CHAPTER – II

OLIVER TWIST

Dickens’ second novel *Oliver Twist* (1839) is a novel of contemporary interest. When we study the imagery of *Oliver Twist* we see the death struggle of the protagonist where Oliver hovers from darkness to light, confinement to freedom; death to life; suffocation to breathing; loveless existence to be loved by people around him; chillness to warmth and winter to spring. This paradoxical plight of the protagonist reveals the plight of thousands of orphaned children of England in the Victorian era. In the novel we notice an oppressive, lurid intensity of a claustrophobic world of darkness. Dickens portrays the miserable condition of the poor work houses, the world of criminals and the prisons with the characteristic symbolic *ethos* and their paradoxical opposites with their characteristic symbolic *ethos*.

The novel *Oliver Twist* opens with the birth of the main character Oliver Twist and the death of his mother Agnes Fleming in a desolate workhouse. The very birth of the protagonist is described as a struggle in the world of nature. At the time of birth, Oliver and Nature fight out the battle of life between them. Oliver Twist, the very name puns on two hidden meanings. The liver is twisted before he succeeds in the struggle of being pulled into this world. The lungs of Oliver are struggling. Dickens says: “The fact is, that there was considerable difficulty in inducing Oliver to take upon himself the office of respiration -a troublesome practice, but one which custom has rendered necessary to our easy existence; and for some time he lay gasping on a little flock mattress, rather unequally poised between this world and the next: the balance being decidedly in favour of the latter” (23-24). Then the novelist portrays vividly how the struggle is won by Oliver. Dickens says:
…Oliver and Nature fought out the point between them. The result was, that, after a few struggles, Oliver breathed, sneezed, and proceeded to advertise to the inmates of the workhouse the fact of a new burden having been imposed upon the parish, by setting up as loud a cry as could reasonably have been expected from a male infant who had not been possessed of that very useful appendage, a voice, for a much longer space of time than three minutes and a quarter. (24)

The result is after a few struggles, Oliver triumphantly proclaims his entry into the world. We wonder at the twist of his liver which suffocates and says as we are to say many times in the novel, “O! liver twist”. “As Oliver gives this first proof of the free and proper action of his lungs, the patchwork coverlet which is carelessly flung over the iron bedstead, rustled; the pale face of a young woman was raised feebly from the pillow; and a faint voice imperfectly articulated the words, ‘Let me see the child, and die’”(24). The protagonist is introduced to the reader, who is fighting alone for his life; his mother lies dying and others are unable to help. The birth of Oliver Twist is mysterious. Oliver gets a kiss from his mother when the surgeon places him in her arms. Here we get a picture of how the mother dies after kissing him for the first and last time. The fact that she is found lying in the street with the wedding ring makes the doctor understand that she is yet another unwedded mother, who is the victim of industrial England. His mother’s identity is not revealed. Here one can point out the similarity between the birth of Oliver and that of the mythic heroes. Thus like a mythic hero Oliver’s arrival has a miraculous mythical birth. Dickens’s choice of vocabulary reveals the materialistic nature of the Victorian society of eighteenth century. For instance the author does not mention his birth with the phrase “a child was born” but with that of “the item of mortality”. Here Dickens wants to accentuate that people of lower class are not even considered to be human beings but some kind of living things, i.e., items.
Oliver is brought up in the workhouse under the control of the workhouse beadle Mr. Bumble. Oliver leads his life in the company of other boys in the workhouse. These boys are not properly fed in the workhouse and they always remain hungry. So the boys hold a meeting and decide to protest against the meager food served to them. A council is held among the boys and it is decided that lots would be cast and the person chosen should walk to the master to ask for more food. It falls to Oliver. As a punishment for daring to confront authority, Oliver is put into instant confinement. The often recurring image in the novel is darkness with the suffocating atmosphere. A bill is pasted on the gate outside, offering reward of five pounds to anybody who will take Oliver off the hands of the Parish. Oliver trembles and sheds tears when it is decided by the Parish authorities to send him as an apprentice to Mr. Gamfield, a chimney sweeper. “Oliver fell on his knees, and clasping his hands together, prayed that they would order him back to the dark room—that they would starve him—beat him—kill him if they pleased—rather than send him away with that dreadful man” (45).

On seeing the bill, Mr. Sowerberry comes forward to take Oliver for the sake of money. Oliver is carried away by fate as by wind. One should remember the Biblical quotation “the wind bloweth where it listeth” to show how fate plays a role in the life of Oliver “…it being a windy day, little Oliver was completely enshrouded by the skirts of Mr. Bumble’s coat as they blew open, and disclosed to great advantage his flapped waistcoat and drab plush knee-breeches” (51). Though it seemed a relief from the workhouse, he is still wrapped in the coat (slavery) of Mr. Sowerberry amidst the blowing wind. When Oliver is taken to Mr. Sowerberry’s house, Oliver is pushed down a steep flight of stairs into a stone cell, damp and dark and after eating some meager food he is asked to sleep among the coffins. Here is another dreadful imagery of the boy being buried alive in a coffin. Dickens says: “…as he crept into his narrow bed, that were his
coffin, and that he could be lain in a calm and lasting sleep in the churchyard ground, with the tall grass waving gently above his head, and the sound of the old deep bell to soothe him in his sleep” (55-56). Oliver dares to escape from the clutches of Mr. Sowerberry by running away to London. “It was a cold, dark night. The stars seemed, to the boy’s eyes, farther from the earth than he had ever seen them before; there was no wind; and the sombre shadows thrown by the trees upon the ground, looked sepulchral and death-like, from being so still” (78). As a light shining in the darkness, the star in the night is a symbol of the spirit. It stands for the forces of the spirit struggling against the forces of darkness. Here the starlight in the sky symbolises the struggling soul of Oliver in treachery and torments. On the other hand, the star symbolises the hope and guiding light. In the case of Jesus’ birth the three Magis are guided by the star when they do not know their destination. Likewise, here, the star in the distance symbolises his hopeful future in London. Oliver decides to run away from Mr. Sowerberry’s house. He bids farewell to Dick who is to depart from the body, dreaming of Heavens and Angels: “The blessing was from a young child’s lips, but it was the first that Oliver had ever heard invoked upon his head; and through the struggles and sufferings, and troubles and changes of his afterlife he never once forgot it” (79).

Oliver has now resumed his journey. After having walked about five miles, he sits down to rest by the side of a milestone. This milestone indicates him the fact that London is about seventy miles away from this place. The word London gives rise to many ideas in Oliver’s mind. He has often heard that London is a city of great opportunities. During the Industrial Revolution, a mass of humanity moved from country sides to cities and towns, especially to London, without any promises of stable houses or shelter. Oliver’s journey towards London reflects the quest imagery of the mythical heroes. Oliver sits down to rest
by the side of the milestone and begins to think, for the first time, where he has to go and live.

The stone, by which he was seated, bore, in large characters, an intimation that it was just seventy miles from that spot to London. The name awakened a new train of ideas in the boy’s mind. London!-that great place!-nobody-not even Mr. Bumble-could ever find him there! He had often heard the old men in the workhouse, too, say that no lad of spirit need want in London; and that there were ways of living in that vast city, which those who had been bred up in country parts had no idea of. It was the very place for a homeless boy, who must die in the streets unless someone helped him. (80)

One is reminded of the flight of Jacob in the Old Testament and his rest at Bethel. The stone on which he lays his head initiates him in the knowledge of Heaven where he confronts God and wrestles with Him. Hercules shouldered the Earth and this image stands for the etymological derivation of the word, understanding, i.e., standing under the earth. The stone of Bethel is the symbol of understanding but here the hero, the boy ironically sits on the stone with no understanding of the world.

The mill in the industrial England underestimates man as a machine. When Oliver asks what a mill is, Artful Dodger explains to him by saying: “What mill! Why, the mill-the mill as takes up so little room that it’ll work inside a Stone Jug; and always goes better when the wind’s low with people, than when it’s high; acos then they can’t get workmen” (84). Northrop Frye in his work, The Great Code: The Bible and Literature refers to a sardonic Old English riddle begins thus:

An enemy deprived me of life, took away my strength, then soaked me in water, then took me out again and put me in the sun, where I soon lost all my hair.
The answer is “book”, specifically a Bible codex. The riddle obliquely describes the method of preparing a codex in the writer’s day, and seems to be referring also to the shearing of Samson in Judges 16:17-22. The normal human reaction to a great cultural achievement like the Bible is to do with it what the Philistines did to Samson: reduce it to impotence, then lock it in a mill to grind our aggressions and prejudices. But perhaps its hair, like Samson’s, could grow again even there. (232-233)

But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.

Oliver enters a new world. In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell talks about the mythical heroes. He says, “The hero in accepting the challenge to adventure “crosses the first threshold” and enters a new world. This world is associated with darkness and confusion where there are elements of “violence, danger and delights” (Campbell, 79). When Oliver ventures into this world of adventures, he gets the blessings of Dick who is able to foresee his own death. Dick says, “I dream so much of Heaven, and Angels, and kind faces that I never see when I am awake. Kiss me,…” (79) Here is a transcendence of time. When Dick is near Heaven, there is a transcendence of space and the two subtle things that are the creations of the mind. Time and space, when conceived have existence and non-existence. Man’s life which is an entry into the time and space and death an escape from them are dealt with an artistic way, wherein good is rewarded and evil is punished. This is shown when Oliver is taken by Artful Dodger to Fagin’s place. Fagin’s group is the kernel of villainy in the novel where young homeless boys are taken in and taught the mischievous trade i.e., trained to become thieves. Oliver reaches Fagin’s place. “The walls and ceiling of the room were perfectly black with age and dirt. There was a deal table before the fire: upon which were a candle, stuck in a ginger-beer
bottle, two or three pewter pots, a loaf and butter, and a plate” (87). Here the dilapidated house stands as the symbol of decadent civilization. Dickens proposes to show the real picture of crime in Fagin’s den through the dark and broken stairs. When Oliver moves with Dodger, Oliver finds himself in a place which is dirtier than any other place he has ever seen before. The street is very narrow and muddy, and the whole area is foul and full of filthy smells. Here the environment reflects the demonic mineral world of industrialisation. But a supernatural force is going to liberate Oliver from this den. It is late next morning, when Oliver is able to understand the power of the mind. It is a preface to what is going to happen to Oliver due to the supernatural power of the mind.

Although Oliver had roused himself from sleep, he was not thoroughly awake.

There is a drowsy state, between sleeping and waking, when you dream more in five minutes with your eyes half open and yourself half conscious of everything that is passing around you, than you would in five nights with your eyes fast closed, and your senses wrapped in perfect unconsciousness. At such time, a mortal knows just enough of what his mind is doing, to form some glimmering conception of its mighty powers, its bounding from earth and spurning time and space, when freed from the restraint of its corporeal associate. (89)

Previously the novelist has shown how Oliver has no understanding of the Earth or the globe, which is visualised through the imagery of sitting on the stone. Here the novelist brings an imagery of transcending the time and space, travelling above the Earth, and having the feeling of moving away from the bodily limitations. When the boys are engaged in picking the pocket of a gentleman who is reading hard, totally oblivious of what he is reading. In the state of abstraction he transcends time and space. “He had taken up a book from the stall, and there he stood, reading away, as hard as if he were in his elbow-chair, in his own study. It is very possible that he fancied himself there, indeed; for
it was plain, from his abstraction, that he saw not the book-stall, nor the street, nor the boys, nor, in short, anything but the book itself…”(98). This can be compared to Arjuna of Mahabharatha. When Dhronacharyar, the Guru of Pandavas and Kouravas is conducting a test in archery, except Arjuna all of them says that they are able to see the sky, tree, river and also the parrot, which the Guru asks them to shoot at. But it is Arjuna who says that he is able to see only the target. Oliver stands perplexed, being shocked by the theft of the purse by his companions, unable to digest the fact that he is one of the accomplices. Here Oliver goes into his inner consciousness which is flawless. That is why he is not able to run fast like the other young thieves. A mob is chasing Oliver. The collective consciousness of human beings in capturing a thief, however young the person might be is revealed here. The crowd shouts:

‘Stop thief! Stop thief!’ The cry is taken up by a hundred voices, and the crowd accumulates at every turning. Away they fly, splashing through the mud, and rattling along the pavements: up go the windows, out run the people, onward bear the mob, a whole audience desert Punch in the very thickest of the plot, and, joining the rushing throng, swell the shout, and lend fresh vigour to the cry, ‘Stop thief! Stop thief!’

‘Stop thief! Stop thief!’ There is a passion for hunting something deeply implanted in the human breast (99).

Oliver is captured by the crowd and he is taken to the police station by the old gentleman. Oliver is put in the prison, another imagery of dirty prison. Then he is brought for trial. Here Dickens says: “After musing for some minutes, the old gentleman walked, with the same meditative face, into a back ante-room opening from the yard; and there, retiring into a corner, called up before his mind’s eye a vast amphitheatre of faces over which a dusky curtain had hung for many years” (103). Again the novelist is probing with
the hidden potentialities of the mind which is able to unearth persons and incidents buried and forgotten long ago. His mind muses over them again. He has called them into view, and it is not easy to replace the shroud that has so long concealed them. There are the faces of friends, and foes, and of many that have been almost strangers peering intrusively from the crowd; there are the faces of young and blooming girls that are now old women; there are faces that the grave has changed and closed upon, but which the mind, superior to its power, still dresses in their old freshness and beauty, calling back the lustre of the eyes, the brightness of the smile, the beaming of the soul through its mask of clay, and whispering of beauty beyond the tomb, changes but to be heightened, and taken from earth only to be set up as a light, to shed a soft and gentle glow upon the path to Heaven.

Thus Mr. Brownlow reminds one of God-fathers because he is to provide the proof of Oliver’s identity in the future and also he rescues Oliver from the clutches of the evil Fagin. After the bitter incident, Oliver is carried to Brownlow’s residence. The old gentleman puts Oliver to bed for rest. But Oliver does not regain his consciousness for many days. Mrs. Bedwin, an old woman is put in charge of him. For many days Oliver remains confined to bed on account of a fever. During his illness the darkness of the room makes him think about his past.

Oliver lay awake for some time, counting the little circles of light which the reflection of the rushlight-shade threw upon the ceiling; or tracing with his languid eyes the intricate pattern of the paper on the wall. The darkness and the deep stillness of the room were very solemn; as they brought into the boy's mind the thought that death had been hovering there, for many days and nights, and might yet fill it with the gloom and dread of his awful presence, he turned his face upon the pillow, and fervently prayed to Heaven. (113)
During his delirium Oliver sees the angelic presence of his dead mother at his bedside. The fever from which Oliver suffers becomes a blessing in disguise as he has the vision of his mother. Oliver says “If she had seen me hurt, it would have made her sorrowful; and her face has always looked sweet and happy, when I have dreamed of her” (111). The reader comes to know that the portrait in front of his sick bed is that of Oliver’s mother. The working of the unseen forces of nature is established here. Oliver feels that the portrait is beautiful and Mrs. Bedwin says that it seems to strike the fancy of Oliver. Oliver says, “…‘but the eyes look so sorrowful; and where I sit, they seem fixed upon me. It makes my heart beat,’ added Oliver in a low voice, ‘as if it was alive, and wanted to speak to me, but couldn’t.’” (114) Oliver is able to understand the unconscious. Mr. Brownlow also sheds tears, a proof to prove that love cannot be hidden. The Tamil poet Valluvar speaks of love: “Is there any lock to love? the very tears emanating from the eyes will betray the bond between two souls”. Oliver believes that his rapport with Mr. Brownlow has the power to relieve his stress and strains of emptiness. He feels cheerful and happy for being surrounded by people who take care of him. In The Hero with a Thousand Faces, Campbell says, “The hero’s entrance to this new world is protected by a threshold guardian who has knowledge of this world” (Campbell, 77). Jung understands the maternal archetype very broadly and finds this in persons like individual’s grandmother, wet-nurse and the mother herself. Mrs. Bedwin, who stands for the maternal archetype, takes great pains in attending upon Oliver and nursing him. Her warm and tender emotions have the capability to bring life into his body and soul. A doctor and Mrs. Bedwin have been attending on Oliver all those days. At last Oliver recovers to the extent of being able to sit in an easy chair. On the very first day of his recovery, he happens to see a portrait of a lady hanging upon the wall opposite. Suddenly Mr. Brownlow discovers that there is a close resemblance between Oliver’s face and the
portrait. “As he spoke, he pointed hastily to the picture over Oliver's head, and then to the boy's face. There was its living copy. The eyes, the head, the mouth; every feature was the same. The expression was, for the instant, so precisely alike, that the minutest line seemed copied with startling accuracy!” (116). The portrait of the lady is Oliver’s mother, Agnes Fleming. Thus the picture symbolises and stands for the first clue to Oliver’s identity. It also suggests the mystical binding power of family relationships i.e. Brownlow, his real uncle. On the other hand the features of the face in the portrait reflect the inner qualities of his soul i.e. the purity and innocence of his mother and himself.

Dickens shifts from the apocalyptic world to the demonic and vice- versa in order to make the story interesting. This is shown in the sudden shift from the house of Brownlow’s to that of Fagin’s. While Fagin inquires about Oliver to Dodger and Bates, William Sikes enters followed by his dog. Sikes’s demonic character is symbolised by his dog, Bulls Eye, the emblem of his owner’s character. The dog’s viciousness reflects and symbolises Sikes’s own animal-like brutality. Sikes and Fagin discuss Oliver’s matter and decide to send Nancy to the police station to find out what has happened to him. Nancy enters during their discussion. “The Jew's countenance fell. He turned from this young lady, who was gaily, not to say gorgeously attired, in a red gown, green boots, and yellow curl-papers, to the other female” (124). Dickens gives importance to the colour imagery also. Here the red gown of Nancy symbolises her sacrificing mind for Oliver whereas green in many cultures popularly symbolise hope i.e. the only hope for Oliver in Fagin’s evil gang. The Chinese wear green socks and red skirts, where the combination is a Chinese symbol of vitality. Thus in the case of Nancy the colour of her dress symbolises her potentiality in saving Oliver from evil. Sikes decides to send Nancy to know what happens at the police station. Accordingly she goes to the police station and learns that Oliver has been taken by the old gentleman to his residence. Charles Dickens gives a
vivid picture of the lock-up of London, where a musician is locked up for selling his wares without license:

There was nobody inside but a miserable shoeless criminal, who had been taken up for playing the flute, and who, the offence against society having been clearly proved, had been very properly committed by Mr. Fang to the House of Correction for one month; with the appropriate and amusing remark that since he had so much breath to spare, it would be more wholesomely expended on the treadmill than in a musical instrument. He made no answer: being occupied mentally bewailing the loss of the flute, which had been confiscated for the use of the county. (126)

The prisoner with a musically bent mind comments over the loss of his flute through which he breathed out his musical spirit. The irony of imprisoning a musically bent mind and allowing thieves like Sikes, Fagin and his accomplices freely roam is revealed by the novelist.

Oliver Twist begins to live with Mr. Brownlow very comfortably. For him, things are easy, quiet and orderly. Oliver experiences the bliss of heaven after the period of noise and turbulence. Mr. Brownlow orders a new suit, new cap and a new pair of shoes for him. Oliver is taken to Brownlow’s study room. He says:

…he found himself in a little back room, quite full of books, with a window, looking into some pleasant little gardens. There was a table drawn up before the window, at which Mr. Brownlow was seated reading. When he saw Oliver, he pushed the book away from him, and told him to come near the table, and sit down. Oliver complied; marvelling where the people could be found to read such a great number of books as seemed to be written to make the world wiser. (131)
Brownlow who gives shelter to Oliver is associated with the imagery of bookshelves, windows and beautiful scenery. Though a closed window is an image of confinement in a house, when open it is an opportunity for Oliver to explore the outside world. The book is often considered to be a container of intellect. Transmission of higher knowledge, originating in higher sphere is apparently possible only with the aid of books. Thus the mental horizons of Oliver are expanded through reading and observation which makes his life at Brownlow’s house a pleasant one. Like Hardy, Dickens makes his characters puppets in the hands of fate. It is seen when Mr. Brownlow asks Oliver to return the books to the book stall from where he had received them earlier. Mr. Brownlow also gives him a five-pound note to be passed on to the book stall keeper. He also reminds him that Oliver has to bring back ten shillings from the owner of the book-stall. Mr. Grimwig, a friend of Brownlow says that Oliver is not a trust worthy fellow and he will cheat Mr. Brownlow and run away with the amount. They wait for Oliver till night. Dickens says: “It grew so dark, that the figures on the dial-plate were scarcely discernible; but there the two old gentlemen continued to sit, in silence, with the watch between them”(139). The novelist presents a picture of two persons, an optimist and a pessimist setting with a clock in between them. How is the character of Oliver to be proved? Is there any universal power, which will save the good and innocent ultimately, is the situation thrown to the readers. Mrs. Bedwin is standing as the displaced version of the old Earth which anxiously watches the fight between the good and the evil. “The gas-lamps were lighted; Mrs. Bedwin was waiting anxiously at the open door; the servant had run up the street twenty times to see if there were any traces of Oliver; and still the two old gentlemen sat, perseveringly, in the dark parlour, with the watch between them” (146). Mr. Brownlow is the displaced wise old Man who is anxious to protect the young man from being caught in the clutches of evil. Mr. Grimwig teases the motherly instinct
of Mrs. Bedwin as wrong commenting that such old woman believes quack doctors and lying story-books. But Mrs. Bedwin is roused, when her womanly instincts are attacked and tells him: “He was a dear, grateful, gentle child, sir,” retorted, Mrs. Bedwin, indignantly. ‘I know what children are, sir; and have done these forty years; and people who can’t say the same, shouldn’t say anything about them. That’s my opinion!’(165).

William Sikes, the thief is introduced in a dismal atmosphere. The atmosphere is described as:

In the obscure parlour of a low public-house, in the filthiest part of Little Saffron Hill; a dark and gloomy den, where a flaring gas-light burnt all day in the winter-time; and where no ray of sun ever shone in the summer, there sat, brooding over a little pewter measure and a small glass, strongly impregnated with the smell of liquor, a man in a velveteen coat, drab shorts, half-boots and stockings, whom even by that dim light no experienced agent of the police would have hesitated to recognise as Mr. William Sikes.(140)

There is a visual rendering of the dog, a very important character in constant confrontation with its master from the beginning till the end.

Dogs are not generally apt to revenge injuries inflicted upon them by their masters; but Mr. Sikes’s dog, having faults of temper in common with his owner, and labouring, perhaps, at this moment, under a powerful sense of injury, made no more ado but at once fixed his teeth in one of the half-boots. Having given in a hearty shake, he retired, growling, under a form; just escaping the pewter measure which Mr. Sikes levelled at his head.

‘You would, would you?’ said Sikes, seizing the poker in one hand, and deliberately opening with the other a large clasp-knife, which he drew from his pocket. ‘Come here, you born devil! Come here! D’ye hear?’
The dog no doubt heard; because Mr. Sikes spoke in the very harshest key of a very harsh voice; but, appearing to entertain some unaccountable objection to having his throat cut, he remained where he was, and growled more fiercely than before: at the same time grasping the end of the poker between his teeth, and biting at it like a wild beast. (140-141)

Oliver again disappears into darkness. “Darkness had set in; it was a low neighborhood; no help was near; resistance was useless. In another moment he was dragged into a labyrinth of dark narrow courts, and was forced along them at a pace which rendered the few cries he dared to give utterance to, unintelligible. It was of little moment, indeed, whether they were intelligible or no; for there was nobody to care for them, had they been ever so plain” (146). The night is dark and foggy. The lights in the shops could scarcely struggle through the heavy mist, which thickens every moment and shrouds the streets and houses in gloom, rendering the strange place still stranger in Oliver's eyes and making his uncertainty the more dismal and depressing. The mist symbolises the human uncertainty about the future. Here the uncertainty in Oliver’s life takes place when he is taken by force and against his will to the same place by Nancy and Sikes when he comes to the book stall. In the apocalyptic world, the road takes the pilgrims to the golden city of Jerusalem. It helps the man travel in the path of salvation and spiritual transformation but in the demonic world, it leads one to complete doom. This is seen when Oliver is taken by Nancy and Sikes to Fagin’s Den for the second time. They walk on by little-frequented and dirty ways for a full half-hour, meeting very few people, and those appearing from their looks to hold much the same position in society as Mr. Sikes himself. At length they turn into a very filthy narrow street, nearly full of old-clothes shops, and the dog runs forward, as if conscious that there is no further occasion for he keeping on guard, and it stops before the door of a shop that is closed and
apparently untenanted, and the house is in a ruinous condition, and on the door is nailed a
board, intimating that it is to be let and it looks as if it has been hanging there for many
years.

The Demonic mineral world is pictured by Dickens in this situation, where the
dilapidated houses reveal the dismal life of the people because of industrialisation. The
filthy narrow street with the ruined houses show the destructive condition of Oliver. Here
the passivity of Oliver is a commentary on the child’s perception of the dehumanisation
of society. On the other side the streets stand as a symbol of the complexities in the
industrial world. While they are moving towards Fagin’s den they hear the church bell.
The church bell indicates a call for prayer. The constant chanting of church bell stands as
a hope for suffering mankind. In the case of Sikes he refuses to hear it. The complete lack
of divinity in the case of Sikes is seen here. Thus in the demonic divine world to which
Sikes belongs there is no faith in God. The three persons (Oliver, Nancy and Sikes) halt in
front of a closed shop. Sikes rings a bell and the door is opened by Artful Dodger. They
pass through a dark passage. Oliver finds himself in the dark and is tormented. “They
crossed an empty kitchen; and, opening the door of a low earthy-smelling room, which
seemed to have been built in a small back-yard, were received with a shout of laughter”
(150). Destiny plays its greater part when Oliver Twist once again falls in the hands of
Fagin. His name ‘Twist’ thus symbolises the outrageous reversals of fortunes which
Oliver is to experience in his future. Man who is destined to die from the moment of his
birth has to compromise and live in harmony with the inevitable destiny, until he
becomes a part of the everlasting earth. When Fagin meets Oliver he strips off his new
clothes and once again and gives Oliver the tattered garments. The clothes symbolises the
construction of the identities of various characters. Here Fagin strips Oliver off all his
upper-class credibility when he takes from him the suit of clothes purchased by
Brownlow. “I suppose he'd better not wear his best clothes tomorrow, Fagin, had he?” inquired Charley Bates….Poor Oliver unwillingly complied. Master Bates rolling up the new clothes under his arm, departed from the room, leaving Oliver in the dark, and locking the door behind him” (156). The similar incident is found in Bible. Jesus’ parable of the good Samaritan is about “a certain man who went down from Jesus along to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment and wounded him and departed leaving him half dead”(Luke 10:30)(Fulghum156). Similarly Oliver moves like a half-dead person in Fagin’s den. Oliver is locked up in a dark lonely room where he has ample leisure to ponder over in the room.

Charles Dickens comments on the archetypal pattern of melodramas which take place in real life also:

It is the custom on the stage, in all good murderous melodramas, to present the tragic and the comic scenes, in as regular alternation, as the layers of red and white in a side of streaky bacon. The hero sinks upon his straw bed, weighed down by fetters and misfortunes; in the next scene, his faithful but unconscious squire regales the audience with a comic song. We behold, with throbbing bosoms, the heroine in the grasp of a proud and ruthless baron: her virtue and her life alike in danger, drawing forth her dagger to preserve the one at the cost of the other; and just as our expectations are wrought up to the highest pitch, a whistle is heard, and we are straightway transported to the great hall of the castle; where a grey-headed seneschal sings a funny chorus with a funnier body of vassals, who are free of all sorts of places, from church vaults to palaces, and roam about in company, carolling perpetually.(157)

But Dickens comments on the major difference between the real life situation and the fictitious situation in which the observers and participants are thrown into: “Such
changes appear absurd; but they are not as unnatural as they would seem at first sight. The transitions in real life from well-spread boards to death-beds, and from mourning-weeds to holiday garments, are not a whit less startling; only, there, we are busy actors, instead of passive lookers-on, which makes a vast difference” (157). After a week he is allowed to wander about the filthy place all by himself. “It was a very dirty place. The rooms upstairs had great high wooden chimney-pieces and large doors, with paneled walls and cornices to the ceiling; which, although they were black with neglect and dust, were ornamented in various ways” (168). The roof and upper floor correspond to the head and mind as well as to the conscious exercise of self-control. Here ceilings of the roof due to neglect and dust are black. The dirty condition of the roof reflects the evil character of Fagin and Sikes. Dickens says:

In all the rooms, the mouldering shutters were fast closed: the bars which held them were screwed tight into the wood; the only light which was admitted, stealing its way through round holes at the top: which made the rooms more gloomy, and filled them with strange shadows. There was a back-garret window with rusty bars outside, which had no shutter; and out of this, Oliver often gazed with a melancholy face for hours together; but nothing was to be descried from it but a confused and crowded mass of housetops, blackened chimneys, and gable-ends. Sometimes, indeed, a grizzly head might be seen, peering over the parapet-wall of a distant house; but it was quickly withdrawn again; and as the window of Oliver’s observatory was nailed down, and dimmed with the rain and smoke of years, it was as much as he could do to make out the forms of the different objects beyond, without making any attempt to be seen or heard,—which he had as much chance of being, as if he had lived inside the ball of St. Paul’s Cathedral. (169)
Here Dickens proposes to show the real picture of crime in Fagin’s den and its environment. Windows according to Jung is a symbol of consciousness. The windows which are nailed down symbolises Oliver’s lack of consciousness about his involvement in burglary in future. The lives of Nancy, Fagin and Sikes which are shadowed by death and destruction are symbolised by the darkness in the den. On the other hand open windows are the openings that admit supernatural light. Light from outside or from above, corresponds to God’s spirit. The absence of light and the gloomy atmosphere inside Fagin’s den resemble the demonic world. But Oliver finds the small rays of light from the top of the ceiling. This light symbolises the only ray of hope for Oliver’s suffering i.e., the spiritual guidance he gets from his dead mother who operates in the consciousness of Nancy who protects him from being beaten by Fagin. Nancy’s conscience pricks her as she has deprived Oliver of a comfortable house. Therefore Nancy does her utmost to atone for her guilt. This situation is symbolised through the fire imagery. “…and the girl, mending the fire, sat before it, in readiness to rouse them at the appointed time. For a long time Oliver lay awake, thinking it not impossible that Nancy might seek that opportunity of whispering some further advice; but the girl sat brooding over the fire, without moving, save now and then to trim the light” (193). Here her fixed attention on the fire light is an image of misery and dejection. In Hindu rituals fire is the medium which carries the offerings to Gods. Here Nancy’s looking into the fire, often symbolically connotes her remorse she expresses to God.

On a chilly and windy night, Fagin leaves his cell for Sikes’ house. When he moves to Sikes’ place, he is presented in an odious light. It is a chill, damp, windy night, when the Jew buttoning his great coat tight round his shriveled body, and pulling the collar up over his ears so as to completely obscure the lower part of his face, emerges from his den. He passes through the dirty streets. Fagin, because of his meanness, his
greed, his baseness, and his utter lack of decency and any sense of human dignity may indeed be described as a reptile. Dickens says:

The mud lay thick upon the stones, and a black mist hung over the streets; the rain fell sluggishly down, and everything felt cold and clammy to the touch. It seemed just the night when it befitted such a being as the Jew to be abroad. As he glided stealthily along, creeping beneath the shelter of the walls and doorways, the hideous old man seemed like some loathsome reptile, engendered in the slime and darkness through which he moved: crawling forth, by night, in search of some rich offal for a meal. (176)

In the demonic world of the novel *Oliver Twist* mankind is reduced to animal existence. This world where there is no difference between a man and an animal is deprived of human sense. Here Fagin’s movements reflect the movements of an animal. This is shown through the words ‘creeping’ ‘crawling’ in search of a meal. When he enters the house of Sikes, Fagin goes near the hearth and warms himself and Sikes compares him to an ugly ghost. The hidden but the key imagery of the novel i.e., the mind of Oliver’s dead mother working subtly in the consciousness of the character involved in the novel turning the misadventures into an unexpected lucky course, is revealed through the prevailing belief in the existence of the ghosts. The demonic imagery predominates in the evil characters. Fagin who spreads evil by poisoning the souls of the young people is the devil incarnate. The action of the evil persons takes place in Fagin’s den and the dilapidated house of Sikes.

They live and hide in a wretched place like ghosts. This is shown through the words of Sikes when Fagin enters the place of Sikes. He says, “It’s enough to turn a man ill, to see his lean old carcase shivering in that way, like an ugly ghost just rose from the grave” (177). Thus evil is made to look very ugly and disgusting. Northrop Frye in his
Great Code: The Bible and Literature says: “A quest involving conflict assumes two main characters, a protagonist or hero, and an antagonist of enemy. The enemy may be ordinary human beings but the nearer the romance is to myth, the more attributes of divinity will cling to the hero and the more the enemy will take on demonic mythical qualities” (187). When Nancy is gazing at the Fire, Fagin wants Sikes to intimate Nancy through a sign to leave the room as he believes the womanly instincts to be unstable and not fit for confiding secrets. “The Jew nodded his head towards Nancy, who was still gazing at the fire; and intimated, by a sign, that he would have her told to leave the room. Sikes shrugged his shoulders impatiently, as if he thought the precaution unnecessary; but complied, nevertheless, by requesting Miss Nancy to fetch him a jug of beer”(181).

Oliver is brought to a place away from Fagin’s den to involve him in a burglary. The belief that the soul has existence after the death is once again mentioned by the novelist. Dickens says:

The boy was lying, fast asleep, on a rude bed upon the floor; so pale with anxiety, and sadness, and the closeness of his prison, that he looked like death; not death as it shows in shroud and coffin, but in the guise it wears when life has just departed; when a young and gentle spirit has, but an instant, fled to Heaven, and the gross air of the world has not had time to breathe upon the changing dust it hallowed.

(185)

Dickens, here, creates the suffocating darkness of utter loneliness and when Oliver is left alone he reads a book which deals with the history of the lives and trials of great criminals, an attempt to prepare him mentally for the evil ventures. Dickens says:

Here, he read of dreadful crimes that made the blood run cold; of secret murders that had been committed by the lonely wayside; of bodies hidden from the eye of man in deep pits and wells: which would not keep them down, deep as they were,
but had yielded them up at last, after many years, and so maddened the murderers with the sight, that in their horror they had confessed their guilt, and yelled for the gibbet to end their agony. Here, too, he read of men who, lying in their beds at dead of night, had been tempted (so they said) and led on, by their own bad thoughts, to such dreadful bloodshed as it made the flesh creep, and the limbs quail, to think of. The terrible descriptions were so real and vivid, that the sallow pages seemed to turn red with gore; and the words upon them, to be sounded in his ears, as if they were whispered, in hollow murmurs, by the spirits of the dead. (188)

The book narrates the gruesome crimes committed by great criminals because of industrialisation and materialistic mind. This incident is a preface to the burglary which is going to be enacted by Sikes with the help of Oliver. Finally Oliver is brought to Sikes’s house by Nancy. When Oliver and Nancy are moving towards Sikes’s house it begins to rain. “It was a cheerless morning when they got into the street, blowing and raining hard, and the clouds looking dull and stormy” (195). Here the rain can be associated with the rain in the novel *A Farewell to Arms* where the rain brings cholera, a dreadful disease which puts an end to the lives of seven thousand soldiers. On the other hand, Catherine says that, she sees herself dead in the rain. Thus in both the novels rain is the symbol of imminent doom and disaster. The Tamil poetess Andal’s *Thiruppavai* is a contrast to it. Andal prays to God for rain, since rain is the only source of fertility and prosperity and hence it is considered to be a constructive force. While reaching Sikes’ house, Oliver resists the temptation of crying out for help with great difficulty. Unaware of the truth, Oliver stands alone in the midst of wickedness and guilt. Oliver finds no way of resisting the rigidity of Sikes that crushes him. On a damp windy morning Oliver and Sikes pass through the streets of Smithfield. J.E. Cirlot in *A Dictionary of symbols* refers to the
archetypal symbol of labyrinth as the symbol of confusion. The labyrinth represents a
descent into unfamiliar territory. When Oliver and Sikes come to Smithfield, it is market-
morning. Sikes moves down quite oblivious of the sights and sounds around him:

The ground was covered, nearly ankle-deep, with filth and mire; a thick steam,
perpetually rising from the reeking bodies of the cattle, and mingling with the fog,
which seemed to rest upon the chimney-tops, hung heavily above. All the pens in
the centre of the large area, and as many temporary pens as could be crowded into
the vacant space, were filled with sheep; tied up to posts by the gutter side were
long lines of beasts and oxen, three or four deep.

Countrymen, butchers, drovers, hawkers, boys, thieves, idlers, and vagabonds of
every low grade, were mingled together in a mass; the whistling of drovers, the
barking dogs, the bellowing and plunging of the oxen, the bleating of sheep, the
grunting and squeaking of pigs, the cries of hawkers, the shouts, oaths, and
quarrelling on all sides; the ringing of bells and roar of voices, that issued from
every public-house; the crowding, pushing, driving, beating, whooping and
yelling; the hideous and discordant dim that resounded from every corner of the
market; and the unwashed, unshaven, squalid, and dirty figures constantly running
to and fro, and bursting in and out of the throng; rendered it a stunning and
bewildering scene, which quite confounded the senses.(196)

The maze here stands for the manifest social ills of city life. With great accuracy
the author describes the London streets with all their variegated and exuberant activities.

As Murray Baumgarten in *The Cambridge Companion to Charles Dickens* says, “The
labyrinthine passages keep repeating and changing; the solid realistic location gives way
to a shape-shifting word” (223). The oxen, sheep and dogs stand for the destroyed
creatures in the demonic animal world, a perfect opposition to the world of natural
vitality. The condition of animals reveals how man exploits animals to meet with his materialistic need. Thus Dickens shows the bleak side of industrialisation where the industrial society though has brought material prosperity among people, is accompanied by many evils that affect the society. Oliver travels with the burglar throughout the day. When they reach the lower Halliford it is dark:

The night was very dark. A damp mist rose from the river, and the marshy ground about; and spread itself over the dreary fields. It was piercing cold, too; all was gloomy and black. Not a word was spoken; for the driver had grown sleepy; and Sikes was in no mood to lead him into conversation. Oliver sat huddled together, in a corner of the cart; bewildered with alarm and apprehension … (199-200)

There is no conversation between the drivers of the cart on which Oliver and Sikes are travelling. Oliver sits huddled together in a corner of the cart, bewildered with fear and apprehensions. His mind is figuring strange objects in the gaunt trees where branches wave grimly to and fro as if in some fantastic joy at the desolation of the scene. The imminent presence of ghosts is revealed through a scene of churchyard augmenting in the psyche of Oliver certain things which will happen in his life with the help of the omnipresence:

As they passed Sunbury Church, the clock struck seven. There was a light in the ferry-house window opposite: which streamed across the road, and threw into more somber shadow a dark yew-tree with graves beneath it. There was a dull sound of falling water not far off; and the leaves of the old tree stirred gently in the night wind. It seemed like quiet music for the repose of the dead. (200)

The symbolic intent of the word Sunbury should be taken into account here. As in Milton’s *Lycidas* the Sun is buried (Sunbury church) but will rise the next morning. In the same way Oliver suffers under darkness but will witness dawn at the end of the
adventure. They confront a ruined and decayed house, where they meet another accomplice, i.e., Toby Crackit. Sikes exchanges his greetings with Toby Crackit, one of the boys in Fagin’s gang. They come near the starting point of a bridge. The bridge imagery is used by Dickens very powerfully as it is a bridge for Oliver cross his miserable life. But Oliver apprehends that Sikes has brought him to this bridge to throw him into water and murder him. The three pass through the little town of Chertsey and stop in front of Mrs. Maylie’s isolated house. Oliver’s resolution to go back to the village and starve instead of living in London, a place of many opportunities, is revealed through his unwillingness to be a part of the burglary. Oliver says: ‘Oh! for God’s sake let me go!’ cried Oliver; ‘let me run away and die in the fields. I will never come near London; never, never! Oh! pray have mercy on me, and do not make me steal. For the love of all the bright Angels that rest in Heaven, have mercy upon me!’(205). Oliver is asked to enter into the house through the window. Oliver enters the house and he inwardly resolves not to open the door to Sikes but to raise an alarm in order to wake up the inmates and alert them. In this situation one can find the evidence of Oliver’s innate goodness. When Oliver enters the room, Sikes asks him to climb the stairs before him. There is a scene of Oliver’s resolution to die than to be a part of the burglary and coming along with it is an imagery of climbing upstairs. Ladders, stair cases or ascending up a mountain are imageries accompanying a positive mind. “In the short time he had had to collect his senses, the boy had firmly resolved that, whether he died in the attempt or not, he would make one effort to dart upstairs from the hall, and alarm the family. Filled with this idea, he advanced at once, but stealthily” (207). But presently there is some noise in the house and Sikes shouts to him to come back. Oliver sees two figures at the top of the stairs and he is panicked by a loud noise. Sikes drags Oliver out of the house. Oliver is hurt by one
of the shots and he begins to bleed profusely. Sikes carries the wounded Oliver in his arms.

Dickens portrays the awful condition of the homeless at the beginning of the twenty third chapter. Dickens writes that many hunger-worn outcasts close their eyes in our bare streets. Dickens says:

The night was bitter cold. The snow lay on the ground, frozen into a hard thick crust, so that only the heaps that had drifted into byways and corners were affected by the sharp wind that howled abroad: which, as if expending increased fury on such prey as it found, caught it savagely up in clouds, and, whirling it into a thousand misty eddies, scattered it in air. Bleak, dark, and piercing cold, it was a night for the well-housed and fed to draw round the bright fire and thank God they were at home; and for the homeless, starving wretch to lay him down and die.(208)

Dickens presents a scene vividly in contrast to the above mentioned scene. Corney, squanders the public money which ought to have been spent for charity at the work house for her personal luxury. For her husband is another item of crockery:

How slight a thing will disturb the equanimity of our frail minds! The black teapot, being very small and easily filled, ran over while Mrs. Corney was moralizing; and the water slightly scalded Mrs. Corney’s hand. ‘Drat the pot!’ said the worthy matron, setting it down very hastily on the hob; ‘a little stupid thing that only holds a couple of cups! What use is it of, to anybody! Except,’ said Mrs. Corney, pausing, ‘except to a poor desolate creature like me. Oh dear!’ With these words, the matron dropped into her chair, and, once more resting her elbow on the table, thought of her solitary fate. The small teapot, and the single cup, had awakened in her mind sad recollections of Mr. Corney (who had not been
dead more than five-and-twenty years); and she was overpowered. ‘I shall never get another!’ said Mrs. Corney, pettishly; ‘I shall never get another-like him.’

Whether this remark bore reference to the husband, or the teapot, is uncertain.

(209)

Dickens deftly draws an imagery of how the selfish government officials move together literally and metaphorically to ruin themselves and the public. The round table is used as a symbol to show the round earth which brings like-minded people together. This imagery is a preamble to the oncoming union of Miss Rose and Oliver, whom the same earth brings together. Simultaneously the round table pokes fun at the so called dignitaries, who tempted by time space, and opportunity, stoop beneath their dignity.

Dickens says:

It was a round table; and as Mrs. Corney and Mr. Bumble had been sitting opposite each other, with no great space between them, and fronting the fire, it will be seen that Mr. Bumble, in receding from the fire, and still keeping at the table, increased the distance between himself and Mrs. Corney; which proceeding, some prudent readers will doubtless be disposed to admire, and to consider an act of great heroism on Mr. Bumble’s part: he being in some sort tempted by time, place, and opportunity, to give utterance to certain soft nothings, which however well they may become the lips of the light and thoughtless, do seem immeasurably beneath the dignity of judges of the land, members of parliament, ministers of state, lord mayors, and other great public functionaries, but more particularly beneath the stateliness and gravity of a beadle: who (as is well known) should be the sternest and most inflexible among them all.

Whatever were Mr. Bumble’s intentions, however (and no doubt they were of the best), it unfortunately happened, as has been twice before remarked, that the table
was a round one; consequently Mr. Bumble, moving his chair by little and little, soon began to diminish the distance between himself and the matron; and, continuing to travel round the outer edge of the circle, brought his chair, in time, close to that in which the matron was seated. Indeed, the two chairs touched; and when they did so, Mr. Bumble stopped. (213)

The Beadle drinks his tea to the last drop, finishes a piece of toast, whisks the crumbs off his knees, wipes his lips and deliberately kisses the matron. When the matron is called out to hear the confession of Old Sally, Mr. Bumble behaves in an inexplicable way by taking stock of the costly items at the house of the matron.

When Fagin enquires about the burglary, Toby Crackit says, “Bill had him on his back and scudded like the wind” (227). The criminals concentrate on the work at hand unlike the people like Mr. Brownlow, who live in a world of abstraction. Dickens gives the readers a glimpse of how thieves concentrate on the work at hand. Toby Crackit relishes the food and drink and live a life of satiation. When the Jew is watching anxiously to hear the burglary which risked their lives, Toby relishes the food and the drink. They strike a balance between the inner and the outer worlds, which is the quality of spiritual aspirants. That is why the thieves realise their souls when the opportunity crops up to them. Theif Valmiki, who being inspired by Naradha wrote Ramayana and became the greatest poet of India. Dickens’ style of changing of one world to another suddenly i.e., apocalyptic world of Oliver to demonic world is shown through the den of Fagin. Fagin sits in his den and broods over the collapse of the burglary which he hears through Toby Crackit. He feels upset on hearing the things that have gone wrong. He suspects that Oliver having fallen into the hands of his pursuers might have told them about his connection with Fagin, Sikes and the others. Fagin cries aloud and rushes out of the house. Fagin goes through the streets at a very fast pace. He enters a narrow and
dismal lane leading to Saffron Hill. The Saffron Hill is associated with the sale of stolen things and after enquiring a few shopkeepers in this lane Fagin goes to the public-house, ‘The Three Cripples’. This is a place where Fagin and Sikes usually have their discussion regarding their evil plans. Fagin finds either Sikes or Monks there.

The symbolic name ‘The Three Cripples’ stands for the three criminals Fagin, Sikes and Monks. They are physically fit but mentally crippled and they exploit the innocent and the helpless. The rooms in ‘The Three Cripples’ are described by Dickens as:

The room was illuminated by two gas-lights; the glare of which was prevented by the barred shutters, and closely-drawn curtains of faded red, from being visible outside. The ceiling was blackened, to prevent its colour from being injured by the flaring of the lamps; and the place was so full of dense tobacco smoke, that at first it was scarcely possible to discern anything more.

By degrees, however, as some of it cleared away through the open door, an assemblage of heads, as confused as the noises that greeted the ear, might be made out; and as the eye grew more accustomed to the scene, the spectator gradually became aware of the presence of a numerous company, male and female, crowded round a long table: at the upper end of which, sat a chairman with a hammer of office in his hand; while a professional gentleman with a bluish nose, and his face tied up for the benefit of a toothache, presided at a jingling piano in a remote corner. (231)

The room, though it is lighted by two gas-lights is portrayed as a dark room, since the closed shutters prevent the light entering in. Symbolically it means that though humaneness is in each of them it is shrouded by selfishness because, they are thieves; they wouldn’t light the light of the consciousness in them. So they harbour the darkness in
their hearts. Fagin returns home and to his surprise, finds Monks waiting for him. An earnest conversation takes place between Fagin and Monks. Monks wants Fagin to change Oliver from an innocent boy into a thief. He wants Fagin to ruin Oliver’s life. His grudging will towards Oliver becomes an obsession to destroy him. His poisonous influence over Oliver tries to kill the very core of Oliver’s existence. Thus through Monks, Dickens demonstrates the corruption of humanity in man. Fagin accepts the conspiracy of Monks. He is being an agent of evil acts as an important disintegrating force which hastens the destruction of Oliver. Nancy overhears the conversation of Fagin and Monks.

The women involved in criminal activities are torn between good and evil. Fagin often suspects Nancy of being pulled by the polar opposition of good and bad. Due to certain mysterious reasons Nancy is not loyal to Fagin and Sikes and at the same time she does not want to leave Sikes. Gloria Naylor’s *Mama Day* gives an answer for this unpredictable attitude of Nancy. George correlates the working of women’s psyche with that of the phases of the moon. George says that as the Earth is disturbed by the lunar phases, women, are also disturbed. Nancy is brought by Fagin and the other thieves and she betrays them and wants to find out what happens to Oliver. When Fagin and Monks discuss, Nancy eve drops and Monks exclaims, “The shadow! I saw the shadow of a woman, in a cloak and bonnet, pass along the wainscot like a breath!” (240). The word breathe makes the readers attribute the behavior of Nancy to the numinous power of Oliver’s mother. The grave is brought by the novelist by making Monk and Fagin descend cellars to partake the secrets of the earth. “They looked into all the rooms; they were cold, bare, and empty. They descended into the passage, and thence into the cellars below. The green damp hung upon the low walls; the tracks of the snail and slug glistened in the light of the candle; but all was still as death” (240). The Monks subsided and his
reconciliation to the fact that it is his imagination shows how certain things are beyond
the comprehension of human brain. “This accumulated testimony effectually staggered
Mr. Monks. His protestations had gradually become less and less vehement as they
proceeded in their search without making any discovery; and, now, he gave vent to
several very grim laughs, and confessed it could only have been his excited
imagination”(240).

Dickens shifts the movement of Oliver to the next phase of his life through the
imagery of wind. Here when Oliver is about to get freedom he is carried away by wind.
Oliver suddenly becomes unconscious and Sikes leaves him in a ditch and both Toby
Crackit and Sikes run to save their own lives. Oliver has been lying unconscious in the
ditch throughout the night. It begins raining but still Oliver is unconscious “The rain came
down, thick and fast, and pattered noisily among the leafless bushes. But, Oliver felt it
not, as it beat against him; for he still lay stretched, helpless and unconscious, on his bed
of clay” (252). Here rain acquires symbolic value. Water is condensed in clouds and
returns to earth in the form of life-giving water, which is invested with two fold virtues of
giving life, and coming from heaven. In the case of Oliver the rain water in this context
comes like a blessing from heaven, to make a move from the demonic world to the
apocalyptic. In The Bible, Beula is the abode of pleasant pastures and still waters. In
Beula or the garden of Adonis or fertile love, the water of life springs forth to give life to
dead matter. In Oliver’s situation like the water in the garden of Adonis, the rain water
acts as a water of life. This rain water can be associated with the rain and disaster in the
Old Testament. Noah with his family and with a pair of every species in an ark escapes
from the storm and flood. Thus for the second time Oliver passes from the world of
criminals to the middle-class world of safety and comfort while in the unconscious state.
In Nature there is a continuity of life. Fishes go underground in summer season when
tanks and rivers dry up. But they do not die. They come to the surface when the rain comes. Likewise for Oliver the rain gives him re-birth. Oliver is cut off from his well-wishers (Mr. Brownlow and Mrs. Bedwin) and from their love. The psyche of Oliver suffers due to this kind of break. Here the rain water gives him a new life by helping him once again into the world of goodness. Thus Oliver identifies a new life and identity after the collapse. William Golding in *Paper Man* calls the water fall as consciousness hanging up there. Here the rain is the objective correlative of the unconscious which comes to the help of suffering people. Here it is the soul of Oliver’s mother which comes to the help of Oliver. The soul of Oliver’s mother protects Oliver when he is shot half dead and drenched in rain. Water and mist are the objective correlative of soul or collective unconscious, when we deduce the symbol essence of The Old Testament story of the Red Sea to give way to Moses and his people and submerging the soldiers of Pharaoh.

Morning drew on apace. The air became more sharp and piercing, as its first dull hue—the death of night, rather than the birth of day—glimmered faintly in the sky. The objects which had looked dim and terrible in the darkness, grew more and more defined, and gradually resolved into their familiar shapes. The rain came down, thick and fast, and pattered noisily among the leafless bushes. But, Oliver felt it not, as it beat against him; for he still lay stretched, helpless and unconscious, on his bed of clay. (252)

Oliver struggles towards the house where a burglary has been attempted the previous night. He faints at the door steps of the house after feebly knocking at the door. Oliver wakes up and as he feels very weak he falls prostrate on the ground when he tries to stand upright. He takes an effort to walk slowly to the house. Suddenly he recognises that it is the same house where they have attempted to rob. He forgets the agony of his wound and decides to run away. But he could scarcely stand. Oliver somehow climbs up
the steps and knocks at the door and then collapses. The servants fabricate stories and expect a thief outside. But the unconscious Oliver is found and carried in and the advice of the woman in the upstairs is sought for. According to the instruction Oliver is carried upstairs. Here Oliver is carried upstairs literally and metaphorically carried by the angelic forces of nature. Giles carries Oliver upstairs with the care and solicitude of a woman. This is the end of the chapter twenty eight.

On seeing the boy the new benefactors of Oliver, Mrs. Maylie and Rose attend to the boy with the help of a doctor. Here the house of Rose can be interpreted as the safe and comfort zone for Oliver. Similarly in Robert Frost’s “The Death of the Hired Man” the poet brings to our notice that the only source of peace and comfort for a man in the present complex social structure is one’s home. It comes true in the case of Oliver. House is the symbol of humanity and Freudian psychology refers to the nature of the house as more feminine or maternal than masculine. This is shown in the case of Miss Rose and Mrs. Maylie who are compassionate towards the boy. The girl’s very name suggests the sweetness of her young nature and the fragrance of the soul. She is intelligent but simple in her goodness representing the sort of angel of the fireside. “…the smile, the cheerful, happy smile-were made for Home, and fireside peace and happiness” (260). In European and Eurocentric culture, the rose is the gift of love as well as the traditional romantic symbol of female beauty and innocence. Dan Brown in The Da Vinci Code talks elaborately about the symbol of Rose. Oliver struggles with the severe fever. “Upon it, in lieu of the dogged, black- visaged ruffian they had expected to behold, there lay a mere child, worn with pain and exhaustion, and sunk into a deep sleep”(263). Here is a turning point in the life of Oliver. Oliver Twist undergoes an illness and is reawakened each time to the happy world of either Maylies or Mr. Brownlow, and this is the device that Dickens has adopted from the quest myth. The novelist very subtly carries out the transformation
with the help of this fever. Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* says, “The unconscious state allows the hero to make transition from one condition to another” (91). On the other hand Campbell believes that sleep is also used to indicate self-annihilation and re-birth of the hero. The re-birth has taken place for Oliver by the love of Rose and Maylie, which always exists in the apocalyptic human world. Thus Oliver is under the protection of the forces of light as he has earlier been threatened by the forces of darkness. The doctor Mr. Losberne, and the two women hear the pathetic story of Oliver. Oliver tells them how he is mistaken by Brownlow as the culprit by the villainy of Fagin.

Dickens takes us once again back to the town where Oliver is born. This scene is shrouded by a mystery in Oliver’s birth. Mr. Bumble and Mrs. Corney the matron, look after the inmates of the work house. When both of them are in their conversation they hear the news that an old woman, Sally is dying. When Mrs. Corney rushes to the place of the old woman, Sally tells the matron that she has stolen a gold locket from a woman who died several years back, after having given birth to a child, i.e., Oliver. Old Sally says, “It was gold, I tell you! Rich gold, that might have saved her life!” (220). Through old Sally Dickens gives birth to Oliver’s identity. She uses green glass bottle with the wine during the birth of Oliver, “The medical gentleman walked away to dinner; and the nurse, having once more applied herself to the green bottle, sat down on a low chair before the fire, and proceeded to dress the infant” (25). Here the green colour symbolises the mother earth. As Frye notes, “…. there was a general tendency to associate sky with a male principle and the earth with the female principle (*The Great Code* 157). The earth symbolises birth, death and re-birth. In the case of Oliver Old Sally acts as a medium of revealing the secrecy in Oliver’s birth. Mrs. Corney vacates the place after hearing the strange secret from the old lady.
The beginning of chapter twenty nine is a small thesis about the two women, the young and the old and how the young woman, though made up of earthly quality, does not belong to that gross element, earth. If angels abide in human frame, Miss Rose is such a one:

The younger lady was in the lovely bloom and springtime of womanhood; at that age, when, if ever angels be for God’s good purposes enthroned in mortal forms, they may be, without impiety, supposed to abide in such as hers. She was not past seventeen. Cast in so slight and exquisite a mould; so mild and gentle; so pure and beautiful; that earth seemed not her element, nor its rough creatures her fit companions. The very intelligence that shone in her deep blue eye, and was stamped upon her noble head, seemed scarcely of her age, or of the world; and yet the changing expression of sweetness and good humour, the thousand lights that played about the face, and left no shadow there; above all, the smile, the cheerful, happy smile, were made for Home, and fireside peace and happiness. (259-260)

She is the very incarnation of virtue, “…and artless loveliness that blessed spirits might have smiled to look upon her” (260). The blessed spirit of Oliver’s mother which emanated from the portrait of Mr. Brownlow’s house might have smiled at Miss Rose as earth did not seem to be her element. The inference is, according to Dickens’, earth is the element associated with women. This give the clue to resolve certain ambiguity of the novel i.e., why Nancy behaves in an unpredictable way and seems to be torn between two loyalties

The Doctor, an honest gentleman holds the curtain aside to watch Oliver, the patient, the young lady Rose glides softly past and, seating herself in a chair by the bedside, gathers Oliver’s hair from his forehead. As she stoops over him tears fall upon his forehead. This tears are associated with “the rippling of water in a silent place” (263-
which in turn is seen archetypally is the objective correlative of the surfacing of the unconscious up to the conscious, which makes Oliver smile in his sleep. The symbol of rippling of water in a silent place is again a symbol to connote the help Oliver gets from the unconscious, where Dickens says:

The boy stirred, and smiled in his sleep, as though these marks of pity and compassion had awakened some pleasant dream of a love and affection he had never known. Thus, a strain of gentle music, or the rippling of water in a silent place, or the odour of a flower, or the mention of a familiar word, will sometimes call up sudden dim remembrances of scenes that never were, in this life; which vanish like a breath; which some brief memory of a happier existence, long gone by, would seem to have awakened; which no voluntary exertion of the mind can ever recall. (263-264)

The power of the mind which has many layers of consciousness ranging from conscious to the collective unconscious is effectively brought out by Dickens through the symbols of water, fragrance of flowers and familiar word. They call up remembrances of scenes that never were in this life. The novelist says that they call up remembrances of happy existence long gone by, which brings to the readers mind, the re-birth theory of Brien Weiss. This theory is also seen in the teaching of Shri Krishna to Arjuna in the Bhagavat Gita, that the soul is neither created nor destroyed. In Bhagavat Gita, Chapter II entitled ‘Sankhyagoga’ (the yoga of knowledge), Krishna tells Arjuna about the nature of the soul. He says to Arjuna that the soul is never born, nor it ever dies; nor does it become after being born. For, it is unborn, eternal, everlasting and primeval; even though the body is slain, the soul is not.

This remembrance of the past existence can be continued through the voluntary exertion of the mind. It surfaces at unguarded moments resulting in epiphany. Oliver’s
smile in his sleep is in recognition of the binding between him and Miss Rose as aunty and nephew, which he does when Rose’s tears fall down on his cheeks. The Doctor, though a good natured one, deals only with things pertaining to body. So he says, “My dear young lady,” rejoined the surgeon, mournfully shaking his head; ‘crime, like death, is not confined to the old and withered alone. The youngest and fairest are too often its chosen victims” (264). But Rose is a character who is much aware of the working of unconscious and hence she defends the cause of protecting the innocent children like Oliver.

But even if he has been wicked,’ pursued Rose, ‘think how young he is; think that he may never have known a mother’s love, or the comfort of a home; that ill-usage and blows, or the want of bread, may have driven him to herd with men who have forced him to guilt. Aunt, dear aunt, for mercy’s sake, think of this, before you let them drag this sick child to a prison, which in any case must be the grave of all his chances of amendment. Oh! as you love me, and know that I have never felt the want of parents in your goodness and affection, but that I might have done so, and might have been equally helpless and unprotected with this poor child, have pity upon him before it is too late! (264)

Oliver gradually thrives under the loving care of Mrs. Maylie, Rose and the kind hearted Doctor. Dickens here talks about the power of prayer ascending to heavenly blessings and descending to the earth. “If fervent prayers, gushing from hearts overcharged with gratitude, be heard in heaven-and if they be not, what prayers are!-the blessings which the orphan child called down upon them, sunk into their souls, diffusing peace and happiness” (280). One remembers Plato’s ideal world, the imitation of it in the real world and the second imitation of it in the literary world, which Oliver is trained to see by reading good books. The imagery of the starry world and the sky is contrasted with
the Earth populated by tender-hearted people like Mrs. Maylie, Miss Rose, and Mr. Losberne, the doctor. This imagery of the books brings out the mood of happiness and hope. Here is a turning point in the life of Oliver and the novelist very subtly carries out the transformation with the help of this image-cluster. Now Dickens brings us up to the late developments in Oliver’s situation, and shows him again as happy and at peace in the affectionate and peaceful atmosphere where goodness, love and security prevail. He recovers slowly and is brought by Maylies to a country cottage. Before moving to the countryside Oliver wants to see Mr. Brownlow who has tried to save him from ignominy. But to his disappointment they hear that Brownlow moved to West Indies six weeks ago. After sometime Oliver moves with Rose and Maylie to the country side and he is relieved of his darkness and psychological pain:

Who can describe the pleasure and delight, the peace of mind and soft tranquility, the sickly boy felt in the balmy air, and among the green hills and rich woods, of an inland village! Who can tell how scenes of peace and quietude sink into the minds of pain-worn dwellers in close and noisy places, and carry their own freshness, deep into their jaded hearts! Men who have lived in crowded, pent-up streets, through lives of toil, and who have never wished for change; men, to whom custom has indeed been second nature, and who have come almost to love each brick and stone that formed the narrow boundaries of their daily walks; even they, with the hand of death upon them, have been known to yearn at last for one short glimpse of Nature’s face; and, carried far from the scenes of their old pains and pleasures, have seemed to pass at once into a new state of being.

Crawling forth, from day to day, to some green sunny spot, they have had such memories wakened up within them by the sight of the sky, and hill and plain, and glistening water, that a foretaste of heaven itself has soothed their quick decline,
and they have sunk into their tombs, as peacefully as the sun whose setting they
watched from their lonely chamber window but a few hours before, faded from
their dim and feeble sight! The memories which peaceful country scenes call up,
are not of this world, nor of its thoughts and hopes. Their gentle influence may
teach us how to weave fresh garlands for the graves of those we loved. (286-287)

Dickens as a social reformer could hardly ignore the darker side of life in the city.
But at the same time he also gives a series of green world’s idealised pastoral settings to
which Oliver could retreat to be nurtured and healed by the power of nature and the slow
and gentle social texture of life in the country side. Dickens accords much significance to
the description of the natural things to stress the mood and state of mind of the characters.
The nature kindles, refines and cheers his bruised body and spirit. Alexander Welsh in his
The city of Dickens: In Oliver Twist, talks about the satiric contrast between city and
country. He says, “Dickens associates the faraway place with an almost Platonic idea of a
previous existence” (198). Here the green hills and rich woods symbolise the Tree of life.
In apocalyptic imagery, the form imposed on the vegetable world is that of garden, the
farm, the grove or park. Here the trees are fertile and they are covered by branches and
leaves. This reflects the prosperity and the pleasant mood. Spender in Eliot says that Eliot
recollects the echoes of past happiness in order to relieve himself of his present
sufferings. He pictures the lurid picture of the human happiness in the vision of the
village wedding dance. Similarly in Burnt Norton, Eliot’s imagination is fired with the
ideas of human happiness and sorrow and birth and death:

The unheard music hidden in the shrubbery and the unseen eyebeam crossed,
for the roses had the look of flowers that are looked at.
There they were as our quests …
Along the empty alley into the box circle
To look down into drained pool.

And the pool was filled with water out of sun-light,

Go said the bird for the leaves were full of children,
Hidden excitedly, containing laughter. (I. 21-43)

When the poet remembers the beautiful house with its shrubbery and roses, its alley-walk, and box endings, its pool and singing birds, he forgets for a while the present flux in this pattern. Similarly for Oliver Twist his stay in the country side symbolises his longing for his stay against confusion. The beauty of nature offers him solace and comfort for which his mind and body yearn to relish. It uplifts his enervated spirit. He feels as if he is lifted to a heavenly abode when he is in the country side. The idea which is related to nature’s greatness is pointed out in Frye’s *The Stubborn Structure*:

Nature to Wordsworth is a mother-goddess who teaches the soul serenity and joy, and never betrays the heart that loves her; to the Marquis de Sade nature is the source of all the perverse pleasures that an earlier age had classified as ‘unnatural’. For Wordsworth the reality of Nature is manifested by its reflection of moral values; for de Sade the reality is concealed by that reflection…The corn-goddess in Keats’s *To Autumn*, the parallel figure identified with Ruth in the *Ode to a Nightingale*, the still unravished bride of the Grecian urn, Psyche, even the veiled Melancholy, are all emblems of a revealed Nature. (213-214)

By lying on the lap of the Mother Nature he gets relief from the past sufferings he has suffered in the hands of Fagin and Sikes. In Robert Heilman’s *The Turn of the screw as a poem* he talks about the change of tone from brightness, beauty and innocence to darkness, old age and malice. But in *Oliver Twist* the positive note is struck with the
change in the scenario. So far we have come across the imagery of darkness, winter and sorrow, but now the boy Oliver is removed to good company, happiness and joy. This is clearly brought out with the imagery of spring and beauty: “The rose and honeysuckle clung to the cottage walls; the ivy crept round the trunks of the trees; and the garden-flowers perfumed the air with delicious odours. Hard by, was a little churchyard; not crowded with tall unsightly gravestones, but full of humble mounds, covered with fresh turf and moss: beneath which, the old people of the village lay at rest” (287). Oliver’s state of mind is symbolised through seasons. Northrop Frye also views novel’s plot as recurrences of basic mythic formulas and associates elemental forces of myth with seasonal cycles of spring, summer, autumn and winter.

Dickens’ use of seasons makes one refer to the Demeter archetype in Greek mythology. The Greek myth of Demeter and Persephone recounts a year when grew. In the myth, Demeter is the goddess of agriculture and she is responsible for the fruitfulness of the earth. Human beings are dependent on Demeter for their ability to grow food. One day when Demeter’s daughter is picking flowers in a meadow, the god of Hades Kidnaps her and takes her back to his realm, the underworld of the dead, where he rapes her. Not knowing where his daughter is, Demeter goes into such deep mourning that she ignores the prayers of human beings, and nothing grows on the earth. Seeing that the world will starves, the other Gods intercede. They find Presephone and promise that if she has not eaten anything in the underworld she may return to Demeter. But the pathetic situation arises, where Persephone has eaten six seeds from a pomegranate. The Gods work out a compromise by which Presephone spends six months of the year in the underworld, during which Demeter mourns and there comes snowfall and winter, and six months with Demeter, during which there are spring and the summer. In Hindu mythology Brahma turns inward and a youth appears condensed from the breath of his nostrils. This youth is
called ‘Vasantha’ or ‘spring’ who is accompanied by a blossom laden wind. Thus the spring season makes Oliver Twist find a rapport with nature. He begins to lead an Arcadian life. In Thoreau’s *Walden or Life in the woods*, he says, “she was probably the only thoroughly the sound conditioned, healthy and robust young lady that ever walked the globe, and where ever she came it was spring” (Thoreau 112). Oliver starts to read and write. This enlightenment in Oliver’s life is symbolised through the morning time, “There was the little church, in the morning, with the green leaves fluttering at the windows: the birds singing without: and the sweet-smelling air stealing in at the low porch, and filling the homely building with its fragrance” (288-289). The morning is the most memorable season of the day, and it is the awakening hour. Thoreau reflects the points of Vedas in *Walden or Life in the woods*. “All intelligence awake with the morning” (73).

The Olive branch is the symbol of peace and resurrection. Thus the name of Oliver symbolises his rebirth which is being attained by peace. His breast is full of love and duty and he wants to show his gratitude to the two ladies, who are the polar opposite of the thieves whose hearts are full of hatred and betrayal. Spring season in a country seat brings a balmy effect on the man who has lived in the crowded, pent-up streets of cities like London. As Wordsworth sings in “Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey” Oliver is cured of the fever and fret of Fagin’s den on the lap of mother Earth. It is the lonely spot to which they retire and Oliver, whose days had been spent among squalid crowds and in the midst of the noise and brawling, seemed to enter on a new existence.

Crawling forth, from day to day, to some green sunny spot, they have had such memories wakened up within them by the sight of the sky, and hill and plain, and glistening water, that a foretaste of heaven itself has soothed their quick decline, and they have sunk into their tombs, as peacefully as the sun whose setting they
watched from their lonely chamber window but a few hours before, faded from their dim and feeble sight! The memories which peaceful country scenes call up, are not of this world, nor of its thoughts and hopes. Their gentle influence may teach us how to weave fresh garlands for the graves of those we loved: may purify our thoughts, and bear down before it old enmity and hatred; but beneath all this, there lingers, in the least reflective mind, a vague and half-formed consciousness of having held such feelings long before, in some remote and distant time, which calls up solemn thoughts of distant times to come, and bends down pride and worldliness beneath it. (287)

Again Dickens is talking about the immortality of the soul and thoughts of the other world and the re-birth theory. The imagery of grave and the rotation of Earth are brought to one’s mind:

…whilst the young lady read: which he could have done, until it grew too dark to see the letters. Then, he had his own lesson for the next day to prepare; and at this, he would work hard, in a little room which looked into the garden, till evening came slowly on… When it became quite dark, and they returned home, the young lady would sit down to the piano, and play some pleasant air, or sing, in a low and gentle voice, some old song which it pleased her aunt to hear. There would be no candles lighted at such times as these; and Oliver would sit by one of the windows, listening to the sweet music, in a perfect rapture. (288)

The novelist says that “the earth had donned her mantle of brightest green, shed her richest perfumes abroad. It was the prime and vigour of the year; all things were glad and flourishing.”(290) Rose is in high spirits in a brilliant moon and the reader correlates this scene with Jane Eyre’s first meeting of Rochester in the full moon night and Ursula Brangmen’s journey into the moon. When Rose falls ill she is visualized as the Earth on
which shadows of clouds pass now and then. Mrs. Maylie says that Heaven is just, and such things teach us impressively that there is a brighter world than this, and the passage to it is speedy. One is reminded of the Hindu sage Viswamithra’s famous Gayathri mantra which sings the glory of the Feminine Goddess Gayathri who is the source of light for the sun and the three worlds. This is Mrs. Maylie’s perception of death and entry into the happier world through grave. The novelist puts forth the theory of symbols and archetypes in a passage which would have inspired the archetypal critic Northrop Frye. The *ethos* is the sad atmosphere of Miss Rose failing in health. Oliver has crept away to the old churchyard and sitting down on one of the green mounds weeps and prays for her in silence.

There was such peace and beauty in the scene; so much of brightness and mirth in the sunny landscape; such blithesome music in the songs of the summer birds; such freedom in the rapid flight of the rook, careering overhead; so much of life and joyousness in all; that, when the boy raised his aching eyes, and looked about, the thought instinctively occurred to him, that this was not a time for death; that Rose could surely never die when humbler things were all so glad and gay; that graves were for cold and cheerless winter: not for sunlight and fragrance. He almost thought that shrouds were for the old and shrunken; and that they never wrapped the young and graceful form in their ghastly folds. (297)

Oliver shudders to hear a knell from the church bell and it breaks harshly on his youthful thoughts. It tolls for the funeral service. But to the great relief of Oliver the body buried is not that of Miss Rose.

Oliver and Henry used to collect flowers every day to decorate the bed chamber of Rose: “If winter comes can spring be far behind” is the mood of the *ethos*. The birds are once more hang out to sing in their old places. The melancholic look of Oliver is
dispelled as if by magic. Again Dickens talks about the theory of objective correlative.

“Such is the influence which the condition of our own thoughts, exercise, even over the appearance of external objects. Men who look on nature, and their fellow-men, and cry that all is dark and gloomy, are in the right; but the somber colours are reflections from their own jaundiced eyes and hearts. The real hues are delicate, and need a clearer vision” (306).

For the adornment of sick chamber Oliver used to collect flowers. When Harry Maylie comes, Oliver is left behind to collect flowers as he has the passion for flowers:

Harry Maylie, after the very first morning when he met Oliver coming laden home, was seized with such a passion for flowers, and displayed such a taste in their arrangement, as left his young companion far behind. If Oliver were behindhand in these respects, he knew where the best were to be found; and morning after morning they scoured the country together, and brought home the fairest that blossomed. The window of the young lady’s chamber was opened now; for she loved to feel the rich summer air stream in, and revive her with its freshness; but there always stood in water, just inside the lattice, one particular little bunch, which was made up with great care, every morning. Oliver could not help noticing that the withered flowers were never thrown away, although the little vase was regularly replenished; nor, could he help observing, that whenever the doctor came into the garden, he invariably cast his eyes up to that particular corner, and nodded his head most expressively, as he set forth on his morning’s walk. Pending these observations, the days were flying by; and Rose was rapidly recovering. (306)

One is reminded of the Biblical reference to flowers in “Hero as a Poet” where the author says about the quality of the lilies. He says, “The highest ever heard on this earth said withal, ’consider the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin: Yet
Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these’. A glance, that, into the deepest deep of Beauty. ‘The lilies of the field’, dressed finer than earthly Princes, springing-up there in the humble furrow-field; a beautiful *eye* looking-out on you, from the greater inner Sea of Beauty!”(106). Rose is the flower of humanity. For such a flower, the flowers of the earth are submitted to commemorate her virtues. Rose is referred to as an angel who belongs to that bright sphere. “…whither so many of the fairest and the best have winged their early flight; and yet to pray, amid all these consolations, that you might be restored to those who loved you-these were distractions almost too great to bear”(312-313). It refers to Oliver’s mother, who went there earlier. But Rose is different from Oliver’s mother.

The novelist draws the attention of the readers to look at the earth as a ball showing its English side to the other side of the sun. It is the bird-eye-view of the Earth. “One beautiful evening, when the first shades of twilight were beginning to settle upon the earth, Oliver sat at this window, intent upon his books” (307). The darkness is associated with Fagin and Monk. Far from being in the atmosphere of darkness, Oliver is pictured as being buried in a grave by a fiendish man whom Oliver has come across at an inn, when he is carrying message of Rose’s sickness to the doctor and Harry Maylie: “He!’ the other man seemed to answer; ‘could I mistake him, think you? If a crowd of ghosts were to put themselves into his exact shape, and he stood amongst them, there is something that would tell me how to point him out. If you buried him fifty feet deep, and took me across his grave, I fancy I should know, if there wasn’t a mark above it, that he lay buried there?”(308). A crisis now occurs in the life of the Maylie’s family. Rose suddenly falls ill and her condition becomes critical. Soon a crimson hue appears on her face and quickly it turns pale. Immediately Oliver begins to pray for her recovery. Her recovery in the future is symbolised through the bright sun and bird imagery. In
Shakespeare’s imagery and what it tells us, the author refers to the works of Shakespeare and shows how he connects the rising sun with youth and vigour, with strength, splendor, good cheer and renewal of life in Julius Ceaser, (5.3.60) Richard II, (2.4.21) Richard III, (2.3.34) and Romeo and Juliet (3.5.127). In contrast to this he also refers to the setting sun in the above plays not as the glory of its colours or rest and quiet, or the promise of another day, but as the end of things, old age and dangers. In the case of Rose her renewal of life is thus symbolised through the sunny landscape. Jung points out in Psychology and Alchemy “the sun is, in truth, a symbol of the source of life and of the ultimate wholeness of man” (32). Harry Maylie, son of Mrs. Maylie comes to their house to meet Rose, his lady love. He has been in love with Rose for the last several years. But his mother tells him that Rose might not agree to marry him because of the dubious circumstances of her birth. Thus we experience a feeling of mystery and suspense with regard to Rose’s birth. This mystery will be revealed to the readers in connection with Oliver’s mystery of his identity. Thus Oliver faces two levels of experiences: in the demonic night world and in the apocalyptic pastoral life and human world, where all belong to one community and one can find the images of symposium, communion, order, friendship and love.

The new good forces of Oliver are powerful enough to defend him against any evil designs being contrived by the forces of darkness. These latter forces cannot remain inactive for long. Evil has greater drive in it than goodness. This is shown to the readers through the entry of Fagin and Monks once again in the life of Oliver who has a sound sleep:

There is a kind of sleep that steals, upon us sometimes, which while it holds the body prisoner, does not free the mind from a sense of things about it, and enables it to ramble at its pleasure. Oliver is precisely in this kind of sleep. Oliver knew, perfectly well, that he was in his own little room; that his books were lying on the
table before him; that the sweet air was stirring among the creeping plants outside.

And yet he was asleep. Suddenly, the scene changed; the air became close and confined; and he thought, with a glow of terror, that he was in the Jew’s house again. There sat the hideous old man, in his accustomed corner, pointing at him, and whispering to another man, with his face averted, who sat beside him. (308)

Oliver Twist struggles to survive in an environment that oscillates between an enchanted world of dream and an alien world of nightmare realities. This is shown in the atmosphere of the room where he feels the change in the sweet air becoming close and confined.

Suddenly Oliver wakes up with fear and sees Fagin and Monks standing near the window. In a flash of seconds both sides recognise each other.

Mr. Bumble after his marriage with Mrs. Corney, has fallen in low estimation. Bumble leaves the work house, and walks broodingly into a public house. There a dark stranger, almost an image of the devil himself waits to tempt him. The man gives Bumble money for information about Oliver’s birth and for the promise of more. Bumble agrees to bring Mrs. Bumble to meet him, to tell him of the old pauper’s (Old Sally) revelations in her death bed. When Mr. and Mrs. Bumble move to meet Monks it begins to rain heavily. “It was a dull, close, overcast summer evening. The clouds, which had been threatening all day, spread out in a dense and sluggish mass of vapour, already yielded large drops of rain, and seemed to presage a violent thunder-storm…” (331). In Judeo-Christian thought lightning is a symbol of God’s immediate presence or of the last judgment. Here the judgment day for Monks begins. With the help of Nancy, Mr. Brownlow reveals the real face of Monks in the future. This judgment for Monks is symbolised by the appearance of lightning and thunder in the nocturnal meeting between Bumbles and Mr. Monks. In the case of Monks the storm also foreshadows the crisis that he has to face shortly. It is the day when the trumpet of the Last Judgment will sound and
thunder will be heard. Storms prominently accompany a pair of highly similar encounters in Dickens’ novels. In Dickens’s *Bleak House* during the storm Esther Summerson encounters Lady Dedlock. It is only during this meeting that Esther Summerson comes to know that Lady Dedlock is her mother. In Dickens’ *Great Expectations* Pip’s second encounter with Abel Magwitch occurs in a heavy storm. The situation reveals him that Magwitch is his real benefactor. Similarly in *Oliver Twist*, the meeting between Bumble and Monks, in the storm, helps the reader to comprehend that Monks is Oliver’s step-brother: “When the time is out of joint” (187). As stated by Jung in his essay “Psychology of Literature” the unconscious comes to the help of the conscious. As soon as Shri Krishna is born he is taken from the prison (the guards sleep and the prison doors open) to Gokulam on a wicker basket, (shielded from the rain by Aadishesh) by his father, being instructed by Lord Vishnu (whose incarnation is Shri Krishna) in a stormy night as this. The thunder storm can also be interpreted as the revelation of the unconscious, i.e., the things which people are unaware of. Thus the protagonist’s past and the future is symbolically manifested in the imagery of storm. Mr. and Mrs. Bumble walk down the river-side and arrive at a scattered little colony of shabby dilapidated houses built on low-lying unhealthy land. This area is inhabited by ruffians. The colony is a collection of mere hovels. In the centre of hovels or huts, there stands a large building. This is the building to which Mr. Bumble has now come with his wife following the address which Monks has given him. Mr. and Mrs. Bumble are received by Monks who takes them to a distant dungeon in that building:

The rat, the worm, and the action of the damp, had weakened and rotted the piles on which it stood; and a considerable portion of the building had already sunk down into the water; while the remainder, tottering and bending over the dark
stream, seemed to wait a favourable opportunity of following its old companion, and involving itself in the same fate. (332)

The place which is ruined has a high symbolical importance. The destroyed articles in Monks’ place symbolise the destructive role of Monks in Oliver’s life. The rat here creates a murky atmosphere. The activities of the rat resemble the activities of Monks. As a destroyer of stored food and a transmitter of diseases, the rat acquires the ill-reputation of being in league with the devil, demons and witches in their efforts to bring unsuspecting ruin. Thus Monks’ activities in turning Oliver into a thief in order to ruin his life are shown through the rat. Here the surrounding is filled with unwholesome things. The demonic image portrays the inorganic mineral world and waste land as the centre of destruction. In *Anatomy of Criticism* Northrop Frye says, “The inorganic world may remain in its unworked form of deserts, rocks and waste land. Cities of destruction and dreadful night belong here…” (150). On the other hand Fagin and Monks’ place is shadowed by death with their evil darkness. In *A Farwell to Arms*, this type of inorganic mineral world is shown through the hospitals, brothel houses and artilleries. Thus it symbolises the destructive life of the people in the town. Monks and the couple start their business. Monks prepares to pay well for information about old Sally’s death. Mrs. Bumble assures him that at the time of old Sally’s death she was the only one present near her. She removed from her hand a scrap of paper that she discovered to be a pawn broker’s ticket. Obviously she got it from Oliver’s dying mother but later she had pawned it. Mrs. Bumble produces the gold ornament to Monks: “It contained a little gold locket: in which were two locks of hair, and a plain gold wedding-ring. ‘It has the word ‘Agnes’ engraved inside,’ said the woman. ‘There is a blank left for the surname; and then follows the date; which is within a year before the child was born. I found out that” (338). Jung in his *Psychology and Alchemy* says: “Gold is the image of slow light and
hence of divine intelligence” (32). Thus in the case of Oliver Twist the golden locket symbolises the pure and divine character of his mother Agnes. The custom of carrying a lock of the hair of one’s beloved in a locket was wide spread in the nineteenth century. In the Middle Ages, rings came to symbolise betrothal and marriage. This connotes that Oliver’ mother did not give birth to Oliver illegally. According to Cirlot, like every closed circle, the ring is the symbol of continuity and wholeness. Oliver’s continuity with his uncle Mr. Brownlow, the husband of Agnes’s aunt and with Rose (sister of Agnes) is symbolised through this ring. Monks is quite pleased to get these things. He throws back a large trap-door which opens almost at the very spot at which Mr. Bumble stands. He sees the gulf there. Looking into the gulf Mr. Bumble finds a swift current of water flowing. It is evidently a current of water from the river. Monks wants to destroy the evidence of Oliver’s birth which is produced by Mrs. Bumble. He throws the evidence into the current below. “Monks drew the little packet from his breast, where he had hurriedly thrust it; and tying it to a leaden weight, which had formed a part of some pulley, and was lying on the floor, dropped it into the stream. It fell straight, and true as a die; clove the water with a scarcely audible splash; and was gone” (339-340). The river is the element which pervades the past, present and future. Here the river stands for past memories. The golden lock in the river symbolises an end of the proof of Agnes’s wedding with her husband. It also destroys the treasured parental memories of Oliver. The contrast is seen in Tony Morrison’s, *Beloved* where the diamond earrings of Beloved’s mother is said to have been seen by Beloved under the current of water while she is submerged in the river. The diamond earrings in the river unearths the treasured past in the psyche of Sethe. Here the water stands for revelation the past.

Monks tells Fagin of how he had destroyed Oliver’s identity and this is overheard by Nancy. Nancy considers Monks to be an evil obstacle which has to be cleared out
immediately in order for Oliver’s life to be peaceful. Her sympathy for Oliver compels
er to fight against all odds. She does not want the innocent boy to come to any harm
through Monks’ wickedness. She broods over her past guilt in bringing Oliver to the
dreadful world of Fagin. She is moved by a sense of shame and pain for what she has
done. She suffers from intolerable pain and trouble which has sunk into her unconscious.
She waits desperately for a chance to undo her wrongs and give some meaning to her life.
She decides to take meticulous efforts to protect Oliver. She is ready to die rather than
lead a meaningless life. Returning to Sikes’ place she makes Sikes fall asleep by mixing
a little opium in his drinks. Now she hastens towards her destination. She reaches the
family hotel near Hyde Park, to meet Rose Maylie. She tells Rose that Oliver was
abducted and kept in Fagin’s den. She also discloses the fact that Monks had made him a
thief in order to get legal possession of Oliver’s rightful inheritance, for, he is Oliver’s
half-brother. She also adds that he knows Oliver’s real identity but has destroyed it. At
the end of their conversation Nancy promises that Sunday night from eleven until the
clock strikes twelve she will walk on London Bridge to meet Rose for any further help in
this matter. Dickens reveals the secret of Oliver’s parentage through the meeting of the
two ladies. Their two different worlds, i.e., the displaced apocalyptic and demonic world
converge. Rose offers asylum to Nancy but the latter declines it as she thinks it her
destiny to suffer under thieves as she was stolen as a child to be involved in criminal
activities. Thus the meeting is like a spiritual melodrama. Rose immediately decides to
meet Mr. Brownlow. She tells Mr. Brownlow everything about her meeting with Nancy.
Thus by uniting Mr. Brownlow and everyone in her circle of friends she decides to help
Oliver to obtain his rightful inheritance. The troubadours have seen rose as a tangible
symbol of earthly love and this tradition continues in our time. On the other hand, a rose
is of great importance in the symbolism of free masonry. Three roses are placed on the
grave of a Mason when he is buried. The three roses of St. John stand for light, love and life. Thus in the case of Oliver, Rose symbolises earthly love for him. She gives him not only love but also enlightenment and life in rescuing him from evil hands.

Two more persons who are concerned with the past of Oliver’s life make their way to London. They are Noah Claypole and Charlotte. They come to London to lead a prosperous life. They enter the public house ‘The Three Cripples’, the very same place haunted by criminals like Fagin and Sikes. On seeing them, Fagin makes up his mind to entice them to his profession. He has decided to employ him on a secret mission. He uses Noah as a spy to watch the activities of Nancy. Thus Fagin’s evil character is shown through the words of Sikes, “… and you, like a black hearted wolf as you are, kept yourself aloof,’ said Sikes” (400). Wolf as a symbol of the principle of evil, a predatory animal is considered dangerous to people and animals and it has the quality to corrupt the innocent. The name Noah is highly symbolical as the Biblical Noah stands between the two worlds after the flood. But here he stands as a demonic Noah who by hastening the death of Nancy brings the two worlds together. i.e., the demonic and the apocalyptic. But for the death of Nancy the den of the thieves would not have been exposed to the public.

Accompanying Mr. Brownlow, Rose arrives at the London Bridge at midnight. For six nights Noah waits and on the seventh night Fagin tells him about her appointment. Noah trails her along the dark streets. Here the darkness is the preface to the death of Nancy in the future: “It was a very dark night. The day had been unfavourable, and at that hour and place there were few people stirring” (407). Nancy reaches the bridge. She sees the tower of old Saint Saviour’s church. In the Egyptian system of hieroglyphs, the tower is a determinative sign denoting height or the art of rising above the common level in life or society. At the cost of her life Nancy saves the innocent Oliver and due to this sacrifice she is elevated to a higher spiritual sphere. Her attempt of saving the life of Oliver helps
her reach the feet of God after her death. Her innate goodness makes her act with humanity though she belongs to the demonic world. Like Noah Clayploe she also stands as a connecting factor between the displaced apocalyptic and demonic worlds. The divine power which operates behind apparent things makes her a victim so as to redeem the fallen humanity. Her walking on the London bridge at midnight is highly symbolic as she stands as a sacrificial victim between the divine and demonic worlds. Mr. Brownlow asks Nancy to give all the particulars about the various men with whom she is associated. He also asks her to give evidence against those men to the police in which case her own safety will be guaranteed. But Nancy is unable to give evidence against Fagin and Sikes. This character of humaneness in Nancy is symbolised through the spire of Saint Magnus. “The tower of old Saint Saviour’s church, and the spire of Saint Magnus, so long the giant-warders of the ancient bridge, were visible in the gloom”(408). According to Lamperez, the church walls stand for redeemed humanity; the counter forts and flying buttresses for uplifting moral strength; the roof for charity and shelter; the pillars for the dogmas of the faith; the ribbing of the vaults for the paths of salvation and the spires for God’s finger pointing to the ultimate goal of mankind. Nancy has taken a few restless turns to and fro. She is closely watched by her hidden observer. The soul preparing for union with God must pass through the dark night, the dark river, the icy steps of the Mount of Purgatory and purgatorial fires. Nancy in order to reach God after her death has to undergo tortures and sufferings in her life because of Fagin and Sikes. This situation of Nancy is symbolised through the midnight darkness in the bridge, where Dickens says, “Midnight had come upon the crowded city” (408). In The Art of T.S. Eliot, Miss Helen Gardner rightly says about the theme of purifactory darkness. She says: “The darkness comes upon the mind; it is not sought; but accepted. The watcher in the theatre, waiting in the darkness while the scene changes, the passenger in the tube, when the train stops too
long between stations, the patient half-etherized are all passive images” (167). This kind
of darkness is also seen in Eliot’s purgatory. At the second turning of the stairs he finds
himself enveloped in darkness. Thus Nancy’s soul is purified by passing through this
darkness. St. John in *The Dark Night of the Soul* says, “the soul must go through the
ordeal of that terrible night of contemplation, into which, of set purpose, God brings the
soul he may lead it to divine union” (Book II, Ch 1:1.375). Nancy hears the sound of the
church bell. “…when the heavy bell of St. Paul’s tolled for the death of another
day”(408). St. Paul encourages the new Christians in Rome by promising them that they
are God’s people and will receive God’s love through grace. On the other side, the bell in
its hanging position symbolises the connection between heaven and earth. Thus Dickens
repeatedly uses different symbols regarding Nancy’s after life. Nancy for helping
Brownlow definitely receives God’s grace in the end i.e. in her after life. Rose and
Mr. Brownlow arrive at the appointed time. On seeing them, Nancy is afraid of speaking
to Brownlow and Rose on the road and so she requests them to come down to the steps.
The steps on the surrey bank to which she pointed at are on the same side of the bridge as
Saint Saviour’s church, form a landing-stairs from the river: “These stairs are a part of the
bridge; they consist of three flights. Just below the end of the second, going down, the
stone wall on the left terminates in an ornamental pilaster facing towards the Thames”
(409). Bridge here symbolises a transition or passage which connects this world to the
next world. The water stands for the way to heaven. These symbols reflect the peaceful
life after her death. Looking at Christian traditions of purification which is the only way
of communication with God, the purgatorial images present a three tier system of
realization. The Christian mystics believe: “No one can be enlightened unless he be first
cleaned and purified or stripped. Thus there are three stages: first the purification… The
purification concerneth those who are beginning or repenting and are brought to pass in a
threefold wise; by contrition and sorrow for sin, by full confession, by hearty amendment” (*Theologia Germanica* Ch. XIV). In Nancy’s case she crosses her first stage of sorrow after her sin. This is shown before her meeting Rose in the London Bridge.

At other times, she laughed without merriment, and was noisy without a moment afterwards- she sat silent and dejected, brooding with her head upon her hands, while the very effort by which she roused herself, told, more forcibly than even these indications, that she was ill at ease, and that her thoughts were occupied with matters very different and distant from those in the course of discussion by her companions. (396-397)

The next stage is confession. Nancy reveals to Rose, the sins she had committed against Oliver. The final stage is hearty amendment. In this stage she moves a step ahead as she decides to save Oliver by sacrificing her life. Thus Nancy achieves the stage of purification. Her standing in the second stair symbolises her fight against her sinful life. Like Dante’s hill of purgatory, Eliot also pictures the hill of purgatory. Eliot’s stair symbolism puts forth images of the ascent of the Mount of purgatory. This is seen in T.S. Eliot’s *Ash Wednesday*: “At the first turning of the second stair” (III. 11.55-60). Here the protagonist struggles against the sinful desires which seem to follow him. He is successful in leaving behind the devil of despair who is bent upon deceiving him with false appearances. Nancy decides to move against her male companion, Sikes and makes her mind to save the innocent boy. Nancy is totally shrouded with fear of Sikes and Fagin. She has a premonition that she is to encounter some mystic experience. Her mind is preoccupied with the thoughts of death. She tells Rose that when she reads a book, she has seen the word ‘coffin’ written on every page of the book in large block letters. She says, “Horrible thoughts of death, and shrouds with blood upon them, and a fear that has made me burn as if I was on fire, have been upon me all day. I was reading a book to-
night, to while the time away, and the same things came into the print” (410). Apart from being powerfully evocative, this description prepares us for Nancy’s violent death.

When Mr. Brownlow asks about Monks, she gives detailed particulars about Monks’ physical appearance. She describes Monks as a tall man who constantly looks over his shoulders as he walks and has sunken eyes. She adds that Monks is in the habit of wearing a kerchief which covers a broad red mark on his throat:

His evil nature is reflected in his whole personality. His face is dark, like his hair and eyes; and, although he can’t be more than six or eight and twenty, withered and haggard. His lips are often discoloured and disfigured with the marks of teeth; for he has desperate fits, and sometimes even bites his hands and covers them with wounds—why did you start?” said the girl, stopping suddenly. (413)

The red mark is reflected in his whole personality. The red mark in his throat symbolises his jealousy towards his brother Oliver. A similar mark is found on Cain, a Biblical character. Cain kills his brother Abel out of jealousy. Cain refuses to regret for his act of murdering his brother. God’s punishment is instant and severe. Cain is cursed to wander the earth and anyone who meets him can kill him. Thus God puts a mark on Cain as an identification of his evil act. In contrast to Monks and Cain; Ahab, the hero in the novel *Moby Dick* bears a lividly whitish rod-like mark “threading its way out from his grey hairs, and continuing right down one side of his tawny scorched face and neck, till it disappeared in his clothing” (Melville 215-219). The mark of Ahab symbolises his heroic quality in attempting to destroy the evil in man by experiencing sacrificial death.

Mr. Brownlow, Rose and Nancy carry their conversation by standing under the bridge. Mr. Brownlow after getting all the details about Monks conveys his thanks to Nancy for giving him the valuable information. He then offers to help Nancy to move away from the criminals. Nancy refuses their proposal. She says she is chained to her old life and not
able to give it up even though she loathes and hates it. She says, “Look at that dark water. How many times do you read of such as I who spring into the tide, and leave no living thing, to care for, or bewail them. It may be years hence, or it may be only months, but I shall come to that at last” (415). Here the dark river symbolises the place where people suffer and groan before attaining purification. Before their departure Brownlow offers some money to Nancy. But she asks for something she could keep in remembrance. Rose, there upon gives her a white handkerchief as a token of her affection and regard for her. After the process of purification she is given a ticket to heaven, which is symbolised through the white handkerchief. Thus they finally depart from the bridge.

The Chapter “Fatal Consequences” starts with the words:

It was nearly two hours before day-break; that time which in the autumn of the year, may be truly called the dead of night; when the streets are silent and deserted; when even sounds appear to slumber, and profligacy and riot have staggered home to dream; it was at this still and silent hour, that Fagin sat watching in his old lair, with face so distorted and pale, and eyes so red and blood-shot, that he looked less like a man, than like some hideous phantom, moist from the grave, and worried by an evil spirit.(417)

The imagery autumn, connotes the falling of leaves. Here one by one Fagin’s associates are falling. Fagin imparts his knowledge about Nancy to Sikes. His demonic character is once again shown in his murdering of Nancy. Without hearing a single word from Nancy he hits her with his pistol. After receiving the wound, Nancy draws from her bosom a white handkerchief—Rose Maylie’s own—and holding it up, in her folded hands, high towards Heaven as her feeble strength would allow, breathed a prayer of mercy to her Maker. A prayer is the symbol of love. Blood on the other sense symbolises purifications. There are early Christian representations of the fountain in the Garden of Eden, from
which the four rivers originate. Here, water, the life-giving element comes to light, and it is associated symbolically with baptism and with the bloody water flowing from the wound at the side of the crucified Christ. Here the blood of Nancy in the form of water acts as a purifier for the sins she has committed as a companion to thieves. She is baptized in her death by cleansing her sins. Thus death becomes the eternal sleep which is the tender peace and consolation for her tormented soul. On the whole the character John Bayley in *Dickens and the Twentieth Century* says:

Nancy’s living is the living of England, a nightmare society in which drudgery is endless and stupefying, in which the natural affections are warped, and the dignity of man appears only in resolution and violence. It is a more disquieting picture than the carefully and methodically symbolized social panoramas of *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit*, and *Our Mutual Friend*. [61]

Sikes sits motionless in the room where Nancy lies dead. The sun rises that morning just as it used to rise every day:

The sun—the bright sun, that brings back, not light alone, but new life, and hope, and freshness to man—burst upon the crowded city in clear and radiant glory. Through costly-coloured glass and paper-mended window, through cathedral dome and rotten crevice, it shed its equal ray. It lighted up the room where the murdered woman lay. It did. He tried to shut it out, but it would stream in. If the sight had been a ghastly one in the dull morning, what was it, now, in all that brilliant light! He had not moved; he had been afraid to stir. There had been a moan and motion of the hand; and, with terror added to rage, he had struck and struck again. Once he threw a rug over it; but it was worse to fancy the eyes, and imagine them moving towards him, than to see them glaring upward, as if
watching the reflection of the pool of gore that quivered and danced in the
sunlight on the ceiling. (424)

The sunlight travelling through costly-coloured glass and paper mended window through
cathedral doom and rotten crevices stands for the omnipresence of divine consciousness.
The sun stands for the symbol of untroubled guilt, happiness and perhaps the approval of
God and Nature. In the case of Nancy the sun gives her eternal illumination. The soul
purifies itself by God-sent darkness, as well as by the elemental forces like wind, earth,
water, sky and fire. Eternal illumination will follow when the soul is completely purified
of all sins. In The Wordsworth Dictionary of Symbolism, it is pointed out “The purified
soul, as soon as it has left the human body, is led by three angels to the realm of light,
where it receives its prize from the Judge of Truth: the crowns and vestment of light”
(204). Thus the sunlight piercing into the room of Nancy purifies her soul. But in the case
of Sikes he tries to avoid the entry of sunlight. Dickens has portrayed Sikes as a symbol
of darkness. In the novel, he always appears in the cover of darkness. We rarely find him
coming in daylight. His vileness does not allow him to see God’s grace and truth through
the sunlight. He says, “God, how the sun poured down upon the very spot!” (425). He
covers the dead body of Nancy with the rug. But he is constantly haunted by the dead
woman. Collecting some courage, he lights the fire and burns the club with which he has
struck her down. He soon washes his hands and rubs his clothes to remove the stains of
blood from them. He cuts these pieces and burns them. He is shocked to see the
bloody footprints of his dog. He says, “How those stains were dispersed about the room!
The very feet of the dog were bloody. (425) Foot prints symbolise the ways of gods,
saints or demonic spirits etc… In Indian tradition, during Krishna Jeyanthi people mark
the foot prints of Lord Krishna in their house. They believe the foot prints symbolise the
arrival of God to their house. But in the case of Sikes the bloody footprints of his dog in
the room stand for the personification of his crime. He is unable to continue his stay in the house. So he locks the house and sets out on a journey though he does not know where he will go. Dickens makes a reference to Whittington. Dickens gives the reader a glimpse of far away London from a hill top of High gate, as it might have made Dicke Whittington to turn back to London to become the Mayor of London thrice as he was foretold by the chiming of the church bell. Dickens suggests that the readers can do honest business and become rich, instead of being driven away from London like Sikes. He himself is a murderer, and he is his own enemy. Here Sikes’s flight deals with the psychology of a murderer. He walks towards the countryside. He has a feeling that all the people including children are looking at him with suspicion. He moves towards the post office and overhears some people around a coach bound to London talking about a murder in Spitalfields. An antic fellow and half mount bank, a vendor of odd things is loudly advertising his commodities. He talks of very powerful poison and stain remover and plucks the hat of Sikes: “I’ll take it clean out, sir,’ replied the man, winking to the company, ‘before you can come across the room to get it. Gentlemen all, observe the dark stain upon this gentleman’s hat, no wider than a shilling, but thicker than a half-crown. Whether it is a wine-stain, fruit-stain, beer-stain, water stain, paint-stain, pitch-stain, mud-stain, or blood-stain” (428). With a hideous imprecation Sikes overthrows the table and tears the hat from him and runs out of the inn. The oppression of guilt is an inescapable punishment. Sikes’s inner mental agony oppresses him. He begins to fear her shadow and feels that Nancy’s eyes follow him:

   Every object before him, substance or shadow, still or moving, took the semblance of some fearful thing; but these fears were nothing compared to the sense that haunted him of that morning’s ghastly figure following at his heels. He could trace its shadow in the gloom, supply the smallest item of the outline, and
note how stiff and solemn it seemed to stalk along. He could hear its garments rustling in the leaves, and every breath of wind came laden with that last low cry. If he stopped it did the same. If he ran, it followed— not running too: that would have been a relief: but like a corpse endowed with the mere machinery of life, and borne on one slow melancholy wind that never rose or fell. (429)

When he moves along the dark road, he feels the shadow of dead Nancy following him. The shadow symbolises Sikes’s own guilt about the murder which pricks his consciousness. ‘Shadow’ is the term given by Jung to the primitive and instinctive side of the individual. It is the image of the evil spirits. Thus the dark entity of Sikes is revealed through this shadow. The slightest sound in the rustling of leaves and every breath of wind appear to him as the cry of the dead Nancy. Now he is not only like a haunted animal but also a human being in the grip of terrible guilt. Nancy’s gaze seems to pursue him everywhere. “For now, a vision came before him, as constant as and more terrible than that from which he had escaped. Those widely staring eyes, so lusterless and so glassy, that he had better borne to see them than think upon them, appeared in the midst of the darkness: light in themselves, but giving light to nothing” (430). The eyes of Nancy, like her shadow, symbolises the dreadful consciousness of crime in him. He is relentlessly pursued by the haunting eyes of his innocent victim.

In the next few seconds he hears some cries in the darkness of the night. He begins to run in the direction from where voices are coming. A great fire has broken in the village. In this incident he uses all his energy in extinguishing the fire not because he has sympathy for the victims but he is in need of human company:

The broad sky seemed on fire. Rising into the air with showers of sparks, and rolling one above the other, were sheets of flame, lighting the atmosphere for miles round, and driving clouds of smoke in the direction where he stood. The
shouts grew louder as new voices swelled the roar, and he could hear the cry of Fire! mingled with the ringing of an alarm-bell, the fall of heavy bodies, and the crackling of flames as they twined round some new obstacle, and shot aloft as though refreshed by food. The noise increased as he looked. There were people there-men and women-light, bustle. It was like new life to him. (430)

One can liken this fire to the fire in hell. His fighting with the fire looks as if he is entering into hell. Here the murderer gets relief in the tremendous excitement of the fire and of his need afterwards to return to London. This is revealed in the words of Dickens, where he says, “It was like a new life to him” (430). A feeling of fear now begins to creep upon him. This feeling begins to increase till it soon becomes an agony for him. The thought of the murder which he has committed becomes an obsession with him. This state of fear and guilt is common in a human being. He undergoes a great transition. Thus the change from the demonic to humaneness is shown through the poplar trees. When he spends his night under a shed in a field there are three tall poplar trees. “There was a shed in a field he passed, that offered shelter for the night. Before the door were three tall poplar trees, which made it very dark within; and the wind moaned through them with a dismal wail” (430). In addition to the general symbolism attached to trees, wood and vegetable life, the poplar has a significance connected with the fact that the two sides of the poplar leaf are of different shades of green. It has the bright green on the side of water and a darker green on the side of the sun. Jung in his Psychology and Alchemy says “The poplar also has a place within the general range of bipolar symbols” (positive and negative). In the case of Sikes the poplar tree symbolises his transformation. From the negative side he transforms to the positive side i.e. man with pricking sense for his crime. Thus the mental tortures suffered by Sikes during his flight have been described by Dickens with the strict principle of poetic justice. So far Sikes has been committing
atrocities with the strength of his body and mind. Now it is time to confront the spiritual power of a woman who could torture him by her metaphysical power. A still greater punishment awaits for him in his alienation from the society. Mr. Brownlow corners Monks to write down statements about whatever villainy the latter was involved in to deprive Oliver of his due share according to his father’s will. Mr. Brownlow tells Monks that he had come to know what he had been conversing with Fagin through Nancy, Monks has said to Fagin: “the only proof of the boy’s identity lie at the bottom of the river, and the old hag that received them from the mother is rotting in her coffin” (440). The image-clusters of “at the bottom of the river” and “rotting in her coffin” with the Shadow on the wall bring to one’s mind the all-pervading consciousness. Behind the seeming reality of things is a world which wicked men totally ignore, but they come to the surface at the appropriate time. The contrast between the individual guilty consciousness with that of the collective consciousness is powerfully brought out by the novelist. The murderer is isolated from his fellow men by the horror of his stigma. This is shown when he reaches the dilapidated house of his fellow men in Jacob’s Island:

To reach this place, the visitor has to penetrate through a maze of close, narrow, and muddy streets, thronged by the roughest and poorest of waterside people, and devoted to the traffic they may be supposed to occasion. The cheapest and least delicate provisions are heaped in the shops; the coarsest and commonest articles of wearing apparel dangle at the salesman’s door, and stream from the house-parapet and windows. Jostling with unemployed labourers of the lowest class, ballast-heavers, coal-whippers, brazen women, ragged children, and the raff and refuse of the river, he makes his way with difficulty along, assailed by offensive sights and smells from the narrow alleys which branch off on the right and left, and deafened by the clash of ponderous wagons that bear great piles of merchandise from the
stacks of warehouses that rise from every corner. Arriving, at length, in streets
remoter and less-frequented than those through which he has passed, he walks
beneath tottering house-fronts projecting over the pavement, dismantled walls that
seem to totter as he passes, chimneys half crushed half hesitating to fall, windows
guarded by rusty iron bars that time and dirt have almost eaten away, every
imaginable sign of desolation and neglect. (443-444)

Once again Dickens stresses the effect of industrial revolution. This revolution is the
cause of many crimes. Here Sikes is a product of such squalid environment as that of
Jacob’s Island. He has gone back into the ugly desolate world that has produced him.
“Blanched face, sunken eyes, hollow cheeks, beard of three days’ growth, wasted flesh,
short thick breath; it was the very ghost of Sikes” (448). Here Bates decides to hand over
Sikes to the police. When he enters the room the atmosphere becomes very tense and it is
very difficult to pursue any conversation. No one tries to meet his eyes. He has been
totally isolated. He starts fighting with Bates.

Dickens successfully but very subtly portrays the emergence of the collective
consciousness when the murderer is locked in combat with Bates. The voices shouting,
“In the King’s name” (450) speaks volumes of the royal metaphor which stands for the
collective consciousness. Another powerful usage of the symbol is the man on horseback,
the readers infer him to be Mr. Brownlow, who wades through the crowd like swimming
in water. As water and meditation are wedded as it is stated by Herman Melville in Moby
Dick, the collective consciousness is artistically portrayed by Dickens:

Of all the terrific yells that ever fell on mortal ears, none could exceed the cry of
the infuriated throng. Some shouted to those who were nearest to set the house on
fire; others roared to the officers to shoot him dead. Among them all, none showed
such fury as the man on horseback, who, throwing himself out of the saddle, and
bursting through the crowd as if he were parting water, cried, beneath the window,
in a voice that rose above all others, ‘Twenty guineas to the man who brings a
ladder!’.(451)

The parting of the water reminds one of the parting of Red Sea in the Exodus and the
parting of river Yamuna in *Mahabharatha*, when Shri Krishna’s father carries Him from
the prison to Gokulam in order to exchange Him with a female baby. The presence of the
collective unconsciousness is the symbolic intent of the two scenes.

When Sikes tries to escape by jumping into the water, the ditch in a bed of mud,
the crowd understands and raises a cry of triumphant execration:

The crowd had been hushed during these few moments, watching his motions and
doubtful of his purpose, but the instant they perceived it and knew it was defeated,
they raised a cry of triumphant execration to which all their previous shouting had
been whispers. Again and again it rose. Those who were at too great a distance to
know its meaning took up the sound; it echoed and re-echoed; it seemed as though
the whole city had poured its population out to curse him.

On pressed the people from the front-on, on, on, in a strong struggling current of
angry faces, with here and there a glaring torch to lighten them up, and show them
out in all their wrath and passion. The houses on the opposite side of the ditch had
been entered by the mob; sashes were thrown up, or torn bodily out; there were
tiers and tiers of faces in every window; cluster upon cluster of people clinging to
every house-top. Each little bridge (and there were three in sight) bent beneath the
weight of the crowd upon it. Still the current poured on to find some nook or hole
from which to vent their shouts, and only for an instant see the wretch. (452)

The uproar of the crowd at the failure of Sikes’s every attempt reveals the collective
consciousness.
There was another roar. At this moment the word was passed among the crowd that the door was forced at last, and that he who had first called for the ladder had mounted into the room. The stream abruptly turned, as this intelligence ran from mouth to mouth; and the people at the windows, seeing those upon the bridges pouring back, quitted their stations, and running into the street, joined the concourse that now thronged pell-mell to the spot they had left: each man crushing and striving with his neighbour, and all panting with impatience to get near the door, and look upon the criminal as the officers brought him out. The cries and shrieks of those who were pressed almost to suffocation, or trampled down and trodden under foot in the confusion, were dreadful; the narrow ways were completely blocked up; and at this time, between the rush of some to regain the space in front of the house, and the unavailing struggles of others to extricate themselves from the mass, the immediate attention was distracted from the murderer, although the universal eagerness for his capture was, if possible, increased. (452-453)

Immediately he sees lights glimmering below and hears voices and sound of hurried footsteps across the bridge. A police officer starts pointing to the door of the house on reaching there. He is pursued by the police, He finds no escape and finally he is able to climb over the roof and look over the edge. He attempts to escape from the house by using a rope and sliding down the rope which he ties to a chimney on the house-top. When he is sliding down the rope, his own neck is tightly caught in it. In an instant, the noose tightens and Sikes is strangled by it. He slides down the rope and comes to a stop and hangs there for the whole crowd to see. Nancy’s eyes become the final haunting image in his life. He sees Nancy’s eyes again and cries out in terror “the eyes again”. He says:
The eyes again!’ he cried in an unearthly screech. Staggering as if struck by lightning, he lost his balance and tumbled over the parapet. The noose was on his neck. It ran up with his weight, tight as a bow-string, and swift as the arrow it speeds. He fell for five-and-thirty feet. There was a sudden jerk, a terrific convulsion of the limbs; and there he hung, with the open knife clenched in his stiffening hand. (453-454)

Dickens shifts to the other extreme. Mr. Brownlow tries to find the mystery around Oliver’s birth. He decides to catch hold of Monks with the clue given by Nancy before her death. After a great struggle Monks tells the whole truth to Mr. Brownlow. He says his real name is Edward Leeford. He is Oliver’s half-brother. Monks is the son of Edwin Leeford, a good friend of Mr. Brownlow. Mr. Edwin Leeford never loved Monks’ mother. He comes into contact with Agnes Fleming, the daughter of a retired navy officer. Mr. Edwin leaves a considerable portion of his property to the unfortunate girl and her yet-to-be-born child i.e. Oliver Twist. But Monks who spends his property lavishly tries to get Oliver’s inheritance by turning him into a criminal. Later on Mr. Brownlow finds out that Rose is the youngest sister of Oliver’s dead mother. Thus Oliver is restored to his lawful guardians. Fagin, another evil incarnation in the novel is yet to be accounted for. The last days of Fagin’s life are related in a spectacle of macabre of gloom that begins in court and ends on the gallows. Dickens has a remarkable insight into the working of Fagin’s mind. The position in which he sits in the cell is almost in a state of delirium. His alienation from the outer world tortures him to madness. He beats his hand against the doors and walls screaming for light but he who has lived ever in darkness finds no light.

Some of them might have inhabited that very cell-sat upon that very spot. It was very dark; why didn’t they bring a light? The cell had been built for many years.
Scores of men must have passed their last hours there. It was like sitting in a vault strewn with dead bodies—the cap, the noose, the pinioned arms, the faces that he knew, even beneath that hideous veil. —Light, light! (475)

 Darkness symbolises the darkness in the soul of Fagin. Darkness creates an atmosphere of hellish sordidness in which wretched souls suffer. The darkness here acts as a punishment for Fagin, without God’s grace i.e., without light. A similar atmosphere is found in the ninth plague that the Lord inflicts upon the Egyptians when the Pharaoh would not let the children of Israel go. The Lord told Moses, “Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. (Exodus 10:21-23) (Fulghum 113).

 Oliver faces the tortures and torments of Fagin and Sikes. In the end he is united with his blood relations like Rose Maylie and regains his true identity. This happy ending or beginning of his life is symbolised through his name. The sacred grove in Olympia consists of Olive trees and at tournaments olive branches are presented to the winners. The Olive branch has a dual association with both war and peace. In Oliver’s case he retains peace after a great war with evil. Thus in the end Dickens shows in little Oliver, the principle of survival through every adverse circumstance and his triumph at last.