CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is the novelist of the Victorian era and he is the most acceptable novelist to readers of all ages and of people with widely differing mentalities. Dickens’ greatness as a novelist and reformist will not be withered for centuries together. Shakespeare’s encomium on Cleopatra in Antony and Cleopatra, “...age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety....” can be applied to his novels. He is one of the most painstaking of English novelists. Tolstoy regards him as one of the few supreme novelists who has ever lived. Charles Dickens is the Shakespeare of English fiction. The vividness and magnitude of his created world, its variety, exuberance, and total particularity are equaled in literature by none other than Shakespeare. Like Shakespeare Dickens brims with originality in expressing and addressing human nature at large.

Stewart Garrett says, “It is the potent union of Dickens’s style and motive imagination that sends us back time and again to the inevitable comparison with Shakespeare, subscribed to early in Dickens’s career by Walter Savage Landor and David, Masson” (Garrett XV). Dickens creates a unique and independent seeming world, allowing us to use that time-worn term ‘world’ with precision. He creates a flexible language for self-expression and imaginative creativity that commands admiration for its brilliance and virtuosity. The Noble prize winner, the English novelist and critic, George Orwell says of Dickens that “His imagination overwhelms everything, like a kind of weed” (Orwell 77). Scott and Emily Bronte's imagination are of a finer quality; Jane Austen's is more exactly articulated, but then none of them has an imagination at once forceful, so varied, and so self-dependent as that of Dickens. His insight into humanity is comprehensive in the highest degree. In the portrayal of this life he has every right to
demand a permanent place just beside Shakespeare. Steven Marus says, “What one feels and senses in reading Dickens is the central genius of the English language” (Garrett XV). Dickens has a unique position in English Literature for his special form of self-expression in prose fiction.

The period between the great Reform bill of 1832 and the end of the nineteenth century is named as the Victorian age. Victorian age is an era of great ups and downs. The age of Dickens is characterised by suffering and conflict as well as by expansion and progress. It has seen the birth of great capitalist class as a new dimension in national life due to the Industrial Revolution. On the other side, it is an era of material affluence, political consciousness, democratic and social reforms, scientific advancement, and social unrest. It is the time of discoveries, explorations, reforms and movements. It is, however, an age of radical changes in every field. No other period in English history has ever seen such an output of literature like the Victorian age. It is characterized by the constant change in economic circumstances, social customs and intellectual atmosphere. It is an age of literary giants, especially in the field of novels. Some of the English literary classics were written in this period. The unique feature of the novels of this period is their true life portrayal both in terms of characters and social life. It produces a galaxy of great men in all walks of life.

Poetry, prose, novel, history and painting—all these were produced in large quantities. However, the most outstanding literary contribution of the age is especially found in the field of novel. Victorian novel does not conjure before us a school or a class of a novel with common conventions and traditions; instead they picture the society with all its merits and follies. They adhere to the facts of life. But facts are not merely reproduced rather coloured with the imagination of the writer. Thus the novels of this age still stand as a record of Victorian life with men and women of flesh and blood. Writers of
the age especially novelists, have used their writing to criticize society. Hence almost all
great novelists of the age could not satirise society directly or indirectly in their novels.
This may be one of the reasons for an element of gentle social satire even in romantic
novels. There are, however, certain common characteristics which we ordinarily detect in
all the Victorian novelists. In the Victorian novels, the hero is affected by innumerable
incidents and surrounded by characters, which are knit together rather loosely by an
intrigue or intrigues, which are resolved at the end with the ringing of marriage bells. The
richness and the variety of the fiction is well represented by the writers like Charles
Dickens, one of the greatest novelist in English language. Like the novels of Dickens the
novels of Thackeray and George Eliot are primarily studied in social realism. Of course
with George Eliot, the novel becomes the vehicle of human motives and emotions. With
Henry James the novel takes a new form. His novels attempt to study the inner minds of
its characters. With Hardy and Trollope, the regional novel makes its appearance.
Disraeli’s novels are political in character. Charles Kingsley, primarily a writer of
historical romances has certain novels of great social importance. Lytton and Reads thrill
the Victorian mind with their historical romances. Meredith exposes Victorian
pompousness, vanity and hypocrisy. The Bronte sisters create a peculiar aroma of
romance and suspense in their works. In short the Victorian novels have a very complex
character.

Charles Dickens’ works expose the awakened consciousness of the Victorian age.
He is the first novelist to openly protest against the corruption and social maladjustments
of the age. Dickens believes that the ethical and political potential of literature can be
used to criticize economic, social, and moral abuses of the Victorian era. He who is a
novelist with a purpose wages a relentless battle against oppression and injustice. His
enthusiasm to reform the evils is often an impediment in his artistic way. Through his
novels he emerges as an outspoken critic of unjust economic and social conditions. He uses his writings as a repository of social conscience. Dickens’s books are one of the great reforming forces of the Victorian Age. Carlyle and Charles Dickens dominate the first half of the Victorian’s reign, and their works help one to discern the contrast of interaction between ‘Literature’ and ‘society’ of the period. Chiefly concerned with their work is the description of the ‘condition of England’. Another is the examination of prevailing economic doctrines related to poverty, population and the scope of public responsibility. A third is the attempt to suggest more humanitarian alternatives to those doctrines. Humanitarian sentiment has to first bring the ‘condition of England’ to public notice and initiate reforms. The novels of Dickens belong entirely to the humanitarian movement of the Victorian Age. Humanitarianism is indeed the keynote of his work. A complete and true understanding of Dickens’s merit as a novelist is possible only if we analyse his novels in the light of the prevailing social set up of England. The scenes, characters, actions and activities of children, as well as their sorrows and sufferings depicted and treated by him are real. He is a supreme novelist of child-life and has no match in this respect. In his second novel *Oliver Twist*, Dickens centers his story around a child, Oliver Twist, and from then onwards children are the vital characters in his novels. Though Little Nell, Florence Dombey and David Copperfield stand out in divine innocence and goodness, in contrast to the evil creatures whose persecution they suffer for a time. The complaint of an individual against a society is represented in the most effective manner.

The scenic settings of Dickens’s novels are profuse. The backgrounds are presented in a lively colour. Every detail is lavishly described and everything is magnificent. Every detail of his setting contributes to the overall atmosphere and its intended effect. Generally it predominates the other aspects of the central theme. It serves
the purpose of evoking higher levels of meaning; it enhances the intensity of truth and adds lyrical intensity and life to the narration. By his keen observation he adds vibration of life and quivering impulse even to the concrete aspects. He admits the common people of London to the arena of the English novel. He is a painter of the lower class London life. The basis of Dickens’ realism is the lower middle class life of the nineteenth century London. It is the London of the 1820's and 1830's but in the process of presentation, passing through the prismatic imagination of Dickens’ they all emerge with a new colour. The slums of *Oliver Twist*, the law courts of *Bleak House* and *Great Expectations*, the west wind of *Little Dorrit*, the waterside of *Our Mutual Friend*, the marshes of *Great Expectations*, the suburbs of *Nicholas Nickleby*, all these form a part of the same world, the world which is not London, but London which has stimulated Dickens’ fancy to create. He seeks wonders amid the dreary life of common streets. Even the ordinary and common place streets of London are often treated romantically by Dickens. Instead of the pageant of the middle age, Dickens portrays to his readers’ mind the strikes and riots, the factories and granaries and the barns in blaze, the dirty garrets, the workhouses, etc… He shows abuses or prepares those fits of moral compunction from which reforms have sprung. Thus he is regarded as one of the greatest social reformers of his age. This leads to his enormous popularity and carries his influence far and wide. Northrop Frye, a critic appreciates the work of Dickens’s in *Anatomy of Criticism* where Frye says:

In literature, as in painting, traditional emphasis in both practice and theory has been on representation or “life likeness” When, for instance, we pick up a novel of Dickens, our immediate impulse, a habit fostered in us by all the criticism know, is to compare it with “life”, whether as lived by us or by Dickens’s contemporaries. Then we meet such characters as Heep or Quilp, and as neither we nor the Victorians have ever known anything much “like” these curious
monsters, the method promptly breaks down. Some readers will complain that Dickens has relapsed into “mere” caricature, others, more sensibly, simply give up the criterion of lifelikeness and enjoy the creation for its own sake. (134)

The literary career of Dickens is divided into four periods. Sketches by Boz (1836) is the product of the Experimental period. This work is a series of short papers having descriptive value, and appealing primarily because of their humour. The second period has The Pickwick Papers (1837). In The Pickwick Papers Dickens creates a utopian and nostalgic vision of pre-Victorian and pre-industrial England prior to a rapid industrialisation and urbanisation. His later novels contain a bitter diagnosis of the condition of England. They are the most trenchant pieces of social commentary. Dickens explores many social themes in Oliver Twist (1839), but the three predominant themes are: the abuses of the new Poor Law system, the evils of the criminal world in London and the victimisation of children. The picturing of the child abuse in the context of the Victorian educational system is continued in Nicholas Nickleby (1838-9). The novel is a serious social commentary on the conditions of schools where unwanted children are maltreated and made to starve. The Old Curiosity Shop (1841) deals with the pressure of the money lenders on the poor people. Barnaby Rudge (1841) is an experiment in the Ainsworth type of historical novel dealing with the Gordon anti-poppery riots of 1700. The outstanding work of the third period starts with Martin Chuzzlewit (1841) which deals with the adventures of Martin in England and in America. Dickens’s novella, A Christmas Carol (1843), is an anti-Malthusian tale. The author expresses his disgust for the Malthusian principle of uncontrolled population growth. Dombey and Son (1848) is a study on the evil effects of pride and haughtiness of temper. The marvelous creations of his final period are David Copperfield (1850) and Oliver Twist that deal with the sorrows and terrors of children. Bleak House (1853) exposes the abuses of the court of Chancery.
and administrative incompetence. Apart from the critique of the Chancery courts, Dickens also criticises slum housing, overcrowded urban graveyards and neglect of contagious diseases, electoral corruption, preachers, class divisions, and neglect of the educational needs of the poor. In *Hard Times* (1854) the social consequences of industrialisation and urbanisation are most persuasively depicted. The target of *Little Dorrit* (1857) is the unreformed civil service with its nepotism and its injustice. *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) depicts the entire system of legalized oppression that lies behind the picturesque horrors of the French Revolution. *Great Expectations* (1860-61), like *David Copperfield* and *Oliver Twist*, deals with the sufferings and sorrows of a child. His last completed novel is *Our Mutual Friend* (1865) pictures the effect of industrial revolution both in the mindset of the people and in the country. His novel *Edwin Drood* (Incomplete and published posthumously), is a psychological thriller novel. Thus through his novels Dickens emerges as a critic of unjust economic and social conditions. He uses his writings as a repository of social conscience. Besides these novels, he has many other writings to his credit. Some of his stories with the Christmas are as follows: “A Christmas Tree” (1850), “What Christmas is, as We Grow older?” (1851), “The Poor Relations Story” (1852), “The Child’s Story” (1852), “The Schoolboy’s Story” (1853)”Nobody’s Story” (1853), “Going into Society” (1858), “Somebody’s Luggage” (1862), “Mrs. Lirriper’s Lodgings” (1863), “Mrs. Lirriper’s Legacy” (1864) and “Doctor Marigold’s Prescriptions” (1865). Some of the short story collections are: “Sketches by Boz” (1836), “Sketches of Young Gentleman” (1838), “Sketches of Young Couple” (1840), “Master Humphrey’s Clock” (1840-1841), “Boots at the Holly-tree inn: And other stories” (1858) and “Reprinted Pieces” (1861). Some of his short stories are as follows: “The Lamplighter” (1838), “The Sewer-Dwelling Reptiles” (1841), “The Long Voyage” (1853), “Prince Bull” (1855), “Thousand and one Humbugs” (1855), “The Queer Chair” (Part of
The great novelists often create rather complex symbolic meanings that reach the minds of the readers far deeper than the suggestions of the superficial pattern of social actions. Dickens’s use of imagery and symbols in his novels suggests a deeper level of meaning. The Pre-Raphaelites and the Georgians use images only for the sake of colour and it is left to the symbolists to try their luck with innovative imagery. The novels of Dickens for example are full of symbolic images and situations suggesting notions like the desperate isolation of the individual. The various settings in Dickens’s novels of mid-career, although isolated from each other topographically are closely linked with each other or even chained together through symbolism and plot. When Dickens develops his social views, he introduces ideas, motifs and metaphors in terms of theme. Two of his most potent symbols are the river flowing into the sea and the prison which help in exploring the themes. Dickens views the sea as the deep mysterious eternity to which all life returns. He, in his novels also introduces the old idea of life being a journey down a river which begins as a stream, broadens into maturity and finally flows into the sea. He not only sets many important episodes of his fiction on the riverside locations like Tuickenham and Petersham, but also has made the Thames as one of his central symbols. In both *Dombey and Son* and *David Copperfield*, Dickens rather applies these analogies of the river and the sea to the judgment, salvation and immortality of the individual, than of society as a whole. In *Little Dorrit* Dickens describes Thames as a deadly sewer, ebbing and flowing through the heart of London. Not only the river imagery but also the
prisons are used as sites of social exclusion and despair. This is shown in the case of Martha, a prostitute in *David Copperfield*. Journeys are the most important controlling metaphors in Dicken’s early novels. In *Pickwick Papers*, Pickwick journeys from innocence to experience. As Pickwick’s benevolence is channeled towards those whom he encounters on his travels and most starkly in the Fleet prison, the confrontation between good and evil becomes overt. In *Martin Chuzzlewit*, the last novel of the early phase of Dickens’s career pictures further darkness when the protagonist’s journey to London exposes the selfishness of the occupants of a coach. Dickens closely examines the factors of environment that surrounds the characters. Here environment includes weather, rural landscapes, urban areas, factories and machines, etc… Symbols, themes and leitmotifs highlight the issues and ills of his age. For example, factories and machines in his novels symbolise the depravity among mankind. In *The Old Curiosity Shop* the factories and machines stand for the dismal and unpleasant things. The weather phenomenon emerges as the crucial one in Dickens’s allegorical literary world. Rain in the novel *Bleak House* comments on the callous bureaucracy and the deterioration of Britain’s aristocracy. In the case of storms, it acts as one of the greatest traumas among his characters. The storm foretells the unexpected situations in *Our Mutual Friend* and in many other novels. Beyond this, fog stands for the concealment of the crimes like rape and robbery and other ill-defined activities of pickpockets and prostitutes. Ackroyd noted “It can be said that fog is the greatest character in nineteenth century fiction” (429). Thus it is quite interesting to see that even after two centuries, the writer is still tremendously popular for his literary techniques. Edgar Johnson points out “Charles Dickens belongs to all the world. He is a titan of literature” (Johnson 7). Dickens has used the technique, the objective correlative in his novels. This term objective correlative is used by T.S.Eliot in an essay on “Hamlet”, (1919) “The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is
by finding an ‘objective correlative’; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked” (Kermode 48). A writer resorts to various techniques by making the reader feel and understand what he wants to convey. The creativity of a writer expresses or manifests itself through a number of ways. The purpose of the thesis is to study some of the novels of Dickens’ with the help of Northrop Frye’s critical theory. As Frye believes in the interwoven structure of symbols with the life incidents, his critical theory will be highly relevant in interpreting the novels of Dickens’ and bringing out their universality.

Northrop Frye defines an image as a symbol in its aspects as a formal unit of art with a natural content. A creative writer uses it to describe concrete objects, abstract ideas, situations and sensory or extra sensory experiences. While describing abstract ideas, he uses many devices such as simile, personification, etc… Through imagery he more truly reveals the meaning of his work. Imagery, the pictorial representation of words has a long and living tradition. Writers from the earliest times have tried to crystallise their experiences and human emotions through allegory, symbols and metaphors. Blake sees allegory to be the daughter of memory. Yeats thinks that it belongs to fancy. To Aristotle, a command of metaphors is the mark of genius. The Elizabethan and Jacobean know the potentiality of this poetic device and choose them for expressing poetic moods. For the Augustans, the function of metaphor and simile is to illustrate ideas and not to create them. It is the romantic writers who revive imagery into a fresh, intense and evocative one. The Victorian writers like Hardy, attempt to give a deep picture of what they think, in terms of imagery. For Dickens, it is the back drop with which his narration shines better.
A symbol, according to Northrop Frye is any unit of any work of literature which can be isolated for critical attention. In general usage restricted to the smaller units, such as words, phrases, images, etc. Symbols and images play a great role in exemplifying the theme of the novel. The setting and the moving imagery help in bringing out the structure of the novel. The meaning, the structure, the setting of the novel and the insight into the psyche of the characters involved can be apprehended by the exploration of the imagery. An image, a symbol or a cluster of images occur in the artistic creation to give backdrop to the story. The first step a critic takes in analysing the novel is to be aware of the occurrence on image or image clusters. An image or a symbol can act as a monad, when it is taken out and treated archetypally, i.e. in comparison with the other similar image or symbol occurring in other literatures. Symbolism is a kind of understatement. The writer may have a literary allusion in mind, a mythological or religious allusion, or may be very strongly aware of a situation, physical or psychological, but may not say it in so many words and only suggest it by some subtle touch. The allusion in the writer’s mind also serves the purpose of lighting up a situation and making the general meaning clear. The whole work of literary art can be placed with the relation to sequence of meanings and sequence of contents, each having its characteristic mythos or narrative, ethos, or characterization and setting, dianoia or visual pattern. The uniting factor of all literature is the archetypal approach for which the formalistic is the first step which is totally text based. Northrop Frye is of the view that the new poem is born into an already existing order of words as the new born baby is a repetition of the already existing species. It is typical of the structure of poetry to which it is attached. It is due to the autonomy of literature, a study of a work of art in juxtaposition with other works of literature is possible. The structural principles of music and painting can be studied with reference to
their internal analogies. Similarly the structural principles of literature are to be derived from archetypal and anagogic criticism.

Aristotle lists three aspects of poetry apart from melody, diction and spectacle. They are mythos or plot, ethos which includes both characters and setting, and dianoia or “thought”. Frye places this issue in a broader context. “It is better to think, therefore, not simply of a sequence of meanings, but of a sequence of context of relationship in which the whole work of literary art can be placed, each context having its characteristic mythos and ethos as well as its dianoia or meaning ”(Anatomy 73). Frye points out that the work of literature moves in time and also is caught by the eye as a whole making a pattern.

Narrative or mythos conveys the sense of movement caught by the ear and dianoia conveys or preserves the simultaneous pattern or vision caught by the eye. Whenever any simultaneous apprehension is made, we have dianoia. This is what is meant as matter and meaning of a work. Matter is the narrative or organizing principle and meaning is the containing principle. When a work of literature is dealt by a critic, he tries to freeze its movement in time and looks at it as a completed pattern of words, with all its parts existing simultaneously. This simultaneity caught by the eye is described as dianoia. Frye observes, “The mythos is the dianoia in movement; the dianoia is the mythos in stasis. The one reason why we tend to think of literary symbolism solely in terms of meaning is that we have no word for the moving body of imagery in a work of literature” (Anatomy 83).

The conception of literal meaning as simple descriptive meaning will not do at all for literary criticism. An historical event can be literally an historical event, but a prose narrative cannot be literally anything but a prose narrative. The literal meaning of Dante’s Divine Comedy is a simple description of what “really happened” to Dante. The readers are always wrong, in the context of criticism, when they give a prose paraphrase of it. All
paraphrases abstract a secondary or outward meaning. Understanding a poem literally means understanding the whole of it. Such understanding begins in a complete surrender of the mind and senses to the impact of the work as a whole, and proceeds through the effort to unite the symbols towards a simultaneous perception of the unity of the structure. Frye writes, “Every poem must necessarily be a perfect unity,” says, Blake; this, as the wording implies, is not a statement of fact about all existing poems, but a statement of the hypothesis which every reader adopts in first trying to comprehend even the most chaotic poem ever written”(Anatomy 77).

When the formal critic has to deal with the symbols, he isolates the units which show an analogy of proportion between the poem and the nature which it imitates. The symbol in this aspect may best be called the image. The readers are accustomed to associate the term “nature” primarily with the external physical world, and they consider an image as primarily a replica of a natural object. Nature takes in the conceptual or intelligible order as well as the spatial one and what is usually called an “idea” may be a poetic image also. Formal criticism starts with an examination of the imagery of a poem, bringing out its distinctive pattern. Certain images are created, and repeated in a poem caused by the requirement of its context, the predilection of its author and countless other factors. For example, in Macbeth the images of blood and of sleeplessness have the thematic importance, says Frye, as it is natural for a tragedy of murder and remorse.

The form of the poem is the same either studied as narrative or as meaning; hence the structure of imagery in Macbeth may be studied as a pattern derived from the text, or as a rhythm of repetition falling on an audience’s ear. The average audience at a symphony knows very little about sonata form and misses practically all the subtleties detected by an analysis of the score; yet those subtleties are really there, and as audience can hear everything that is being played, it gets them all as part of a linear experience; the
awareness is less conscious but not less real. The same is true of the response to the imagery of a highly concentrated poetic drama. The analysis of recurrent imagery, after attaching the imagery to the central form of the poem, renders an aspect of the form into the proportions of discursive writing. Formal criticism is the process of translating what is implicit in the poem into explicit or discursive language. Good commentary naturally does not read ideas into the poem, it reads and translates what is there. The central principle of the formal phase is an imitation of nature which isolates the individual poem. Any poem may be examined, not only as an imitation of nature, but as an imitation of other poems. Virgil discovered, according to Poe, that following nature was ultimately the same thing as following Homer. Once the readers think of a poem in relation to other poems, as a unit of poetry, they can see that the study of genres has to be founded on the study of convention. The criticism which can deal with such matters will have to be based on that aspect of symbolism which relates poem to one another, and it will choose, as its main field of operations, the symbols that link poems together. Its ultimate object is to consider, not simply a poem as an imitation of nature, but the order of nature as a whole as imitated by a corresponding order of words.

The repetition of certain images of physical nature like the sea or the forest in a large number of poems does indicate a certain unity in nature that poetry imitates and in the communicating activity of which poetry forms a part. Because of the larger communicative context of education, it is possible for a story about the sea to be archetypal, to make a profound imaginative impact on a reader who has never been out of Saskatchewan. And when pastoral images are deliberately employed in “Lycidas”, for instance, merely because they are conventional, the readers can see that the convention of the pastoral makes them assimilate these images to other parts of literary experience. Frye says,
The first pastoral elegy from Theocritus appears as a literary adaption of the ritual of the Adonis lament, and it is carried through Theocritus to Virgil and the whole pastoral tradition to *The Shepheards Calender* and beyond to *Lycidas* itself. Then comes the intricate pastoral symbolism of the bible and the Christian Church, of Abel and the twenty-third psalm and Christ the Good Shepherd, of the ecclesiastical overtones of “pastor” and “flock”, and of the link between the classical and Christian traditions in Virgil’s Messianic *Eclogue*. The pastoral symbolism in Sidney’s *Arcadia*, *The Faerie Queen*, Shakespeare’s forest comedies, and the like; then the post-Miltonic development of pastoral elegy in Shelley, Arnold, Whitman, and Dylan Thomas; perhaps too of pastoral conventions in painting and music. In short, the readers can get a whole liberal education simply by picking up one conventional poem and following its archetypes as they stretch out into the rest of literature. (*Anatomy of Criticism* 99-100)

One very common convention of the nineteenth-century novel is the use of two heroines, one dark and one light. The dark one is as a rule passionate, healthy, plain, foreign or Jewish, and in some way associated with the undesirable or with some kind of forbidden fruit like incest. When the two are involved with the same hero, the plot usually has to get rid of the dark one or make her into a sister if the story is to end happily. Examples include *Ivanhoe*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The women in White*, *Ligeia*, *Pierre* (a tragedy because the hero chooses the dark girl, who is also his sister), *The Marble Faun*, and countless incidental treatments. A male version forms the symbolic basis of *Wuthering Heights*. This device is as much a convention as Milton’s calling Edward King by a name of Virgil’s *Eclogues*, but it shows a confused, or, as we say, “unconscious” approach to conventions.
Again, when the readers meet the images of the man, a woman and a serpent in the ninth book of “Paradise Lost”, there is no doubt of their conventional links with similar figures in the book of Genesis. But when a female in Henry James’s *The Other House* called Rose Armiger with a white dress and a red parasol appears, the readers become clueless. It is clear that a deficiency in contemporary education often created the disappearance of a common cultural ground which makes a modern poet’s allusions to the Bible or to Classical mythology fall with less weight than they should and it has much to do with the decline in the explicit use of archetypes. Whitman, as is well known, is a spokesman of an anti archetypal view of literature, and urged the Muse to forget the matter of Troy and develop new themes. Yet his elegy in its form is as conventional as “Lycidas”, complete with purple flowers thrown on coffins, a great star drooping in the west, the imagery of “ever-returning spring” and all the rest of it. Poetry organizes the content of the world as it passes before the poet, but the forms in which that content is organized come out of the structure of poetry itself.

While formal criticism concentrates on the study of a poem or a work of literature, archetypal criticism places it among all the works of art and makes a comparative study. While a poem is studied in relation to other poems, as a unit of poetry, symbols are the connecting factors of poems of different nations, ages and poets. Here comes the view of symbol as an archetype. By archetype, Frye means a typical or recurring image. “I mean by an archetype a symbol which connects one poem with another and thereby helps to unify and integrate our literary experience” (*Anatomy* 99). If the archetypes are communicable symbols, and there is a centre of archetypes, the possibility of the existence of universal symbol is ascertained.

Some symbols are images of things common to all men, and therefore have a communicable power which is potentially
unlimited. Such symbols include those of food and drink, of the quest of journey, of light and darkness, and of sexual fulfillment, which would usually take the form of marriage. *(Anatomy 118)*

Archetypes are associative clusters, and differ from signs in being complex variables. Within the complexity is often a large number of specific learned associations which are communicable because a large number of people in a given culture happen to be familiar with them. When the readers speak of “symbolism” in ordinary life, they usually think of such learned cultural archetypes as the cross or the crown, or of conventional associations, as of white with purity or green with jealousy. As an archetype, green may symbolise hope or vegetable nature or a go sign in traffic. Some archetypes are deeply rooted in conventional association that they can hardly avoid suggesting that association, as the geometrical figure of the cross inevitably suggests the death of the Christ. There is a context in which the phrase “universal symbol” makes sense, but it is not in this context. The stream of literature, however, like any other stream, seeks the easiest channels first: the poet who uses the expected associations will communicate more rapidly.

At one extremity of literature, a poet uses merely the pure convention because it has often been used before in the same way. This is most frequent in naïve poetry, in the fixed epithets and phrase-tags of medieval romance and ballad etc. At the other extreme, the readers have the pure variable, where there is a deliberate attempt at novelty or unfamiliarity, and consequently a disguising or complicating of archetypes. Between these extreme points conventions vary from the most explicit to the most indirect, along a scale parallel to the scale of allegory and paradox already dealt with. The two scales may often be confused or identified, but translating imagery into examples and precepts is
quite a distinct process from following images in other poems. Norrop Frye in *Anatomy of Criticism* says:

After the extremity of pure convention, the paradoxical or ironic convention, including paradoxy-often a sign that certain vogues in handling conventions are getting worn out. Then comes a tendency to identify originality with “experimental” writing, based in our day analogy with scientific discovery, and which is frequently spoken of as “breaking with convention”. And, of course at every stage of literature, including this last one, there is a great deal of superficial and inorganic convention, producing the kind of writing the most students of literature prefer to keep in the middle distance: run-of-the-mill Elizabethan sonnets and love lyrics, Plautine comedy-formulas, eighteenth-century pastorals, nineteenth-century happy-ending novels, works of followers and disciples and schools and trends generally. (103-104)

It is clear from all this that archetypes are most easily studied in highly conventionalized literature: that is, for the most part, naïve, primitive, and popular literature. In suggesting the possibility of archetypal criticism, Frye suggests that there is the possibility of extending the kind of comparative and morphological study now made of folk tales and ballads into the rest of literature. This should be more easily conceivable now that it is no longer fashionable to mark off popular primitive literature from ordinary literature as sharply as we used to do. Also, we shall find that superficial literature, of the kind just spoken of, is of great value to archetypal criticism simply because it is conventional.

If archetypes are communicable symbols, and there is a centre of archetypes, the readers should expect to find, at the centre, a group of universal symbols. Frye does not mean by this phrase that that there is any archetypal codebook which has been memorized
by all human societies without exception. He means that some symbols are images of things common to all man, and therefore have a communicable power which is potentially unlimited. Such symbols include those of food and drink, of the quest or journey, of light and darkness, and of sexual fulfillment, which would usually take the form of marriage. It is advisable to assume that an Adonis or Oedipus myth is universal, or that certain associations, such as the serpent with the phallus, are universal, because when the readers discover a group of people who know nothing of such matters, the readers must assume that they did know and have forgotten, or do know and won’t tell, or are not members of the human race. On the other hand, they may confidentially be excluded from the human race if they cannot understand the conception of food, and so any symbolism founded on food is universal in the sense of having an indefinitely extensive scope. That is, there are no limits to its intelligibility.

In the archetypal phase, the work of literary art is a myth, and unites the ritual and the dream. By doing so it limits the dream: it makes it plausible and acceptable to a social waking consciousness. When the reader looks at the dream as a whole, the readers notice three things about it. First, its limits are not the real, but the conceivable. Secondly, the limits of the conceivable are the world of fulfilled desire emancipated from all anxieties and frustrations. Thirdly, the universe of the dream is entirely within the mind of the dreamer. This phase of the imitation of the total dream of man is called anagogic phase by Frye. In the formal phase the poem is still contained by nature, whereas in the anagogic phase, nature is no longer the container, but the thing contained by the dreamer, “Nature is now inside the mind of the man who builds cities out of the Milky Way” (Anatomy 119).

Ritual deals with the cyclical rhythm of nature and dream deals with the wish-fulfilment. Myth is the combination of ritual and dream. The latter is highly contrasted
with the dialectic opposites of the desirable world of heaven and the undesirable world of hell. The archetypal criticism rests on the basic patterns of cyclical and dialectical rhythms. “Myth, therefore, not only gives meaning to ritual and narrative to dream: it is the identification of ritual or dream, in which the former is the latter in movement” (Anatomy 107). Ritual is the archetypal aspect of mythos and dream, the archetypal aspect of dianoia. The poet is imitating only the universal not the particular. He is concerned not with what happened but with what happens. His subject matter is concerned with the typical and the recurring element in action. So there is a similarity between the subject matter of the poet and the significant, typical and so ritualistic action men are engaged with.“The verbal imitation of ritual is myth, and the typical action of the poetry is the plot, or what Aristotle calls mythos, so that for the literary critic the Aristotelian term mythos and the English word myth are much the same thing” (Fables of Identity 53).

As the total dream of man is towards the conception of himself as immortal, living in the infinite world, the word apocalypse means this dream. The apocalyptic vision is, “.... primarily the imaginative conception of the whole of nature as the content of an infinite and eternal living body, which is infinite, eternal, and hence apocalyptic” (Anatomy 119). At the ritual level, magic is used to recapture man’s lost rapport with natural world. The impetus towards magical element in ritual is clearly towards the universe in which a stupid and indifferent nature no longer containing the human society, rather nature must obey the wishes of man. At the anagogic level, poetry imitates the omnipotence of human mind over the alien and inanimate nature. Anagogically, then, poetry unites total ritual of unlimited social action with total dream or unlimited individual thought. Its universe is infinite and boundless hypothesis: it cannot be confined within any actual civilization or set of moral values, for the reason that no structure of
imagery can be restricted to one allegorical interpretation. The _ethos_ of art is no longer a group of characters within a natural setting, but a universal man who is also a divine being, or a divine being conceived in anthropomorphic terms.

The form of literature most deeply influenced by the anagogic phase is the scripture or apocalyptic revelation. The God, whether traditional deity, glorified hero, or apotheosized poet, is the central image that poetry uses in trying to convey the sense of unlimited power in a humanized form. Many of these scriptures are documents of religion as well, and hence are a mixture of imaginative and the existential. When they lose their existential content they become purely imaginative, as Classical mythology did after the rise of Christianity. They belong in general, of course, to the mythical mode. The readers see the relation of anagogy to every part of the literary universe. Such works are definitive myths, or complete organizations of archetypes. They are called analogies of revolution: the epics of Dante and Milton and their counterparts in the other modes.

But the anagogic perspective is not to be confined only to works that seem to take in everything, for the principle of anagogy is not simply that everything is the subject of poetry, but that anything may be the subject of a poem. The sense of the infinitely varied unity of poetry may come, not only explicitly from an apocalyptic, but implicitly from any poem. “Lycidas” for example, followed its archetypes through literature. Thus the centre of the literary universe is whatever poem the readers happen to be reading. One step further and the poem appears at a microcosm of all literature, an individual manifestation of the moral order of words.

The archetype of a poem can be studied through literature. Here the poem is the microcosm and the symbol which is the connecting factor between the microcosm and the macrocosm is a monad. Certain common images of physical nature like the sea or the forest in a large number of poems indicate a certain unity in nature that poetry
imitates. Frye ascertains, “As Mr. Auden’s brilliant essay “The Enchafed Flood” shows, an important symbol like the sea cannot remain within the poetry of Shelley or Keats or Coleridge: it is bound to expand over many poets into an archetypal symbol of literature (Fables of Identity 12). Rabindranth Tagore also believes in the universality of the symbolic significance of certain images. He writes,

The history of the Northmen of Europe is resonant with the music of the sea. That sea is not merely topographical in its significance, but represents certain ideals of life which still guide the history and inspire the creations of that race. In the sea, nature presented herself to those men in her aspect of danger, a barrier which seemed to be at constant war with the land and its children. The sea was the challenge of untamed nature to the indomitable human soul. (Creative Unity 46-47)

If this unity is not accepted, then there will not come the possibility of getting the systematic mental training out of the reading of literature. On account of education, certain images make certain profound imaginative impact upon the readers. Even though a reader is not exposed to certain atmosphere in actual life, the expected impact is created in his mind, thanks to the systematic mental training of reading literature.

The archetypal criticism studies a narrative not as an imitation of an action, but as an imitation of human action as a whole. Rituals and dreams are the narrative and conceptional aspects of archetypal criticism. Rituals represent the mythos (narrative) and dreams represent the dianoia (meaning) of archetypal symbolism. Archetypal study of narrative deals with “generic, recurring, or conventional actions which show analogies of rituals: the wedding, funerals, intellectual and social initiation, execution or mock executions, the chasing away of scapegoat villain, and so on” (Anatomy 105). The mood
and resolution of an individual work resolve it either as a comedy or tragedy, or what not, in which the relationship of desire and experience is expressed.

Anagogic criticism is usually found in direct connection with religion and it is also found in the more uninhibited utterances of the poets themselves. Frye quotes Eliot’s “Quartets” where he emphasizes the role of the poet as expressive of the incarnate word. Rilke’s Statement in his letter is also quoted by him where Rilke equates the function of the poet with that of the angel in revealing the truth behind the appearance. Valery’s figure Mr. Tate stands for the total intelligence and Yeats’ “The Tower” places man as the creator of all creations. James Joyce’s non-theological usage of the theological term “epiphany” stands as an example for the anagogic phase. Dylan Thomas also sings about the universal human body. Veda Vyasa’s *Mahabharatha* reveals the incarnate God Krishna as the highly imaginative man, whose body contains the whole universe, which is also an example for the anagogic phase.

But if the readers look at “Lycidas” anagogically, for example, they see that the subject of the elegy has been identified with a god who personifies both the sun that falls into the western ocean at night and the vegetable life that dies in the autumn. In the later aspect “Lycidas” is the Adonis or Tammuz whose “annual wound” as Milton calls it elsewhere, was the subject of a ritual lament in Mediterranean religion, and has been incorporated in the pastoral elegy. Since Theocritus, as the title of Shelley’s “Adonis” shows more clearly. As a poet, “Lycidas’s” archetype is Orpheus, who also dies young, in much the same role as Adonis, and was flung into the water. As a priest, his archetype is Peter who would have drowned on the “Galilien Lake” without the help of Christ. Each aspect of “Lycidas” poses the question of premature death as it relates to the life of man, of poetry, and of the church. But all of these aspects are contained within the figure of Christ, the young dying god who is eternally alive, the word that contains all poetry, the
head and the body of church, the good Shepherd whose pastoral world sees to winter, the 
sun of righteousness that never sets, whose power can raise “Lycidas”, like Peter, out of 
the waves, as it redeems souls from the lower world, which Orpheus failed to do. Christ 
does not enter the poem as a character, but he pervades every line of it as completely that 
the poem, so to speak, enters him. Corresponding to the total dream of humanity, there is 
the existence of the total order of words. Anagogy and archetype are ascertaining the total 
dream and the total order of words respectively. “Then we see that literature is in a 
complex setting what a mythology is in a simpler one: a total body of verbal creation. In 
literature, whatever has a shape has a mythical shape, and leads us towards the center of 
the order of words” (Fables of Identity 38).

Literature is a constructed mythology, having its structural principles derived from 
those of myth. Many learned writers are mythopoeic. The learned mythopoeia is very 
complex and the complexities are there to reveal the mythical in it. Frye observes,

I began dimly to see that the principle pulling me away from 
historical period was the principle of mythological framework.
The Bible had provided a framework of mythology for European 
poets: an immense number of critical problems began to solve 
themselves as soon as one realized this. (Spiritual Mundi 17)

Frye asserts that a literature grows out of the primitive verbal culture which contains a 
mythology and it can grow out from any mythology. Every verbal culture has some 
stories which are called myths, and they provide a network of shared allusions and 
experiences. The structural principles of painting and music can be studied only with 
reference to their internal analogies. Similarly the structural principles of literature are 
closely related to archetypal and anagogic studies which in turn are mythology and 
comparative religion.
At the one extreme of literary tradition is the art of verisimilitude, where there is a portrayal of human action. At the other extreme are the myths, or the abstract fictional designs. Myth is a story whose chief characters are gods or beings superior in power. As a type of story it is a form of verbal art. It provides the main outline and the circumference of a verbal universe which is occupied by literature. Great many literary works are directly derived from mythology with its society’s religious beliefs, historical traditions and cosmological speculations. They are making the matrix of literature and major poetry keeps returning to it. “In every age poets who are thinkers (remembering that poets think in metaphors and images, not in prepositions) and are deeply concerned with the origin or destiny or desire of mankind— with anything that belongs to the larger outline of what literature can express— can hardly find a literary theme that does not coincide with a myth” (Fables of Identity 33). The structural principles of mythology and literature are based on analogy and identity. Realism is an art of implicit simile; myth is an art of implicit metaphorical identity. In the realistic fiction or as Frye calls it, in the ironic mode, mythical patterns are seen, if not myths. Frye holds the view, “The presence of a mythical structure in realistic fiction, however, poses certain technical problems for making it plausible, and the devices used in solving these problems may be given the general name of displacement” (Anatomy 136).

Placing myth at the one extreme of literary design and naturalism on the other, Frye places romance in the middle. By romance he means the displacement of myth in a plausible human direction in contrast to “realism”, to conventionalize content in an idealized direction. In the words of Frye, “The central principle of displacement is that what can be metaphorically identified in a myth can only be linked in romance by some form of simile: analogy, significant association, incidental accompanying imagery, and the like” (Anatomy 137). In a myth we have Sun-god or river-god or tree-god. But in
romance a person is associated with Sun, river or trees. The association becomes less significant in realistic fiction. It is more a matter of incidental, even coincidental or accidental imagery. Frye quotes the myth of Proserpine as an example for myth. He considers the romance *Marble Faun* as the displacement of the Proserpine myth.

Frye classifies the fictions by the hero’s power of action: the mythical mode is about the undisplaced myth of gods and demons; the romantic mode is about the hero who is superior in degree to other men and his environment; the high mimetic mode is about the man who is superior in degree to other men but not to his natural environment; the low mimetic hero is neither superior to other men nor to his environment and the hero of ironic mode is inferior in power or intelligence to other men. The undisplaced myth of gods and demons with the two contrasting worlds of total metaphorical identification acts at the higher level. In the mythical world the dialectics of good and evil are seen as the desirable heaven and the undesirable hell. Frye calls these two metaphorical organizations as apocalyptic and demonic imagery respectively. They have their respective divine, human, animal vegetable and mineral worlds. Secondly there is a general tendency towards romance, suggesting implicit mythical patterns in a world more closely associated with human experience. Thirdly there is realism to throw more emphasis on content and representation rather than on the shape of the story. Ironic literature begins with realism and tends towards myth. The mythical pattern of ironic literature is more towards demonic world than towards apocalyptic world. Sometimes it continues the romantic tradition of stylization as in Hawthorne, Poe, Conrad and Hardy.

The conception of heaven above and hell beneath, and the cyclical cosmos or order of nature in between them is the framework of Ptolomic Universe. The same construct may be applied to the narrative: a cyclical movement within the order of nature and the dialectical movement from that order to the apocalyptic world above and the
demonic world beneath. The top half of the natural cycle is the world of romance and the analogy of innocence. The lower half is the world of “realism” and the analogy of experience. Frye asserts the existence of narrative categories of literature which are broader than and prior to the literary genres. They are romantic, tragic, comic and ironic or satiric. The terms tragedy and comedy can also describe the general characteristics of literary fictions, without regards to genres. Tragedy, romance, comedy and satire are elements of literary experience. Frye terms the narrative pregeneric elements as mythoi or generic plots.

If we think of our experience of these mythoi, we shall realize that they form two opposed pairs. Tragedy and comedy contrast rather than blend, and so do romance and irony, the champions respectively of the ideal and the actual. On the other hand, comedy blends insensibly into satire at one extreme and into romance at the other; romance may be comic or tragic; tragic extends from high romance to bitter and ironic realism.

*(Anatomy 162)*

Frye also states about the two worlds, i.e., the apocalyptic world and the demonic. The apocalyptic world is the heaven of religion, presents, in the first place, the categories of reality in the forms of human desire, as indicated by the forms they assume under the work of human civilization. The form imposed by human work and desire on the Vegetable world, for instance, is that of garden the farm, the grove or the park. The human form of the animal world is a world of domesticated animals, of which the sheep has a traditional priority in both classical and Christian metaphor. The human form of the mineral world, the form into which human work transforms stone, is the city. The divine
and human worlds, are similarly identical with the sheep fold, city and garden, the social and individual aspects of each are identical.

Opposed to apocalyptic symbolism is the demonic imagery where the presentation of the world that desire totally rejects: the world of the nightmare and the scape goat, of bondage and pain and confusion. Northrop Frye says, “…. The world also of perverted or wasted work, ruins and catacombs, instruments of torture and monuments of folly. And just as apocalyptic imagery in poetry is closely associated with a religious heaven, so its dialectic opposite is closely linked with an existential hell, like Dante’s Inferno” (Anatomy of criticism 147). They have their respective divine, human, animal, vegetable and inorganic world. In the demonic divine world, they demand sacrifices, punish presumption, and enforce obedience to natural and moral law as an end in itself. The demonic human world is a society held together by a kind of molecular tension of egos, a loyalty to the group or the leader which diminished the individual, or at best, contrasts his pleasure with his duty or honor. Such a society is an endless source of tragic dilemmas like those of Hamlet and Antigone. The demonic Vegetable world is a sinister forest like the ones we meet in Comus or the opening of the Inferno, or a heath, which from Shakespeare to Hardy has been associated with tragic destiny, or a wilderness like that of Browning’s “Chile Roland” or Eliot’s “Waste land”. Or it may be the sinister enchanted garden like that of Circe and its Renaissance descendants in Tasso and Spenser. In the inorganic world, corresponding to the temple or one building of the apocalypse, we have the prison or dungeon, the sealed furnace of heat without light, like the city of Dis in Dante. Frye says, “The world of fire in contrast to the purgatorial or cleansing fire, like the fiery furnace in Daniel. The world of water is the water of death, often identified with spilled blood…” (Anatomy of Criticism 150).
A reading of Dickens’ novels without a careful eye on the accompanying images is an incomplete task. Thus a sincere attempt is made in the consequent chapters, *Oliver Twist, David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations* by rendering the archetypal approach with an examination of the imagery of a work of art, bringing out its distinctive pattern, and countless other factors, the study of it gives richer meaning to the novels.