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**DICKENS'S DARK CORNERS:
A STUDY OF THE SUPERNATURAL
IN SELECTED WORKS OF CHARLES DICKENS**

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by
Simone Elizabeth Reutens

Department of English
University of Malaya

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And Alex, this one's for you.

ABSTRACT

Critics have identified several characteristics of supernaturalism in Gothic literature such as a dreamlike sense of the unreal, a questioning of the reader's worldview and the exploitation of a perennial fear of the unknown. Many of these characteristics may be found in Dickens's works. Dickens's treatment of the supernatural, however, bears traits which are characteristically Dickensian. Grotesque figures such as Quilp are bestowed with both demoniacal and comical idiosyncracies and reflect the dichotomy of their creator's personality. The supernatural is used often as a powerful device to ameliorate Dickens's social criticism.

This thesis examines the manner in which Dickens's lifelong fascination with the occult permeates his writing. The first chapter looks at Dickens's personal preoccupation with the supernatural, and how his dark imagination is incorporated in his shorter works. Oliver Twist and The Old Curiosity Shop are examined in the following chapter. In both these novels, the

supernatural is used to contrast the child's innocence with what Dickens saw as the ugliness of the surrounding world. The final chapter goes on to show how supernaturalism is inherent in Dickens's increasingly dark images, symptomatic of a growing concern with the innate evil in the systems of his society.

ABSTRAK

Para pengkritik telah pun mengenal pasti beberapa aspek alam ghaib dalam kesusasteraan Gothic, iaitu suasana igau-igauan, penyoalan tentang pandangan dunia para pembaca dan eksploitasi ketakutan alam luar biasa. Aspek-aspek tersebut wujud dalam kebanyakan hasil karya Dickens, tetapi diubah menurut gaya tersendiri si-penulis. Watak-watak seperti Quilp mempunyai sifat demonik dan juga sifat lawak. Ini mencerminkan pembelahan dua personaliti Dickens. Imej-imej dari alam ghaib sering digunakan untuk menambahkan impak kritikan sosial beliau.

Tesis ini meneliti bagaimana minat Dickens tentang alam ghaib terkandung dalam hasil penulisannya. Bab yang pertama menunjukkan cara-cara imaginasi gelap Dickens diterapkan dalam karya pendeknya. Oliver Twist dan The Old Curiosity Shop diteliti dalam bab yang berikutnya. Aspek alam ghaib digunakan dalam kedua-dua novel ini adalah untuk membandingkan keadaan kanak-kanak yang tidak bersalah dengan dunia yang dipenuhi kejahatan. Bab yang terakhir menunjukkan bahawa aspek-aspek alam ghaib wujud dalam imej-imej beliau yang kian bertambah sinis.

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