

RITUAL PURIFICATION IN DICKENS'  
OUR MUTUAL FRIEND

---

A Thesis

Presented to

the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English  
University of Houston

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

---

by  
Claire Kuperberg DeBakey  
August, 1974



## FOREWORD

I would like to thank the members of my committee for their interest and suggestions. I particularly want to thank Dr. Terrell Dixon for his guidance and good humor throughout the past year.



RITUAL PURIFICATION IN DICKENS'  
OUR MUTUAL FRIEND

---

An Abstract of a Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English  
University of Houston

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

---

by  
Claire Kuperberg DeBakey  
August, 1974



RITUAL PURIFICATION IN DICKENS'  
OUR MUTUAL FRIEND

In Our Mutual Friend (1864-65) Dickens criticizes his contemporaries' tendency to purify themselves of spirit in attempting to become respectable. Disconcerted by the rootlessness of a society without rigid class lines, characters create new, fixed standards such as the Harmon Mounds. But precisely because this new standard is a marketplace, and because everything placed on the market is liable to be bought, characters add only tokens of their true selves to the general heap, reserving their essential selves apart. Ironically, fear of moral flux causes characters to retain merely the shell of mechanized matter, projecting fluid spirit, or inner fire, onto either a communal pool of alienated fire or an external double. Dickens endorses the reincorporation of this fire--a true act of purification in which a character is cleansed of his malignant, material double, healing the split between body and spirit encouraged by society. Reincorporation of fire allows mutuality to replace self-interest as the dominant social standard, although Dickens implies that regeneration occurs on an individual basis, and that society as a whole is not as easily reformed.



## CONTENTS

	Page
I. WORKING OUTWARDS . . . . .	1
II. FIRE . . . . .	44
III. MUTUALITY . . . . .	64
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	80



## I. WORKING OUTWARDS

Earlier critics have often remarked that Dickens was a novelist of the coaching days. Certainly, he maintains a nostalgia for the last days of Merry England throughout his career; but this fondness diminishes steadily in importance, and his faith in the retreat to an earlier, simpler period seems to have disappeared by 1864, when he began Our Mutual Friend. The pastoral scenes of this novel are all but absorbed by the presence of the city--an exact reversal of his sunny first novel, Pickwick Papers (1836-37). Yet even in this last completed novel, Dickens persists in understanding the present in terms of the past. If he cannot return to the refuge of the past as Pickwick does, but must rather progress through time in a linear fashion, he must at least have the sense of continuum. And while the past is static and immutable, and the present is constant flux, one of the central concerns of Our Mutual Friend is the reconciliation of order and movement, of stasis and flux.

The need for such a balance is not peculiar to Dickens, but is a natural result of the vast social changes of the period. During the coaching days to which Dickens' earlier



novels look back, society was united by a static hierarchy not significantly different from the Elizabethan Great Chain of Being.<sup>1</sup> The dislocations of the industrial revolution,<sup>2</sup> as well as scientific refinements which disclosed movement where man previously had thought there was none,<sup>3</sup> overwhelmed Victorian man with a sense of change and motion. The very ground beneath him was suspect: in Walden (1854), Henry David Thoreau asks, "Who knows but if our instruments were delicate enough we might detect an undulation in the

<sup>1</sup> In The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870 (1957; rpt. New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1971), p. 1, Walter E. Houghton remarks that "to Mill and the Victorians the past which they had outgrown was not the Romantic period and not even the eighteenth century. It was the Middle Ages."

<sup>2</sup> Louis Cazamian, The Social Novel in England 1830-1850: Dickens, Disraeli, Mrs. Gaskell, Kingsley (1903; trans. Martin Fido, London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 14-16 in particular.

<sup>3</sup> In his 1958 Univ. of Illinois dissertation Poe and Cosmology: the God-Universe Relationship in a Romantic Context, Hugh Bernard Fox, Jr., provides a good synopsis of the impact of science on nineteenth-century literature. It is particularly interesting to note that he considers Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, so important for the Boffin-Wegg subplot, to be the first historical work to employ "an organic or evolutionary" viewpoint, p. 11.



crust of the earth?"<sup>4</sup> Suddenly, the Great Chain itself had begun to move, progress, evolve. Social position was no longer determined by fixed standards, but became relative, determined only by comparison with others who were also in motion. Such fluctuation in the social scale naturally leads to individual insecurity. U. C. Knoepfelmacher thus remarks that most of the characters in Our Mutual Friend, "placed in a physical world of flux and in a social order of interchangeable nonpeople . . . cannot even cling to the elementary security of their own being. Twemlow pathetically assures himself, 'Then, there can be no more doubt . . . I AM.' But the very repetition of this refrain expresses his fear of a world in which he is not."<sup>5</sup>

Dickens develops this sense of rootlessness in the opening paragraph of the novel. His choice of the shifting

<sup>4</sup> Henry David Thoreau, Walden and Civil Disobedience, ed. Owen Thomas (N.Y.: W. W. Norton and Co., 1966), p. 193. Leo J. Henkin, in Darwinism in the English Novel 1860-1910: The Impact of Evolution on Victorian Fiction (1940; rpt. N.Y.: Russell and Russell, 1963), gives an excellent overview of evolutionary theory up to and including Darwin. The trend of seeing everything as in motion obviously continues into our own day, most dramatically with the theory of relativity.

<sup>5</sup> U. C. Knoepfelmacher, "Our Mutual Friend," Laughter and Despair: Readings in Ten Novels of the Victorian Era (1971; rpt. Berkeley and L.A.: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1973), p. 144.



river as an emblem of "these times of ours," and his reluctance to "be precise" about the actual date of the action convey a sense of dislocation, or what J. Hillis Miller calls a "detachment from solidity" of meaning.<sup>6</sup> The people in the boat cannot determine their position independently, but can do so only by comparing their progress with fixed objects on the shore. In fact, the stretch of river itself can be defined only as existing "between Southwark Bridge which is of iron, and London Bridge which is of stone," thus underlining the characters' need for fixed standards with which to gauge their progress on the river of life.<sup>7</sup>

Unlike the more cohesive societies of previous times, however, the society of Dickens' day no longer provided such external guidelines for the individual. Lady Tippins' importance, for instance, results solely from the title which the King conferred upon her late husband entirely by mistake (164). Knoepfelmacher is likewise correct in claiming that petit bourgeois society offers Twemlow no clue to his real identity. Both the juxtaposition of the

<sup>6</sup> J. Hillis Miller, "Our Mutual Friend," 1964; rpt. in Dickens: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Martin Price (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 173.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Dickens, Our Mutual Friend, ed. Stephen Gill (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), p. 43. Future citations to appear in the text.



first Veneering dinner with the opening scene on the river, and the metaphors of Tippins as "this hardy old cruiser" (53), and of Georgiana Podsnap's birthday party as a series of plunges into a "haunch of mutton vapour-bath" (181), indicate that the new middle class is as unstable as the Thames. Dickens makes the point even more insistently in the chapter "Cut Adrift" (I,vi), in which Lizzie Hexam is expelled from the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters--a tavern which, by its very designation of Fellowship, implies a cohesive society. Thus, with little help from society at large, the dislocated individual must create his own guidelines. He must project a set of fixed, independent, external standards from within himself.

Dickens establishes that these standards are actually projected from individual characters by choosing the dung heap for one of the central emblems of the novel.<sup>8</sup> The mounds are the concrete, externalized accumulation of the inner workings of thousands of individuals, and therefore form a public standard with which the individual identifies. Having invested in the system, so to speak, he

<sup>8</sup> Most critics agree with Humphry House's contention that "dust" is a Victorian euphemism for excrement; The Dickens World (2nd. ed. 1942; rpt. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), p. 167.



naturally works to keep it together. The other major emblem, the river, is also accessible to all, having become the main sewer of London after private cesspools were abolished in 1847.<sup>9</sup> The same connection between public standards and excrement forms the basis of the Foreign Gentleman's comparison of the British Constitution to horse droppings.<sup>10</sup> Society is therefore united by the public sharing of private functions. On a smaller scale, the Veneering dinner parties center on the discussion of the "series of experiments" which Tippins has made "on her digestive functions, so extremely complicated and daring, that if they could be published with their results it might benefit the human race" (53).

Thus society neither understands nor condones private experience; it accepts only that which is shared. Eugene Wrayburn has little social currency while he remains "buried alive in the back of his chair," and gains importance only when a "reviving impression goes round the table" that he is "coming out." He loses caste as soon as he "goes in

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth Muir, "Image and Structure in 'Our Mutual Friend,'" Essays and Studies 19 (1966), p.1.

<sup>10</sup> Knoepfelmacher, pp. 137-38, in reference to the text, p. 179.



again" (53-4). Even Silas Wegg figuratively acknowledges this principle of sharing one's inner life with others when he refers to his private fantasy house as "Our House" (88).<sup>11</sup>

This externalization of fixed standards becomes an unconscious obsession for most of the characters of Our Mutual Friend. Although Miller feels that solid objects have an a priori existence in the novel,<sup>12</sup> it is more accurate to say that they are evolutionary outgrowths of individual characters. These objects begin their development internally and grow outwards until, like a chameleon's tail or an infected leg, they are snapped off entirely. But while the social aspirant hopes, through this projection of solid objects, to achieve a final, static position vis a vis his peers, he finds that the rest of society still moves ahead. He is forced to continue this projection just

<sup>11</sup> Wegg's rather feudalistic notion that he is "one of the house's retainers" who "owed vassalage to it and was bound to leal and loyal interest in it," also suggests the desire for a stable social standard with which the public can relate. But Wegg's feudalism is infused with individual initiative and social aspiration, and therefore partakes of the flux observed in the continuous accumulation of standards such as the dust heap or the sewer.

<sup>12</sup> J. Hillis Miller, Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels (1958; rpt. Bloomington and London: Indiana Univ. Press, 1969), p. 298.



in order to keep up. Until he reaches the very top of the scale--the haven of Podsnappery--he must continually add parts of himself to the creation of new social standards. Essentially, he purges himself of socially-undesirable traits in order to progress from one level to the next on the social scale.

This continuous casting off of waste reflects what Leo J. Henkin calls the many "scattered evolutionary concepts" of the times.<sup>13</sup> Theories of evolution had been applied to astronomy by Kant and Laplace, to geology by Lyell, and to biology by Lamarck, before Herbert Spencer tied them together in The Development Hypothesis in 1852--seven years before Darwin's Origin of Species and twelve years before the publication of the first installment of Our Mutual Friend. Henkin calls Spencer's vision a "cosmical process--one and continuous, from nebula to man, from star to soul, from atom to society . . . ." Cosmic evolution of this sort obviously leads to the continuous betterment of society, and Houghton remarks that "as early as 1850 . . . Spencer was happy to point out that the 'purifying process' by which animals kill off the sickly, the malformed, and the aged,

<sup>13</sup> This and the following information is from Henkin, p. 30.



was equally at work in human society . . . ."14 It is just this evolutionary purification of society which occurs in Our Mutual Friend.

Such a vision of perfectibility normally assumes that the progressing organism is more important than the slough that it casts at each successive stage in its development. However, the great social importance placed on the dust heaps and other solid objects in Our Mutual Friend suggests an unhealthy transference of value from the self to that which the self has externalized as waste. Further, Dickens presents a society in which the slough that each person casts represents his most desirable traits, so that characters regress, rather than progress, spiritually. Thus the fluid soul, beginning at the center of a character, slowly evolves outward until it hardens into a socially-acceptable mask, which then detaches itself and takes on

<sup>14</sup> Houghton, p. 209. In Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph (N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1952), II, 1132, Edgar Johnson notes that Dickens welcomed such new theories as Darwin's and as Lyell's Antiquity of Man. Dickens' linking of Mrs. Podsnap to Prof. Owen (52), is also interesting. A leading critic of Darwin's theory, Owen was a defender of the religious-scientific establishment in much the same way that the Podsnaps represent the new economic establishment. Essentially, Owen denied that man and apes could have similar genetic roots; but in associating Mrs. Podsnap with a rocking horse, Dickens suggests that no matter how sophisticated and abstract the bourgeoisie becomes, they betray an unconscious link with the animal world just the same. See Henkin, pp. 50-1.



an external solidity of its own--becomes, so to speak, a part of the dust mound of other such masks. Thomas Carlyle, Dickens' mentor from the 1840's on,<sup>15</sup> presents a similar view of society in Sartor Resartus (1831). His Teufelsdröckh complains "that Man's earthly interests, 'are all hooked and buttoned together, and held up, by Clothes,' " that people prize the external outfit more than the inner man: " 'Day after day, I must thatch myself anew; day after day, this despicable thatch must lose some film of its thickness; some film of it, frayed away by tear and wear, must be brushed-off into the Ashpit, into the Laystall; till by degrees the whole has been brushed thither, and I, the dust-making, patent Rag-grinder, get new material to grind down.' "<sup>16</sup> In Sartor Resartus, however, clothes are not organic to the wearer, but are the " 'shreds and tatters raked from the Charnel-house of Nature,' " being in reality the " 'dead fleeces of sheep, the bark of vegetables, the entrails of worms, the hides of oxen . . . .' "<sup>17</sup> For

<sup>15</sup> Michael Goldberg, Carlyle and Dickens (Athens, Ga.: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1972), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Carlyle, Sartor Resartus: The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh (1831; rpt. N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897), pp. 40, 44.

<sup>17</sup> Carlyle, p. 44.



Dickens, on the other hand, clothes and appearance are the products of a socially-induced organicism. Thus, under pressures to appear younger, Lady Tippins becomes "a diurnal species of lobster--throwing off a shell every forenoon, and needing to keep in a retired spot until the new crust hardens" (466).

The image of growth outwards from a center of consciousness recurs throughout the novel.<sup>18</sup> Thus Wegg's leg is not a foreign appendage, but is organic to him: ". . . he was so wooden a man that he seemed to have taken his wooden leg naturally, and rather suggested to the fanciful observer, that he might be expected--if his development received no untimely check--to be completely set up with a pair of wooden legs in about six months" (89). Mrs. Podsnap's skeleton has also been working outwards, and seems

<sup>18</sup> H. M. Daleski, Dickens and the Art of Analogy (N.Y.: Schocken Books, 1970), p. 272, notes that the plot lines of Our Mutual Friend also radiate from a center: "It is this expanding movement that distinguishes the structure of Our Mutual Friend from that of Little Dorrit, which . . . can also be viewed as a series of concentric circles. The circles of Little Dorrit are themselves emblematic of confinement . . . with each successive circle we are brought to a stop . . . and returned to the centre. In Our Mutual Friend the stone at the centre, though never forgotten, drops from sight, and one circle gives way to another . . . in a widening perspective." Daleski's comment is also pertinent to the discussion of mutuality in Chapter III below.



ready to burst through the surface of her skin--perhaps to rock away, independently of Mrs. Podsnap.

But this expansive growth process necessarily produces self-dilution: somewhere in the transformation of inner into outer, man loses his central identity. The description of the Twemlow table is an imaginative example of this self-dilution: "Sometimes, the table consisted of Twemlow and half a dozen leaves; sometimes of Twemlow and a dozen leaves; sometimes, Twemlow was pulled out to his utmost extent of twenty leaves. . . . it always happened that the more Twemlow was pulled out, the further he found himself from the centre, and the nearer to the sideboard at one end of the room, or the window-curtains at the other" (48). Such forcing of Twemlow from a central meaning to the periphery of abstraction is thoughtless, and is a perfect example of the interchangeability of people and things in a mercantile society which Miller, among other critics, discusses so well.<sup>19</sup> But the manipulation of the dying aristocracy by the rising middle class is mild in comparison with the results of social pressure on the lowest classes. There, the truly warped nature of self-dilution is inescapable: the description of Wegg's rotting, tied-up

<sup>19</sup> Miller, Charles Dickens, pp. 297-98.



umbrella as "an unwholesomely-forced lettuce that had lost in colour and crispness what it had gained in size" adds the impressions of vegetable waste and a perversion of organic processes to the image of forced expansion noted in Twemlow (87).

In each of these examples, the evolutionary product is a solid object. This pattern fits the need for stable landmarks like the iron and stone bridges on the Thames. In its relief to have a firm basis for relationships, however, society places more value on the solid part of a person than on the person as a whole. Wegg is not valuable for his literary knowledge alone, but because he is " 'a literary man--with a wooden leg' " (94), and Mrs. Podsnap is respected for her "quantity of bone" (52). Tippins' shell is also valuable as social currency--as a form of barter with which to purchase new lovers. A social climber becomes a "widowed female of a Medusa sort, in a stoney cap, glaring petrification at her fellow-creatures" (166). Even clothing has a tendency to crystallize: outfits become "armour," caps are "stoney" and "impenetrable" (166-67), and Bradley Headstone's suit, though worn habitually, retains a "certain stiffness . . . as if there were a want of adaptation between him and it, recalling some mechanics in their holiday clothes" (266). In the cases



of the extreme poor, however, who have been kept from fulfilling their evolutionary potential, Dickens returns to the image of vegetable waste. Appropriately enough to their failure in a mercantile society, Dickens places a number of these wasted individuals in the Covent Garden marketplace:

It may be the companionship of the nightly stir, or it may be the companionship of the gin and beer that slop about among carters and hucksters, or it may be the companionship of the trodden vegetable refuse which is so like their own dress that perhaps they take the Market for a great wardrobe; but be it what it may, you shall see no such individual drunkards on doorsteps anywhere, as there... . Such stale vapid rejected cabbage-leaf and cabbage-stalk dress, such damaged-orange countenance, such squashed pulp of humanity, are open to the day nowhere else. (798-99)

For those who do succeed, however, the process of social evolution does not stop with the formation of a hard outer crust. Rather, the crust takes on an existence independent of the character. In discussing the mechanization of people and the animation of things in Dickens' novels, Dorothy Van Ghent remarks that "it is as if the life absorbed by things had been drained out of people who have



become incapable of their humanity."<sup>20</sup> Thus objects, the cast-off shells of people, retain the momentum of the generating organism, and leave emptiness behind. For example, all sense of process has died out of Podsnap, and is now carried on externally by the objects around him. He has transferred his life forces onto a "corpulent straddling epergne" which is "blotched all over as if it had broken out in an eruption rather than been ornamented" (177). The cast-off clothes in Pleasant Riderhood's leaving shop seem more animated than Pleasant herself, whose hair mechanically falls down and is mechanically wound up again (413, 407-8). And the despondent Venus is less animated than the skeletons and stuffed trophies in his shop, even though he is the source of their seeming animation.

Such an outward projection of inner resources naturally results in a tendency to identify with the projected self. Van Ghent notes that Wegg, whose wooden leg "signifies spiritual necrosis," chooses to identify with his

<sup>20</sup> Dorothy Van Ghent, "The Dickens World: A View from Todgers's," 1950; rpt. in The Dickens Critics, ed. George H. Ford and Lauriat Lane, Jr. (1961; rpt. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1962), p. 214.



severed leg instead, a conclusion justified by the use of the chapter title "Mr Wegg Looks After Himself" to describe Wegg's attempt to buy his leg back from Venus (I,vii).<sup>21</sup> Although the leg is no longer useful to him, he understands that it represents a dispersion of his vital forces, and protests: " 'I have a prospect of getting on in life and elevating myself by my own independent exertions . . . and . . . I should not like--under such circumstances, to be what I may call dispersed, a part of me here, and a part of me there, but should wish to collect myself like a genteel person' " (127). Mr. Venus intuitively acknowledges the Plotinian principle of this dispersion when, in selling the leg back to Wegg, he states that he is " 'glad to restore it to the source from whence it--flowed' " (351).

Identification with the severed leg is not merely an idiosyncrasy, but is symptomatic of what Harvey Sucksmith, in a Jungian analysis, calls the "extraversion" characteristic of the period. Describing the extravert as someone who seeks "truth in external facts," Sucksmith concludes that it "would be difficult to find a more extraverted age than that of the Victorians. In the task of transforming

<sup>21</sup> Van Ghent, p. 215.



their environment men's energies were turned outwards as never before. . . . Everywhere, we find giants of industry and feats of production."<sup>22</sup> However, in seeking "to correct the one-sidedness" of the period, the contemporary literature "presents an introverted vision."<sup>23</sup> Thus Sucksmith notes that Dickens' disgust with the extraverted society around him can be traced in the relationships between characters and the masks they present to others:

One of Dickens's most fertile discoveries was the ironic relationship between the persona and the inner man. . . . as early as Pickwick, Dickens was aware of the ironic discrepancy between the mask and the face, though he still saw it at this stage as a fairly crude contrast between the dissembler's "mask of friendship" and the "grin of cunning" beneath it. As Dickens matured, he realized that the persona was no mere set expression put on and removed as readily as a papier mache affair but a living part of the human personality with a delicately adjusted relationship to the rest of the psyche.<sup>24</sup>

Such identification with the outer tokens of one's personality occurs at all social levels in the novel. Wegg, for example, does not put up his umbrella over himself, but rather over his goods--that part of him which he projects

<sup>22</sup> Harvey Peter Sucksmith, The Narrative Art of Charles Dickens: The Rhetoric of Sympathy and Irony in his Novels (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 341-42.

<sup>23</sup> Sucksmith, p. 342.

<sup>24</sup> Sucksmith, p. 257.



for public consumption, much as Tippins proffers her shell to the dinner guests at the Veneerings' (87). Mrs. Wilfer never feeds her inner self, but has in fact become her persona, so that she operates only in the public sphere:

"The stately woman would then, with a meritorious appearance of devoting herself to the general good, pursue her dinner as if she were feeding somebody else on high public grounds" (515).

Public projection of this sort might at first seem beneficial in a period when society must "articulate" new standards of behavior. But a mercantile attitude towards anything offered up "to the general good" leads to the establishment of money as the only standard, and individuals act selfishly rather than with the "general good" in mind. Thus Dickens exposes the meaninglessness of ceremonies which, because they represent the sharing of private emotions with the group, should help maintain social coherence. At the Lammle's wedding, strangers take the parts of next-of-kin, and the whole is pervaded by competition and suppressed violence, as when the "combined unknowns do malignant things with their legs to ottomans, and take as much as possible out of the splendid furniture" (168). Dickens increases the sense of self-interest and of alienation from others by narrowing the narrative point



of view during the ceremony itself. Seen through Tippins' eyes, people are less important than their outer trappings: " 'Bride; five-and-forty if a day, thirty shillings a yard, veil fifteen pound . . . Bridesmaids; kept down for fear of outshining bride, consequently not girls, twelve and sixpence a yard . . . Mrs Veneering; never saw such velvet, say two thousand pounds as she stands, absolute jeweller's window, father must have been a pawnbroker, or how could these people do it?' " (165). The knighting of Sir Tippins, mentioned above, exposes another public ceremony which has lost its social value. The title is meaningless except insofar as it can be exchanged for a certain number of free meals at the homes of members of the rising middle class.

Identification with the persona is not only an ineffective way to hold society together, it also necessitates a bankruptcy of the individual. Having externalized their insides, the characters have no inner resources left. In analyzing the spatial organization of Dickens' works, John R. Reed discerns two basic modes of action: expenditure of energy "without renewal" and expenditure with "constant replenishment." The former, which is the mode of society in Our Mutual Friend, leaves the character empty and on



the verge of collapse.<sup>25</sup> The name Veneering obviously conveys this sense of vacuity; but in some ways "Podsnap" is even more suggestive. The latter name implies both an exhausted growth process--the empty pod--and the threat of going "to pieces," as the Lammles and Veneerings do when they have financially and spiritually overextended themselves. Tippins is also empty space under the shell:

"Whereabout in the bonnet and drapery announced by her name, any fragment of the real woman may be concealed, is perhaps known to her maid; but you could easily buy all you see of her, in Bond Street; or you might scalp her, and peel her, and scrape her, and make two Lady Tippinses out of her, and yet not penetrate to the genuine article" (164). In fact, the whole of Tippins is merely the cast-off shell of someone else, insofar as she is the "relict" of her late husband, who presumably has already gone to pieces himself. But again, implosions are not confined to the vacuous middle class: Mr. Dolls, who has been kept, by social forces,

<sup>25</sup> John R. Reed, "Confinement and Character in Dickens' Novels," Dickens Studies Annual 1 (1970), p. 51. Reed goes on to say that constantly expanding virtue eventually overtakes the space formerly occupied by the now-depleted evil. This is only partially true of Our Mutual Friend: the Voice of Society is still a rather formidable barrier by the end of the novel.



from ever developing any substantial insides in the first place, is constantly "dropping half a dozen pieces of himself while he tried in vain to pick up one" (603).

If extraversion and projection resulted only in vacuity, however, they would not be as pernicious as in fact they are. But projection easily becomes a pattern which, in separating the man from the persona, relieves the individual of responsibility in social interaction. Mr. Dolls blames his drunkenness on " 'circumstances over which had no control' " (292), and makes life very inconvenient for his daughter. Bradley Headstone blames his murderous tendencies on the external love object, Lizzie, and denies criminal responsibility by telling her that " 'I have no resources in myself, I have no confidence in myself, I have no government of myself when you are near me or in my thoughts' " (452). Eugene participates in " 'the pleasures of the chase' " in order to transfer his " 'ludicrous position' " onto Bradley Headstone (605), while the Lammles, who cannot accept the humiliation of their mutual deception, attempt to transfer this humiliation onto other couples so as to lessen its effects on themselves. Mr. Venus similarly passes most of the guilt of plotting against Boffin onto Wegg: " 'Not that I was ever hearty in it, sir,' the penitent anatomist went on, 'or that I ever viewed myself



with anything but reproach for having turned out of the paths of science into the paths of--' he was going to say 'villany,' but, unwilling to press too hard upon himself, substituted with great emphasis--'Weggery' " (641). In fact, Podsnap can often avoid social encounter entirely by sending his daughter in his stead. To him she is merely the most dispensible extension of himself, "the hem of his mantle"--or, in another metaphor, the "pale reflected light" of "the glory of him the sun" (306).

Projection often has the one advantage, however, of preventing direct acts of violence by providing an outlet for hostilities. Although Van Ghent comments that the "animation of inanimate objects suggests both the quaint gaiety of a forbidden life and an aggressiveness that has got out of control,"<sup>26</sup> animism really acts as a control, in that things absorb the violence directed at other people. Dickens establishes this pattern at the first Veneering dinner party where "the looking-glass reflects Boots and

<sup>26</sup> Van Ghent, p. 214. In Dickens: The Dreamer's Stance (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1965), Taylor Stoehr remarks that the "one still forbidden area" for Dickens is violence, so that, whereas sex is more openly dealt with in Our Mutual Friend, violence must still be displaced. He also notes that Eugene displaces his anger onto both Bradley and Riderhood, pp. 220 and 223. This observation moves into the area of doubling, however, and will therefore be discussed in Chapter II below.



Brewer, and two other stuffed Buffers interposed between the rest of the company and possible accidents" (53), and develops it most fully with the Lammles, who maintain a liveable marriage despite enormous hostility. Rather than direct her full anger at Alfred, for instance, Sophronia breaks her parasol, which is an extension of herself in the same way that Wegg's leg is an extension of Wegg, or that Alfred's cane is described as if it were a tail (171). Rather than explode at his wife, Alfred engages "in a deed of violence with a bottle of soda-water as though he were wringing the neck of some unlucky creature and pouring its blood down his throat" (319). In both of these situations, the Lammles relieve their hostility on inanimate objects, so that verbal communication is avoided. Sometimes, however, they must speak to each other directly; at these times they maintain a polite facade by letting the emotional content of the conversation pass only between the personae. In this way, neither husband nor wife commits his or her true self in a way which would antagonize the other partner: "There was a mirror on the wall before them, and her eyes just caught him smirking in it. She gave the reflected image a look of the deepest disdain, and the image received it in the glass. Next moment they quietly eyed each other, as if they, the principals, had had no part in that



expressive transaction" (312). A similar scene occurs as the Lammles discuss their shaky economic situation, in which the mirror is replaced by the figurative "skeleton in the cupboard," so that each looks "disdainfully at the skeleton--but without carrying the look on to" the other (619). This scene, though belabored where the mirror scene is not, is perhaps richer for its allusion to Venus' skeletons and the tendency for lovers to regard each other " 'in that boney light' " (128). Poor Georgiana Podsnap suspects that there is no alternative to this pattern of communication and so, in her vulnerability, projects outwards, preferring to love vicariously: " 'It's enough for me to see how loving you and your husband are. That's a different thing. I couldn't bear to have anything of that sort going on with myself. I should beg and pray to--to have the person taken away and trampled upon' " (309).

The unwillingness to involve oneself with others is particularly interesting because it parallels the attitude of many of the characters towards money. As Stephen Gill remarks in a footnote to the famous passage on shares, Our Mutual Friend portrays a world in which fortunes are no longer founded on facts, such as the ownership of precious metals or land (899). Rather, Podsnappery is concerned with shares--the part ownership of property offered for



public sale. As in the scene between the Lammles in which the "principals" remove themselves from an emotional "transaction," no one invests enough of himself in a property to allow him to possess it wholly. Instead, he owns a share, a fragment. This attitude is fostered in several ways. Firstly, in contributing to the accretion of new social standards, characters become used to the principle of partial ownership. Secondly, like Alfred and Sophronia, people have been conditioned to expect that anything placed in the public sphere is as if placed on the market, and is liable to be bought by someone else, somewhat as Podsnap acquires "a share" in the Harmon murder story which "made him a part proprietor" (181). The same principle is at work with the Harmon mounds. Placed on the market by innumerable individuals, the mounds are in constant danger of appropriation by one legatee or another, and are schemed after by Wegg, the Lammles, and various scavenging charities. Thus characters learn that, by presenting only a part of themselves to the public--a costume, a wooden leg, a mask, a name--they can retain ultimate control over their



basic selves.<sup>27</sup> This principle of social interaction is shown most brilliantly in the scene in which Bradley literally purchases Rogue Riderhood as an alter-ego. In fact, he does not use Rogue to carry out the attack on Eugene, but merely purchases the persona, i.e., the right to wear Riderhood's clothes. Bradley's tragedy results from the assumption that he controls the whole man, whereas Dickens is particularly careful to show that Riderhood reluctantly engages only his name in the transaction: "As Bradley walked on meditating, the Rogue walked on at his side muttering. The purport of the muttering was: 'that Rogue Riderhood, by George! seemed to be made public property on, now, and that every man seemed to think himself free to handle his name as if it was a Street Pump.' The purport of the meditating was: 'Here is an instrument. Can I use it?' " (614). The irony, of course, is that after social evolution has taken place, the part of oneself that does not

<sup>27</sup> Miller, "Our Mutual Friend," p. 173, remarks that while hiding his own "secret" behind his mask, each character tries to "probe behind a misleading surface and find the secrets of others." In this way, "scenes in the novel are frequently presented as a conflict of masks." Dickens' derogatory attitude towards the attempt to retain control over the projected self is interesting in comparison with his aggravation over piracies of his work, and with his consequent desire to establish some form of international copyright. See Johnson, I, 212-13; 375-76; 380-81; 388-91; 419-21; 449-51; and II, 1074.



interact with others is merely a moral vacuum, and is not worth salvaging anyway.

But self control is necessary if one is not to fall "to pieces." And the mechanism of foisting dangerous impulses onto other people or things, an act of repressive control in itself, helps to keep society from collapsing under the strain of class antagonism. Because of the split between the man and the mask, however, a character who wishes to maintain perfect self control must exercise force in two directions at once. He must control his inner and outer environments simultaneously.

The desire to exercise external control is most obvious in Wegg's retrieval of his severed leg from the jumble of bones in Venus' shop, an action not unlike the scramble to gain possession of the dust mounds. Wegg further states that " ' . . . I must be overbearing with Boffin, or I shall fly into several pieces' " (645). Thus, he tries to appropriate both his projected self and people previously unrelated to him. As with Wegg, Old Harmon uses his wills to control both John, an extension of himself, and relative strangers. The Lammles must arrange the lives of others in order to hold themselves together financially and emotionally. Young Harmon conducts Boffin's business "as if the affairs had been his own" (241). Podsnap



clears his environment of unpleasantness with his sweeping arm motions. He also controls Georgiana--the extension of himself who has just "come out," or entered the marriage market--who is "put away like the plate, brought out like the plate, polished like the plate, counted, weighed, and valued like the plate" (189-90).

Force directed against oneself, however, is both more interesting and more illustrative of Dickens' view of society than is force directed at others. To say that one's insides evolve slowly outwards until they take on an independent existence is only partially to explain the process; it does not indicate the tremendous repression necessary to set the process in motion.

In essence, this force results from a character's desire to leave one class and to move up to the next. Charley Hexam is caught between classes in just this way: when he is first introduced to the reader, he is a "curious mixture . . . of uncompleted savagery, and uncompleted civilization" (60). In order to complete the process of "civilization," he must eliminate the savage half of himself which derives from his past life on the river. Charley's eradication of lower class tendencies merely parallels, on a smaller scale, the excretion of the poor by the upper classes, the "accumulated scum of humanity [which] seemed



to be washed from higher grounds, like so much moral sewage, and to be pausing until its own weight forced it over the bank and sunk it in the river" (63). Insofar as Charley's denial of his past increases with his educational achievements, it also expresses the control of the body by the "higher grounds," or intellect. Repression--and ultimately elimination--of uncouth instincts belies a fear that, if the head does not control the body, socially-unacceptable forces will overrun the whole. Thus, in attempting to control his murderous rage until just the proper moment, Bradley Headstone becomes "like a haggard head suspended in the air: so completely did the force of his expression cancel his figure" (608).

Although Bradley and his pupil may successfully control their lower natures, it is doubtful that the head of the body politic--an elderly, passive aristocracy represented by Tippins and Twemlow--can continue to control the vigorous upward movement of the classes beneath them. Each of these aristocrats has become the pawn of the bourgeoisie, and each is parodied by the vivacious commercial activity of the business establishments over which they live. The stables under Twemlow's apartment are an especially ironic touch, suggesting not only what Angus Wilson calls



"the old jungle world that lay beneath the surface,"<sup>28</sup> but also the degree to which the aristocracy has lost touch with the land, an original source of its power. Stables normally should serve the upper classes, yet it is obvious that the horses receive more attention than Twemlow does:

The estimable Twemlow, dressing himself in his lodgings over the stable-yard in Duke Street, Saint James's, and hearing the horses at their toilette below, finds himself on the whole in a disadvantageous position as compared with the noble animals at livery. For whereas, on the one hand, he has no attendant to slap him soundingly and require him in gruff accents to come up and come over, still, on the other hand, he has no attendant at all; and the mild gentleman's finger-joints and other joints working rustily in the morning, he could deem it agreeable even to be tied up by the countenance at his chamber-door, so he were there skilfully rubbed down and slushed and sluiced and polished and clothed, while himself taking merely a passive part in these trying transactions. (466)

A passage comparing Tippins rather unfavorably to the mannequin which dwells below her in a staymaker's shop has much the same effect (300). The successful middle class, symbolized by the stablemen and the staymaker, is slowly pushing its way up the social ladder; if the upper class wishes to maintain control over the entire social body, it must exert a corresponding downward pressure, similar

<sup>28</sup> Angus Wilson, "Dickens and the Divided Conscience," The Month 189 (May, 1950), p. 356.



to that which the middle class exerts when it excretes the poor as "moral sewage." But as the vital force of society, like that of Bradley and Charley, leaves the lowest class and moves upward, it leaves a sense of deadness behind. Those who are left (with some exceptions, like Lizzie and Betty), do not rise because they do not have the strength to do so. And the tension between the bulging middle class and the aristocracy literally and figuratively brings to a head a very explosive situation. As with the repressed Bradley, whose animal nature and ominous name reflect the more general class struggle, the repressed vitality may at any moment erupt volcanically, as if out through the social head.<sup>29</sup>

The sense of constriction which accompanies the movement of vital forces up and out of the body is evident in several characters. The addition of a wooden leg has meant that Wegg's vitality is forced into less than a whole body, and the result is that he is tight as well as hard, as seen in the description of his tightly screwed-up eyes (121). This tightness is also seen in Jenny Wren when she is

<sup>29</sup> Johnson notes that Dickens reacted ambivalently to this explosive class situation, as he had been both a lower-middle class child and an upper-middle class adult. The Gordon Riots were a focal point for Barnaby Rudge (1841), and Johnson feels that Dickens had both a fascination for and a horror of such violent social disruption, I, 311-13.



feeling shrewish, and in Miss Peecher, whose "small official residence" has "little windows like the eyes in needles, and little doors like the covers of school-books" (268). Podsnap's world has also shrunk, "confined within close bounds, as Mr Podsnap's own head was confined by his shirt-collar" (175). In fact, all of London bulges at the head and rots at the knees: "From any point of the high ridge of land northward, it might have been discerned that the loftiest buildings made an occasional struggle to get their heads above the foggy sea, and especially that the great dome of Saint Paul's seemed to die hard; but this was not perceivable in the streets at their feet, where the whole metropolis was a heap of vapour charged with muffled sound of wheels, and enfolding a gigantic catarrh" (479). As with the image of Old Harmon as a volcano (56), life has deserted the inner core and is about to burst forth, leaving hollowness behind.

The atrophy of the lower nature, whether in the individual or in society at large, is also integrally related to the images of the dust heaps and the sewage-filled Thames. In a discussion of Bleak House (1852-53), Michael Steig makes a connection between the reduction of certain



characters to heads and the pervasive anal compulsion of that novel:

The "anal character" as understood by Freud and his followers is defined not so much by attitudes towards eliminatory processes themselves, as by the transformations of infantile anality into "higher" traits, especially the well known triad of obstinacy, orderliness and thrift . . . Physically, Grandfather Smallweed is little more than a head, the rest of his body being virtually atrophied and in constant need of being "beaten up" as if it were a pillow . . . It is as though his visceral functions have been converted upwards into the obsessive interest in the gaining of money and the power it brings over others.<sup>30</sup>

This forcing of the whole into the head is also a perversion of organicism in that it suggests a using up of energies rather than a constant renewal of them. This is the type of action which John Reed associates with volcanic explosions of evil or undesirable characters.<sup>31</sup> It explains Wegg's fear that mental exertion will have a " 'weakening effect on his mind,' " and his consequent demand to be paid for the loss (95). This attitude is similar to

<sup>30</sup> Michael Steig, "Dickens' Excremental Vision," Victorian Studies 13 (1970, pp. 347-48. Stoehr, pp. 20-5, discusses the movement of vital force into the head in terms of synecdoche and dream technique.

<sup>31</sup> Reed, p. 51.



Riderhood's desire to be compensated for that part of him which evaporates, literally off the top of his head, as the "the sweat of an honest man's brow." Bradley Headstone, who eventually does explode--and whose explosion is foreshadowed by Miss Peecher's vision of his "triumphantly flying out of Vesuvius and Aetna ahead of the lava"--has a similar fear that the knowledge he has slowly accumulated may evaporate if he does not hold onto it (393, 267).

This displacement of energies from the physical to the mental parallels the movement from the concrete to the abstract that characterizes much of the bourgeoisie. Rowland McMaster notes that the villains in Pickwick are easily distinguished from the good characters, but that in Our Mutual Friend a "sinister unreality" prevents the reader from determining a character's substance.<sup>32</sup> Mortimer's attempt to find out who really is the Voice of Society underlines this lack of substance.<sup>33</sup> Although they tend to surround themselves with heavy, solid objects like the Podsnap plate, the people themselves become less real as they move up the social scale. Thus, Wegg's leg is actually wooden, but the casters and wooden legs of the Twemlow

<sup>32</sup> Rowland D. McMaster, " 'Society (Whatever that was)': Dickens and Society as an Abstraction," Etudes anglaises 23 (1970), pp. 133 and 135.

<sup>33</sup> McMaster, p. 134.



table are only figures of speech. The description of Wegg's lettuce-like umbrella (87)--which like everything else has had its substance forced to a head--is also a figure of speech; but it is a concrete one insofar as cabbages really do have leaves. The diners who are described as leaves in the Twemlow, however, are a double abstraction: unlike even a figurative lettuce, tables do not have real leaves. In a similar way, Hexam is described as a bird of prey, and depends upon finding corpses for his living; but the "prosperously feeding" Podsnap, also a parasite, salvages only stories about corpses, not the bodies themselves.<sup>34</sup> Mrs. Podsnap is not even compared to a real horse, but rather to an abstraction of one--a hobby-horse, in fact (52).

To a large degree, utilitarianism is responsible for the move away from the concrete. One sees a forest, sees its potential as lumber, and translates it into a new and "useful" form. This process is at work with the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters, the "beams, partitions, floors and doors" of which "seemed in [their] old age fraught with confused memories of [their] youth," so that "when the light shone full upon the grain of certain panels, and particularly

<sup>34</sup> Richard A. Lanham, "Our Mutual Friend: The Birds of Prey," Victorian Newsletter 24 (Fall, 1963), pp. 7-8, develops the various parallels between Hexam and Podsnap.



upon an old corner cupboard of walnut-wood in the bar, you might trace little forests there, and tiny trees like the parent tree, in full umbrageous leaf" (105). But whereas the wood moves from a primary existence as a tree to a secondary existence in which its treeness can only barely be discerned, it does not necessarily progress from the world of matter to that of spirit. Rather, it passes from reality to an imitation of reality. The utilitarian approach demeans true value in things just as it does in people.<sup>35</sup>

Except for the fact that the end product of this process is undesirable, movement from the physical and concrete to the mental and abstract is not unlike the transcendence of the body by the spirit which is demanded in religious mysticism. Thoreau, for instance, saw life as a continuous translation from increasingly less physical stages of existence to increasingly more spiritual ones. After passing the hypothetical last stage, one would be liberated into the realm of spirit, and would awake to true

<sup>35</sup> An interesting parallel exists between the atrophied bodies and bulging heads of the various characters and of London itself and the influx of cheap labor after the closing of the common lands (Cazamian, pp. 15-16). The rest of England was suddenly drained of what used to be the yeoman class, and London and the Midlands area bulged with a swollen population. Grahame Smith, Dickens, Money, and Society (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1968), pp. 70-74 notes the social dislocation and alienation in London during Dickens' time.



reality for the first time. In Our Mutual Friend, however, this translation is often a direct consequence of the production or acquisition of physical goods. Only the worldly classes succeed in abstracting themselves into thin air (the Veneerings and Lammles are so removed from a concrete basis of wealth that they seem to evaporate). Such characters apply the process of evolutionary transcendence mechanically, without the original spiritual intent.

However, as Arnold Kettle remarks regarding money in the novel, a thing is not necessarily evil per se in Dickens' mind.<sup>36</sup> Rather, as with the wood used in the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters, a thing is good or bad according to how it is used. Jenny's fantasy about the children who come and make her light, essentially a fantasy of translation of body into spirit, is a desirable use of transcendence. Indeed, H. M. Daleski sees this fantasy as the central concern of Our Mutual Friend. If a character wishes to be redeemed, he must learn "to rise above" life, "to look down on and despise the values of the dust-heap."<sup>37</sup> Bella and Harmon must follow this pattern, as does Eugene

<sup>36</sup> Arnold Kettle, "Our Mutual Friend," Dickens and the Twentieth Century, ed. John Gross and Gabriel Pearson (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1962), p. 216.

<sup>37</sup> Daleski, p. 299.



who, after the attack, "has mounted, as it were, to the roof of his own Pubsey and Co., of his own worldliness, and risen above it."<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, projection of hostility is not necessarily bad, as long as it does not involve manipulation of other people. Although Jenny Wren is often harsh with her father, it is seldom without good cause, and there is a feeling that, if she could not project some of her frustration onto her dolls, she might be much harsher. Through this escape, she vents her emotions and yet is not tempted to manipulate people, as Eugene is tempted to do when he thinks of setting up Lizzie as if she were a doll (288-89).

Thus, projection and transcendence may have productive, as well as unproductive, applications. But it is questionable whether society's emphasis on hardness and permanence has any real value for Dickens. Over and over again he shows neat standards to be incapable of dealing with the spontaneity and incomprehensibility of life.

<sup>38</sup> Daleski, p. 315. He also notes, pp. 290 and 298, that people who are not "dead" have a tendency to form chains (e.g., at Georgiana's coming out party, the dancers form a giant chain), and that Jenny is conscious of the weight of heavy chains dropping from her when she has her fantasy.



Formal logic, for instance, cannot grasp the reality of the Harmon "murder": "But, according to the success with which you put this and that together, you get a woman and a fish apart, or a Mermaid in combination. And Mr Inspector could turn out nothing better than a Mermaid, which no Judge and Jury would believe in" (74). And the policeman who neatly rules his books as if to contain experience within rational borders, cannot cope with the drunken prisoner "who was banging herself with increased violence, and shrieking most terrifically for some other woman's liver" (66-67). In fact, the very solidity of objects is threatened by the wind which wears them down to sawdust as fast as they can be produced (191).

Against the socially-accepted standard of hardness, therefore, Dickens sets up a standard of softness and fluidity, and in one way or another most of the sympathetic characters are measured against it.<sup>39</sup> Betty Higden spends most of her time running away from encroaching paralysis (449). Mr. Venus, who deals professionally in the bone trade, and therefore with hard objects, is redeemed only by his affection for Pleasant Riderhood: " 'My very bones is rendered flabby by brooding over it. If they could be

<sup>39</sup> Steig demonstrates that, in Bleak House and in A Christmas Carol, Dickens endorses "moral flux" over "moral constipation," p. 342.



brought to me loose, to sort, I should hardly have the face to claim 'em as mine. To such an extent have I fallen off under it' " (563). Both Mortimer and Eugene, despite their seeming arrogance, are described as having secret soft spots (57). And Eugene's refusal to commit himself to anything concrete--profession, energy, marriage--actually marks him as a potentially salvageable character from the first. Several of the characters are able to evolve continuously without ever forming a crust. For instance, R. Wilfer never settles on a permanent first name, and--with the exception of the suit which Bella gives him when she has been spoiled by wealth--is never trapped by a complete new set of clothes. Similarly, John Harmon adopts several names and disguises without investing his real self in any of them. He does not make Bradley's mistake of taking the clothes for the man. This emphasis on fluidity, of course, is analogous to a return to the river, from which the upper classes have alienated themselves. Thus Lizzie, who is associated with the river most closely, proves to be a point of reference for both Eugene and Bella, and is instrumental in their redemption. As J. Hillis Miller suggests, what Dickens calls for is essentially a return to basic existence.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Miller, "Our Mutual Friend," pp. 176-77.



Finally, Dickens proposes a reversal of the malignant separation of people and things. What is needed is the reattachment of objects to people: not the definition of people in terms of objects, but the understanding of objects in the measure to which they are useful to people. Different attitudes towards wooden legs and canes also indicate the difference between these two modes of definition. Wegg, whose leg is actually attached to him, and seems an organic outgrowth of him, is indifferent to it, and notes that its advantage over real legs is that he needn't keep it warm (91). On the other hand, Boffin carries his walking stick warmly, as if it were a baby (90, 93). He appreciates it as an extension of his personality in that others recognize him by it, and he accordingly treats it as if it were human. Sloppy displays the same warmth when he ornaments Jenny's crutch. He can respond to material things with a sense of mutuality because he sees them in terms of the person to whom they are useful or necessary. The restoration of John Harmon's true name is also important. Society in general views names as extensions of personality which are discarded and bought on the open market. Twemlow, in fact, falls in debt because the person for whom he co-signed a note did not honor his own signature



on the note; and Veneering tries to buy Lord Snigsworth's name: " 'I don't go so far as to ask for his lordship; I only ask for his name' " (296).<sup>41</sup> Thus the reattachment of Harmon to his name signifies a rebirth of inherent--as distinguished from utilitarian--meaning. For a few of the characters, such reattachment is unnecessary because the split had never taken place: Twemlow honors his friend's debt because, in signing his name, he has engaged himself personally, and Boffin remarks to Venus that " 'you have my word; and how you can have that, without my honour too, I don't know. I've sorted a lot of dust in my time, but I never knew the two things go into separate heaps' " (640-41).

Thus, as Miller suggests, it is necessary for the characters of Our Mutual Friend to reverse the process of abstraction, and to return to basic meaning, matter, and existence. Both aspects of this process--the purgation of

<sup>41</sup> Knoepfelmacher, pp. 146-47, also notes Veneering's detachment of the name from his lordship. Names are "detachable, for they have lost their oneness with the persons they are meant to designate." However, he sees Jenny's and R. Wilfer's name changes as a token of "uncertainty," whereas I see such changes as a refusal to let one's inner essence solidify to the point that it can be manipulated " 'as if it was a Street Pump.' " The reattachment of Harmon to his name does not imply such socially-acceptable rigidity, however: happily married, he has withdrawn both from the marriage and the money markets. Like Pickwick, he has built a refuge from society.



basic matter and the subsequent need to reincorporate it--are seen in Dickens' treatment of fire as a symbol for human value, and in the ways in which Bradley Headstone and Eugene Wrayburn cope with this element.



## II: FIRE

In discussing the almost literal hollowness of the characters in Our Mutual Friend, Miller contends that society encourages the individual's alienation from basic experience. The more socialized a character becomes, the further he removes himself from the "elemental matter" of earth, air, water, and fire "which lies behind or beneath the hollowness of an avaricious society."<sup>1</sup> Thus, in order to raise his status, Charley Hexam must move away from the riverside; and Miller points out that upper class characters come in contact with water only metaphorically, in the mutton vapor bath of a Veneering party, or in the shifting tides of Fledgeby's bedclothes. But while the removal from water may be more obvious, it is actually the alienation from fire which is most representative of society's denial of elemental matter, and which most adequately explains society's rigidity. Like the alchemists,<sup>2</sup> Dickens prizes internal fire. An emblem of the spirit which animates

<sup>1</sup> Miller, "Our Mutual Friend," pp. 176.

<sup>2</sup> Gaston Bachelard, The Psychoanalysis of Fire (1938; trans. Alan C. M. Ross, Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), p. 73, quotes Nicholas de Locques: " ' . . . the external fire is mechanical, corrupting and destroying, the internal is spermatic, generative, ripening.' "



the physical body, internal fire is organic and inductive to moral growth. The society which Dickens describes, however, encourages the externalization of--or alienation from--fire which, in separating body from spirit, is destructive to individual integrity, and encourages mechanization.

But society cannot tolerate internal fire, because it sees fire as a threat to social order. In its unpredictability and insatiability, fire appears anarchic, and Edgar Johnson points out the early connection in Dickens' mind between fire and social revolution in the riot scenes of Barnaby Rudge (1841).<sup>3</sup> The very primitive association of fire with man's need for warmth also seems anarchic to a society in which status is determined by conspicuous consumption rather than by consumption for need. A character who wants to appear sophisticated will therefore scorn fire because of its uncivilized implications: Mrs. Wilfer, for instance, conducts herself "like a frozen article on sale in a Russian market" (676). In representing the individual, rather than a group spirit, fire threatens the very basis of such a "market." In a commercial society, a person's worth is determined by how much he brings on

<sup>3</sup> Johnson, I, 311-13.



the market, an amount determined by the group.<sup>4</sup> Were characters to allow inner fire, and therefore to recognize their worth as individuals, there would be no impetus to maintain narrow rules of decorum, and anarchy would result. When fire stands for love (as it does with Miss Peecher, 393), it is a threat to the commercial basis of marriage, and therefore must also be suppressed.

Thus, in order to insure the survival of the commercial standard, society encourages the alienation of the individual from his animating spark and places more value on this spark once it has been extracted. Divorced from the individual body, the spirit no longer threatens social order. It ceases to represent anarchic individualism and becomes a social emblem in that, for the first time, others can relate to it. This conversion occurs most vividly when Rogue Riderhood is run down by a steamship and almost drowns:

Doctor examines the dank carcase, and pronounces, not hopefully, that it is worth while trying to reanimate the same. All the best means are at once in action, and everybody present lends a hand, and a heart and soul. No one has the least regard for the man; with them all, he has been an object of avoidance, suspicion, and aversion; but the spark of life within him is curiously separable from himself now, and they have

<sup>4</sup> This process is explicit when Lady Tippins acts as the Social Chorus at the Lammles' wedding, p. 165.



a deep interest in it, probably because it is life, and they are living and must die. (503)

The men cannot identify with Riderhood as an individual; they feel a common bond only with the "spark of life" once it is "curiously separable from himself"--that is, when it has been divorced from the "outer husk and shell" that lies unconscious.<sup>5</sup> Only at this point is community effort expended in Riderhood's behalf; once he is revived, this interest ceases to exist. In fact, mechanized society, in the form of the steamer, is responsible for the extraction of Riderhood's inner spark, and similar manipulation of recalcitrant types occurs elsewhere in the novel: when Boffin refuses to share his wealth with Wegg, Wegg threatens to hold Boffin's nose to the grindstone " 'till the sparks flies out in showers' " (647). Lady Tippins manipulates Mortimer Lightwood in order to "strike conversational fire

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Carlyle, p. 191: " 'The gladder am I, on the other hand, to do reverence to those Shells and outer Husks of the Body, wherein no devilish passion any longer lodges, but only the pure emblem and effigies of Man: I mean, to Empty, or even to Cast Clothes.' " Clothes without body--like Riderhood without fire--are purged of dangerous tendencies: " 'What still dignity dwells in a suit of Cast Clothes! . . . The Coat-arm is stretched out, but not to strike; . . . the Waistcoat hides no evil passion, no riotous desire; hunger or thirst now dwells not in it. Thus all is purged from the grossness of sense, from the carking cares and foul vices of the World; and rides there, on its Clothes-horse; as, on a Pegasus, might some skyey Messenger, or purified Apparition, visiting our low Earth,' " p. 192.



out of him" (469). Like the bystanders at Riderhood's resurrection, she is more interested in the conversational spark which can be pried out of Mortimer than she is in Mortimer himself. Other characters are so completely socialized that they force fire out of themselves in a concerted application of the work ethic. The Elder Harmon externalizes fire in the volcanic eruption which creates the dust mounds, and Fledgeby reduces his "youthful fire" to "sparks from the grindstone" which "flew off, went out, and never warmed anything" (56, 321). Bradley Headstone is another such character: he struggles desperately to remove himself from fiery, lower-class instincts (267).

In removing fire from the individual, society takes the first step in coping with primeval, anarchic tendencies. To complete the process, society must find a way to put this collective fire to some use--to sublimate it, in effect, on a group level. Such group sublimation confirms Steig's observation that the anal compulsive is obsessed with the transformation of waste into less threatening, useful articles.<sup>6</sup> Of course, fire can be safely and profitably used in industry, and Dickens presents this alternative to the family hearth in Hard Times (1854).

<sup>6</sup> Steig, pp. 349-50. This process pervades the novel, from the hoarding of dust to Jenny's use of damage and waste to make doll's clothes.



The inhabitants of Coketown have pooled their vital fire, and have subsumed it in the hellfires of the factory. But this attempt to dominate fire is self defeating: once created, the machine must be fed, and the individual must serve industry at the cost of personal freedom and happiness. The voraciousness of industrialized fire is particularly evident in a scene from The Old Curiosity Shop (1840-41), in which Nell and her grandfather watch workers "moving like demons among the flame and smoke . . . flushed and tormented by the burning fires . . . opening the white-hot furnace doors, [to] cast fuel on the flames, which came rushing and roaring forth to meet it, and licked it up like oil."<sup>7</sup> Fire therefore remains the directing influence in man's life, and his attempts to control it result only in its increased tyranny over him.

But the use of the industrial inferno to symbolize externalized fire is not obvious in Our Mutual Friend. Unlike the Coketown of Hard Times, the society of London in

<sup>7</sup> Charles Dickens, The Old Curiosity Shop, ed. Earl of Wicklow (1951; rpt. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), p. 330. Charles W. Bishop, "Fire and Fancy: Dickens' Theories of Fiction," Diss. Duke, 1971, p. 248, contrasts this scene with the one immediately following, in which one worker is able to maintain a more personal relation to fire, "reading" it the way that Lizzie Hexam does in Our Mutual Friend.



Our Mutual Friend encourages not only the isolation of fire, but the quenching of it as well. Thus the Veneering home sports a bran-new fire escape, and "Our House" has "two iron extinguishers before the main door--which seemed to request all lively visitors to have the kindness to put themselves out, before entering" (48, 88-9). Podsnap does not merely contradict a dinner guest, but quenches the man's "ineffectual fire" (188). And at the very time when they are most actively engaged in the community--that is, when they campaign for their friend Veneering--Boots and Brewer "dine . . . with the air of firemen in charge of an engine, expecting intelligence of some tremendous conflagration" to be put out (302). Surroundings, as well as people, extinguish vitality: the Temple is "accustomed to tone down both the still life and the human life that has much to do with it," and a choking fog comes "creeping in to strangle" the gaslights in Saint Mary Axe. Even the sun looks "as if it had gone out and were collapsing flat and cold" (336, 479). Like the sparks from Fledgeby's grindstone, the human spark, once extracted, goes out almost immediately. The ashes which are left stand Steig's test of usefulness: they are a lucrative commodity, actively hoarded, sifted, weighed, and sold, and along with excrement, bones, and refuse, they form a significant part of the Harmon mounds. In such



a way, fire is extracted from the individual, extinguished, and then its product sold; its potential threat to organized society has been eliminated.

On an obvious level, then, the London of Our Mutual Friend is more of an ashen wasteland than an industrial inferno. The inferno is implied, however, when Dickens establishes London as a kind of hell by portraying Rogue Riderhood as a devil. Riderhood's inability to benefit from baptism, and the blood covenant that Bradley forms with him by sprinkling some of his own blood onto Riderhood's clothes (773), are two indications of the Rogue's demonic nature. In his capacity of lockkeeper he is an inverted version of the guide to the underworld, allowing souls to pass out of the world in which people "look alive" and into the world of spirit upriver where, like Jenny Wren, they can "come up and be dead." This last function links him to the satanic figure of Orlick in Great Expectations (1860-61), who is the gatekeeper of Satis House, and who lives by a sluice gate on the river, near the hellish fires of a lime kiln.<sup>8</sup> Although Riderhood is not linked directly to a kiln or other industrial fire, he does live in

<sup>8</sup> The discussion of Orlick's devilish attributes is taken from Harry Stone, "Fire, Hand, and Gate: Dickens' Great Expectations," Kenyon Review 24 (1962), pp. 662-91.



Limehouse Hole, and so may be seen as metaphorically surrounded by the fires which have died out of him.

But there are other connotations to a name like Limehouse Hole which Dickens may intend here. Lime is the powdery remains of rock that has been reduced by slow, intense burning, and is therefore symbolically related to the dust and ashes which pervade the novel. Like dust, lime is a valuable commodity, and Dickens makes the point that, like dust, it is associated with scavenging. The bird of prey Hexam is referred to as a " 'gentleman engaged in the lime trade,' " while the corpses which are his livelihood are missing shipments of lime. Eugene and Mortimer, who feel like scavengers for helping to trap Hexam refer to themselves as " 'assisting bystanders, that is to say, lime-burners' " (208). In the language of the lime trade, they are reducing a human being to a useful commodity so that Riderhood may collect the reward offered for solving the Harmon murder. To be a scavenger, in other words, is essentially to view others as if they were so much lime, or dust: corpses in the Thames become shipments of lime, just as Boffin becomes known to the schemers who swarm around the Bower as the Golden Dustman.

That Riderhood should be associated with the reduction of others to ashes and lime is important for his



relation to Bradley Headstone. Hoping to move ahead in society, Bradley suppresses the inner fire which he associates with a lower-class background:

Suppression of so much to make room for so much, had given him a constrained manner, over and above. Yet there was enough of what was animal, and of what was fiery (though smouldering), still visible in him, to suggest that if young Bradley Headstone, when a pauper lad, had chanced to be told off for the sea, he would not have been the last man in a ship's crew. Regarding that origin of his, he was proud, moody, and sullen, desiring it to be forgotten. And few people knew of it. (267)

But Bradley has not succeeded in externalizing this fire. In suppressing it, he merely intensifies it. Mechanized as he has become, he carries the industrial inferno within himself: leaving Wrayburn in anger, he slams the door "like a furnace-door upon his red and white heats of rage" (347). Although Bradley recognizes a spiritual link with Riderhood, it never occurs to him that Riderhood is actually in control and can, by stoking up the fires within Bradley's own soul, reduce him to lime and ashes.

Bradley's lack of insight results from his orientation towards socially-acceptable solidity. In ridding themselves of fire, characters hope to render their purified bodies as solid as the Podsnap plate. Riderhood's near-drowning again establishes the pattern: "Supple to twist and turn as the Rogue has ever been, he is sufficiently



rigid" once the spark has been knocked out of him (503). This rigidity of the body without spirit is linked in several places to a character's turning to marble as a result of socialization. Bella is afraid that greed has turned Boffin to marble, to the extent that she sees his very features become "monotonous, unvarying, set, as in a piece of sculpture" (664, 533). Ancient Rome, a metaphor for the philistinism of London, also began its history in the fragmentation of personality and ended as a monument to solidity: " 'Rome, brother,' returned Wegg: 'a city which (it may not be generally known) originated in twins and a wolf, and ended in Imperial marble: wasn't built in a day' " (539). Ironically for characters like Bradley, who are willing to separate themselves from spirit in order to attain this ultimate state of rigidity, marble is merely another form of limestone, hardened and purified by intense heat and pressure. By repressing his inner fire and passion until the moment of the attack on Eugene, when he will purge himself of fire once and for all, Bradley builds up the heat and pressure required to turn himself to marble. All the while, however, using the same internal heat and merely reversing the process, Riderhood is reducing Bradley to lime.



In pursuing his goal, Bradley ignores many signs that indicate that even marble is not immutable. Chief of these is the grating wind, which reduces all of solid London to dust (191). Eugene also provides a strong hint when he punctuates the silences after each of Bradley's fiery blasts of rage by blowing the ash off the end of his cigar (343). Bradley's self-ignorance is most dramatically exposed, however, when he confronts Lizzie in the graveyard. In his rage he wrenches at a stone wall and pulverizes the mortar which holds it together (455). Allegorically, of course, Headstone foreshadows his own destruction. The final irony is that the ashy residue which a fire leaves behind is popularly believed to be the fire's excrement<sup>9</sup>: thus, in ridding himself of fire, Bradley will find that the fire has in fact rid itself of him. He is therefore duped at his own game.

But Bradley is unable to learn from these signs<sup>10</sup> and when he cannot channel his passion into a legal marriage to Lizzie, he decides to exorcize it once and for all. And, for a very brief moment, he does indeed become a "statue" as he sits before the fire at the lockhouse (872). But

<sup>9</sup> Bachelard, p. 105.

<sup>10</sup> Unlike Bella, who benefits from the example of Boffin.



when he realizes that he has compromised his respectability and not killed Wrayburn, he begins to decay and, sitting before the fire as if before the spirit he has just exorcized, turns to ash:

Not one other word did Bradley utter all that night. Not once did he change his attitude, or loosen his hold upon his wrist. Rigid before the fire, as if it were a charmed flame that was turning him old, he sat, with the dark lines deepening in his face, its stare becoming more and more haggard, its surface turning whiter and whiter as if it were being overspread with ashes, and the very texture and colour of his hair degenerating.

Not until the late daylight made the window transparent, did this decaying statue move. Then it slowly arose, and sat in the window looking out. (872)

With his inner substance gone, Bradley cannot defend himself against a scavenger like Riderhood; like a shipment of lime on the Thames, he is in danger of being appropriated by someone else. Certainly the disintegration of his features and hair suggests the dissolving qualities of lime; but whether he is lime or ash, it is obvious that he can now be weighed and measured like so much refuse on the dust heap, and that Riderhood intends to get top price out of him.

Riderhood's ultimate control over Bradley results from the split between Bradley's inner and outer selves that is



caused by the externalization of fire. In adopting Riderhood's clothes as his own, Bradley indicates that he has come to see Riderhood as the public part of himself. Once he finally rids himself of all inner essence, only this outer, or public self, now identified with Riderhood, remains.

While the extraction of fire causes fragmentation of personality, the internalization of fire gives an inner consistency and sense of wholeness.<sup>11</sup> As an alternative to the industrial inferno, therefore, Dickens suggests a pre-industrial, alchemical "furnace of proof" (522), which burns off the exterior self and, in forcing fire back into the individual, leaves a purified spirit, or the " 'true golden gold' " (843).<sup>12</sup> The worth of this purified soul is inherent; it is valuable individually, not in its relation to society at large. Both Eugene Wrayburn and John Harmon must pass through such trials in order to reject

<sup>11</sup> Again, Dickens is in accord with a conventional, pseudo-scientific view of the properties of fire. See Bachelard, p. 80.

<sup>12</sup> The alchemists believed that gold had the highest concentration of inner heat of any metal; Bachelard, pp. 72-4. In "The Four Elements in Great Expectations," Dickens Studies 3 (1967), pp. 112 and 120, William H. New notes a similar association of fire and the purification of gold with the acceptance of a non-material standard of love. It is therefore likely that Dickens was conscious of the implications of his symbolism in Our Mutual Friend.



materialism and social taboo so that they can marry for love rather than for money. To complete their purifications, however, each depends on an external double--Headstone or Radfoot--to stand for the cross which must be burnt away in order to expose the " 'golden gold' " or higher nature.

A member of the upper middle class by birth, Eugene Wrayburn is at least one generation removed from the tensions which plague Bradley Headstone. He has not had to purge himself of a lower, fiery nature, but has rather been alienated from fire all of his life. Although he desires some warmth in his life, he is unwilling to confront fire directly, keeping it, as it were, at arm's length. His habitual cigar is symptomatic of his desire to confine fire at a safe distance while enjoying it, and his perpetual stirring of the fire in the grate suggests not only these conflicting desires but a distinct antagonism as well, as if he were waiting for the fire to intensify and strike back at him. It is also at least plausible that Eugene is attracted to both Lizzie and Bradley because of their associations with fire. Although both Mortimer and Eugene smoke cigars and sit by the hearth, Dickens associates the cigar and the stirring of the fire almost exclusively with Eugene, whose name indicates a potential for rebirth, rather



than with Mortimer, who is Eugene's link to the dead world of society, and whose name (Mort-i-mer) suggests death by drowning.

In his role of guide to the world of society, Mortimer may at first seem to be Eugene's external double. Professionally he is Eugene's socialized half: as a solicitor, he refers clients to Eugene, who is permitted only to bring cases to trial. The friends thus form two halves of a whole man. But the character who truly functions as Eugene's malignant double is Bradley Headstone, who possesses the fire that Mortimer lacks.

The confrontation with Headstone is thus Eugene's confrontation with the fire that has been drained from him by a materialistic society. Stoehr feels that, even this late in his career, Dickens was uncomfortable with an aggressive protagonist. In Stoehr's view, Bradley and Riderhood are therefore the two surrogates onto whom Eugene displaces all of his energy.<sup>13</sup> As he tells Boffin in the passage on the industry of bees, Eugene disdains the expenditure of energy (138); Bradley, on the other hand, is characterized chiefly by earnest effort and self-help, while Riderhood, by calling attention to the sweat of his brow,

<sup>13</sup> Stoehr, p. 220.



is a grotesque exaggeration even of Bradley's energy. In fact, Stoehr sees a "continuum of passion and restraint, crime and law-abiding order" running from Riderhood through Bradley, and finally to Eugene, the lawyer, and the most constrained of the three.<sup>14</sup> Each character reaches a level of energy past which he will not go, and displaces unacceptable aggressions onto the next person down the line. Riderhood, who has the least self control of all, expresses his relationships to Bradley and Eugene perfectly by calling them both his "governors"--that is, people obsessed with keeping him under control.

Thus Bradley, the striving schoolmaster, represents the fire that Eugene lacks. Eugene's attraction to this fire is seen when he participates in the pleasures of the chase. But he always maintains control of the situation, and never lets the fire get so close that he could be burned. Yet he goads Bradley in much the same way that he stirs the fire in the grate, so that, when Bradley finally strikes

<sup>14</sup> Stoehr, p. 222. Other studies which probe the nature of doubles in the novel are Lauriat Lane, Jr., "Dickens and the Double," Dickensian 55 (1959), 47-55, which touches only on the Headstone-Riderhood relationship, and Masao Miyoshi, The Divided Self: A Perspective on the Literature of the Victorians (N.Y.: N.Y.U. Press, 1969), pp. 265-78, which gives a fuller treatment.



out, Eugene maintains his passivity.<sup>15</sup> He is conscious only of the blows and of a sensation of being hit by lightning (766-67). This lightning represents the spirit that is drained from Bradley and which, when beaten into the passive Eugene, will allow Eugene to live a full life.<sup>16</sup> Only after the attack does Eugene live up to his family name of Wrayburn, and begin to glow with vitality (886).

Bradley's immediate demise is also linked to Eugene's incorporation of spirit. Eugene no longer needs Bradley as an object for displacement and therefore he no longer needs to exist, at least for Dickens' symbolic purposes. By incorporating Bradley's energy, of course, Eugene has purified it of all commercial associations, so that the physical shell of Bradley that is left--and which, being lime and ash, is purely commercial--falls away from Eugene and into the hands of Riderhood. This casting off of the external, material shell is foreshadowed when Eugene passes through Riderhood's locks, out of the land of the dead,

<sup>15</sup> This passivity is a natural result of alienation from fire; cf. the scene of Riderhood's unconsciousness, when the lack of fire renders him stiff and lifeless. Eugene's passivity also recalls Twemlow's desire to have servants wash and dress him, p. 466, and is therefore also a function of class.

<sup>16</sup> Stoehr feels that it represents a form of punishment--possibly even divine--that will eliminate Eugene's guilt feelings about marrying below his station.



and into the land of the living: "The water rose and rose as the sluice poured in, dispersing the scum which had formed behind the lumbering gates, and sending the boat up, so that the sculler gradually rose like an apparition against the light from the bargeman's point of view" (696). In reaching his new, spiritual level of existence, Eugene cleanses himself of the moral scum of materialism, and finally marries for love. His external self, on the other hand, dies in the very "ooze and scum" which had been washed away from Eugene (874).

John Harmon is also purged of a malignant self with the " 'flashing of flames' " during his confrontation with Radfoot (426). Although Radfoot is hardly a developed character, the reader knows that, like Headstone, he is both anxious to increase his material worth, and to believe in the myth of clothes. By exchanging clothes with Harmon, he hopes to become Harmon, and therefore to inherit the mounds. When both Harmon and Radfoot are pitched into the river, only Harmon survives, having been revived from unconsciousness by " 'a sparkling and crackling as of fires.' " His material self--the external double--falls away from him much as the scum is flushed away from around Eugene: " 'I think I cried out aloud in a great agony, and then a



heavy horrid unintelligible something vanished, and it was I who was struggling there alone in the water' " (426).

This traumatic near-death provides the excuse for Harmon's delay in claiming Bella and his fortune. Having originally started out to accept the terms of his father's will, he becomes increasingly less interested in the money; when he finally does marry Bella, their relationship has been purified of all commercial interest.<sup>17</sup>

The conversions of John Harmon and Eugene Wrayburn thus suggest the foundation for a new social order, one which does not depend on the fragmentation of the individual for its survival. The whole person, rather than the mechanized "husk and shell," will be the basic unit. But a society based on individual worth--even of a high spiritual sort--still contains the threat of anarchy. The important next step in the building of this new society, then, is the development of a sense of mutuality to replace the principle of self-interest.

<sup>17</sup> In a comic manner, Fledgeby also is divorced from his exterior self (Riah), and forced to incorporate "fire" when Jenny Wren rubs hot pepper into his wounds, p. 793. Bella also is purged from her materialistic tendencies, although they are not represented by an external double. She is, however, at war with her image as reflected in the mirror (435) in much the same way that she disapproves of her behavior as reflected by Boffin. Her name, in fact, suggests both "pretty" and "war" (bellum). Cf. Miyoshi, p. 274.



### III: MUTUALITY

The previous chapters describe how the characters of Our Mutual Friend react to the rootlessness of their society. Society no longer defines the individual overtly, and the average man must take his cue from the archetypal waterman, and be "On The Look Out" for covert indications--i.e., Podsnappian "Signs" and "Tokens"--of where he stands in relation to society.<sup>1</sup> The need for these external guidelines is so great that characters are willing to contribute parts of themselves to the creation of these new standards. But such a personal contribution--to the dust heaps, the pool of alienated fire, or the pile of bones in Venus' shop--does not insure a mutual understanding between individuals. Rather, the displacement of inner self onto a group identity insulates the remaining individual shells in much the same way that "Boots and Brewer, and two other stuffed Buffers [are] interposed between the rest of the company and possible accidents" at a Veneering dinner party (53). The lack of a true sense of community is so striking that the reader expects the guests at Podsnap's party,

<sup>1</sup> "On The Look Out" is the title of I,i. Cf. Knoepflmacher, p. 138.



who "were like the plate, and included several heavy articles weighing ever so much" to ask, like the plate, " ' . . . wouldn't you like to melt me down?' " (177). Then, at least, they would form a cohesive society. In their present condition, they are merely the solidified fragments of isolated human beings, thrown together for the occasion in an imitation of social harmony.<sup>2</sup>

In order to cure himself of this alienation from others, a character must learn to deal with the inner man rather than with the mask; as both A.O.J. Cockshut and Miller remark, he must stop living on the surface of life, and rediscover the depths of experience.<sup>3</sup> These critics suggest that the plunges into the river--i.e., into the good elements that society has discarded--are one way of reencountering the depths. This method is successful, however, only when a character is simultaneously cleansed of material impurities. Thus Eugene Wrayburn and John Harmon are regenerated after their baptisms because they have eliminated

<sup>2</sup> Miller, Charles Dickens, p. 284, states that "the novel seems to be a large group of impenetrable milieus with characters buried untouchably at their centers. These milieus exist side by side, but do not organize themselves into a larger whole."

<sup>3</sup> A.O.J. Cockshut, The Imagination of Charles Dickens (1961; rpt. N.Y.: N.Y.U. Press, 1962), p. 170; Miller, "Our Mutual Friend," p. 177.



an evil, materialistic double. But the confrontation between doubles, while a form of interdependence, is not a model of true mutuality: only one of the partners benefits, while the other becomes a waste product of the transaction. Instead, Dickens suggests that the mutual purgation of evil and the mutual inspiration of good can occur only in the context of a love relationship. But most of the lovers in the novel also fail to develop a true sense of mutuality.

This lack of understanding also results from the tendency to deal with externalities, and is most clearly demonstrated in the relationship between Pleasant Riderhood and Mr. Venus. Venus is not used to dealing with whole people; rather, he deals with bones, or the internal structure which the evolving social body casts to the surface and then discards. Pleasant naturally hesitates to marry Venus, thinking that he will understand her only externally, and not as a complete human being: " ' "I do not wish," she writes . . . "to regard myself, nor yet to be regarded, in that boney light" ' " (128). She does not want to be taken for a fragment, or for something that she is not.

This fear is a valid one, for most of the characters in Our Mutual Friend do view each other in a "boney light,"



either in Bradley's sense of " 'Here is an instrument. Can I use it?' " or in the sense of taking the appearance for the man (614). The latter case results from a lack of true interaction between characters: communication occurs between personae, while the rest of the character's consciousness remains sealed in a private world which does not reflect reality.<sup>4</sup> Thus, like the Buffers who are so closed off that they cannot drink wine, but must "screw it slowly into themselves," Twemlow seems to have "made a great effort to retire into himself some years ago . . ." (56, 52). By the time the image of an old lover filters in to him from the outside world, it bears no resemblance to reality:

Ah! my Twemlow! Say, little feeble grey personage, what thoughts are in thy breast to-day, of the Fancy--so still to call her who bruised thy heart when it was green and thy head brown--and whether it be better or worse, more painful or less, to believe in the Fancy to this hour, than to know her for a greedy armour-plated crocodile, with no more capacity of imagining the delicate and sensitive and tender spot behind thy waistcoat, than of going straight at it with a knitting-needle. (467)

Miss Peecher has also retired into herself, until she has become "Little Miss Peecher," living in a "little official dwelling-house, with its little windows like the eyes in

<sup>4</sup> Miller, "Our Mutual Friend," p. 173.



needles, and its little doors like the covers of school-books . . ." (392). Closeted in such a diminutive residence, Emma Peecher can have no real knowledge of the world at large, and indeed the image of Bradley Headstone that seeps through to her is ludicrous when compared to the real man:

For, oftentimes when school was not, and her calm leisure and calm little house were her own, Miss Peecher would commit to the confidential slate an imaginary description of how, upon a balmy evening at dusk, two figures might have been observed in the market-garden ground round the corner, of whom one, being a manly form, bent over the other, being a womanly form of short stature and some compactness, and breathed in a low voice the words, "Emma Peecher, wilt thou be my own?" after which the womanly form's head reposed upon the manly form's shoulder, and the nightingales tuned up. (393)

Had this been a scene from Pickwick, Bradley would in fact have corresponded to Miss Peecher's romantic notion of him. In Pickwick, characters are their surfaces. But Dickens' concept of human nature is darker in Our Mutual Friend and what Emma Peecher perceives does not at all indicate the evil depths of Bradley's soul, the " 'raging sea' " which has been " 'heaved up ever since' " he met Lizzie Hexam (454). Other characters--like Jenny Wren (402)--see Bradley's explosive potential. But Miss Peecher distorts the possibilities of explosion and drowning into an image of



Bradley Triumphant: "Though all unseen, and unsuspected by the pupils, Bradley Headstone even pervaded the school exercises. Was Geography in question? He would come triumphantly flying out of Vesuvius and AEtna ahead of the lava, and would boil unharmed in the hot springs of Iceland, and would float majestically down the Ganges and the Nile" (393). Such fantasies allow Miss Peecher to cope with "the primitive and homely stock of love that had never been examined or certificated out of her." Because she cannot invest her love in a relationship with the real Bradley, she displaces it into fantasy, where it becomes harmless, in much the same way that all socialized characters cleanse themselves of inner fire. In such a way she can continue to live on the surface of life, believing Bradley to be something that he is not.

But Bradley is not so lucky. His love for Lizzie unsettles him because it forces him, for the first time, to confront the depths of his own nature: " 'No man knows till the time comes, what depths are within him. To some men it never comes; let them rest and be thankful! To me, you brought it; on me, you forced it; and the bottom of this raging sea,' striking himself upon the breast, 'has been heaved up ever since' " (454). For the first time he



realizes his capacity for living outside of social boundaries: he is relieved that he never married, " 'For if I had, and if the same spell had come upon me for my ruin, I know I should have broken that tie asunder as if it had been thread' " (453).

But even this recognition of inner drives does not lead to regeneration in mutual love. Although Bradley professes an ideal of mutuality in marriage--" ' . . . I on one side of a school, my wife on the other, both of us interested in the same work' "--he is as unable to accept Lizzie for herself as he is unable to care for Emma Peecher. He needs to marry Lizzie not because she inspires him with inner life, but precisely because he wishes to rid himself of these emotions. But he can control himself only by first controlling Lizzie because he sees her as the cause of his malaise:

"You know what I am going to say. I love you. What other men may mean when they use that expression, I cannot tell; what I mean is, that I am under the influence of some tremendous attraction which I have resisted in vain, and which overmasters me. You could draw me to fire, you could draw me to water, you could draw me to the gallows, you could draw me to any death, you could draw me to anything I have most avoided, you could draw me to any exposure and disgrace. . . . But if you would return a favourable answer to my offer of myself in marriage, you could draw me to any good--every good--with equal force." (454-55)



But this " 'offer of myself in marriage' " is really an offer to take Lizzie out of a socially-unacceptable context and to make her respectable. Such a conversion would free Bradley from the spell of the depths and allow him to resume his calmer life on the surface.

Thus both Miss Peecher and Bradley Headstone, who by temperament should marry each other, are left to cope with their emotions in isolation. Both are unable to focus their love on a suitable object, and so Miss Peecher projects her passion into fantasy, and Bradley projects his frustration onto Eugene Wrayburn.

In contrast to this lonely projection of inner life, Dickens presents the healthier relationship of Eugene and Lizzie. In this relationship mutual purgation of undesirable traits occurs for the first time in the novel. Each is, at first, as closed off from a true understanding of the other--Eugene by his boredom, Lizzie by her pride, and both by a sense of class restriction--as Miss Peecher is shut off from the world by the windows which are as narrow as "the eyes in needles." But each forces the other to acknowledge a broader, deeper perspective so that these barriers eventually break down. It is Lizzie who prompts Eugene to act unselfishly when he offers to pay for her



education--although her influence over Eugene, like her influence over Bradley, is not consciously willed. Simultaneously, Lizzie feels that Eugene draws out of her selfish instincts of her own. After Eugene remarks that Lizzie's refusal of his finding her a tutor is " 'wrong to yourself and does wrong to your dead father,' " Lizzie begins to realize the falseness of her pride: "It chanced to be a subtle string to sound, in her who had so spoken to her brother within the hour. It sounded far more forcibly, because of the change in the speaker for the moment; the passing appearance of earnestness, complete conviction, injured resentment of suspicion, generous and unselfish interest. All these qualities, in him usually so light and careless, she felt to be inseparable from some touch of their opposites in her own breast" (286). Thus the inspiration of the other's presence breaks down barriers to understanding in each of the lovers. Their marriage indicates that the perspective of each has been broadened so that distrust, pride, and even class cease to isolate them from each other.

But the full acceptance of another is not accomplished merely by mutual purgation of distrust. Lizzie and Eugene must substitute shared experience for shared standards (such



as their initial acceptance of class-determined behavior towards each other). When they first meet, they share no common experience; the divergency of their backgrounds keeps each from seeing the other as a conventional marriage partner. Lizzie's rescue of Eugene gives them a common experience, however. In effect, it allows Eugene to participate in Lizzie's past, to understand her life on the river at firsthand.<sup>5</sup> Eugene's entrance into the world of her past breaks down Lizzie's last barrier against Eugene as a lover. He no longer seems removed--by breeding, station, or money--from a true understanding of her whole existence.

Thus Lizzie and Eugene found their relationship of mutual need and mutual respect on a rejection of class limitations. Theirs would still be an isolated example of human respect, however, if Dickens did not place their relationship in a larger social context. Arnold Kettle sees as basic to the novel the "idea of mutuality as involving more than the isolable personal relationships of individual

<sup>5</sup> This is also the basis of the friendship between Lizzie and Jenny: Jenny's grandfather was one of the corpses that Gaffer fished out of the Thames. Unlike the Veneerings, who have no past, and Bradley, who denies his past, Lizzie insists that those who know her must accept her for her total experience.



characters . . . ." <sup>6</sup> Dickens develops this larger sense of mutuality by creating a new first cause for the new society that he foresees at the end of the novel.

John Harmon is this new first cause. Kettle points out that it is through Harmon that characters meet, and that class barriers are broken down: he introduces the Boffins to the Wilfers, and Eugene to Lizzie. He is the "mutual friend" who can cross class lines. <sup>7</sup> Like his prototype Venus--who, Wegg says, has " 'the patience to fit together on wires the whole framework of society--I allude to the human skelinton . . . ' " --Harmon/Rokesmith is the "smith" who forges a New Harmony, or new " 'framework of society' " (540). But while Venus joins together fragments of body, Harmon must unite fragments of mind, of spiritual identity. His struggle to sort through the various manifestations of himself--Radfoot, Handford--relates only metaphorically to Venus' sorting of the " 'various' " hands and feet in his shop. Not caring about spirit, Venus produces a skeleton which is technically perfect but which is spiritually incoherent: " 'When I prepare a miscellaneous one, I know beforehand that I can't keep to nature, and be

<sup>6</sup> Arnold Kettle, "Our Mutual Friend," Dickens and the Twentieth Century, ed. by John Gross and Gabriel Pearson (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1962), p. 214.

<sup>7</sup> Kettle, pp. 214-15.



miscellaneous with ribs, because every man has his own ribs, and no other man's will go with them; but elseways I can be miscellaneous. I have just sent home a Beauty--a perfect Beauty--to a school of art. One leg Belgian, one leg English, and the pickings of eight other people in it' " (124).<sup>8</sup> Harmon, on the other hand, resents being a miscellany of values, and sifts through his various identities until he creates a homogeneous sense of self.

The process of self-creation--or, as Venus might say, of self-articulation--is important for Harmon's role of Social Creator.<sup>9</sup> More mythical than human by dint of the stories which spring up around his "death," Harmon sets the pattern of self-examination that must be followed by other characters--by Bella and Eugene especially--who wish to be saved. Harmon's self-creation, of course, begins

<sup>8</sup> It is significant that, with "his head and face peering out of the darkness, over the smoke of" his tea, Mr. Venus looks "as if he were modernizing the old original rise in his family . . ." (OMF, 126). Like the original Venus, he creates order out of chaos by fitting fragments of bone into coherent shapes. But his order, like Wegg's feudalism, is merely a jumbled imitation of an older order which has entirely lost its significance for the modern world.

<sup>9</sup> Knoepflmacher almost makes the connection between Harmon and a god-figure when he discusses the religious imagery of the novel, p. 161: "The Redeemer of the New Testament, whose second coming can dissolve the shackles of the material world, may even be of the figures suggested by the novel's elusive title."



after his "death"--that is, after he has died to the Radfoot part of himself, that part which would have married Bella for material gain.<sup>10</sup> What Kettle does not acknowledge is that it is not Harmon per se who unites the various characters, but rather the Harmon "murder," the rejection of materialism and the rebirth into a higher life. The social relations that form as a result of this "murder" will necessarily be more spiritually advanced than those formed on the Venutian premise that men are reducible to interchangeable, boney fragments. United by the fluid process of becoming, rather than by the inert solidity of the mounds, of the Podsnap plate, or of marble monuments, characters of the New Harmony do not find themselves in a Harmony Jail. They are united not by narrow and inflexible social standards which reinforce their isolation from each other, but are, like the Podsnap plate, melted down. In this new, fluid state there is true interaction between characters who share the experience of growth.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Miyoshi, p. 273.

<sup>11</sup> Bella's disappearances into her husband's side indicate the extent to which characters of the new social order melt into one another.



In a sense, then, the New Harmony is established on the premise of spiritual organicism, while the old order perverts this principle. In either instance, characters are forced to grow outwards from a central perspective. Under the Articles of Podsnappery, however, this growth is a gradual outward movement of spirit so that, like a snake's skin, spirit is eventually shed, leaving only the meaninglessness of empty matter. The expansion which takes place in the new society, however, encourages the shedding of the material and the development of the spirit. Spiritual growth widens moral horizons and encourages true understanding between people of different classes. In this way, it prevents the reinforcement of egocentricity and the resultant alienation of the mechanized "husk and shell" from its own informing spirit and from spiritual worth in other people. Whereas Podsnappery encourages a limited point of view based on the self-interest of a fragmented human being, the expansiveness of spiritual organicism encourages a wider angle of vision, one that heals the split between the public and the private halves of man, and allows this new, whole person to include other whole people in his definition of "self."

However, Dickens gives this new spiritual organicism only a tentative place in the end of the novel. He does



allow innocence to flourish in the city, as Eugene's decision to remain in London makes clear--a decision which Dickens could not make for the innocent Pickwick, who retires from the shock of reality of prison life to an idyllic, protected country home. But his use of the Voice of Society as a coda indicates that the radical marriage of Eugene and Lizzie is carefully contained within society as it is, and the Harmons' new home is not too far removed from a Pickwickian retreat. Their urban home incorporates such pastoral elements as birds, flowers, and fish, and therefore protects them from the larger, morally-ambiguous reality outside. Although Reed believes that good characters expand to fill the void left by evil characters who have exploded--as the Veneerings and Lammles both do--it is unlikely that Dickens expects any change in society itself.<sup>12</sup> Certainly Twemlow's defense of Lizzie is hardly strong enough to devastate the implacable Podsnap. In fact, even this late in his career, and even after his illicit affair with Ellen Ternan,<sup>13</sup> Dickens could not bring himself totally to

<sup>12</sup> Reed, p. 51.

<sup>13</sup> It is a commonplace of Dickens criticism that Ellen Ternan influenced Dickens' conception of Bella, and that there are parallels between Bradley's rage and Dickens' own frustration with his mistress. See Johnson, II, 1038-41.



reject socially-imposed definitions of "decent behavior."<sup>14</sup> Instead, all of the love relationships are carefully contained within the traditional bounds of marriage--even Jenny Wren finds her "Him" in Sloppy.

What Dickens does desire, however, is the rejuvenation of older forms, a fleshing out, so to speak, of the social " 'skelinton.' " Thus John Harmon returns to his old name, but with a new outlook; and he and Bella fulfill the conditions of the first Harmon will, but voluntarily, and with new and loving attitudes. Thus they do not float through an amorphous present, as William Palmer suggests,<sup>15</sup> but are reattached to their pasts in a constructive way, finding a new sense of wholeness. By containing the love of John and Bella within a conventional marriage, and by using this marriage to modify the radical nature of Eugene's acceptance of Lizzie, Dickens strikes his own balance between order and flux, and places the breakdown of class barriers within the safe context of a New Harmony, or improved order.

<sup>14</sup> In fact, Philip Collins, Dickens and Crime (1962; 2nd. ed. London: Macmillan, 1964), p. 22, feels that Dickens became increasingly less tolerant of criminals with age.

<sup>15</sup> William J. Palmer, "The Movement of History in Our Mutual Friend," PMLA 89 (1974), pp. 487-95.



## Selected Bibliography

- Adrian, Arthur A. "Dickens and Inverted Parenthood." Dickensian 67 (1971), 3-11.
- Andersen, Sally S. "The De-Spiritualization of the Elements in Our Mutual Friend." Discourse 12 (1969) 423-33.
- Anderson, Kate. "Scenery and the Weather in Dickens." The Dial 52 (1912), 115-16.
- Aydelotte, William O. "The England of Marx and Mill as Reflected in Fiction." Supplement, Journal of Economic History 8 (1948), 42-58.
- Bachelard, Gaston. The Psychoanalysis of Fire. 1938; tr. Alan C. M. Ross. Boston: Beacon Press, 1964.
- Barnard, Robert. "The Choral Symphony: Our Mutual Friend." Review of English Literature 2 (July 1961), 89-99.
- Bodelsen, Carl A. "The Physiognomy of the Name." Review of English Literature 2 (July 1961), 39-48.
- Boll, Ernest M. "The Plotting of Our Mutual Friend." Modern Philology 42 (Nov. 1944), 96-101.
- Brook, G. L. The Language of Dickens. London: Andre Deutsch, 1970.
- Brown, Arthur Washburn. Sexual Analysis of Dickens' Props. N.Y.: Emerson Books, 1971.
- Brown, Ivor. Dickens in His Time. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1963.
- Carlyle, Thomas. Sartor Resartus: the Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh. 1831; rpt. N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897.
- Cazamian, Louis. The Social Novel in England 1830-1850: Dickens, Disraeli, Mrs. Gaskell, Kingsley. 1903; tr. Martin Fido. London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.



- Cecil, David. Victorian Novelists: Essays in Revaluation. 1935; rpt. Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966.
- Clayborough, Arthur. The Grotesque in English Literature. 1965; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.
- Cockshut, A.O.J. The Imagination of Charles Dickens. 1961; rpt. N.Y.: NYU Press, 1962.
- Collins, Philip. Dickens and Crime. 1962; 2nd. ed. London: Macmillan, 1964.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Dickens and Education. 1963; 2nd. ed. London: Macmillan, 1964.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Queen Mab's Chariot Among the Steam Engine: Dickens and 'Fancy'." English Studies 42 (1961), 78-90.
- Collins, Thomas J. "Some Mutual Sets of Friends: Moral Monitors in Emma and Our Mutual Friend." Dickensian 65 (1969), 32-34.
- Coolidge, Archibald C., Jr. Charles Dickens as Serial Novelist. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State Univ. Press, 1967.
- Dabney, Ross H. Love and Property in the Novels of Dickens. London: Chatto & Windus, 1967.
- Daleski, H. M. "Our Mutual Friend." Dickens and the Art of Analogy. N.Y.: Schocken Books, 1970, 270-336.
- Davis, Earle. The Flint and the Flame: The Artistry of Charles Dickens. Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1963.
- Dickens, Charles. Our Mutual Friend. Ed. Stephen Gill. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971.
- Dunn, Richard J. "Dickens and the Tragi-Comic Grotesque." Studies in the Novel 1 (1969), 147-55.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Dickens's Mastery of the Macabre." Dickens Studies 1 (Jan. 1965), 33-9.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Drummle and Startop: Doubling in Great Expectations." Dickensian 63 (1967), 125-27.



- Frye, Northrop. "Dickens and the Comedy of Humors." 1968; rpt. in The Victorian Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism. Ed. Ian Watt. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971, 47-69.
- Garis, Robert. The Dickens Theatre: A Reassessment of the Novels. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965.
- Gibson, Priscilla. "Dickens's Use of Animism." Nineteenth Century Fiction 7 (1953), 283-91.
- Gold, Joseph. Charles Dickens: Radical Moralists. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1972.
- Goldberg, Michael. Carlyle and Dickens. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1972.
- Gordon, Scott. "The London Economist and the High Tide of Laissez Faire." Journal of Political Economy 63 (1955), 461-88.
- Grob, Shirley. "Dickens and Some Motifs of the Fairy Tale." Texas Studies in Literature and Language 5 (1964), 567-79.
- Hardy, Barbara. Dickens: The Later Novels. London: Longmans, 1968.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Complexity of Dickens." Dickens 1970. Ed. Michael Slater. N.Y.: Stein and Day, 1970, 29-51.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Moral Art of Dickens. N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970.
- Henkin, Leo J. Darwinism in the English Novel 1860-1910: The Impact of Evolution on Victorian Fiction. 1940; rpt., N.Y.: Russell and Russell, 1963.
- Houghton, Walter E. The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870. 1957; rpt. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1971.
- House, Humphry. The Dickens World. 1941; 2nd ed. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Macabre Dickens." 1947; rpt. in The Victorian Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism. Ed. Ian Watt. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971.



- James, Henry. "The Limitations of Dickens." 1865; rpt. in The Dickens Critics. Ed. George H. Ford and Lauriat Lane, Jr. 1961; rpt. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1962, 48-54.
- Johnson, Edgar. Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph. 2 vols. N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1952.
- Johnson, Pamela Hansford. "The Sexual Life in Dickens's Novels." Dickens 1970. Ed. Michael Slater. N.Y.: Stein and Day, 1970, 173-94.
- Kelly, Thomas. "Character in Dickens' Late Novels." Modern Language Quarterly 30 (1969), 386-401.
- Kettle, Arnold. "Our Mutual Friend." Dickens and the Twentieth Century. Ed. John Gross and Gabriel Pearson. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1962, 213-25.
- Knoepfmacher, U. C. "Our Mutual Friend." Laughter and Despair: Readings in Ten Novels of the Victorian Era. 1971; rpt. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: Univ. of California Press, 1973.
- Kotzin, Michael C. Dickens and the Fairy Tale. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green Univ. Popular Press, 1972.
- Kreutz, Irving W. "Sly of Manner, Sharp of Tooth: A Study of Dickens's Villains." Nineteenth Century Fiction 22 (1968), 331-48.
- Lamb, Cedric. "Love and Self-Interest in Dickens' Novels." Paunch 33 (1968), 32-47.
- Lane, Lauriat, Jr. "Dickens and the Double." Dickensian 55 (1959), 47-55.
- Lane, Margaret. "Dickens on the Hearth." Dickens 1970. Ed. Michael Slater. N.Y.: Stein and Day, 1970, 153-71.
- Lanham, Richard A. "Our Mutual Friend: The Birds of Prey." Victorian Newsletter 24 (Fall, 1963), 6-12.
- Lucas, John. The Melancholy Man: A Study of Dickens's Novels. N.Y.: Barnes and Noble, 1970.



- Marcus, Mordecai. "The Pattern of Self-Alienation in 'Great Expectations'." Victorian Newsletter 26 (Fall 1964), 9-12.
- McMaster, Rowland D. "Dickens, the Dandy, and the Savage: A Victorian View of the Romantic." Studies in the Novel 1 (1969), 133-46.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Man into Beast in Dickensian Caricature." Univ. of Toronto Quarterly 31 (1962), 354-61.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "'Society (Whatever that was)': Dickens and Society as an Abstraction." Etudes anglaises 23 (1970), 125-35.
- Miller, J. Hillis. Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels. 1958; rpt. Bloomington and London: Indiana Univ. Press, 1969.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Our Mutual Friend." 1964; rpt. in Dickens: A Collection of Critical Essays. Ed. Martin Price. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1967, 169-77.
- Miyoshi, Masao. "Resolution of Identity in 'Our Mutual Friend'." Victorian Newsletter 26 (Fall, 1964), 5-9.
- Morse, Robert. "Our Mutual Friend." 1949; rpt. in The Dickens Critics. Ed. George H. Ford and Lauriat Lane, Jr. 1961; rpt. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1962, 197-213.
- Moynahan, Julian. "The Hero's Guilt: The Case of Great Expectations." Essays in Criticism 10 (1960), 60-79.
- Muir, Kenneth. "Image and Structure in 'Our Mutual Friend'." Essays and Studies 19 (1966), 92-105.
- New, William H. "The Four Elements in Great Expectations." Dickens Studies 3 (1967), 111-21.
- Page, Norman. "'A Language Fit for Heroes': Speech in Oliver Twist and Our Mutual Friend." Dickensian 65 (1969), 100-07.
- Palmer, William J. "The Movement of History in Our Mutual Friend." PMLA 89 (1974), 487-95.



- Patterson, Annabel M. "Our Mutual Friend: Dickens as the Compleat Angler." Dickens Studies Annual 1 (1970), 252-64.
- Reed, John R. "Confinement and Character in Dickens' Novels." Dickens Studies Annual 1 (1970), 41-54.
- Rees, Richard. "Dickens, or the Intelligence of the Heart." For Love or Money, Studies in Personality and Essence. London: Secker and Warburg, 1960, 89-112.
- Reid, J. C. The Hidden World of Charles Dickens. Univ. of Auckland Bulletin 61, English Series 10. 1962; 2nd ed. Auckland: Univ. of Auckland Press, 1966.
- Sharp, Sister M. Corona. "The Archetypal Feminine: Our Mutual Friend." Univ. of Kansas City Review 27 (1961), 307-11 and 28 (1961), 74-80.
- Shea, F. X., S.J. "Mr. Venus Observed: The Plot Change in Our Mutual Friend." Papers on Language and Literature 4 (1968), 170-81.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "No Change of Intention in Our Mutual Friend." Dickensian 63 (1967), 37-40.
- Smith, Grahame. Dickens, Money, and Society. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1968.
- Smith, Sheila M. "Anti-Mechanism and the Comic in the Writings of Charles Dickens." Renaissance and Modern Studies 3 (1959), 131-44.
- Steig, Michael. "Dickens's Excremental Vision." Victorian Studies 13 (1970), 339-54.
- Stoehr, Taylor. Dickens: The Dreamer's Stance. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1965.
- Stoll, John E. "Psychological Dissociation in the Victorian Novel." Literature and Psychology 20, no. 2 (1970), 62-73.
- Stone, Harry. "Fire, Hand, and Gate: Dickens' Great Expectations." Kenyon Review 24 (1962), 662-91.



Sucksmith, Harvey Peter. The Narrative Art of Charles Dickens: The Rhetoric of Sympathy and Irony in his Novels. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970.

Sussman, Herbert L. "The New Industrial Novel and the Machine: Charles Dickens." Victorians and the Machine: the Literary Response to Technology. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1968, 41-75.

Thompson, Leslie M. "The Masks of Pride in Our Mutual Friend." Dickensian 60 (1964), 124-28.

Thoreau, Henry David. Walden and Civil Disobedience. Ed. Owen Thomas. N.Y.: W. W. Norton and Co., 1966.

Van Ghent, Dorothy. "The Dickens World: A View from Todgers's." 1950; rpt. in The Dickens Critics. Ed. George H. Ford and Lauriat Lane, Jr. 1961; rpt. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1962, 213-32.

Watson, Thomas L. "The Ethics of Feasting: Dickens' Dramatic Use of Agape." Essays in Honor of Esmond Linworth Marilla. Ed. Thomas A. Kirby and William J. Olive. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1970, 243-52.

Welsh, Alexander. The City of Dickens. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971.

Wentersdorf, Karl P. "Mirror-Images in Great Expectations." Nineteenth Century Fiction 21 (1966), 203-24.

Wilson, Angus. "Dickens and the Divided Conscience." The Month 189 (May 1950), 349-60.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Heroes and Heroines of Dickens." Review of English Literature 2 (July, 1961), 9-18.

Wilson, Edmund. "Dickens: The Two Scrooges." 1940; rpt. in The Wound and the Bow: Seven Studies in Literature. Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1941, 1-104.

Winters, Warrington. "Charles Dickens: Our Mutual Friend." N. Dakota Quarterly 34 (1966), 96-9.