DICKENS'S *BLEAK HOUSE* AND *THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP:* A READING THROUGH THINGS

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ABSTRACT

DICKENS'S *BLEAK HOUSE* AND *THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP:*
A READING THROUGH THINGS

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This thesis analyzes Dickens' *Bleak House* and *The Old Curiosity Shop* from the perspective of thing theory as expounded by Bill Brown to explore how objects and other material entities are represented, and what kinds of meanings and values they take upon themselves within the narratives. In addition to making use of insights of thing theory, this thesis also makes references to the concepts of the carnivalesque, the grotesque and the uncanny since they are integral parts of Dickens' portrayal of the material worlds in both of his novels. This thesis concludes that Dickens depicts the material world as saturated with values and ideas, and that he regularly challenges the idea of a firm boundary between the characters and objects by depicting characters as objects and objects as people.

Keywords: thing theory, the carnivalesque, the grotesque, the uncanny

ÖZ

DICKENS'IN *KASVETLİ EV* ve *ANTİKACI DÜKKANI ROMANLARI: ŞEYLER ÜZERİNDEN BİR OKUMA*

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Bu tez Dickens'ın *Kasvetli Ev* ve *Antikacı Dükkanı* romanlarında nesnelerin ve diğer maddi varlıkların nasıl tasvir edildiğini, ve ne tür anlam ve değerler yüklendiklerini ortaya koymak için romanların Bill Brown tarafından geliştirilen şey teorisi açısından bir analizini yapmaktadır. Her iki romanda da Dickens'ın maddi dünya tasvirinin ayrılmaz bir unsuru oldukları için şey teorisinin yanısıra karnavalesk, grotesk ve tekinsiz kavramlarından da yararlanılmaktadır. Çalışma, Dickens'ın maddi dünyayı değer ve fikir yüklü tasvir ettiğini, karakterleri nesne, nesneleri ise insan gibi tasvir ederek karakterler ve nesneler arasında katı bir sınır olduğu fikrini ısrarla sorguladığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Şey Teorisi, karnavalesk, grotesk, tekinsiz

To my husband Ogün

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BH	*Bleak House*
OCS	*The Old Curiosity Shop*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Victorian novel is noted for being full of objects with its catalogue of items and vast amount of objects crowding in and overflowing from the pages. Yet, as Elaine Freedgood observes in her work *The Ideas in Things,* while "the Victorian novel describes, catalogs, quantifies, and in general showers us with things [...] we have learned to understand them as largely meaningless: the protocols for reading the realist novel have long focused on subjects and plots; they have implicitly enjoined us *not* to interpret many or most of its objects" (1). According to Ian Watt, in what he termed formal realism, depictions of interiors and the objects that fill them serve the aim of providing "an authentic account of the actual experiences of individuals" (27, 31). Similarly, Roland Barthes called such representational practice in literature "the reality effect" which refers to "fiction's numerous gratuitous details that have no symbolic or functional utility within the narrative, but simply point to the category of "the real" and thereby ensure verisimilitude to life's material profusion" (Chappel 801). Therefore, within such critical acclamation, the detailed object worlds of fiction are regarded as narrative elements functioning simply to add to the realistic atmosphere of the novel. In the "rhetorical hierarchy" of the text, as Freedgood calls it, the objects are considered to have a subordinate function and to be insignificant in the text compared to plots and characters (*Ideas* 2).

In addition to the critical perception of objects in Victorian literature as elements of the category of "the real", there is yet another scholarly perception which takes the large quantity of objects in the Victorian novel solely as a representation of commodity culture. About the commodity culture the philosopher Guy Debord argues that "commodity completes its colonization of social life" in Victorian Britain around the mid-nineteenth century and from that time on "commodities are now all that there is to see" (qtd. in Freedgood "Commodity"152). And the Victorian novel is regarded as "an example of a compelling representation of the commodity's

invasiveness" (153). In the scholarship on Victorian literature, especially that of the 1980s and 1990s, the general critical assumption was that objects function in Victorian literature simply as commodities that reflect the bourgeois way of life and their tastes (John 116).

Scholarly criticisms of Dickens's fiction are no exception to these critical perceptions and as Freedgood argues, "it is the criticism of Dickens novel rather than anything inherent in his novels themselves" that has led to the perception of their objectfullness as being "first and foremost a representation of commodity culture" ("Commodity"153). In addition to the crowded object world of his novels, critics have noted long ago how this object world is rendered vital and animate while his characters are represented as de-animated forms (Waters *Commodity* 3). They see in this Dickens's criticism of the invasiveness of commodity culture. This critical interest is generally traced back to Dorothy Van Ghent's work *The English Novel* published in 1953 which identifies Dickens's characteristic "transportation of attributes" between people and objects as symptomatic of a world driven by the commodity in which "the qualities of things and people were reversed" (ibid.). Van Ghent noted that, in Dickens novels,

> people were becoming things and things (the things that money can buy or that are the means for making money or for exalting prestige in the abstract) were becoming more important than people. People were becoming de-animated, robbed of their souls, and things [...] were usurping the prerogatives of animate creatures (qtd. in Freedgood"Commodity"160).

There is no doubt that Dickens's novels present a relentless social criticism of his times and yet his representation of the material world that surrounds his characters and of the relation between the objects and humans is "more ambivalent", in Freedgood's words ("Commodity" 164), than commodity criticism can explain. The material worlds of his novels also have functions beyond pointing to the category of the real that provide an appearance of authenticity to the fictional realm. The critical perspective that calls for an attention to the material worlds of fiction in an effort to

see what kinds of significance they hold in texts other than their purely economical values found its developed form in what has come to be termed "thing theory". By building its analysis on insights from thing theory, especially as expounded by Bill Brown, this thesis studies the material world of Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Bleak House* to discern the meaning and value of objects within the narratives.

1.1. The Aims and Scope of the Study

Although there are critical studies underlining the fact that Dickens's fiction offers a promising ground for thing theory analysis (Freedgood "Commodity"*;* John "Things"), the object world of Dickens's fiction is largely an understudied area from thing theory perspective. This thesis aims to analyze the material world of Dickens' novels *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Bleak House* in order to find out how the objects are represented and what kinds of meanings and values they take upon themselves within the narratives. The particular emphasis of thing theory, especially as underlined by Bill Brown, that the discussions on the materiality of objects in fiction are most meaningful when they are considered in relation to the human subjects who use and interact with them is kept in mind throughout the analysis. Therefore, this thesis does not analyse objects on their own, or only their materiality, but always in relation to subjects. Such an analysis will support the argument that objects do not "crowd" the narrative just for the purposes of creating a realistic atmosphere and that they have meanings beyond their purely economic values.

One of the novels chosen for this thesis, *The Old Curiosity Shop,* is one of Dickens's early novels and the other, *Bleak House,* is a late novel. The analysis is limited to only two of Dickens's novels and thus, considering the expansiveness of his oeuvre, it does not aim to offer a generalized commentary on how Dickens represents the objects in his fiction.

Within the limits of a master's thesis, theoretical discussions concerning thing theory, the carnivalesque and the grotesque, and Freudian uncanny are given in a concise form, rather than in a lengthy and detailed way. Theoretical material on thing theory that has been produced so far is limited, and these materials usually include what Plotz calls "chewy phenomenological accounts" which complicate the understandability of thing theory ("Sofa"109). Therefore, special attention has been paid in the writing of the thing theory section of this thesis to ensure that while the theory discussion becomes reader-friendly, it does so without losing its essence.

The concepts of thing and object are used interchangeably in this thesis, as is mostly done in the works of thing theorists and in works that use thing theory as an analytical tool. Such a slippage of usage stems directly from the fact that, theoretically, things are also objects and vice versa, because an object possesses a latent thingness that becomes visible when there is a change in the interaction of people and objects, as will be discussed in the theory section.

This thesis is organized around six chapters. The next chapter will provide the theoretical background of this thesis, in which why and how thing theory is developed, the basic premises of historicist and phenomenological/psychoanalytical lines of study in thing theory and the meaning of concepts of thing and object will be discussed. It will also discuss the concepts of the carnivalesque, the grotesque and the uncanny, because in both novels selected for this thesis, carnivalistic imagery and acts have significant places in the narratives. The texts not only present carnivalesque mingling of opposites and parodic doubling, but they also make use of grotesque imagery in a subversive manner in their representations of the material world. The sense of uncanniness also plays an important role in the depictions of some of the objects analyzed in this thesis. The uncanniness of objects not only contribute to sensory reinforcement of them, but they also enable the narrators to get deeper into the psychology of the main characters. Therefore, this thesis will make use of the concepts of the carnivalesque, the grotesque and the uncanny in combination with thing theory in its analysis of the selected objects and material entities.

The subsequent chapters will be devoted to the analyses of the novels *Bleak House* and *The Old Curiosity Shop* which will be done in terms of some shared features of the novels in their depictions of the material entities, like the carnivalesque things and bleak things. Therefore, this thesis will not analyze the entire material world of both novels, but only those that stand out as the most representative examples. In the conclusion chapter, the findings of this study will be discussed with some suggestions for further research in the area.

1.2. Theoretical Background of the Study

1.2.1. Thing Theory

Over the last decade, thing theory has become an umbrella term for the growing body of interdisciplinary critical literature aimed at analysing the material world, both in fiction and in other scholarly areas. The name of the theory comes from literary critic Bill Brown's introductory article "Thing Theory" that appeared in 2001 in a special issue of *Critical Inquiry* entitled *Things*. As the body of articles in that issue shows, thing theory offers a promising tool in fields like anthropology, archaeology, cinema studies, material culture studies and literature. As a theory that is still in formation and development, there are contesting ideas about how this theory should be applied especially in the analysis of the material worlds of fiction. As Juliet John says "the influence of 'thing theory' has been such that" the critics have been "sinking under the weight of things and the critical conversations they have generated" (115). However, it is important to keep in mind that since thing theory is still in the process of development, some internal discussions about thing theory itself among its theorists is unavoidable.

Thing theory distinguishes between the concepts of object and thing. Objects are mundane parts of our lives that we do not recognize most of the time, or "obscene, passive [...] alienated, accursed part of the subject" as Jean Baudrillard says (qtd. in

Brown "Thing" 8). Yet "we begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us: when the drill breaks, when the car stalls, when the window gets filthy" (Brown "Thing" 4).

What does "the thingness of objects" mean? Thing theorists argue that an object is, in fact, simultaneously both an object and a thing. As Brown explains, the thingness of objects is about latency, an inactive potential that is not yet formed ("Thing" 5). The thingness of objects is an "excess" in objects, what exceeds the mere materialization or utilization of objects as objects. This excess can be thought of as "the force of things" as sensuous or metaphysical presences, or the magic, so to speak, by which objects become values, fetishes, idols and totems. As objects circulate in our lives, we look "through" them "because there are codes by which our interpretive attention makes them meaningful" ("Thing" 4). In other words, we scarcely perceive them as separate entities. But when our habit of using them is interrupted, when these codes are upset, we look "at" the object itself and see the thing. Brown gives an example from A. S. Byatt's *The Biographer's Tale* where the protagonist looks up at a filthy window and says "A real, very dirty window, shutting out the sun. A thing" (2). As Brown says "the interruption of the habit of looking *through* windows as transparencies enables the protagonist to look *at* the window itself in its opacity" (emphasis in the original 4). This discussion shows that, as Brown concludes,

> the story of objects asserting themselves as things, then, is the story of a changed relation to the human subject and thus the story of how the thing really names less an object than a particular subject-object relation (4).

This discussion also shows that thing theory does not theorize objects and things on their own but in relation to the human subjects who use them and interact with them. The analysis starts from the object itself, yet it does not disregard the subject. Rather than theorizing objects separate from subjects, thing theory aims to account for "how inanimate objects constitute human subjects, how they move them, how they threaten them, how they facilitate or threaten their relation to other subjects" (Brown *Sense*

7). In other words, thing theory does not leave the subject aside but offers new ways of thinking about subject and object relations.

The discussions about subject-object relations in thing theory largely draw from anthropological and philosophical studies. Plotz differentiates between an anthropocentric approach and an object centred approach in the discussions about the meaning of objects and their relation to human subjects (Plotz "Materiality" 5-8). According to him, the rich tradition of anthropological work falls largely on the side of the anthropocentric approach which aims "to unpack" what a culture understands the definitive meaning of particular objects to be. The meaning of an object is considered to have been bestowed on it by culture and "hears the object saying nothing that the ambient culture has not instilled" (5). The anthropological work *The Social Life of Things* edited by Arjun Appadurai in 1986 started a change in theorizing the material world (Plotz "Materiality" 5). Scholars began to appreciate the idea that objects can have material qualities that cannot be simply accounted for by their culturally fixed value. It also enabled scholars to think about the slippages or failures of meaning of objects rather than considering a fixed meaning bestowed on objects by the culture (Plotz "Sofa" 110). As Brown points out, *The Social Life of Things* also establishes a different understanding of the commodification and circulation of objects which argues that

> a commodity object is unambiguously a commodity only during the course of transaction, after which it is individualized, leading a concrete life outside the commodity structure, beyond the abstraction on which exchange depends. This is why one can imagine writing a life story of objects [...which] allows us to speak of the commodity's afterlife - or its several afterlives - [...] none of which can wholly arrest the potential for further commodification (Brown "Reification" 177).

Thing theorists place a special emphasis on Appadurai's volume because of "the transformation wrought in theorizing things (and materiality generally) by [its] publication" (Plotz *Materiality* 5). Especially its emphasis on the afterlife of the

commodity seems to have proved useful in thing theory analysis in fiction because, as Brown says, fiction demonstrates "that the human investment in the physical object world, and the mutual constitution of human subject and inanimate object, can hardly be reduced to [commodity] relations" (*Sense* 5).

The object centred approach, on the other hand, argues that objects have a "recalcitrant" quality, or a vibrancy of their own regardless of their interaction with people (Plotz "Materiality" 6). This approach shuns the Kantian insistence that the materiality of the world can be known to humans only phenomenologically, that is by means of senses, and instead makes sense of the world as something extra-human and even inhuman (ibid.). Posthuman and ecocritical object studies follow this type of approach (Plotz "Sofa" 110). For instance, when the philosopher Graham Harman argues that "the real has an inner struggle of its own quite apart from the human encounter with it", he totally disregards the human element in defining the real (Plotz "Materiality" 7). Plotz names Bill Brown's work *A Sense of Things* as an example of object centred approach since it, according to Plotz, "very strongly downplays" the logical reasoning power of human beings in deciding "what things mean" (8). Yet Brown is criticized by Harman too, since, according to Harman, the notion of recalcitrance remains steadily human centred in Brown's work (ibid.). With his rhetorical question "are we stuck, forced to choose between two approaches?", Plotz seems to be arguing for a different approach that does not get caught in the "pitfalls built into both anthropological and object oriented approaches" ("Materiality" 8, 11). Therefore he argues that

> a revamped thing theory might shed more light on the tangled and troubled 'contact zone' between material objects and the human subjects who are thrown into relationship with both the material world and one another by their interactions with those objects. One promising way forward may be to hypothesize that any 'thing theory' ought to highlight approaches to any historical period's margins - of language, of cognition, of material substance. 'Things' do not lie beyond the bounds of reason, but at times they may seem [so]. That *seeming* is significant: these are limit cases at which our ordinary categories for classifying signs and substances, meaning and materiality, appear to break down. It is

> accordingly worth seeking out not so much a theory about the cultural significance of the movement of objects within the realm of symbolic circulation, but also the limit cases of different epochs and locations [...] ("Materiality" 21).

As an example of things which defy ordinary classifications of objects, Plotz mentions Geoffrey Batchen's work on Victorian memorial photography which are photographs that are displayed with a piece of hair of the depicted person ("Materiality" 12). According to Batchen these photographs appeared to contemporary viewers as "something more than simple symbolic objects [...] with a definite human meaning attached to them by way of representation" (ibid.). In his call for a revised thing theory, then, Plotz accepts that the materiality of such things can be known to humans, or in other words he does not argue for an object centred approach to things, but he also argues for avoiding an anthropocentric approach. This shows that there is a discussion going on among scholars of thing theory about how far the analysis of the material world should be human or object centred; or how the analysis should be conducted. It may be important to note that in literary analysis, the author's imagination or his/her portrayal of the material world may also determine how far human or object centred the critic's analysis can be.

In literary analysis, scholars who aim to analyze the material world of fiction turn mostly to nineteenth century literature. There are of course other studies analyzing fictional objects besides nineteenth century literature. Jonathan Lamb's work *The Things Things Say,* for instance, dwells on the eighteenth century "it narratives", the first person narratives told by objects. Yet nineteenth century literature offers a more promising ground for the study of objects, because as Cynthia Wall argues, there is, in general, a qualitative change in the representations of objects between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; there is more description of objects in the nineteenth century fiction and they are accommodated and absorbed into the contextual structure (Freedgood *Ideas* 4).

Before the development of thing theory, there were also studies on the material world of fiction but these studies were largely confined to a commodity analysis. As Juliet

John points out, in the Victorian literary scholarship of the 1980s and 1990s, there was a widespread critical assumption that objects function in Victorian fiction simply as commodities (116). They offered a reading of objects in Victorian literature, like parlour furnishings, as clues about bourgeois way of life, indicating their tastes and wealth; these readings avoided analysis of what kind of a relation is depicted between objects and human subjects who use them. The body of literature on thing theory offers a different perspective that calls to trace in literature other types of relations between humans and objects that are beyond commodity relations. For Bill Brown, nineteenth century American literature is "not incidentally" full of objects because "they are texts published in [...] an era when the invention, production and consumption of things rather suddenly came to define a national culture" (*Sense* 4). John Plotz makes a similar argument about the Victorian novel when he says that the catalogued and classified "stuffiness" of Victorian literature, "especially of the variety long ago dubbed 'formal realism' by Ian Watt [...] was a byproduct, if not the wished-for consummation, of a worldwide capitalist network with London as both its fiscal and political center" ("Materiality" 2). These comments point out that thing theory in literary studies is interested in discovering how the massive increase in the production of commodities impressed itself on the literary imagination, rather than discussing how the commodity is represented. Thing theorists argue that the stuffy object world of nineteenth century literature convey meanings beyond their commodity forms:

> Even as the prose fiction of the nineteenth century represents and variously registers the way commodity relations came to saturate everyday life, so too (despite those relations or, indeed, intensified by them) this fiction demonstrates that the human investment in the physical object world, and the mutual constitution of human subject and inanimate object, can hardly be reduced to those relations (Brown *Sense* 5).

Therefore, not limiting the discussion of objects in fiction to commodity analysis does not mean that thing theory is an attempt to counter commodity analysis. As

discussed above, thing theory is more interested in the afterlife of the commodity with the insights from anthropological studies.

In literary analysis, thing theory is also interested in analysing the boundary between the categories of people and things as depicted in fiction, or as Brown puts it "the indeterminate ontology where things seem slightly human and humans seem slightly thing-like" (*Sense* 13). Brown believes that the "metamorphosis of the one into the other" cannot be "fully explained by the so-called reifying effects of a society permeated by the commodity form" (ibid.). Therefore, Brown does not see only a negative sense in this slippage unlike Dorothy Van Ghent, for instance, who sees Dickens's fiction simply as symptomatic of a world which is invaded by commodities so that people are "robbed of their souls, and things [...] were usurping the prerogatives of animate creatures" (qtd. in Freedgood "Commodity" 160). Brown's analysis of Henry James's *The Spoils of Poynton* is a good example. For Brown, the things at Poynton attain their value outside the circulation of commodities and for the main character of the novel, Mrs Gereth, the value of objects is determined by her aesthetic and emotional attachment to them. Therefore, when Mrs Gereth starts to consider her friend Fleda as part of her collection of objects in the Poynton, she "does not diminish her to the status of a commodity object [but] elevates her to a status beyond (socially determined) value, and it envelops her in the kind of affection Mrs Gereth generally reserves for objects" (Brown 155-56). Yet he also adds that the example of Mrs Gereth and Fleda does not suggests that "for James, the objectification of people as possession can simply be considered beneficent or benign" (ibid.). A straightforward commodity analysis would probably have seen in Mrs Garreth's attachment to her objects "a degradation of *being* into *having*" (Brown *Sense* 146) in a society which is invaded by commodities and her considering Fleda as part of her collection of objects would concomitantly be seen as an act of commodifying her. This example shows that when literary criticism pays attention to how the material world is depicted through its relation to subjects, rather than using a straightforward identification of objects as commodities, the slippage between objects and people may attain a positive sense in fiction.

Within literary scholarship, the last decade has seen ample studies that analyze the object world of fiction. As David Trotter notes, these studies can be classified as historicist and phenomenological/psychoanalytical ones (4). Historicist studies trace the cultural histories behind objects. As one of the influential names of the historicist reading, Elaine Freedgood believes that without conducting a cultural-historical tracing, the depicted material world of fiction can be grasped only fleetingly (*Ideas* 1-30). For her, representations of objects in novels occupy a medial position, they stand between history and memory. In her work *The Ideas in Things,* Freedgood analyzes mahogany furniture in *Jane Eyre,* calico curtains in *Mary Barton,* and Negro head tobacco in *Great Expectations* so as to reveal the imperial and industrial histories behind these objects. For instance, when the imperial history behind the mahogany furniture in *Jane Eyre* is read, "mahogany becomes more than a weak metonym for wealth and taste; it figures, first of all, itself. It tells a story of imperial domination - the history of deforestation and slavery" (*Ideas* 3). Freedgood's argument is that although the objects she analyzed are "largely inconsequential in the rhetorical hierarchy of the text, [... they were] highly consequential in the world in which the text was produced" (2). Juliet John is highly critical of such historicist reading because she believes it "reinscrib[es] the histories of objects that seem unimportant within literary texts" (116). John reminds readers of "Freedgood's own suggestive notion that a 'rhetorical hierarchy' exists within texts which works to ascribe more meaning to some things than to others" (117). Therefore, conducting a historical analysis of objects that are inconsequential in the texts seems futile for Juliet John.

According to Plotz, the historicist analysis aims "to bring to life what a novel does not set out to show" and it is accomplished by means of "excavating" the histories of those objects that are not readily known to present day readers ("Materiality" 9). Historicist studies are deeply indebted to Frederic Jameson's discussion of the "political unconscious" which states that history, whether explicitly present in the text or not, lies "under the feet of" the common everyday life depicted in the text ("Materiality" 10). There is also a side of the historicist reading which Plotz calls a "hermeneutics of suspicion" and that he exemplifies through Suzanne Daly's work

The Empire Inside. For Daly, the Victorian novelists depict Indian commodities as "timeless embodiments of British status symbols" and thus "deceive" readers, since deep ideologically conditioning structures are concealed beneath those seemingly benign domestic narratives ("Materiality" 9, 10). It seems that in historicist reading of fiction, the real analytical work is conducted not within the text, but outside it; it analyzes what the text does not tell, rather than with it says about the objects.

Different from the historicist reading of fictional objects, the phenomenological/psychoanalytical one contends that "it is far more than history that lies [...] within the object materialized by human attention" (Brown *Sense* 7). The phenomenological/psychoanalytical reading, of which Bill Brown is the leading name, analyzes the senses in which we apprehend things, the ways subjects experience things and the meanings things acquire in their relationship with subjects. In its line of analysis, it tries to answer "two rather simple questions: How are objects represented in this text? And how are they made to mean?" (18). It aims to discover "the rhetorical strategies by which fiction works to convince us not just of the visual and tactile physicality of the world it depicts but also of that world's significance" (Brown *Sense* 17).

Although thing theory is not a unified field, it certainly opened a new field of analysis which builds on the material world of literature. It is with the insistence of what has come to be known as thing theory that the object world of fiction has been granted critical attention in the last decade. Rather than tracing the histories behind objects, this thesis will follow the phenomenological/psychoanalytical line of analysis in its analysis of the material world of Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Bleak House.* It will make use of the insights of thing theory, especially as expounded by Bill Brown, to find out how the objects are represented and what kinds of meanings and values they take on themselves within the narrative.

1.2.2. The Carnivalesque and The Grotesque

The concept of the carnivalesque is one of the components of the philosopher and literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the novel. In his works *Rabelais and His World* and *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* Bakhtin discusses his concept of the carnivalesque as he uses it to denote carnival and grotesque elements in literature. His notion of the carnivalesque includes the literary genre of grotesque realism, which centers on the image of the grotesque body. As Vice says, Bakhtin discusses carnival as an element of folk history which has become textualized and the carnivalesque may be detected in textual images, plots, or language itself (149). Bakhtin develops his concept of the carnivalesque by looking especially at the historical carnivals of the Middle Ages. He says that ordinary people of the Middle Ages inhabited a dual form of existence. On the one hand there was the authority of the church, the feudal system and work, all of which comprised the "official form". On the other hand, there was the unofficial form of existence characterized by the carnival reversals, parodies, songs and laughter (Vice 150). He says that the dual form of existence was the direct result of changes in the hierarchical world of the Middle Ages (*Rabelais* 403). These changes found their counterparts in the literature of the Middle Ages and Bakhtin calls this the carnivalization of literature, of which Rabelais's works were prime examples. According to Baktin, Rabelais used "the traditional folklore method of contrast, the "inside out," the "positive negation" to depict "the real being outside all hierarchical norms and values" (*Rabelais* 403).

The folk carnival Bakhtin discusses was a “boundless world of humorous forms and manifestations [which] opposed the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture" (*Rabelais* 4). "[F]olk festivities of the carnival type" included "the comic rites and cults, the clowns and fools, giants, dwarfs and jugglers, the vast and manifold literature of parody" (ibid.).

In his work *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin details his perception of the carnival and discusses the main carnivalistic categories and acts: carnivalistic life,

carnivalesque mésalliances, profanation and eccentricity. For Bakhtin all of the carnival images related to carnivalistic categories and acts are ambivalent in their nature since

> [...] they unite within themselves both poles of change and crisis: birth and death (the image of pregnant death), blessing and curse (benedictory carnival curses which call simultaneously for death and rebirth), praise and abuse, youth and old age, top and bottom, face and backside, stupidity and wisdom. Very characteristic for carnival thinking is paired images, chosen for their contrasts (high/low, fat/thin, etc.) or for their similarity (doubles/twins). Also characteristic is the utilization of things in reverse: putting clothes on inside out (or wrong side out), trousers on the head, dishes in place of headgear, the use of household utensils as weapons, and so forth. This is a special instance of the carnival category of *eccentricity,* the violation of the usual and the generally accepted, life drawn out of its usual rut (*Problems* 126).

According to Bakhtin, carnival is not something performed but it is a carnivalistic way of life in which its participants live. Carnivalistic life is "life drawn out of its *usual* rut", it is "life turned inside out", "the reverse side of the world" (*Problems* 122). The laws and prohibitions of the ordinary life are suspended during carnival (ibid.). Since there is no division between the spectators and performers in the carnival, and since it suspends all hierarchical structures, the carnival allows "free and familiar contact" between people who are usually separated hierarchically in the normal life (*Problems* 123). Bakhtin calls this type of free and familiar contact between people "carnivalesque mésalliances" which allows for the comingling of "the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the low, the great with the insignificant, the wise with the stupid" (ibid.). Eccentricity is also important in the carnival sense of the world since it permits "the latent sides of human nature to reveal and express themselves" in "concretely sensuous forms" (ibid.) Another carnivalistic category Bakhtin discusses is profanation which is about "carnivalistic blasphemies, a whole system of carnivalistic debasings and bringings down to earth" (ibid.).

The carnivalistic acts Bakhtin discusses are "the mock crowning and subsequent decrowning of the carnival king" and "carnival laughter" (*Problems* 124-27). These carnivalistic acts are all ambivalent in their nature and in them ideas of death and renewal have central importance. In the act of mock crowning and decrowning, a direct antipode of the king, like a slave or jester, is chosen among the people and the symbols of authority are handed over to him. A ceremony of decrowning follows this act, in which his crown is removed, the other symbols of authority are taken away, and he is ridiculed and beaten (125). This act is permeated with the logic of the carnival world like free and familiar contact as manifested in decrowning, carnivalistic mésalliances of slave and king and profanation through playing with the symbols of higher authority (ibid.). Carnival laughter, connected with the ancient forms of ritual laughter, is directed toward higher authorities, "towards a shift of authorities and truths" to force them to renew themselves (127). In the act of carnival laughter, death and rebirth, negation and affirmation is combined. This laughter contains a whole outlook on the world (ibid.). In connection with carnival laughter, Bakhtin discusses the place of parody in carnivals and carnivalized literature. For Bakhtin, parody is inseparably linked to a carnival sense of the world which turns the world inside out. The important thing about parody is that it is not a naked, or direct rejection of the parodied object since "everything has its parody, that is, its laughing aspect, for everything is reborn and renewed through death" (*Problems* 127). Carnivalesque parody is different from the "negative and formal parody of modern times" which only denies without renewing (Vice 154). In carnivalized literature, "parodying doubles" appear as a common phenomenon. By giving examples from Dostoevsky's doubles, Bakhtin says that in each of his double characters, the hero is negated through death so that s/he can be renewed and rise above himself (128). All these carnivalistic acts take place in the carnival square which can be any place which allows for the free familiar contact of people. In carnivalized literature, other places of action like streets, taverns, roads, bath houses, decks of ships and the like can become carnival squares if they are realistically motivated by the plot (ibid.).

According to Bakhtin, through the transportation of carnivalistic categories into literature over a thousand of years, the carnivalization of literature became possible

(*Problems* 124). The free familiar contact of the carnivals influenced the literary genres and "facilitated the destruction of epic and tragic distance" (ibid.). It also influenced organization of the plot and "determined that special familiarity of the author's position with regard to his characters". The logic of mésalliances and profanatory debasings were introduced into literature (ibid.). Especially during the Renaissance, carnivalistic forms invaded all the genres of high literature and transformed them fundamentally (*Problems* 130).

As the high point of carnival sense of the world was the Renaissance and it began to decline beginning with the 17th century, the carnivalization of literature also underwent some changes through time (*Problems* 130). Although there are fewer external manifestations of carnivalization, Bakhtin finds a deeper carnival sense of the world in 19th century literature, especially in the works of Balzac, Dostoevsky, Victor Hugo, Dickens, Gogol and Pushkin (159-60). So, the "generic tradition" of carnivalized literature was transmitted through the particular authors, and is "reborn and renewed in each of them in its own way" (159). For instance, Bakhtin mentions a "carnivalization of passion" of the characters in literary works, whereby "love is combined with hatred, avarice with selflessness, ambition with self-abasement and so forth" (*Problems* 159). He also mentions the "carnival sense of a great city" like Paris in Balzac and St. Petersburg in Dostoevsky (160). According to Bakhtin, Dostoevsky portrays "Petersburg with all its sharp contrasts, as a fantastic magical daydream [...] as something standing on the boundary between reality and fantastic invention" (ibid.).

Before moving on to the Bakhtinian notion of the grotesque, it is necessary to discuss some other previous studies on the concept since they influenced the way Bakhtin came to define the grotesque. The important names who have written on the concept of the grotesque are Wolfgang Kayser, Mikhail Bakhtin and John Ruskin, whose views manifest some contrasting approaches on the concept. The Victorian art critic and thinker John Ruskin was the first among these three names to write on the grotesque. In his book *The Stones of Venice* (1853) Ruskin differentiates two types of grotesque, namely the "sportive" and "terrible", which are respectively composed of

"ludicruous" and "fearful" elements (Steig 254). Yet these two types are generally found in combination (ibid.).

According to Michael Steig, Ruskin's notion of the grotesque came closer to providing a psychological explanation of the concept, the essence of which is that "the grotesque is an imaginative playing with the forbidden or the inexpressible (and perhaps [with] which is inexpressible [...] because it is forbidden)" (255).

Wolfgang Kayser made his important contribution to the concept in his book *The Grotesque in Art and Literature* (1957) which traces the origin of the word grotesque to the Italian word *grotta,* meaning cave (Hollington 2). Kayser explains that the word refers to some underground paintings that display "fantastic forms, colours, and arrangements", discovered in the baths of Titus in 1480s (ibid.). In Kayser's view, the grotesque evokes in the audience or the reader "a sense of the radical alienness of the world, its 'estrangement' from man [and] its essential absurdity" which is achieved through a depiction of the world that is "intermittently under the sway of 'demonic' forces" (Steig 253). As Hollington notes, Kayser's peculiarly "modern" perception of the concept is challenged by other critics, especially by Mikhail Bakhtin, who formulated "an alternative tradition of the grotesque [which is] at once more ancient and more benign" (3). Hollington further notes that critics who challenged Kayser's notion treated the category of the "demonic" in Kayser's view as a function of the Christian campaign against the lingering remains of pre-Christian beliefs in medieval Europe (ibid.).

In contrast to Kayser's negative perception of the grotesque, Bakhtin places a special emphasis on the positive and regenerative side of it. According to Bakhtin, previous works "ignore[] the deep ambivalence of the grotesque and see[] it merely as negation, an exaggeration pursuing narrowly satirical aims" (*Rabelais* 304). For instance, while Kayser argues that demonic forces are at play in grotesque images, Baktin emphasises the ancient and medieval origins of the devil as an attractive image of the subversive power (Hollington 3).

In Bakhtin's view, the image of the grotesque body is at the center of the grotesque realism and it is a direct heir of folk humour (*Rabelais* 18). The image of the grotesque body is "grandiose, exaggerated, immeasurable" because it represents not only a single individual, but all the people (ibid.).

In grotesque realism, the bodily element "is presented not in a private, egotistic form, severed from the other spheres of life, but as something universal, representing all the people" (19). The grotesque image is also ambivalent since it integrates "both poles of transformation, the old and the new, the dying and procreating, the beginning and the end of metamorphosis" (24). Unlike the classical representations of the body as "ready-made [...] the finished, completed man, cleansed, as it were, of all the scoriae of birth and development" (*Rabelais* 25), the grotesque body turns the classical representations of completed man inside out.

The grotesque body also represents all "[...] that which protrudes from the body, all that seeks to go out beyond the body's confines [...] all that prolongs the body and links it to other bodies or to the world outside" (*Rabelais* 317). In addition, by means of bodily junction like mouth, nose, phallus and bowels "the confines between bodies and between the body and the world are overcome: there is an interchange and inter-orientation" (*Rabelais* 317). According to Bakhtin, the main events in the life of the grotesque body, by means of which the beginning and end of life are linked and interwoven, are "eating, drinking, defecation and other elimination (sweating, blowing of the nose, sneezing), as well as copulation, pregnancy, dismemberment, swallowing up by another body" (*Rabelais* 317). As Hennelly indicates, in Bakhtin's analysis, cavities and protuberances in the grotesque body like mouth and nose have counterparts in the lower stratum of the body, whereby the mouth corresponds to the anus and nose to the phallus (89). This correspondence also links the human body with the geological corpus of caves and mountains and ultimately, this reflects the cosmic relationship between the process of death and birth (ibid.).

As these discussions on the grotesque show, while Kayser's view disregards "the role of the comic [and] overemphasize[s] the role of terror" in the grotesque images

(Steig 254), Bakhtin puts forth a strictly positive sense by underlining the regenerative force of the grotesque.

Dickens' own notion of the grotesque is also important for this study. Critics point out that the grotesque is a central feature of Dickens's art and it has been commented upon "admiringly or disparagingly" by almost every critic who ever wrote on Dickens (Hollington *Dickens* 1). Hollington argues that Dickens makes use of the grotesque in his fiction in an ironic way "in criticism of a society which, by and large, disapproved of the grotesque" (i). As Hervouet-Farrar says, Dickens's notion of the grotesque is built on a scrutiny on "the romantic side of familiar things", the phrase Dickens uses in the introduction to *Bleak House* (7).

According to Hollington, Dickens's conception of the grotesque in his later works developed in an essentially binary structure:

> In the novels that succeeded *Dombey and Son,* there is frequently a confrontation between two alternative grotesques, one positive, one negative, one inherently "true" or "innocent", the other debased, or as in *Hard Times* (the novel in which this pattern can be most clearly discerned), "disgraceful". They tend to stand for two phases of the imagination - on the one hand the imagination "in a state of nature", as it were, perceiving the grotesque from the perceptipns of the child, or the artist who has retained sufficient childhood powers of vision, and on the other hand, the imagination, as it must express itself, in and through monstrous distortion, out of radically diseased social conditions and relations (197).

Hollington points out that Ruskin's differentiation between the "sportive" (or ludicruous) and "terrible" (or fearful) grotesque is also useful in the consideration of the Dickensian grotesque (198). For him, Dickens's notion of the grotesque shows a development from the sportive grotesque of earlier novels like *Pickwick Papers* to the terrible grotesque of later novels like *Bleak House* and *Hard Times* (198). Of course Hollington here talks about a dominant mode of the grotesque, because as Ruskin himself underlines, a fictional work which primarily includes the terrible

grotesque may also contain the sportive one. According to Hollington, the ironic portrayal of modern industrial cities as hellish infernos is an example of the use of terrible grotesque in Dickens's novels, especially in the later ones like *Bleak House* and *Hard Times* (199).

1.2.3. Freudian Uncanny

In his 1919 essay on the uncanny, Freud says "the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar" and he builds the discussion on how and in what circumstances the familiar can become frightening and uncanny (3676). In German, *heimlich* is an ambiguous word; "on the one hand it means what is familiar and agreeable, and on the other, what is concealed and kept out of sight" (3679). As Tatar insightfully points out, reflecting on the nature of a home, as one of the meanings of the word *heimlich* is "belonging to the home", enlightens this double meaning of the word: While a home contains the familiar and the congenial, it also screens what is familiar and congenial from view, making a mystery of it (169). As this discussion shows, what is *heimlich*already integrates in itself what is *unheimlich,* what is kept out of sight. This is what Freud means when he says the meaning of the word *heimlich* "develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite *unheimlich*" (Freud 3679). The ambivalent nature of the word *heimlich* shows that the prefix un- does not negate the meaning of the adjective but functions rather as a "token of repression" (3694). Freud concludes that the factor of repression enables to appreciate what the German philosopher Schelling noted about the uncanny: '"*Unheimlich*" *is the name for everything that ought to have remained . . . secret and hidden but has come to light*' (italics in original, 3679). And yet, as Newsom underlines, the uncanny is not only about the revival of the repressed material, or unconscious material but also about the fact that the repressed memory "does not cease on that account to be repressed; if it did, the experience would simply be one of remembering" (67). Then, the feeling of

the uncanny is about the constant repression and recurring of an unconscious material which leads into the "experience of déjà vu" (ibid.).

Returning back to his initial definition of the concept of the uncanny as "that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar", Freud explains that the frightening element can be shown to be "something repressed which *recurs*"(3692). In the unconscious mind of an individual, there is a dominance of a "compulsion to repeat...powerful enough to override the pleasure principle", which is "very clearly expressed in the impulses of small children" (3691) like "infantile complexes" such as the "castration complex or womb-phantasy" (3698). And "whatever reminds [that individual] of this inner compulsion to repeat is perceived as uncanny" (3691). The frightening element can also be related to what Freud calls "omnipotence of thoughts" related to the old "animistic conception of the universe" (3692). Animistic conception of the universe is characterized by the idea that the world was peopled with the spirits of human beings, by the belief in the omnipotence of thoughts and the technique of magic based on that belief, by the belief in magical powers or *mana.* For Freud, each and every people has been through a phase of personal development corresponding to this animistic stage of primitive men. Although modern men have "surmounted" (3697) these modes of thought, "certain residues and traces of it [...] are still capable of manifesting themselves" (3692), as can be seen for instance in the fear of darkness, the dead and the return of the dead. "Everything which now strikes us as 'uncanny' fulfils the condition of touching those residues of animistic mental activity within us and bringing them to expression" (3692). In relation to these discussions, Freud concludes:

> [...] an uncanny effect is often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced, as when something that we hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality, or when a symbol takes over the full functions of the thing it symbolizes and so on (3694).

The uncanny is, as Nicholas Royle discusses, "a peculiar commingling of the familiar and unfamiliar" rather than being "simply an experience of strangeness or

alienation." The uncanny can arise in "the form of something familiar unexpectedly arising in a strange and unfamiliar context, or of something strange and unfamiliar unexpectedly arising in a familiar context" (1). This notion of unexpected arising points to the sense of haunting that the concept of the uncanny suggests.

For Freud, the feeling of uncanniness is experienced in the highest degree by many people in relation to death and dead bodies, to the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts (3692), and the most uncanny thing of all to some people is the idea of being buried alive by mistake, which is itself related to the phantasy of "intra-uterine existence" (3694). A living person can also become uncanny for us when we ascribe evil intentions to that person and when we believe that those evil intentions are to be carried out with the help of some special powers. Such ideas pertain to the realm of animism as discussed above (3693).

According to Freud, themes of uncanniness are most prominent in the phenomenon of the double, in all its nuances and manifestations. What Freud calls the double are characters who are to be considered identical because they look alike. The relation of these two people is intensified by what is called telepathy, so that the one possesses the knowledge, feelings and experience in common with the other. The subject may also identify himself with someone else and gets unsure of his true self; or he may substitute the other's self with his own. So, the double is about a doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self. The concept of the double also includes the constant recurrence of the same thing like the repetition of the same features, character traits, the same names or variations of the same crimes through several consecutive generations (3686).

On the concept of the double, Freud refers to his colleague Otto Rank who had pointed out the connection of the double with "reflections in mirrors, with shadows, with guardian spirits, with the belief in the soul and with the fear of death" (3687). For Rank, the double is an "energetic denial of the power of death" and the idea of the immortal soul was probably the first double of the body. As such, the double was originally an insurance against the destruction of the ego, a preservation against extinction (ibid.).

As Freud indicates, the idea of the double as a preservation against extinction have sprung from the primary narcissism which dominates the mind of the child and the primitive man. When this stage has been surmounted, the double reverses its aspect and it becomes "the uncanny harbinger of death" rather than being an insurance of immortality. Yet, with the passing of primary narcissism, the idea of the double does not necessarily disappear. In the later stages of the ego development, a special agency is slowly formed which is able to stand over against the rest of the ego. We become aware of this special agency as our conscience which observes and criticizes the self. The fact that man is capable of self observation gives a new meaning to the idea of the double. This mental agency becomes isolated and dissociated from the ego in the pathological cases of delusions of being watched (3687).

The German word *doppelgänger* which literally means the double-goer was brought into the language and the literary tradition by the German novelist Jean Paul in 1796. Yet, the sources of the double can be traced back to mythologies and folk epics, to some native cultures who tabued shadows and held the belief that twins are magical and reflections are awesome (Hallam 5, 6) and to some fundamental dualities in Christian theology like spirit and flesh, good and evil, God and the Devil (Herdman 5).

In literature, representations of the double are usually in the form of juxtaposed characters who reflect "mankind's chronic incompleteness, as well as his attempts, which range from the noble to the ludicrous, to achieve integration" (Hallam 4). The missing part of a character's personality can be represented by a completely different person in the story, as for instance, Don Quixote's fanciful idealism is complemented by Sancho's excessive practicality, or as in the case of Karamozov brothers the fragmentation can be multiple (5). As Newsom says, Dickens is also famous for his double characters or alter egos, which will be discussed in the following chapters (87).

CHAPTER 2

CARNIVALESQUE THINGS

2.1. " Heaps of Fantastic Things": Curiosities in the Old Curiosity Shop

Dickens' novel *The Old Curiosity Shop* opens with a scene in which Old Humphrey[1] meets Nell, the protagonist of the novel, in the street late at night. Having lost her way back to her home, Nell approaches Old Humphrey to ask for a direction and Old Humphrey offers to take her there. When they arrive at the home, what strikes Old Humphrey's attention is that their home is also a place of business, an old curiosity shop where Nell's grandfather exhibits curious items for sale. Old Humphrey's depictions of the curiosities in the shop and his perception of Nell and her grandfather as part of these curious objects inform how the whole material world that is elaborated on throughout the novel. In another words, the carnivalesque mingling of awry and old curiosities with Nell, who is depicted as a young and fresh object among them, is re-enacted in the whole novel.

Old Humphrey evokes quite a grotesque sensation in his depiction of the things in the old curiosity shop. When he enters the shop, the feeling he gets is a mixture of attraction and repulsion, which he reflects through his choice of words in his narration. The objects he sees in there are "curious things" that astonishes him, but they are also "rusty", "strange" and "distorted" things that evoke some darker sensations in him. He feels "as if some evil must ensue if [he] turned [his] back upon

[1] The first three chapters of *The Old Curiosity Shop* is narrated by an unnamed narrator who leaves his part as a narrator at the end of the third chapter "for the convenience of the narrative" (*OCS* 33). Yet, in chapter 34, he appears again as "the single gentleman" who is trying to locate Nell and her grandfather. That the first person narrator and the single gentleman are the same person is implied later in chapter 69. In the same chapter, the single gentleman also reveals himself as the brother of Nell's grandfather who have been seperated from each other for many years since they fell in love with the same woman. Since the novel evolved from the weekly installments of Dickens's *Master Humphrey's Clock* as stories about the elderly Master Humphrey (Ballinger 328-9), some critics identify the first person narrator as Old Humphrey. In order to avoid confusion, he will be called Old Humphrey throughout this thesis.

the place" (*OCS* 18). He describes the shop as an "uncongenial" and "gloomy place" which is "dark, and silent as the grave" (*OCS* 16, 17, 19):

> The place through which he made his way at leisure was one of those receptacles for old and curious things which seem to crouch in odd corners of his town and to hide their musty treasures from the public eye in jealousy and distrust. There were suits of mail standing like ghosts in armour here and there, fantastic carvings brought from monkish cloisters, rusty weapons of various kinds, distorted figures in china and wood and iron and ivory; tapestry and strange furniture that might have been designed in dreams (*OCS* 11).

The way the curiosities are presented is rather unusual and contrary to the eye-catching and orderly exhibition one may expect from a shop. They are placed in "heaps of fantastic things [...] huddled together" and placed "here and there" (*OCS* 11, 19). The old curiosity shop is not only a shop that exhibits Nell's grandfather's curiosities for sale, but it is also the home of Nell and her grandfather. As Rowlinson reminds us, "[i]n *The Old Curiosity Shop* the conjunction of home with business is peculiarly marked in that the shop and the home not only occupy the same premises, but are also indistinguishable from one another in their contents, [...] even that of Nell's bedroom" (348). Therefore, it is an unhomely home, or an uncanny place full of grotesque things which compel Old Humphrey to engage in thinking about them no matter how hard he tries to "court forgetfulness" (*OCS* 20):

> But all night, waking or in my sleep, the same thoughts recurred and the same images retained possession of my brain. I had ever before me the old dark murky rooms - the gaunt suits of mail with their ghostly silent air - the faces all awry, grinning from wood and stone - the dust and rust, and worm that lives in wood - and alone in the midst of all this lumber and decay, and ugly age, the beautiful child in her gentle slumber, smiling through her light and sunny dreams (*OCS* 20).

As Ginsburg comments, in *The Old Curiosity Shop* "the home was never represented as unambiguously positive, that is, as a natural protection against the evil world

outside. [...] Nature, rather than being aligned with the home, provides an alternative to it [...]. [The home] is not idealized as a refuge" ("Sentimentality" 94). This is strikingly underlined in the text through the comments of characters. As Nell describes, even before her grandfather started gambling and leaving her alone in the shop at nights, the place used to give Nell and her grandfather ambiguous feelings of happiness and dullness. For Nell, it was a place that could be "liked better" when they were tired or when they could picture in their minds the times they spent in nature:

> We often walked in the fields and among the green trees, and when we came home at night, we liked it better for being tired, and said what a happy place it was. And if it was dark and rather dull, we used to say, what did it matter to us, for it only made us remember our last walk with greater pleasure, and look forward to our next one. But now we never have these walks, and though it is the same house it is darker and much more gloomy than it used to be, indeed!(*OCS* 56).

For Kit's mother, what Nell experiences in the shop is a kind of confinement rather than a protection. She says "It's a cruel thing to keep the dear child shut up there" (*OCS* 88). In their discussions about how they may live after Quilp takes over the whole property as a payment for the grandfather's debts for him, both Nell and her grandfather dream of living free in the nature. When Nell talks about this idea for the first time, the imagery she uses conveys a sense of the freedom she wishes to find in nature:

> Let us walk through country places, and sleep in fields and under trees, and never think of money again, or anything that can make you sad, but rest at nights, and have the sun and wind upon our faces in the day, and thank God together! Let us never set foot in dark rooms or melancholy houses, any more, but wander up and down wherever we like to go; and when you are tired, you shall stop to rest in the pleasantest place that we can find, and I will go and beg for both (*OCS* 79).

For Nell's grandfather too, the shop has become a "scene of sorrow" that they need to leave behind to head for the "open sky": "It is far better to lie down at night beneath

an open sky like that yonder—see how bright it is—than to rest in close rooms which are always full of care and weary dreams. [...] To-morrow morning, dear, we'll turn our faces from this scene of sorrow, and be as free and happy as the birds." (*OCS* 100).

Quilp plays an important part in Nell's and her grandfather's ambiguous sense of their home. To a considerable extent, it is Quilp himself who forces them onto the road. He violates their private space on several occasions. In the scene where Nell and her grandfather are discussing how they will "leave this sad place [...], and beg [their] way from door to door", Quilp, "having entered unseen", appears behind them listening to every word they say (*OCS* 79). The narrator emphasizes this infiltration into their private space by saying "those were not words for other ears, nor was it a scene for other eyes. And yet other ears and eyes were there and greedily taking in all that passed, and more over they were the ears and eyes of no less a person than Mr. Daniel Quilp" (ibid.). Later when he takes over the shop with all its contents, Quilp "set[s] about making his quarters comfortable after his own fashion" even before Nell and her grandfather have left the place (*OCS* 90). He "encamp[s] in the back parlour" and occupies Nell's bed by making it "both as a sleeping place by night and as a kind of Divan by day" (*OCS* 90, 94). Thus forcing his presence in the shop, he makes it less homely. Quilp is also a sexual threat to Nell, which is yet another factor in Nell's sense of insecurity in their home.

In addition to being an unhomely home, the old curiosity shop is also ambiguous in terms of its status as a shop. The curiosities in his shop seem to have some other definitive value for the grandfather other than the monetary one. Although it is a shop, there is no account of any sale in the whole narration except for the one that Quilp arranges when he takes over the whole shop as a payment for the grandfather's debts for him. As relics of a bygone age, like "suits of mail" and "rusty weapons" that are suggestive of the middle ages, the curiosities at the shop have a certain cultural and monetary value that can yield profit when they are sold (*OCS* 11). They are objects that have become durable in terms of their social value as discussed by the

anthropologist Michael Thompson. Thompson offers an analytical category in which he classifies objects into three categories according to their social value, which are transient, durable and rubbish objects (Chappell 786). According to this categorization, if the value of objects decreases over time, they become transient objects, but if their values retain or increase over time, they become durable objects (ibid.). Rubbish items occupy a middle state between these two categories, in which objects have no immediate value and may either remain as rubbish, some of which can be consumed by services like refuse disposal and sewage treatment, or slide to the durable category if they have the chance of being discovered (Chappell 786, 787). If considered in the light of Thompson's categorization, they are objects that are discovered and revalued as relics or antiques for sale. Although these curiosities are already used items, their value has survived the passage of time so that they can be kept, exhibited and sold for different purposes than they are originally for. They are durable objects.

When Old Humphrey describes the impression of the curiosities on him, he imagines that it is the grandfather himself who has discovered these curiosities and notices a peculiar association between the grandfather and his curiosities, which objectifies the grandfather as part of his collection:

> The haggard aspect of the little old man was wonderfully suited to the place; he might have groped among old churches and tombs and deserted houses and gathered all the spoils with his own hands. There was nothing in the whole collection but was in keeping with himself, nothing that looked older or more worn than he (*OCS* 11).

The image of the grandfather searching among old and deserted places to discover curious objects as fancied by Old Humphrey, suggests that the grandfather has a different kind of enthusiasm for curiosities than can be expected from a usual dealer. He is like Old Humphrey himself, who makes curious stories out of observations collected while wandering around. Nell's grandfather is like a collector who so earnestly wants to possess curious items that he "gather[s] all the spoils with his own

hands" (*OCS* 11). Therefore, the place in which he collects his curiosities is like a "receptacle", as the narrator suggests, that contains and keeps these curiosities intact, rather than a shop (ibid.). And his curiosities are like his collection, rather than his commodities for sale, that he "hide[s] from the public eye in jealousy and distrust" (ibid.). They are his genuinely owned possessions. Bill Brown's comments on the collector and the act of collecting may be useful here. He says that

> The act of collecting is one of conferring on the particularized object a value that derives from its place in the collection, not from its exchange within the world of fungible goods, nor as the manifestations of labor. The collector reobjectifies the object and relocates it from the commodity scene (the shop, the auction, the market) into an other space, a utopic or heterotopic space where value, far from being a mystery, is, to the collector, utterly transparent (*Sense*158).

Similarly, although the grandfather's receptacle for his collection of curiosities is named a shop, it is not represented in the text as a place where some commodity exchange happens. Rather, it is represented as an ambiguous place where a home coexists with an alleged shop, and where the value of curiosities comes from the collector's own attachment to them. The curiosities seem to attain their value for the grandfather himself outside the circulation of commodities. Although these points are not directly stated in the narration, there is some further textual evidence that may justify them. Towards the end of the novel, Old Humphrey, as his long lost brother, tells how it is in keeping with the grandfather's character to become a collector and dealer of curiosities. In his tale he relates that the grandfather "had entertained a fondness for" curiosities since he was a boy and that he had become a dealer of curiosities in his later life out of necessity (*OCS* 524). The reader learns how the grandfather had been "nearly beggared" by the husband of his daughter and how the grandfather had to look after his grandson and granddaughter when she died (ibid.):

> [The] grandfather to these two children, was now a broken man; crushed and borne down, less by the weight of years than by the heavy hand of sorrow. With the wreck of his possessions, he began to trade—in pictures first, and then in

> curious ancient things. He had entertained a fondness for such matters from a boy, and the tastes he had cultivated were now to yield him an anxious and precarious subsistence (*OCS* 524).

As the grandfather's brother continues to relate, dealing in curiosities provided them with an unstable sort of subsistence until his grandson's "profligate and hardened course drained [the grandfather] of money" and "it was then that there began to beset him, and to be ever in his mind, a gloomy dread of poverty and want" (*OCS* 525). At this point, the grandfather developed a habit of gambling resulting in an endless cycle of his borrowing money from Quilp, without telling him that he is gambling, only to lose it again at the gambling table. When Quilp finds out that the grandfather has been gambling and losing money, he takes "formal possession of the premises and all upon them, in virtue of certain legal powers to that effect, which few understood and none presumed to call in question" (*OCS* 90). Feeling "deceived" by the grandfather, Quilp deceives him on a whim "with the assistance of a man of law", Sampson Brass, by means of a so-called legal binding that is quite suspicious (*OCS*83, 100). His uncontrollable gambling habit makes the grandfather prone to the fiendishness of Quilp who pays no heed of his desperate cry:

> 'Nay, Quilp, good Quilp,' gasped the old man, catching at his skirts, 'you and I have talked together, more than once, of her poor mother's story. The fear of her coming to poverty has perhaps been bred in me by that. Do not be hard upon me, but take that into account. You are a great gainer by me. Oh spare me the money for this one last hope!' (*OCS* 83).

And yet ultimately, the grandfather loses his things since he loses control of himself through his addiction to gambling. The loss of his collection of curiosities (and thence Little Nell as one of the curiosities, is endangered) and their home, no matter how unhomely it was, is experienced as a loss of his own self which turns him into a "listless, passionless creature" and throws him into "a state of childishness" (*OCS* 99). This situation forces Nell to acknowledge that "the whole burden of their two lives had fallen upon her, and henceforth she must think and act for both." (*OCS*99,

323). In addition to the loss of self experienced by the grandfather, the text also foregrounds the loss of objects and the shop once more, in an almost theatrical way, at the very end of the novel. When Kit takes his children years later to the place where old curiosity shop once stood, he cannot locate it. The shop has disappeared from the registers of the text altogether only to leave a faint idea about its whereabouts:

> He sometimes took them to the street where she had lived; but new improvements had altered it so much, it was not like the same. The old house had been long ago pulled down, and a fine broad road was in its place. At first he would draw with his stick a square upon the ground to show them where it used to stand. But he soon became uncertain of the spot, and could only say it was thereabouts, he thought, and these alterations were confusing. Such are the changes which a few years bring about, and so do things pass away, like a tale that is told! (*OCS* 554).

Taking his children there is part of the story he tells them, the "story of good Miss Nell who died" (*OCS* 553). Providing a cyclical closure to the novel by ending it at the very place it started suggests that the whole story, and the whole collection of curious characters that are themselves curiosities of the novel, emanate from that place.

While the grandfather's looks are in harmony with his old and decayed curiosities, Nell's position as a curiosity is established through contrasts. Since she is "so very young, so spiritual, so slight and fairy-like a creature" in the eyes of Old Humphrey, she looks like "the only pure, fresh, youthful object in the throng" (*OCS* 19, 20). As Old Humphrey says, what makes the place "uncongenial" for Nell is the striking contrast between the old, distorted and fantastic objects and the youth and beauty of Nell: "If these helps to my fancy had all been wanting, and I had been forced to imagine her in a common chamber, with nothing unusual or uncouth in its appearance, it is very probable that I should have been less impressed with her strange and solitary state" (*OCS* 20).

Nell also becomes a curiosity through the gaze, or the curiosity of other characters, which also assumes voyeuristic qualities in most of the cases. Right at the beginning of the novel, it is the curious gaze of Old Humphrey that identifies Nell as a curiosity in the text. He conveys an excessive interest in Nell when he narrates how he has "been so thoroughly possessed" by Nell, her lonely and neglected situation, and the "uncongenial place" she lives in (*OCS* 19). His curiosity compels him to picture Nell, who is "so very young, so spiritual, so slight and fairy-like a creature" in his eyes, asleep among the curiosities (*OCS*19). He realizes that he cannot "dismiss her from [his] recollection" (*OCS* 20)."Or perhaps", as Freedgood draws attention, "he means he cannot dismiss her from his *collection,* for he goes on to turn her into a different kind of curiosity, 'imagin[ing] her in her future life, holding her solitary way among a crowd of wild grotesque companions; the only pure, fresh, youthful object in the throng.'" ("Uncanny Daughter" 33).Old Humphrey narrates his imaginations as follows:

> "It would be curious speculation" said I, after some restless turns across and across the room, "to imagine her in future life, holding her solitary way among a crowd of wild grotesque companions; the only pure, fresh, youthful object in the throng. It would be curious to find ----". I checked myself here, for the theme was carrying me along with it at a great pace, and I already saw before me a region on which I was little disposed to enter. I agreed with myself that this was idle musing, and resolved to go to bed, and court forgetfulness (*OCS* 20).

Yet his curiosity for Nell becomes an uncanny experience for him and he finds that "all night, waking or in [his] sleep, the same thoughts recurred and the same images retained possession of [his] brain" (ibid.). Jackson suggests that Old Humphrey's curiosity for Nell has some implicit sexual connotations:

> The old man Nell has brought home seems benign, but he takes an inordinate interest in her physical appearance, her sleeping arrangements, and the lack of protection she is given

> during her grandfather's evenings out. [...] [He] tells her grandfather that “it always grieves me to contemplate the initiation of children into the ways of life, when they are scarcely more than infants. It checks their confidence and simplicity – two of the best qualities that Heaven gives them – and demands that they share our sorrows before they are capable of entering into our enjoyments.” (6). On the surface, this statement sounds harmless enough, but it has sinister, pedophilic undertones. [...] He is perfectly aware that Nell is too young to engage in sexual “enjoyments”, yet he feels compelled to think about the possibility of Nell’s “initiation”. Even after he leaves [the old curiosity shop], the old man continues to think about “a region on which [he] was little disposed to enter” (13).The old man senses that Nell really has no dependable source of protection and that the wicked forces that surround her will inevitably destroy her innocent defencelessness. If this old, infirm man can sense Nell’s budding sexuality and the lack of concern her grandfather exhibits in protecting it, other more capable predators will sense it too (Jackson 45).

Similarly, Hennelly also notes that in the "Old Humphrey's ambivalent feelings about Nell [... there is the] Oedipal element of sibling rivalry which occurred years earlier between himself and Grandfather over Nell's future grandmother - whom the child uncannily resembles" (113). Although Hennelly does not extend his argument, it can be deduced that it is the uncanny resemblance of Nell and her dead grandmother that make Old Humphrey remember his past love that he suppressed many years ago. When Old Humphrey narrates his past to Mr Garland, he explains how he had to suppress his love for Nell's grandmother:

> There were once two brothers, who loved each other dearly. [...H]owever, they became rivals too soon. The deepest and strongest affection of both their hearts settled upon one object. The youngest [...] was the first to find this out. I will not tell you what misery he underwent, what agony of soul he knew, how great his mental struggle was. He had been a sickly child. His brother [...] had many and many a day denied himself the sports he loved, to sit beside his couch [...] to carry him in his arms to some green spot [...]. But when the time of trial came, the younger brother's heart was full of those old days. Heaven strengthened it to repay the sacrifices

> of inconsiderate youth by one of thoughtful manhood. He left his brother to be happy. The truth never passed his lips, and he quitted the country, hoping to die abroad (*OCS* 523).

This suppressed memory is revived through the resemblance of Nell to his old love, thereby creating an uncanny experience for Old Humphrey. Therefore, the "recollection" he mentions while narrating his uncanny dreams about Nell is also the remembrance of a past love that he had to suppress.

Although the sexual implications of Old Humphrey's excessive interest in Nell is slight and hidden in between the lines, Quilp's comments about her are quite direct and he openly makes sexual advances towards her. Therefore Quilp is the one who awakens Nell to the fact that she attracts a sexually charged gaze from others. When Quilp asks Nell "to be [his] Mrs Quilp", she does not understand it at first in her naiveness but when she gets it she "shrink[s] from him in great agitation, and tremble[s] violently" (*OCS* 52). Although it looks as if it is a marriage proposal, the way he puts it has a sinister kind of sexual implication that makes Nell shudder:

> "How should you like to be my number two, Nelly?"
> "To be what, sir?"
> "My number two, Nelly, my second, my MrsQuilp," said the dwarf.
> The child looked frightened, but seemed not to understand him, which MrQuilp observing, hastened to explain his meaning more distinctly.
> "To be MrsQuilp the second, when MrsQuilp the first is dead, sweet Nell," said Quilp, wrinkling up his eyes and luring her towards him with his bent forefinger, "to be my wife, my little cherry-cheeked, red-lipped wife (*OCS* 51, 52).

Seeing her frightened is a "delightful prospect" for Quilp, who is "delighted in torturing" people whenever he can (*OCS* 52, 80). He seems to get a sexual kind of pleasure in frightening Nell, or in other words, torturing her takes the place of sex in giving him delight. About Quilp's sexual appetites and his violence, Schor comments that the text insists on sexualizing his violence as suggested by the arms of his wife

which "were seldom free from impressions of his fingers in black and blue colours" ("Uncanny Daughter" 213).

Even if he cannot act out his sexual desires for Nell, he takes pleasure in watching her being kissed by her grandfather, for instance. When Quilp observes how her grandfather kisses Nell, his comments signify that he takes a sensual kind of pleasure in watching her being kissed. He "smack[s] his lips" as if he were the one who kisses her, almost in a kind of devouring way as fancied by him which make him smack his lips, and he comments that "what a nice kiss that was just upon the rosy part (*OCS* 80). The narrator also conveys Nell's and her grandfather's sense of discomfort upon Quilp's remarks:

> "Ah!" said the dwarf , smacking his lips, "what a nice kiss that was just upon the rosy part. What a capital kiss!"
> Nell was none the slower in going away, for his remarks. Quilp looked after her with an admiring leer, and when she had closed the door, fell to complimenting the old man upon her charms.
> "Such a fresh, blooming, modest little bud, neighbour" said Quilp, nursing his short leg, and making his eyes twinkle very much; "such a chubby, rosy, cosy, little Nell!"
> The old man answered by a forced smile, and was plainly struggling with a feeling of the keenest and most exquisite impatience (*OCS* 80).

Quilp's occupation of her bed, asking her whether she is going to sit upon [his] knee" and if she would like to be "[his] wife, [his] little cherry-cheeked, red-lipped wife" are other advances of Quilp that have clear sexual connotations (*OCS* 51, 93). Such sexual remarks of Quilp make Nell so "frightened" that even when he "pat[s] her on the head" she "shrink[s] so quickly from his touch and [feels] such an instinctive desire to get out of his reach" (*OCS* 51, 57). She never feels secure when Quilp is around, not even when she is at home.

Throughout the narration, Quilp acts as the most straightforward and threatening predator trying to seduce Nell. But there are other people as well who sexually objectify her. Her brother Fred sees her as a sexual commodity which he can sell to his friend Dick Swiveller. He notices that his sister "will be a woman soon" who is

"nearly fourteen", and thus she can make "a beautiful young wife" (*OCS* 26, 61). He wrongly assumes that "there is no doubt about [his grandfather's] being rich" and the money "will all be [Nell's]" when their grandfather dies (*OCS* 63). So he plans that if Nell and Dick marry, "[Dick] become[s] the sole inheritor of the wealth of this rich old hunks, [Dick and him] spend it together, and [Dick] get[s] into the bargain a beautiful young wife" (*OCS* 62, 63). Rowlinson insightfully draws attention to another type of sexual objectification of Nell in the text. According to him, although why the grandfather always uses Nell to mediate his relations with Quilp is never explained, the text clearly foregrounds how the grandfather puts her at risk by using her as a mediator (370). On almost every occasion, Quilp makes his attractions to Nell very clear to the grandfather, which makes him nervous, and yet he keeps sending Nell to Quilp to ask for money. This shows that the grandfather very consciously "uses Nell as a lure to induce Quilp to loan him money" (Rowlinson 370). For one of the performers of the Punch and Judy show that Nell and her grandfather meet on the road, Codlin, Nell is again an object to be "looked at [...] with an interest which did not appear to be diminished when he glanced at her helpless companion" (*OCS* 130). His gaze is also voyeuristic, as in the scene in which he "follow[s] close at her heels, and occasionally admonish[es] her ankles with the legs of the theatre in a very abrupt and painful manner" (*OCS* 152). The way Codlin reflects his sexual objectification of Nell is quite reminiscent of Quilp's sadistic behaviour. Just like Quilp, he takes sexual pleasure in tormenting her.

Quilp himself is another curiosity of the novel, towards whom the reader's gaze is directed at throughout the narrative. Unlike Nell's well-proportioned, symmetrical and beautiful body, Quilp is bestial and has a grotesque body. He is from the start associated with his material body that is shown to be distorted. He is described as "an elderly man of remarkably hard features and forbidding aspect, and so low in stature as to be quite a dwarf, though his head and face were large enough for the body of a giant" (*OCS* 27). Though he has a diminutive body, his bodily parts are all excessive. He has a "distorted face with the tongue lolling out" and with "his great goggle eyes" (*OCS* 45, 365). In this way, his body is depicted like the broken objects that draw attention to their materiality and thingness, and other characters in the novel observe

and comment upon his appearance. Kit calls him "an uglier dwarf than can be seen anywheres for a penny" (*OCS* 53). In the scene where Mrs Quilp, Quilp's mother in-law and Mr Brass commemorate him in a pretentious way after hearing false reports of Quilp's drowning, they discuss Quilp's bodily traits to be written up in a "descriptive advertisement:

> 'It is a melancholy pleasure to recall his traits. Respecting his legs now—?'
> 'Crooked, certainly,' said Mrs Jiniwin. 'Do you think they *were* crooked?' said Brass, in an insinuating tone. 'I think I see them now coming up the street very wide apart, in nankeen' pantaloons a little shrunk and without straps. Ah! what a vale of tears we live in. Do we say crooked?'
> 'I think they were a little so,' observed Mrs Quilp with a sob.
> 'Legs crooked,' said Brass, writing as he spoke. 'Large head, short body, legs crooked—'
> 'Very crooked,' suggested Mrs Jiniwin.
> 'We'll not say very crooked, ma'am,' said Brass piously. 'Let us not bear hard upon the weaknesses of the deceased. He is gone, ma'am, to where his legs will never come in question.—We will content ourselves with crooked, Mrs Jiniwin.'
> 'I thought you wanted the truth,' said the old lady. 'That's all.' (*OCS* 371).

Through some animalistic depictions, he is positioned at the margins of the category of human. He has, for instance, a "dog-like smile" which seems to appear on his face out of context (*OCS* 42):

> But what added most to the grotesque expression on his face, was a ghastly smile, which appeared to be the mere result of habit and to have no connection with any mirthful or complacent feeling, constantly revealed the few discoloured fangs that were yet scattered in his mouth, and gave him the aspect of a panting dog (*OCS*27).

He has "hawk's eyes" and he is "as watchful as a lynx" (*OCS* 43, 364). He describes himself "as sharp as a ferret, and as cunning as a weasel" (*OCS* 178). His appetites are grotesque too and cause his wife and her friends to wonder if he is really a human being:

> [...] he ate hard eggs, shell and all, devoured gigantic prawns with the heads and tails on, chewed tobacco and water-cresses at the same time and with extraordinary greediness, drank boiling tea without winking, bit his fork and spoon till they bent again, and in short performed so many horrifying and uncommon acts that the women were nearly frightened out of their wits, and began to doubt if he were really a human creature (*OCS* 45).

Although his remarkable physical features are excessively unusual, he incites in others both repulsion and attraction. His wife's comments on Quilp illustrates this: "Quilp has such a way with him when he likes, that the best looking woman here couldn't refuse him if I was dead, and she was free, and he chose to make love to her." (*OCS* 37). Even Nell, who feels so threatened by him, finds Quilp funny in some respects:

> Little Nell stood timidly by, with her eyes raised to the countenance of Mr. Quilp as he read the letter, plainly showing by her looks that while she entertained some fear and distrust of the little man, she was much inclined to laugh at his uncouth appearance and grotesque attitude. (*OCS* 50).

Although Quilp looks in stark contrast to Nell, they both have small bodies. The much emphasized "littleness" of Nell, with her small and compact body and everything about her that is so small (her "little bed that a fairy might have slept in" in her "little room", her "little hands" *OCS* 11, 13), serves in a way to blend her with the dwarf Quilp. Nell's diminutive body is not much about her young age but rather her mould. As Dick Swiveller says about Nell, she is a "fine girl of her age but small" (*OCS* 61). Her character traits are also markedly contrasted to Quilp's. She embodies "those virtues associated with the hearthside angel", like her domestic skills (Waters "Gender" 124). She mends the puppet Judy's cloth when they were with the showmen Codlin and Short (ibid.). She is also the embodiment of selflessness. As Schor reminds the readers she shares her portion with her grandfather even when they have very little to eat, as in the scene when "Her grandfather ate greedily, which she was glad to see" ("Uncanny" 40). On the contrary, Quilp is depicted as a sadistic person. His mother-in-law relates his

relationship with his wife: " He is the greatest tyrant that ever lived, she daren't call her soul her own, he makes her tremble with a word and even with a look, he frightens her to death, and she hasn't the spirit to give him a word back, no, not a single word." (*OCS* 38). He takes delight in "keeping Mrs Quilp and her mother in a state of incessant agitation and suspense" (*OCS* 375). Therefore he enjoys a "free and gipsy mode of life [...which provides him an] agreeable freedom from the restraints of matrimony" in his "Bachelor's Hall" (*OCS* 375). As Jackson says, Nell on the other hand, as a young girl whose sexuality is about to awaken, fears her sexual appeal since these feelings are alien to her (44). The text projects Nell's sexual fears onto Quilp who subverts the ideal and conventional image of Nell. As her grotesque double, Quilp represents those realities that have to be suppressed in order to maintain that the conventional image is real and normal. That is why, as will be discussed in the next chapter, Nell has uncanny dreams about Quilp which has sexual connotations.

The text directs the attention of the reader to Nell as a curiosity even when a particular scene is about other curiosities of the novel. As will be discussed in the following section in detail, what attracts the attention of the audience who has come to see Mrs Jarley's waxworks is not the waxwork collection itself but Nell, whose "beauty [...] coupled with the gentle and timid bearing, produced quite a sensation in the little country place" (*OCS* 220). Similarly, when Nell and her grandfather meet travelling showmen, the human curiosities like the "young lady on stilts" in the Grinder's lot, or the "little lady without legs or arms who had jogged forward in a van" appear quite fleetingly in the text, and the narrative keeps focusing on Nell (*OCS* 139, 148). Her grandfather's haggard aspect, his old and worn out appearance, underline the youthfulness of Nell, as his curiosities also do. While the text objectifies the grandfather as one of the old curiosities among his collection, it does so to enhance Nell as a pure and youthful object. And throughout the narrative, she is always objectified in a way that makes her stand out among other curiosities.

In her death at the end of the novel, her position as a curious object is marked again. As early as 1873, Dickens' friend and biographer John Forster commented that Nell

had to die "so that the gentle pure figure and form should never change to the fancy" (qtd. in Janes 336). Much recent feminist criticism emphasizes the bodily connotations of Nell's death just at the moment when she reaches puberty. According to Schor, for instance, Nell's death "on the verge of menstruation, of which the blood that falls from her feet at every step is a hint", enables the narrative to keep her little so that she can stand in the place of the whole novel as a memento ("Uncanny" 42).

2.2. "So like living creatures, and yet so unlike": Wax Figures

In the journey of Nell and her grandfather, their path crosses that of Mrs Jarley, the proprietor of a waxwork collection that she exhibits travelling through the country. She is a curious lady, "stout and comfortable to look upon" and drinking from "a bottle of rather suspicious character" (*OCS* 199, 200). When Nell and her grandfather are passing by her caravan, she glances at Nell "with eyes of modest but hungry admiration" (*OCS* 201). Nell shows a curiosity about Mrs Jarley and her waxworks too. When she asks Mrs Jarley if waxwork "is [...] funnier than Punch", her "curiosity [is] awakened" by Mrs Jarley's description:

> It isn't funny at all [...]. It's calm and - what's that word again - critical? - no - classical, that's it - it's calm and classical. No low beatings and knockings about, no jokings and squeakings like your precious Punches, but always the same, with a constantly unchanging air of coldness and gentility; and so like life, that if wax-work only spoke and walked about, you'd hardly know the difference. I won't go so far as to say, that, as it is, I've seen wax-work quite like life, but I've certainly seen some life that was exactly like wax-work (*OCS* 207).

Mrs Jarley's collection includes such grotesque and sensational figures like "the wild boy of the woods", "the woman who poisoned fourteen families with pickled walnuts", "the old lady who died of dancing at a hundred and thirty-two" and "other historical characters and interesting but misguided individuals" (*OCS* 218). Although

she says that her waxworks are "calm and classical" pieces, they are in fact grotesque caricatures of human body. They have an air of unnaturalness and exaggeration with their very wide open eyes, very muscled legs and arms, very surprised countenances and very pigeon like breasts:

> the stupendous collection was uncovered, and there were displayed, on a raised platform some two feet from the floor, running round the room and parted from the rude public by a crimson rope breast high, divers sprightly effigies of celebrated characters, singly and in groups, clad in glittering dresses of various climes and times, and standing more or less unsteadily upon their legs, with their eyes very wide open, and their nostrils very much inflated, and the muscles of their legs and arms very strongly developed, and all their countenances expressing great surprise. All the gentlemen were very pigeon-breasted and very blue about the beards; and all the ladies were miraculous figures; and all the ladies and all the gentlemen were looking intensely nowhere, and staring with extraordinary earnestness at nothing (*OCS* 217).

Mrs Jarley's waxworks depict real life figures in life size, and yet they are also objects that display deanimated versions of life. The juxtaposition of life and death in wax figures make them "look[] so like living creatures, and yet so unlike" them (*OCS* 222). Depictions of Mrs Jarley's waxworks throughout the narrative are illustrative of an "indeterminate ontology where things seem slightly human and humans seem slightly thing-like" (Brown *Sense* 13). Images of people and waxworks are fused together both through the curious gaze of others and uncanny dreams of Nell, as will be discussed below.

Mrs Jarley pities Nell and her grandfather when Nell says "We are poor people, ma'am, and are only wandering about. We have nothing to do; - I wish we had" (OCS 207). So she employs Nell "to point [the waxworks] out to the" audience, and her grandfather "in the way of helping to dust the figures" (*OCS* 207, 209). Her task is ironic in that while she is pointing out Mrs Jarley's wax figures, it is in fact herself who attracts most of the attention from the audience: "grown-up folks began to be interested in the bright-eyed girl, and some score of little boys fell desperately in

love" (*OCS* 221). She at once becomes "an important item of curiosities" and she is taken for a wax figure "by an admiring group of children" who also believe "that her grandfather was a cunning device in wax" (*OCS* 214). Mrs Jarley also looks like her waxworks when she "remains for sometime as mute as one of her own figures" (*OCS* 208).

People and waxworks are merged through uncanny fantasies as well, such as Nell's uncanny dreams which transform Quilp into a wax figure. The persisting influence of Quilp in Nell's fantasy draws her to dream one night that all the wax-works of Mrs Jarley were in fact Quilp in disguise:

> Quilp indeed was a perpetual night-mare to the child, who was constantly haunted by a vision of his ugly face and stunted figure. She slept, for their better security, in the room where the wax-work figures were, and she never retired to this place at night but she tortured herself—she could not help it—with imagining a resemblance, in some one or other of their death-like faces, to the dwarf, and this fancy would sometimes so gain upon her that she would almost believe he had removed the figure and stood within the clothes. Then there were so many of them with their great glassy eyes—and, as they stood one behind the other all about her bed, they looked so like living creatures, and yet so unlike in their grim stillness and silence, that she had a kind of terror of them [...] (*OCS* 222).

This scene, where the wax figures stood "about her bed", replays the first scene in which Nell's bed is surrounded by her grandfather's grim curiosities with their "faces all awry, grinning from wood and stone" (*OCS* 20). It is Nell's fancy that imagines Quilp disguising himself inside the waxworks, and yet it would not surprise the reader if it were really so. After all, it was Quilp who seemed to "get through key-holes" and spy on Nell and her grandfather in the old curiosity shop by disguising himself among the curiosities: "he sat, one leg cocked carelessly over the other, his chin resting on the palm of his hand, his head turned a little on one side, and his ugly features twisted into a complacent grimace" (*OCS* 79).

Mrs Jarley's waxworks undoubtedly have an uncanny impression about them as in the sense of uncertainty about whether an object is living or inanimate as discussed by Freud (3680). But Nell's dream fusing the image of Quilp with the waxworks creates a more striking instance of uncanniness. The life-likeness of Mrs Jarley's waxwork collections and their stories full of all sorts of deviances (like sexual ones) compel Nell to imagine a likeness between Quilp and the waxworks, a likeness which "she could not help" imagining (*OCS* 222). Mrs Jarley relates Jasper Packlemerton's story as a "warning to all young ladies" (*OCS* 218):

> [...] Jasper Packlemerton of atrocious memory, who courted and married fourteen wives, and destroyed them all, by tickling the soles of their feet when they were sleeping in the consciousness of innocence and virtue. On being brought to the scaffold and asked if he was sorry for what he had done, he replied yes, he was sorry for having let 'em off so easy, and hoped all Christian husbands would pardon him the offence. Let this be a warning to all young ladies to be particular in the character of the gentlemen of their choice. Observe that his fingers are curled as if in the act of tickling, and that his face is represented with a wink, as he appeared when committing his barbarous murders.' (*OCS* 218).

Packlemerton killed his wives in a playful way, "by tickling the soles of their feet", and yet this playful act is both erotically charged and fatal. As Gao notes, being tickled to death means "taking part in sexual orgasm and experiencing the *stirh und werde* feelings (to die and to be resurrected) provoked by deep sexual satisfaction" (100). Packlemerton's playful but erotically charged act recalls Quilp's ways of sexual advances towards Nell. Like Packlemerton's victims, virginal Nell sleeps in "innocence and virtue" while her sexual predator Quilp chases her so that he can tickle the sole of her feet. He had shown this type of playful and yet erotic behaviours towards Nell before as when he asks her whether she is going to “sit upon [his] knee” or "pat[s] her on the head [...which makes Nell feel] an instinctive desire to get out of his reach" (*OCS* 57, 93).

Nell constantly feels "haunted by a vision of [Quilp's] ugly face" and this vision always takes the shape of an object (*OCS* 222). For Nell, Quilp is "a monstrous

image that had come down from its niche", or a "wax-work himself" or a wax-work in the shape of Mrs Jarley (*OCS* 210, 213). Right after their arrival in the city with the Gothic arch, where Mrs Jarley is going to exhibit her wax collection, Quilp appears in front of Nell while she was contemplating the fallen old statue "with mingled sensation of curiosity and fear" (*OCS* 210):

> There was an empty niche from which some old statue had fallen or been carried away hundreds of years ago, and she was thinking what strange people it must have looked down upon when it stood there, and how many hard struggles might have taken place, and how many murders might have been done, upon that silent spot, when there suddenly emerged from the black shade of the arch, a man. The instant he appeared, she recognised him—Who could have failed to recognise, in that instant, the ugly misshapen Quilp! The street beyond was so narrow, and the shadow of the houses on one side of the way so deep, that he seemed to have risen out of the earth. But there he was. (*OCS* 210).

Quilp does not notice Nell who "withdrew into a dark corner" beneath the arch. Nell is so startled that she fancies Quilp is the fallen old statue itself, the "monstrous image that had come down from its niche [...] casting a backward glance at its old house" (*OCS*212). Although Quilp does not see her and most probably goes back to London, Nell cannot shake off the idea that he was in search of her and her grandfather and "felt as if she were hemmed in by a legion of Quilps, and the very air itself were filled with them" (*OCS* 212). Similar uncanny fancies persist in her mind all night. The scene below is marked with implicit sexual connotations and shows that for Nell sexuality is something that creates a "mingled sensation of curiosity and fear" (*OCS* 210). Her fears give her "fits and starts" but the dream realization of sexual curiosity gives her " overpowering and irresistible enjoyment":

> she could get none but broken sleep by fits and starts all night, for fear of Quilp, who throughout her uneasy dreams was somehow connected with the wax-work, or was wax-work himself, or was Mrs Jarley and wax-work too, or was himself, Mrs Jarley, wax-work, and a barrel organ all in one, and yet not exactly any of them either. At length, towards break of day, that deep sleep came upon her which succeeds

> to weariness and over-watching, and which has no consciousness but one of overpowering and irresistible enjoyment (*OCS* 213).

Such "shape shifting" of Quilp, in Hennelly's words (100), is perfectly suited to a setting full of wax works, which Mrs Jarley can transform with wigs and costumes for different audiences. She alters Mr Grimaldi the clown "to represent Mr Lindley Murray" the grammatist "by altering the face and costume", and "turn[s] a murderess of great renown into Mrs Hannah More". With "a dark wig", Mary Queen of Scots is turned into Lord Byron and it becomes "such a complete image of Lord Byron that the young ladies quite screamed when they saw it" (ibid.). In a carnivalesque ambivalence, the most extreme opposites of historical figures are brought together and are turned into carnivalesque doubles in Mrs Jarley's wax figures. The grammatist Mr Lindley Murray, who historically represents standardization and rules, is transformed into Mr Grimaldi the clown, whose pantomime art represents exceeding of boundaries. The beautiful queen is turned into Lord Byron, who has a bodily distortion of club foot. She transforms a murderess into Mrs Hannah More who is "the founder of the Religious Tract Society" (OCS 221, 598). Such carnivalesque gathering of opposites dispels the gloomy and sentimental undertone of the novel that follows little Nell to her death by blending fantasy with reality, people with objects.

2.3. "Grub on in a muddle": Krook's Things

In *Bleak House,* the text dwells on the idea of hidden value and meaning in the descriptions of Krook's things; his hoard of litter and clutter of materials. Through an exchange of hands, some of the documents and papers he has hoarded mediate a relation between some of the characters in the novel and serve to resolve, although partly, the two mysteries of the novel: Lady Dedlock's past and the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case, as will be discussed below. So, throughout the narrative, an act of

digging up for meaning and value among Krook's things is necessitated on the parts of both the characters and the readers.

The first descriptions of Krook's shop are given through the eyes of Esther, who goes there with Richard and Ada to visit Miss Flite's lodging above it. In her expectations of "receiving judgement shortly" in the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case, Miss Flite believes "it will be a good omen for [her]" if Esther, Richard and Ada, whom she calls "youth, and hope, and beauty" respectively, visit her lodging (*BH* 61). As Esther narrates:

> [Miss Flite] had stopped at a shop over which was written KROOK, RAG AND BOTTLE WAREHOUSE. Also, in long thin letters, KROOK, DEALER IN MARINE STORES. In one part of the window was a picture of a red paper mill at which a cart was unloading a quantity of sacks of old rags. In another was the inscription BONES BOUGHT. In another, KITCHEN-STUFF BOUGHT. In another, OLD IRON BOUGHT. In another, WASTE-PAPER BOUGHT. In another, LADIES' AND GENTLEMEN'S WARDROBES BOUGHT (*BH* 61).

What Krook collects is all sorts of residues of the big cycle of consumption in the urban capitalist market of London. Here some segments of the society make a living out of the garbage like "the extraordinary creatures in rags secretly groping among the swept-out rubbish for pins and other refuse" that Esther sees on the streets of London city centre before entering Krook's shop (*BH* 60). Commonly known as the "scavagers" or street-finders, as discussed by Henry Mayhew in his 1861 work *The London Labour and The London Poor,* these people collected anything of a resale value from the garbage like rags, bones, bits of metals, old wood and cigar ends, and sold them to street buyers, dealers in marine stores, and rag and bottle shops (Shatto 58-9). Marine store shops and rag and bottle shops were, as Shatto notes, in many instances different names for the same types of business dealing in any kind of worn out material articles (59). In his shop Krook collects discarded paper, rags, bones, bottles, and all sorts of reusable material as part of a recycle economy, which is suggested by the "picture of red paper mill" in Krook's shop window (*BH* 61). Therefore, Krook's things hold a latent economic reuse value. In the nineteenth

century, the standard paper making was chiefly done by recycling old rags into paper pulp, but it also included recycling of waste paper into new paper (Chappell 789). Bones were sold to the soap manufacturers who boiled out the fat and marrow used in soap making and then sold the crushed bones for manure (Shatto 62). Kitchen stuff included dripping, grease, soup stock and the like which are sold to the tallow makers to be used in foodstuffs and candle making, or sold to the poor as a cheap substitute for butter (ibid.). Old clothes were sold mainly to the working class people (ibid.).

Despite this purely economic background of Krook's shop, Krook's act of hoarding reusable and recyclable materials extends beyond economic purposes. His hoarded things are important to him not so much because of their latent economic value, which his reluctance to sell them means he can hardly earn a living from them, but also because he has "a liking for rust and must and cobwebs" and thus he "can't abear to part with anything [he] once lay hold of" (*BH* 63). An air of stagnation therefore surrounds Krook's shop with its large hoard of material articles which are supposed to enter the recycling system but which seem to have stuck in the shop. In Esther's perceptive eyes, Krook's shop is a place where "everything seemed to be bought, and nothing to be sold" (*BH* 61). Krook's own account does not help the reader much in deciding whether any sort of sale happens in his shop. He says:

> "You see, I have so many things here," [...] holding up the lantern, "of so many kinds, and all as the neighbours think (but *they* know nothing), wasting away and going to rack and ruin, that that's why they have given me and my place a christening. And I have so many old parchmentses and papers in my stock. And I have a liking for rust and must and cobwebs. And all's fish that comes to my net. And I can't abear to part with anything I once lay hold of (or so my neighbours think, but what do *they* know?) or to alter anything, or to have any sweeping, nor scouring, nor cleaning, nor repairing going on about me (*BH* 63).

He implies that he sells the things he has hoarded by saying that his neighbours "know nothing", and yet he seems to confirm their belief by saying that "[he] can't abear to part with anything [he] once lay hold of" (*BH* 63). He even stashes away, or

"stores" as Esther suggests, some of the things that he believes to be more valuable to a separate place so that they do not get mixed up with other stuff. After Krook has died grandfather Smallweed finds the last Jarndyce will among this bundle of papers in the well. Although he cannot read or write, he is able to identify documents about the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case. On one occasion, Esther unknowingly witnesses Krook hiding and cataloguing this will in his own way: she sees Krook" storing a quantity of packets of waste-paper in a kind of well in the floor [... and he] had a piece of chalk by him, with which, as he put each separate package or bundle down, he made a crooked mark on the panelling of the wall" (*BH* 68). Esther goes on to narrate:

> "I was going when he touched me on the arm to stay me, and chalked the letter J upon the wall—in a very curious manner, beginning with the end of the letter and shaping it backward. It was a capital letter, not a printed one, but just such a letter as any clerk in Messrs. Kenge and Carboy's office would have made.
> "Can you read it?" he asked me with a keen glance.
> "Surely," said I. "It's very plain."
> "What is it?"
> "J."
> [...] He went on quickly until he had formed in the same curious manner, beginning at the ends and bottoms of the letters, the word Jarndyce, without once leaving two letters on the wall together. (*BH* 71).

When Esther enters Krook's shop for the first time, she observes that the shop contains "great many ink bottles" which, along with other clutter of legal materials like "shabby old volumes [...] labelled Law Books" and "dog's-eared law-papers", suggests to her that "the shop had in several little particulars the air of being in a legal neighbourhood and of being, as it were, a dirty hanger-on and disowned relation of the law" (*BH* 61). She notices hundreds of "rusty keys" and "fanc[ies] that [...they] had once belonged to doors or rooms or strong chests in lawyers' offices" and that "the litter of rags [...] hanging without any counterpoise from a beam might have been counsellors' bands and gowns torn up" (ibid.). This particular clutter of old legal materials suggests a tie between Chancery and Krook's shop. The legal system

represented by Chancery produces rubbish consisting mostly of paper which end up in Krook's shop to be reused or recycled into different material forms. And yet, since Krook seems not to part with this rubbish, they do not enter into the recycling system. Through a similar kind of stagnation that Chancery represents for legal processes, Krook's shop gets "the ill name of Chancery" and Krook himself the name of "Lord Chancellor" (*BH* 63, 64). Krook admits the likeness that people see between him and the Lord Chancellor and says "both" the Lord Chancellor and Krook himself "grub on in a muddle" (*BH* 64). In both cases, this muddle mostly consists of legal paper and other materials related to writing like ink and parchments. Both the Lord Chancellor and Krook, the mock Lord Chancellor, are surrounded by a huge amount of paper which produce no meaning at all. While the Lord Chancellor is unable to resolve the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case which has become little more than an endless stream of bureaucratic paper work, Krook cannot make sense of the paper he hoarded since he "can neither read nor write" (*BH* 71). Krook's illiteracy and his inability to make sense of the legal documents he possesses parodies the inefficiency of the Lord Chancellor and the whole Chancery.

Through Krook and his shop the text also presents an uncanny doubling of the names Lord Chancellor and Chancery, which represents the inescapable power of Chancery and underlines the belief held by most of the characters in the novel that people are never to get out of Chancery once they enter it. This is one of the first things Richard recognizes and jokes about on their first day in London when they meet Miss Flite and visit Krook's shop: "'So, cousin,' said the cheerful voice of Richard to Ada behind me 'We are never to get out of Chancery! We have come by another way to our place of meeting yesterday, and—by the Great Seal, here's the old lady again!' " (*BH* 60). In his work *Dickens on the Romantic Side of Familiar Things,* Robert Newsom underlines that such "coincidence[s]" in *Bleak House* point to an "involuntary repetition" which is a characteristic of the uncanny (54).

The text foregrounds a disturbing sense lingering around Krook's shop with all the strangely selected materials in his shop, especially with the bones and women's hair. When Richard sees the bones in Krook's shop, he jokes about them: "One had only to

fancy, as Richard whispered to Ada and me while we all stood looking in, that yonder bones in a corner, piled together and picked very clean, were the bones of clients, to make the picture complete" (*BH* 62). There is an uneasy kind of humour in Richard's joke, especially when Richard's death because of his obsessive involvement in the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case is considered. His humorous association of the bones with the old clients of attorneys foreshadows, in a sense, his own final reduction to dust and bones.

The insistence of the text on isolated parts of the body is further emphasized by Krook's collection of women's hair in his shop. Shatto notes that hair was "used to make wigs and perukes for men, false hairpieces for women and items of hair jewellery, a fashion at its height in the 1840s and 1850s" and that "the hair in Krook's shop would have come from local poor women, compelled to sell their hair to provide for their families" (63). Although Krook's act of collecting hair has such an economic background, his fondness for hair is also noticeable. When Krook sees Esther, Richard and Ada in his shop with Miss Flite, the first thing he notices is Ada's hair. "[D]raw[ing] one of Ada's tresses through his yellow hand", Krook remarks that he sells woman hair: "Hi! Here's lovely hair! I have got three sacks of ladies' hair below, but none so beautiful and fine as this. What colour, and what texture!" (*BH* 63).

Fragmented body parts like the hair and bones in Krook's shop and also Krook's reduced bodily remains after his spontaneous combustion function as an element of the bodily grotesque in the text. Sue Vice notes that in grotesque realism, "sacrificial dismemberment" is used as a novelistic device in which fragmented parts of the body are listed in an irreverent way as an element of carnivalesque decrowning (159). In his work *The Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* Bakhtin says that such representation of "carnival anatomy" and "enumeration of the parts of the dismembered body" was used as a comic device in the carnivalized literature (162). He gives an example from Dostoevsky's short story "Uncle's Dream" in which "the scene of the [...] decrowning of the prince [...] is consistently portrayed as a *tearing*

to pieces, as a typical carnivalistic 'sacrificial' dismemberment into parts" (*Problems* 161):

> "Yes, yes, one-legged and toothless into the bargain, that's what you are!"
> "And one-eyed, too!" shouted Marya Alexandrovna.
> "You have a corset instead of ribs," added Natalya Dmitriyevna.
> "Your face is on springs!"
> "You have no hair of your own!"
> "And the old fool's moustache is artificial, too," screeched Marya Alexandrovna.
> "At least leave me my nose, Marya Alexandrovna!" cried the Prince, flabbergasted by such unexpected revelations. . . . (*Problems* 162).

As Hervouet-Farrar says "fragmentation and dismemberment are often brought to the fore by Dickens, in whose fiction the hybrid, fragmented grotesque body is obsessively represented as a source of fascination, not untinged with repulsion and horror" (7). In *Bleak House,* through the representation of Krook's spontaneous combustion, the text presents a repulsive and terrifying type of carnivalesque dismemberment. Yet it also serves as a comic device through which the Lord Chancellor, who is personified by Krook from the start, is thoroughly decrowned and literally brought down to earth.

The representation of Krook's grotesque body and its final atomization into different forms of repulsive matter do not only generates fascination but also repulsion and horror. While alive, he has a repellent body. Esther's description of Krook reveals the ambivalent nature of Krook, who seems to be both dead and living having a corpselike body, frosted eyebrows and wrinkled skin:

> He was short, cadaverous, and withered, with his head sunk sideways between his shoulders and the breath issuing in visible smoke from his mouth as if he were on fire within. His throat, chin, and eyebrows were so frosted with white hairs and so gnarled with veins and puckered skin that he looked from his breast upward like some old root in a fall of snow (*BH*62).

As Wright says "Krook seems to simultaneously occupy the world of the dead and the living, a nightmarish realm of fire-breathing men, and the vegetable world" (101).Krook's grotesqueness is further emphasized in the text with his strange death by spontaneous combustion that reduces his body to some indefinable matter: "soot [...that] smears like black fat"; "a thick, yellow liquor" that "defiles" every surface in his shop; "a stagnant, sickening oil with some natural repulsion in it"; "a crumbled black thing [...] upon the floor"; "cinder" and "coal" (*BH* 472, 476, 479). What remains from Krook's body is hard to classify. It is "all that represents him" and yet he is none of them at the same time (*BH* 479). Like the fragmented body parts of bones and hair that Krook has been stashing away in his shop, his dead body is atomized:

> Here is a small burnt patch of flooring; here is the tinder from a little bundle of burnt paper, but not so light as usual, seeming to be steeped in something; and here is—is it the cinder of a small charred and broken log of wood sprinkled with white ashes, or is it coal? Oh, horror, he *is* here! And this from which we run away, striking out the light and overturning one another into the street, is all that represents him. Help, help, help! (*BH* 479).

While alive, Krook was surrounded by his things he could not part with, and after his death by spontaneous combustion his body turns into a thing that covers the things in his shop. He is turned into a thing that is "offensive to the touch and sight and more offensive to the smell [...which] slowly drips and creeps away down the bricks [where it] lies in a little thick nauseous pool"(*BH* 476). What remains of Krook's body incites not only disgust, but also feelings of horror. Horrified by what happened to its owner, Krook's cat Lady Jane "stands snarling [...] at something on the ground before the fire" (*BH*). What Guppy and Tony Weevle, the ones who first discover Krook's remains, experience is also described as "horror" in the text (*BH* 479). Since his death is an unusual one and what remains of him is nothing human, people are horrified.

Critics point out that there is a relation between Krook's spontaneous combustion and the stagnation that surrounds his shop and the Chancery. For instance, Ginsburg says:

> Since there is no outlet and no movement, things are bound to implode and "combust". The intransitive, self-reflexive nature of Krook's hoarding is made to be an obvious material representation of the court of Chancery, of "the one great principle of English law, [which] is to make business to [sic.] itself" (*BH* 416). The closed system that feeds on itself, "inborn, inbreed" (*BH* 346), necessarily reaches a point of self-annihilation. The spontaneous combustion of Krook, the financial exhaustion of the Jarndyce suit, the death of Richard who has worn himself out, all are manifestations of the inevitable (because internally determined) finality of a process that takes place within a closed system ("Case" 143-44).

Daniel Miller makes a similar comment about Krook's spontaneous combustion. According to Miller, Krook's spontaneous combustion illustrates what may happen to the "all-pervasive system of domination" that the Chancery represents. According to Miller, Krook's spontaneous combustion is the fulfilment, and also the displacement, of the wish expressed earlier in the text for the total destruction of the Chancery (126) :

> Repeatedly, the court induces in the narration a wish for its wholesale destruction by fire: "If all the injustices it has commited, 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 for other parties than the parties in Jarndyce and Jarndyce!" (*BH* 7). [...] The wish [...] may be considered fulfilled (albeit also displaced) when Mr Krook, who has personified the Chancellor and Chancery from the first, dies of spontaneous combustion. It is as though apocalyptic suddenness were the only conceivable way to put an end to Chancery's meanderings, violent spontaneity the only means to abridge its elaborate procedures, and mere combustion the only response to its accumulation of paperwork. [...] Insofar as Krook dies [...] of his own internal repressions, then Chancery can be safely trusted to collapse from its own refusal to release what is unhealthily accumulating in its system (126).

Krook's strange kind of fascination with and attachment to his things when he was alive leads others to believe that he had in fact possessed some secret wealth, a kind of "treasure" hidden among his things (*BH* 585). After Krook's death, the Smallweed family gets hold of Krook's shop since Krook was "Mrs Smallweed's only brother; she had no relation but Krook, and Krook had no relation but Mrs Smallweed" (*BH* 489). The Smallweed family, especially money-lender grandfather Smallweed, is notorious for its love of money. They are described as belonging to "money-getting species of spider" and for grandfather Smallweed "money [is] a subject on which he is particularly sensitive" (*BH* 307, 308). "Weak in her intellect", grandmother Smallweed lives in a "childish state" and upon "hearing figures mentioned, [she] connects them with money, and screeches, like a horrible parrot without any plumage, 'Ten ten-pound notes'" (*BH* 309). Appreciating things only for their monetary value, the Smallweeds think that they will find valuable items in Krook's shop. For grandfather Smallweed, Krook's shop is a profitable kind of "property [that...] must be sealed up [...] and protected", a word which he repeats "like an echo, 'the - property! The property! - property!'"(*BH* 488, 489). While the Smallweed family clears the rag and bottle shop, their greedy and ambitious search, which is done "regularly, every morning at eight", attracts the attention of neighbours and other onlookers who start to fantasize about what fabulous contents of the shop could keep the munney-grubbing Smallweeds so occupied; perhaps it contains wealth-providing resources, like "guineas pouring out of tea-pots" (*BH* 585) :

> Regularly, every morning at eight, is the elder Mr.Smallweed brought down to the corner and carried in, accompanied by Mrs. Smallweed, Judy, and Bart; and regularly, all day, do they all remain there until nine at night, solaced by gipsy dinners, not abundant in quantity, from the cook's shop, rummaging and searching, digging, delving, and diving among the treasures of the late lamented. What those treasures are, they keep so secret, that the court is maddened. In its delirium it imagines guineas pouring out of tea-pots, crown-pieces overflowing punch-bowls, old chairs and mattresses stuffed with Bank of England notes (*BH* 585).

The Smallweeds "endeavour[] to make out an inventory of what's worth anything to sell" but what they find are "principally rags and rubbish", as grandfather Smallweed

says (*BH* 587). After the Smallweeds start to "rummage" among Krook's things, it seems that "there is more litter and lumber in [the shop], than of old, and it is dirtier if possible; likewise, it is ghostly with traces of its dead inhabitant, and even with his chalked writing on the wall" (*BH* 872, 586) and as Chappell notes, "the proceedings at the rag and bottle shop" after Krook's death result in "proliferation of yet even more paper" as the reporters scribble notes about the scene on tissue paper (783) :

> Twice when the dustman is called in to carry off a cartload of old paper, ashes, and broken bottles, the whole court assembles and pries into the baskets as they come forth. Many times the two gentlemen who write with the ravenous little pens on the tissue-paper are seen prowling in the neighbourhood (*BH* 585).

Although there are no such treasures as fancied among Krook's things, some important documents that help to resolve two mysteries of the novel are found among them: the old love letters between Lady Dedlock and Captain Hawdon, who lived under the assumed name of Nemo the law writer at a lodging above Krook's shop, and the last Jarndyce will that will finally settle the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case. As it was with all the other things that Krook stashed away in his shop, these things were stuck in Krook's shop only to be brought into daylight after Krook's death. It is as if Krook's death is necessitated for these materials to be "reclaimed", in Chappel's words, in the text (803).

The text weaves a web of mysteries that are to be resolved only through the revelation of the presence of these old love letters. They serve to resolve why Lady Dedlock was so interested in the legal hand who copied the document she saw with Tulkinghorn; who Hawdon was and why Tulkinghorn wants a sample of Hawdon's hand writing from George and why Esther's real surname should be Hawdon as Guppy relates to Lady Dedlock. The letters come into the possession of different characters throughout the narrative; from Krook to grandfather Smallweed who passes them to Tulkinghorn, then to inspector Buckett. Although these old love letters are of central importance in resolving the mysteries about Esther's parentage,

their contents are never presented in the text. Dever's comments are noteworthy in this respect:

> The significance of the letters is not in their content, but rather in their existence. By evidence of handwriting alone, the detectives of Bleak House are able to create a parentage; like the letter at the reunion scene, this is another narrative of origins for Esther. A packet of letters comes to represent and supplement the conception of Esther; Esther Summerson is produced in this text by writing, by the commingling of the handwriting of her two parents: she is the material trace of their correspondence (16, 17).

The other important document that is found in Krook's shop is "a Will of later date than any" in the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case (*BH* 876). It is "a stained discolored paper, which was much singed upon the outside, and a little burnt at the edges, as it had long ago been thrown upon fire, and hastily snatched off again" (874). This will serves to settle that the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case is "over for good" but it fails to provide the outcome that the wards in Jarndyce has expected because "the whole estate is found to have been absorbed in costs" (*BH* 899, 901). The end of the case through a will results in an outlet of huge amounts of paper from Chancery, that shall supposedly end up in a rag and bottle shop like Krook's:

> [P]resently great bundles of paper began to be carried out—bundles in bags, bundles too large to be got into any bags, immense masses of papers of all shapes and no shapes, which the bearers staggered under, and threw down for the time being, anyhow, on the Hall pavement, while they went back to bring out more (*BH* 899).

CHAPTER 3

BLEAK THINGS

3.1. "Strange engines ...like tortured creatures ": Bleak Things of Industry

When Nell and her grandfather move towards "a great manufacturing town" in their journey, the proximity between humans and things assume a darker force. And the text maintains a distinction between the previous chapters which are marked by a grotesque humour and awe, and the total bleakness of the industrial sphere outside of that world. In Hollington's words, "all 'joyful and triumphant hilarity' is banished" from the scenes that take place in this industrial town (89).

As Philpotts notes in his article "Dickens and Technology", Dickens perceives technology as something that is both magical and dreary (209). In one of his articles in *Household Words,* Dickens says that "the mightier inventions of this age are not, to our thinking, all material but have a kind of souls [sic.] in their stupendous bodies" (ibid.). Yet he also perceives a "fundamental deadness" in the reliance of the machinery on repeated motions (ibid.).

Although Dickens's perception of technology and the machinery is ambivalent, what is represented in *The Old Curiosity Shop* is only the negative aspects of them. The exchange of aspects between the machines and humans is depicted as a threatening force of the machines in the text. And the industrialization is relentlessly equated with dirt, poverty and death throughout the scenes that take place in the industrial town.

As Nell and her grandfather approach the industrial town by boat, what attracts their attention first is the striking force of the dirt which forces them to acknowledge its materiality. They realize that "the water [has] become thicker and dirtier" and they

see "tall chimneys vomiting forth a black vapour, which hung in a dense ill-favoured cloud above the housetops and filled the air with gloom" (*OCS* 329). Dirt appears as an unwanted and sickening thing, that the monstrous industry not only produces but also tries to expel from its body by vomiting or pouring it out: Tall chimneys "vomit[] forth" and "pour out their plague of smoke", and "brick towers never cease[] in their black vomit, blasting all things living or inanimate" (*OCS* 329, 339). Through the outskirts of the industrial site, dirt assumes a much more sinister force which puts the lives and humanity of the people at stake. It lurks in the form of death in the "desolate, but yet inhabited" neighbourhoods (*OCS* 339). They see "carts came rumbling by, filled with rude coffins (for contagious disease and death had been busy with the living crops)" (*OCS* 340). What is human in the dead bodies is so stripped off from them that a dead child is depicted as "a kind of bundle on the ground" (*OCS* 341).

In the town center, the individuality of people is unsettled by the urban chaos. The people cannot be individuated in the midst of the crowd of the town. They are just a "throng of people [who] hurried by, in two opposite streams" (*OCS* 329). Nell and her grandfather also feel like diminished from their singularity. They think that "they were but an atom, here, in a mountain heap of misery" (*OCS* 329, 330). After living in the stillness of their curiosities, and then passing through the quiet country places, the confusion of the industrial town makes them feel "strange, bewildered, and confused as if they had lived a thousand years before, and were raised from the dead and placed there by mistake" (*OCS* 329).

The whole town seems to be driven by machines and the life force of the machines bring them closer to not to humans but to creatures:

> Strange engines spun and writhed like tortured creatures; clanking their iron chains, shrieking in their rapid whirl from time to time as though in torment unendurable, and making the ground tremble with their agonies. [...] Then came more wrathful monsters, whose like they almost seemed to be in

> their wildness and untaimed air, screeching and turning round and round again (*OCS* 339).

While the industrial machinery takes on the aspects of human agency, the individuality and agency of humans face the danger of being totally subsumed in the machinery. The people themselves and their lives become so mechanical that the distinction of boundaries between men and the machines becomes less clear. The people that Nell and her grandfather see in the streets are like automatons that show "no symptom of cessation or exhaustion" and wear "the same expression, with little variety" (*OCS* 329, 330). Without partaking it its compelling attractions, their mechanicalness is reminiscent of Mrs Jarley's curious "machinery in the body of the nun [...which] shook its head paralytically all day long" (*OCS* 247). Here the threshold between men and things is problematized in a darker sense than that found in its presentation through Mrs Jarley's waxworks:

> The throng of people hurried by, in two opposite streams, with no symptom of cessation or exhaustion; intent upon their own affairs; and undisturbed in their own business speculations, by the roar of carts and wagons laden with clashing wares, the slipping of horses' feet upon the wet and greasy pavement [...], and all the noise and tumult of a crowded street in the high tide of its occupation. [Nell and her grandfather] withdrew into a low archway for shelter from the rain, and watched the faces of those who passed, to find in one among them a ray of encouragement or hope [...]. In the public walks and lounges of a town, people go to see and to be seen, and there the same expression, with little variety, is repeated a hundred times. The working-day faces come nearer to the truth, and let it out more plainly. (*OCS* 329, 330).

An even darker perception of the indistinction between humans and machinery is given as the text progresses. In the scenes when Nell and her grandfather reach an industrial site, the proximity between men and machinery make the workers look like "demons", "giants" and "savage beasts" (*OCS* 333). As a number of critics have pointed out, the text depicts the industrial site as a hell (Adorno 191; Carey 110; Hollington 88; Philpotts 211). This hellish place is replete with "bewildering sights

and unearthly sounds" that Nell and her grandfather perceive in "apprehension and alarm" (*OCS* 333):

> In a large and lofty building, supported by pillars of iron, with great black apertures in the upper walls, open to the external air; echoing to the roof with the beating of hammers and roar of furnaces, mingled with the hissing of red-hot metal plunged in water, and a hundred strange unearthly noises never heard elsewhere; in this gloomy place, moving like demons among the flame and smoke, dimly and fitfully seen, flushed and tormented by the burning fires, and wielding great weapons, a faulty blow from any one of which must have crushed some workman's skull, a number of men laboured like giants (*OCS* 333).

The infernal imagery is intensified with "a lurid glare hanging in the dark sky", the fire which "burnt by night and day" inside the industrial site (*OCS* 332, 333). It is an infernal fire that "torment[s]" the workers who "move[] like demons among [its] flame and smoke" (333). Yet it is also a precious material thing that makes the small area around the furnace within the industrial site a home for the man who keeps this fire burning. He pities Nell, seeing "how wet she is", and takes her and her grandfather to the furnace to sleep beside it "on the heap of ashes" (*OCS* 332, 336). In the midst of a hell-like industrial site, Nell and her grandfather find a peaceful shelter most unexpectedly. This unhomely home, where the man used to "crawl about" when he was a baby, keeps Nell safe as well: "In the dark strange place and on the heap of ashes, [Nell] slept as peacefully, as if the room had been a palace chamber, and the bed, a bed of down" (*OCS* 336). As Carey says "the fire [...] is both nurse and destroyer; the fire of home and the fire of Hell" (110).

Although the man who keeps the fire burning is not as beast-like as the other industrial workers, he nevertheless looks less than human. He is first perceived in apprehension by Nell, who "utter[s] a half-shriek" upon seeing this "black figure which came suddenly out of the dark recess" (*OCS* 331):

> The form was that of a man, miserably clad and begrimed with smoke, which, perhaps by its contrast with the natural colour of his skin, made him look paler than he really was. That he was naturally of a very wan and pallid aspect, however, his hollow cheeks, sharp features, and sunken eyes, no less than a certain look of patient endurance, sufficiently testified. His voice was harsh by nature, but not brutal; and though his face, besides possessing the characteristics already mentioned, was overshadowed by a quantity of long dark hair, its expression was neither ferocious nor cruel (*OCS* 332).

He is like yet another creature of the industry, though and amiable one, "nursed" by the fire (*OCS* 335). When his mother died, he was brought up in the industrial site by his father, who used to "watch [the fire] then" (ibid.). He relates that "the fire nursed me - the same fire. It has never gone out" (ibid.).

For the man, the fire is endowed with a force, a life of its own, and they constitute an indivisible whole with the man. He keeps alive the fire which nursed him when he was a baby. Their lives are bound to each other. He says the fire "has been alive as long as I have.[...] We talk and think together all night long. [...] It's my memory, that fire, and shows me all my life" (*OCS* 335). The fire is also his precious material thing, his "book - the only book [he] ever learned to read" (ibid.).

In the descriptions of the industrial city, the text foregrounds a darker proximity between humans and things. Humans either assume the deadly and monotonous motions of the machines or look like savage beasts through their proximity to the machinery. Together with the machines, which are like tormented creatures, men and the machinery both toil and suffer in hellish industrial places. As a filthy residue of the industry, the dirt also assumes a life force that puts the lives and humanity of the people at stake. Yet this bleak portrayal of the industrial town is also tinged with a lighter perception by means of the ambiguous materiality of the fire, which is both a nurturer and a tormentor.

3.2. "with a foggy glory round his head": The Fog

Bleak House opens with an image of fog over a filthy and muddy landscape. Just like the "gas looming through the fog in divers places" (*BH* 11), the world of *Bleak House* also looms through the symbol of the fog, thus the ties among events and characters become indistinct, foggy and mysterious. The description of the fog that spreads throughout the first chapter of the book calls attention to the fog itself and to its materiality:

> Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green aits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex marshes, fog on the Kentish heights. Fog creeping into the cabooses of collier-brigs; fog lying out on the yards and hovering in the rigging of great ships; fog drooping on the gunwales of barges and small boats. Fog in the eyes and throats of ancient Greenwich pensioners, wheezing by the firesides of their wards; fog in the stem and bowl of the afternoon pipe of the wrathful skipper, down in his close cabin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of his shivering little 'prentice boy on deck. Chance people on the bridges peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog, with fog all round them, as if they were up in a balloon and hanging in the misty clouds. (*BH* 11-12).

As Paganoni comments, the repetition of the lexeme fog creates an anaphoric effect, and a feeling of atmospheric and psychological overload (28). The fog creeps into and droops on people and objects and expands limitlessly until it surrounds them all. It has an ambivalent nature. It "separates every individual from those around them, emphasising their fundamental isolation [...]. On the other hand, because it is all-pervasive, it conjoins all those it envelops, regardless of class or position" (Allan 105). As Schwarzbach says, the way the fog is narrated, along with other elements of dirt in the city, creates an effect of estrangement, defamiliarization and dislocation and it forces readers to view a familiar, everyday world in an entirely new way, or in Dickens's words, to see the romantic side of familiar things (121):

> "[...] the fog and the mud, are all commonplace and to a Londoner of 1851, part of his everyday experience. Yet the overall effect of the passage is one of estrangement: the individual components are ordinary but they are so coloured by the strange atmosphere of the passage that they are transmuted into an alien cosmos. The mud threatens to dissolve everyone or everything that touches it; smoke becomes a threatening rain of blackness, blotting out the sun; fog isolates people from the city around them as if each were in separate balloons. The odd syntax heightens the dislocating effect. Before us as we read, these ordinary objects are being endowed with striking new meanings. The familiar elements of the London cityscape have been assembled into a terrifying atmosphere of darkness and stagnation." (121).

"At the very heart of the fog", there is the High Court of Chancery, the legal institution the name of which "has become a byword for obfuscation and delay" by the time Dickens published *Bleak House* (Gill 917). Chancery represents "the secret life of city institutions which became bureaucratic enclaves of expertise and intricate documentation, closely guarding privilege with obfuscation" (Cheadle 29, 30). The satirical representation of the workings of Chancery, along with other elements of social criticism, serve to make *Bleak House* famous for being Dickens's "most all-embracing social critique" (Mighall 86) and his "most extended attack on the legal system" (Schor "Bleak House" 101). Yet Dickens presents his social criticism not by "mirror[ing] the world" as it is but by "offering an imaginatively altered 'real' world" which has "a touch of exaggeration of the real (and sometimes more than a touch)" and "some fanciful items in the very structure of his fiction" (Reed 1, 7). In his representation of Chancery in *Bleak House*, it is possible to see all those elements John Reed points out, as for instance, Chancery as an institution of an ineffective legal system and foggy London are the realities of Dickens's time. Yet Dickens mystifies these realistic elements in such a fanciful way that Chancery and the law case Jarndyce and Jarndyce become the very fog itself, infiltrating everywhere and everything they touch with their opaque and mysterious workings. And the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case, with its exaggerated longevity, becomes one of the mysteries of the novel.

The mysterious workings and "all-pervasive" power of the Chancery, as D. A. Miller calls it (125), is materialized through the fog in the novel. The highest authority of the suit, the Lord High Chancellor, sits in the court "with a foggy glory round his head" and "he can see nothing but fog" while being "addressed by a large advocate" and (*BH* 12). He seems to have lost his way in the dense fog that literally and figuratively surrounds the High Court of Chancery: "And hard by Temple Bar, in Lincoln's Inn Hall, at the very heart of the fog, sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery" (*BH* 12). As D. A. Miller says, the fact that the court is situated at the very heart of the fog points to the difficulty of locating the court substantially and unlocalizability of its operations, which permits them to be in all places at once (124). At the end of the day, what is locked up is only "the empty court" but not "all the misery it has caused" (ibid.). The misery Chancery has caused is everywhere: "This is the Court of Chancery, which has its decaying houses and its blighted lands in every shire, which has its worn-out lunatic in every madhouse and its dead in every churchyard, which has its ruined suitor [...]" (*BH* 13). "The fog hang[s] heavy in [Chancery], as if it would never get out" (*BH* 13).

Just as the fog seems never to get out of Chancery, the parties of the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case also "can't get out of the suit on any terms, for [they] are made parties to it, and must be parties to it, whether [they] like it or not" (*BH*109). Just like the obfuscation of the fog, the parties in the case look "in vain for Truth" among a proliferation of paperwork which keeps delaying it (*BH* 12). About this power of Chancery, D. A. Miller says that

> [...] every surface it needs to attack is already porously welcoming it. [...] this power does not impose itself by physical coercion [...] rather, it relies on being voluntarily assumed by its subjects, who, seduced by it, addicted to it, internalize the requirements for maintaining its hold. Fog everywhere. [...It is] a system of control which can be all-encompassing because it cannot be compassed in turn (125).

Represented through Chancery is a law system that is in fact effective in its very ineffectiveness, which ruins generations of people related to the law case Jarndyce and Jarndyce. The case was about a will and yet it became a mysterious, foggy case

over the course of the time. As Mr Jarndyce, who refuses to be an active party in the case, says:

> The lawyers have twisted it into such a state of bedevilment that the original merits of the case have long disappeared from the face of the earth. It's about a will and the trusts under a will—or it was once. It's about nothing but costs now. [...]Why, yes, it was about a will when it was about anything. A certain Jarndyce, in an evil hour, made a great fortune, and made a great will. In the question how the trusts under that will are to be administered, the fortune left by the will is squandered away [...and] all through the deplorable cause, everybody must have copies, over and over again, of everything that has accumulated about it in the way of cartloads of papers (or must pay for them without having them, which is the usual course, for nobody wants them) and must go down the middle and up again through such an infernal country-dance of costs and fees and nonsense and corruption as was never dreamed of in the wildest visions of a witch's Sabbath (*BH* 108).

The counsels of the suit seem not to accomplish any developments in the suit over the years since "no two Chancery lawyers can talk about it for five minutes without coming to a total disagreement as to all the premises" (*BH* 14). "[T]he attendant wigs are all stuck in a fog-bank" (*BH* 13). The will of the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case was originally about the division of a fortune, a material property, but as the close of the legal case about the execution of this will is delayed, parties went under huge costs to pay for the bureaucratic delays. This will is passed on to further generations but what is promised to them turns out to be not a material property but the ills of the legacy like death, hatred and madness. Therefore, the will in *Bleak House* is not much about a legal will about certain property, but about an evil legacy that hangs over generations like a fog.

Likening this devastating social and psychological legacy to the "ancestral curse" of the Gothic trope, Mighall points out that this curse is "initiated by no worse crime than the folly of someone once entering the 'labyrinth' of Chancery" (88). Miss Flite's story is a case in point, whereby she goes to "look at the monster" Chancery and is slowly "drawn" to it:

> I'll tell you my own case. Before they ever drew me—before I had ever seen them—what was it I used to do? Tambourine playing? No. Tambour work. I and my sister worked at tambour work. Our father and our brother had a builder's business. We all lived together. Ve-ry respectably, my dear! First, our father was drawn—slowly. Home was drawn with him. In a few years he was a fierce, sour, angry bankrupt without a kind word or a kind look for any one. He had been so different, Fitz Jarndyce. He was drawn to a debtors' prison. There he died. Then our brother was drawn—swiftly—to drunkenness. And rags.And death. Then my sister was drawn. Hush! Never ask to what! Then I was ill and in misery, and heard, as I had often heard before, that this was all the work of Chancery. When I got better, I went to look at the monster. And then I found out how it was, and I was drawn to stay there.(*BH* 523).

These legal actions "draw" people to them in Miss Flite's words and never let go of them like a "horrible phantom" as Mr Jarndyce says to Richard: "For the love of God, don't found a hope or expectation on the family curse! Whatever you do on this side the grave, never give one lingering glance towards the horrible phantom that has haunted us so many years. Better to borrow, better to beg, better to die!" (*BH* 359, 523). Once the people are drawn into legal disputes concerning legacies everything in their lives become the case itself until it has drawn all the "peace out of them" (*BH* 523). As Mighall says, "by pursuing wills (records of legacy), they lose their own wills (agency)" (87). And the fog is the manifestation of this loss of agency; the fog paralyzes the agency of people and its power cannot be contained, it is subtle, "finely vaporized, sublimated" as D. A. Miller (125) says. People are afraid of the bad influence of the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case on them, yet at the same time they feel drawn towards it. They are both attracted to and repelled by Chancery. The loss of agency is experienced as a kind of "magnetic spell of Chancery" by them (Newsom 72):

> "[...] there's a dreadful attraction in the place. Hush! Don't mention it to our diminutive friend when she comes in. Or it may frighten her. With good reason. There's a cruel attraction in the place. You CAN'T leave it. And you MUST expect. [...] I have been there many years, and I have noticed. It's the mace and seal upon the table."

> What could they do, did she think? I mildly asked her. "Draw," returned Miss Flite. "Draw people on, my dear. Draw peace out of them. Sense out of them.Good looks out of them. Good qualities out of them. I have felt them even drawing my rest away in the night. Cold and glittering devils!"

In all her frenzy, Miss Flite "expect[s] a judgment shortly" for several years, she "is always in court, from its sitting to its rising [...] carry[ing] some small litter in reticule which she calls her documents; principally consisting of paper matches and dry lavender" (*BH* 13). In fact, the documents related to the case do not make more sense than the paper matches and dry lavender of Miss Flite, since nobody can make sense or a meaningful whole out of those documents. Many fragmentary documents end up in Krook's rag and bottle shop, by means of which his shop gets the mock name of Chancery, and they become litter. When Richard finally falls into the "dreadful attraction" of the mace and seal of the Chancellor, he finds himself trying to decipher a huge load of case documents. The case, as Miss Flite prophecies, draws peace, sense, good looks and good qualities out of Richard. And just like Miss Flite's long expectation of "judgement shortly", Richard starts to believe that "the longer [the suit] goes on, [...] the nearer it must be to a settlement one way or another" and he dies of it in the end (*BH* 198). Miss Flite's and Richard's sanity have been fogged by the case.

Esther is also "drawn" to her legacy step by step as her plot unfolds. As a child born out of wedlock, Esther is tied to the law case not in terms of inheritance of material property but in terms of a "different version of property altogether: [...] her maternal legacy" (Schor "Bleak House"112). The maternal legacy, the inheritance, that Esther pursues is "the mother's love" which "will restore the daughter to her lost property, her lost self" (Schor "Bleak House" 110). Whether Esther truly comes to inherit her mother's love is questionable given the fact that their reunions are brief and troubled with separation. In their first reunion scene where Lady Dedlock unveils the secret that Esther is her daughter, Lady Dedlock asks for forgiveness but also wants her "evermore to consider her dead" (*BH* 536). Their last reunion seems more troubled than the first one, which is a scene of Esther finding her mother on her father's grave

"cold and dead" (*BH* 847). These reunions always shadowed with separation makes it questionable whether Esther truly inherited her mother's love. It seems that she has to nurture the scrap of love that she had from her mother in herself and on her own. And this love seems to be always shadowed with separation and resentment. As Kennedy says, Esther "attains her happiness through passive suffering and active self-restraint" (345) and these are exactly what she does after her troubled reunions with her mother. She masks her suffering in her narration and restrains herself. What she always seeks is "emotional security" (Schor "Bleak House" 107) and she finds it not in her mother but Ada, for instance. Following her troubled reunion with her mother, Esther narrates her reunion scene with Ada after Esther's long illness, in which Ada presses Ether "to her faithful heart" (*BH*545). Jordan insightfully comments that

> Ada here takes the part of Lady Dedlock, providing Esther with the unconditional acceptance and love that her mother has been unable or unwilling to give. She holds Esther in her arms, bathes her scarred face with kisses and tears, and rocks her to and fro "like a child." [...] The scene allows Esther [...] to express indirectly her anger at Lady Dedlock for her betrayal in the scene that Esther has narrated only a few pages before. The key word here is "faithful." [...] The mother who finally reveals herself to Esther [...] is anything but "faithful" (55, 56).

Therefore, the only truthful inheritance Esther gets is writing and she unifies her lost self in the very act of writing. As Schor says "She has come into her own inheritance, which was, simply, to wander, to scribble, to be secret, to seek for her own face in the wide world" (Schor 121). "Language is the vehicle by which Esther can create something - herself - out of nothing" (Dever 10). And the addressee of her entire narrative, "the unknown friend to whom I write" as Esther says, is her mother, "cold and dead" (Jordan 17). She writes about herself and her mother, and the act of writing becomes a repetition of her finding and losing her mother again and again in her continuous struggle of forming a unified self.

Both in terms of Esther's maternal legacy and the legacy of the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case, the will left to further generations has an all-encompassing,

obfuscating and mysterious power and the fog that opens the novel is the materialization of this power.

3.3. "Dear old doll, long buried in the garden": Esther's Doll

As the prevailing theme of Dickens's Bleak House is quest for truth, Esther's quest for illuminating the mystery of her origins, or in other words the secrets about her mother, comprises an important part of the novel. Uncovering the truth about her origins is closely related to her quest for a unified and stable self, since the absence of her mother and Esther's sense of unworthiness are intertwined. And Esther's doll plays an important role in Esther's narration in revealing Esther's fantasy about her absent mother, her inner conflicts and longings. Esther's doll, which she verbally objectifies and minimizes by calling Dolly, does not represent a toy but holds a nostalgic referent for the lost mother. She projects her fantasies about her absent mother onto a material thing, her doll. It is not a toy for Esther but a material thing that substitutes for her absent mother. In this respect, through Esther's perception of it, her doll is placed in a slippery position between the categories of objects and humans.

It is no chance that Esther's narration starts with her doll, the symbol of her mother from whom Esther originated. And from that source, Esther starts her retrospective narration of her life story:

> I have a great deal of difficulty in beginning to write my portion of these pages, for I know I am not clever. I always knew that. I can remember, when I was a very little girl indeed, I used to say to my doll when we were alone together, "Now, Dolly, I am not clever, you know very well, and you must be patient with me, like a dear!" (*BH* 24).

Esther expects her doll to "be patient with [her]", like a mother is patient with her child. She projects the mother-daughter relationship she never had onto her relationship with her doll. As Jordan insightfully comments "when Esther remembers

her doll looking at her, she recalls it staring at 'nothing' - that is, not at Esther's beautiful face, but the 'pyschical hole' where Esther's self should be" which reflect "her deepest fear that she does not exist, that in the place of her face there is 'nothing'" (52-3).

> And so she used to sit propped up in a great arm-chair, with her beautiful complexion and rosy lips, staring at me—or not so much at me, I think, as at nothing—while I busily stitched away and told her every one of my secrets (*BH* 24).

Her origins have been a mystery to her since her childhood, kept secret from her by her "grave and strict", never smiling godmother Miss Barbary, who raises her and is revealed to be her aunt later in the novel. Esther leads a lonely and miserable childhood and learns to blame herself for this when her godmother's unloving attitude towards Nell is coupled with the loneliness she feels at school. And her doll, like a mother, waits at home and "expect[s]" her from school sitting in a "great arm-chair":

> My dear old doll! I was such a shy little thing that I seldom dared to open my lips, and never dared to open my heart, to anybody else. It almost makes me cry to think what a relief it used to be to me when I came home from school of a day to run upstairs to my room and say, "Oh, you dear faithful Dolly, I knew you would be expecting me!" and then to sit down on the floor, leaning on the elbow of her great chair, and tell her all I had noticed since we parted. I had always rather a noticing way—not a quick way, oh, no!—a silent way of noticing what passed before me and thinking I should like to understand it better. I have not by any means a quick understanding. When I love a person very tenderly indeed, it seems to brighten. But even that may be my vanity." (*BH* 24)

She realizes that she cannot love her godmother as she "ought to have" and could have loved her "if [she] had been a better girl" (*BH*25). At school, she also feels that there is "some other separation" between other girls and her when she realizes "[her] birthday was the most melancholy day at home in the whole year", an "evil anniversary" in her godmother's words, which is different from the birthdays of other

children at school (*BH* 25). Believing that "[She] was to no one upon earth what Dolly was to [her]", her dolly becomes her only companion (*BH* 27).

Even as a young girl, Esther wondered about her mother and "had more than once approached this subject of [her] thoughts with Mrs. Rachael, [their] only servant", from whom she gets no answer. As she says,

> I had never heard my mama spoken of. I had never heard of my papa either, but I felt more interested about my mama. I had never worn a black frock, that I could recollect. I had never been shown my mama's grave. I had never been told where it was. Yet I had never been taught to pray for any relation but my godmother.(*BH* 25).

When she asks her godmother about her mother and receives the answer that "it would have been far better that [she] had had no birthday, that [she] had never been born!", she assumes that her mother died while giving birth to her (26). Esther's godmother portrays Esther's mother as a disgraceful and sinful woman. She says "Your mother, Esther, is your disgrace, and you were hers" without getting into the factual information what she had done to disgrace Esther, or why Esther is also her mother's disgrace. Thus, falsely considering her birthday as the death day of her mother, and feeling that she is not wanted by anyone at all, she decides to dedicate her life, as her godmother advises her, to "submission, self-denial, [and] diligent work" in order "to repair the fault [she] had been born with" (ibid.). These childhood memories of an absent and disgraceful mother shape Esther's fantasy of her mother, who has never been there and yet whose absent presence keep haunting Esther in her inner journey, like "a shadow", in her godmother's words (*BH* 26). She confides in her doll, her only confidant, the misery of being the cause of her mother's death and she feels the need to repeat this sad story so many times that she cannot remember " how often [she] repeated to the doll the story of [her] birthday" (27). Like a child lays her cheek against her mother's when crying, she does the same with her doll:

> I went up to my room, and crept to bed, and laid my doll's cheek against mine wet with tears, and holding that solitary friend upon my bosom, cried myself to sleep. Imperfect as my understanding of my sorrow was, I knew that I had

> brought no joy at any time to anybody's heart and that I was to no one upon earth what Dolly was to me. Dear, dear, to think how much time we passed alone together afterwards, and how often I repeated to the doll the story of my birthday and confided to her that I would try as hard as ever I could to repair the fault I had been born with (of which I confessedly felt guilty and yet innocent) and would strive as I grew up to be industrious, contented, and kind-hearted and to do some good to someone, and win some love to myself if I could. I hope it is not self-indulgent to shed these tears as I think of it. I am very thankful, I am very cheerful, but I cannot quite help their coming to my eyes. (*BH* 27).

As a child, Esther believes her doll is alive; she talks to it, opens her deepest secrets to it, believes that it "expects" her from school and listens to her patiently like a mother. After all, as Freud says, it is common in children to believe that their dolls are alive and they "have no fear of their dolls coming to life; they may even desire it. The source of uncanny feelings would not, therefore, be an infantile fear in this case, but rather an infantile wish or even merely an infantile belief" (3685). In Esther's case, this infantile wish is extended into her adulthood and whenever her anxieties about the loss of her mother and Esther's related sense of unworthiness are revived, she remembers her doll. Such a repetitive pattern of revival of repressed anxieties attaches uncanny sensations to Esther's doll.

Esther buries her doll, her only "companion" just before she leaves her godmother's house in Windsor, her godmother's house, for Greenleaf, Miss Donny's house where she is trained to be a governess for six years before going to the Bleak House. By burying her doll, Esther, in a way, repeats her mother's abandonment of her at her birth. This act also subverts her godmother's act of concealing the place of her mother's grave, since Esther says " I had never been shown my mama's grave" (*BH* 25). By burying her doll, Esther marks a grave for her mother, which is "the garden-earth under the tree that shaded [her] old window" (*BH* 31).

> A day or two before, I had wrapped the dear old doll in her own shawl and quietly laid her—I am half ashamed to tell it—in the garden-earth under the tree that shaded my old

> window. I had no companion left but my bird, and him I carried with me in his cage. (*BH* 31).

Believing that her mother died while giving birth to Esther, the moment when her life began, she buries her doll at an important junction of her life, when a new phase of her life will begin, or when she will be reborn, so to speak. In Freudian terms, Esther unconsciously feels a "compulsion to repeat" (Freud 3691) her mother's death to achieve control over her trauma of being left by her mother. Yet on another level, the loss of her mother also means the loss of her sense of identity, as her godmother used to impose on her the idea that only through submission and diligent work she can clear the guilt she was born with. These ideas teach her to dissolve her identity into others by being "industrious, contented, and kind-hearted and to do some good to someone, and win some love to [her]self if [she] could" (*BH* 27). She believes that only in this way, "by making herself necessary" can she be someone wanted and loved (Kennedy 338) . Therefore, the burial of her doll just before going to Bleak House also means her determination to dissolve her identity into others. By burying her doll, she not only repeats the death of her mother, but also the death of her individuality, its dissolving into others, which she painfully reflects throughout her narration.

In the night after Mr Guppy has declared his love for Esther, her underlying sense of unworthiness is reactivated, or in her words "an old chord had been more coarsely touched than it ever had been" and she immediately links this "old chord" to her doll.

> "I rang the bell, the servant came, and Mr. Guppy, laying his written card upon the table and making a dejected bow, departed. Raising my eyes as he went out, I once more saw him looking at me after he had passed the door. I sat there for another hour or more, finishing my books and payments and getting through plenty of business. Then I arranged my desk, and put everything away, and was so composed and cheerful that I thought I had quite dismissed this unexpected incident (*BH* 141). But, when I went upstairs to my own room, I surprised myself by beginning to laugh about it and then surprised myself still more by beginning to cry about it. In short, I was in a flutter for a little while and felt as if an old chord had been more coarsely touched than it ever had been

> since the days of the dear old doll, long buried in the garden." (*BH* 142).

Just as she learned from her godmother to busy herself with diligent work and by helping others to clear away the guilt she was born with, after the incident of Mr Guppy, she first busies herself with work so as not to think about Guppy's feelings for her, then she laughs at it, probably because she does not have any feelings at all for Guppy, but then she starts to cry about it so intensely that she feels her "old chord" has been "coarsely touched". She cries because she has two contradicting feelings that of the death of her identity which denies her the right to have feelings and that of the pressing need to have such emotional and sexual feelings. It is the tension between being recognized as someone worthy of love, and yet also feeling that she is no one that makes her cry. That's why she remembers her "dear old doll, long buried in the garden", or in other words her individuality, long buried.

On her first encounter with her mother at the church near Chesney Wold, she remembers her doll again:

> Shall I ever forget the rapid beating at my heart, occasioned by the look I met as I stood up! Shall I ever forget the manner in which those handsome proud eyes seemed to spring out of their languor and to hold mine! It was only a moment before I cast mine down—released again, if I may say so—on my book; but I **knew** the beautiful face quite well in that short space of time. And, very strangely, there was something quickened within me, associated with the lonely days at my godmother's; yes, away even to the days when I had stood on tiptoe to dress myself at my little glass after dressing my doll. And this, although I had never seen this lady's face before in all my life—I was quite sure of it—absolutely certain. (emphasis added *BH* 268).

Dever suggests that "[w]ithout knowing that she is looking at her mother, Esther occupies a maternal position, seeing herself as a child dressing by herself in a very un-mothered mothering moment, seeing that child playing mother to that doll, the doll who is simultaneously a mother-substitute and a dead and buried baby (19, 20). It is true that at this point Esther does not know yet that Lady Dedlock is her mother. But she experiences an unconscious recognition of her mother's face although she

never saw her, as she says " I knew the beautiful face quite well in that short space of time" (*BH* 268). She cannot bring it to her consciousness "why her face should be, in a confused way, like a broken glass to [her], in which [she] saw scraps of old remembrances" (ibid.). In this uncanny moment, Esther realizes that "Lady Dedlock's face accidentally resemble[s] [her] godmother's" and also her own face (ibid.). That's why "the sight of another woman who both is and is not herself [is] like looking into a broken glass" (Dever 20). In all those instances of uneasy remembering that are discussed above, Esther's doll seem to reach beyond her grave and "coarsely touch" that chord of Esther, which is her uneasy memories of suffering because of the absence of her mother. Her doll, and thus her mother, comes to life again and again in such remembrance of past.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

This thesis has focused on an important aspect of Dickens' novels, which is their strikingly overcrowded material worlds, which critics have generally considered to function simply as narrative elements adding to the realistic atmosphere of the texts. They have been regarded as a decor, so to speak, in front of which the plots unfold and characters are depicted; or they have been taken prominently as a representation of the invasiveness of commodity culture that Dickens is critical of. In this thesis, the new critical interest in the material worlds of fiction which has come to be known as thing theory has been used to challenge these earlier assumptions, and to add new perspectives to scholarship on the two selected novels.

By building its analysis on insights from thing theory, this study aimed to analyze how the material worlds of Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Bleak House* are represented and what kinds of meanings and values they take upon themselves within the narrative. The objects analyzed were selected according to some shared features of the novels in terms of their depictions of objects and material entities in the texts, such as their carnivalesque and bleak depictions. This structural organization of the analytical chapters of the thesis also underlines Dickens' notion of the grotesque, which is an integral part of his portrayal of the material world as variously bleak and humorous. In both novels, the depictions of objects and other material entities like the fog convey both a positive sense and a negative one in alteration. In other words, there is both a sense of carnivalesque humour and bleakness, which is directly related to Dickens's grotesque art. This aspect of Dickens' art was identified by the Victorian art critic and thinker John Ruskin, who differentiated between the sportive and terrible grotesques that are respectively composed of ludicrous and fearful elements (Steig 254). Hollington also notes that Dickens's notion of the grotesque shows a pattern corresponding to Ruskin's categories (197-199).

In *The Old Curiosity Shop* depictions of curious objects and objectified characters evoke, most of the time, an excitement, or a curiosity, in the reader. For instance, the grandfather's collection of curiosities, Mrs Jarley's waxworks and human curiosities perform, as carnivalesque elements, a positive function in the novel by dispelling the gloomy and sentimental undertone of the novel that follows little Nell to her death. Yet, in the small section of the novel that takes place in an industrial setting, there is a bleaker portrayal of the material world in which the fusion of the machinery and the human assume a malignant force and evoke darker sensations in the reader.

In *Bleak House,* on the other hand, although a bleaker depiction of the material world is on the fore, there are again elements of carnivalesque humour in the portrayal of some of the material entities. For instance, the fog, as a material entity, is a murky manifestation of the inefficient and yet all-encompassing legal system in the text. However, the legal system symbolized by the fog is subverted in the text by means of a grotesque portrayal of the material entities in Krook's shop, a rag and bottle warehouse that is ironically called Chancery in the text. In the depictions of Krook's shop with its hoard of rubbish items and Krook's final transformation into a disgusting and horrifying matter, there is a carnivalesque humour directed at the legal system which promotes inefficiency. These discussions show that the carnivalesque and grotesque imagery, which have subversive functions in both texts, is an integral part of Dickens' portrayal of the material world.

This study has identified that both novels employ a slippery depiction of objects and characters. In *The Old Curiosity Shop,* the subjects and the objects are depicted in terms so similar to each other that the boundary separating them is at times quite weak. The objectified human characters are depicted in a way as to possess a curiosity about them and they are objectified through the curious gaze of other characters. For instance, little Nell is brought to the fore as the prime curiosity of the novel who is objectified in different ways: as part of her grandfather's collection of curiosities, as a sexual object and commodity, and as Schor ("Uncanny Daughter" 42) points out, as a memento that stands in the place of the whole novel. Nell's grandfather is also depicted as a curious object and the analysis showed that it is the

intimate connection between the grandfather and his curiosities that makes him look like part of them. Quilp, on the other hand, is objectified through his grotesque body that attracts the attention of other characters. His dwarfism and other bodily distortions make him look like a curious object throughout the narrative.

Mrs Jarley's waxworks, another collection of curiosities in *The Old Curiosity Shop,* are discussed as objects that exemplify a proximity between objects and humans in their very nature. They depict real life figures in life size, and yet they are also objects that display deanimated versions of life. The narrative plays with this perception through a carnivalesque confusion of people and waxworks.

In *The Old Curiosity Shop,* Dickens also makes use of a slippery depiction of people and things in a much darker sense. The indistinction of the boundary between the industrial machines and humans is rendered as a threatening force of the machines in the text. While the industrial machinery are depicted as to take on aspects of human agency, people look either like automatons or savage beasts of the industrial setting.

In *Bleak House,* Esther's doll also exemplifies slippery perception of people and objects and it is a rather more textualized object than the other objects analyzed in this study. Although all the objects of fictional works are textual in some respects, Esther's doll is markedly so. In other words, while Esther's doll exists only within the registers of her own narrative, all the other objects in *Bleak House* are depicted as being seen and commented upon by other characters too. Esther's doll does not even exist at the moment of Esther's narration, since she narrates that she buried it years before. It is still, nevertheless, also a material thing that Esther cherished, talked to and even buried as she relates in her narration. She projects her fantasies about her absent mother onto a material thing, her doll. It is not a toy for her but a material thing that substitutes for her absent mother. In this regard, Esther's depiction of her doll is an example of slippery perception of people and objects.

Krook's death by spontaneous combustion and his turning into some indefinable material like yellow liquor, soot that smears, cinder and coal is a different example of Dickens' depiction of people and material entities as slippery things. In Krook's case,

the slipperiness is not between people and man-made objects, but rather between people and other material entities. What remains from Krook's body is repulsive and horrifying and his remains is subsumed into his stashed away things in his shops.

Dickens' regular use of a depiction of objects and humans as slippery categories shows that the boundary between things and the self is a topic of scrutiny for Dickens. Further study of Dickens' other novels can illuminate whether Dickens' novels express a philosophical questioning of the ways in which human beings perceive the world as strictly human or non-human.

Another material entity that was analyzed in this thesis is the fog in *Bleak House.* In his depictions of the fog Dickens gives material form to the idea of mystification that he pursues throughout the novel. In the novel, the workings of the Chancery are so mystified that they are literally "mist-ified" by Dickens. As depicted, the legal system gets its "all-encompassing" power, in D.A. Miller's words (125), from this very mystification. The fog is the murky manifestation, or the materialization, of this mystified and thus all-encompassing power. Through the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case, the legal issue at hand in the novel, the power of the Chancery infiltrates all aspects of the lives of the characters.

In both novels, Dickens pursues similar ideas through his representations of shops and the things that they contain. Both Krook's and Nell's grandfather's shops contain material things that are more than commodities. They are, in principle, commodities for sale but it has been noted that there are no accounts of any sale in either of the shops. Both Krook and Nell's grandfather are described as having a strong liking for their things and a reluctance to sell them, which also implies that they can hardly earn their living from them. This thesis found that the bonds between these owners and their possessions, even though they are in principle for sale, confirm Bill Brown's observation that

> Even as the prose fiction of the nineteenth century represents and variously registers the way commodity relations came to saturate everyday life, so too (despite those relations or, indeed, intensified by them) this fiction demonstrates that the

> human investment in the physical object world, and the mutual constitution of human subject and inanimate object, can hardly be reduced to those relations (Brown Sense 5).

In the case of both Krook and Nell's grandfather, a break of the bonds between the owners and their things is necessitated within the narrative logic so that the items that are valuable in terms of the plot can circulate within the texts. Nell's grandfather loses his shop with all the curiosities it contains when Quilp takes over the possession of the whole. This enables the circulation of Nell within the text as the prime curiosity, where previously she had been firmly entrenched there, or "shut up there" in the words of Kit's mother. It is only through her death that this prime curiosity stops circulating and thus ushers in the closure of the plot. Her demise is necessitated in the narrative, because, as Schor says, her death just after she reaches puberty keeps little Nell little so that she can be a "souvenir", a "memento" which stands in the place of the whole novel ("Uncanny Daughter" 42).

In the case of Krook and his things, the bond between them breaks when he dies, or rather when he is subsumed into his things as mere grease and ash, and this enables the circulation of two items that are valuable in terms of the plot; the latest Jarndyce will and the love letters between Lady Dedlock and Captain Hawdon. These two items serve to resolve the two mysteries of the novel: Lady Dedlock's past and the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case. In this regard, Krook's death and a break of his bonds with his things is necessitated within the narrative logic.

The discussions carried out in this study can be further developed by means of an analysis of different objects and material entities in Dickens' other novels. For instance, in the section of this thesis where the industrial things in *The Old Curiosity Shop* is analyzed, dirt is discussed as a bleak thing. Although dirt appears fleetingly in this novel, Dickens makes more use of it in the depictions of the material worlds in his later novels which have bleaker perceptions. Filthy things that Dickens depicts in a large quantity in his later works can be analyzed by means of the concepts of the grotesque or the abject. Another interesting point of study can be an analysis of the

illustrations of Dickens' novels as visual textual objects. These illustrations that Dickens specifically integrated into the texts can be discussed in terms of how they add to the portrayal and meaning of the material worlds of the novels.

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APPENDICES

A. TÜRKÇE ÖZET

DICKENS'IN *KASVETLİ EV* ve *ANTİKACI DÜKKANI ROMANLARI: ŞEYLER ÜZERİNDEN BİR OKUMA*

Dickens'ın romanları, 19. Yüzyıl ve Viktorya dönemi romanlarında olduğu gibi, nesnelerle doludur. Kimi örneklerde nesnelerle dolu bir mekanın ya da bir nesnenin tasviri sayfalarca devam etmesine rağmen eleştirmenlerce analize değer unsurlar olarak görülmemektedir. Çünkü, bu tarz analizleri sorgulayan eleştirmenlerin de belirttiği gibi, roman analizinde sadece karakterlere ve olay örgüsüne odaklanan, nesne tasvirlerini anlatının göz ardı edilebilecek detayları olarak gören bir okuma kalıbı yerleşik hale gelmiştir. Örneğin Ian Watt, formel gerçekçilik olarak tanımladığı türde yer alan mekan ve nesne tasvirlerini, bireylerin gerçek deneyimlerininin sahici betimlemesini yaparken yararlanılan anlatı unsurları olarak ele almaktadır. Benzer şekilde Roland Barthes de nesne ve mekan tasvirlerini gerçeklik etkisi olarak tanımlamakta ve anlatıda herhangi bir sembolik ya da işlevsel değer taşımayan, sadece gerçeğe işaret eden detaylar olarak değerlendirmektedir. Öte yandan, Dickens analizlerinde nesneleri de dikkate alan çalışmaların çoğunda ise nesneler sadece meta olarak ele alınmakta ve Dickens'ın nesnelerle dolu tasvirlerini yalnızca yazarın maddi kültür eleştirisinin bir yansıması olarak değerlendirmektedir.

Ancak bu akademik yaklaşımlar maddi kültüre dönük yeni bir kuramsal ilgiyle sorulanmaya başlanmıştır. Bill Brown'ın 2001 yılında *Critical Inquiry* adlı süreli yayın için editörlüğünü yaptığı *Şeyler* adıyla yayınlanan özel sayı için kaleme aldığı "Şey Teorisi" başlıklı yazısıyla birlikte, bu yeni kuramsal alan şey teorisi olarak adlandırılmaya başlanmıştır. Bu tezde, Dickens'ın *Antikacı Dükkanı* ve *Kasvetli Ev* romanları, yukarıda bahsedilen eleştirel varsayımları sorgulamak ve her iki romanla ilgili akademik birikime farklı bir yaklaşımla katkıda bulunmak için şey teorisi

açısından analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmada nesnelerin nasıl tasvir edildiği, ve ne tür anlam ve değerler yüklendikleri incelenmiştir. Her iki romanda da Dickens'ın maddi dünya tasvirinin ayrılmaz bir unsuru oldukları için, şey teorisinin yanısıra karnavalesk, grotesk ve tekinsiz kavramlarından da yararlanılmıştır.

Çalışmanın teorik altyapısını oluşturan şey teorisi, arkeoloji, antropoloji, kültürel çalışmalar ve edebiyat gibi farklı alanlardan beslenen disiplenler arası bir kuramdır. Bu kuram, nesnelerin bir kültürde ya da edebi eserde taşıdıkları anlamları ve değerleri, ve kimi örneklerde bu anlam ve değerlerin nasıl ötesine geçtiklerini inceler. Edebiyatta uygulandığı haliyle kuramın tarihselci ya da fenomenolojik/psikanalitik yaklaşımlarla ele alındığı görülmektedir. Tarihselci yaklaşım, nesnelerin edebi metinlerde kolonyal ya da endüstriyel tarih hakkında bilgiler barındırdığını ileri sürmektedir ve bu açıdan özellikle postkolonyal incelemelerde yararlanılmaktadır. Fenomenolojik/psikanalitik yaklaşım ise, nesneleri karakterlerle olan etkileşimleri içinde analiz ederek, nesnelerin metin içinde barındırdığı değer ve anlamları ortaya koyar.

Nesne ve şey kavramlarını birbirinden ayıran şey teorisi, bu iki kavramı insanlarla olan etkileşimleri üzerinden tanımlamaktadır. Nesneler, insanlar tarafından gündelik hayat içinde genellikle tekillikleri içinde fark edilmeyen, hayatın sıradan parçaları olarak görülmektedir. Ancak nesneler, gündelik kullanımlarının ötesine geçen çeşitli anlamlar ve değerler de barındırırlar. Şey teorisi bunu nesnelerin gizil potansiyeli, ya da nesnelerin şeyliği olarak adlandırmaktadır. Bir diğer ifadeyle aslında nesneler aynı zamanda şey, şeyler ise nesnedir. Bu nedenle şey teorisinden yararlanılan analizlerde nesne ve şey kavramlarının birbirinin yerine kullanıldığı görülmektedir. Bir nesnenin olağan kullanım kodları aşındığında, örneğin söz konusu nesne kırıldığında ya da bozulduğunda, kişinin dikkatini çeker. Bir nesneyi fetiş, idol ya da totem yapan unsur da, nesnelerin şeyliği, onların gizil potansiyelleridir. Dolayısıyla şey, insanların nesnelerle olan olağan ilişkisinin değişmesi durumunda görünür hale gelen nesnenin gizil potansiyeline verilen addır. Örneğin bu tezde analiz edilen nesnelerden biri olan *Kasvetli Ev* romanındaki Esther'in Dolly adını verdiği oyuncak bebeği sıradan bir nesne değil, bir şeydir. Geriye dönük anlatısı boyunca Esther, oyuncak bebeğini hiç

sahip olmadığı annesi olarak görmekte, onunla konuşmakta, ve hayatının dönüm noktası olarak gördüğü bir anda bahçeye gömmektedir. Esther'in çocukluğundan gelen değersizlik duygusunun su yüzüne çıktığı anlarda da özlemle hatırladığı oyuncak bebeği, bu nedenlerden dolayı bir çocuğun sahip olduğu sıradan bir nesne değil, bir şeydir.

Çalışmada yararlanılan bir diğer kavram olan karnavalesk, Rus düşünür ve edebiyat kuramcısı Mikhail Bakhtin'in roman teorisinin önemli unsurlarından biridir. Bu kavramı, *Rabelais ve Dünyası* ile *Dostoyevski Poetikasının Sorunları* adlı çalışmalarında, edebiyattaki karnaval ve grotesk unsurları tanımlamak için kullanmaktadır. Bakhtin karnavalesk kavramını özellikle Orta Çağ'daki karnavallara bakarak ortaya koyarar, ve hiyerarşik dünyanın ters yüz edilmesi ve normların ötesindeki sahici benliğin ortaya çıkarılması gibi karnavallara özgü olan unsurların Orta Çağ ve Rönesans'ta edebiyatı da etkilediğini söyler. Edebiyatın karnavallaşması dediği bu olgunun başat örneklerinin Rabelais'nin eserlerinde bulunduğunu düşünür. Edebiyatta karnaval unsurlar, metnin kullandığı imgelerde, dilde ve olay örgüsünde karşımıza çıkabilir. Tıpkı orta çağın dini ve feodal kültürünü ters yüz eden karnavalların tarihsel örneklerinde görüldüğü gibi, edebiyattaki karnaval unsurlar da normları sorgulayıcı ve ters yüz edici işlevler üstlenir. Otoriteye yönelen karnaval kahkahası ve parodi, edebiyatta yenileyici ve pozitif unsurlar olarak yer alır.

Grotesk imgeler, özellikle de grotesk beden, Bakhtin'e göre binlerce yıldır otoriteyi ters yüz eden halk mizahından kaynaklanmaktadır ve grotesk gerçekçilik adını verdiği türün bir unsurudur. Grotesk beden imgesi abartılı ve normların dışına çıkan bir beden tasvirinden oluşur çünkü grotesk beden bütün insanları temsil eden evrensel bir imgedir. Grotesk beden, bedenin sınırlarını zorlamayı, bu sınırlardan dışarı taşmayı ifade ettiği için, bedenin sınırlarından dışarı uzanan burun, fallus, dudak gibi kısımların abartılı bir şekilde tasvirini içerir. Örneğin bu tezde incelenen *Antikacı Dükkanı* romanındaki Quilp karakteri cüce olmasına rağmen anormal derecede büyük bir kafaya, eğri bacaklara, sürekli ağzından dışarı sarkan bir dile sahiptir. Bu açılardan grotesk bir bedene sahip olan Quilp, romanda Nell'i ve Nell'in temsil ettiği Viktorya dönemi normlarını altüst eden bir karakter olarak yer

almaktadır. Buna ek olarak Quilp deforme olmuş bedeniyle özdeşleşmekte ve nesneleşmektedir.

Bu çalışmada, Dickens'ın grotesk anlayışını ve sanatını anlamak açısından önemli olan Viktorya dönemi sanat eleştirmenlerinden John Ruskin'in grotesk tanımlamasından da yararlanılmıştır. Ruskin'e göre sırasıyla komik ve korkutucu unsurlardan oluşan iki tür grotesk vardır: neşeli ve dehşetli grotesk. Bu iki tür, Ruskin'e göre genellikle bir arada bulunur. Hollington da *Dickens ve Grotesk* adlı çalışmasında Dickens'ın grotesk anlayışının erken dönem eserlerindeki çoğunlukla komik unsurlar barındıran bir groteskten, ileri dönem romanlarındaki daha korkutucu türe doğru bir gelişme gösterdiğini vurgulamaktadır. Bu tezde analiz edilen her iki romanda da, komik ve korkutucu türde grotesklerin birarada bulunduğu ortaya konmuştur. Örneğin *Antikacı Dükkanı* romanında sanayi kenti tasvirleri korkutucu türde groteskin örnekleri iken, diğer karakterleri hem şaşırtan hem de korkutan bir karakter olarak Quilp komik türde groteskin örneğidir. Benzer şekilde *Kasvetli Ev* romanındaki Krook, Chancery mahkemesi yargıcının parodik versiyonu olarak romanda onun otoritesini sarsan komik türde grotesk bir karakterdir. Ancak bürokratik gecikmeler ve gizemli bir işleyişle özdeşleşen Chancery mahkemesi, kendisiyle bir şekilde ilişkilenen herkesin hayatını mahveden korkutucu türde groteskin bir örneğidir.

Her iki romanda da bazı nesnelerin tasvirlerinde tekinsizlik olgusu da önemli bir rol oynar ve sadece nesnelerin duyularla algılanma biçimlerine katkıda bulunmakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda romandaki anlatıcıların ana karakterlerin psikolojisini daha derinlemesine yansıtmalarını da sağlar. Tekinsiz kavramı, Freud'un ele aldığı haliyle bastırılan ancak sürekli olarak su yüzüne çıkan korku ve kaygıların kişide yarattığı duyguyu tanımlar. Tekinsizlik duygusu, bir şeyin kişiye hem tanıdık hem de yabancı gibi görünmesine neden olur. Ya da bir diğer ifadeyle, tanıdık bir şeyin yabancı bir ortamda beklenmedik bir şekilde ortaya çıkması, kişide tekinsizlik duygusu yaratır. Örneğin *Antikacı Dükkanı* romanında Nell, yeni yeni gelişmekte olan ve kendisinde korku uyandıran cinselliğini sürekli olarak bastırmaktadır. Quilp ise romanda dizginlenmeyen cinsel dürtülerle özdeşleşen bir karakterdir ve bu açıdan Nell'in

korkularını da sembolize eden, bu korkuların bedenleşmiş halidir. Bu yüzden Nell, korkuları her su yüzüne çıktığında, Quilp'in imgesi farklı nesnelerde Nell'in karşısına çıkar ve onda tekinsizlik duygusu yaratır. *Kasvetli Ev* romanında da Esther'in oyuncak bebeği Dolly Esther açısından tekinsiz duygularla ilişkili bir nesnedir, çünkü Esther'in bastırmaya çalıştığı değersizlik duygusu ve hiç sahip olmadığı annesiyle ilgili fantezileri su yüzüne çıktığında, bu duygular oyuncak bebeğiyle ilgili imgelerle çakışmaktadır.

Çalışmada analiz edilen nesneler, romanlarda nesneler ve diğer maddi varlıklar betimlenirken kullanılan kimi ortak noktalar üzerinden seçilmiştir. Buna göre, betimlemelerin karanavalesk ve kasvetli özellikler taşıdığı ortaya konmuş ve tezin analiz kısmı bu özellikler doğrultusunda bölümlere ayrılmıştır. Karnavalesk ve kasvetli betimlemeler Dickens'ın grotesk anlayışına içkin özelliklerdir ve maddi dünya tasvirleri mizah ve karamsarlık arasında gidip gelmektedir. Dolayısıyla, bu çalışmada analiz edilen her iki romanda da nesnelerin ve *Kasvetli Ev* romanında yer alan sis gibi diğer maddi varlıkların tasvirleri okuyucuda, olumlu ya da olumsuz duygular uyandırmaktadır.

Antikacı Dükkanı romanındaki ilginç nesneler ve nesneleştirilmiş karakterler okurda merak ve heyecan duygusu uyandırır. Örneğin, Nell'in büyükbabasının ilginç nesneler koleksiyonu, Bayan Jarley'nin balmumundan figürleri ve nesne gibi tasvir edilen insanlar, olay örgüsü Nell'in adım adım ölüme yaklaşmasını takip eden romanın kasvetli ve duygusal tonunu dağıtan karnavalesk unsurlardır. Öte yandan, romanın sanayi kentinde geçen kısa bölümünde makine ve insanların özelliklerinin içiçe geçmesi sanayinin karanlık gücü olarak işlenerek, maddi dünya son derece karanlık bir şekilde tasvir edilmektedir. Bu bölüm okuyucuda kasvetli ve karanlık duygular uyandırmaktadır.

Kasvetli Ev romanında ise, her ne kadar maddi dünyanın tasviri *Antikacı Dükkanı* romanına göre daha karanlık olsa da, kimi nesnelerin ve maddi varlıkların tasvirinde karnavalesk mizahın unsurlarına rastlamak mümkündür. Örneğin bu çalışmada analiz edilen maddi varlıklardan biri olan sis, verimsiz ancak her şeyi etkisi altına alan

hukuki sistemin metindeki karanlık dışavurumudur. Ancak sisle sembolize edilen hukuki sistem metinde, ironik bir şekilde Chancery mahkemesi olarak anılan Krook'un daha çok çaput ve çer çöpten oluşan ikinci el eşya dükkanı aracılığıyla tersyüz edilmektedir. Krook'un kendi kendine yanarak bedeninin mide bulandırıcı ve ürkütücü bir takım maddelere indirgenmesinin, ve yığınlar halinde biriktirdiği çer çöpünün tasvirlerinde, sadece verimsizlik üreten bu hukuki sisteme yönelen karnavalesk mizahın unsurları bulunmaktadır. Bu tartışmalar, tersyüz edici işlevleri olan karnavalesk ve grotesk betimlemelerin, Dickens'ın maddi dünya tasvirinin ayrılmaz unsurları olduğunu göstermektedir.

Bu çalışma, her iki romanda da nesne ve karakterlerin kaygan kategoriler olarak betimlendiğini ortaya koymuştur. Bir diğer ifadeyle, her iki romanda da anlatı boyunca karakterler nesne, nesneler ise insan gibi tasvir edilmektedir. *Antikacı Dükkanı* romanında, özneler ve nesneler birbirine o kadar benzer şekillerde betimlenmektedir ki, bu iki kategoriyi birbirinden ayıran sınır kimi zaman oldukça zayıflamaktadır. Nesne gibi tasvir edilen karakterler, diğer karakterlerin merak dolu bakışlarıyla nesneleşmektedir. Örneğin küçük Nell romanda farklı açılardan nesneleştirilen bir karakter olarak ön plana çıkmaktadır: büyükbabasının ilginç nesneler koleksiyonunun bir parçası, cinsel bir nesne ve meta, ve Schor'un belirttiği gibi romanın kendisini temsil eden bir hatıra olarak. Nell'in büyükbabası da bir nesne gibi tasvir edilmektedir ve bu çalışmada yapılan analiz, büyükbabanın koleksiyonuyla olan derin bağının kendisini o koleksiyonun bir parçası haline getirdiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Öte yanda romanın diğer ana karakteri Quilp ise diğer karakterklerin dikkatini kendisine çeken grotesk bedeniyle nesneleşmektedir. Cüceliği ve diğer bedensel deformasyonları Quilp'i anlatının ilgi çekici nesnelerinden biri kılmaktadır.

Romandaki ilginç nesneler koleksiyonlarından bir diğeri olan Bayan Jarley'nin balmumu figürleri, roman boyunca anlatının temel unsurlarından olan nesne ve insanların kaygan kategoriler olarak betimlenmesinin örneklerinden bir diğeridir. Gerçek hayattan kişileri gerçek boyutlu olarak temsil eden Bayan Jarley'nin balmumu figürleri, aynı zamanda hayatın cansız tasvirleridir. Metin balmumu

figürlerin bu niteliğiyle oynayarak anlatı boyunca karakterlerin algısında insan ve balmumu figülerin nasıl içiçe geçtiğini gösterir.

Antikacı Dükkanı romanında Dickens'ın insan ve nesneleri kaygan kategoriler olarak betimlediği sahnelere kimi zaman daha karanlık bir algı eşlik etmektedir. Örneğin sanayi makineleri ve insanlar arasındaki sınırın silikleşmesi, metinde makinelerin tehditkar gücü olarak tasvir edilmektedir. Makineler insana ait özelliklere sahip olmaya başladıkça, insanlar da otomat ya da sanayinin canavarları gibi görünmeye başlarlar.

Kasvetli Ev romanında Esther'in oyuncak bebeği de hem insan ve nesnelerin kaygan kategoriler olarak betimlenmesine bir örnektir hem de bu çalışmada analiz edilen diğer nesnelere göre daha metinsel bir nesnedir. Her ne kadar edebiyat eserlerindeki bütün nesneler metinsel olsa da, Esther'in oyuncak bebeğinin bu özelliği çok daha belirgindir. Romandaki diğer nesneler krakterler tarafından görülen ve karakterlerin yorum yaptığı nesneler iken, Esther'in oyuncak bebeği sadece Esther'in kendi anlatısında yer alan bir nesnedir. Bu oyuncak bebek, Esther'in kendi anlatısına başladığı anda bile var olmayan bir nesnedir çünkü yıllar önce onu bahçeye gömdüğünü anlatmaktadır. Fakat yine de anlatı içinde yer alan maddi bir varlıktır çünkü, Esther'in anlatısında bahsettiği gibi oyuncak bebeği çok sevdiği ve insanlarla kuramadığı iletişimi onunla kurduğunu düşündüğü bir nesne olarak Esther'in hayatında yer almıştır. Bu oyuncak bebek, Esther'in hiç sahip olmadığı annesiyle ilgili fantezilerini yansıttığı bir nesnedir ve bu açıdan Esther için bir oyuncak değil, annesinin yerini alan maddi bir varlıktır.

Yine *Kasvetli Ev* romanında Krook'un kendi kendine yanarak ne olduğu tam olarak tanımlanamayan bir maddeye dönüşmesi de Dickens'ın insan ve nesneleri, ya da bu örnekte olduğu gibi maddi varlıkları kaygan kategoriler olarak betimlemesine bir örnektir. Krook'un örneğinde kayganlık insanlar ve insan yapımı nesneler arasında değil, insan ve maddi varlıklar arasındadır. Krook'un bedeninden geriye kalan şey mide bulandırıcı ve ürkütücüdür ve dükkanında biriktirdiği şeylerin dokusuna işler, onlarla bir olur.

Bu örnekler, insan ve nesneler, ya da maddi varlıklar arasındaki sınırın Dickens'ın dikkatle ele aldığı konulardan biri olduğunu göstermektedir. Dickens'ın diğer romanlarını da bu açıdan ele alabilecek farklı çalışmalar, Dickens'ın romanlarının insanların dünyayı algılama biçimlerine dair felsefi bir akıl yürütmeyi ifade edip etmediğini ortaya koyabilir.

Bu çalışmada incelenen bir diğer maddi varlık, *Kasvetli Ev* romanındaki sistir. Dickens roman boyunca mercek altına aldığı mistifikasyon konusuna sis aracılığıyla maddi bir form kazandırır. Romanda hukuki sistem ve onu temsil eden Chancery mahkemesinin işleyişi o kadar gizemlidir ki, hukuki sistem herşeyi etkisi altına alan gücünü bu gizemlilikten alır. Sis, hukuki sistemin kasvetli sembolüdür. Romanda geçen Jarndyce Jarndyce'e karşı davası aracılığıyla hukuki sistem karakterlerin hayatlarına bir sis gibi tamamen sızar.

Her iki romanında da Dickens, betimlediği dükkanlar ve bu dükkanlardaki nesneler aracılığıyla benzer fikirleri ele alır. Hem Krook'un hem de Nell'in büyükbabasının dükkanı meta özelliklerinin çok ötesine geçen nesnelerle doludur. Bu nesneler, dükkanlarda satılmayı bekleyen metalar gibi görünseler de her iki romada da herhnagi bir satış sahnesi yer almamaktadır. Hem Krook hem de Nell'in büyükbabası, sahip oldukları nesnelerle duygusal bir bağ içindedir ve onları satmak konusuda isteksizdir. Aslında bu, aynı zamanda, bu nesneleri satarak geçimlerini kazanamadıklarını da ima etmektedir. Her iki örnekte de mal sahipleri ve sahip oldukları nesneler arasındaki bağın kopması, anlatının mantığı gereği zorunludur. Çünkü ancak bu sayede olay örgüsü açısından önemli olan nesneler metinde dolaşıma girer. Nell'in büyükbabası dükkanını ve sahip olduğu ilginç nesneleri, Quilp'e olan kumar borcunu ödeyemediği için kaybeder. Böylece, daha önce dükkanda adeta kapalı kalan Nell büyükbabasıyla birlikte bir yolculuğa başlar. Bu, aynı zamanda, romanın ilgi çekici ana nesnesi olarak Nell'in metinde dolaşıma girmesini de sağlar. Nell'in dolaşımı, ancak romanın sonunda ölümüyle birlikte son bulur.

Krook'un örneğinde ise Krook ve nesneleri arasındaki bağ, Krook öldüğünde ortadan kalkar ve bu sayede olay örgüsü açısından önemli olan iki nesne metinde dolaşıma

girer. Bu iki nesne, en son tarihli Jarndyce vasiyetiyle, Lady Dedlock ve Kaptan Hawdon arasındaki aşk mektuplarıdır. Krook hem biriktirmeyi sevdiğinden, hem de okuma yazması olmadığı için ne olduklarını anlamadığından bu iki nesne dükkanında gizli kalmaktadır. Ancak Krook'un ölümüyle ortaya çıkarlar ve romanın iki gizeminin çözümlenmesinde rol oynarlar. Yıllarca sürüncemede kalan Jarndyce Jarndyce'e karşı davası kapanır ve Lady Dedlock'un gizemli geçmişi ortaya çıkar. Bu açıdan, Krook ve nesneleri arasındaki bağın kopması, anlatının mantığı gereği romanda gereksinilen bir unsurdur.

Çalışma, Dickens'ın maddi dünyayı değer ve anlam yüklü tasvir ettiğini, karakterleri nesne, nesnleri ise insan gibi tasvir ederek karakterler ve nesneler arasında katı bir sınır olduğu fikrini ısrarla sorguladığını ortaya koymuştur. Bu çalışmada yürütülen tartışmalar, Dickens'ın diğer romanlarındaki nesnelerin inceleneceği farklı çalışmalarla ileriye taşınabilir. Örneğin, *Antikacı Dükkanı* romanındaki sanayi şeylerin analiz edildiği kısımda kir, karanlık bir varlık olarak ele alınmıştır. Her ne kadar bu romanda kir yüzeysel bir şekilde yer alsa da, Dickens'ın daha karanlık bir bakış açıcına sahip olduğu ileriki dönem romanlarında anlatının önemli bir kısmını kapsar. Bu romanlarda Dickens'ın daha fazla yer verdiği kirli şeyler, grotesk ya da abject kavramları aracılığıyla incelenebilir. Yine Dickens'ın romanlarına özellikle eklediği çizimlerin, metinde yer alan görsel nesneler olarak analiz edilmesi, romanlarda tasvir edilen maddi dünyayı algılamamıza ne tür katkıları olduğunun araştırılması ilginç bir çalışma konusu olabilir.

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