"The Most Dreadful Visitation": An Examination of Dickens's Treatment of Madness in his Novels

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Abstract

"The Most Dreadful Visitation": An Examination of Dickens's Treatment of Madness in his Novels

The purpose of this study is to investigate the ways in which the subject of insanity holds a place of special importance in Dickens's novels, and to study the means by which he developed a range of literary skills in exploring its potential. An examination of certain key novels will reveal the changing form and nature of Dickens's literary uses of insanity as he matured as a writer, highlighting his early exploration of madness as an expression of man's fallen nature, and his later treatment of a character notably restored from insanity. His experimentation with this subject, explored both in theme and character in several novels, was to culminate in his carefully crafted A Tale of Two Cities, a work illuminating his skill in interweaving the cause and effects of madness into a plot which conveys Dickens's maturing vision of meaning and purpose in his novel-writing.

The introductory chapter of this study observes that although Dickens (during a visit to an asylum) described insanity as a "dreadful visitation", it was to provide him with a rich vein of invention in his novels. His varied treatment of madness, unparalleled in contemporary literature, invites us to ask why this theme should have appealed to his imagination. The second chapter examines the reasons why insanity was a subject of topical interest during much of Dickens's writing career. It describes the

attitudes of certain influential medical writers in the nineteenth century towards the condition (the nature of which proved difficult to define), and notes the ways in which Dickens was affected by contemporary medical debates on the subject.

Dickens's portrayal of madness in his novels was to some extent influenced by earlier literary conventions. The third chapter broadly considers his writing within the context of a range of literary traditions, indicating ways in which the subject of insanity was handled in a variety of genres with which he was familiar. The chapter highlights themes of madness as a punishment for human misdeeds: the use of insane characters as victims of circumstance, and the restorative effects of insanity. This study will, however reveal, that although Dickens's writing draws upon a wide range of literary traditions, his novels bear his own individual stamp.

Chapter Four considers ways in which Dickens was influenced by his own first-hand knowledge of madness, as experienced by people known to him, or visited by him. It highlights his attitudes towards those who were mentally afflicted, and illuminates the nature of his strongly-held views on this subject, as author and as editor.

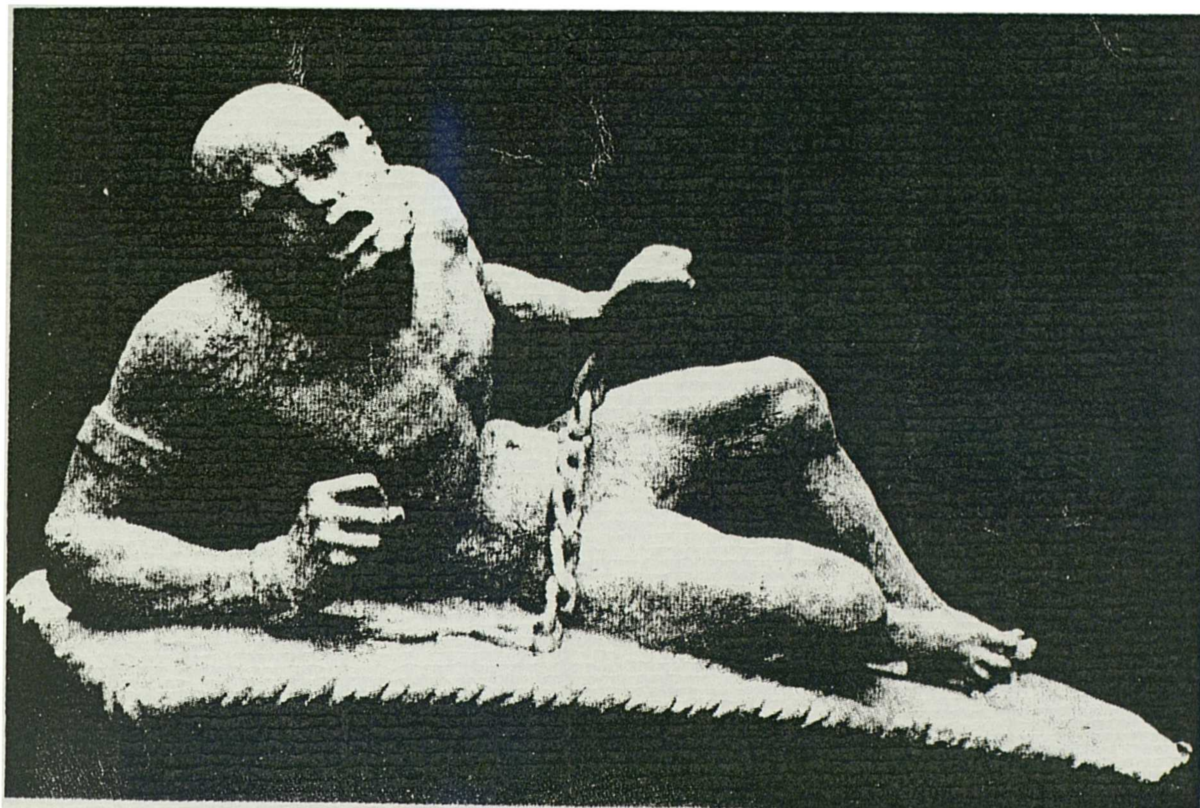
In the ensuing chapters, several key novels have been selected for a detailed consideration of ways in which Dickens's handling of madness shifted in focus as he matured as a writer. Chapter Five compares and contrasts his early treatment of this theme in Sketches by Boz, Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist and Nicholas Nickleby, novels in which he explored the potential of madness as an expression of moral failure. The sixth chapter, whilst drawing upon some themes from The Old Curiosity Shop, highlights his experimentation with an insane central character in Barnaby Rudge. It also notes the significant contribution of the minor character, Mr Dick, within the framework of David Copperfield, contrasting the role of this benign madman with that of the deranged, malign figure of Miss Havisham in Great Expectations, characters exemplifying his portrayal of insanity in victims of circumstance, whilst also illustrating their potential effect upon other characters. The treatment of insanity in Bleak House and Little Dorrit is examined in the seventh chapter, which highlights Dickens's experimentation with insanity as an expression of human frailty and concludes with a study of A Tale of Two Cities, a novel

marking the height of Dickens's achievement in his arresting portrayal of madness in both theme and character.

The final chapter evaluates the significant role of madness in Dickens's novels, and draws conclusions about the reasons why he chose to describe insanity in so many forms. Whilst illuminating ways in which his portrayal of this subject shifted in focus as he mastered new technical skills, it highlights the changing uses Dickens made of insanity. Far from being a "dreadful visitation" in its literary representation, Dickens discovered that madness, a subject which fascinated him, provided him with a wealth of possibilities in exposing hidden depths of meaning in his novels, highlighting too the ways in which his own creative vision changed in its emphasis as he matured as a writer.

A Note on Abbreviations and Quotations from Dickens's Novels.

Quotations from Dickens's novels are taken from the Penguin editions throughout. The Pilgrim edition of the letters is used wherever possible, and abbreviated as Letters; where another edition is used, fuller references are given.



Caius Gabriel Cibber, "Raving Madness", 1677

Caius Gabriel Cibber, "Melancholy Madness", 1677

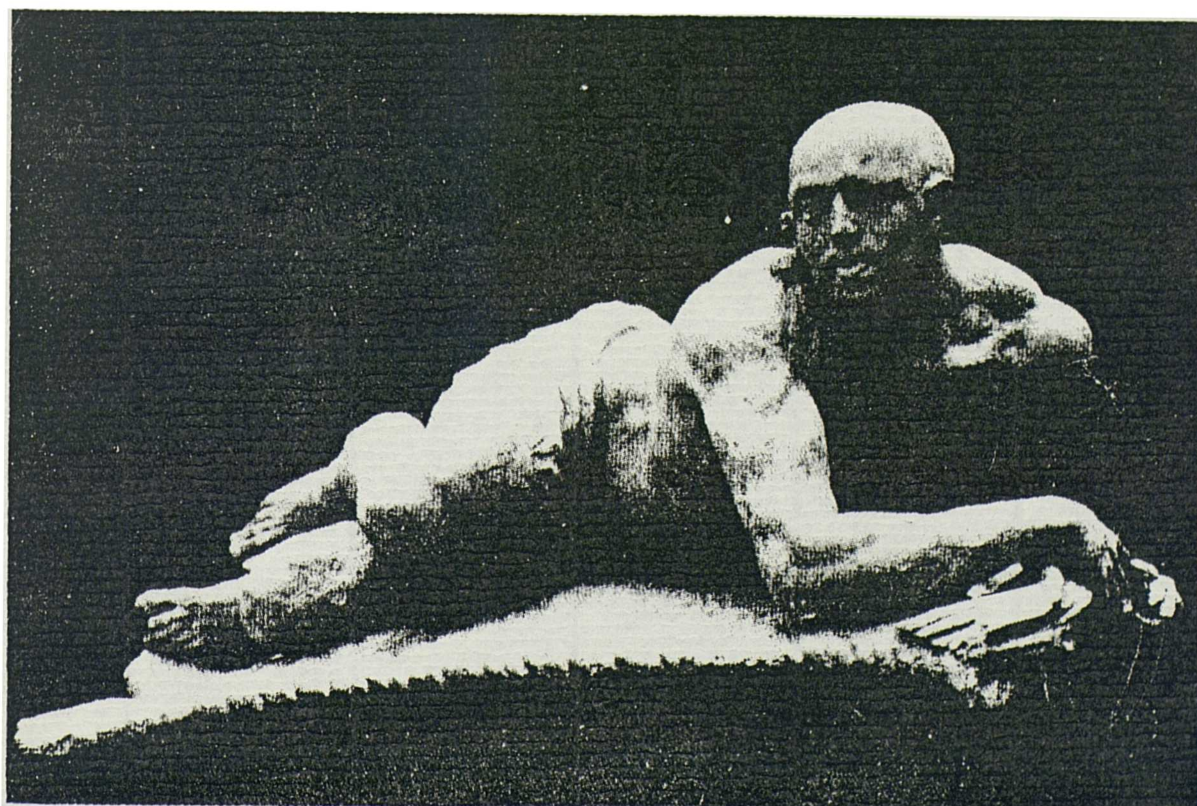
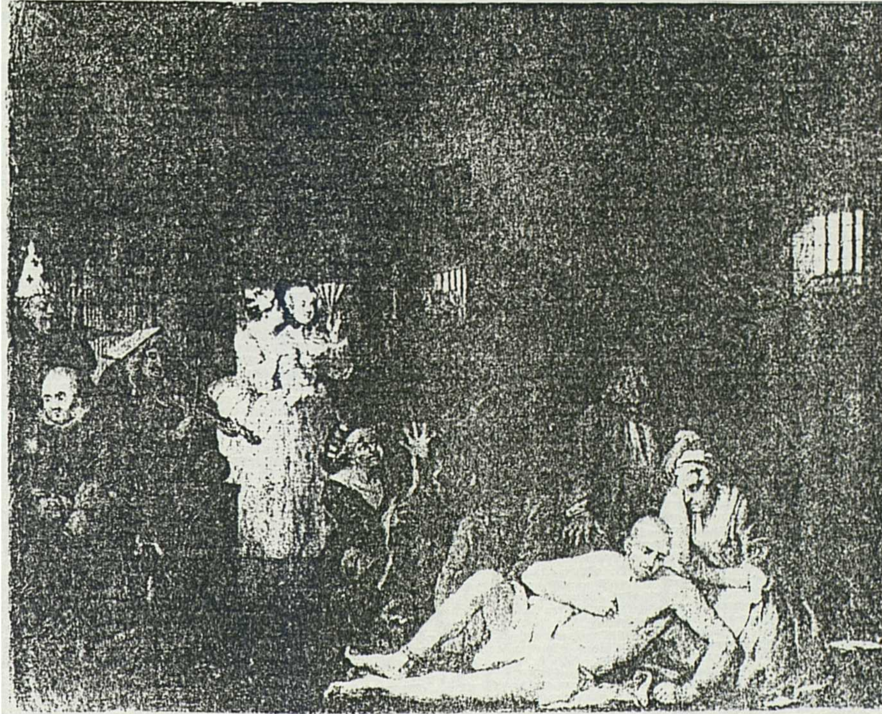


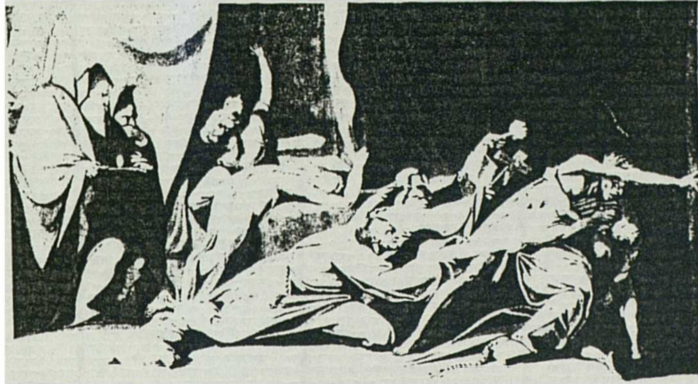
PLATE 1



William Hogarth "The Rake in Bedlam", from

'The Rake's Progress'. 1735

PLATE 2



Johann Henrich Fuseli,
"The Madhouse",
C.1772

Francisco Goya, "The Madhouse", 1793

PLATE 3

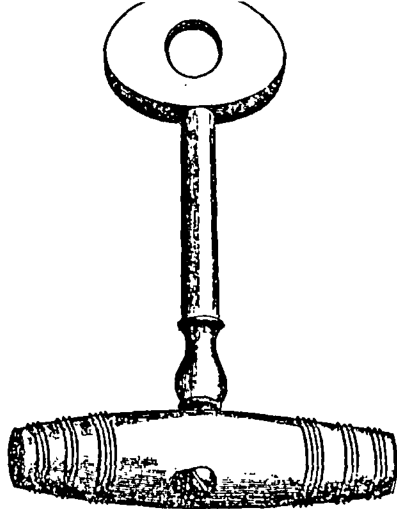
"Madness". Taken from Charles Bell, <u>Essays on the Anatomy in Painting</u> (London: Longman, 1806).

PLATE 4

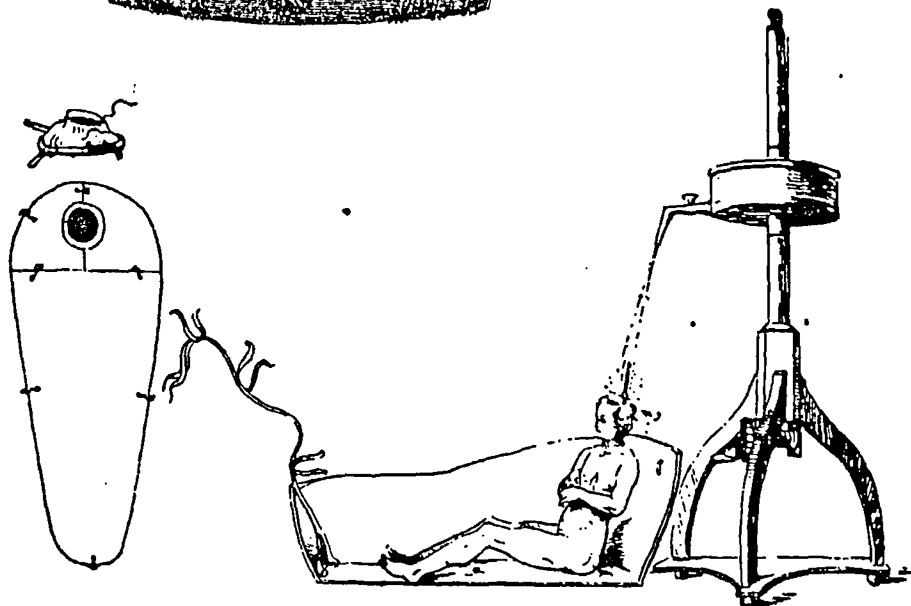
Richard Dadd,
"Sketch to Illustrate the Passions,Agony -
Raving Madness," 1854

PLATE 5

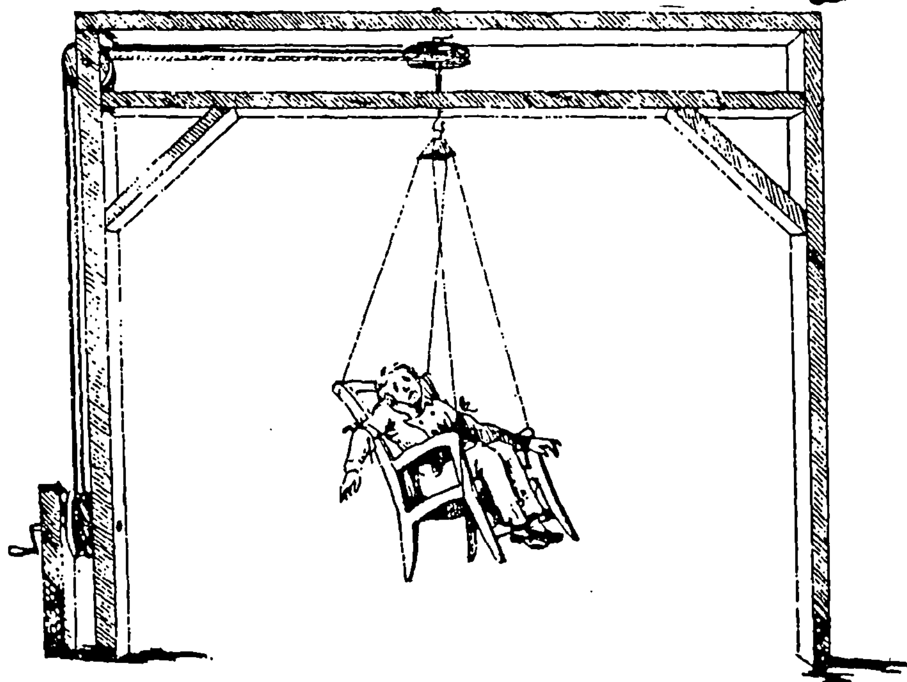
Haslam's key for forcing open patients' mouths.



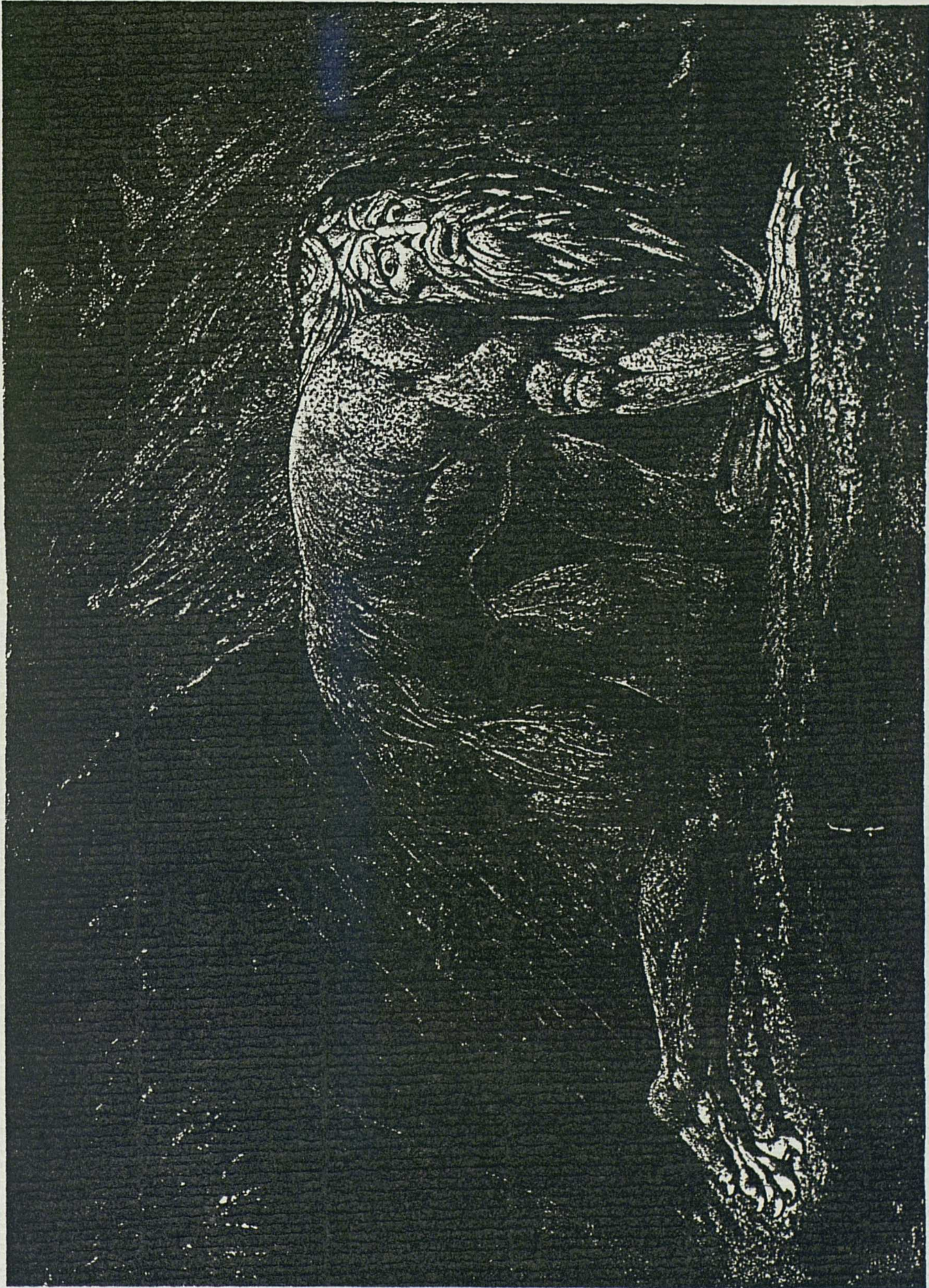
Morison's "the douche"



Morison's "Rotary Machine".



Drawings of "the Douche" and "Rotary Machine" from Sir Alexander Morison's Cases of mental disease... (1828).



William Blake, "Nebuchadnezzar". 1795

PLATE 7

A Lithograph of the hermit, by William
Short of Eye (near Peterborough (date uncertain)).

PLATE 8

Katharine Drake, "Lunatics' Ball, Somerset", 1848

Chapter One

Introduction

When visiting America in 1842, Dickens inspected two very different establishments accommodating insane patients, in South Boston and in New York. Of the institution in South Boston, he observed that it was "admirably conducted" on "enlightened principles of conciliation and kindness" with "the greatest decorum",[1] but he criticised the asylum in New York for its lack of order, its failure to provide patients with purposeful activity, and its dull, blank appearance. He noted that "everything had a lounging, listless, madhouse air, which was very painful" in this "sad refuge of afflicted and degraded humanity" (pp. 140-141).[2] However, it is not his description of the two establishments which is the most striking feature of Dickens's record of these visits, but his comment about the condition of insanity itself. Madness, he observes, is "the most dreadful visitation to which our nature is exposed": an illuminating remark at an early stage in his writing career, of the impact made by the plight of the insane upon Dickens.

Madness was to be a subject which Dickens explored through a range of themes and characters over a period of many years. He does not merely use insanity as a literary device; his powerful descriptions conveying the effects of deranged behaviour illustrate the way in which this subject gripped his imagination, as will become evident in this study. Dickens's novels are remarkable for their wide array of characters experiencing brief or prolonged periods of insanity. Such creations are used as a means of moral or social comment, as comic relief, as indicators, touchstones, mirrors or catalysts, often

providing insight into other characters and events. His description of maddened scenes of wild crowd violence offer further illustrations of his fascination with the impact of irrationality. An examination of certain key novels, in which Dickens experimented with various forms in portraying madness, will reveal the extensive use he made of this theme, and the ways in which his early exploration of madness as an expression of moral failure was later followed by experimentation with insane figures as victims of circumstance or as catalysts in his plots, and by his portrayal of insanity as an expression of human frailty, which became interwoven with themes of redemption in A Tale of Two Cities. In depicting the cause and effects of many forms of insanity, Dickens undoubtedly drew from a wide range of literary sources. His novels mark his own development as a writer experimenting with different aspects of his representation of insanity, together with his attempts to overcome some technical problems inherent in any sustained portrait of madness.

The Dickens world is, of course, notable for its eccentric grotesques:[3] memorable figures like Mrs. Gamp or Quilp, who seem larger-than-life, yet Dickens also chose to portray characters who were not merely motivated by the bizarre compulsions of his eccentrics. Such figures offered him the potential to explore the more "dreadful" effects of irrationality in its many forms. Some of his insane creations were to provide him with the opportunity of highlighting emotional extremes, often cast into relief by the effective use of contrast.

It is intriguing that such a dynamic character as Dickens (and one only has to glance through his letters to marvel at his tireless energy), someone who was obsessively keen to maintain a sense of order in his own personal affairs,[4] should have been repeatedly drawn into exploring the fragmented, disordered state of irrationality. His writings notably reveal Dickens's overt, philosophical beliefs about the importance of duty, illustrated, for example, by his letter to his youngest son on the day of Plorn's departure to Australia, which concludes: "I hope you will always be able to say in after life, that you had a kind father. You cannot show your affection for him so well, or make him so happy, as by doing your duty".[5]

Dickens's religious and philosophical beliefs have been amply discussed elsewhere,[6] as has his difficulty in upholding certain aspects of his philosophy in his personal life.[7] It will become apparent that as Dickens explored the subterranean world of insanity in his novels, he used the state of madness as one means of challenging the effects of conventional norms and expectations. Although he had noted that insanity was a "dreadful visitation" during his visit to the asylum, it was to provide him with invaluable resources in incisively exposing hidden layers of meaning in his novel-writing.

For the purposes of this study, we shall be examining madness as manifested in Dickens's novels in wild, extravagant delusions or mania, and in the expression of ungovernable emotional manifestations, whether conveyed in anger, deep despair, rage or fury by individuals or by groups. There is often a fine line of distinction between the bizarre behaviour of some of Dickens's eccentric creations and the characteristics of insanity displayed in other characters. Both eccentric and insane characters may experience isolation, when Dickens portrays their inability to relate to social groups, while they may also share bizarre compulsions (providing Dickens with a range of opportunities to highlight emotional extremes). It has been observed that the "criterion by which a person in any society is judged to be mentally ill is not primarily the presence of certain unvarying and universally occurring symptoms. It depends rather on whether the affected individual is capable of some minimum of adaptation and social functioning within his society, or whether the psychological change has progressed to such an extent that he has become an outcast in his society".[8] A character such as Miss Havisham might have been portrayed as merely eccentric had she chosen to adopt her enclosing lifestyle, but her inability to adapt and make choices about her role in society mark out the confines of her monomania, for she is incarcerated as the result of events over which she had no control.

In setting out to examine the forms and literary purposes of Dickens's varied treatment of madness, which was unparalleled in contemporary literature, this study will examine, in its second chapter, the reasons why insanity was a source of topical

interest at certain key points during Dickens's writing career. It will consider the attitudes of some influential medical writers in the nineteenth century (for whom a widely-shared, satisfactory definition of this condition was to prove elusive), noting the ways in which Dickens was affected by their contemporary medical debates. The third chapter will observe that in his portrayal of madness, Dickens was at least partially influenced by a range of literary conventions, and will consider the context of his writing within a wider literary tradition. Although the chapter will explore ways in which he may have drawn upon different sources, later chapters will demonstrate that Dickens's novels bear his own remarkable stamp. In Chapter Four, the effects of Dickens's own first-hand observations about insanity, as manifest in people known to him, will discuss the cause and effect of some of his own strongly-held views on this subject which he expressed both in his capacity as author and as editor.

The ensuing chapters of this study will compare and contrast Dickens's uses of insanity in several selected novels which reflect the way in which his treatment of this subject altered in its emphasis during his writing career. The fifth chapter will examine Dickens's early exploration of this theme in Sketches by Boz, Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist and Nicholas Nickleby, highlighting his early use of dramatic devices in portraying madness as one of the effects of moral failure. The sixth chapter, whilst reflecting upon some themes evident in The Old Curiosity Shop, will focus attention on Dickens's significant experiment with an insane central figure in Barnaby Rudge - an experiment which was less than successful because of the technical difficulties arising from such a sustained attempt at a portrait of insanity. By contrast, the contribution of the minor character of Mr Dick within the framework of David Copperfield will be examined, and compared with the role of Miss Havisham, a deranged figure who later exerts a malign influence in Great Expectations, - contrasting examples of Dickens's deranged victims of circumstance. The seventh chapter, which highlights Dickens's experimentation with insanity as an expression of human frailty, will discuss the ways in which Dickens later used insanity for moral purposes in Bleak House, in his characterisation of Miss Flite. His treatment of this figure will be compared with his

handling of Mr Dorrit's mental collapse in Little Dorrit. The chapter will conclude with an examination of A Tale of Two Cities, the novel which most significantly marks Dickens's achievement as a mature artist, in which he explores the potential for restoration represented by the workings a benign Providence, through his arresting portrayal of insanity in both characterisation and theme. Finally, a concluding chapter will highlight the significance of Dickens's treatment of madness in his novels. Whilst noting that Dickens's handling of this subject subtly altered as he experimented with new technical skills, this chapter will highlight the way in which, as he matured as an artist, his treatment of insanity (expressing a range of heightened human emotions) became interwoven in a broader exploration of purpose and meaning in his novel-writing.

Notes

1. American Notes, p. 95.

2. Dickens's values in social care were further displayed, five years later, through his involvement in the organisation of a very different establishment, Urania Cottage, in Shepherd's Bush. His attention to detail in supervising this "Home for Fallen Women" is well-documented by Philip Collins in Dickens and Crime, (London: Macmillan, 1962), pp. 98-115.

3. For a fuller discussion of Dickens's use of the grotesque, see Michael Hollington, Dickens and the Grotesque, (London: Croom Helm, 1984).

4. Forster further observed: "To all men who do much, rule and order are essential; method in everything was Dickens's peculiarity" (The Life of Charles Dickens (ed. J.W.T. Ley). London: Cecil Palmer, 1928 (XI, III, p. 836)). It has been suggested, by John Carey amongst others, that Dickens's own obsessive state was bordering on mania (see The Violent Effigy, p. 31). For further discussion on this point, see below p. 212.

5. 26 September, 1868 (Nonesuch Letters, III, 668).

6. See Dennis Walder, Dickens and Religion, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), and Norris Pope, Dickens and Charity (London: Macmillan, 1978).

7. See chapters 6 and 7 of Michael Slater, Dickens and Women, (London: Dent, 1983), for a discussion about his marital difficulties. See also Claire Tomalin, The Invisible Woman: The Story of Nelly Ternan and Charles Dickens, (London: Viking, 1990), which draws attention to some of the personal tensions experienced by Dickens in his later years.

8. Erwin H. Ackerknecht, trans. Sula Wolff: A Short History of Psychiatry (New York & London: Hafner, 1968), p. 3.

Chapter Two

"To Define True Madness": Dickens in Context

"MAD is one of those words, which mean almost everything and nothing".
T. Beddoes, Hygeia, 3 vols, Bristol: J. Mills, 1802-3, III (Tenth Essay), 40.

> "Mad call I it, for to define true madness
> What is 't but to be nothing else but mad?"
> (Hamlet, II. ii. 93-94).

Dickens's experimentation with the theme of insanity marked out his interest in this subject during the period in which he was writing. He was unique as a nineteenth-century novelist because of his varied representation of the cause and effects of insanity, discovering in his treatment of the subject one means of exposing hidden springs of emotion in a range of his creations. He also explored its use as a plot device, and, amongst other purposes, experimented with a portrayal of madness as one outcome of moral failure in individuals (exemplified by Ralph Nickleby), and also as the result of injustice in the legal system (in the case of Miss Flite). In later novels, he was, however, to explore insanity as an expression of human frailty, together with its restorative potential.

In madness, Dickens had chosen a subject of topical interest, for, during the period in which he was writing, a number of eminent medical writers were entering into public debate about the nature of the condition, its cause and effect, whilst recommending a wide variety of treatments. In examining the way in which some of these medical writers struggled to define the condition of insanity, this chapter will particularly highlight the contribution made to contemporary debates by Conolly, with whom Dickens was acquainted. His viewpoint was clearly significant for Dickens, who permitted the publication of an article applauding Conolly's humanitarian approach to the treatment of the insane in one of his journals (see below, p. 12). Dickens's support for an enlightened approach towards caring for the insane is apparent in several minor details in his writing, illustrated for example in his comments when visiting asylums on his travels (see below, chapter 4).

That Dickens's reading public would have been aware of aspects of public debate concerning the incidence, cause and treatment of insanity, including the use (and abuse) of the asylum system, will become evident from an examination of contemporary writings in the chapter which follows. Changing trends in public attitudes towards the care of the insane were, in turn, reflected in legislative developments in the nineteenth century. Following the County Asylums Act of 1808, institutions had been specifically designed for criminal and pauper lunatics. Later, the Select Committee on Madhouses of 1815-16 publicised the plight of the insane, and, thirty years later, the Lunatics Act of 1845 was passed (several years after Dickens had experimented with his own portrayal of the plight of an insane figure, Barnaby Rudge), partly through the endeavours of zealous reformers such as Lord Ashley (later 7th Earl of Shaftsbury), one of a group of commissioners inspecting hospitals and private houses. It has been remarked that Ashley and his colleagues had "roused the conscience of mid-Victorian society, and had set a new standard of public morality by which the care of the helpless and degraded classes of the community was to be seen as a social responsibility".[1] The 1845 Act was to mark the "culmination of a slow process of social revolution which transformed the 'Lunatick or Mad Person' of 1744 into the 'person of unsound mind'" (Jones, p. 149).

Three amending Acts were passed in 1853, relating to the certification of patients in private institutions, the admission of patients to private asylums, and the protection of the wealth of chancery lunatics - themes explored in contemporary literature, including Bleak House. During the year in which A Tale of Two Cities was being published, a further Select Committee was established, in 1859, recommending that a magistrate should intervene in private cases of certification. Later, pauper lunatics were to benefit when financial incentives induced Boards of Guardians to transfer paupers from workhouses into centres of treatment. Further Acts were to be discussed by Parliament, until twenty years after Dickens's death, the lengthy Lunacy Act of 1890 attempted to safeguard against illegal confinement.

As Dickens was, as we have noted, writing during the period in which legislative reforms reflecting a change in public attitudes towards mental derangement were being implemented, insanity would have been a subject of topical interest. While Dickens may have chosen to focus on several specific aspects of this theme (as will become apparent in chapters 5-7), he had clearly found, in madness, a subject which would capture his readers' attention.

Dickens was writing at a time when some writers had come to regard aspects of insanity as a national characteristic. Since the eighteenth century, when there had been widespread concern about the bouts of insanity suffered by George III (see below p. 220)), literary and medical texts had examined links between the nation's cultural habits and symptoms of a condition which curiously became known as the "English Malady".[2] Two very visible symbols of the repulsive effects of insanity, in Cibber's famous, grotesque sculptures of "Raving Madness" and "Melancholy Madness" (see plate 1),[3] had been removed from the gates of Bethlem hospital less than twenty years before Dickens began writing. The classically athletic form of these two semi-nude male figures portrayed by Cibber is contrasted by the writhing contortion of their bodies, and their tortured facial expressions. It is significant that his sculptured figure of "Raving Madness" is confined by chains, highlighting not only the earlier use of such a deterrent,

but also the way in which the general public would presumably have been favourably disposed towards its use (or at least, towards its display) in the eighteenth century.

The grotesque image of insanity evoked by these sculptures was later reflected in sketches, paintings and engravings by a range of artists, including Hogarth's "The Rake in Bedlam", in which the semi-nude form of the manacled madman (reminiscent of the figure in Cibber's "Raving Madness"), is contrasted, in the gloom of Bedlam, with the fully clothed onlookers (see plate 2), while Fuseli and Goya also depicted "The Madhouse" (see plate 3) as an enclosure for wild, maddened human activity. Charles Bell's "Madness" further exemplified the interpretation of insanity as bestial and unruly (see plate 4), a form of expression still found in Richard Dadd's "Raving Madness" in the nineteenth century (see plate 5). In these examples of artists' interpretations of madness, insanity conveys an image of the fallen nature of man - an image also apparent in Dickens's description of the wild unpredictability of his crazed figure in "A Madman's Manuscript" (see below, p. 96).

Perhaps an even greater influence in heightening public awareness about the effects of insanity, however, than the artistic portrayal of this subject, was the effect of the periodic bouts of mental infirmity suffered by King George III, which had proved a source of national concern. Opinions had varied as to the most appropriate treatment for the King (see Appendix I, p. 217); indeed, many medical writers found themselves unable to define the nature of insanity in the first place. That eighteenth and nineteenth century medical writers spent a good deal of time and effort trying "to define true madness" is borne out in the widely divergent views held by a number of these writers; views which were well publicised, as will be seen.

Before Dickens's writing career had begun, John Haslam (medical officer at the famous asylum, Bethlem Hospital, from 1795-1816), had acknowledged the inherent problems in any attempt at defining the nature of madness, noting that "an infallible definition of madness... will I believe be found impossible".[5] Later, Sir Andrew Halliday M.D., who was to become deputy Inspector General of Army Hospitals (1838-9), and physician to the Duke of Clarence, was to take the view that this condition was

essentially of a physical origin, the disease itself always found to arise from a deranged or diseased state of the structure of the brain".[6] However, for Dickens, as we have noted, one of the most influential writers was the eminent Victorian physician, John Conolly (1794-1866), a pioneer in the humane treatment of the insane. Conolly, professor of the practice of medicine at London University (1827-31), and an inspecting physician in lunatic houses, was a friend of Dickens, and would undoubtedly have kept Dickens abreast with contemporary developments in the care of the insane. He believed that public interest in the effects of insanity was heightened by the awareness that "no man can confidently reckon on the continuance of his perfect reason. Disease may weaken, accident may disturb, anxiety may impair it, and if every departure from sound mind may subject the person so affected to an indiscriminate treatment... no man can be sure that he may not pass his melancholy days among the idiotic and mad".[7] He was critical of the view that madness was "an impairment of the judging faculty", noting that "this was only a substitution of another name for the same thing" (p. 291). He observed that many unsatisfactory definitions of the condition were "resting on some strong symptom not of constant occurrence, which is made the character of all the varieties; and the language in which the definitions are given is almost always incorrect or obscure" (p. 292).

Conolly took the view, broadly expressed in Dr Good's Study of Medicine (vol. IV), that some contemporary definitions of insanity were "so narrow as to set at liberty half the patients at Bethlem, or the Bicêtre, and others so loose and capricious as to give a straight waistcoat to half the world." According to Conolly, medical men tended to discourage general discussion on this subject by "asserting it to be too mysterious for man to understand" (p. 293). He was critical of the belief that "madmen put wrong ideas together, and so make wrong propositions, but argue and reason right from them", wryly remarking that "If madness consisted in reasoning correctly from false premises, many of the most indefatigable among the learned must be ranked with lunatics" (p. 298).

When compared with the writings of some of his contemporaries in the medical

world it will become apparent that Conolly's observations are remarkable for their lucidity and common sense. Conolly, who proved to be an influential figure in the nineteenth century, was appointed Superintendent physician at Middlesex Lunatic Asylum at Hanwell in 1839, and Dickens later planned to visit two of the asylums with which Conolly was closely associated.[8] Conolly's own definition of madness may provide some insight into Dickens's understanding of insanity: whilst exploring the "inequalities and weaknesses and peculiarities of the human understanding which do not amount to insanity", Conolly observes that "madness consists of a loss or impairment of one or more of the mental faculties, accompanied by the loss of comparison" (An inquiry, p. 114), citing various examples of cases which illustrate his point. A man is not mad, he notes, "until he has lost the power of transferring his attention from one object to another. Then he ceases to compare, and then he can no longer judge" (p. 128). Conolly's observations may lack precision, but it is notable that his viewpoint may have been taken up by Dickens, for several characters in Dickens's novels exhibit the symptoms of monomania described by Conolly, including Mr Dick, Miss Flite and Miss Havisham; the hallmark of many of Dickens's mad creations is a tendency to become self-absorbed, and to adopt a highly subjective view of their personal circumstances, illustrating one respect in which he shared Conolly's understanding.

Other nineteenth-century writers were adopting a variety of views about the nature of madness, a condition which is still described with difficulty in the twentieth century.[9] For one Victorian writer, the "great fault" consisted in the attempt to "define with precision what does not admit of being defined",[10] while Sir William Charles Ellis, medical superintendent of Wakefield, and later Hanwell Asylum, remarked that "Strictly speaking, every individual who exhibits an involuntary alteration in his mental manifestation denoting the most trifling disorder is not at that moment in a state of perfect sanity or health, that is, he is insane".[11] The writings of Dickens's friend Conolly, however, proved to be influential in this medical debate, and by about the mid-point in Dickens's writing career, another eminent writer was reflecting a similar viewpoint. Henry Monro (later to become physician to St. Luke's Hospital for Lunatics),

described insanity as

> a condition of the mind where it is capable of the functions of simple suggestion to a most intense degree, but where it is more or less incapable of the function of relative suggestion... the mind, or rather its instrument, is capable of the conception and impression of ideas, but it is more or less incapable of comparing facts with facts, and mental impressions with external things. The consequence is that vague impressions of the mind are believed often to have a present reality of existence in the natural world, reason or relative suggestion not having the power to correct these ideas by the actual relation of external things.[12]

While the extensive writings of nineteenth-century physicians who were attempting to define the nature of insanity make rather turgid reading, the sheer volume of their observations about its cause and effect undoubtedly reflected widespread interest in the subject. George M. Burrows, a doctor who owned a private asylum in Chelsea, had remarked that insanity was "truly designated" the "vice of civilisation: for the more polished, the more artificial the people... the more prone to insanity."[13] As early as 1820, he had foreseen the need for a "revolution in public opinion respecting insanity, as a human malady, as well as regarding the care of those who superintend the care of lunatics" (p. 52).

While it is evident, however, that there were significant developments in the care and treatment of those members of society who were mentally deranged, during Dickens's lifetime, it is notable that Dickens was highly selective when describing the care of the insane in his writing. In Dickens's novels, the insane (including such figures as Barnaby Rudge or Mr Dick) are most commonly cared for by a close relative (although reference is occasionally made to the use of asylums), while some of Dickens's mad creations are left entirely to their own devices. He refers, on occasion, to earlier practices in the treatment of the insane (see Appendix I), when there had been no widespread attempt to segregate them from the rest of society, prior to the introduction of asylums.[14] That he was conscious of one form of earlier treatment is evident in his reference to the writings of John Haslam (apothecary to Bethlem Hospital from 1795-

1816). Dickens may have come across accounts of John Haslam's practices during his extensive travels, referring to Haslam's device for forcing open patients' mouths with a special key (see plate 6), when he contrasts past and present methods of treating insanity in his "A Curious Dance" (see below, p. 64). Although Dickens makes passing reference to aspects of treating the insane, it was clearly not his intention to provide an accurate record of contemporary practices. Dickens's reasons for avoiding the portrayal of some disturbing implications of insanity are discussed elsewhere (see below, p. 70); his selection of material was not only shaped by his artistic and moral purposes, but also his concern about its effect upon readership.[15] He was more inclined to explore this aspect of the treatment of the insane in articles and notes, exemplified by his American Notes or his "Curious Dance" (see below, p. 64).

For some of Dickens's readers, the very subject of madness may have provoked a sense of anxiety, as there were widespread fears that the incidence of insanity was increasing in the country. In 1810, the numbers of insane people had been estimated at one in 7,300 of the population (by Dr Powell),[16] one in 2,000 in 1820 (by Dr Burrows, and one in 769 in 1829 (by Sir Andrew Halliday) - statistics which may not be reliable indicators, but which do intimate reasons for public concern about this subject. Whilst it was estimated that the country's population had increased by approximately one-fifth between 1844 and 1860, the number of lunatics who had officially been identified had almost doubled: the rate of lunatics per 10,000, estimated at 2.26 in 1807, had increased to 29.26 by 1890 (Scull, p. 224). Although several medical writers, including Burrows, argued that insanity was not an increasing malady,[17] and that Powell's statistics were less conclusive than they might appear, the Select Committee report of 1807 had expressed the "observation of medical men of extensive practice, that the lunatic affection is a disease increasing in its influence in this country".[18] A London physician boldly stated in 1808 that "Madness, strides like a Colossus in the country" (Parry Jones, p. 11), while nearly seventy years later, on April 5th 1877, an article in The Times ironically noted that "if lunacy continues to increase as at present, the insane will be in the majority, and, freeing themselves, will

put the sane in asylums".

However, while some of Dickens's readership may have been concerned about the prevalence of insanity, anxious that groups such as the insane (also paupers and criminals) could undermine nineteenth-century values, in his novels, Dickens was inclined to depict individual portraits of insanity, rather than groups of insane figures. Nonetheless, contemporary preoccupation with the incidence of insanity underscores the insecurity of certain sectors of society in the nineteenth-century,[19] as in the early twentieth century too.[20] One eminent writer, Samuel Tuke, who had observed the fears of some of his contemporaries, noted that "They who are unacquainted with the character of insane persons, are very apt to converse with them in a childish, or, which is worse, in a domineering manner"[21] - evidently one means of responding to insanity as a malaise which requires controlling for fear it should challenge conventions and expectations. Although Dickens may not have chosen to portray insanity as a widespread social malaise, he explored its use in subverting conventions and challenging expectations in certain specific situations, highlighted, for example, in the scene in Little Dorrit in which Mr Dorrit's mental collapse illuminates the superficiality of the response from other guests.

Dickens's own viewpoint about the treatment of the insane is illustrated by the way in which he permitted the publication of a key article describing one approach to the treatment of insanity, in the midst of such contemporary debate. This article, which tackled issues relating to insanity, rather than its incidence rate, was published on November 28th 1857, in the twopenny miscellany of "Instruction and Entertainment" over which he presided as editor. Henry Morley's "Things within Dr Conolly's Remembrance" in Household Words (pp. 518-523), applauds the way in which many earlier practices in the treatment of insanity were reversed, in England, through what is described as the "help of the wise energy" of Conolly (p. 518). The article focuses on Conolly's achievements, noting that details of his personal experience "are often such as cannot be read without emotion" and that his "strong heart (God Bless and reward him!)" was in his work, for "To carry on a great labour of civilisation" in a "wise and tender

spirit", as a "good physician to the broken-minded, watchful on their behalf" and "made happy by the happiness created for them is "to live above the need of praise" (p. 522).

The article describes the York Retreat, a Quaker foundation established by the Tuke family on a non-profit-making basis, accommodating thirty insane patients recommended by members of the Society of Friends. Practices at the Retreat are contrasted, in this article, with the more inhumane treatment at the nearby York Asylum.[22] It notes that:

> While the York Retreat was demonstrating the excellence of the right system of treating the insane, the old York Asylum... was as conspicuous for the repulsive form which it gave to the wrong.

The article clearly conveys to Morley's readers the practices of which he approves and disapproves as far as the care of the insane is concerned. That Dickens permitted publication of the article suggests a degree of support for its viewpoint.

Not only was there public concern, during Dickens's writing career, about the incidence of insanity, however, but some writers also expressed anxiety about the treatment, or mistreatment, of the insane. The 1815-16 Parliamentary Inquiry examined the treatment of inmates at Bethlem and St. Luke's, in county asylums, private madhouses and workhouses, revealing widespread mismanagement. At Tavistock Workhouse, for example, it was noted that there was a suffocating "stench" (Report... 1815, p. 21). Renewed parliamentary investigation led to the establishment of a new Select Committee which inquired into the conditions of madhouses in Middlesex in 1827. Their examination revealed, amongst other poor conditions, abuses at Warburton's White House in Bethnal Green, where inmates were strapped to cribs, "mere boxes of the depth of about eighteen inches, where the person lies in", and upon inspection, maggots were found at the bottom of cribs "where sick men had laid" (Report of the Select Committee on Pauper Lunatics in Middlesex, 1827, pp. 156-8)). Such evidence was supported by descriptions of abuse published in John Mitford's The Crimes and Horrors of Warburton's Private Madhouse, and the Crimes and Horrors of Kelly House in 1830. While Mitford's pamphlets may have held some appeal because of the sensational sexual

details they contained, their publication indicates that the reading public were becoming aware of the punitive environment in which some of the insane were confined.

Later, the son of the Prime Minister, Spencer Perceval, brought to the attention of the public his own account of the way in which he claimed to have been treated during his "State of Mental Derangement" in two madhouses in 1838.[23] The publication of such an account underlines the topical interest of the subject for the reading public, illustrating ways in which a punitive approach in the treatment of insanity was not considered fashionable by the late 1830s, the period in which Dickens was completing Oliver Twist, commencing Barnaby Rudge, and publishing Nicholas Nickleby. While Dickens's early novels explored a range of causes of insanity, however, in which madness is perceived as a form of punishment, his personal attitude towards the treatment of insane members of society is expressed in his American Notes (see below, p. 62). Perceval claimed that it was his intention to "stir up an intelligent and active sympathy" on behalf of "the most wretched, the most oppressed", by "proving with how much needless tyranny they are treated" by men who torment and destroy them (p. 3). He alleged that he was fastened (p. 85), beaten (p. 86), laughed at (p. 87), confined to a strait waistcoat (p. 90), manacled to a wall (p. 94), and showered with cold water by means of a pewter urinal (p. 97) - some details evoking images depicted in the artistic portrayal of insanity (see above, p. 10). Clearly, by the time Perceval was writing, he felt that he could assume that, for his readership, such practices would be considered inhumane. Perceval's supposed account of his experiences would have brought issues concerning the treatment of insanity before the reading public in the 1830s whether he had related factual or fictional material. He describes his plight with vivid use of the particular,[24] although one interesting side-effect of the account is to highlight problems in coping with such a patient in his desires to twist his own neck or suffocate himself with a pillow (p. 270). The account also offers some insight into the urges of one mentally deranged individual, noting that "the lunatic mistakes a poetic train of thought for the reality" (p. 274) - a viewpoint expressed by some medical writers (see above, p. 11), and that lunacy is "the mistaking of a command that is spiritual for that which is literal" (p. 279), a

"state of confusion of understanding, by which the mind mistakes the commands of a spirit of humour, or of irony, or of drollery" (p. 281). William Blake had, of course, emphasised the significance of the creative imagination ("You certainly Mistake, when you say that the Visions of Fancy are not to be found in this World. To Me This World is all One continued Vision of Fancy or Imagination")[25]: that Dickens's Barnaby Rudge shares some of these heightened experiences will be seen in chapter 6.

The contents of Perceval's account, and of Richard Paternoster's Madhouse System (1841) would presumably have been general knowledge, whether or not Dickens was intimately familiar with them. Paternoster claimed that he was committed to a madhouse by his father who was supposedly attempting to defraud him. According to Paternoster, his publication described the mechanical restraint, filthy linen, cold baths and inedible food in Finch's madhouse in London, in what was, by now, becoming a familiar story. Not only was this theme described in non-fiction, but in fictional writing too, and, much later, Charles Reade drew upon details of such descriptions when writing Hard Cash, with its memorable description of the suffering caused to patients through being immersed in tanks, together with other punitive measures. The reaction of the reading public to Reade's serial, published in All the Year Round, may indicate one reason for Dickens's reluctance to portray life in madhouses or asylums in his novels. Reade's story was of course an account of mistreatment in an asylum which bore little relation to current practice or philosophy, reflecting some earlier, more punitive attitudes towards insanity.

The publication of Hard Cash (whether as the result of its subject matter or of Reade's amateurishness as a serial writer) resulted in "the reduction of the circulation of the magazine by three thousand copies and a very narrowly averted quarrel with editor and proprietor".[26] The contents of Reade's tale will be discussed elsewhere (see below, p. 43), but it is important to note that Dickens took exception to the way in which Reade's story criticised the work of the Lunacy Commission.[27]. Although the instalment of Hard Cash for November 14, 1863 describes the commendable work of one commissioner (perhaps with the intention of appeasing Dickens, whose friend Forster

was of course a member of the Lunacy Commission), Dickens added a footnote:

> The conductor of this journal desires to take this opportunity of expressing his personal belief that no public servants do their duty with greater ability, humanity and independence than the Commissioners in Lunacy.

After Reade's final number, Dickens further noted, on December 26th, 1863:

> The statements and opinions of this journal generally are, of course, to be received as the statements and opinions of its conductor. But this is not so in the case of a work of fiction first published in these pages as a serial story.

He adds (with regard to such text) that"I do not consider myself at liberty to exercise that control... which I claim as to other contributions". Dickens's disapproval could hardly have been more clearly expressed.

The shifting focus of public attitudes towards mental derangement in the nineteenth century was reflected not only in contemporary legislative reforms, but also in a variety of publications, highlighting widespread public interest in the incidence, cause, effect and treatment of insanity. Later chapters in this study will reveal that, although Dickens was aware of changing contemporary attitudes towards the insane, he was also conscious when exploring this theme, of its potential effect upon his readership. He noted, for example, that the subject of hereditary madness would cause some of his readers to experience grave alarm (see below, p. 70), also recognising the potential impact upon sales if his readers found aspects of this theme unsavoury - amply demonstrated by the effect of Charles Reade's handling of this theme.

While it gradually became accepted in the nineteenth century that the care of the insane was a public responsibility, it is not surprising that in Dickens's novels, the care of mentally deranged characters tends to be undertaken by individuals, for Dickens's treatment of insanity reflects more of his own philosophy than contemporary practice, as he focuses on the responsibility of individuals, indicated, for example, by his letter to Forster of March 2, 1845:

> No philosophy will bear these dreadful things, or make a moment's head against

them, but the practical one of doing all the good we can, in thought and deed (Letters, IV, 275).

That Dickens was well-informed about contemporary debates relating to insanity is evident, for example, in his defence of the Commissioners of Lunacy. Yet it was not his primary purpose to reflect such contemporary discussion, in publicising the need for reform in the treatment of the insane, nor merely to increase compassion for their plight, for Dickens's treatment of madness was an integral part of a wider moral vision reflecting a range of literary traditions. In some of the literary sources from which Dickens has drawn, insanity was portrayed as a means of punishment, or as an expression of human frailty in several forms, or as a means of restoration - uses explored by Dickens during various periods in his writing career for different purposes, as will become apparent in the following chapter which highlights his familiarity with a range of literary traditions.

Notes

1. Kathleen Jones, A History of the Mental Health Services (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 149.

2. See Vieda Skultans, "The English Malady", English Madness: Ideas on Insanity 1580-1890 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), pp. 26-51. See also A. Moore, "The English Malady", Backgrounds of English Literature 1700 - 1760 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1953), pp. 179-235; for contemporary/earlier responses, see Ned Ward's comical treatment of the theme in All Men Mad; or, England a Great Bedlam (1711), and, more seriously, George Cheyne, The English Malady; or, A Treatise on Nervous Disorders of All Kinds (London: Strahan and Leake, 1733), in which a well-known doctor claimed that insanity was caused by certain national characteristics.

3. Patricia Allderidge, Cibber's Figures from the Gates of Bedlam (London: Victoria & Albert Museum Masterpieces, no 14, 1977).

4. A point made by Ida Macalpine & Richard Hunter, in George III and the Mad-Business (London: Allen Lane, 1969), p. 310.

5. John Haslam, Observations on Madness and Melancholy, 2nd edition, (London: Callow, 1809), p. 5.

6. Andrew Halliday, A General View of the Present State of Lunatics and Lunatic Asylums, in Great Britain and Ireland, and in some other Kingdoms(London: Underwood, 1828), p. 5.

7. John Conolly, An Inquiry Concerning the Indications of Insanity, with Suggestions for the Better Protection and Care of the Insane(London: Taylor, 1830), p. 8.

8. See his letter to Wills, 14 April 1853 (Letters, VII, 63-64), referring to arrangements made with Conolly to visit Park House Asylum in Highgate, and Essex Hall Asylum near Colchester.

9. See above reference to A Short History of Psychiatry, p. 3.

10. William B. Neville, On Insanity: Its Nature, Causes and Cure (London: Longman, 1836), p. 7.

11. W.C. Ellis, A Treatise on the Nature, Symptoms, Causes and Treatment of Insanity, (London: Holdsworth, 1838), pp. 30-31.

12. H. Monro, Remarks on Insanity: its Nature and Treatment (London: Churchill, 1850), p. 22.

13. George M. Burrows, An Inquiry into Certain Errors Relative to Insanity and their Consequences: Physical, Moral and Civil (London: Underwood, 1820), p. 55. While there was no consensus of opinion about the treatment of insanity in the nineteenth century, neither was there one widely accepted viewpoint concerning its cause. For Burrows, "insanity, like most other maladies... is superinduced by a variety of causes: some physical, as climate, seasons, situation... food, habitude... and those causes termed affective or moral" (Burrows, p. 54); for another, there was a connection between insanity and the condition of the blood (James Sheppard, Observations on the Proximate Cause of Insanity etc., London: Longman, 1844, p. 2); whilst for another, predisposing causes included hot cradles, cribs or beds, lack of oxygen, pride or vanity, or sudden and unexpected honour, with exciting causes including alcohol, extreme heat or cold, disappointed love, lightning, gambling or a storm at sea, (William W. Moseley, Eleven Chapters on Nervous and Mental Complaints (London: Simpkin Marshall & Co, 1838), pp. 123-124).

14. Kathleen Jones, A History of Mental Health Services (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 31- 34.

15. For example, Dickens rejected the publication of stories in Household Words which dealt with hereditary insanity, on the grounds that this would awaken fear and despair in the "numerous families in which there is such a taint" (Anne Lohrli, Household Words: A Weekly Journal 1850- 1859 Conducted by Charles Dickens (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), p. 16).

16 Scull, p. 222.

17. Burrows, p. 80.

18. Quoted in Parry Jones, p. 11.

19. See "The Historical Object of Deviance: King Mob" in Geoffrey Pearson, The Deviant Imagination (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 148-167.

20. See W.E. Fernald, "The burden of feeble-mindedness", Journal of Psychoasthenics, 17, (1912), p. 90-91, for an account of one superintendent of the Massachusetts State Schools: "The feeble-minded are a parasitic, predatory class, never capable of self-support or of managing their own affairs... they cause unutterable sorrow at home and are a menace and danger to the community... we have only begun to understand the importance of feeble-mindedness as a factor in the causation of pauperism, crime and other social problems... Every feeble-minded person, especially the high-grade imbecile, is a potential criminal... The unrecognized imbecile is a most dangerous element in the community".

21. See Samuel Tuke, Description of the Retreat (York (1813) rpt. London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1964), p. 159.

22. For further discussion concerning the York Retreat and York Asylum, see Macalpine and Hunter, George III. Tuke's Description of the Retreat, published in 1813, outlines the philosophy and practice of this institution, described by Morley as the first "in Europe - the first in the world - at which the right treatment of the lunatic was clearly indicated" (p. 518) - rather an extravagant claim, bearing in mind the pioneering work being carried on elsewhere. Tuke believed that the Retreat's success lay in the "moral" nature of its treatment, whereby patients were not punished for their failure: restraint was seldom used in its efforts to encourage self-control. Social events such as tea-parties and visits were arranged for inmates, who were able to help at the Retreat by

caring for its animals, or tending its garden. It has been remarked that "By all reasonable standards", the Retreat was "an outstandingly successful experiment" (Scull, p. 69), though some commentators suggest that the "overt chains of the older tradition might be replaced by subtler methods of social control in reformed asylums such as the Retreat". See Anne Digby's "Moral treatment at the Retreat, 1796-1846", (vol. 2 of The Anatomy of Madness: Institutions and Society ed. W.F. Bynum, R. Porter and H. Shepherd (London: Tavistock, 1985).

By contrast, the York Asylum, situated near to the Retreat, received poor publicity when a local magistrate heard of the way in which its inmates were mistreated. Godfrey Higgins became aware of malpractices at the Asylum (in 1813) after he had committed a pauper there. Subsequently, part of the building was burnt down under suspicious circumstances. Higgins's visit to its squalid cells was recorded in the Report of the Select Committee on Madhouses, 1815:

"the walls were daubed with excrement; the airholes, of which there was one in each cell, were partly filled with it... I... went... into a room... twelve feet by seven feet ten inches, in which there were thirteen women who... had all come out of those cells that morning".

23. John Perceval, A Narrative of the Treatment experienced by a Gentleman, during a State of Mental Derangement: designed to explain the Causes and Nature of Insanity and to expose the Injudicious Conduct pursued towards many unfortunate Sufferers under that Calamity (London: Effingham Wilson, 1838 & 1840; rpt. In G. Bateson (ed.), Perceval's Narrative: A Patient's Account of his Psychosis 1830-1832 London: Hogarth Press, 1962)).

24. Thus, for example he describes the approach of his keepers: "Their footsteps talked to me as they came upstairs, the breathing of their nostrils over me as they unfastened me, whispered threatenings". He recollects the sound of a pumping machine, the feeding of ducks and chickens before a window, the sound of breakfast bell and a piano, and he contrasts his present unfortunate circumstances with that of his boyhood (p. 93).

25. See chapter 6 of Max Byrd Visits to Bedlam: Madness and Literature in the Eighteenth Century (Columbia, South Carolina: University of Carolina Press, 1974).

26. Walter C. Phillips, Dickens, Reade, and Collins: Sensation Novelists. A Study in the Conditions and Theories of Novel Writing in Victorian England (New York: Columbia University Press, 1919), p. 115.

27. For further discussion about Dickens's embarrassment concerning the effects of Reade's serial, see R. Hunter and I. Macalpine, "Dickens and Conolly: An Embarrassed Editor's Disclaimer", T.L.S., 11 Aug 1961, pp. 534-5. For further discussion concerning Conolly's career see A. Scull's essay "A Brilliant Career? John Conolly and Victorian Psychiatry", in Victorian Studies, 27 (1984), 203 -35.

Chapter Three

"The Trembling of the Balance": Dickens's Use of Literary Traditions.

"There is nothing so delicate, so fragile, as that invisible balance upon which the mind is always trembling. Mad to-day and sane to-morrow... Who has not been, or is not to be mad in some lonely hour of life? Who is quite safe from the trembling of the balance?" (Lady Audley's Secret).[1]

Dickens, aware of contemporary debate about the cause, effect and treatment of insanity, clearly touched upon a theme of significant interest for his reading public in his wide-ranging exploration of insanity. Yet while his appetite for exploring the potential of madness in his novels may have been whetted by his acquaintance with Conolly, and by his personal observations (later discussed in chapter 4), there was another imaginative source for the great variety of his insane inventions, and for his thematic exploration of madness. In the discussion which is to follow, it will become apparent that this subject had served a variety of purposes in a range of literary traditions, some of which played a part in shaping Dickens's portrayal of madness. This chapter will highlight certain key characteristics typifying the literary treatment of the subject, and, whilst not providing an exhaustive survey of literary influences which could have affected Dickens's portrayal of madness, will demonstrate the place of his

writing within the context of a range of traditions, indicating ways in which he may have drawn from such sources.

This chapter will explore the uses of insanity in a range of literary genres with which Dickens was familiar. Firstly, it will note that, in the Biblical tradition, madness was portrayed as an outcome of moral failure - a use later evident in Massinger's plays (with which Dickens was acquainted), and in a range of contemporary writings. Secondly, whilst noting Dickens's interest in the theatre, the chapter refers to the sensational uses of insanity, illustrated by the writing of seventeenth and eighteenth century playwrights, and also by examples from another literary tradition with a strong, dramatic element - the Gothic novel.

Madness as a commentary upon human frailty is, thirdly, observed in the writings of Shakespeare, and in the later fiction of Sir Walter Scott. Fourthly, the use of insanity as a means to highlight the nature of wisdom and folly is noted in the writings of Erasmus, Swift, Shakespeare, and Scott. Whilst referring to the range of literature highlighting abuses in the care of the insane, the chapter concludes in observing the restorative potential of insanity, evident in New Testament narrative, and taken up, much later, in the fiction of Charlotte Bronte and Mrs. Gaskell.

The chapter will highlight Dickens's indebtedness in his early novels to aspects of earlier traditions in which insanity was portrayed as an outcome of the Fall, with their emphasis on madness as a moral punishment, or warning. It will become apparent too that the ways in which Dickens depicted certain insane creations as victims of circumstance, or experimented with madness as an expression of human frailty, later exploring the potential of restoration from insanity, may have found roots in a range of literary traditions. In chapters 5-7 of this study, an examination of a number of key novels will highlight the way in which his treatment of madness shifted in its emphasis, reflecting the range of sources from which he drew as he matured as a novelist. It will become evident that, in his later novels, Dickens was to explore the interrelationship between moral issues and the state of insanity with increasing subtlety, in both theme

and character, while his experimentation with a character's potential restoration from insanity was to provide him with a range of uses in the plot of A Tale of Two Cities. The discussion which immediately follows will, however, cast light on the reasons why, for many of the insane creations in Dickens's early novels, the "trembling" of the "invisible balance" to which M.E. Braddon later referred, proved to be one consequence of human failure, for this was a recurrent subject in earlier literary traditions.

Dickens would almost certainly have been aware that, in some earlier literary conventions, the onset of madness had been portrayed as a punishment for a variety of human misdeeds, reflecting the fallen nature of man, which thus became associated with sin and guilt.[2] Such an association, apparent in Old Testament writings and elsewhere, may have helped to shape Dickens's own early exploration of madness in his novels. He would have been familiar with Old Testament writings,[3] in which insanity is depicted as one consequence of the fallen condition of mankind, and a warning against false pride or wickedness, most notably in descriptions of Nebuchadnezzar.

In Old Testament narrative, the figure of Saul also presents a striking portrait of overwhelming jealousy - an emotional response which is, however, not to be confused with the state of insanity. Although Saul has been described as one of the most famous mad characters (Doob, p. 13), like Herod, he is more memorable for his jealous rage - a volatile emotional reaction. In Saul's case, the narrative describes the way in which he is soothed by harmonious music - while Dickens also vividly conveyed the effects of music when portraying the jealous, impassioned figure of Rosa Dartle (Copperfield, p. 496). It becomes apparent in Old Testament writings in I Samuel, that Saul's extremely volatile emotional state proves hazardous for his son's friend David (while David's sense of fear is expressed in I Samuel, 27, 1). The warping effects of jealousy are felt, in various forms, throughout a range of literary representations, spanning many centuries, most memorably including Shakespeare's Othello, but also, later finding expression in Dickens's portrayal of Bradley Headstone.

However, while overwhelming jealousy may result in intemperate actions, it is not

in itself irretrievably linked to insanity, and, although a range of Dickens's creations may represent his varied treatment of jealousy, it is the purpose of this study to focus on his handling of insanity. As we have noted, in Old Testament writings, it is the example of Nebuchadnezzar, boldly described as the father of most literary madmen (Doob, p. 55), and the subject inspiring Blake's detailed illustration (see plate 7), which has provided a striking model of insanity. It was a model which may have inspired Dickens in his early representation of insanity. Nebuchadnezzar is a character who enjoys stability in his kingly role when he has a modest sense of his self-importance. It is, however, his excessive pride which leads to his downfall, when he becomes deposed (Daniel 5:20). In losing his reason, he memorably identifies with the animal kingdom (4:33) - a recurrent motif in the literary portrayal of insanity, of which Dickens made use.

The figure of Nebuchadnezzar provided a remarkable model for writers exploring, in their characterisation, the potential effects of overwhelming pride. Similarly, an interconnection between a character's moral actions and the experience of insanity, described in Old Testament writings and elsewhere[6] was, much later, underscored by Burton in his Anatomy of Melancholy,[7] in which Burton observes that

> we, so long as we are ruled by reason, correct our inordinate appetite, and conform ourselves to God's word, are as so many living saints: but if we give reins to lust, anger, ambition, pride, and follow our own ways, we degenerate into beasts, transform ourselves... provoke God to anger, and heap upon us... all kinds of incurable diseases, as a just and deserved punishment of our sins.[8]

The disastrous consequences of excessive pride, and a false sense of self-importance, was a theme explored in a range of literature, taken up, for example in Massinger's creation of Sir Giles Overreach, and, later still, reflected in the villainous form of Ralph Nickleby.

That Dickens was familiar with Massinger (1583-1640), is evident not only because his library contained an edition of Massinger's works (Letters, IV, 717), but in his reference to Kean's performance of Overreach in A New Way to Pay Old Debts.[9] The

style of Massinger's writing, notable for its overtly moral tone when conveying the folly of the villainous Sir Giles, may have helped to shape Dickens's early portrayal of Ralph Nickleby. The mental collapse and downfall of Sir Giles is designed to illustrate the moral that

> heaven here gives a precedent to teach us
> That, when men leave religion, and turn atheists,
> Their own abilities leave them.

Sir Giles is portrayed as a villainous character from an early point in the play through his rhetoric, by means of which Massinger highlights the significance of the values of loyalty, friendship or wisdom, decried by this figure:

> so he serve
> My purposes, let him hang, or damn, I care not;
> Friendship is but a word.[10]

Massinger conveys the deteriorating condition of this character by means of a highly exaggerated style of language[11] designed to illuminate the torment experienced in his suffering. Thus, for example, Overreach mistakes servants for hangmen, or for shapes "like Furies, with steel whips/To scourge my ulcerous soul." By means of creating such exaggerated effects through his use of this character's language, it is clearly Massinger's intention to persuade his audience of the dire effect upon those whose "own abilities leave them."

While Massinger was not the only seventeenth century dramatist whose characters expressed themselves in a highly stylised manner of speech,[12] there are resonances in some descriptions in Dickens's early novels which suggest his familiarity with Massinger's method of inversely conveying through such a character as Sir Giles his own overt moral purposes as a playwright. Thus, for example, it will become apparent (in chapter 5) that in Ralph Nickleby's experience of insanity, Dickens demonstrates the effects in a character who has, like Sir Giles, devoted his life to selfish purposes. The exaggerated use of language conveying Ralph Nickleby's plight is reminiscent of the way in which Massinger shaped Sir Giles's alliterative speech to particular ends: "Oh! if men

by selling their own souls could ride rampant for a term, for how short a term would I barter mine to-night!" and "No bell or book for me; throw me on a dunghill" (Nickleby, p. 906).

As the model of Nebuchadnezzar was remarkable for a capacity to overstatement (see above, p. 27), illustrated when "The King spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" (Daniel 4.30), and as Massinger's Sir Giles was, similarly, disposed towards overstatement, another writer from a different literary tradition was to make use of the rhetoric of one of his characters as a means to underscore the moral of his cautionary tale. Thus, when Samuel Warren's aptly-named Warningham is recovering from his experience of insanity, in the Diary of a Late Physician,[13] he exclaims:

> I have richly deserved it! - I now, however, bid farewell to debauchery - profligacy, dissipation, for ever... I will now descend into the tranquil Vales of Virtue (II, 147).

Dickens would almost certainly have been acquainted with Warren's writings,[14] as some of these were published in Blackwood's, a journal he recommended to an acquaintance.[15] In Ten Thousand - a Year,[16] which appeared between 1839 and 1841, Warren too underlined the plight of a character suffering from insanity as the result of his own actions - (not an unfamiliar treatment of this theme) - while his writing, first published as a novel, was later adapted as a play. Warren was to describe the downfall of a figure who had peevishly exclaimed that he would go mad. Warren's anti-hero, Titmouse, suffers an epileptic fit which proved the "finishing stroke to his shattered intellects" in that he "sank soon afterwards into a state of idiocy" (p. 403). His admission into a private lunatic asylum was to illustrate for the reader, the consequences of such a life of selfishness, dissipation and debauchery, as the models of Nebuchadnezzar and Sir Giles Overreach had earlier illuminated the effects of overwhelming pride or selfishness, in a tradition in which insanity is perceived as a punishment.

The examination of Dickens's early novels which follows in chapter 5 will reveal that Dickens too explored the uses of insanity in portraying the effects of moral failure - moral sentiments later echoed in turn by Henry Cockton in the final chapter of his unexceptional novel, The Life and Adventures of Valentine Vox, The Ventriloquist:[17]

> It's no use for a man to go crooked in this world.Things are sure to come round; it's sure to comehome to him; he's sure to be served out in the same way.

Dickens's own exploration of madness as a moral warning is displayed in his early fiction, including "The Drunkard's Death" or "The Stroller's Tale" in which his portrayal of insanity draws upon earlier dramatic traditions[18] Yet, while Dickens makes evident use of some conventional theatricalities, it will become apparent in this study, that in his narrative discourse, he has "access to novelistic means of interiorizing the emotions and passions",[19] enabling him, for example, to explore the inner world of the troubled character of Ralph Nickleby as he nears his death (see below, p. 101). This is one feature of Dickens's novel-writing which is lost in the televisation of his novels, as, in conveying the internal conflicts and contradictions experienced by a range of his mentally unstable creations, Dickens permits the reader not only to observe, but to comprehend the nature of the dilemma in which these characters find themselves.

In depicting the effects of insanity as a result of moral failure, Dickens provides startling insight, on occasion, into the inner world of characters such as Sikes or Ralph Nickleby, as will be seen in chapter 5. He also makes use of stock theatrical devices, whereby, as in the tradition of melodrama, his villains meet an early death (experiencing despair at the very least), illustrated by the plight of Fagin, who suffers a period of derangement in the process of his ultimate collapse. In the examination of key novels which follows in chapters 5-7, it will, however, become apparent that Dickens's treatment of madness as a moral warning was to change in its emphasis as he matured as a writer. By the time that he was depicting the effects of Mr Dorrit's false pride, it will be seen that he was exploring the interrelationship between the moral causes and effects of insanity with greater subtlety, than in his early fiction. Thus,

when hearing of his daughter's engagement, Mr Dorrit responds "with great dignity and with a large display of parental pride; his dignity dilating with the widened prospect of the advantageous ground from which to make acquaintances, and his parental pride being developed by Miss Fanny's ready sympathy with that great object of his existence" (Bk. 2, 15), a description subtly hinting at this character's inner insecurity. While earlier literary traditions had reflected the use of madness as a moral warning against wickedness through a diverse range of models, including Nebuchadnezzar, Sir Giles Overreach, or Warningham, their influence may be felt in Dickens's early portrayal of certain villainous figures, when he had conveyed their plight by means of various dramatic devices, although on occasion he experimented in providing insight into their inner impulses and conflicts through his narrative discourse. An examination of a range of Dickens's key novels, exploring his methods when describing the cause and effects of insanity, together with his use of a range of literary traditions, will, however, highlight the distinctive nature of his style of writing and the changing focus of his moral purpose and vision as he matured as a writer.

Not surprisingly, a careful reading of Dickens's descriptions of his mad creations underscores his use of theatrical sources, for Dickens's obvious fascination with the dramatic form has been widely remarked.[20] It will also become evident from examining certain novels, that some of his novel - writing techniques were influenced by contemporary theatrical practices,[21] a tendency still apparent in the latter part of his writing career. Dickens was, of course, a keen theatre-goer, acquainted with the work of a number of dramatists, and enjoying a wide range of contemporary theatrical productions, including pantomime, with its "curious amalgam of fantasy, realism, topicality, anachronism, grotesquerie, burlesque, spectacle, music, verse, dance, and a serious story" (Axton, p. 20), although farces, operas and burlesques were also popular in the nineteenth century. Besides being involved in dramatic productions himself (including The Lighthouse (1855), and The Frozen Deep (1857)) - an experience which may have significantly shaped aspects of his novel-writing when he

explored extreme emotional states (see below, chapter 7) - Dickens was also influenced by the characteristic style of some contemporary actors. Edmund Kean had been well-known for the physical intensity and excitability of his style of acting, although it has been observed that the peculiarity of Macready's quieter style, much admired by Dickens as we have noted, with its "frequent pauses and syllabic equality" may have more directly influenced the "remarkable nature of melodramatic speech as described by Dickens" (Booth, p. 207).

That insanity could be used to great effect for sensational purposes had been illustrated by the writing of several seventeenth and eighteenth century writers, including Webster, Otway and Lee, with whose plays Dickens was almost certainly acquainted.[22] Given Dickens's interest in drama,[23] he would presumably have been familiar with Webster's treatment of insanity in <u>The Duchess of Malfi</u> (probably performed between 1613-14, but first published in 1623), which describes one character's "nauseated obsession" with his sister's sexuality and its consequences, as a result of which a group of madmen are sent to visit his sister. There is a dramatic parallel between his purpose "To bring her to despaire" and Sir Giles Overreach's instruction concerning Wellborn: "do anything to work him to despaire" (II, II), though Wellborn spurns this "Devil's creed":

> "'T will not do; dear tempter,
>
> With all the rhetoric the fiend hath taught you
>
> I am as far as thou from despair" (11. 1)).

An attempt to bring a character to despair would not only have been recognised by a seventeenth century audience to be of a villainous, diabolical intention, but also (presumably) by a nineteenth century audience too. The effects of such diabolical intrigue had, of course, earlier been explored in Marlow's <u>Doctor Faustus</u>,[24] while Ferdinand himself is associated with the devil through various diverse images (illustrated by the remark, when his chamber is shaken by a storm, that:

> "'Twas nothing but pure kindnesse in the Divell
>
> To rocke his owne child" (V. IV. 23-26)).

The mark of a villainous character in Dickens's novels too was one who brought others to despair, while his portrayal of a range of villainous figures, including Ralph Nickleby and Quilp, illustrate his indebtedness to earlier theatrical traditions.

However, as Dickens was confronted by a challenge when attempting the sustained portrayal of madness in Barnaby Rudge, as will be seen, there were also some obvious pitfalls for dramatists who set out to portray the state of insanity on the stage too. At least one playwright to whom Dickens refers[25] was aware of the comical potential in portraying insanity, evident from Richard Sheridan's satirical play The Critic; or, a Tragedy Rehearsed.[26] There are some resonances of Act II, Scene II of this eighteenth-century play in Dickens's treatment of a scene in David Copperfield,[27] suggesting that he would have been familiar with Sheridan - and was evidently conscious of the theatrically comical potential of insanity. In his treatment of scenes featuring Mrs. Nickleby and her crazed suitor, it will become apparent, in chapter 5, that Dickens's writing illuminates the ways in which he used dramatic techniques to highlight Mrs. Nickleby's folly, by means of one madman's antics, and that his comically theatrical treatment of insanity is used to underscore his moral vision, from an early stage in his career.

In his portrayal of insanity, Dickens was undoubtedly indebted in some respects, to another literary tradition with a strong, dramatic element: the Gothic novel,[28] in which madness was a recurrent motif, used as a plot device to convey heightened emotional reactions from shock, grief or guilt. The influence of this tradition upon Dickens's novel-writing has been widely remarked.[29] In the world of the Gothic novel, characterised by its "chronic sense of apprehension" and the "premonition of impending but unidentified disaster", appearances frequently prove deceptive, and characters are often overwhelmed by passions: it has been remarked that it represents a "fallen world particularly without hope" in which characters survive in fear and alienation (Tracy, p. 3). There are many undistinguished novels in the Gothic tradition, in which insanity is a recurrent theme, often used to create startling effects,[30] yet Dickens was wont to

employ some of these methods (particularly in episodes in his earlier novels, as will be seen in chapter 5).

Dickens, acquainted with some of Maturin's earliest drama,[31] would probably have been familiar with the contents of some of his novels too. In his The Milesian Chief,[32] Maturin described the plight of one character who became insane after being "snatched from a watry grave", and delivered of a dead baby. Innes's grief[33] is conveyed in her highly dramatic actions, characteristic of the Gothic novel, as she is shown "beating the ground with her hands", shrieking "Dead eyes, dead eyes, will you not look at me? Will you not reach to me your cold hands? You are mine" (p. 170)). The way in which Dickens's imagination was captured by such images of staring eyes is evident from his writing (see below, p. 88).

That insanity was used as a sensational device to capture the readers' interest in the Gothic novel is evident in Melmoth the Wanderer,[34] the well-known tale which was an offshoot of one of Maturin's sermons.[35] During the course of this tale[36] which is pieced together from a series of manuscripts, some containing a tale within a tale, Maturin uses madness for a sensational purpose when crudely describing a bride's death ("a corse within the arms of her husband"), together with her father's reaction when he failed to recover his reason after her death, keeping silent until midnight, when he would cry with a "frightfully piercing" voice (pp. 79-81). Some of Maturin's descriptions evidently serve no direct purpose in the plot, other than to titillate his readers' interest. Thus, with sickening detail, he describes the reaction of a woman who has lost her husband and family in the fire of London. Maturin uses vivid detail as this character recollects the discovery of her burned children ("And this hair, how it hisses" (p. 125)): sorrow which is reminiscent of Macduff's grief at the loss of his children in Macbeth.[37] Even in the heightened emotional texture of a Gothic novel, Maturin's description of this "maniac" who is peripheral to the novel's plot, is chilling as he recounts the details of her tragedy.[38] Insanity, it seems is all the fashion in Maturin's tale: Stanton (finally released from an asylum) later suffers a period of insanity

experiences famine, persecution and delirium in a monastery, later concludes:

> "It is better to be mad at once, than to believe that all the world is sworn to think and make you be so, in spite of your own consciousness of your sanity" (Book II, p. 82).

While Dickens experimented in his early writing with sensational effects, he tended to use them to reflect his moral preoccupations.

That the Gothic tendency to use madness as a plot device for adding spice to a tale, had undoubtedly lacked subtlety, is illustrated by Edward Ball's The Black Robber, a novel representing a range of Gothic fiction with which the Victorian reading public may have been acquainted.[39] In many Gothic novels, the reaction of characters experiencing insanity as the result of shock is commonly conveyed in highly visual symptoms, and often in dramatic, incoherent speech, exemplified by a shipwrecked character in Samuel Egerton Brydges's Sir Ralph Willoughby[40] who exclaimed: "I can deal with Spirits! I can ride the air; and pierce the clouds; and lead the music of the winds!" (p. 125). Elsewhere, Gothic writers seemed to use insanity to create effect for effect's sake, evident, for example, in "Monk" Lewis's portrayal of Irza's insanity in The Isle of Devils,[41] in which the shipwrecked Irza experiences insanity as she has supposedly watched a demon lover beating a human lover to death. Lewis's tale, recounted with a jangling use of rhyming couplets, describes the cause and effect of Irza's malady with layer upon layer of sensational detail, exemplified by "bosom's globes" which are stained with "gore". Some Gothic writers were still portraying madness as the result of shock in the 1830's when Dickens's earliest writing was being published, and although his familiarity with individual novels is uncertain, he would undoubtedly have been aware of such uses of the theme.

The way in which Gothic novelists also depicted insanity as an effect of guilt is exemplified by William Godwin's St. Leon,[42] a novel illuminating the viewpoint that "the gamester would be the most pitiable, if he were not the most despicable creature that exists" (vol 1, p. 149). While Godwin depicts his hero's physical symptoms amidst a typically Gothic landscape, his temporary experience of insanity is shown to be

the outworking of his own folly and self-loathing. Although Dickens, in The Old Curiosity Shop, explored the deplorable consequences of gaming within a very different context, he too illuminated the disastrous effects of the pursuit upon the mental wellbeing of his characters.

Madness as an outworking of passionate jealousy was explored in Gothic fiction by Godwin in Fleetwood, or the New Man of Feeling,[43] in which a central character suspects that his wife has a lover. Fleetwood's passionate reaction, described with reference to "hissings and lowings and howls" of the animal kingdom (vol. 3, p. 251), is reminiscent of such use of imagery describing Nebuchadnezzar's rage, and later evident in Dickens's portrayal of Rosa Dartle's "lynx-like" scrutiny and comparison with a "wild cat" (see chapter 6).

On occasion, Gothic writers incorporated madmen into their plots as a means of adding variety and intrigue to their novels, exemplified by Elizabeth Tomlinson's Rosalind de Tracy[44] and William F. Williams's The World We Live In,[45] and Dickens too was to discover the uses of such figures in his novel-writing. Although he would have known Mary Shelley's Frankenstein; or the Modern Prometheus,[46] in which Victor suffers a "nervous fever", and "raved incessantly" concerning his creation (pp. 110-111), Dickens's portrayal of insanity as the result of a character's own actions was to take a very different form in his novel-writing.

Madness was evidently a recurrent motif in Gothic novels, and, whether or not Dickens was intimately familiar with individual examples within the range of Gothic fiction[47] he would have known of those novels from the tradition which featured in a number of theatrical productions.[48] He would presumably have been aware too of the Gothic use of insanity as a device dramatising a character's reaction to shocking news, exemplified by Moncrieff's The Lear of Private Life, or Father and Daughter (1820),[49] or in Alexis Lewis's Grace Clairville (1843), in which a distracted father, driven insane by news of his daughter's death (following her seduction by a villain), is to die in classically melodramatic fashion, upon his daughter's body. Dickens's own exploration of the interrelationship between shock and madness, however, was to be conveyed not by

means of brief reference to the Gothic treatment of this theme, but in a sustained portrait of the effects of shock upon Miss Havisham, his remarkable victim of circumstance. In Great Expectations, the influence of her experience of rejection was to prove far-reaching in the novel's plot, as will be seen in chapter 6.

While Dickens's early fiction may exemplify his experimentation with insanity for sensational purposes, he was inclined to describe such effects with brevity. Descriptions such as those in "The Madman's Manuscript" were to be contained, as nuggets, within a larger piece of writing. He would also have been conscious of tales of terror in Blackwood's, evoking a more "realistic terror through precision of detail" than the more vaguely suggested sense of fear evoked by many Gothic tales,[50] for Samuel Warren's descriptions of madness and hallucination, often used for sensational purposes, were published at an influential point in Dickens's writing career in the 1830s, as his "Intriguing and Madness" and "The Spectral Dog"[51] appeared in Blackwood's in 1830, and his "The Spectre Smitten"[52] in 1831.[53] The influence of such tales were not, however, to be widely felt throughout Dickens's fiction, for Dickens's later novels suggest that he became less interested in exploring the potential of insanity for creating surface effects, than in its use in conveying one outcome of irreconcilable tensions experienced by his creations. The deeply-felt sense of inner conflict and ambiguity experienced by such a figure as Dr Manette interestingly signified a wider malaise in society itself.

Dr Manette represents one of a range of characters in Dickens's novels who were portrayed as victims of circumstance, driven to madness by events over which they had no control, and exemplifying the effects of human frailty. For Dickens, the plight of a maddened figure such as Shakespeare's Ophelia would have highlighted the effects of human frailty, while Walter Scott later took up this theme in his characterisation of Lucy Ashton. Through his exploration of Lear's insanity, which had been linked with Lear's experience of rejection, Shakespeare had also exposed the fragility of human nature which lay beneath the outer shell of such a kingly figure as Lear:

> Pray do not mock me;

I am a very foolish old man,

Fourscore and upward, not an hour more or less;

And, to deal plainly,

I fear I am not in my perfect mind (Lear, IV. VII. 59-63).

However, it was the plight of Ophelia, as an unfortunate victim of circumstances over which she (unlike Lear) had little control, which not only inspired the work of Millais, but a number of writers too, for in "no other of Shakespeare's women does a woman's helplessness, her beauty seen, desired and manipulated, appear as it does in Ophelia," while it has aptly been remarked that her character, conditioned to "goodness and docility" is "the exact foil to Hamlet's wildness".[54] Beneath the surface of Ophelia's speech, after she has lost the capacity to reason, Shakespeare hints at the depths of her anguish:

I hope all will be well. We must be patient; but I cannot choose but weep to think they would lay him i' th' cold ground (Hamlet, IV. V. 66-68).

Shakespeare's portrayal of Ophelia's suffering and insanity provided a model which inspired writers in the Gothic tradition - [55] a tradition which itself played a part in influencing other nineteenth-century fiction,[56] including Scott's The Bride of Lammermoor (1819) - the theme of a dramatisation, and also of Donizetti's opera, amongst others - in which Lucy is also portrayed as the unfortunate victim of circumstances. Scott depicts Lucy's deteriorating mental condition in his novel by use of contrast (comparing, for example, "flighty levity" with "fits of deep silence and melancholy and of capricious pettishness", or her bright eyes and cheeks with her hand, "as wet and cold as sepulchral marble" (ch. 34)). Following the attempted murder of her husband, Scott depicts her dishevelled appearance and insane mannerisms (as she "gibbered, made mouths and pointed... with her bloody fingers, with the frantic gestures of an exulting demoniac") which strongly contrast with earlier descriptions of her character and attire. As an old hag had prophetically predicted (at her wedding) that her sand had "but a few grains to rin out", her untimely death is fairly predictable.

Although Dickens's library contained the works of Scott, an author for whom his

admiration was shown when he was numbered amongst a committee who set out to raise money for completing a monument to Sir Walter Scott,[57] he has not replicated the details of Scott's characterisation in any of his own mad creations. While undoubtedly familiar with the characterisation of Ophelia and Lucy Ashton, Dickens experimented in the portrayal of victims of circumstance when he produced the contrasting figures of the harmless Miss Flite and the malign Miss Havisham. Young women in Dickens's novels who sink, like little Nell, under overwhelming pressure in various forms, are more likely to experience physical illness or death than, like Ophelia or Lucy Ashton, the effects of madness. However, Miss Flite and Miss Havisham both experience the long-term consequences of insanity, for Miss Flite is mentally confused throughout her appearance in the novel, while Miss Havisham too suffers the persistent symptoms of monomania. Hence while Shakespeare had explored the interrelationship between aspects of sexuality and insanity in his portrayal of Ophelia,[58] Dickens has described the long term plight of two ageing spinsters in Miss Flite (who has been drained of all vitality by the law suit), and Miss Havisham (soured by her experience of rejection). When Dickens's young heroines, such as Sophie Traddles, encounter adversity, they commonly rise to the occasion, showing endurance and fortitude. Figures such as Rosa Dartle may be scarred by their experience, while others (like Dora Spenlow) may become conscious of their own shortcomings, but many of Dickens's female creations who find themselves in adverse, difficult circumstances, discover an outlet in action, which prevents them from becoming mentally deranged. Although Dickens experimented in the portrayal of his own victims of circumstance, he also explored the effects of insanity in symbolising the brokenness and frailty of humanity, through his portrayal of the male figures of Mr Dorrit and Dr Manette, as will be seen in chapters 6 and 7. In the case of Mr Dorrit, it will become apparent (in chapter 7), that Dickens used a character's mental state as one means of highlighting the varied reaction in other characters to his plight.

In his varied treatment of madness, Dickens was to explore its potential use in contrasting the nature of wisdom and folly. While the portrayal of folly has often served

different literary uses from those of insanity, Dickens draws upon earlier conventions in their treatment of the fool, when depicting some of his insane creations. The theme of folly, described by Erasmus in his The Praise of Folly, was explored in a range of literary traditions, also finding expression in Shakespeare's plays.[59] In his writing, Dickens reflects certain Pauline teachings, where paradoxically, "foolish things of the world" are seen to "confound the wise" (1 Corinthians 1.27) - a theme taken up in the ironic form of Erasmus's Praise of Folly in 1511, and later interwoven in Swift's "Digression on Madness" in A Tale of a Tub, in which happiness is defined as "The Serene Peaceful State of being a Fool Among Knaves".[60] Although Enid Welsford suggests that the tradition of the fool ended with Cervantes's Don Quixote,[61] Dickens later ambitiously explored some complex effects drawn from this tradition in the deranged figures of Barnaby Rudge and Mr Dick. The examination of Barnaby Rudge and David Copperfield which follows will reveal that the dramatic functions of such characters illustrate Dickens's familiarity with the role of the traditional stage fool, whose "defects have been transformed into a source of delight, a mainspring of comedy" (Welsford, p. XI), a figure who often stands apart from the main action of the play, acting as intermediary between the stage and the auditorium.

Dickens would, of course, have known that Shakespeare's fools performed a range of different functions, in mirroring other characters, for example, or in operating as licensed critics to the action.[62] For some Victorian theatre goers, one contemporary interpretation of Lear would have highlighted the significance of the fool's role, as Macready's production of this play[63] marked the first appearance of the fool on stage since the seventeenth-century,[64] and the part of the fool was notably played by a woman in this production. Dickens's own consciousness of themes in Lear, evident for example in The Old Curiosity Shop, is also felt as a presence in David Copperfield. While Shakespeare's fools not infrequently take on important social and dramatic functions, creating a complementary perspective which may counterpoint the attitude of heroic or romantic character,[65] Lear's fool proves more perceptive than the King from the first act of the play. Thus too the foolish Mr Dick proves more perceptive about the Strongs'

marriage than did the seemingly wise and scholarly Dr Strong himself. While Lear's fool takes many opportunities of warning the king of his folly (exemplified in Act 1, Scene V), acting as commentator as Lear gradually loses his power and possessions,[66] Mr Dick too conveys his concerns about tensions apparent within the Strongs' marriage, as will be seen.

The hallmark of Lear's fool (as in the case of Mr Dick), is his loyalty. There are other similarities between these characters too, for the fool's expression of devotion towards Cordelia and the King (illustrating the virtues of patience and endurance) is mirrored in Mr Dick's attitude towards the Strongs (strongly contrasted by Mrs. Markleham's character). Lear's fool finally disappears, not because he is overshadowed by Edgar as he acts the part of a mad beggar,[67] but because he is no longer needed, as the King, in losing his reason, has become a fool himself (Welsford, p. 264). Mr Dick too adopts a different (less significant) role, once he has acted as mediator between the Strongs (see below, chapter 6).

Whilst in Lear, Shakespeare had explored the interrelationship between suffering and wisdom,[68] this theme also recurred throughout several of Dickens's novels, evident in his characterisation of Pip, for example. Shakespeare's sympathetically portrayed characters (exemplified by Edgar and Gloucester) may appeal to the external forces of the gods, whilst (like Nebuchadnezzar's model) less sympathetically conceived figures are often bent on enforcing their own will: there are obvious parallels in Dickens's novels. However, any attempt at a sustained portrayal of madness, clearly presented a novelist with technical problems which would have proved less challenging for a playwright. Although Dickens described the plight of characters who briefly suffered periods of mental derangement, and also a number of insane creations whose role proved peripheral in his plots, he rarely attempted any sustained portrayal of the cause and effects of insanity, his creation of Barnaby Rudge highlighting the inherent problems in any such attempt (see below, chapter 6).

In this portrayal of the crazed figure of Barnaby Rudge, Dickens's writing reflects some characteristics of the Shakespearian fool, which had later been evident too in the

writings of a range of authors, including Walter Scott's The Heart of Midlothian (1818), with its descriptions of Madge Wildfire, a female attired in fool's garb. Barnaby may however, more closely resemble a "poor simpleton" in another of Scott's novels, Waverley, in which Davie Gellatley is dressed in a style which is "antiquated and extravagant", and is "an innocent" (p. 123), although this character can also prove quick-witted.[69] Davie's characterisation, besides adding colour and interest to the plot, also serves as an indicator, for the way in which other figures react towards him provide insight into their characters. Waverley, for example, treats Davie sympathetically, and his reaction is reminiscent of Gloucester's response to Lear's downfall:

"Alas", thought Edward, "is it thou? Poor helpless being, art thou alone left, to gibber and moan, and fill with thy wild and unconnected scraps of minstrelsy the halls that protected thee?" (vol III, p. 227).

As Barnaby Rudge was to highlight a range of responses in other characters towards his confused state, and particularly illuminating Gordon's shortsightedness, in David Copperfield, the role of Mr Dick illustrated the ways in which both David and his aunt recognised this character's potential:

> 'Mr Dick,' said my aunt, 'don't be a fool, because nobody can be more discreet than you can, when you choose',

and

> 'Janet,' said my aunt, turning round with a quiet triumph, which I did not then understand, 'Mr Dick sets us all right' (ch. 13).

For Dickens, the use of such crazed foolish figures as Barnaby and Mr Dick - characters whose origins may have been found in earlier literary traditions - enabled him to explore range of effects, as will become apparent in chapter 6.

While Dickens's early novels explore the subject of insanity, and highlight some shortcomings in society and its organisation (evident, for example, in the part played by Miss Flite), it is quite remarkable, given the wealth of writing in contemporary novels which drew attention to the abuses in the asylum system, that Dickens did not set out to

use his novel-writing as a vehicle to publicise this issue. Thomas Bakewell had (anonymously) drawn attention to this issue in The Moorland Bard, highlighting the plight of those insane people housed in parish poorhouses,[70] and Henry Cockton's Valentine Vox illuminated the plight of a character who was wrongly confined,[71] while in The Woman in White, Wilkie Collins was to draw attention to the way in which ill-qualified and ill-equipped doctors could detain people who were perfectly sane, in a tale which was serialised in All the Year Round (from 26 November 1859 - 25 August 1860). Collins is reputed to have told a friend that the plot of this novel was suggested to him when visiting Paris with Dickens[72] it was a tale which appealed to Dickens,[73] who wrote that he had read this book "with great care and attention" and "that the story is very interesting, and the writing of it admirable".[74] The plot of this novel (which may be rooted in Gothic melodrama)[75] evidently impressed Dickens, as he congratulated Collins on finishing his "best book".[76] Dickens was also latterly familiar with the plot of Armadale[77] (published serially in The Cornhill Magazine (November 1864 - June 1866)), in which Collins depicted another inhospitable sanatorium (in an "overgrown dismal house", "frightful to behold"), founded by an unprofessional, incompetent doctor. For the sum of £600, this doctor, the proprietor of the Sanatorium, is prepared to compromise himself, concerning the false identity of one of the characters, Miss Gwilt. Miss Braddon explored a similar theme in Lady Audley's Secret, a novel later to be dramatised,[78] in which she imaginatively explored the way in which confinement in an asylum could be arranged with ease, whilst also exploring the theme of hereditary madness.[79]

By the time that Charles Reade's Hard Cash was being published in All the Year Round, the potential misuse of asylums [80] was not an uncommon literary theme. Reade's interest in this subject may have been fired by the experience of someone known to him.[81] Yet although he makes use of contrast in describing Hardie's horror and indignation at being restrained in an asylum,[82] Hard Cash was (as we have noted), not welcomed by the reading public: Dickens himself, who had suggested an alternative title of Safe as the Bank, twice published the fact that he did not agree with Reade's viewpoint,

perhaps because of his friendship with Forster, a member of the Lunacy Commission. Dickens would naturally have been concerned about the circulation of All the Year Round, but his dislike of overt, or harrowing descriptions is further indicated by his later remarks about Reade's novel Griffith Gaunt in 1867. While describing this as the work of a "highly accomplished writer and a good man", he found certain scenes "extremely coarse and disagreeable".[83] Although Dickens's novels reveal the oppressive effects of some contemporary institutions,[84] his remarks about Reade's work indicate one of the reasons why he did not describe abuses in the asylum system in his novels, for the reading public may not have welcomed the exploration of such a theme. Instead, Dickens thematically explored the cause and effects of insanity in a range of individual portraits of crazed and insane figures in his novels, leaving other writers to explore the uses and abuses of "the mental lumber room"[85] of the asylum.

While Dickens's early novels illuminate his exploration of insanity as a potential effect of human waywardness, one of the outcomes of the Fall described in Old Testament writings, it is notable that the Biblical narrative describes the way in which Nebuchadnezzar was restored to sanity when he repented of his earlier behaviour. In the latter part of his writing career, Dickens too explored an interconnection between insanity and restoration, particularly evident in A Tale of Two Cities, his description of Dr Manette's restoration from insanity presenting a marked contrast with his earlier use of madness.

Healing and restoration were keynotes in one New Testament account with which Dickens was familiar, in which a seemingly crazed figure is restored to normality. St Luke's account described a figure who is delivered of demons according to the narrative, an experience enabling him to form a relationship (with Christ) and to publicise the transformation he experiences.[86] In Dickens's account of these events (in Luke 8, 30)) this figure is portrayed as a "dreadful madman", whilst the effects of his howling "made travellers afraid, to hear him".[87] Here, Dickens describes Christ's perception that this figure was "torn by an Evil Spirit", and that he "cast the madness out of him." Dickens may have described this figure's experience as madness for the benefit of his

young audience:[88] he had strongly-held views about the ways in which children should be taught religion,[89] advising his own children (in his Will) "humbly" to guide themselves "by the teaching of the New Testament in its broad spirit, and to put no faith in any man's narrow construction of its letter here or there" (Forster's Life, (Appendix, p. 859)). Dickens's account of the recovery of this madman highlights his knowledge of the New Testament account - his own familiarity with the book of Common Prayer, and the Old and New Testament apparent throughout his writing,[90] while on a number of occasions, he reflects the tone of Biblical narrative.[91] His writings indicate that Dickens was all too aware of the need for healing and restoration of individuals and in society, evident in the impact of greed and heartlessness upon contemporary society.[92]

Elsewhere, the restorative potential of insanity - a theme evident in earlier literature[93] - had been observed by writers in the nineteenth century. According to Julius and Augustus Hare, "Temporary madness may be necessary in some cases, to cleanse and renovate the mind; just as a fit of illness is to carry off the humours of the body."[94] This was a theme also explored in the writing of Mrs. Gaskell, one of Dickens's contemporaries with whom he later became acquainted. According to Forster, Mrs. Gaskell was a writer "for whose powers he had a high admiration, and with whom he had friendly intercourse during many years" (Life, VI, 513). She described the effects upon one of her heroines, in Mary Barton,[95] a character whose circumstances suddenly change (as Esther Summerson's personal situation also altered when she contracted smallpox) through her experience of insanity. She becomes child-like and dependent, smiling "gently, as a baby does when it sees its mother tending its little cot", with an "innocent" infantile gaze. In Dickens's novels, insanity can cause characters such as Mr Dorrit to become dependent too: he "fell away into a weakness so extreme that he could not raise his hand" (Little Dorrit, p. 710). Yet although Dickens would have been aware of the potentially restorative effects of insanity described, for example, in Jane Eyre,[96] he more often explores the way in which insanity can affect the circumstances of his male creations than of his female characters, only portraying its

restorative effects in later years. For characters such as little Em'ly, a restorative change in personal circumstances can be brought about by Dickens through causes other than insanity - such as emigration, for example.

Mary Barton's experience of insanity is, of course, transitory, for she later makes a recovery with a renewal of energy. The potentially beneficial effects of insanity were, however, later underscored by Bulwer Lytton in his rather dull tale, A Strange Story,[97] serialised by Dickens in All the Year Round and published as a novel three years after A Tale of Two Cities. This was a tale which appeared late in Dickens's writing career, in which, following the death of a character who has reputedly exercised magnetic powers over her, Bulwer Lytton's Lilian Ashleigh (who has suffered insanity, chronic fever, sleeplessness and loss of appetite), is finally healed, affirming the moral of this tale, that "in the awful affliction that darkened my reason, my soul has been made more clear" (ch. 78). Dickens, by contrast, did not explore the restorative effects of insanity by such (fairly crude) means of narrative discourse, and, in Dr Manette, had studied the restoration of one individual's sanity by means which almost seem to anticipate psychotherapy,[98] in a subtle exploration of this character's suffering and recovery. Bulwer Lytton's writing provides an example of the contemporary treatment of a theme which contrasts with Dickens's sensitive exploration in A Tale of Two Cities. In Dickens's earlier novels, madness had more commonly proved symbolic of human frailty and brokenness than of providential, restorative potential, whereas his treatment of the theme of restoration from insanity was to mark the development of his technical skills as, a writer during the latter part of his writing career.

Dickens, then, had access to, and drew selectively from a wide range of literary traditions in which the theme of insanity had been explored for a variety of purposes, with varying degrees of literary competence. Even when aspects of his indebtedness to a variety of traditions may be apparent, however, Dickens's novels bear his own remarkable stamp. Although, in his early novels, in which madness is described as a moral warning against wickedness, Dickens may have drawn upon earlier traditions, it

is apparent that his use of this subject is subordinate to Dickens's own purposes (see below, chapter 5). As Dickens mastered new technical skills, his portrayal of insanity, and its effects upon those characters who are presented as victims of circumstance, was explored in a selection of novels examined in chapter 6. For Dickens, madness often symbolised the effects of human frailty and brokenness - the restoration of Dr Manette's sanity proving a notable exception (see below, chapter 7), as in this character he notably depicted a figure who was restored from insanity.

An examination of key novels in Dickens's writing career will reveal that he was evidently aware of the ironic potential of insanity, drawing upon earlier traditions in which madness is used in ironically highlighting the nature of wisdom and folly, and apparent in his characterisation of Barnaby Rudge and Mr Dick. Although his early novels indicate a sense of familiarity with the sensational uses of insanity in various literary traditions, it will become apparent that Dickens's treatment of madness commonly reflected his moral preoccupations, even where his handling of the subject demonstrated his love of theatricality. Most notably absent, in Dickens's novel-writing, is any detailed reference to literature publicising a viewpoint about the uses and abuses of the asylum system and the care of the insane. Although this was a subject explored by a number of his contemporaries, it was clearly not Dickens's intention to use his novels for this purpose, but rather of exploring the cause and effect of the madness experienced by individual characters with increasing insight and penetration.

As we explore selected key novels in the chapters which follow, we will discover that, while drawing upon a range of literary traditions, Dickens's experimentation with various methods in his distinctive representation of madness, expressed his maturing vision of meaning and purpose in his novels. Before turning to these novels, however, the next chapter considers Dickens's knowledge about the nature of insanity gained from personal observation and experience, together with its impact upon his novel-writing.

Notes

1. M.E. Braddon, Lady Audley's Secret, 3 vols (Tinsley, 1862; rpt. New York: Dover Publications, 1974 (ch. 34)), p. 265.

2. Penelope Doob, Nebuchadnezzar's Children: Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1974).

3. See Dennis Walder, Dickens and Religion, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), and James S. Stevens, "Dickens's use of the English Bible", The Dickensian, 21, (1925), 32-34, for discussion about Dickens's familiarity with Old Testament writings.

4. Deut. 28.28; Zech 12.4

5. I Sam. 18.

6. Euripides, however, had explored the chastening effects of human suffering in rather a different way in his Heracles (written in approximately 420 B.C.), through the decision taken by the gods to punish the figure of Heracles with madness:
"If Heracles escape our punishment, then gods/are nowhere, and the mortal race may rule the earth" (840-41).
After the play's action has unfolded, its moral sentiment is of course underscored for us by Heracles himself when he finally declares:
"If any man thinks wealth or power of greater worth
To him who has them, than a good friend - he is mad" (1425-1426).

7. This was a work which Dickens possessed (Stonehouse, p. 17).

8. Robert Burton. Anatomy of Melancholy (1621; rpt. New York: Tudor, 1955), P. 119.

9. In his letter of 5 March 1839 to Forster, Dickens notes that Charles Kean is performing (at the Theatre Royal, Exeter) and that "If it had been the "rig'lar" drama I should have gone, but I was afraid Sir Giles Overreach... might upset me so I stayed away" (Letters, I, 520).

10. Similarly, Overreach declares:
"I would be worldly wise; for the other wisdom
That does prescribe us a well-govern'd life,
And to do right to others as ourselves,
I value not an atom" (II, I),

and:

"Learn any thing,
And from any creature, that may make thee great;
E'en from the devil himself; stand not on form;
Words are no substances" (III, II).

11. Evident, for example, in Nathaniel Lee's Nero when he cried: "Gods! Devils! Hell! Heaven and Earth!" (Nathanial Lee: The Tragedy of Nero, Emperour of Rome, (III, I), staged in 1674). Lee also portrayed the effects of madness in another character in Britanicus (particularly in acts IV and V of this play). Works by Lee are included in a collection owned by Dickens (in The British Theatre, ed. Mrs. Inchbald, and listed in Stonehouse p. 92), which he would presumably have read.

12. Allardyce Nicoll, A History of English Drama, 1660-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 129.

13. Warren depicts a wealthy young character, "accustomed to the instant gratification of almost every wish he could form" from childhood, for whom the slightest obstacle was sufficient to "irritate him almost to a frenzy" (Samuel Warren, Passages from the Diary of a Late Physician, republished in 2 vols (London: Blackwood, 1833, vol I, p 119)). Following his infatuation with an actress, the rather aptly-named figure of Warningham experiences a series of incidents causing him to become delirious, and finally insane when he raves and gnashes his teeth. The methods of his medical treatment illustrate contemporary practices, as his head is shaved, he is bled copiously, and is kept cool and tranquil.

14. He refers to Warren's Passages from the Diary of a Late Physician, in a letter to Edward Oliver (Letters I, 409-410).

15. See his letter to J.A. Overs, of 27 Sep 1839 (Pilgrim Letters, I, 587).

16. Here Warren has contrasted the exemplary figure of Mrs. Aubrey with the irritable, unsavoury character of Titmouse ("Curse me, say I, if this life is worth having" (p. 2)). As the result of Titmouse's actions, one sympathetically portrayed figure suffers a paralytic seizure and mental instability ("Alas! the venerable sufferer's tongue was indeed loosed:- but reason had fled!" (p. 343)) and Mrs. Aubrey's death is described by means of adapting Biblical verses ("or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain... Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was" (p. 365)).

17. Henry Cockton, The Life and Adventures of Valentine Vox, The Ventriloquist (London: Tyas, 1840). In this work, Walter, who has been instrumental in confining another character wrongfully in a private lunatic asylum, receives his just deserts when he is admitted to an asylum at the novel's close, "an emaciated form with an aspect of madness". Fiend-like, he gives a "maniacal chuckle", laughing and clenching his fists, and finally springs over a balustrade with a "dreadful yell of defiance," the water "opening to receive him with a roar" - a scene which may have been inspired by the conclusion of Dickens's "The Drunkard's Death".

18. For detailed comments about Dickens's indebtedness to the dramatic tradition, see J.B. Van Amerongen, The Actor in Dickens: A Study of the Histrionic and Dramatic Elements in the Novelist's Life and Works (New York: Haskell House, 1926), in which it is noted that Dickens was most strongly influenced by music-hall, farce, sentimental comedy and melodrama (p. 225). See also William F. Axton, Circle of Fire: Dickens's Vision and Style and the Popular Victorian Theater (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966), which considers the influence of popular Victorian theatre on Dickens's techniques as a novelist. For a study of the nature of melodrama, and its development

from 1790-1900, together with its theatrical background, see Michael R. Booth, English Melodrama (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1965), in which it is remarked that melodrama was a dramatic form depending more on "visual excitement and the thrill of the moment ... than anything ever written for the stage" (p. 13) and that "Most definitions of melodrama have laid stress upon the concentration on plot at the expense of characterization, the reliance on physical sensation, the character stereotypes, the rewarding of virtue, and punishment of vice ... but what is really more important is the pattern into which they all fit ... giving a logical moral and philosophical coherence" (pp. 13-14). For a discussion about the differences between melodrama and tragedy, see A.R. Thompson's "Melodrama and Tragedy", PMLA, XLIII, Sep 1928, 810-835, and for comment about Dickens's later active involvement in one stage presentation, see Robert L. Brannan (ed.) Under the Management of Mr. Charles Dickens: His Production of "The Frozen Deep" (Ithaca: New York: Cornell University Press, 1966). For a fuller, more recent account of the distinction between tragedy and melodrama, see Robert B. Heilman, Tragedy and Melodrama: Versions of Experience (Washington: Washington University Press, 1968)

19. A point made by Barbara Hardy, in Forms of Feeling in Victorian Fiction (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 46.

20. See J.B. Van Amerongen, The Actor in Dickens: A Study of the Histrionic and Dramatic Elements in the Novelist's Life and Works (New York: Haskell House, 1926). Dickens's interest in drama is evident in his descriptions, providing information and indicators about the nature of even his most obscure characters, when their "manner, dress, their whole being bespeak their dispositions". For insight into "Emotion and Gesture in Nicholas Nickleby", see Angus Easson, Dickens Quarterly, 5, no. 3 (1988), 136-51.

For Dickens's characters, mental derangement is conveyed in appearance and expression, whereby Mr F's aunt, for example, is "an amazing little old woman, with a face like a staring wooden doll too cheap for expression, and a stiff yellow wig perched unevenly on the top of her head" (Little Dorrit, p. 198). Similarly, the inner turmoil of Nell's grandfather is conveyed through his action in adopting a foetal position "with limbs huddled together, head bowed down, arms crossed upon the breast, and fingers lightly clenched", as he "rocked to and fro" upon his seat, "accompanying the action with the mournful sound" (The Old Curiosity Shop, p. 646). See also William Axton, Circle of Fire: Dickens' Vision and Style and the Popular Victorian Theater (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966), and Michael R. Booth, English Melodrama (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1965), and Robert Garis, The Dickens Theatre: A Reassessment of the Novels (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965).

21. See George Rowell, The Victorian Theatre: A Survey (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), in which it is noted that "Victorian acting was probably seen at its most characteristic "not in tragedy or comedy, but in melodrama, the characteristic entertainment of the age" (p. 26). See also Allardyce Nicoll, A History of Late Nineteenth Century Drama 1850-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1949), for a description of theatrical practices, together with observations about the contemporary portrayal of stock figures and grotesque eccentrics (vol. 1, p. 125). For a discussion about the salient features of melodrama, see Allardyce Nicoll, The Theatre and Dramatic Theory (London: Harrap, 1962).

It is notable that a change of emphasis evident in popular Victorian theatre in the second half of the nineteenth century was mirrored in aspects of Dickens's novel-writing, as Gothic elements were becoming less evident, and dialogue was becoming more natural: plots were more skilfully constructed, and characters were more credibly conceived and portrayed on the stage. Allardyce Nicoll notes that Shakespeare's greatness was admired in the nineteenth century to the detriment of contemporary creative writing, suggesting that this may have caused the "greatest hindrance to the development of prose drama in the age" (History of Late Nineteenth Century Drama, (p. 216)), although other factors, including the effect of theatrical licensing and the changing social circumstances in which theatrical productions were being staged would have also

influenced playwriting during this period. For a fuller, more recent account of the influence of nineteenth century theatre on Dickensian theatricality, see Michael Slater's introduction to the Penguin Nickleby.*

22. Dickens's library contained Webster's works, and Otway's plays (Letters, IV, p. 712 and p. 716). In Venice Preserved, Otway had depicted the crazed reaction of one of his characters to the shocking news of her husband's death. Belvidera's intense shock, expressed in suitably stylised rhetoric, is subsequently followed by her own death:

"Ha! look there!
My husband bloody, and his friend too! Murder!
... Speak to me, thou sad vision...
Here they went down:- Oh, I'll dig, dig the den up!
Hoa, Jaffier, Jaffier!
They have hold of me, and drag me to the bottom!
Nay - now they pull so hard - farewell".
(Thomas Otway, Venice Preserved, a Tragedy (London: T. Dolby, 1823), p. 58).

Work by Otway was being produced on the Victorian stage during Dickens's lifetime, and the title of at least one of Lee's plays was current, as his The Rival Queens had inspired a title for one rejected article for Household Words (Letters, VII, 705).

23. See J.B. Van Amerongen, The Actor in Dickens; a study of the Histrionic and Dramatic Elements in the Novelist's Life and Works (New York: Haskell House, 1926).

24. See John Webster, ed. B. Morris (London: Ernest Benn 1970), for a critical examination of Webster's works, especially "The Duchess of Malfi; A Theological Approach," D.C. Gunby, pp. 181-204. See also Ariel Sachs, "The Religious Despair of Doctor Faustus", JEGP, LXIII (1964), 625-47.

25. Dickens makes passing reference to one of Sheridan's works in his letter of 3 January, 1844 (Letters, IV, 10) in which he refers to the jealous disposition of Falkland, and would presumably have been familiar with The Critic.

26. Sheridan parodies the conventional stage devices used to portray insanity, in costume and speech:

Puff	"- now she comes in stark mad in white satin".
Sheer	"Why in white satin?"
Puff	"O lord, Sir! When a heroine goes mad she always goes into white satin (III, I).
	and
Til	"The wind whistles - the moon rises - see, They have kill'd my squirrel in his cage; Is this a grasshopper? Ha! no; it is my Whiskerandos - you shall not keep him... An oyster may be cross'd in love! - Who says A whale's a bird? Ha! did you call, my love? He's here! he's there! - He's everywhere! Ah me! He's nowhere!"
Puff	"There, do you ever desire to see anybody madder than that?... You observed how she mangled the metre?
Dangle	Yes - egad, it was the first thing made me suspect she was out of her senses".

27. There are some parallels in the exchanges between two of Sheridan's characters and the scene in chapter 45 of David Copperfield which describes Mrs. Markleham's interjections. In both instances, there are numerous exclamations amidst the conversations described.

* A view which is however challenged by Paul Schlicke in "Crummles Once More", Dickensian 86 (1990), 2-16.

28. A tradition originating from Walpole's Castle of Otranto (1765), with a widespread influence upon historical romances and tales of supernatural terror (see David Punter, The Literature of Terror: A history of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the present day, London & New York: 1980). See also David Richter, "The Gothic Impulse: Recent Studies", Dickens Studies, 9 (1981), 279.

29. See, for example, Michael Hollington Dickens and the Grotesque (London & Sydney: Croom Helm, 1984), pp. 23-24.

In The Hidden World of Charles Dickens (Auckland: University of Auckland, 1962), J.C. Reid observes:
"His work is acknowledged as springing, in its most important aspects, not so much from the cheap fiction and stage melodrama of his time, with which, of course, it has many links, but from the Gothic tradition" (p. 7). In A.C. Coolidge's Charles Dickens as a Serial Novelist (Iowa, 1967), comparisons are made between Dickens and Mrs. Radcliffe.

30. Thus, for example, in Sophia Lee's The Recess, Elinor is driven to madness when she hears that Essex, whom she loves, has been condemned to death (Sophia Lee, The Recess, or, a Tale of Other Times, 3 vols. (London: T. Cadell, 1783-1785)) and in Bungay Castle, Le Forester suffers mild bouts of insanity after being attacked and beaten (Elizabeth Bonhote, Bungay Castle. A Novel 2 vols., (London: William Lane, 1796). In this novel, a second character (Narford) becomes insane after the death of the woman he loved. Similarly, Alfred experiences mental instability after being imprisoned for debt in Roche's A Suffolk Tale (John Hamilton Roche, A Suffolk Tale, or The Perfidous Guardian, 2 vols., (London: for the author, 1810)), and Samuel Brydge's heroine in Mary de Clifford (London: Sherwood, Neely & Jones, 1811), suffered grief and insanity after the death of her lover. Brydges criticised the "barbarous custom of duelling", but attempted to evoke sympathy for the heroine who became feverish: an "angelic soul" who had burst its confines, and fled to eternity" (p. 213). One character who had been party to the duelling is left, Brydges notes (with amusing understatement), "not a little deranged".

31. See Letters, VII, 314.

32. Charles Robert Maturin, The Milesian Chief (London: Henry Colburn, 1812).

33. "You would not let me see him alive; but I will steal out at night, and tear up a grave with these hands, and then I shall see him in his shroud and in death",
and
"I have followed every gleam of the moon, for by moonlight I see best, but nowhere can I find one green sod to cover him".

34. Charles Robert Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer, A Tale, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: Constable; London: Hurst & Robinson, 1820).

35. "Is there any one of us who would... accept all that man could bestow... to resign the hope of his salvation? - No, there is not one... were the enemy of mankind to traverse it with the offer" (p. 1X).

36. In this tale, Melmoth, condemned to wander for a hundred and fifty years as the result of occult dealings, finally concludes that "No one has ever exchanged destinies with Melmoth the Wanderer. I have traversed the world in the search, and no one, to gain that world, would lose his own soul" (p. 441).

37. Perhaps Macduff is not maddened by his grief because he has the outlet of action as a means of diffusing his emotional turmoil.

38. "The maniac marked the destruction of the spot where she thought she stood by one desperate bound, accompanied by a wild shriek, and then calmly gazed on her infants as they rolled over the scorching fragments, and sunk into the abyss of fire below. "There they go, - one - two - three - all!" (p. 126).

39. In The Black Robber. A Romance, 3 vols. (London: A.K. Newman, 1819), he portrays a character whose madness was the result of her wrongdoing. Ball describes the sensuous attire and habitat of Rodolpha (the "jewelled robe of showy whiteness", "rich, gold-woven plaid", or "urns of delicious perfumes"), a character who murders her husband. Her remorseful reaction to news of her lover's death underlines Ball's moral that she "could not escape the tortures of her own guilty conscience", and she finally becomes "deranged". Her mental turmoil is used for sensational purposes (as she is "rending" her "glossy ringlets", or "shrieking with terror" or averting her gaze from the "reproachful ghost" of her husband). Her (predictable) suicide illuminates Ball's moral that "true earthly happiness is not attainable - that guilt can only prosper for a time .... no path... leads to peace, but the one of rectitude... through the benign intercession of a blessed REDEEMER" (p. 199).

40. Samuel Egerton Brydges, Sir Ralph Willoughby: An Historical Tale of the Sixteenth Century (Florence: I. Maghieri, 1820).

41. M. G. Lewis, The Isle of Devils - An Historical Tale, founded on an Anecdote in the Annals of Portugal (Kingston: Jamaica, privately printed at the Advertiser office, 1827).

42. William Godwin, St. Leon. A Tale of the Sixteenth Century 4 vols (London: G. and G. Robinson, 1799).

43. William Godwin, Fleetwood, or the New Man of Feeling (London: R. Phillips, 1805).

44. Elizabeth Tomlinson, Rosalind de Tracy, 3 vols (London: Dilly, 1798).

45. William F. Williams, The World We Live In. A Novel, 3 vols (London: Lane & Newman, 1804).

46. Mary Shelley, Frankenstein: or the Modern Prometheus, 2 vols Ist edition 1815; rpt. 1823.

47. Mario Praz, "Introductory Essay", Three Gothic Novels (Harmondsworth, Middx: Penguin, 1968), p. 34.

48. See Allardyce Nicoll, A History of the Late Eighteenth Century Drama, 1750-1800 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), which notes a number of plays in the late eighteenth century, originating from romance or novels.

49. Booth, pp. 127-128.

50. H.P. Sucksmith, "The Secret of Immediacy: Dickens's Debt to the Tale of Terror in Blackwood's," Nineteenth - Century Fiction, 26 (1971-2), 146.

51. Here the author depicted an intelligent but rather unimaginative clergyman, troubled by the spectre of a blue Newfoundland dog (a side-effect, it is concluded, of the clergyman's stomach-disorder: "every body knows the intimate connection between its functions and the nervous system" (p. 786), despite his characteristic "firmness and good sense").

52. In this tale, Warren describes in detail the return from a party of a young, successful student, and his vision of an "appalling spectre" with features "glowing like steel heated to a white heat", and eyes "absolutely blazing" with a "most horrible lustre". The student expresses fear that he has been visited by a dead neighbour's spirit, in highly dramatic speech ("then it was he... whom I saw, and he is sure - damned!... Horror! horror!"). When he suffers a convulsive fit, the author writes, it was as though he "lay passive in the grasp of some messenger of darkness" sent to "buffet him" (p. 363). This character's speech dramatically conveys his mental incapacity: ("Hark you, there - secure one! tie me! make me fast, or I shall burst upon you and destroy you all") while his physical symptoms are shown in his heaving chest, grinding teeth and glaring eyes. Warren highlights his "livid lips crested with foam", his features "swollen - writhing - blackening", his fiendish expression, "diabolical" glance and contrived means of expression ("Oh-spectre smitten"), details which are also evident in Dickens's "Madman's Manuscript". The physician in "The Spectre-Smitten" speculates whether those New Testament characters who were "possessed of devils" were in reality nothing more than maniacs of the worst kind:- if a man is "transformed into a devil, when his reason is utterly overturned". This is a viewpoint which seems to be reflected in Dickens's version of The Life of Our Lord (1846-9), known by his children "from having it repeated to them, long before they could read, and almost as soon as they could speak" (Dexter, Letters 3, 784: 8 June 1870). It is notable that, in "teaching his children, Dickens chose not to dwell on the supernatural element of Christianity, but rather upon its essentially moral features" (Walder, p. 13).

Warren's physician endorses Dr Johnson's remark: "Oh God! afflict my body with what tortures thou willest; but spare my reason! 'observing' 'where is he that does not join him in uttering such a prayer?" (p. 372). Like Dr Monro (in Philosophy of Human Nature), Warren takes the view that "children, and people of weak minds, are never subject to madness; for how can he despair, who cannot think?" and that intelligent people can become insane because they overtax their minds and neglect their bodies. Warren strongly contrasts the cool, detached observation of his physician with his patient's fearful sense of terror, and notes that the student later destroyed himself "in a manner too horrible to mention".

53. Blackwood's, 28 (1830), 609-619; 29 (1831), 361 - 375.

54. John Bayley, Shakespeare and Tragedy (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 173.

55. Some Gothic writers portrayed insanity as the effect of actions taken by some of their characters upon other (often weaker) figures, illustrated by Ellenor in Smollett's Ferdinand Count Fathom, who was "seized with the most violent transports of grief and dismay, by which her brain was disordered to such a degree, that she grew furious and distracted, and was... conveyed into the hospital of Bethlem; where we shall leave her for the present, happily bereft of her reason" (ch 31). See also Charlotte Dacres, The Passions 4 vols (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1811).

56. See Mario Praz, "Introductory Essay", Three Gothic Novels (Harmondsworth, Middx: Penguin, 1968), p. 34.

57. See letter to Charles Mackay, 7 March 1844 (Pilgrim edition notes that this monument was still incomplete in 1878 (Pilgrim IV, 66)).

For details of the stage tradition in operatic dramatisations of Rob Roy, see Pilgrim II, 36.

58. Illuminated, for example, in the bawdy song, of Act IV. V, 46-52 and 56-61 which are incongruous when compared with the character of Ophelia.

59. Robert Goldsmith, Wise Fools in Shakespeare (East Langsing: Michigan State University Press, 1955), p. 14.

60. Jonathan Swift, A Tale of a Tub, to which is added the Battle of the Books and the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit (rpt. A.C. Guthkelch and Nichol Smith, Oxford, 1950), p. 174).

61. See Enid Welsford, The Fool: His Social and Literary History (London: Faber & Faber, 1935; rpt. 1968). See also Sandra Billington A Social History of the Fool, (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1984), pp. 15-31, for a discussion about theological and philosophical attitudes to the Fool. Welsford makes several pertinent observations about traditional attitudes to the Fool, and the notion of the lunatic as an awe-inspiring figure who, as the mouthpiece of a spirit, has access to hidden knowledge (p. 76). She describes the onset of one form of madness (perceived as the result of battle, in the story of Merlin Lailoken (p. 104)) and recounts a seventeenth century exhortation to "treat such creatures kindly and use them as looking glasses", because of their paradoxial combination of natural folly and spiritual wisdom (p. 147). Welsford offers her own intriguing praise of folly, and doubts whether the "change of mental climate which was so fatal to the fool is ... altogether wholesome," observing "who is to laugh at us and remind us of our mortal inadequacy?" (pp. 193-194).

For comments on Erasmus's work, see Walter Kaiser, Praisers of Folly (London: Victor Gollancz, 1964). See also F. Saxl, "Holbein's Illustrations to The Praise of Folly by Erasmus" (The Burlington Magazine, 83 (1943), pp. 275-9). Kaiser has noted (p. 278) that in Cervantes's novel, irony becomes the meaning. Don Quixote, because of his belief that he is a knight errant, follows a dead custom, and the source of folly in this novel is found in the confusion which arises between the nature of illusion and reality (p. 291). Cervantes's central character who has (rather loosely) been described as " that most famous of mad characters" by Max Byrd (Visits to Bedlam, Madness and Literature in the Eighteenth Century (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1974), p. 110), seems to have provided the model for the quixotic character, developed in some eighteenth century fiction (see Stuart Tave, The Amiable Humorist, Chicago, 1960, pp. 140-163). Fielding paid tribute to Cervantes's influence on his work in his Preface to Joseph Andrews, producing his own comedy, Don Quixote in England, in 1734. Smollett, who had published a translation of Don Quixote, also produced another quixotic novel in his The Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves (1760-62). The relation of Greaves to Don Quixote has been examined in Boucé's Les Romans de Smollett: Etude Critique (1971). Although Smollett's hero was (by means of his unworldly folly) to highlight the "vicious madness of the world" (Michael V. De Porte, Nightmares and Hobbyhorses. Swift, Sterne, and Augustan Ideas of Madness (San Marino: The Huntingdon Library, 1974, p. 92), in some respects, Greaves did not prove such a likeable character as Don Quixote.

Smollett dealt with the theme of folly and madness elsewhere (when describing the dangers of unlawful confinement in lunatic asylums in the "Memoirs of a Prisoner" episode in Peregrine Pickle. Dickens's library (providing him with a "host of friends when he had no single friend" according to Forster (Life, 1, 1, p. 8), contained Smollett's works, whilst he was clearly familiar with Don Quixote: sources which may have provided some inspiration for his characterisation of Lord George Gordon.

62. See John Reibantz, The Lear World; A Study of King Lear in its Dramatic Context (London: Heinemann, 1977).

63. See Leslie C. Staples, "Dickens and Macready's Lear", Dickensian, 44, (1948), no. 286, 78, for discussion about dates of performance. See also Paul Schlicke's detailed comments in "'A Discipline of Feeling': Macready's Lear and The Old Curiosity Shop", The Dickensian, 76 (1980), 79-90, in which it is noted: "That Dickens knew

Macready's Lear is unquestionable" (p. 79).

64. There has been some debate whether a review in The Examiner of 4 February 1838, entitled "The Restoration of Shakespeare's Lear to the Stage" was written by Dickens or Forster, although W.J. Carlton has persuasively argued that it should be attributed to Forster, in "Dickens or Forster? Some King Lear Criticisms Re-examined", The Dickensian, vol.41, (1965), 133-140). However, a notice in The Examiner on 27 October 1849, concerning Macready's final appearance as Lear, described the Fool in the production as "one of its most affecting and necessary features", and Schlicke observes that this review is "incontrovertibly by Dickens" (p. 79).

65. See Robert Weimann, Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 12-13.

66. It has been remarked that Lear's fool shows the penetrating insight of the traditional fools of earlier conventions, including the Sottie (Goldsmith, p. 67). Further parallels between the Sottie and Lear have also been noted, particularly at the point of the great reversal when the highest dignitaries appear as fools. See also Sandra A. Billington, A Social History of the Fool Sussex: Harvester Press, 1984.

67. John Bayley, Shakespeare and Tragedy (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1981), p 62.

68. Both Gloucester and Lear are victims of filial ingratitude, and experience suffering in different ways, through experiencing blindness or insanity. See Theodore Spencer, Shakespeare and the Nature of Man (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1943, p. 136. Both Gloucester and Lear (who manifests the paradoxical quality of "Reason in madness" (IV, VI, IV)) experience greater understanding and wisdom as the result of their suffering.

69. Illustrated when Davie prevents the Baron from being shot by soldiers by putting on the Baron's cloak himself ("majoring and looking about sae like his Honour that they were clean beguiled" little thinking that they "had letten off their gun at crack-brained Sawney". He is compared by Edward with one of Shakespeare's "roynish clowns" (Waverley: or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since, 4th edition, Edinburgh, Ballantyne, 1814, Vol I, p. 117), and bears the stamp of a wise fool.

70. "See yonder fabric, fair and large,
'T was builded at the parish charge;
'Tis there that wasting age retires,
To wait till painful life expires.
Go, look within the ample space,
Where cold damp vapours fill the place;
Go, peep into the filthy cell,
Where keen disease, and anguish dwell...
There see the idiot's vacant stare,
And th' wild maniac's frantic glare
Where, tho' strong chains the body bind,
"No fetters can restrain the mind":
Go, go my friend, and learn to feel,
Nor more thy heart from pity steel"

See [Thomas Bakewell], The Moorland Bard; or, Poetical recollections of a weaver, in the Moorlands of Staffordshire; with notes, 1807. Evidence suggests that Bakewell himself later became the proprietor of a private madhouse.

71. In this novel, the character whose victim has been confined in a private lunatic asylum, finally receives his just deserts when he becomes admitted into an asylum himself at the end of the novel, "an emaciated form with an aspect of madness." There is nothing fresh or original in Cockton's description of Walter's insanity (as he groans or gnashes his teeth, and as his "sunken eyes glared and he looked like a fiend" (p. 601); or as he mutters wildly to himself, laughing with a maniacal chuckle" or clenching his fists). The author uses Walter's plight to underscore his cautionary warning "This, indeed, is a dreadful retribution", dramatically conveying the result of his guilty conscience ("The wretched maniac... uttering a dreadful yell of defiance, sprang over the balustrade... the water opening to receive him with a roar" (p. 602)). Finally, Cockton concludes that "it's of no use for a man to go crooked in this world. Things are sure to come round; it's sure to come home to him; he's sure to be served out in the same way".

Cockton uses his novel as a vehicle for portraying the brutal treatment of Goodman in an asylum, as he dashed face downwards on a gravel path, kicked as a "dead dog", stripped and sent to bed on a pallet in a dark narrow cell, forced to feign madness when commissioners visit the asylum, and chained, then tickled with a feather. Cockton's insistence on hammering home his point is crude and heavy-handed, illustrated by Valentine's overt remark to his uncle ("you have not heard of the system upon which these private lunatic asylums are based... that under that villainous system, men- perfectly sane men - perfectly sane men - can be seized, gagged, chained, and imprisoned for life, to promote the interests or to gratify the malignity of those to whom they are prompted by nature to look for affection"(p. 315)). His Uncle later labours the point when declaring: "Are we to pronounce every man to be mad who acts strangely? Why every man living acts strangely at times... Eccentricity is the parent of all that is eminent. No man ever yet raised himself into eminence who was not eccentric. But are we to pronounce all such men to be mad? That were in itself indeed madness" (p. 337).

Perhaps one of the most effective aspects of this novel is Cockton's use of farcical comedy, exemplified by the scene in which Uncle John tumbles over an asylum wall and embraces the neck of an "idiot who, conceiving himself to be the King of the Universe, had embellished his cap with a variety of young onions" (p. 321). Some details of the scene are reminiscent of Dickens's farcical treatment of Mrs. Nickleby's meetings with her would-be suitor.

72. See Wybert Reeve, "Recollections of Wilkie Collins", Chambers Journal IX, June 1906, 458.

73. For Dickens, the appearance of the woman in white was supposedly one of the most dramatic episodes in literature (see The Recollections of Sir Henry Dickens, K.C., 1934), p. 54.

74. Letter to Collins, 7 Jan 1860, Letters of Charles Dickens 1833-70 (1903), p. 492.

75. It has been suggested that the persecution and incarceration of Anne Catherick and Lady Glyde "goes back to the dungeon motif in the Gothic strand of popular melodrama" (H.P. Sucksmith: Introduction to The Woman In White, (1860; rpt - Oxford University Press. 1973), p. 15).

76. Letters of Charles Dickens to Wilkie Collins, 1851-1870 (London: Osgood, 1892), p. 105.

77. For Dickens's comments about the dramatization of Armadale, see his letter of 10 July 1866 (in Nonesuch Letters, III, 476-477).

78. Booth notes that it was staged three times in 1863, describing one version in which Lady Audley dies "unrepentant and raving mad" to appropriate music and a "tableau of

sympathy" (p. 157). The plot of this novel is well-known, describing the adventures of a bigamist who attempts (rather amateurishly, it transpires) to murder her husband, and also to murder the relative who discovers that she had a mysterious secret, before she is confronted with evidence of her history. Finally, Lady Audley is confined in a Belgian madhouse, where she later dies.

79. Lady Audley fears that she may have inherited madness from her mother, brooding "horribly" on this subject, which "haunted" her: she dreams of her mother's "icy grasp" on her throat (vol. III, p. 82). According to a doctor in this novel, hereditary madness may "descend to the third generation and appear in the lady's children", though "not necessarily transmitted from mother to daughter" (vol. III, p. 140). One critic (Winifred Hughes, p. 59), observes that Miss Braddon's comments are remarkable for their moral ambiguity, effectively absolving Lady Audley from moral responsibility for her actions. Elaine Showalter has shown little literary sensitivity when remarking that "As every woman reader must have sensed, Lady Audley's real secret is that she is sane and, moreover, representative" (A Literature of their Own, p. 166, (see also Showalter's The Female Malady, pp. 71-72), as the text reveals this character's acute sensitivity about her background. A rather more interesting sideshoot of this novel's invention is the way in which Lady Audley associates this threatening "distraught and violent creature" with male characteristics, fearing she will be killed if she comes "within his reach". The model of Lady Audley provided the Victorian stage with a vivid portrayal of villainy: Booth observes that "After Lady Audley villainesses proliferated" (p. 157). Dickens, however, rarely depicted characters suffering from hereditary madness for reasons which he had made clear - Barnaby Rudge proving a notable exception.

80. For a discussion concerning the interrelationship between society and its buildings and physical environment, see Buildings and Society. Essays on the social development of the built environment, ed. Anthony D. King (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980). In the mid-nineteenth century, it was noted that "Were we to draw our opinions on the treatment of insanity from the construction of the buildings destined to the reception of patients, we should conclude that the great principle adopted in recovering the faculties of the mind was to immure the demented in gloomy and iron-bound fastnesses; that these were the means best adapted for restoring the wandering intellect, correcting its illusions, or quickening its torpidity: that the depraved or lost social affections were to be corrected or removed by coldness or monotony" (from "Lunatic Asylums", Westminster Review, vol. 43, 1845, p. 6-7).

81. Reade assisted a man whose relations claimed that he was mad for several months, until his sanity was proven after a lengthy examination. During this process, a doctor lent Reade a mass of reading material on the subject of lunacy (including pamphlets, journals, reports, blue-books, manuscripts and letters). Reade subtitled Hard Cash, "A matter-of-fact-romance", a "fiction built on truths", established by the systematic examination of "sources - books and witnesses". The novel may have been inspired by the Report of the Select Committee of 1859-1860, published at a time when "public feeling on these issues ran high" (Kathleen Jones, Mental Health, p. 20). That Reade was acquainted with some contemporary medical opinions is indicated by his portrayal of the unscrupulous Dr Wycherley (a thinly - disguised satiric thrust at Dr John Conolly) who has young Hardie confined with the malady of "Incubation of Insanity".

82. Hardie seems quite restrained, when compared with Dr Wycherley (one of those "who first form an opinion, and then collect the materials of one: and a very little fact goes a long way with such minds"). Reade underlines his trivial annoyances (such as the inmate who keeps forking pieces of food out of Alfred's plate and "substituting others of his own. There was even a tendency to gristle in the latter"), but also depicts brutal treatment. His hero is presumably transferred to another asylum to provide further illustrations of squalor and degradation, at Dr Wolf's establishment. His descriptions of

inmates "singing, roaring, howling like wolves" and creating "horribly unearthly sounds" are reminiscent of scenes in Maturin's Melmoth, while he uses their one-line phrases to convey their mental disorder (exemplified in "Let us curse and pray"). When describing the fire in the asylum, Reade uses diabolic imagery to represent the hellish nature of the scene ("Hell seemed discharging demons").

83. The tone of Reade's writing in this novel often lacks subtlety (exemplified in such phrases as "He came softly after them, with ghastly cheek, and blood thirsty eyes, like red-hot coals," Griffith Gaunt (London: Chapman & Hall, 1866), p. 179, or, "'God!' he cried, 'I must go, or kill....'" and "he fled from them, grinding his teeth and beating the air with his clenched fists", galloping away "with the face, the eyes, the gestures, the incoherent mutterings of a raving Bedlamite" (p. 181)).

84. For further discussion, see T.A. Jackson, Charles Dickens: The Progress of A Radical (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1937).

85. In "Non-Restraint in the Treatment of the Insane" (Edinburgh Review, vol. 131, (1870), 21), one writer remarked that "If we make a convenient lumber room, we all know how speedily it becomes filled up with lumber. The county asylum is the mental lumber room of the surrounding district". Recent studies, exploring such themes as the building as metaphor, and the language of architecture, have examined the origin and nature of institutional models of asylums in Britain. See, for example, Wolf Wolfensberger, The Origin and Nature of our Institutional Model (New York: Human Policy Press, 1975), and S. Sontag, Illness as Metaphor (London: Allen Lane, 1979). The legacy of the "mental lumber room" of the Victorian asylum is still evident in some aspects of mental health care in twentieth century Britain.

86. Luke 8. 38-39.

87. Charles Dickens, The Life of Our Lord (London: Associated Newspapers, 1934), pp. 38-39.

88. The Biblical narrative describes him as being "possessed" of "devils" (v. 36) rather than as insane.

89. Illustrated in his letter of 25 July 1839 (Letters, I, 568).

90. Andrew Sanders, The Companion to A Tale of Two Cities (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988).

91. Biblical teaching that "the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom" (Job 28:28) or, conversely, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God " (Psalm 53:1) is underscored by Dickens's moral treatment of the vices of greed, selfishness or pride.

92. Robert McCarron, "Folly and Wisdom: Three Dickensian Wise Fools", Dickens Studies Annual 6, (1977), 56. For a further discussion on Dickens's religious attitudes, see Andrew Sanders, Charles Dickens, Resurrectionist (London: Macmillan, 1982); also Dennis Walder, Dickens and Religion.

93. The restorative nature of insanity had, for example, earalier been portrayed in some medieval writings, although there is no evidence of Dickens's familiarity with such works in which madness was commonly represented as the result of anger, fear or grief when a friend had proved unfaithful, or had died (Doob, p. 22). In medieval writing, the symptoms of insanity illuminated an individual's moral failings, when the prerequisites for any cure were confession and penance. A temporary spell of insanity

could act as a means of purgation, and forgiveness for wrongdoing would bring the restoration of sanity (Doob, p. 54).

94. [Julius and Augustus Hare], Guesses at Truth by Two Brothers (London: Taylor, 1827), p. 159.

95. Following a period of mental instability, this character took on a role which made less demands on her - a personal change of circumstances which has led Elaine Showalter to claim that Mary represents the way in which many middle-class women "embraced insanity as an explanation of their unfeminine impulses and welcomed the cures that would extinguish the forbidden throb of sexuality or ambition... Having so clearly demonstrated her competence... Mary goes mad, and when she recovers she has regressed to a more pliant and familiar level. ("Victorian Women and Insanity", Victorian Studies, (1980), 175).

96. The madness of Bertha Mason in Jane Eyre - a novel with which Dickens was certainly acquainted - is indirectly shown to have rather a different restorative effect - not on the individual concerned, but on others. One critic has taken the view that Bertha's madness, "which represents the recklessness of mankind - and of Rochester in particular - leads to the blazing end of Thornfield... and with it the extermination of its begetting madness" (Reed, p. 210), although there is little textual evidence that Bertha is a particularly representative creation in this novel. It has, of course, been argued by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar (in The Madwoman in the Attic: the Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 78), that Bertha is the projection of a female novelist, functioning as Jane's "truest and darkest double" (ibid., p. 360). Bertha certainly provides a sharp contrast with Jane, though not necessarily symbolising Jane's "own secret self", (p. 348). Bertha is unsympathetically portrayed as "the monster", "the maniac" - a grim and hated figure (Kathleen Jones, Mental Health and Social Policy 1845-1859 (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 21), whose roots may lie in the Gothic tradition. Rochester is scathing about her ("She came of a mad family; idiots and maniacs through three generations! Her mother... was both a madwoman and a drunkard! - as I found out after I had wed the daughter" (ch. 26)), and she represents the impediment to the relationship developing between Jane and Rochester. Following her gruesome death (she lay "smashed on the pavement"), Jane's reaction is highlighted at the news of Rochester's survival (when her "blood was running cold").

One indirect effect of Bertha's insane condition is that the would - be bigamist Rochester is duly chastened: he becomes a "sightless block", blinded and crippled by the disastrous fire. Following a period of suffering, however, he experiences cleansing and purgation. Dickens, however, did not use such a crazed figure as Bertha, either as a model for evoking terror, mystery and suspense, or as a means of indirectly effecting purgation. Given his strongly held (though somewhat inconsistent) views about the portrayal of hereditary insanity, and its effect upon his readership, it is not surprising that his creation of such self-imprisoned figures as Miss Havisham are in a very different mould.

97. In this tale, published as a novel (London: Simpson Low, 1862), a character given to romantic musing is supposedly driven to the brink of madness on her wedding day. The poor quality of Bulwer Lytton's writing is illustrated in Lilian Ashleigh's Ophelia - like babblings: "Hush! you do not know my name. I will whisper it. Soft! - my name is Nightshade ... Hist! What are those bells?" (p. 178).

98. Russell Brain, Some Reflections on Genius and Other Essays (London: Pitman Medical Publishing, 1960), p. 133.

Chapter Four

"Inconsequent foolishness"? Dickens's Personal Attitude Towards Madness

"Inconsequent foolishness is lunacy, I suppose?" said the Hermit.
"I suppose it is very like it", answered Mr Traveller...
"There is little wisdom in knowing that every man must be up and doing, and that all mankind are dependent on one another".
("Tom Tiddler's Ground" (Christmas Edition, All the Year Round, 1861)).

Dickens, while aware of medical debate about the treatment of insanity, and acquainted with a variety of literature in which this subject was portrayed, tended to adopt a broadly moral framework when depicting the theme of madness, particularly in his early novels, as will become evident in the chapters which follow. To what extent, we may enquire, was that framework drawn from his own observation of and understanding of insanity? This chapter will highlight Dickens's personal attitude towards aspects of the condition, evident in his writing about four specific issues relating to his own experience: his visits to various asylums; his attempts to mesmerise a woman suffering great mental agitation; his editorial policy towards articles describing the subject of insanity; his visit to a renowned, crazed individual. It will become apparent from the discussion which follows that the tone of Dickens's writing when expressing his viewpoint about these issues, underscores the nature of his understanding about the moral aspects relating to the cause and treatment of insanity:

that inconsequent foolishness is "very like" lunacy, and that "every man must be up and doing" (ibid).

Dickens gained first-hand experience of ways in which insanity was treated when visiting several asylums during his lifetime. His letters provide evidence of his plans to visit Bedlam and observations of New York's "ill-managed lunatic asylum",[2] described in his American Notes. His criticisms of this American institution provide insight into his general attitudes towards the care of the insane (as we have observed in chapter 1). Although noting the "handsome" appearance of New York's asylum, he remarked that everything in it had a lounging, listless, madhouse air, which was "very painful":[3] it clearly lacked a sense of purposeful activity, and also the neatness, order and cleanliness which were "passionate concerns of Dickens".[4] His writing indicates that he was unimpressed by the lack of care shown in decorating this asylum.[5] His description of patients in the institution underlines their miserable, disorderly appearance and behaviour:

> The moping idiot, lowering down with long dishevelled hair; the gibbering maniac, with his hideous laugh and pointed finger; the vacant eye, the fierce wild face, the gloomy picking of the hands and lips, and munching of the nails: there they were all, without disguise, in naked ugliness and horror.

stereotypical portraits reminiscent of some pictorial illustrations of insanity (see plate 3). This visit proved to be the catalyst for one of Dickens's most clearly defined statements about the cause of insanity which he described as a blight upon frail human nature, "the most dreadful visitation to which our nature is exposed": by contrast Dickens himself found great solace in positive action[6] as an antidote to ill-tidings.

Dickens's visit to the State Hospital for the Insane in South Boston provided him with a very different model for the care of the insane. Operating on the principles of non-restraint, this institution adopted a moral approach of "conciliation and kindness" in its treatment, its resident physician advising: "Evince a desire to show some confidence, and repose some trust, even in mad people". Instead of portraying different types of insanity with the broad brush strokes of his description of New York's asylum,

Dickens focuses on the many different occupations of inmates at Boston, observed as they work, read or play at skittles. That Dickens clearly admires the "highly beneficial influence" and "graceful" and "handsome" appearance of the physician's wife and her party in the asylum is no surprise, for he describes their calmness, order and self-respect.[8] He clearly states his support for a progressive approach to the treatment of insane patients, arguing that moral restraint is "a hundred times more efficacious than all the strait-waistcoats, fetters, and hand-cuffs, that ignorance, prejudice, and cruelty have manufactured since the creation of the world." Dickens's belief that order, cleanliness, useful occupation and discipline are key issues in caring for the insane was demonstrated in his portrayal of Aunt Betsey's treatment of the crazed Mr Dick in David Copperfield.[9]

In the course of Dickens's extensive travels, he had also visited an asylum at Massachusetts,[10] the Glasgow Royal Lunatic Asylum, and St. Luke's hospital in 1851, and again in 1858. "A Curious Dance Round a Curious Tree", published in Household Words (17 January 1852), describes his reaction to a seasonal festivity to which he had been invited at St. Luke's, also underlining the nature of his viewpoint about caring for the insane. This article, written in collaboration with W.H. Wills[13] describes the practice of inviting a celebrity to a ball at an asylum which was not uncommon in the nineteenth century.[14] For at least one of Dickens's contemporaries, "the announcement of a ball in Bedlam" seemed "almost as much an anomaly as a fancy fair in Pentonville Penitentiary".[15] An article in the Quarterly Review recorded the impressions of another writer at such a ball,[16] while this subject was also explored in some contemporary art (see plate 9). It is significant that in Katharine Drake's illustration of a "Lunatics' Ball", in 1848, the word "Harmony" is depicted in large letters above the fireplace - an apparent attempt to convey a sense of order for the benefit of the mentally disordered participants. Dickens's "A Curious Dance", while providing a detailed description of his observations, reiterates the viewpoint earlier expressed concerning the care of the insane, with a characteristically emphatic conclusion which undergirds

his philosophy: "Nonetheless, reader, if you can do a little in any good direction - do it. It will be much, some day", a theme reverberating throughout Dickens's novels.

Dickens's "A Curious Dance" provides a well-structured exploration of the way in which a visitor reacts at the scene of a ball in an asylum. Here, Dickens contrasts contemporary practices with earlier, more inhumane treatment of the deranged. Highlighting the need for future improvements, he characteristically focuses on the importance of individual effort and charity, rather than upon any radical appraisal of the use and abuse of contemporary asylums. This article illuminates Dickens's awareness of some earlier practices: he ironically refers to practices of eighteenth-century mad-doctors as their "monomania", while his knowledge of Haslam's work is evident in his description of this "amiable practitioner" who had devised the means of force-feeding by use of a "flat oval ring, with a handle to it" (see plate 6).

For Dickens, the drab appearance of St. Luke's asylum contrasts with lively street scenes (evoked by the associations of "flaming gas-lights, oranges, oysters, paper lanterns, butchers and grocers... omnibuses rattling by... street beggars, and street music"): the asylum is noted for its "Dead silence". He evocatively describes the "busy ripple of sane life" which "came murmuring on from far away, and broke against the blank walls of the Madhouse", like a "sea upon a desert shore".

Inside the asylum, having imaginatively tried to speculate about the reaction of new inmates, Dickens makes some general observations. Women inmates, he notes, tend to be taciturn, with the notable exception of one figure (described with impressionistic brilliance), "sewing a mad sort of seam, and scolding some imaginary person". Yet, although the narrator remarks that taciturnity is a "symptom of nearly every kind of mania, unless under pressure of excitement", this is rarely a trait in Dickens's manic creations. Figures such as Miss Flite tend to express their inner turmoil verbally. The "Utter vacuity" of the scene where patients are "silently looking at the ground" (a sense of emptiness recently echoed by Elizabeth Jennings's "A Mental Hospital Sitting Room" (Selected Poems, p. 96)), is contrasted by the business and "earnestness" of patients occupied in a workroom. Victorian attitudes towards earnestness have been described by

Walter Houghton in The Victorian Frame of Mind (chapter 10). In Dickens's novels, the occupations of his deranged characters rarely prove of restorative or therapeutic value, illustrated by the fairly inactive model of Miss Havisham (see below, p. 150), while the example of Dr Manette proves a striking exception.

Dickens further notes that female servants are "more frequently afflicted with lunacy than any other class of persons". In Anthony Master's Bedlam (pp. 196-7), it is observed that a list of patients at Bedlam during the latter half of the nineteenth century provides evidence that daughters of tradesmen outnumbered "females in servitude" in at least one contemporary institution, and records that there were more female patients than males in Bethlem, during this period. Dickens's narrative describes the activities of men in the asylum, while the behaviour of one patient is finely observed, "deriving intense gratification from the motion of his fingers as he played with them in the air", - a detail which had been evident in Dickens's portrayal of Barnaby Rudge, before Dickens is summoned to the ball itself. He notes that the diverse and singular group of individuals observed are typical of their kind, "the patients usually to be found in all such asylums, among the dancers", the "brisk, vain, pippin-faced little old lady, in a fantastic cap... the old-young woman, with the dishevelled long.. hair... the vacantly laughing girl... the sturdy bull-necked thick-set little fellow who had tried to get away last week; the wry-faced tailor, formerly suicidal... the suspicious patient with a countenance of gloom... the man of happy silliness, pleased with everything." In his novels, however, he did not tend to typify his mad creations in this way, as will be seen.

Dickens further makes use of contrast in this article, firstly to highlight lack of physical restraint in the treatment of such patients ("But the only chain that made any clatter was Ladies' Chain, and there was no straiter waistcoat in company than the polka-garment of the old young woman"), and, secondly to portray the matron as a "star in a dark spot." He describes this figure "shining everywhere" with "clear head and strong heart", treating the patients as "her afflicted children". Thirdly, Dickens observes with insight the patient who is the "favourite of the house", at once "so childish

and so dreadfully un-childlike", noting that it would have been preferable if this giggling, chuckling character "had charged at the tree like a Bull". Dickens notably takes the view that people working in such a place as St. Luke's will find their reward "in the substitution of humanity for brutality, kindness for maltreatment, peace for raging fury", his concluding remarks (about doing "a little in any good direction") reaffirming the sentiments of his earlier letter of 2 March 1845: "No philosophy will bear these dreadful things, or make a moment's head against them, but the practical one of doing all the good we can, in thought and deed".

A year after this visit to St. Luke's, Dickens was to write persuading his reading public that the needs of those members of society classed as idiots, should be met in appropriate institutions. "Idiots", an article written in collaboration with W.H. Wills,[18] appeared on 4 June, 1853 in Household Words, inspired by Dickens's visit to Park House Asylum for Idiots in Highgate (see Letters, VII, 63). He was clearly impressed by this institution (founded by Dr John Conolly), noting that such establishments deserved "encouragement and support", and expressing the opinion that provision should be made for pauper idiots, at the public expense. Having aroused the reader's curiosity by highlighting the potentially disruptive effects of idiocy[19] in the first sections of this article, its second section illuminates the way in which order has effectively been established in the institutional life[20] within this "fine detached house", which is "beautifully" situated. This is an article in which Dickens overtly sets out to influence public attitudes towards the treatment of one sector of the mentally deranged, a subject drawn to his attention through this visit. He blames people who are "so desperately careful to receive no uncomfortable emotions from sad realities... the incarnation of the demon selfishness" for the "putting away of these unfortunates in past years", observing that institutions such as the Park House Asylum are "truly humane". Dickens's care in the composition of the article, in which he campaigns for the humane treatment of idiots, is evident in its witty conclusion, with its skilful alteration of lines from Macbeth, designed to illuminate the potential of the mentally deranged:

A tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound instruction,

Signifying something.

In his novel-writing, Dickens takes up this theme when exploring the potential in his characterisation of such figures as Mr Dick, as will be seen in chapter 6.

Besides being aware of contemporary debate about the care and treatment of insanity,[21] Dickens also took a personal interest in the welfare of at least one individual known by him to be suffering from a debilitating mental condition. He sympathised with the plight of Mme de la Rue, the wife of a Swiss banker, whom he met in Genoa in 1844, and attempted, over several years, to treat her "sad disorder"[22] by means of mesmerism.[23] He claimed that he had exercised mesmeric powers on Catherine Dickens, magnetizing her "into hysterics, and then into the magnetic sleep,"[24] and waking her "with perfect ease". He believed that mesmerism would help treat Mme de la Rue's condition, remarking that he had "the truest interest in her, and her sufferings".[25] It has been noted that Dickens devoted considerable time and attention to Mme de la Rue, who suffered from convulsions, distortions of the limbs, aching headaches, insomnia, and other neurasthenic symptoms.[26]

He described the nature of Mme de la Rue's mental anguish in a letter to Le Fanu (24 November, 1869 (Nonesuch Letters, III, 752-753)). According to Dickens, Mme de la Rue had disclosed that she had long felt "pursued by myriads of bloody phantoms of the most frightful aspect, and that, after becoming paler, they had all veiled their faces". Dickens notes that "from that time... every day I magnetized her; sometimes under olive trees, sometimes in vineyards, sometimes in the travelling carriage, sometimes at wayside inns", observing that on one occasion, she had adopted a foetal position, "rolled into an apparently impossible ball", when he was only able to locate the position of her head "by following her long hair to its source".

It is evident that Dickens perceived that Mme de la Rue was a victim of the nervous complaint upsetting her.He believed that he was enabling Mme de la Rue to combat the "Phantom" which was troubling her, by means of such mesmerism. We can only

speculate whether he would have given such attention to a male who was similarly distressed, for the potential sexual basis of the power relationship between a male operator and a female subject in Victorian mesmerism has been noted by Kaplan (p. 82). It is not surprising that Dickens was finally forced to convey Catherine's unhappiness about his arrangements for treatment to the de la Rues. [27] Over and above all, Dickens's involvement in treating Mme de la Rue demonstrates his personal belief in the ability of individuals to effect change: a resonant theme, as we have noted, in his writing.

Dickens's sensitivity about the welfare of the mentally incapacitated is further illustrated for us by his role as editor of Household Words from 1850. Handbills announcing the arrival of this twopenny miscellany had advertised its purpose as "Instruction and Entertainment", "Entertainment and Instruction" (see Letters, IV, 39), while W.H. Wills remarked that "subjects of an uninviting nature are treated - as a rule - in Household Words in a more playful, ingenious and readable manner than similar subjects have been hitherto presented in other weekly periodicals".[28]

Dickens, as editor, naturally had a keen interest in the sales of this miscellany, a constraint which would clearly have influenced his advice to prospective writers.[29] Amongst its wide range of articles, Household Words contained several contributions which dealt with aspects of the care of the insane. These included an unexceptional description of "A Lunatic Asylum in Palermo"[30] (which seems neither entertaining nor instructive), and a weightier article on "The Treatment of the Insane".[31] It may have been this latter article on which Dickens commented in a way which epitomises his judgement as editor. He found it "a little too dry and didactic for Household Words, and a little too long besides," further noting "Nor am I quite sure that it would be well to give such a Government as ours, a Monopoly in a question of such magnitude, or that I could make that proposal mine",[32] indicating Dickens's concerns about such a centralised system of organisation. Dickens was, however, prepared to publish the article if its author agreed to his terms, observing that "it suggests, and very well puts, considerations of importance, and I am unwilling to reject it if the Author will give me

leave to take some Editorial liberties with it". If left unchanged, however, Dickens makes it clear that he could not "have the pleasure of accepting it".

He later expressed his reservations about another drafted article, which critically examined provision made for the insane in lunatic asylums, lunatic hospitals and licensed houses.[33] Harriet Martineau's "Idiots Again" (published on April 15, 1854), however, happily reflected something of Dickens's own philosophy. Here, Miss Martineau berated unenlightened views about idiocy ("It used to be thought a very religious and beautiful thing (it certainly was the easiest thing) to say that it pleased God to send idiots... to try and discipline their parents by affliction"), describing the grief of such parents as their children fail to develop normally: "Of all the long and weary pains of mind... we know of none so terrible as that of the mother attaining the certainty that her child is an idiot". She notes that "The house that has an idiot in it can never be like any other", and argues that establishments for idiots are a necessity. She does not, however, underestimate the abilities of idiots, a viewpoint shared by Dickens, as we have noted, observing that "There are flashes of faculty now and then in the midst of the twilight of idiot existence", referring to individuals she has known.

In her concluding paragraph, Miss Martineau argues, "It is for us to act upon the medium view sanctioned alike by science and morals... neither to cast out our idiots... nor to worship them... Our business is... to reduce the number of idiots.. by attending to the conditions of sound life and health... and... by trying to make... the best of such faculties as these imperfect beings possess". Her final sentence reiterates Dickens's own sentiments: "Happily, there are now institutions, by aiding which any of us may do something".

However, although insanity was a subject receiving varied treatment in a range of articles,[34] it is significant that one item never to be published in Household Words was a story dealing with the theme of hereditary madness. Dickens had written a letter to W.H. Wills about this very subject when commenting about Wilkie Collins's submission of an article dealing with this theme. In the letter (8 February, 1853),[35] Dickens did not so much express concern about the "feelings of the public in general" as "a

consideration for those numerous families in which there is such a taint", noting: "The force of my objection lies in that range of the subject only".

He declined to accept "Gilbert Massenger", a work written by Holme Lee (the pen name of Miss Harriet Parr) for similar reasons, despite the fact that he said he had felt "very much affected" by the tale, which was "more painfully pathetic than anything I have read for I know not how long".[36] While observing of its length that he could not in "conscience recommend the writer to cut the story down in any material degree,"[37] he also expressed concern about the "nature of the idea on which it turns": its treatment of hereditary madness. Dickens further observed:

> So many unhappy people are, by no fault of their own, linked to a similar terrible possibility - or even probability - that I am afraid it might cause prodigious unhappiness, if we could address it to our large audience. I shrink from the responsibility of awakening so much slumbering fear and despair.

When writing to Harriet Parr, three weeks later, he made some encouraging remarks about her work,[38] but outlined the inherent problems in handling such a theme. He expressed doubt whether he could have "prevailed upon" himself to do so, further remarking that the length of the story "rendered it unavailable" in any case.

It has, however, been remarked that there is a "smack of dishonesty"[39] about Dickens's editorial policy for Household Words, as Dickens seems to have been "operating with a double standard, one for his own serious work... and another for magazine copy to gain mass circulation". Whilst stating his concern about the influence of "Gilbert Massenger" on the reader, Dickens would have been keenly aware of its potentially disastrous effects upon sales of Household Words. It is noted that, in his own fiction, "Dickens himself displays ambiguity" on "this matter of causing prodigious unhappiness": although his "Madman's Manuscript" in Pickwick Papers touches on the theme of hereditary madness, it is explained in the tale's postscript that the suffering of the character concerned has been caused by his own immorality. In this example, "the reader had two thrills for the price of one; the shocking horror of the madness, and the prim gratification that in fact it was all the man's own fault" (Easson, p. 106).

Dickens's response to Miss Parr's submission illuminates his determination that the magazine's promise of "Entertainment and Instruction" should be fulfilled at all costs.

Dickens's encounters with Mme de la Rue, together with his editorial stand concerning the subject of insanity, suggest that he took a broadly sympathetic attitude towards the plight of the mentally afflicted.[40] His encounter with one crazed character, however, proved an exception. During the summer of 1861, Dickens visited James Lucas,[41] a renowned hermit (living near Stevenage in Hertfordshire), accompanied by Lord Orford, Mr Arthur Helps,[42] his eldest daughter and sister-in-law: the visit was clearly not a private one. Dickens's observations about this famous character, popularly known as "Mad Lucas"[43] were later woven into a piece of his writing, published in All The Year Round, according to Forster.[44] In "Tom Tiddler's Ground", the figure of Lucas provided Dickens with a model for his Mr Mopes, in a highly moral tale, which demonstrates ways in which the mad hermit is judged to be wanting in both effort and industry.[45] Far from sympathising with the hermit's plight, Dickens adopts a critical attitude towards this "sluggard" who inhabits a "shameful" place, and who is described as a "slothful, unsavoury, nasty reversal of the laws of human nature", living a "highly absurd and highly indecent life".[46] In "Tom Tiddler's Ground", Dickens appeals to the indignation of his audience,[47] for Mopes is both lazy and irresponsible, traits characterising a range of Dickens's villains, and at complete odds with Dickens's own personal belief in the value of effort and industry.

Although a modern psychiatrist might describe Lucas's condition as paranoid schizophrenia,[48] neither Dickens, nor the Lunacy Commissioners, may have fully appreciated the nature of Lucas's mental condition, though one of Dickens's contemporaries expressed a more sympathetic attitude towards Lucas. Edward Copping, interviewing the hermit for London Society in 1862, noted that Lucas's conversation could alternate between rationality and irrationality. He seems to have recognised Lucas's mental instability, querying whether the hermit suffered from "some singular form of madness" (ibid., p. 56), and noting that Lucas's "rich gifts" are "rendered

profitless".[49] In contrast to Dickens, Copping remarks that "whether the man would delude others, or is himself deluded, he is equally worthy of our pity". While Copping's article was written for a different purpose from Dickens's tale, he has clearly adopted a more sympathetic attitude towards Lucas. Nonetheless, although Dickens's attitude towards this figure of Mr Mopes may not have been generally representative of his approach to the insane people he met, "Tom Tiddler's Ground" does provide a striking example of the values he held, of "doing all the good we can, in thought and deed".

Dickens's comment in "Tom Tiddler's Ground" that "every man must be up and doing", and that all mankind are "dependent on one another" conveys the significance, for Dickens, of both individual action and social interdependence, underlined too by remarks he made when visiting an asylum. His own attempt to "do a little in any good direction", evident in his efforts at treating the troubled Mme de la Rue, was an experiment not without its implications for his own marriage, as we have noted.

While Dickens's novel-writing reflects his experimentation in portraying aspects of insanity, these two key issues (of individual action and social interdependence) evident in accounts of Dickens's first hand observations concerning insanity, are explored in a range of his novels too. That his early novels heavily emphasize an interconnection between insanity and various forms of moral failure, will be established in the chapter which follows. Yet through his creation of the mentally incapacitated Barnaby Rudge, Dickens more subtly illuminates the far-reaching effects of the failure of individuals and of society at large, to quench the activities of another mentally unstable figure, Lord George Gordon, at an early stage in his campaign. Dickens skilfully highlights the extent to which this character could be manipulated (see below, p. 123).

By contrast, it will become apparent in chapter 6, that Dickens portrays in <u>David Copperfield</u>'s Mr Dick, a victim of circumstances who performs the function of a catalyst in the novel, despite his mental incapacity. Mr Dick is a character who succeeds in effecting a beneficial change in the lives of other characters - a fine illustration of a figure who may be mentally incapacitated, but is nonetheless "up and

doing" on occasion. In chapter 7, it will be seen that, in Dr Manette, Dickens depicts a man who becomes incapacitated during periods of mental infirmity. As a character trapped by circumstances beyond his control, Dr Manette ultimately proves unable to succeed in rescuing his family from danger; it is the heroic sacrifice of Carton which enables them to escape death in A Tale of Two Cities. As Dickens traces the ways of Providence in the shaping and purpose of events in this novel, Sydney Carton's part in its plot inversely demonstrates not only the effects of being "up and doing", but of laying down his life, in sacrifice.

An examination of Dickens's novels will reveal that he was highly selective when drawing up on his first-hand observations of insanity. While madness was evidently a subject of topical interest in the period in which Dickens was writing, we have noted that he made few direct references to contemporary practices in its treatment. It will, however, become evident that his novels reflected a range of literary traditions in their varied treatment of the subject of madness. The three following chapters will highlight the ways in which, in both the design and details of his novels, Dickens's portrayal of insanity shifted in its emphasis as he matured as a novelist. In chapter 5, Dickens's treatment of madness and moral failing in his early fiction will be examined in Sketches by Boz, Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist and Nicholas Nickleby - key examples of writing which exemplify his exploration of insanity at an early point in his career. Chapter 6 explores his experimentation with the effect of madness upon the role of characters who are portrayed as victims and catalysts, in Barnaby Rudge, David Copperfield and Great Expectations. Chapter 7 considers the ways in which Bleak House and Little Dorrit helped to pave the way for his remarkable portrayal of insanity in A Tale of Two Cities, a novel not only marking Dickens's achievement as a novelist in describing the cause and effects of insanity through a variety of narrative forms, but also conveying a reflective interpretation of the ways of Providence.

NOTES

1. See his letters of 17 and 23 June 1836 (Letters, 3, 101).

2. See his letter of 6 March, 1842.

3. American Notes, Chapter 6, p. 140.

4. John Carey, The Violent Effigy: A Study of Dickens' Imagination (London: Faber & Faber, 1973), p. 30. Energy, cheerfulness and industry were important qualities for Dickens.

5. He describes its "bare, dull, dreary" dining room, and its "empty walls", together with his rather shocked reaction to the "terrible crowd" filling the asylum's halls and galleries. He condemns the political rivalry affecting the organisation of such an establishment, and declines the offer of viewing the mechanical restraints used in this asylum.

6. Illustrated in a letter to Forster of 2 March 1845: "No philosophy will bear these dreadful tidings or make a moment's head against them, but the practical one of doing all the good we can, in thought and deed" (Letters, IV, 275).

7. One elderly female is described with Dickens's own distinctive, comic attention to detail. Whilst assuming great dignity "and refinement of manner", this figure wears "as many scraps of finery as Madge Wildfire herself" (illustrating Dickens's knowledge of Scott's novel), her head "strewn with scraps of gauze and cotton and bits of paper" with so many "queer odds and ends stuck all about it, that it looked like a bird's nest". Highlighting the contrast between her assumed and actual appearance (between reality and her crazed imagination), Dickens observes that she was "radiant with imaginary jewels", seen "gracefully" dropping a "very old greasy newspaper": a sense of contrast evident in varying degrees, in a range of crazed characters portrayed by Dickens in his novels, including Barnaby Rudge and Miss Flite.

Dickens seems to endorse the physician's collaboration with this woman's delusions ("This lady is the hostess of this mansion, sir. It belongs to her"), arguing that in moments of sanity, inmates can be startled by contrasting "their own delusion before them in its most incongruous and ridiculous light." Some characters in A Tale of Two Cities similarly collaborate with certain of Dr Manette's delusions, as will be seen in chapter 7).

8. Also, he characteristically admires the way in which patients are entrusted with the tools necessary for their recreation, and the "greatest decorum" displayed by the asylum's sewing society. His love of order is further apparent when Dickens approves of the preparations made at the weekly ball, noting that the proficiency of anyone

wishing to sing "has been previously ascertained", and that the proceedings are carefully timed ("at eight o'clock refreshments are served; and at nine they separate").

9. See below, p. 139. It is significant that in this novel, Mr Dick was nurtured by the care of one spirited individual. Mrs. Rudge, however, was not so successful in providing her son with the consistency of care she would have chosen.

10. Reference to this visit is made in The Times, 25 October, 1842.

11. Described in a letter to Forster (30 December, 1847, Pilgrim, V, 215), and in a speech (see J.K. Fielding (ed), The Speeches of Charles Dickens (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 92).

12. Details of the latter visit with Dr Monro and Dr Alexander Sutherland are described in a letter to Wilkie Collins of 17 January, 1858 (Nonesuch, III, 3).

13. For a brief discussion concerning the authorship of this work, see Harry Stone (ed.) Charles Dickens' Uncollected Writings from "Household Words", 1850-1859, 2 vols: (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 1968, pp. 381-382.

14. See Dickens's letters (Pilgrim, II, 321), referring to the invitation of P.W. Banks to visit an asylum.

15. Illustrated Times, 29 December, 1859.

16. "On the occasion of our visit there were about 200 patients present... In a raised orchestra, five musicians, three of whom were lunatics, soon struck up a merry polka, and immediately the room was alive with dancers... Had the men been differently dressed, it would have been impossible to have guessed that we were in the midst of a company of lunatics, the mere sweepings of parish workhouses; but the prison uniform of sad coloured grey appeared like a jarring note amidst the general harmony of the scene... At nine precisely, although in the midst of a dance, a shrill note is blown, and the entire assembly, like so many Cinderellas, breaks up at once and the company hurry off to their dormitories" (Quarterly Review, 101 (1858-1859), 375-6).

17. Letters, IV, 275.

18. Harry Stone suggests that the nine lengthy paragraphs which provide a weighty preamble to this account of Dickens's visit to Park House Asylum are probably the work of W.H. Wills, and that the concluding paragraphs are written by Dickens (Stone, p. 489). Although Stone provides no evidence for this view, the article does seem to divide into two sections. It outlines the public views of insanity, includes a medical definition and various sketched case histories (some demonstrating the capabilities of idiots), and describes the establishment of asylums for such idiots in some other countries. It then focuses on the establishment of the Park House Asylum.

19. Dickens has highlighted the potentially disruptive influence of idiocy by listing its wide-ranging effects, as graphically reported at the opening of Park House: "'The first gathering of the idiotic family was a spectacle unique in itself, and sufficiently discouraging to the most resolved, and not to be forgotten in after time by any. It was a period of distraction, disorder, and noise of the most unnatural character. Some had defective sight; most had defective or no utterance; most were lame in limb or muscle; and all were of weak or perverted mind. Some had been spoiled, some neglected, and some unconscious and inert. Some were screaming at the top of the voice; some making constant and involuntary noises from nervous irritation; and some, terrified at scorn and ill-treatment, hid themselves in a corner'" (Uncollected Writings from Household Words, pp. 495-496).

20. The narrative describes its "orderly" schoolroom, and young patients occupied in copy-writing, drawing, learning geography and arithmetic, plaiting straw, parading in a military style, and sewing. Dickens's approval is evident in the descriptive tone which conveys the orderliness of this asylum, where "Every room was airy, orderly and cheerful", for example. His use of phrases such as "little fellows" and "capital" gymnasium is reminiscent of his writing elsewhere (see Sylvère Monod's detailed comments on "Dickens' Language and Style in David Copperfield" in Dickens the Novelist, p. 335). Dickens's admiration is illuminated in his descriptions of this institution's pet birds, and of the way in which one of the residents, an idiot woman, is "delighted to be useful", and of its well-prepared food - a significant indicator for Dickens, who mentions its "smoking - hot legs of mutton" (see Barbara Hardy, "Food and Ceremony in Great Expectations", Essays in Criticism, XIII, (1963), 351-363).

21. See above (chapter 2) for discussion about Dickens's awareness of contemporary issues relating to insanity. Dickens owned presentation copies of Dr. John Conolly's Croonian Lectures, delivered at the Royal College of Physicians, 1849, on some of the Forms of Insanity (inscribed "To Charles Dickens Esq., with all regard, from the Author", in 1852). He also possessed copies of Dr. W.C. Hood's Suggestions for the Future Provision of Criminal Lunatics, (1854), and Forbes Winslow's The Incubation of Insanity (Stonehouse, p. 23, p. 62, p. 88, although Stonehouse's catalogue is not, of course, a comprehensive source of Dickens's reading materials). His letter of March 30 1847, in which he "presents his compliments to Dr. Forbes Winslow, and begs to thank him for the very singular and curious document he had the goodness to enclose "(Letters, V, 47), does, however, at least indicate that Dickens had received this document.

Dickens also corresponded with Dr. Hood of Bethlem Hospital (see Nonesuch Letters, II, 872), while he was acquainted too with Dr. John Conolly, and the poet "Barry Cornwall" (B.W. Procter, whose wife was the daughter of Basil Montagu Commissioner for Lunacy from 1832-61, someone also interested in legal matters). Dickens's closest friend and biographer, John Forster, was of course also a Commissioner for Lunacy.

On a more personal level, in Claire Tomalin's The Invisible Woman: The Story of Nelly Ternan and Charles Dickens (London: Viking, 1990), it is noted that although Dickens falsely accused his wife Catherine of suffering from a "mental disorder" (p. 8), he would have indirectly gained knowledge of the results of mental affliction, as Ellen Ternan's father was committed to the Insane Asylum at Bethnal Green: "It was a grim place, and treatment of those with General Paralysis of the Insane - this was the diagnosis of Ternan's condition - was necessarily dreadful and humiliating" (p. 45). Tomalin observes that Mr. Ternan's condition was probably caused by syphilis, contracted during his bachelor days, and that his wife would have incurred costs of £3-£5 per week for his asylum fees. The moral consequences of this individual's actions were evident in its effects upon his family, as Tomalin demonstrates.

Besides being aware of many central issues concerning insanity with which some medical writers were preoccupied, Dickens also recognised the practical implications for families with insane members. This is evident from his letter to Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, of 11 May 1849, (Letters, V, 537-538), in which he refers to one writer's attempts to defray the cost of keeping a lunatic brother by republishing a poem.

22. See his letter to Emile de la Rue of 26 December, 1844 (Letters, IV, 243).

23. See Fred Kaplan, Dickens and Mesmerism: The Hidden Springs of Fiction, (Princeton University Press, 1975), for a study examining Dickens's interest in this subject.

24. Letters, III, 180.

25. Letters, IV, 243.

26. Kaplan, p. 77.

27. See Mr and Mrs Charles Dickens. His Letters to Her, pp. 227-9. See also reference to this event in Pilgrim Letters, VII, 224.

28. An observation made on October 17, 1851, noted in R.C. Lehman (ed): Charles Dickens as Editor, p. 74. Also quoted by Anne Lohrli in Household Words. A Weekly Journal 1850-1859 Conducted by Charles Dickens (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), p. 10.

29. Thus, for example, in his letter to W.H. Wills of 24 September, 1858 (Nonesuch Letters, III, 58) he warned that nothing in Wilkie Collins's article "Highly Proper" should be "sweeping and unnecessarily offensive to the middle class".

30. This account, written by Miss Ross, was published on November 9, 1850, in which she describes her visit to a converted villa in Italy, claiming that one insane resident (employed in repeatedly carrying faggots from the cellar to the loft and back), was cured of "morbid insanity" after a year.

31. There were two articles with this title (Household Words, III, 572 (6 Sep, 51), and V, 270 (5 June, 52)). The latter was probably written by Dr. Richard Oliver, Superintendent of Salop and Montgomery Counties Lunatic Asylum, and compares provision in county lunatic asylums with accommodation for the insane in licensed houses over which there is a lack of legislative control.

32. Letters, VI, 454-455.

33. In his letter to John Hills (of February 28, 1852), he remarked that the paper on the treatment of the insane was "far too long", "too didactic", and, in places circumlocutory, although prefacing his comments with an explanation that "The remarks I am about to make... do not apply to its abstract merits or demerits, but simply to its suitability to the pages of my Journal "(Letters, VI, 610). Dickens notes that, if "printed in its present form it would obtain but few readers out of a very large audience and would be positively injurious to the number in which it appeared." He recommends that this article should be condensed, otherwise declining to publish it. Presumably the article which appeared in Household Words, suggesting that the insane should be cared for by the State, had been revised before publication.

34. On November 25, 1854, John Copper's "During Her Majesty's Pleasure" examined legislation relating to insane criminals, an article to which W.H. Wills responded in the chip "Criminal Lunatics" (on December 23, 1854), while in "Mad Dancing" (on October 4, 1856), Louisa Stuart Costello described the antics of a "frantic mob of dancers" during Belgian and French festivals. In "A Touching (and Touched) Character", Andrew Scobles described a madman in an article published on October 24, 1859, while "Things Within Dr. Conolly's Remembrance" by J. Henry Morley (November 28, 1857), contrasted the inhumane treatment of insane people in some establishments with the more progressive attitude adopted in the Retreat. This article noted that the system of non-restraint was gaining in popularity.

On May 15, 1858, John Hollingshead produced the chip entitled "How to make a Madman", noting ways in which mistaken identity and false accusation can lead to madness, while a year later, on April 2, 1859, Henry Morley reviewed John Bucknill's "Reports of Lunatic Asylums" in The Journal of Mental Science. He came to the conclusion that "insanity in its first stage... is in very many cases curable; that a visit of a few weeks to a perfectly well-regulated asylum... will often suffice to establish a cure". Finally, a rather less weighty contribution by John Lang, entitled "A Bad Name",

was to describe the predicament of an author whose behaviour suggested to local people that he was on the brink of madness, until his sanity was established by a Doctor (in an article published on April 16, 1859).

35. Letters, VII, 23.

36. See his letter of July 22, 1855 to W.H. Wills (Letters, VII, 680-81).

37. Letters, VII, 680-681.

38. He noted: "I read your tale with the strongest emotion, and with a very exalted admiration of the great power displayed in it" (14 August, 1855 Letters, VII, 687-8).

39. Angus Easson, "Dickens, Household Words, and a Double Standard", Dickensian, 60, (1964), 104.

40. Evident from his descriptions of asylums he visited. He did however, show his sense of personal rage with Richard Dunn over the persecution of Miss Coutts (Letters, II, 207).

41. Dickens refers to this visit in a letter of 27 March 1862 (Nonesuch Letters, III, 290).

42. Later to be the Clerk to the Privy Council.

43. See Richard Whitmore, Mad Lucas: The Strange Story of Victorian England's Most Famous Hermit(Hitchin, Herts: North Hertfordshire District Council, 1983), for one account of a description of his life.

44. Forster's Life, Book VIII, V, 673.

45. Published in the Christmas Edition of All the Year Round, 1861. Here a Hermit is visited by a Traveller who observes: "according to Eternal Providence, that we must arise and wash our faces and do our gregarious work and act and re-act on one another, leaving only the idiot and the palsied to sit blinking in the corner". The Traveller clearly adopts a strident attitude towards the Hermit in this tale: perhaps because Mad Lucas was a character who was never certified insane. The Commissioners of Lunacy had, in August 1851, taken the decision that there was insufficient evidence for Lucas to be certified insane (Whitmore, p. 30), and even after Dickens's death, Forster himself believed that Lucas was "singularly acute and without the least trace of aberration of intellect" (ibid., p. 62). Although reports suggest that this hermit's behaviour was eccentric in the extreme, the Commissioners were unwilling to grant the request of Lucas's relatives for his certification (a sharp contrast to the literary portrayal of this theme in some sensation novels (see above, p. 37)).

46. There are, however, some differences between details of Dickens's visit to Lucas and his account in this tale as, for example, Mr Traveller meets Mr Mopes on his own.

47. Exemplified when he asks: "What is a place in this obscene state of dilapidation but a Nuisance? What is a man in your obscene state of dilapidation but a Nuisance? ... in the last and lowest degree inconsequent foolishness and weakness".

48. According to Richard Whitmore, a senior psychiatrist in Hertfordshire has based this diagnosis on Dr. Daniel Hack Tuke's paper of 1874, The Hermit of Redcoat Green (Mad Lucas, p. 22). Evidence suggests that Lucas showed the capacity to be logical and yet at the same time insane.

49. He contrasts Lucas's potential abilities, as a man who is "still young", "well-educated", with a "fair competence"; a character who could be "dignified, honourable and useful", with his wretched state as he is seen "huddled up in a blanket, grovelling in a noisome kitchen", and "exhibiting himself as a curiosity" (see plate 8).

Chapter Five

Madness and Moral Failure: Dickens's Early Fiction

In his early fiction, Dickens commonly portrayed insanity as the consequence of villainy and of various forms of moral failure, using a range of dramatic devices drawn from farce, comedy, melodrama and the Gothic tradition. As he matured, it will be seen that he experimented with other uses of the theme, but in the 1830s, his treatment of madness was often (although not exclusively) characterised by a fairly crude, rough-hewn dramatic representation which indirectly highlights the significance of certain moral values, including family loyalty and duty. Dickens's early portrayal of madness in Sketches by Boz, Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist and Nicholas Nickleby starkly illustrates the effects of various forms of mismanagement, drunkenness, selfishness, and criminal activity (also describing a murderer's tormented reaction to his crime) amongst other vices, though Dickens briefly depicts too one form of insanity which is the result of a hereditary condition. This chapter will highlight the means by which he chose to portray madness as one effect of moral failure, at the beginning of his writing career. While he depicted a range of causes of insanity (including mismanagement), exploring too its effect as a consequence of the actions of other people, it will become apparent that Dickens was also aware of the comic potential of insanity and its use in capturing his readers' interest, at an early stage in his career as an author.

Sketches by Boz, Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist and Nicholas Nickleby were all written during the 1830s, and it has been widely remarked that Dickens was serving his

literary apprenticeship when producing at least the first of these writings.[1] Although this "uneven, imperfect collection" of his writing[2] was not written as a novel, it marked an important stage in the development of Dickens's literary career, aptly compared to a "dress rehearsal" before the real "opening night" of the Dickensian work (Monod, p. 50). While foreshadowing aspects of his later works, the Sketches (subtitled as "Illustrative of Everyday Life and Everyday People"), contain a number of examples of Dickens's early treatment of insanity.

Sketches by Boz was published on February 7th, 1836, on Dickens's twenty fourth birthday, although most of these sketches had earlier appeared in the Monthly Magazine, the Morning Chronicle and the Evening Chronicle. Dickens divided his work into four broad sections subtitled "Our Parish", "Scenes", "Characters" and Tales", but did not confine the material he used to the subtitles he had chosen, perhaps using them as working titles which he later failed to revise. While these sketches may lack one coherent, unifying narrative viewpoint,[3] their strength lies in Dickens's ability to evoke vivid observed and imagined scenes of life in London.

Forster described this work as a "picture of every-day London at its best and worst, in its humours and enjoyments, as well as its sufferings and sins" (I, V), though at least one writer has observed that "To the level of Sketches by Boz he never afterwards descended".[4] Yet the Sketches are particularly interesting because of the way in which Dickens has interwoven themes of poverty and insanity, prefiguring his exploration of the malevolent aspects of city life and its potentially blighting consequences in his later novels.

In the inset tales of the Pickwick Papers, the theme of insanity (which had reflected brief glimpses of the dark underside of life in the Sketches) resurfaced in Dickens's first novel, published between 1836-7. Forster admired "The charm of its gaiety and good humour, its inexhaustible fun, its riotous overflow of animal spirits, its brightness and keenness of observation", and (rather vaguely), the "incomparable ease of its many varieties of enjoyment" (Life, 2, I), although noting that the Pickwick Papers was a work comprised of "a series of sketches, without the pretence to such

interest as attends a well-constructed story". While Dickens himself admitted the haphazard origin of this novel in its preface, at least one critic has noted how quickly Dickens set about establishing his artistic authority over the direction the book was to take, finding evidence of his "deliberate artistic integrity" and "conscious sense of responsibility."[5] This novel, taking the form of a loosely structured series of events described in the Picaresque tradition, begins rather shakily with its rather dull first chapter, although later developing a stronger sense of plot and purpose.[6] In his preface to the 1837 edition, Dickens had stated that it was his intention "to place before the reader a constant succession of characters and incidents". Its treatment of insanity provides a marked contrast with comical scenes portrayed in this novel: Dickens noted in Pickwick's closing chapter that "There are dark shadows on the earth, but its lights are stronger in contrast".[7] Such shades of darkness are particularly evident in Pickwick's sombre, interpolated tales (as will be seen) and their vivid treatment of insanity.

Before Dickens had completed Pickwick, he had begun work on Oliver Twist, published in sixteen page instalments each month in Bentley's Miscellany over a period of twenty-seven months, from February 1837 until April 1839.[8] Whilst writing Oliver Twist, he also began to compose his next novel, Nicholas Nickleby, and its first number was published on April 1st, 1838. Yet although Oliver Twist was written in this way between the composition of two other novels, its texture and tonal quality was much darker than either Pickwick or Nickleby in conveying an atmosphere of fear and desperation. Its overall mood has been described as "one long, oppressive nightmare",[9] although Forster quaintly admired the novel's precision in the "art of copying from nature as it really exists in the common walks" (II, III). Oliver Twist is perhaps more memorable for its Gothic elements,[10] reminiscent of writing by "Monk" Lewis or Maturin, (see above, chapter 3). Amidst the forbidding atmosphere of this work, Dickens's thematic treatment of insanity is woven into an altogether darker tapestry.

Madness was to be a surprisingly pervasive theme in one of Dickens's most buoyant early novels, Nicholas Nickleby, published from April 1838 until October 1839, and

originally entitled The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby, Containing a Faithful Account of the Fortunes, Misfortunes, Uprisings, Downfallings, and Complete Career of the Nickleby Family.[11] Forster admired this novel's construction, commenting that "All that had given Pickwick its vast popularity, the overflowing mirth, hearty exuberance of humour, and genial kindliness of satire, has here the advantage of a better laid design" (II, IV). The warm, optimistic tone of Nicholas Nickleby strongly contrasts with that of its predecessor, although both novels are, like other early works, "unabashedly melodramatic in mode".[12] Nickleby is undoubtedly a novel of marked contrasts, Dickens's treatment of madness casting light on one of its central themes - namely that appearances can prove deceptive - a theme later explored elsewhere, and highlighted for us by Miss Mowcher: "What a world of gammon and spinnage it is, though, ain't it!" and "What a refreshing set of humbugs we are" (David Copperfield, (p. 389)).

Dickens's exploration of madness as moral failure, a subject explored in Old Testament writings and elsewhere, as we have noted, was a recurrent theme in Sketches by Boz, Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist and Nicholas Nickleby, despite the wide range of subjects with which they dealt. In these early examples of his fiction, he portrayed the effects of various forms of mismanagement, exemplified in his Sketches where he has briefly depicted the mental collapse of one impoverished figure "with small earnings and a large family" to highlight the shortcomings of Parish provision in "Our Parish". In this lightly sketched tale, Dickens uses madness as a device to illustrate the ultimate fate of one unnamed representative of the poor as he deteriorates into a harmless, babbling idiot in the parish asylum, because of the inadequacies in the Parish welfare system, with its "Excellent institutions and gentle, kind-hearted men". Dickens was, evidently, keenly aware of the destructive effects of urban poverty at an early stage in his writing career[13]: while some of his Sketches may celebrate the teeming variety of urban life, others prefigure the way in which he later explored the forbidding aspects of urban existence and its warping effects upon individuals - a subject of public concern during

the nineteenth century.[14] His use of insanity highlighted the nature of these warping effects. In depicting a range of individuals whose mental infirmities are intimately connected with their experience of city dwelling, Dickens highlights its destructive potential in his early fiction. His representation, in Oliver Twist, of a widower's distracted state of mind at Oliver's initiatory experience of "Going to a Funeral for the First Time" (ch. 5) is, for example, intertwined with his portrayal of urban squalor. Here, Dickens's description of city life is overtly used to convey social comment. His intentions are clearly expressed in the novel's preface: "I have yet to learn that a lesson of the purest good may not be drawn from the vilest evil", his use of the "very dregs of life" serving the purpose of a moral, showing "in little Oliver, the principle of Good surviving through every adverse circumstance" (p. 33). In this novel, designed to highlight the sufferings and plight of the poor, Dickens expresses sustained concern about the effects of a slum environment (as Norris Pope has noted in Dickens and Charity, (p. 159)). Hence, Dickens sets the scene of a pauper woman's death in a "dirty and miserable" part of town which is decaying and mouldering, where the "kennel was stagnant and filthy"), while its human inhabitants exist like its local vermin: "The very rats, which here and there lay putrefying in its rottenness, were hideous with famine" (p. 81). The similarity is underscored by the rat-like appearance of an elderly couple seated in a cold room by an empty hearth - the man with thin, pale face, grizzly hair and bloodshot eyes, the old woman with wrinkled face, teeth protruding over her underlip, and "bright and piercing" eyes.

Dickens's means of portraying the emotional reaction of the widower and his mother indicates his early fascination with theatrical tradition, as we have noted:

> "Keep back! Damn you, keep back, if you've a life to lose".... "Ah!" said the man, bursting into tears, and sinking on his knees at the feet of the dead woman; "kneel down, kneel down - kneel round her, every one of you, and mark my words! I say she was starved to death" (p. 82).

While this speech is being delivered, Dickens's interest in theatre is also evident when he provides dramatic visual interest as the undertaker measures the body. The

widower is used as a narrator to describe circumstances surrounding his wife's death, while Dickens portrays the form of the widower's mental collapse as a stereotypical reaction to shock and grief expressed elsewhere, as we have observed, in Gothic and sensation literature:

> He twined his hands in his hair; and, with a loud scream, rolled grovelling upon the floor, his eyes fixed, and the foam covering his lips (p. 82).

Although in "A Madman's Manuscript", Dickens had earlier described a crazed figure rolling about on the floor and tearing his hair, this creation had been wildly conveying a sense of pleasure, whereas, by contrast, the widower's reaction is dramatically used to convey his grief (expressed as a seizure or fit).

The response of the crazed, selfish, anti-mother figure when discovering her daughter's death, lacks any complexity in the expression of her emotion: Dickens is plainly conscious of the theatrical potential in this scene:

> "Lord, Lord! Well it is strange that I who gave birth to her ... should be alive and merry now, and she lying there so cold and stiff! Lord, Lord! - to think of it; it's as good as a play - as good as a play!" (p. 83)

This mentally confused character, mumbling and chuckling in "hideous merriment," a "crazy old woman", shows more concern about the loss of the cloak she has been loaned than the loss of her daughter, although the widower swoons after his wife's burial. The scene clearly challenges the reader's conventional expectations as a means to underscore the dislocating impact of poverty upon family life and values. A later portrait of the complacent character of Mrs. Corney as she comfortably brews her tea in front of a fire, provides a strong contrast to Dickens's portrayal of the squalid conditions of the pauper woman's death. Cruikshank's illustration of "Mr Bumble and Mrs. Corney taking tea" notably mirrors the portly form of these characters in the stout ornamental figure depicted over the mantelpiece, and in a portrait of a buxom woman on the wall. The odd-looking cats sketched by the fireside contrast with the scavenging rats in the pauper's habitat- a symbolically significant feature of this narrative's description.

Besides highlighting the effects of urban existence, Dickens's early writing also

illustrates the view that domestic mismanagement compounds the downfall of some characters, shown when he crudely traces in his sketches the plight of a woman maddened by poverty. Although once a "quiet, hard-working woman", Mr Bung relates that she has deteriorated into an unmanageable, wild state, that her misery has "actually drove her wild". This anti-mother figure is found in squalid surroundings in an unclean, unswept room in a "dirty court at the back of the gas-works", while her children too are dirty and unkempt, and diabolic imagery is used to underscore the extreme way in which she reacts to adverse circumstances ("Our Parish", ch. 5).[15] The plight of this woman who has clearly neglected her home and children is not sympathetically described by the narrator Bung, who turns to another case "of quiet misery... as touched me a good deal more".

The effects of another individual's actions upon his family are, similarly, described by means of broad brushstrokes, in "The Drunkard's Death", a brief tale outlining the consequences of selfishness and drunkenness.[16] Dickens's handling of this drunkard's "moral madness" is notable because it highlights some of Dickens's values at the beginning of his career. Here, Dickens divides alcoholics into two categories: those "madmen" whose misery and misfortune have driven them "wild", and those who have wilfully and knowingly "plunged into the gulf" in which they sink beyond recovery. The sketch depicts the plight of one such stereotypical representative as Dickens crudely describes the circumstances resulting in a man's mental breakdown and suicide, "The Drunkard's Death" illustrating an interrelationship between one form of moral weakness and mental aberration.

This is a sketch which is loosely structured around a series of set-pieces, while the nature and disposition of characters depicted are theatrically conveyed through their actions. Thus the "slovenly" figure of the drunkard is summoned from a scene of "some wild debauch" to a contrasting scene at his wife's deathbed. Dickens's heightenened description of the wife's death ("That heart was broken, and she was dead!") is followed by a scene further highlighting his indebtedness to the theatrical tradition, as "the husband sank into a chair by the bedside, and clasped his hands upon his burning

forehead. He gazed from child to child... All shrank from and avoided him... he staggered from the room" ("Tales", ch. XII).

Although hinting at causes of marital discord ("she was too good for him; her relations had often told him so... Had they not deserted her"), Dickens does not attempt to evoke our sympathy by examining causes of this character's downfall, but in describing its effects, he focuses on the drunkard's irresponsibility. This figure's paternal role is shown to be blighted by his selfishness, as he clearly mistreats his children, although Dickens observes that "even he" could not repress a shudder upon news of his son's death. The scene in which the character betrays his son is conveyed in a theatrical set-piece, visually highlighting Dickens's intention in underscoring the effects of this drunkard's behaviour. After the dramatic departure of his son ("My brother's blood, and mine is on your head... Die when you will, or how, I will be with you"), a figure who "raised his manacled hands in a threatening attitude, fixed his eyes on his shrinking parent and slowly left the room", the plight of this drunkard prefigures a number of villainous characters, including Bill Sikes and Ralph Nickleby, who are ultimately left in a state of isolation. Dickens shows that such a desolate condition can lead to mental decline. In the drunkard's case, his mental deterioration is set against the backcloth of a storm which is (presumably, as in the case of Lear), intended to reflect the disordered nature of his own condition. Thus, for example, his "tremulous" voice is lost in the storm's violence, and he is "coiled" in a doorway as he shelters from the rain, a description hinting at an association with evil. One of the sketch's most arresting details is undoubtedly found in the drunkard's horror as he recognises his own disorientation. He is woken by the sound of his own voice, and even attempts to mutilate himself: "He was going mad, and he shrieked for help till his voice failed him" (p. 493, Oxford Illustrated edition). In this detail, Dickens explores the fragmentation between a character's inner world and actual circumstances.

As this figure resolves to end his life, Dickens's indebtedness to earlier Gothic fiction is evident in his description of the spectral vision luring the man to his death, which vivifies his writing:

> Strange and fantastic forms rose to the surface, and beckoned him to approach; dark gleaming eyes peered from the water, and seemed to mock his hesitation, while hollow murmurs from behind urged him onwards (ibid., p. 494).

Bill Sikes's imagination was later haunted by an uncanny, spectral image of staring eyes in Oliver Twist, a "vision" which was "terrible", of "widely staring eyes, so lustreless and so glassy... There were but two, but they were everywhere" (pp. 428-429) - a lurid vision which becomes casually connected with his death. This description is remarkable because of the insight it provides into Sike's troubled mental state when it notes that "he had better borne to see them than think upon them". Although eyes commonly communicate non-verbal expression, illustrated as Charley looks "with horror in his eyes" when he espies Sikes, following which Sikes's eyes "sunk gradually to the ground", by contrast, Nancy's eyes are "expressionless" and "giving light to nothing". Elsewhere, Dickens has used the motif of eyes for other purposes: at Fagin's trial, for example, conveying a menacing atmosphere when Fagin is walled in by gazing spectators, where "Inquisitive and eager eyes peered from every inch of space... all looks... fixed upon one man... surrounded by a firmament, "all bright with gleaming eyes" in a glare of "living light" (p. 466). Later, in American Notes, Dickens made a different use of the motif when describing rotting windows in decaying houses "like eyes that have been hurt in drunken frays" (p. 136).

However, Dickens's early association between staring eyes and death indicates his fascination with this theme. In an inset tale of Pickwick, there is for example, a repellent description of "hideous crawling things with eyes that stared" (p. 110) amidst the hallucinatory nightmares of the dying clown. Perhaps, for Dickens, the specific detail of unresponsive eyes may hint at a (not uncommon) fear of mortal decay. Carey suggests that Dickens's fascination with eyes may have arisen because of his early experience in Warren's blacking factory when he was watched by a crowd (Carey, p. 104). Although Dickens felt acutely embarrassed by this experience (a point underlined by numerous critics), it is, however, notable that, in his early novels, he more commonly associates use of this motif with the theme of death. He may have been

arrested by the eerie picture of staring eyes from fiction he had read, or from his trips to various mortuaries during the course of his travels, but the association, apparent when the drunkard desperately leaps and plunges to his death, vivifies Dickens's description as Sikes dramatically falls from a great height, uttering a yell of terror: '"The eyes again!"' he cried in an unearthly screech. Staggering... he lost his balance and tumbled over the parapet (p. 453).

Dickens's treatment of the drunkard further prefigures his handling of the villainous Quilp, a figure who also perishes by drowning. Both characters finally struggle in the attempt to save themselves, shouting as they sink under the water. For the drunkard, "Bright flames of fire shot up from earth to heaven, and reeled before his eyes", while Quilp's yell "seemed to make the hundred fires that danced before his eyes tremble and flicker". The drunkard almost saves himself ("The shore - but one foot of dry ground - he could almost touch the step. One hand's-breadth nearer, and he was saved"), but is borne away by the tide, as is Quilp ("The hull of a ship! He could touch its smooth and slippery surface with his hand. One loud cry now - but the resistless water bore him down" p. 620). Both characters die as unrepentant villains, while the squalid description of their disintegrating corpses demonstrates the ultimate fate of such villainous figures in Dickens's novels.

That Dickens draws some vague hope from the departure of a number of his characters who have shown kindness to other people, is illustrated by his treatment of Nell's death:

> When Death strikes down the innocent and young, for every fragile form from which he lets the panting spirit free, a hundred virtues rise, in shapes of mercy, charity, and love, to walk the world, and bless it... some good is born, some gentler nature comes (p. 659).

As Alexander Welsh notes, memories of the dead can prove a source for good deeds in Dickens's world (p. 200), as illustrated by the schoolmaster's speech in The Old Curiosity Shop: "Forgotten! oh, if the good deeds of human creatures could be traced to their source, how beautifully would even death appear!" (pp. 503-4).

By contrast, when the "swollen and disfigured" remains of the drunkard in Sketches is discovered, nobody mourns his departure: "Unrecognised and unpitied, it was borne to the grave; and there it has long since mouldered away!" (pp. 503-504). He prefigures a number of darkly portrayed villains including Bill Sikes, Ralph Nickleby and Daniel Quilp who experience the "sudden death" which is described in the Litany with which Dickens would have been familiar.

The mental decline of Dickens's anti-father figure in "The Drunkard's Death" is portrayed as the result of his own selfishness: for Dickens, he represents the "hideous spectacle of madmen" hurried "madly on to degradation and death", while his children are better off without him. The plight of this doomed figure inversely demonstrates for the reader the importance of family responsibilities and loyalty. Elsewhere, Dickens has claimed that harrowing death scenes could only be justified if used to support a positive moral or philosophical viewpoint,[17] and, in this sketch, he starkly illustrates the implications of alcoholism. Its arresting description of the drunkard's mental state as he meets his death conveys Dickens's interest in describing one form of mental aberration.[18] Dickens further explores the disastrous effects of alcoholism on family life in Pickwick Papers, when portraying the mental collapse of another alcoholic in "The Stroller's Tale", one of three inset tales describing extreme emotional states of mind. While the novel's main narrative exposes the discrepancy between sight and insight, between outer appearance and inner reality,[19] these inset tales illuminate the way in which, as Axton remarks, certain mental conditions reshape the experience of reality, and reform it at will, thus inverting the relation between appearance and reality developed in the main body of the text (Axton, p. 78). While "The Stroller's Tale" is framed within an episode of situation comedy,[20] its singular narrator, Dismal Jemmy, underlines the significance of contrasts between appearance and reality ("Ah! poetry makes life, what lights and music do the stage" (p. 104)), a point heavily laboured with reference to the theatre: "To be before the footlights... is like sitting at a grand, court show" (p. 104). If the strongly moral position taken up by the dismal raconteur contrasts with his Bohemian appearance, the reader is all the more aware of

his creator's intentions in revealing the "besetting sin" of alcoholism and its consequences.

Although Dickens makes a fairly crude use of contrasting images to highlight this clown's physical and mental degeneration, his "bloated" body contrasting with his "shrunken" legs, his disguised appearance - the white, painted face, ornamented head and chalked hands - with the reality of his "glassy" eyes, the head which is trembling with paralysis, and long, skinny hands (p. 106), he effectively contrasts his assumed patterns of speech with his actual condition. Thus the clown's "shrill" laugh is "blending with the low murmurings of the dying man" (p. 109). Dickens's particularised description of this clown's squalid home is used to underscore the unfortunate effects of his passion for drink upon his family. The stroller visits the coal shed above which this clown lives with his family on a dark, cold wet night, with a "chill, damp wind": an evocatively damp and dismal backcloth which heightens the sense of this family's misery, while their poverty is highlighted by effective use of details describing their paltry belongings, their "tattered" checked curtains, broken glass, and bundles of rags. Dickens underlines the effects of alcoholism when portraying a "wretched- looking" wife, previously beaten by her husband, who protects their fearful child, lest her husband "should injure it in the violence of his insanity" (p. 110). The clown's own feelings of guilt and mental anguish are evident in Dickens's vivid visual image of staring eyes, in this character's imaginative preoccupation with eyes, awakening a "dreadful fear" in him, and with the eyes of "hideous, crawling" insects "glistening horribly". In the clown's delirium, Dickens describes his fearful experience as he visualises reptiles, frightful figures, and gibing faces - imagining he is seared with heated iron, and bound with cords - a vivid description of his tortured state.

Dickens's fascination with the theatre is again evident when he highlights the effect of this character's actions in depicting the death scene with which this tale is concluded. Thus, the clown's child runs screaming towards the figure of the father, is caught in the mother's arms, and stands "transfixed by the bedside" in a tableau. Thus too the clown grasps the stroller's shoulder, striking his breast with his other hand, before extending

his arm before them, while Dickens concentrates on the oral and visual effects - "a rattling noise in the throat - a glare of the eye - a short stifled groan - and he fell back - dead." In this "grim description" of the ravings of an alcoholic clown," who dies in the midst of financial, physical, and marital ruin", as Deborah Thomas, notes (p. 20), Dickens broadly sketches the results of this character's behaviour, as in Nicholas Nickleby he impressionistically sketches the effects of the irrational actions of a group of drunken gamesters.[21] It was not until later in his writing career that he explored the causes of such irrationality with greater subtlety.

Although Dickens has conveyed the dire consequences of moral failure in his treatment of mismanagement or drunkenness, in his early writing he also began to explore the comic uses of this theme. The humorous potential of the theme of madness and moral failure is nowhere more evident than in his portrayal of one of his most memorable madmen, Mrs. Nickleby's suitor. This crazed figure[22] has a disquieting effect on all the characters he meets, but one of the keenest effects of this madman (the "cruellest, wickedest, out-and-outerest old flint that ever drawed breath" according to his keeper (p. 628)), is in highlighting Mrs. Nickleby's lack of insight, for she persists in the belief that "there's a great deal too much method in his madness". His highly comical false perception of reality, and bizarre association of particularised, unconnected events - a characteristic later reflected in Little Dorrit's portrait of another memorable mad creation[23] - challenges the assumptions of other characters in the novel. In this way, Dickens uses Mrs. Nickleby's mad neighbour as a touchstone, (a purpose later explored in Barnaby Rudge, amongst others), his role highlighting her own moral failure, for "she had a weak head and a vain one" (p. 570). Dickens's comical portrayal of this crazed figure is highly effective, a detailed examination of the techniques he employed in describing such a character casting light on his early methods of craftsmanship.

The role of this character highlights Mrs. Nickleby's moral weakness and also her naivety in several ways: she misjudges his manners and appearance ("he does wear

smalls and grey worsted stockings. That may be eccentricity, or he may be proud of his legs"), largely because of her own vanity, describing his assumed interest in her muddled stock Romantic images (whereby, for example, it "came upon me like a flash of fire, and almost froze my blood"). Flattered by the cucumbers and marrows cast over the wall, her thoughts turn rapidly (and too readily) to marriage. By skilful use of irony, however, Dickens ensures that his readers are aware that Mrs. Nickleby's neighbour is unbalanced, because of numerous clues given in the text. Hence, for example, we are conscious of the irony in her question: "Lord, Nicholas, my dear, do you suppose I don't know when a man's in earnest?"

Dickens portrays Mrs. Nickleby as a myopic character, "vain and garrulous, self-centred and self-satisfied", although Gissing is rather harsh in suggesting that she has the "brain 'of a Somerset ewe'...though she seems comically punished when she herself is wooed by a lunatic whose madness everyone but she recognises", despite the fact that her "zany ramblings provide us with wonderful entertainment throughout the book."[24] Dickens's early interest in the theatre is again evident as he has effectively employed theatrical devices to convey Mrs. Nickleby's reaction to her crazed neighbour.[25] The way in which Mrs. Nickleby reacts to this intruder in her private domain provides a marked contrast with the way in which Aunt Betsy responds to the donkey boys trespassing on her territory in David Copperfield, highlighting the differences in these two characters. In Nickleby's garden scene (and we have noted that gardens held particular symbolic significance in Dickens's novels), Dickens dramatically depicts the visual effects of the sudden, incongruous influx of vegetables, in a scene which is memorable for the reader, while Kate and her Mother are poised in a tableau, holding hands, and the reader's attention is drawn to the madman's gradual appearance over the wall.[26] The remarkable speech of this figure is used to convey the nature of his deranged mental condition, as he rambles over a bizarre range of topics (including confused descriptions of London's monuments[27] in references to the statue of Charing Cross, the Stock Exchange, the Pump from Aldgate, the Horse Guards, the House of Commons and Royal Exchange). His random descriptions of scenes in London not only

provide a dislocated picture of the city, reflecting the fractured condition of his ability to reason, but also further illuminate Mrs. Nickleby's lack of judgement.

Dickens does, however use, however the effects of this madman's speech for purposes other than their mere dramatic value. The bizarre association of disparate objects (exemplified in the "fricassee of boot-tops and goldfish sauce" p. 743)) which is a hallmark of this madman's speech, reflects (but distorts) Dickens's widely ranging associations in his own use of imagery. His portrayal of this madman mirrors but accentuates tendencies apparent in Mrs. Nickleby herself, for she is no stranger to unconnected flights of fancy: "I don't know how it is, but a fine, warm summer day like this... always puts me in mind of roast pig" (p. 616).

Dickens uses the dramatically conceived figure of this madman as a means of releasing into the novel a sexual energy which would otherwise have been expressed in a less explicit form. It is evident that his unconventional behaviour challenges the expectations of other characters. Kate Nickleby is clearly keen to escape from him at first, but proves sympathetic about his "infirmities" in due course. Her mother, however, dismisses the Keeper's account that this is a man who has "broken his poor wife's heart, turned his daughters out of doors, drove his sons into the streets" and "went mad at last, through evil tempers, and covetousness, and selfishness, and guzzling, and drinking" - a tale of moral failure, reminiscent of "The Drunkard's Death". By means of contrast, Dickens also uses this crazed figure , however, to illuminate the comic potential in Frank and Kate's youthful romance, evident during the scene in which he makes his extraordinary entrance down the chimney (in ch. 49). Here Dickens contrasts the coy nature of their relationship with the madman's vulgar expression of his feelings. While Kate and Frank are shown hastily turning their heads, or drooping their eyes, or speaking in low voices, the madman melancholically chants a romantic ditty whilst dangling feet-first down the chimney, and later falls to admiring Miss La Creevy: "She is come at last - at last - and all is gas and gaiters!" Dickens's early exploration of such incongruity is undoubtedly highly effective,[28] while his use of insanity exposes potential in the underlying theme of sexuality.

In Nicholas Nickleby, it is apparent that the crazed figure of Mrs. Nickleby's neighbour functions as a touchstone who comically (albeit rather crudely) reveals the vanity of Nicholas's mother,[29] although in the comically theatrical scene, described in chapter 49, Nicholas himself proves blindly unaware of the romance blossoming between Kate and Frank.[30] Dickens's portrayal of this madman in Nickleby is strikingly original, arguably a more "brilliant success" even than his much-acclaimed portrait of Mrs. Nickleby,[31] while the characterisation of this madmen may have proved particularly effective because Dickens does not attempt to use this figure as a means of conveying any direct moral warning. His peripheral role indirectly exposes the moral failings of others.

Although Dickens began to explore the comic potential of moral failure in his early fiction, as observed, he had more commonly portrayed the dire consequences of such failure. In his Sketches, he has notably explored the effects of selfishness in causing intense emotional suffering which may become interlinked with the experience of insanity. The model of Ophelia as victim may have very broadly inspired Dickens's experimentation in his early portrayal of one cause of insanity,[32] where, in the case of "The Black Veil" in his Sketches, he has, for example, used madness as a crude device conveying the plight of a mother who has finally deteriorated into a "harmless madwoman" because of the selfishness of her son, the consequence of his moral shortcomings. While his choice of the tale's title is reminiscent of Ann Radcliffe's use of this device in The Mysteries of Udolpho (in which the black veil is a Gothic accessory), other aspects bear some resemblance to Samuel Warren's Passages from the Diary of a Late Physician.[33] This melodramatic tale, though crude in its execution, and lacking in subtlety in its exploration of the mother's mental torment, demonstrates the way in which Dickens used contrast as a means of arresting the reader's attention[34] - a technique later used with great effect throughout many of his novels - at an early point in his writing career. It also illuminates the means he used to create suspense and mystery,[35] while reflecting his ability to create atmospheres conveying mental decay

and deterioration,[36] a theme more fully explored in later novels. His experimentation with his victim of circumstance in his early fiction prefigured his later exploration of the subject (see below, chapter 6).

Dickens's love of theatre[37] is conveyed in his portrayal of the scene in which the "singularly tall woman"[38] unveils the cause of her anguish, for his description of this woman's mental torment and collapse becomes increasingly stagey and melodramatic in its execution. Thus, upon hearing of her son's death, she "started to her feet", and "beat her hands together", while her speech too is theatrical ("Oh, don't say so, Sir!" she exclaimed, with a burst of passion amounting almost to frenzy"). She is depicted "wildly" beating the cold hands, and dramatically (if awkwardly) declares: "If... he is really dead, do not expose that form to other eyes than mine!". Dickens makes full use of stage effects when concluding this scene:

> "Who was he?" inquired the surgeon.
>
> "My son," rejoined the woman; and fell senseless at his feet.

Having dramatically described the effects of this figure's plight, Dickens hints at their cause, briefly describing the woman's efforts to care for her wayward son (not an uncommon theme in the Sketches). The moral consequences of the son's actions and subsequent death are clearly shown by Dickens to cause her "shame and incurable insanity", in an early equation between cause and effect.

Besides highlighting the potentially adverse effects of one character's actions upon the welfare of another, not an uncommon literary theme, Dickens further underlines the effects of moral degeneracy in the memorable inset tale, "A Madman's Manuscript". Here he experiments, in Pickwick Papers, with the potential use of insanity, evident in other literary sources, to capture the reader's interest. This tale, containing a "melancholy instance" of the "baneful results" of the "energies" of a man "misdirected in early life" due to "thoughtless riot, dissipation, and debauchery" trails off into a heavily moralistic conclusion:

> It is only matter of wonder to those who were acquainted with the vices of his

early career, that his passions, when no longer controlled by reason, did not lead him to the commission of still more frightful deeds (pp. 226-227).

Dickens has taken considerable care over setting the scene for this tale,[39] and, within its framework, he has introduced significant tonal keys which are later developed. An episode involving the figure of Bill Stumps, for example, proves a fitting context for introducing the theme of self-delusion while delusion, is a subject explored in the tale itself.

This is a tale which is clearly designed to shock its reader, and Dickens dramatically conveys its author's experiences as if in soliloquy, to heighten the impact of the tale upon his audience. His opening line ("Yes - a madman's! How that word would have struck to my heart, many years ago!") consciously highlights the reader's response to this tale's odd title, as if its mad author were conversing with his audience. Yet his reason for recounting his experience is rather vague, while it is also unclear for whom the manuscript was originally intended. Dickens's purpose in including this excursive tale in his narrative (reminiscent of a convention in some Gothic fiction) seems to be in testing out - in a contained form - the sensational potential of one form of insanity. This madman represents the fierce, violent potential in one representation of madness at an early point in Dickens's writing career.

Dickens's arresting portrayal of the madman's experiences[40] is enhanced by the dramatic style of this character's speech,[41] and by the madman's awareness of his potential power,[42] while the manuscript's account of life in a madhouse would (as we have noted), have held a certain fascination for Dickens's readership. Yet it is as an early exploration of the effects of hereditary madness ("mixed up with my very blood and the marrow of my bones") that this tale holds a particular interest.[43] Dickens's portrayal of insanity as a blighting condition[44] caused by an external force outside the control of this crazed figure, prefigures his later description of madness as an "awful visitation".

However, at the heart of this tale there is an intrinsic dilemma in its construction. While Dickens uses this mad creation to highlight the nature of human greed and folly

(the way in which he inherits wealth and marries a young woman from an impoverished, scheming family highlighting the folly of marriages contracted for merely financial advantage),[45] Dickens needs to convince the reader that the mad protagonist could have rationally related such a narrative. While Dickens generally distinguishes between two very different modes of discourse - between this protagonist's theatrical speech actions,[46] and the choric function of a narrator in recounting a sequential, coherent narrative,[47] he sidesteps on one notable occasion when the madman remarks: "If I had not been mad- for though we madmen are sharp-witted enough, we get bewildered sometimes - I should have known..." (p. 221). Despite inherent technical difficulties in the form of narrative Dickens has chosen in this inset tale, he has successfully used it to describe a range of highly sensational, visually evocative effects.[48] It has aptly been remarked that, in this tale, Dickens was "performing a literary sleight of hand, whereby the reader had two thrills for the price of one; the shocking horror of madness,[49] and the "prim gratification that in fact it was all the man's own fault, and if he had lived a Christian God-fearing life no part of his illness need have happened."[50] Here Dickens may have hinted at two possible causes for this madman's condition, but it is the dramatic effects[51] he has created which are highly memorable.

Dickens does not only use the example of this striking figure of a madman in "A Madman's Manuscript" to highlight the effects of moral degeneracy, for, in graphically illustrating the ultimate fate of the characters of Fagin, Sikes and Ralph Nickleby, he underlines the dire consequences of moral failure. In the case of these three characters, Dickens closely observes their reactions as they suffer different forms of acute mental anguish prior to their death. Although an association between death and madness was not, as we have noted, uncommon in Gothic fiction, Dickens has memorably conveyed the way in which these three characters are mentally and physically affected by their own actions. Interestingly, Dickens's earliest writing did not include a detailed exploration of the cause or effects of insanity in a female creation (other than the sketchy figure of

the mother in "The Black Veil"), though he later portrayed a monomaniac in Miss Havisham, amongst other mad female characters.[52] In Fagin, Sikes and Ralph Nickleby, however, he notably explored the dire effects of moral failure, as will be seen.

In the case of the villainous Fagin, Dickens depicts a character's experience of insanity as the result of his own guilty conscience, conveying his extreme mental turmoil in the condemned cell through his rocking movements.[53] This darkly portrayed character is "blighted", according to Dickens - tormented as the result of his own actions, and has been described as "a kind of hellish scapegoat":[54] Dickens undoubtedly overlays descriptions of his confinement with fearful imagery.[55] It has aptly been observed that while Dickens's description of Fagin's last days is longer, and pitched higher, than a corresponding passage in Sketches by Boz, it is doubtful whether it shows "more insight into the character of the condemned man",[56] for Dickens is focusing our attention on Fagin as a symbol of evil, more than on Fagin as an individual. His impressionistic portrait of this figure tends to lack precision, illustrated by the description when "He grew so terrible, at last, in all the tortures of his evil conscience, that one man could not bear to sit there... He cowered down". Other descriptions of the way the walls of Newgate "never held so dread a spectacle", or of Fagin's gasping mouth, his burning skin, his eyes which shine with some "terrible" light, or his "unwashed flesh" which crackles "with the fever that burnt him up" create a powerfully symbolic impression of Fagin's plight.

Effective use is made of dramatic devices to describe Fagin's mental deterioration, reflecting his sense of dislocation and intense loneliness - the consequence of his villainy.[57] Dickens also makes a striking use of contrast to highlight the intense isolation of this doomed man whose "cry upon cry" penetrated the "massive walls" in which he was incarcerated whilst a bustling crowd outside are busily engaged in smoking, card-playing, pushing, quarrelling and joking. In sharp contrast to Fagin's miserable exodus, Oliver Twist, embodying the "principle of Good surviving through every adverse Circumstance" finds acceptance, friendship and happiness.

Dickens's description of Bill Sikes's tormented mental condition after he has murdered Nancy provides a contrast with his account of Oliver Twist's experiences. The appeal which popular theatre held for Dickens is evident in his highly dramatic portrayal of Bill Sikes's final collapse, and, while the scene in which Nancy is murdered had been described to its full dramatic effect,[58] it is in his exploration of a criminal's mental state after committing the act of murder that Dickens excels. He vividly conveys Sikes's inner turmoil through the narrative's attention to detail, and the particularised descriptions[59] of this character's horror - as he discovers hair upon the end of his club, a detail which may suggest familiarity with Maturin (see above, p. 34), or has a terrifying vision of the dead woman's eyes - powerfully illustrating Sikes's tormented reaction to his crime. In his evocative description of Sikes's preoccupation with the vision of Nancy's staring eyes, Dickens selects a vivid, arresting image as a means of highlighting Sikes's haunted imagination and conscience - stricken state of mind.

The narrative description of Sikes's mental turmoil is, however, oddly interrupted by an episode in which this character becomes caught up in fire-fighting. During his aimless wandering after the murder, Sikes becomes energised by the sight of a house on fire.[60] The blaze may indicate something of Sikes's own uncontrolled urges,[61] as he witnesses the effects of destruction: Dickens's description of this scene, with its showers of sparks, sheets of flame, tumbling red-hot beams, its "mess of raging fire", "burning well" of crumbling walls, and its white-hot iron and lead, undoubtedly conveys the fierce energy of the blaze. Sikes's association with such a scene not only demonstrates his heroic potential and energy,[62] but his activity amidst this inferno-like conflagration also (symbolically) underlines his association with destructive force and conveys the effects of destruction.[63]

This episode provides a hiatus in the narrative describing Sikes's mental decline during his last tormented hours,[64] as in Nicholas Nickleby, an episode amidst Ralph Nickleby's final hours also creates a hiatus, as will be seen. Sikes seems to find some relief in activity, [65] although his vigorous (almost reckless) actions may be

stimulated by a death-wish. Dickens contrasts this scene with a very different crowded canvas as he describes the crowd surrounding Sikes's refuge in Jacob's island.[66] While Oliver Twist observes several characters besides Sikes, who experience extreme states of mental agitation at various times, their tales are interwoven into the broader moral purposes and framework of the novel.[67]

Dickens's exploration of the interrelationship between insanity (and associated states of heightened or extreme emotional reactions) and moral failure, furthermore finds a striking form of expression in his description of Ralph Nickleby's mental turmoil, prior to his suicide, in Nicholas Nickleby.[68] There are parallels between Dickens's dramatic treatment of Sikes's death and his handling of Nickleby's suicide[69] in chapter 62, for both characters experience acute isolation before death, despite the way in which Sikes surrounded by a noisy throng, and Ralph, whilst musing beside a graveyard, is approached by a noisy group of people. Both figures are preoccupied with one significant image: while Sikes is haunted by the image of the corpse's eyes, Ralph is strangely affected by a hunchback's antics, and finds himself involuntarily reflecting upon the plight of a man who committed suicide.

In Nickleby, Dickens traces the consequences of Ralph's villainous existence. Set against the background of a "poor mean burial ground" upon which Ralph has been gazing, he describes a striking, though seemingly inconsequential episode, which prefigures, through a train of association, Ralph Nickleby's own death. As Ralph observes one of the novel's minor grotesques, he is moved to laughter,[70] and there are obvious parallels between this scene and the novel's account of a man known to Ralph, who seemed "merry" prior to his suicide: Ralph had been "wondering which might be his grave" before observing the hunchback described. Ralph is portrayed in this novel as an archetypal villain,[71] "the crafty uncle of fairy tales and folklore, rich and wicked".[72] Ralph's blighted garden reflects his character:[73] he is imaginatively associated with a graveyard, with the evocative detail of a goblin,[74] and with devilry.[75] As Ralph recognises the comical incongruity between the hunchback's appearance and actions - his fascination with the figure reflecting something of his own

emotional deformity caused by his suppression of emotion - his laughter may either indicate his callous nature, or something of his hidden potential and humanity.[76] It is evident from the novel that, in suppressing this potential, Ralph mentally and physically destroys himself.

Ralph is portrayed as a character who has chosen a lonely, isolated style of life[77] - an important indicator in Dickens's novels, and, as in the case of some of his predecessors, a state of extreme isolation precedes this character's mental collapse.[78] Dickens sharply contrasts the differing attitudes of Nicholas Nickleby and Ralph in their treatment of two disadvantaged figures, Smike and Noggs, as a means to highlight the consequences of their actions.[79] While in the "Madman's Manuscript", Dickens explored a character's insane desire for power, an urge reminiscent of that experienced by Nebuchadnezzar, in Nickleby, he describes Ralph's belief that he can achieve power through the act of suicide.[80] Ralph is a villain maddened by his own intemperate reaction, illustrated by his almost obsessive hatred for the novel's hero, attaining a "height which was sheer wild lunacy." He does not experience the change of heart sought by some other archetypal villains, and Dickens carefully prepares the reader for Ralph's final act of self-destruction, dramatically conveying the means of his death as had been the case in his portrayal of Sikes's death.[83]

Dickens evocatively reflects the dismal nature of Ralph's situation in his descriptions of the weather - not an untypical characteristic of his descriptive writing[84] - finally interpreting the impact of Ralph's suicide by reference to an inanimate object, with a masterly stroke, when "the crazy casement rattled with the wind as though an impatient hand inside was striving to burst it open. But no hand was there, and it opened no more". Dickens underlines Ralph's isolation by contrasting a description of Ralph's hanged body with the "knot of men" gathering outside his house, as Sikes's isolation had been contrasted by the crowded scene surrounding his lonely death. In such use of visual contrast, Dickens evocatively depicts the effects of moral failure and immorality.

In his early novels, Dickens not only explored the effects of moral failure in his

portrayal of individuals: he also used crowd scenes as the means to interpret and reflect heightened emotional states experienced by individual characters. The disorderly, "infuriated throng" in Oliver Twist reflects, for example, something of Sikes's own anguished state,[85] and Dickens uses nature imagery to convey the effect of their wild activities.[86] Dickens's description of the turmoil caused by this crowd's maddened behaviour illuminates his fascination with its anarchic potential,[87] and, as Carey notes, "The violence of the mob, which always intensely excites Dickens, is repeatedly conveyed through its fiery antics"[88] - an association also evident in some of Dickens's later novels, including Barnaby Rudge and A Tale of Two Cities. In Oliver Twist, Jacob's island not only provides an admirably evocative setting for the squalid downfall and death of Sikes, but also for the violent actions of a discontented mob, for it is a filthy, tainted, slimy, part of London with "every repulsive lineament of poverty, every loathsome indication of filth, rot, and garbage". When Mayhew visited this area in 1849, it was still similarly derelict and unhealthy,[89] and Dickens highlights the desolation of this once-thriving district[90] - such scenes of desolation fascinated him.[91] In his later writing, Dickens was to use the wild, maddened activity of the mob as the means to reflect various forms of individual discontent, in a more sustained form than had been afforded in his earliest novels.

"... it was a blessing he went mad at last, through evil tempers, and covetousness, and selfishness, and guzzling, and drinking, or he'd have drove many others so" (Nicholas Nickleby, p. 628).

In his early fiction, Dickens portrayed madness as one form of punishment for egotism - a recurrent subject in earlier literary traditions which may, as noted in chapter 3, have found one root in the model of Nebuchadnezzar, amongst other sources. While Dickens experimented with the uses of this theme in Sketches by Boz, Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist and Nicholas Nickleby, examples of early fiction in which he

conveyed the dire consequences of moral failure (a theme which would not necessarily lend itself to a sustained form of representation), he also began to explore the theme's comic potential, and its sensational value too in adding spice and interest to the plots of his novels. Insane characters, he discovered, could create some interesting, dislocating effects, stripping away conventional expectations, and also illuminating the unreasoning, often hypocritical, reactions of other characters (evident in the part played by the madman in "A Madman's Manuscript"). His early portrayal of madness inversely highlighted the significance of the values of loyalty, family responsibilities and common decency, although in his later exploration of insanity, Dickens was to experiment with other uses, for reasons which will become apparent, whilst also building upon foundations established in his earliest writing. In Barnaby Rudge, David Copperfield and Great Expectations, novels spanning twenty years of writing, Dickens's intentions in portraying a range of insane characters including Barnaby Rudge, Mr Dick and Miss Havisham, indicate the nature of his experimentation with some specific uses of insanity. In the chapter which follows, it will become apparent that he not only explored the potential of such creations as unfortunate victims of circumstance, but also as catalysts in the plots of his novels, with varying degrees of success.

NOTES

1. See Duane DeVries, Dickens's Apprentice Years: The Making of a Novelist (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1976), pp. 111, 132, 137.

For a brief examination of these Sketches, see Deborah A. Thomas, Dickens and the Short Story (London: Batsford Academic, 1982), pp. 14-19. See also Sylvère Monod, Dickens The Novelist, X: "Literary Apprenticeship", pp. 50-62.

2. Sylvère Monod, p. 50.

3. Dickens himself became apologetic about the flaws of these early sketches, "written and published, one by one, when I was a very young man... and sent into the world with all their imperfections (a good many) on their heads... I am conscious of their being extremely crude and ill-considered, and bearing obvious marks of haste and inexperience" (Preface to a reissue in 1847).

Although Forster doggedly maintained that Dickens had "decidedly underrated" the work (Life of Dickens, I, 60), few critics seem to have shared his viewpoint. It has, however, been observed that it is "difficult to make a fair assessment of the literary value of these early sketches because, in so doing, one must temporarily forget the masterpieces of which they were the harbinger, and of which one is so frequently reminded by small inspired touches, or by the foreshadowing of characters as yet unborn" (Thea Holme: Introduction to Sketches by Boz, (Oxford Illustrated Edition, London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. VIII). There are, for example, some similarities between details of the way in which both the Tuggses of Ramsgate and the Dorrit family use the proceeds of their unexpected wealth to travel abroad. Similarly, the scheming Lammles bear a marked resemblance to the scheming Captain Waters and his wife. However, whereas a light, comical tone characterises Dickens's description of the way in which the naive Tuggs family is swindled out of fifteen hundred pounds, Mr Dorrit's downfall is portrayed in a more sombre light.

4. G.K. Chesterton, Charles Dickens (1906; rpt. Burns & Oates, 1975), p. 57. For Chesterton, the Sketches "stand out very symbolically in the life of Dickens", illustrating his dedication in "the sympathetic and yet exaggerated painting of the poorer middle-class" (p. 49).

However, for discussion about the revisions Dickens later made in editions of Sketches by Boz, see John Butt & Kathleen Tillotson, Dickens at Work (London: Methuen, 1957), ch. 2. See also J. Hillis Miller, "The Fiction of Realism: Sketches by Boz, Oliver Twist, and Cruikshank's Illustrations", Dickens Centennial Essays ed. Ada Nisbet & Blake Nevius (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 85-153.

5. H.P. Sucksmith, The Narrative Art of Charles Dickens (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 10.

6. Kate Flint has aptly observed that the novel is "not irredeemably light-hearted".Despite Dickens's "disingenuous disclaimer that, given the sprawling character of his narrative, no artfully interwoven or ingeniously complicated plot can with reason be expected" (Preface to 1837 edition), the novel "does in fact show a careful interweaving of interpolated tales (a technique which in its turn owes something to eighteenth-century practice) which throw into relief the often thoughtless cheerfulness of the main parts of the book" (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1986, p. 31).

7. Angus Wilson has observed that "those shadows which make the high spirits of the first three quarters of the novel and its emergence into a sunny ending so significant and so acceptable, are present in various ways from early on" (p. 119).

Dickens later defended his practice of alternating tragic and comic scenes (in the seventeenth chapter of Oliver Twist) by referring to the stage tradition "in all good murderous melodramas, to present the tragic and comic scenes... as the layers of red and white in a side of streaky bacon".

8. Although Oliver Twist did not appear during the month in which Mary Hogarth died.

9. Dennis Walder, Dickens and Religion, p. 43.

10. Its opening also illustrates the way in which Dickens uses modes of ironic discourse, drawing on the tradition of Erasmus, Swift, and Fielding (in Jonathan Wilde) - a mock-biography satirising the celebration of human greatness ["INDEED whoever considers the common Fate of GREAT MEN must allow, they well deserve, and hardly earn that considers Applause which is given them by the World" (Bk IV, ch. 16)).

11. This rather lengthy title was presumably shortened at a later date in order to focus attention on its hero rather than on his family, though the roles of Ralph Nickleby and Mrs. Nickleby are clearly of central significance in this novel.

12. Robin Gilmour, The Novel in the Victorian Age: A Modern Introduction (London: Edward Arnold, 1986), p. 87.

There is little evidence for Lucas's remark that this is the "flabbiest and least dramatic of all Dickens's novels, and the one where we most clearly see that he is serving his apprenticeship to the art of writing fiction" (p. 61).

13. Illustrated by the stylised set-piece in another sketch which describes the death of a young lad in "Our Next-Door Neighbour": "Mother! dear, dear mother, bury me in the open fields - anywhere but in these dreadful streets. I should like to be where you can see my grave, but not in these close, crowded streets; they have killed me". Dickens's dramatic conclusion of this episode (in the phrase "The boy was dead") later reverberated in his description of Jo's death, in Bleak House, while Jo too was to be a victim of urban poverty.

14. The sudden growth of the Victorian urban population was undoubtedly creating new challenges. Some medical officers were expressing concern that "Overcrowding and disease mutually act and react upon each other" and that "overcrowding of dwellings is one of the most frequent sources of sickness and decay at all ages" (see Henry Jephson's The Sanitary Evolution of London (p. 119)).

That the city was of central significance in Dickens's work has been well-documented by Alexander Welsh in The City of Dickens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971). In Barnaby Rudge and A Tale of Two Cities, the city is used as a backcloth for mob violence and irrationality (see below, ch. 6), while Our Mutual Friend vividly conveys an image of the city as a prison.

15. She has been "changed... to a devil", and "cursed the little naked children as was rolling on the floor... savagely she struck the infant when it cried with hunger" - a

model of motherhood which strongly contrasts Dickens's idealised patterns of mothering as embodied in figures of Ruth Pinch or Esther Summerson. According to Mr. Bung, her children are more "comfortable" in a workhouse without their mother, for she proves violent and unmanageable, even in a house of correction where she blasphemes and throws inkstands, finally dying of a burst blood vessel.

16. This theme was also reflected by nineteenth-century temperance melodrama. One later "unusually grim" example of such drama was found in T.P. Taylor's The Bottle (1847). In Michael R. Booth's English Melodrama (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1965), it is noted, amidst a discussion of these temperance dramas (pp. 130-136), that Taylor's play was written as a dramatic accompaniment to Cruikshank's series of engravings of that title (p. 132). Booth further notes that "it would be tedious to enumerate all the repetitious agonies of wives and stage drunkards. Their husbands are always rejecting their anxious advice, breaking their promises not to drink, spending the last pennies on liquor" (p. 136).

17. He criticised one poet's description of the haunted experience of a painter at the point of death, when writing to R.S. Horrell:

"to have him struggling with Death in all its horrors, yelling about foul fiends and bats' wings, with starting eyes and rattles in his throat, is a ghastly, sickening, hideous end, with no beauty, no moral, nothing in it but a repulsive and most painful idea" (25 November 1840, Letters, II, 155).

The physical and mental torment of Dickens's drunkard is used for an overtly moral purpose: his mental decay is the consequence of his own selfishness. Later in his writing career, Dickens more subtly explored the cause of various forms of mental aberration although still conveying its effects by dramatic means. Even in his maturity, Dickens's treatment of this theme underscored his moral values.

18. In Dickens and the Short Story, (p. 18), Deborah Thomas has argued that the "artistically extraneous paragraph about the potentially delirious ravings of a dying person and their potentially maddening effect on a listener" corroborates Dickens's preoccupation with this topic in "The Drunkard's Death".

19. See Axton, p. 78.

20. Confusion over mistaken identity is caused because Mr. Winkle's coat has been borrowed in his absence, in an incident which comically reinforces the tale's contrasting themes of appearance and reality.

21. Dickens's description of the wild behaviour of Hawk and his friends is reminiscent of earlier descriptions of crowd activities at Jacob's island (see above p. 101), prefiguring the wild nature of later mob scenes in A Tale of Two Cities (see below p. 191), as Dickens evokes an atmosphere that is diabolical, hot and frenzied. Here men are "wild, burning with wine," with "blood boiling" and "brains on fire", "mad", and Dickens writes: "In that giddy whirl of noise and confusion the men were delirious". His use of some vocabulary (as in "Savage", "parched", "scalding", "cracked with thirst"), conveys the atmosphere of this scene by means of overstatement as Dickens describes figures who are disorderly and destructive (swearing, cursing, roaring, waving bottles, dancing, singing and raving), for "Tumult and frenzy reigned supreme". The scene is memorable, not for its particularisation of detail, but for its effective use of abstract descriptions ("some mounted... tables... some danced... some tore the cards"), creating a suitable backcloth for the quarrel between Hawk and Verisopht. As Dickens focuses on the conflict between these characters, which is theatrically conveyed: "His passion was so great that he could not articulate, but stood clenching his fist, tearing his hair, and stamping upon the ground", the behaviour of the wild revellers becomes less significant. As in his portrayal of the crowd in Oliver Twist, whose activity became of secondary importance as Dickens focused attention on Sikes's suicide, so he concentrrates attention on

the central action in this scene in Nicholas Nickleby. In both episodes, the intense energy of such wild, disordered groups of figures help to interpret and set the scene for the central action Dickens depicts.

22. Russell Brain notes that the "elation, grandiosity, flight of ideas, amorousness, and loose paranoid delusions" shown by this character are typical of "chronic hypomania" (p. 133), although for Dickens, the cause of this character's malady is less important than its effects.

23. Exemplified in chapter 13, where Mr. F's Aunt "struck into the conversation like a clock", proclaiming that "The monument near London Bridge... was put up arter the Great Fire of London".

24. Michael Slater, Dickens and Women, pp. 16-17. It has been remarked that Mrs. Nickleby's characterisation may reflect some of the unfavourable qualities of Dickens's own mother (ibid., p. 17), and several critics, including Hollington, have noted the possibility of "some personal malice" in his portrayal of Mrs. Nickleby (referring to Letters, I, 15n. for some of the evidence for and against this view (see Michael Hollington, Dickens and the Grotesque, p. 71)). Mrs. Dickens does not seem to have identified with such character traits however, as she is reported to have asked if Dickens "really believed there ever was such a woman" (Letters, IV, 5).

It is possible that the grudge which Dickens bore because of his unfortunate experiences in the blacking warehouse ("I never afterwards forgot, I never shall forget, I never can forget, that my mother was warm for my being sent back" (Forster, p. 35)), coloured Dickens's portrayal of Mrs. Nickleby's character. Mrs. Nickleby, one of a vast array of inadequate mother figures portrayed in Dickens's novels, persistently fails to support her son, illustrated in chapter 20. While she proves impressionable - and easily influenced by the villainous Ralph Nickleby for example, Miss La Creevy is typical of a number of unlikely mother-substitutes proving more dependable and loyal than many of the mothers portrayed by Dickens in his novels. Mrs. Nickleby's frailty is clearly highlighted by the bizarre antics of the madman in Nickleby. Hollington has perceptively commented that in her speech "one thing leads to another by a curious sequential logic essentially parallel to the strange transitions and juxtapositions of the city environment".

25. The reader takes on the role of audience, observing the madman's effect on Mrs. Nickleby and her reactions to him. Thus, for example, she declares that although her "eyes are not very good", she espies "another large vegetable - marrow" (ch. 37), and is also described "communing with herself" (and the audience) in her room: a scene in which she is given clear stage directions (looking in her dressing glass, walking backward a few steps or extinguishing her candle).

Dickens dramatically uses the method of contrast to highlight Mrs. Nickleby's naivety, for when Nicholas Nickleby hears of this neighbour's antics, he is amazed, annoyed and mildly amused by the madman he dismisses as an "Absurd old idiot" (ch. 37) - quite an apt description, although Michael Slater berates his "boring accuracy" (Introduction to Penguin edition of Nickleby, rpt. 1986, p. 22).

In the chapter "Containing some Romantic Passages between Mrs. Nickleby and the Gentleman in the Small-Clothes next Door", Dickens successfully illuminates Mrs. Nickleby's ignorance about Smike's love for her daughter, although his readers have, ironically, been made aware of this state of affairs. Her rambling account of numerous suitors provides a fine dramatic introduction which precedes the amorous, athletic gestures of her crazed neighbour. The figure of this madman is dramatically conceived, evident in his speech ("Queen of my soul... this goblet sip!") and in stage directions (as he folds his hands, climbs a step higher, or leans his elbows on the wall).

26. The means by which Dickens introduces this figure conveys a sense of dislocation and disconnection, as he describes "an old velvet black cap", "a very large head, and an

old face", "a pair of most extraordinary grey eyes... rolling in their sockets with a dull, languishing, leering look".

27. As Hollington remarks (in Dickens and the Grotesque, p. 71), he is a "London madman, his disordered speech full of the London streets in which confusion also reigns".

28. Evident, for example, when this crazed figure sings the romantic air "Has she then failed in her truth, the beautiful maid I adore" in tones described with Dickens's overstatement as those "of suffocation which a human voice might have produced from under five or six feather-beds of the best quality". Dickens further exposes the incongruity between the madman's feelings and Mrs. Nickleby's perception of them. Kate's reaction to this comical situation further highlights her obtuseness: whereas Mrs. Nickleby is "deliberately sitting herself down in a chair with that sort of desperate resignation which seemed to imply that now matters had come to a crisis", Kate shows concern for the welfare of this "mad gentleman". We can only speculate how this episode would be interpreted by one consultant psychotherapist, for Dr. John Sklar of the Addenbrooke Hospital, Cambridge, is reputed to have commented that "The Father Christmas mythology closely parallels the sexual act: he comes down the chimney to the hearth - I see that as the woman - to deliver a present - obviously, that symbolises a baby" (The Observer, 20 December, 1987).

29. Evident when she declares she would rather have been a "pig-faced lady than be exposed to such a life as this!" or assumes a "kind of bashful stateliness" when she claims to have been mistaken for her daughter, or when she unkindly describes Miss La Creevy as "that poor unfortunate little old maid".

30. He also fails to perceive the cause of Smike's depression when, in the scene following this comic interlude, Dickens touches upon themes of romance and frustrated hopes.

31. Sylvère Monod, p. 159.

32. Dickens's portrayal of madness was shaped by a range of literary influences, but perhaps most notably in his earlier fiction, to the dramatic forms of melodrama, and to farce. J.B. Van Amerongen has noted of melodrama that this is a genre in which "character development with anything like psychological truth there is none; mankind is divided into the entirely good and the entirely bad; indeed the strongest and most glaring contrasts form a characteristic feature of this most popular of English dramatic productions" (p. 109). Dickens's use of farce is exemplified by the "Great Winglebury Duel" in Sketches, a comical intrigue in which feigned madness, removal to an asylum, and mistaken identities all feature as stock devices in a tale of an ageing spinster who plans an elopement. Deborah Thomas observes that this tale is one of those in the Sketches, a comical figure which reveals Dickens's growing control of the elements of fiction in the final stage of his apprentice years (p. 15). Dickens's exploration of the way in which the moral action of a character can cause madness as one effect of shock also illustrates his indebtedness to some sources from the Gothic tradition.

33. See H.P. Sucksmith, "The Secret of Immediacy: Dickens' Debt to the Tale of Terror", Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 26 (1971-2), pp. 145-157. Whereas traditional Gothic tales aroused a purely romantic sense of terror by means of vague suggestion, Sucksmith argues that the tales in Blackwood's created a more realistic sense of terror through precision of detail, as has been noted. Sucksmith observes that objects arousing horror were described with meticulous scientific accuracy, and that sensations were analysed with almost medical thoroughness in these tales. He notes that there are some obvious similarities between this tale (and also between "The Madman's Manuscript") and Warren's writing (pp. 149-50).

34. For example, the snug domestic scene in which the young physician is comfortably

seated by a "cheerful fire" in a little parlour is contrasted with the cold, wet scene outside, and by his imaginative preoccupation with the wind and cold rain. The pleasant associations evoked by his anticipated Christmas visit to dear friends, and the patient fiancée named Rose (like several of her successors in Dickens's novels), strongly contrast with the atmosphere of his unexpected visit to the veiled widow in the dreary domestic scene to which he is led. The cold, desolate little room in which a handful of fire only serves to highlight its damp atmosphere, with moisture "stealing down the walls in long, slug-like tracks" presents a striking contrast to his own snug parlour. By contrast, the physician can look forward to a happy future, while the widow's prospects seem bleak.

35. For example, he heightens our curiosity by means of the third party of the physician's errand boy, to convey a sense of alarm about a "very unusual apparition" before the widow appears to the physician, a character experiencing "infinite horror" when this figure turns "its" head in his direction. However, although successfully evoking the physician's fear, in this visually effective scene, Dickens is less successful in accounting for the purpose of this woman's visit. The plot pivots on her ability to convince us that she could not bury her son without first seeking help. Although her (rather unsatisfactory) confession is not made until near the end of the tale, Dickens attempts to sustain the reader's interest by various effects, including the mysterious use of her veil, and also by skilfully maintaining a sense of suspense until this character makes her anti-climactic confession.

36. The dismal theme of this piece is taken up in the description of the surroundings in Walworth, reflecting the hopelessness of the widow's plight: "little better than a dreary waste" with houses "of the rudest and most miserable description". The dark, marshy environment seems blighted, affecting its natural growth and fertility: "A stunted tree, or pool of stagnant water, roused into a sluggish action by the heavy rain of the preceding night, skirted the path occasionally". Its inhabitants are represented by a "filthy-looking woman", her "slipshod girl" and "sallow infant" while the whole scene is shrouded in a "cold damp mist which hung heavily over it." The physician has to plod wearily through "mud and mire" before reaching his desolate destination - the cold, damp house overlooking a sodden patch of ground outside. The symbol of the garden described here - a significant symbol throughout Dickens's novels - is used to great effect, as the small, enclosed piece of ground close to this house is "almost covered in water", contributing to the sodden atmosphere which permeates the scene.

37. Dickens dramatically creates a feeling of suspense as the physician enters this house, in descriptions of its creaking stairs, the silent appearance of the mysterious, tall, veiled woman, and the uncanny arrival of the body.

38. A figure preceding Dickens's portrayal of several tall female creations, including Lady Dedlock, who experience unfortunate circumstances in their personal lives.

39. The manuscript of this self-consciously styled autobiography of a man with a psychotic disorder, found upon the death of a "medical man" engaged in a "County Lunatic Asylum," is given to a friend, the kindly, aged clergyman from Dingley Dell, who invites Mr Pickwick to decide if it is "the genuine production of a maniac, or founded upon the ravings of some unhappy being". Although Dickens rather clumsily introduces the device of this manuscript - ("You are not really going? "said he, taking Mr Pickwick aside... "Then here... is a little manuscript, which I had hoped to have the pleasure of reading to you myself") - he successfully heightens a sense of suspense by depicting Mr Pickwick's highly suggestible state of mind. Dickens describes Pickwick reading the manuscript when he is overtaxed and unable to sleep ("Anything, he thought, was better than lying there fancying all kinds of horrors"), carefully setting the scene outside Pickwick's window (where it is "very dark" while inside it seems "very lonely"), and providing this character with stage directions (as he is shown trimming the light, or is visibly startled when it is extinguished).

William Axton, (p. 79), has compared the foolish affectation of Mr. Pickwick's archaeological expertise with the (widely differing) homicidal dementia of the maniac and the injustice shown towards the figures of Blotton and the madman's wife: "Insanity and affectation, Dickens seems to suggest, make of the world whatever their inner state demands; and this act undermines the conventional world and makes it grotesque" (p. 79) However, although Axton highlights the popular Victorian theatre's influence on Dickens's novelistic techniques, he strains the point in comparing the disparate conditions of insanity and affectation.

40. The narrative records this madman's experiences in a style which conveys the deteriorating nature of his deranged mental condition, while his initial fear of insanity is contrasted by his later recognition of its powerful influence: "Show me the monarch whose angry frown was ever feared like the glare of a madman's eye".

41. Although the form of this madman's speech is simple and direct, Dickens makes a strikingly theatrical use of exclamations to illustrate his excitability. This is illustrated by the narrative's opening paragraph, containing eight exclamations, which contributes to its staccato, hollow tone: "Ho! Ho! It's a grand thing to be mad!" or "Hurrah for the mad-house! Oh, it's a rare place!" Such emphatic patterns of speech, evident in earlier dramatic conventions, were later echoed in the ejaculations of a less menacing creation, Barnaby Rudge, exemplified in such speech as "Grip - ha, ha, ha! - Brave Grip, who cares for nothing, and when the wind rolls him over in the dust turns manfully to bite it... Ha, Ha, Ha!"

42. Although he experiences violent urges, "all the power and half the will" to plunge a knife into his friend's heart, the narrative notes that he "could have screamed with ecstasy" at his skill in deception. His pleasure at the prospect of inflicting pain is characteristic of other villainous figures, such as Quilp or Squeers. "Oh, the pleasure of stropping the razor day by day, feeling the sharp edge, and thinking of the gash one stroke of its thin, bright edge would make!"

43. The paranoid tendencies of this character are illustrated by his anxiety that others were talking about him, and he experiences vivid dreams of "Large dusty forms, with sly and jeering faces" crouching in the corner of his room, tempting him "to madness" - a feature reminiscent of the drunken clown's hallucinations in Dickens's earlier tale. Like the maddened figure in the "Drunkard's Death", his grandfather's grandfather had tried to tear himself to pieces. That his grandfather too had committed suicide "in raging madness" underscores Dickens's familiarity with one popular view of hereditary madness and its association with self-destruction. It is intriguing that he described the condition in an early novel, for he later indicated concern about its potential effects on his readership.

44. Evident in his description as "Strange feelings came over me and thoughts, forced upon me by some secret power, whirled round and round my brain", and, "At last the old spirits who had been with me so often before whispered in my ear that the time was come". In the case of this particular madman, however, his outer appearance does not fully reflect his inner condition, and Dickens explores the theme earlier reflected in the "Stroller's Tale" of the complex relationship between seeming and being, between appearance and reality. Dickens also uses this figure's deceptive appearance to illuminate moral hypocrisy in other characters.

45. Later exemplified by the Lammles in Our Mutual Friend.

46. Evident in such phrases as "Damn you", said I, starting up and rushing upon him; "I killed her. I am a madman. Down with you. Blood, blood! I will have it!"

47. Illustrated in such a phrase as 'Stay, if they had known it, would they have saved her?"'

48. One of the tale's most striking visual images is found in the description of the statuesque, ghostly figure of the madman's dead wife:

> "I see, standing still and motionless... a slight and wasted figure with long black hair, which, streaming down her back, stirs with no earthly wind, and eyes that fix their gaze on me".

Use of the present tense provides this account with a sense of immediacy, and particularisation of detail evokes a vivid picture of her pale face and glassy eyes. As the madman prepares to murder her, Dickens's description of his sleeping wife (her face buried in her hands, the wet cheeks, the calm, placid expression, her tranquil smile and pale features), while slowing down the pace of the plot's action, also dramatically heightens its sense of suspense. Her role in this narrative is swiftly terminated with the onset of her madness, resulting from the shock caused by her attempted murder - a conventional device in sensation novels, as we have noted.

Dickens does not describe her stereotypical reaction to shock with any attention to detail, since he is dramatically highlighting the effects of her behaviour: "Uttering shriek upon shriek, she sunk upon the ground", and "she lay bereft of animation for hours, and when life, look and speech returned, her senses had deserted her, and she raved wildly and furiously". His writing makes effective use of irony when the madman is advised to place her under restraint, although such action is unnecessary as, in the tradition of some sensation novels, her sudden death swiftly follows her experience of madness. Finally, the madman is confined in a dark cell, persecuted by the constant vision of his dead wife's "pale form".

49. The effects of this exterior force are manifest in sound and movement: his "wild shout" (taken up by "strange beings" flocking around him on every side) "swelled the sound till it pierced the air," while his description of being "borne upon the arms of demons, who swept along upon the wind" and spun him "round and round with a rustle and a speed that made my head swim, until at last they threw me from them with a violent shock" is reminiscent of the forceful effects of Legion's experience of insanity. However, although he perceives that his mental instability is inflicted by a diabolic force, unlike the figure of Legion, he is not freed from this malign influence.

50. Angus Easson, "Dickens, Household Words, and a Double Standard", The Dickensian, 60 (1964), 106.

51. Dickens's use of dramatic devices is illustrated in the highly theatrical denouement scene in which the madman's insanity is exposed in a set-piece: '"You villain," said I, "I found you out; I discovered your hellish plots against me,"' and '"Down with you. Blood, blood! I will have it!"' He also provides clear stage directions ("He looked uneasily around him... He jumped suddenly from his chair... I turned aside," and "a crowd of people rushed forward, crying aloud to each other to secure the madman").

52. The predominance of mad male characters in his novels was not, however, based on contemporary trends in the incidence of insanity (noted in chapter 2), while the sources from which he drew portrayed a wide variety of insane women. For Dickens, however, women more often played their most significant role as wives, daughters, mothers, sisters or aunts: their familial relationship to other characters is often of importance, while the scope of their influence is usually (although not always) more limited than that of the menfolk in Dickens's novels. There are fewer villainesses than villains in the Dickens world, perhaps because most of his women are more powerless than his men, and consequently insanity as the result of villainy is a theme explored less frequently in female characters. Because his womenfolk are less often corrupted by moral failings than his males, figures such as Mrs. Gamp, or Mrs. Brown, or Emily, or Martha are all the more notable. For further discussion concerning Dickens's portrayal of women, see Michael Slater, Dickens and Women.

53. Cruikshank has starkly depicted the criminal's sense of fear and panic in his

illustration "Fagin in the Condemned Cell". Although for G.K. Chesterton, this drawing may display both baseness of subject and baseness of technique (see Charles Dickens, p. 80), this is a picture which may increase the reader's feelings of sympathy for the pathetic figure of this condemned man.

54. A.O.J. Cockshut, The Imagination of Charles Dickens, p. 82.

55. He portrays Fagin staring up with "gasping mouth and burning skin", hurrying to and fro with such "paroxysms of fear and wrath" that experienced prison attendants recoil "in horror".

56. Philip Collins, Dickens and Crime, p. 43.

57. Dickens's skilful use of dialogue is illustrated when resonances from Shakespeare's Lear convey a suitably ironic deflation of Fagin's pretence: "I am a foolish fond old man, four score and upwards", which is nicely intercepted by the turnkey's reply: "Are you a man?" Dickens's use of dramatic speech is evident in such phrases as "Strike them all dead! What right have they to butcher me?" while he uses Fagin's rambling speech as the means dramatically to convey the nature of his violent history: "Good boy, Charley - Well done... Oliver, too, ha! ha! ha! Oliver too - quite the gentleman now - quite the - take that boy away to bed... Bolter's throat, Bill; never mind the girl - Bolter's throat as deep as you can cut. Saw his head off!" The theatrical mode of laughter ("ha! ha! ha!") - expressed explicitly, rather than implicitly - is a feature in several of Dickens's mad creations, including Barnaby Rudge.

Dickens makes dramatic use of contrast as a rather crude means of highlighting Fagin's unrepentant spirit and its sad consequences, when describing the way the villainous Fagin is distractedly concentrating on escape and deception, rather than on heavenly themes: "Yes, Yes," returned Oliver, "Let me say a prayer. Do!... say only one, upon your knees..." "Outside, outside", replied Fagin, pushing the boy before him... " Say I've gone to sleep - they'll believe you. You can get me out". Oliver's tears are perceived by Fagin as an aid to his own deception, however: "That's right... That'll help us on".

58. According to Forster, Dickens became visibly excited during his reading tours when reading this scene aloud to an audience, and Angus Wilson comments that "'The Nancy Scene' was an immediate triumph of horror with the public; and very nearly his own death warrant from the nervous effect it produced" (p. XI). G.K. Chesterton evocatively described the "ghastly joy" with which he first read about Sikes and his flight - with a mixture of appetite and repugnance, like "supping on horrors" (G.K. Chesterton, Charles Dickens, London: Methuen, ch. V, p. 810).

59. In comparison, Dickens's description of the "reflection of the pool of gore that quivered and danced in the sunlight on the ceiling" is more generalised, more impressionistic, but rather less effective.

60. The narrative observes that he dashes to help "as madly as his dog" when he becomes feverishly active in fire-fighting. Sucksmith is amongst one of several critics who have observed that this dog "is a projection of Sikes, almost his familiar" (p. 295).

61. It has been suggested by John Carey that this scene is a "projection of the violence and torment within Sikes" (p. 13).

62. Thus, for example, he is "never ceasing to engage himself wherever noise and men were thickest", scaling up and down ladders: "in every part of that great fire was he".

63. Some aspects of the scene which symbolically underlines Sikes's association with evil and destruction - earlier conveyed in his moral failure - are later recalled in Barnaby Rudge, and also by Reade's treatment of the memorable fire in Hard Cash (where "wild, weird forms, with glaring eyes and matted hair, leaped out and ran into the hall, and laughed, and danced, and cursed in the lurid reflection of the fires above",

and when "Hell seemed discharging demons"). For Dickens's treatment of a similar scene, see below A Tale of Two Cities (pp. 194-195.

64. In Dickens Centennial Essays, ed. Ada Nisbet and Blake Nevius (Berkeley & Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1971), Barbara Hardy has explored Sikes's flight as a fine example of Dickens's "multiple expressiveness of passion" (pp. 72-75). Hardy notes: "The events themselves are highly vivid and exciting: the pursuit, the flight, the fire, the trap, the death. But the inner register is also exciting and especially so for not being simple or predictable" (p. 72).

65. Geoffrey Thurley notes that "The pressure of the extreme experience forces him into an awareness of his need for human society and companionship" (Thurley, The Dickens Myth, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 47-8

66. As Sikes resumes his solitary journey, a very different crowd of people surround him, one of whom suggests that Sikes's refuge should be set alight. There are some obvious parallels between these two crowd scenes, in the noise, the scurrying activity of the crowd, and the mention of ladders in both narratives. The role of the crowd in Jacob's Island is, however, clearly most menacing, reflecting the forceful, uncontrolled nature of the earlier conflagration itself.

67. Its commitment to tracing the principle of "Good surviving through every adverse circumstance" has already been observed. Nancy is one character who may have been described as "out of her senses" and "stark raving mad" by Sikes (ch. 44), but this merely underlines his reaction to a passionate outburst, described in dramatic, visual effects (as she places "both hands upon her breast, as though to keep down by force some violent outbreak", or stamps her foot).

Bet's emotional reaction as she identifies Nancy's body (also described by a third-party, in dramatic terms) is, however, perceived by Chitling amongst others, to indicate a form of mental instability: she "went off mad, screaming and raving, and beating her head against the boards; so they put a strait-weskut on her and took her to the hospital" (ch. 50), though Kags lacks interest in her plight, immediately enquiring: "Wot's come of young Bates?".

Oliver Twist's father is reported by Monks to have suffered extreme mental agitation on at least one occasion when one of his letters "ran on, wildly, in the same words, over and over again, as if he had gone distracted" (ch. 51), while Monks darkly added "I believe he had", although the reader has little information about this shadowy character and the difficulties he experiences.

68. This is a novel in which Dickens also describes another form of madness resulting from shock when Madeline Bray suffers an illness which has "threatened her reason" in chapter 55 (p. 822) - a device used to convey the effects of a character's (Ophelia-like) inability to come to terms with sudden or unexpected events.

69. Dickens conveys this villain's "sheer wild lunacy" through highly theatrical, melodramatic gestures, as Ralph is gnashing his teeth, or smiting the air.

70. In the midst of a shouting, singing group of drunken men, "in high good-humour", Ralph spots a "little, weazen, hump-backed man" who began to dance: "He was a grotesque, fantastic figure, and the few bystanders laughed. Ralph himself was moved to mirth."

71. Evidence of his stagey, melodramatic role is found as he "looked wildly round with eyes which gleamed through the darkness", or in his speech: "I am trampled down and ruined". Robin Gilmour has aptly observed that Dickens's early novels are "unabashedly melodramatic in mode, none more so than Nicholas Nickleby" (p. 87).

72. Harry Stone, p. 83. For Stone, Ralph's suicide is a "self-judgment": he notes that

in Dickens's novels (and "most emphatically and unambiguously in his early ones"), the "forces of good rally toward the end and assert their primacy."

73. See chapter 2 for a description which describes the essence of this garden with its contents of a "distorted fir-tree" which is rotting away in a tub (p. 67).

74. He "remembered, when a child, to have had frequently before him the figure of some goblin he had once seen chalked upon a door" - a detail which may have been drawn from Dickens's own childhood experiences (see Carey, p. 122, and a reference in the Penguin edition, p. 974).

75. Outlined in the question "Is there no devil to help me?" as he refers to the selling and bartering of souls.

76. Some of Ralph's bodily gestures hint at this hidden potential and also inner contradictions illustrated when he "smiled involuntarily" in chapter 44 (p. 661), and expressed in his nervous facial tics (ch. 56), or on the occasion when his face was "convulsed and changed by the passions which raged within him" (ch. 54): see Angus Easson's "Emotion and Gesture in Nicholas Nickleby", Dickens Quarterly, V (1988), 136-151, for further discussion. Such descriptions may hint that Ralph is assuming a role, or playing a part. Dickens has portrayed another character in this novel who is playing a part, in Fanny Squeers. However, unlike Ralph Nickleby, she seems to experience a sense of self-confidence. Despite her apparent physical ugliness, her father clearly boosts her morale (illustrated when she is arguing with John Browdie, when her father "looked sideways at her, as much as to say, "'There you had him'" (ch. 42, p. 637)). Dickens's description of the house of this usurer could be compared with that of Isaac the Jew's counting house in Scott's Ivanhoe, with its palace at the rear illustrating the powerful myth concerning the nature of such usurers.

77. Dickens notes (in chapter 2) that "He knew nobody round about and nobody knew him" (p. 65).

78. Such an isolated state contrasts many of the snug, domestic interiors peopled by cheerful families (such as the Traddles's cramped but cosy quarters).

79. On occasion, Ralph has treated Noggs "as if he were his dog" when the clerk has (significantly) "slunk away"; Nicholas tends to treat Smike with kindness, although he is sometimes rather patronising. The villainous Ralph is negative and dehumanising, in comparison with Oliver, and Dickens has subtly used the apparent mental infirmity of such characters as Noggs and Smike as a means of highlighting sight and insight in others.

80. He feels that he can achieve "victory" by that "heap of clay which with one motion of its hand had let out the life and made this stir among them."

81. See Barbara Hardy, The Moral Art of Dickens (London: Athlone Press, 1970), for discussion about the change of heart in some of Dickens's creations.

82. He uses specific details (evident in some tales of terror (as noted in chapter 2)), as a means to evoke a sense of suspense, when Ralph recollects the suicidal man's corpse with its "rigid, upturned, marble feet", whilst Ralph also considers the impact of such a death, "the pale and trembling relatives... the shrieks of women - the silent dread of men - the consternation and disquiet" (p. 905).

83. As Sikes had thrown his arms above his head, Ralph shakes his clenched hand at the darkly lowering sky, and, while an old chimney quivered with shock at Sikes's death, chimneys "quaked and rocked" with rain and hail at Ralph's death, also. Both death

scenes are memorable for their theatrical qualities, evident in the speech of the principal figures: "'The eyes again!'" he cried in an unearthly screech'" and 'Lie on!' cried the usurer, 'with your iron tongue! Ring merrily..... No bell or book for me; throw me on a dunghill, and let me rot there to infect the air!'".

84. Ralph fears that he has been followed by an ominous portent - a black cloud - and the sky appears "dark and threatening" (p. 906), while rain and hail are pattering against the window.

85. Some people in this mob, for example, are expressing the "ecstasy of madmen" (p. 449).

86. Thus "all waved to and fro, in the darkness beneath, like a field of corn moved by an angry wind", and they "began to pour round, pressing upon each other in an unbroken stream", a "current of angry faces" which "poured on" until the "stream abruptly turned".

87. He describes the mob's "wrath and passion" and also its violence (when windows are torn out), while people are shown "crushing and striving" with their neighbours, or "panting" with impatience, or "pressed almost to suffocation", or "trampled down and trodden under foot": images which highlight the crowd's bestiality.

88. Carey, p. 13. Dickens later used imagery relating to fire and animals when expressing the dangerous, irrational impulses of such a passionate figure as Rosa Dartle, while Emily's role in Copperfield was interwoven with the cruel, destructive sea. While Dickens is fascinated by the energy unleashed by crowd activity, the effects of such behaviour in a crowd (as in the example of the passionate behaviour of Emily or Rosa) proves ultimately destructive.

89. He noted that "The striking peculiarity of Jacob's Island consists in the wooden galleries and sleeping-rooms at the back of the houses which overhang the dark ditch that stagnates beside them...

As I passed along the reeking banks of the sewer, the sun shone upon a narrow slip of water. In the bright light it appeared the colour of strong green tea... and YET, I WAS ASSURED THIS WAS THE ONLY WATER THE WRETCHED INHABITANTS HAD TO DRINK". H. Mayhew, "Home is Home, Be it Never so Homely", in Meliora, First series, ed. C.J.C. Talbot (Cass, 1971), pp. 258-80.

90. "In Jacob's Island, the warehouses are roofless and empty, the walls are crumbling down; the windows are windows no more; the doors are falling into the streets; the chimneys are blackened, but they yield no smoke".

91. Illustrated by the scene in David Copperfield, (chapter 47), when Martha gazed into the water amidst a scene permeated by images of dank decay, disease, pollution and hopelessness. See John Carey, p. 49, for a discussion concerning such "junk-littered Dickensian wastelands".

Chapter Six

Victims and Catalysts: DIckens's Use of Madness in Barnaby Rudge, Mr Dick and Miss Havisham

In his early novels, Dickens had portrayed madness as a punishment for various forms of moral failure, including egotism. He had also explored the use of insanity as a means of highlighting the impact of a character's reaction to adverse circumstances. By imaginative association, insanity had commonly been linked, in his early writing, with aspects of destruction and death. Although, on occasion, making use of its sensational effects, Dickens had also begun to explore the comic potential of the theme, evident in his highly effective description of the antics of Mrs. Nickleby's neighbour: a figure whose role not only challenges conventional expectations, but also indirectly exposes the moral failings of other characters in Nicholas Nickleby. As Dickens matured as a novelist, however, he explored a wider variety of the causes and effects of the condition, his experimentation reflected by a more varied use of symbols and metaphors of madness. In Barnaby Rudge, Dickens experimented with a sustained treatment of the effects of insanity upon one character, portrayed as a victim of circumstance, whilst depicting the potential of another mad figure as a catalyst in David Copperfield's Mr Dick, whose role effects significant changes in this novel's plot, and illuminates sentiments (later expressed in Tennyson's "Maud") that "It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the

ill". In Miss Havisham, he was to create a character who was herself a victim, yet exerted a malign, controlling influence on the lives of others.

After considering ways in which The Old Curiosity Shop prefigures Dickens's later treatment of the theme, and examining his experimentation with aspects of insanity in Barnaby Rudge, David Copperfield and Great Expectations, this chapter will explore ways in which madness as a metaphor for human frailty, was to prove a rich and fertile source of invention in these novels. In Barnaby Rudge, Mr Dick, and Miss Havisham, Dickens explored the destructive and constructive potential of the condition in his characterisation - and met with a very mixed response from his readership. While Dickens later underscored, as we have noted, the importance of individual action, together with the need for social interdependence, it will become apparent in the chapter which follows, that in certain key novels, his thematic treatment of madness reinforced sentiments expressed by Thomas Hood (published in the Athenaeum, 22 Jan. 1842), that "It is a common but dangerous error to attribute all moral to mental obliquities."

In The Old Curiosity Shop, it is observed that "Everything in our lives, whether of good or evil, affects us most by contrast" (p. 493), Dickens's striking use of contrast - a literary device used also with great effect in Nicholas Nickleby - proving a significant feature in his portrayal of insanity in this subsequent novel.[1] Here, Dickens has described madness both as an individual and corporate malady, in several different forms. His presentation of gambling as one form of moral madness[2] was, by now, a familiar theme, although its potentially destructive effects on a character - in this case on Nell's grandfather - are dealt with in a more sustained manner than afforded by earlier glimpses of its effects in Nickleby. His portrayal of other aspects of insanity and its interrelationship with poverty in the causation of mob violence prefigures his later treatment of the theme. Carlyle's "Chartism" (published in December 1839) drew attention to public concern over the effects of the New Poor Law and the Chartist Movement - a theme reflected in a number of novels, including Mrs. Gaskell's Mary Barton, Charles Kingsley's Yeast (1848) and Disraeli's Sybil (1845), a novel in which

attention was drawn to the rift developing between the rich and the poor - the "Two Nations". In his novels, Dickens too explored various causes for discontent amongst working folk - a significant theme in A Tale of Two Cities - and in Barnaby Rudge, he began to uncover some of the potential of this subject.

In The Old Curiosity Shop, he depicts a dismal, drab landscape in the Midlands,[3] using broad, impressionistic strokes to paint a desolate backcloth against which one form of crowd violence occurs. With use of familiar natural images, recurrent in his description of crowds, he highlights the potential in a crowd's strength and vigour in chapter 44, when comparing its movement to the sea at high tide. He pays little specific attention to the grievances of the inhabitants of the desolate environment,[4] though crudely illustrating the way their discontent leads some men to wild acts of violence. Some scenes from the novel are reminiscent of nightmare-like scents described in Carlyle's "Chartism", conveying the hellish, wretched effects of manufacturing industries, the narrative questioning whether the operatives in Glasgow experience "a green flowery world, with azure everlasting sky stretched over it, the work and government of a God; or a murky - simmering Tophet, of copperas-fumes, cotton-fuzz, gin - riot, wrath and toil, created by a Demon, governed by a Demon?"[5] Dickens too describes a hell-like landscape, in which inhabitants live in miserable half-dismantled houses, tending shrieking machines which seem to writhe like "tortured creatures".[6] He poetically interweaves a description of the effects of this environment when depicting a night scene, making particularly skilful use of repetition ("night, when... night, when... night, when") in an account of the suffering experienced by its inhabitants. While the novel's illustration of the maddened men, marching in the darkness and waving firebrands, prefigures in some of its visual details, a later mob scene in Barnaby Rudge,[7] the interrelationship between suffering and the expression of maddened mob violence was a theme later explored more fully in A Tale of Two Cities.

In The Old Curiosity Shop, Dickens begins to explore an interrelationship between moral values and insanity, but it is Barnaby Rudge which provides a rather more remarkable experimentation in its sustained treatment of insanity. In Barnaby Rudge,

Dickens's decision to probe the cause and effects of insanity as a central theme was to present him with considerable challenges, and some problems which he was unable to resolve.[8] In this novel above all others, Dickens was to illustrate the harrowing effects of the "most dreadful visitation" upon one socially insignificant family, comparing and contrasting the experience of Barnaby Rudge with that of another naive but powerful figure, Lord George Gordon. Barnaby Rudge traces the chain of social reactions caused by the attitudes and actions of several individuals, the theme of insanity permeating the very texture of the novel. Yet despite its careful construction,[9] varied subject-matter, changes in pace and tempo, sustained character portrayal, effective use of contrast, and its comic invention, there is a flatness about the novel Barnaby Rudge which is puzzling. In this, one of Dickens's least religious novels, there was to be little hope or healing for either Barnaby or Gordon amongst other characters, and the novel concludes in a minor key, reminiscent of the tonal quality of The Old Curiosity Shop. Dickens's portrayal of madness, central to the novel's construction in Barnaby Rudge, conveys more of Dickens's consciousness of the malign influence of evil than of the assurance of divine grace.[10]

Edgar Allen Poe expressed the view shared by several of Dickens's contemporaries when he observed: "We think that the whole book has been an effort to him, solely through the nature of its design. He has been smitten with an untimely desire for a novel path".[11] Barnaby Rudge has aptly been described as Dickens's first "projected novel",[12] a book which he had in mind for at least five years prior to its publication,[13] although he clearly found that the weekly publication of his novel imposed considerable constraints on his creativity.[14] While Dickens assured Forster that he was "always sure" that he could "make a good thing of Barnaby" ("I think you'll find that it comes out strong to the last word... I am in great heart and spirits with the story" (Letters, I, 345)), the tale which Forster described as "Dickens's first attempt out of the sphere of the life of the day and its actual manners" (II, IX),[15] is undermined by its anti-climatic conclusion. Far from being "strong to the last word", it clearly tails off at the end, and it

seems to have attracted little discussion or enthusiasm from contemporary reviews.[16] Even Forster, while hailing the fact that "The story is told with a purpose: the characteristic of all his later writings", had to acknowledge grave defects in the narrative: "The interest with which the story commences, has ceased to be the interest before it closes" (Examiner, 4 December 1841, 772; cf. Life, 169-70), and it has been noted that the novel's purpose was not in any case much regarded (Collins, p. 92).

The subject of the Gordon riots had, however, clearly captured Dickens's imagination, for he wrote: "No account of the Gordon Riots having been to my knowledge introduced into any Work of Fiction, and the subject presenting very extraordinary and remarkable features, I was led to project this Tale"[17] - presumably unaware that Thomas Gaspey had earlier described the riots in The Mystery or, Forty Years Ago, published in 1820. Although Dickens has often been criticised because he lacks subtlety in his historical analysis,[18] there is evidence that he had referred to several sources in researching this subject,[19] and he was keen to assure his readers to this effect. In Dickens's statement that his account is "substantially correct" in its accuracy (a phrase reminiscent of his "IT IS TRUE" in Oliver Twist's preface), he claims that "In the description of the principal outrages, reference has been had to the best authorities of that time" (Preface to the "Charles Dickens" Edition, 1868). Nonetheless, Dickens's objectives in recounting this tale - however well-researched - are clearly moral in nature, and his material is used to illustrate the way in which "those shameful tumults", whilst reflecting "indelible disgrace" upon the time in which they occurred, and their participants, "teach a good lesson". His moral viewpoint clearly affected his portrayal of insanity, and also his portrayal of religion in the novel, for he argues that what is falsely called a "religious cry" is easily raised by irreligious men "who in their daily practice set at nought the commonest principles of right and wrong". One of Dickens's contemporaries noted that "Dickens will lose popularity with the saints, for he too faithfully exposes cant", further observing that Dickens has portrayed an excellent picture of the riots which "has poetical truth whether it be historical or not".[20] Dickens is keen to warn his readers against the effects of intolerance and persecution.[21]

that it is "senseless, besotted, inveterate and merciful; all History teaches us", but suggests that his readership may "profit by even so humble an example as the 'No Popery' riots of Seventeen Hundred and Eighty".

Barnaby Rudge is a study of human frailty - a theme and subject illustrated by the novel's two central figures, both shown to be mentally inadequate in different ways, and taken up in its microscomic portrayal of family life and macrocosmic portrait of mob activities. Few characters are capable of distinguishing between the rational and irrational urges of Gordon, and Barnaby's role also highlights the weaknesses of various characters in the novel. By casting an inadequate leader and a crazed follower at the heart of the novel, Dickens has provided opportunities for exploring some interesting parallels.[22] Both characters are ungainly and awkward, often lacking in common sense, and suggestible (shown when Barnaby is taken in by Stagg's falsehoods, and when Gordon is influenced by Grueby), and both are child-like in their naivety.[23] Barnaby is an asexual creation, and, although Gordon was to attract at least one appealing female (described in Chapter the Last), women do not play a large part in his life.

Unlike Barnaby, however, Gordon is a privileged member of society, wielding a great deal of power, and although he seems mentally confused at times, he is much less incapacitated than Barnaby. Gordon experiences a lonely fate, as, finally deserted by his former friends and "treated in all respects like the worst criminal in a jail", he expires in his prison cell at the early age of forty three. Dickens adopts a more romantic mode of discourse when portraying Barnaby in Chapter the Last, however, as a blithe and happy soul, "popular with young and old" who finally settles into a quiet, rural lifestyle with his mother.[24] The portrayal of Barnaby as a St. Francis-like figure "known to every bird and beast about the place" rambling and roaming about the countryside (rather like Wordsworth's Idiot Boy),[25] strongly contrasts with Gordon's confined figure at the close of the novel. For an insane character such as Barnaby, the conventional wedding with which many of Dickens's novels were concluded would have been out of the question: Barnaby is a child-like, sexless creation, while sexuality is an attribute of adulthood. Although some simpletons in Dickens's works are married (such

as Mr Toots in Dombey and Son), such characters seem less deranged than Barnaby, who is primarily attached to his mother. In this novel, Dickens's expression of passion and energy are not found in such a character as Barnaby, but in his handling of the riots, as will become apparent.

Dickens had taken a bold step in casting two mentally confused characters at the heart of the riots in this novel (Forster having discouraged him from having three madmen leading the fray), and an even bolder step in introducing Barnaby to Gordon in the memorable but uneasy scene in chapter 57. While Barnaby shows a childish pleasure at meeting his hero, Gordon is discomfited by Barnaby and his pet raven. Gordon's gestures express the inner uncertainty of this vague character, a figure given to childish outburst, who seems unable to separate the complexities of his own internal world from external reality.[26] Dickens ironically highlights Gordon's own shortcomings by using Barnaby's mental incapacity as a point of reference, his skilful use of irony illustrated in the scene in which Gordon asks John Grueby whether Barnaby's manner "was at all wild or strange". In replying, Grueby uses his own intuitive rule of thumb as he bluntly explains how Barnaby's gestures and appearance reflect his inner mental state ("look at his dress, look at his eyes, look at his restless way, hear him cry 'No Popery!' Mad, My lord"). The description of Gordon's angry reaction and telling gesture (as, with nicety of detail, Dickens describes him "glancing at himself"), are particularly effective because of Dickens's use of contrast: while Grueby, having stoutly affirmed that such a character is "stark, staring, raving, roaring mad", proves "unmoved", Gordon turns sharply on him, perceiving his statement as a personal insult. Grueby's practical advice that Barnaby should seek safety is contrasted by Gordon's fanciful, unrealistic appraisal of the situation and of Barnaby's character. Gordon's idiosyncrasy is effectively underscored by use of irony ("Let us see who will venture to attack a power like ours... This a madman!... I am proud to be the leader of such men as you"). Grueby is, of course, rather a clumsy creation on the whole, whose rhetorical function in illuminating Gordon's shortcomings also underscores, on this occasion, here the way in which Gordon's speech is shot through with irony. One telling

result of Gordon's leadership, in persuading Barnaby to stay at his post, is illustrated for the reader in the ensuing scene in which Barnaby is captured by soldiers.

Aspects of Gordon's characterisation may seem reminiscent of Cervantes's portrait of Don Quixote,[27] yet although Cervantes's hero had some seemingly bizarre notions concerning chivalry throughout much of Don Quixote,[28] at the end of the novel, he declares "My judgement is now clear and free from the misty shadows of ignorance" (p. 935), and "I was mad, but I am sane now" (p. 938) - however this news is received by his readers. Gordon by contrast, is a character who has difficulty in separating dreams from reality in rather a different way: unlike Don Quixote, whose confusion arises over the chivalric code and ideals, Gordon is clearly uncertain about his sense of purpose, skilfully illustrated by means of a gesture which also indicates the way in which he is easily influenced by Gashford.[29] The subtlety with which Dickens describes Gashford's gestures demonstrates the way in which, as a novelist, Dickens was developing the ability to hint at nuances with great sensitivity (shown when, "Apparently quite unconscious" of Gordon's embarrassment, the "wily secretary stepped a little apart, under pretence of pulling up the window-blind", speaking only when Gordon had fully recovered himself, his actions as he seems to turn his attention to external objects (the watch and the window-blind) conveying the disparity between Gashford's inner motivation and outer appearance). Here, Dickens has experimented with a narrative device of separating out certain characteristics of one character (Gordon) and expressing them in another creation (Gashford). By means of such a device, he explores Gordon's irresponsibility and its evil effects. It is suggested that Orlick's relationship with Pip provides a further exploration of this device in Great Expectations,[30] and that, through Orlick, a "distorted and darkened mirror-image" of Pip (Moynahan, p. 108), some aspects of criminality were displaced from the hero, the complex unity of these two characters representing a penetrating exploration of guilt. However, in contrast to Gordon, Barnaby proves loyal to the cause,[31] whereas Gordon's wavering sense of purpose and commitment is clearly apparent.

As a literary device, Barnaby Rudge serves as a touchstone, and the reaction of a range of characters (including Gordon, Grueby, Hugh and Jo) towards his mental limitations, proves revealing. It is, for example, the character of Hugh who, in the "madness of his humours", originally stations Barnaby at the front of the marching mob. Hugh deceives Barnaby by appealing to his child-like fascination with items of adornment, promising for Mrs. Rudge a "grand house all hung round with gold and silver banners", and for Gordon's followers, "money, cocked hats and feathers, red coats and gold lace". Barnaby's response to this manipulative figure ("kind Hugh") may underline his gullibility, but Hugh's behaviour towards the deranged Barnaby has highlighted his deception.

Dickens nicely highlights the way in which Barnaby's character also contrasts with that of Mr Dennis in the scene (in chapter 49), in which Barnaby searches for his mother:

> "Why, what palaver's this?" asked Mr Dennis with supreme disdain. "We ain't got no sentimental members among us, I hope."
>
> "Don't be uneasy, brother," cried Hugh, "he's only talking of his mother".
>
> "Of his what? "said Mr Dennis with a strong oath..."The notion of a man's sweetheart is bad enough, but a man's mother!"... he spat upon the ground, and could say no more (p. 451).

Here, his comical portrayal of Dennis's blatant disregard of family affections not only illuminates the hangman's callous nature, but also touches on a significant theme in the novel - the significance of family relationships (a theme explored in Dickens's earlier fiction), and their broader social effect upon society.

Dickens further contrasts the reactions of Barnaby, Hugh and Mr Dennis in chapter 77, as they await their execution. On this occasion, Barnaby is described as a Holy Innocent[32] ("Bless you!... I'm not frightened, Hugh. I'm quite happy," and "Hugh, we shall know what makes the stars shine, *now*!"), identifying with the natural world ("he felt the influence of the bright sky, and looked up, smiling, into its deep unfathomable blue"). His simple bravery contrasts with Dennis's cowardice and Hugh's more complex

reaction, although the hangman's response is, interestingly, described with more vigorous use of language. There is a grim humour in the hangman's "Don't hang me here. It's murder" - a macabre sense of black comedy, evoking in the reader that response aptly described elsewhere as "horrid laughter". Monod, noting that "The case of a man looking at his own certain impending death is one that haunted Dickens"[33] - a feature in several of his novels - observes that there is a "tragic quality" in the scene in which Dennis's exultation over other peoples' death is transformed into his own terror. In comparison with Dennis, Barnaby is portrayed as an insipid, emblematic figure of innocence in this scene, as elsewhere too. Descriptions of Barnaby tend to lack humour (unlike those of Grip, who is a notable creation) - a trait evident in Dickens's portrayal of other emblematic figures, including the good but dull Agnes Wickfield, characters lacking the vitality of some of Dickens's comic creations.

From his first entrance into the novel, Barnaby strikes the reader as a dramatically conceived, unlikely choice as the novel's eponymous hero. Monod overstates the case when claiming "He has not a single heroic quality, being no more than an unfortunate idiot and playing no essential part" (p. 189), for he does show some bravery (even when misguided), and does play a significant (albeit secondary) role in the novel's plot. The novel's illustration of Barnaby's first appearance (p. 72) highlights his dramatic potential, for he is depicted in a slightly manic pose, feet astride, waving his ribboned stick (an emblem, significantly, replaced by a pennant later in the tale), looking dishevelled and confused. His fear of blood (a motif which Dickens takes up and interweaves in the role of Barnaby's father) illuminates Barnaby's limitations from the beginning, as he is unable to give help when needed, eliciting the comment from Varden: "Now Heaven help this silly fellow". Monod notes, with some justice, that "It can hardly be contended that Barnaby is the novel's *hero*" (p. 189), for as the plot unfolds, it becomes apparent that Joe Willet is the real hero of this novel, a character who, despite his imperfections, does develop qualities of loyalty and courage, together with the sense of moral integrity which Barnaby is unable to achieve.

While Barnaby and Joe are both characters who leave their families, for different

reasons, and become caught up in combat, Barnaby's role is more limited, as he is unable to develop and change as he matures, because he lacks the power of reason, and the ability to make responsible choices. Unlike central characters such as Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby or David Copperfield, Barnaby is unable to coherently express his thoughts, which creates a sense of nebulousness at the heart of this novel. William Faulkner later grappled with the problem of portraying a mentally retarded character in his The Sound and the Fury,[34] by conveying an impression of the world as seen through the eyes of one central figure. Dickens, however, relied on Barnaby's actions as the means to express his inner compulsions and motivation - arguably, with a limited degree of success.

Although in some respects, Dickens portrays Barnaby as a victim of circumstances, a fanciful figure [35] who lacks the discernment of other characters in the novel, his characterisation is not completely without interest. One of the most arresting facets of his portrayal is found in Dickens's description of his pet raven - an inspired stroke of comic invention. The remark that Grip's "I.Q. makes him the only fit member of the cast for companionship with Barnaby",[36] does not indicate the nature of Dickens's ingenuity in complementing Barnaby's humourlessness. Dickens himself observed that "Barnaby being an idiot, my notion is to have him always in company with a pet raven who is immeasurably more knowing than himself".[37] Dickens's imagination has clearly been captured by the creation of this bird, perhaps modelled on his own ravens whose "preternatural sagacity" is described in the 1868 Preface to the novel. The demise of one of these ravens is recorded in what must surely be one of Dickens's wittiest letters:

> Towards eleven o'clock he was so much worse that it was found necessary to muffle the stable - knocker. At half-past... he was heard talking to himself... and to add some incoherent expressions which are supposed to have been either a foreboding of his approaching dissolution, or some wishes relative to the disposal of his little property: consisting chiefly of half-pence which he had buried... in the garden. On the clock striking twelve he appeared slightly agitated... staggered, exclaimed "*Halloa, old girl!*" (his favourite expression),

and died." (Forster, Life, II, IX, pp. 165-6).

This is a description which of course gains much of its humour from the contrast between Dickens's sombre mode of discourse and the hilariously unpredictable behaviour of the raven. Grip proves similarly volatile, and the bizarre association of unrelated, incongruous ideas in this raven's chattering speech provides a rich vein of comic relief in the novel. In chapter 57, for example, Protestant protests are juxtaposed with lines from a childrens' nursery rhyme in the bird's refrain "I'm a Polly, I'm a kettle, I'm a Protestant, No Popery!", and "Never say die, bow wow wow, keep up your Spirits, Grip Grip Grip, Holloa!" (echoing here the cry of Dickens's own raven), or "We'll all have tea, I'm a Protestant kettle, no Popery!" The incongruity of these juxtaposed ideas and associations when removed from the context of their common usage, is highly comical and bizarre, in much the same way as Mr. F's aunt's refrain "There's mile-stones on the Dover road" (Little Dorrit, p. 314), is amusing when removed from any relevant context for its meaning in a conversation. At a deeper level of meaning, Grip's refrain also underscores the incoherence of the rioters, for the way in which their chants are interwoven with phrases from nursery rhymes highlights the repetitive childish quality of such chants. Dickens kaleidoscopes a series of impressions with the appearance of Lord George Gordon by means of an effective use of the singular in Grip's phrase "A devil, a kettle, a Grip, a Polly, a Protestant, no Popery!" (p. 520). There are clearly times when this raven is given a choric function. Like Barnaby, Grip has the ability to imitate without fully understanding the meaning or purpose of his actions, and, as we have seen, Barnaby proved unable to accept responsibilities from the beginning of the novel.

One of the reasons why Grip is such an effective comic device is that Dickens endows him with some human qualities (exemplified in chapter 17, when he "muttered in a sepulchral voice", sounding "more like a drunken man than a reflecting raven" (p. 193)). Grip is a singular creation, for although in Dickens's novels, several characters (particularly females) express their views in a jumbled pattern of speech, by means of an uncommon associative connection which turns from one subject to another with little conventional sense of sequence or natural progression, this is an

unusual characteristic in a bird. While figures such as Mrs. Nickleby, Flora Finching, Miss Tox and Mrs. Lirriper exemplify Dickens's comical treatment of this trait, in Bleak House, Dickens makes a more complex use of a list of word associations which on first sight seem fairly random and unconnected, when naming Miss Flite's caged birds: "Hope, Joy, Youth, Peace, Rest, Life, Dust, Ashes, Waste, Want, Ruin, Despair, Madness, Death, Cunning, Folly, Words, Wigs, Rags, Sheepskin, Plunder, Precedent, Jargon, Gammon, and Spinach". The novel reveals that the list has a deeper significance when applied to the legal system, much-criticised by the novel. In Grip's case, the incongruity between his appearance and activities is a source of comedy. Hence, in chapter 25, Grip walks up and down in a churchyard after he has dined "with an air of elderly complacency which was strongly suggestive of his having his hands under his coat tails", appearing to "read the tombstones with a very critical taste," while his hoarse cry "I'm a devil, I'm a devil, I'm a devil" is humorous because of its incongruity in a churchyard.

Although in some ways, Grip complements Barnaby Rudge, the bird's fate is interwoven with that of its master, Grip's recovery, for example, mirroring Barnaby's own gradual recovery after the riots in Chapter the Last. Similarly, while some time elapses before Barnaby regains "his old health and gaiety", Grip is also "profoundly silent" for a year, after which period of purgation, his speech notably lacks any reference to the riots. Foolish and insane figures are, of course, associated with animals elsewhere in literature, and in describing the part played by Barnaby's bird, Dickens may have been reflecting aspects of earlier traditions.[38] Shakespeare, for example, refers to Launce's dog Crab to highlight this character's sadness at leaving his home ("Now the dog all this while sheds not a tear, nor speaks a word; but see how I lay the dust with my tears", Two Gentlemen of Verona, II, III), and Sterne associates one of his characters, the "disorder'd maid" Maria, with a goat in Sentimental Journey. After this animal leaves her, proving "as faithless as her lover," she had a little dog which she keeps tied to her girdle. It is not uncommon for authors to use animals as a means of casting light on characters portrayed - Wilkie Collins later made effective use of this

device[39] - and Dickens may have derived the idea of associating a raven with an idiot from Smollett's Roderick Random ("The old man was the landlord's father, who had been an idiot some years, and diverted himself with a tame raven" (ch. 13)).[40] Having explored the potential of such a creation as Grip, Dickens later created a similarly remarkable invention in Mrs. Merdle's parrot. The choric function of Mrs. Merdle's bird is illustrated in chapter 20 of Little Dorrit, when it shrieked in the midst of Mrs. Merdle's speech and "filled up the sentence so expressively that Mrs. Merdle was under no necessity to end it", and, following her remark that "Society suppresses us and dominates us", the parrot is shown breaking "into a violent fit of laughter", seeming to "mock" his observers "with a pompous dance". Although, like Grip, this parrot has human attributes ("presiding over the conference as if he were a judge", for example (ch. 33)), its satiric role is rather less subtle than Grip's part in diverting interest from the humourless, rather uninteresting figure of his master.

Barnaby Rudge is a figure dramatically conceived by Dickens from his first theatrical entrance into the novel, a character who becomes caught up in conflict, with all its inherent interest. One of the reasons why his characterisation may seem rather weak, however, is that he undergoes little change of personality, or development of character, as his tale unfolds. Dickens conveys his confused mental state by means of dramatic techniques (when, for example, he nods with a "fantastic exaggeration" in chapter 3, physically re-enacting the scene he has observed ("Steel, steel, steel," he replied fiercely, imitating with his hand the thrust of a sword")). Aspects of his characterisation, including his clothing, speech and gestures,[41] mark him out as a stage fool, as he is dressed in "motley scraps", gaudy lace, feathers, baubles and ribbons, although lacking the intellectual capacity of Shakespeare's stock stage fools, for, Dickens notes "the absence of the soul is far more terrible in a living man than in a dead one; and in this unfortunate being its noblest powers were wanting" (p. 74). While he may lack the critical perspective of a character such as Lear's fool, he does occasionally make a penetrating remark, shown in the middle of one rambling soliloquy when he philosophically ponders the nature of suffering and of justice - a theme of Lear - his

reference to stars, later taken up in chapter 77, demonstrating Dickens's attention to thematic detail in the novel:

> see, when I talk of eyes, the stars come out! Whose eyes are they? If they are angel's eyes, why do they look down here and see good men hurt, and only wink and sparkle all the night?

If Barnaby is not a wise fool, he is at least a thoughtful one, on occasion, despite the childish, fragmentary form of his expression. He is described by Dickens not as "the fool" but as "the idiot" - a childish, inadequate figure who experiences a remarkably swift transition between moods, becoming absorbed by trivial activities (such as counting the stars on his fingers - a gesture which may have been suggested to Dickens when visiting an asylum (see above, p. 63)). Dickens would, however, have had more flexibility in his characterisation if Barnaby had proved less deficient in critical faculties.

Although Barnaby may lack the wit of Shakespeare's fools, he is, like Lear's fool, associated with inclement weather: he "comes and goes, through wind, rain, snow, and hail, and on the darkest nights" (p. 131). While it has been observed that this novel is remarkable for a number of Shakespearean elements,[42] including Dickens's use of imagery (ibid., p. 46), there is little textual evidence to support this viewpoint, although Barnaby, like some of Shakespeare's fools, does incorporate a "peculiar blending of youth and age" (Ryan, p. 44). Macready's restoration of <u>Lear</u> to the stage would certainly have brought this particular play before the public eye, as we have noted, in a production in which the fool was played by a woman,[43] perhaps helping to shape Dickens's portrayal of Barnaby as an asexual figure who lacks a strong sense of male sexual identity. Unlike Lear's fool, however, Barnaby's role is interwoven throughout the plot in Dickens's novel, whereas Lear's fool disappears after the third act of <u>Lear</u>. Barnaby is less able to adopt the ironical, critical perspective of Lear's fool because he is less perceptive.[44] Such difference is illustrated in the differing attitudes of the two characters towards the natural world. While Lear's fool, enduring stormy weather with Lear, aptly comments "Here's a night pities neither wise men nor fools"

(3. 2. 12-13), or "This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen" (3.4.77), Barnaby Rudge, like Wordsworth's Johnny in "The Idiot Boy" (see above, p. 121), is emotionally moved by his experience of the natural world in a very different way. He exults in the beauty he finds in nature, and Dickens describes his empathy by using religious imagery which marks him out on one occasion, as a holy innocent:

> He, a poor idiot, caged in his narrow cell, was as much lifted up to God, while gazing on the mild light, as the freest and most favoured man in all the spacious city; and in his ill-remembered prayer, and in the fragment of the childish hymn... there breathed as true a spirit as ever studied homily expressed, or old cathedral arches echoed (p. 658).

The tone of this description (in which Barnaby embodies the principle that "Blessed are the pure in heart"), seems strained when compared with the sprinkling of religious associations found elsewhere in this novel,[45] perhaps because Dickens does not consistently portray Barnaby as a holy innocent figure throughout the novel. It would seem inconsistent for such a figure to become caught up in violence. Instead, Dickens vacillates between portraying Barnaby as a stage fool, a holy innocent, a touchstone and a victim of circumstances who provides a means for social comment[46] amongst other uses. Had Dickens proved steadier in purpose when characterising this figure, Barnaby Rudge may have been a more successful creation.

It is significant that Barnaby, although portrayed (as we have noted), in some respects as a holy innocent, becomes implicated in violence, described by the novel as evil in its effects. He has dreamed of "strange creatures crowded up together neck and heels, to sit upon the bed" (p. 95), and prophetically imagines that he sees mischief-makers ("what is it that they plot and hatch?"), a tendency nicely underscored by Mr Willet's "He wants imagination... that's what he wants" (p. 133). Barnaby's dreaming vision of whirling, plunging, "shadowy people", and "men stalking in the sky" may imaginatively prefigure the uneasy turmoil in the series of episodes which lead up to the riots, for Barnaby himself is "whirled away into the heart of a dense mass of men" after which he is seen no more by his mother (p. 449). Grip too is associated with devilry

not only in his hoarse speech ("I'm a devil, I'm a devil..."), but in his actions ("as if enclosing" other characters in a magic circle, and invoking "all the powers of mischief" (p. 167)).[47] In Macbeth, a raven had been used as an ill-omen ("The raven himself is hoarse/That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan" (I. IV. 35-36)), perhaps suggesting to Dickens his use of this device.

From the beginning of Barnaby Rudge, Dickens imaginatively associates extreme states of mind with wild elements, and has interwoven descriptions of frenzied human passions amidst those of storm and tumult:

> The demons of wrath and despair have striven to emulate those who ride the whirlwind and direct the storm; and man, lashed into madness with the roaring winds and boiling waters, has become for the time as wild and merciless as the elements themselves (p. 62).

For Dickens, influenced no doubt by Shakespeare's memorable storm scenes in Lear amongst other sources,[48] the imaginative correlation between the evil, negative effects of uncontrolled passions, and the wild, untrammelled elements, was to become a recurrent theme (later taken up, for example, in the fate of one individual, Steerforth, who plunges to his death in a storm at sea). If Bleak House was to be memorable for its fog, Barnaby Rudge is memorable for its boisterous weather (which, for example, buffets Gabriel Varden at the beginning of chapter 5), Dickens's evocative description of the effect of stormy weather in chapter 2 prefiguring the way in which he imaginatively associates wild irrationality with evil. Angus Wilson aptly remarks that Barnaby Rudge is "triumphant in its portrayal of the mob and of the riots. What is lacking is any good motivation",[49] for Dickens is taken up with describing the effects of the rioting more than with a detailed exploration of their cause. In conveying the results of these "shameful tumults", his description of the mob's assault upon Newgate displays a "fascinated interest, as well as horror and disgust",[50] as his portrait of Dennis too contains elements of attraction and repulsion.

Earlier, Dickens's fascination with mob violence had been evident in Oliver Twist where a crazed mob, some with the "ecstasy of madmen" had, in cornering the wretched

Sikes (in chapter 50), seemed to unleash a sort of elemental energy, while water imagery evoked the nature of their wild activity. In Barnaby Rudge, the maddened behaviour of the cursing, ferocious rabble, and its "wrath and passion", its "crushing", "striving", and "panting", further taps a source of violent energy, later explored in A Tale of Two Cities. That Dickens imaginatively identified with this mob is evident from his letters of 11th September, 1841 ("I have just burned into Newgate, and am going in the next number to tear the prisoners out by the hair of their heads"), and of 18th September, 1841 ("I have let all the prisoners out of Newgate, burnt down Lord Mansfield's, and played the very devil... I feel quite smoky when I am at work"). Yet, although it has been remarked that the novel seems torn between the glamour of anarchy and the terror of it (Carey, p. 120), the interest for Dickens in maddened, riotous action lies not in its glamour, but in the sheer scope of its potential for a wide range of corporate and individual effects.

In Barnaby Rudge, violent crowd scenes are often characterised by an association with irrational creatures and uncontrollable elements, the mob a "creature of very mysterious existence", while the "ocean is not more fickle and uncertain, more terrible when roused, more unreasonable, or more cruel" (p. 475). Although associating its appearance with swarming insects (p. 497), Dickens develops more fully its diabolic potential (as people "danced and howled, and roared" about fires (p. 482), whooping like savages (p. 495), like an "army of devils", "stark mad, setting fire to all they saw" (p. 506)). Dickens underscores this mob's devilish potential: "The more the fire crackled and raged, the wilder and more cruel the men grew; as though moving in that element they became fiends", with qualities that would "give delight in hell". Like frenzied maniacs, members of this mob drop lighted torches on themselves, paddling in the flames with their hands (p. 508), for the "whole great mass", Dickens writes, were "mad" (p. 583).

Dickens's use of language is significant when he describes the effects of the "moral plague" of this uprising as "contagion", which "spread like a dread fever: an infectious madness" (p. 484). Yet although he uses the imagery of illness to describe this mob's

wild activity, his imagination is captured by the effects of fiery destruction, evident for example, from the tone in which he describes a fire in the keeper's house in Newgate (admiring the brilliant appearance of the flames, "like burning serpents" with their "deep red heat and glow", while their destructive force reflects the urges of the mob). The subject of mob violence would have undoubtedly touched upon a source of concern for some of Dickens's readership, for the consequences of the French revolution,[51] Luddism, or the Rebecca riots, or the "Captain Swing" disturbances and of Chartism,[52] would presumably have been widely known, and, thirteen years later, Dickens further explored the wildly irrational behaviour of the mob in A Tale of Two Cities - a novel in which he was to describe one character's intermittent experience of insanity in his psychologically complex creation, Dr Manette. The spasmodic nature of this character's insanity was to afford Dickens greater opportunities for the development of the role of this figure in the novel than had been the case with his less successful creation, Barnaby Rudge.

Taken as a whole, Barnaby Rudge is particularly memorable because of its marked contrasts. It leaves the reader with a striking collection of visually effective images, comparing and contrasting scenes at the Maypole and the Warren, or in the Varden and Willet households, or characters such as Chester and Haredale, Barnaby Rudge and Jo Willet. Although Barnaby himself has been described as the "best-described mental defective in Dickens",[53] the mental limitations of this character have clearly presented Dickens with some difficult challenges. As a literary device, Barnaby's character is effectively used as a touchstone by Dickens, and although (because of his mental incapacity) he proves of limited potential in the development of the plot, Dickens uses his experience to highlight the effects of human fallibility. Angus Wilson captures the mood of this novel when he remarks: "Barnaby Rudge is a very fine novel about individuals caught up in the horrors of mass activity."[54]

Following his experiment in using an insane figure as a central protagonist, Dickens

subsequently explored a variety of different themes and subjects when publishing Martin Chuzzlewit, (1843-4), A Christmas Carol, (1843) and Dombey and Son, (1846-8), although his interest in insanity had been reflected in his American Notes (1843). Yet some of the character traits associated with Barnaby Rudge were later apparent in Dickens's creation of a very different portrait of insanity, in Mr Dick in David Copperfield, as will be seen. In David Copperfield, published between 1849-50,[55] Dickens was to depict several characters who, spurred on by passion, experience extreme mental anguish and turmoil. David Copperfield becomes conscious of the devastating and destructive potential of sexuality as he observes the downfall of Steerforth, a figure who has had a scarring effect upon other characters, including Rosa and Em'ly. Dickens explores various forms of irrationality in this novel, his handling of Mr Dick's crazed character providing one comical outworking of this theme.

As Dickens had compared and contrasted some of Barnaby's characteristics with those of Gordon, it is evident that Mr Dick has a dark, villainous double in the grotesque figure of the goroo, goroo man. This "drunken madman" immediately prefigures Mr Dick in chapter 13 of Copperfield, when both characters encounter David on his pilgrimage journey to Aunt Betsey. In contrast to Mr Dick, who assists David when he can, the goroo, goroo man exploits David's vulnerable position. Dickens skilfully conveys the nature of this figure through association: his shop, situated at the corner of a "dirty lane" ending in an "inclosure full of stinging-nettles", is low, small and "darkened" by one little window overhung with clothes, its second window revealing a prospect of "more stinging nettles and a lame donkey". The painful associations of nettles and lameness reflect the unkempt appearance and quality of the goroo man's environment. It is significant that this character is reached by descending several steps, and that he lives in a darkened "den", whereas the benign Mr Dick is first espied at an upstairs window, for these two characters seem polarised between good and evil, and the goroo man has the reputation of "having sold himself to the devil".

The goroo man's appearance is grimy and untidy, and (in sharp contrast to David's patchwork counterpane in Peggotty's boat which had made his eyes "quite ache with its

brightness" (ch. 3)), his bedstead is covered with a "tumbled and ragged piece of patchwork". The painful associations evoked by his environment are reflected in his behaviour too, as this "dreadful old man" seizes David by the hair, his hands like the "claws of a great bird" (underlining the predatory nature of his character). Like Betsey Trotwood, he is troubled by a gang of boys pestering him. However, the most memorable feature of his characterisation is his pattern of speech with its expletives ("Oh, my eyes and limbs!" "Oh, my lungs and liver"), and the rattling, throaty sound of "goroo" which he has "screwed out of himself, with an energy that made his eyes start in his head". The raw energy of this hideous, monstrous creation who swindles the pilgrim David out of a fair exchange for his clothing is reminiscent of the grotesque Quilp. His malign influence upon the journeying David is cast into a sharp relief when David is received by his Aunt Betsey and Mr Dick, whose environment is notable for its orderliness. In contrast to the goroo man's nettles, Aunt Betsey's garden is well-tended,[56] and, while she is accompanied by a figure who may appear grotesque, Mr Dick proves both kindly and inventive.[57]

Mr Dick clearly plays a more peripheral role in David Copperfield than did the eponymous hero of Barnaby Rudge, yet his minor role strongly underscores some of Dickens's artistic and moral intentions in this novel. Both characters are child-like and sexless, and neither of them seems likely to be married. Instead, they are looked after by maternal figures. Unlike some of Dickens's mad creations (including, for example, Mrs. Nickleby's crazed neighbour), Barnaby and Mr Dick are mentally afflicted owing to circumstances beyond their control. Dickens uses both of these powerless individuals to highlight different aspects of his moral vision despite the varying modes of narrative discourse in Barnaby Rudge and David Copperfield.[58] Barnaby and Mr Dick are, for example, both used on occasion as one means of mirroring and contrasting other characters, also functioning as touchstones, Barnaby used as a particularly effective device for revealing Gordon's shortcomings, while Mr Dick highlights the effects of Aunt Betsey's rugged benevolence. The reader can only surmise whether, if Barnaby's mother had been of a more spirited nature, the outcome of the tale would have been very

different.

Unlike Barnaby Rudge, David Copperfield was written in the Bildungsroman tradition, in which Dickens traces the life history of his central protagonist from birth to maturity. This novel was itself something of an experiment in Dickens's writing career, not because of its unconventional central character (as in Barnaby's case), but because of Dickens's use of first-person narrative. In Copperfield, Dickens skilfully used his narrator's memory as a means of controlling the pace and movement of the narrative, also providing this novel with its sense of shape and unity.[59] Copperfield was much more limited in the scope of its subject-matter than Barnaby Rudge, yet what it lacked in breadth, it gained in depth, through Dickens's sensitive portrayal of his hero's traumatic experiences.

David Copperfield has the opportunity to observe several characters experiencing emotional turbulence and desperation. Figures such as Rosa, Em'ly or Steerforth lack the sense of emotional discipline which Betsey Trotwood encourages in David Copperfield,[60] the novel revealing that the inability of these characters to control their passionate impulses is ultimately destructive. It is significant that Steerforth's role in David Copperfield is suddenly terminated by his early death (which may perhaps bear some resemblance to the near-death of Dickens's own brother (see Forster's Life, IV, IV, p. 342)), while David's passionate love of Dora is frustrated by her untimely death,[61] for one of this novel's most intriguing themes is its symbolic identification between passion and destruction, a theme in which even the unlikely character of Mr Dick becomes involved.

In Copperfield, Dickens's varied treatment of sexuality and passion finds its expression in a range of minor characters, including the grotesque Miss Mowcher,[62] a dwarf Dickens uses in comically highlighting the contrast between outer appearance and inner reality through her use of irony, exemplified by remarks about Steerforth: "What a comfort you are to your blessed mother, ain't you, my dear boy, over one of my

shoulders, and I don't say which". Mid-way through his characterisation of Miss Mowcher, Dickens changed tack, having received a communication from Mrs. Seymour Hill, the figure upon whom he had based his characterisation. Forster, recording Dickens's reaction ("I have had the queerest adventure this morning... the receipt of the enclosed from Miss Mowcher! It is serio-comic, but there is no doubt one is wrong in being tempted to such a use of power"), notes that he had "given way... to the temptation of copying too closely peculiarities of figure and face amounting in effect to deformity. He was, of course, shocked at discovering the pain he had given" (Life VI, VII, p. 548). In the thirty-second chapter of the novel, Dickens attempted to correct the series of impressions created in the twenty-second chapter, according to Forster, although the results are less than satisfactory. Monod wryly comments that "There is no need to expatiate on such painful results of Dickens' belatedly praiseworthy purpose. He has emptied to the dregs the cup of penance and voluntary humiliation" (p. 311). Miss Mowcher's advice that Copperfield should "Try not to associate bodily defects with mental... except for a solid reason" (ch. 32), is not a lesson for which Dickens seeks a wide application in the novel: it represents a specific attempt to rectify the damage he may have inadvertently caused to one of his readers, highlighting his sensitivity over this issue.

Besides her choric function in illuminating human folly ("What a world of gammon and spinnage'" or "What a refreshing set of humbugs"), Miss Mowcher particularly highlights David's naivety.[63] In contrast, Mr Dick is much more dull-witted: whereas Miss Mowcher may be child-like in her appearance, he proves child-like in most aspects of his character. Although both of these characters may appear grotesque,[64] they evidently fulfil very different purposes in the moral economy of this novel.

Mr Dick, like Barnaby, proves an unfortunate victim of circumstances, and while, from the beginning, portrayed as a comic creation, it is evident from Dickens's early description of him that he is limited for action by his mental disability.[65] As the novel's plot unfolds, however, his part in it becomes heavily overladen with Dickens's moral purposes, causing the transference to him of inappropriate actions. In this novel,

Dickens is clearly focusing attention on the personal hopes, expectations and experiences of his hero, as set out in its full title: The Personal History, Adventures, Experience and Observation of David Copperfield, the Younger, of Blunderstone Rookery, which he never meant to be published on any account. His close personal attachment to this novel, his favourite child, and the way in which it constituted a "very complicated interweaving of fact and fiction"[66] has been widely remarked. Part of the novel's success [67] lay with Dickens's achievement in creating a hero who represented many of his middle class audience's ideal of a young man,[68] and, over and above the gripping qualities of the first-person narrative, David resembled an Everyman figure, reflecting the concerns of his Victorian readers in his growing adherence to the peculiarly Victorian virtue of Earnestness;[69] in his respectability;[70] and in his industrious attitude towards work.[71] In the latter part of Copperfield, Mr Dick too reflects some of these values, discovering, for example, that he has the ability to work, a pursuit which changes his outlook on life. While the change of character he experiences as a result may not quite constitute what Barbara Hardy would describe as a change of heart,[72] we can detect a shift of focus in Dickens's portrayal of this character. Whereas his early characterisation has been tender and sympathetic,[73] it becomes simultaneously more wooden as Mr Dick loses his comic interest. Although Dickens's imagination was clearly captured by his early representation of this delightfully grotesque figure, by chapter 45 (when he is acting in the capacity of deus ex machina), Mr Dick's character seems drained of vitality and comic invention. Initially, he may strike the reader as a fascinating adornment to the novel, but his characterisation proves less successful as an integral part of the developing plot because of his limited mental capacity. The changes evident in Mr Dick's character in David Copperfield mirror David's own development towards self-discipline, a development, which, interestingly, proves less fulfilling for David at a deeply emotional level, than some of his early strongly-felt experiences in life.

However, the falling away of comic inventiveness is not an uncommon occurrence in Dickens' humorous creations, for there are obvious difficulties in sustaining the idiosyncratic exuberance of some of his characters. One of the keys to his successful

portrayal of the comic figures of Mrs. Lirriper, Flora Finching, or Mrs. Gamp, lies in his exploration of their confused inner worlds through their conversation. Dickens's comic female creations often prove garrulous, whereas the more taciturn Mr Dick is representative of many of his comic male figures, whose motivation, though conveyed by means of brief phrases, is largely expressed through their actions.

One of the most striking features in Dickens's portrayal of Mr Dick lies in his curious relationship with Aunt Betsey, first perceived through the eyes of the child David. Dickens marks him out as a grotesque figure when he suddenly appears at Betsey's window, a "florid, pleasant-looking gentleman, with a grey head, who shut up one eye in a grotesque manner, nodded his head at me several times, shook it at me as often, laughed and went away" (ch. 13). His erratic physical movements convey the illogical pattern of his mental reasoning, an early representation which strongly contrasts his highly controlled speech and behaviour portrayed in chapter 45 ("Now you are a scholar, Trotwood... You are a fine scholar").

Despite such inconsistencies in Dickens's characterisation of this figure, Mr Dick serves as an indicator or signpost, pointing out Betsey's kindness, but also her strength of will, as illustrated when she insists on renaming him - a characteristic which may indicate a sinister determination to control. Although previously known as Mr Richard Babley, while Micawber mistakenly calls him Mr Dixon (ch. 52), Betsey informs David that "Mr Dick is his name here", similarly renaming David as Trotwood Copperfield. Mr Dick is a character who clearly plays a complex and significant part in the life of a woman disappointed by her husband. He is more boyish than manly, and the Victorian reading public could not have been offended by any impropriety in his living arrangements with Betsey, because of Mr Dick's sexlessness.

Betsey's strongly influential effect upon Mr Dick (which later finds a parallel in her significant role in David's life), provides a strikingly original model for the management of mentally unstable people, when contrasted with some of the alternatives

available for the insane (see above, chapter 2). The novel records that Betsey rescued him from the private asylum to which he had been sent by his brother ("A proud fool... So I stepped in... After a good deal of squabbling... I got him"). For Forster, a Commissioner in Lunacy who would presumably have provided Dickens with information about the potential misuse of private asylums, Betsey demonstrates "how often asylums might be dispensed with, and how large might be the number of deficient intellects manageable with patience in their own homes" (Forster, Life, VI, VII, p. 556). Dickens, however, although highlighting shortcomings in legal, educational and prison systems elsewhere in his novels, does not as we have noted, choose to tackle in any depth the widely publicised abuses in the asylum system either in this novel or elsewhere. Neither did he extensively draw upon his observation of life in an asylum in his novel-writing, preferring to record his comments in the shorter form of narrative prose (see above, chapter 4). In Copperfield, he confines himself to commenting on the particular experiences of one individual, Mr Dick, who had been sent "away to some private asylum-place", although such a figure is barely representative of the inmates observed by Dickens when visiting asylums. Had he chosen to expose the potential malpractice in contemporary asylums, he would have needed to describe their effect by depicting interior scenes featuring inmates with a range of mental problems (as occurred, for example, in Hard Cash (see above, p. 43). He had described other unconventional minority groups (such as prostitutes) by means of oblique reference (in his treatment of figures such as Martha, for example), rather than by direct exposure of their practices. The treatment of unsavoury practices in asylums would as we have observed, have presented Dickens with a considerable challenge in portraying malpractices without causing undue offence to his readership, his letter to Harriet Parr revealing his distaste for sensationalism in the literary treatment of some specific forms of mental illness. It will become evident that Dickens preferred to depict the plight of individuals rather than groups of mentally deranged characters, for a range of specific purposes.

In David Copperfield, Dickens's treatment of Mr Dick's character is not untypical of his method of associating individual figures with significant objects which convey some

quality of their inner nature. He uses a variety of pets and animals for this purpose, as has been noted, similarly depicting a vast range of personal adornment, exemplified by Mrs. Gamp's umbrella, Mrs. Lammle's sharply-pointed parasol, or Miss Murdstone's chained handbag. The pastimes and pursuits of his creations often convey something of their characters, shown by Esther Summerson's jam-making or Dick Swiveller's mournful flute-playing. In contrast to many of Dickens's characters (such as Wemmick, whose castle-home reveals much about his inner life and motivation), Mr Dick's domestic environment is not so much an expression of his own private world as that of Betsey Trotwood, for he is, essentially, a lodger. Hence his occupation and pursuits are particularly significant in conveying the nature of his character to the reader. His kite-flying, rather a childish pursuit, is, he explains, one means of "diffusing" the confusion which arises out of his Memorial, and his obsession with King Charles the First's head. There may, as Butt and Tillotson have noted (p. 130), have been some topical interest in the plight of Charles I when Dickens was writing, but Mr Dick's fascination with this subject as a simile for his own suffering seems to waver between being obsessive and therapeutic, as shoe-mending is later to prove similarly significant for Dr Manette.

Mr Dick emerges as a creation who is both colourful and idiosyncratic. His potential creativity is illustrated in seemingly trivial (yet revealing) activities such as cutting oranges, turning crampbones into chessmen, creating Roman chariots from old court cards, spoked wheels out of cotton reels and birdcages out of old wire (ch. 17). This child-like figure proves popular with schoolboys, as he enjoys confectionery treats, like the mentally deficient figure in George Eliot's later tale of Brother Jacob (1864), and also jingling coins in his pockets. By contrast, while Mr Dick is depicted as a boyish man (whose bowed head reminds David of one of Mr Creakle's boys' heads after a beating), Betsey Trotwood is a rugged, manly woman (wearing a gardening pocket "like a toll-man's apron", "a gentleman's gold watch," "linen at her throat not unlike a shirt-collar, and things at her wrists like little shirt-wristbands" (ch. 13)). Yet, in spite of their unconventional roles, Betsey and Mr Dick have a close and complementary

relationship. Both characters are aware of the misery that an unhappy marriage can cause, Betsey through her own wretched experience, and Mr Dick, through suffering a severe fever as a consequence of his sister's marital conflict. Betsey's fear of passion, the legacy of her wretched marriage, is comically portrayed in her highly symbolic anxiety about the risk of fire breaking out,[75] while her suspicion about most males, humorously shown in her rough treatment of donkey boys who encroach on her territory, prefigures her later treatment of the Murdstones.[76]

Although at times, both Betsey and Mr Dick are highly irrational in their behaviour, on occasion they both show common sense (illustrated when Mr Dick advises that David should be washed and put to bed, in chapter 13). More commonly, Mr Dick, as a touchstone, contrasts and highlights the nature of other characters, as did Barnaby Rudge. His sadness when David leaves for school strongly contrasts with Mr Murdstone's reaction in chapter 14, for example. The asexual nature of Mr Dick's character is notable when compared with most of the other figures in the novel, for he is one of the few characters for whom the expression (or repression) of sexuality is not a significant issue. It is intriguing that Dickens should have chosen to use this mildly demented, eunuch-like figure as a moral mouthpiece later in the novel, as will be seen.

Mr Dick's artless, fanciful approach to life contrasts with Dr Strong's scholarly but dry preoccupations, though there are also some interesting similarities between these two men. Like Mr Dick, Dr Strong's sexuality is hardly one of his most salient features, particularly when compared with the younger, more virile figures of Maldon, Heep or Steerforth. Both men express their creative urge in writing (in Mr Dick's memorial and Dr Strong's dictionary), while the benevolent, kind nature of these characters is cast into relief by the frivolous, selfish Mrs. Markleham. Whereas she reinforces Dr Strong's fear that he "was a constraint upon his young wife" (ch. 45), Mr Dick is given the role of reconciler and peacemaker in the éclaircissement scene.

It has been noted by H.P. Sucksmith that Dickens modified his portrait of Mr Dick in proof, in order to "win the sympathy, even the affection, of the reader", finally inserting Mr Micawber's eulogy in chapter 49 ("The friendliness of this gentleman...

floors me... It has been my lot... to meet... with an occasional oasis, but never with one so green"). His use of Mr Dick as a touchstone becomes particularly evident in the latter part of the novel, although, in order to fulfil the catalyst-like role designed for him, he undergoes rather an unlikely transformation of character, as has been observed.[77] Traddles and Copperfield engineer Mr Dick's copy-writing duties, so that he transfers his energies from writing his manuscript, in a therapeutic but disciplined manner. As Mr Dick becomes increasingly self-disciplined, Dickens paves the way for his more overtly moral role in the novel. However, as the more fanciful, inventive aspects of Mr Dick's character receive less attention than his more serious qualities, there is, simultaneously, a falling away in his intrinsic interest to the reader as an artistic creation. The boyish, pantaloon-like figure of David's youth would not have attempted to take any initiative in repairing a damaged marital relationship. Also, his laboured questions to David in chapter 45 ("Now, boy... I am going to put a question to you... What do you consider me, sir?") are very different in tone from his more vague, confused speech in chapter 13 ("David Copperfield?... David Copperfield? Oh yes, to be sure, David, certainly").

In Mr Dick, Dickens portrays a character whose benevolence and goodwill prove instrumental in saving the Strongs' marriage, despite his limited mental capacity. In order to convince his readers that the change occurring in Mr Dick's character is merely the fulfilment of Betsey's expectations, Dickens entitles chapter 45 (which could well have been titled "Great Expectations"), "Mr Dick fulfils my Aunt's Predictions". Mr Dick's thoughts are dramatically conveyed through his actions, evident in his symbolic prayer when sending Dr Strong's name into the sky on a piece of paper attached to his kite, while his physical movements interpret Mr Dick's decision to take action, as he fiddles with his handkerchief, nods his head, or strikes himself on the chest. Mr Dick's role in the éclaircissement scene is somewhat theatrical in its execution, for, while Dickens clearly attempts to exploit the dramatic potential in this episode, its total effect is stagey, wooden and contrived, the part he plays as genial, wise fool illustrating the familiar Dickensian theme that kind-heartedness is more important than worldly

wisdom. He may describe himself as "a Simpleton, a weak-minded person", and (in Shakespearean terms), as "simple Dick - mad Dick", but Dickens is keen to show that he can still enhance the lives of other people. Although unable to alter the events of his own unhappy life, he is, fleetingly, able to exert a healing influence upon the lives of others. In contrast to many of Dickens's proud characters (exemplified by Mr Dombey), he does not overestimate his significance, perceiving himself as a slight breath of air ("Dick's nobody! Whoo!"). The description of the way in which he "blew a slight, contemptuous breath, as if he blew himself away" has some slight Biblical resonances, reminiscent of Isaiah 40: 6-8, which touches upon the ephemeral nature of the human condition:

> All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

An exaggerated sense of self-importance (shown in the model of Nebuchadnezzar), spells disaster for many of Dickens's characters who tend to experience frustrated ambitions, whereas the benevolent figure of Mr Dick as he seeks the common good, illuminates Dickens's philosophy that even the weakest or most vulnerable figure has the capacity to effect beneficial change. Mr Dick's moral integrity is shown (albeit rather clumsily), to outweigh his mental incapacity.

However, there are occasions when the strength of Dickens's moral vision somewhat dims the brilliance of his artistry. For example, his preparation for the dramatic use of Mr Dick as reconciler, as he briefly explores this character's motivation and describes the movements of other dramatis personae who will play an important part in the episode in chapter 45, rather too-obviously sets the scene for his domestic set piece. He depicts Mrs. Strong coming out of the garden, the Doctor engaged in the study, and gives Mrs. Markleham the choric function of letting the reader-audience know that Dr Strong is making his Will. Dickens then repositions his characters in the study, Mrs. Markleham sitting in her easy chair, and David with his aunt, stationed by the door. This is clearly a scene which creates a strongly visual impression, and would no doubt

have provided an immensely effective tableau scene in a Victorian melodrama.[78] Both speech and actions of its principal actors are memorable for their dramatic quality, as exemplified in Mr. Dick's "Doctor!... What is it that's amiss? Look here!" Perhaps, though, the most distinguished feature of this episode is found in Dickens' wonderfully comic interplay of comments between Mrs. Markleham and Aunt Betsey:

> "Really", interrupted Mrs. Markleham, "if I have any discretion at all - "
>
> ("Which you haven't, you Marplot," observed my aunt...")
>
> and:
>
> "I have mentioned the fact, fifty times at least, to everybody here!" said Mrs. Markleham.
>
> ("Then hold your tongue, for the Lord's sake..." muttered my aunt. (pp. 727-728)).

The feature of this scene which does, however, create a strong sense of disharmony is caused not by Mr Dick's part in it, but by the reader's uncomfortable awareness of the disparity between the age and disposition of Dr and Mrs. Strong, highlighted by the tableau in which Dickens depicts the Doctor's grey hair mingling with his wife's dark brown tresses - a description reminiscent of the way in which Mr Peggotty's hair became entwined with Em'ly's, as they embraced. The motif of lovers' hair becoming intermingled is, of course, not uncommon in Petrarchan poetry and elsewhere, but in this instance the detail illuminates the physical difference in this ill-assorted couple. Although their disparity in age is not unlike that between Casaubon and Dorothea, Dickens's treatment of the relationship is very different from Eliot's, for he gives us no insight into their inner life, or reasons why Annie should care for Dr Strong. Dickens is, however, focusing primarily on the moral nature of the reconciliation which has been effected, dispensing at the end of the scene with his supporting cast of Aunt Betsey, Mr Dick and David, who are seen stealing from the room, to leave his hero brooding upon Annie's ponderous, philosophical lines "There can be no disparity in marriage like unsuitability of mind and purpose" and their application to his own situation.

Mr Dick is indirectly used as an instrument to enable David to develop insight into

his own relationships, although his part in helping to manoeuvre the Strongs across the stage proves less spectacular than we may have anticipated. Later, Dickens highlights his role as adviser, and as loyal companion when Mr Dick offers advice to Mr Micawber ("You must keep up your spirits... and make yourself as comfortable as possible" (ch. 49)), and accompanies Mrs. Heep as a shepherd's dog might accompany a sheep (ch. 52). Yet, in the novel's "A Last Retrospect", he again becomes associated with the objects and interests which made his earlier portrayal so memorable. Here, he is described as "an old man making giant kites, and gazing at them in the air, with a delight for which there are no words", whispering "Trotwood... I shall finish the Memorial when I have nothing else to do, and your aunt's the most extraordinary woman in the world, sir!" (p. 947). Although Dickens may have unsuccessfully attempted to overlay the role of this comical character with serious moral intentions (and few of his humorous creations, including figures such as Mrs. Gamp could act as an intermediary or marriage guidance counsellor and still retain a degree of credibility), our most vivid impression of Mr Dick's appearance and nature has surely been evoked by Dickens's earliest description of his face as it unexpectedly appeared at Betsey's window. In this character, he continued his exploration of a theme which had emerged in his earlier novels, for Mr Dick is one of the many characters in David Copperfield whose external appearance does not fully express their inner potential. The potential disparity between appearance and reality (a theme earlier evident in Nicholas Nickleby), is an issue challenging David Copperfield when he learns that the physical beauty of some characters (such as Emily and Dora), does not necessarily reflect an inner tranquillity.

Throughout David Copperfield, Dickens compares and contrasts outer and inner appearances in a variety of settings, using the recurrent device of windows as one means of exploring the preoccupations of some characters. He uses windows as frames, or as ways of separating scenes, exemplified as David gazes out at his father's grave, Peggotty gazes out of church at the house, Aunt Betsey peers in at Mrs. Copperfield, or as David looks out at the damp scene conveying (by association) the dismal nature of his own feelings in chapter 60.

In contrast to the nature of Mr Dick's appearance and characteristics, vividly conveyed as he appears at a window,[79] when David revisits his old home, he notices another figure at a window of the building which has grown dilapidated: it is occupied by a "poor lunatic gentleman, and the people who took care of him. He was always sitting at my little window, looking out into the churchyard" (ch. 22, p. 378). The presence of this deranged figure in the home of David's childhood is strangely disquieting, because of the incongruity between David's happy memories of early childhood, and the lonely isolation of this irrational character. The house which had become a prison for David during the Murdstone's regime has now become a place of a different type of confinement. This lunatic, "always" stationed at the window contrasts with Dickens's description of the boy David at the window, and, as the maturing Copperfield identifies with him, Dickens underscores changes occurring in his hero's life since childhood. The lonely figure of such a lunatic may represent the dislocation of thoughts and inability to reason or cope with reality which may have befallen David had he not escaped from the Murdstones to his aunt, or the miserable fate of Mr Dick had he not been cared for by Betsey Trotwood.

In David Copperfield, Dickens uses a wide range of characters, including the unlikely figure of Mr Dick, to reinforce one of the novel's central themes that there "can be no disparity in marriage like unsuitability of mind and purpose." Irrational or crazed characters such as the grotesque goroo man, or the cameo of the lunatic at the window - isolated figures representing the array of Dickens's madmen who experience difficulties in relating to other people - are used to contribute to the varied texture of Copperfield's experiences. Whereas irrationality is a theme permeating Barnaby Rudge, explored in individuals and in group activities, in Copperfield, Dickens portrays the effects of a different type of irrationality, in describing the destructive consequences of sexual passion. While David's marriage to Agnes represents the triumph of moral earnestness, one of the most interesting features of this novel lies in the truant nature of David's powerful imagination as we have noted. In spite of his experience in observing the plight of figures such as Steerforth, Rosa and Emily, caused through the destructive

consequences of passion, and in spite of Mr Dick's initiative in affirming Betsey's moral values, David's early experiences of love and passion have evidently captured his imagination much more vividly than his rational but dull relationship with Agnes.[80]

While a common feature of Dickens's portrayal of Barnaby Rudge and Mr Dick lay in the asexual nature of these characters, he was later to depict a very different victim of circumstances in Miss Havisham, a figure suffering from monomania - a condition linked with his exploration of sexuality in Great Expectations. This novel, serialised weekly in All the Year Round from 1 December 1860, and published in book form in 1861, turned upon what Dickens described as "such a very fine, new, and grotesque idea", the "germ", Forster claimed, of Dickens's creation of Pip and Magwitch (Forster's Life, IX, III). Great Expectations, reviewed in the Athenaeum (13 July 1861) as "the imaginative book of the year",[81] was well-received by other contemporary writers, one of whom (rather wildly) claimed that its plot is "universally admitted to be the best that Dickens has ever invented".[82] Its construction has been widely admired by modern critics, a viewpoint expressed by Barbara Hardy when describing its plot as "one of Dickens' best, at once intricate and lucid, highly original",[83] despite widespread discussion about its ending.[84] In this novel, written in the Bildungsroman tradition, in which Dickens describes, in the form of first-person narrative, Pip's development to maturity, the part played by Magwitch is clearly of central importance, as is also the role of Miss Havisham. Whereas Miss Havisham seeks to make her mark through a form of sexual revenge, in teaching Estella to become heartless, Magwitch is keen to provide Pip with opportunities for social improvement which he has never experienced himself. Hence, although, like Mr Dick in Copperfield, Miss Havisham has the capacity to effect change, she uses her potential for negative purposes: whereas Mr Dick is an agent of reconciliation, Miss Havisham is an agent of revenge.

In portraying aspects of her role in the novel, Dickens's love of theatricality is particularly evident on the occasion when some "sharp words arose between Estella and Miss Havisham" (p. 321). As Estella irritates Miss Havisham, when detaching herself from an embrace, Dickens carefully describes the actions of the two characters (moving

to the chimney-piece, or passionately striking a stick on the floor), while their stilted expression in speech is highly melodramatic:

> "So proud, so proud!" moaned Miss Havisham, pushing away her grey hair with both her hands.
>
> "Who taught me to be proud?" returned Estella...
>
> "So hard, so hard!" moaned Miss Havisham...
>
> "Who taught me to be hard?" returned Estella (p. 323).

Estella testifies to the method in Miss Havisham's madness: "Why should I call you mad... I, of all people? Does any one live, who knows what set purposes you have, half as well as I do?" (p. 323). Yet this is a scene which casts light on the intensity of the relationship between these two women, whose conflict, in needling each other, is reminiscent of the conflict between Rosa Dartle and Mrs Steerforth in Chapter 56 of Copperfield. As Miss Havisham is poised with her arms outstretched, shrieking: "Estella, Estella, Estella, to be proud and hard to me!", Dickens, with a masterly stroke, underlines the degree to which Miss Havisham's educative process has been successful in Estella, for "Estella looked at her for a moment with a kind of calm wonder, but was not otherwise disturbed" (pp. 323-324).

It is evident, from the plot of Great Expectations, that Miss Havisham's role is significant in affecting the lives of some other characters, although, unlike Mr Dick, she exerts her influence for a negative purpose. Points of contrast in Dickens's characterisation of these two creations highlight ways in which he developed Mr Dick's comic potential and the tragic effects of Miss Havisham's role, for the paralysing effects of her mental condition are felt throughout the plot.

Both characters have suffered rejection (Mr Dick having been sent to "some private asylum-place" by his brother, whom he feared, while his sister was unable to assist him because of her own marital difficulties (ch. 14)), Miss Havisham having been swindled and abandoned by her suitor. Mr Dick, however, benefits from Betsey Trotwood's advice, while Miss Havisham (whose portrait may have been taken from a living original),[85] angrily rejects the independent advice given to her by Mr Pocket

(ch. 22) warning her against "placing herself too unreservedly "in her suitor's "power". Having ordered Mr Pocket out of the house, she is attended by less assertive individuals (exemplified by Mrs. Camilla), described by H.P. Sucksmith as the "toadies" (p. 8), numbered amongst those characters in the Dickens world who become caught up in deception. Unlike Mr Dick, Miss Havisham has inherited wealth and power (although embezzled by her supposed suitor who "got great sums of money from her"), though Mr Dick proves benevolent in spite of adverse personal circumstances, while Miss Havisham proves malevolent. In many respects, Mr Dick is child-like, whereas Miss Havisham has shown the capacity of being "too much in love", and, while he comes to terms with the change of circumstances in his life, she is frozen in the past, with "the appearance of having dropped, body and soul, within and without, under the weight of a crushing blow" (p. 91).

Miss Havisham is clearly much more intelligent than Mr Dick, and therefore has greater potential, yet her role in the novel is terminated by her untimely death, whereas Mr Dick (in chapter 64, "A Last Retrospect") is finally described as an old man making giant kites with great "delight", who enjoys referring to his work on the Memorial, and admires Betsey's "extraordinary" qualities. While Mr Dick is (at times) described as a wise fool, Miss Havisham is shown to be warped and foolish, despite her intelligence.

The symbols with which these two characters are associated provide further points of contrast between them, exemplified in Dickens's description of the key image of the garden. Whereas Mr Dick as we have noted, is identified with Betsey's orderly garden, Miss Havisham's garden is, not unexpectedly, "overgrown with tangled weeds" (p. 93), and Pip observes "a rank ruin of cabbage-stalks, and one box tree that had been clipped round long ago, like a pudding, and had a new growth at the top of it, out of shape and of a different colour" (pp. 108-109). While Mr Dick's flights of fancy are associated with kites, and the memorial, Miss Havisham, "incarcerated with the spidery wreck of her wedding cake" is "determined to bring up Estella as an instrument of vengeance upon men."[86] It has been noted that confinement in Dickens's novels "can be a limitation or the means of liberation", and that while for "virtuous characters, confinement leads to

self-awareness", for Miss Havisham (as for Mrs. Steerforth and Mrs. Clennam), confinement "is negative and useless".[87]

There are few critics who have not remarked that Miss Havisham is a remarkable, haunting creation,[88] a figure who suffers a form of obsession illustrating the effects of rejection, and of thwarted passion. Miss Havisham is not merely an awesome, decorative embellishment in Great Expectations, but plays a significant part in contributing to Pip's maturing process,[89] as Mr Dick, in a very different way, cast light on David Copperfield's understanding of marital fidelity. It is significant that in both cases, Dickens used insane, obsessive characters, to enlighten his maturing heroes, illustrating his exploration of one of the sideshoots of insanity as he matured as a writer.

In Barnaby Rudge and Mr Dick, Dickens explored the use of insanity in two very different, asexual characters, who act as victim and catalyst, later exploring the malevolent effects of one form of monomania in a remarkable female victim through the figure of Miss Havisham, who also plays a part in the maturing process of Dickens's hero, Pip.

Dickens's considerable interest in exploring the interrelationship between the expression and repression of sexuality and a character's mental stability (reflected in the portrayal of creations such as Bradley Headstone) was a theme which found its final outworking in Edwin Drood. Further experimentation with use of the maddened mob, (earlier explored in Barnaby Rudge), was found too in A Tale of Two Cities, a novel illustrating Dickens's fascination with the effects of wild, irrational crowd activity. Set against a backcloth of intermittent mob violence, he has carefully depicted the fate of one character experiencing a very different malaise from either Barnaby or Mr Dick, in his portrait of Dr Manette, Dickens's most sensitively sketched portrait of mental frailty as we will explore, in the chapter which follows.

Notes

1. In charting the decline and death of its young heroine, The Old Curiosity Shop is notable for its use of contrast in drawing conclusions about a range of other issues too. In his preface to the First Cheap Edition in 1848, Dickens noted that "I had it always in my fancy to surround the lonely figure of the child with grotesque and wild... companions" (p. 42) - one of the novel's many contrasts. In this novel, Dickens created a chiaroscuro effect when setting the characters of Nell and her grandfather against a backcloth of city life, the vivid portrayal of jostling activity in bustling street scenes prefiguring similar settings in Barnaby Rudge. In some street scenes, he depicts the way in which these two characters are overwhelmed by the general sense of turmoil. Similarly, in chapter 9 of the novel, Dickens has nicely contrasted the solitary figure of Nell with the scene outside, in a cameo-like picture foreshadowing a similar scene in David Copperfield. He depicts Nell sitting at a window, looking into the street, on many long evenings "and often far into the night, alone and thoughtful", waiting for her grandfather. The view from Nell's window feeds her imagination as she observes people passing up and down the street, or appearing at windows of houses opposite. Similarly, David Copperfield is portrayed at a window, and, as he looks out, he is reminded of his earlier experience of loneliness:

> "I stood in a window, and looked across the ancient street at the opposite houses, recalling how I had watched them on wet afternoons, when I first came there; and how I had used to speculate about the people who appeared at any of the windows, and had followed them with my eyes up and down stairs" (ch. 60).

In this evocative description, Dickens used the motif of the window as the means through which to interpret Copperfield's mood in the damp street scene. Movement in the description of this scene is provided by means of David's line of vision from the interior of houses to the pavements outside, by following the sloping line of the rainfall flowing out of the waterspout, when the rain provides a sense of unity between the description's movement, action and mood. Here, David's feeling of loneliness is highlighted by his sympathetic identification with tramps passing along the road in this damp scene.

Little Nell is shown to possess an equally fanciful imagination, as she wonders "whether those rooms were as lonesome as that in which she sat, and whether those people felt it company to see her sitting there, as she did only to see them look out." For Nell, crooked chimneys resemble "ugly faces that were frowning over at her," although her view of a coffin being carried past is used as a presage, suggesting all sorts of morbid possibilities to her vivid imagination - the harbinger of other coffins inextricably interwoven in the novel's plot.

In his description of these two characters as they gaze out of windows, imaginatively speculating on external scenes, Dickens subtly uses their fanciful capacity to reveal something of their innermost feelings. There are other occasions in David Copperfield when he effectively uses the motif of windows as a means of contrasting two different

scenes, or highlighting an individual's state of mind. In some ways, The Old Curiosity Shop prefigures certain scenes in David Copperfield, shown when Nell glances out of a little window at the end of chapter 16, thoughtfully gazing at the moonlit scene of an old church and graveyard, with its dark trees "whispering among themselves", for example. This scene prefigures the second chapter of David Copperfield, where David is shown the "quiet churchyard out of the bedroom window, with the dead all lying in their graves at rest, below the solemn moon". There are some obvious parallels between these two moonlit scenes. However, unlike some of Dickens's earlier novels, The Old Curiosity Shop conveys no strong sense of religious conviction about life beyond the graveyard. Despite his own personal grief at bereavements in his life, David Copperfield finds some solace in the angelic figure of Agnes (although not without a sense of personal loss and regret), partly through the part played by the crazed figure of Mr Dick though in this novel too, there is only a muted sense of religious optimism.

The overt, religious message of The Old Curiosity Shop is undershot by a sense of doubt, conveyed in Dickens's use of imagery. Nowhere is a wavering uncertainty about religious belief more apparent than in his description of Nell's visit to a mouldering church in chapter 53. Here, the light through its "sunken" windows seemed "old and grey", the air, "redolent of earth and mould, seemed laden with decay", the very pavement "broken". Dickens evocatively describes the "rotten" beam, the "sinking" arch and the "sapped and mouldering" wall. By means of sharp (almost Blakean) contrast, the outside scene (evoked in colour, scent and activity with its glorious "sudden burst of light", its fresh fields, its smoking homesteads and its playing children) is, for Nell, portrayed as "passing from death to life". For Nell, death symbolises sleep more than resurrection, though David Copperfield was to seek heavenly comfort in the human (if rather unearthly) form of Agnes.

The sense of religious uncertainty, permeating The Old Curiosity Shop was to spill over into Barnaby Rudge - undoubtedly one of Dickens's least religious novels - in which Dickens expresses doubt about the nature and scope of divine compassion upon the mentally afflicted.

For discussion about "Death and The Old Curiosity Shop", see Dennis Walder, pp. 66-90, and for discussion about his portrayal of religion in David Copperfield, see Walder, pp. 145-153.

2. Quilp taunts the grandfather about his "mad career" (p. 127); the old man's overwhelming compulsion to gamble is described by the novel as his "madness" (p. 410), a folly causing great suffering for Nell. The grandfather's reaction to the prospect of being diagnosed as mad ("They will shut me up in a stone room, dark and cold, and chain me up to the wall, Nell - flog me with whips" (p. 211)), reflects upon earlier practices, (noted above, ch. 2), presumably because the novel was set in a previous era.

Dickens's early fiction contains several portraits of characters whose lives were ruined by an irrational impulse to gamble (often associated with alcoholism), although his treatment of this type of moral insanity became less evident in later novels.

3. Dickens may have been describing an area he knew, possibly between Birmingham and Wolverhampton (Pilgrim, II, 131-2) in his portrayal of the industrial scenes in chapter 45.

4. The barren nature of this industrial wasteland is evocatively captured in Dickens's use of one of his most recurrent symbols, the garden, for even in the suburbs, "coal-dust and factory smoke darkened the shrinking leaves, and coarse rank flowers". His alliterative description of the "struggling" vegetation which "sickened and sank" beneath the kiln's influence highlights the blighting effect of industrial pollution, its effects upon people living and working in this "cheerless region" where not even "a blade of grass was seen to grow", and the only greenery was on the surface of "stagnant ponds."

5. Critical and Miscellaneous Essays (London: Chapman & Hall, 1896-1901; vol. 4), 144.

6. Dickens further highlights the distasteful effects of the scene in his effective use of imagery: "black vomit" was emitted from towers, "blasting all things living or inanimate". Set against the black backcloth of night, the aggressive actions of the labourers described by Dickens, reflect the unnatural nature of their existence. Within the space of three paragraphs, Dickens has evoked a highly subjective impression of life in one industrial region, though in portraying the effects of a powerless workforce, the reader may sense that Dickens is depicting scenes which are observed rather than felt. He describes unemployed labourers marching in the streets, and "maddened men" rushing with swords and firebrands on errands of "terror and destruction", working "no ruin half so surely as their own".

7. For a discussion about the novel's illustrations, see Joan Stevens, "'Woodcuts Dropped into the Text': The Illustrations in The Old Curiosity Shop and Barnaby Rudge," in Studies in Bibliography, 20 (1967), 113-34.

8. This novel clearly presented some structural problems, and it is significant that he never again chose to construct a novel around a crazed central character. The roles of figures such as Mr Dick or the periodically insane Dr Manette or the disordered Miss Havisham were more limited in Dickens's later novels than the mad figure of Barnaby Rudge.

9. In studying Dickens's methods of composition, John Butt and Kathleen Tillotson conclude that "Dickens' persistence in his plan for a 'tale of the riots of '80' is evidence of his tenacity of purpose and the grip of the original idea on his imagination; not as has been suggested, of the grudging performance of a task" (Butt and Tillotson, Dickens at Work, (London, 1957), p. 77). It has been remarked that the two halves of this novel, separated by an interval of five years in its plot, have been integrated by Dickens's treatment "of the irony of the common assumption that private lives are immune from public events" (K. Tillotson, "Introduction", Barnaby Rudge, (Oxford, 1954), p. XI; also Butt & Tillotson, p. 87). Barbara Hardy summarises the view (explored elsewhere by Harold F. Folland in "The Doer and the Deed: Theme and Pattern in Barnaby Rudge, PMLA, Vol. 74 (1959), 406-417), that, "As is commonly observed, the pattern of character and theme is unified" (Charles Dickens: The Writer and His Work (Windsor: Profile, 1983), p. 49).

10. Dennis Walder notes that Dickens took this novel as an opportunity "to express his hatred of religious intolerance and oppression, and to urge the need for a positive, counteracting force of goodwill based on reason and common sense" (p. 92). In choosing to portray an unreasonable figure at the heart of the novel in Barnaby Rudge, Dickens boldly challenges his readers' expectations.

Yet, in his portrayal of the evil effects of such moral failings as indolence, intolerance, greed, selfishness, or inhumanity in this novel, Dickens's descriptions are more arresting than his portrayal of virtues such as tolerance, loyalty or kindness. Dickens is not merely grappling with Milton's problem of describing goodness (which can often lack the intrinsic interest inherent in the more striking presentation of active evil), for Barnaby Rudge is a novel which fundamentally takes a strongly pessimistic view of the widespread power and effect of evil. Characters such as Dolly, who are chastened by their experiences of suffering, which may help to refine their personalities, are outnumbered by the novel's powerful array of unchanging, evil figures. Although several villains are disposed of in Chapter the Last, Barnaby Rudge traces the wideranging destructive effect of their actions both on other people and on their environment.

For a discussion about Dickens's portrayal of resurrection themes in other novels, see Andrew Sanders, Charles Dickens: Resurrectionist (London: Macmillan, 1982).

11. See Graham's Magazine, 19 (Feb, 1842), 19, for Poe's review.

12. See J. Butt & K. Tillotson, Dickens at Work, p. 76.

13. In May 1836, he had planned to write a novel entitled Gabriel Vardon, the Locksmith of London, but by September 1838, he had made a significant alteration, focusing attention on a different character, and highlighting the novel's historical context in the title Barnaby Rudge: A Tale of The Great Riots. Although Dickens began writing this novel in January 1839, its publication was postponed during the course of the lengthy negotiations with publishers (Butt and Tillotson, pp. 76-77). The work finally appeared in forty two weekly numbers, between February and November 1841, in Master Humphrey's Clock, later published in one volume in December, as Barnaby Rudge: A Tale of the Riots of 'Eighty.

14. He expressed some of the disadvantages he experienced in this form of publication in his rather curious preface to Master Humphrey's Clock (vol. I, September 1840, also reprinted in the National edition, vol. 33, pp. 342-4). Here he describes the "anxiety", the "close confinement" and "constant attention" which are "inseparable from the weekly form of publication", and the way in which he has often felt "cramped and confined in a very irksome and harassing degree, by the space in which I have been constrained to move". He notes that he has been "sometimes strongly tempted" to "hurry incidents" on in case they should appear "too long delayed", and observes "In a word, I have found this form of publication most anxious, perplexing and difficult." His letters too reflect his frustration ("Oh! if I only had him... in monthly numbers" (Letters, I, 343), and the lack of "elbow room" he experienced (ibid., p. 353).

15. Other tales at the beginning of Master Humphrey's Clock were also set in an earlier time.

16. Philip Collins, Dickens, The Critical Heritage (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 92. Commenting about the lack of "serious discussion" stimulated by this novel, Collins notes that this "long-intended historical novel" suffered by comparison both with Scott and with Dickens's own earlier writing.

17. Preface to the 1841 edition, reprinted in Penguin edition, p. 40.

18. Hollington, for example, observes that Dickens's "conception of history is notorious for its extreme... its grotesque crudity" (p. 96), and remarks that he shows a "marked tendency to present historical figures and events in a manner quite specifically reminiscent of caricature" (ibid., p. 97).

19. He is likely to have read the letters of Dr. Johnson, Horace Walpole and Crabbe, to have spoken to eyewitnesses and to have read newspaper reports and several reminiscences (see Dickens At Work, p. 84). He owned a copy of William Vincent's A Plain and Succinct Narrative of the late Riots and Disturbances in the Cities of London and Westminster and Borough of Southwark, 2nd edition 1780 (reputed in De Castro's bibliography to be written by Thomas Holcroft: but see also footnote in Letters, II, 3 June 1841, p. 295). He also annotated Robert Watson's Life of Lord George Gordon: with a Philosophical Review of his Political Conduct, (London: Symonds, 1795). The Catalogue of the Gadshill Library includes details of other historical sources which may have been used by Dickens (although this catalogue, compiled some years after his death, does not list all of his books, whilst also listing some works published after his death), including The Annual Register: or, A View of the History, Politics and Literature, For the Year 1780, pp. 190-195; 254-87; A Complete Collection of State Trials, ed. T.B. Howell, vol. 21, Hansard, 1814 (see cols. 485-652); "Trials at the Old Bailey, in the Mayoralty of the Rt. Hon. Brackley Kennet, Lord Mayor" (taken in shorthand by Joseph Gurney, 1779-80); James Boswell's The Life of Samuel Johnson... Including a Journal

of a Tour of the Hebrides, (ed J.W. Croker, 8 vols. Murray, 1835: see letters of Mrs. Thrale of 9, 10, 12, & 14 June 1780); The Poetical Works of the Rev. George Crabe; with His Letters and Journals, and his Life by His Son,(8 vols., Murray, 1834; see vol. I. The Life, ch. 3, "The Poet's Journal" of 8 June 1780) and Sir Nathaniel Wraxall's Historical Memoirs of His Own Time, (revised edition, 4 vols., Bentley, 1836, Part 1). See Catalogue of the Library of Charles Dickens from Gadshill), ed. J. H. Stonehouse, (see also the inventory of books in Pilgrim Letters, vol. 4, 711-725), for a list of books at 1, Devonshire Terrace, in May 1854). Dickens's letter to Charles Ollier of 3rd June 1841 shows that he owned a copy of Lord George Gordon's portrait, too.

The Appendix B of the Penguin edition of Barnaby Rudge also refers to other possible sources of reference, including Fanaticism and Treason, (1780), The Political Magazine for June & July 1780; Hansard's edition of The Parliamentary History of England, (1814), five newspapers, and letters of June 1780 contained in the Memoirs of the Life of Sir Samuel Romilly (1840).

Dickens may have consciously or unconsciously drawn from a wide range of literary sources. It has been suggested that the social satire in this novel, "though savage at times, is in the tradition of Fielding" (A.O.J. Cockshut, op. cit, p. 73), that the influence of Fielding and also Smollett is detectable in Dickens's humorous characterisation (Introduction to Penguin edition of Barnaby Rudge, p. 16), and that there are resemblances between Scott's David Gellatley, Madge Wildfire and Barnaby Rudge. Gothic elements are evident too, in Dickens's portrayal of the mysterious Rudge, the murderer.

While he may have drawn from a wide range of sources when writing this novel, it is probable that Dickens's understanding of the cause and effects of the riots was particularly influenced by two (fairly biased) sources, in Watson's Life and Vincent's Narrative. According to the Narrative, one source of public discontent in the riots was attributed to an Act seeking to provide Roman Catholics with greater liberty, though little notice was initially taken of Lord George's protests against this Act (pp. 7-10) because of his eccentric character. One contemporary, Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, noted that it "will always remain disputable whether ambition, fanaticism, or alienation of mind" mainly contributed to Gordon's part in "assembling and inciting the people to acts of violence" (The Historical and the Posthumous Memoirs of Sir Nathaniel Wraxall 1772-1784 (vol I, London: Bickers & Son, 1884), p. 252). Wraxall, a well-known memoir-writer (1951-1831), who had travelled extensively in Europe in the service of the East India Company, believed that "To religious enthusiasm or conviction some share may perhaps be fairly attributed", commenting on the "deranged state" of Gordon's understanding (ibid). He doubted whether Gordon had foreseen the consequences of the riots, noting that the mob who set fire to London were "savage" (p. 253), and that few individuals "occupy a more conspicuous or a more unfortunate place in the annals of their country under the reign of George III" (p. 255). It is, however, notable that Wraxall himself was fined for libel on a Russian envoy, and later imprisoned, whilst several reviews attacked the veracity of his memoirs.

The Narrative records the mixed motives of people in the crowd as they presented their petition to Parliament on Friday June 2nd, "some with serious intentions, some with wicked, and others out of curiosity" (ibid., p. 15); the riotous mob activity in various parts of London; Gordon's ineffectual attempts at quelling the affray (Wraxall recording that Gordon proved "destitute of the power" to persuade the crowd to retire (p. 253)); and also the role played by some well-known figures. This account, full of the dramatic interest inherent in conflict, proceeds at a rapid pace, while its inclusion of minutiae and attention to minor details further contribute to its arresting effects (exemplified in the description of one chimney sweep, shot by the military, who was aged about sixteen, and had forty guineas in his pockets (ibid., p. 35)). This author's revulsion when "one of the most awful and dreadful spectacles this country ever beheld was exhibited" (ibid., p. 31), is vividly expressed, and he describes visual and aural effects (of a "tremendous roar", and the "dreadful" report of soldiers' muskets (ibid., p. 33) for example).

Some details in Dickens's account may have been drawn from Vincent's Narrative. Both authors, for example, list the buildings which the mob intend to destroy (including the Bank, Gray's Inn, the Temple, Lincoln's Inn, and the Grand Arsenal at Woolwich in Vincent's work, and the Bank, the Mint and the Arsenal at Woolwich in ch. 67 of Barnaby Rudge). Dickens may have expanded upon the narrative's account of people dying of inebriation in Mr Langdale's distilleries:

> "the liquor ran down the middle of the street, was taken up by the pailfuls, and held to the mouths of the besotted multitude; many of whom killed themselves with drinking non-rectified spirits, and were burned or buried in the ruins" (ibid., p. 36).

In chapter 68 of his novel, he writes:

> "The gutters of the street, and every crack and fissure in the stones, ran with scorching spirit, which being dammed up by busy hands, overflowed... and formed a great pool, into which the people dropped down dead by dozens... From the burning cellars, where they drank out of hats, pails, buckets, tubs, and shoes, some men were drawn, alive, but alight from head to foot."

His use of vivid adjectives and attention to detail vivifies his account. Dickens may also have been influenced by the Narrative's sympathetic portrayal of Lord George Gordon, "actuated rather by a wrong head, than a wicked heart" (ibid., p. 46).

Robert Watson presented rather a different series of impressions, revealing his own political views, but these bear little resemblance to Dickens's portrayal of the cause of the riots or of his characterisation of Gordon. Watson (1746-1838) was an adventurer who rose to be Colonel in Washington's army, becoming secretary to Gordon in 1780, and was an advocate of revolution. Imprisoned as a political suspect from 1796-8, he fled to Paris, becoming Napoleon's English tutor. He later committed suicide in London. Noting that "the nobility of every country violate the laws of nature to support aristocratic pride", he had felt that it was "meritorious" in Gordon to have avoided the prejudices of his parents (ibid., pp. 2-3), while observing that the instigators of the riots were French miscreants ("for at that time, France was governed by a perfidious King"). Gordon, the "enemy of the tyrants, and the friend of the oppressed" had saved the government from "destruction" and was "a man of the strictest virtue, the greatest philanthropy, and the most unsullied honour" (p. 137).

Dickens, of course, portrayed Gordon as a flawed, sometimes irresolute character, but when defending Forster's criticism of his interpretation of "this madman, stated much too favourably as I thought" (Forster, II, IV), he replied: "Say what you please of Gordon, he must have been at heart a kind man, and a lover of the despised and rejected, after his own fashion" (3 June 1841), and "He lived upon a small income, and always within it; was known to relieve the necessities of many people... and did great charities in Newgate". From the sources he had used, Dickens had obviously gained some favourable impressions of Gordon, though for Forster "The feeblest parts of the book are those in which Lord George and his Secretary appear" (II, IX).

20. Henry Crabb Robinson, quoted by Philip Collins in Dickens, The Critical Heritage, p. 102.

21. It has already been noted that he advised his own children "humbly" to guide themselves by the teaching of the New Testament in its broad Spirit, and to put no faith in any man's "narrow construction of its letter here or there" - a point heavily underscored in chapter
25 of Barnaby Rudge: "Ye men of gloom and austerity, who paint the face of Infinite Benevolence with an eternal frown... learn some wisdom even from the witless".

22. Barbara Hardy notes that "Barnaby's weak brain parallels that of Lord George Gordon," as the "Willet father and son parallel the Chesters" (Charles Dickens, The Writer and his Work, p. 49).

23. In Shakespeare and Tragedy, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), John Bayley usefully notes that there are few examples of mad children in literature because some of the characteristics of madness of innocence, dependency or childishness are already attributed to children. Dickens depicts several child-like, insane characters, including Barnaby Rudge, Gordon and, later, Mr Dick.

24. Dickens contrasts the differences between these characters when describing the way in which Gordon, prior to his death, had become involved in further controversies, "stimulated" he explains, by "some new insanity" to publish pamphlets criticising the Queen of France, and also publicly professing the Jewish religion. Barnaby, however, is supposedly to become a little "more rational," with a "better memory and greater steadiness of purpose" at the end of the novel, though never recovering from the shock of his experience.

25. Unlike Johnny in Wordsworth's The Idiot Boy, however, Barnaby Rudge is capable of describing his appreciation of the natural world. Barnaby roams the countryside ("I am often out before the sun, in the woods before the day has reached the shady places" (p. 427)), feeling the influence of the bright sky" and looking up, "smiling, into its deep unfathomable blue" (ch. 77). Although Johnny too may roam "the cliffs and peaks so high that are, To lay his hands upon a star" (320) - a recurrent motif for Barnaby Rudge - he more vaguely observes "The cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo,/And the sun did shine so cold!" (450-451). In "Folly and Wisdom: Three Dickensian Wise Fools" (Dickens Studies Annual, 6, (1977), Robert McCarron notes that both characters feel empathy towards the natural world. Barnaby, though, is rather less exuberant than Johnny, a figure who experiences moments of gay abandon ("For joy he cannot hold the bridle /He's idle all for very joy").

Both Wordsworth and Dickens have portrayed mothers who are concerned about the welfare of their mentally deficient sons. Betty Foy, married to a woodman who returns home at weekends (unlike Barnaby's shadowy father-figure), is proud of the abilities which the mentally retarded figure of her son does possess ("Of Johnny's wit, and Johnny's glory" (126)), though observing : "Consider, Johnny's but half-wise... we must take care of him" (188-9). Mrs. Rudge tries to protect "my idiot son... my blighted boy", and is thrown to the ground in her attempt to stop him from joining Gordon's cause (ch. 48). Coleridge may have found that Wordsworth's description of the effects of mental derangement were distasteful (in his Biographia Literaria, II, (1817), 48-49, he had noted that Susan embodies "an impersonation of an instinct abandoned by judgement", the boy's idiocy "so evenly balanced by the folly of the mother as to present... a laughable burlesque on the blindness of anile dotage", and observing that Wordsworth has recalled the "disgusting images of *ordinary, morbid idiocy*" (p. 48)), yet Wordsworth succeeds in conveying a sympathetic portrait of the effects of idiocy. It has been observed that in his later portrayal of lunacy, Dickens was to modify in proof his description of Mr Dick, thereby avoiding the disgust which Wordsworth "has occasionally aroused in his picture of the Idiot Boy" (H.P. Sucksmith, The Narrative Art of Charles Dickens, (op cit, p. 37), quoting Butt & Tillotson (op.cit., p. 130)). Wordsworth's influence upon the Victorian novel has been described by Robin Gilmour, (The Novel in the Victorian Age, pp. 59-60), and it has been noted that Barnaby Rudge is "very much like the Idiot Boy and the many other simple-minded or 'natural' heroes of Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads (Angus Wilson, Charles Dickens, op.cit., p. 149). There are some similarities between the romantic portrayal of Johnny who is associated with a horse, and Barnaby accompanied by a raven, although Barnaby's characterisation highlights the potentially destructive effects of a suggestible, imaginative approach to life, untempered by rational considerations. For Angus Wilson, "Barnaby represents the extreme freedom of fancy that in some aspects of Romanticism broke down the old eighteenth-century order", while Dickens "here expresses his fear of such total dismissal of the real world for the world of shadows" (ibid, p. 150); although Barnaby becomes caught up in the riots with good intentions, it is clear from the novel that he

lacks discrimination, and therefore becomes caught up in evil, mischievous activity. The scope of activities of Wordsworth's Idiot Boy is clearly more limited.

26. Thus, for example, he looks thoughtfully, and seems perplexed, or bites his nails in a "discomfited manner" while his speech is "faltering". His sudden anger reveals his sense of uncertainty, and his dramatic departure highlights his excitability as, with a "kindling eye and glowing cheek" he took off his hat, and "flourishing it above his head" bade Barnaby "exultingly Farewell! - then cantered off at a brisk pace."

27. "Sitting bolt upright upon his bony steed, with his long, straight hair, dangling about his face and fluttering in the wind; his limbs all angular and rigid, his elbows stuck out on either side ungracefully, and his whole frame jogged and shaken at every motion of his horse's feet" (p. 351). See Michael Hollington, op.cit, p. 105.

28. Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, The Adventures of Don Quixote, rpt. Penguin, 1970. See Anthony Close, The Romantic Approach to 'Don Quixote': A Critical History of the Romantic Tradition in "Quixote" Criticism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). Close provides examples of the way in which, "In his patently lunatic moments, the knight shows a marvellous emotional sensitivity" (p. 18), and notes: "One would hardly expect to find a case of madness like Don Quixote's if one visited a madhouse; rather, his madness appears initially as a literary device designed to set the wheels of parody in motion. Yet.. Cervantes manages... to make the mad personality of Don Quixote thoroughly believable" (p. 23). Close further notes that Quixote's character is, in many ways, an "exaggeration or misapplication of romantic and heroic traits of a general kind rather than of chivalric traits in particular", and that "there is often a disconcerting continuity between his mad behaviour and its exemplary counterparts", though the "stylishness of the exaggeration blurs its indecorum" - Quixote's "residual good sense and good intentions" creating uncertainty in the reader about "where to draw the line between this residual lucidity and the real wisdom of his 'lucid intervals'" (p. 70).

29. Dickens includes a very telling episode in chapter 37, to illustrate the way in which he is highly suggestible:

> "I dreamed that we were Jews, Gashford. You and I - both of us - Jews with long beards."
> "Heaven forbid, my lord! We might as well be Papists."
> "I suppose we might..... Yes, that seems reasonable...There's no harm in thinking of such things."
> "Not in dreams," returned the secretary.
> "In dreams! No, nor waking either."
> - '"Called, and chosen, and faithful,"' said Gashford, taking up Lord George's watch... and seeming to read the inscription" (p. 349).

30. Julian Moynahan "The Hero's Guilt: The Case of Great Expectations". Essays in Criticism, 10 (1960), 60-79, rpt. Dickens. A Casebook (ed. N. Page, Macmillan, 1979), p. 108.

31. Dickens notes of Barnaby: "If ever man believed with his whole heart and soul that he was engaged in a just cause, and that he was bound to stand by his leader to the last, poor Barnaby believed it". In spite of his changeable moods and unpredictability, Barnaby's loyalty is illustrated in chapters 49 and 57, in which he proudly bears his flag, his role as the "only light - hearted, undesigning creature in the whole assembly" (ch. 49), providing a stark contrast with other characters, including Mr Dennis.

32. Robert McCarron, pp. 40-56.

33. Monod, p. 195 .

34. William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury, (1929) rpt. London: Chatto & Windus, 1978.

35. Angus Wilson notes that "although Barnaby takes part in the riots with the weirdest childish fancies for doing good, it is clear that the riots are evil and that fancy may therefore stray too far" (p. 150).

36. Monod, p. 196.

37. Letters, II, 197/.

38. A different use of this association is made when, during periods of derangement, Nebuchadnezzar's behaviour became bestial as we have noted. While the insanity of a New Testament figure had a dramatic effect upon the local swine as observed in chapter 3, Dickens used ferocious animal imagery when describing the "wild and savage" mob like "beasts at the sight of prey" (p. 454).

39. In The Woman in White (serialised in All the Year Round from 26 November 1859-25 August 1860 (rpt. Oxford University Press, 1973)), he uses a dog as an indicator when Sir Percival Glyde held out his hand to Miss Fairlie's dog, but it looked up at him sharply, shrank away from his outstretched hand, "whined, shivered, and hid itself under a sofa" (ibid., p. 118). Collins also adds interest to his characterisation when describing Count Fosco as he exercises his canaries (p. 527), and also the way this character gives a tart to a monkey (rather than its owner, an organ-grinder).

40. A point made by Monod, p. 196.

41. For discussion about the garb of fools, see Sandra Billington's A Social History of the Fool (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester, 1984), pp. 13-14. See also Leslie Hotson's Shakespeare's Motley, (London, 1952).

Barnaby is described as a bedraggled, foolish figure in chapter 3:

> "His dress was of green, clumsily trimmed here and there - apparently by his own hands - with gaudy lace; brightest where the cloth was most worn and soiled, and poorest where it was at the best. A pair of tawdry ruffles dangled at his wrists, while his throat was nearly bare. He had ornamented his hat with a cluster of peacock's feathers, but they were limp and broken, and now trailed negligently down his back. Girt to his side was the steel hilt of an old sword without blade or scabbard; and some particoloured ends of ribands and poor glass toys completed the ornamental portion of his attire. The fluttered and confused disposition of all the motley scraps that formed his dress, bespoke... the disorder of his mind" (p. 74).

However, although he wears some of the apparel traditionally associated with fools, his role is different from that defined by Enid Welsford in The Fool. His Social and Literary History, as "a man who falls below the average human standard, but whose defects have been transformed into a source of delight, a mainspring of comedy" (XI). Barnaby's defects lead him to become caught up in violence and destruction, and he might have been a more successful creation had he possessed more wit, or the capacity to bring delight.

42. See, for example, M. Rosario Ryan, "Dickens and Shakespeare: Probable sources of Barnaby Rudge", English, 19, (1970), 43-48. Not all of this critic's arguments are, however, convincing, illustrated by his far-fetched comparison between Rudge the murderer and the character of Macbeth (p. 43).

43. It is also possible that Dickens's portrayal of Smike in Nickleby may have been influenced by the actress playing the part of the Fool in Macready's production.

44. The speeches of Lear's fool illustrate his intelligence ("Prithee, nuncle, tell me whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman... he's a yeoman that has a gentleman to

his son; for he's a mad yeoman that sees his son a gentleman before him... He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's oath" (3. 6. 9-19)). By contrast, Barnaby suffers (according to the blind Stagg), from "blindness of the intellect" which, "having sometimes glimmerings and dawnings of the light, is scarcely to be trusted as a total darkness." Stagg is not the only figure who beguiles Barnaby with his persuasive powers (illustrated in chapter 46), for Barnaby not only misjudges his character ("He's a wise man"), and is persuaded by Stagg that wealth is to be found in the city (p. 439), but also proves malleable when drawn into supporting Gordon's cause, "ready to do anything for the good cause, and the right, and to help the kind, mild, pale-faced gentleman - the lord they used so ill" (p. 485).

45. Exemplified at the beginning of chapter 47, in which, despite the fulsome nature of his description, Dickens writes with a stronger sense of conviction, that "In the exhaustless catalogue of Heaven's mercies to mankind, the power we have of finding some germs of comfort in the hardest trials must ever occupy the foremost place... something which... we possess in common with the angels... in pity" (p. 432).

46 Exemplified in his rather heavy-handed comments at the beginning of chapter 25: "Who would not rather see a poor idiot happy in the sunlight, than a wise man pining in a darkened jail!

Ye men of gloom and austerity, who paint the face of Infinite Benevolence with an eternal frown; read in the Everlasting Book... and learn some wisdom even from the witless, when their hearts are lifted up they know not why, by all the mirth and happiness it brings" (p. 249).

47. For further discussion about Grip's role, see James K. Gottshall "Devils Abroad: The Unity and Significance of Barnaby Rudge", Nineteenth Century Fiction, 16, (1961), 133-146.

48. It has been suggested that Addison's Campaign may have been one source (Penguin edition, p. 746).

49. Angus Wilson, The World of Charles Dickens, p. 152.

50. Philip Collins, Dickens and Crime (London: Macmillan, 1965), p. 49.

51. See A.O.J. Cockshut, pp. 66-67 for a fuller discussion.

52. See John Stevenson, Popular Disturbances in England 1700-1870 (London: Longman, 1979). See also E.P. Thompson "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," Past and Present, 50 (1971), and E.J. Hobsbawn & G. Rudé, Captain Swing (Harmondsworth, Middx: Penguin, 1973). Dickens had earlier described night-rioting in The Old Curiosity Shop.

53. Russell Brain, Some Reflections on Genius and Other Essays (London: Pitman Medical, 1960), p. 135.

54. Angus Wilson, p. 152.

55. This novel was published in monthly serials, following Forster's suggestion that Dickens should write a novel "in the first person, by way of change" (Forster's Life, (ed. J.W.T. Ley, 1928), p. 522). In this novel, Dickens adopted the form of autobiographical narrative. For discussion about the "elaboration of David Copperfield", see Monod, pp. 277 -307.

56 The symbol of the garden is clearly of significance in Dickens's novels, as has been observed. For a more general study of gardens in nineteenth century literature, see

Michael Waters, The Garden in Victorian Literature, (Aldershot, Hampshire: Scholar Press, 1988). In David Copperfield, Dickens describes Betsey's "small square gravelled court or garden full of flowers, carefully tended, and smelling deliciously" (ch. 13). For further discussion about the role of Betsey Trotwood in the novel, see A Study of the role of women in David Copperfield, (Heather Pike, unpublished M. Phil, (1983), pp. 47-60).

57. See Hollington, pp. 184-185.

58. See Barbara Hardy's The Moral Art of Dickens (London: Athlone Press, 1970), pp. 122-138, for discussion about form, character and symbolism in Copperfield in relation to the larger theme of moral fiction.

A range of divergent critical opinions have been expressed about this novel, for while Leavis (in Dickens the Novelist, chapter 2), like J. Hillis Miller (who notes that the novel records the "slow formation of an identity through many experiences and sufferings" (Charles Dickens: The World of his Novels (Cambridge: Massachusetts: Harvard University Press: London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 152), are numbered amongst those critics who have perceived David's marriage to Agnes as the culmination of this novel's portrayal of its hero's personal development (explored in theme and character study), other critics are more sceptical. In Criticisms and Appreciations of the Works of Charles Dickens (London: Dent, 1911), G.K. Chesterton argued that Copperfield's marriage to Agnes was a sort of spiritualised and sublimated marriage of convenience and that crisis and conflict are healthy in marriage (p. 130), while James R. Kincaid has argued that the narrator's progress marks a gradual retreat into delusion and a "dream world" ("The Darkness of David Copperfield", Dickens Studies, 2 (1965), p. 66).

59. This subject hast been well-aired by Robin Gilmour in "Memory in David Copperfield", The Dickensian, 81 (1975), 30-42.

60. See "Gwendolyn B. Needham, "The Undisciplined Heart of David Copperfield", Nineteenth Century Fiction, 9 (1954), 81-107, for an exploration of the way in which this novel constitutes a well-constructed study of emotional maturity.

In Dickens and the Invisible World: Fairy Tales, Fantasy, and Novel-Making, (London: Macmillan, 1980), Harry Stone argues that Steerforth is "David's double, that there is a subtle alter-ego relationship between the two" (p. 233).

61. For a less than satisfactory exploration of Dickens's identification with David Copperfield, see Vereen M. Bell's "The Emotional Matrix of David Copperfield," Studies in English Literature, 8 (1968), 633-649.

62. Sylvère Monod has noted (in Dickens the Novelist, p. 310) that Edwin Pugh disclosed the name of this figure in The Dickens Originals (London: 1912), p. 295.

63. Hollington describes her as one of "Dickens's most brilliant grotesques", noting that "with the status of a child, she has an adult knowingness". Like Mr Dick, she is an essential outsider, though she has access to private information ("secrets"), and operates "like the fool in a Shakespearean play, commenting on misdemeanours and frauds" and "speaking about sex" with frankness almost unparalleled in Dickens's novels (p. 187).

For discussion concerning Phiz's illustration of Miss Mowcher, and her potential role as intermediary in Steerforth's seduction of Em'ly, see Michael Steig's Dickens and Phiz (Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1978), p. 19.

64. For further discussion about their grotesque appearance, see Michael Hollington, Dickens and the Grotesque, pp. 184 -187.

65. It has been noted that Dickens had "considerable psychiatric insight" when identifying the essence of Mr Dick's mental disorder "without lapsing into the use of lay concepts of raving lunacy", in "Mr Dick the Schizophrenic" (J.M. Keyte and M.L. Robinson, The Dickensian, (1980), 37-39).

66. See Philip Collins, "David Copperfield: A very Complicated Interweaving of Truth and Fiction" London: Essays and Studies, (1970), 71-86.

67. Forster describes its "supreme popularity" (III, VII), while Dickens himself described the work as his "favourite child" (Preface to 1869 Charles Dickens Edition of David Copperfield). For further discussion, see Sylvère Monod, pp. 275-369.

68. See Margaret Dalziel, Popular Fiction 100 Years Ago; An Unexplored Tract of Literary History (London: Cohen & West, 1957), p. 99 for discussion about heroes of contemporary Victorian popular fiction.

69. For discussion about Victorian attitudes towards earnestness, see chapter 10 of Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830 - 1870, pp. 218-262.
70. For discussion about respectability, see Walter Houghton, pp. 184-190. See also Robin Gilmour, The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981).

71. For discussion about Victorian attitudes to work, see Walter Houghton, pp. 242-262.

72. See Barbara Hardy, The Moral Art of Dickens (London: Athlone Press, 1970).

73. See H.P. Sucksmith, The Narrative Art of Charles Dickens, pp. 37-40.

74. For detailed discussion, see my unpublished M. Phil thesis: The Role of Women in David Copperfield.

75. Dickens's humorous treatment of this motif of fire provides a striking contrast with the way in which the passionate figure of Rosa is often associated with fire. Fire is used as a particularly fitting symbol of the fierce turmoil consuming Rosa. David Copperfield believes that her thinness is caused by some wasting fire within her, his first discussion about her (with Steerforth) takes place in front of a fire, her portrait hangs above his bedroom fire at the Steerforth's house, and when Steerforth succeeds in charming her, they sit in front of a fire together.

76. Leavis, however, observes that Betsey's "humanization" towards the end of the novel is illustrated by the way in which she is "'aiding and abetting' her last maid'" when she marries a tavern-keeper, and "crowning the marriage-ceremony with her presence" (pp. 95-96).

77. See above, p. 13 ?. The simple-minded fellow, who has comically associated very disparate ideas like many of Dickens's comical creations (as exemplified in chapter 19 when he suggests that David should become a "Brazier"), and who has taken most of his cues from Betsey, sucking his thumb on occasion (in chapter 36), has clearly captured Dickens's imagination. When hearing of Betsey's financial ruin, he is described rolling his eyes "like a piece of machinery" - a description reminiscent of Betsey's eyes which gaze "like a Saracen's Head in a Dutch clock", in chapter I.

78. Michael R. Booth interestingly remarks that although melodrama is extinct on the twentieth century stage, elements of it survive in some contemporary films (English Melodrama (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1965), p. 189.

79. Mr Dick's appearance of a window sharply contrasts with another figure later observed at a window, for Uriah Heep appears cadaverous and far from jovial. Heep (whose appearance is, significantly, red-tinged and devilish), becomes one of David's sexual rivals, unlike the benign, asexual Mr Dick.

80. See my unpublished M. Phil. thesis: The Role of Women in David Copperfield for a detailed exploration of this point.

81. Quoted in Hard Times, Great Expectations and Our Mutual Friend, A Selection of Critical Essays, (ed.) Norman Page (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 94-96.
82. Page, p. 98.

83. Barbara Hardy, Charles Dickens: The Writer and his Work, p. 84.

84. For discussion about Dickens's change of plan, in concluding this novel, see Martin Meisel, "The Ending of Great Expectations", Essays in Criticism, 15 (1965), 326-31.

85. Angus Calder (Penguin edition, p. 501), notes that James Payn, a minor novelist, claimed to have given Dickens the idea for Miss Havisham, from a living original of his acquaintance, declaring that Dickens's account was "not one whit exaggerated".

86. Kate Flint, Dickens, p. 87.

87. John R. Reed., "Confinement and Character in Dickens' Novels", Dickens Studies Annual, I (1970), 43.

88. For discussion about the fairy-tale elements in Dickens's description of Miss Havisham, see Harry Stone (Dickens and the Invisible World), pp, 312-324. Leavis has remarked that Miss Havisham is "a living witness to the reality of passion" (p. 388), and plays a part in awakening Pip to the knowledge that there is a "life of the imagination", while G.K. Chesterton numbered Miss Havisham amongst a range of "grisly figures" described by Dickens, noting that the atmosphere evoked "altogether eclipses the story, which often seems disappointing in comparison". For Chesterton, "Something worse than a common tale of jilting lay behind the masquerade and madness of the awful Miss Havisham" (Charles Dickens, ch. VII), while Françoise Basch notes: "Victim of a double error of judgement, both in her idea of love and in her attribution of one man's perfidy to the entire sex, Miss Havisham, the purest symbol of death in life, embodies the tragic echo of a betrayed and solitary woman" (Relative Creatures: Victorian Women in Society and the Novel 1837 - 67, trans. A. Rudolf (London: Allen Lane, 1974), pp. 150-151). In Dickens and Women, Michael Slater observes that "Just as she is the most haunting, so Miss Havisham is actually the last figure in Dickens's work to illustrate the perversion of womanhood that can be brought about by the passions" (p. 293).

89. For a sample of contemporary reviews concerning the reception of this novel, see the Casebook edition (Dickens: Hard Times, Great Expectations and Our Mutual Friend, ed. Norman Page (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 94-101). While one reviewer wrote in defence of her portrayal ("There are those who will say that Miss Havisham's strange mad life is overdrawn; but such have not been conversant with the freaks and eccentricities which a haughty spirit in agony can assume (ibid., p. 95)), another (anonymous) writer was more scathing: "Miss Havisham is one of Mr Dickens' regular pieces of melodramatic exaggeration.... Human life cannot go on in this way... even if it were possible, the manner of living would be... too nearly bordering on the monstrous and loathsome, to be appropriately introduced in the midst of a story of ordinary English life" (ibid., p. 97).

For one (rather insubstantial) interpretation of Miss Havisham's positive contribution to Pip's personal development, see Graham Martin's Great Expectations, (Milton Keynes: Oxford University Press 1985, p. 67). Julian Moynahan, however, observes that Miss Havisham is one of a number of characters failing to assist Pip in this novel who come to grief in various ways ("The Hero's Guilt: The Case of Great Expectations". Essays in Criticism, volume 10 (1960), 72-73). He argues that much violence in this novel can be viewed as a projection of Pip's repressed feelings. For Dennis Walder, however, "Forgiveness, in Great Expectations, seems to override all other aspects of Dickens's vision" (p. 200).

Commenting on the special significance of food in this novel, Barbara Hardy observes that Miss Havisham demonstrates "one of the most prominent failures in love in Great Expectations. Her love-feast is preserved in its decay to make the most conspicuous contribution to the themes of love and nature.... Miss Havisham makes a symbolic correlation between the mouldering wedding - breakfast and her own life", while her "rejection of ordinary public meals is like her attempt to shut out the daylight" (The Moral Art of Dickens, pp. 153-154).

Developing ideas drawn from the psychoanalytic theories of Lacan, Steven Connor takes the view that Miss Havisham's "masochistic self-immurement is, like most masochism, an attempt to close off in advance and master pain and humiliation imposed from the outside - in her case the pain of her rejection by her swindling lover" (Charles Dickens (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p. 130.

Chapter Seven

The Ways of Providence and Dickens's Portrayal of Insanity in A Tale of Two Cities

"I think the business of art is to lay all that ground carefully, not with the care that conceals itself - to show, by a backward light, what everything has been working to - but only to suggest, until the fulfilment comes. These are the ways of Providence, of which ways all art is but a little imitation" (Letter to Collins, 6 October, 1859), Nonesuch, III, p. 125.

In A Tale of Two Cities, a novel according to Dickens, which "greatly moved and excited me in the doing, and Heaven knows I have done my best and believed in it" (ibid.), we find his most integrated portrayal of insanity, interwoven in both theme and character. The novel is also significant because of the way in which it reveals Dickens's overt and more subtly expressed religious and moral values in the latter part of his writing career. It will become apparent too that it marks the great strides he had made as a writer in portraying the cause and effects of insanity through a variety of narrative forms.[1]

While Dickens had explored the uses of insanity in his portrayal of the characters of Barnaby Rudge and Mr Dick as victims and catalysts (and later still the effects of madness in his portrait of the crazed Miss Havisham), in A Tale of Two Cities, he interweaves the theme of insanity within a broader, spiritual vision, finding one form of expression in his treatment of the themes of sacrifice, death and redemption. Dickens's

handling of the subject is illustrated by his descriptions of Dr Manette's experience of insanity and recovery, contrasted with his account of the death of the unrepentant, vengeance-seeking Mme Defarge. In A Tale of Two Cities, Dickens returns again to the theme of mob violence, and his portrayal of the phenomenon of mad dancing (the outworking of misdirected energies, according to Dickens, which finds its roots in pagan rites), provides insight into his understanding of crowd activity - a significant theme in the novel.

It has already become evident in this study, that Dickens's experimentation with the theme of madness developed throughout his writing career, and he experimented further with its potential in two significant novels preceding A Tale of Two Cities, which help pave the way for his later treatment. In Bleak House and Little Dorrit, he portrayed insanity in individuals as a means of symbolising one aspect of a social malaise: he experimented with the technical potential of the theme in exposing different levels of meaning in the narrative, and he studied the cause and effect of mental breakdown in a character with more subtlety of insight than shown in his earlier fiction. For these reasons, a brief consideration of his artistry in describing insanity in these novels will help to set the scene for the major contribution of A Tale of Two Cities. It will become apparent, as the discussion unfolds, that Dickens was to excel himself in conveying in this novel, the effects of insanity in both the fury of the mob and the frailty of the individual, although the tale paradoxically highlights Dickens's belief in the workings of Providence, even in the midst of intense human suffering.

When contrasted with its predecessor David Copperfield, Bleak House (a novel published in twenty monthly numbers between March 1852 and September 1853), was described by at least one of Dickens's contemporaries as bristling with social questions.[2] Although for some it had marked the "drear decline of the author of Pickwick, Chuzzlewit and Copperfield", some modern critics have admired its construction, noting that it marks the beginning of the "greatest phase of his achievement"(see Collins, Critical Heritage, p. 272).[3] His study of insanity in this novel is clearly used to reflect some of

the novel's central themes in his description of the two minor, but significant characters, Miss Flite and Grandmother Smallweed.

Dickens had publicised his determination purposely to dwell "upon the romantic side of familiar things" in his Preface to the first edition of Bleak House (although it is doubtful whether he actually fulfilled this aim in a work permeated by legal satire). Acutely aware of the implicit irony in a Chancery Judge's statement that the Court of Chancery was "almost immaculate" (p. 41), Dickens had set out to remedy such a misconception in this novel. There are few characters in Bleak House whose lives are not touched by the far-reaching consequences of the law courts, including its memorable madwoman, Miss Flite, a victim used (like Mr Dick) as a rhetorical device to undergird Dickens's moral viewpoint. At times, Dickens makes heavy-handed use of this device, illustrated by "Esther's Narrative" in chapter 35 when Miss Flite's remark that "all the greatest ornaments of England in knowledge, imagination, active humanity, and improvement of every sort are added to its nobility", is ironically undermined by the comment: "I am afraid she believed what she said, for there were moments when she was very mad indeed".

Miss Flite, a character whose existence has been blighted by legal injustice, has been described as "a much more painful Ophelia", "wholly conceived in terms of her environment in time and place",[4] for although there may be few points of comparison between these two figures, both suffer the ill effects of the actions of another character. Unlike the figure of Barnaby Rudge, Miss Flite has not been mentally deranged from birth, but her plight illuminates the effects of intense personal suffering and mental anguish. Dickens's thumbnail sketch of her family crudely represents the disastrous effects of legal injustice: her father, a bankrupt builder, dies in a debtor's prison, her brother falls into drunkenness and poverty before expiring, and her sister sinks into prostitution. Dickens uses Miss Flite's insanity as a means of further illustrating the social effects and legal injustice, weaving her role into brief, yet memorable encounters with some key characters in this novel. The way in which Miss Flite's prophetic role in Bleak House provides a warning to other characters (as she too has been a Ward of

Chancery, like Richard and Ada), marks Dickens's achievement in using insanity as an effective device (evident, for example, in the "miserable" news from her "poor mad lips" that Richard is, after Miss Flite, the "most constant suitor in court" (ch. 60)). Dickens later explored its potential as a plot device in A Tale of Two Cities, although Dr Manette's insanity was to serve a very different purpose.

In the case of Miss Flite, Dickens had conceived a helpless, harmless, somewhat asexual creation whose time and energy were consumed by the Chancery case. Like Barnaby Rudge, she is a character with no prospect of marriage. It is evident that few of Dickens's mad creations are capable of sustained marital relationships (for a variety of reasons), while their distinguishing features include an inability to relate to their peer groups and a common experience of isolation. Dickens may have drawn from a range of literary sources in conveying the sense of fragmentation and loneliness which may be experienced by the insane.[5] However, Miss Flite's role in Bleak House is heavily endowed with symbolic significance - the few trappings she possesses underlining her association with the great Chancery case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce at the heart of this novel (in her reticule containing papers and dry lavender, and in her significantly - named birds).[6] For this reason, her characterisation illustrates Dickens's continuing experimentation with the uses of insanity.

Miss Flite is used by Dickens as a means of highlighting the rapacious, destructive effects of the legal system (as few critics have failed to observe) in naming these birds "Hope, Joy, Youth, Peace, Rest, Life, Dust, Ashes, Waste, Want, Ruin, Despair, Madness" (a point which hardly needs underling), "Death, Cunning, Folly, Words, Wigs, Rags, Sheepskin" (referring to the material from which parchment was made), "Plunder, Precedent, Jargon, Gammon and Spinach" (echoing Miss Mowcher's description of the world and its folly). With even heavier symbolic significance (which is arguably rather too heavy-handed), Dickens later adds two more birds to this collection, darkly naming them "the Wards of Jarndyce", while the aptly-named Miss Flite states her intention of restoring these birds to liberty after the Chancery case is over. It has been remarked that the image of Miss Flite's caged birds reflects the way in which the pastoral values of

Bleak House are set against the perplexingly scattered life of the city,[7] yet while Dickens uses the symbolic value of these birds to great effect, it is clearly not his intention to explore other aspects of Miss Flite's characterisation with subtlety of insight. Her speech, with its repetitive references to youth, hope and beauty, the Day of Judgement or the Great Seal,[8] is pregnant with symbolic significance (as is her association with her landlord Krook, nicknamed the Lord Chancellor, in his shop (the "Court of Chancery" in which his stock wastes away with "rust and must and cobwebs")). While he, significantly, may "grub on" in a "muddle", his cat is described viciously ripping a bundle of rags. Here, Dickens is crudely highlighting the rapacious practices of Chancery, by means of imagery which is disappointing in its crudity of effect, for his moral purposes in conveying the malpractices of the legal system have somewhat blunted the finer edges of his artistry.

Furthermore, because of Dickens's singleness of purpose in directly associating most aspects of Miss Flite's characterisation with her function in the novel, his invention of this figure may lack the spontaneity evident in his portrayal of some other crazed figures exemplified by the unexpected responses of the unpredictable Mr F's aunt. There are times when he strains his use of the imagery of madness (exemplified when Miss Flite describes her landlord as "M, quite M!" (p. 252)). That Miss Flite's character symbolises the blighting effects of Chancery is evident in her association with a garden - a significant symbol in Dickens's novels - for she is described not in her own garden, but in Lincoln's Inn, where she has made nosegays for the Court during the Summer (p. 98).

While Miss Flite, "along with the frenzied Mr Gridley", represents "the fate of Richard Carstone, and of all other wards in Chancery who would assert their claims before the Court",[9] she is clearly possessed of some self-knowledge: "I am afraid I am at times (between ourselves, you wouldn't think it) a little - rambling you know". Although her role indirectly illuminates the compassion of Esther's kindly guardian in providing financial help, her quest for justice is, of course, ultimately unsuccessful, Dickens thematically taking up her preoccupations in a significant conversation between

Jarndyce and Esther (in chapter 8) which highlights the widespread, dismal effects of Chancery.[10] As part of his moral vision in this novel, it is evident that Dickens occasionally uses this crazed victim as a wise fool, drawing on evidence of wisdom in her folly, as when she observes that the lives of her birds are "so short" in comparison with Chancery proceedings" (p. 104). This character, who is "as cordial and full of heart as sanity itself can be - more so than it often is" (p. 693) is possessed of insight more than the seemingly rational creation of Richard in the novel (a trait also occasionally evident in David Copperfield's Mr Dick, as we have noted). In a novel which explores a range of causes of injustice, not even Esther's guardian avoids making a misjudgement (evident when he provides income for the irresponsible Harold Skimpole, whose selfishness markedly contrasts with such a character as Mr Dick, for example).[11]

Although Miss Flite merely features as a minor character amidst the array of creations in Bleak House, her significant role has aptly been described as a "burlesque anticipation" of Richard, part of the system of parallels and parodies that structure the novel",[12] for she clearly plays an important part in this novel. Unlike such a figure as Wemmick, who adopted a successful strategy for surviving the pressures encountered in the business world (by means of his fortress - like home), Miss Flite proves unable to devise an effective system of defence against the crushing legal system. As such, her portrayal as a "Chancery victim mentally unhinged by its treatment of her" (Monod, p. 405), is highly effective, even though depicted with more care than spontaneity. Dickens's later portrayal of Dr Manette as a rather different victim of circumstances was, however, to be more complex in both its design and execution.

In contrast to the pinched, frail portrait of Miss Flite, Bleak House contains a more comical image of insanity, in the memorable form of Grandmother Smallweed, who may represent a picture of senile dementia.[13] Dickens skilfully explores her comic potential, using her idiosyncratic behaviour as a means of humorous relief. The antics of her acquisitive family as they search for Jarndyce's Will, may offer a parody of other families similarly engaged in this novel,[14] while the mentally confused, minor character of Grandmother Smallweed illustrates Dickens's achievement in creating

comic diversion through the unpredictability and incongruous behaviour of a crazed creation. The mental condition of this puppet-like, wizened figure degenerates as the novel progresses (in contrast to Mr Dick, who shows greater mental capability as time passes, while such a character as Barnaby Rudge makes little significant change). This character has been critically described as "the most lugubrious example, throughout Dickens's work, of the perverse pleasure he could derive from presenting feeble automata... a picture of the extremity of human decrepitude, something never amusing to contemplate "(Monod, p. 413), offering rather a sober estimate, however, of Dickens's strikingly original comic effects.[15] Grandmother Smallweed's dazed, mental state creates comic diversion in the novel, partly because of the annoyance she causes her immediate family, who respond with active hostility (whether throwing cushions at her, or insulting her). Their actions are described with a vibrance lacking from some descriptions of the novel's central themes - evident for example in Dickens's descriptions of the the way in which, in responding to her obsession, Grandmother Smallweed's "worthy husband, setting aside his bread-and-butter, immediately discharges the cushion at her" (p. 346). Dickens highlights the family's obtuseness by skilful use of irony, here and elsewhere, as in his ironic description of "the sportive twins" (p. 351), or in Mr George's response to Grandfather Smallweed's triumphant exclamation that his family have "never been readers": "It don't pay. Stuff. Idleness", whereupon, glancing at the crazed figure of Grandmother Smallweed, Mr George notes: "There's not much to choose between your two states" (p. 351). By contrast, Richard's obsession with the legal case which is slowly wearing him down ("Call it madness, and I tell you I can't help it now, and can't be sane" (p. 676)), an obsession involving both time and money - themes which hold a special fascination for Grandmother Smallweed - is treated very differently by this character's close friends. It is felt that to "use persuasion" is "even more mischievous" with him "than to leave him as he was" (p. 678): unlike Grandmother Smallweed, Richard (though obsessed by the Court case) is clearly not insane. Yet the themes of time and money, recurring in Grandmother

Smallweed's interjections, have parodied issues which become central to Richard's welfare.

Thus, while it is (acidly) observed that the crazed creation, Grandmother Smallweed, is lacking in "observation, memory, understanding, and interest", her role indirectly highlights some of the novel's central themes, as she confuses the measurement of time and money, muddling "Ten minutes" with "Ten ten-pound notes", or "fifteen years ago" with "Fifteen hundred pound" for example. Dickens describes her confusion with exuberance, as her exaggeration becomes even more marked, reflecting her husband's crescendo of annoyance: "Seventy-six hundred thousand million of parcels of bank-notes").[16] Dickens does not overtax such comic invention, but, by skilful use of incongruity, injects the remarks of this crazed figure into a general conversation, as one means of provoking a response in others. This was a technique successfully employed elsewhere (with Mrs. Markleham's interjections in Copperfield, and, later, Mr F's aunt in Little Dorrit), when a character's unanticipated remarks, cutting through the superficial niceties in a conversation, necessitate a response from others, which may prove illuminating. As Dickens had explored such comic uses of insanity in Grandmother Smallweed, he later returned to this theme when describing Mr F's aunt, a minor character whose crazed conversation exposes some underlying revelations with startling clarity in Little Dorrit, although she is, of course, not the only insane figure in a novel dealing extensively with different types of confinement, their cause and effect.[17]

The major characteristics of Mr F's aunt are her "extreme severity and grim taciturnity", while her tendency to interrupt conversations "totally uncalled for by anything said by anybody, and traceable to no association of ideas" is exemplified by various interjections: "When we lived at Henley, Barnes's gander was stole by tinkers" (p. 199), or "The Monument near London Bridge... was put up arter the Great Fire of London" (p. 200), or "There's mile-stones on the Dover road!" (p. 314). Russell Brain remarks that "it is possible that Mr. F's aunt was an elderly schizophrenic" who "readily became aggressive if replied to", while "on one occasion she had to be led from the room, to which she offered no resistance" (Brain, p. 132). Whilst she may

demonstrate "mortal hostility towards the human race", she is particularly hostile towards the rather mild figure of Clennam. Thus, whilst bending over a steaming vessel of tea "like a malignant Chinese enchantress engaged in the performance of unholy rites" she exclaims about Clennam, "Drat him, if he ain't come back again!" (although she has not seen this character for least three months), and following her hostile: "None of your eyes at me" offers a crust of toast, observing: "He has a proud stomach, this chap! He's too proud... to eat it!" and, "Give him a meal of chaff!" (pp. 591-2). Such a figure has a discomfiting effect on other characters, and with dry irony, Dickens remarks that on one occasion (following comments that "You can't make a head and brains out of a brass knob with nothing in it. You couldn't do it when your Uncle George was living; much less when he's dead"), her speech "produced a depressing effect on the little assembly" as it was impossible to mistake her hatred of Clennam, and "secondly, because nobody ever knew on these occasions whose Uncle George was referred to" (pp. 319-20).

Interestingly, as this character grows increasingly hostile towards Clennam, she becomes less comical as a creation. The developing sense of connection between her thoughts renders her less idiosyncratic, as Mr Dick grew less comically effective when he became steadier in his purpose (as we have noted). Nonetheless, in her assault on the already uncertain figure of Mr Clennam, Mr F's aunt questions accepted social norms of common courtesy. The reader's attitude towards such norms is, of course, affected by the viewpoint adopted by the author. If, for example, Wemmick had been described from a different perspective, he could have been perceived to be mad, although as Michael Waters observes (in The Garden in Victorian Literature), his "garden and miniature castle are the only recuperative spaces available to him" (p. 158), and, in describing the cause and effect of his behaviour, Dickens treats this character sympathetically.

In the case of Mr F's aunt, Dickens associates her appearance and actions with a variety of disparate images to convey her inflexible nature. She has a face "like a staring wooden doll too cheap for expression", as if owned by a child who has carelessly attached her wig, and caused "dints" in her face with "some blunt instrument," while her "stony reticule" is "an appendage of great size and of a fossil appearance" (p. 315),

appearing on occasion "as rigid as if it had been petrified by the Gorgon's head, and had got it at that moment inside" (p. 886): a description reminiscent of the jaw-like structures of Miss Murdstone's bag. Dickens uses nautical imagery (when she was "laid up in ordinary in her chamber"), also describing her as "holding out like a grim fortress." This minor character clearly introduces a sharp cutting edge to conversations through her role in the novel: something of the cutting edge lacking in the character of Clennam (as Mrs. Nickleby's crazed suitor had introduced the theme of sexuality in Nickleby). For these reasons, the role of Mr F's aunt in Little Dorrit, although minor, produces some arresting effects in this novel.

Insanity was, of course, a subject explored elsewhere in Little Dorrit - a novel which in some ways helped to pave the way for Dickens's more carefully explored treatment of madness in A Tale of Two Cities, for Mr Dorrit's mental collapse prefigured Dickens's later exploration of Dr Manette's plight, as both characters experience (to a differing degree) the blighting consequences of confinement through a period of mental derangement. Despite the widely varying subject-matter of the two novels, Dickens's Preface to the 1857 Edition of Little Dorrit illustrates, in its reference to "threads", "weaving" and "pattern", the way in which the lives of numerous seemingly unconnected characters become interwoven in a particularly complex tapestry, prefiguring his treatment of the shaping influence of Providence in A Tale of Two Cities. The form and content of Little Dorrit may have been widely discussed elsewhere,[18] yet this novel is notable because of the way in which it marks a further development in Dickens's handling of insanity. While passing reference is made to Mr Flintwinch's brother Ephraim, the "lunatic-keeper" who "speculated unsuccessfully in lunatics" and "got into difficulty about over-roasting a patient" (p. 852), Dickens did not choose to enlarge upon this subject. More significantly, his description of the mental collapse of Mr Dorrit however, prefigures his later portrayal of Dr Manette's experience in several important details. Both characters, for example, are challenged by a change of circumstance in their personal lives for different reasons, their experience of emotional turmoil highlighting their mental frailty, while both are affected by a period of

incarceration. Whereas, in his early novels, Dickens had depicted the effects of insanity with broad brush strokes, Mr Dorrit's characterisation exemplifies the way he later traces a character's mental deterioration with greater subtlety, sensitively contrasting this character's outer semblance of well-being with traits of inner uncertainty. Thus, for example, he carefully prepares the reader for Mr Dorrit's downfall by describing Little Dorrit's "faint misgiving" that she will never see her father fully restored "as he used to be before the prison days" (p. 530). Little Dorrit is herself used as a rhetorical device when noting that, in his so-called freedom, her father moves in a society which "greatly resembled a superior sort of Marshalsea" (p. 565).

Apart from using Little Dorrit as a means of casting light on Mr Dorrit's fragile state of mental welfare, Dickens uses another method of prefiguring this character's mental and physical degeneration by evoking an atmosphere of impending doom in the significant way in which, when nearing Rome, Mr Dorrit happens upon a (rather menacing) funeral procession. The narrative includes descriptions of "dirty" vestments and an "ugly" priest of "lowering" aspect with "overhanging" brow, whose chanting sounds threatening, while even his salutation seems menacing. Although the funeral procession makes off in one direction, and Mr Dorrit's company moves upon their "so-different way", this incident has introduced a hint of death into the narrative, and it becomes apparent that Mr Dorrit's direction is, ultimately, not to be so very "different" after all.

Dickens highlights certain key words and phrases to indicate the disparity between Mr Dorrit's appearance and behaviour, and his inner feelings. Thus, in his description of Mr Dorrit's relationship with Mrs. General (Book 2, ch. 19), it is evident that Mr Dorrit is assuming a posture, conducting himself as some "may be seen" to conduct themselves in Church, and to "perform" their part in the service, when he "appeared" generally satisfied and confident in his relationship with Mrs. General. It becomes apparent, however, that his inner emotions are merely protected by a fragile shell, and Dickens skilfully conveys the damaging effects of his internal experience of mental fragmentation before it becomes outwardly expressed. Thus, prior to the memorable

dinner party at which he suffers from delusions, it is significant that he has been secluded in his room (partly reflecting his earlier experiences of isolation). He emerges from this room looking "refulgent" yet "indefinably shrunken and old", his outer attire contrasting with his inner malaise. Dickens is economical in his use of language when (rather vaguely) describing this dinner as "very choice" as the lack of details commonly characterising his description of food (a subject addressed elsewhere by Barbara Hardy as we have noted), emphasises the dull nature of this gathering, for the "table was long, and the dinner was long." Far from proving a convivial event, Dickens depicts its fragmentary effects, with Little Dorrit being separated from her father by shadowy figures who were not intimate friends of the family. When describing the "usual French Count and the usual Italian Marchese" as "decorative social milestones", Dickens's use of the word "milestones", echoing one of Mr F's aunt's memorable phrases, draws attention to the folly of such social conventions. The portrayal of Mr Dorrit's mental collapse is used as a means to expose a range of reactions in other characters. The guests' hushed reaction to Mr Dorrit's unexpected change in behaviour, resulting from delusions at the dinner party, dramatically heightens the effects of his mental deterioration, while Dickens fully exploits Mr Dorrit's confusion about the nature of this gathering. Mr Dorrit's experience of mental confusion is used to highlight the folly in others - in this case, the shallow reaction of the other guests gathered at this dinner, as exemplified by Mrs. Merdle's response, when "the exceeding mortification undergone by the Bosom had occasioned the withdrawal of the greater part of the company". By contrast, Little Dorrit is neither ashamed of her father's behaviour, nor of his personality, showing the potential to reconcile her past and present experiences, unlike her father. As her father's health deteriorates, Dickens underlines the sacrificial nature of her devotion (a point made by Meisel in Realizations, in which the theatricality and imagery of this devotion is discussed (Martin Meisel, Realizations: Narratives, Pictorial and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth Century England (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) Dickens note) that she "would have laid down her own life to restore him" - themes later resurfacing in a different way in <u>A Tale of Two Cities.</u>

When conveying the effects of Mr Dorrit's experiences of different types of confinement (including the self-imposed constraints he suffered when he became wealthy), Dickens uses *dramatic irony, as Mr Dorrit proves unaware of the social*

impact of his behaviour. As Mr Dorrit slips out of consciousness, however, Dickens's use of different literary methods in conveying this character's deterioration, underline his developing skills and artistry as a writer. Here, he translates the resolution of this character's internal conflicts into a vivid description of the symbols which have confined him:

> Quietly, quietly, all the lines of the plan of the great Castle melted one after another... Quietly, quietly, the reflected marks of the prison bars and of the zig-zag iron on the wall-top, faded away.

For Mr Dorrit, a resolution of his inner conflicts[19] (concerning his social standing, role, and personal sense of self-esteem) was never to be achieved on this earth. Perhaps Dickens's finest achievement in portraying the role of this character is in the dramatically conceived public scene of private exposure which draws on his extensive knowledge of the theatre, in which the reader observes unfolding events as an audience, and perceives that only Little Dorrit is aware of her father's inner turmoil (unlike the unsympathetic guests at this memorable dinner), while Mr Dorrit alone proves blithely unaware of the striking effect he has created. Such a diverse range of differing perceptions and interpretations of events surrounding Mr Dorrit's mental collapse has enabled Dickens to explore several layers of meaning in his description of the scene, while underlining his continuing use of insanity as a catalyst.

The ensuing death of Mr Dorrit may have resolved a technical difficulty for Dickens, as this figure, unless undergoing what Barbara Hardy has described as a change of heart, would have presented a number of challenges for any prospective son-in-law in this novel. By contrast, although Dr Manette later experienced difficulty in reconciling a range of conflicting emotions and loyalties (suffering a period of insanity as a result), he represents one of the few characters in Dickens's novels who were to recover from this condition. Dickens's portrayal of Dr Manette thus provides a striking exploration of a character restored to sanity - a significant symbol of regeneration and of hope.

Whereas Dickens had explored both the comic and tragic potential of aspects of insanity in Bleak House and Little Dorrit, interweaving its effects in his portrayal of characters and the development of themes, A Tale of Two Cities was to be a novel altogether more sombre in tone. While some contemporary sources offered a "peculiarly cordial welcome" to Dickens's "new romance" (rather a loose description of this pithy tale, presumably referring to Dickens's treatment of a tale set in an earlier historic period, with its portrayal of unrequited love), described by one writer as a "completely successful story",[20] this novel, like Barnaby Rudge, was notable for its absence of humour, yet proved remarkable in its exploration of the cause and effects of various forms of insanity - a theme central to its construction. In both Barnaby Rudge and A Tale of Two Cities, Dickens has depicted a major character suffering from the effects of a mental disorder, in his portrayal of Barnaby Rudge and Dr Manette. As the mental condition of these characters absorbs much of the interest inherent in the subject of insanity, their characterisation may have precluded its use as comic relief in other more peripheral parts of the plot. The general lack of humour in A Tale of Two Cities has led one critic to conclude that Dickens was "out of his depth" when tackling a subject which he had researched but not experienced (Monod, p. 471), although Dickens evidently took great care over the composition of this novel (see below, p. 184), with its "minimum of dialogue, subplot, humorous or even melodramatic ornament" (Wilson, p. 267). The novel may contain few examples of the "impulses of inspiration" which are not central to the plot (Monod, p. 468), yet clearly marks a development in Dickens's conscious artistry (evident, for example, in the carefully composed chapter headings), for, while it may lack comic interlude, its concluding chapter marks this novel out not as a tragedy, but as a comedy. While within its broadly comic vision, Dickens's treatment of insanity has expressed one aspect of the anguish and frailty of the human condition, its closing picture of Carton's peacefulness, of a "beautiful" city and a "brilliant" people, the "expiation" of evil and of restoration, are all images which convey Dickens's care in expressing the outworking of the ways of Providence in this novel, as will be seen.

When writing A Tale of Two Cities, Dickens had clearly planned to compose a well-constructed tale with a plot which would interest his readership, informing Forster that he fancied a "story of incident might be written (in place of the odious stuff that is written under the pretence), pounding the characters out of its own mortar, and beating their interest out of them." Yet, although Dickens (not uncharacteristically) described A Tale of Two Cities as the best story he had ever written,[21] Forster was less than wholehearted in his admiration, noting that "To rely less upon character than upon incident, and to resolve that his actors should be expressed by the story more than they should express themselves by dialogue, was for him a hazardous, and can hardly be called an entirely successful experiment (Life, p. 731).

In choosing the subject-matter of this novel, Dickens may have, however, lighted on a theme which held a particular interest for his readership, as it has been observed (albeit rather broadly), that "Nineteenth-century thought returned, time and again, to the spectre of the French revolution and the desperate energies of the mob".[22] Dickens's plan to write a "story of incident" was to require great technical skill in a novel with historical roots, which contained comments about the French Revolution whilst straddling two different cultures in its descriptions of Paris and London. That he should have chosen to explore the theme of insanity not only in mob violence, but in the experiences of one particular individual in this carefully crafted novel, reveals the importance of this theme for Dickens, in his maturity.

In his Preface of November 1859, Dickens claimed that the main idea of this story first came to him when, together with his family, he was acting in Wilkie Collins's drama The Frozen Deep.[23] In the Saturday Review (August 1, 1857, pp. 106-7, quoted by Brannan, p. 80), Dickens was praised for his skill in conveying the "wonder, madness and jealousy" in his role as Wardour - a figure portrayed on the brink of physical and mental exhaustion. Despite the unexceptional expression of Wardour's sentiments,[24] Dickens interpreted the role with great emotional vigour,[25] in a performance which may have inspired his creation of Carton[26] in A Tale of Two Cities.

For Dickens, his collaboration with Wilkie Collins in producing this play had evoked a "strange feeling" of unparalleled satisfaction (see Brannan, pp. 83-87, for further discussion on this point), underlining his fascination with the representation of extreme states of emotion. This sense of fascination was to find another form of expression in A Tale of Two Cities.

When planning the novel, Dickens may have drawn from a play by the Irish playwright, Watts Phillips, whose The Dead Heart was written two years before A Tale of Two Cities. Some striking resemblances have been noted between these two pieces of writing, for, at a central point in Phillips's play, one character is substituted for another at the guillotine[27] - a significant theme in Dickens's novel too. Of particular interest in his portrayal of insanity, however, in the form of maddened crowd activity, is Dickens's indebtedness to Carlyle's The French Revolution. In his Preface of 1859 (p. 29), Dickens notes that "No one can add anything to the philosophy of Mr Carlyle's wonderful book", underlining an interest in Carlyle's understanding of the events he portrays, while Forster is reputed to have observed that "Admiration of Carlyle increased with his years; and there was no one whom in later life, he honoured so much" (Life, p. 227). While it would, of course, be overstating the case to suggest that the novel owes "almost everything" to Carlyle's work, its influence is widely felt throughout A Tale of Two Cities in both design and details, although at least one eminent critic is "dubious" whether this novel's "philosophy" of history coincides with that of Carlyle.[28]

Descriptions of the fall of the Bastille (French Revolution, I, 189-198), or the death of Foulon (I, 205-207), and numerous details, when the guillotine is described as a national razor (3, 253), or the gallows are forty feet high (I, 34, 53), or the battle lasts "four fierce hours" (I, 195), find parallels too in Dickens's novel, while in describing the wildness of the mob, both authors use metaphors of uncontrollable elements. Similarly, as Carlyle describes the way the multitude "flows on", and "ever wider swells the tide of men", when the crowd "seems shoreless", a "living deluge" (I, 190-195), Dickens depicts a "sea of black and threatening waters... whose depths were yet unfathomed" (p. 249), an "ocean" of faces, and "risings of sea" (p. 263). However,

whereas such images are taken up in Caryle's final chapter "Finis", in "Higher, higher, yet flames the Fire-Sea... RESPECTABILITY... leaves the Earth... Imposture how it turns", Dickens leaves his reader with a very different series of impressions, reflecting on the heroic death of one of his characters with the resonant, memorable phrases:

> I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die (p. 403),

and "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known" (p. 404).

Carlyle, who described his French Revolution as "a wild savage book, itself a kind of French Revolution" which had come "hot out of my own soul, born in blackness, whirlwind, and sorrow", clearly felt a close affinity for his work ("You have not had for a hundred years any book that comes more direct and flamingly from the heart of a living man" (Froude, p. 84)). For Dickens, his earlier grief over family bereavements had been followed by the experience of marital unhappiness and separation,[31] his letters reflecting a sense of restlessness during the period in which he was writing A Tale of Two Cities (see Nonesuch, III). Like Carlyle,[32] Dickens immersed himself in the process of writing, declaring in his Preface that "it has had complete possession of me; I have so far verified what is done and suffered in these pages as that I have certainly done and suffered it all myself", indicating his emotional involvement in the process with characteristic vigour. His comment is reminiscent of his intense reaction to involvement in the stage production of The Frozen Deep ("a strange feeling... like writing a book in company; a satisfaction of a most singular kind"),[33] for, although it has been argued that A Tale of Two Cities was inspired by sources predating The Frozen Deep (Collins, "A Tale of Two Novels", p. 348), Dickens himself believed that it was this play which had suggested the "main idea" of the story.

Dickens's involvement in the production of The Frozen Deep, and his familiarity with Carlyle's writing were clearly important shaping influences in the novel-writing process. The theme of the French Revolution had, of course, been explored elsewhere, in

novels such as Zanoni (aptly described as "almost unreadable" by Oddie (p. 68)), and La Vendée. Points of comparison and contrast between these pieces of writing and Dickens's later A Tale of Two Cities would undoubtedly reward sustained research, for these novels are dealing with "a political, intellectual and cultural storm" which may have held significance for mid-Victorians (Sanders, "Cartloads of Books", p. 49), as we have noted.

Bulwer Lytton broadly describes the effects of the French Revolution as a backcloth against which he sets his central characters in Zanoni (1842), a novel in which he poignantly underscores a child's separation from its parent as one result of the Revolution. He describes the activities of the mob in less detail than the later A Tale of Two Cities, although depicting his mob as "savages, gaunt and menacing" in the final book (chapter 16). In the final chapter of this tale, Viola's vision of the guillotine ("the giant instrument of murder") is used to highlight a particularly heavenly vision ("Heaven opened, deep after deep; and the Hosts of Beauty were seen, rank upon rank, afar; and "Welcome", in a myriad melodies, broke from your choral multitude... this it is to die!"). Such a description provides a contrast with Dickens's more economical description of Carton's death.

Trollope's La Vendée (1850) explored the effects of revolutionary activity upon individuals for, as Nicholas Rance notes in chapter 3 of The Historical Novel and Popular Politics in Nineteenth-Century England, this novel exemplifies the effects of the populace gaining power. The novel traces the downfall of Adolphe Denot, a figure who "certainly lacked something in his brain or mind, which is necessary to perfect sanity", and who "could not regulate his conduct", possessing "talent without judgement, and ambition without principle", later described by another character (in chapter 18) as "mad". By chapter 30, the condition of this character has deteriorated, and he becomes unkempt, his motives being attributed by Larochejaquelin to the "frenzy of madness." Denot, known as the "Mad Captain of La Petite Vendée" is, after his death, described as a character who has wanted that "sustained courage which is only given by principle, and

trust in God." For Trollope, the plight of Denot highlights the disastrous consequences of revolutionary struggle.

Dickens may have also found imaginative stimulus from another source in John F. Smith's 'hack' romance The Substance and the Shadow, serialised in Cassell's Illustrated Family Paper.[34] As in his preparation for writing Barnaby Rudge, evidence suggests that Dickens also carefully researched the subject of A Tale of Two Cities,[35] seeking information from Carlyle, amongst other sources. It has however, been argued that "for all the two cartloads of reference books from the London Library, which Carlyle sent round to him to help him prepare the novel, the French Revolution remained unrealized in Dickens's book" - while "Private renunciation and private love" are, the "real" themes of A Tale of Two Cities[36] - an argument clearly pivoting on one writer's interpretation of Dickens's methods providing a sample of the events he portrays. Yet it is particularly evident from a reading of Dickens's concluding chapter, that, for Dickens, the theme of redemption was an important imaginative preoccupation when he was completing the novel.

In "The Footsteps Die Out for Ever", Dickens has not only drawn together the remaining threads of his plot in A Tale of Two Cities, but has also injected into the plot a sense of hope of redemption, and of resurrection.[37] It has, of course, been argued by Dennis Walder that it is "hard to know how far Dickens really holds the belief expressed at the end, or indeed, what it is, exactly, that he is trying to convey" (Dickens and Religion, p. 198), yet it is not in the precision of his use of language that Dickens conveys his religious optimism, but in the tonal mood and concentration of effects in his impressionistic description.

In the concluding paragraphs of the novel, Dickens's imagination casts forward into the future he envisages for the characters he has created - a perspective which is arresting because of its religious nature. The glimpse he affords his readers in sketching the effects of moral decisions made by individuals in the novel upon unborn generations, briefly yet significantly, underlines a theme evident in Dickens's earliest fiction - that moral failure brings with it dislocating effects upon individuals and upon

society. By contrast, Dickens introduces into the narrative an important keynote, in exploring the themes of sacrifice and redemption. Death becomes incorporated within a wider vision in Dickens's narrative discourse. Hence he portrays Dr Manette "passing tranquillity to his reward", and even Lucy and her husband, "their course done", lying "side by side in their last earthly bed", not with a narrative tone of resignation, but of acceptance. Perhaps, not surprisingly, it is a child who takes responsibility for keeping alive the memory of events, and for transmitting them to future generations.

In Dickens's 1859 Preface, he had stated the desire to "add something" to the "popular and picturesque" means of understanding "that terrible time" of the French Revolution. While the description of Carton's "prophetic" vision of a "beautiful" city and "brilliant" people rising from "this abyss", together with their long struggle for freedom may lack detail, Dickens is, perhaps, translating impressions of his intense experience when acting in The Frozen Deep, interweaving his heightened emotional reaction as he is shaping material in his novel-writing. The nature of his personal identification is suggested when he includes the word "useful" in the nature of Carton's list of the attributes of those for whom he has sacrificed himself, earlier apparent, as we have noted, in Dickens's advice to his own son Plorn. Dickens's exploration of themes of sacrifice and redemption, a central framework within which he explores the subject of insanity in this novel is, however, not only apparent in the conclusion of A Tale of Two Cities, for Carton's act of sacrifice is symbolically prefigured in an earlier act of self-sacrifice, in the striking example of Miss Pross.

Dickens's portrayal of Miss Pross's struggle with Madame Defarge is perhaps one of his finest dramatic representations of the tenet that 'amor vincit omnia', in this novel (underlined in this character's speech ("I don't care an English Twopence for myself. I know that the longer I keep you here, the greater hope there is for my Ladybird"), and evident in his narrative description ("It was in vain for Madame Defarge to struggle and to strike; Miss Pross, with the vigorous tenacity of love, always so much stronger than hate, clasped her tight" (p. 397)). In his description of the struggle between the two women, Dickens vividly conveys the practical expression of loving devotion in the

unsophisticated character of Miss Pross (a figure reflecting in some respects the devotion of Juliet's nurse in Romeo and Juliet), Carton's later self-sacrifice, representing a further exploration of the laudable impulse and resolution of a character to express a form of 'philia' ("always so much stronger than hate"), a recurrent theme in Dickens's novels which nowhere finds a sharper focus than in A Tale of Two Cities. In this novel, it is apparent that the expression of insanity, whether portrayed in individuals or in the maddened effects corporate mob activity, is ultimately subsumed by an arching philosophy of the hope of regeneration.

Dickens's major concerns when writing this novel are conveyed in the outlined list of titles he sent to Forster, One of These Days, Buried Alive, The Thread of Gold, The Doctor of Beauvais, (recorded in Forster's Life, p. 729). Forster noted that Dickens intended to treat the characters in this novel in a different way from his earlier fiction, using a less dramatic mode of discourse:

> I set myself the little task of making a picturesque story, rising in every chapter, with characters true to nature, but whom the story should express more than they should express themselves by dialogue (see above, p. 178).

It is doubtful whether we would describe A Tale of Two Cities as "picturesque" or its characters "true to nature", but one of the effects of Dickens's conscious efforts in experimenting with characterisation is in the creation of figures who are portrayed with a sense of flatness about them. It is through the actions of characters in the novel that we gain knowledge of their inner world, and motivation, exemplified as Miss Pross defends her "ladybird," or as Dr Manette is drawn into shoe-repairing, or as Lucie Manette (rather a nebulous character in many ways) patiently stations herself outside the prison for two hours each day, regardless of the weather. While Dr Manette and Mme Defarge are two central characters through whom Dickens explores the effects of different forms of extreme emotional reactions, the reader may not feel well acquainted with either of them. It is as though Dickens's purposes, when writing this novel, are of more importance to him than the minutae of his characters.

The figure of Dr Manette is, however, used by Dickens as one means of illustrating the irrationality of the time in which he lives. In Dr Manette, we find one of Dickens's most sensitively sketched portraits of insanity, yet we are given few details about aspects of his life, including his work. He represents one of Dickens's few experiments with a character experiencing intermittent periods of insanity, portrayed as some of his predecessors, as a victim of circumstance. As such, Dickens evokes our sympathy through Dr Manette's role in the novel, from the first dramatically conceived episode when his daughter tearfully observes "the shoemaker" (Bk 1, 6), to the novel's final projected image of this figure, "aged and bent, but otherwise restored, and faithful to all men in his healing office, and at peace" (Bk 3, 15, p. 404).

An air of mystery surrounds Dickens's initial description of this almost wrecked character who may be restored to "life, love, duty, rest, comfort" by his daughter (p. 57). Like the figure of the lunatic in David Copperfield, he is initially presented as a madman in the attic. He is kept in a locked garret for fear that he may "rave - tear himself to pieces - die - come to I know not what harm"(p. 67). His daughter describes him as an object at first ("I am afraid of it" (p. 69)), but the carefully described portrait of Dr Manette's frail figure as he stoops over his shoemaking, illustrates a change of emphasis in Dickens's later more naturalistic method of description as he underlines this character's helplessness. As light is admitted to the garret, Dickens fills in further details concerning Dr Manette's plight. Like Mr Dick, it becomes apparent that Dr Manette is unable to complete the task he has set himself (although while Mr Dick experienced a brief period of confinement, and also restricted freedom in the care of Aunt Betsey, Dr Manette's experience of captivity is altogether more scarring). Dickens's exploration of an interconnection between insanity and confinement, earlier evident in his portrayal of Mr Dorrit, and later finding expression in his description of Miss Havisham, is apparent in his close study of Dr Manette's mannerisms, as he observes the agitated way in which Dr Manette moves his knuckles repetitively when not engaged in shoemaking (p. 72), for example, or in the way in which he identifies himself by a number ("One Hundred and Five, North Tower," instead of a name (p.

73)). While Dickens had earlier described the terror experienced by one figure in his "Sketches", he highlights the fear Dr Manette experiences as the result of his ordeal, in the "fearful look" with which Dr Manette stares at his unrecognised daughter (p. 74).

This scene of dawning recognition is skilfully realised in the novel, and Dickens cannot but heighten the dramatic effects of an episode in which a father and daughter are reunited, again underlining his personal interest in theatre. Thus, despite the "frightful suddenness" of Dr Manette, his daughter is heard, stoically exclaiming "I entreat you, good gentlemen, do not come near us, do not speak, do not move!" (p. 75), and, as in Copperfield, Dr Strong's grey hair became entwined with his wife's "dark brown tresses" in a warm embrace (ch. 47 p. 732), so Dr Manette's "cold white head mingled with her radiant hair" as though (an interesting image this) it were "the light of Freedom shining on him". In the sensuous detail of her bright hair, and in her action as she rocks him on her breast, "like a child", Lucie Manette represents vitality and motherly nurture - themes taken up in H.K. Browne's illustration, "The Shoemaker". It is clearly Dickens's intention to heighten the sympathy of his readers for Dr Manette's plight, and he cannot overcome the temptation to highlight the melodramatic effects of the scene ("Weep... for me! Good gentlemen, thank God! I feel his sacred tears upon my face, and his sobs strike against my heart. O, see! Thank God for us, thank God!"). Here, Dickens underlines the "terrible" effects of the "tremendous wrong and suffering" caused - leading both Defarge and Mr Lorry to cover their faces on this occasion. It is a scene which may (wrongly) lead the reader to conclude that Dr Manette's daughter will single-handedly enable him to be recalled to life, although the novel later reveals the limitations of her personal powers of restoring his freedom. However, while Lucie plays a significant part in the restoration of her father to sanity, she cannot prevent the lapses he experiences, highlighting the limitations of the human condition.

There are clearly points of comparison and contrast between this relationship and the father/daughter relationships of Mr Dorrit and Little Dorrit, and Mr Dombey and Florence.[38] Dickens pauses as he carefully depicts the (rather sensuous) details of Lucie protecting the lethargic form of her father ("She had nestled down with him, that his

head might lie upon her arm; and her hair drooping over him curtained him from the light" (p. 78)). She is to lie beside him in the deepening gloom, before drawing him forth on a journey (which may remind us of Little Nell as she led her grandfather forth, at the end of the novel's first book in which Dickens has evoked the reader's sympathy for "the buried man who had been dug out" (p. 81)). The themes of death and life (the former taken up comically in Jerry Cruncher's activities) are schematically introduced with care from the beginning of the novel, providing further evidence of Dickens's careful construction of this tale. There are, however, times when the construction of such recurrent phrases as "recalled to life" interspersed like nuggets in the narrative can seem to staunch the creative energy in Dickens's writing. This particular phrase, for example, punctuates the narrative, and rather heavy-handedly prepares the reader for the later exploration of themes of life, death, restoration and resurrection.

In his characterisation of Dr Manette and Mme Defarge, Dickens explores the contrasting effects of two facets of insanity. Dr Manette, a memorable portrait of human frailty, is at times conscious of the fine line between sanity and insanity - the "trembling of the balance" described by M.E. Braddon (see above, p. 24). Thus he speaks with the diffidence of a man who knows "how slight a thing would overset the delicate organisation of the mind" (p. 232). Significantly, Dr Manette imagines the daughter he had never met would be "active, cheerful, useful": key attributes of which he approves (p. 220), admired elsewhere by Dickens. Dr Manette's own attempts at usefulness are, however, not strongly realised by Dickens; - while he may have been recalled to life, his occupation is described with a disappointing lack of detail ("Silent, humane, indispensable... described using his art... he was a man apart" (p. 303)), for Dickens gives us little specific insight into his duties as a doctor (either in London or elsewhere). In portraying Dr Manette's character in A Tale of Two Cities, a novel containing "the echoes of many voices", Dickens may have been drawing from several different sources,[39] yet does not depict this character in sufficient detail to acquaint the reader with Dr Manette's inner world. Although described (broadly) on one occasion as a

"very energetic man indeed, with great firmness of purpose, strength of resolution, and vigour of action" (p. 161), or later "confident in his power, cautiously persistent in his end" (p. 303), Dr Manette is thinly portrayed in comparison with a character such as David Copperfield, though it has been remarked with some justice that there is little detailed characterisation in this novel as a whole;[39] Dr. Manette is by no means an exceptional case, as we have noted.

Commenting on Dickens's original plan to call the book Buried Alive, one writer has remarked that, at its heart, lie "images of death and, much less certainly, of resurrection", while Dr Manette's early recall to life is described as "the feeblest of all resurrections".[41] It is, however, significant that Dr Manette's good intentions are not sufficient to bring about significant changes in the plot at the end of the novel. He proves unable to rescue his daughter and family from their impending doom: the "public current of the time set too strong and fast for him" (p. 301). The figures of these two men provided a striking contrast in book 3, chapter 12, when Dr Manette's frailty is emphasised, a "rocking figure before the dying embers", and Carton is portrayed as he idles away the night before his sacrifice, when he looks up from a darkened courtyard at the light in Lucie's window. While Dr Manette is envisaged in the closing chapter as "aged and bent, but otherwise restored, and faithful to all men in his healing office, and at peace" (p. 404), the welfare of his family has been dependent on the remarkable action of Carton - and here, Dickens skilfully intertwines the themes of sacrifice and redemption. The restoration of Dr Manette's sanity, as portrayed in Carton's final prophetic vision, is one part of the future projected at the novel's conclusion. Whereas Manette's successors are envisaged as "peaceful, useful, prosperous and happy", his grandson "foremost of just judges and honoured men", by contrast, Carton imagines the destruction of the "new oppressors", including "the Vengeance" herself, Mme Defarge having, of course, earlier been consumed by her own destructive urge in her fatal tussle with the staunch figure of Miss Pross.

By contrast, Mme Defarge is portrayed as a figure maddened by passion. As in the case of Dr Manette,[42] her characterisation may find a source in Carlyle's writing,[43]

although the cause of her maddened behaviour and the nature of its expression is very different from Dickens's realisation of Dr Manette's inner turmoil. Manette had been released from the Bastille before the opening of A Tale of Two Cities, embodying "a powerful, and a plausible, rendering of the permanent damage to the personality which such an experience may inflict",[44] an experience mirroring William Dorrit's mental collapse and partially attributed to his earlier confinement.[45] In the case of Mme Defarge, Dickens portrays a character locked in a desire to undertake retribution as an idée fixe, her vengeance described as a form of madness. She too has suffered personal loss, in the devastating experience of bereavement. Her plight, however, is not sympathetically portrayed by Dickens, as she seeks vengeance, regardless of its consequences on others. In her destructive urge, this woman ("A great woman... a strong woman, a grand woman, a frightfully grand woman!" (p. 216)) works against the promptings of Providence. Dickens would have presumably been familiar with the Old Testament tenet "Vengeance is mine, and I shall repay":[46] Mme Defarge as an emblem of human vengeance (as distinct from divine retribution) embodies the destructive effects of such an urge.

In his characterisation of Mme Defarge, Dickens returns to an earlier theme in the disparity between her outer appearance and her inner nature, between seeming and reality. From his initial introduction of Mme Defarge, Dickens draws attention to this disparity between appearance and motive in his description of her "watchful eye that seldom seemed to look at anything" - a sense of discord which is not lost on the reader. Although capable of great energetic activity - often an attractive trait in Dickens's characters - her role is ultimately a destructive one. In contrast to the (rather insipid) appearance of Lucie Manette with her "short, slight, pretty figure", "quantity of golden hair", and "pair of blue eyes" (p. 52), Mme Defarge is unattractive - stout, with "strong features" and "darkly defined eyebrows" - a characteristic reminiscent of a range of unappealing females in Dickens's novels. While capable of showing patience, she misuses this virtue ("Vengeance and retribution require a long time" (p. 207)), and the symbols of domestic industry with which she is associated are used for evil

purposes. In her knitting, she has been likened to the knitting figure of Mrs. Heep, an "implacable fate who spins the dark destiny of those she wishes to entrap",[47] although Mme Defarge is to become equipped with violent weapons. She possesses an axe, pistol and "cruel" knife (p. 244), leading other women in acts of violence: "What! We can kill as well as the men" (p. 245). The tone of Dickens's writing indicates that he is particularly repulsed by the sight of women engaged in violence: "The men were terrible... but, the women were a sight to chill the boldest" (p. 252). Mme Defarge herself has memorably "trodden" on the governor's body "to steady it for mutilation" (p. 249) - an action not only contradicting Dickens's womanly ideal,[48] but also common human decency. It is not, as John Carey has it, that Mme Defarge is "a monster, fit only to be exterminated like a savage animal, for feeling vindictive towards the family which murdered her brother and sister" (The Violent Effigy, p. 159), but that she is unable to undergo any process of change or transformation, illustrated for us in chapter 3, 3. She represents one of many "hardened in the furnaces of suffering until the touch of pity could make no mark on them" (p. 249), and, in her final scuffle with Miss Pross, resulting in her untimely death, Dickens has represented a struggle between the forces of hatred and of love. The honour of Miss Pross's case (liberally bespattered with references to English culture to enhance her case ("I am an Englishwoman", "If... I was an English four-poster", "I don't care an English Twopence for myself")), is defended by this character with the tenacity of her love, a theme, as we have noted, which encapsulates this novel's overt moral vision. The inability of Mme Defarge to change is Illustrated in the scene in which Lucie pleads with her "As a wife and mother", when Mme Defarge looks "coldly as ever" at the suppliant, responding: "All our lives, we have seen our sister-women suffer... Is it likely that the trouble of one wife and mother would be much to us now?" (p. 298), unlike Defarge whose uncertainty is nicely reflected in his action as he is "uneasily biting his thumb-nail" (p. 297).

Dickens has clearly taken care in linking cause and effects in this novel when enlisting the grievances of Mme Defarge and the Vengeance - grievances shared by many others in their suffering of "poverty, nakedness, hunger, thirst, sickness, misery,

oppression and neglect of all kinds" (p. 298). The episode (in chapter 2, 8) in which Monsieur the Marquis, having killed a child with his carriage remarks: "How do I know what injury you have done my horses?" (p. 141), is evidently designed to highlight such grievances, and although Dickens paints the scene with rough brush strokes ("You dogs!... I would ride over any of you very willingly, and exterminate you from the earth" (p. 142)), reflecting once again Dickens's love of theatre, he has taken care in siting this scene in front of a fountain, - a recurrent symbol in this novel which later becomes a vehicle conveying poison.[49]

Dickens's use of recurrent symbols, not only provides the novel with its sense of internal unity,[50] but also plays a part in highlighting the effects of descriptions of wild, crowd violence.[51] It has been remarked that Dickens's "ambiguous mixture of sympathy and revulsion for the mob reflected a traditionally English view of the revolution" (Oddie, p. 65), that he views revolution "with hatred and disgust", describing it in terms of "pestilence and madness" (Gross, p. 192). Such comments reflect the varied tone of Dickens's representation of the cause and effects of the mob's action, but it is evident that A Tale of Two Cities represents an exploration of the cause and effects of one particular form of social injustice, while Dickens's descriptions of maddened crowd activity with its "mad joy" and "mad ferocity" (p. 299) convey his fascination with the heightened emotional reaction of the mob. Although Dickens may have portrayed the mob as "a monster much dreaded", it was, evidently, a very remarkable one at that.

In A Tale of Two Cities, the activities of the crowd fill Dickens's canvas, injecting a terrific sense of energy into the novel. There are few critics who have not noted the way in which Dickens compares the wild, maddened actions of the mob to the elements. Sometimes such descriptions are tortuous (as the "very tide of the river on the bank of which the mad scene was acted, seemed to run mad, like the people on the shore" (p. 314)), while at other times, they prove vividly effective ("As a whirlpool of boiling waters... this raging circled... and every human drop in the caldron had a tendency to be sucked towards the vortex" (p. 244)). Dickens vividly conveys the boundless energy of the mob by comparing their activities to the sea,

> The sea of black and threatening waters, and of destructive upheaving of wave against wave, whose depths were yet unfathomed and whose forces were yet unknown (p. 249).

He uses repetition of phrases in "The remorseless sea of turbulently swaying shapes", developing this imagery in his description in chapter 21 of "the ocean of faces", while expanding the metaphor in the title of the following chapter "The Sea Still Rises". Interestingly, he does not further develop the metaphor in this chapter, although the accompanying illustration "The Sea Rises" interprets the mob's actions. His use of chapter headings ("Fire Rises") and book headings ("The Track of a Storm") underlines Dickens's careful design and planning when interweaving such symbolism in this novel.

Critical discussions about the role of the mob in A Tale of Two Cities are, of course, commonplace, yet, at the heart of Dickens's description of crowd irrationality, it is his portrayal of mad dancing which most vividly conveys the abandonment of the mob, sharply contrasting with the measured, solitary action of Carton in his carefully planned act of self-sacrifice. The solitary figure of Carton, as he "outwatched the awful night" prior to his death (p. 375), provides a stark contrast to Dickens's description of the crowd's mad dancing. The role of Carton, embodying the tenet that "Greater love hath no man", becomes caught up in the theme of self-sacrifice and redemption, while the wild dance of the mob becomes identified with evil, devilry, and perversion.

Elsewhere in Dickens's novels, the Dance of Death was not an unfamiliar theme, as he had earlier begun to explore its potential in his description of one character, Ralph Nickleby, as we have noted. In A Tale of Two Cities, he explored an interconnection between an energising, violent form of dance and its place in the revolution, when describing this mad dancing of the mob. Having depicted Foulon's death, he highlights the collective effect of the dancing upon the inhabitants of Saint Antoine, "for Saint Antoine so shouted and danced his angry blood up, that it boiled again" (p. 254).

Earlier, Dickens had published an article on "Mad Dancing" in Household Words (October 4, 1856), in which he describes a wild dance which had also featured in Carlyle's description of the Carmagnole in his French Revolution. "Mad Dancing" is an

account of Dickens's impressions of a festivity held in Dinant, where he was on holiday. Here he describes his astonishment at the customary antics and the whirling energy of "an apparently frantic mob of dancers" (p. 287) who had burst, uninvited, into the inn where he was staying. The tone of Dickens's writing conveys his consternation at this unanticipated event. While the dancers had "forcibly" entered "without leave", much to the discomfiture of the landlady, "Nothing could be done", until, at the height of tumult, their dancing ceased, as the party rushed off in another direction.

Dickens is intrigued by the origins of the dance, "once honouring Diana", a form of pagan rite which had been absorbed into changing religious traditions throughout several centuries, overseen by priests or magistrates. He notes that it took the "tornado of the great French revolution" to overturn such supervision of this customary dancing in some villages (p. 288), presumably because of its effects upon law, order and religious observance. For Dickens, then, this form of "mad dancing" has symbolised primitive, pagan impulses - a form of expression which has survived throughout changing religious observance and practices, and which is no longer supervised by the authorities, except to ensure its conclusion at a fixed time.

In A Tale of Two Cities, this type of dancing embodies a form of primitive, elemental expression which highlights its violent potential. Lucie Manette is filled by fear when she witnesses such dancing (p. 307), and Dickens endows descriptions of the dancing with diabolic associations, the dancers like five thousand "demons" partaking in "a fallen sport" - an innocent pursuit "delivered over to all devilry". That the dancers are peasants is underlined in descriptions of their "coarse" caps and "coarse" rags. Carlyle more heavily underscores the irreligious nature of the dance in his writing: "sacristies, lutrins, altar-rails are pulled down; the Mass-Books torn into cartridge papers! men dance the Carmagnole all night about the bonfire" (French Revolution, 3, 227). For Dickens, this dance, in perverting a pleasant pursuit, highlights the way in which things "good by nature" were "warped" during the Revolution, presenting such strongly contrasting images in his description of a delicate foot "mincing" in this "slough of blood and dirt".

This sense of contrast is reinforced as Dickens frames the scene of such dancing in a picture of feathery, soft white snow which provides a contrast with Lucie's recollection of the "cruel bad sight". When later Lucie observes the Carmagnole again (3, 6) and a young woman is elevated as "Goddess of Liberty", it is evident that individuality is absorbed in the "swelling and overflowing" group. The description may find its roots in Carlyle's ironic writing:

> Demoiselle Candeille, of the Opera; a woman fair to look upon, when well rouged; she, borne on palanquin shoulder high; with red woollen nightcap... Let the world consider it! This... is our New Divinity (3,227).

Dickens, like Carlyle, has drawn attention to the effects of the Revolution on religious observation (Dickens, for example, noting that the Guillotine became the "sign of the regeneration of the human race. It superseded the Cross" (p. 302)). His inclusion of the frantic antics of mad dancing in the novel has tapped a source revealing that wholesome practices or pursuits can be transformed by a form of madness - by lack of constraints or boundaries. Such mad dancing as Dickens describes in this novel provides a stark contrast with the ordered formality of the ball he had attended in a mental institution (see above, p. 64). Although suffering various forms of mental derangement, the inmates of this establishment were notable for their orderly conduct at the ball, whereas, by contrast, the wild dancing in A Tale of Two Cities symbolised the fierce energy of the populace and their potential to take action during the "disjointed" times of the Revolution with all its upheaval, when such a common activity became tainted[52] (according to Dickens) by hellish, diabolic forces associated with darkness: "Darkness closed around... all the women sat knitting, knitting. Darkness encompassed them. Another darkness was closing in as surely..." (p. 216).

While his portrayal of mad dancing highlights the effects of one form of wild group activity, the destructive effects of the mob are nowhere more carefully described in this novel than in Dickens's portrayal of the storming of the Bastille. His use of contrast, repetition, alliteration and imagery demonstrate an attention to detail in his

construction of this scene. Here he contrasts the solidity of the Bastille walls with the eroding effects of a sea of figures, a description reminiscent of the way in which he had likened the crowd to a "rocking, surging sea of degradation"[53] after attending his first hanging, when he had written deploring its "ribaldry, debauchery, levity, drunkenness, and flaunting vice in fifty other shapes".[54] In A Tale of Two Cities, his nuggets of carefully crafted prose with its use of repetition and alliteration ("Deep ditches, double drawbridge, massive stone walls, eight great towers, cannon, muskets, fire and smoke.... Deep ditch, single drawbridge, massive stone walls, eight great towers, cannon, muskets, fire and smoke.... Cannon, muskets, fire and smoke"), are highly evocative, while his account is vivified by reference to sound and movement descriptions of the "Flashing", "blazing"' "smoking", "shrieks", "boom, smash and rattle" and "furious sounding of the living sea". Dickens has, however, been criticised for the "overwhelming frequency, the systematic and even laboured adoption of the effects of repetition" in this novel (Monod, p. 461), and a careful reading of his account of the storming of the Bastille reveals that there are times when his style of writing, though carefully constructed, becomes strained, particularly in his extended use of the sea metaphor. In the chapter which follows this account, entitled "The Sea Still Rises", although outlining the grievances of the mob (exemplified in the plight of a baby dying through starvation), Dickens may fail to convince the reader that numbers of women, victims of Foulon's disregard for humanity, were lashed "into blind frenzy, whirled about, striking and tearing at their own friends" (p. 252).

Dickens does, however, convey the fickle nature of the mob with striking effect, as he describes the ways in which emotions could be swayed. As Manette is judged by Jurymen voting aloud and individually at the Tribunal, Dickens notes that the process is reflected and mirrored by an unintelligent mob ("The lowest, cruellest, and worst populace... were the directing spirits of the scene: noisily commenting, applauding, disapproving, anticipating, and precipitating the result, without a check" (p. 311)), and, when Manette is acquitted, "tears were shed as freely as blood at another time": although embraced on this occasion, Manette knows that "carried by another current",

they could have "rushed at him with the very same intensity, to rend him to pieces and strew him over the streets" (p. 314). Here Dickens is clearly illuminating the "very close connection between the positive and negative impulses of the crowd, between generosity, hero worship and lust for blood" (A.O.J. Cockshut, p. 68), evident when the crowd later reacts to Manette's document, as it is read out, with a "terrible sound"... a "sound of craving and eagerness that had nothing articulate in it but blood" (p. 361). Dickens has outlined the causes of this mob's maddened behaviour but again wonders at the fickleness of their response.

In Oliver Twist, the crowd had shown its potential (in demanding Fagin's death or in the desire to set alight Sikes's house), while its ability to become engaged in violent acts (and to incorporate the undiscerning in its activities), is underscored in Barnaby's role in Barnaby Rudge. The mob has other uses in Dickens's novels, shown, for example, where he has painted crowded streets as a backcloth in Little Dorrit as a means to highlight Clennam's loneliness, as the "great multitude" had contrasted with Fagin's imprisoned state (Oliver Twist, p. 475), or with Sikes, surrounded by a ferocious mob at the time of his death (pp. 450-451). In A Tale of Two Cities, Dickens more fully explores the wide-ranging effects on the populace of political injustice (albeit with rather crude brushstrokes), and portrays the crowd as an agent of change - a very different role from that of the mob as bystanders, or as interpreters of action mirroring events in a novel. In this novel, the crowd's active role diminishes only with the emergence of new political structures, illustrating the powerful effects of the widely shared loyalty to their cause.

While Dickens starkly conveyed various forms of human injustice in A Tale of Two Cities, it is, paradoxically, a novel which nonetheless unmistakably expresses the ways and workings of Providence. Forster quotes Dickens's own observations about the way in which the death of Mme Defarge, "seems to me to become, as it were, an act of divine justice" (Life, p. 731), and there is a sense in which (despite an element of fortuitousness) the determination of this character is notably defeated by the

ordinariness of love, as Carton demonstrates the extraordinariness of love. In his Life, Forster noted: "On the coincidences, resemblances, and surprises of life, Dickens liked especially to dwell, and few things moved his fancy so pleasantly. The world, he would say, was so much smaller than we thought it; we were all so connected by fate without knowing it" (p. 76). In A Tale of Two Cities, Dickens subtly hints at the workings of Providence through connections and patternings conveying the possibility of goodness in the universe, and that things will come right in due course. Within this context, despite the destructive effects of maddened crowd violence, out of the distressing events surrounding Dr Manette's mental breakdown, the possibility of a sense of purpose is asserted by an unlikely character in the form of Carton, while his example demonstrates the presence of a sense of benevolence, of higher good. Thus the brokenness of humanity, whether expressed in individual collapse and mental fragmentation or in corporate acts of impassioned violence (the results of inhumanity and injustice), in contrast to Dickens's earlier writings, is overarched in this novel by the sense of a larger benevolent design, the "ways of Providence".

NOTES

1. This novel strongly contrasts, however, with the tone of Edwin Drood, (scathingly) described by Wilkie Collins as "Dickens' last laboured effort, the melancholy work of a worn-out brain" (Dickens, The Critical Heritage, (ed. Philip Collins), p. 542).

2. From Ecclesiastic and Theologian, Oct. 1855, quoted in Philip Collins (ed), Dickens, The Critical Heritage(London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 273.

3. See "The Topicality of Bleak House", describing ways in which this novel was "a fable for 1852" in Butt & Tillotson, Dickens At Work, ch. VII. See also M.D. Zabel, "Bleak House: The Undivided Imagination" (in Ford & Lane, The Dickens Critics, pp. 325-348, and Percy Lubbock, The Craft of Fiction, (1921) - a critic who has, however, been criticised by H.P. Sucksmith for neglecting the "relationship between texture and structure" (p. 44). For a detailed study of the way in which Dickens at last finds a "perfect voice for death", exploring his compassionate portrayal of Jo's death-bed scene, see Barbara Hardy, Forms of Feeling, pp. 73-76. See also L.W. Deen, "Style and Unity in Bleak House" Criticism, III, No. 3, (1961), 206-18.

4. Leavis, Dickens the Novelist, p. 177.

5. See above chapter for discussion concerning Dickens's use of sources, including the literary representation of such figures as Nebuchadnezzar, the demonic figure in the New Testament, Lear or Ophelia, all of whom experience intense isolation at times.

6. For a detailed consideration of ways in which these names summarise Dickens's chancery satire, see Trevor Blount's "Dickens and Mr. Krook's Spontaneous Combustion," Dickens Studies Annual, I, (1970), 201-202.

7. See Steven Connor, Charles Dickens, p. 76.

8. See Trevor Blount (op. cit.), p. 194, for further discussion about the significance of such references.

9. A point made by Mark Spilka in "Religious Folly" from Dickens and Kafka, (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1963), pp. 199-210.

10. "There is... some property of ours.... a street of perishing blind houses, with their eyes stoned out, without a pane of glass... with the bare blank shutters tumbling from their hinges and falling asunder... the stone steps to every door (and every door might be death's door) turning stagnant green, the very crutches on which the ruins are propped

decaying. Although Bleak House was not in Chancery, its master was, and it was stamped with the same seal. These are the Great Seal's impressions...".
This description with its vivid metaphor of windows as eyes stoned out of blind houses reflects the way in which the novel is permeated by images of death, decay and destruction, its apocalyptic reference to the Great Seal frequently re-iterated throughout the novel.

11. Skimpole is one of Dickens's childish male figures, a "light bright creature with a rather large head" who, like Mr Dick, cares little about the value of money, and also occupies himself with trivial pursuits whilst lodging with another character. Skimpole, however, does not contribute to the moral texture of this novel as had been the case with Mr Dick, for his most salient feature is his irresponsibility, over which he exercised some personal choice (in contrast to Mr Dick's experience of insanity). Unlike Mr Dick, he has fathered a brood of children (whom he neglects), and is shown to be of a posturing, decadent disposition. He is a sketchy, rather puzzling figure in the novel, whose character fails to develop, and who is killed off in chapter 59 with no great loss to this novel. For discussion of ways in which Skimpole was believed to have been a caricature of Leigh Hunt, see Monod, pp. 407-411.

12. See T. Blount, "Dickens and Mr Krook's Spontaneous Combustion", Dickens Studies Annual, I (1970), 201 - 201.

13. Russell Brain, "Some Reflections on Genius," p. 132. Latterly, the condition of senile dementia is described with a different use of medical terminology in contemporary society.

14. Kate Flint observes that "the incessant low-key sadism practised by the Smallweeds" provides one example in Dickens's novels of "a complete antithesis to the delights of hearth and home" (p. 115).

15. The humour of Dickens's characterisation of Grandmother Smallweed and her family lies in the way in which they are caricatured, exemplified in her husband's exaggerated physical movements as he "crushes" her against a chair with a cushion, insulting her: "You brimstone chatterer... You jade of a magpie, jackdaw and poll-parrot... You are a brimstone pig. You're a head of swine," "a chattering clattering broomstick witch, that ought to be burnt!" (ch. 21) - associations taken up in descriptions where she "screeches like a horrible old parrot without any plumage" (ch. 21), or accompanies her idiosyncratic dancing with a chattering noise "as in a witch dance".

16. This obsession with numbers is reminiscent of the drunken bargeman in The Old Curiosity Shop, who demands a song from Little Nell, regardless of her protests: "You know forty-seven songs," said the man with a gravity which admitted of no altercation on the subject. "Forty-seven's your number" (p. 411).

17. For discussion about the prison as this novel's symbol or emblem, see Lionel Trilling, "Little Dorrit", in Ford and Lane, The Dickens Critics, pp. 279-293.

18. For a range of critical comments on this novel, see A. Wilde, "Mr F's aunt and the analogical structure of Little Dorrit," (Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 19, (1965)), F.R. Leavis, "Dickens and Blake: Little Dorrit, in Dickens The Novelist (pp. 282-359), Richard Barickman, "The Spiritual Journey of Amy Dorrit and Arthur Clennam," (Dickens Studies Annual, 7 (1978), 163-189), and John Butt, "The Topicality of Little Dorrit" (University of Toronto Quarterly, 29, 1959), pp. 1-10. See also John Lucas's chapter "Little Dorrit" in (The Melancholy Man (London: Methuen, 1970), pp. 244 - 286), Randolph Splinter, "Guilt and the Trappings of Melodrama in Little Dorrit", in (Dickens Studies Annual, 6 (1977), 119 - 133), and Peter Christmas, "Little Dorrit: The End of Good

and Evil", Dickens Studies Annual, 6, (1977), 134 - 153). In The Novel in the Victorian Age, Robin Gilmour succinctly describes Little Dorrit as "a transitional work in Dickens's career, still concerned to expose and denounce the ills of society, but more concerned with the psychological and spiritual meanings of imprisonment" (p. 100).

19. For further discussion about the impact of the Marshalsea upon this character, see Angus Easson, "Marshalsea Prisoners: Mr. Dorrit and Mr. Hemens", in Dickens Studies Annual, 3, (1974), 77-85, in which it is noted that once Dorrit has escaped the physical boundaries of the Marshalsea, in polite society, he mirrors the prisoner like state of the people he meets (p. 85).

20. David G. Tucker, "The Reception of A Tale of Two Cities", Dickens Studies Newsletter, 10 (1979), 9.

21. 3. Nonesuch Letters, III, 25 August, 1859. It was, of course, not uncommon for Dickens to describe recently completed work with such enthusiasm.

22. See G.M. Young, "Mid-Victorianism", History Today, vol. 2, January 1951, 17. See also Geoffrey Pearson, The Deviant Imagination (London: Macmillan, 1975), p. 175. It is well known that the eighteenth and early nineteenth century were punctuated by mob riots for a number of reasons, amply explored by E.P. Thompson in The Making of the English Working Classes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), amongst others; Dickens wasas we have noted, one of several nineteenth-century authors, describing the mob's fearful potential in their novels.

23. For discussion about Dickens's role in this production, see Robert L. Brannan, Under the Management of Mr Charles Dickens: His Production of "The Frozen Deep" (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), in which it is noted that Dickens had helped write the 1857 script, controlling details of the staging and acted the principal role - activities in which he may have found relief from his marital unhappiness" (p. 3). In a letter of 9 January 1857, Dickens wrote to Sir James Tennent that "I derive a strange feeling out of it... a satisfaction of a most singular kind, which has no exact parallel in my life" (ibid., p. 83).

24. Exemplified in Clara's account of his passionate love for her in Act the First ("His awful, awful look of fury and despair - his deep heavy breaths that came from him in the silences, as he crushed down the passion within him - the parting words he spoke... 'The time may come when I shall forgive you', he said, 'but the man who has robbed me of you shall rue the day when you and he first met'). Similarly, Wardour's mental confusion is conveyed with a striking lack of subtlety: "When?" (Pauses and makes gestures indicating an effort to collect his ideas). "When?" (Shakes his head). "I can't get the wash of the sea out of my ears. I can't get the shining stars all night, and the burning sun all day out of my brain. When was I wrecked?... When did the gnawing here" (touching his breast) "and the burning here" (touching his head) "first begin? I can't tell ye I have lost all reckoning of it". Steventon assumes (with no great insight) that the "poor wretch is out of his mind" (Act the Third).

In The Invisible Woman: The Story of Nelly Ternan and Charles Dickens (London: Viking, 1990), Claire Tomalin aptly remarks that to modern readers, it is "almost impossible to see how it made its appeal" (p. 97).

25. It has been noted that "Dickens had problems with the emotional disturbance occasioned in some of his actors by the force of his own remarkable performance", and that "Maria Ternan, for one, had to be carefully coached but still managed to weep profusely as Wardour died in her arms" (Sanders, p. 38).

26. See George H. Ford, "Dickens's Notebook and Edwin Drood", in Nineteenth Century Fiction, 6 (1952), 275. Brannan has noted that the victory "given to Wardour by his change of heart affirms the essential goodness of man more strongly than any victory over external forces could have affirmed it. Dressed in rags and finally near madness, Wardour may not prove respectable, although he is heroic, while Carton too proved to be a hero who was not thoroughly respectable (p. 87).

See also Andrew Sanders, "Cartloads of Books: Some Sources for A Tale of Two Cities", where it is noted that "The character of Richard Wardour, a disappointed lover who dies sacrificially, clearly lies behind that of Sydney Carton" (in Dickens and Other Victorians, (ed. Joanne Shattock, 1988), p. 46).

27. See Claire Tomalin, p. 280, for further comparison between the two pieces of writing.

28. Phillip Collins, "A Tale of Two Novels" Dickens Studies Annual, 2 (1972), 340-341. Andrew Sanders notes that "it is useful to re-stress the extent of the novelist's obligation to Carlyle's narrative masterpiece" and that there was a copy of this work in the Inventory of Books at I, Devonshire Terrace, drawn up in May 1844, while in 1851 he claimed to be reading 'that wonderful book' for the 500th time (p. 40).

30. Froude, James Anthony, Thomas Carlyle, A History of His Life in London, I, 1834-1881, (London: 1884; rpt. London: Longman, 1919), p. 90.

31. By 1859 he was separated from his wife. Claire Tomalin argues that Nelly Ternan played a central part in Dickens's life, and notes the way in which his diary later revealed the effects of a man intent on living a split life.

It is intriguing that Ellen's father suffered severe mental affliction, and was taken to the Insane Asylum at Bethnal Green, probably as the result of syphilis. In The Invisible Woman, Claire Tomalin notes that this was a grim place, and treatment of those with General Paralysis of the Insane - this was the diagnosis of Ternan's condition - was necessarily dreadful and humiliating, and could involve the use of restraints. Had Dickens explored the misuse of the asylum system with sensational detail in his earlier novels, his writing could have highlighted the distress of one member of the Ternan family.

32. See Froude I, p. 28, for a description of the way he had produced one of his volumes as if "possessed", the "fruits of five months of steadfast, occasionally excessive... painful toil".

33. See letter of 9 January 1857 to Sir James Tennent (Nonesuch, II, p. 824).

34. See Harland S. Nelson "Shadow and Substance in A Tale of Two Cities", The Dickensian, 84 (1988), 98.

35. See Andrew Sanders, "Cartloads of Books": Some Sources for A Tale of Two Cities for discussion about Dickens's use of a range of sources. Philip Collins had noted, in Dickens and Crime (p. 332) that there are some "very useful hints" about the sources of A Tale of Two Cities in Lindsay's Charles Dickens (pp. 360-372), "a subject on which there is, I think, no really thorough study, though the sources are much more 'documentary' than is usual in Dickens". Since Collins's comment in 1962, Andrew Sanders's useful "Cartloads of Books" has of course been published.

36. Angus Wilson, The World of Charles Dickens, p. 268.

37. See Andrew Sanders, Charles Dickens, Resurrectionist (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 166-70, for further discussion about Dickens's treatment of resurrection in this novel.

38. In Dickens and Crime, (p. 332), Philip Collins notes that Kathleen Tillotson compares this relationship with the reunion between Lear and Cordelia (Novels of the Eighteen-Forties, p. 170).

39. See Andrew Sanders, "Cartloads of Books", p. 49.

40. See Philip Collins "A Tale of Two Novels" in Dickens Studies Annual, 2, (1972), 336-351, in which it is remarked that there is very little humour in this novel; that there is little detailed characterisation and that it is not felt, but dry in its construction.

41. John Gross, "A Tale of Two Cities", in Dickens and the Twentieth Century (ed. John Gross & Gabriel Pearson, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962) p. 187.

42. William Oddie, Dickens and Carlyle: The Question of Influence (London: Centenary Press, 1972), p. 61, 71, 74-75, 82, 85.

43. Ibid, p. 75, 77.

44. Philip Collins, Dickens and Crime (London: Macmillan) 1965), p. 137.

45. For discussion about Mr. Dorrit's self-deception about the prison as a refuge, see Angus Easson, "Marshalsea Prisoners: Mr. Dorrit and Mr. Hemens", Dickens Studies Annual, 3 (1974), 81-82.

46. Dickens was, of course, not the early nineteenth century writer exploring this theme: see frontmatter of Anna Karenin (Penguin edition: Harmondsworth: Middx, 1971).

47. Harry Stone, Dickens and the Invisible World, p. 219.

48. See Michael Slater, Dickens and Women, ch. 14.

49. For discussion about Dickens's portrayal of this scene, see Ewald Mengel, "The Poisoned Fountain: Dickens's Use of a Traditional Symbol in A Tale of Two Cities", The Dickensian, 80 (1984), 26-28.

50. Monod is critical of "the overwhelming frequency, the systematic and even laboured adoption of the effects of repetition (p. 461), noting that "in his considerable effort to make his style more artistic... Dickens makes a broader use of the symbols and allegories that had long been dear to him" (p. 462). While Monod argues, with compelling logic, that Dickens's essential purpose in writing this novel "seems to run counter to the natural bent of the author's genius" (p. 468), his comments reflect the scope of Dickens's experimentation in A Tale of Two Cities.

51. See William Oddie, Dickens and Carlyle; The Question of Influence (London: The Centenary Press, 1972), pp. 72-73, in which he compares ways in which the two authors have described of "The arming of the mob" and "the living sea."

52. In American Notes, Dickens expressed a disdainful view about another form of dancing, which was both orderly and grotesque, when describing the Shakers (so-called "from their peculiar form of adoration (p. 258)). Dickens had gained the unfavourable impression, from a print, amongst other sources, that this religious group "accompany

themselves with a droning, humming noise, and dance until they are quite exhausted, alternately advancing and retiring in a preposterous sort of trot" (p. 258), describing the effect as "unspeakably absurd" and "infinitely grotesque". Although he has no first-hand experience of this sect, he is evidently unimpressed by what he knows of their joyless activities, of which their dancing is one expression ("I cannot, I confess, incline towards the Shakers" (p. 259)). In this instance, the sociable aspects of dancing have been tainted, for Dickens, by a religion which would "make existence but a narrow path towards the grave" (p. 259).

53. Recounted in Frederic G. Kitton, Charles Dickens by Pen and Pencil (London: Frank T. Sabin, John F. Dexter, 1890), p. 142.
54. Daily News, 28 February 1846. For further comment on this letter, see Philip Collins, Dickens and Crime, p. 343.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion: "The Thought that Travelled by a Crooked Lane"

"Dickens has a positive affection for lunatics, and... a vast majority of his characters are born fools. In his queer world they fare none the worse for this.... it almost seems as if... he preferred the thought that travelled by a crooked lane".[1]

That Dickens is fascinated both by the insane and by the condition of insanity itself, its causes and effects, has become evident from this examination of his treatment of madness in certain key novels. While it is doubtful that a "vast majority" of Dickens's characters are "born fools" (although he commonly highlights his characters' blemishes), - doubtful too that, in the unique world of his novels, these figures "fare none the worse" (such notably foolish figures as Barnaby Rudge faring very much the worse for their condition), this study has revealed that madness undoubtedly holds a place of special significance in Dickens's novels, for a number of reasons. It is of particular interest that Dickens, a writer who underlined the importance of such qualities as duty, earnestness and self-control, should, paradoxically, have been fascinated by irrational impulses and emotions. Yet it has become apparent that Dickens's wide-ranging experimentation with insanity reflected, in his novel-writing, his interest in "the thought that travelled by a crooked lane".

Dickens was evidently aware of certain aspects of changing public attitude towards mental derangement and the care of the insane in the nineteenth century, described in a

wide variety of publications, and evident in contemporary legislative reforms - a matter of interest to those of his friends who were closely associated with these developments. Yet, though Dickens explored the cause and effect of some specific aspects of insanity in his novel-writing, he was conscious too that if his portrayal of this subject was not well-received by his readership, it could have potentially disastrous effects on the sales of his publications. Hence, while evidently drawn to the subject in his novel-writing, Dickens's treatment of madness was handled with care, a reading of his novels revealing, for example, that he rarely reflected contemporary debate over the treatment of insanity in his fiction.

For what purposes, we may enquire in conclusion, has Dickens employed the use of madness in his writing? An examination of key examples in Dickens's novel-writing has revealed the changing uses of madness in his fiction as he matured as a writer - uses evident in a range of literary traditions - also reflecting the changing nature of Dickens's vision and purpose as a writer. A careful examination of some of his early writings suggests that Dickens was acquainted with literary traditions in which madness features as a moral warning against various forms of wickedness - one of the outcomes of the Fall - although it is apparent that Dickens's treatment of this subject bears his own remarkable stamp. In later years, Dickens's writing reflected those literary traditions in which madness symbolises the effects of human frailty - a subject explored in a range of literary genres. Whilst Dickens's novel-writing reveals that he was evidently aware of the ironic potential of insanity (in highlighting the nature of wisdom and folly), together with its sensational and theatrical uses - aspects of insanity apparent in a range of literary sources - this study has revealed that, in his maturity, Dickens was to explore the potential of restoration from insanity in A Tale of Two Cities - a novel in which insanity is carefully interwoven in theme and character.

It may, then, come as a surprise to the reader that, in spite of the wide-ranging nature of Dickens's exploration of insanity, his novels contain no sustained attempt at highlighting potential abuses of the asylum system. Yet it is evident that Dickens did not intend to use his novels as a platform for campaigning for the improved treatment of the

insane, as we have noted, even though he had visited several institutions catering for the mentally deranged.

However, the reader may glean some insight into Dickens's personal viewpoint, not only in his comments as editor of Household Words, but also in descriptions of his first-hand observation of insanity. The nature of Dickens's understanding of insanity is illustrated by his description of asylums he visited, and by his report of impressions gained from two individuals with whom he became acquainted, both suffering from two widely differing forms of mental illness. His time-consuming attempts at mesmerising a woman suffering periodic bouts of mental agitation, illuminate not only his fascination with mesmerism, but with the cause of one particular type of mental disturbance, although Dickens's wife was evidently (and perhaps understandably) troubled by his apparent interest in the female in question. By contrast, Dickens's account of his visit to a renowned hermit, whilst illustrating the way in which he had formed a less sympathetic judgement about one character's mental condition, also underlines his belief in the need for individuals to be resourceful and active in promoting the welfare of their community - a theme resonating throughout his novels.

This investigation set out to examine the changing nature of Dickens's purposes as an author in his portrayal of insanity. Whilst noting that madness featured in a range of literary genres (its varied treatment reflected in Dickens's changing uses of insanity), and whilst observing too that Dickens's personal observations about madness provide insight into his portrayal of this subject in his novel-writing, it is an examination of a range of key novels, marking his development as a writer, which has highlighted the shift in emphasis in Dickens's purposes as he matured as a writer. This shift is marked in his early emphasis on madness and moral failure, and by his later experimentation with the use of insane characters as victims and catalysts, while in A Tale of Two Cities, he explored a complex treatment of the subject in character and theme - a treatment turning on his paradoxical exploration of insanity as an expression of human frailty within the wider context of the benign workings of a sense of Providence.

At the beginning of Dickens's writing career, in Sketches by Boz, Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist and Nicholas Nickleby, Dickens explored the use of madness as a form of punishment, in which insanity became interlinked with an association with aspects of destruction and death. An examination of these examples of Dickens's early fiction also illustrates his experimentation with the comic and sensational uses of insanity, Dickens discovering in his insane creations the potential to create dislocating effects in his plots, through their use in stripping away conventional expectations (particularly evident in such comic figures as Mrs. Nickleby's suitor). Dickens's early exploration of the theme highlights for the reader the significance of family responsibilities, and the importance of common decency - themes underpinned by his sensitive exploration of the troubled figures of Bill Sikes, Fagin and Ralph Nickleby.

As Dickens matured as a novelist, he experimented with a more varied use of symbols associated with insanity, while portraying madness as an expression of human frailty, in his most sustained portrayal of insanity, found in the characters of Barnaby Rudge - a victim of circumstances - and in Mr Dick, a figure acting as a catalyst in the plot of David Copperfield. In Miss Havisham, he later created a figure who had been an unfortunate victim herself, yet who nonetheless gained sufficient power to exert a malign influence upon other characters, for the purposes we have noted. In Barnaby Rudge, David Copperfield and Great Expectations, Dickens's writing has reflected literary traditions in which madness symbolises the effects of frailty, while he explores its use in the insane characters he has portrayed as victims and catalysts, whose roles also cast light upon the central themes of his novels. Thus the role of Barnaby Rudge highlights the insanity of the nature of the riots and their leader, Gordon, in Barnaby Rudge, and Mr Dick illuminates the significance of reconciliation and of a shared vision in marriage in Copperfield, while Miss Havisham, "a living witness to the reality of passion" (Leavis, p. 388), demonstrates too the potentially, damaging effects of rejection and unrequited love in a character who, like Mme Defarge, is overwhelmed by a desire for revenge. Like Mme Defarge, her fate becomes caught up with "emblems of death" (Basch, p. 150).

This study has revealed that Dickens's most integrated portrayal of insanity, interwoven in theme and character, however, finds its expression in A Tale of Two Cities, not only in his description of the crowd as an agent of change, but also, notably, in the fate of one character who becomes paralysed by the inability to take effective action - an inability interlinked with Dr Manette's experience of insanity. Dickens's sensitive portrayal of Dr Manette's periods of mental derangement highlight the effects of human frailty, through this character's inability to integrate disparate experiences. Yet, paradoxically, while A Tale of Two Cities portrays the dire consequences of human suffering in various forms, together with the social fragmentation experienced by a range of individuals, the novel hints that there is evidence of a benign sense of shaping purpose, in the almost imperceptible workings of Providence. The novel's conclusion points to an overarching, redemptive purpose, taken up in themes of self-sacrifice, despite the intensity of suffering conveyed in the novel. Hence Dickens's portrayal of insanity in A Tale of Two Cities becomes caught up in a broader sense of purpose - the ways of Providence. While many of Dickens's novels may be notable for their emphasis on the need for action to overcome the debilitating effects of insanity, in later writings, he began to explore restoration from insanity, and the religious potential of the theme, while it has been suggested that the final resolution of Edwin Drood would have been "one of resurrection, recovery and hope"[2] - a conclusion, however, which is necessarily speculative.

That Dickens should have been drawn to the subject of madness in so many of his novels is intriguing - not least because his own mental condition had been the subject of gossip and speculation. According to Forster, reports had been circulated in 1837, and one in 1840, which had even reached Dickens's publishers, claiming that Dickens was "suffering from loss of reason and was under treatment in an asylum:"[3] Dickens referred to this so-called "mad report",[4] and was not unnaturally angry about its potentially damaging effect.[5] While Forster was of the opinion that Dickens's high-spiritedness provided evidence for Shaftsbury's notion that any man of merit holds within himself "wise" and "foolish" elements which should be allowed to alternate,[6] he

confirmed, a year later, that Dickens had never suffered from any symptoms relating to insanity.[7] Although one twentieth century writer suggests that Dickens "manifested some obsessional traits" and also displayed certain manic depressive tendencies,[8] while another critic notes that he may have suffered from some sort of "neurotic syndrome",[9] there is no evidence to suggest that Dickens's treatment of insanity in his novels was the outcome of his own experience: indeed, he does not apparently possess all of the traits of an "obsessional character" as defined by one eminent writer.[10] Whilst creativity may represent "one mode adopted by gifted people of coming to terms with, or finding symbolic solutions for, the internal tensions and dissociations from which all human beings suffer in varying degree", it has been noted that the expression of creative genius necessitates the inhibition of immediate impulse, requiring persistence, control, and judgement[11]- characteristics for which Dickens was more renowned than for his instability.

Yet it is intriguing that Dickens's novels should be outstanding for the sheer variety of their insane creations, when compared with the writings of many of his contemporaries. Madness was evidently a subject which continued to fascinate Dickens throughout his writing career, although in his maturity, he experimented with a more complex portrayal of its cause and effects, his early representation of crazed figures suffering as a result of their own actions, giving way to a sensitive exploration of the effects of intense pressure on characters suffering the brief (yet severe) consequences of their earlier experiences (exemplified by Mr Dorrit, or Dr Manette). One interesting sideshoot of Dickens's later novels, and a subject which invites further research, is the way in which some aspects of sexuality became interconnected with a source of pain and suffering - a focus for the monomania in such characters as Bradley Headstone and Miss Havisham,[12] and a theme which Dickens had begun to explore in Edwin Drood too.

In later years, Dickens explored the uses of insanity in both theme and character with particular care when constructing his novels (evident in the example of in A Tale of Two Cities). While one recent study has enquired whether Dickens's madmen question

accepted concepts of normality and insanity,[13] the significance of the form and content of insanity in Dickens's novels has not generally received the recognition it deserves in any detailed scholarly works. This study has revealed that, far from being a "dreadful visitation" in its literary representation, Dickens discovered that madness, a subject which fascinated him, provided him with a wealth of possibilities in exposing hidden depths of meaning in his novels, and in penetrating beneath the surfaces of conventional expectations.

NOTES

1. Philip Collins (ed) Dickens, The Critical Heritage(London: Routledge & Kegan Paul,1971), pp. 546-547.

2. John Thacker, Edwin Drood: Antichrist in the Cathedral (Chailey, E. Sussex: S.M.P., 1990), p. 140.

3. Forster Life, II, VIII, pp. 162-163.

4. Letters, II, 124.

5. Forster writes in his characteristically ponderous style that "there was a difficulty in keeping within judicious bounds his not unnatural wrath" (Life, II, VIII, pp. 162-163).

6. Life, II, VIII. Forster also provides evidence of Dickens's buoyancy of spirits (exemplified with his fanciful infatuation with the young Queen which was comically expressed in one letter with a "wild derangement of asterisks in every shape and form" p. 156).

7. Forster received a request for this information from the Eagle Life Assurance Company (Letters, II, 494).

8. In Some Reflections on Genius and other Essays (London: Pitman Medical, 1960), pp. 20-21, Russell Brain notes that the "form of insanity which is most closely related to genius is cyclothymia, the manic-depressive state. Many men of genius have either been cyclothymes themselves or have been cycloids with a family history". Referring to Dickens's letters to illustrate his case, Brain further observes that the "creativeness of the genius may show a rhythm determined by the cyclothymia, cycles of productiveness alternating with cycles of sterility", noting that in Dickens's case, "the untiring energy and flight of ideas of the phase of elation may persist as a milder enduring state without disorder of thought, and add greatly to the productivity of the artist". For Brain, the significant role of the feelings among creative artists explains the closer correlation between genius and mental instability, whilst he notes that our culture has been enriched by the contribution of individuals such as Dickens whose preoccupation with cruelty and prisons moved his contemporaries to abolish abuses which had long been tolerated (p. 22).

9. Leonard Manheim, "Dickens' Fools and Madmen", Dickens Studies Annual, 2 (1972), 73.

10. Anthony Storr, The Dynamics of Creation (London: Secker & Warburg, 1972), ch. VIII. Storr observes that many of the world's great creators have exhibited obsessional symptoms, including Dickens, while one striking feature of this temperament is manifest in the "compulsive need" to control both the self and the environment. For such characters "Disorder and spontaneity must be avoided so far as possible, since both appear threatening and unpredictable", and while one feature of this need to control "is the extreme tidiness so characteristic of obsessionals", there can also be a tendency to parsimonious, miserly behaviour (ibid.). Whilst it has been noted that Dickens was concerned about tidiness, that "Neatness, orderliness and personal cleanliness were passionate concerns of Dickens" (Carey, p. 30), there is, however, little evidence that he lacked spontaneity, whilst his letters, on the contrary, provide numerous examples of the impromptu arrangements be made. Furthermore, his correspondence reveals his generosity, rather than a tendency to be miserly or parsimonious.

11. Ibid., p. 203.

12. A subject which, although outside the confines of this study, would provide interesting grounds for further research.

13. See Natalie McKnight, Idiots, Madmen, and Other Prisoners in Dickens (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993). This is a study which groups together Dickens's portrayal of prisoners, idiots and madmen because of their shared experiences of being marginalised and imprisoned, and it is argued that their use of private languages binds these groups of characters together.

Natalie McKnight takes the view that in the representation of Dickens's imprisoned characters, he questions (and sometimes indicts) the system and authorities leading to institutionalized segregation, while in exploring the disciplinary mechanisms in society, and in attacking "normalizing tendencies" and Utilitarian principles, Dickens questions accepted concepts of insanity and normality, prefiguring for Natalie McKnight, Foucault's "more extensive analysis over a century later" (p. 3). This study sets out to explore the "Foucauldian aspect" of Dickens's presentation of idiots and madmen (p. 6.)

Following a broad consideration of the biographical and historical context in which Dickens was writing, it is (even more broadly) noted in this study that, in his portrayal of idiots, madmen and prisoners, Dickens questions fundamental assumptions on which "modern society is based" (p. 30). In its fourth chapter, the study notes the way in which Dickens's attitudes are shaped by elements of the holy idiot and wise fool traditions. It is observed that the inarticulateness of some of Dickens's characters is presented as "no minor problem", Dickens's description of unassertive and nullifying idiolects, "the silent", "the garrulous", demonstrating ways in which the inarticulate are trapped in idiolects that hamper communication.

In the four chapters which follow, Natalie McKnight considers the significance of imprisoned figures in Nicholas Nickleby, Barnaby Rudge, Dombey and Son and Little Dorrit. There is, however, a lack of clarity in the study's definition of idiocy (whereby, for example, Mrs Nickleby is "one of the novel's most successful idiots" (p. 77)). It is further observed that "Foucault's account of the "hysterization of women's bodies" provides a framework for interpreting Mrs Nickleby's "progress" from absurdity to dignity" (p. 78), despite

the widely disparate historical and social context within which Dickens and Foucault were writing. Similarly, when describing Dickens's treatment of Barnaby Rudge, the study notes that Dickens "seems to have bought into the bourgeois ethic, as described by Foucault" (p. 89), also awkwardly observing that Dickens must "decenter" Barnaby in fitting him into the context of the novel (p. 91).

For Natalie McKnight, the division between sane and insane, normal and abnormal, begins to dissolve in Dombey and Son when Dombey, the bastion of normalcy "goes mad" (p. 103), in a novel "celebrating the chaotic energy of foolishness" (p. 111). Whilst it is suggested that in Little Dorrit, Dickens affirms a sense of chaos, when only foolish, idiotic characters may escape the constraints of society and imprisonment, Natalie McKnight underlines Foucault's views about incarceration and surveillance in society (p. 112), although there is no reference made to the context in which Dickens was writing.

In conclusion, Natalie McKnight observes that through Dickens's characterisation of idiots, madmen and other prisoners, he voices a distrust of institutionalisation and normalisation (the latter, a concept with which Dickens would not have been familiar). Observing the changing approach adopted towards "the aberrant" (p. 130). Whilst in its detailed exploration of Dickens's treatment of idiots, madmen and other prisoners, the study makes many lucid observations about Dickens's purposes, it is in its insistence on relating Dickens's writings to the work of Foucault that its case becomes most strained.

Appendix I

Earlier Treatment of the Insane

The Victorian age had marked a watershed in the treatment of the insane, because of the introduction of special provision on an organised basis in asylums for the insane. Earlier treatment of those who were deranged had been altogether different throughout many centuries. In medieval times, for example, there is evidence to suggest that some mentally infirm members of society were accommodated in infirmaries[1] amongst people who were physically ill, or were sheltered in monastic houses. Little is known about the extent of insanity or its treatment in the Middle Ages, although it has been noted that some people may have believed that mental derangement could be cured at a holy place (Clay, p. 31), and pilgrimages to holy wells were not uncommon even in the sixteenth century, indicating that there was, for some, the hope of restoration.

From the thirteenth century, treatment of the insane could to some extent have been affected by their geographical location, as the most famous refuge was located in London when the Priory of the Order of St. Mary of Bethlehem was founded in 1247. This refuge for the insane was later given by Henry VIII to the City of London as a hospital for poor lunatics in 1547, which became known as Bethlem, and later, Bedlam. In other parts of the country, those mentally infirm members of society who were not catered for by relatives or by medieval hospitals could be kept in local gaols if they became violent,[2] although those who were thought to be harmless lunatics or idiots were generally left to their own devices. Thomas More describes the method of treatment for one unfortunate

individual in 1533, who, having "fallen into... frantick heresies" and "plaine open frenzye" had been "put up in Bedlam, and afterward by beating and correccion gathered his remembraunce to him". After being set at liberty, this individual caused a disturbance, and, according to More, was bound to a tree by constables, "and ther they stripped him with roddes therefore till he waxed weary and somewhat leager. And it appeared well that hys remembraunce was goude ineoughe save that it went about in grazing til it was beaten home".[3]

Some ex-patients from Bethlem Hospital, known as the Bedlam beggars, or Tom of Bedlams, became licensed to beg: Percy included a song entitled "old Tom of Bedlam" in his Reliques (preceded by a quaint note that the English have more songs about madness than any neighbours because of a predisposition to "native gloominess"):

> Forth from my sad and darksome cell,
> Or from the deepe abysse of hell,
> Mad Tom is come into the world againe
> To see if he can cure his distempered braine...
> Through the world I wander night and day
> To seeke my straggling senses.[4]

From the seventeenth century, there was a gradual but marked change in public attitudes towards the treatment of insanity in a period which has been described as the "Great Confinement" (in Foucault's Madness and Civiliation,[5] though it is not the purpose of this study to provide a detailed examination of this work, for critical evaluation has been provided elsewhere).[6] From the late seventeenth century onwards, there is some evidence of a greater (if not "Great") tendency to confine the insane in institutions. By 1676, for example, Bethlem had expanded, and contained between 130-150 inmates, although there may have been a number of causes for this expansion.[7] The Act of 1714, 12 Anne, c23, permitted two or more J.P.s to confine, and, if necessary, to chain those who were "furiously mad and dangerous", while it has been noted that the first legislative mention of the insane as a social class was found in the Vagrancy Act of 1744.[8] Affluent people who were mentally afflicted had often received individual care

and attention from medical experts or clergymen during the seventeenth century, although an increasingly popular method adopted by some parishes as a means to deal with lunatics in their charge, was in financing private dwellings which became known as madhouses. The demand for lodgings in such madhouses had greatly increased by the eighteenth century.[9]

One of the most influential physicians in mid-eighteenth century England was Dr William Battie of St. Luke's hospital. In some ways, Battie (who had attended the poet Christopher Smart between 1757 and 1758), initiated "a new era in psychiatry",[10] as he took the view that the "unhappy objects" of insanity should not be abandoned, "much less shut up in loathsome prisons as criminals or nusances (sic.) to the society".[11] He noted that "Madness, though a terrible and at present a very frequent calamity, is perhaps as little understood as any that ever afflicted mankind" (p. 5), but that "deluded imagination" is an "essential character" of the condition. Battie observed that there were two distinct types of insanity: "Original Madness", due to disorders of the nervous substance, and "Consequential Madness", owing to some "remote and accidental cause". Whilst disapproving of such contemporary practices as treating madness with evacuation by vomiting or by use of opiates, Battie (unlike "some unthinking persons"), believed that madness was as "manageable as many other distempers". Bethlem's physician, James Monro, responded to Battie's treatise by publishing his Remarks on Dr Battie's Treatise on Madness,[12] defending the practices of induced vomiting, purging and bleeding.

John Ferriar, physician to Manchester Lunatic Hospital, later published his Medical Histories and Reflections,[13] while the surgeon to Bridewell and Bethlem Hospitals produced Practical remarks on insanity,[14] and the medical superintendent at Lancaster County Lunatic Asylum published Observations on the Causes, Treatment etc. of the Mind.[15] Although these writings illustrate the nature of medical debate on the treatment of insanity from the mid-eighteenth century, Dickens makes reference to the writings of another medical writer who was apothecary to Bethlem Hospital from 1795-1816. Dickens may have come across accounts of John Haslam's practices during the

course of his extensive travels, for, although we have no evidence for the source of his knowledge, he refers to the way in which patients' mouths were forced open to take food or medicines with Haslam's "key".[16] Dickens refers to this practice when contrasting past and present methods of treating insanity in his A Curious Dance.

Haslam wrote that the insane patient may be "punished for improper behaviour, by confining him to his room, by degrading him", while, with regard to his invention of a "simple and very efficient instrument... I can truly affirm, that no patient has ever been deprived of a tooth, and that the food or remedy has always been conveyed into the stomach of the patient". He notes that the "manner in which this compulsory operation is performed, consists of placing the head of the patient between the knees of the person who is to use the instrument: a second assistant secures the hands... and a third keeps down the legs. As soon as the mouth is opened, the instrument may be "introduced".[17] Haslam also believed that in "the most violent state of the disease", a patient "should be kept alone in a dark and quiet room".

Haslam held an eminent position as medical officer in such a large and well-known institution as Bethlem. His recommendations for the treatment of insanity were not uncommon, for prior to King George III's illness, the King's principal medical advisor had argued that the three main principles for governing maniacs should be intimidation, isolation and restraint:

> "Restraint... is useful, and ought to be complete... and the strait waistcoat answers every purpose... In most cases it has appeared to me necessary to employ a very constant impression of fear... sometimes it may be necessary to acquire it even by stripes and blows".[18]

Ironically, George III himself displayed an enlightened attitude towards insanity (on one occasion at least) if the report of an attempt upon his life has been accurately recorded. When a deluded woman tried to stab him (on August 2nd, 1786), he is reported to have said: "No, I am not hurt - take care of the woman - do not hurt her, for she is mad".[19]

That a reigning monarch such as George III should himself suffer periods of mental

derangement had naturally been a cause for public concern; because of the nature of his disorder, "the topic of insanity was widely discussed in a context which excluded the attitude of moral condemnation",[20] and it is not surprising that his physician received many recommendations for cures to aid the King's recovery. Amongst other remedies, his physicians were advised to try the soothing effects of sweet music; the use of cold water; use of an improvised Turkish bath; the application of leeches to the patient's head; the application of a napkin steeped in vinegar, around the patient's temple, whilst he ate bitter almonds; the application of boiled ground ivy in wine with salad oil to the patient's shaved head; the application of lambskins to his head.[21]

One of the physicians appointed to attend to the King during his periods of mental instability took the view that insanity was not incurable, estimating that nine-tenths of his patients recovered within three months of treatment.[22] Dr Francis Willis requested information from Dr Monro of Bedlam, during a bout of the King's illness, concerning symptoms of incurability. The reply he received can hardly have been reassuring, as Monro indicated that the condition "comes on towards the middle stage of life without any known cause... unless it be a family complaint", the symptoms being "great deprivation of sense: tending to fatuity", every tendency "to be dreaded" where the condition is "not abated by medicine or management" (Trench, p. 160). The King's condition was treated by use of the strait waistcoat for non-compliance, and he was to be kept in isolation during some periods (Macalpine and Hunter, George III, p. 44, and p. 127). Yet at least one of his contemporaries was critical of King George's treatment, noting that "The unhappy patient... was no longer treated as a human being... encased in a machine which left no liberty of motion... sometimes chained to a stake... frequently beaten and starved... at best... kept in subjection by menacing and violent language".[23]

A measure of heightened interest in the treatment of insanity (both during and after the periods of George III's mental derangement) is reflected in the space allocated for this subject in contemporary medical courses: by 1822, at least one writer was attempting to "provide a scheme for clinical observations and advance" (Bynum, p. 310). During the course of the nineteenth century, it has been remarked that there

was a change of emphasis on the "relative weight to be attributed to physical and moral causes of insanity. During the early part of the century moral causes are thought to be of greater importance. During the latter part of the century physical causes assume ascendancy".[24] The writings of the period reflect a wide range of divergent opinions concerning the most effective treatment of the condition. On the one hand, we find that useful occupation, fresh air and exercise are recommended as curatives, medical remedies proving "principally of use in the early stages of the disease" (Macalpine & Hunter, The Hundred Years, p. 870), whereas on the other hand, popular physical restraints of "the Douche" and "Rotary Machine" were being recommended (see plate 6). According to Sir Alexander Morison's Cases of mental disease, with practical observations... for the use of students, (London: Longman & Highley, 1828), these contraptions "may be erected at little expence, and by any intelligent carpenter", and Morison,[25] as Fellow and President of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, was an authoratative figure.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, alarm was being expressed about the rapid increase in the incidence of insanity. A Select Committee was established, noting in its report of 1807 that "It is an observation of medical men of extensive practice, that the lunatic affection is a disease increasing in its influence in this country" (p. 17); a matter which was the subject of much debate. During the following year in 1808, the County Asylums Act was, significantly, to recommend that asylums should be erected at the expense of the County rates - an Act which was of importance because of its conception of non-deterrent treatment as a public responsibility, and its attempt to deal with insanity, rather than symptoms of anti-social behaviour (Jones, p. 75).

It gradually became accepted that care of the insane was a public responsibility, although it is notable in Dickens's novels, that the care of the mentally deranged tends to be undertaken by individuals. Dickens's portrayal of the treatment of insanity reflects more about his own philosophy than current practice as he focuses on the responsibility of individuals, indicated, for example, by his letter to Forster of March 2nd 1845: "No

philosophy will bear these dreadful things, or make a moment's head against them, but the practical one of doing all the good we can, in thought and deed" (Letters, IV, 275).

Notes to Appendix I

1. See R.M. Clay, The Medieval Hospitals of England (London: Cass, 1909 (rpt. 1966)), pp. 31-34.

2. Andrew T. Scull, Museums of Madness: The Social Organization of Insanity in Nineteenth Century England (Harmondsworth, Middx: Penguin, 1982), p. 19.

3. See George Rosen, "Madness in Society", in The Historical Sociology of Mental Illness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 8.

4. Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry (London: J.M. Dent, Everyman's Library, 1906 (vol. 2)), pp. 148-9.

5. Michel Foucault, Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason ((trans. Richard Howard), London: Tavistock, 1967), pp. 151-171.

6. See, for example, Steven Marcus, "Morals, Literature and Society", Representations: Essays on Literature and Society (New York: Random House, 1975), pp. 137-60.

7. See Andrew T. Scull, Museums of Madness; The Social Organizaton of Insanity in Nineteenth-Century England (Allen Lane, 1979; rpt, Harmondsworth, Middx: Penguin, 1982), p. 24.

8. Kathleen Jones, Lunacy, Law and Conscience 1744-1845; The Social History of the Care of the Insane (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955).

9. See William Parry-Jones, The Trade in Lunacy: A Study of Private Madhouses in England in the Eighteen and Nineteenth Centuries (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972).

10. Richard Hunter & Ida Macalpine, Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry, 1535-1860, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 404.

11. William Battie, A Treatise on Madness (London: Whiston & White, 1758), p. 97.

12. James Monro, Remarks on Dr. Battie's Treatise on Madness (London: Clarke, 1758), pp. 50-52.

13. John Ferrier, Medical Histories and Reflections (3 vols, London: Cadell & Davies, 1792-8).

14. Bryan Crowther, Practical remarks on insanity (London: Underwood, 1811).

15 P.S. Knight, Observations on the Causes, Treatment etc. of the Mind (London: Longman, 1827).

16. See plate 7.

17. John Haslam, Observations on Madness and Melancholy (2nd edition, London: Callow), pp. 289-91.

18. William Cullen, First Lines in the Practice of Physic, (4th edition, Edinburgh: Elliot, 1784, vol. IV), pp. 153-154.

19. Ida Macalpine & Richard Hunter, George III and the Mad-Business (London: Allen Lane, 1969), p. 310.

20. Kathleen Jones, Lunacy, Law and Conscience, 1744-1845 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955), p. 26.

21. C.C. Trench, The Royal Malady (London: Longmans, 1964.), pp. 182-183.

22. This is a claim which is challenged, however, by Macalpine & Hunter (Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry, p. 513).

23. William Bynum, "Rationales for Therapy in British Psychiatry", Medical History, 18 (1974), 319.

24. Vieda Skultans, Madness and Morals: Ideas on Insanity in the Nineteenth Century (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 2.

25. As old lunatic hospitals were reorganised, and new asylums opened, Morison identified the need to train specialists in the field, later founding the Society for Improving the Condition of the Insane, in 1842. His interest in exploring the connections between the fixed physiognomy and different types of insanity led him to produce a collection of 108 plates of insane patients, described as "the first English atlas of the physiognomy of the insane" (Macalpine & Hunter, Three Hundred Years, p. 770).

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