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#### RESEARCH ARTICLE

# A Rhetoric of Motives: Home and Nation in Dickens's Novels

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**Abstract:** This article will explain how and why does Dickens use home as a symbol in his novels. The concept of home is a constant preoccupation in Dickens's novels. The ideal house is an implicit criticism of the general condition within the total system. The home becomes a microcosm of an ideal society, with love and charity replacing the commerce and capitalism of the outside world. Home is a haven, a sanctuary, and an answer to the ills of the world. It is a protected place not only from dishonest values of the system but from alienating effects of the division of labor. The appropriate method that speaks clearly to this paper's question is Kenneth Burke's Cluster analysis. Burke defines cluster analysis as a critical approach to help a critic find rhetors' worldviews through an examination of the rhetoric that forms their terministic screens. The task of a critic using this method is to notice what subjects cluster about other subjects. This paper argues that through Dickens's novels, readers come to comprehend the virtues of love and the pleasures of home in an imperfect world. In his lexicon, the patriot is the thankful partaker in history who fights persistently to defend the beauty of his home.

**Keywords:** Dickens; Cluster Analysis; Home; Patriot.

#### Introduction

This paper analyzes the significance of the concept of home as a recurrent and dominant symbol in Dickens's novels. It argues that Dickens's novels are distinguished by and shaped to a large and yet unexplored extent by the value of patriotic love. Throughout his novels, a consistent message emerges that patriotic love becomes an essential virtue in achieving equilibrium in an age of anxiety. In contrast to the prevalent notion that considers him a reformer, this paper will argue that since he was rather the exposer of ills than the mender, and by providing a sense of equilibrium, he is based on his own words "unconscious instrument" (Tomalin, 1991: 164) of the authority. He points out where

faults lie and reproaches those who are in charge; he marks the course of a disease but does not consider himself the physician who could cure it.

Even though the story of "a famous writer being at the service of the dominant ideology" has been hackneyed because of being repeatedly applied by a leftist critic on a great writer, still it is this paper's view that it is important for this to be done for Dickens, especially since its conclusion might be surprising for many readers. Similar researches have been done before on Shakespeare, T.S. Eliot, Hedayat, Ferdowsi and others because of their importance. Now it has been done on Dickens.

"Both in his lifetime and afterward, Dickens had a reputation of being a reformer. Many have credited him with creating the climate of opinion that facilitated reforms in education, public health, and criminal law that helped make Britain a safer and less strife-ridden society. He was also well-known for his criticism of existing structures of power" (Paroissien, 2008: 159). Yet, when examined closely, and on a case by case basis, it becomes less and less evident to consider him directly a reformer. "There were others with a claim to the title of a reformer who had much clearer diagnoses for and solutions to British ills than did Dickens" (ibid). Dickens stood on an uncomfortable and shifting ground among them, his solutions to situations often appearing to attract the label of radical as much as conservative. This paper's claim is that it is a useless debate to think of him either a reformer, or a revolutionist. The wise act would be to look at him as a master improviser. The atmosphere of his novels, which lingers longer than his message, betrays his political stance and creates docile, obedient, and submissive citizens who are afraid of rebellion. Just like a true improviser, Dickens was able to deliver important social messages while engaging the reader through empathetic characters, true-to-life conditions, and sharp wit. "Like a sneak attack, it was as if the bourgeoisie never knew what hit them, or indeed, that they had been hit at all" (Stearns, 2011: 4). Dickens was not merely recreating reality, but creating his own with reworked portraits of what he had personally experienced in real life.

In order to establish the elements of the argument, certain definitions will have to be presented. After establishing the concept of home as a dominant mode, the researchers will investigate several structural traits of Dickens's novels, which have an immediate bearing on that mode. By selecting and examining the distinctive features of those constituent elements, it will answer two

fundamental questions: How Dickens's novel is constructed and why it is constructed in such a fashion. In this respect, the best term for the methodology of its approach would be structural in the sense that involves to a greater or lesser extent the consideration of a literary text in terms of functions of its constituent elements.

#### Methodology and Approach

The appropriate method that speaks clearly to this paper's question is Rhetorical Criticism. It is a qualitative research method designed for the systematic explanation and investigation of symbolic acts and artifacts for understanding rhetorical processes. The ideas of Kenneth Burke as the rhetorical critic and theorist who very likely has had the greatest influence on rhetorical criticism are used.

Burke introduces rhetoric as "the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents" (1964: 41). Rhetoric not only gives a name to a condition but also depicts an innovative strategy to deal with that condition or to solve the issues inherent in it. Rhetoric offers instructions or commands of some kind, helping people maneuver through life and helping them feel more at home in the world. Because rhetoric is a rhetor's solution to noticed problems, it establishes "equipment for living" (1974: 293-304) — a formula, chart, map, or manual that an audience may consult in attempting to decide on different courses of action.

Another contribution Burke makes to the rhetorical theory is in the system he creates for describing rhetoric. He defines the cluster analysis as a critical approach to help a critic find rhetors' worldviews through an examination of the rhetoric that forms their terministic screens. Burke describes the main idea of the cluster analysis: "Now, the work of every writer [rhetor] contains a set of implicit equations. He uses 'associational clusters.' And the reader may, by examining his work,

find 'what goes with what' in these clusters" (1974: 20). In other words, the task of a critic using this method is to notice, "What subjects cluster about other subjects" (1984: 232).

The first step in cluster analysis is to select the key terms in the artifact. The importance of terms is determined by intensity or frequency. A recurrent term used by a rhetor is probably a key term in that person's rhetoric and thought, so if one term frequently appears in the work that very likely should be chosen as one of the rhetor's key terms. After discovering the key terms in the work, the critic should chart the clusters around those key terms. At this stage, a criticism, which involves seeking opposing terms, may help the critic to find patterns in the clusters suggesting some ambiguity confusion on the part of the rhetor about that term. In the following paragraphs, researchers will chart the clusters around the key term, home, and formulate the ideology of Dickens's representation of this based on the value of patriotic love.

#### Home and Nation as a Patriotic Love

This section will clarify how Dickens's striving to the welfare of the whole nation is related to patriotism. Patriotic love is a powerful feeling taking the nation as its object. This love consists of the sense that the nation is one's own, and its rituals often apply to that idea. Different people think differently about the nation's relation to them. "For some, the nation is a beloved parent, and that idea is prominent in many symbolic appeals to patriotism. At other times, the nation is considered more like a beloved child, whose growth and development one desires to promote. At still other times, the nation is seen in a more romantic light, as a beloved beckoning to the lover" (Nussbaum, 2013: 209). Patriotic love, in all its forms, is particularistic. It imitates personal or family love of some kind, and, in remaining with that analogy or origin, it focuses on particulars: this or that historical event, this or that beautiful

geographical feature. The thicker it is in these senses, the more probable it is to motivate. In Dickens's lexicon, the patriot is the thankful partaker in history who fights persistently to defend the beauty of his home. Although the situation in his country had changed in a dramatic manner within the course of a hundred years, Dickens was the real patriot, because he was not ready to give up his locality, but instead was determined to paint its literary portrait repeatedly with an accurate eye.

Patriotism rests on a psychological truth; a social sympathy with those of our own sort, ... But if we accept this mystical corporate being, this larger self, we must accept it for good and ill. If we boast of our best, we must repent of our worst. Otherwise, patriotism will be a very poor thing indeed (McCleary, 2004: 6).

Dickens's nation was like his beloved and as a strong patriot; he was displeased with Britain where he was born and with the period he lived in. He devised an ideal, which was neither acceptable nor popular when he first showed it to the public. He was at war with many corrupt traditions and bad old fashions. Dickens set himself a great task in attempting to perceive his dream of another England which was cheerier and brighter, with men of real dignity and value, with women of real sincerity and charm, with governors of true humanity; another England, with better union between the poor and the rich, with politics liberated from deception, and religion purified of insincerity; with fewer slums and workhouses, and more recreation halls and schools; in which crime must be less widespread, and brotherly feeling more clear. It is an underlying impulse of this paper to suggest that the work of Dickens, by helping its readers to feel for the world, serves to keep alive the "utopian" hope that the world is, or can be made, hospitable to virtues:

Who knows, but by the time the series reaches its conclusion, it may be discovered that there are even magistrates in town and country, who should be taught to shake hands every day with Common-sense and Justice; that even Poor Laws may have mercy on the weak, the aged, and unfortunate; that Schools, on the broad principles of Christianity, are the best adornment for the length and breadth of this civilized land; that Prison-doors should be barred on the outside, no less heavily and carefully than they are barred within; that the universal diffusion of common means of decency and health is as much the right of the poorest of the poor, as it is indispensable to the safety of the rich, and of the State; that a few petty boards and bodies – less than drops in the great ocean of humanity, which roars around them - are not forever to let loose Fever and Consumption on God's creatures at their will, or always to keep their jobbing little fiddles going, for a Dance of Death. (1998: 725)

However, Dickens has formed a vision of what the world might be like in Dingley Dell, if only people had the good intention, aim, and energy to make it so. He appears to feel that the Kingdom of God can be attained, here and now, in people's hearts. Patriotic love is an everlasting value, and Dickens gave it wonderful and great form in his novels. "All societies need to think about the stability of their political culture over time and the security of cherished values in times of stress. All societies, then, need to think about compassion for loss, anger at injustice, the limiting of envy and disgust in favor of inclusive sympathy" (Nussbaum, 2013: 89). People's lives are immersed in self-interest, and avarice, so they need a powerful feeling directed at the general well-being to encourage them to support the common good in ways that include sacrifice. But to have enough motivational power, this feeling cannot have an entirely abstract object, "humanity," but must have more concreteness. The notion of the nation to

Dickens was: sufficiently theirs, sufficiently concrete, sufficiently local, to inspire them powerfully, and yet, large enough to involve their hearts in an object beyond egoism and greed.

# **Home and Patriotism: Interpretation of Clusters**

The best way to understand the relation of "home" to issues of rootedness, belonging, and love is to look at all of the homes in the novels and see how they function. The ideal home is perceived as a shelter, a walled garden, or refuge from the indifference of a businessorientated universe. Though there are some terrible households in Dickens's novels and common examples of perverted, unnatural relationships within the family, the myth of the perfect home is positively used in the later novels and when this happens, it often produces on Dickens's part a feeling of tranquility and equilibrium. However, the ideal houses in Dickens's novels usually function as microcosms of a social condition within which relationships are qualitative and healthy, reflecting a radical criticism of the loss of community and materialistic values in the broader system. His friend and biographer Forster stated, "If it is the property of a domestic nature to be personally interested in every detail, the smallest as the greatest of the four walls within which one lives, then no man had it so essentially as Dickens, no man was so inclined naturally to derive his happiness from home concerns" (1904: 540). Dickens's anxiety for home has long attracted his readers' attention around the globe. In fact, throughout his life and novels, Dickens paid attention to the nature of families, viewing it as an embodiment of the world, and trying to establish in his writing an ideal notion of a healthy family suitable to his contemporary alienated and industrialized society.

In Dickens's opinion, which is represented through Pickwick's discussion, each citizen has a public mission and that is one's country's good: "that object which actuates and animates me in all my gigantic labors is my country's good" (1998: 646). The first hint that one can find a relation between home and country, and the claim that Dickens' ultimate aim was the love of his country can be found in *The Old Curiosity Shop*. The close tie of the love of home and love of country is presented explicitly:

In love of home, the love of country has its rise; and who are the truer patriots or the better in time of need—those who venerate the land, owning its wood, and stream, and earth, and all that they produce? Or those who love their country, boasting not a foot of ground in all its wide domain! (2000: 287)

Gregsbury's patriotic love discloses the pride of a citizen in being a part of his nation. He is proud of his free and happy country:

My conduct has been, and ever will be, regulated by a sincere regard for the true and real interests of this great and happy country. Whether I look at home, or abroad; whether I behold the peaceful industrious communities of our island home: her rivers covered with steamboats, her roads with locomotives, her streets with cabs, her skies with balloons of a power and magnitude hitherto unknown in the history of aeronautics in this or any other nation—I say, whether I look merely at home, or, stretching my eyes farther, contemplate the boundless prospect conquest of possession—achieved by British perseverance and British valour—which is outspread before me, I clasp my hands, and turning my eyes to the broad expanse above my head, exclaim, Thank Heaven, I am a Briton! (1999: 184)

In A Tale of Two Cities, once again Dickens displays that being a patriot is the greatest achievement of citizens in their lives. Dickens, by creating the sense that tranquility reigns in London, presents his patriotism. For him, love of one's country must be above all loves.

Based on jury's reaction to Doctor Manette's protest, it is people's duty to be loyal to the Republic:

'Citizen Manette, be tranquil. To fail in submission to the authority of the Tribunal would be to put yourself out of Law. As to what is dearer to you than life, nothing can be so dear to a good citizen as the Republic.' 'If the Republic should demand of you the sacrifice of your child herself, you would have no duty but to sacrifice her' (2006: 271).

Dickens believes that for the sake of love of one's country, one should bear the pains of home and not think of immigration: "If you ever become a rich man, or a powerful one,' returned his friend, 'you shall try to make your government more careful of its subjects when they roam abroad to live. Tell it what you know of emigration in your own case, and impress upon it how much suffering may be prevented with little pain!" (2004: 503). For a patriot, the love of country is what is at stake, not erotic or any other kind of love. No matter how hard it seems home sweet home is one's only solace: "In health and fortune, prospect and resource, they came back poorer men than they had gone away. But it was home. And though the home is a name, a word, it is a strong one; stronger than magician ever spoke, or spirit answered to, in the strongest conjuration" (ibid: 504). Dickens's representation of homes in his

novels divulges his true opinion regarding this motif. It also shows how patriotism makes love and home united. In his second novel, *Oliver Twist*, home is a place where one can find a sense of belonging. There is no one in Oliver's life who cares for his safety and well-being; consequently, he must be a dejected, homeless poor individual. Even Fagin's den is a home for rejected and homeless poor. Oliver, despite being homeless, had some happy times in that place, too. Fagin's den is both a place of refuge and a dungeon. It is dirty, dark, and completely shut off from the outside world, but "it is also a parody, at least, of a home, that place where one lives safely by one's own fireside,

protected from the outer world, and where one has food, light, warmth, and a circle of other human beings with whom one feels at ease" (Miller,1958: 48). Fagin's den is a "snug retreat" and inside its walls, readers find a society joined for common safety against the enmity of the outside world. It is a condition well-depicted by the single candle, which so often seems shining faintly in the gloom.

Similarly, the agon analysis of implied equations gives evidence that in *Great Expectations*, the shelter and warmth of the Gargery's house and the cold misery and danger of the marshes are in sharp contrast. To disclose the sanctity of the hearth and home Pip tells readers of his attitude towards home prior to the alienation induced in him by Satis House:

The home had never been a very pleasant place for me, because of my sister's temper. But, Joe had sanctified it, and I had believed in it. I had believed in the best parlor as a most elegant saloon; I had believed in the front door, as a mysterious portal of the Temple of State whose solemn opening was attended with a sacrifice of roast fowls; I had believed in the kitchen as a chaste though not magnificent apartment; I had believed in the forge as the glowing road to manhood and independence (2003: 100).

"Having published The Pickwick Papers and Oliver Twist, both of which end with cozy domestic scenes, Dickens had also recently completed **Nicholas** which Nickleby, compounds the pleasure of returning home by having the hero move back into his father's old house, where he ensures that 'nothing with which there was an association of bygone times was ever removed or changed" (Forster, 1904: 242). In all three novels, "home" is where the plot finds refuge, rest, or satisfaction:"When I speak of home, I speak of the place wherein default of a better—those I love are gathered together; and if that place were a gypsy's tent or a barn, I should call it by

the same good name notwithstanding" (1999: 146).

In *Dombey and Son*, Dickens exhibits that love changes houses to homes. For instance, Dombey's house, which lacks genuine and pure mutual love, is a hell for those living there. "The Dombey household stifles emotional life (especially love) which is the basic elements constituting a happy family" (Chen, 1991: 73). It is personified as decaying and somber. In this case, the house becomes ruinous after Edith and Florence leave it:

Florence lived alone in the great dreary house, and day succeeded day, and still, she lived alone; and the blank walls looked down upon her with a vacant stare, as if they had a Gorgon-like mind to stare her youth and beauty into stone. No magic dwelling-place in magic story, shut up in the heart of a thick wood, was ever more solitary and deserted to the fancy, than was her father's mansion in its grim reality, as it stood lowering on the street: always by night, when lights were shining from neighboring windows, a blot upon its scanty brightness; always by day, a frown upon its never-smiling face (2002: 295).

Side by side with this failed representations of houses, Dickens describes the home as a place of delight, pleasure, warmth, and love. Bleak House is a place of mutual and moral love, refuge, and warmth for Ada, Richard, and Esther. It represents the idea of home, hope, and creativity. In contrast, Chesney Wold is a house not a home: "Fairy-land to visit, but a desert to live in" (2000: 258). The net outcome of a society in which values are corrupt and wrong-headed, and ethical codes insufficient, is that the whole of society is a Bleak House. Based on Humanism's worldview, the whole of humanity can be one big family, but the place in which they live is no more than a 'house'; there is no mutual support, ethical love, and closeness to change it into a 'home'. As such, it is a comfortless environment that is in reality 'bleak':

Thus Chesney Wold. With so much of itself abandoned to darkness and vacancy; with so little change under the summer shining or the wintry lowering; so somber and motionless always—no flag flying now by day, no rows of lights sparkling by night; with no family to come and go, no visitors to be the souls of pale cold shapes of rooms, no stir of life about it;—passion and pride, even to the stranger's eye, have died away from the place in Lincolnshire, and yielded it to dull repose. (Ibid: 910)

Charting the clusters around the key term, home, and interpreting each group, home is revealed as a utopian ideology. As a spiritual value, it creates peace, security, prosperity, control, and regulation in people's lives. Similarly, in *Hard Times*, Louisa's return to her father's home which displays that even in her case of utter disappointment, home is a place of warmth, refuge, relaxation, pleasure, and escape from moral corruption of the business world. Even Stephan in his time of difficulty, full of misery and hardship, goes home for shelter, and in search of rootedness. Stone Lodge, the house of Gradgrind, signifies that home without love is not a pleasant place. Tom called their house "Jaundiced Jail," because in his eyes it lacks the proper affection. "No, Loo; I wouldn't hurt you. I made an exception of you at first. I don't know what this—jolly old— Jaundiced Jail," Tom had paused to find a sufficiently complimentary and expressive name for the parental roof, and seemed to relieve his mind for a moment by the strong alliteration of this one, "would be without you" (2001: 56).

In *Little Dorrit*, Old brick house, where Mrs. Clenman lives, due to the absence of mutual love is black, and darkness prevails in it. In Arthur's opinion, lack of love makes one's house blank, dreary, gloomy, deserted, dark, and dull. Arthur left the place with a depressed heart. He does not feel at home at all:

In the course of the day, too, Arthur looked through the whole house. Dull and dark he found it. The gaunt rooms, deserted for years upon years, seemed to have settled down into a gloomy lethargy from which nothing could rouse them again. The furniture, at once spare and lumbering, hid in the rooms rather than furnished them, and there was no color in all the house; such color as had ever been there, had long ago started away on lost sunbeams—got itself absorbed, perhaps, into flowers, butterflies, plumage of birds, precious stones, what not (2003: 46).

For Dickens home is where there is warmth, mutual love, family, and friendship. According to this definition, even prison can be a home. Love of Amy makes prison home, but lack of love makes Arthur not comfortable in his own home:

With a pitiful and plaintive look for everything, indeed, but with something in it for only him that was like protection, this Child of the Marshalsea and the child of the Father of the Marshalsea, sat by her friend the turnkey in the lodge, kept the family room, or wandered about the prison-yard, for the first eight years of her life. With a pitiful and plaintive look for her wayward sister; for her idle brother; for the high blank walls; for the faded crowd they shut in; for the games of the prison children as they whooped and ran, and played at hide-and-seek, and made the iron bars of the inner gateway 'Home.' (Ibid: 57)

In Great Expectations, Miss Havisham's house, Satis house, is a house, not a home. The owner, a jilted woman, by her lack of mutual and moral love makes it a ruin. In the description of Satis House, which means enough house, readers encounter "whoever had this house, could want nothing else" (2003: 20), but in reality, it lacks love and warmth. In the end, again Estella and Pip see each other in the ruins of Satis house, a place, which lacks love, but is going to be rebuilt so it can be the sign of a new beginning. Moreover, with the help of agon and cluster analysis one can come to this conclusion that Joe's house and Satis House are different; in Satis House people are treated as a means not an end, but in Joe's house, the emphasis is on the worth and dignity of the people. Also, Walworth property, Wemmick's abode, because of his love for his father, is beautiful, warm, and lively. It is a place of openheartedness and sympathy. It is in sharp contrast to his place at work, Mr. Jagger's office. It is noteworthy that he acted differently in each of these places.

Dickens's ethical creed, as he had publicly stated, was to spread out faith in the existence of pretty things, to give evidence that people have their energies, hopes, and sympathies in trust for the many and not for the few, and to hold in contempt all falsehood, cruelty, oppression, and meanness, of every kind and grade. Dickens was nonetheless an essential influence, a shaper of character, a moral teacher, and a force in the society. His theory would be that it is better to be attentive to the wrongs than in ignorance to state perfection and that it is a more real patriotism to accept and refer to error where it is discovered than to make the blunt boast that all is well. The ignorant hypocrite does not perceive the ulcer in the body politic; the patriot admits its presence and tries to remove it. One conceals, and the other cures. With limitless pity, he saw disappointed men, hardworking women, and afflicted children. His wish was a renewed England. It was renewed in a way which was safer, stronger, more content, and happier. This was the image of the future. He sought to make the picture real and to bring the future near.

#### **Conclusion**

After analyzing Dickens's novels attentively, it became clear that he understood the limits of social and political reforms in his period and that he had to be politically accurate while performing the assigned role as a novelist and criticizing the mistakes of his time. A close reading of his novels foregrounded Dickens's attitude towards the condition of his time as both a social reformer and an author who had already become a part of the system. This

paper's claim was that Dickens's fiction, by euphemizing the real historical conditions of time. distracts people from their surroundings. This justified the claim that he becomes a part of the system because power requires discourse, and far from being set against authority, the novel is one power's essential modes. This does not mean that he did not attack ills of the society, or that his reputation as a reformer was unmerited; rather, his views of particular issues were formed by his abiding concern for humanity and decency, and not by any coherent belief of the suitable role of the state. Although England suffered all the unemployment, inflation, overpopulation, and poverty it never experienced the chronic conflict that raged elsewhere. What makes Dickens patriot was his concern for the stability of the society. He wished that the poor and the rich can live together peacefully to make a harmonious state, and, in the second place, his patriotism encouraged people to use their love to dissolve hatred.

In his hands, the rhetoric of patriotic love became a persuasive means. He intentionally employed it since he was sure of its desired effect. He tried to influence his readers' personal and collective behaviors by having them voluntarily agree with him that this way of looking at the world was better than other alternatives. Unlike other critics who believe that Dickens stands on an uncomfortable and shifting ground among the reformers and that his responses to conditions usually appear to attract the label of conservative as much as radical, the researchers' contention is that Dickens's position is not at all shifting and that he does have a clear diagnosis of what is wrong with society and an established view as to how to set things right, namely that patriotic love is the solution to all society's problems, and a failure to pursue its rules is the cause of all wrong.

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### فصاحت انگیزهها: خانه و وطن در رمانهای دیکنز

## 9

### نیلوفر همتیارا 🕩 و کیان سهیل ۲

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چکیده: مقالهٔ حاضر به بررسی نماد خانه در رمانهای دیکنز میپردازد. به منظور دریافت نقش کلیدی و پررنگ خانه به عنوان مضمونی تکرارشونده، نخست خانههای این آثار بررسی و استخراج می شوند و سپس با استفاده از خوشه بندی کنت برک، نقش رمزی این خانهها بیان خواهد شد تا خوانندگان با استفاده به این معانی محتوای اثر و هدف آن را بهتر دریابند. دیکنز سعی داشت تا با استفاده از ظرفیتهای موجود در رمانهایش علیه موانع و گسستهای جامعه خویش به پا خیزد. این مقاله کوشیده است تا با مطالعهٔ رمانهای دیکنز، میزان انسجام و همبستگی دوسویه میان کارکرد این نماد و جهانبینی او را رمزگشایی کند. خانهٔ ایده ال نقدی غیر مستقیم از شرایط جامعه است، خانه برای این نویسنده وطن پرست، تبدیل به نمونهٔ کوچکی از جامعه می شود که عشق و بخشندگی جای تجارت و سرمایه داری متکی بر پول، ثروت و قدرت را می گیرد.

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واژههای کلیدی: دیکنز، خانه، خوشهبندی، وطنپرست، نماد.