TALES FROM THE HAUNTED CITY:
INDUSTRIALIZATION AND THE VICTORIAN NOVEL

by

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TALES FROM THE HAUNTED CITY: INDUSTRIALIZATION AND THE

VICTORIAN NOVEL.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at four Victorian novelists--Benjamin Disraeli, Mrs. Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Kingsley and Charles Dickens--whose works I feel are representative of the issue I wish to analyze: the socio-psychological effects of industrialization upon the literature of the time, and the changes in literary form and content which are the result of conscious attempts by these writers to wrestle with the horrors of contemporary industrial capitalism and to provide humanistic alternatives to them.

The thesis begins with a brief historical overview that establishes the reasons why the middle class culture produced a dissident literature. They are trying, I argue, to retain--or regain--human rather than institutionalized values. This idealist goal is not an attempt to return to a conceptualized and blissful past, but rather an attempt to redefine culture, to retrieve those elements of human interaction by which pre-industrial civilizations lived. Pre-industrial here refers in part to pre-industrial Christianity, and marks that point of reference in my thesis where I study the moralism displayed by the four novelists whom I study.

In the next chapter I analyze a novel of each of the three writers I define as socio-political. I separate their work from Dickens' because the focus of their visions is different. They see the working class as a group, and the solutions to the problems of industrialization as best being mediated by the Church and an aristocratic government. They spend considerable time charting the effects of workers' rebellions and in the end tend to unanimously condemn such action. Dickens, on the other hand, whose novels I discuss in Chapters Four and Five, studies the effects of industrialization upon the

estranged and lonely individual. His characters are victims whose attempts just to survive the haunted, bewildering city changes them. Some, the grotesque ones, become extremely solipsistic, concentrating only on their own success, while others, particularly the women, are much more sentimentally portrayed, for they invariably are not given even the opportunity for survival. In Dickens' London they die young while the men turn into parodies of humanity and the concept of family disappears forever.

The visions of these four writers have much in common. They all realize, and are sympathetic to the plight of the working class people caught in the labyrinth of the industrial city. But as I note in my conclusion they share another common perspective, which is their inability to continue to have faith in their visions. They see what is needed; they even seem initially to attempt a call to reformist action; but rather than confronting the social and individual problems of getting on, their final verdict is to get back, to hide, to seek only protection from, and not confrontation with, the effects of urban industrialization--the haunted city.

We start from the view that author, and reader, the literary processes of writing, appropriation, and communication, are mutually intercoordinated and form a relative structure.

--Manfred Naumann, "Literary Production and Reception"

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"Today," writes Walter E. Houghton, "we tend to think of the intellectuals as a special class...but this divorce between the artist and the public ...did not occur until the last decades of the century. In the years between 1830 and 1870 the sense of crisis at the very moment when the traditional authority of the church and the aristocracy was breaking down, impelled men of letters to focus on the contemporary scene more consciously, I think, than they had ever done before; and then, in the light of their analysis, to urge the adoption of one or another political, religious or moral philosophy."[1] This "intimate connection between literature and life," adds Houghton, "is a significant feature of the Victorian age and one of its chief glories."[2] The intimacy isn't always in evidence, of course, nor does it ever exist solely in a sociological sense, for there were no realists in Victorian England of the "French" school--no Zolas, for example, no writers solely concerned with realism as a single all-encompassing genre.[3] In fact, what is traditionally defined as Victorian literature is romantic--sensational, melodramatic, sentimental, as well as exotic, historical, horrifying in the "gothic" tradition. Much of the realism that exists, in Eliot, the Brontës and Hardy, for example, is psychological realism, and it too has been sentimentalized. That is not to say that there were no social realists in Victorian England. Dickens, for example, has long been accepted as more than a writer of humorous and children's books;[4] Collins and Reade are similarly perceived as sociological as well as mystery or adventure novelists, and so on. And yet this realism is also undeniably couched in romantic paraphernalia. With the exception, perhaps, of some of Reade's passages, it is a lightly satirized, often sentimentalized realism. It is the portrayal, not of stark reality, but, in Dickens' words, of the "romantic [and often ambiguous] side of familiar things."[5]

The ambiguity comes from the personal, the subjective, the specific, for this combination of the romantic and the socially relevant, or realistic approach to literature is in essence a tendency to fuse the fictional with the autobiographical, in that writers of this evolved genre tended to view the "facts" romantically or imaginatively. They delighted in interpretation --the dramatic, passionate reformulation of their environment according to their own vision. The result, what Albert Béguin calls "a fictional society ...arises at the point where two different projections meet: the projection into the imaginary of a real world which the novelist has recorded to the best of his ability; and the projection into reality of a personal myth, expressing his self-knowledge, his knowledge of fate, his notion of the material and spiritual forces whose field is the human being."[6]

These two projections meet when the industrial revolution in England can no longer be ignored, when urban writers like Dickens, Reade, Disraeli, Gaskell and Kingsley, finding themselves inextricably involved in the plight of their readers, begin to write about their own culture, a culture, writes Donald Fanger, which was "no longer a norm against which to measure individual comic aberrations, but a subject calling in its own right for investigation; not only a milieu, but an aspect of character," so that every person, especially in the literature of these new realists, now had a double nature: his or her "individual being" and its antagonist, the "social being."[7] The characters, then--and this is a radical departure--were not always stereotypes, as were the heroes of the romance, as were the rogues of the picaresque novel. They could also be serious portrayals, in depth, and if they are at all typical it is a local typicality, both in time and setting, and one that is constantly, rapidly changing; therefore one that could be re-created again and again. "Realism," Georg Lukacs once said, "is the recognition of the fact that a work of literature can rest neither on lifeless average, as the naturalists suppose, nor on an individual principle which dissolves its own self into nothingness. The central category and criterion of realist literature is the type, a particular synthesis which organically binds together the general and the particular both in characters and situations."[8] This, in the first half of the century at least, seems to have been a definite goal for some Victorian writers.

The romance, which is equally important in this literature, is a concern, at times sentimental, with the "individual being," just as the realism concerns itself with the "social being." The innovative novelists, observing momentous social change, became obsessed, says Fanger, with "the character of this new urban life, with what happened to the traditional staples of human nature when placed in an unnatural setting and subjected to pressures, many of them new in kind and all of them new in degree. The results--strangeness, alienation, crime, as matters of fact--explain much of the common technical inventory: a carefully fostered sense of mystery (atmosphere), of grotesquerie, a penchant for sharp contrasts, for the improbable, the sensational, the dramatic. Technique and theme, in short, go hand in hand, and both are directly connected with urban social history."[9]

This was the new reality, and as Fanger explains, this was also the new, successful and very popular literary theme. As examples of contemporary literature, these novels are quite obviously indicative in their very existence of a certain historical and sociological reality. They express certain sentiments demanded by readers of the time, and in doing so also express aspects of contemporary anxieties, fears, goals, ambitions, not necessarily by being realistic, but by the sheer weight of their popularity, in the same way that the movie Star Wars, for example, is a conclusive statement of something lacking in our society--and this we glean both from the nature of the movie, which is of the escape, fantasy genre, and from its popularity. However, the question which modern sociologists and psychologists might ask of this current phenomenon, and which the literary critic of a social bent most certainly asks of, say, The Old Curiosity Shop, is: What specifically is lacking in contemporary life? What particular fears, and to what degree, and to what extent do they exist? And more importantly, to what degree do they exist in the author as well as his or her readers? That is, once the realism has been established, to what degree is this particular expression of the realism credible? Once this problem had been resolved, the final general question is then one of implication. What is the significance of these works of literature, then and now?

In the work following, I intend to analyze the literature in a socio-historical context; that is, in light of the development of the industrial centres in England, the cities which in effect created the new literature. Together with increased literacy, mass production of printed material, which lowered the prices of books and magazines, the creation of public libraries and the advent of magazine serialization of novels, industrialization and urbanization created a problem of relationships, and therefore a problem of identity. Whereas Jane Austen could write stories of a more familiar community, in which the roles, from aristocratic landowner to peasant, were stratified, clearly definable and few in number, so that pressures, goals, and relationships were traditional and unchanging, the novels of Dickens, for example, deal with far different, far more confusing matters. The familiar or traditional has disappeared, along with individual self-identity, self-knowledge, self-possession, replaced by a completely unknowable community, and an unknowing and *unknown* individual.[10] The only serenity remaining is in the endearing, escapist elements of the literature and in the constant reaffirmation of the innate goodness in humanity, in itself a statement of little hope, given the quality of life in the new industrial state.

In this work I will be looking closely at four novelists: Benjamin Disraeli, Mrs. Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Kingsley and Charles Dickens. The first three I group together, because I see in their works a certain approach to the problems of society which is common to all of them and which is fundamentally different from Dickens's way of dealing with the haunted city. Theirs I call the socio-political view; Dickens's, the socio-psychological. The socio-political view is partly historical or traditional, and is a broader, more general view. It most often focuses upon the plight of the working class people as a group and upon the general conditions of work they face in mines, factories and sweat shops. The people are stereotypically characterized, as are their homes and families. The conflict between the workers and the aristocrats who employ them is similarly depicted in broad sweeping sketches, with characters on both sides offering opinions and arguments as representative of the group. These novels are quite didactic and yet idealistic too. The conflicts are resolved, sometimes too easily, sometimes unrealistically, and the feeling at the end is that conservative restraint is the best policy.

The socio-psychological view--Dickens's view--is one that focuses more upon the individual than on a group. Dickens's characters tend not to be members of groups, unless those groups can do something for them. The characters are often narcissistic, self-indulgent, many of them are thieves, "con-artists," minor entrepreneurs, trying to "get ahead," to achieve some sort of personal success in the midst of the overwhelming and confusing city of London. But these characters, and many others--the women, the broken families, the children--are depicted as victims, and as they work just to survive the estrangement and confusion and other horrifying effects of industrialism, they change. The city forces them to change, to adapt, and in doing so, the city itself becomes a character in Dickens's novels in a way not seen in the novels of Disraeli, Gaskell and Kingsley. The latter seem to see industrialism as a political force, the right hand of the despicable middle class, whereas Dickens seems to understand that it is far more insidious and pervasive ~~than that.~~

In either case, this literature is new because of its theme--the city --and because of its moral concern for the lower and lower middle classes. In light of this, my thesis is an analysis of the effects of industrialization and rapid urbanization upon people--not specific people, but the human psyche generally--as these effects are portrayed in the literature. This is not in any way an historical document, unless one wishes to see literature as partly historical. It may be that, but more importantly, the literature of and about the haunted city explores the psychological ramifications of social circumstance--those abstract elements of the imagination, of the soul, if you will, which transcend history, for they are common causes, and common effects--which can only with the greatest difficulty be included in historical tracts, but which thrive, and indeed are the raison d'etre, of literature.

This will be an exploration of the city, of its citizens, through its literature. It will be the other extreme of statistics, perhaps, although I hope it can incorporate the factual to a degree; I do not wish these pages to be themselves filed under the heading fiction, but rather, to enter that ambiguous sector of the arts which recognizes both fact and fiction. In other words, my theme is similar to Dickens's own journalistic policy, as announced in the first edition of Household Words:

> No mere utilitarian spirit, no iron binding of the mind to grim realities, will give a harsh tone to our Household Words. In the bosoms of the young and old, of the well-to-do and of the poor, we would tenderly cherish that light of Fancy which is inherent in the human breast; which, according to its nurture, burns with an inspiring flame, or sinks into a sullen glare but which (or woe betide that day!) can never be extinguished. To show to all, that in all familiar things, even in those which are repellent on the surface, there is Romance enough, if we will find it out:--to teach the hardest workers at this toiling wheel of toil, that their lot is not necessarily a moody, brutal fact, excluded from the sympathies and graces of imagination; to bring the greater and the lesser in degree, together, upon that wide field, and mutually dispose them to a better acquaintance and a kinder understanding--is one main object of our Household Words.[11]

The conclusions I wish to draw from this area of research concern the artists and the relationship they require to their work and with their audiences, and more importantly, the converse, the relationships of people in the audience, in society, to themselves and to each other, to the city and its specific and continuing pressures, to the artists, and also to the recreated people, the people of the artist's experience, now fictionalized. It is here that the research and its conclusions become most relevant, in this grey area between verifiable fact and its extreme opposite, imaginative fiction, in the area where personal experience is too subjective to be valuable, and scientific observation too objective to be relevant, in the area, writes Raymond Williams, where "certain feelings, certain relationships, certain fusions and as relevantly certain dislocations...can only be conceived in the novel, which indeed demand the novel" for the novel as contemporary history gives us "not precedents but meanings, connected meanings. And it is significantly a history that isn't otherwise recorded: part of the history of a people which if these novels weren't written would be decidedly, demonstrably inadequate. What we are told of the history of ideas [the recorded ideology] and of the general history of the society is different, looks different, when these novels are read."[12]

This literature is an issue as well as a literary form or genre: an issue involving culture versus society, social awareness versus literature as escape, opiates versus therapeutics. It is the popularization of alienation, which is not always a negative thing, for popularization can breed awareness. It is the commercialization of despair, which is the sensationalization of despair, which is the capitalist way. It is the only way within a system of laissez-faire economics that any idea can be transmitted; it must be sold on the open market. If the people "buy it," it has been successfully communicated.

Chapter 2: Culture and Alienation

The history of Victorian England is the history of industrialization, and the effects of that industrialization upon literature are twofold, or, to be more specific, they can be defined in terms of two quite different sets of criteria: the socio-psychological, and the historical. In the socio-psychological area we note the effects of urbanization, over-crowding, disease, poverty, abhorrent working conditions--that is, we are able to see in the novels of certain writers the effects these conditions were having on the authors themselves: the hardships of pre-union factory workers in Mary Barton, Sybil and Hard Times, the insanity of urban living in Bleak House, the greed inherent in capitalist industrialization in Martin Chuzzlewit and Hard Cash, and so on.

Historically, the utilization of the steam powered press (The Times was the first to use this mechanism, in 1814) heralded the initiation of a series of innovations--the web press, printing from a continuous roll of paper, more efficient type-setting machines--which rapidly improved the quality and quantity of press output. Before 1814, for example, The Times could produce to a maximum of five thousand copies per day; by mid-century it was turning out ten thousand per hour. There was a corresponding decrease in prices, too, due to developments in the manufacture of newsprint, and the use of chemical pulp processes, as well as the lessening of cost per copy just by the increase in output itself.

Distribution also became cheaper and more efficient due to the effects of industrialization--not the least of which were the railway and the telegraph. As well, more distribution points were established. The railway companies, for example, introduced bookstalls and libraries in most of their stations; in addition, because of cheaper publications and faster, less expensive distribution, an increasing number of small towns and villages could now establish libraries and bookstores.

In this respect, then, the culture was not merely being superficially affected by industrialism, it was being profoundly changed, reformed, by that phenomenon. Industrial technology did not just affect popular literature, for example; it created, or caused the creation of, a new popular literature which bore little resemblance to the old tradition of broadsheets, minstrels and popular drama. This was a new phenomenon, in some respects an invention itself of nineteenth century industrialism and the bourgeois forces which fed it.

The most significant characteristic of the Industrial Revolution, or of capitalist industrialism generally, is that once started, it never stops. By definition, because it is based on competition it must expand, and in doing so, its technology must evolve, for the technology is the means of production--the methodology, as it were, whereby profits are made. One envisions an ever-expanding mill-wheel, whirling faster and faster, the waters that propel it out of control, the workers in a state of panic, while the manager rubs his hands, the plans for an expanded mill already forming in his head. The historian G. M. Trevelyan writes that:

> Up to the Industrial Revolution, economic and social change, though continuous, has the pace of a slowly-moving stream; but in the days of Watt and Stephenson it has acquired the momentum of water over a mill-dam, distracting to the eye of the spectator. Nor, for all its hurry, does it ever reach any pool at the bottom and resume its former leisurely advance. It is a cataract still. The French Revolution occupied a dozen years at most, but the Industrial Revolution may yet

> continue for as many hundred, creating and obliterating one form of economic and social life after another, so that the historian can never say--'This or this is the normal state of modern England.' [1]

Industrialism, in other words, is a process, not an event: the continuous addition of innovations, social and economic, which initially confront tradition, then are accepted into tradition, even as they in turn are being confronted by newer innovations. It is a baffling process, and a culturally alienating one, for the innovators, usually young, are constantly battling with the traditionalists, usually a generation or so older. It creates "generation gaps," disrupts families, eventually erodes and destroys the family institution, and that of marriage too. It creates in people a defensive and therefore alienating posture. Individuals begin to live their lives with hunched shoulders, and an eye on the person behind, as if it was feared that a conspiracy exists. And of course a conspiracy does exist, in that capitalists have created a monster--the haunted city--a monster that conspires, quite effectively, as it turns out, to dehumanize society--to make the city more efficient by conformity, by eradicating the human differences which so counter that efficiency, by bureaucratizing existence itself (as Clennam discovers when he is forced to enter the world of the Circumlocution Office).

Trevelyan has noted that in the nineteenth century, which is the time when this insidious monster really began to prosper, "an ever larger proportion of the population was harnessed to the new machinery and to big business, while the realm of the factory was extended every year at the expense of domestic and out-of-door occupations."[2] The metaphor is an apt one; like animals, or perhaps automatons, the populace were increasingly harnessed, trapped, chained, often literally, to that speeding mill wheel, with fewer and fewer alternatives, other than prison, debtors' prison, and the workhouse. And those, of course, were not solutions; they were even worse than the problems of the "free" citizen.

Another aspect of the split in humanity was the rapid expansion of the middle class. They were already the new aristocracy, the power elite, but it is interesting to note not just their change in status, but their growth in numbers related to industrialism. At the top of this group were the mill and factory owners--the lords of the land now manufactory lords--who were the upper middle class. They controlled the government, they confiscated aristocratic estates for use as railraods or canals, they also controlled their own, the lower echelons of the bourgeoisie. They were, in essence, an aristocracy in every respect: their wealth was most often gained through inheritance, for example; they were increasingly detached from their own means of production; they were slowly building an alliance with the Church; and they were gaining control of Parliament.

Below these people, and in fact hired by them, were the new echelon of the middle class, the mill managers, the engineers, the industrial mechanics, and the latter two, recent innovations, comprised the areas of most rapid growth, although comparatively small in terms of the masses of unskilled workers employed at each mill or factory. It is ironic that while industrialism in the nineteenth century did so much for these few working class people--engineers and mechanics were well-educated, and very well paid --even to the point of promoting them to the middle class (every working man's dream), it still had almost no effect, or one could even say, a negative effect, upon the hundreds of thousands who worked the machines that reaped the profits. They watched the owners prosper, they watched a select few of their own become a part of that prosperous elite, while they, the workers, slaved for as long as sixteen hours per day, and then returned, cold and hungry, scantily clothed, to homes of a lesser quality than the barns in which their fathers, or perhaps, in the earlier years, they themselves, had once kept cattle.

Small wonder each individual would begin to feel himself or herself less and less a part of humanity as they had once known it; more significantly, this was an escalating phenomenon. Because so many of these workers were only a single generation from their rural past, their ability to overcome what was in essence a cultural shock--their capacity to either assimilate the industrial environment, or create a new society--was inhibited both by their traditional, rural experience, and their desire to cling to their traditional values. The estrangement intensified because these people could not give their children anything but an increasing sense of confusion: their hold on traditional values was slipping--even if it hadn't been, those values were still becoming increasingly obsolete--and meanwhile their own ability as adults to make meaningful the chaos surrounding them had not improved. They simply could not articulate the reasons for their poverty in the face of such obvious, overwhelming wealth, their sickness in view of such prosperity, their misery in the face of the success of others, the memory of their own idealized past, and the dreams of their glorious future.

This phenomenon was to become much worse before it would begin to improve even slightly. By the middle of the nineteenth century industrialism was supreme monarch. The Crystal Palace was being constructed, and it became a symbol of prosperity, and therefore, in my terms, a landmark, indicative of the degree of alienation, the depth of the crevice between the prosperous few and the labouring many. This was "the great period of mid-Victorian commercial and industrial expansion, which submerged beneath a tidal wave of prosperity the social problem and the mutiny of the underworld."[3]

The Victorian Age was also an age "full of paradoxes, and anachronisms, and of some of them its people were painfully aware. Their certainties were mingled with confusions, their hearts with their heads, their hopes with a quivering uncertainty."[4] It was a time of rapid change, of exodus to the manufacturing cities, of astounding growth of those cities. The Victorians themselves, eager purveyors of statistics, glowed with a sense of Progress when they discovered, in 1841--a census year--that employment in trade and manufacture, for example, had doubled in the past decade--84 per cent of the labour force were now directly involved in industrial work--or that the population in manufacturing districts had increased by 30 per cent. Exports had risen by 70 per cent; imports by 30.[5]

Behind these figures, writes Dodds, "lies the human story...the story of a nation that was old and yet new, where land and its proprietors still carried traditional authority and prestige, and yet where the balance of power was in process of shifting from the great estates to the industrial towns. Everytime a railway was opened across the park of a protesting aristocrat, every time a Cobden or a Bright was elected to Parliament, every time a new factory in Birmingham sent up its stacks, the old order changed slightly. The economic and agricultural distresses of the moment could not hide the fact that a new kind of civilization was boiling and bubbling beneath the ancient way of life."[6]

The most obvious evidence of this cauldron was the exodus of artisans and peasants, by the thousands, then hundreds of thousands, to the industrial cities. There was no more work in the villages and, for several other reasons--most importantly, the decline of the aristocratic hold on the economy--the farm workers too were unemployed. The complex interrelationships between artisan and peasant, even between rural and urban artisan, had been broken. There was no more skilled labour, only labour.

The problems this estrangement of individual and task created were numerous--some physiological, some psychological. The new migrants were forced into alien environments--smog bound, muddy, overcrowded cities--severed from nature, torn from their roots, from their connections with the past, from their memories and momentoes, from their family cottage and the village church and graveyard, from the very bones of their ancestors, and shoved into an alien world, a world with no past, certainly, and only a hazy, ill-defined present, a world without a future, and without hope. A world in which even the concept of family was being lost, as parents and children alike toiled inhuman lengths of time, in dehumanizing working conditions. They were forced to live--these hundreds of thousands of families--in single rooms, in torrid attics and dank, windowless cellars. Overcrowding became a part of life. Disease spread rapidly; sanitary measures were unknown. Sewage was dumped into the streets, or, later, into open cess-pools. New suburbs sprang up, but the conditions of living remained unchanged. Building restrictions were unknown, except occasionally, and then only to restrict the spread of fire to the wealthier neighbourhoods.[7] The old houses, of thick stone mostly, were damp and unventilated, with dirt floors and often with basements in which water dripped constantly and rats frolicked in the cold, bleak darkness. The new houses were the opposite. They had no cellars, but were built two or three stories above ground. Their inhabitants did not complain about lack of ventilation; in most cases there was too much air, as the winds howled through the poorly constructed and very thin walls. So poorly built were they, in fact, that it was not uncommon for one of them occasionally to collapse, tumbling slowly to the ground in a heap of half-bricks, crushed furniture and people. (It was a topical enough event, in fact, that Dickens describes it in Little Dorrit and Bleak House).

At work, the condition of life was similar, but more intensely horrible. It was, writes Engels, literally murder, for by definition, "murder has been commited if thousands of workers have been deprived of the necessities of life or if they have been forced into a situation in which it is impossible for them to survive."[8] And for most people, the working place of their childhood became their place of apprenticeship during the teenage years, which was the transitory period, the shift from an unskilled child's job to another kind of job: unskilled still, or perhaps semi-skilled, but one requiring greater strength or stamina. Cartpullers in the mines became colliers, tread-mill children became assembly line workers, button makers would continue as tailors in the sweat shops, brick throwers became brick layers. The span and condition of work remained unchanged. The dangers to health and limb continued. People worked for the machines. They were the subservient ones; the machines the elite. (A Mr. George Boyce, manager, in a letter to the Children's Employment Commission of 1864, wrote that one of the main reasons he has experienced no deaths in recent years--nothing, in fact, "beyond the loss of a finger or so"--was that "the shafts are driven very lightly...so as not to hurt the machines in case of stoppages, so that no great hurt is done."[9] Bodies in the works affected the precision of these finely tuned instruments, and thus were to be kept out). This horrible state of affairs intensified in 1832. That was the year the Reform Act had finally passed; it was the year therefore, that the middle class gained the opportunity to become members of Parliament, and the ability to legislate in their favour, and at the expense of the working class. It was the beginning of the two nations.

The first major legislation this reformed Parliament passed, and one which clearly revealed its intention to attend only to the interests of the middle class, was the New Poor Law of 1834. Highly Utilitarian in purpose, this new legislation centralized and more severely regimented the work-house system of welfare for the poor. Sexes were divided, including husbands and wives, hours and conditions of work were even more cruel than those in the factories, and, by a scheme of "eternal indebtedness," the paupers, once ensconsed, rarely freed themselves from the clutches of these abominable places. The new legislation, it seemed, was meant to provide a deterrent to poverty. Like criminals, these people were dealt with as harshly as possible; they were set as examples--in a land where the work ethic had become a Church doctrine, unemployment and poverty were indeed crimes against the state.

The working class rebelled. At first not at all organized, they nevertheless reacted against the Poor Law, as well as their own working conditions, their meagre salaries, their hardened overseers, with acts of vandalism or theft. But acting singly or in small, isolated groups, these dissenters were easily discovered, and given harsh prison sentences to discourage the continuance of such behaviour. The next stage of dissent was in the formation of trade unions, which followed from the artisan societies which had existed in the villages of pre-industrial times. From these unions stepped leaders, men whom the workers were now able to pay, from union dues, to devote most of their time to organization. They joined forces with the liberal idealists--Radicals, with imagination and a sense of history, men who were inspired, who had "larger ideas than those of the ordinary Trade

Union leader."[10] Slowly, gradually they began to succeed, to stir the working class into believing that "society might be radically changed; that life need not wear so hard and ungenerous a face; that the poor might have a share in the civilization of their age."[11]

The government was also aware of the problem; it strove to rationalize it by the invocation of tradition, by maintaining the customary hierarchy of Parliament, Church, and the landed aristocracy, by maintaining the platitude that poverty was an inevitability, but one which could be bearable if accepted in the proper spirit of patriotism. The government didn't only issue platitudes, however. In the first twenty years of the nineteenth century, write J. L. and Barbara Hammond, "it sought to crush the cheap press and popular propaganda by imposing heavy stamp duties on all periodicals, it put men in prison freely for distributing pamphlets and books, and Sidmouth would have liked to suppress all reading-rooms."[12] In this light, popular literature, which was just beginning to recognize the social issues as possible stuff for novels, again in the hands of the middle class, and thus more educated writers, becomes part of the radical or dissident movement. But this dissidence was not accidental. Those writers who tended to be concerned socially were realizing that the problems at hand were part of a broader issue, and one which had to do with industrialization as a general and pervasive movement. The industrial revolution was not only affecting the financial sector of society; it was changing the very culture itself, so that there were not only problems within society created by greedy industrialists; there were problems, which had to be dealt with, which were a part of this new industrialized society. That was the key factor in even recognizing the problems themselves. Solutions aiming at a return to pastoral life or pre-industrial urbanism were dreams, and while they were being striven for, the industrialists themselves, and the State with them, surged forward, unabashedly using the ignorance and illiteracy of the working classes to their best advantage.

But even those who recognized this greater dilemma soon realized that conventional remedies were obsolete. Dickens, for example, working as a Parliamentary reporter, saw that governmentally mediated solutions to problems of over-crowding, or unemployment, were doomed, for part of the problem of unemployed and ill-fed masses was the bureaucracy's inability to recognize current situations fast enough. Crucial time was being lost, therefore, and the problems were worsening while remedies were being awaited. The middle class bureaucracy, in other words, was part of the problem. Even Disraeli, who felt that Church-affiliated Statehood was the answer, conceded that it would take almost utopian idealism to overcome the inertia of the bureaucracy. The alternative which he proposed amounted to little less than an outright aristocratic oligarchy.

What Dickens and Disraeli as well as the metaphysically inclined Gaskell and Kingsley had in common however, was their belief in some sort of idealism which would inspire a movement against middle class treachery within the government and the private industrial sector. This movement would acknowledge the fact that the culture had permanently changed, that there could be no return to a past tradition, that industrialism was here to stay. What they advocated, then, and this is the basis of the vision that was more or less common to all four novelists, was a culture which would assimilate aspects of tradition, as well as contemporary facets of society. It would move beyond the chaos of capitalistic mediation to a culture based on the ancient communal foundation of Christianity itself. It would not, to use Stanley Diamond's terminology, strive to return to the primitive; it would seek the primitive, trying to retrieve those elements of humanity by which our forefathers had lived, and by which we could live once again. This vision is idealistic, of course, and tends even to become utopian, but it is nevertheless based on sound philosophical and social tenets which stress the necessity, as well as the possibility, of a culture which affirms the values of the individual rather than those of the state. The literature of these writers, which defines urban estrangement as another product of industrialization, attempts to point out the differences between pre-industrial and modern culture. It attempts, in other words, to redefine culture.

There is in this literature the realization that a person living in a city is simultaneously a social being, a metaphysical or philosophical being and an individual consciousness which is neither social nor spiritual but something more: a cultural being. (Wemmick, in Great Expectations, realizes this, as does the narrator in Mark Rutherford's Deliverance). Culture, therefore, is or should be that which promotes, with a certain amount of equivalency, the essence of all three beings: social relations, the search for truth, or the significance of life, and respect for the value of individual life. Each person in this ideal culture is both an individual and a part of the group--with the responsibilities inherent in each--and each person has a body and a mind and a psyche, the latter of which mediates the first two and provides the motivational energy of individuals and the group --not that there is necessarily a "group psyche", although there may be, but simply that the group is composed of individuals--in their development, or "progress" (ie: improvement, which is one way of defining culture), towards the transcendence of the contradictions which confront them in their everyday life experience. Culture, in other words, is that mysterious "something" which promotes unity and the totality of experience. Anything which advocates imbalance, fragmentation or disunity, anything which does not allow "the contradictions of growth through the various phases of the life cycles" to be "socially recognized, ritually expressed and dialectically resolved"[13] is not culture, is probably opposed to culture (although not necessarily consciously opposed, and certainly not overtly opposed), and, because it looks like culture, is what I will call quasi-culture.

An explanation of these concepts is most satisfactorily initiated, I think, by an examination of another kind of culture: the primitive, that which preceded industrialism or capitalism, that which includes, therefore, the tribal origins of modern Christianity and Judaism as well as other anthropological categories, such as that of the North American Indians.

Primitive culture, according to some philosophical anthropologists, including Stanley Diamond, is a total experience, not because it is the apex of profundity, but because it is not divided into the various components which have become separate institutions in the modern or so-called "civilized" culture. Primitive religion, for example, is the ritual, metaphorical articulation of the whole process of human development, and is not divorced from the totality of experience; only modern, fragmented peoples could develop the grotesque habit of being "religious" on Sunday, or Saturday, mornings, confessing sins of the past week and then resuming those practices that afternoon. In the primitive experience such secularism is unknown; religion and culture are the same thing: a way of life. This becomes important to the Victorian humanists because it works against the alliance of Church and State which is seen as potentially repressive.

The symbolic formulations of primitive religions, which are often seen as non-ecumenical and thus irrelevant, even blasphemous by the modern religious theorists, in fact "rise from and are in touch with the whole of human existence, and...therefore express a more authentic religious consciousness than has been evident in churchly dogma...primitive religions are culturally particularistic, but within the given culture, universal in their synthesis of man-society-nature."[14] This is their concept of progress or development, in which conflicts are recognized as the inevitable hindrances to growth of all people, to the degree, in fact, that there are social structures--the primitive equivalent to our institutions, but for far different purposes--specifically formulated in recognition of the universality of conflict, and the need for communal procedures for resolution, whereas "in our civilization, the person is reduced to a status, a reflex of society, and it is society which is supposed to progress. In primitive societies, the 'becoming' of personal growth is balanced by the 'being' of personal realization on all significant levels of existence."[15]

The primitive culture, then, according to Diamond, functions in the affirmation of man rather than of the state, and does so, not only through its religious organization, although that is eminently significant and important, but because of the following characteristics: a communal economy --that is, a pre-capitalistic economy, in which the exploitation of man by man is generally unknown; communal and traditional, rather than political and secular, roles of leadership, based on skill or functional relevance rather than patronage; the operation of society by customary and well-understood, informal sanctions, rather than codified law which operates in the interest of select, elitist groups, producing "that curious aspect of alienation that arises in all political societies, the division between 'we' and 'they', the citizen versus constituted public authority;"[16] cultural integration, in which religious and social structures and economic organizations all serve the physical and emotional needs of the individuals who comprise the society, and in which each individual in turn actively participates in one, and usually more than one, functional aspect of that society; ritual drama, "a culturally comprehensive vehicle for group and individual expression at critical junctures in the social round or personal life cycle, as these crises are enjoined by the natural environment or defined by culture. In such ceremonies, art, religion and daily life fuse, and cultural meanings are renewed and re-created on stage as wide as society itself"[17] (and a stage on which the artist is not a separate entity, in that art is not a "business"--it's everybody's business); and finally, the dialectical development of the individual which the group actively encourages, for the benefits of individual transcendence affect everyone. This is the direct opposite of the individualism which permeates the modern industrial and political culture, and which has become the byword of the middle class dream, as in "reaching the top," or "climbing the ladder of success." In both metaphors, opportunity is not understood as a social or collective phenomenon; only one person can climb a ladder at one time.

The tendency of modern culture--that is, culture mediated by industrial capitalism--is to practise a form of utilitarianism which only permits the pursuit of "truth and happiness" so long as such an endeavor occurs "after hours" (almost as a hobby) so as not to interfere with the useful and the necessary: the domain of bourgeois materialism. So we have two separate entities--Culture and Business--and while Culture may be a Business, that part of it which is defined as Art must not interfere with Business. It must not occupy the valuable hours of Business, for time is money; it must not even concern itself with social affairs--the domain of Business. Art as Culture is only entertainment or, in Duvignaud's words, it is the art of confirmation and upholding middle class values is its sole function.[18]

Two of the disturbing qualities of this separation are the fact that "culture" is commodified, on the one hand, a practise which can lead to superficiality, and, on the other hand, cultural commodification is assumed to not be superficial at all, due to the truly profound and freeing experience said to be found in the materialism inherent in this culture. In this sense, even modern religion is commodified. But such experience by itself, writes Marcuse, is neither profound nor free, because "disposal over material goods is never entirely the work of human industry and wisdom, for it is subject to the rule of contingency. The individual who places his highest goal ...in these goods makes himself the slave of man and things. He surrenders his freedom."[19]

This is the dilemma which Odysseus, the prototype of modern man, is forced to contend with and (as Max Horkheimer notes) he discovers only two possible ways of resolving it. One, which he prescribes for his workers, is to ignore the very temptation of freedom, for it can only be a perilous diversion from the task at hand: "Whoever would survive must not hear the temptation of that which is unrepeatable...and must ignore whatever lies to one side. They must doggedly sublimate in additional effort the drive that impels to diversion. And so they become practical."[20] At this point culture becomes a thing separate from society, history and politics. It becomes an abstract and an unattainable ideal. It is now defined reductively, as in "national culture," "Greek culture," or "Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture?" and is seen as somewhat of an anomaly, something which may even interfere with the daily routine of business "life." In this way "culture is distinguished from civilization and sociologically and valuationally removed from the social process."[21] In the face of mass alienation workers are taught to believe in the truth of happiness as an other-worldly reward for diligence and suffering in this one. Thus such "uplifting" forms of quasi-culture as art and religion become both escapist opiates and propagandized modes of capitalist affirmation, in the way that Calvinism sanctified the bourgeois work ethic or, more recently, the way that Andy Warhol sanctions commodification (Campbell's Soup as ethereal inspiration) and the madness which killed Marilyn Monroe. Suffering becomes beautiful and masochism a way of combatting or resigning oneself to sadism.

The other way of pretending to regain the freedom of total experience --the way Odysseus himself chooses--is to appear to confront the temptation of freedom directly, implying mastery, while in reality being impotently bound to the mast. The confrontation, however, is believed by both master and slave, and the power and the glory of the master's triumph of body over beauty becomes a worker's goal. What for the employer is ultimately an idle philosophical game, whether he is conscious of this or not, for the outcome is predetermined, proves conclusively to the masses that even if they could possess the means to free themselves, they would be wise to remain where they are, for freedom is a dangerous thing, devoid of security and meaning. Thus are people taught the joys of materialism, and thus do the social novelists' endeavors become almost inevitably doomed to compromise and failure.

One of the reasons for this is that like so many aspects of bourgeois culture, contradictions inherent in the materialist's world view are easily, even gleefully assimilated (gleefully, because the bourgeois mentality, in its perverseness, seems to enjoy turning rebellion into rhetoric). Rather than striving for a harmony between the real and the ideal, the tendency has been to consciously maintain the contradictions so that progress in one area never impinges upon the dictates of another. Killing, for example, can be viewed imperialistically as progress, and still be maintained theologically, that is, in the abstract, as a sin. (This has reached the point of absurdity whereby the army hires chaplains to bless its murderers, without causing the least concern in either state or church circles). In this way, as Marcuse, Lowenthal and others constantly point out, the history of progress is no history at all, but only "the dark and tragic prehistory of coming existence."[22] In other words, if the humanists, in their struggle to contemporize the simple truths of the past, are labelled idealists, and their philosophy primitive in a degenerative rather than affirmative sense, then the industrialists, the so-called constructors of civilization, are in fact barbaric or pre-primitive, and the irony of all this is that they are also pre-Christian, even pre-religious, while sternly upholding a belief in God as the basis of their civilization.

One of the predominant dualisms of the quasi-culture, or industrial society, as I briefly mentioned before, is their rationale of this realistic/idealistic split. Totality, the truly fulfilled human being, is said to be possible only in the afterlife, and then only as remuneration for a non-indulgent, or industrially/economically indulgent, and acquiescent life in this world. Happiness, freedom, life itself are not social concerns, then, but rigidly individualistic ones, the pursuit of which often pre-empts relationships, common feelings, even love. The only social pre-occupation is the acquisition of wealth through labour, and the subsequent acculturation of the products of others' labour. Such endeavors are said to produce happiness, but actually the only product is the resigned individual.[23] What also happens is that the contradictions of this rationale "provide the impetus to the idealization of that claim [the claim to happiness]. But the real gratification of individuals cannot be contained by an idealistic dynamic which either continually postpones gratification or transmutes it into striving for the unattained."[24]

The resultant anxiety, created by the split between social being and individual and by the contradictions underlying such a split, which are proclaimed, not as problematic, but as necessary to the well-being of the individual as well as the state, is both the product of idealization, for state gratification is officially the only realistic gratification, and the source of further idealization. The individual himself is split, as we will see later, in my discussion of the grotesque, forced to contend with a real self and a potential self, forced to endure bodily pain and mental torment as the prerequisites to soul gratification at a future time when body and mind will be discarded. In this way schizophrenia is a social disease, for fragmentation becomes the only way to survive within the contradictory environment of the social state.[25] The same forces which create division of labour also create division of being, the phenomenon of the double bind, for the psyche is deemed irrelevant in the material processes of industrialization, just as it is in the abstract processes of bourgeois philosophy. The "rational" advice given to the individual is to lay aside the "individual", an irrational and impossible task which, however, is a successful pacifier of rebellion in that it sets the psyche against itself, rather than against the state. The loneliness which this form of alienation produces "is sublimated to metaphysical loneliness and, as such, is accorded the entire aura and rapture of inner plenitude alongside external poverty. In its idea of personality affirmative culture reproduces and glorifies individuals' social isolation and impoverishment."[26] The soul, then, the very essence of being, becomes an abstract idealization, an inner state divorced from reality, into which can be placed all other idealizations--freedom, beauty, truth, happiness, human relations, the innate goodness of man--the qualities of culture in storage.

Culture in this sense is a response not only to industrialization, and its overbearing penchant for categorization, but to the intensified problems of social classes and the feelings of impermanence which the new social and political development created. In other words, the concept of reductive culture developed in differing degrees according to the responses of a particular class: the aristocracy maintained culture as a state of mind which, in the courtly tradition, uses art, and the artist, to confirm the higher purpose of the nobility; the bourgeoisie, after they had stopped emulating the aristocracy, responded to culture as an abstraction of another kind: a commodity or a spiritually uplifting after-hours hobby. It was the working class which began to embrace culture as a mode of interpreting common (shared) experience--the phenomenon of popular literature, for example, in part a result of rapidly increasing literacy, was also a response to a primitive urge to experience some mass sense of humanization as a prelude to communality. This is true of the lower middle class also; for all of these people popular literature becomes the new village gossip. These attempts at achieving a definable community were still mediated, however, by the power elite, and were frustrated and unsuccessful as a result. This, of course, is to be expected, for "a common [industrial] culture is not, at any level, an equal culture. Yet equality of being is always necessary to it, or common experience will not be valued."[27]

These rapid changes in consciousness and literacy created a new genre in literature, especially in the novel, which had become the predominant artistic form. Popular realism in the nineteenth century, unlike its satirical predecessor, which only mocked the pretentiousness of the ruling class, began to develop as a specific although not always conscious response to the alienation of the new age. The new realists--Stendhal and Balzac in France, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky in Russia, and Dickens, to name a few--were striving to counteract the new anxieties and fears--theirs as well as their readers'--by portraying some greater social experience within the novel, an experience which would eventually enable the individual psyche to integrate in such a way as to respond, as a social and spiritual being, to the differences and the sameness of others, bringing to the community both the security of familiar things and the challenge and excitement of experiential differences--the potential for a greater common experience and a more comprehensible world view.

This would be real culture: the integration of body, mind and psyche which actively and consciously counteracts the disintegrative quality of quasi-culture. The affirmation of real culture is an attempt to embrace the ideals of the primitive or pre-industrial past in a non-idealistic and contemporary way, although that is not always possible. However, the value of socially responsible art, in these terms, is that it at least recognizes the contradictions and the horrors of contemporary social (that is, state-oriented) experience, and the need for integrative (or rather, re-integrative) human experience. It is this assimilation process--the tying together of individual and community--which the socially oriented artist becomes involved with; for, like the shaman or witch doctor of primitive culture, he forces his "patients" to confront their particular anxieties--the first step of the therapeutic or re-integrative process--by dressing up to resemble those demons or, in the artistic sense, by creating alter-demons, and presenting them to us. Those characters and their conflicts are, like the primitive rituals, the articualtion of the common fears of urban industrial life, the experiences of fear and estrangement, of repression, of lost potential, of the city itself, which we all share. The common solution to those conflicts comprises the next step of the artistic process; after confrontation comes evocation, the stirring of repressed memory, the attempt "to awaken in the observer, listener or reader emotions and impulses to action or opposition."[28] Thus history and socio-psychological analysis become elements of artistic activity, "those tasks which have devolved upon the artist...a series of obligations which have to be fulfilled."[29]

Chapter 3: The Social Novel

The first major figure to respond to artistic as well as social obligations, Thomas Carlyle, was not even a fiction writer, but he became a mentor to so many novelists that he cannot be ignored. Carlyle's Chartism, published in 1837, the year after the creation of the six point Charter of the London Working Men's Association, established him as a Victorian prophet and the eminent philosopher of the times. Even more than the two books which preceded it (Sartor Resartus and The French Revolution), the extended essay jarred the anxiety-ridden public, frightened as they were by the sporadic Chartist riots and the spectre of the French Revolution. It did more than awaken, too; it became the inspiration for a series of social novels--novels concerned almost solely, and in a propagandistic way, with contemporary issues and the theme which tied those issues together: the Condition-of-England question. Gaskell's Mary Barton, and North and South, Charles Kingsley's Yeast and Alton Locke, Disraeli's Sybil, or the Two Nations, Dickens's Hard Times, even Gissing's The Nether World: all, writes Michael Goldberg, "drew on Carlyle and propagated his views."[1]

In Chartism, Carlyle addresses the Condition-of-England question; he leaps to the podium, in fact, on the first page of the first chapter. About this condition--the "condition and disposition of the Working Classes" above all--"something ought to be done; something ought to be said," and most importantly, "if something be not done, something will do itself one day, and in a fashion that will please nobody."[2] In discussing Chartism as a mass social movement, and one which counters the Christian-Capitalist doctrine of individualism, Carlyle implies that this is the "something [which] will do itself one day"--it is in fact "doing" itself already, and is indeed pleasing nobody. In fact, such is the middle class displeasure with it, that they have declared it non-existent. "According to the newspapers," writes Carlyle, "Chartism is extinct...a Reform Ministry has 'put down the chimera of Chartism' in the most felicitous effectual manner. So say the newspapers." However, continues Carlyle, such is not really the case, for "alas, most readers of newspapers know withal that it is indeed the 'chimera' of Chartism, not the reality, which has been put down...Reform Ministry, constabulary rural police, new levy of soldiers, grants of money to Birmingham; all this is well, or is not well; all this will put down only the embodiment or 'chimera' of Chartism" (p.2). The movement itself, he adds, exists, and will continue to exist until the real problems are recognized, and real solutions are developed, solutions that work, that confront the problems, rather than squelch them or cover them up.

What must not happen, what must not continue to happen, is the glib use of statistics, and repressive legislation, to either theorize the problem to death, or make the problem illegal, as does the New Poor Law, for example --a law which announces, writes Carlyle, that "whosoever will not work ought not to live" (p. 24). Repressive acts of this kind only affect the symptoms anyway. Riots are made illegal, gatherings of more than a certain number of people are forbidden, but riots and crowds are not the problem, and certainly coercion, to any degree, is not the solution. In fact, there is no solution when there is no clear understanding of the problem.

The first stage, then, of the movement to answer the "Condition-of-England Question," must be a clarification of the problem. "What means this bitter discontent of the Working Classes? Whence comes it, whither goes it? Above all, at what price, on what terms, will it probably consent to depart from us and die into rest?" (p. 3). These are the questions that must be asked; these are the questions that Parliament has to date ignored. Who, then, must ask them? Carlyle does not know. Other than himself, he cannot find anyone.

The question, or problem, involves injustice, which is "another name for disorder, for unveracity, unreality" (p. 36), for a "soul's pain and stigma" that cannot be easily erased, if indeed it can be erased at all.

> As disorder, insane by the nature of it, is the hatefullest of things to man, who lives by sanity and order, so injustice is the worst evil, some call it the only evil, in this world. All men submit to toil, to disappointment, to unhappiness; it is their lot here; but in all hearts, inextinguishable by sceptic logic, by sorrow, perversions or despair itself, there is a small still voice intimitating that it is not the final lot; that wild, vast, incoherent as it looks, a God presides over it; that it is not an injustice but a justice. (p. 37)

Revolt, adds Carlyle, is in the end a lost belief in God, and "unless altered it will be fatal" (p. 41).

To be fair to Carlyle, he is not turning his back on the "mutinous" working class, nor is he denying their position as a valid one. Neither, however, is he proposing a solution. He presents the issue very clearly, true--it is one of injustice, it exists, it must be dealt with--but suddenly he becomes fearful. England must not suffer the "horrors and crimes" of the French Revolution. "God grant," he pleads, "that we, with our better methods, may be able to transact it [the solution] by argument alone!" (p. 42). And in the meantime, the working class must retain their belief in God, and in the ultimate justice of the universe.

Carlyle is not advocating an individualistic approach to this horrendous problem; nor is he implying that if everyone became a part of the middle class, viewed by many to be the true English Dream, there would be no working class, and therefore no working class problem, so-called, although he comes _very_ close when he says "Society, it is understood, does not in any age, prevent a man from being what he _can be_" (p. 60). But "transaction"--what does that mean? Arbitration? Give and take between the classes? Harmony before God? Surely Carlyle is either being naive or forgetful, or perhaps just middle class, for that is precisely what the workers attempted, so very often, before they became highly organized and "disruptive." They petitioned Parliament, or tried to. They trekked to London from every industrial centre in the Kingdom, pleading with the government to be heard. They were instead ignored, then arrested, persecuted, denounced as lazy, unwilling to be satisfied with their lot. "You've never had it better," was the argument so often shouted at them; the fact that they wouldn't work, that they would consider strike action, was ultimately viewed as traitorous, for laissez-faire economics had by then become the definitive philosophy upon which liberty and equality and all those other ideals were based. To not work was to commit treason of the worst kind.

Carlyle can perceive the problem with clarity but the solution lies beyond his ken. He knows that the government is making matters worse by passing legislation that always benefits the middle class; he understands, and sympathizes deeply with the plight of the workers. He denounces romantic descriptions of these people and their problems, and he damns fanciful, idealistic solutions. But equally harsh are his denunciations of revolt. He is, in the final analysis, middle class, intellectual, and Calvinistic. His diagnosis of the problem, writes Richard Altick, is "too heavily derived from German transcendentalism and Scottish Calvinism...his cure, for its part, strikes one as being a substitution...of something uncomfortably like

Prussian authoritarianism."[3]

The cure Altick refers to--the cure Carlyle mentions--is this: "Universal Education" and "general Emigration." By education, Carlyle means "society's ethical and religious regeneration, a return to the serene faith, obedience and values of Abbot Samson's time."[4] Either regenerate, one supposes Carlyle to be saying, or get out, In his own words, this from the final pages of Past and Present:

> Subdue mutiny, discord, widespread despair, by manfulness, justice, mercy and wisdom. Chaos is dark, deep as Hell; let light be, and there is instead a green flowery World. O, it is great, and there is no other greatness. To make some nook of God's Creation a little fruitfuler, better, more worthy of God; to make some human hearts a little wiser, manfuler, happier,--more blessed, less accursed! It is work for God. [5]

This, then, is the man who becomes the inspiration for all those middle class liberals who would wish to change the world through their fiction, which is not impossible; in fact they, and Carlyle, are certainly instrumental in making their readers aware of the problems. That is not the issue here; what is perturbing is that the so-called "cures" or solutions which Carlyle discussed are solutions which could not, in any way, be applied to the real situation. They are middle class solutions to a working class problem: solutions in other words which have been formulated without sufficient knowledge of the problems. They are not even idealistic, but rather unrealistic and superficial potions, as it were, intended to cover up or gloss over the real sources of the problem.

It is important to note that while the Chartist movement, and organized union action generally, had lost most of its strength by mid-century, following the abysmal failure of the general strikes of 1842, several phenomena continued, and became the inspiration of writers who began to produce what I will call social novels.[6] The foremost influence, as I have mentioned, was Carlyle's Chartism, and this was not so much a result of the context of his essay as the spirit, the fervour with which Carlyle had attacked the social problems of the day. "In Carlyle's hands," writes Cazamian, the social and moral consequences of Chartism (what he calls the "idealist and interventionist reaction") became "intuitive and mystical; social charity and philanthropy took on the force of a national impulse."[7] This impulse, combined with other contemporary phenomena--such as the Exhibition of 1851 (whose displays of wealth and technology were bound to alienate both the working class and sympathetic idealists) and the engineers' strike of 1852 --allowed the social novelists to continue to be both relevant and popular well into the fifties.

The novelists themselves were all middle class, and while certainly idealistic and even (especially in the case of Disraeli) quite provocatively intellectual, none were influenced by the philosophical treatises of Ruskin, for example, nor by the socialist writings of Robert Owen. Even Kingsley's Christian "socialism" was theistically inspired, based on the fundamental doctrines of Hebrew communality. Only Carlyle affected these writers, and then on a stylistic rather than philosophical level, commensurate with that Calvinist zeal of his which will be seen to be the most concrete facet of his influence. They did not seem to understand him, or perhaps they did not try; they did, however, make effective and popular use of his middle class idealism and imaginative stimulus in writing about the impoverished masses.

Along with the victimized workers and paupers about whom the novelists wrote, there was another group devastated by industrialism, and these in fact provide a link between industrial working class victims and the middle class authors who wrote about them. They were the newly "created" lower middle class, whose dreams of glory within the ranks of their own class had been shattered, ironically by the very proponents of free trade whom they had so recently admired, even corresponded with. Lost and extremely alienated, in a social limbo, or purgatory, these "new, unlooked-for people were forever arriving at this unhappy social level where their former social standing was lost,"[8] and in their novelty, and their pathos, they provided the sympathetic writers with source material both contemporary and endearing. They were also completely disoriented and unorganized; in this regard the social novelists became the representatives of a movement that didn't exist, and never would exist, for it is aborted by a "fundamental acceptance of the prevailing order. They [the writers] all begin with the most violent attacks on capitalist society, but come in the end to accept its presuppositions...as if they had merely wanted to expose and fight against the abuses, in order to prevent deeper revolutionary upheavals...At best, they waver between genuine democratic impulses and the reflection that, in spite of everything, class differences between them are, at any rate, of subordinate importance in comparison with the common features of their philanthropic conservatism."[9] This helps to explain their inability to perceive solutions, or even the real nature of the problems; they could describe what was occurring, but, especially for the lower middle class, they could not even see this set of circumstances as a real issue, and for the working class, after the failure of the Chartist movement, what was perceived was also defined as more of a fundamental ethical matter than a social or political problem. In both cases the situation was made more ambiguous because neither class itself was able to clearly define the nature of its own critical position. Violence or apathy, rather than reformist action, were the common symptoms of this industrialist victimization.

Another factor in this "awakening" of liberal humanists to the Condition-of-England, about which those who were novelists would try to write, was the origin of what I would describe as the collective body of emotional opposition to bourgeois ruthlessness. "The first stirring of [this] sentiment," writes Cazamian, "came in religion. Methodism was a call to spiritual upheaval and a reawakening of conscience."[10] The public sermons of John Wesley in the eighteenth century had produced a following, beginning with the Romantics, and leading, nearly one hundred years later, to the Oxford Movement, which advocated a humanistic philosophy in direct opposition to the Reform Act. In the face of rampant, unpopular utilitarianism, this was a welcome and a highly imaginative relief, as well as the first tangible source of opposition or counteraction for the intellectuals.

Methodism, and the spirit of Puritanism generally, were becoming dominant movements of their own, even before the Romantic popularization of their tenets. There were reasons for this. The Church of England, aristocratic bastion, was as impervious to the plight of the masses as Parliament, perhaps even more so, and the various orthodox and evangelical groups who were opposed to this lethargy began organizing their own meetings, writing their pamphlets, and generally beginning to organize in a way remarkably similar to the union movement, although less violently. Both groups began at the working class level; both were originally a part of the middle class rebellion. The religious groups, however, tended to continue their alliance with the bourgeoisie, and in fact many of them eventually became middle class. There were working class orders and branch groups, such as the Quakers, and later, the Salvation Army, but Puritanism--the Methodists, Baptists and other fundamentalists--was definitely middle class, in aspiration as well as membership. Its tenets, most dramatically, the work ethic ("Except for 'God'," writes

Houghton, "the most popular word in the Victorian vocabulary must have been 'work.'"[11]), were established and held holy by the very people also fighting the Corn Laws and writing the New Poor Law. In other words, entrepreneurism and puritanism were astonishingly similar in intent.[12] Making vast amounts of money and at the same time establishing one's future place in Heaven were not seen to be in anyway anomalous. Christianity had acquired Capitalist overtones (it would later become Big Business itself).

The only people to counter both the aristocratic Anglicans and the free enterprise fundamentalists were the poetic mystics inspired by Coleridge. "Like him" writes Cazamian, "they defended the insights of imagination and intuition, and denounced arid eighteenth-century logic and utilitarian atheism. Faith expanded among them, and was enriched by lofty emotions. Once again art, poetry, and passion were accepted as ways of reaching the divine."[13] But they soon inspired their own opponents, a group of anti-bourgeois Church of England supporters known as the Oxford Movement. These people were intellectuals rather than artists, but they had much in common with the Romantics. They too appreciated the value of aesthetics, not in the abstract, but as an uplifting social force. Beauty, as well as the Christian concept of charity, could relieve the psychological distress of the poor. In other words, both groups recognized the spirit of man, and defended the needs of this spirit as being at least equal to the needs of the body; however, both groups were, idealistic and rather too philosophical and mystical to be politically successful.

The two groups eventually converged (their only opposition seemed to revolve around the relevance of the Church of England), and once again we see Carlyle as the instrument of "sanity." The next generation of Romantics, including those people Donald Fanger calls romantic realists, were far more cynical and pessimistic than their mystical predecessors, and far more political. That they were influenced by Carlyle, as well as Ruskin, is undeniable. On the other hand, we see a fusion of poetry and intellectualism in the Oxford Movement (by this time basically a Romantic movement),[14] and the convergence of revivalist moral philosophy with the various social movements, and finally, the joining of all these socially-oriented movements with the phenomena of working class writers, popular literature, and the general penetration "at every level...by the spirit of philosophical idealism...These revivals in religion, aesthetics, and poetry...were inevitably intertwined, for they all gave expression to the same lofty spirituality which had been called into being by changed social conditions and the pendulum-swing of psychological evolution."[15]

The Romantics, then, as well as Carlyle, leave a legacy to the romantic realists: social awareness through art (especially writing); social reform by way of divine inspiration. This bears keeping in mind, in the pages that follow, particularly in terms of the endings which these Victorians write to their works. These ideals are middle class and for the most part reactionary.

The first social novel (I will look at five others: Mary Barton, 1848; Hard Times, 1854; North and South, 1854-55; Alton Locke, 1879; and The Nether World, 1889) is Sybil, published in 1845. By the standards already being established in the area of popular serialized literature it is not grandly successful, but it is endearing and it achieves a certain readership. Those who do read and enjoy it are for the most part intellectually inclined, and the concept of The Two Nations, the subtitle of the novel, is for them a highly flammable and certainly very contemporary issue. The novel in fact achieves much of its success from its realism, or quasi-realism, and its discussion of current events, rather than from any forcefulness of style, narration or characterization. Certainly it is a love story, a romantic tale of courage and fortitude, but it is mostly a highly didactic, propagandistic story, almost a fable, the story of "'THE RICH AND THE POOR'...'between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each others habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets; who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws.'"[16]

Sybil was the second of three novels which Disraeli wrote during a four year period. Arnold Kettle explains the novelist's intentions:

> The trilogy--Coningsby, Sybil, and Tanored (1844-47)--was planned not only as a unity but with a specific political purpose. It was to illuminate and serve the cause of Tory Democracy, the Young England Movement which Disraeli...saw as the hope of post-Reform Bill Britain. It was the need for an alliance of populace and aristocracy--a reformed, not to say idealized, aristocracy of natural leaders--against the new barbarian industrialist class that Disraeli wished to emphasize. In the trilogy three aspects of the Condition-of-England Question were to be dealt with (the phrase falls all too appropriately)--the political, the social, the religious...[In his second book] Disraeli makes his most ambitious contribution... In this crowded novel all England is represented: the aristocracy, in both its effete and responsible aspects, the industrialists, the rural poor, the proletariat of several categories.[17]

Kettle adds that while it is "true the articulation has a self-consciousness, an artificiality, which is sometimes more than a little ridiculous, a glibness we are right to hold suspect...what, in the end, makes Sybil readable...is what Carlyle had asked for--articulate inquiry into the Condition-of-England Question."[18]

That question was one which Disraeli pondered for many years, and with good reason. As a politician, and especially one for whom the popular vote meant so much, he could not ignore a contemporary issue of such magnitude. Nor, he felt, could he, as leader of the "Young England" group, go on record as being reluctant or condescending, or anything in fact but forthright and dynamic.

Disraeli had begun his political career as a Liberal but, as Cazamian notes, "radicalism could not hold him, and there were early signs of that reactionary temperment which would bring...[him] to power in the Tory party."[19] So he changed parties in mid-stream. In the Tory party two aptitudes brought him early recognition: his oratorical ability and his position as stout defender of the landed gentry. He was made leader of the "Young England" group, and his career in Parliament began in earnest.

The Young England group was a small coterie of young and ambitious Tories--"social" Tories, they called themselves--who had pledged their support of England, and particularly of the tradition of England, that tradition whereby God and the King were the only really suitable examples of good leadership which the ruling class should follow in their attempt to straighten things out and convince the people of their authority. The Young England group, even those like Disraeli who were not themselves aristocrats, wholeheartedly supported the landed gentry in their fight against industrial radicalism. At the same time, however, in a rather idealistic way, they sympathized with the poor, who were so cruelly maltreated by the manufacturing barons. And finally, they supported, and were in awe of, the monarchy and the Church. They were all Romantics, and they held both institutions in particularly high esteem in terms of the inspiration they provided these highly enthusiastic and aesthetic imaginations. They were idealists, and their program for social and political change, such as it was, "was almost absurdly childish."[20]

In Sybil, then, we can expect a certain degree of romantic idealization, of Utopianism disguised as political rhetoric, and yet within this fantasy a certain plan or vision of the future as it must relate to this group of social and very ambitious Tories. If we think otherwise, writes Cazamian, if we suppose, for example, that Disraeli is trying to educate the general public, we are very wrong. He may make the people aware of their own situation, but his solution will not necessarily correspond to any notion of relief which they might have had in mind.

> If his acquaintance with the industrial proletariat on familiar terms was as limited as Dickens's, he did hold a compensatory picture in his clear and excellent brain of the way in which society worked economically. Sybil tells us everything about working-class life that one would expect a highly intelligent and politically well-informed tourist to bring away from a quick survey of the situation. It is a picture in which the most shocking instances of misery [the tale of Devilsdust, for example] are tactfully softened: Disraeli never forgot that he was writing for the ruling classes, and even the dialogue he puts in the mouths of his working class characters does not compel him to disregard his own association with marchionesses and duchesses.[21]

The humane view, then, is couched in political as well as idealistic terms. In Sybil, "the descriptions of industrial squalor are very like those of Dickens on Coketown: brilliant romantic generalizations--the view from the train, from the hustings, from the printed page--yet often moving, like all far-seeing rhetoric...Anyone who is prepared to give credit to Disraeli's unsupported authority on any matter of social fact has of course mistaken his man, as he would similarly mistake Dickens. But Disraeli, like Dickens, is a very fine generalizing analyst of cant, and almost as fine a generalizing rhetorician of human suffering. Both functions, it must be emphasized, are reputable."[22]

Sybil is the story of an aristocrat, a young aristocrat of a particularly humane bent--Charles Egremont (or Disraeli) by name--who is in the process of becoming a social Tory. During this period of development he meets a young woman--Sybil--and her father, Walter Gerard. These two apparently change Egremont, although it may be more apt to say that he, along with a friend of theirs, the socialist outlaw, Stephen Morley, changes their lives.

Coexistent with this plot, which is also a love plot, and a love triangle: Egremont, Sybil and Morley, is the story of the factory and farm workers who are in the process of being organized by the Chartists (the year is 1839), of whom the outstanding member is Walter Gerard. They are organizing, it must be added, in order to overthrow the cruel and tyrannical despots of the area, Lord Marney, Egremont's older brother, and the man in charge of all the local farms, and Lord Mowbray, the resident manufacturer.

The plight of these mill and farm hands, romanticized as it is in this novel, still remains horrifying. Their lives and their environment are graphically described. In the town of Marney, for example, "wretched tenaments" line the streets, the chinked stone walls of a typical run-down tenament house admitting "every blast" of wind, its thatched roof "yawning in some parts to admit the wind and the wet, and in all utterly unfit for its original purpose of giving protection from the weather...[looking] more like the top of a dung hill than a cottage. Before the doors of these dwellings, and often surrounding them...open drains full of animal and vegetable refuse, decomposing into disease...so that, when the poor man opened his narrow habitation in the hope of refreshing it with the breeze of summer, he was met with a mixture of gasses from reeking dunghills" (pp. 60-61).

Inside these overcrowded slum houses, often windowless, with mud floors, "with the waters streaming down the walls, the light distinguished through the roof, with no hearth even in winter, the virtuous mother in the sacred pangs of childbirth gives forth another victim" while her other children watch, and the father "in another corner of the sordid chamber, lies stricken by that typhus which his contaminating dwelling has breathed into his veins, and for whose next prey is perhaps destined his new-born child" (p. 60). And in a fortnight or so the mother returns to the factory, putting her infant out to nurse, "that is to say...[paying] threepence a week to an old woman who takes charge of these new-born babies for the day...The expense is not great: laudanum and treacle, administered in the shape of some popular elixir, affords these innocents a brief taste of the sweets of existence, and keeping them quiet, prepares them for the silence of their impending grave" (p. 108).

Most infants in these circumstances do die, or are allowed to die by pitying mothers. Some do not, and one of these, Devilsdust, provides a good example of what I mean later when I say Disraeli's doctrine is an evolutionary doctrine.[23] This urchin is truly a prototypical Ubermensch figure: an orphan and a pauper who rises from the dungheap to become a prominent capitalist. At two years of age, "his mother being lost sight of, and the weekly payment having ceased, he was sent out in the streets to 'play,' in order to be run over" (p. 108). But he survives.

> All his companions were disposed of. Three months' 'play' in the streets got rid of this tender company,--shoeless, half-naked, and uncombed,--whose age varied from two to

five years. Some were crushed, some were lost, some caught cold and fevers, crept back to their garret or their cellars, were dosed with Godfrey's cordial, and died in peace. The nameless one would not disappear. He always got out of the way of the carts and horses, and never lost his own. They gave him no food: he foraged for himself, and shared with the dogs the garbage of the streets. But still he lived; stunted and pale, he defied even the fatal fever which was the only habitant of his cellar that never quitted it. And slumbering at night on a bed of mouldering straw, his only protection against the plashy surface of his den, with a dung-heap at his head and a cesspool at his feet, he still clung to the only roof which shielded him from the tempest.

At length when the nameless one had completed his fifth year, the pest, which never quitted the nest of cellars of which he was a citizen, raged in the quarter with such intensity that the extinction of its swarming population was menaced. The haunt of this child was peculiarly visited. All the children gradually sickened except himself; and one night when he returned home he found the old woman herself dead, and surrounded only by corpses. The child before this had slept on the same bed of straw with a corpse, but then there were also breathing beings for his companions. A night passed only with corpses seemed to him in itself a kind of death. He stole out of the cellar, quitted the quarter of pestilence, and after much wandering lay down near the door of a factory. Fortune had guided him. Soon after break of day, he was woke by the sound of the factory bell, and found assembled a crowd of men, women, and children. The door opened, they entered, the child accompanied them. The roll was called; his unauthorised appearance noticed; he was questioned; his acuteness excited attention. A child was wanted in the Wadding Hole, a place for the manufacture of waste and damaged cotton, the refuse of the mills, which is here worked up into counterpanes and coverlids. The nameless one was preferred to the vacant post, received

> even a salary, more than that, a name; for as he had none, he was christened on the spot--DEVILSDUST. (p. 109)

And so he gains employment, but not salvation. Working twelve to sixteen hours, for as little as a penny an hour, is at least as harrowing as "playing" in the streets. And this slave-labour is self-perpetuating; it has no end, for the worker is soon in debt, his wages not at all relating to the prices of foodstuff at the local tommy-shop, where a diabolical entrepreneur, in this case, one Joseph Diggs & Son, carefully records each shopper's rising debts, and interest daily calculated, and each worker sees himself or herself slowly bound by an agreement that ends only with death. "'Why am I here?'" asks one such man.

> 'Why am I, and six hundred thousand subjects of the Queen, honest, loyal, and industrious, why are we, after manfully struggling for years, and each year sinking lower in the scale, why are we driven from our innocent and happy homes, our country cottages that we loved, first to bide in close towns without comforts, and gradually to crouch in cellars, or find a squalid lair...without even the common necessaries of existence; first the ordinary conveniences of life, then raiment, and, at length, food, vanishing from us?
>
> 'It is that the Capitalist has found a slave that has supplanted the labour and ingenuity of man. Once he was an artisan: at the best, he now only watches machines; and even that occupation slips from his grasp...The capitalist flourishes, he amasses immense wealth; we sink, lower and lower; lower than the beasts of burthen; for they are fed better than we are, cared for more.' (p. 127)

The coal mines are the worst. There, in long, black and dank tunnels, men, women and "troops of youth--alas! of both sexes--" toil. "Naked to the waist, an iron chain fastened to a belt of leather runs between their legs clad in canvas trousers...on hands and feet...for twelve, sometimes for sixteen hours a day...[they haul] tubs of coal up subterranean roads, dark, precipitous, and plashy: circumstances that seem to have escaped the notice of the Society for the Abolition of Negro Slavery" (p. 154).

As an alternative to the horrors of ordered middle class industrialism, Disraeli gives us Wodgate. In Wodgate "Labour reigns supreme," for the town has, by a quirk of history, escaped the clutches of the industrial revolution. "There are no landlords, head-lessees, main-masters or butties in Wodgate;" instead "the business of Wodgate is carried on by master workmen in their own houses, each of whom possesses an unlimited number of what they call apprentices" (p. 177-78). It sounds rather like a working class co-operative, or commune, but it is not. Rather, it is as intolerable as the sweat shops of London. "There master workmen...form a powerful aristocracy, nor is it possible to conceive one apparently more oppressive. They are ruthless tyrants; they habitually inflict upon their subjects punishments more grievous than the slave population of our colonies were ever visited with; not content with beating them with sticks or flogging them with knotted ropes, they are in the habit of felling them with hammers, or cutting their heads open with a file or lock" (p. 178). They even, on occasion, "pull an apprentice's ears till they run with blood" (p. 178). These youths are worked for "twenty hours a day; they are often sold by one master to another; they are fed on carrion, and they sleep in lofts or cellars" (p. 178). In other words, if the slaves of industrialists are treated poorly, the slaves of workers are treated in a manner almost defying description. Disraeli is not impressed with progressive socialism, nor even with the feeling that workers have in their hearts only sympathy for their peers. The Republic of Labour is satanically endowed.

He similarly distrusts, and is in fact openly hostile towards, trade unions. In the novel he depicts them as clandestine secret societies with superstition-wrought initiation ceremonies. Meeting in "obscure chambers," the members are seen "enveloped in dark cloaks and wearing black masks, a conical cap of the same colour adding to their considerable height" (p. 237). They carry torches, and rarely speak. When they do, it is most often to denounce some brethern or another for trangressing their stern set of rules. They particularly condemn "any member who shall be known to boast of his superior ability, as to either the quantity or quality of work he can do, either in public or private company" (p. 240). This, writes Cazamian, is clear evidence that "Disraeli sees the union as an instrument of oppression, holding down wages and skills, regardless of individual excellence."[24] While the opposite interpretation would also hold--that the union is trying to discourage individualism and promote cooperative harmony amongst its members, which is presumably the historical interpretation--I tend to agree with Cazamian that Disraeli's portrayal of the union movement as a quasi-Ku Klux Klan group is further evidence of his anti-workers position.

As well as presenting workers and unions in a general way, Disraeli depicts certain characters stereotypically also. Lord Marney is one of them (he and Stephen Morley are the "strawdogs" in this novel: in their characters lie the worst aspects of socialism, the most barbaric and stupid features of aristocratic liberalism). Marney is a buffoon, a wife beater, emotional if not physical, and an oligarch of the worst kind. He pompously flaunts his weaknesses like a Dickensian fool, but without the redeeming qualities of a Dickensian fool: "cynical, devoid of sentiment, arrogant, literal, hard," and without a grain of imagination, his "countenance...bespoke the character of his mind" (p. 50). He is also a paradox, supporting both the Reform Bill and the New Poor Law--as industrialist, utilitarian, and Whig--whilst at the same time supporting the Corn Laws--as landed aristocrat, reactionary, and closet Tory. "He eulogized the new poor law," he tells his brother and other assembled dinner guests one evening, "which he declared would be the salvation of the country, provided it was 'carried out' in the spirit in which it was developed" (p. 54). He is against allotments, economists, poachers, priests, and poor folk. He approves of kings, though not necessarily queens, vicars who know their place, Members who know theirs, and the general state of his own affairs.

He is satisfied--this he tells the industrialist, Lord Mowbray--that the working conditions, and the wages, of his workers are "'good enough: not like your manufacturing districts; but people who work in the open air, instead of a furnace, can't expect, and don't require such'"(p. 120). In fact they get too much: eight shillings per week plus beer-money, "'though I for one do not approve of the practise, and that makes nearly a shilling per week additional...I have generally found [he adds in a tone foreshadowing Bounderby in Hard Times] the higher the wages the worse the workmen. They only spend their money in the beer-shops. They are the curse of this country'" (p. 120). To which he adds at a later date, when his brother insists that eight shillings a week is not enough to support a family: "'I suppose you want the people to live as they do at a house dinner at Boodle's ...The poor are very well off...their incomes are certain, that is a great point, and they have no cares, no anxieties; they always have a resource ...People without cares do not require as much food as those whose life entails anxieties. See how long they live!'" (p. 166). And that, as far as Lord Marney is concerned, is that. With a proper rural police the current and temporary problem of incendiarism which is currently plaguing the neighbourhood, would be solved, and with it the entire "Condition-of-England" issue too.

Stephen Morley--the other extreme to Marney--is the token socialist in this novel, and it is not surprising that he does not fare well. At first seen as only an eccentric, an idealist of above average enthusiasm, by the end he is revealed as a traitor, liar, cheat, thief, and would-be murderer. As well as being a socialist stereotype, he is the novel's single outright villain.

Morley is an intellectual, which makes him even more dangerous, and a pacifist, a teetotaller, a vegetarian, and a communist. He believes strongly in the theory of a cooperative society, and is thus recognizable as an anti-hero not only in Disraeli's eyes--the young would-be Prime Minister is nothing if not a fervent individualist--but in the commonly held view of most Victorians, for whom the Carlylean super prophet was to be the key to real success. Great men, not great movements, would in the end provide the leadership needed to move England forward. Morley, on the other hand, is "as a man, less elevated than his ideas; indeed, intellectualism has made him as morally degraded as his worst enemy, Lord Marney."[25] He is, as well as a non-leader, a rather despicable human being whom Disraeli turns into a symbol and a scapegoat. In other words, when this horrible man is murdered, defeated by Egremont, we suspect that Disraeli means us to believe that socialism has been justly vanquished as well.

In between these two extremes lie four other characters. Each has a point of view, or an opinion, concerning the causes of this horrible Chartist issue, and the possible ways in which it might be resolved. All four of them are aristocrats, and all four of them, including Gerard, who is converted in the end, see the Church as the source of any solution that would really work. The first of these--the most obvious--is Aubrey St. Lys. He is an aristocrat, "a younger son of the most ancient Norman family in England" (p. 117). He is the vicar of Mowbray, a "humble vicar," and of course an idealist who is dedicated to helping the poor. He sees as the historical cause of _all_ contemporary social, political, and even economic ills the Church's ignominious renunciation of its own pledge to bring charity and enlightenment to all sinners, and not just the wealthy ones. In ignoring most of the populace, the Church has gradually lost its autonomy. It has become the servant of the ruling class; it has "deserted the people; and from that moment the Church has been in danger and the people degraded" (p. 122). As a restorationist, St. Lys, like his political counterparts, sees the return to the past as the only solution for a better future.

Sybil, also an idealist, is, as it turns out, an aristocrat obsessed with the notion of suffering. When Egremont calls her a "ministering angel," she replies:

> 'There is no merit in my conduct, for there is no sacrifice. When I remember what this brave English people once was; the truest, the freest, and the bravest, the best-natured and the best-looking, the happiest and most religious race upon the surface of this globe; and think of them now, with all their crimes and all their slavish sufferings, their soured spirits and their stunted forms; their lives without enjoyment and their deaths without hope; I may well feel for them, even if I were not the daughter of their blood.' (p. 137)

An interesting adjunct to this--given that she is in fact not of their blood, but a true-blue aristocrat--is the relationship she has with the children at Trafford's factory. "'The queen, the queen,'" they cry when she approaches; "'my subjects,'" she explains to Egremont.

She wants to help the poor, and yet she is, according to her father, very ambivalent about her position in the world, and her future there. "'She hankers after the cloister,'" he tells Egremont. "'She has passed a still, sweet life in the convent here; the Superior is the sister of my employer and a very saint on earth; and Sybil knows nothing of the real world except its sufferings'" (p. 150). That she does indeed know nothing of the real world is revealed further when she questions Baptist Hatton's claim to be one of the people. "'But is your labour their labour?'" she asks. "'Is yours that life of uncomplaining toil, wherein there is so much of beauty and of goodness, that by the fine maxim of our Church it is held to include the force and efficacy of prayer?'" To which Hatton replies, rather sardonically, I think: "'I am sure that I should complain of no toil that would benefit you'" (p. 269).

In other words, Sybil is, or would be, a martyr. She calls herself a "sister in Christ," a "Saint Theresa, foundress of nothing, whose loving heart-beats and sobs after an unattained goodness tremble off and are dispersed among hindrances, instead of centering in some long-recognizable deed."[26] She, and many like her, would turn suffering into a utilitarian experience, a mass and masochistic method of internalizing change and adapting to a society in which humans-as-machines must not waste time trying to relieve themselves of pain and suffering. They must not only eat less, one can imagine Sybil thinking, they must see the value, and the beauty, of eating less.

Egremont, whose vision is the most complicated, also sees the Church as a necessary part of the nation's salvation. In one of the most memorable first meetings we have with him, he stops at a monastery, where, in the centre,

> with a strength that had defied time, and with a beauty that had at last turned away the wrath of man, still rose if not in perfect, yet admirable, form and state, one of the most noblest achievements of Christian art--the Abbey Church...He stood among the ruins that...had seen many changes: changes of creeds, of dynasties, of laws, of manners. New orders of men had arisen in the country, new sources of wealth had opened, new dispositions of power to which that wealth had necessarily led. His own house, his own order, had established themselves on the ruins of that great body, the emblems of whose ancient magnificence and strength surrounded him. (pp. 65, 67).

He sees this partially ruined abbey as the link with the feudal past, with religion, "which, far more than an organized system of worshipping God, was in feudal England the unifying and, indeed, controlling factor in man's life. Government and statecraft were guided by religion just as was every other area of human endeavor."[27]

Unlike St. Lys, however, Egremont, as aristocrats generally, sees the Church as an agent, just as "government and statecraft" are agents. In other words, just as Parliament would promote economic stability through such legislation as the Corn Laws, the Church would promote social stability. It would be a pacifying agent.[28] In Sybil, then, theorizes Richard Levine, "by viewing the philosophy which emerges from the treatment of religion...the reader becomes aware of more than the subject of religion however broadly conceived. If we couple...[Egremont's] religious medievalism...with the novelist's view of history, what must emerge is a world view, a Weltanschauung, so broad that hardly an aspect of human life is left unaccounted for."[29]

At this point Egremont may well be a sincerely humanistic aristocrat, but he remains an aristocrat nevertheless. He will never give up his belief in the natural supremacy of some men over others. He believes that if it "were indeed the case" that "an impassable gulf...[divides] the Rich from the Poor...that the Privileged and the People...[form] Two Nations, governed by different laws, influenced by different manners, with no thoughts or sympathies in common; with an innate inability of mutual comprehension," if this be true, he says, then "the ruin of our common country" is at hand (p. 265). But he very clearly does not believe this to be true. There is only One Nation, "our common country," and it is unified by tradition: the tradition of Church and State, guided by the wisdom of the true leaders, whose wisdom, and above all, whose strength is so vital to this unity. That is why, he tells Sybil, they--the aristocrats--are the born leaders.

> The People are not strong; the People can never be strong. Their attempts at self-vindication will end only in their suffering and confusion. It is civilization that has effected, that is effecting, this change. It is that increased knowledge of themselves that teaches the educated their social duties. There is a dayspring in the history of this nation which those who are on the mountain-tops can as yet perhaps only recognize. You deem you are in darkness, and I see a dawn. The new generation of the aristocracy of England are not tyrants, not oppressors, Sybil, as you persist in believing. Their intelligence, better than that, their hearts are open to the responsibility of their position...They are the natural leaders of the People, Sybil; believe me they are the only ones. (p. 297).

Another character with an opinion is Gerard, the Chartist. It is noteworthy that although we hear much of Egremont's views, even of Lord Marney's, Stephen Morley's, and Sybil's, we hear almost nothing at all from this man, nor even from Disraeli, concerning the Chartist movement. That it exists is of course verifiable, that it is abhorrent would seem to be similarly easy to prove. His characters for the most part detest it, his mentor Carlyle sees its value only in theory, the practise being too violent, too unorganized, too irrational and ungodly, and the author himself, like Carlyle, approves only of the words of the petition. The act of putting those words into practise is presumably for wise minds alone; the results of the attempts of others he chronicles--they include mass insurrection, treason and murder. (I make the distinction here between Charter and Chartists. It is the former about which he is strangely silent; the latter he ridicules every chance he gets.)

Gerard eventually renounces the Chartists, in much the same way that Crossthwaite does in Alton Locke, abhorring particularly the violence with which this movement has been fraught, and choosing instead the moral path, and the aristocratic path. The Chartists, meanwhile, continue on their road of destruction. In the final chapters of Sybil we see depicted Disraeli's undisguised views of them, their unionist allies, and workers generally. Led by their "Biship," they roam the countryside, a band of marauding ruffians, vandalizing, burning, murdering; at this point we are expected to see them, and indeed all political movements as barbaric, unprincipled and ultimately treacherous. Like Carlyle, "Disraeli feels nothing but hatred and contempt for them: his tone is that of a prophet who dreads his own visions...he is warning England of the fate awaiting the country if it fails to accept the new Toryism [God and Monarch fighting the evils of Mammon] to safeguard society."[30]

In the end, those who have supported the aristocrats--those who are on the side of truth and justice--are duly rewarded. Walter Gerard becomes Lord Mowbray, his tender young daughter, Lady Marney, and Dandy Mick, surnamed

Mowbray, and Devilsdust, who changes his name to Radley, are set up in business by Egremont. " The firm of Radley, Mowbray, and Co. is a rising one," writes Disraeli, in a quasi-prophetic tone, "and will probably furnish in time a crop of members of Parliament and Peers of the realm" (p. 453).

This novel tries to augment faith, and provide reassurance in an anxiety-ridden world. And yet, as Raymond Williams notes, the climax of Sybil is the "uniting of Egremont, 'the enlightened aristocrat,' and Sybil, 'the daughter of the People,' which, in the novel, is the symbolic creation of the One Nation. This...is the novel's most interesting illustration. For Sybil, of course, is only theoretically 'the daughter of the People.' The actual process of the book is the discovery that she is a dispossessed aristocrat, and the marriage bells ring, not over the achievement of One Nation, but over the uniting of the properties of Marney and Mowbray, one agricultural, the other industrial: a marriage symbolic, indeed, of the political developmemt which was the actual issue."[31] It is also, ironically, a marriage symbolic of the actual hope which existed: the dream of becoming.

The Victorians, even, or perhaps especially, those who would most passionately denounce Darwin, were obsessed with the idea of becoming. One is born a sinner, but becomes cleansed. One is born poor, but becomes wealthy, successful, happily married. It was Disraeli's most internalized concept, this notion of achievement. From the very beginning, perhaps as early as the age of thirteen, when he became a member of the Anglican Church, he was obsessed with ambition and power, and convinced himself, even before becoming a Tory, that he could--he would--become Prime Minister. Nor was he alone in this kind of thinking: "the theory was, in brief, that there was a movement in history akin to the scientific, evolutionary movement which Darwin was soon to explode on the Victorian horizon...This idea of 'becoming' developed in many historical and philosophical quarters into an optimistic trend; the state of man and therefore of his society was becoming better as generation succeeded generation and the facts of history could be offered as evidence for this view."[32]

Disraeli's theory of evolution, it must be noted, is an aristocratic one, based on historical as well as Christian evidence. "The aristocracy, through a dedicated application of a Hebraeo-Christian nobless oblige, must remain in control...Thus the hierarchy remains intact and the problem of critical transfer of power is avoided. Furthermore, Disraeli believes that a transfer of power to the populace would be a disaster as well as a violation of the spirit of his historical view...[as we have seen in Egremont's tirade to Sybil on this subject]. Since the state and its leaders are theoretically moral, there is no danger of a subversion of the rights and blessings due the populace...This moral development...[takes place] when the ruling classes are ideologically committed to the great principles of the past."[33] In other words, just as St. Lys sees a better future concomitant with the return of the Church to the practise of its Medieval religious doctrine, so Egremont sees hope only in the return of the aristocracy to its own inherent doctrine of quasi-divine (passionate) rule. Disraeli, born neither aristocratic gentry nor aristocratic Anglican, somehow sees his own personal future, and of course that of England, as an amalgam of the two doctrines.

Mary Barton is as different from Sybil as its authoress--a reserved middle class, a-political woman, wife of a Unitarian minister, and a pastoral Romantic at heart--is from the vociferous, ambitious, highly political author of Sybil. And yet the two are similar in many ways, as are all the social novels. This is because they deal with the same issues; Disraeli following from Carlyle, has presented them all--poverty, politics, the horrors of industrialism, the horrors of agriculturalism, the disparity of the two nations, Chartists, unionists, the Church, and so on--in what becomes a model, or matrix, for all subsequent novels of this sort. Not that any of the later writers--Mrs. Gaskell, for example--consciously copy Disraeli's techniques, or attempt a confrontation with what he sees as the issues; they do not. What they do, however original in conception, is motivated by a concern with contemporary issues and more than that, with the outcry, the torrent of rage, which Carlyle has bequeathed them. The second restriction is simply the morality of the times in which they live. In Victorian England they cannot be as free as Lawrence will be, just as he will be more restricted than Céline. Disraeli's matrix, then, is the Victorian matrix; Disraeli has, with his ambition and intelligence, simply filled all the squares in that matrix. As I have said, others will do better (a qualitative matter), but they cannot do more (a quantitative matter).

Mary Barton chronicles the lives of a young Manchester woman and her father, whom she takes care of and protects. Immediately we see one effect of industrialization which Disraeli could not adequately discuss: the fragmented and often alienated family. As surrogate wife--Mrs. Barton dies in childbirth--Mary cleans, sews, mends, and worries about the household's financial situation. She works as an apprentice dressmaker in the day time, her father being unemployed. She is sixteen years old.

Life is harsh for this young woman; work is intolerable, yet not more so than homelife.

> For when she returned for the night her father was often out, and the house wanted the cheerful look it had had in the days when money was never wanted to purchase soap and brushes, black-lead and pipe-clay. It was dingy

> and comfortless; for, of course, there was not even the dumb familiar home-friend, a fire...
>
> If her father was at home it was no better; indeed it was worse. He seldom spoke, less than ever; and often when he did speak they were sharp, angry words, such as he had never given her formerly...once in his passion he had even beaten her...he was often angry. But that was almost better than being silent. Then he sat near the fire-place (from habit), smoking, or chewing opium. Oh, how Mary loathed that smell![34]

Life is no better for the rest of the townfolk.

> For three years past, trade had been getting worse and worse, and the price of provisions higher and higher. This disparity between the amount of the earnings of the working classes, and the price of their food, occasioned in more cases than could well be imagined, disease and death. Whole families went through a gradual starvation. They only wanted a Dante to record their sufferings.[35]

Barton and the other workers become increasingly desperate. They have petitioned Parliament, with no results. Malnutrition and disease are ravaging their numbers. What can the solution be?

At this point Gaskell, like Disraeli before her, becomes confused, and not a little anxiety-ridden. Chartism, or any form of socialism, are clearly not the answer, for several reasons. Gaskell is firstly not at all political, nor is she economically inclined, so she naturally does not see the problem as one of politics nor economics. It is instead a moral problem, posed in these words: Why, she asks, are there "rich and poor; why are they so separate, so distinct, when God made them all? It is not His will that their interests are so far apart. Whose doing is it?"[36]

She is certainly not a socialist, not even, like Kingsley, a Christian socialist. In fact, like Disraeli, she fears trade unions, portraying them as secret societies plotting dark blasphemous revolution, their members for the most part "desperate" men, "ready for anything," their "strange" and "pale" faces peering into Mary's home as they seek her father, a devout Chartist. Sometimes they are disembodied, a "hand and arm" reaching in and beckoning him away.[37] Another time, when Job is trying to explain to Carson that Barton had remained a Christian, and that his wrong doings had, in the end, only been an attempt "to make great riches and great poverty square with Christ's Gospel," Carson misinterprets him. "'You mean he was an Owenite,'" he asks, "'all for equality, and community of goods, and that kind of absurdity.' 'No, no!'" replies Legh vehemently. "'John Barton was no fool.'"[38]

Job Legh is the one character in the novel who does not suffer as the others suffer. He is the one intelligent character, the man who, unlikely as it may seem, is able to "snatch" passages of Newton's Principia as it lies open before him on the loom, and at night ponder mathematical problems for relaxation. He is also "the embodiment of 'the gentle humanities of earth' and of the practical possibilities of the Christian ethic...[it is] he who presses home the social and spiritual lesson after John Barton's death."[39] He is sharply contrasted with Barton the Chartist, the violent protester, the murderer. He is a pacifist, resigned to the acceptance of his situation, and indeed, that of his peers. And he is the one who survives intact, with a peaceful mind and soul. The message is indisputably clear, to the reader as well as to Job himself.

> 'It's true it was a sore time for the handloom weavers when powerlooms came in: them newfangled things make a man's life like a lottery; and yet I'll never misdoubt that powerlooms, and railways, and all such-like inventions, are the gifts of God.

> I have lived long enough, too, to see that it is part of His plan to send suffering to bring out the higher good...I'm clear about this, when God gives a blessing to be enjoyed, He gives it with a duty to be done; and the duty of the happy is to help the suffering to bear their woe.'[40]

In other words, the "solution" involves Christian ethics, as embodied in this virtuous man or as proclaimed by the dying and repentant John Barton. Even Carson the millowner changes. He suddenly and almost inexplicably turns to religion, and becomes in addition a model employer for whom his workers just as suddenly become sympathetic. In this way, writes Cazamian, "Mrs. Gaskell hopes that an increase in sympathy in the national heart will improve social relations."[41] In the end, however, her idealism, like Disraeli's, is a problem. Their visions become clouded for they, like Carlyle, jump to solutions before clearly comprehending the problems. Their idealism turns into ungrounded optimism mixed with dogmatism.

While parts of Mary Barton, then, are accurate and sympathetic portrayals of conditions as they existed, the novel as a whole does not deal with the problems of the day in a realistic manner. Certainly the ending is detached and insufficient. The characters are "all going to Canada; there could be no more devastating conclusion. A solution within the actual situation might be hoped for, but the solution with which the heart went was a cancelling of the actual difficulties and the removal of the persons pitied to the uncompromised New World."[42] Gaskell, continues Williams, again like Disraeli, does not even attempt to deal with the real problem, and she does not because she cannot. "Her response to the suffering is deep and genuine, but pity cannot stand alone in such a structure of feeling. It is joined, in Mary Barton, by the confusing violence and fear of violence, and is supported, finally, by a kind of writing-off, when the misery of the actual situation can no longer be endured."[43]

Religion is the only solution for Disraeli, for Gaskell, and not surprisingly, for the Reverend Charles Kingsley in his novel of the impoverished tailor, Alton Locke. Like the others, he begins bravely, with pictures of depravation, starvation, alienation; like the others, he falters mid-way, and by the end has turned in fear from the real attempts of the working classes to resolve the situation, and in doing so, turns from his own idealism. For Kingsley, this was a particularly bitter and in the end, extreme transformation. "In the beginning," writes Allan Hartley, "he had written with a fiery zeal that knew only certainty and no doubt. The world, he should change in a twinkling. But in the heat of the day he tempered his steel and dampened his fire and, chastened, had continued 'in fear and trembling.' At the book's close, he found himself a conservative clergyman rising against the background of his birth into the...Establishment."[44]

The novel does indeed begin with "fiery zeal." Alton Locke, a half-orphan, his father dead, his mother soon to die, acquires work in a sweat shop where in common practise men and women become so indebted to the tailor, because their wages are lower than the price he charges for food and rent, that they remain indebted for years--often, in fact, until death--so poor that they do not possess clothing enough to venture outside. In the shop where Alton works, he is informed by a co-worker that he is lucky, there on the top floor, for he is "nearer heaven" than his neighbours. "Why?" he asks.

> 'A cause you get all the other floors' stinks up here as well as your own. Concentrated essence of man's flesh, is this here as you're a breathing. Cellar work-room we calls Rheumatic Ward, because of the damp. Ground-

> floor's Fever Ward--them as don't get typhus gets dysentery, and them as don't get dysentery gets typhus--your nose'd tell yer why if you opened the back windy. First floor's Ashmy Ward--don't you hear 'um now through the cracks in the boards, a puffing away like a nest of young locomotives? And this here most august and upper-crust cockloft is the Conscrumptive Hospital. First you begins to cough, then you proceeds to expectorate--spittoons, as you see, perwided free gracious for nothing--fined a kivarten if you spits on the floor--
>
> Then your cheeks they grows red, and your nose it grows thin,
> And your bones they stick out, till they comes through your skin:
>
> and then, when you've sufficiently covered the poor dear shivering bare backs of the hairystocracy--
>
> Die, die, die
> Away you fly,
> Your soul is in the sky!
>
> as the hinspired Shakspeare wittily remarks.'[45]

The conditions of work, and the indebtedness, are almost completely perennial. They can change, a radical colleague named Crossthwaite tells Alton, but not by conventional means. Certainly not by education, for education, like religion, only perpetrates the moral and philosophic tenets of industrial capitalism. The only people for whom education could conceivably provide a greater freedom are middle classes and the aristocrats. The poor people are being educated--if at all--only "to make them slaves and bigots."

> 'They don't teach them what they teach their own sons. Look at the miserable smattering of general information --just enough to serve as sauce for their first and last lesson of 'Obey the powers that be'--whatever they be; leave us alone in our comforts, and starve patiently; do, like good boys, for it's God's will. And then, if

> a boy does show talent in school, do they help him up in life? Not they; when he has just learnt enough to whet his appetite for more, they turn him adrift again, to sink and drudge--to do his duty, as they call it, in that state of life to which society and the devil have called him.'[46]

Crossthwaite is a Chartist, and he soon persuades Alton to join the movement. "Neither government nor members of parliament can help us," he tells Alton, "we must help ourselves. Help yourselves and heaven will help you."[47] Alton becomes convinced, and joins. As a Chartist he begins to speak at meetings and soon becomes a powerful and eloquent orator. He is sent to the provinces where he incites a large mob to riot and is imprisoned for three years. His spirit breaks, and he leaves prison a depressed and ailing man. At this point we are reading a new novel; all that had gone before is ignored. By now it is clear that for Kingsley, as for his predecessors, Chartism is deplorable. In Kingsley's hands, as in Disraeli's, it is made synonymous with sloth and treachery. "Individual moral reform is abandoned," writes Cazamian. "For Kingsley, this political materialism is the ultimate impiety: his faith, like Carlyle's, revolts against making man the plaything of circumstances. The Chartists are heading for destruction, like Owen and the Benthamites, for they 'worship false gods.'"[48]

Alton and Crossthwaite are not lost, however. (As hero and supporting character, they cannot be). They are saved, like Sybil and her father, by a benevolent aristocrat, Lady Eleanor Ellerton. Although detesting the commercial, materialistic traits of the middle class, Kingsley, like Disraeli, finds much that is admirable in the aristocracy, so that Alton is convinced by Lady Ellerton's claim of inherent upper class superiority in the same way that Sybil was convinced by Egremont.

Eleanor is waiting for Alton when he is released from prison. (Her husband has recently died, and her philanthropic spirit aches with the desire to be active). She nurses him, and comforts him, and slowly persuades him and the despairing Crossthwaite to accept the folly of their past action, and the wisdom of what she hopes will be their future. Lay down your Charter, she tells them, and accept the Bible. "'That is your charter; the only ground of all charters...

> Learn a new lesson. Believe at last that you are in Christ, and become new creatures...Believe that your Kingdom is not of this world but of One whose servants must not fight. He that believeth, as the prophet says, will not make haste...Try no more to meet Mammon with his own weapons, but commit your cause to Him who judges righteously, who is even now coming out of His place to judge the earth...'
>
> She ceased, and there was silence for a few moments, as if angels were waiting, hushed, to carry our repentance to the throne of Him we had forgotten.
>
> Crossthwaite had kept his face buried in his hands; now he looked up with brimming eyes--
>
> 'I see it--I see it all now. Oh, my God! my God! what infidels we have been!'[49]

The model--Disraeli's matrix--becomes clear and the message from Carlyle, whom these writers emulate, also becomes increasingly evident. And contrary to the progress of novelists and their works which we normally expect, in these works there is no progress. Nothing new is presented. Chartism fails as a movement, and disappears; social awareness appears in other forms, less didactic, subtler, and probably in the end more effective. "The end of Chartism," writes Arnold Kettle, "did not mean the end of the social-problem novel; yet there are no real immediate successors to Disraeil and Mrs. Gaskell and Kingsley...The peculiar set of circumstances which produced the Condition-of-England Question and writers' attempts to cope with it altered."[50]

Certainly Dickens is not a successor. He does not follow this matrix of Disraeli's which I have mentioned. He is aware of social conditions, but his approach is radically different. His one attempt to emulate Carlyle --Hard Times--is almost a parody of the novels previously discussed. With the exception of a very harsh attack on utilitarianism, the novel is a sentimental, melodramatic portrayal of an environment and people that do exist, but mostly in that vivid Dickensian imagination.

Neither are North and South and The Nether World, in Kettle's words, successors to the works previously discussed. In North and South Gaskell has turned even further away from the "generalities" of social conditions to a study of individuals for whom the cotton mills provide little more than a backdrop. And for Gissing, the plight of the working classes only offends his middle class senses. One of the problems he is constantly wrestling with involves what Kingsley refers to as "getting on." He wonders at times how this horrendous situation confronting him might be eradicated. The conflict seems to waver between the liberal humanists' ideal of abolishing the lower classes altogether, the idea being that if everyone were middle class and well-fed, there would be no working class problem, and the more pragmatic realization by others that without a working class there would be no economy, and no well-fed middle class to theorize about this question from behind the rims of after-dinner brandy glasses. It is also a matter of class patriotism. Getting on, after all, or "rising in life," means leaving one's peers behind. It implies individualism, which these authors seem to deplore. No, if a solution exists, it must be one which benefits as many as possible simultaneously. It must if possible be a cooperative affair, and if it cannot be that, it must at least exist as a solution available, theoretically, to everyone. In other words, similar to the American myth that anyone can be president, "getting on" must, like the public library, be open to all, regardless of class, regardless of circumstance. This is clearly a middle class, entrepreneurial position, and one which denies the reality of class, and of circumstance.

In the meantime, there seem to be only two alternatives available: passive Christian acceptance, or escape to the New World, which is seen as a sort of heaven on earth. Shape up, to paraphrase Carlyle, or ship out. The first position, which often borders on martyrdom, is a particularly unique middle class one, whereby the individual rises, or betters himself _in spirit_, while dutifully serving his master physically, because to rise physically, and economically, would crowd the market, and eventually destroy free trade. The rationale for this Odyssean split (and the dualism is very much a part of the Victorian Age, and of industrial alienation generally), is that God is eternal master; the local factory owner is too insignificant to really protest against. Attend Church meetings, in other words, not Chartist meetings. Serve Christ, not Communism.

In light of this, the invective these writers display is in the end defused. Disraeli's solution to the problem of the two nations involves an unlikely compromise between the working class and the aristocracy; Gaskell's vision of Christian harmony dissipates, her characters emigrating to Canada instead; Kingsley similarly turns from his own idealism to a compromise based on emigration. The other two--Dickens in _Hard Times_, and Gissing, in a novel called _The Nether World_--are even less reformist, as is

Gaskell in her later novel, North and South. They are all, like Disraeli, middle class Tories. They are Romantics, reactionaries, convincingly sympathetic towards the poor, and especially the impoverished lower middle class, yet are clear supporters of middle and upper class values. As novelists, some of them are good--and Dickens is exceptional--but as proponents of social change, or even acute observers of social conditions, they are confused, fearful, ambiguous, and ultimately traitors to their own cause.

Chapter 4: The Haunted City

By the 1840's the novel had undergone many interesting changes. Dealing with urban society and its problems, it was being read by an increasingly larger audience; it was also being made more easily available, due, ironically, to the lowering prices mass industrialization made possible, and to public libraries, a product of urban industrial growth; and finally, the novel was being made even more accessible because of magazine serialization, which changed many aspects of the novel: its form, its reception, its popularity, its very raison d'etre.

There were writers who became aware of these changes, who followed the pattern of things happening--Bulwer Lytton, Ainsworth, the minor Newgate novelists--but there were few real innovators; really only three, in this area: Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade and Charles Dickens, and of those the latter was more often, and more profoundly, the one man who became aware of the changes in the novel and in the urban experience as he wrote. Indeed, he often caused the changes, taking from the city more than merely the details of setting, taking what Williams calls "a crisis of experience, often quite personally felt and endured, which when it emerged in novels was much more than a reaction to existing and acknowledged public features....It brought in new feelings, people, relationships; rhythms newly known, discovered, articulated; defining the society, rather than merely reflecting it...It was not the society or its crisis which produced the novels. The society and the novels...came from a pressing and varied experience which was not yet history."[1]

This "crisis of experience" is a rapidly changing and increasingly complicated one, and in terms of what I have discussed concerning culture and the attempt to redefine culture (see Chapter Two), the concept of society, or social interaction, and within that, of known, or knowable self, in fact, writes Williams, "any assumption of a knowable community--a whole community, wholly knowable--becomes harder and harder to sustain. And we have to remember, with this, that there is a direct though very difficult relationship between the knowable community and the knowable person."[2] The concept of knowable community--the apparently "known" community, say, of Jane Austen or George Eliot--becomes (and this bears repeating) so very difficult to sustain, that we might imply a more accurate historical--socio-psychological--situation if we use the term unknowable, or alienated community, one in which the inhabitants also are unknown and unknowable. The relevant point here is that in the face of increased material wealth and because of rising literacy, among other things, there is a growing awareness of history, of a comparatively better, or at least different and certainly nostalgically maintained past, and a recognition, by contrast, of the alienated victims of contemporary industrialization, and of the depth and breadth of that alienation, and that victimization. This recognition is very conscious, initially, and quite profound, for it included the relationships between the individual and society, between "the urban crowd--not the occasional but the regular crowd, the new crowd of the metropolitan streets" and the "problems of self-identity, self-knowledge, self-possession," problems of "the unknowable crowd and the unknowing and unknown individual." In other words, "a related alienation, of community and of persons."[3]

This, then, is another aspect of industrial-related alienation, and thus another stage of awareness on the part of the romantic realists. The first stage (at least in terms of my two part investigation) was the alienation of the working class as a whole--alienated from their past, alienated in terms of their new environment, alienated more intensely than their peasant forefathers ever were; for the new middle class, unlike the landed aristocracy, is not indifferent to work, and the dirty job of making money. It is in fact very much attuned to its endeavours and its automaton-like "hands," for their production rate is its profit margin.

As we saw in the last chapter, the social, or socio-political novelists were aware of this estrangement, but only in terms of classes and individuals as a part of a class. In one sense they are very moralistic in their writing, and to a degree simplistic too. There tends to be two sides only--two nations--them and us, the good and the bad. The cultural fragmentation may very well start that way--certainly the movements arising from the initial recognition of the urban ghetto dwellers' plight are one-sided (the Chartist Movement, the Trade Unions)--but it soon becomes very evident to the people as well as the writers that the reasons for such mass alienation are far more complicated, and no longer can be explained in terms of employment or improved with shorter working hours. The middle class is too entrenched by now; the working class too far removed from the rural past, too psychologically urban, for simple solutions.

In the new novel, the novel of the city, the phenomenon of industrial estrangement moves from the general to the specific, and from the superficial to the more profound, People become individuals rather than stereotypes or representatives of causes, and they are investigated as unique beings, rather than being presented in an unquestioning way. Again, this is particularly so in the hands of Dickens.

One of the issues--the main one, perhaps--is the city itself. Not the factories, not the factory workers, nor the unions, and the Chartists, but the total environment within which all these exist. The portrayal of the city as it is perceived by Dickens is part of his realism, and his experience, which was the experience of his readers also. Because of this writer and reader had a common bond: the haunted city, which they were consciously confronting, and the actual drama of the streets which was the drama of this literature. There was something comfortable, and reassuring about this compatibility--for the people of the streets, that is. In the eyes of the aristocracy, this move to realism, so-called, was disconcerting, and just as they denounced it for its sensationalism, they denied it the verity of its realism. In 1850, for example, Sir Peter Laurie, a London alderman, told a public meeting that Jacobs Island "ONLY existed" in Oliver Twist. Dickens, of course, was quick to retaliate, in support not only of his own fiction, but of popular literature generally, and the veracity of those who would reveal the true horrors of contemporary cities. His rebuttal was couched in Dickensian phrases--the usual satire and wit. According to Sir Peter's logic, he wrote, "when Fielding described Newgate...[it] ceased to exist...when Smollett took Roderick Random to Bath, that city instantly sank into the earth...[and] an ancient place called Windsor was entirely destroyed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth by two Merry Wives of that town, acting under the direction of a person of the name of Shakespeare."[4]

There are two ways of perceiving a city: in the first, the huge conglomerate of people is seen as a grand village, in the sense of both the primitive--the definable community--and the pastoral--the innocent and beautiful experience; in the second, it is found to be, as one early critic described it, a "kind of monster, with a head enormously large, and out of proportion to its body...no better than a wen or excrescence upon the body politic."[5]

The city was not always seen this way of course; there was a time when it was viewed more positively, for it was growing in direct proportion to the expansion of industry and trade, and that was good. It was cherished as the "celebration of production," a combination of economic wizardry and civilized order. But that was the ideal of course, and the ideal was embodied in the material, the reification of bourgeois values. There was another side to the city that the ruling class recognized and attempted to quell, and that was the mob: the hordes of people flocking into the metropolis, unemployed, hungry, homeless or crowded into hastily constructed shacks, all of them filled with great expectations and lofty, naive dreams of success. The ruling class attempted to remove them by creating a judicial superstructure that would rule their very presence illegal--this included statutes prohibiting new buildings--exceptions were allowed, of course, for houses of a certain grand fashion--and the attempt to eliminate "undesirables," including those who for some reason were deemed unemployable, by either defining them as criminals or encouraging them to seek a better life in the colonies. Either way, this would enable higher wages to be given to those remaining. Of course the new laws, covering everything from vagrancy to murder for profit, were directed primarily at the working class, to whom the terms "insolent rabble" or "idle, profligate and debauched" were applied as a rationale to hide the fear and incomprehension with which they and their situation were perceived. "What is then compounded in this view," writes Williams, "is a contradictory reality: of vice and protest, of crime and victimisation, of despair and independence. The contrasts of wealth and poverty were not different in kind from those of the rural order, but were more intense, more general, more evidently problematic, in their very concentration into the feverishly expanding city."[6]

The system, of which the laws were the determining factor, may have produced a greater coherence and ease of management in the minds of the theorists, but the reality of the situation changed only in that confusion and alienation were intensified and poverty in the working class increased while material success as a middle class goal became further internalized. Charles Booth, in his "Recommendations" to raise the quality of life for the poor, writes in 1889 that because "the main object of the lives of the members of this class is money-making...it is better for themselves, and for others too, that...[they] should spend freely...On a wise expenditure both their welfare and their higher social order depend."[7] The potential for community degenerated into a common condition and destiny which was a shared thing but not something likely to inspire; that any--Dickens, for example--were inspired says something about both the genius and the nature of their personal visions.

The laws, ostensibly order-producing, in fact did not resolve conflict or ease tension at all. They created security rather than order, protecting the power structure by creating separation via one-way channels of communication. All interaction was stifled; action, including the extremely personal acts of self-defense or suicide, was constricted and channelled. All complaints had to be registered only with the relevant bureau; to act otherwise--that is, to act independently--was to participate in criminal activity against the city-state. In this way the state managed the very conditions of existence, and did so with the apparent authorization by natural processes. The "law" became part of the Law of God, a commandment which everyone eventually obeys, even willingly. "Acts that these poor people would not do for their own interests," writes Balzac in Old Goriot, "are done eagerly if the words 'His Excellency' are uttered. Government Departments, like the Army, have their system of passive obedience, a system which stifles the conscience, destroys the individual utterly, and ends, in time, by making a man nothing more than a screw or a nut in the administrative machine."[8]

The city is capitalism's domain, the "seizure of the natural and human environment" for use by the system. "Integration in the system," writes Guy Debord, "requires that isolated individuals be recaptured and isolated together...The history of the city is...also the history of tyranny, of state administration that controls the countryside and the city itself."[9] The control, for the purpose of governing and self-perpetuation, is based on census, tax and conscription. This causes the kinds of tension which prompts the imagination and fills the novels of Dickens: the apparently irreconcilable conflict which intensifies as the population and the inhumane practises of industrialization increase.

The massive size of the city, swelling daily, the overcrowding, the dirt and disease, the pressure exerted by the ruling minority, creating alienation, economic cannibalism and a mild but pervasive mass schizophrenia, the helplessness felt by the individual irrevocably dependent upon a system of social and financial conditions he was unable to comprehend and even more incapable of combatting--all this is a nightmare, a perception that the city is a haunting, organic creature, the monster which is more than a metaphor: the government--the group that "knows"--is the head; the streets are the arteries, in which "throbbing currents" of people rush incessantly back and forth, feeding the head; the centre is the heart, the business core from which emanates the city's energy forces. And beneath all this lies the bowels of the city, out of which exudes crime, including the crime of poverty--diseases which affect the monster's health and must be quelled. And more profound than this was the frightening discovery that the dreadful creature could exist for its own sake, obeying its own laws, and growing, always growing.

These were the later responses to the city: the observations, whether by inhabitant or visitor, of the crowded streets, the poverty, the shacks and the lack of privacy, and therefore the lack of dignity. They included the sociological perspective, the critical response, the "knowledgeable" view, and the feeling, the intuitive response to the actual experience of the urban and the human condition, of the uncertainty, the loss of identity, the inability to communicate, the recognition of life behind the contradictions within the impenetrable paradox of the haunted city. These were the observations of the urban writer, the person "who enacts in himself the alienation he is witnessing; who sees in the despair of others not only his own despair but the shapes of recoil; the drawing back, do-not-touch-me kind of exile."[10]

The city inspires the writer, becoming in part his imaginative muse (and nightmare), in part the shape of his fiction, its people his new-found characters. Dickens, for example, notes as early as the sketch "Shabby-Genteel People" (1834), the existence of "certain descriptions of people who, oddly enough, appear to appertain exclusively to the metropolis. You meet them, every day, in the streets of London, but no one ever encounters them elsewhere; they seem indigenous to the soil, and belong as exclusively to London as its own smoke, or the dingy bricks and mortar."[11] These are the people who will later appear in his novels; in fact, in the Introduction to Oliver Twist he returns to this preoccupation with the street dwellers, and the need to portray them in his fiction. It appears to him, he writes, that to "draw" these people, "as really did exist; to paint them in all their deformity, in all their wretchedness, in all the squalid misery of their lives; to show them as they really are, for ever skulking uneasily through the dirtiest paths of life, with the great black ghastly gallows closing up their prospect, turn them where they might; it appeared to me that to do this, would be to attempt something which was needed, and which would be a service to society."[12]

And so begins the evolution of a theme: the haunted city and its victims, the mystery and confusion of the unintelligible urban labyrinth. Most of Dickens's later novels will in some way be detective novels, not primarily because they involve mysteries of plot, but because they attempt to "lay bare the subterranean network of [urban] social relationships."[13] In this investigation, the city and the tendency of writers like Dickens to exaggerate or intensify the urban experience coalesce, and the city becomes an environment of juxtaposed extremes--as in Bleak House, where Jo, hungry and tired, stares up at St. Paul's Cathedral, "glittering above a red and violet-tinted cloud of smoke"[14]--in which the animate and the inanimate tend to merge.

What each individual writer sees and feels, according to his own anxiety, determines his mythology of the city. For Dickens, the city was black and mysterious, a grotesque and unknown organism inhabited by the doomed individual, for whom the impersonal law is incapable of aiding, and for whom poverty, or some such societal disease, eventually destroys. Tom-all Alone's, for example:

> It is a black, dilapidated street, avoided by all decent people...by night, a swarm of misery. As on the ruined human wretch vermin parasites appear, so these ruined shelters have bred a crowd of foul existence that crawls in and out of gaps in walls and boards; and coils itself to sleep in maggot numbers, where the rain drips in; and comes and goes, fetching and carrying fever and sowing more evil in its every footprint than Lord Coodle, and

> Sir Thomas Doodle, and The Duke of Foodle, and all the fine gentlemen in office, down to Zoodle, shall set right in five hundred years--though born expressly to do it.[15]

The system degrades the individual, so that if he were compared to a dog, "an educated, improved, developed dog who has been taught his duties and knows how to discharge them," the two would probably be "upon a par" in terms of "awakened association, aspiration, or regret, melancholy or joyful reference to things beyond the senses...But, otherwise, how far above the human...is the brute!"[16] And how far above some men's dwelling places are the brutes'; on a certain spring morning, for example, "birds in hot rooms, covered up close and dark, felt it was morning, and chafed and grew restless in their little cells; bright-eyed mice crept back to their tiny homes and nestled timidly together; the sleek house-cat, forgetful of her prey, sat winking at the rays of sun starting through the keyhole...The nobler beasts ...stood motionless behind their bars...[and] men in their dungeons stretched their cramped cold limbs and cursed the stone that no bright sky could warm."[17]

The city is a muddy, damp, unsophisticated place, appearing to be so recently removed from prehistoric times that one wouldn't be surprised "to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill."[18] There is mud everywhere. "Dogs, undistinguishable in mire. Horses, scarcely better; splashed to their very blinders. Foot passengers, jostling one another's umbrellas in a general infection of ill temper, and losing their foot-hold at street-corners, where tens of thousands of other foot passengers had been slipping and sliding since the day broke."[19] Similarly, there is fog everywhere, so that the onlooker, or even the participant cannot see as much as hear and feel and smell the fetid, slimy city, for it is not only soil that is being squelched underfoot.

The previous passage from Bleak House is comparatively humorous, even with the implied odours. In an earlier work, Martin Chuzzlewit, Dickens is not so exclusively comical, though certainly as vivid and as imaginative. In this novel, the city is epitomized in the description of Todgers's.

> You couldn't walk about in Todgers's neighbourhood, as you could in any other neighbourhood. You groped your way for an hour through lanes and bye-ways, and court-yards, and passages; and you never once emerged upon anything that might be reasonably called a street. A kind of resigned distraction came over the stranger as he trod these devious mazes, and, giving himself up for lost, went in and out and round about and quietly turned back again when he came to a dead wall or was stopped by an iron railing, and felt that the means of escape might possibly present themselves in their own good time, but that to anticipate them was hopeless. Instances were known of people who, being asked to dine at Todgers's, had travelled round and round for a weary time, with its very chimney-pots in view; and finding it, at last, impossible of attainment, had gone home again with a gentle melancholy on their spirits, tranquil and uncomplaining. Nobody had ever found Todgers's on a verbal direction, though given within a minute's walk of it. Cautious emigrants from Scotland or the North of England had been known to reach it safely, by impressing a charity-boy, town-bred, and bringing him along with them; or by clinging tenaciously to the postman; but these were rare exceptions, and only went to prove the rule that Todgers's was in a labyrinth, whereof the mystery was known but to a chosen few.[20]

The city here is almost completely unintelligible: a prison, should one find oneself ensconced in it, a prison in which one would surely die, for death is everywhere; in fact, "one of the first impressions wrought upon the stranger's senses was of oranges--of damaged oranges, with blue and green bruises on them, festering in boxes, or mouldering away in cellars... There were churches also by dozens, with many a ghostly little churchyard, all overgrown with such straggling vegetation as springs up spontaneously from damp, and groves, and rubbish...Here, paralyzed old watchmen guarded the bodies of the dead at night, year after year, until at last they joined that solemn brotherhood."[21]

The city, paradoxically--for it is so bustling and energetic--is a dying town, like a ghost town, complete with ghosts. Even the buildings "had an air of palpable deadness about them,"[22] and below ground, "deep among the foundations of these buildings, the ground was undermined and burrowed out into stables, where cart-horses, troubled by rats, might be heard on a quiet Sunday rattling their halters, as disturbed spirits in tales of haunted houses are said to clank their chains."[23] And yet, if the city appears to be dying, it is only because the living things are dying, and the flesh decaying. If the stranger looks at Todgers's from another perspective, if, say, he climbs to the top of a house, above the stench and the rattling chains, he sees something completely different, and he truly feels alien.

> After the first glance, there were slight features in the midst of the crowd of objects, which sprung out from the mass without any reason, as it were, and took hold of the attention whether the spectator would or no. Thus, the revolving chimney-pots on one great stack of buildings seemed to be turning gravely to each other every now and then, and whispering the result of their separate observation of what was going on below. Others, of a crook-backed shape, appeared to be maliciously holding them-

> selves askew, that they might shut the prospect out and baffle Todgers's. The man who was mending a pen at an upper window over the way, became of paramount importance in the scene, and made a blank in it, ridiculously disproportionate in its extent, when he retired. The gambols of a piece of cloth upon the dyer's pole had far more interest for the moment than all the changing motion of the crowd. Yet even while the looker-on felt angry with himself for this, and wondered how it was, the tumult swelled into a roar; the hosts of objects seemed to thicken and expand a hundredfold; and after gazing round him quite scared, he turned into Todgers's again, much more rapidly than he came out; and ten to one he told M. Todgers afterwards that if he hadn't done so, he would certainly have come into the street by the shortest cut: that is to say, headforemost.[24]

The city, then, is confusing and unintelligible because it is literally a labyrinth, and because it is so illogical. It has no sense to it, so that the only people who can survive for any length of time in it are those who have learned to live and travel instinctively, and on a level of awareness (sniffing, smelling, etc.) equal to, or even below that of a dog. And while the natives, and the postman, are able to instinctively manoeuver within the labyrinth, they do not come closer to understanding the maze itself, nor do they have any acquaintanceship with other inhabitants; this we receive from the allusion to the dead or dying, festering life, the only life-action being that of decrepit storytellers repeating their tales over and over to the same deaf ears. The only life as we understand it (in an affirmative sense) lies in the buildings themselves, and then only the houses, not the ancient warehouses and stables--presumably even the stone and wooden structures eventually become deaf and stiff, and slowly die. These houses, "turning gravely to each other now and then, and whispering the result of their separate observation of what was going on below"[25] are the only ones with an overview, the only ones capable of revealing the clues to the maze, and the solution, or even partial solution, to the mystery. And they, "maliciously holding themselves askew, that they might shut the prospect out and baffle Todgers's,"[26] refuse to do so.

One of the few solutions to life in the city, with its stinking streets and masses of humanity trampling earth into mud, is the attempt to create a dual personality (in Fanger's terms, an "'individual'" or private being and "its antagonist, his 'social being'"[27]), so that within the private being some small amount of humanity will remain, and be nurtured, and not extinguished in the brutal social world. There the other persona, the Mr. Hyde, transformed from the gentle Dr. Jekyll in the experimental laboratory which innovative industrialization creates, will develop a shell, or armor, and will survive.

The attempt to create two personalities, and with them, two lives--one in the office or working world, the other in the home, which becomes a haven and sometimes literally a castle--corresponds to the greater sense we have of an alienated environment creating or at least encouraging schizophrenia. We find an example of this in the novel Deliverance, in which the narrator, Mark Rutherford, who works "from ten in the morning till seven in the evening" but who, because of his distance from work, "was really away from home for eleven hours every day, excepting on Sundays," finds not only the hours but the work itself "unspeakable," made so mostly by his deputy-manager, a "tall, thin" man who "suffered occasionally from spitting of blood," and who "was the terror of the place." Rutherford finally develops a "stratagem of defense" whereby he separates the horrors of work, and his own working personality, from the gentle husband he wishes to be at home, with his new bride.

> Nobody knew anything about me, whether I was married or single, where I lived, or what I thought upon a single subject of any importance. I cut off my office life in this way from my life at home so completely that I was two selves, and my true self was not stained by contact with my other self. It was a comfort to me to think the moment the clock struck seven that my second self died, and that my first self suffered nothing by having anything to do with it. I was not the person who sat at the desk downstairs and endured the abominable talk of his colleagues and the ignominy of serving such a chief. I knew nothing about him. I was a citizen walking London streets; I had my opinions upon human beings and books; I was on equal terms with my friends; I was Ellen's husband; I was, in short, a man.[28]

Mr. Wemmick, Jaggers' assistant in Great Expectations, prescribes to a similar sort of duality. When Pip first meets him, he finds "a dry man, rather short in stature, with a square wooden face, whose expression seemed to have been imperfectly chipped out with a dull-edged chisel. There were some marks in it that might have been dimples, if the material had been softer and the instrument finer, but which, as it was, were only dints." He appears to be smiling, perpetually, until Pip realizes that "it was merely a mechanical appearance, and that he was not smiling at all."[29]

There is another Mr. Wemmick, however, and this man, besides being the best of sons for his aged parent, feeding him, caring for him, entertaining him, is also, he tells Pip, "my own engineer, and my own carpenter, and my own plumber, and my own gardener, and my own Jack of all Trades," trades he has utilized in building himself the ultimate Victorian retreat: a gothic castle, small, but evidently sturdy, complete with drawbridge and moat, a flagstaff, and a small cannon, which he fires every night at nine. Within this walled fortress, which is also a foreign country, in the midst of the back lanes of Walworth, impenetrable to attack, there is a lush garden and a small farm. When the drawbridge goes up at the end of the day, Wemmick is transformed from wooden clerk to king.

The next morning, the process is reversed. Pip notes that as they return to the law offices, "by degrees, Wemmick got dryer and harder as we went along, and his mouth tightened into a post-office again. At last, when we got to his place of business and he pulled out his key from his coat-collar, he looked as unconscious of his Walworth property as if the fountain and the Aged had all been blown into space together by the last discharge of the Stinger."[30]

For some the family and the home are retreats, havens which the changing "economical man" clings to in an effort to retain something of the serenity of bygone days. For others, however, the reverse is true. The Veneerings, for example, have not resisted those changes wrought by commerce; they and their abode, like a modern movie set, are only facade. Behind it--nothing.

> Mr. and Mrs. Veneering were bran-new people in a bran-new house in a bran-new quarter of London. Everything about the Veneerings was spick and span new. All their furniture was new, all their friends were new, all their servants were new, their plate was new, their carriage was new, their harness was new, their horses were new, their pictures were new, they themselves were new, they were as newly married as was lawfully compatible with their having a bran-new baby, and if they had set up a great-grandfather, he would have come home in matting from the Pantechnicon, without a scratch upon him, French polished to the crown of his head.
>
> For, in the Veneering establishment, from the hall-

> chairs with the new coat of arms, to the grand pianoforte with the new action, and upstairs again to the new fire-escape, all things were in a high state of varnish and polish. And what was observable in the furniture, was observable in the Veneerings--the surface smelt a little too much of the workshop and was a trifle sticky.[31]

This is the new city, the suburb, and in the fiction it is dealt with lightly, and more humorously. There is no death here, and no disease, although the animated objects and the dehumanized characters clearly show the awareness of death and disease. Twemlow, for example, is introduced as "an innocent piece of dinner furniture that went upon easy castors and was kept over the livery stable-yard in Duke Street, Saint James's, when not in use."[32] In some respects, then, this fashionable suburb seems to be a better place to live, but it is not. The nothingness of Twemlow's life is as horrible as the emptiness of Jo's, the only difference being that one eats more regularly than the other. Both have the same problem with identity, with trying to discover who they are and what their lives mean. Twemlow, who collapses at one point, and seems to have fainted, is only, Dickens tells us, "stunned by the unvanquishable difficulty of his existence,"[33] while Jo sits, "the sun going down, the river running fast, the crowd flowing by him in two streams--everything moving on to some purpose and to one end--until he is stirred up, and told to 'move on' too."[34] Ironically, Jo thinks he is the only one whose life is not purposeful, yet lives compared to the mindless water of rivers are no more purposeful than his, and when he joins the flow, he is really more a part of humanity than he knows.

The city is a shadowy grey thing, logically inanimate, and yet at times, viewed from the corner of the eye, as it were, it moves. It conspires, for it disapproves of all these petty individuals running around its streets, filling its air with smoke (or perhaps it prefers the smoke to the clean country air). It has become a living breathing monster which seems about to destroy the very people who created it and who now encourage its continued existence. It will not destroy everyone, however, for the people who benefit the most from the city--the upper middle class--are to a degree exempt from the death-giving part of their creation. They can escape at times to their country estates; it is the lower middle class bureaucrats and the workers, and more than that, the unemployed, the infirm, the aged, and the children who suffer the most at the "hands" of this monster. They can never escape. In their world, the city becomes a responsive entity, and in being given such stature, it achieves the position of another character. In other words, it is no longer just a setting; it takes part in the action of the novel, touching people, and occasionally destroying them, changing relationships, becoming a persona, a monster, a villain--the master criminal for whom Fagin, Quilp, Uriah Heep, Jonas Chuzzlewit and Smallweed work: the city is the mastermind.

The city destroys illusions too--it crushes Little Nell's dream world, and her grandfather's plans for their future, leaving him with nothing but "'Hope and patience, hope and patience!'"[35] It also destroys naivete, changing children into adults, whether they are ready, as Pip probably is, or yet too young to be capable of accepting such responsibility, as in the cases of young Bailey, Jenny Wren, Jo, and others. These children do survive the changes they are forced to undergo, but not untouched. To survive in the city they become instinctively cunning and often hard, even ruthless, not because they wish to gain something at another's expense, but because they are to some degree still children, and always will be--caught in a timelessness that will render them forever narcissistic, in the way of children. This is apparently what has happened to Daniel Quilp, and certainly to Dick Swiveller, for whom life is unbearable without a touch of fantasy, the substitute, in his case, for the ability to comprehend the world around him in a logical, adult way.

The city destroys individuals, and leaves others with a confused sense of self. Identity in this unintelligible maze becomes as confusing as the city itself. What the city does not mystify or cover up, however, is selfishness--the concept of self as ultimate authority--which is also the individualism condoned so heartily by the industrial middle class capitalists who rule the city. Petty entrepreneurism, as it may also be defined, is something that we see often in Dickens's works. Fagin is an entrepreneur, as is Jaggers, and Smallweed, Tulkinghorn, Quilp, Veneering, Tite Barnacle and Nicodemus Boffin. All of them are trying to "get on", which is a euphemistic way of saying that they are trying to rise above their present economic position. None, of these mentioned, are as determined in this endeavor as the Chuzzlewits, Anthony and his son Jonas.

Anthony Chuzzlewit is one of the few to whom some small part of the mystery has evidently been revealed, for at eighty years of age, spry, and shrewd, he has clearly learned the art of survival in his city. He is as grotesque as his son, or very nearly so--the mentor often in these kind of situations being surpassed by his most gifted student--and that mutated spirit has been directed solely to one end: the acquisition of wealth, in an environment where people of his background most often die penniless. The ironic part of this particular man, and now of his son, is that they shall die as hungry and aesthetically and spiritually impoverished as their beggarly neighbours, for they die poor, in the same way that a miserly collector of food might die of malnutrition. Their nature, grotesque and misguided, has narrowed in scope, has shrivelled to the point where happiness, as I will explain, has become symbolic.

This branch of the Chuzzlewits also illuminates the single most demeaning aspect of all alienation created by capitalism, which is the separation of the means of production from the human condition. And in this case we see the further destruction of the soul which is that particular craziness most often found within the ranks of the middle class, the merchants: they would emulate the ruling class, and yet are not capable of a sensible form of that emulation. In other words, by not being capable of understanding the greater consequences of wealth, theirs becomes a parody of success, as well as an idolization of the means of success, which is how happiness becomes symbolic. Like the archetypical miser of George Eliot's novel, Silas Marner, these Chuzzlewits hoard their "happiness", employing Chuffey, the human adding machine, to inform them of the degree of that emotional state which they might at any particular time be potentially able to enjoy.

The motto of these bargain-seekers is "'Do other men, for they would do you.' That's the true business precept. All others are counterfeits."[36] For them, alienation produces success, while relationships, especially with relatives, create interference; the world of social amenities similarly creates distractions and interference, for it denies the businessman a portion of his work day and thus a portion of his profit, and it takes yet another portion as the price paid for such luxury. Jonas, for example, walks about the town for entertainment, enjoying the outsides of buildings while at the same time disparaging the activities, particularly those demanding an entrance fee, which the buildings house.

It is the rationale for behaviour, and not the phenomenon itself, which privides the greater insight, and which is therefore so intriguing. In

Martin Chuzzlewit, we are granted a moment of insight into the reasons for alienation by the alienated characters themselves. Furthermore, we are provided the surprising realization that these estranged beings know that they are estranged. Anthony Chuzzlewit knows the value of alienation in terms of survival, and passes that knowledge to his son as something even more valuable than wealth, or even the ability to amass wealth. Money, in other words, and the attainment of money are the natural talents and rewards derived from the truly entrepreneurial and urban nature: the alienated being.

We see, then, not only the results of urban alienation, Anthony, but the relationship between him and his son, as well as the actual process whereby an individual becomes what the father has become. When we meet him, the son's education is almost complete, and almost perfect.

> But for two results, which were not clearly forseen, perhaps by his watchful parent in the beginning, his training may be said to have been unexceptionable. One of these flaws was, that having been long taught by his father to over-reach everybody, he had imperceptibly acquired a love of over-reaching that venerable monitor himself. The other, that from his early habits of considering everything as a question of property, he had gradually come to look, with impatience, on his parent as a certain amount of personal estate, which had no right whatever to be going at large, but ought to be secured in that particular description of iron safe which is commonly called a coffin, and banked in the grave.[37]

And certainly when the "Dissolution of Partnership" finally occurs, Jonas, although anxious not to appear unduly grateful of the fact, has worked for many years to this very end, even contributing directly in such acts of financial wizardry as denying his father a new coat or a larger fire, and later even attempting with the aid of Mr. Lewesome's potion to deny him his life outright, and using as rationale the very words that man taught him, again and again, during his formative years.

This "singular disposition" of his son's might disturb another man, and in fact does disturb even one so similarly callous as the elderly Martin, who notes that his brother "'carried his corrupting influence with him, go where he would; and shed it round him, even on his hearth. It made of his own child a greedy expectant, who measured every day and hour the lessening distance between his father and the grave, and cursed his tardy progress on that dismal road.'"[38] Anthony, on the other hand, is delighted that Jonas is like this, for he has purposely trained him from childhood to be thus, and his training, according to the evidence at hand, has been eminently successful. He is pleased, for example, by Jonas's sharpness: "that young man's coarse allusions, even to himself, filled him with a stealthy glee: causing him to rub his hands and chuckle covertly, as if he said in his sleeve, '_I_ taught him. _I_ trained him. This is the heir of my bringing-up. Sly, cunning, and covetous, he'll not squander my money. I worked for this; I hoped for this; it has been the great end and aim of my life.'"[39]

The Anglo-Bengalee Disinterested Loan and Life Assurance Company is another example of the city's influence on people. This company, in all its grandiose fraudulence, began when Tigg expanded the idea of a limited business with limited funds. "Provided we did it on a sufficiently large scale," he muses, "we could furnish an office and make a show without any money at all...[a show which] addressed the public in general from the strong position of having everything to gain and nothing at all to lose."[40] This is "Business!" or at least it looks like business. Like the Anthony Chuzzlewit and Son empire, it is another parody of the capitalist system (although not so exaggerated)--unscrupulous, shady, barely legal, or perhaps quasi-legal or outright illegal, bending, even breaking contemporary laws in the name of utilitarian individualism and laissez-faire mongering, this, as other financial concerns, bases its credibility on appearance and its success on the same financial wizardry as that which allowed Anthony his achievements.

The difference between Chuzzlewit and Tigg is similar to the difference between Chuzzlewit and Fagin: Dickens simply presents us with varying degrees of the entrepreneurial facade. Fagin uses his "charitable" metaphor as a front, and with his talk of a "school" for boys, and various other innuendoes and implications, it is clear that he really believes in his "reversed capitalism," which is also important. Chuzzlewit, intent only upon the financial or accumulative aspects of capitalism, promotes the wizardry while disdaining the facade. Tigg is less capable and understands more perhaps than his predecessors. He understands that in a system that is basically fraudulent, ambiguous, and obviously shallow, the appearance or the "show" itself, which by definition is indicative of past success, is all that one needs in order to succeed. And so Tigg becomes another of the very few to whom some small part of the mystery is revealed.

Tigg is cunning, but in a sophisticated way. He is one of the original confidence men, deceiving people by using, or more accurately, misusing, the very laws written to protect them. Deception on the inside is countermanded by respectability on the outside; fraudulence on the part of a Director is ignored in the face of massive evidence of competence and sobriety on the part of another; irresponsibility is ignored or made to seem irrelevant by Tigg's brilliant use of the very emblem of responsibility: his porter, "a man who carried more conviction to the minds of sceptics than the whole establishment without him."

> When he sat upon a seat erected for him in a corner of the office, with his glazed hat hanging on a peg over his head, it was impossible to doubt the respectability of the concern...People had been known to apply to effect an insurance on their lives for a thousand pounds, and looking at him, to beg, before the form of proposal was filled up, that it might be made two. And yet he was not a giant. His coat was rather small than otherwise. The whole charm was in his waistcoat. Respectability, competence, property in Bengal or anywhere else, responsibility to any amount on the part of the company that employed him, were all expressed in that one garment.[41]

Truly, Tigg is brilliant. He is able to recognize the value of symbolism, and its effect upon the otherwise logical minds of his customers. Just as advertisement agencies in America use Grandmothers to promote their goods, this man has in fact summarized and combined the two British systems of conduct--moralism and materialism--in the person of one small man and his red waistcoat.

Martin Chuzzlewit is about individualism, capitalism, and the alienating effects of the city upon the practitioners of the first two as well as upon their victims. In portraying moral propriety as a guise for the fraudulent inner soul, it reveals a society "dedicated to the political principle of laissez-faire and the economic principle that there must be no interference with the iron laws of supply and demand."[42] And this, as Dickens himself extrapolates in his Preface to the 'Cheap Edition' (1850), was the most basic of the novel's concerns: "to exhibit in a variety of aspects the commonest of all vices,--to show how Selfishness propagates itself; and to what a grim giant it may grow, from small beginnings."[43]

In his usual direct way, Dickens has defined the underlying motivation behind much of contemporary social and business practise. All the political theories and the economic theories, and the theories of liberalism and humanism, the principles guiding the philanthropists, including the Church, and the merchants, even the aspirations of the victims of these edicts for self-improvement--the whole of the Victorian ideology and religious postulation--is based on and provoked by Selfishness. "'At every turn!'" cries Martin Senior (and for him to note this proves the extreme to which the affairs of men have fallen), "'Self, self, self. Everyone amongst them for himself!'"[44]

One final comment on Martin Chuzzlewit will show how Dickens is aware of the crisis of identity in the haunted city. The crisis is epitomized in the person of Mr. Nadgett, a man without an identity.

> He was...born to be a secret. He was a short, dried-up, withered old man, who seemed to have secreted his very blood...how he lived was a secret; where he lived was a secret, and even what he was, was a secret. In his musty old pocket-book, he carried contradictory cards, in some of which he called himself a coal-merchant, in others a wine-merchant, in others a commission-agent, in others a collector, in others an accountant: as if he really didn't know the secret himself.[45]

Mr. Nadgett, like so many urbanites, is a man of mystery, an alienated man, as haunted and confusing (and confused) as the city itself. He is absolutely without identity; his life is a secret, completely unknowable even to himself. It is worth noting, therefore, that he is also a secret agent, an invention of the haunted city, who, by trying to reveal the mystery of other men's identities without first knowing his own, only adds to the confusion and the mystery. He is told to follow Jonas Chuzzlewit, and when he does so, "that amiable and worthy orphan...[became] a part of the mystery of Mr. Nadgett's existence...the whole object...[of which] appeared to be, to avoid notice and preserve his own mystery."[46] Even when he feels ill, he informs his employers that there is "something wrong (secretly wrong, of course) in his liver."[47]

In Dickens's literature these characters are the second issue--the city was the first--and their lives, their experiences, are of utmost concern to him. He creates them as he does the city they live in; they are exaggerated, shadowy grey figures, or gleaming white ones, for it is the contrast, always the contrast, which best illuminates that which lies in between: the mundane, the undramatic, the average. In terms of characterization, this contrast underlines the typical as well as the idiosyncratic, the public person as well as the private person, all in a highly dramatized, even melodramatic manner. In this way what could appear to be the familiar, the typical, is presented in an unfamiliar situation, or at least more intensely projected. We have, on the one hand, "flat" characters, so-called, in a haunted, mysterious city, and on the other, the comic-grotesque, the individual who is portrayed either through exaggerated characterization, as a person of shadows and mystery, or is portrayed as sentimental, also by exaggeration.[48] The characters, then, and the literary form itself, become a projection of the city, both determined by their environment.

Chapter 5: The Grotesque, the Sentimental, and the Family

I

The grotesque, like the sentimental, is proof of the existence of human spirit, and therefore is a statement of faith by the author. But it is more than that, for it is also an unconscious statement. Psychologically, the grotesque surfaces as a manifestation of social taboos, and as a result of the phantasmagoric, hallucinatory effect the estranged city has on its inhabitants. Owing to the contradictory essence of the bourgeois state which permeates the city, and which is heralded by the bureaucrats as normal, these urban dwellers after a while themselves begin to perceive the ludicrous as normal, the repressed as natural, and anxiety as the motivating force behind one's actions.[1]

The taboos produce a conflict between the individual and society, and that conflict as Freud noted many times, leads to psychological repression, because in an alienated--that is, an absurd--world, orientation or any other form of resolution is impossible. Repression, then, as well as being a biological phenomenon, is also a social phenomenon, for the same reasons that Stanley Diamond sees schizophrenia as a social phenomenon. In both cases there is a created idealization of the self as an alternative to the mechanistic being which society prescribes. The schizophrenic is the pathological or grotesque result of idealization; the sentimentally portrayed woman, the primitive man, the innocent child, are similar versions of this idealization.

The most profound of social taboos on memory, and especially on the first experiences of childhood, is the sexual taboo, which is the strongest application of social repression the child is confronted with, and one which is increasingly progressive in its sophistication. This repression of infantile sexuality, writes Ernest Schachtel, "is brought about by the 'psychic forces of loathing, shame, and moral and esthetic ideal demands.' These forces have the sanction of society, they are the product of society, they are part of and serve the purposes of the same organized life of society which moulds the functions of all social activity."[2] The power of these forces can best be understood, although not necessarily explained, continues Schachtel, by the observation that repression of sexual experience in the first four or five years of a child's life leads to the repression of all other experience.

In literature, the grotesque might be described as an attempt to deal with the repression of childhood experience. The grotesque is profoundly inspired by the artist in his search to extract the truth from the illusionary myth of lost childhood. Because childhood memory, although repressed and threatening, does exist, it is possible to say that the grotesque allows that unconscious memory to surface. The fearful, and thus grotesque or uncanny aspects of the resurfacing memory are created in part, according to Freud, by an uncertainty and ambiguity concerning the humanness of the character, which is presented in such a way as to divert the reader's attention from the direct intellectual confrontation with that uncertainty. The emotion, which overpowers the intellect, is triggered by a repressed apprehension, usually retained from childhood, which is being reproduced within the story. It is the coincidental recurrence of our repressed experience or attitude, says Freud, and not the repression itself, which produces the fear, or uncanny feeling. For example: we read of a paranoic who is convinced someone is trying to blind him. Intellectually we know his fears are the result of his own deranged imagination, but emotionally we sympathize with the character because from childhood the fear of losing one's eyes has become the most dreaded of physical injuries.

Another way of defining the grotesque is in terms of the unresolved conflict between the desire to return to childhood, as a method of resolving our inability to adapt to a society which is felt to be too irrational for human needs, and the societal taboo which prohibits that desire. We relate to that conflict because we too wish to return to childhood, and yet we are frightened because we don't really want to return to our own particular childhood. It is a world too full of repressed fears and (sexual) anxiety. What we want, and what at least some aspects of the grotesque provide, is a fantasy world "in which," writes Michael Steig, "the dreamlike and the real are no longer clearly distinguished."[3] The fantasy is the idealized sexual or social experience, in which success is finally achieved. It is also liberation; in Freud's terms: "ego's triumph over harsh reality,"[4] and in this sense the grotesque is ultimately paradoxical, for it involves "the managing of the uncanny by the comic."[5] In other words humour, related both to instinctual pleasure--the fantasied freedom--and anxiety, enables the individual to transcend fear. Steig adds that:

> More specifically: a) When the infantile material is primarily threatening, comic techniques, including caricature, diminish the threat through degradation or ridicule; but at the same time, they may also enhance anxiety through their aggressive implications and through the strangeness they lend to the threatening figure. b) In what is usually called the comic-grotesque, the comic in its various forms lessens the threat of identification with infantile drives by means of ridicule; at the same time, it lulls inhibitions and makes possible on a preconscious level the same identification that it appears to the conscience or superego to prevent.[6]

The problem with such a definition, in terms of real life, is that not everything which has undergone repression and then returned from it, and is thus secretly familiar, produces uncanny feelings. We can sometimes, through a lack of empathetic experience, perceive the coincidence of repression and not be frightened. We don't emphathize because we don't accept the primitive quality or reality of the experience.

In literature such a conclusion is transcended, for the realm of fiction is not so liable to reality testing. It can contain, in addition to all the elements of real life, an element not found in real life. The grotesque can be dressed in additional guises because there are more means of creating it. Furthermore, the artist can depart from real life very subtly, by choosing to present unreality as a single, small detail within what appears to be common reality. He deceives us by promising to give us only reality, and then overstepping its bounds. "We react to his inventions as we would have reacted to real experiences; by the time we have seen through his trick, it is already too late and the author has achieved his object."[7] Again, this can only happen when we are sympathetic with the grotesque elements involved. For example, Fagin is frightening only when he is evil as seen through Oliver's eyes. If we concentrate on Fagin alone--that is, from an adult perspective--we no longer feel afraid, and in terms of the comic-grotesque, we don't continue to ridicule him. His character no longer seems ambiguous; he is transformed from a mechanistic alien to a real human being.

From the child's perspective, however, there is no such clarity, only anxiety and disorientation. Feeling betrayed, the child turns from the unaffectionate and authoritarian adult world suggestive of paternal rule nostalgically backwards to the affectionate, secure memories of maternal love, but is transfixed in his attempt. He cannot return to that world because of the social and emotional implications--it is a black, demonic world, filled with sexual horror, which society demands that he forget--and yet he is incapable of maturation because of the ambiguity and perplexity involved.

The child is trapped in the man, a victim both of the unresolved conflicts inherent in industrialized urban life, and of the frustration of an unfulfilled childhood. As adult, he can attempt to adapt, certainly, but in that attempt, whether partly successful or not, we see the grotesque, the alienated. And we experience the alienation from a child's perspective and not, in the adult view, as a distortion of reality. In other words, the grotesque is as much a part of the children's perception of life as, say, violence in the streets is to a modern inhabitant of the Bronx. They never articulate or try to interpret their estrangement; it is only through their actions and dramatic dialogue that we experience it.

The grotesque characters in Dickens can be divided into two groups: those whose attempts to adapt to society have proven fairly successful, and those whose attempts have been inadequate. Those in the first group are less explicitly, but more naturally, grotesque. They are without feelings and are the true products of an alienating society, totally accepting their inhuman, insensitive roles. The members of the second group, on the other hand, act out their roles inhumanely, but underneath their very explicit grotesqueness they are human and sensitive. They are grotesque only because of their attempts to repress an overwhelming fear of alienation. They feel the estranged world and can imagine a better one, but lack the courage and ability to execute such convictions.

The second group regresses--the desire to return to childhood slightly outweighing the taboo--and their childlike qualities predominate: their repetitive preoccupations, their naive perverseness, their attitudes towards sex, their egotistical perceptions of themselves as the centres of the universe. Their attempts at assimilation into society are superficial, inconsequential, and eventually ineffectual. We see some of them going mad, and feel certain the rest will follow. They are, as Kayser describes them, like characters from a Kafkaesque dreamworld:

> What Kafka shows is the gradual displacement of the individual, a continuous process without climax, no single phase of which the narrator is able to explain; for he, too, like the reader is affected by the incomprehensibility of the phenomenal world...based on the continuous onslaught of exactly rendered details, which is capable of no rational explanation, which forever eludes one's grasp, and to which one cannot get accustomed, since all attempts to solve the puzzle are thwarted.[8]

And yet, we do not feel the apathy that such a process should evoke. Through brilliant caricature Dickens transcends (overcomes) such emotions, in spite of the mechanical nature of his estranged world. This is particularly evident in the caricature of authority figures, like Bumble, whose attempts at role-playing for the purpose of his own survival can evoke in us a keen sense of sympathy.

We first meet Bumble

> when Mrs. Mann, the good lady of the house, was unexpectedly startled by the apparition of Mr. Bumble the beadle striving to undo the wicket of the garden-gate.
>
> 'Goodness gracious! Is that you, Mr. Bumble, sir?... My heart alive! Mr. Bumble, how glad I am to see you, sure-ly'

> Now Mr. Bumble was a fat man, and a choleric one; so, instead of responding to this open-hearted salutation in a kindred spirit, he gave the little wicket a tremendous shake, and then bestowed upon it a kick which could have emanated from no leg but a beadle's.[9]

Mr. Bumble, a figure of such great authority that even gates are to be included in his jurisdiction of power, gives credence to Kayser's statement of the grotesque: "The mechanical object is alienated by being brought to life, the human being by being deprived of it."[10]

Bumble is performing the duties of a conscientious beadle, as he sees them. He brings order to the chaotic workhouse and the parish in general, seeing himself in such an ego-centric light that when a member of the Board orders him to hold his tongue, he "was stupefied with astonishment. A beadle ordered to hold his tongue! A moral revolution!" (p. 66). And it is a moral revolution, because his alienation is so complete that he stands alone, knowing himself only in terms of the duty he must perform and the position in society he has attained. He stands at the top of his universe, embodying the ultimate in wisdom and authority, witnessed in the following dialogue concerning the reasons for Oliver's open rebellion at the Sowberry's"

> 'Oh, you know, Mr. Bumble, he must be mad,' said Mrs. Sowberry. 'No boy in half his senses could venture to speak so to you.'
>
> 'It's not Madness, ma'am,' replied Mr. Bumble, after a few moments of deep meditation. 'It's Meat.'
>
> 'What?' exclaimed Mrs. Sowberry.
>
> 'Meat, ma'am, meat,' replied Mr. Bumble, with stern emphasis. 'You've over-fed him, ma'am. You've raised a artificial soul and spirit in him, ma'am, unbecoming a person of his condition

> ...What have paupers to do with soul or spirit? It's quite enough that we let 'em have live bodies.' (p. 93)

Likewise, Mr. Bumble entertains a certain philosophy concerning women, containing similar droplets of wisdom and authority. When Mrs. Bumble attempts to overpower her commanding husband by the use of a certain feminine mode of deception, namely tears, the "hard-hearted brute" is adamant:

> ...his heart was waterproof. Like washable beaver hats that improve with rain, his nerves were rendered stouter and more vigorous, by showers of tears, which, being tokens of weakness, and so far tacit admissions of his own power, pleased and exalted him. He eyed his good lady with looks of great satisfaction, and begged, in an encouraging manner, that she should cry her hardest: the exercise being looked upon, by the faculty, as strongly condusive to health.
>
> 'It opens the lungs, washes the countenance, exercises the eyes, and softens down the temper,' said Mr. Bumble. 'So cry away.' (p. 324)

We see Bumble as a parodoxical figure, however. He is perverse in his use of authority, and yet, like a child, his is a naive perversity. He reacts the way he thinks a beadle should react, and yet, occasionally, the human Bumble peaks out from behind the beadle's coat, as when he hears Oliver's agonizing cry of loneliness:

> Mr. Bumble regarded Oliver's piteous and helpless look with some astonishment for a few seconds; hemmed three or four times in a husky manner; and, after muttering something about 'that troublesome cough', bade Oliver dry his eyes and be a good boy. (p. 73)

But Bumble's humaneness is a flaw, a weakness not well received within the various institutions of society. It softens one, as Bumble is softened by the prospects of marriage and the apparent security of that highly respected institution. Within a short time after marriage, however, he learns first-hand of one greater than he: the manually dextrous Mrs. Bumble, who, in one day, "inflicted a shower of blows (dealt with singular vigour and dexterity)" (p. 325), scratches his face, chokes him, tears his hair, and then, almost immediately afterwards, humiliates him utterly, in front of a group of paupers. "He was degraded in their eyes; he had lost caste and station before the very paupers; he had fallen from all the height and pomp of beadleship, to the lowest depths, of the most snubbed henpeckery. 'All in two months!'" (p. 328). Bumble is now revealed as a sympathetic human being, one who could finally see that "the poor laws really were too hard on people; and that men who ran away from their wives, leaving them chargeable to the parish, ought, in justice, to be visited with no punishment at all, but rather rewarded as meritorious individuals who had suffered much" (p. 326).

When we understand Bumble and his motives, when we see him as the pathetic victim of society rather than the harsh perpetrator of societal horror, then we sympathize with him. He is gullible and foolish and ignorant, a bully and a coward, but he has feelings, and he is as much deprived of life as Oliver was.

The grotesque "victims" of society evoke such sympathy. They do not remain distant figures, as do the true social "criminals," but become at some point directly involved with our feelings. We ridicule them from a distance; we dismiss them or laugh at them because we don't wish to confront their anxieties, for, as Freud points out, they are our own anxieties also. We generalize, pushing each character into a convenient drawer of preconception. We typecast and then we dismiss. Dickens does the opposite. He becomes very specific in his non-judgmental analysis of the character, confronting that person, forcing us to confront him and our fear of what he stands for, forcing us to confront our own fears. Bumble, for example, is the principal that punished us, the father that shouted at us, the principal or parent that we might be one day. In other words, after being specific, after showing us why a particular character acts the way he does, Dickens generalizes, presenting the universality of that character. We are generous because we have become both sympathetic and empathetic.

Fagin is another good example of Dickens's use of the grotesque. When we first meet him, he is an evil man with a "villanous-looking and repulsive face," dressed in a "greasy flannel gown" and living in a room "perfectly black with age and dirt" (p. 105). He is a criminal, living by the misfortunes of others according to a personal "catechism" which is his perverse interpretation of the Golden Rule of Christianity: "If you don't take pockethandkechers and watches...some other cove will; so that the coves that lose 'em will be all the worse, and you'll be all the worse too, and nobody half a ha'p'orth the better, except the chaps wot gets them--and you've just as good a right to them as they have" (p. 184).

Fagin becomes Oliver's tutor, the school master who teaches him how to adapt to and survive in "society," a diabolical Mr. Gradgrind. "Having prepared his mind, by solitude and gloom, to prefer any society to the companionship of his own sad thoughts in such a dreary place, he was now slowly instilling into his soul the poison which he hoped would blacken it, and change its hue forever" (p. 185). And yet Mr. Fagin is not without a certain softness, a certain flaw similar to Bumble's. When Oliver has only been in the criminal's den a few hours, he is able to overcome his terror, and laugh "till the tears ran down his face" at the antics of Fagin imitating the unsuspecting victim so his boys may practice their art. The life, the imagination, the cleverness of the old man is revealed, and begins to grasp our hearts to a greater degree than his villainy does. We can sympathize after all with a man who only uses criminal activities as an imaginative technique in recreating the world. In his own mind, he is a "successful," fully integrated citizen of society. As with Bumble, this man appeals to us because he is surviving, and because we are able to place ourselves imaginatively at least into his situation.

Fagin is a man with feelings, fears and anxieties. He is affectionate towards Oliver, as much as he is able to be affectionate towards anyone but himself. When he warns the boy about Sikes, we suspect that his admonitions are motivated by that affection.

> 'Take heed, Oliver! take heed!' said the old man, shaking his right hand before him in a warning manner. 'He's a rough man, and thinks nothing of blood when his own is up. Whatever falls out, say nothing; and do what he bids you. Mind!' Placing a strong emphasis on the last word, he suffered his features gradually to resolve themselves into a ghastly grin, and, nodding his head, left the room. (p. 196)

The following passage reveals even more of the human being. He is in a rage over the loss of Oliver, and the possibility of losing even more.

> '...am I to lose what chance threw me in the way of getting safely, through the whims of a drunken gang that I could whistle away the lives of! And me bound, too, to a born devil that only wants the will, and has the power to, to--'
>
> Panting for breath, the old man stammered for a word; and in that instant checked the torrent of his own wrath, and changed his whole demeanor. A moment before his clenched hands had grasped the air, his eyes had dilated; and his face grown livid with passion; but

> now, he shrunk into a chair, and, cowering together, trembled with the apprehension of having himself disclosed some hidden villany. (p. 240)

The "born devil" is Monks, and the word that couldn't be uttered is "kill." Fagin has been struck with the knowledge of his own mortality, and his real position in society. Suddenly he is just another Bumble, a man whose fantasy has ended, a man who, like us, is afraid of dying.

The idealized world of these grotesque individuals who fail to adapt to "normality" borders on madness; not, however, the madness of the mentally deranged, the psychotic, the criminally insane, but the insanity of normal, everyday people, or at least, people who started out in the normal fashion. There is a separation of world and individual due to incompatibility: the "world" is seen as a form of incessant action that presses too much upon the individual who attempts to withdraw inwardly to a self-created and idyllic world. This is the frontier of grotesqueness, beyond the solutions usually found to be satisfactory for the less estranged citizens.

It is amazing that the madness of such people sometimes leads them back into the maelstrom which once ejected them. Miss Flite, the "little mad old woman in a squeezed bonnet who is always in court," upon meeting the wards of Jarndyce, does not warn them to beware of Chancery, or more specifically, to avoid the eternal case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce that has killed so many, and driven so many more mad with despair. Instead, she is pleased at the prospect of having a few more victims added to the "heap of humanity" which "the suit Jarndyce and Jarndyce has stretched forth its unwholesome hand to spoil and corrupt."[11]

> "Oh!" said she. "The wards in Jarndyce! Ve-ry happy, I am sure, to have the honour! It is a good omen for youth, and hope, and beauty when they find themselves

> in this place, and don't know what's to come of it.
>
> "Mad!" whispered Richard, not thinking she could hear him.
>
> "Right! Mad, young gentleman," she returned so quickly that he was quite abashed. "I was a ward myself. I was not mad at the time," curtsying low and smiling between every little sentence. "I had youth and hope. I believe, beauty. It matters very little now." (p. 81)

We cannot ascribe meaning to her words; we can only observe and sympathize. Miss Flite cannot now survive without her Chancery. It is her life, and her love affair: "A suitor, my child," she calls herself. "I have the honour to attend court regularly" (p. 97). She is directly, even erotically, involved with Chancery. It gives her energy while it kills others, including her friend Gridley, and her landlord Krook. This huge machine devours the others while she survives, so she must attribute survival and a kind of inverted sanity to her actions, and describe others who react differently to Chancery as being madder than herself. Her landlord, for example: "'He is called among the neighbours the Lord Chancellor. His shop is called the Court of Chancery. He is a very eccentric person. He is very odd. Oh, I assure you he is very odd!'" (p. 100). To Miss Flite, Krook is odd because he sits in his shop, accumulating junk "'(or so my neighbours think, but what do _they_ know?),'" while she is contributing something vital to the system, for which she is later awarded a weekly stipend. In her confused mind, Krook deserves to be victimized; he is too apathetic. Perhaps she is right.

Gridley is another matter. He is not apathetic; in fact one could truthfully describe his final defeat as a result of exactly the opposite actions. In a frenzy of passion and energetic vehemence he wears both mind and body away in a rather shorter period of time than his predecessors--the innumerable other victims of Chancery--had ever done. He is desperately fighting the system by attacking its servants, by demanding of them a justice he will never receive, for it is not theirs to give. But for Gridley there is no alternative; "'if I took my wrongs in any other way,'" he says, "'I should be driven mad!'"

> "It is only by resenting them, and by revenging them in my mind, and by angrily demanding the justice I never get, that I am able to keep my wits together. It is only that!" he said, speaking in a homely, rustic way and with great vehemence. "You may tell me that I over-excite myself. I answer that it's in my nature to do it, under wrong, and I must do it. There's nothing between doing it, and sinking into the smiling state of the poor little mad woman that haunts the court. If I was once to sit down under it, I should become imbecile..."
>
> Mr. Jarndyce said that he condoled with him with all his heart and that he set up no monopoly himself in being unjustly treated by this monstrous system.
>
> "There again!" said Mr. Gridley with no diminution of his rage. "The system! I am told on all hands, it's the system. I musn't look to individuals. It's the system." (pp. 267-78)

The depressing knowledge that Jarndyce has, and Gridley does not have of the system is the unalterable fact that it is a mechanistic, soul-destroying monster, and that no human being understands it well enough, or lives long enough, to extract one iota of justice or kindness from it. To do anything other than what Jarndyce does is to drive oneself mad, or to the graveyard in the manner of Gridley, and Carstone, and even Krook, who escapes from the battle into a gin-inspired fantasy world, degenerating into a "bundle of old clothes with a spiritous heat smouldering in it." How like Gridley and Carstone Krook is, for the smouldering heat in all of them consumes their bodies and their minds. They die, and the system, like a concrete monument of words, remains.

The system drives people backwards in time, turning them into grotesque reflections of their former selves; the system is an impersonal, elemental and uninhibited force which, when it doesn't madden and kill, mechanizes its servants, dynamically driving them, not by the force of their own personalities, but by its own animating life source. The system is a cesspool, breeding "a crowd of foul existence that crawls in and out of gaps in walls and boards; and coils itself to sleep, in maggot members, where the rain drips in; and comes and goes, fetching and carrying fever and sowing...evil in its every footprint" (p. 272). The system hardly even distinguishes between man and animal.

> It is market day. The blinded oxen, over-goaded, over-driven, never guided, run into wrong places and are beaten out, and plunge red-eyed and foaming at stone walls, and often sorely hurt the innocent, and often sorely hurt themselves. Very like Jo and his order; very, very like!
>
> A band of music comes and plays. Jo listens to it. So does a dog--a drover's dog...a thoroughly vagabond dog...but an educated, improved developed dog who has been taught his duties and knows how to discharge them. (p. 275)

The dog is dutiful and obedient, not aspiring to greater things, such as love for his fellow animals or compassion in times of distress, but remaining content in the knowledge that he is surviving. That is the important thing for dogs and other mechanized beings who evoke, if not sympathy, at least a pity in us, for they have been mechanized by oppression and fear. Look at Magwitch:

> A fearful man, all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg. A man with no hat, and with broken shoes, and with an old rag tied round his head. A man who had been soaked in water, and smothered in mud, and lamed by stones, and cut by flints, and stung by nettles, and torn by briars, who limped, and shivered, and glared, and growled...[with something that] clicked in his throat as if he had works in him like a clock, and was going to strike ...The man took strong sharp sudden bites, just like a dog. He swallowed, or rather snapped up, every mouthful, too soon and too fast, and he looked sideways here and there while he ate, as if he thought there was danger in every direction... he was very like a dog.[12]

Magwitch is unique, however, for he has been mechanized without adapting to the system, but it is clear by looking at him that the grotesque is also the social alienation that creates abnormality in the first place. It is both a symptom of the disease, and the disease itself, so that the form of the grotesque mirrors the cause. The characters, trying to adapt to a mechanistic world, actually develop certain mechanical parts or traits: Magwitch's throat, Quilp's marionette body and Krook's combustitle one, Jo's sensibility (less than a dog's), as well as his reduction to a mechanical being, a robot that wanders aimlessly through the streets occasionally winding down to a complete stop. The bodies of these people have betrayed them--a result of their betraying environment--and the effects are traumatic, even tragic, as when Quilp is denied his sight and other senses in what he had considered the most familiar of settings, and drowns. A similar example of such betrayal is Grandfather Smallweed.

Smallweed is a comical figure who does not arouse sympathy. He is of a family both mechanized and mad, a family who, having "discarded all amusements, discountenanced all story-books, fairy-tales, fictions and fables, and banished all levities whatsoever" (p. 342), has become too detached from their own humanness even to reproduce. There have been no children in that family "until Mr. Smallweed's grandmother, now living, became weak in her intellect and fell (for the first time) into a childish state" (p. 341).

While his mind is "unimpaired...[holding] as well as it ever held, the first four rules of arithmetic and a certain small collection of the hardest facts" (ibid.), Grandfather Smallweed's body, especially when he tries to use it in a human, that is to say, passionate manner, reacts "like a broken puppet."

> The excellent old gentleman being at these times a mere clothes-boy with a black skull-cap on the top of it, does not present a very animated appearance until he has undergone the two operations at the hands of his grand-daughter of being shaken up like a great bottle and poked and punched like a great bolster. Some indication of a neck being developed in him by these means, he and the sharer of his life's evening again fronting one another in their two porter's chairs, like a couple of sentinels long forgotten on their post by the Black Sergeant, Death. (p. 343-44)

We laugh at the antics of this grubbing usurer and his mad wife; we ridicule them, for they are made to be ridiculous, and yet we fear them too, for they are the emissaries of Death, and that produces a great amount of anxiety. They are automatons, without feelings, and we are even more afraid of them than of the Fagins and Magwitches, because they are so unyielding and so entirely without concern for human beings. They will never see, as Fagin saw in that memorable flash of inspired knowledge, that they too are capable of being destroyed. They in fact won't be destroyed, for they contain no seed of discontent, no rebellious fibre, no inclination to be critical. Only revolutionaries are destroyed; only they would heretically revolve around a different axis.

Such a propensity for death is not without its practical applications on the part of these dehumanized characters. Grandfather Smallweed lends money at very high rates of interest, or rather, is the intermediary for his friend in the city who lends money at very high rates of interest. At any rate, Smallweed and his friend hold in their wizened hands the success or failure, the life or end of life, of Mr. George and, we may assume, many others. Smallweed, himself in the hands of a more powerful servant, Mr. Tulkinghorn, almost brings destruction to the trooper and the Bagnets. It is in fact only a stroke of luck that they are temporarily saved, Mr. George having something in his possession which can be used to destroy one who is of more consequence, and thus one whose death will bring more satisfaction to the death-dealers.

Smallweed is an authority figure, as able a servant of the system as any judge or lawyer or petty bureaucrat. He promotes the evils of capitalism, and the punishment for ignoring his power is no different than that bestowed upon any other breaker of society's rules. It is a criminal offence to disobey Mr. Smallweed's rules, and therein lies another aspect of the repressed fear we have of him. He is an unaffectionate father figure.

In spite of, or more aptly, as a result of the manner in which our anxieties concerning Smallweed arise, we laugh at him. We do not laugh at Mr. Tulkinghorn, however. He is as grotesque, but not explicitly so. As a figure of power and authority he stands in the shadows. Even we the readers are not always aware of his presence, and yet he is there, a secret man, a "silent depository...[of] family confidences" greater than the "noble Mausoleums rooted for centuries in retired glades of parks among the growing timber and the fern" (p. 58).

> He never converses when not professionally consulted. He is found sometimes, speechless but quite at home, at corners of dinner-tables in great country houses and near doors of drawing-rooms, concerning which the fashionable intelligence is eloquent, where everybody knows him and where half the Peerage stops to say "How do you do, Mr. Tulkinghorn?" He receives these salutations with gravity and buries them along with the rest of his knowledge." (p. 59)

Tulkinghorn is a Big Brother with the potential for blackmail. His collection of knowledge, like the CIA's computer banks, is frightening in its enormity. What happens when a few innocent remarks, a few apparently unrelated pieces of conversation are reshuffled within the confines of that collection of cogs and spindles and pulleys, the so-called mind of the "rusty lawyer?" And even more frightening, how will he use his evidence? Against whom? And for what reasons? We don't know. Even the lawyer himself cannot answer those questions. He is a minor machine, "mechanically faithful without attachment, and very jealous of the profit, privilege, and reputation of being master of the mysteries of great houses" (p. 567). His only allegiance is to the system he has sworn to uphold--in this case the class system as well as the judicial system. He doesn't accumulate knowledge for specific use, he collects knowledge to be used against someone, anyone, should the occasion arise.

And so it becomes necessary to reprogram certain valuable morsels of evidence to be used against Lady Dedlock. She is not of the aristocracy, and yet there is the danger that she has gained too much prominence in that class. She might set a precedent in such matters, which would surely destroy the moral fibre of the entire nation. She must be destroyed, and how easy it is, once the cogs and pulleys start revolving, to effect that desire. Like Iago, Tulkinghorn turns person against person, employing a small army of unwitting spies, using each person, each tidbit of information to its fullest advantage.

Mr. Tulkinghorn never actually sees the end result of his Machiavellian scheme, but he dies satisfied anyway. He knows what will happen, and he knows also that the system will replace him. And it does, in the calculated personage of Mr. Bucket. Bucket the policeman, in every respect equally as valuable as Tulkinghorn the lawyer. There is no difference between the two, even when one is dead and one is living.

> Contrast enough between Mr. Tulkinghorn shut up in his dark carriage and Mr. Bucket shut up in his. Between the immeasurable track of space beyond the little wound that has thrown the one into fixed sleep which jolts so heavily the stones of the streets, and the narrow track of blood which keeps the other in the watchful state expressed in every hair of his head. But it is all one to both; neither is troubled about that. (p. 770)

Bucket is emblematic of that which is immortal in the system; "time and place cannot bind Mr. Bucket. Like man in the abstract, he is here today and gone tomorrow--but, very unlike man indeed, he is here again the next day" (p. 769).

It is the unchanging, cyclical quality of life as Dickens depicts it which is so grotesque, so fearsome and at the same time hopeless. In Oliver Twist, while Oliver himself escapes, the dread evoked is not from the workhouses or the criminals on the streets, but from society generally, with its propensity for dealing out poverty and anguish, its double standards, its confusion and dehumanization. In Bleak House, there is even less hope. The court of Chancery, destroying human minds as surely as poverty and disease destroy bodies, churns on, beyond the dash which so inconclusively ends the book, a ghostly, inanimate machine, symbolic of the eternal and depressing society that created it.

And yet we laugh. Dickens makes us laugh. We cannot face the repressed fears of our childhood, the anxieties of adulthood, and survive. Our fantasy is to ignore the horrors of reality, and focus only on the humorous side of life, trying to make ourselves believe that benevolance and good will are the ultimate victors.

II

The sentimental, compared to the grotesque, is an even more complicated and abstruse matter, this in part a result of its current reception, as opposed to its historical place in the novel, and its earlier more positive reception. Fifty years ago, Peter Burra wrote that a literary history exists in part because all novels and all novelists share a common feeling, an element of emotion which lingers because it transcends technical innovation as well as social or political change. "This permanent element is Sentimentality. There is a value in thin sentiment and in bad literature; for pure emotion is a rare and exhausting experience, which might kill the sufferer, or itself die, if it could not relax into the sentimental state, which preserves 'emotion' without demanding the least spiritual labour."[13] Sentimentality, he continues, is the product of "an irregular alliance" between tragedy, which he defines as the imaginative experience, and comedy, the actual experience.

While I don't quite understand what he means by "spiritual labour," I do agree that pure emotion, such as we find in Henry James or George Eliot, is exhausting, and can eventually die, as in the latter half of James's The Golden Bowl. The other interesting observation that Burra makes is that emotion, the portrayal of feelings, whether sentimental or not is a common experience, not only to the readers but to literature itself. Sentimentality, then, maligned or ignored by critics as being "non-intellectual," I suppose, fit only for housewives too barren to appreciate anything more "profound" is very much more than that, in that it is a sharing of emotion, an attempt therefore to define the undefinable community. As such, it is an asset to literature, although few see it that way. Even Donald Fanger, writing about romantic realism, fails to mention Dickens's use of sentimentality, or even his portrayal of women.

Sentimentality became a predominant feature of Elizabethan literature, and we see reflected in this the strong influence of the courts. Even Goethe's novels, ostensibly written in an anti-French Romantic style, nevertheless resound with sentiment. It seems to have been the forerunner of modern political satire in this respect, in that it was used to display revolutionary enthusiasm while still remaining capable of appealing to the monarch. The passions, in Goethe, and the enthusiasm for the poems of Ossian, are a release, just as the readers' reactions to the deaths of Werther and Ottilie are; they are conventionalized substitutes for the rebellious emotions which must be stifled for reasons of survival. This attitude, writes Burra, reached its apex during the period of the Gothic novel. "There can have been no other literature when emotionalism was so uncontrolled...'Enthusiasm' in the eighteenth century was an even more astonishing performance than 'aestheticism' in the nineteenth."[14] It was, and continued to be for part of the nineteenth century as well, a celebration of life, overly melodramatic, perhaps, and at times detached from the actual experience, but always containing the recognition of some part of humanity in the face of an increasing tendency for the culture to be based on pure cold thought and the worship of the mechanical.

In the early nineteenth century, before the shift to mechanism and the rejection of emotion had become extensive, sentimentality was a term almost synonymous with sensibility. Both implied the experience of emotion; both referred to that experience as a unity of thought and feeling. Among the more rigid Victorians, however, utilitarian capitalists as well as ascetic Puritans began to protest that there was such a thing as "too much emotion," that the open display of sentiment was a frivolous and ungodly waste of time. Displays of emotion were considered the woman's domain; similar outbursts in men were a sign of weakness, effeminacy, overindulgence, perhaps even mental instability; they were described by Carlyle as "that rosepink vapour of Sentimentalism, Philanthropy and Feast of Morals," and by Bagehot in his criticism of Dickens as "Sentimental Radicalism."[15]

As mechanism and this intolerance of "impractical things" became more and more pervasive the celebration of life itself--the reason sentimentality existed in the first place--began to acquire a mournful tone; it was becoming the celebration of life lost, or life never to be adequately experienced or fulfilled. And just as the predominant philosophy relegated sentiment solely to the sphere of womanhood, so the same forces relegated womanhood itself to the neutered ground of the impotent, or more accurately, the "impotential." Potency was for the man, just as intellect was, and while the woman contained the capacity for experience, it was for the most part a latent capacity. Death in the sentimental literature, while being an actual thing for the characters, began also to represent, for the writers at least, the death of potential in women--sexual as well as emotional--signifying the repression of talent and the loss of independence. A woman in the capitalist world of markets and material things was chattel, a sexual object both maligned and idolized.

Although very emphatically ignored, even derided in practise, sentimentality was not necessarily dismissed in the literature of the middle class, for emotions there could provide an escape from the outside world and at the same time a release of feeling and of guilt. Pity, for example, in a good melodrama could more than compensate for a lack of real philanthropy. "A business society" writes Walter E. Houghton, "dedicated to the political principle of laissez-faire and the economic principle that there must be no interference with the iron laws of supply and demand needed to feel that in spite of appearances its heart was tender. If it was doing little to relieve the suffering of the poor, at any rate it was feeling very sympathetic."[16] For the middle class, then, sentimentality was an expression of the ideal --ideal love, ideal marriages, ideal parent and child relationships, ideal acts and thoughts--which could be actualized. For the poor, on the other hand, there was no such idealism, only the recognition that dreams never come true, that ambition is an empty thing, that idealism and fantasy are synonymous. As John Ruskin wrote in an essay on The Old Curiosity Shop, "the power of the fiction rests, I suppose, on the fact that most persons of affectionate temper have lost their own May Queens or Little Nells in their time." He later added that Nell's death was sacrificial, that she had been "killed for the market, as a butcher kills a lamb."[17]

Nell's attempt to respond to dominance in an independent way by leaving Quilp and striving to protect her grandfather is not an attempt to achieve the ideal of transcendence--escape from the impure city--as the Puritans advocated, but the need simply to survive. She cannot even see her escape as an assertion of sexual independence, for in the Victorian version of lost sexual potential, this experience has to be unconscious. Victorian characters never allow the repressed consciousness to surface directly--they can't, for the need to conform outweighs the desire to escape the prevalent standards of feminine conduct. The conflict is never understood, not even by the writer; therefore the experience of self-consciousness is seen only in a sentimental way. If there is any sexuality involved it is, as Steven Marcus suggests, not only completely unconscious in the author and unknown in the character, it is metaphorical as well. But it does exist. Nell, for example, although she would seem to be "purity incarnate," is not really so absurdly one-sided. "Quilp, her antithesis, is pure carnality. But he is more than her antithesis--he is her other half; and in this poetic injunction of a single character into antagonistic parts, Dickens has descended...toward the deepest regions of his being...[If] Nell is the spirit...detached in her immaculateness from the source out of which spirit springs...Quilp...is that source; he is the flesh gone wild."[18]

This sado-masochistic relationship is similar to the one between Nancy and Sikes, and is as much a part of the culture as sentimentality itself. Both are the negated experience of consciousness, the portrayal of the characters' or readers' awareness of self through the repression of self. Even the woman's potential is only valued, only noticed, after it is lost--that is, after she is forced into impotency or death--and the mourning (grieving for the death or resignation of a loved one) which is the celebration of lost potential replaces the celebration of enlightenment or home-coming.

We see this most explicitly when Nell dies. "She was dead," writes Dickens. "No sleep so beautiful and calm, so free from trace of pain, so fair to look upon. She seemed a creature fresh from the hand of God, and waiting for the breath of life; not one who had lived and suffered death."[19] In other words, she has been so far from achieving any part of her human potential that she appears as if yet unborn. "Oh! it is hard," he continues, "to take to heart the lesson that such deaths will teach, but let no man reject it, for it is one that all must learn, and is a mighty, universal Truth. When Death strikes down the innocent and young, for every fragile form from which he lets the panting spirit free, a hundred virtues rise, in shapes of mercy, charity, and love, to walk the world and bless it."[20] He becomes maudlin at this point, and abstract, and it is no coincidence that what he had originally added to this passage he later omitted: "'Let us not,' said the schoolmaster, 'bury all mention of her...' 'It would seem a common practise,' said Mr. Garland, 'to bury the recollection of the dead in our daily intercourse with as much care as we bury them, or more.'"[21] The sentiments of these two men must be omitted, for they wish to remember and to cling to one who has never lived.

Sentimentality is a result, then, of repression: the repression of perceived potential that in turn produces visions of the ideal, a phenomenon as common in Victorian life as in Victorian literature. The woman, idealized and placed on a pedestal, is seen ironically as free from the repression which is the man's life, and becomes an ideal herself, an exotic figure not unlike the ideal pastoral or even primitive man which the Romantics had idealized. This phenomenon, as it exists in the literature, represents a direct response to the repressive nature of the culture, and is therefore an expression of that culture.[22] The novelists who portray some characters sentimentally are aware of the real circumstances of these people--their lack of choice and the reasons why they do what they do. Dickens, for example, or Balzac, heavily romanticize the angelic prostitute (particularly if they are young and dying, for then these fallen angels fall no more) in the same way as they romanticize the humanistic criminal (as opposed to the institutional criminal, the victimizer).

It is also, during these sentimental moments, Dickens' chance to be most effectively rebellious--for he is being the most effective generally, in that the anger that envelops the reader also condemns the reader to being one of the guilty. There is once more the empathy which unequivocally involves the reader. This is best seen in Dickens' black portrayals of needless sacrifice; for example, when Nancy is murdered in Oliver Twist:

> She staggered and fell: nearly blinded with the blood that rained down from a deep gash in her forehead; but raising herself, with difficulty, on her knees, drew from her bosom a white handkerchief--Rose Maylie's own --and holding it up, in her folded hands, as high towards Heaven as her feeble strength would allow, breathed one prayer for mercy to her Maker.
>
> It was a ghastly figure to look upon. The murderer staggering backward to the wall, and shutting out the sight with his hand, seized a heavy club and struck her down.[23]

or in the even more imaginative description of the aftermath of Coralie's death in Balzac's Lost Illusions:

> The sight of this beautiful corpse smiling on eternity, her lover paying for her funeral with indecent rhymes, Barbet paying for her coffin, the four tapers around an actress whose basque skirt and red stockings with green clocks had once put a whole auditorium into a flutter of excitement, and, at the door, the priest who had brought her back to God returning to the church to say mass for one who had loved so much! --this grandeur and this infamy, so much grief, ground under the heel of poverty, chilled the hearts

> ground under the heel of poverty, chilled the hearts of a gifted writer and the talented doctor, who sat down without being able to utter a word.[24]

In both scenes there is a desperation, an intensity not only in the style, but noticeable also in the characters, who feel that they are to blame for the degeneration of the fallen woman being doubly punished by an uncaring society and by repressed, guilt-ridden husbands and lovers. Even Sikes, who becomes a hero in the next chapter as he tries to escape the ghost of Nancy's goodness, cannot achieve a state of blamelessness. There is also a mention of God, typical of scenes such as these; it is a mildly ironic evocation, however, for it is known that there will be no reply, that religion, middle class in its orientation, is not after all the answer to the suffering these women have been forced to endure.

Hypocrisy, then, itself a product of repression, is more specifically the main reason for sentimentality--hypocrisy in religious matters, hypocrisy in terms of the middle class use of the idea of philanthropy as a substitute for the real act of giving. This double standard that we associate with prevalent Victorian views of feminine sexuality--the view of woman as either angel, idol on a pedestal, fallen woman, or the prostitute--begins, the historian Gordon Rattray Taylor suggests, as an ambivalence towards women stemming from childhood, when an individual naturally "feels for its parents both love--because they support it--and hate--because they frustrate it...As it grows more mature, it learns to reconcile these extremes...But if the emotions felt are very powerful [still]...it simplifies matters to separate them, directing all the good feelings to one woman, all the bad feelings to others."[25] This ambivalence is condoned by moralists and theologians, who simplistically divide women into two categories: the divine, or pure, woman, who preserves her chastity at all costs, including the loss of her liberty, and intellectual potential, and who is therefore a completely desexualized woman; and the fallen woman, who has lost her divine purity. Once again we see evidence of the split between social being and the individual, and the anxiety that results.

Hypocrisy also exists as a distinct feeling towards people generally and this, more than anything, writes Taylor, is "a retreat from reality. If it makes one feel better that prostitution is out of sight, it must be because this enables one to pretend that it doesn't exist. When a moralist actually sees a prostitute, painful emotions are aroused, and he feels an obligation to take action. In short, the early Victorian attempt to thrust the unpleasant side of life out of sight represents another facet of the retreat into fantasy. The attempt to deny the sexuality of the normal woman shows this process in its most extreme form."[26] In other words, ambivalence in sexual matters combined with moralism and a certain overwhelming sense of frustrated idealism produces hypocrisy.

Taylor implies that the moralist is not a reformist; he does not seek out the prostitute, and indeed should he see her, turns a blind eye. This is not, however, what a writer like Dickens does. He sees the prostitutes --he may even look for them--and as religious idealist he sees also their inner beauty and their potential for divine purity which, if it is lost, means only that it has been denied too much and for too long. And yet there is an odd contradiction in all this, for in portraying the lost woman as potentially divine, or as used-to-be divine, he is portraying that undeniably sexual woman as previously desexualized with the firm hope that she might become desexualized again. He goes too far, in other words; in keeping with the contradictions of the haunted city the moralist overwhelms the realist and becomes self-contradictory. He recognizes the prostitute in his literature; therefore, on some level--most probably unconscious--he recognizes her attained sexuality, her independence, her freedom. This is part of the hypocrisy of industrialization which Houghton mentions and which I have discussed earlier. But public approval, which Dickens as popular writer obviously seeks, demands the notion of the dependent woman and the independent man. And so his sentimental characters must, like the grotesque characters, suffer from both the dehumanization associated with the process of industrialization and repression by contemporary morals. They can rarely if ever win for on the one hand, should they attain a humanized persona, they are indicted by the moralists, and on the other, behaviour capable of moral sanction is the behaviour of the utterly dependent, the enslaved, the dehumanized if "pure" individual. The women in this situation are caught between two polarized extremes in terms of how they are perceived, and they are sacrificed in a moral battle that loses sight of both their uniqueness and their human potential. The literature, I might add, while attempting to comment on this phenomenon, cannot do so objectively; as a result it eventually becomes a part of the indictement, although certainly without intending to do so.

The degraded woman is sympathetically and sentimentally portrayed as being potentially capable of idealized or expected female behaviour. The sentimentality, as it is occuring, shows either the woman in an instant when she is behaving in this way--so that we may look up to her at this moment and the author can imply that he was correct in his assumption of such potential --or shows the woman at the moment when she realizes that she will never have the chance to reveal her potential as idealized woman. This usually occurs in a scene where she is dying. We see both of these in the portrayal of

Nancy, who is constantly going out of her way to protect Oliver or Sikes and who never achieves the recognition for her deeds which we are led to believe that she deserves. Instead, she is killed because of a coincidence--Noah Claypole overhears her plotting to betray Monks, the outsider, whom even Fagin would gladly betray also. And although she staunchly refuses to turn against a single other member of her group, including Fagin, she is condemned as a known and undeniable traitor.

These women, or more correctly, these children and adolescents, for they are invariably very young, would seem to die as if according to some ancient and primitive rites of generation or survival, so that male children can live, which they invariably do: Oliver, Pip, and Bailey do quite well, while Nell, Nancy, and Mercy do not. There are exceptions to this, of course. Jo dies, while Jenny Wren, who is clearly not about to be sacrificed for anyone, survives. But Jenny is also not very sentimentally portrayed. She is a straightforward, almost callous, child-adult, more of a parent figure than even her father. There is even something pathetic about this, and about the way the child in her clings to her dolls while the adult self has turned that preoccupation into an entrepreneurial venture, there is not anything sentimental about it. Jenny is neither a woman of lost potential nor an idealized figure. Her street-wise character and speech does not suggest repressed sexuality, nor are we inclined to worship her, although we certainly respect her determination and stand almost in awe of her self-will and ability to survive.

The others--those who die--are sacrificed. Nell dies for Truth, Nancy for Honesty. Even Esther, who does not die but comes close, is sacrificed. She is forced to become the ideal woman--the ministering angel, if you will, because she has no alternative. Like death, her illness and the disfigured face that follows prevents her from becoming a fallen woman, for her guilt (she feels she has been scarred for her sins) is a social guilt because it is derived from social pressures which encourage people to absolve their sins. Ironically, her very belief in those sins is also socially derived. In other words, Esther has lost her innocence, and like all romantics, she strives to regain it in an emotional, sentimental way (which is also Dickens's way).

Sentimentality, then, replaces the intellect, which is baffled, not knowing how else to deal with the contradictions of urban life that it sees as an inexplicable form of punishment. The sentimentalism becomes an exaggerated and ironic substitute for the humaneness which is so noticeably absent in an industrial society. However, writes Raymond Williams, the ultimate function of sentimentality still remains affirmative.

> The exclusion of the human...is not after all absolute, or it would make no sense to call what is alienated human; there would otherwise be nothing to alienate. The inexplicable quality of the indestructible innocence... which has been casually written off as sentimentality is genuine because it is inexplicable. What is explicable, after all, is the sytem, which consciously or unconsciously has been made. To believe that a human spirit exists, ultimately more powerful than even this system, is an act of faith but an act of faith in ourselves.[27]

This is what Dickens believed, that no matter how apparently mysterious or confusing or unintelligible the system appeared to be, no matter how many Gridleys and Little Nells it destroyed, it could in the end be made submissive again, and while we as modern cynics may laugh at the naivete of such beliefs, we cannot, I think, deride the openness and honesty of the strength of conviction behind them.

Like the grotesque, then, the sentimental produces in us feelings of guilt about the loss of these tender and potentially gifted characters. Again, it is the loss of potential from which we are made to suffer the most--the realization, in a world occupied as it is with so many narcissistic, uncaring people, that here lies one who would in her own small way have made this world a better place to live in. We see in this re-creation of the expected reader response how very Victorian this sentiment is, and how charged with moral and social idealism. Perhaps we feel cynical today about such public and to us exaggerated displays of emotion because we feel that the direction these displays lead to, and the intent of this idealism, is ultimately so incredibly futile. And perhaps, after two major wars, in a world threatened daily by the prospect of a nuclear holocaust, perhaps we are right. Certainly history would seem to advocate cynicism, and yet such feelings, ultimately individualistic, alienated, almost anti-social responses to humanity, in that they are pessimistic to the point of defeatism, are as exaggerated as the idealism of the Victorians tended to be. If we are to glean anything of value from what otherwise is a complete undercutting of the sentimentality so prevalent in these works, surely it is this: that the requiem for a victim of industrialization, exaggerated as it is, nevertheless remains a call to fight the forces of alienation, and not to be defeated by them. It is indeed an act of faith.

III

Anomie, writes Jean Duvignaud, "the transition from the traditional feudal societies of the Middle Ages in Europe to monarchical societies, in which capitalism and economic methods of production and of living associated with it emerged, produced shocks and a great many contradictions"[28]--this was the phenomenon which provoked the disruptions leading to alienation of the individual, and directly associated with that, the alienation of the family, because it resulted in the transition from a traditional way of life to one in which the habits and institutions and laws--the mental and spiritual foundations of life itself--were profoundly affected. Not only was the individual in society forced to reassess the meaning of his own personal identity, but the institutional roles--the individual in the family, the father role, the priest as father of the flock--all these were changing as well, so that the alienated family becomes a distinctly separate although related element of modern industrial estrangement.

The role of the family in society, and of the family members, undergoes its most radical change when the concept of individualism within the capitalist market system begins to overrule state and church autonomy. Economic affiliation, even for priests and politicians, becomes the guiding motivation, so that monetary success converts the peasants and guild members of the Middle Ages into competitive entities striving for power--the power to achieve even greater financial success--while those in power promote individualism as both a propagandistic enticement and a way of perpetrating their own system, and thus securing their own position, which is achieved by encouraging the further expansion of an already rapidly increasing labour force--a force that remains functional in their hands because promotion is not a reality for the hungering masses, while almost slave-like dependency is.

The family in the midst of all this greed and prostitution is reduced during the nineteenth century to a memory: a fad which the church retains for its monetary value, and grandparents for its nostalgia. In all other respects, writes Rusell Jacoby, "the bourgeois family...as instruments of authority are being eclipsed by more efficient means...

> The father as the wielder of the absolute power of condemnation or inheritance is being phased out. The erosion of the economic content of the family unit ultimately saps its authoritarian structure in favour of complete fragmentation. Important in this context is that the family in its 'classic' form was not merely a tool of society, but contained an antiauthoritarian movement. The family as an independent and (relatively) isolated unit preserved a 'space' in which the individual could develop against society; as a mediator of authority, and not merely an instrument of it, it resisted as well as complied ...The notion...that you can always come home echoes this role of protection offered against the forms of social domination.[29]

A particularly illuminating example of this disintegrative process is seen in Balzac's Old Goriot, where not only the traditional father role is shown as anomalous to the modern condition, except in the case of the "new father," Vautrin, but the daughter and son roles have become obsolete as well. In fact the mother, Madame Vauquer, is the only one malleable and historically perceptive enough to have already adapted to the new commercial environment. Eugene, the son, is no longer a son of his parents--he goes so far as to state that obedience to the family is boring--but a son of Paris and, although he would struggle against it, to a certain degree of Vautrin and Madame Beauseant as well. He reduces his real mother and sisters to the menial roles of financial supporters, alienating them because of this reduction in value and because he bleeds them in the name of a cause totally foreign to them. While they prepare for a visit from the old-life king of Versailles, he dresses to meet the new royal family of Paris: the financial barons, society princes and princesses, and other members of the quasimonarchical business courts.

An even more intense version of the alienated family is the Goriots. Father Goriot is the extinct classical father, trying to mediate against society and against the already complete fragmentation of his family by using as his authoritative tool, money, the symbol of the very structure he would destroy. The structure, of course, destroys him, for it wields a force more powerful than his money, and far more permanent.

Goriot wishes to use his money to create new "homes" for his daughters, and to buy them families which will also be the purchased continuation of the Goriot dynasty. By doing this, he feels that they and he can be secure against the onslaught of fragmentation and estrangement. They will be able to "go home." His daughters, however, do not want to go home; Paris is their new home, as it is Rastignac's. This is just as well, for as Goriot discovers, there can never again be a home as he once knew it. It is gone, and even money cannot recreate it for there is no hallowed space to create it in. The city, with its pervasive economic authority, controls all environmental space now and in doing so, mediates all beings via the marketplace, replaces all kin relationships with competitive values, transforms all individuals into functions. This degradation is as inevitable as it is imperishable, and it soon reduces Goriot to a disease-ridden pauper while intensifying his daughters' dependency upon inhumane and regressive bourgeois financial structures.

This is the disintegration of the family unit which accompanies industrialization: alienation from environment, including home, estrangement from other family members and oneself, destruction of any remnants of authority not mediated by the bureaucracy, even the pre-empting of history and family origins, the sacrifice of the past for the sake of the present, which in itself is only a means of preparation for the future--the dream of a better tomorrow.

Because family alienation is a result of industrialization it is therefore, contrary to popular mythology, no less a part of Victorian urban society. The only difference is that the Victorian Protestant, with only an omniscient Father remaining in the celestial sphere of experience, must idealize the home as well as women, presenting the world with a fictional version of what they unsuccessfully attempted to preserve: the already defunct image of the unified and holy earthly family. The majority of French Roman Catholics, on the other hand, are capable of separating the celestial from the societal --paying homage to Mary, the mother, and the Son, confessing their sins to the proxy Father, investing ten percent of their profits in the maintenance of the soul while spending the remaining ninety percent on more meaningful things. They have little trouble releasing themselves from the bondage of the traditional family institution, for they still retain membership and solace in the holy family. Or so they think. It is not of course that simple; while the guilt or remorse can be confessed, and thus allegedly dispelled, the remainder of the religious metaphor weakens and begins to crumble. Installed as a further buffer in the conflict between individual and society, and now also assuming the responsibility of the old classical family as well as the spiritual obligations, it has become a symbol of the decadence it now supports, rather than of unity. As a philosophical means of survival, this buffer can be discussed during or after Mass (although it is rarely discussed at all); as a psychological crutch it offers no support whatsoever.

The memory lingers, as metaphor, just as memory of earthly family lingers, but the contemporary safeguard is a sham, perpetrated by the trickster priest in the same way Vautrin (especially in A Harlot High and Low) perpetrates love. That is, it protects only the perpetrator; all others are in some way or other its victims. The bureaucracy of the Church helps only the wealthy; ultimately, then, the poor have no family, except that they comprise a micro-conglomerate of wage earners or eligible factory employees who make up the new family: the industrial hands, "a race who would have found more favour with some people if Providence had seen fit to make them only hands, or, like the lower creatures of the seashore, only hands and stomachs."[30]

Both French and English writers were aware of the change, or rather, the loss of family status. They knew only too well that the "organic" family, as it had appeared in the earlier and for them influential works of Scott, Austen and others, and appealing as it was to them personally--especially to Dickens--nevertheless no longer existed in that form. This understanding of the differences is reflected in their novels. From the time of Stendhal and the indifferent family, each progression in literature, if it dealt with contemporary issues, consciously or unconsciously marked a corresponding change in the social environment.

In the earlier works of Dickens there is an attempt to portray the old families as wardens of the nation's morality and in doing so retain a sense of history, but that soon changes. In his later novels there are no such "normal" families, no gentle groups of the sort that Mill and Ruskin write about; there are only alienated families, grotesque and distorted, surviving and retaining at least a portion of their dignity through a kind of metamorphosis, allowing the stronger or the more cunning member--Mrs. Jellyby, the mother, or Mr. Smallweed, the grandfather, or more often, the perceptive child--to dominate. Other families satirically reflect other aspects of the alienation: the Dedlocks, slowly succumbing to atrophy; the family Brass, reflecting the "new" economic family, complete with child/servant; the Chuzzlewits, with their meaningless genealogy, sardonically refuting family history as something absurdly irrelevant; and the Jarndyces, completely in the power of the bureaucracy which now controls not only the present, but past and future generations as it ruthlessly robs the family vault and destroys the family dignity.

There are also the inverted families, in which the children take care of the adults, for the industrial age is the age of the child. It is the young who, for a short time, are the strongest; it is the young, then, in an age of survival of the fittest, upon whom the elder must depend. We see this most clearly in Martin Chuzzlewit, where Jenny Wren is an "adult" figure, her father as incapacitated as a child and Bailey, forced to mature rapidly in the streets, acquires an air of sophisticated adult knowledge, just as Devilsdust does in Sybil. Little Dorrit, though not nearly so worldly as Jenny, must protect her mad father, Mary Barton her depressed, opium-addicted parent, Little Nell, her senile, gambling grandparent, Jane Snowden, in The Nether World, her work-worn grandfather. There is something both pathetic and revealing in this continued portrayal of the young girl taking care of the elderly man; it is both hopeful--the young, meek virgins shall inherit the earth—and despairing, for unless these virgins can reproduce miraculously, there will be no lineage preserved, and therefore no future for the family.

There are other forms of alienation, too: impotence in the Veneerings and the Smallweeds; perversion in the Chuzzlewits; and adoption: Joe and his wife raising Pip, Crossthwaite teaching Alton Locke, Fagin showing Oliver how to survive on the streets. Whatever the form of this estrangement of the family, it is very widespread. In Hard Cash, the family must contend with an insane father; in Woman in White, the two step sisters are without parents, just as the brother and sister, Owen and Cytherea, are in Desperate Remedies. The list could be extended, showing how alienation remains and pervades, contentious and disturbing. Even the so-called "normal" families cannot exist untouched by this essence of industrialism. The "ideal" family, writes Edmund Wilson, "the domestic unit which preserves the sound values of England--is located by Dickens...in the small middle-class household: Ruth Pinch and her brother in Martin Chuzzlewit; the bright hearths and holiday dinners of the Christmas Books."[31] And yet even the ideal--which is almost a fantasy--is awry. The Christmas Books may present bright family groups, but they are almost surrealistic in their joviality, even in their sorrow, and Ruth and Tom Pinch present a distinctly abnormal family unit; as brother and sister they cannot morally produce heirs to continue the preservation of "sound values," which after all is what families are all about.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In these pages I have analyzed two different kinds of Victorian literary perspectives: the one I call the socio-political--Disraeli, Gaskell, Kingsley and Dickens, in one novel, Hard Times--and the view Dickens presents in some of his other novels, a vision I call the socio-psychological. The first view, I have concluded in Chapter Three, is not a particularly realistic one, for it sees individuals in terms of masses, and mass political movements, and its advocates present, in the endings of their novels, an assurance of a better future which is both cruel for some of its readers--in that it is falsely optimistic for the working class--and reassuring for others--those of the middle class who see these endings as completely viable. What about Dickens, however? Does he present a more optimistic vision of the future, and a more generally viable one?

Firstly, Dickens is a therapist, a psychoanalyst on a large scale, a secular evangelist whose concerns are psychological and moral rather than political. It is important to note, however, that as novelist he is also a city-dweller, and a reader; he is, in other words, a passive victim of the haunted city as well as an active innovator, seeking cures or solutions. His therapy, then, is largely unconscious and is therefore often haphazard. He gropes in the darkness also.

This tendency is an apt reflection or indication of the general and widespread fragmentation of the culture itself. The very fabric of human interrelationship had become a tattered and dysfunctional thing. The novelist, whether Dickens or Disraeli, Gaskell or Kingsley in making experience comprehensible, in even presenting that experience to a large number of people, has also to realize the nature of the social experience--that which is common to the readers, and that which is not common. That is to say, there is, in the very nature of the culture, a fragmentation which is reproduced in the relationships between writer and reader. The readers are not a community, nor even phvsically present as, say, a dramatist's audience is. That is what the novelist overcomes in making his experience entertaining, worthwhile, and finally, comprehensible. He creates a community, artificial as it may seem at the outset, for it is the experience of community, any community--the P.T.A., a night at the local tavern--which is the worthwhile aspect of the urban experience. Industrialization fragments, compartmentalizes, condones specialization and bourgeois individualism; art fights to reverse that trend. The artist has, or develops what Williams calls a total vision of society: "a whole way of seeing that is communicable to others, and a dramatization of values that becomes an action "[1] as the artist attempts to give substance to his vision. That is the responsibility he feels toward his readers, for it is they who participate in his work even when it antagonizes the status quo and would seem in danger of being refused publication. He maintains that private part of the relationship with his readers which disallows intermediaries such as publishers, although they, especially in the case of a very popular writer, usually bow to the greater influence of profits, and remain for the most part rather uncensorious. An example of this is the Dickens case, in which Chapman & Hall relinquished their tendency to direct the young Boz as he became more popular. They still remained too self-righteous for the determined and increasingly powerful novelist, however, and so he changed, in 1844, to the struggling firm of Bradbury & Evans. The former publishers, unwilling to lose such profits, finally persuaded Dickens, fifteen years later, to return to them. There would be no more manoeuvering; Dickens would write, Chapman & Hall would print, distribute, sell.

The writer maintains the reader relationship, which has a sense of the uniqueness of humanity, and which also has a sense of the intimate dialogue, and resists most of the insidious elements of patronage based on a theoretic conceptualization that does not recognize individuality but only the fragmented isolation of humanity into separate compartments, the sum of which comprise that societal filing cabinet called "the people," or "the masses." The popular and cultural writer can not do what the pseudo-popular and societal modern writer does. "In other words," writes Alex Comfort, "the degree of co-operation possible between the writer and society is determined entirely by the responsibility or otherwise of that society, and contemporary urban civilization cannot by its nature have any use for a writer who is not prepared to be a prostitute. With the growth of irresponsibility as a public virtue, and the consequent suppression of criticism, the opportunities for honest contract between the writer and his public are being reduced in number...by the syndicalisation of kitsch-publishing, or book clubs and libraries, on the one hand, and by the direct intervention of the state on the other."[2]

Popular culture, then, is not the same as mass culture, and a writer like Dickens is not a "factory" writer, churning out novels upon demand, although he was prolific. He was intrigued and curious about the strange and sometimes wonderful time and space in which he lived, and about the popularity of the new genres in which he was writing. He was an explorer, trying out new forms, seeking the best ways of articulating, revealing, interpreting and analyzing the repressive nature of his mysterious society, the society in which he lived, the society he was actually experiencing even as he wrote about it. And in that the articulation of the experience was imaginative, he helped create a culture, a collective identity, for which the truth he wrote was as much of the readers as for the readers. It was theatrical; it was an active participation, an empathetic enactment of real life via the literature.

There is a problem with this, however, in that Dickens and the other three writers discussed in this thesis offer a fairly complete degree of satisfaction for the reader only if that reader chooses to view their works in a certain way; for example, as narratives of a fairly straightforward type. That this can be done at all suggests a certain position taken by or inherently existent in the writer. It is the sophisticated reader, or critic, who perceives the incomplete satisfaction: the problems implied, the conflicts never clearly identified, the grotesque and sentimentally portrayed characters as products of their own and the writer's unconscious. This is the key, and the means whereby the lack of satisfaction is perceivable; that the tales of the haunted city are ultimately unconsciously conceived. The experience of the city, in other words, is experiential and subjective. In this way, or because of the intensity of this vision, objective criticism by the novelists is suppressed, even avoided.

It is for this reason that Carlyle was ultimately dissatisfied with the works of Dickens, and with Dickens as a radical reformer. It is not that Dickens doesn't want to be either radical or reformist; it is that he cannot be; he is as unable in his way as are Disraeli, Gaskell, or Kingsley (that is, those who also explicitly and consciously wished to reform in a radical way). As writers, they are journalists. They observe, and their observations cripple them somewhat, in that they so intensely feel, or experience, those observations. They become those impoverished ghetto dwellers--on an imaginative level--and thus they become critically illiterate, or inarticulate, or maybe just overwhelmed, confused, frustrated.

Whatever the reasons, it is clear that the social vision of these writers lacks authority, or even worse, contains a sinister authority. There are no answers, no solutions, and this denies the therapeutic nature of the works, in that it provides a pessimistic counterweight. Nor is there any incentive, other than a general response to love and Christian charity. If changes are to take place, we wonder who is to be involved, and who is to take the initiative. If there is hope for the future, is it to be reified in a specific way, or must we be satisfied with the casual good fortune of having a few more Mr. Rouncewells and Mr. Jarndyces--benevolent ironmasters and philanthropic father figures--introduced into our midst?[3]

The problematic aspects of these three visions (actually, this single vision, for it is more or less common to all four of the writers I have discussed) are most crucial in terms of the endings of the novels where the reader is given only two alternatives: the one expressed in the work, which we might call the heavenly solution, and the other, black, Satanic, and completely intolerable. The latter alternative is usually seen as the result of extreme radicalism, insurrection, crime, prostitution, or any other pragmatic or politically active attempt to humanize the urban experience, and often carries with it, in the literature, the penalty of death--this is true even if the character is in some way fundamentally good--so that we see Nancy die, as well as Sikes, Fagin hanged, Jonas Chuzzlewit commits suicide, Quilp is drowned, and all the others--John Barton, Stephen Morley, Tulkinghorn, Madame Defarge, and so on--die for having plotted against the good people. They must die, and go to hell, while the innocent and the angelic live on, or are rewarded for their suffering by being sent to heaven. Faith, perpetrated or aided by the secular therapy of the fiction, is maintained by the novelists, who are conservatives and moralists, rather than socialists.

The unfortunate problem in all of this is that the therapy, so-called, suppresses social reform, or even a sense of the need for reform, in that the cure for immediate anxiety takes precedent over a more long range prevention of anxiety. This is problematic historically, because the cure is conceived after the illness has become terminal, and because immediate cures deny the future, both in terms of humane political evolution and the realization of the need for such movement (this all being symptomatic of the journalist, who reports, rather than critically analyzes trends). This literature, in other words, discovers the haunted city, the grotesque, the lost potential, and then stops.

Instead of political activism, Dickens, as well as Disraeli, Gaskell, and Kingsley, tries to battle the spectre of the apocalypse, similar in spirit to the opponents of the vampire and other symbols of alienation, with Christian ethics and rhetoric. (We at times almost literally see the golden cross of the vanquisher shining, the golden spike dripping its unholy blood, as these novels end). But the vision of the haunted city--I'm speaking more of Dickens now--is dissipated at this point; even in the novels of the other three that great shout from Carlyle--the fanatic attempt to do battle against Mammon--rings very quietly. The endings of their novels owe more to the Brothers Grimm than to either Carlyle or their own view of things.

We've seen the endings of Sybil, Mary Barton, and Alton Locke discussed in Chapter Three; Dickens's endings are no less subjective and sentimental. In Great Expectations, Pip denounces his own narcissism, and his fairy tale princess, Estella, to go on to better things; Esther Summerson marries and seven years later is doing well, but not in the city, the implication being that if there is a future, it lies in the return to the pastoral--the antithesis of the message in The Old Curiosity Shop. Oliver lives on in childlike fantasy, Little Nell lives on in a similar, although other-than-earthly paradise, Mercy Chuzzlewit is saved, Ruth Pinch is married, brother Tom is no less happy. But more disconcerting, the horrors that these people suffered are not mentioned. What of Tom-all-Alone's, or Todgers's, and the starving people? What about all those huts with dripping floors, with cold hearths and hacking babies, unemployed fathers, and mothers dying in childbirth? Forgotten, and with them, the authorial visions which mediated the novels and provided some good reasons to read them.

What this means is that these, and other, similar writers (including Dostoevsky, Balzac, Gogol, Stendhal, Flaubert, as well as Hardy, Eliot, and James) had not developed a genre that was ultimately to be viable in a changing and increasingly alienating world even though at least some of them had been able to clearly perceive the estrangement of the victims of industrial capitalism. They were not able, in the end (literally), to extend this vision, so that instead it was allowed to dissipate. The extension of this genre, then, was the Utopian fiction of Wells, Orwell and Huxley; the "apocalyptic" writers[4]--Lawrence and Céline, for example--had to return to Enlightenment concepts in order to provide a genre, in Jerald Zaslove's words, "where apocalyptic ends are critical ends, where time is rejected for body, where our coarseness is adhered to but against the inhuman community, not the human animal. The consequence of the latter view is to construct a shared reality, not a fragmenting one."[5]

This is a particularly apt view in light of the writers I have discussed and their endings, for although their ideals were humane and even radical, the return to individualism which is their sense of each person or couple achieving bliss is projected at the expense not only of the suffering of others but of their own memory of that pain which was in most cases a shared suffering. Esther Summerson, for example, is no longer the philanthropist dealing charity in the muddy huts she once visited; Louisa, in Hard Times, does not fight the forces of utilitarianism any more; Sybil has no time, presumably, to aid the mill workers, her days being occupied with the direction of a small army of servants, cooks, gardeners and relatives in her romantic castle. The writers do not understand that they have betrayed their ideals in doing this. They have drawn realistic pictures of horrible social conditions, and it seems to make sense to them that they protect their characters from such an environment. After all, those without forts and castles invariably die. Maintaining the hearth, and the family are seen, then, as socially responsible moves. But of course they are not; they are in fact only the reactionary suggestions of rather conservative and, in a moral sense (like Carlyle) highly aristocratic people. Rather than confronting the social and individual problems of getting on, their final verdict is to get back, to hide, to seek only protection from, and not confrontation with, the effects of urban industrialization--the haunted city.

List of References

Chapter One: *Introduction*

[1] Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind* (1957, rpt., London; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), p. xvi.

[2] Ibid., p. xvii.

[3] It has been suggested that George Moore and Gissing might be exceptions. While I would concede the first, I could not the second, for sentimentalism pervades Gissing's works in much the same way as it does the novels of Charles Reade, who seems to divide his pages into parts that are extremely sentimental and parts that are devoid of such feelings.

[4] This is a surprisingly recent position; as late as 1939 Edmund Wilson could still decry the critics for their shallow middle class stance. Dickens, for them, Wilson wrote, was "so much one of the articles of their creed--a familiar joke, a favorite dish, a Christmas ritual--that it is difficult for...[them] to see in him the great artist and social critic that he was." *The Wound and the Bow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 1.

[5] Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 43.

[6] Cited by Donald Fanger, *Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 15.

[7] Fanger, p. 9. The reference to local typicality is also his.

[8] Georg Lukács, *Studies in European Realism*, trans. Edith Bone (London: Merlin Press, 1950), p. 6.

[9] Fanger, p. viii.

[10] See Raymond Williams, *The English Novel From Dickens to Lawrence* (1970, rpt., Frogmore, St. Albans: Paladin, 1974).

[11] *Household Words*, March 30, 1850.

[12] Williams, p. 155.

Chapter Two: *Culture and Alienation*

[1] G. M. Trevelyan, *A Shortened History of England* (1942 rpt., Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), pp. 446-47.

[2] Ibid., p. 451.

[3] Ibid., p. 481.

[4] John W. Dodds, *The Age of Paradox* (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1952), p. 5.

[5] What most did not eagerly study were the "other" figures, those not illuminative of Progress: the average wage of a factory worker, for example, was 10 d. per week. One of the few who did comment, Léon Faucher, author of *Études sur L'Angleterre*, wrote in praise of the "dignity and moral courage with which these people endured unparalleled privations." Cited by Dodds, p. 82. The statistics are from his work also.

[6] Dodds, p. 57.

[7] There was in fact one building restriction--the Window Tax. Under a law temporarily imposed in 1696 (repealed in 1851) every window exceeding a total of eight was taxed 8 s. 3 d. per year. This naturally discouraged the construction of walls with windows, so that "'many of the staircases were so darkened that it became necessary to grope the way up them, at noonday as at night.'" J.L. and Barbara Hammond, *The Bleak Age* (rev., Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1947), p. 56.

[8] Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, trans. W. O. Henderson, W. H. Chaloner (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1958), p. 108. The summary that follows is derived from a number of historical works, including those by Engels, Pike, Dodds and the Hammonds.

[9] E. Royston Pike, *Human Documents of the Victorian Golden Age* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1967), p. 192.

[10] Hammond, p. 175.

[11] Ibid., p. 175.

[12] Ibid., p. 44.

[13] Stanley Diamond's definition of progress, an important aspect of culture. See *In Search of the Primitive* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1974), p. 40. Although anything opposed to cultural harmony

is usually individual, there are also certain trends--capitalistic policies, for example--which appear to promote harmony--through mass consumption, to continue the example--and therefore look cultural, but are not.

[14] Ibid., p. 31.

[15] Ibid., p. 41.

[16] Ibid., p. 137.

[17] Ibid., p. 150.

[18] See Jean Duvignaud, The Sociology of Art, trans. Timothy Wilson (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

[19] Herbert Marcuse, Negations, trans. Jeremy Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. 89.

[20] Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment, trans. John Cumming (New York: The Seabury Press, 1972), p. 34.

[21] Marcuse, p. 95.

[22] Ibid., p. 99.

[23] See Guy Debord, Society of the Spectacle (Detroit: Red and Black Press, 1977).

[24] Marcuse, p. 100.

[25] The parallel between modern ideology, based on separation, and schizophrenia has already been established; a symptom of this pathogeny is "the proliferation of psychological counsellors of every conceivable type --not shamans, not dramatists, not creators of meaning, but adjusters, those fragile safety valves for the emotional underground of our rationalizing civilization." (Diamond, P. 218). The keyword here is underground: the whole problem of so-called aberrant behaviour is viewed as illicit, even sinful, craziness being a symptom of demonism. By contrast, primitive cultures recognize and tolerate abnormal behaviour, sometimes to the point of institutionalization, as in the Crazy Dog Society of the Crow Indians. See Diamond, p. 169.

[26] Marcuse, p. 122.

[27] Raymond Williams, Culture and Society (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), p. 317.

[28] Arnold Hauser, The Social History of Art (4 vols., New York: Vintage Books, n.d.), vol. 4, p. 128.

[29] Ibid., p. 128.

Chapter Three: The Social Novel

[1] Michael Goldberg, Carlyle and Dickens (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1972), p. 5. Arnold Hauser adds that these are "Carlyle's first disciples and are among the writers who accept his ideas most readily. They are irrationalists, idealists, interventionists, they scoff at utilitarianism, and national economy, condemn liberalism, and industrialism, and place their novels at the service of the fight against the principle of 'laissez-faire' and the economic anarchy which they derive from this principle." Hauser, vol. 4, p. 119. I am not so sure as Hauser; I think that these writers may have wanted to achieve these heroic goals but that in the final analysis their ideals are tempered by the very forces--what Williams calls the middle class social structure--that they railled against.

[2] Thomas Carlyle, Chartism (London: James Fraser, 1840), p. 1.

[3] Richard D. Altick, "Introduction," Past and Present (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965), p. xvii.

[4] Ibid., p. xv.

[5] Carlyle, Past and Present, pp. 293-94.

[6] By "social novel" I mean a novel that is clearly aware of a specific social problem, and that discusses a specific solution, or at least, implies the action necessary to produce a solution. I realize, in light of this definition, that novels of the city--detective or crime novels, for example --are also "social novels;" I not only realize this, but will imply in a later chapter that the novels in which crime is a symptom (poverty and unemployment, on the one hand, middle class entrepreneurism, on the other, being the creators) of this social disease--these novels in fact come closer to discussing solutions than do the "factory novels" being discussed here.

[7] Louis Cazamian, The Social Novel in England: 1830-1850, trans. Martin Fido (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 4.

[8] Ibid., p. 62.

[9] Hauser, vol. 4, p. 119.

[10] Cazamian, p. 78.

[11] Houghton, p. 242.

[12] They were also, as Houghton points out, even more remarkably similar in practise, both being inherently belligerent in the course of their achievement of goals. Puritanism, "though its conception of life as moral warfare led to a struggle against the passions in the Victorian conscience... also inspired a self-righteous intolerance, based on the belief in divine election, that could release the passions and justify the most merciless appeal to force." Thomas Hughes, "in words which show how perfectly the 'Puritanism' of Thomas Arnold could be blended at Rugby with the combative elements of the squirearchy," writes that "'everyone who is worth his salt has his enemies, who must be beaten, be they evil thoughts and habits in himself, or spiritual wickedness in high places, or Russians, or Border-ruffians, or Bill, Tom, or Harry'...In addition to the inner struggle is the battle against your enemies, political and private as well as national, who are His enemies too." Houghton, p. 213.

[13] Cazamian, p. 91.

[14] In Arnold Hauser's opinion all these movements are romantic: "Disraeli's feudalism is political romanticism, the 'Oxford Movement' religious romanticism, Carlyle's attacks on contemporary culture social romanticism and Ruskin's philosophy of art aesthetic romanticism; all these theories repudiate liberalism and rationalism and take refuge from the complicated problems of the present in a higher superpersonal and supernatural order, in an enduring state beyond the anarchy of liberal and individualistic society." Hauser, vol. 4, p. 110. In my opinion this is, ironically, an escape from individualistic society to individualistic super-society. It is this sense of oneness with God (which is individualistic) as a social goal which predominates in the works of all romantic realists, and which of course advocates transcendence as a substitute for social reform.

[15] Cazamian, p. 96.

[16] Benjamin Disraeli, Sybil, or The Two Nations (London: Macmillan and Co., 1895), p. 74. All subsequent references to this text in the following discussion will appear in the body of the chapter.

[17] Arnold Kettle, "The Early Victorian Social-Problem Novel," From Dickens to Hardy, ed. Boris Ford (1958, rev. ed. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 174.

[18] Ibid., p. 178.

[19] Cazamian, p. 178

[20] Ibid., p. 179. Cazamian questions Disraeli's sincerity at this point: "His fine sense of the absurd could never have overlooked the ludicrous aspects of the group's reactionary programme," and yet he never criticizes them. Also, in terms of "emotional sympathy for the poor...there is little evidence of sentiment in Disraeli's life or his writings, in which the tone is usually cool and detached." Ibid., p. 179.

[21] Ibid., p. 192.

[22] Raymond Williams, Culture and Society (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961), p. 108.

[23] Michael Steig notes that Devilsdust is the English translation of Teufelsdröckh.

[24] Cazamian, p. 205.

[25] Ibid., p. 198.

[26] George Eliot, Middlemarch (1956, rpt., Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968), p. 4.

[27] Richard A. Levine, Benjamin Disraeli (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1968), p. 85.

[28] Houghton discusses this further, particularly in terms of religious sentiment in the literature.

[29] Levine, p. 85.

[30] Cazamian, p. 205.

[31] Williams, Culture and Society, p. 110.

[32] Levine, p. 88.

[33] Ibid., p. 94.

[34] Elizabeth Gaskell, Mary Barton (1911, rpt., London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1961), pp. 109-10.

[35] Ibid., p. 78.

[36] Ibid., p. 159.

[37] Ibid., p. 110.

[38] Ibid., p. 363. Earlier, Tillotson observes, "after a tentative and unwonted excursion on the possible causes of the strike, she concludes with relief, 'So much for generalities. Let us now return to individuals.'" Novels of the Eighteen-Forties (1954, rpt., London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 202.

[39] Ibid., p.219.

[40] Gaskell, p. 364.

[41] Cazamian, p. 220.

[42] Williams, Culture and Society, p. 103.

[43] Ibid., p. 102.

[44] Allan John Hartley, The Novels of Charles Kingsley (Folkestone: The Hour-Glass Press, 1977), p. 82.

[45] Charles Kingsley, Alton Locke (London: Macmillan and Co., 1879), p. 24.

[46] Ibid., pp. 50-51.

[47] Ibid., p. 112.

[48] Cazamian, p. 278.

[49] Kingsley, pp. 405, 407-08.

[50] Arnold Kettle, "The Early Victorian Social-Problem Novel," p. 186.

Chapter Four: The Haunted City

[1] Williams, The English Novel, pp. 10-11.

[2] Ibid., p. 14.

[3] Ibid., p. 15. As I understand it, Williams bases his notion of "knowing" on security--the sense of assurance that is gained from an understanding of one's environment, and the reasons for or explanation of the

interaction of lifeforms within the environment. In other words people who have lived in the country, or whose families have migrated in the recent past from the country, have "known" the land intimately, and expect to be able to "know" the city in a similar way. Their inability to do so produces a kind of primal bewilderment that is psychologically devastating.

[4] Edgar Johnson, Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph (rev. New York: The Viking Press, 1977), p. 356.

[5] Tucker, 1783. Cited by Williams, The Country and the City, p. 146.

[6] Ibid., p. 144.

[7] Albert Fried, Richard M. Elman, eds., Charles Booth's London (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968), p. 282.

[8] Balzac, Old Goriot, trans. Marion Ayton Cranford (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1951), p. 185.

[9] Guy Debord, Society of the Spectacle (Detroit: Black and Red, 1977), pp. 172, 176.

[10] Williams, The English Novel, p. 130.

[11] Charles Dickens, Sketches by Boz (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 262.

[12] Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 34.

[13] Fanger, p. 82.

[14] Charles Dickens, Bleak House (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 326.

[15] Ibid., pp. 272-73.

[16] Ibid., p. 275.

[17] Charles Dickens, The Old Curiosity Shop (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 171.

[18] Dickens, Bleak House, p. 49.

[19] Ibid., p. 49.

[20] Dickens, Martin Chuzzlewit (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975), p. 185.

[21] Ibid., p. 186.

[22] Ibid., p. 186.

[23] Ibid., p. 187.

[24] Ibid., p. 188.

[25] Ibid., p. 188.

[26] Ibid., p. 188.

[27] Fanger, p. 9.

[28] Mark Rutherford, Mark Rutherford's Deliverance (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1884), pp. 130-32.

[29] Charles Dickens, Great Expectations (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977), pp. 195-96.

[30] Ibid., p. 232.

[31] Charles Dickens, Our Mutual Friend (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 48.

[32] Ibid., p. 48.

[33] Ibid., p. 52.

[34] Dickens, Bleak House, p. 326.

[35] Dickens, The Old Curiosity Shop, p. 65.

[36] Dickens, Martin Chuzzlewit, p. 241.

[37] Ibid., p. 177.

[38] Ibid., p. 452.

[39] Ibid., p. 239.

[40] Ibid., p. 499.

[41] Ibid., p. 501.

[42] Houghton, p. 277.

[43] Dickens, _Martin Chuzzlewit_, p. 39.

[44] Ibid., p. 868.

[45] Ibid., p. 517.

[46] Ibid., p. 662.

[47] Ibid., p. 663.

[48] I disagree with E. M. Forster here, for I do not consider the comic-grotesque characters as being at all flat. They may not be psychologically "rounded," but in a social context, because of what they are saying about their environment and about the human will to survive and adapt they are very full portrayals.

Chapter Five: _The Grotesque, the Sentimental, and the Family_

[1] This statement originated in a lecture on Dickens by Dr. Jerald Zaslove which I attended in the summer of 1977.

[2] Ernest G. Schachtel, "On Memory and Childhood Amnesia," _Metamorphosis_ (New York: Basic Books, 1959), p. 3.

[3] Michael Steig, "Defining the Grotesque: An Attempt at Synthesis," _Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism_ (Winter, 1970), p. 253.

[4] Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," _The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud_, ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955), XVII, p. 250.

[5] Steig, p. 259.

[6] Steig, pp. 259-60.

[7] Freud, p. 250.

[8] Wolfgang Kayser, The Grotesque in Art and Literature, trans. Ulrich Weisstein (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), p. 147. I would point out that Kafka is conscious of this process, even if his characters are not, while in Dickens, neither author nor characters fully understand what is occurring.

[9] Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist, pp. 49-50. All subsequent references to this novel will appear within the body of the chapter.

[10] Kayser, p. 183.

[11] Charles Dickens, Bleak House, p. 53. All subsequent references to this novel will appear within the body of the chapter.

[12] Charles Dickens, Great Expectations, pp. 36, 50.

[13] Peter Burra, Baroque and Gothic Sentimentalism (rev., London: Duckworth Press, 1931), p. 3.

[14] Burra, p. 15.

[15] Raymond Williams, Keywords (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 237.

[16] Houghton, p. 277.

[17] Philip Collins, ed., The Critical Heritage (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1971), p. 101. I take Ruskin's last comment as an indictment of society, and not of Dickens.

[18] Steven Marcus, Dickens: From Pickwick to Dombey (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), pp. 151-52.

[19] Charles Dickens, The Old Curiosity Shop, p. 652.

[20] Ibid., p. 659.

[21] Ibid., p. 718.

[22] Steven Marcus has a similar definition of sentimentality. See Dickens: From Pickwick to Dombey.

[23] Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist, p. 432.

[24] Balzac, Lost Illusions, trans. Herbert J. Hunt (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books), p. 473.

[25] Gordon Rattray Taylor, The Angel Makers (London: Secker and Warburg, 1973), p. 282.

[26] Ibid., p. 299.

[27] Williams, The English Novel, pp. 44-45.

[28] Jean Duvignaud, The Sociology of Art, trans. Timothy Wilson (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 119.

[29] Rusell Jacoby, "The Politics of Subjectivity Slogans of the American New Left," New Left Review (1973), p. 42.

[30] Charles Dickens, Hard Times, p. 103.

[31] Edmund Wilson, The Wound and the Bow (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 33.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

[1] Williams, p. 49.

[2] Alex Comfort, Art & Social Responsibility (Vancouver: Pendejo Press, n.d.), p. 72.

[3] For some of this material I am indebted to Michael Steig, whose Dickens course I attentively attended in the spring of 1979.

[4] See Jerald Zaslove, "Fiction Extended: The Genre of Apocalypse and Dead Ends," Genre, vol. III, no. 1 (March, 1970), and Frank Kermode, The Sense of an Ending (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

[5] Zaslove, p. 27.

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