorically titled Little Britain. Pip observes Jagger's bullying tactics which reflect the British Empire's attitude to its colonies: Jagger believes that he knows what is best for his clients. Jagger's small room simultaneously scares and intrigues Pip who remembers that it

was lighted by a skylight only, and was a most dismal place; the skylight, eccentrically patched like a broken head, and the distorted adjoining houses looking as if they had twisted themselves to peep down at [Pip] through it. There were not so many papers about, as [he] should have expected to see; and there were some odd objects about, that [he] should not have expected to see--such as an old rusty pistol, a sword in a scabbard, several strange-looking boxes and packages, and two dreadful casts on a shelf, of faces peculiarly swollen, and twitchy about the nose. Mr. Jagger's own high-backed chair was of deadly black horse-hair, with rows of brass nails around it, like a coffin. (Great 20,154)

The room highlights Dickens' feelings about the legal profession: the ghoulish objects d'art stand as proud reminders of crime instead of being shameful artifacts of death. The chthonic atmosphere of the room iterates that lawyers often deal with wills and death, and the inquisitive

adjoining houses highlight the secretive nature of the legal profession (even Wemmick "ha[s] the same air of knowing something to everybody's disadvantage, as his master had" (Great 20,155)). Typically, Jagger's stately home in seedy Soho further enhances the image of the lawyer whose work becomes an obsession. Dickens' solicitors cannot leave their work behind: Tulkinghorn lives in his office, Jagger works in his home. The house badly needs painting; Jagger's obviously cares little for outward appearances. Internally, ominous noose-garlands decorate the walls, casting a gloomy atmosphere in the three rooms that are utilized--the rest lay to waste. These dark rooms contain practical furniture and legal tomes as befit a home/office. All in all, a depressing residence consistent with his occupation, where all is useful not ornamental. Jagger's sensibility to the uncleanliness of his occupation shows in his ritualistic handwashing; however, Jagger's clerk, Wemmick, separates his work from his home life. It would appear that Dickens placed the two homes in juxtaposing chapters to contrast them.

Mr. Wemmick's "little wooden cottage in the midst of plots of gardens" presents a picture of fertility which contrasts to Satis' ruined garden--life flourishes in Wemmick-land (Great 25,195). Pip describes a fairy-tale residence and believes "it was the smallest house [he] ever saw; with the queerest gothic windows . . . and a gothic

door, almost too small to get in at" (Great 25,196). The miniature size of the house delights Pip and suggests Wemmick's practicality: his small house utilizes all available space, whereas Jaggers leaves many rooms unused in his larger residence. Indeed, only one room, the kitchen/sitting room, dominates the interior; here the Aged Parent and son share a congenial fireside and present Pip with a cozy picture of a united, happy family--Jaggers has only his housekeeper for company. This room also contains a miniature museum filled with Wemmick's "collection of curiosities" which are unlike the unhealthy relics of Satis or the gruesome gadgets of Jaggers (Great 25,197). The knick-knacks fascinate Pip, and this castle's nooks and crannies echo Wickfield's interesting corners and Miss Trotwood's laden cabinet (David). Pip's turret bedroom delights him, and from his window Pip watches Wemmick perform his morning duties. Outside, the sun illuminates the maze-like paths, which, unlike the dark corridors of Satis, demonstrates that this home harbors no hidden secrets. Purifying water surrounds the house cutting the home off from civilization and the corrupting influence of commercial London; the drawbridge allows Wemmick to "leave the office behind" (Great 25,197). Wemmick's serene castle offers Pip a refuge from London, and Pip comes here whenever he needs kindly, not practical, advice. Thus, Dickens contrasts commerce and survival, for Wemmick and Jaggers are

both kindly men who assume harsher personalities to compete in Little Britain.

Wemmick's Walworth home provides more than a haven for Pip--Dickens utilizes the home as a microcosmic glimpse at an urban Utopia. When Wemmick boasts to Pip that

[he is his] own engineer, and [his] own carpenter, and [his] own plumber, and [his] own gardener, and [his] own Jack of all Trades . . . a good thing you know . . . [it] brushes the Newgate cobwebs away." (Great 25,196)

there is more than idle pride in his statement. Wemmick's freehold property affords a singular glimpse at the benefits of self-reliance. His ingenious inventions demonstrate an ability to solve his own problems. Such toils are the backbone of a nation where a man's home is his castle, and to build and maintain it by one's own hands should be the aim of all men. Wemmick created rather than inherited. Dickens suggests that from such humble beginnings come great and desirable things. The raised drawbridge, the flying Union Jack, the fake fortifications, and the evening cannon ceremony demonstrate Wemmick's defiance--he has created his own utopia and uses the emblems which typify a country: the fortress, flag, show of arms, and ceremonial firing of the canon. Wemmick's miniature kingdom may seem ridiculous to some, but his authentic attempts at personal freedom provide Dickens with an innovative example of business success

without business greed. Dickens' cozy description of Wemmick's castle suggests that he preferred Wemmick's attitude to Jagger's; certainly Wemmick's home contains many of his own personal preferences and, therefore, may be considered one of Dickens "good" homes.

The only other house Pip visits in London is Mrs. Brandley's Richmond residence. After leaving Satis, Estella moves to London to increase her "expectations" of marrying well. While she resides in the Richmond mansion, Pip haunts the house as much as David hounded the Spenlow's and the Larkins' homes in David Copperfield. In small, easy-to-overlook paragraphs, Dickens depicts a house that will become the second influence in Estella's life:

a staid old house, where hoops and powder and patches, embroidered coats, rolled stockings, ruffles, and swords, had their court days many a time. Some ancient trees before the house were still cut into fashions as formal and unnatural as the hoops and wigs and stiff skirts.

.
A bell with an old voice--which I dare say in its time had often said to the house, Here is the green farthingale, Here is the diamond-hilted sword, Here are the shoes with red heels and the blue solitaire,--sounded gravely in the moonlight.

(Great 33,256)

This residence evokes bygone days when women and men played the game of courtly love; the ancient surroundings reverberate with the ghosts of a past era which mimic Pip's and Estella's false dance of pretend love. As directed by Miss Havisham, Estella had flirted with Pip at Satis and had led him on--she practiced the art of seduction on the unsophisticated country lad. Therefore, the Richmond house eagerly sweeps Estella inside because it needs new blood for its ancient game. The house senses the newcomer will become one with the spirit of the house--Estella is already an experienced participant in the stately game of courtship. Estella readily adapts to the new lifestyle which fulfills her shallow expectations; she flirts and plays the coquette to perfection. Satis still holds sway, however, because nightly Estella writes to "Satis House," not to Miss Havisham, to tell of her triumphs, a subtle reminder that it is not the owner who weaves the spell. Even when Estella tries to warn Pip about his devotion, she explains her attraction in appropriately Satis-like terms; she is a lighted candle which attracts moths and other "ugly creatures" (Great 38,296).

Much scholarship has been spent arguing the pros and cons of the different endings, and Edgar Rosenberg's article gives an excellent and comprehensive look at the major contentions. I agree with those "Second Endians" who stress the second ending as being most harmonious with the

"recurrent patterns and images of the novel" (106). The first ending, in which Pip meets Estella in London after many years absence, proves less satisfactory because they are too far away from Satis, the source of their unhappiness--therefore the story seems incomplete. The second ending in the fetid garden seems far more appropriate because the cycle is complete, even if the happy ending appears too contrived. However, in accordance with the endings of Esther (Bleak) and Agnes (David), it seems more Dickensian to conclude a novel hopefully.

Pip surveys the cleared space that was once Satis Manor: "[T]here was no house . . . no brewery, no building whatever left, but the wall of the old garden" (Great 59,458). The solid wall withstood the harsh elements of time, unlike the other elements of Satis: the garden which needed attention, the house which required care, or the brewery which needed employees. This postlapsarian scene of Pip and Esther's reunion contains one sign of hope: a new root from the old ivy which "was growing green on low quiet mounds of ruin" (Great 59,458). According to Kate Greenaway's Language of Flowers (1884), ivy suggests fidelity and marriage, thus the flower-knowledgeable Victorian audience would have seen hope for Pip and Estella's relationship in the small ivy root (23). Perhaps, a more believable ending would have included the destruction of their love in a final scene among the ruins of Satis.

The common house becomes a potent emblem in the right hands. In Great Expectations Dickens constructed homes that revealed the truth about the occupant and the concept of home. Miss Havisham's, Joe's, Wemmick's, Jaggers', and Pip's homes all present microscopic looks at life; at the relationship between man's inner home (his mind) and his public pose. The secular and spiritual messages are blended in the fireside scenes and the religious imagery of the ashes, for at the end of Pip's journey, after all his ambitions have turned to ashes, and he has served his penance, the one thing that remains in the ruined garden is the hopeful ivy root.

Conclusion

Dickens uses the home as a powerful emblem which works as a subtle symbol for his underlying psychological themes. An examination of the novels David Copperfield, Bleak House, and Great Expectations reveals that each book has a home-centered element which reinforces his themes: the windows in David Copperfield, the external appearance of the homes in Bleak House, and the fireplaces in Great Expectations.

Dickensian homes are homes of the senses. He documents their smell, their visual appearance, their atmosphere, and by doing so, Dickens reminds us of homes we have known, visited, and loved. His homes become our homes because they delight and entertain us--just as his characters do. His house descriptions are never incidental, rather they become the reader's first introduction to the owner, and each character resides in a dwelling appropriate to his character type, social status, and moral beliefs. We know which homes are the most important because Dickens proffers considerable detail for significant dwellings; he neglects the rest. We also know which homes Dickens preferred: light, clean, airy abodes filled with snug rooms and cozy corners.

Dickens embellished buildings with unique characteristics, and his houses become personified by his lively descriptions. He utilized the house and its variants as outer shells to garment his characters; as retreats from a harsh world; as evidence of the occupant's social class;

as symbols of man's complex interaction with his private world and public pose. Dickens presents the home as fact, fiction, and fantasy.

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