

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF ARTS, LAW AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

CHARLES DICKENS: THE ROMANTIC LEGACY

PETER COOK

A thesis in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of Anglia Ruskin University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Submitted: January 2017

Acknowledgements

Parts of this study were presented at the conferences ‘Literary London: The Victorian Era and Charles Dickens’ at The Oxford and Cambridge Club, London, 15th-17th December 2012; ‘Victorian Age(s): BAVS 2015 Conference’ at Leeds Trinity University, 27th-29th August 2015; and ‘After Dickens’ at the University of York, 2nd-3rd December 2016, and annually at the Cambridge Branch of the Dickens Fellowship, Wolfson College Cambridge, 2012-16. I am most grateful for these opportunities to share my ideas, and for the feedback and encouragement received.

I am grateful to staff at Anglia Ruskin University Library, The British Library, and the University of Cambridge Library for their unfailing help and courtesy.

My two supervisors, Professor Valerie Purton and Professor John Gardner, have gone well beyond the call of duty in the help, advice, detailed reading of drafts, and general encouragement they have given me. I cannot imagine more expert and effective supervision, and I am deeply grateful.

My family, Samya, Nabil and Zeina, have lived with Dickens and the Romantics for the past five years with grace, humour and tolerance – thank you!

Abstract

This thesis investigates the relationship between the fiction of Charles Dickens and the work of canonical Romantic Period authors: William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Shelley, and John Keats, with a view to assessing the influence of these Romantic writers on Dickens's novels and stories. The reason for the investigation is that, while other influences on Dickens: the eighteenth-century novel, popular culture, melodrama, and the sentimental tradition have been thoroughly investigated recently, the influence of the Romantics has been relatively neglected.

Four topics are identified: Childhood, Time, Progress, and Outsiders, which together constitute the main thematic aspects of Dickens's debt to the Romantics. The use of imagery as a structural, unifying device, rather than a decorative, pictorial addition, is also identified as a significant common feature. Close readings of key Romantic texts, and eight of Dickens's novels, draw out comparisons and contrasts, indicating the ways in which Dickens appropriated and adapted Romantic tropes and devices.

It was found that the influence of the Romantics on Dickens's fiction is more extensive and important than has previously been recognised. Essentially, Dickens turns to these Romantic tropes and devices to express his responses to the exponential growth of industrial, technological culture, and its effects on personal life and relationships, that was happening as he wrote. The modern society that provoked these complex responses did not exist when the eighteenth-century authors that Dickens loved were writing. The Romantics, on the other hand, witnessed the dawn of this new social order, and experimented with ways of expressing it. Dickens found in them a basis on which to build.

These findings demonstrate that the Romantic legacy needs to be taken into account far more seriously in order to arrive at a balanced, fully-rounded understanding of Dickens's achievement.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Abstract	ii
Abbreviations used in endnotes	v
Copyright Declaration.....	vii
Introduction.....	1
Literary Context	2
A Methodology of Influence, Ecology and Things.....	6
Critical Context	9
Method, Design and Structure.....	12
Chapter 1: Childhood.....	19
Education Debates and Parental Aspirations	20
<i>David Copperfield</i> : Failing Families.....	29
Childhood to Adulthood.....	32
Heroes and Villains	34
Romantic Pedigree	37
Tempestuous Images	38
<i>Great Expectations</i> : a Novel without a Hero?	40
Character and Environment.....	43
Chapter 2: Time	55
Watches and Clocks	55
<i>Dombey and Son</i> : Hides and Hearts.....	59
‘A Watch That’ll Do You Credit’	64
Commonplace Obituaries, Infant Philosophy	67
A Wandering Princess and a Good Monster	69
<i>Our Mutual Friend</i> : the Poorest of Mr. Dickens’s Works	73
A Battle Within and Without	77
River and Rail.....	83

Chapter 3: Progress	94
Revolution and Science	94
<i>Bleak House</i> : Mudfog Revisited	99
Old School	105
Love One Another or Die	108
<i>Hard Times</i> outside London	112
Strangled in its cradle	114
Stale, flat, and unprofitable	117
Perfect Integrity	119
Chapter 4: Outsiders	131
Guilt and Isolation	132
Dickens and Master Humphrey	139
Unnatural Oppositions	142
Lonely Wanderers	144
<i>Little Dorrit</i> : Mind-forged Manacles	152
Pillars of Society	157
Familiar yet Misplaced	159
Nearly Everything of Importance	161
Conclusion	173
Bibliography	184

Abbreviations used in endnotes

- BCW* William Blake, *Complete Writings*, ed. by Geoffrey Keynes (London: Oxford University Press, 1969)
- BH* Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, ed. by Norman Page (London: Penguin Books, 1985)
- BL* Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria: or, Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions* ed. by George Watson (London: Dent, 1971)
- BR* Charles Dickens, *Barnaby Rudge*, ed. by Gordon Spence (London: Penguin Books, 1986)
- CB* Charles Dickens, *The Christmas Books*, ed. by Michael Slater, 2 volumes (London: Penguin Books, 1985)
- CCW* Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. by Ernest Hartley Coleridge, 2 volumes (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968)
- CPW* Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Poetical Works*, ed. by Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: Oxford University Press, 1967)
- DC* Charles Dickens, *The Personal History of David Copperfield*, ed. by Trevor Blount (London: Penguin Books, 1985)
- DJ* Charles Dickens, *Journalism*, ed. by Michael Slater and John Drew, 4 volumes. (London, J. M. Dent, 1994-2000)
- DS* Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son*, ed. by Andrew Sanders (London: Penguin Books, 2002)
- ED* Charles Dickens, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, ed. by David Paroissien (London: Penguin Books, 2002)
- GE* Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, ed. by Charlotte Mitchell (London: Penguin Books, 1996)
- HT* Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*, ed. by Kate Flint (London: Penguin Books, 1995)
- KPW* John Keats, *Poetical Works*, ed. by H. W. Garrod (London: Oxford University Press, 1970)
- LCD* Charles Dickens, *The Letters*, ed. by Madeline House, Graham Storey, Kathleen Tillotson, K. J. Fielding, Nina Burgis et al., 12 volumes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965-2002)

- LD* Charles Dickens, *Little Dorrit*, ed. by John Holloway (London: Penguin Books, 1988)
- MC* Charles Dickens, *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit*, ed. by P. N. Furbank (London: Penguin Books, 1994)
- MSF* Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus*, ed. by Maurice Hindle (London: Penguin Books, 1992)
- NN* Charles Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby*, ed. by Michael Slater (London: Penguin Books, 1986)
- OCS* Charles Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, ed. by Angus Easson (London: Penguin Books, 1985)
- OMF* Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, ed. by Stephen Gill (London: Penguin Books, 1985)
- OT* Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, ed. by Peter Fairclough (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985)
- PP* Charles Dickens, *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, ed. by Mark Wormald (London: Penguin Books, 2003)
- SIE* William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, facsimile with Introduction and Commentary by Geoffrey Keynes (London: Oxford University Press, 1972)
- SL* Hartley, Jenny, ed., *The Selected Letters of Charles Dickens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)
- SPW* Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Poetical Works*, ed. by Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1968)
- TP* William Wordsworth, *The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850*, ed. by Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979)
- TTC* Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*, ed. by Richard Maxwell (London: Penguin Books, 2003)
- WPW* William Wordsworth, *Poetical Works*, ed. by Thomas Hutchinson, revised by Ernest de Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1971)
- WTP* William Wordsworth, *The Prelude, or, Growth of a Poet's Mind (Text of 1805)*, ed. by Ernest de Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1969)

Copyright Declaration

Charles Dickens and the Romantic Legacy

Peter Cook

COPYRIGHT

Attention is drawn to the fact that copyright of this thesis rests with

- (i) Anglia Ruskin University for one year and thereafter with
- (ii) Peter Cook

This copy of the thesis has been supplied on the condition that anyone who consults it is bound by copyright.

This work may

- (i) be made available for consultation within Anglia Ruskin University Library, or
- (ii) be lent to other libraries for the purpose of consultation or may be photocopied for such purposes
- (iii) be made available in Anglia Ruskin University's repository and made available on open access worldwide for non-commercial educational purposes, for an indefinite period.

Introduction

‘You are not so tolerant as perhaps you might be of the wayward and unsettled feeling which is part (I suppose) of the tenure on which one holds an imaginative life, and which I have, as you ought to know well, often only kept down by riding over it like a dragoon’.¹

This frequently-quoted complaint to John Forster is significant not only in intimating the conflicts that Charles Dickens experienced between his creative inner life and his external everyday life, but also in terms of the lack of understanding of these conflicts even among his closest literary friends, let alone his wider readership. A close reading of Dickens’s fictions reveals that he was only partially successful in keeping down these conflicts – like Silas Tomkyn Comberbatche before him, he was ‘an indifferent dragoon’.² This thesis explores how Dickens found ways to stop riding roughshod over his deepest imaginative perceptions, and express in his fiction values and ways of thinking which were profoundly at odds with his time and place, but which because of his work came eventually to represent that time and place. Donald Stone’s observation that Dickens’s ‘Romantic sympathies are frequently at odds with his anti-Romantic views’³ is acute; but Stone follows Philip Collins in asserting that Dickens ‘probably owed much more to the Romantic middlemen – essayists such as Lamb, de Quincey and Leigh Hunt’, than to ‘the poets’.⁴ In this thesis I will argue that it is through Dickens’s relationship with the work of ‘the poets’: Wordsworth, Blake, Coleridge, Percy Shelley, Keats and Byron, and Mary Shelley, rather than Stone’s ‘middlemen’, that he was able to come to terms with and express much of his ‘wayward and unsettled [...] imaginative life’.

In his biography of Dickens, Peter Ackroyd discusses a passage in *Dombey and Son*: ‘Dickens is here parodying Wordsworth and by implication the Romantic movement (of which he himself was the most important legatee)’.⁵ There is no development of this huge, unqualified, tantalising parenthesis in Ackroyd’s book, and very little attention to its implications elsewhere. The most recent edition of the *Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens* (2011) reflects the situation precisely: there is no entry on ‘Romanticism’, although ‘Roman Catholic Church’ and ‘Royal General Theatrical Fund’, either side of where ‘Romanticism’ would have stood in the alphabetical sequence, are deemed important enough to merit inclusion.⁶ Byron receives a substantial entry, Wordsworth and Coleridge briefer ones, while Blake, Keats, Mary Shelley and Percy Shelley do not receive entries. It is the aim of this thesis to fill this gap: to substantiate the assertion that Dickens was indeed an important legatee of the Romantic movement by offering a close reading of eight of his novels, exploring the extent to which their power and meaning are linked to Dickens’s struggles to overcome the anxiety of influence, to ‘unname the precursor while earning one’s own name’,⁷ as Harold Bloom argues all great writers must. Having undertaken this work, I now see Charles Dickens in an entirely different light. It is my aim in this study to demonstrate precisely how and why.

Literary Context

As suggested above, the focus of this thesis is the relationship between Dickens's fiction and the work of seven canonical Romantic authors. It is to them that the term 'Romantics' applies in this study. In this section I will identify those aspects of their work, and of Dickens's early career, that are particularly relevant to this focus. I understand Romanticism as a broad cultural movement, its protagonists linked to the social, technological and political upheavals of the time, and to each other, in often complex ways. Seamus Perry has traced the evolution of the word, and noted that the writers themselves would not have described themselves or their work as 'Romantic' or 'romantic',⁸ with the fascinating exception of Coleridge. As in so many crucial areas, as Raymond Williams points out,⁹ Coleridge established the terms for future thought and debate. In Chapter 14 of *Biographia Literaria* he distinguishes between Wordsworth's poems for *Lyrical Ballads*, devoted to the 'things of every day', and his own, 'directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic'.¹⁰ In 'Kubla Khan' he evokes 'that deep romantic chasm which slanted/ Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!'¹¹ The word also carried less positive connotations for Coleridge. In a letter to a friend in 1796 he bemoans the Pantisocracy venture as 'a scheme of virtue impracticable and romantic'.¹² Dickens too was to use the word tellingly, and with a parallel range of meaning, in his fictions. In the 'Preface' to the first edition of *Bleak House* he echoes Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* distinction between the 'every day' and the 'romantic', and hints at their union in his fiction: 'I have purposely dwelt upon the romantic side of familiar things'.¹³ Out of such uses of 'romantic', of course, came 'Romantic'.¹⁴

Jeffrey Robinson argues against what he calls the 'institutional Romanticism' of critics who characterise the movement as brief, escapist, and inward-looking.¹⁵ Robinson argues convincingly for 'the recovery of the radical dynamic of Romantic poets', and sees a 'vital continuity between a radical Romanticism and modern [...] innovative poetry and politics'.¹⁶ Andrew Radford and Mark Sandy also stress its abiding relevance, writing of: 'the ambiguous yet sustained fascination that Romanticism held for many subsequent nineteenth-century intellectuals. Its allure is a heady mixture of aspiration and transgression, the ennobling and the subversive, which continues its appeal to the present day'.¹⁷

Marilyn Butler is right to warn against oversimplified notions of Romanticism as only 'revolutionary'.¹⁸ But there seems little doubt that this 'heady mixture' had its origins in writers' reactions to the changes effected by the American and French Revolutions and the Industrial Revolution. Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge immersed themselves in the atmosphere of the 1790s, openly declaring their support for radical change and the spirit of the French Revolution, and their fears for the effects of industrialisation, in poems, dramas, lectures and journalism. Shelley called the French Revolution 'the master plot of the epoch in which we live',¹⁹ and proclaimed the central role of writers in the process: 'The great writers of our own age are [...] the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition or the opinions which cement it. The cloud of mind is discharging its collected lightning.'²⁰ William Blake wrote

The French Revolution (1791) and *America, a Prophecy* (1793),²¹ and proclaimed in ‘Now Art has lost its mental Charms’:

France shall the arts of Peace restore,
And save thee from the Ungrateful shore.
Spirit, who lov’st Brittania’s Isle
Round which the Fiends of Commerce smile ²²

Lyrical Ballads famously announced the most radical literary shift of all, the desire ‘to ascertain how far the language and conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure’, and write poetry with ‘a natural delineation of human passions, human characters, and human incidents’.²³ These aspirations required radical new techniques and forms, new approaches to diction and imagery. And these evolved rapidly, as Richard Cronin notes: ‘the careers of the Romantic poets [who] completed, in a decade, five years, or less, a process of poetic development that ought to have taken a lifetime’, and ‘the wild revolutionary energy’²⁴ of the events in France from 1789 to 1795: ‘six years in which France underwent a process of political change that would have been rapid if it had been spread over a hundred’.²⁵ The same point could be made about the exponential growth of industrialisation during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in England.

This political and literary radicalism was profoundly at odds with the dominant national culture of the time. In 1793 Britain joined a coalition that declared war on France in an attempt to overthrow the Revolution, the hostilities lasting until the defeat of Napoleon in 1815.²⁶ Warren Roberts writes of ‘the repressiveness and climate of fear that gripped the country during the 1790s’.²⁷ Marilyn Butler traces the rapid demise of Blake’s early career at this time: ‘Within a few years, the first half of the 1790s, the radical artist fell out of step with his identifiable public, and lost his place in the cultural mainstream’.²⁸ Wordsworth and Coleridge, together with Lamb, Southey and Charles Lloyd, caught the attention of the *Anti-Jacobin* in 1797:

the principles on which the poetical, as well as the political doctrine of the NEW SCHOOL is established [...] are to be found, some in the exaggeration, and others in the direct inversion of the sentiments and passions which have in all ages animated the breast of the favourite of the Muses.²⁹

Francis Jeffrey took up these ideas in his lengthy review essays on Southey, Wordsworth and their associates for the far more influential *Edinburgh Review*,³⁰ and their reputations as poets never fully recovered during their lifetimes.³¹ Coleridge lost confidence in his own poetry, publishing very little after 1802.³² Wordsworth doggedly continued publishing his verse, to consistently contemptuous reviews,³³ but after 1805 he became ‘less responsive to nature, more obsessed with

the loss of inspiration', E. P. Thompson writes.³⁴ Jonathan Bate points out that Wordsworth's best-selling work in his lifetime was not poetry, but *A Guide to the Lakes*.³⁵ The second generation of Romantic writers fared little better with the reading public or the literary establishment. Keats and Percy Shelley endured either withering reviews or neglect. Mary Shelley first published *Frankenstein* (1818) anonymously, and was only credited with its authorship in the second edition of 1823.³⁶ Only Byron enjoyed fame and healthy sales, while very few copies of Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats and Shelley were in circulation. However, Tennyson and the Brownings, and their literary circles, were well aware of their Romantic predecessors. Indeed, as David Amigoni argues, they suffered from 'Romantic veneration':

For the generation [...] whose careers were troublesomely 'post-Romantic', following in the wake of Byron, Shelley and Keats made it difficult to feel in sympathy with the 'spirit' of their age, and easier to feel divided from it, and from one's self'.³⁷

The Byronic hero quickly achieved popular currency across Europe and beyond in the 1810s, 20s and 30s. As Fiona MacCarthy writes: 'Many of the people we have come to think of as the great Victorians were addicted to Byron in their youth'.³⁸ But the innovative ideas and interrogative strategies of the other major Romantics, although known to professional writers and critics, failed to make a widespread public impact, suffering the same fate as the egalitarian, compassionate ideals of the Revolution in an essentially insular, conservative cultural climate.

When Charles Dickens began his literary career in the 1830s, the 'climate of fear that gripped the country during the 1790s'³⁹ had subsided, but British society was still profoundly unsettled. It was, as Kathryn Chittick notes, a 'period of Chartist agitation'.⁴⁰ Historian Boyd Hilton writes that, in the years from 1800 to 1850, British society at large was pervaded by 'a constant sensation of fear – fear of revolution, of the masses, of crime, famine, and poverty, of disorder and instability, and for many people fear even of pleasure'.⁴¹ Robin Gilmour argues that a key challenge facing Victorian society was that of 'assimilating, comprehending, and directing change', achieving 'revolutionary change without revolution. The price paid, culturally, was a deep ambivalence about past and future'.⁴² This ambivalence is a key element in the exploration of notions of personal and social progress in Chapter 3.

During his apprenticeship as a parliamentary reporter Dickens had ample opportunity to observe politicians and leaders at first hand, and he conceived a largely critical view of most of them. Openly radical and reformist, as his letter to the *Morning Chronicle* on the Mines and Collieries Bill makes quite clear,⁴³ he was scornful of the Tory establishment, whom he characterised in the *Morning Chronicle* of 1834 as 'insects and reptiles that bask in the sunshine, and retreat to small corners when the air is cold'.⁴⁴ But he felt little sympathy for the Malthusian, Utilitarian Whig reforms of the 1830s and 1840s, which for Dickens were as insensitive to the deprivations of poor people as were the Tories. As Malcolm Andrews argues, Dickens sees in the Utilitarian mind 'an

imbalance in the total personality', in which 'the spirit of childhood' has been 'repressed or eliminated'.⁴⁵ Neither faction reflected Dickens's diagnosis of the state of the nation; neither represented the values that he wished to cultivate. There seemed to be no place in contemporary sensibility for compassion for the poor and dispossessed, or for 'the spirit of childhood'. This vacuum was clearly a direct result of reactions to the events of the French Revolution in the 1790s, events which took place in the name of the poor and dispossessed. Marilyn Butler writes of 'a cultural witchhunt'⁴⁶ against revolutionary sympathisers, which went hand-in-hand with the almost unbroken state of war between England and France between 1792 and 1815. The anxiety created by this climate was lasting.

Dickens's love of the eighteenth-century novel is well-known. Michael Slater writes that before he was ten Dickens 'had the run of his father's little library' and 'could steep himself in the writings of Defoe, Fielding, Goldsmith, Smollett [...] as well as *The Arabian Nights*'.⁴⁷ The fact that he recalled his childhood reading frequently in his adult fiction and journalism, 'always with an apparently effortless total recall of details of plots, settings and characters', as Slater says,⁴⁸ is testimony to its profound influence. However, all of this literature was written in the pre-revolutionary world, before the French, American and Industrial Revolutions had their impact. If this seems an obvious point, it is a vital one: there was very little in the eighteenth-century novel that could guide the young Dickens in coming to terms with a changed, and still rapidly-changing world. As Robert Douglas-Fairhurst writes: 'his early novels try to find some middle ground between his childhood reading of Smollett and Fielding and the demands of the modern age'.⁴⁹ Just as the Whigs and Tories of the eighteen thirties offered no political home for his ideological and social responses to his time, so his childhood reading offered no literary model for fictionalising the world around him. If he was to succeed in giving expression to 'the wayward and unsettled feeling which is part (I suppose) of the tenure on which one holds an imaginative life'; if he was to stop 'riding over it like a dragoon' and begin to express its totality, he would have to look elsewhere for inspiration.

Rather than allying himself with any political or literary faction, then, Dickens sought in his early writings to bypass factions and parties altogether and appeal directly to his readers and listeners on a one-to-one basis. The habit never left him. This appeal took the form, in the essays which became *Sketches by Boz*, and in *The Pickwick Papers*, of a combination of two eighteenth-century traditions: Swiftian satire, and the intense, dramatic emotionalism of the sentimentalists and gothic novelists, both of which acquired a more radical edge from 'the popular radical culture of the early nineteenth century', as Sally Ledger argues.⁵⁰ This thesis will build on Ledger's work by extending the scope beyond Hone and the radicals to the work of the canonical Romantic writers. Satire, sentimentalism and popular radicalism remained mainstays of Dickens's art throughout his life, and they would no doubt have guaranteed him a successful contemporary career. But I will demonstrate in this thesis that from *Oliver Twist* onwards Dickens began to combine these features with a questioning of social and personal values that is neither satirical nor sentimental, and an

exploration of ways of expressing this questioning. He sought and found ways to express profound doubts about the aims and priorities of his society, drawing on the explorations of Romantic writers about theirs. This is not to say that there is in any sense a logical 'progression' towards a more 'Romantic' style and content. Rather, I argue that Dickens draws on Romantic values and techniques at moments when he most needs them: to express subject-matter that he could neither control nor comprehend – 'the wayward and unsettled feeling' created by his imaginative perceptions. Dickens always had a sense of what his audience would accept and what it would not. In the 1837 preface to *The Pickwick Papers* he assures the reader that he writes nothing 'which could call a blush into the most delicate cheek, or wound the feelings of the most sensitive person'.⁵¹ Indeed he himself seems embarrassed at times by the intensity of some passages he has written, and tries, I argue in this thesis, to distance himself from them in subsequent chapters and particularly in neat denouements. It is Dickens's engagement with his Romantic predecessors, I suggest, that enabled him to evolve from a hugely popular nineteenth-century writer, to one who was eventually recognised in the twentieth-century as a 'great' novelist, and in our own time as a writer who yields fresh, vital insights at every reading. And where the canonical Romantics, Byron excepted, had been indifferent publicists of their own work, Dickens was a consummate businessman, selling each of his fictions many times over, and ensuring probably the widest and most popular readership of any novelist in the language. As Peter Ackroyd writes: 'This was [...] Dickens's genius: to remove his private concerns into a larger symbolic world so that they became the very image of his own time.'⁵² His sensibility became a part of the English-speaking sensibility; his words modified our understanding of the language, and his unique Romantic legacy was finally assimilated and passed on.

A Methodology of Influence, Ecology and Things

It is not difficult to find evidence that Dickens knew the works and ideas of his Romantic precursors. Indeed he treated such works as 'The Ancient Mariner' and *Frankenstein* as common currency, confident that his readers will recognise his allusions to them without his naming the author. For example, he has Pip refer to Mary Shelley's novel with the words: 'The imaginary student pursued by the misshapen creature he had impiously made, was not more wretched than I'.⁵³ By the time Dickens began his career as a writer he was very well-read. He acquired reader's cards at the British Museum and Fetter Lane circulating library when he was eighteen,⁵⁴ giving him access to a very wide range of books. When he was thirty-two his library of over 2,000 items already contained the complete works of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Byron along with volumes by Southey, Lamb and Chatterton,⁵⁵ and he bought *The Prelude* as soon as it came out.⁵⁶ Dickens was also interested in Romantic history and legend, recording his visit to the graves of Keats and Shelley in *Italian Notes*,⁵⁷ and owning two histories of the French Revolution, one of which was Carlyle's, believed by John Stuart Mill to be, in Richard Cronin's words, 'the most direct conduit through which High Romanticism passes into the Victorian Age'.⁵⁸

However, it is not my aim to establish precisely when and where Dickens read ‘Tintern Abbey’, ‘Frost at Midnight’ or ‘Julian and Maddalo’: such literary detective work is valuable from a biographical point of view, and can indicate what was in a writer’s conscious mind at a particular time. The kind of influence I am interested in here works on a deeper level, of which the writer may not be wholly conscious. It is dangerous to assume that a writer cannot have been influenced by a particular work simply because no concrete evidence has survived that he or she read it. Gillian Beer goes further, arguing that ‘who had read what does not fix limits’.⁵⁹ The methodology of influence which I use here owes much to Beer’s *Darwin’s Plots*, from which the above quotation comes. But Harold Bloom’s discussion of the anxiety of influence which he believes all creative writers experience, their need to establish and assert their own primacy in the face of the daunting achievements of their predecessors, has been the main factor in determining my approach. In *The Anxiety of Influence* Bloom illustrates his argument by quoting Malraux’s axiom ‘every invention is an answer’:⁶⁰ the truly original writer, in other words, does not work in a vacuum, but creates by establishing his relationship with, and primacy over, his or her immediate predecessors. Bloom argues against what he sees as the reductive tendency of much twentieth-century criticism, and asserts that:

The meaning of a poem can only be a poem, but *another poem – a poem not itself*. And not a poem chosen with total arbitrariness, but any central poem by an indubitable precursor, even if the ephebe has *never read* that poem. Source study is wholly irrelevant here; we are dealing with primal words.⁶¹

That phrase ‘primal words’ is, I think, key. The words we use are common to all users of the language throughout its evolution, they are a shared possession. Gillian Beer writes of the ‘primordial continuities’⁶² of language, its profound links with cultural memory, and she argues that language and meaning, words and the ideas they express, are inextricably fused. Therefore when any of us speaks or writes in a language, we are engaging with the thoughts and ideas of our predecessors, even if we are wholly unconscious of the fact. How much more so must this be the case with creative writers, whose *raison d’être* is a profound, lifelong relationship with words. Shelley evidently believed that such influence is inevitable:

It is impossible that any one who inhabits the same age with such writers as those who stand in the foremost ranks of our own, can conscientiously assure himself that his language and tone of thought may not have been modified by the study of the productions of those extraordinary intellects.⁶³

In ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’ (1919) T. S. Eliot famously asserts: ‘No poet [...] has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets’.⁶⁴ If this talk of poems and poets might seem to rule out novelists, Eliot writes elsewhere that ‘Dickens’s figures belong to poetry, like figures of Dante or Shakespeare’,⁶⁵ and Bloom specifically identifies ‘Dostoyevsky, Goethe, Stendhal, Scott, Alessandro Manzoni, Dickens, Melville’ as ‘all powerful creators’.⁶⁶ Bloom writes in the *Anatomy of Influence* (2011): ‘To unname the precursor while earning one’s own name is the quest of strong or severe poets’.⁶⁷

In the light of this argument, Dickens's reluctance to name the writers who by an accident of birth were the first to respond to the post-revolutionary world that he too must respond to (typified by the allusion to *Frankenstein* in *Great Expectations* quoted above), while happily acknowledging those eighteenth-century novelists (famously listed in *David Copperfield*)⁶⁸ who present no competition in this respect, takes on a new significance.

The same accident of birth that gave the writers of the 1790s and early 1800s first sight of the new, post-revolutionary world makes Bloom's theory especially resonant in studies of early Victorian writers, who, as David Amigoni writes, 'tortured themselves with the question of why they should, by a cruel logic of history and time, be forced to follow the transcendent examples of the great Romantics'.⁶⁹ However, I do not subscribe to Bloom's insistence that criticism should be 'free of all history except literary biography [...] beyond the reach of ideology'.⁷⁰ As Jonathan Bate writes: 'Literary criticism has never been a pure discipline. [...] As political and moral visions change, so literary criticism will change too'.⁷¹ I have therefore drawn on works of social, cultural, political, scientific and legal history to elucidate my subject.

The quotation from Bate is the opening words of his *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (1991), which leads to the ecocriticism which has also influenced my approach in this study. Marilyn Gaull suggests that Bate 'initiated' ecological criticism,⁷² and it is no accident that the word 'Romantic' is the first word in his title; 'if one historicizes the idea of an ecological viewpoint', Bate writes, 'one finds oneself squarely in the Romantic tradition'.⁷³ His *Romantic Ecology* and *Song of the Earth* (2001), and works like James Darryll Dockstader's unpublished PhD thesis 'The Place of Charles Dickens in English Environmental Literature' (2001), have significantly modified critical perceptions of Dickens's and the Romantic writers' engagement with nature. In 1980, for example, it was possible for Donald Stone to dismiss 'the idealized depictions of rural life in [Dickens's] novels' as 'a source of tranquility for the city-dweller [...] Like Wordsworth, he prefers the status quo'.⁷⁴ As a result the work of Bate, Dockstader and more recent studies such as Lisa Ottum and Seth Reno's *Wordsworth and the Green Romantics* (2016), Dickens's – and the Romantics' – perceptions of the relationship between human beings and the natural world, which it was once possible to dismiss as sentimental escapism, can now be seen as genuine insights into matters of planetary life and death. There is no more graphic illustration of the truth of Blake's proverb 'What is now true was once only imagined'.⁷⁵ I have also found thing theory, in the hands of Bill Brown and Juliet John, a helpful way of understanding Dickens's literary *modus operandi*. Just as the theories behind the anxiety of influence and ecocriticism have their roots in Shelley and Blake, so thing theory has its roots in Wordsworth, as I will argue in Chapter One. Its relevance to Dickens was vividly expressed, and the essence of the theory anticipated, by John Cowper Powys in 1938:

What Dostoevsky and Dickens have in common is a quality singularly difficult to define, as are all great imaginative essences, but it is a quality at all events that has to do with the porousness of human souls to inanimate objects, and it is as richly charged with the magic of streets and houses as is the poetry of Keats and Shakespeare with that of land and sea.⁷⁶

Like Eliot and Bloom, Cowper Powys unapologetically places Dickens in the company of poets. I will argue that Dickens's appropriation of Romantic tropes and techniques, at moments when he

most needs them, is a key element of the relationship between his writings and those of the Romantics.

Critical Context

In 2001 Juliet John, one of the most influential Dickens scholars of the last two decades, put forward an argument against Dickens's being in any sense a Romantic legatee. In *Dickens's Villains* she argues that 'Dickens's belief in cultural inclusivity was held with uncharacteristic consistency. In fact, one might go so far as to say that a belief in 'popular' culture was Dickens's most firmly held political view'.⁷⁷ John contrasts this with what she asserts is the elitism of 'High Romanticism' which, 'with the important exception of the *Lyrical Ballads* – tends to valorize internalized, intellectualized feeling; it values emotion, in other words, principally when it is mediated by the mind'.⁷⁸ As a result, 'Dickens subverts the subject-centred view of 'reality' common in the dominant cultural modes of high Romanticism' by the use of 'melodramatic aesthetics [...] as a point of ideological principle – the principle of cultural inclusivity'.⁷⁹ While John's arguments for the validity of melodrama in Dickens's work were timely, her assertion that melodrama, and Dickens, are somehow incompatible with 'high Romanticism' raises several important points which need to be addressed. Firstly, the notion that melodrama and Romanticism are culturally opposite poles is highly contentious. Peter Brooks, for example, argues in *The Melodramatic Imagination* that melodrama rose out of Romanticism: 'The melodramatic mode can be seen as an intensified, primary, and exemplary version of what the most ambitious art, since the beginnings of Romanticism, has been about'.⁸⁰ Secondly, an argument for Romantic elitism that exempts *Lyrical Ballads*, which is by common consent one of the most radically inclusive projects in the history of literature, as well as one of the central documents in the history of Romanticism, seems open to question. And it is of course by no means the only such exception. Adrian Poole suggests that 'This narrow notion of an exclusive Romanticism is a convenient antagonist', and becomes for Juliet John 'the villain of her own argument'.⁸¹ John also asserts that critics of Dickens from Henry James and G. H. Lewes onward 'utilize and reinforce the cultural hierarchies Romanticism did so much to establish'.⁸² From my own reading of late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century criticism it seems that these cultural hierarchies were established in the anti-jacobin reactions to the early writings of the Romantics, and popularised by Jeffrey, Macaulay and other opponents of Romantic innovation.

Thirdly, despite the plethora of dramatic adaptations they have inspired, Dickens's fictions are not stage works: everything in them is of necessity 'mediated by the mind'. John cites 'Charles Lamb's famous elevation of the experience of reading Shakespeare over that of seeing Shakespeare performed' as evidence of 'the cultural elitism which regularly informs high Romantic aesthetics'.⁸³ But her discussion frequently seems to fall into an inverted version of the same trap, treating Dickens's novels as works for the popular stage, rather than the page. John's claim that his characters are 'largely modelled on stage prototypes brought to life by actors',⁸⁴ is not justified by her analysis.

Furthermore, Dickens's lack of sympathy for humble characters who try to better themselves: Boffin and Wegg reading Gibbon,⁸⁵ Headstone and Charley Hexam aspiring to learning and teaching, 'all according to pattern and all engendered in the light of the latest Gospel according to Monotony',⁸⁶ is hardly indicative of cultural inclusivity. Dickens's tendency to send characters who are beyond the social or moral pale off to the colonies, or, in the case of Tom Gradgrind, to 'any distant part of the world',⁸⁷ does not suggest consistent ideological inclusivity. His characterisation of the 'common men and boys' that David Copperfield works with at Murdstone and Grinby's: 'No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship',⁸⁸ suggests very different ideological leanings. Far from being 'instinctively opposed to the privileging of the individual psyche' through a 'belief in the principles of communality and cultural inclusivity',⁸⁹ Dickens's attitudes towards the poor and uneducated are far from inclusive.⁹⁰ As a writer he revels in the diversity and extremes of individuality, and the clash of values and habits they represent.

Finally, and obviously, not all of Dickens's characterisation is melodramatic. Major characters as diverse as Arthur Clennam, Eugene Wrayburn, John Jarndyce and Joe Gargery are depicted with little recourse to melodrama. John Bowen writes: 'However strong Dickens's allegiance to popular and expressive forms of characterisation, he was equally fascinated by the complexities of psychological life and development'.⁹¹ I will argue in this thesis that Dickens's use of external objects and elemental forces to explore states of mind is an integral part of his art; but rather than being inimical to High Romanticism, it is, I will demonstrate, integral to it. It is not necessary to paint Dickens as ideologically hostile to Romanticism and high culture in order to valorise his use of melodrama. Sally Ledger writes that 'Dickens was [...] able [...] to transcend the boundaries between high and low culture'.⁹² As John Bowen points out, 'much of the power of Dickens's work seems to derive from its capacity simultaneously to absorb and exceed its generic affiliations, to be big enough to be both romantic and melodramatic'.⁹³ 'To absorb and exceed' is a precise diagnosis of Dickens's engagement with Romanticism.

John's argument is extreme in its denial of any kind of relationship between Dickens and his Romantic predecessors, but critical neglect of the relationship is common. From contemporary reviews onwards, Romanticism has not loomed large in discussions of Dickens's literary influences. From Leigh Hunt's 1839 proclamation of 'the not unworthy successor of our GOLDSMITHS and FIELDINGS',⁹⁴ to Lyn Pykett's assertion in 2002 that his main literary antecedents were 'those picaresque novels by Henry Fielding and Tobias Smollett, which Dickens read so avidly in his childhood and youth',⁹⁵ the eighteenth-century novel has been the main, and in many cases the only, focus of critical attention when influence is discussed. There have however been some important developments towards a more balanced view in recent years. After the arguments against Romantic allegiance discussed above, Juliet John's *Dickens's Villains* (2001) demonstrates the importance and validity of popular theatrical melodrama as a source of literary influence on Dickens. Sally Ledger, in *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination* (2007),

explores the influence the traditions of satire and melodrama found in ‘the popular radical culture of the early nineteenth century’,⁹⁶ in the work of William Hone, George Cruikshank and others. Valerie Purton’s *Dickens and the Sentimental Tradition* (2012) aims to develop ‘a set of analytic tools to examine sentimental writing’ and thus re-evaluate its place in Dickens’s fictions.⁹⁷ In works such as these the sheer protean diversity of Dickens’s imagination, and its sources, has begun to be critically explored. Working in the spirit of these pioneering essays in the redefinition of Dickens’s art and its influences, this thesis aims to extend the reach further and argue that an appreciation of the influence of canonical Romanticism on Dickens’s fictions is necessary for a full understanding of his work and achievement. The extent to which this influence has been overlooked can be gauged from the fact that in 2011 Robert Douglas-Fairhurst was able to publish an excellent book, *Becoming Dickens: The Invention of a Novelist*, without once using the words ‘Romanticism’ or ‘Romantic’, and without once mentioning William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge or Mary Shelley. Keats and Percy Shelley are each mentioned once, Byron and Wordsworth twice. None is discussed in any detail. I will argue in this dissertation that Dickens’s ‘invention’ of himself as a novelist did not end in 1839, as Douglas-Fairhurst’s study does, but continued throughout his career, and that the determining factor in this process, from *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841) onwards, is the influence of High Romanticism. The seeds of the Romantic legacy are already present in *Oliver Twist* (1838) and *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839). My argument is not that previous assessments of influence upon Dickens are incorrect, but that they are incomplete.

There has of course been some recognition of Dickens’s debt to Romanticism. Raymond Williams’s pioneering overviews of the development of culture from the eighteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, *Culture and Society* (1958) and *Country and City* (1973), have been invaluable in providing a stimulating and convincing context for this study. The biographies by Fred Kaplan (1988), Peter Ackroyd (1990), Michael Slater (2009) and Claire Tomalin (2011) have provided important insights. Peter Coveney’s *Poor Monkey* of 1957, better known in its revised 1967 version *The Image of Childhood*, is a pioneering study of the notion of the ‘Romantic Child’ in Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge, and its subsequent influence on writers from Dickens to Lawrence. Philip Collins’ *Dickens and Education* (1963) deals with the influence of Wordsworth on Dickens’s representations of childhood. Angus Wilson contributed a short but stimulating essay: ‘Dickens on Children and Childhood’ to Michael Slater’s *Dickens 1970: Centenary Essays*, again stressing the Wordsworthian influence. Robert Newsome’s *Dickens on the Romantic Side of Familiar Things* (1977), although not a study of Romantic influence as such, is significant in raising Dickens’s much quoted phrase from the ‘Preface’ to *Bleak House*⁹⁸ to the status of ‘an essential *novelistic* principle’⁹⁹ of Dickens’s art. Tellingly, Newsome notes that the phrase ‘has often been cited but seldom discussed’.¹⁰⁰ Dirk den Hartog’s *Dickens and Romantic Psychology* (1987) is a detailed analysis of Wordsworth’s notions of human development from childhood to adulthood in *The Prelude*, and their influence upon Dickens’s fiction. Malcolm Andrews’ *Dickens and the Grown-up Child* (1994) provides valuable insights into the same subject-matter.

Clearly, the focus in existing criticism is overwhelmingly on the theme of childhood, and the influence of Wordsworth. Dickens's relationship with Byron has also been explored, from W. R. Harvey's 'Charles Dickens and the Byronic Hero' (1969) to Carol Anne White's 'Responses to Byron' (1997). Other aspects of the Romantic legacy in Dickens's work, and the influence of other Romantic writers, have received far less attention. Donald D. Stone's *The Romantic Impulse in Victorian Fiction* (1980), with its emphasis on 'the Byroads of Romanticism',¹⁰¹ has already been noted.

Method, Design and Structure

While reading Dickens's novels and stories for this study I have tried to put aside for the moment what he, and everybody else, has said about them, and re-engage with the texts themselves as fictions: sequential narratives in which the meaning and significance of each chapter and event can only be appreciated in the context of what came before, and what comes after. The death of Little Nell, discussed in detail in Chapter 4, is a clear example of a scene which has suffered critically from being discussed and judged out of context. When these close readings are then placed within the critical context of Dickens scholarship, I believe that they reveal a very different, more important relationship between Dickens's fictions and the works of his Romantic predecessors than has previously emerged. Dickens was, as Leslie Simon suggests, 'a well-informed and deeply allusive writer'.¹⁰² It is the aim of the close readings to tease out Dickens's allusions to his Romantic predecessors, and explore their significance.

As mentioned earlier, I do not see Dickens's engagement with Romanticism as primarily a chronological development, rather, as a source of inspiration when expressing ideas and feelings unknown to the eighteenth-century novelists and the popular cultures he loved. For this reason the thesis is designed thematically rather than chronologically. The four themes: Childhood, Time, Progress, and Outsiders, were selected to encompass the variety and diversity of High Romanticism, but with sufficient overlap between them to indicate overall unity. This unity became increasingly evident as I realised that almost any of Dickens's novels could have been used to explore any of the four themes. However, the relationship between Dickens and Romanticism is not only thematic. Each chapter also discusses Dickens's use of imagery from the natural world, and from the man-made environment, to provide that structural 'unity of sentiment and atmosphere' that G. K. Chesterton perceived,¹⁰³ and which I will argue is a key element in Dickens's Romantic legacy.

There are few Dickens novels and stories where the theme of childhood does not play a key role, and which could not have been discussed in Chapter 1, 'Childhood'. However, the two wholly first-person narratives, *David Copperfield* (1849-50), and *Great Expectations* (1860-61), were chosen as they are particularly revealing in their relationship to Romanticism. Dirk den Hartog characterises Pip's career in the latter novel as 'a qualified version of the spiritual-cum-psychological autobiography Wordsworth had traced in *The Prelude*'.¹⁰⁴ Both novels can in fact

be seen as Dickensian versions of *The Prelude*, written at different stages of Dickens's career. I will demonstrate that the differences between their portrayals of the theme of growth from childhood to adulthood encapsulate the essence of his engagement with the Romantic child. In terms of the use of imagery too, both novels make striking use of natural images that assume the importance of characters in the novel, rather than merely scenery or setting. The elemental presences that Dickens evokes just once in *David Copperfield*, to embody the climactic tragedy of Ham's death trying to save Steerforth, are present throughout *Great Expectations*, in the form of the marshes and estuary, as unifying devices. This chapter was originally called 'Childhood and Education', but as the work progressed it became apparent that the institutional connotations of the latter word were inappropriate to both the Romantics' and Dickens's notions of how children learn and develop. The final lines of Coleridge's 'Frost at Midnight' haunt this opening chapter, and return in each of the ensuing ones.

Chapter Two, 'Time', begins with a brief discussion of *A Christmas Carol* (1843), one of the clearest exemplars in Dickens's fiction of what Robin Gilmour calls 'the pervasive time-hauntedness of the era'.¹⁰⁵ Romantic writers' treatment of the theme are then examined, especially Coleridge's awareness of the emerging conflict between industrial, mechanical time measured by clocks and watches, and pre-industrial notions of time measured by night and day, sun and moon, and the seasons. This provides the context for an analysis of Dickens's exploration of the same conflict in *Dombey and Son* (1846-48) and *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-65). Where *Dombey and Son* uses opposing groups of characters to embody the conflicting notions of time, in *Our Mutual Friend* the conflict is intensified and internalised by being played out within the mind of a single character. Images of water haunt both of these novels; again, I will suggest that its use in the later work represents a deeper level of integration of the Romantic legacy, more closely reflecting the psychological and emotional states that Dickens's imagination explores.

The starting point for my third chapter, 'Progress', was Raymond Williams's discussion in *Culture and Society* of Robert Southey's *Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society* (1829).¹⁰⁶ I found myself agreeing with Thomas Babington Macaulay on the weakness of Southey's arguments,¹⁰⁷ and turned to Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Mary Shelley for more robust expositions of the Romantic stance on progress. *Frankenstein* stands out as the central document in this respect, not only as a critique of socio-technological *hubris*, but also as a commentary on the male Romantic fascination with science. *Hard Times* (1854) seemed a clear choice for one novel exemplifying Dickens's engagement with this stance, but the second was less obvious, the dehumanizing havoc caused by industrial and technological 'progress' being one of Dickens's abiding themes. *Bleak House* (1852-53) is perhaps his most detailed exploration of conflicting views of progress, encompassing the whole range of society from the Dedlocks to Jo the crossing-sweeper, and aptly points the contrast with the brevity and terse, manifesto-like style of *Hard Times*. The choice seemed especially appropriate as *Hard Times* was written immediately after *Bleak House*, providing another point of contact and comparison.

The subject-matter of the final chapter, ‘Outsiders’,¹⁰⁸ is a clear example of the value of aspects of history, in this case legal history, in furthering an appreciation of literature. The early dramas of Wordsworth and Coleridge discussed at the beginning of the chapter were a more or less direct response to the spate of oppressive penal legislation that came into force in the early 1790s, itself a response to the political events in France and America. Jonathan Bate’s statement that literary criticism has never been ‘pure’ is equally true of literary creation. The Romantics’ engagement with contemporary social, political and scientific trends has already been noted, and Dickens was no less engaged in these matters. The relationship between the individual and society, and the alienating effects of the society that was coming into being during Dickens’s lifetime, were themes that preoccupied him from *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-41) onwards. I argue in this chapter that this relatively early novel is Dickens’s first substantial engagement with the themes and modes of High Romanticism, and with the theme of alienation in particular. The years that separate this novel from *Little Dorrit* (1855-57), and the experience of writing the six intervening novels, gave Dickens’s a clearer focus on his ‘outsider’ characters and their careers in this later novel, together with the prospect of a qualified solution, in this life rather than the next, to the pressures of alienation. In both novels Dickens depicts a disintegrating, dehumanised society which promotes selfishness, even self-obsession. But where in *The Old Curiosity Shop* Nell and her father both die, in *Little Dorrit* Amy and Arthur Clennam live on, offering qualified hope on a personal level, based on human love and the rejection of self-interest.

The four chapters thus offer detailed close readings of all but one of the completed novels from *Dombey and Son* (1846-48) to *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-65), encompassing the full flowering of Dickens’s maturity as a novelist, together with the fascinating insight into the shape of things to come that is *The Old Curiosity Shop*. The decision to omit *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) might be thought odd in the light of the stress I have placed on the French Revolution and its impact on the first half of the nineteenth century. I would certainly have liked to include it as testimony to the importance of the Revolution to Dickens’s personal and artistic thinking. However, the inclusion of a detailed close reading of a ninth novel would have compromised the space available for the other eight, and disrupted the pattern of comparative readings of two novels within each chapter. A choice had to be made. As Geoffrey Hempill writes of Dickens, ‘most of his novels are placed in an antedated setting, generally the 1820s, the time of his youth’, yet as an author ‘he was more concerned with his present day’.¹⁰⁹ Given the choice between an essentially historical novel and one of Dickens’s novels about his own time and place, and given that my central argument is that the essence of Dickens’s Romantic legacy is his reconfiguration of Romantic expression for that time and place, I chose to include all of the mature novels which contribute to this reconfiguration, which I believe is an essential component of the meaning and significance of his work.

¹ Charles Dickens, letter to John Forster, [5 September 1857]: *SL*, p. 325.

-
- ² Ernest Hartley Coleridge, 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge', in *Chambers's Cyclopaedia of English Literature* (London: W. & R. Chambers Ltd, 1903), Vol. III, pp. 56-71 (p. 56). In 1793 Coleridge enlisted as a dragoon under the name of Silas Tomkyn Comberbache: see Molly Lefebure, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Bondage of Opium* (London: Quartet Books, 1977. First published 1974), pp. 109-19.
- ³ Donald D. Stone, *The Romantic Impulse in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 249.
- ⁴ Philip Collins, *Dickens and Education* (London: Macmillan, 1964), p. 213.
- ⁵ Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1990), p. 524. The passage from *Dombey and Son* that Ackroyd discusses is the introduction of Mrs Skewton in Chapter XXI: *DS*, p. 320.
- ⁶ *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens: Anniversary Edition*, ed. by Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 510-11.
- ⁷ Harold Bloom, *The Anatomy of Influence: Literature as a Way of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 10.
- ⁸ Sean Perry, 'Romanticism: The Brief History of a Concept', in *A Companion to Romanticism*, ed. by Duncan Wu (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp.3-11.
- ⁹ Raymond Williams, for example, credits Coleridge with 'an *alternative* conception of man and society', and 'the construction of 'Culture' in terms of the arts': Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1971. First published 1958), p. 83.
- ¹⁰ *BL*, pp. 168-69.
- ¹¹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Kubla Khan', ll. 12-13: *CPW*, p.297.
- ¹² Samuel Taylor Coleridge, letter to Joseph Cottle, February 22nd 1796: Joseph Cottle, *Reminiscences of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey* (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1847), p. 68.
- ¹³ Charles Dickens, 'Preface' to *Bleak House*, August 1853: *BH*, p. 43.
- ¹⁴ According to Peter Cochran, 'The idea of an "English Romantic School" was, it seems, invented by a Frenchman, Hippolyte Taine, in 1863': *"Romanticism"- and Byron* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), p. xvii.
- ¹⁵ Jeffrey Robinson, 'Occupy Romanticism', a paper given at the Poetry & Revolution International Conference at the CPRC, Birkbeck College, University of London, Friday 25 May 2012 - Sunday 27 May 2012 (27 May 2012): http://www.bbk.ac.uk/cprc/events/Jeffrey_C_Robinson_-_Poetry_and_Revolution_conference_paper.pdf (accessed 6.1.15).
- ¹⁶ Robinson, p. 1.
- ¹⁷ Andrew Radford and Mark Sandy, 'Introduction: Romanticism and the Victorians', in *Romantic Echoes in the Victorian Era* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 1-14 (p. 3).
- ¹⁸ Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 4.
- ¹⁹ Percy Bysshe Shelley, letter to Byron, *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by F. L. Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), Vol. 1, p. 504.
- ²⁰ Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Preface' to *Prometheus Unbound*, 1818-20: *SPW*, p. 206.
- ²¹ *BCW*, pp. 134-48, 195-206.
- ²² William Blake, 'Now Art has lost its mental Charms', Ms Notebook 1808-11: *BCW*, p. 557.
- ²³ William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Advertisement', *Lyrical Ballads, with a few other poems* (London: Penguin Poetry First Edition, 1999), pp. v-vi (p. v).
- ²⁴ Richard Cronin, *Romantic Victorians: English Literature, 1824-1840* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002), p. 8.
- ²⁵ Cronin, p. 7.
- ²⁶ The main events of the anti-Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars are summarised in Encyclopaedia Britannica online: <https://www.britannica.com/event/French-revolutionary-wars#ref171789> (accessed 20.1.15)
- ²⁷ Warren Roberts, *Jane Austen and the French Revolution* (London: Athlone Press, 1995), p. 203.
- ²⁸ Butler, p. 42.

²⁹ *Anti-Jacobin; or, Weekly Examiner*, 1 (1797), p. 6. The term 'New School' may have been used throughout the 1790s to denote revolutionary sympathisers. Alexander Gilchrist writes of the year 1791: 'Blake was himself an ardent member of the New School, a vehement republican and sympathiser with the Revolution': Alexander Gilchrist, *Life of William Blake, with Selections from his Poems and Other Writings*, 2 volumes (London: Macmillan and Co., second edition, 1880. First published 1863), vol.1, p. 93.

³⁰ See Peter A. Cook, 'Chronology of the 'Lake School' Argument: Some Revisions', *Review of English Studies*, XXVIII (1977), 175-81.

³¹ Southey was made poet laureate in 1813 but never threw off the taint of republicanism, especially after the unauthorised publication in 1817 of *Wat Tyler*, 'a revolutionary play from his Jacobin youth', as Paul Baines and Edward Burns describe it: 'Introduction', *Five Romantic Plays: 1768-1821*, ed. by Paul Baines and Edward Burns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. vii-xxix (p. xiv). He was also the butt of Byron's satire in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809). Coleridge acquired a reputation in later life as a speaker and thinker, the 'Sage of Highgate', rather than poet: see Richard Holmes, *Coleridge: Darker Reflections* (London: Harper Collins, 1998), pp. 423-88.

³² Most of the poetry he published that year, including *Dejection*, appeared in the *Morning Post*. After *Lyrical Ballads* there was to be no volume of Coleridge's poetry until 1816.

³³ Peter Newbon writes that Wordsworth had little impact on the reading public until the 1830s and '40s: Peter Newbon, 'Representations of Childhood in the Wordsworth Circle', a Dissertation Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Kings College Cambridge 2011, p. 13.

³⁴ E. P. Thompson, *The Romantics: England in a Revolutionary Age* (New York: The New Press, 1997), p. 66.

³⁵ Jonathan Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 41.

³⁶ Mary's father William Godwin had a hand in preparing the 1823 edition: see Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (London: John Murray, 2000), pp. 326, 335.

³⁷ David Amigoni, *Victorian Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), p. 109. This sense of alienation will be the theme of Chapter 4.

³⁸ Fiona MacCarthy, *Byron: Life and Legend* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003), p. 555.

³⁹ Roberts, p. 203.

⁴⁰ Kathryn Chittick, *Dickens and the 1830s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 168.

⁴¹ Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People? England 1783-1846* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), p. 31.

⁴² Robin Gilmour, *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830-1890* (London: Longman, 1993) p. 22.

⁴³ 'B', letter 'To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle, 25th July 1842', *SL*, pp. 106-09. As Jenny Hartley notes, 'the signature 'B' would have suggested Boz' (note 9, p. 110).

⁴⁴ 'The Story without a Beginning (Translated from the German by Boz)', *Morning Chronicle*, 18th September 1834: *DJ*, Volume II, pp. 10-13.

⁴⁵ *Dickens and the Grown-up Child* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), p. 68.

⁴⁶ Butler, p. 37.

⁴⁷ Slater, pp. 10-11.

⁴⁸ Slater, p. 11.

⁴⁹ Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, *Becoming Dickens: The Invention of a Novelist* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press, 2011), p. 134.

⁵⁰ Sally Ledger *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 2.

⁵¹ *PP*, p. 7.

⁵² Ackroyd, p. 583.

⁵³ *GE*, p. 339.

⁵⁴ See Ackroyd, p. 128.

-
- ⁵⁵ Dickens and his wife Catherine made an inventory of his library at Devonshire Terrace before letting the house. The inventory is printed in *LCD*, Vol. 4, pp. 711-25.
- ⁵⁶ See Slater, p. 316.
- ⁵⁷ Charles Dickens, *American Notes and Pictures from Italy*, Introduction by Secheverell Sitwell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 398.
- ⁵⁸ Cronin, p. 65.
- ⁵⁹ Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction. Third Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 3.
- ⁶⁰ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: a Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, second edition 1997. First published 1973), p. 69.
- ⁶¹ Bloom, 1997, p. 70.
- ⁶² Beer, p. xx.
- ⁶³ Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Preface' to *Prometheus Unbound*, 1818-20: *SPW*, p. 206. Shelley does not put names to these 'intellects', but the discussion that follows on the same page, of the 'intense and comprehensive imagery which distinguishes the modern literature of England', strongly suggests that he had Wordsworth and Coleridge in mind.
- ⁶⁴ T. S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919): *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), pp. 13-22, (p. 15).
- ⁶⁵ T. S. Eliot, 'Wilkie Collins and Dickens' (1927): *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), pp. 460-70, (p. 462).
- ⁶⁶ Bloom, 2011, p. 46.
- ⁶⁷ Bloom, 2011, p. 10.
- ⁶⁸ *DC*, pp. 105-06.
- ⁶⁹ Amigoni, p. 16.
- ⁷⁰ Bloom, 2011, p. 5.
- ⁷¹ Bate, p. 1.
- ⁷² Marilyn Gaull, 'On Jonathan Bate, Ted Hughes, Wordsworth, and Coleridge', *Wordsworth Circle*, 46 (2015), 201-203 (p. 201).
- ⁷³ Bate, p. 9.
- ⁷⁴ Stone, pp. 250-51.
- ⁷⁵ *MHH*, plate 10.
- ⁷⁶ John Cowper Powys, *The Pleasures of Literature* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd, 1938), p. 118.
- ⁷⁷ Juliet John, *Dickens's Villains: Melodrama, Character, Popular Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 3.
- ⁷⁸ John, p. 8.
- ⁷⁹ John, p. 9.
- ⁸⁰ Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995. First published 1976), pp. 21-22.
- ⁸¹ Adrian Poole, review of Juliet John's *Dickens's Villains*, *Review of English Studies*, ns 53 (2002), 568-70 (p. 569).
- ⁸² John, p. 16.
- ⁸³ John, p. 45.
- ⁸⁴ John, p. 19.
- ⁸⁵ *OMF*, pp. 103-04.
- ⁸⁶ *OMF*, p. 268.
- ⁸⁷ *HT*, p. 283.
- ⁸⁸ *DC* p. 216.
- ⁸⁹ John, p. 3.
- ⁹⁰ This issue is discussed further in Chapter 3.

-
- ⁹¹ John Bowen, review of Juliet John's *Dickens's Villains*, *Victorian Studies*, 45 (2003), 352-53 (p. 353).
- ⁹² Sally Ledger, *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 3.
- ⁹³ Bowen, p. 353.
- ⁹⁴ [Leigh Hunt], review of *Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Examiner*, 27th October 1839, 677-8 (p. 678). This not uncritical review was once thought to be by John Forster, but Michael Slater accepts Alec Brice's evidence that the author was Leigh Hunt: see Slater, p. 137; Alec W. Brice, 'Reviewers of Dickens in *The Examiner*: Fonblanque, Forster, Hunt and Morley', *Dickens Studies Newsletter*, III (1972), pp. 67-80.
- ⁹⁵ Lyn Pykett, *Charles Dickens* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 39.
- ⁹⁶ Sally Ledger, *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 2.
- ⁹⁷ Valerie Purton, *Dickens and the Sentimental Tradition: Fielding, Richardson, Sterne, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Lamb* (London: Anthem Press, 2012), p. xix.
- ⁹⁸ 'In Bleak House I have purposely dwelt upon the romantic side of familiar things': *BH*, p. 43. The sentence is discussed in Chapter 3.
- ⁹⁹ Robert Newsom, *Dickens on the Romantic Side of Familiar Things: Bleak House and the Novel Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p. 2.
- ¹⁰⁰ Newsom, p. 2.
- ¹⁰¹ The subtitle of Stone's chapter on Dickens is 'Charles Dickens and the Byroads of Romanticism': Donald D. Stone, *The Romantic Impulse in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 249.
- ¹⁰² Leslie S. Simon, 'Dickens' Novels as Poetry: Allegory and Literature of the City by Jeremy Tambling' (review), *Dickens Quarterly*, 33 (2016), 68-71 (p. 69).
- ¹⁰³ G. K. Chesterton, *Appreciations and Criticisms of the Works of Charles Dickens* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1911) p. 62.
- ¹⁰⁴ Dirk den Hartog, *Dickens and Romantic Psychology: The Self in Time in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 131-32.
- ¹⁰⁵ Robin Gilmour, *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830-1890* (London: Longman, 1993), p. xiii.
- ¹⁰⁶ Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society: 1780-1950* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971. First published 1958), pp. 40-41.
- ¹⁰⁷ [Thomas Babington Macaulay], review of Southey's *Colloquies*, *The Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal*, L (1830), 528-65. The article was reprinted by Macaulay in his *Critical and Historical Essays: Contributed to the Edinburgh Review* (1843).
- ¹⁰⁸ Choosing a title for this final chapter was problematic. I wanted to avoid the word 'Alienation' because of its ubiquity in so many disciplines, and consequent range of connotations. Of course the word is used in my discussion, but for my title I wanted something that would allow me to make the point that people can be excluded from society without experiencing alienation. My choice of 'Outsiders' is appropriate in this respect, but as a proper noun it does not fit with the three abstract nouns that make up my other chapter titles. I thought of turning them all into proper nouns, but 'Children', for example, is so radically different from 'Childhood' in its meaning, that I felt this would be too great a sacrifice for the sake of syntactical agreement.
- ¹⁰⁹ Geoffrey Hempill, *The Anxiety of Presence: Charles Dickens and the Self in Time*, A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the City University of New York, 2007, pp. 188, 27.

Chapter 1: Childhood

‘When I tread the old ground, I do not wonder that I seem to see and pity, going on before me, an innocent, romantic boy, making his imaginative world out of such strange experiences and sordid things!’¹ Thus Dickens has David Copperfield muse on his childhood, at the end of Chapter 11 of the novel. Herbert Pocket, in Chapter 30 of *Great Expectations*, addresses his friend Pip as ‘a boy whom Nature and circumstances made so romantic’.² Like Coleridge, Dickens was fond of the word romantic, and his uses of it suggest a similar range of meaning to Coleridge’s, encompassing the impractical, unworldly connotations along with the roots in fantasy and romance. David and Pip are both sensitive, imaginative beings who struggle to find a place in their society; and they are by no means the only Dickensian protagonists to do so. As early as *Barnaby Rudge*, Dickens distinguishes between those for whom the natural world holds meaning and significance, and the ‘worldly men’ for whom ‘the bright glory of day, and the silent wonders of a starlit night, appeal to their minds in vain’.³ These latter people ‘have quite forgotten such small heavenly constellations as Charity, Forbearance, Universal Love, and Mercy’: ‘to the [...] mass of worldly folk, the whole great universe above glitters with sterling coin – fresh from the mint – stamped with the sovereign’s head – coming always between them and heaven, turn where they may’.⁴ There is no doubting where Dickens’s sympathies lie. ‘I have purposely dwelt upon the romantic side of familiar things’, Dickens famously wrote in the 1853 Preface to *Bleak House*: ‘I believe I have never had so many readers’.⁵ It can be argued that after *The Pickwick Papers*, almost all of Dickens’s protagonists are in this same mould, characters to ‘see and pity’, slightly out-of-place in the hard-nosed realities of their time. As Geoffrey Hempill comments: ‘Dickens’s heroes are never fulfilled by their social existence, as they frequently detect its incompleteness’.⁶ Dickens’s imagination is kindled by the clash of values that the lives of such characters embody, and this clash will in various guises be an abiding theme throughout this study. In this opening chapter I will explore the theme of childhood, and the related issues of parenting and education, in Dickens’s two first-person narrative novels,⁷ and suggest ways in which his views of childhood and children are conditioned by the achievements, ideas, and values of his Romantic precursors. I will argue that the legacy of Romanticism is a key determinant of imagery in both of these novels.

Philip Collins asserts that ‘Charles Dickens was the first English novelist in whose stories children are frequent and central’.⁸ There are more child characters in Dickens’s fiction, and those child characters are more extensively delineated, than in the work of any other nineteenth-century novelist. Robin Gilmour argues that ‘the prominence given to children in his work, the sense of childhood as a special and precious state [...] have their roots in Romanticism’.⁹ Closely related are the many comparative explorations of biological parents, and childless characters *in loco parentis*. It is not surprising then that the theme of childhood has been the most widely-discussed aspect of Dickens’s Romantic legacy. Peter Coveney’s pioneering *The Image of Childhood* from the 1950s established clear links between portrayals of children and childhood in Blake, Coleridge and Wordsworth, and in Dickens’s fiction¹⁰. Coveney also argues convincingly that the ‘Romantic

child' of Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge is in fact a reaction against the Rousseau-inspired novels of sensibility of the late eighteenth century, rather than a development from them.¹¹ Subsequent critics, from Angus Wilson (1970) onwards, tended to focus on Wordsworth's influence. Dirk den Hartog's *Dickens and Romantic Psychology* (1987) analyses the impact of Wordsworthian notions of continuity between childhood and adulthood on Dickens's fiction. Malcolm Andrews analyses the variety and inconsistencies of Dickens's child characters in *Charles Dickens and the Grown-up Child* (1994). In the present century Laura Peters's anthology *Dickens and Childhood* (2012), and Peter Merchant and Catherine Waters's *Dickens and the Imagined Child* (2015), together with essays and chapters by Rosemarie Bodenheimer, Holly Furneaux, Clotilde de Stasio and others have opened up new and stimulating insights into Dickens's portrayals of childhood and children. All of these studies have informed my work. What I am attempting here, through a close reading of Dickens's two first-person novels, is an overview of Dickens's engagement with Romantic notions of childhood, and how it is part of a larger Romantic legacy, without cognisance of which its full significance cannot be grasped.

Education Debates and Parental Aspirations

Robert Peel's *Health and Morals of Apprentices Act* of 1802 stipulated that all apprentices working in factories should receive daily education in reading, writing and arithmetic for the first four years of their apprenticeship, and was as such the first legal entitlement to education in UK law.¹² Joanna Innes notes that the Act reflected 'a recent flowering of interest in health, morals and education';¹³ it also of course signals a recognition that the three are not unrelated. In the education field lively debates were well-established around the turn of the century, and centred on the rival systems of the Anglican Andrew Bell, set out in *An Experiment in Education Made at the Male Asylum of Madras*, published in 1797,¹⁴ and the Quaker Joseph Lancaster, whose *Improvements in Education* was published in 1803.¹⁵ Bell thought that schools should be state foundations, accountable to and funded by society; Lancaster, on the other hand, advocated independence and autonomy for his schools. Supporters and detractors of both men tended to divide on religious, sectarian lines. But what really distinguished the two systems in practice, and defined the ideological gulf between them, was their approach to what is now called behaviour management. Bell believed in cultivating a 'nice sensibility among the teachers' in dealing with pupils' mistakes and misdeeds, the effect of which 'is astonishing, and almost always supersedes the necessity of punishment';¹⁶ a 'black book' was kept to record blatant offences, and the pupils themselves periodically reviewed this and decided what punishment was appropriate.¹⁷ Bell's system was based, in other words, on an essentially Romantic, benign view of human nature. Lancaster on the other hand advocated physical punishments which were harsh even for the early 1800s; these are listed in the expanded 1808 edition of *Improvements in Education*. Lancaster suggests placing 'a wooden log [...] which may weigh from four to six pounds' around the neck of an offending child, which 'operates as a dead weight upon the neck';¹⁸ wooden shackles on the arms and legs;¹⁹ and 'occasionally boys are put in a sack, or in a basket, suspended to the roof of the school, in sight of all the pupils, who

frequently smile at *the birds in the cage*'.²⁰ Where Bell sought to foster trust and self-confidence, Lancaster instilled fear and humiliation.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge entered this debate in his London lectures of 1808. Southey reported words from the lecture of the 3rd of May: 'No boy who has been subject to punishments like these will stand in fear of Newgate, or feel any horror at the thought of a slave ship!'²¹ Characteristically, Coleridge never got around to publishing his many series of lectures, and we are dependent on reports from members of his audience for their content and impact. According to Henry Crabb Robinson, reporting the same lecture to Mrs Clarkson, Coleridge argued that the aim of education should be to inculcate love, intellectual honesty, and a sense of common humanity.²² He acknowledged the feelings of bitterness that the recollection of 'ignominious' school punishments still evoked in him. 'This part was delivered with fervour', Crabb Robinson noted, and added: 'Could all the pedagogues of the United Kingdom have been before him!'²³

As with so many of the great debates of the nineteenth century, it was Coleridge who got the ball rolling on a national level, as Raymond Williams has shown.²⁴ These 1808 lectures excited considerable attention and discussion. Coleridge's timing was shrewd: both Bell and Lancaster published new editions of their books in 1808, so the controversy was really coming to the boil. Coleridge returned to the topic in his 1813 Bristol lectures, drawing on characteristic metaphors to emphasise the original meaning of the word education: 'as the blossom is educed from the bud, the vital excellences are within; the acorn is but educed or brought forth from the bud'.²⁵ But the fact remains that Lancaster's punitive, unregulated system was the norm in practice for much of the century: any drunken sadist could open a school – and many did.²⁶ Coleridge campaigned consistently for a more humane, enlightened approach, notably in these lectures of 1808 and 1813, and in another series in London in the winter of 1818-19. Charles Dickens, who reached the age of seven in February 1819, was precisely one of those children on whose behalf Coleridge campaigned so passionately.

On the socio-political level this debate is essentially between the polarities of the humanist and utilitarian approaches. But on a deeper, ontological level the divide is between the traditional Christian, lapsarian view of humanity as essentially sinful, and a belief in human goodness and the essential benignity of creation. At the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many writers, artists and orators, in the wake of revolution in America and France, were demanding political and social change, as Sally Ledger has demonstrated, citing the 'political havoc' wrought by Hone and Cruikshank as an example.²⁷ But others were seeking to bring about change on a more profound, inner level: to extend human empathy and sensibility into new areas. Coleridge's interest in childhood and education certainly began on this deeper level, in the hope and ardour of his own first experiences of being a father. In February 1798, the middle of the *annus mirabilis* of collaboration with the Wordsworths, Coleridge sat up late one night, with his baby son asleep at his side. He thought back to his own childhood, and resolved that his child would have a different, new set of experiences:

Awed by the stern preceptor's face [...]
I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
But *thou*, my babe, shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself.
Great universal Teacher! he shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee²⁸

I will return to this passage frequently, hence the lengthy quotation. Lisa Ottum detects in these lines ‘a stark, morally charged binary between a direct-contact model of learning and a traditional, reading-based model’.²⁹ In this revolutionary poem Coleridge imagines a new kind of childhood in which experience of the natural world will teach his child knowledge of a divine ‘eternal language’ denied to Coleridge himself in his London school with its ‘stern preceptor’. But as Jonathan Bate points out, Coleridge also imagines a new kind of father/child relationship, and a new kind of relationship with that natural world:

What is truly radical about ‘Frost at Midnight’ is Coleridge’s self-representation as a father in the traditional maternal posture of watching over a sleeping baby. In ecofeminist terms, this realignment of gender roles clears the way for a caring as opposed to an exploitative relationship with the earth.³⁰

Eighteenth-century views of nature as lapsarian and chaotic, needing a human hand to render it useful, decorative or ‘picturesque’,³¹ are comprehensively left behind here. Richard Holmes detects in ‘Frost at Midnight’ ideas ‘that Wordsworth was to explore fully in *The Prelude* of 1805’;³² certainly, the essence of Wordsworth’s notions of growth from childhood to adulthood is encapsulated here.

Coleridge wasn't alone in imagining new possibilities for childhood before the turn of the century. A few years earlier William Blake had written, illustrated and printed a crucial poem spoken by a child persona, the eponymous Schoolboy:

But to go to school in a summer morn, -
O it drives all joy away!
Under a cruel eye outworn,
The little ones spend the day
In sighing and dismay.

Ah then at times I drooping sit,
And spend many an anxious hour;
Nor in my book can I take delight,
Nor sit in learning's bower,
Worn through with the dreary shower.

How can the bird that is born for joy
Sit in a cage and sing?
How can a child, when fears annoy,
But droop his tender wing,
And forget his youthful spring!

O father and mother if buds are nipped,
And blossoms blown away;
And if the tender plants are stripped
Of their joy in the springing day,
By sorrow and care's dismay,

How shall the summer arise in joy,
Or the summer fruits appear?
Or how shall we gather what griefs destroy,
Or bless the mellowing year,
When the blasts of winter appear?³³

The references to the seasons, and the use of animal and plant imagery to depict human growth, all foreshadow Coleridge's revolutionary ecology, and also demonstrate how his later views on education are rooted in Romantic poetry. Blake appeals here to 'father and mother' to take an interest in the education and development of their children, to try to understand how children learn and develop, rather than leaving these crucial matters to others. The imagery of imprisonment, of a child confined by school, is common to both poems, and was to become a key theme in Dickens's fiction, which will be discussed in Chapter 4. There's no evidence that Coleridge and Blake knew one another.³⁴ But the kinship between their aims and ideas here, the 'primordial continuities'³⁵ between their words, to use Gillian Beer's phrase, are startling. Both poets insist that childhood should be a time of joy, discovery, and freedom from artificial constraints: a time of natural,

organic growth towards knowledge and wisdom – a knowledge which the ‘cruel eye’ of Blake’s teacher, and Coleridge’s ‘stern preceptor’, both signally fail to foster. Blake’s famous poem ‘London’ is a stark warning of the corrosive effects of the city, as it then was, on humanity; the same city in which Coleridge as a boy was ‘pent’ up, and saw ‘nought lovely’. A few years later Wordsworth developed these ideas in Book 5 of *The Prelude: or Growth of a Poet’s Mind*, which is ‘Addressed to S. T. Coleridge’, perhaps in acknowledgement of their shared evolution of so much of its content:

Where had we been, we two, beloved Friend,
If we, in lieu of wandering, as we did, [...]
Had been attended, follow’d, watch’d, and noos’d,
String’d like a poor man’s Heifer, at its feed
Led through the lanes in forlorn servitude³⁶

The conventional schooling that Wordsworth sees around him produces a ‘monster birth,/ Engender’d by these too industrious times’³⁷ Instead he advocates the rearing of:

A race of real children, not too wise,
Too learned, or too good, but wanton, fresh [...]
Bending beneath our life’s mysterious weight
Of pain and fear; yet still in happiness
Not yielding to the happiest upon earth.
Simplicity in habit, truth in speech,
Be these the daily strengtheners of their minds!
May books and nature be their early joy!
And knowledge, rightly honor’d with that name,
Knowledge not purchas’d with the loss of power!³⁸

Wordsworth here reconfigures Bacon’s aphorism ‘Knowledge is Power’ in crucial ways.³⁹ And Dickens himself was to use the phrase to damn his fictional pedant ‘Mr Barlow’ in the 1869 article of that name for *All the Year Round*: ‘That Knowledge is Power I am not prepared to gainsay; but, with Mr. Barlow, Knowledge is Power to bore’.⁴⁰ Jonathan Jones comments on this crucial passage from *The Prelude*: ‘unlike tutors, books allow for the acquisition of knowledge without demanding submission to another human being. Whereas for Rousseau books are the ‘curse of childhood’, for Wordsworth they are its delight, as they set children’s imaginations free and allow them to pursue their own path to knowledge’.⁴¹ James K. Chandler has suggested that Wordsworth’s ideal here, a child not ‘too good, but wanton’, is the antithesis of Rousseau’s Emile and his ‘delusive fantasy of moral perfectionism, the notion that virtue can be systematically taught’.⁴² The antithesis we see here between man-made devices and the organic environment of the country was to become a central preoccupation for Dickens.

These Romantic ideas of childhood are so familiar to us now that it's salutary to remind ourselves just how unfamiliar they were at the turn of the eighteenth century. The received view then was not that children were born for joy, or innocent, still less capable of organic development towards divine wisdom. On the contrary, children were usually seen as sons and daughters of fallen Adam, sinful creatures who must be saved from eternal damnation by any means at adults' disposal, as Morag Stiles has noted.⁴³ Malcolm Andrews notes the mistrust of imagination among writers for children: 'didacticism of various degrees of austerity dominated children's literature from the 1790s onwards'⁴⁴. If it seems obvious nowadays that parents should play a role in their children's education and development, this was far from the case at the turn of the eighteenth century; very few wealthy parents took any part in these matters,⁴⁵ and the time and energies of poorer people were devoted to feeding and clothing their families rather than educating them. With notions of original sin dictating the agenda, it required an extraordinary leap of imagination to envisage an alternative. That is precisely what the Romantic poets achieved. Blake, Coleridge and Wordsworth proposed a radical new vision which flew in the face of contemporary interpretations of religious principles of duty to children, and of the nature of childhood itself. Coleridge encapsulates this vision in the few lines that conclude the second part of his long, unfinished poem 'Christabel':

A little child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red round cheeks,
That always finds, and never seeks,
Makes such a vision to the sight
As fills a father's eyes with light⁴⁶

This is a child using vitality and imagination to explore and 'find' reality; a child who literally enlightens the adult, rather than needing enlightenment from him/her.

Reviewers of the first publications of these poems were too busy condemning Coleridge's political radicalism to notice their deeper revolutionary intent. In June 1799 the *British Critic* castigated his poem 'France: an Ode' for describing his compatriots as 'a slavish band', and for aspiring to the 'holy flame' of 'Liberty';⁴⁷ 'Frost at Midnight', 'not being defaced by any of these absurdities', got off fairly lightly: 'a few affectations of phraseology, are atoned for by much expressive tenderness, and will be avoided by the author's more mature judgment'.⁴⁸ And C. L. Moody in the *Monthly Review* summed the poem up as 'a pleasing picture of virtue and content in a cottage [...] here he dedicates his infant to solitude and religious contemplation'.⁴⁹ There is no hint in these first reviews of any awareness of the poem's innovative qualities. Peter Newbon suggests that such 'celebratory representations of childhood went against the cultural grain' of the time, and identifies 'a gulf of cultural understanding between the identities of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Lamb in the heyday of their authorship and their later Canonical images'.⁵⁰ The same can equally be said of Blake. Even Hazlitt is out of his depth with the lines from 'Christabel' quoted above: 'The

conclusion of the second part of 'Christabel', about 'the little limber elf', is to us absolutely incomprehensible', he confessed in 1816.⁵¹ There was some praise of these poems, but very little appreciation. For a few aspiring poets, however, they pointed the way forward. Shelley's poem 'Julian and Maddalo', written in 1818-19 when Charles Dickens was six, is an evocation of Shelley's relationship with the much more famous Byron; the characterisation of the dashing, charismatic Maddalo, and the introspective, hypersensitive Julian, are certainly consonant with what we know of the two.⁵² In the poem, Julian recalls Maddalo's daughter in words that clearly, I think, echo Coleridge's:

A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made,
A serious, subtle, wild, yet gentle being,
Graceful without design and unforeseeing⁵³

Julian urges her father Maddalo to learn from her example:

‘[...] See
This lovely child, blithe, innocent and free;
She spends a happy time with little care,
While we to such sick thoughts subjected are
As came on you last night – it is our will
That thus enchains us to permitted ill –
We might be otherwise – we might be all
We dream of happy, high, majestic.
Where is the love, beauty and truth we seek
But in our mind?’⁵⁴

Rather than simply seeing children as needing to learn from adults, Shelley follows Coleridge and suggests the converse, that adults can learn life-enhancing lessons from the child, as Morag Styles has argued.⁵⁵ These poems indicate the range and breadth of what Jeffrey Robinson has called ‘the radical dynamic of Romantic poetics’⁵⁶, which goes beyond the social and political spheres to question our assumptions about the nature of human relationships.

A crucial figure who does not appear in 'Julian and Maddalo' but who was a participant in the conversations it depicts, is Mary Shelley. Although her views on these matters are not recorded in the poem, they certainly are in *Frankenstein*, a novel which grew out of the Shelleys' intimacy with Byron in 1816, as Mary herself intimates in her 1831 'Preface',⁵⁷ and which interrogates that 'radical dynamic of Romantic poetics'. She grew up with this poetry, having heard Coleridge himself reading his work aloud in her father's house when she was eight;⁵⁸ and she echoes the phrase 'the only unquiet thing' from 'Frost at Midnight', in this novel.⁵⁹ She confessed to an 'excessive and romantic attachment to my father',⁶⁰ and suffered from his response, which was 'nearly always emotionally cool and distant', as Maurice Hindle notes.⁶¹ Perhaps fired by her own

experience, and by her awareness of the gap between aspiration and actuality in parent/child relationships which is apparent in the cases of Coleridge, Shelley and Byron,⁶² Mary Shelley examines this relationship as a central theme. She stresses Victor Frankenstein's loving parents: 'they seemed to draw inexhaustible stores of affection from a very mine of love to bestow them upon me [...] My mother's tender caresses, and my father's smile of benevolent pleasure while regarding me, are my first recollections', Victor tells Captain Walton.⁶³ And Shelley has him exult in the prospect of becoming a new kind of father: 'A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs'.⁶⁴ The gap between aspiration and actuality is absolute, Frankenstein's years of education and research producing a true 'monster birth'.⁶⁵ Frankenstein's failure to take responsibility for his new species of 'child' is the source of the creature's misery: 'Cursed, cursed creator!', he exclaims: 'you were my father, my creator [...] You had endowed me with perceptions and passions, and then cast me abroad an object for the scorn and horror of mankind'.⁶⁶ Frankenstein tried to skip the stages of childhood and natural growth, and brought his creature to life fully formed. His quite literal running away from his responsibilities as procreator is the trigger for the tragedy that ensues. Childhood cannot be bypassed without dire consequences, this novel suggests: it is a theme that Dickens was to explore obsessively.

In the absence of parents, family and shelter, the creature is forced to learn for himself everything about the world around him, and draw his own conclusions unguided. Shunned by human beings, he avoids towns and cities, and has his abortive equivalent of a childhood in the natural world. He develops the 'perceptions and passions' with which Frankenstein endowed him by observing 'my beloved cottagers'⁶⁷ the De Laceys, vicariously learning his letters, and the delights of love and affection, from them. His discovery of volumes of Plutarch, Milton, and Goethe 'gave me extreme delight'.⁶⁸ The 'morally charged binary'⁶⁹ that Lisa Ottum detected in 'Frost at Midnight' is present here. In direct contrast to Victor's conventional education, the creature's education is in important respects akin to the new mode advocated by Blake, Coleridge and Wordsworth: free from the enervating prison of city life, rooted in experience of the natural world, not filtered through a pedagogue, and productive of delight in learning. The creature gains, in Wordsworth's memorable phrase, 'Knowledge not purchas'd with the loss of power!'

It is Wordsworth who most graphically illustrates how human beings might learn from Coleridge's 'Great universal Teacher', in *The Prelude*. In Book 1 he recalls a boyhood adventure. Led, he insists, by Nature,⁷⁰ he borrows a shepherd's boat and rows out onto a lake at night:

... It was an act of stealth
And troubled pleasure, nor without the voice
Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on;
Leaving behind her still, on either side,
Small circles glittering idly in the moon,

Until they melted all into one track
 Of sparkling light. But now, like one who rows,
 Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point
 With an unswerving line, I fixed my view
 Upon the summit of a craggy ridge,
 The horizon's utmost boundary; far above
 Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.
 She was an elfin pinnacle; lustily
 I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
 And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat
 Went heaving through the water like a swan;
 When, from behind that craggy steep till then
 The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
 As if with voluntary power instinct,
 Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,
 And growing still in stature the grim shape
 Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
 For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
 And measured motion like a living thing,
 Strode after me. With trembling oars I turned,
 And through the silent water stole my way
 Back to the covert of the willow tree;
 There in her mooring-place I left my bark,--
 And through the meadows homeward went, in grave
 And serious mood; but after I had seen
 That spectacle, for many days, my brain
 Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
 Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts
 There hung a darkness, call it solitude
 Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
 Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
 Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
 But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
 Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
 By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.⁷¹

I will cite this passage as an example of crucial ideas that recur throughout this study. Discussing this episode, Stephen Gill stresses 'the penetration of the child's whole being' by Nature,⁷² a complete reversal of the scientist's 'penetration into the causes of things', a phrase Mary Shelley has Robert Walton use to characterise Victor Frankenstein.⁷³ Jonathan Bate's insights into gender

realignment in 'Frost at Midnight' are again resonant here. The experience reveals to the child not merely new knowledge, but 'unknown modes of being'.

Wordsworth's use of imagery in this passage is every bit as significant as the meaning; indeed the two are inseparable. It begins with conventional pictorial similes and metaphors, 'familiar shapes' which reflect the child's state of mind before the experience. But with the appearance of the 'huge peak' with 'purpose of its own', the imagery quite literally comes to life. Meaning and image fuse inseparably as the peak 'strode' after the child, replacing the 'familiar' and 'pleasant images' in his mind with the 'huge and mighty forms' that made him the man he became. In this passage Wordsworth foreshadows Tiiu Speek's characterisation of the 'environmentally conscious writer', who 'refuses to allow "mind" or "language" or "history" or "culture" to determine what nature can be, to suggest that the mystery out there is the ultimate judge of all human meanings'.⁷⁴

The imagery here is different in kind, I believe, from the imagery that characterises much poetry of the eighteenth century. Rather than remaining an external, picturesque but lifeless object, the image comes to life, the peak becomes a character in the narrative, which 'like a living thing,/ Strode after me'. The movement from stasis to life and action is akin to the distinction that Coleridge makes between Fancy and Imagination in Chapter XIII of the *Biographia Literaria*.⁷⁵ Imagery here takes on a psychological and emotional dimension, as it does in Shakespeare, but in very little of the intervening literature in English. Wordsworth's friend and collaborator Coleridge was among the first to recognise the organic unity of Shakespeare's characterisation, patterns of imagery, and structures,⁷⁶ and together they sought to restore these organic principles in their own work. Shelley too aspired to this type of imagery, as he writes in the 'Preface' to *Prometheus Unbound* in 1820:

The imagery which I have employed will be found, in many instances, to have been drawn from the operations of the human mind or from those external actions by which they are expressed. This is unusual in modern poetry, although Dante and Shakespeare are full of instances of the same kind'.⁷⁷

The ways in which Dickens uses comparable patterns of imagery at crucial points in his narratives will be explored alongside the main themes; and Shelley's words about 'external actions' expressing 'the operations of the human mind',⁷⁸ are of particular interest in this respect.

David Copperfield: Failing Families

Dickens was never able to admit to his public the facts of his experience of poverty, hunger and drudgery while working at Warren's Blacking at the age of twelve; he confided only in Forster, and later sent him the autobiographical fragment, which was written a few months before *David Copperfield*.⁷⁹ Throughout his career he cultivated the public persona of a stable, middle-class family man and purveyor of Household Words. Reviewing *David Copperfield* in December 1850, *Fraser's Magazine* asserted that Dickens's 'wide-spread popularity' was 'above all, because of his deep reverence for the household sanctities, his enthusiastic worship of the household gods'.⁸⁰ Yet

for one whose reputation rested so much on domestic family values, it is remarkable how little interest Dickens's fiction shows in characters brought up in a conventional biological family. Holly Furneaux comments: 'While domesticity is undoubtedly at the emotionally invested heart of Dickens's work, offering a fantasized panacea to wider social suffering, it is a rigorously defamiliarized domestic that Dickens persistently recommends'.⁸¹ As children, *Oliver Twist* and Little Nell know neither of their parents; Nicholas Nickleby, Barnaby Rudge and Martin Chuzzlewit know only their mothers. Of the child protagonists in the novels written before 1850, only Paul Dombey knows his father. And the parents that Dickens assigns to his child characters are anything but idealised. Malcolm Andrews argues that Dickens's 'lifelong preoccupation with childhood and its unresolved relation to the adult world' is due as much to 'the complicated cultural status of childhood in nineteenth-century England' as to his early 'private experiences'.⁸² Michael Slater disagrees, ascribing this preoccupation directly to the traumas of Warren's and the Marshalsea: 'the result was that the figures of inadequate, or downright culpable, parents and hapless, innocent child-victims were deeply imprinted upon his imagination at this time and later became central to his fictional world'.⁸³ It is certainly arguable that, since Bumble's tale of 'some medicine in a blacking bottle'⁸⁴ in *Oliver Twist*, Dickens had felt an urge to introduce this experience into his fiction. In *David Copperfield* he comes closer to doing so than in any other novel to date. As Maria Teresa Chailant argues, 'the blacking warehouse episode is at the very core not only of his autobiographical fragment but also of his first-person narratives'.⁸⁵ *David Copperfield* is, as Malcolm Andrews notes, 'the first novel to trace in considerable psychological detail the development of the child into an adult'⁸⁶ – thematically, it is Dickens's *Prelude*. It is also his first attempt at a first-person narrative, and remained his 'favourite child'⁸⁷ among his novels; these facts suggest that he was attempting something new, more profoundly personal, in this fiction. It is certainly his most detailed exploration of childhood, and not just the childhood of David, to date.

The issue of parenting is there from the start of the novel. David never knows his biological father, and is abused by his stepfather Mr Murdstone. His mother is loving but ineffective, unable to stand up for herself or her sons. David receives more care and affection from his nurse Peggotty than from his mother or the Murdstones, and he is sent off in disgrace to school in Blackheath. By the time he wrote this evocation of Salem House in Chapters 5-8 of *David Copperfield*, Dickens was already famous for his critiques of contemporary schooling. His portrayal of the schoolmaster Wackford Squeers at Dotheboys Hall in *Nicholas Nickleby*, in 1838-39, had caused such outrage that some of the Yorkshire schools on which it was based had been closed down.⁸⁸ But where Squeers is an object of ridicule and contempt, David's master Mr Creakle is altogether more sinister: an ignorant, sadistic pervert about whose motives Dickens allows David to be remarkably frank. John Cowper Powys spoke for a Lawrentian generation when he complained in 1938, in italics for emphasis, that Dickens '*dodges every problem of sex*';⁸⁹ one can imagine the heavily underscored manuscript. Holly Furneaux has more recently traced the critical move away from 'an implicit assumption that the erotic in Victorian culture is repressed', and proclaims 'Dickens's

unabashed celebration of a range of eroticisms.’⁹⁰ While this view might seem as partisan as Cowper Powys’s in some ways, there is certainly no dodging of the issue here:

I should think there never can have been a man who enjoyed his profession more than Mr. Creakle did. He had a delight in cutting at the boys, which was like the satisfaction of a craving appetite [...] he couldn’t resist a chubby boy, especially [...] there was a fascination in such a subject, which made him restless in his mind, until he had scored and marked him for the day. I was chubby myself, and I ought to know.⁹¹

If there is more than a hint of rueful humour at the start of this passage, Dickens was doubtless aware that many of his contemporaries would not be shocked or surprised at the physical abuse of children; violent punishment was a norm for his readers. As he remarks in *Barnaby Rudge*, even hanging was ‘a thing so common, that very few were startled by the awful sentence’.⁹² Hence he uses the humour as a means of drawing us in. But his present-tense analysis of the mental and emotional degradation that Creakle inflicts, soon wipes the smile from our faces:

An unhappy culprit, found guilty of imperfect exercise, approaches at his command. The culprit falters excuses, and professes a determination to do better tomorrow. Mr. Creakle cuts a joke before he beats him, and we laugh at it, - miserable little dogs, we laugh, with our visages as white as ashes, and our hearts sinking into our boots.⁹³

Such passages clearly evoke the Bell and Lancaster debates of the turn of the century. But Dickens’s power of ‘psychological detail’,⁹⁴ in Malcolm Andrews’s phrase, makes us feel the fear and humiliation that such abuse impresses upon children’s minds in ways that educational theory cannot. This is, I believe, the main reason why ‘Dickens’s fiction had a greater influence on public opinion than either theoretical works or articles in the press could have’,⁹⁵ as Clotilde De Stasio notes.

Dickens’s conclusions as to the effect of this regime on learning, are close to William Blake’s:

In a school carried on by sheer cruelty, whether it is presided over by a dunce or not, there is not likely to be much learnt. I believe our boys were, generally, as ignorant a set as any schoolboys in existence; they were too much troubled and knocked about to learn; they could no more do that to advantage, than anyone can do anything to advantage in a life of constant misfortune, torment and worry.⁹⁶

Later on in his boyhood David experiences a more kindly, scholarly schooling with Agnes’ father Doctor Strong in Canterbury. But Dickens’s portrayal of this ‘good’ school is far less vivid, detailed and memorable than his evocation of Creakle’s deadly school, which clearly grasps his creative attention on a deeper level. As Philip Collins writes: ‘his imagination was rarely fired by good men and institutions’.⁹⁷ Clotilde De Stasio points out that the ‘debate on education’ was still ‘current in British society at the time’.⁹⁸ Like Coleridge before him, Dickens played a key role in

this debate, allowing readers acute psychological insight into the effects of punishment. De Stasio also provides evidence that the misery and starvation that Dickens depicts was not confined to ‘schools for destitute children, like the notorious Yorkshire academies [...] It also happened in the schools for the rich as well as in wealthy homes’.⁹⁹

David’s only consolations at Salem House are the friendship of the hapless, constantly-beaten Tommy Traddles, and the patronage of the older boy James Steerforth, who is for some reason unknown to the reader at this stage of the novel, never touched or even challenged by Mr. Creakle. David’s admiration for the handsome, charismatic older boy is uncritical. In the dormitory after school Steerforth gets David to retell stories from the novels and tales he read as a young child at home. David discovers that he has a talent for storytelling, and thus the seeds of his career as a novelist are sown: ‘Whatever I had within me that was romantic and dreamy, was encouraged by so much storytelling in the dark’.¹⁰⁰ Imagination, then, is the redeeming force which helps David get through the realities of life at Salem House.

Which brings us back to the image I quoted at the outset, of David the ‘innocent, romantic boy, making his imaginative world out of such strange experiences and sordid things’. This is how David deals with life, and it is very much how Dickens himself deals with it in this fiction: armed with the Romantic visions of how childhood and child development should be, and his personal experience and observations of how it was, he confronts head-on the ‘sordid’ realities of nineteenth-century childhood, its dangers and horrors, and its determinant effects on development towards adulthood. Dickens passionately wanted change. In a speech in Birmingham in 1844, he appealed directly to his audience’s sense of right and wrong:

If you would reward honesty, if you would give encouragement to good, if you would stimulate the idle, eradicate evil, or correct what is bad, education – comprehensive liberal education – is the one thing needful, and the one effective end.¹⁰¹

We can see the seeds of Gradgrind, as well as of Salem House, in these words.¹⁰² Dickens sought to narrow the gap between Romantic aspiration and everyday reality, and he was more than happy to engage in political and social debate in his journalism and speeches. But in his fiction he sought to effect that more profound, more lasting change that Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge had aspired to effect, deepening and extending the sensibility and values of his readers.

Childhood to Adulthood

The grim humour that characterised the account of Salem House disappears from the narrative altogether when Dickens evokes David’s ‘shame’¹⁰³ at being set to work with ‘common men and boys’¹⁰⁴ at Murdstone and Grinby’s: ‘No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship [...] and felt my hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man, crushed in my bosom’.¹⁰⁵ Kerry McSweeney has called *David Copperfield* Dickens’s ‘great novel of memory’;¹⁰⁶ but the workings of memory in this fiction are complex and often

problematic, on the levels of both the fictional and the actual narrators. Rosemarie Bodenheimer traces ‘an uneasy interchangeability among the positions of knowledge, concealment, and self-exposure’ in Dickens’s explorations of childhood, ‘confronting and accusing the past’.¹⁰⁷ And in this most profoundly autobiographical episode, Dickens emphasises that the loss of his middle-class status and identity is far more traumatic for his protagonist than the physical and mental abuse meted out by Creakle and the Murdstones. David is a born gentleman, and a gentleman still, Dickens insists: ‘the men generally spoke of me as “the little gent” ’.¹⁰⁸ Association with these ‘men’, and with his child workmates Mick Walker and Mealy Potatoes, is a matter of shame for David; the trauma of falling out of middle-class society has permanently blunted his empathy, leaving these uneducated working people beyond the pale of the adult narrator’s imagination: and again, this pertains on both the fictional and authorial narrative levels.

His aunt Betsy Trotwood soon restores David’s middle-class status, and so his life progresses. He makes an unwise marriage, is widowed, then discovers the true love of his life, marries her and has a large family, becomes through discipline and hard work a successful novelist, and all ends happily with a feast at Tommy Traddles’s house. While none of Dickens’s protagonists grows up in a conventional ‘happy family’, many of them end up as parents in one; as Catherine Waters writes, ‘the orphan must earn and secure his social identity by founding his own family’.¹⁰⁹ Contemporary reviewers, detecting the autobiographical elements in the novel, devoted their attention almost exclusively to those parts dealing with David’s life, accepting him uncritically as its hero and showing little awareness of the significance of anything else. The anonymous reviewer in *Fraser’s Magazine* for December 1850 thought it ‘the best of all the author’s fictions’, with David as an ‘ideal character’.¹¹⁰ ‘Rising from the perusal of Mr. Dickens’s work’, Samuel Philips wrote in *The Times* of *David Copperfield*, ‘you forget that there is evil in the world, and remember only the good’.¹¹¹

No doubt this is how Dickens would have wanted his contemporaries to react, the trauma of Murdstone and Grinby’s forgotten in the celebratory, festive ending. But all of this is less than half the story of this novel, literally. David’s tale on its own is the conventional boy-made-good narrative found in countless Victorian novels: it is earnest, moralistic, and desexualised. As a narrative it lacks momentum. Most of the action, tension, passion and dynamism of this novel are generated elsewhere, by the tragic triangle of Steerforth, Emily, and Daniel Peggotty. David sets the tragedy in motion by introducing Steerforth to the Peggottys at Yarmouth, but after that he is a mere onlooker of the events that unfold. So who is the hero, or heroine, of this novel? David himself asks this question in its opening sentence: ‘Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show’.¹¹² So from the very start Dickens sets up this area of doubt. *David Copperfield* is in fact a divided novel, with Dickens straining to unify David’s rather anodyne life with the tumultuous tragedy that unfolds between Steerforth, Emily and Daniel Peggotty. Angus Wilson suggests that *David Copperfield* is ‘the most false of all his major books’,¹¹³ and Malcolm Andrews detects a ‘conceptual instability’

that 'makes David's well-rewarded maturity at the end seem willed rather than achieved, factitious rather than inevitable'.¹¹⁴ The story of David is the part of himself that Dickens could own up to: boyhood misery and degradation, eventual success through sheer hard work and earnest determination. Michael Slater notes the many known parallels between narrator and author: 'Inevitably, it would be – and was – widely read as being, at least to some extent, autobiographical'.¹¹⁵ The story of Steerforth, Emily and Mr Peggotty contains everything of himself that Dickens could not own up to at this stage of his life: illicit, overmastering sexual passion, irresponsibility, and the flouting of social mores and public opinion. Robert Newsom rightly asserts that 'there is very little in Dickens's life that does not manage to find its way into the work',¹¹⁶ but he did not always have control over this process. He was, as we have seen, an 'indifferent' dragoon. In a letter to Forster Dickens hints at the conflict he feels when finishing the novel: 'if I were to say half of what *Copperfield* makes me feel tonight, how strangely, even to you, I should be turned inside-out! I seem to be sending some part of myself into the Shadowy World'¹¹⁷ A partial resolution of this conflict will be achieved in *Great Expectations*.

Heroes and Villains

I will now look more closely at these three other protagonists. It could certainly be argued that Steerforth is the hero of the novel. It is repeatedly stressed that he has the potential for greatness in the classical heroic mode: 'qualities', David says, 'that might have made him a man of a noble nature and a great name'.¹¹⁸ He has a quick understanding, knowledge of a wide range of subjects, and a personal magnetism that wins him the love and affection of people in all walks of life. When David encounters him again in early manhood, their contrasting characters and aspirations are underlined in their discussion of Steerforth's Oxford career:

'You'll take a high degree at college, Steerforth,' said I, 'if you have not done so already; and they will have good reason to be proud of you.'

'I take a degree!' cried Steerforth. 'Not I! my dear Daisy' [...]

'But the fame – ' I was beginning.

'You romantic Daisy!' said Steerforth, laughing still more heartily: why should I trouble myself, that a parcel of heavy-headed fellows may gape and hold up their hands? Let them do it at some other man. There's fame for him, and he's welcome to it.'

I was abashed at having made so great a mistake, and was glad to change the subject. Fortunately it was not difficult to do, for Steerforth could always pass from one subject to another with a carelessness and lightness that were his own.¹¹⁹

The contrast between the supremely confident, slightly bored, charismatic man of the world, and the unsure, affectionate, highly sensitive younger man, puts one in mind of the relationship between Julian and Maddalo in Shelley's poem. And this I think provides the key to Steerforth: he is in every sense the Byronic hero, the first example of a type which recurs often in Dickens's subsequent fiction.¹²⁰ His private opinion of Byron reflects the reaction against the poet's work

and influence which came about in the 1830s and 1840s, according to Harriet Martineau's *Autobiography*, largely as a result of Carlyle.¹²¹ In a letter of February 1843 Dickens joked to Angela Burdett Coutts that he was 'in danger of turning misanthropical, Byronic, and devilish'.¹²² But this first fictional portrayal of a Byronic character is more ambivalent, blending the 'misanthropical' with the magnetic.

William R. Harvey has described Steerforth as 'an extraordinarily successful blend of villain and hero'.¹²³ A charismatic man of action, yet prone to idleness, Steerforth is capable of great daring, yet bored with his own company and bored with life. At Yarmouth Steerforth goes out sailing with Mr. Peggotty and Ham, something the more cautious David never does, and quickly learns to pilot his own boat. He wins Emily's love, just as he wins everyone else's, and takes her away from her fiancé Ham. But for him it's all:

a brilliant game, played for the excitement of the moment, for the employment of high spirits, in the thoughtless love of superiority, in a mere wasteful careless course of winning what was worthless to him, and next minute thrown away.¹²⁴

Nothing satisfies Steerforth for long. His tragic flaw is his inability to choose a path in life and stick to it. And David, with his 'romantic feelings of fidelity and friendship'¹²⁵ towards Steerforth, simply cannot fathom his companion.

Shortly before he and Emily elope, the theme of parenting re-emerges as Steerforth experiences a moment of guilt and self-awareness that leaves David completely out of his depth:

'David, I wish to God I had had a judicious father these last twenty years!'

'My dear Steerforth, what is the matter'

'I wish with all my soul I had been better guided!' he exclaimed ...

There was a passionate dejection in his manner that quite amazed me. He was more unlike himself than I could have supposed possible.¹²⁶

Rather than being 'unlike himself', as David supposes, Steerforth comes closer to self-knowledge at this moment than at any other time in the novel. Steerforth never knew his father. And his doting mother ensured that during his formative years he was never challenged by any authority. She tells David why she chose Salem House and Mr. Creakle:

'It was not a fit school generally for my son,' said she; 'far from it; but there were particular circumstances to be considered at the time, of more importance even than that selection. My son's high spirit made it desirable that he should be placed with some man who felt its superiority, and would be content to bow himself before it; and we found such a man there.'¹²⁷

Mrs Steerforth thus ensured that her son grew up knowing no boundaries or limits, believing that he did not need to make any effort to develop his talents in any particular direction; unwittingly,

his mother sowed the seeds of his tragedy. Steerforth had the potential to excel and fulfil himself in several walks of life, but misguided parenting, the lack of a positive masculine role-model, and defective education, encouraged the tragic flaw in his character and led to a brief, unfulfilled adult life, pain and heartbreak to others, and an unnecessary early death.

If Steerforth is the quintessential Byronic hero, Emily too has Romantic antecedents. David first meets her as a 'most beautiful little girl ... with a necklace of blue beads on, who wouldn't let me kiss her when I offered to, but ran away and hid herself'¹²⁸. Later they pick up shells and pebbles together on the beach, and the impressionable David sees sailing ships reflected in her 'bright eye'¹²⁹. They do eventually exchange 'an innocent kiss',¹³⁰ but Emily remains elusive, to him and to us:

She started from my side, and ran along a jagged timber which protruded from the place we stood upon, and overhung the deep water at some height, without the least defence ... with a look that I have never forgotten, directed far out to sea.

The light, bold, fluttering little figure turned and came back safe to me.¹³¹

Far more so than the gentlemanly David, despite Dickens's wishful repetition of the word 'romantic' to describe him, Emily is the true descendant of Coleridge's and Shelley's radical vision of a 'limber elf' using her vitality and imagination to 'find' reality, a 'serious, subtle, wild, yet gentle being'.¹³²

In addition to his repeated use of the word 'romantic' to describe David, Dickens uses the word 'innocent' almost as often. David is, we must remember, the closest Dickens had come at this stage of his career to a self-portrait, an embodiment of how he would like to see himself and be seen by the world, and the use of these words is significant on many levels. The contrast with his portrayal of Little Emily is equally instructive. Everything is, of course, filtered through David's mind; as Malcolm Andrews notes, 'it is essentially David's idyll, rather than Emily's'.¹³³ In all of his carefully-chosen evocation of her, with the one exception of the kiss quoted above, he avoids the word 'innocent'. On the contrary, even as a very small child Emily's wild searching is coupled with a very adult awareness of class distinctions and their economic consequences, which the middle-class David cannot fathom. She wants to be a lady, and have the money to make her relatives 'gentlefolk';¹³⁴ and for David, and Dickens, this sows the seeds of her destruction. Claire Tomalin agrees, noting that Emily's 'character is fatally undermined by the desire to become a lady; it is this that allows her to become the victim of an unscrupulous gentleman'.¹³⁵ 'There is no innocence here', Malcolm Andrews comments.¹³⁶ When David remembers the little girl dicing with danger on the 'jagged timber' above the deep sea, he muses:

There has been a time since [...] when I have asked myself the question, would it have been better for Little Em'ly to have had the waters close above her head that morning in my sight; and when I have answered Yes, it would have been.¹³⁷

Dickens's attitude to women who have sex outside of marriage, in life and in his fiction, is aptly illustrated here.¹³⁸ As soon as Emily runs off with Steerforth she effectively disappears from the novel. Even when she is eventually found by her uncle, Dickens applies what Claire Tomalin calls 'the standard colonial solution',¹³⁹ and ships her off to Australia along with Uriah Heep, Latimer, the Micawbers, and all the other human beings he regarded as beyond the pale of English society. Dickens was by no means alone in this respect. George Eliot, for example, treats her character Hetty Sorrel in much the same way as Dickens treats Emily, in *Adam Bede*, published ten years after *David Copperfield*, in 1859. It was left to the next generation of novelists, particularly to the 'New Woman Fiction' of the 1880s and 1890s¹⁴⁰, and to Thomas Hardy in his later novels, to begin to extend sensibility and understanding into the areas of female sexuality and sexual behaviour, and to redefine our values.

Romantic Pedigree

David first meets Emily's uncle Daniel Peggotty on that first visit to Yarmouth as a young boy, when he first meets Emily. And just as his nurse, Mr. Peggotty's sister, provides the strongest care and affection that David experiences as a child, so Daniel Peggotty's boat-house at Yarmouth is the nearest he comes to experiencing the security and solidarity of a close-knit family environment. Peggotty describes her brother to David: 'He was but a poor man himself, said Peggotty, but as good as gold and as true as steel – those were her similes.'¹⁴¹ Like everyone else, Daniel Peggotty falls under Steerforth's spell, befriends him and allows him access to the family. He is kind hearted and generous to a fault, demonstrating the aptness of Peggotty's first simile. And when he devotes his life to finding and helping his compromised niece after her seduction by Steerforth, we also see the aptness of the second. He goes with David to Highgate and confronts Steerforth's mother. With dignity and 'a rugged eloquence',¹⁴² he urges her to save his niece from disgrace by agreeing to a marriage between Emily and her son. She refuses, and begins to offer him money in compensation. There is a Wordsworthian grandeur and dignity in his reply:

'I am looking at the likeness of the face,' interrupted Mr. Peggotty, with a steady but a kindling eye, 'that has looked at me, in my home, at my fireside, in my boat – where not? – smiling and friendly, when it was so treacherous, that I go half wild when I think of it. If the likeness of that face don't turn to burning fire, at the thought of offering money to me for my child's blight and ruin, it's as bad. I doesn't know, being a lady's, but what it's worse.'¹⁴³

At this Mrs Steerforth flares up: 'What compensation can you make to me for opening such a pit between me and my son? What is your love to mine? What is your separation to ours?'¹⁴⁴

Again, in this confrontation of classes and values, of biological and adoptive parents, David is a mere onlooker not a protagonist, powerless to grapple with the issues at stake. Humphrey House's comment on 'David's relations with the Peggottys' is acute: 'for all his friendliness he is never anything but "Mas'r Davy".'¹⁴⁵

After Daniel Peggotty has left England in search of Emily, David meets him again on one of his brief returns to London, on a snowy winter night:

I observed, not only that his hair was long and ragged, but that his face was burnt dark by the sun. He was greyer, the lines in his face and forehead were deeper, and he had every appearance of having toiled and wandered through all varieties of weather; but he looked very strong, and like a man upheld by steadfastness of purpose, whom nothing could tire out [...] There was a fine, massive gravity in his face, I did not venture to disturb.¹⁴⁶

Dickens's characterisation of Daniel Peggotty places him firmly in the company of Wordsworth's Leech-gatherer, the shepherd Michael, and the Solitary Reaper, uneducated country men and women whose lives have a dignity and grandeur of spirit, an unflinching integrity which make our day-to-day lives and concerns seem to pale into insignificance. Certainly, David works earnestly and steadfastly to achieve his success; but his life is constrained by notions of gentility and social status. We cannot imagine him making the kind of sacrifices that Mr Peggotty makes, for Agnes or anybody else.

Each of these three characters, then, has clear Romantic pedigree. And into these three characters Dickens puts everything of himself that he cannot, publicly or even privately, admit to or come to terms with at this stage of his career. David's story is the official fictional autobiography; this is perhaps why David's career as a writer doesn't seem to add up, his 'well-rewarded maturity at the end' seeming 'willed rather than achieved, factitious rather than inevitable',¹⁴⁷ as Malcolm Andrews rightly notes. The early childhood traumas seem to have had no lasting effect on the adult David. Steerforth, Emily and Daniel Peggotty together are the unofficial, unexpurgated version of Dickens's fictional autobiography. Dickens's artistic integrity told him that the picture would be incomplete without both versions, and so both are presented side by side in the novel. It is perhaps fitting that the 'main' character does not have Romantic pedigree: David Copperfield, and *David Copperfield*, are significant steps towards Dickens's resolution of the anxiety of influence, his creation of a peculiarly mid-century pedigree to supersede the Romantic antecedents. 'Far from espousing the personal, spontaneous writing privileged by the Romantics,' Jennifer Ruth argues, 'David's writing proceeds, we might say, like clockwork.'¹⁴⁸ Dickens's stress on David's earnest endeavour and hard work – 'mental capital meets industrial labour', Ruth suggests¹⁴⁹ – rather than on any imaginative engagement with writing, is surely the main reason why David fails to convince as a writer. It was not a pedigree that Dickens turned to again to resolve the anxiety of influence.

Tempestuous Images

Dickens's treatment of the themes of childhood and growth, then, shows clearly the influence of Romanticism, and its anxieties, in this novel. But Dickens's portrayals of childhood are agonised, abuse-ridden, closer to the traumas of Mary Shelley's creature's early days than to the celebratory, idealistic evocations of Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Percy Shelley. Security and parental stability are postponed to the next generation. But when we turn to the issue of imagery, the pattern

of Romantic influence is less consistent. Much of the scene-painting in *David Copperfield*, from the rural calm of Blundestone at the outset, to the sterile bleakness of Salem House, is memorable and atmospheric: Dickens's wonderful ability to conjure a scene in a few words, to use 'things', 'stuff'¹⁵⁰ to evoke mood and atmosphere, is present from his first published sketches right through to *Edwin Drood*. In the early novel *Barnaby Rudge*, completed in 1841, Dickens muses on the links between external image and the human psyche:

'The ashes of the commonest fire are melancholy things, for in them there is an image of death and ruin, - of something that has been bright, and is now but dull, cold, dreary dust, - with which our nature forces us to sympathise'.¹⁵¹

In almost every instance in *David Copperfield* the imagery remains on that external, atmospheric level, as it does in much Victorian fiction. The inward, ecological imagery of Wordsworth's boat on the lake scene is largely absent. There is one key exception that points the way to the future, and this is the storm scene in which Ham loses his life trying to save the man who took his sweetheart from him, James Steerforth. The writing here was recognised from the start as something special, *Fraser's* reviewer hailing it as early as December 1850 as 'One of the finest passages to be found in this, or indeed any, book'.¹⁵² Philip Collins summarises contemporary criticism of this scene with the comment 'the storm was the standard example for any critic wanting to maintain that Dickens's gifts included a mastery of the sublime'.¹⁵³ Dickens's previous death-scenes, in *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Dombey and Son*, and the deaths of Dora and Barkis in this novel, involve what Andrew Sanders calls 'the Christianly resolved deathbed'.¹⁵⁴ Such consolation is absent here. Dickens had also imagined storms before, as a backdrop to moments of high drama, notably in *Oliver Twist*,¹⁵⁵ *The Old Curiosity Shop*,¹⁵⁶ *Barnaby Rudge*,¹⁵⁷ and *Martin Chuzzlewit*.¹⁵⁸ Here, the sheer force and power of his imaginative engagement with the scene raise it to what for Dickens is a new level. He begins tentatively, building up the tension as David journeys from London to the sea:

It was a murky confusion [...] of flying clouds, tossed up into most remarkable heaps, suggesting greater heights in the clouds than there were depths below them to the bottom of the deepest hollows in the earth, through which the wild moon seemed to plunge headlong, as if, in a dread disturbance of the laws of nature, she had lost her way.¹⁵⁹

People in Ipswich told him of 'great sheets of lead having been ripped off a high church-tower, and flung into a by-street'.¹⁶⁰ Then, he reaches the coast:

The tremendous sea itself, when I could find sufficient pause to look at it, in the agitation of the blinding wind, the flying stones and sand, and the awful noise, confounded me. As the high watery walls came rolling in, and, at their highest, tumbled into surf, they looked as if the least would engulf the town. As the receding wave swept back with a hoarse roar, it seemed to scoop out deep caves in the beach, as if its purpose were to undermine the

earth. When some white-headed billows thundered on, and dashed themselves to pieces before they reached the land, every fragment of the late whole seemed possessed by the full might of its wrath, rushing to be gathered to the composition of another monster. Undulating hills were changed to valleys, undulating valleys (with a solitary storm-bird sometimes skimming through them) were lifted up to hills; masses of water shivered and shook the beach with a booming sound; every shape tumultuously rolled on, as soon as made, to change its shape and place, and beat another shape and place away; the ideal shore on the horizon, with its towers and buildings, rose and fell; the clouds fell fast and thick; I seemed to see a rending and upheaving of all nature.¹⁶¹

It is difficult to imagine the character David achieving such sublime writing, where the natural world is not merely a framing device, but a presence. Dickens here, like Coleridge and Wordsworth before him, becomes what Tiiu Speek calls ‘the environmentally conscious writer’ who ‘refuses to allow “mind” or “language” or “history” or “culture” to determine what nature can be,’ and affirms that ‘the mystery out there is the ultimate judge of all human meanings’;¹⁶² or the ‘Great universal Teacher’, in Coleridge’s words.¹⁶³ Dickens’s imagination creates genuine catharsis here, with what Lawrence Buell terms ‘verbalizations that are not replicas but equivalents of the world of object’,¹⁶⁴ reminiscent of the storm scenes in *King Lear*. It’s no coincidence that Dickens names this chapter ‘Tempest’. The force of the storm disturbs the natural order, and creates chaos. In his previous storm scenes Dickens felt the need to spell out the link between external weather and internal state of mind: as Martin Chuzzlewit battles with the dawn rainstorm in Chapter 13, Dickens comments ‘the range of view within the solitary traveller was quite as cheerless as the scene without’.¹⁶⁵ And in the first storm scene in *Barnaby Rudge* he tells us that ‘those who are bent on daring enterprises [...] feel a mysterious sympathy with the tumult of nature, and are roused into corresponding violence’. ‘What is wonderful always goes together with a sense of dismay’,¹⁶⁶ Longinus wrote in the earliest treatise *On the Sublime*: in this storm scene Dickens makes us experience the wonder and dismay, rather than telling us about them. His imaginative engagement with the scene is such that there is no need for Dickens to say anything about what’s going on in Steerforth’s mind as the man he has betrayed tries to save him, or in Ham’s mind as he realises for whom he is forfeiting his life; the storm does it for him, leaving us, with David, as mere onlookers in this cosmic drama. ‘Human meanings’, in Speek’s phrase, are created and directed by natural forces. The imagery here is at once psychological and organic, a living presence in the drama, and shows the beginnings of a new level of assimilation of the Romantic legacy.

Great Expectations: a Novel without a Hero?

The organically structured, psychologically revealing type of imagery identified as a key element of the Romantic legacy is confined in *David Copperfield* to the one tremendous scene. In *Great Expectations* it informs the tenor and structure of the whole novel. The Kent marshes bordering the Medway are the scene of Pip’s earliest memories; not only do they reflect and express his

childhood psyche, they largely form it: 'My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things' was gained there, he tells us on the novel's first page:

I found out [...] that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes, and that the low leaden line beyond, was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea; and that the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip.¹⁶⁷

Jane Avner analyses the effect of the writing here: 'his rising terror, so finely and comically inscribed in the emphatic repetition and accelerating rhythms of Dickens's paratactic syntax, organises Pip's world as surely as the naming of its parts'.¹⁶⁸ 'Quintessential Dickens', Peter Coveney writes of this opening: 'Dickens's children tend to move in a world of terror, fantasy, melodrama, and death. In one sense, he continued, throughout his life, to see the world with children's eyes'.¹⁶⁹ Iain Crawford compares this opening scene with Wordsworth's 'We Are Seven',¹⁷⁰ and comments 'never again in his narrative will Pip be far from either the fact or sense of death'.¹⁷¹ The import of the whole is prefigured here.

Fred Kaplan writes of Dickens's intentions in *Great Expectations*: 'From the start, he had no doubt that it would be autobiographical, and he soon reread *David Copperfield* in order to avoid unintentional repetition, "affected by it to a degree you would hardly believe"'.¹⁷² Given this confession, and Kaplan's intriguing if unwritten hint of intentional repetition in what was to be a second essay in fictional autobiography, a second *Prelude*, some correspondence between the two was perhaps inevitable. From the start, the themes of 'rigorously defamiliarized' domestic units, in Furneaux's phrase,¹⁷³ and 'inadequate, or downright culpable, parents and hapless, innocent child-victims', in Slater's,¹⁷⁴ are as central to this later first-person narrative as they are to the first. Pip's parents and all but one of his siblings are buried in the churchyard where the narrative begins. His one surviving relative, a sister, is bad-tempered and violent: 'I often served her as a connubial missile', Pip recalls ruefully.¹⁷⁵ As in the evocation of Creakle in *David Copperfield*, humour is a more effective fictional device than righteous indignation. Her husband and target of the missile, blacksmith Joe Gargery, was 'glad to get hold of me on any terms',¹⁷⁶ to protect Pip from her violent temper. 'Joe Gargery treats childhood with reverence',¹⁷⁷ Holly Furneaux notes. Joe is the only source of love and affection that Pip knows as a child. As Catherine Waters writes, 'Pip's descriptions of his sister and Joe seem almost to reverse the traits typically associated with the masculine and feminine ideals in Victorian fiction',¹⁷⁸ which accords with Jonathan Bate's perception of a 'realignment of gender roles' in 'Frost at Midnight'.¹⁷⁹ In Dickens's working notes for the novel Joe is referred to as a 'Ministering Angel': a role 'customarily reserved for women', Malcolm Andrews writes.¹⁸⁰ As with David, the only effective parenting comes from someone who is not a blood relative. Estella's upbringing at the hands of Miss Havisham, and the interrelationship of each of them, and Pip, to the two convicts Magwitch and Compeyson, are at the heart of the novel's mystery and meaning.

Pip is also akin to David Copperfield in his lack of active engagement in the novel's climactic events, and in his questionable status as hero of his own story. As Annie Sadrin points out, the 'real actants' in the drama are 'Magwitch, Jaggers, Wemmick, Compeyson, Orlick', criminals and lawyers 'so ambiguously connected as to seem but one'.¹⁸¹ And G. K. Chesterton describes *Great Expectations* as 'a novel without a hero [...] I mean that it is a novel which aims chiefly at showing that the hero is unheroic'.¹⁸² Whereas some readers, as noted previously, have accepted David as the hero of his narrative, an 'ideal character',¹⁸³ it is not tenable to see Pip in the same light. His character is as sensitive and imaginative as David's. But here the similarities end. The earliest childhood experiences of this later first-person narrator are altogether less comfortable and reassuring than those of the infant David. Indeed the trappings of middle-class security and status into which David was born are altogether absent in Pip's case. The narrator and central character of this second full-length first-person narrative is a character whom David Copperfield, and Dickens in 1850, would have regarded as beyond the pale, like Mick Walker and Mealy Potatoes; its central theme is the illusory nature, materially and morally, of those same trappings of class that David, and Dickens, clung to so tenaciously ten years earlier. None of the many characters in *David Copperfield* who are shipped to the colonies ever returns; Magwitch's return in *Great Expectations* is pivotal. The radically altered tone and texture of the later novel from the earlier lie precisely in this reconfiguration of Dickens's imaginative sympathies. 'Great Expectations is the most understated work by a writer not usually known for understatement', David Trotter notes: 'its virtues flow from its compactness'.¹⁸⁴

Most contemporary reviewers were equally positive, regarding it as a welcome return to form. The *Saturday Review*, having been dismissive of Dickens's novels of the 1850s, hailed *Great Expectations* as 'a story that is new, original, powerful, and very entertaining'.¹⁸⁵ Edwin P. Whipple wrote in the *Atlantic Monthly*: 'In *Great Expectations*' [...] Dickens seems to have attained the mastery of powers which formerly more or less mastered him'. Whipple offers real insight into the nature of the novel's imagery:

The poetical elements of the writer's genius, his modification of the forms, hues and sounds of Nature by viewing them through the medium of an imagined mind, is especially prominent throughout the descriptions with which the work abounds. Nature is not only described, but individualized and humanized.¹⁸⁶

The first actual human that the young Pip meets in the novel is the escaped convict Magwitch, 'a fearful man, all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg',¹⁸⁷ who rises from the gravestones in the churchyard, as from the dead, and seizes the terrified child:

The man ... turned me upside-down and emptied my pockets. There was nothing in them but a piece of bread. When the church came to itself – for he was so sudden and strong that he made it go head over heels before me, and I saw the steeple under my feet – when the

church came to itself, I say, I was seated on a high tombstone trembling, while he ate the bread ravenously.¹⁸⁸

Pip's whole story is encapsulated in this brilliant image; for him, Magwitch turns the church, symbol of social, moral and spiritual rectitude and stability, upside down. He terrifies the sensitive child into stealing food and a file for him, and Pip experiences a deep sense of guilt and shame for stealing from his sister and Joe. He feels that his encounter with Magwitch has made him a criminal outcast too, and that he will end up on the convict ship if people find out what he has done.

Character and Environment

'The great works of Dickens's major phase', Peter Coveney writes, 'are peopled with characters dominated by their environment, and especially by their childhood. *Hard Times* and *Great Expectations* are in their entirety but variations on this theme'.¹⁸⁹ This abiding image of the wild, inhospitable Kent marshes, and their effect on Pip's character and experience, is counterpoised by the extraordinary vision of the ironically named Satis House and its mistress, the jilted bride Miss Havisham:

I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress, and like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes
[...] I should have cried out, if I could.¹⁹⁰

Pip plays cards with Miss Havisham's beautiful ward Estella: 'She threw the cards down on the table when she had won them all, as if she despised them'. Like Steerforth she wins every time, but it means nothing to her. She mocks Pip's working-class manners and vocabulary, and teaches him to look down on himself and on Joe. The disturbing, Gothic image of Miss Havisham and her mouldering surroundings, in which 'no glimpse of daylight was to be seen',¹⁹¹ is a haunting symbol of the consequences of trying to 'stop the clock', and the imperatives of movement and change: themes which will be explored in Chapter 2. Catherine Waters notes perceptively that the evocation of Satis House 'lays great emphasis upon the exclusion of 'nature' from the ghostly building'.¹⁹² The image acts as a stark contrast to the equally inhospitable but 'natural' image of the marshes, and together these two images act as recurrent, structural presences within the novel; Miss Havisham the presiding spirit of the one, and Magwitch of the other.

When Pip learns that he has a benefactor who is to finance his education and a genteel lifestyle, he becomes ever more estranged from Joe Gargery, the one person who has shown him love. Humphrey House's observation that David Copperfield is always 'Mas'r Davy' to the Peggottys could apply equally to Pip and Joe for most of the novel. As Miss Havisham is the only wealthy person he knows, he assumes that she is the source of his great expectations, and that she intends him to marry Estella, with whom he falls passionately in love. He sees his expectations as rooted in Satis House, an escape from the 'common' world of the marshes, and from the guilt and shame of his forgotten childhood encounter with Magwitch. He moves to London, and cultivates

genteel acquaintances, including the boorish Bentley Drummle, whom Pip dislikes intensely but to whom he is desperate not to reveal his humble origins. When Joe Gargery comes on a visit, Pip is embarrassed: 'I had the sharpest sensitiveness as to his being seen by Drummle, whom I held in contempt. So', the mature Pip muses, 'throughout life, our worst weaknesses and meannesses are usually committed for the sake of the people whom we most despise.'¹⁹³

The return of Magwitch from Australia is a turning-point in Pip's life. Magwitch's revelation that he is Pip's benefactor destabilises Pip's world and his values, turns them upside-down just as his first appearance had done to Pip as a child. His affluence and genteel life, which he had considered morally beyond reproach, is based, he realises, on the wealth of a transported convict. Magwitch revels in Pip's comfortable rooms, and his books, and the fact that he, a convict, can make 'a gentleman'. But he is as deceived as Pip has been:

I reluctantly gave him my hands. He grasped them heartily, raised them to his lips, kissed them, and still held them.

"You acted noble, my boy," said he. "Noble, Pip! And I have never forgot it!"¹⁹⁴

Pip's motives for helping Magwitch were anything but noble: he stole the food and the file because he feared for his life, terrified by the intensity of Magwitch's threats. Pip's rise to affluence and gentility, then, is founded at every stage on illusion and self-deceit. He tries to mitigate the uncouth wildness of his patron by dressing him in fine clothes, but he still exudes 'a savage air that no dress could tame'.¹⁹⁵ And at this point Dickens has Pip evoke a startling reversal of the key relationship in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*:

The imaginary student pursued by the misshapen creature he had impiously made, was not more wretched than I, pursued by the creature who had made me, and recoiling from him with a stronger repulsion, the more he admired me and the fonder he was of me.¹⁹⁶

Iain Crawford has read *Great Expectations* as 'an elaborate reworking of its predecessor [...] both a completion of and antithesis to Shelley's work.'¹⁹⁷ Certainly, the role-reversal here is entirely consonant with the moral reversals that Magwitch's revelations bring about in Pip's mind. Dickens's introduction into this morality tale about growth and development from childhood into adulthood, of the 'misshapen creature' with no childhood, no phase of growth, no parental guidance into adulthood, and no expectations, deepens the sense of catastrophe in this pivotal scene.

Pip's self-deceit with regard to Estella and Miss Havisham also then dawns on him: she brought Pip to Satis House so that he might fall in love with Estella and suffer as she has suffered. He visits them at the House, only to be told by Miss Havisham: 'You made your own snares. I never made

them'.¹⁹⁸ When he declares his lasting love for Estella, she tells him that she is incapable of love. Pip appeals to the Romantic notions of 'Nature', with a capital 'N'. Estella's reply is lower-case:

"You, so young, untried, and beautiful, Estella! Surely it is not in Nature."

"It is in *my* nature," she returned.¹⁹⁹

It was Miss Havisham's teaching: 'the most bizarre example of maternal deviance in the novel',²⁰⁰ Catherine Waters suggests, that made Estella heartless, as she later confesses to Pip.²⁰¹ She marries the equally heartless, boorish Bentley Drummle, but this is not the end of Pip's undeceiving: he discovers that Magwitch is Estella's father, that she was born, for all her superior airs, no more 'genteel' than he. The essence of Dickens's achievement in *Great Expectations* is his realisation of what Randolph Shaffner calls a 'release from bondage to false ideals'.²⁰² Ben Parker asserts that 'Dickens's novels are unthinkable without their elaborate revelations and overturning of identities'.²⁰³ In *David Copperfield* this 'overturning' is confined to Steerforth, Latimer and Uriah Heep, while David's aspirations and trust in middle-class values are vindicated and realised in his narrative. In *Great Expectations*, however, Pip's identity is indeed overturned at the end of the novel, mirroring his physical overturning by Magwitch at the beginning. His dreams of a 'better' life, his confidence in the innate superiority of middle-class manners and values, and of the innate goodness of physical beauty, prove to be based on deceit and illusion. As Parker comments: 'what Pip arrives at through the disclosure of his benefactor's identity is only the sum of his disillusiones — the revealed concatenation of false hopes and disappointments, of ties dissolved and betrayed'.²⁰⁴ Even David's unconvincing success and 'happy ending', as we have seen, is achieved at a price, the price of relegation to the role of bystander in his own life. As Dominic Rainsford writes:

In the most autobiographical novels, *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*, it is a sufficiently hard undertaking just to construct and hang on to a single workable self, and doing so requires the renunciation of many contacts with the world at large, and of many bright notions of who one might, oneself, have been.²⁰⁵

Dickens is much less concerned with education and schooling in this later novel than he was in *David Copperfield*, though he continued to campaign for more progressive education in his journalism and speeches. Pip's education does not have the cruelty of Salem House – instead we have Mr. Wopsle's great-aunt's comatose classes in Chapter 10, and Pip's private studies with Mr. Pocket in Chapter 23; and Dickens draws out their shortcomings with his usual wit and humanity. But education is not a central issue here. Dickens's interest in childhood and children is as strong as ever, but in this novel it is more focused on the ways in which environment and adults, rather than schooling, shape a child's growth and development. Magwitch and Miss Havisham, the presiding spirits of the two central symbolic places in the novel, both formed children to take revenge on Compeyson, the genteel criminal who blighted both their lives. Magwitch grooms Pip

to be a 'gentleman', more 'genteel' than Compeyson; while Miss Havisham grooms Estella to be heartless and cold, to hurt men in the way that Compeyson jilted her. In each case, Dickens makes clear, the grooming is 'unnatural', and only leads to misery and bitterness being passed on to the next generation. We are reminded of Philip Larkin's famous, not to say infamous poem 'This Be The Verse': 'Man hands on misery to man. / It deepens like a coastal shelf'.²⁰⁶

In both Pip and Estella, Dickens successfully traces the ways in which childhood experiences and influences can shape an individual's adulthood. Robert L. Patten suggests that Dickens 'was interested in children's *development*, their growth into maturity, character and occupation, their maturation into loving, effective, and responsible adults.'²⁰⁷ But he was at least as interested in cases where this development is thwarted and perverted, as in this novel. Patten continues: 'The early works cannot imagine a coherent, continuous line of progress from birth to middle age.'²⁰⁸ By this measure, *David Copperfield* is an early work, David's eventual poise seeming, as Malcolm Andrews says, 'willed rather than achieved, factitious rather than inevitable.'²⁰⁹ There is no trace of his childhood traumas in the adult David. Wordsworth's famous adage 'The Child is Father of the Man'²¹⁰ does not ring true in *David Copperfield*. But it does in *Great Expectations*. The adult Pip is entirely the product of his childhood experiences; the same can be said of Estella. Central to Dickens's achievement in this novel is the fact that it is, in Chesterton's words, 'a novel without a hero'.²¹¹ But there is one character who might qualify. Joe Gargery, the unschooled, hard-working blacksmith, is free from the taint of selfishness and bitterness. Not Pip's biological father, he shows him unconditional love, and sets an example of moral integrity that Pip recognises even when he cannot emulate it. Pip may 'act noble',²¹² but Joe is the real thing. Dirk den Hartog calls Joe 'the creator and representative of Pip's beneficent Wordsworthian past', and comments: 'Pip's betrayal of him in quest of the troubled pleasures of gentility, and his subsequent return, enact a path of estrangement and restoration that stands as a qualified version of the spiritual-cum-psychological autobiography Wordsworth had traced in *The Prelude*'.²¹³ If Steerforth is the Byronic hero of *David Copperfield*, then it is Joe, the hard-working, steadfast countryman, who is the Wordsworthian hero of *Great Expectations*, descendant of the Leech-gatherer, the shepherd Michael, and the Solitary Reaper. In *David Copperfield* there is no sense in which David identifies with or aspires to the Wordsworthian qualities that Dan Peggotty represents; in *Great Expectations* these qualities are far more deeply integrated into the novel's meaning, an embodiment of 'something that one side of Dickens yearned towards but could not be',²¹⁴ as Dirk den Hartog perceptively suggests. And while Daniel Peggotty is shipped off to the colonies and never has children, Joe remains in the home country of the novel, and continues his line in marriage to Biddy.

I suggested earlier that the Medway marshes and Satis House, with their presiding spirits Magwitch and Miss Havisham, act as structural presences in *Great Expectations*. But by the end both are dead, and Satis House has been burned to the ground; the sources of all the false expectations are gone. Only the marshes remain, and if they have a presiding spirit now, it is Joe. Malcolm Andrews characterises the relationship between Pip and Joe at the end of the novel:

The difference between them now is one of moral stature: Joe is the giant in every sense; the grown-up Pip is reduced to that “small bundle of shivers” to whom we were introduced at the opening [...] [Joe] is perhaps the most impressive example in Dickens of a man who blends in himself a childlike simplicity and openness with a mature wisdom and humanity. He is an exemplary grown-up child.²¹⁵

This shift, from the flamboyant, amoral Steerforth, to the unspectacular, humane and loving Joe, reflects a parallel shift in the nature of Dickens’s relationship to his Romantic legacy. In *David Copperfield* the influence of Romanticism is felt mainly in the moulding of key characters, in Dickens’s radical anger at the mistreatment of children, and in the imaginative intensity of the storm scene. But the core values of the society depicted are never seriously questioned. *David Copperfield* remains a Victorian novel, imbued with that characteristic optimism that problems will be solved. There is no such confidence in *Great Expectations*: Dickens confronts the morality and social values of his time, and exposes their hollowness, in his narrator and in every other character except Joe Gargery. The children that emerge, and the adults they become, are worlds away from the celebratory, inspirational creations of Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge. But their power to move us lies precisely in the fact that Dickens’s portrayal of them is predicated on the Romantic image of the child as touchstone and implicit reproach, and on the spectre, raised explicitly by Dickens, of Mary Shelley’s chilling corrective. Without this context they would lose all resonance.

Great Expectations is regarded by many commentators as among Dickens’s most successful works. John Cowper Powys chose it to represent Dickens in his *One Hundred Best Books*: ‘His imagination plays superb tricks with [...] objects and things, touching the most dilapidated of them with a magic such as the genius of a great poet uses’.²¹⁶ W. J. Harvey writes that *Great Expectations* ‘achieves an economy, firmness, and clean-cut clarity of control that can only be called classical’.²¹⁷ As Dirk den Hartog suggests, *Great Expectations* is the closest that Dickens had come thus far to writing his own *Prelude*, set in and structured by his own ‘finely wrought landscape of memory and imagination’, in Jane Avner’s words,²¹⁸ just as Wordsworth’s is. As Dickens’s children are more complex, less innocent, than their Romantic predecessors, so his evocation of nature is less benevolent, teaching an altogether more ambivalent lesson to the child. In this novel Dickens has come to terms with the anxiety of influence, creating an authentic space for his own art, a space from which Thomas Hardy, Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence would forge an identity for the novel in the decades after Dickens’s death and into the twentieth century. Fred Kaplan explains Dickens’s achievement in *Great Expectations* in these terms: ‘Dickens created transmutations of the important people and relationships in his life, some of it in fantasy terms, much of it, for the first time, both realistic and personally liberating, an adult fairy tale close enough to the reality to allow him to align his inner needs with his personal myths’.²¹⁹ This

alignment, which is at the heart of Dickens's achievement in *Great Expectations*, is made possible by Dickens's mature assimilation of the values and questioning spirit of Romanticism.

¹ DC p. 225.

² GE p. 250.

³ BR p. 280.

⁴ BR p. 281.

⁵ BH p. 43.

⁶ Geoffrey Hempill, *The Anxiety of Presence: Charles Dickens and the Self in Time*, A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the City University of New York, 2007, p. 295.

⁷ *Bleak House* contains passages of first-person narrative by the character Esther Summerson, but *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations* are the only novels in which the narrative is wholly first-person.

⁸ Philip Collins, *Dickens and Education* (London: Macmillan, 1964), p. 1.

⁹ Robin Gilmour, *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830-1890* (London: Longman, 1993), p. 10.

¹⁰ Peter Coveney, *The Image of Childhood. The Individual and Society: a Study of the Theme in English Literature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), Chapters 2-5, pp. 52-161. The book was first published in 1957 under the title *Poor Monkey* (London: Rockliff).

¹¹ Coveney, 1967, pp. 50-51.

¹² Joanna Innes, 'Origins of the Factory Acts: the Health and Morals of Apprentices Act, 1802', in *Law, Crime and English Society: 1660-1840*, ed. by Norma Landau (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 230-55. Innes writes that although the act was 'poorly enforced', it was at least 'a starting point' for subsequent legislation (p.230).

¹³ Innes p. 231.

¹⁴ Andrew Bell, *An Experiment in Education, Made at the Male Asylum of Madras. Suggesting a System by which a school or Family may teach itself under the Superintendence of the Master or Parent* (London: Cadell and Davies/Edinburgh: W. Creech, 1797).

¹⁵ Joseph Lancaster, *Improvements in Education, as it respects the industrious classes of the community: containing a short account of its present state, hints towards its improvement, and a detail of some practical experiments conducive to that end* (London: Darton and Harvey, J Mathews, and W. Hatchard, 1803).

¹⁶ Bell, p. 17.

¹⁷ Bell, p. 27.

¹⁸ Lancaster, p. 81.

¹⁹ Lancaster, p. 82.

²⁰ Lancaster, p. 82.

²¹ [Robert Southey], 'Bell and Lancaster's Systems of Education', *Quarterly Review* Vol. VI, 1811, pp. 264-304 (p. 285). Southey reprinted his memories of the lecture in his book *The Origin, Nature, and Object of the New System of Education* (London: John Murray, 1812), pp. 95-96.

²² Henry Crabb Robinson, letter to Mrs Clarkson of 7th May 1808, in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lectures 1808-1819 on Literature*, ed. by R. A. Foakes (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), Vol. I, pp. 105-09 (p. 105).

²³ Crabb Robinson, in Foakes, Vol.I, p. 106.

-
- ²⁴ Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1971), pp. 82-84.
- ²⁵ Anonymous report of Coleridge's lecture of 18th November 1813, *Bristol Gazette* 25th November 1813, in Foakes, Vol.I, p. 585.
- ²⁶ See for example the testimony of Norfolk vicar William Wayte Andrew, who recalled how as a child 'he carried the lamp for his drunken schoolmaster two miles upon a dark night until the schoolmaster collapsed over a heap of stones': Owen Chadwick, *Victorian Miniature* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1997), p. 181.
- ²⁷ Sally Ledger, *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 1.
- ²⁸ 'Frost at Midnight' ll. 37, 51-65: CPW, pp. 241-42.
- ²⁹ Lisa Ottum, 'Reading, Romanticism, and Affect in Environmental Education', in *Wordsworth and the Green Romantics: Affect and Ecology in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Lisa Ottum and Seth T. Reno (Durham, New Hampshire: University of New Hampshire Press, 2016), pp. 208-32 (p. 211).
- ³⁰ Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth* (London: Picador, 2000), p. 112.
- ³¹ For a succinct discussion of the picturesque see Dabney Townsend, 'The Picturesque', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 55, (1997), 365-376.
- ³² Richard Holmes, *Coleridge: Early Visions* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989), p. 8. The influence of Coleridge's poem on *The Prelude* was present from its inception. The 1799 two-part version of *The Prelude* quotes from 'Frost at Midnight', First Part, l. 8, and Second Part, ll. 496-97: TP1799, p. 513.
- ³³ Originally one of the *Songs of Innocence*, Blake later assigned this poem to the *Songs of Experience* section of the complete *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1794).
- ³⁴ Coleridge did read and comment upon Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*: see Peter Ackroyd, *Blake* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1995), p. 327, and Richard Holmes, *Coleridge: Darker Reflections* (London: Harper Collins, 1998), pp. 473-74. 'What particularly struck him was Blake's radical understanding of child-exploitation', Holmes comments (p. 474).
- ³⁵ Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction. Third Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. xx.
- ³⁶ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude: or, Growth of a Poet's Mind (Text of 1805)*, ed. by Ernest de Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1969) ll. 233-34, 241-42, p.73. The dedication to Coleridge is on p. 40. Completed in 1805 but not published until 1850, the poem's ideas were in circulation almost immediately among Wordsworth's circle. Coleridge wrote a poem 'To William Wordsworth' based on his reactions to hearing Wordsworth read *The Prelude* aloud in 1806: CPW pp.403-08.
- ³⁷ *Prelude (1805)* ll. 292-93, p.75.
- ³⁸ *Prelude (1805)* ll.436-37, 442-49, p.79.
- ³⁹ For a discussion of the history of the term see Jose Maria Rodriguez Garcia, 'Scientia Potestas Est - Knowledge Is Power: Francis Bacon to Michel Foucault', *Neohelicon*, 28 (2001) 109-21.
- ⁴⁰ ATYR 16th January 1869: DJ4 p.374.
- ⁴¹ Jonathan Jones, 'Orphans: Childhood Alienation and the Idea of the Self in Rousseau, Wordsworth and Mary Shelley', a Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English, University of Warwick 2003, p. 152.
- ⁴² James K. Chandler, *Wordsworth's Second Nature: a Study of the Poetry and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) p. 112.
- ⁴³ Morag Styles, *From the Garden to the Street: an Introduction to 300 Years of Poetry for Children* (London: Cassel, 1998), p.4.
- ⁴⁴ Malcolm Andrews, *Dickens and the Grown-up Child* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), p. 35. The trend was set as early as 1779 by Anna Lætitia Barbauld's *Lessons for Children*, and continued into the new century with Anne and Jane Taylor's *Original Poems* (1804-5).

-
- ⁴⁵ There were of course isolated exceptions, such as Jane Johnson, the subject of Evelyn Arizpe and Morag Styles's study *Reading Lessons from the Eighteenth Century: Mothers, Children and Texts* (Lichfield: Pied Piper Publishing, 2006).
- ⁴⁶ 'Christabel' ll. 656-61: *CPW* p. 235.
- ⁴⁷ 'France: an Ode' ll. 27, 39-40: *CPW* p. 245.
- ⁴⁸ Anonymous review, *British Critic*, XIII, (June 1799), 662-63 (p. 663).
- ⁴⁹ Anonymous review attributed to C. L. Moody, *Monthly Review*, XXIX, (May 1799), 43-47 (p. 47). For the attribution see B. C. Nangle, *The Monthly Review, Second Series, 1790-1815: Indexes of Contributors and Articles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), p.104.
- ⁵⁰ Peter Newbon, 'Representations of Childhood in the Wordsworth Circle', a Dissertation Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Kings College Cambridge 2011, pp. 17, 18.
- ⁵¹ [William Hazlitt], 'Mr. Coleridge's Christabel', *Examiner*, (2 June 1816), 348-49 (p.349). For the attribution see *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. by P. P. Howe (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1933), Volume 19, p. 338.
- ⁵² Richard Cronin surveys early biographies and biographical novels about Byron and Shelley in *Romantic Victorians: English Literature, 1824-1840* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 15-44. Mary Shelley characterised the two in her novel *The Last Man* (1826) as 'antithetical types', Cronin writes: Byron 'the man of power, who aspires to be another Napoleon', and Shelley 'the man of knowledge, content with his books' (p. 36).
- ⁵³ 'Julian and Maddalo' ll. 144-46: *SPW* p. 193.
- ⁵⁴ 'Julian and Maddalo' ll. 166-75: *SPW* p. 193.
- ⁵⁵ Stiles, p.43.
- ⁵⁶ Jeffrey Robinson, 'Occupy Romanticism', a paper given at the Poetry & Revolution International Conference at the CPRC, Birkbeck College, University of London, Friday 25 May 2012 - Sunday 27 May 2012 (27 May 2012, p.1) downloaded from: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/cprc/events/Jeffrey_C_Robinson_-_Poetry_and_Revolution_conference_paper.pdf (accessed 6.1.15).
- ⁵⁷ Mary Shelley, 'Author's Introduction to the Standard Novels Edition' (1831), *MSF*, pp. 05-10 (p. 8).
- ⁵⁸ Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (London: John Murray, 2000), p. 40.
- ⁵⁹ *MSF* p. 88. 'Frost at Midnight' l. 16, 'the sole unquiet thing', *CPW* p.240.
- ⁶⁰ *The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, ed. by Betty T. Bennett, 3 vols (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press 1980-88) Vol. 2, p. 215.
- ⁶¹ Maurice Hindle, 'Introduction', in *MSF*, p. xi.
- ⁶² According to Fiona MacCarthy, Byron had 'no real concept of domesticity': Fiona MacCarthy, *Byron: Life and Legend* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003) p.82.
- ⁶³ *MSF* p. 33.
- ⁶⁴ *MSF* pp. 52-53.
- ⁶⁵ *Prelude (1805)* ll. 292-93, p.75.
- ⁶⁶ *MSF* pp. 132, 135.
- ⁶⁷ *MSF* p. 124.
- ⁶⁸ *MSF* p. 124.
- ⁶⁹ Ottum, p. 211.
- ⁷⁰ *Prelude (1805)* ll. 372, p. 11.
- ⁷¹ *Prelude (1805)* ll. 388-427, pp. 11-12.
- ⁷² Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: The Prelude* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 58.
- ⁷³ *MSF* p. 28.
- ⁷⁴ Tiitu Speek, 'Environment in Literature: Lawrence Buell's Ecocritical Perspective', in *Proceedings of the Estonian Academy of Arts, December 4, 1998: Place and Location: Studies in Environmental*

Aesthetics and Semiotics, ed. by Kaia Lehari and Virve Sarapik. Tallinn, (Estonian Academy of Arts, 2000) pp. 160-71 (p. 170).

⁷⁵ *BL*, p. 167.

⁷⁶ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton' 1811-12, Lecture 9, in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lectures 1808-1819 on Literature*, ed. by R. A. Foakes, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), Volume 1, pp. 347-69 (pp. 358-68).

⁷⁷ *SPW*, p. 205.

⁷⁸ *SPW*, p. 205.

⁷⁹ For a succinct account of how the autobiographical fragment led to *David Copperfield*, see Claire Tomalin, *Charles Dickens: A Life* (London: Viking, 2011), pp.212-13.

⁸⁰ [Anon.], 'Charles Dickens and *David Copperfield*', *Fraser's Magazine*, December 1850, xlii, 698-710 (p. 698).

⁸¹ Holly Furneaux, 'Charles Dickens's Families of Choice: Elective Affinities, Sibling Substitution, and Homoerotic Desire', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 62 (2007), 153-192 (p. 153).

⁸² Malcolm Andrews, *Dickens and the Grown-up Child* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), p. 1.

⁸³ Michael Slater, *Charles Dickens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 22.

⁸⁴ *OT* p.80.

⁸⁵ Maria Teresa Chailant, 'The Adult Narrator's Memories of Childhood in David's, Esther's and Pip's Autobiographies', in *Dickens and the Imagined Child*, ed. by Peter Merchant and Catherine Waters (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 77-91 (p. 77).

⁸⁶ Andrews p. 135.

⁸⁷ Charles Dickens, 'Preface' to the Charles Dickens Edition, 1869: *DC*, p. 47.

⁸⁸ Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1990), pp. 256-57.

⁸⁹ John Cowper Powys, *The Pleasures of Literature* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd, 1938), p.119.

⁹⁰ Holly Furneaux, 'Dickens, Sexuality and the Body; or, Clock Loving: Master Humphrey's Queer Objects of Desire', in *Dickens and Modernity*, ed. by Juliet John (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012) pp. 41-60 (pp. 43, 44).

⁹¹ *DC* p. 141.

⁹² *BR* p. 682.

⁹³ *DC* p. 142.

⁹⁴ Andrews, p. 135.

⁹⁵ Clotilde De Stasio, 'Starvation vs Cramming: Children's Education and Upbringing in Charles Dickens and Herbert Spencer', *Dickens Quarterly*, 27 (2010), 299-306 (p. 299).

⁹⁶ *DC* p. 146.

⁹⁷ Collins, p. 11.

⁹⁸ De Stasio, p.299

⁹⁹ De Stasio, p. 300.

¹⁰⁰ *DC* p. 146.

¹⁰¹ *The Speeches of Charles Dickens*, ed. by K. J. Fielding (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 63.

¹⁰² The biblical phrase 'The One Thing Needful' (Luke 10:42) was to become the title of the famous opening chapter of *Hard Times* in 1854: *HT* p. 9. The novel is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

¹⁰³ *DC* p. 210.

¹⁰⁴ *DC* p. 216.

¹⁰⁵ *DC* p. 210.

¹⁰⁶ Kerry McSweeney, 'David Copperfield and the Music of Memory', *Dickens Studies Annual*, 23 (1994), pp. 93-119 (p. 97).

¹⁰⁷ Rosemarie Bodenheimer, 'Knowing and Telling in Dickens's Retrospects', in *Knowing and Telling the Past*, ed. by Suzy Anger (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 215-33 (pp. 220-21).

¹⁰⁸ *DC* p. 218.

¹⁰⁹ Catherine Waters, *Dickens and the Politics of the Family* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997),

p. 167.

¹¹⁰ [Anon.], 'Charles Dickens and *David Copperfield*', *Fraser's Magazine*, xliii (December 1850), 698-710, (p. 704).

¹¹¹ Samuel Philips, 'David Copperfield and Arthur Pendennis', *The Times*, 11th June 1851, p. 8.

¹¹² *DC* p. 49.

¹¹³ Angus Wilson, 'Dickens on Children and Childhood', in *Dickens 1970: Centenary Essays*, ed. by Michael Slater (London: Chapman and Hall, 1970), pp. 195-227 (p. 209).

¹¹⁴ Andrews, 1994, p. 139.

¹¹⁵ Slater, 2009, p.292.

¹¹⁶ Robert Newsom, 'Criticism and Scholarship: Biographical', in *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens: Anniversary Edition*, ed. by Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 135-37 (p. 136).

¹¹⁷ Letter to Forster [21 October 1850]: *SL*, p. 219.

¹¹⁸ *DC* p. 516.

¹¹⁹ *DC* p. 349.

¹²⁰ See, for example, James Harthouse in *Hard Times* (1854), Henry Gowan in *Little Dorrit* (1857), Sydney Carton in *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), and Eugene Wrayburn in *Our Mutual Friend* (1865).

¹²¹ Harriet Martineau, *Autobiography* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., three volumes, 1877), Volume I, p. 387.

¹²² Letter to Angela Burdett Coutts, 28th February 1843: *LCD* Vol. 3, p. 447.

¹²³ William R. Harvey, 'Charles Dickens and the Byronic Hero', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 24 (1969), 305-316 (p. 308).

¹²⁴ *DC* p. 368.

¹²⁵ *DC* p. 369.

¹²⁶ *DC* p. 380.

¹²⁷ *DC* p. 354.

¹²⁸ *DC* p. 80.

¹²⁹ *DC* p. 84.

¹³⁰ *DC* p. 87.

¹³¹ *DC* p. 86.

¹³² Samuel Taylor Coleridge

¹³³ Andrews, 1994, p. 141.

¹³⁴ *DC* p. 87.

¹³⁵ Claire Tomalin, *The Invisible Woman: the Story of Nelly Ternan and Charles Dickens* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), p. 47.

¹³⁶ Andrews, 1994, p. 142.

¹³⁷ *DC* p. 86.

¹³⁸ His work with Angela Burdett Coutts at Urania Cottage is well documented. See for example Michael Slater, *Dickens and Women* (London: Dent, 1983), pp. 342-3.

¹³⁹ Tomalin, p. 89.

¹⁴⁰ See *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact: Fin-de-siecle Feminisms*, ed. by Angélique Richardson and Chris Willis (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

¹⁴¹ *DC* p.83.

¹⁴² *DC* p.530.

¹⁴³ *DC* p.530.

¹⁴⁴ *DC* p.530.

¹⁴⁵ Humphrey House, *The Dickens World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 161.

¹⁴⁶ *DC* p.647.

¹⁴⁷ Andrews, 1994, p. 139.

-
- ¹⁴⁸ Jennifer Ruth, 'Mental Capital, Industrial Time, and the Professional in *David Copperfield*', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 32 no.3, 303-30 (p. 303).
- ¹⁴⁹ Ruth, p. 304.
- ¹⁵⁰ For a discussion of 'thing' theory and Dickens, see Juliet John, 'Things, Words and the Meanings of Art', in *Dickens and Modernity*, ed. by Juliet John (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 115-32.
- ¹⁵¹ *BR* p. 725.
- ¹⁵² [Anon.], 'Charles Dickens and David Copperfield', *Fraser's Magazine*, xlii (December 1850), 698-710 (p. 151).
- ¹⁵³ *Dickens: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Philip Collins (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 242.
- ¹⁵⁴ Andrew Sanders, 'Death and Funerals', in *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens: Anniversary Edition*, ed. by Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 154-55 (p.154).
- ¹⁵⁵ *OT* pp. 334-44.
- ¹⁵⁶ *OCS* pp. 635-39.
- ¹⁵⁷ There are two storm scenes in this novel: *BR* pp. 61-67, 314-24.
- ¹⁵⁸ *MC* pp. 273-74.
- ¹⁵⁹ *DC* p. 857.
- ¹⁶⁰ *DC* p. 857.
- ¹⁶¹ *DC* pp. 858-59
- ¹⁶² Speek, 2000, p. 170.
- ¹⁶³ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Frost at Midnight', l. 63: *CPW*, p.242.
- ¹⁶⁴ Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination. Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 98.
- ¹⁶⁵ *MC* p.274.
- ¹⁶⁶ Quoted in Harold Bloom, *The Anatomy of Influence: Literature as a Way of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 18.
- ¹⁶⁷ *GE* pp. 3-4.
- ¹⁶⁸ Jane Avner, 'A Medway Childhood: The Dickensian "arriere-pays"?' in *Dickens and the Imagined Child* ed. by Peter Merchant and Catherine Waters (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 93-110 (p.102).
- ¹⁶⁹ Coveney, 1967, p. 160.
- ¹⁷⁰ *WPW* p. 66.
- ¹⁷¹ Iain Crawford, 'Pip and the Monster: The Joys of Bondage', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 28 (1988), 625-48 (p. 633).
- ¹⁷² Fred Kaplan, *Dickens: A Biography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988), p. 432. The quotation is from a letter to Forster, dated 'early October 1860' by Jenny Hartley: *SL* p. 357.
- ¹⁷³ Furneaux 2007, p.153.
- ¹⁷⁴ Slater 2009, p. 22.
- ¹⁷⁵ *GE* p. 9.
- ¹⁷⁶ *GE* p. 9.
- ¹⁷⁷ Holly Furneaux, 'Childhood', in *Charles Dickens in Context*, ed. by Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 186-93 (p. 188).
- ¹⁷⁸ Catherine Waters, *Dickens and the Politics of the Family* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 153.
- ¹⁷⁹ Bate, 2000, p. 112.
- ¹⁸⁰ Andrews, 1994, p. 95.
- ¹⁸¹ Anny Sadrin, *Great Expectations* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), p. 156.
- ¹⁸² G. K. Chesterton, *Appreciations and Criticisms of the Works of Charles Dickens* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1911), p. 199.
- ¹⁸³ *Fraser's* December 1850, p. 704.

-
- ¹⁸⁴ David Trotter, 'Introduction', *Charles Dickens, Great Expectations*, ed. by Charlotte Mitchell (London, Penguin Books 1996), pp. vii-xx (p. vii).
- ¹⁸⁵ [Anon.], review of *Great Expectations*, *Saturday Review*, xii (1861), p. 69.
- ¹⁸⁶ [Edwin P. Whipple], *Atlantic Monthly*, viii (1861), pp. 380-82. For attribution see Collins 1971 p. 428.
- ¹⁸⁷ *GE* p. 4.
- ¹⁸⁸ *GE* p. 4.
- ¹⁸⁹ Coveney, 1967, p. 125.
- ¹⁹⁰ *GE* pp. 57-58.
- ¹⁹¹ *GE* p. 57.
- ¹⁹² Waters, 1997, p. 157.
- ¹⁹³ *GE* p. 218.
- ¹⁹⁴ *GE* p. 316.
- ¹⁹⁵ *GE* p. 337.
- ¹⁹⁶ *GE* p. 339.
- ¹⁹⁷ Crawford, 1988, p.625.
- ¹⁹⁸ *GE*, p. 360.
- ¹⁹⁹ *GE* p. 362.
- ²⁰⁰ Waters, 1997, p. 157.
- ²⁰¹ *GE* p. 398.
- ²⁰² Randolph Shaffner, *The Apprenticeship Novel: A Study of the 'Bildungsroman' as a Regulative Type in Western Literature, with a Focus on Three Classic Representatives by Goethe, Maugham and Mann* (New York: Peter Lang, 1984), p. 17.
- ²⁰³ Ben Parker, 'Unhappy Consciousness: Recognition and Reification in Victorian Fiction', Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Columbia University, 2014, p. 34.
- ²⁰⁴ Parker, p. 34.
- ²⁰⁵ Dominic Rainsford, 'Out of place: David Copperfield's Irresolvable Geographies', in *Dickens and Modernity*, ed. by Juliet John (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 193-208 (p. 194).
- ²⁰⁶ Philip Larkin, 'This Be The Verse' ll. 9-10, in *High Windows* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), p. 30.
- ²⁰⁷ Robert L. Patten, 'Whitewashing the Blacking Factory', *Dickens Studies Annual*, 46 (2015), 1-22 (p. 17).
- ²⁰⁸ Patten, 2015, *loc. cit.*
- ²⁰⁹ Andrews, 1994, p. 139.
- ²¹⁰ 'My Heart Leaps Up', l. 7: *WPW* p.62.
- ²¹¹ Chesterton, 1911, p. 199.
- ²¹² Magwitch's words: *GE* p. 316.
- ²¹³ Dirk den Hartog, *Dickens and Romantic Psychology: The Self in Time in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 131-32.
- ²¹⁴ Hartog, 1987, pp. 133-34.
- ²¹⁵ Andrews, 1994, p. 96.
- ²¹⁶ John Cowper Powys, *One Hundred Best Books: With Commentary and an Essay on Books and Reading* (New York: G.A. Shaw, 1916), p. 45.
- ²¹⁷ W. J. Harvey, 'Chance and Design in Bleak House', in *Dickens and the Twentieth Century*, ed. by John Gross and Gabriel Pearson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 145-57 (p. 146).
- ²¹⁸ Avner, 2015, p. 109.
- ²¹⁹ Kaplan, 1988, pp. 433-34.

Chapter 2: Time

This chapter will examine notions of time, and their practical and psychological impact upon human life, in poems by Coleridge, Keats and Byron. I will then explore how Dickens appropriated and developed these Romantic notions in *A Christmas Carol*, *Dombey and Son*, and *Our Mutual Friend*. The role of water imagery, common to all these writers' explorations of the theme, will be analysed.

Watches and Clocks

One of the by-products of the industrial revolution in the last decades of the eighteenth century was the exponential proliferation of instruments to measure time mechanically, watches for those who could afford them, and clocks on the towers of the new churches and public buildings of London and the great industrial cities, which tolled for all of their swelling populations the quarters of every hour. Pitt's government saw an opportunity to cash in on the proliferation with the Duties on Clocks and Watches Act of 1797¹. With the timepieces came factory sirens, exact working hours, deadlines and railway timetables that characterised the world of industrialised work and transport. James Secord notes 'how rapidly the sense of time and space in Britain was changing [...] Perceptions of time became bound up with factory discipline and railway scheduling'². The growing cultural gap between the way of life of those working people who remained in the country, whose lives and work were regulated as they had always been, by the natural rhythms of light and darkness, the weather and the seasons, and those who were drawn to the cities, can be characterised by their relationship to time. Raymond Williams warns against the age-old tendency to idealise or sentimentalise the 'pastoral', given the 'basically ruthless order' under which rural workers lived.³ Nor can it be assumed that mechanical time provided an objective measure. E. P. Thompson quotes a mid-century Dundee worker: 'The clocks at the factories were often put forward in the morning and back at night [...] all were afraid to speak, and a workman then was afraid to carry a watch, as it was no uncommon event to dismiss any one who presumed to know too much about the science of horology'.⁴ Hardship was common to country and city, but the new ways of measuring time created a new working culture in the city, and a gap between the ways in which time was measured in country and city. As a result of this gap, notions of time were in flux throughout the nineteenth century.

In the fiction that immediately preceded *Dombey and Son*,⁵ Charles Dickens leaves us in no doubt as to the extent to which the life and values of one of his most famous characters are grounded in the new culture of mechanically-measured time. 'The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already'⁶ on the Christmas Eve when we enter Scrooge's counting-house for the first time. There is an immediate mismatch between the winter darkness, which is the natural time for rest and sleep, and the city clocks which indicate that several hours' more work must be done. Scrooge and his clerk Bob Cratchit both stop work precisely

when ‘the hour of shutting up the counting-house arrived’, Scrooge ‘with an ill will’ and Bob ‘in a twinkling’⁷ – even a master’s inclination is bound by mechanical time. And Scrooge’s visitations by the three spirits, Jacob Marley tells him, will be heralded by the stroke of the clock:

‘Expect the first to-morrow, when the bell tolls one ... Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third upon the next night when the last stroke of twelve has ceased to vibrate.’⁸

Thus when Scrooge wakes up a changed man he thinks that he has missed Christmas altogether, and only learns from a child in the street that “‘I haven’t missed it. The spirits have done it all in one night. They can do anything they like. Of course they can”’.⁹ And the writer of fiction can do anything he/she likes; as Brian Sabey notes, ‘the hauntings that reawaken Scrooge’s ethical being both symbolize and instantiate the power of fictive texts to enable sympathetic engagement with others’.¹⁰ Dickens makes his own authorial presence felt quite clearly in this respect when he introduces the Ghost of Christmas Past, picturing Scrooge ‘face to face with the unearthly visitor [...] as close to it as I am to you, and I am standing in the spirit at your elbow.’¹¹ Sabey comments: ‘the narrator, as analogue of the ghost, is endowed with the same mission of reclamation, while the reader, as analogue of Scrooge, is implied to be in need of that reclamation’.¹² The essence of the required reclamation is a new notion of time, effectively a liberation from the rule of mechanical time. Scrooge is the only character in Dickens to see his own grave,¹³ the final jolt towards an awareness of mortality, natural time and decay. As Jennifer Ruth notes of Dickens’s fiction, ‘we *know* a character [...] by the way she or he treats time’.¹⁴ Scrooge’s very first words on waking up on Christmas morning are: “‘I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future! ... The spirits of all Three shall strive within me”’.¹⁵

The significance of this sense of liberation from mechanical time that Scrooge experiences had been a key theme in Romantic thought. In his sonnet ‘On the Sea’, John Keats notes its ‘eternal whisperings’, and urges those ‘who have your eye-balls vex’d and tir’d’ to ‘Feast them upon the wideness of the sea’.¹⁶ And in the sonnet ‘When I have fears that I may cease to be’ he explores his anxiety that he will run out of time before he can fully express ‘my teeming brain’, or ‘relish’ with ‘unreflecting love’ the ‘fair creature of an hour’ to whom the poem is addressed:

... then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.¹⁷

The idea of water: rivers and the sea, as images of the passing of time and of eternity, and of the seashore or riverbank as the gateway between life and death, is at least as old as the myths of Lethe and the Styx.¹⁸ Writing of London’s rivers, Peter Ackroyd points out the historical aptness of the metaphor: ‘the Tyburn [...] flowed in prehistory just as it flows now; it joins past and present in a perpetual embrace. We might be in Coleridge’s ‘Xanadu’

where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea'.¹⁹

Stephen Gill notes the ambiguity of the images of water: 'the element which from time immemorial has spoken of cleansing and rebirth as often as death and dissolution'.²⁰ It was memorably fused into English poetry by John Donne: 'I have a sinne of feare, that when I have spunne / My last thred, I shall perish on the shore'.²¹ Stephen Coote notes Keats's more specific debt to Shakespeare's Sonnet 64, with its 'theme of time the destroyer',²² but also stresses his 'commitment to an [...] honest engagement with the contemporary world'.²³ What Keats adds to the familiar imagery is the sense of solitude, of human beings as essentially alone when facing the ultimate truths of life and death; this is the note of what Coote calls 'an authentic modern poetry'²⁴ in this sonnet. Twenty years earlier, Coleridge had fixed this sense into the minds of English readers in his most famous poem: 'Alone, alone, all, all alone, / Alone on a wide wide sea!'.²⁵

Time, and its suspension, are central themes in the 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. It begins and ends in everyday time, but the central events of the Mariner's tale take place in a state of stasis, outside of time: 'Day after day, day after day, / We stuck, nor breath nor motion'.²⁶ And the Mariner's power over the Everyman figure of the Wedding Guest is, in essence, the power to wrest him away from the thralldom of everyday time; he forgets his hurry to meet his temporal commitments, and 'listens like a three years' child' to the Mariner's tale.²⁷ The link between natural, Coleridgean time and childhood was to play a key role in Dickens's treatment of the theme.

'The Ancient Mariner' and 'Christabel' were both written in 1797, the year of Pitt's Clocks and Watches Act. 'Christabel' embodies, from the opening line onwards, a parallel struggle with time, between the mechanical time of 'the castle clock' and one of the natural measures of time, 'the crowing cock':

'Tis the middle of the night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock;
Tu-whit!-Tu-whoo!
And hark, again! The crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.²⁸

Something is clearly amiss when mechanical time and natural time clash: instead of crowing for dawn, the cock crows, 'drowsily', in the middle of the night. The natural rhythms of time are dislocated.

The lives of the protagonists are punctuated by the castle clock and bells:

Each matin bell, the Baron saith,
Knells us back to a world of death
 ... a warning knell,
Which not a soul can choose but hear
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.²⁹

Although these two poems of Coleridge, with their consciously archaic language and medievalism, seem worlds away from the early years of the encroaching industrial revolution in which they were written, they are, in Coote's phrase, 'authentic modern poetry'³⁰ just as much as the Keats sonnets. Dometa Weigand analyses Coleridge's 'wrestling with [...] changing views of space and time as they grew out of the new astronomical theories' of Herschel, which 'shattered the Renaissance clockwork of unchanging, eternal, time'.³¹ 'The Ancient Mariner' and 'Christabel' explore very modern anxieties about the corrosive effects of mechanical time, which binds humans to 'a world of death', and the dangers of losing the sense of natural time with its cycle of life and renewal. The ambivalence that Gill noted in the image of water is central to Coleridge's thinking about time in these poems.

There is ambivalence too in the Romantic poets' treatment of the theme of solitude. In the final Canto of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, where Harold is, as Richard Bevis suggests, 'less a character, more a persona',³² the recurrent notion of solitude initially strikes a stern note:

'Tis solitude should teach us how to die;
It hath no flatterers; vanity can give
No hollow aid; alone – man with his God must strive.³³

Later in the Canto, however, Byron follows Keats in placing his protagonist on 'the lonely shore'; but whereas for Coleridge and Keats the prospect of facing the edge of time alone is terrifying, for Harold/Byron the solitude is now a blessing:

There is a rapture on the lonely shore
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar.³⁴

He prefers the company of the natural world to that of human beings, for 'Man marks the earth with ruin' – a clear rejection of the notion of material progress - yet 'his control Stops with the shore'³⁵ – an equally clear rejection of Godwinian ideas of human perfectibility. In 1804

Wordsworth had famously celebrated ‘that inward eye/Which is the bliss of solitude’ in the poem ‘I wandered lonely as a cloud’.³⁶ Andrew Warren makes a telling comparison: ‘Byron cannot [...] escape the unchanging solitude of himself. The imagination, Wordsworth’s engine of identification and unity, becomes for Byron an Orientalizing dream-machine’.³⁷ These poets shared common preoccupations, then, but their presentation of them differs widely: this goes some way to explaining the richness and diversity of the Romantic legacy to the nineteenth century and beyond.

Robin Gilmour has noted that the nineteenth-century discovery of ‘deep time’: ‘the aeonic time of geology and evolution’, is one of the most profound determinants of the culture and thought of the time, creating ‘the pervasive time-hauntedness of the era’.³⁸ In 1941 Humphrey House revealed Dickens’s creation of a dual sense of the passing of time, simultaneously fast and slow, in *Bleak House*.³⁹ From House, through Jerome Buckley’s pioneering 1966 study *The Triumph of Time: A Study of the Victorian Concepts of Time, History, Progress, and Decadence* to Trish Ferguson’s 2013 collection of essays *Victorian Time: Technologies, Standardizations, Catastrophes*, the theme of time in Victorian literature has been explored. E. P. Thompson’s essay ‘Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism’ (1967) charts the history of changing attitudes to time from 1300 to the mid-twentieth century, and Nina Auerbach’s ‘Dickens and Dombey: a Daughter After All’ (1985) explores the significance of the various timepieces in the novel. James E. Marlow’s *Charles Dickens: the Uses of Time* (1994) is a perceptive study of, among other things, the ways in which Dickens uses characters’ attitudes to time as an indicator of deeper traits, and a barometer of psychic, emotional health. Leon Litvic’s 2003 essay ‘Images of the River in *Our Mutual Friend*’⁴⁰ explores the nature of literary imagery in general, as well as analysing the specific imagery of that novel. And among many stimulating recent studies, Matthew Bevis explores Dickens’s fascination with clocks,⁴¹ while Daragh Downes’s essay on Dickens and time management traces the influence of strict, externally imposed deadlines, which Dickens experienced as a reporter for the *Morning Chronicle*, on his subsequent art.⁴² There has however been little exploration of the roots of Dickens’s attitudes to time in his Romantic forebears. What follows is an attempt to do just this: to explore how Dickens’s uses of time in his fiction have their roots in the Romantic ideas discussed earlier, and to place Dickens’s treatment of the theme of time within the larger context of the Romantic legacy.

Dombey and Son: Hides and Hearts

By the time Dickens began work on *Dombey and Son* in 1846, the polarity of thought and values between the Utilitarianism of Locke, Bentham and Mill, and the Humanism of the Romantic poets, was common currency. Mill’s essays on Bentham and Coleridge, published in the *Westminster Review* in 1838 and 1840, left readers in no doubt as to the centrality of this schism, hailing the two writers as ‘the two great seminal minds of England in their age’,⁴³ and the most representative of the two modes of thought: ‘every Englishman of the present day is by implication either a Benthamite or a Coleridgean’.⁴⁴ Mill’s characterisation of the two

philosophies: Bentham's 'Progressive', Coleridge's 'Conservative',⁴⁵ is undermined by his own critical perception of Bentham's limited awareness of human nature,⁴⁶ and of Coleridge's stark exposition of the failings of Conservative institutions – 'sufficient to make a Tory's hair stand on end'.⁴⁷

These two essays, and their basic distinctions, not only influenced almost all of Mill's subsequent work, but also helped to map the territory of philosophical, political, social, moral, and cultural debate in the mid-nineteenth century, achieving what Philip Connell rightly calls 'a paradigmatic status within literary-historical discussions of English Romanticism's nineteenth-century afterlife', portraying as they do 'a titanic struggle of ideas and feeling'.⁴⁸ This struggle is exemplified by attitudes to the gradual standardisation of time which was being implemented in Britain at the time when Mill wrote the two essays. 'In the 1840s', Matthew Bevis writes, 'many town clocks had two minute hands, one for local time (based on sunrise) and one for railway time (based first on the London time kept by St. Paul's, and later on Greenwich Mean Time)'.⁴⁹ In 1847 Henry Booth, secretary of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, argued that the ironing out of these anomalies was an essential prerequisite to progress, in his pamphlet *Uniformity of Time, Considered Especially in Reference to Railway Transit and the Operation of the Electric Telegraph*: 'there is sublimity in the idea of a whole nation stirred by one impulse; in every arrangement, one common signal regulating the movements of a mighty people!'.⁵⁰ The utilitarian thrust of Booth's argument is unmistakable, and it was implemented in the same year by the Railway Clearing House, the co-ordinating body of the railway companies, which urged that each railway adopt Greenwich time at all their stations. By 1855 it was estimated that 98% of the public clocks in Great Britain and Ireland were set to Greenwich Mean Time, according to Nigel Thrift.⁵¹ But Dickens himself deflated the 'sublimity' of these changes, and their human consequences, in the article 'An Unsettled Neighbourhood' which appeared in *Household Words* in 1854: 'the smallest child in the neighbourhood who can tell the clock, is now convinced that it hasn't time to say twenty minutes to twelve, but comes back and jerks out, like a little Bradshaw, 'Eleven forty.' Eleven forty!'.⁵² According to Courtney Ilbert, it was not until 1880, ten years after Dickens's death, that the complete synchronisation of time in Britain was formally sanctioned by the Statutes (Definition of Time) Act.⁵³

The first pages of *Dombey and Son* establish Mr Dombey's impeccable Utilitarian credentials. He sees his relationship to the world around him as one of 'mastery and possession', which are, as Jonathan Bate notes, 'the driving forces not only of science but also of capitalism'.⁵⁴

The earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in, and the sun and moon were made to give them light. Rivers and seas were formed to float their ships ... stars and planets circled in their orbits, to preserve inviolate a system of which they were the centre ... Dombey and Son had often dealt in hides, but never in hearts.⁵⁵

Dickens's opposition here of 'hides' and 'hearts' is crucial. Dombey's understanding of, and interest in the first is absolute, and tragically limited with regard to the second. His life revolves around 'dealings', as the title of the 1848 edition proclaims,⁵⁶ rather than personal relationships. Nina Auerbach interprets *Dombey and Son* as primarily an exploration of the consequences of Dombey's splitting his life and world into two opposing poles, the masculine domain of work and the feminine world of home.⁵⁷ This latter world is for Dombey merely 'the Home-Department',⁵⁸ and as Andrew Elfenbein writes, 'neither can survive when the home is run on the same principles that govern the office'.⁵⁹ The polarity of utilitarian and humanist values is equally relevant here: the parallels with Mill's analysis of Bentham's ignorance of 'the hearts of others'⁶⁰ are striking. Even under what Dickens calls the 'softening influence' of the birth of his son Paul, Dombey struggles to call his wife "'my dear'",⁶¹ and believes that as the spouse of such an exalted member of society as himself, she 'must have been happy ... she couldn't help it'.⁶² His six-year-old daughter Florence is of no value to him: 'what was a girl to Dombey and Son! In the capital of the house's name and dignity, such a child was merely a piece of base coin that couldn't be invested – a bad Boy – nothing more'.⁶³ Dombey simply doesn't have time for Florence. This 'complete devaluation of the daughter', Catherine Waters argues, 'indicates both her disqualification by gender as a business partner, and her subordination within a family defined by the practices of patrimonialism and patrilineality'.⁶⁴ Many commentators have seen the opposition between Dombey and Florence, and what Joss Lutz Marsh has highlighted as 'the excessive hostility of Dombey to his daughter',⁶⁵ as the central relationship of the novel, rather than the one suggested by its title. Auerbach, for example sees father and daughter as 'absolutes', 'polar deities' in a 'polarized novel'.⁶⁶ Just as the first sentence of *David Copperfield* raises the crucial question as to who is 'the hero' of the story,⁶⁷ these opening pages of *Dombey and Son* raise, however obliquely, questions about social and personal values, about inheritance and gender, which will be crucial to the novel's unfolding story.

In Dickens's writing, Geoffrey Hempill observes, attitudes to time are linked to values and morality: 'in essence, time is connected to existence, which in turn is connected to morality – this is the chain of ideas that governs the logic and composition of each of the later novels'.⁶⁸ *Dombey and Son* is for Hempill the first of these. As early as the second paragraph the theme of time is introduced, along with baby Paul:

On the brow of Dombey, Time and his brother Care had set some marks, as on a tree that was to come down in good time ... while the countenance of Son was crossed and recrossed with a thousand little creases, which the same deceitful Time would take delight in smoothing out and wearing away with the flat part of his scythe, as a preparation of the surface for his deeper operations.⁶⁹

Valerie Purton has noted parallels between the treatment of the theme of railways in *Dombey and Son* and in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*;⁷⁰ and here the parallels between Dickens's

introduction of the child Paul, and Hardy's portrayal of Little Father Time, another child old before his time – 'Age masquerading as Juvenility'⁷¹ – are equally intriguing. Like Little Father Time, Paul is 'not innocent: he is disconcertingly shrewd and penetrating', as Malcolm Andrews writes;⁷² At the same time he is pensive, philosophical, 'old-fashioned', Dickens repeatedly tells us. Andrews is again perceptive here: 'the old-fashioned nature of Paul can be seen to be a way of placing him in some kind of pre-capitalist age which doesn't understand the use of money merely to make money or to win worldly power.'⁷³

His sister Florence is the emotional centre of Paul's being; otherwise he shuns the company of other children, and spends his days on the edge of the sea:

... he fell asleep, and slept quietly for a long time. Awaking suddenly, he listened, started up, and sat listening.

Florence asked him what he thought he heard.

'I want to know what it says,' he answered, looking steadily in her face. 'The sea, Floy, what is it that it keeps on saying?'

She told him that it was only the noise of the rolling waves.

'Yes, yes,' he said. 'But I know that they are always saying something. Always the same thing. What place is over there?' He rose up, looking eagerly at the horizon.

She told him that there was another country opposite, but he said he didn't mean that; he meant farther away – farther away!⁷⁴

Julian Moynahan notes the frequent water images in *Dombey and Son*, and analyses the novel in terms of 'Firmness *versus* Wetness', in the literal and figurative senses.⁷⁵ Certainly, the sea shore is a constant presence in this fiction, and it could be argued that it represents Dickens's first attempt to use a pattern of imagery as a unifying principle in a novel. As Michael Slater comments:

Looking ahead to such later triumphs of this emblematising art as the depiction of the London fog and the Court of Chancery in *Bleak House*, the prison and the Circumlocution Office in *Little Dorrit*, and the river and the dust-heaps of *Our Mutual Friend*, we recognise in them successors to this presentation of the sea in *Dombey*.⁷⁶

Each occurrence of the water imagery inevitably evokes its literary history as a metaphor for the border between time and eternity, already discussed. Dickens himself makes the connection explicit: 'countless ripples in the tide of time that regularly roll and break on the eternal shore'.⁷⁷ Paul is 'nearly five years old'⁷⁸ at this stage of the novel, but that he 'listens like a three years' child' to the sound of the sea, and senses meaning in it, is quite clear.

Paul's, and the narrator's, philosophical view of time is not shared by Mr. Dombey. On the contrary, while 'exulting' in the birth of his son, he 'jingled and jingled the heavy gold watch-chain that depended from below his trim blue coat'.⁷⁹ Dickens's stress on the weight of the

chain brings to mind Jacob Marley's chain of cash boxes and safes; but while Jacob chafes at his heavy chain, Dombey is proud of his. And just as Jacob's chain tells the reader all he/she needs to know about the ghost's state of mind, it is this 'large watch that defines Mr. Dombey', Jerome Hamilton Buckley suggests.⁸⁰ 'The loud watch which is so inseparable a part of Dombey is the voice of the civilization which gives him his power', Nina Auerbach comments: 'the implacable, arbitrary dominance of clock time counterpoints his wife's equally implacable diffusion into death and space'.⁸¹ Attitudes to time in this novel reflect broader social and deeper philosophical attitudes.

As early as 1835 Dickens was using mechanical time, and the ticking of clocks, as synonymous with the deadly dehumanisation he observed around him. In the essay 'Thoughts About People' he depicts a tired clerk 'working on all day as regularly as the dial over the mantelpiece, whose loud ticking is as monotonous as his whole existence'.⁸² In *Hard Times* he characterises Gradgrind's Observatory as 'a stern room, with a deadly statistical clock in it, which measured every second with a beat like a rap upon a coffin-lid'.⁸³ In *Great Expectations* Miss Havisham's watches and clocks that have stopped 'at twenty minutes to nine', are emblems of her predicament.⁸⁴

The clash of values and priorities between Dombey and Son is stark. For Paul the sea holds the mysteries of life and death; for Mr Dombey it exists to float his ships. He is desperate to perpetuate his business, and his values, through Paul, and feels 'an indescribable mistrust of anybody stepping in between himself and his son'.⁸⁵ Dombey's inability to relate to Paul in any other way than as a future business partner and inheritor, takes its toll. The child pines and falls ill after Dombey banishes Paul's only source of adult love, the nurse Polly Toodle. Galia Benziman links this act with deep insecurities over the issues of gender roles, the 'patrimonialism and patrilineality'⁸⁶ identified by Waters:

Dombey fears that Polly [...] might have replaced the two babies, his Paul and her own child, Mr. Dombey being unable to tell the difference. Whether biological or surrogate mother, the woman is thus the exclusive authority on the child's true identity. The father, on the other hand, only masters the nominal and social identity of family name, class and race that is conferred on the child.⁸⁷

Dombey, with his destructive mixture of arrogance and insecurity, 'wondered [...] what Nature meant by it'.⁸⁸

Dickens's own childhood feelings of neglect and isolation are apparent in the episode when Dombey sends Paul and Florence away from the family home to the 'infantine Boarding-House' of Mrs Pipchin, 'ogress and child-queller', in Brighton.⁸⁹ 'Clearly', Michael Slater comments, 'the process of consciously revisiting his past for literary purposes that had begun in the *Carol* was continuing in *Dombey*'.⁹⁰ Paul Schlicke goes further: '*Dombey* is inextricably

tied to his own life, as no previous novel had been'.⁹¹ Whenever Dickens uses elements from his own childhood in his fiction, there is no doubting where his sympathies lie.

Paul is six years old when his father sends him to Dr. Blimber's school, which Dickens locates tellingly as 'fronting the sea' at Brighton.⁹² That single word 'fronting' tells us everything we need to know about the relationship between the school and its natural environment. Blimber shares Mr. Dombey's values: 'Nature was of no consequence at all' in his scheme of education,⁹³ and mechanical time dominates life at the school. 'There was no sound through all the house but the ticking of a great clock in the hall, which made itself audible in the very garrets'.⁹⁴ 'Clock time' in Dickens's writing, Daragh Downs suggests, 'is like an atmospheric pressure in people's heads'.⁹⁵ Emotion and humanity are suppressed: Miss Blimber and Mr. Feeder ignore the spirit and content of the texts they teach, so that their pupils conclude that 'all the fancies of the poets, and lessons of the sages, were a mere collection of words and grammar, and had no other meaning'.⁹⁶ The boys are not starved or physically abused as at Creakle's or Squeers's schools, but Dickens leaves us in no doubt that the intellectual and emotional damage caused by Blimber's system is every bit as deep and long-lasting. The sleep of Paul's room-mates Briggs and Tozer is disturbed by anxieties: 'Briggs was ridden by his lesson as a nightmare', and Tozer 'talked unknown tongues' in his sleep.⁹⁷ In the morning there is more of the same mental torture: 'the studies went round like a mighty wheel, and the young gentlemen were always stretched upon it'.⁹⁸ Blimber believes, with Mr. Dombey, that children are 'born grown up',⁹⁹ and the effects of his 'system' are very much a part of the polarity between utilitarian and humane values which is at the centre of the novel's meaning. As Philip Collins notes, Paul's death was, if not 'caused', at least 'accelerated', by the school's 'regime',¹⁰⁰ a regime haunted by the 'great clock'. Like the 'matin bell' in 'Christabel', the school clock 'Knells us back to a world of death'.¹⁰¹

Like Blake's Schoolboy Paul longs to escape, 'breasting the window of his solitary cage when birds flew by, as if he would have emulated them, and soared away!'¹⁰². As in his banishing of Polly Toodle, Dombey's choice of school has again dashed Paul's development. Rosemary Bodenheimer comments: 'Dombey [...] repeatedly makes decisions that deprive Paul of fundamental nurture. It cannot exactly be called murder; he does not intend to kill his son. But it is no accident that Paul dies in the vacation before he is to be entirely separated from his last resource, his loving sister'.¹⁰³ Under Blimber's regime Paul, rather than 'qualifying for a man'¹⁰⁴ as his father hopes, is deprived of 'such spirits as he had in the outset', and becomes 'even more strange, and old, and thoughtful, than before ... wandering about the house by himself, or sitting on the stairs, listening to the great clock in the hall'.¹⁰⁵

'A Watch That'll Do You Credit'

In this first part of the novel, which culminates in Paul's death at the end of Chapter XVI, Benthamite, utilitarian notions of time, governed by mechanical devices, are thus vividly embodied in the characters of Dombey, the Blimbers, and Mr. Feeder. But within the main plot

there is no comparable embodiment of Coleridgean time. Little Paul questions the monetary values of his father, and listens to the eternal voice of the sea; but his nature is oppressed and essentially passive, his life wasted by the burden of his father's expectations which he knows he can never fulfil. Florence too is passive in these early chapters, even when her abduction in Chapter VI places her centre stage. The active contrast and corrective, in terms of the time theme, are provided by the sub-plot centred around the ships' instruments shop with its Wooden Midshipman, and the characters of ships' instrument maker Sol Gills, his nephew Walter Gay, and Captain Cuttle. William Axton characterises the contrast between the two groups as between 'materialists' and 'humanists'.¹⁰⁶ The shop is 'in the immediate vicinity'¹⁰⁷ of Dombey's establishment, Dickens stresses: 'symbolically placed between the hovel of the criminal Mrs Brown and the cheerless Dombey mansion', Carolyn Oulton writes.¹⁰⁸ Holly Furneaux aptly notes the correspondence between Sol's shop and Daniel Peggotty's house: 'comfortably out of place; imbricated in the spaces of both land and sea yet fully of neither element, they powerfully suggest a renegotiation of available spaces and possible domesticities'.¹⁰⁹ Dickens's imagination is clearly fired in describing the shop's rich interior, with its 'hints of adventurous and romantic story'.¹¹⁰ Sol's friends and acquaintance are humble 'ship-chandlers and so forth',¹¹¹ his stock is being rendered obsolete by the technological advances of the Industrial Revolution, and his business is faltering.¹¹² The contrast with Dombey's august social contacts, gloomy surroundings,¹¹³ and commercial prowess, is marked. Rick Allen sees this combination of opposition and propinquity as characteristic of Dicken's work: 'the strategy of ironic contrast between wealth and poverty at the heart of his urban vision continued to be founded on a sense of the proximity if not contiguity of these extremes'.¹¹⁴ Dombey and Sol do, however, have one thing in common: each wears a timepiece. And in this apparently minor detail, this apparent similarity between the two men, Dickens encapsulates their diametrically opposed characters and values:

He wore [...] a tremendous chronometer in his fob, rather than doubt which precious possession, he would have believed in a conspiracy against it on the part of all the clocks and watches in the city, and even of the very sun itself.¹¹⁵

Sol's implicit trust in his old timepiece is mirrored by Captain Cuttle's explicit trust in Sol:

'I suppose he could make a clock if he tried?'

'I shouldn't wonder, Captain Cuttle,' returned the boy.

'And it would go!' said Captain Cuttle, making a species of serpent in the air with his hook. 'Lord, how that clock would go!'

For a moment or two he seemed quite lost in contemplating the pace of this ideal timepiece, and sat looking at the boy as if his face were the dial.¹¹⁶

Sol's chronometer is very old, not accurate like the 'clocks and watches in the city' which regulate the lives of Dombey and his like; but Sol is true to his roots and values, and has not

abandoned them in response to the changing commercial and social world around him. Just as 'the loud ticking' of Dombey's watch is matched by that of the physician Doctor Parker Peps's watch, so that the two 'seemed in the silence to be running a race', ¹¹⁷ so Captain Cuttle wears a similar timepiece to Sol's: 'Put it back half an hour every morning, and about another quarter towards the afternoon, and it's a watch that'll do you credit', he confides to Walter. ¹¹⁸ With this type of timepiece in their pockets, and an 'ideal timepiece' firing their imaginations, Sol, Walter and the Captain are emphatically not travellers on 'the journey towards conformity', ¹¹⁹ Matthew Bevis's apt phrase for the gradual synchronisation of mechanical time, with its personal and social consequences, during the nineteenth century. The narrator's – and surely Dickens's – own views on this changing world are starkly expressed in his evocation of the railway construction at Staggs Gardens in Camden, 'dire disorder' in the name of 'civilisation and improvement': 'Nothing was the better for it, or thought of being so'. ¹²⁰ John Drew is one of several writers who see *Dombey and Son* as 'the work in which Dickens first engages seriously if ambivalently with the advent of steam locomotion, and its wider implications for society'. ¹²¹ Nina Auerbach notes the close link between the spread of the railways and the overarching theme of time in this fiction: 'England was in the process of attuning itself to the railroad and its schedule. Later in the novel, the loud ticking of Mr. Dombey's watch will swell into the railroad's prefabricated roar'. ¹²²

Immune to this changing, dehumanising world, Sol and his nephew Walter tease and chafe each other while they discuss Walter's first day of work at Dombey's, but Dickens leaves us in no doubt of the depth of their love for each other as they drink an old Madeira:

Some of the fog that hung about old Sol seemed to have got into his throat; for he spoke huskily. His hand shook too, as he clinked his glass against his nephew's ...

'Dear Uncle,' said the boy, affecting to make light of it, while the tears stood in his eyes. ¹²³

The contrast with the Dombey household could not be greater. Old Sol is not Walter's biological father, but Walter grows up in an environment of love and security which Mr. Dombey fails to provide for his biological children: in Paul's case because he cannot express his love, and in Florence's because he cannot feel it.

Together uncle and nephew weave a tale of romance and adventure around the bottle of Madeira, 'which has been to the East Indies and back' ¹²⁴, an emotionally heightened passage in which Dickens assigns to these two characters his own relish for, and imaginative stimulation by, such tales. As Peter Ackroyd writes of Dickens's early reading: 'These fictional characters literally came alive to him; he could *see* them'. ¹²⁵ The adventure which Sol and Walter take it in turns to embellish is of course all about seafaring; while one relates, the other 'listens like a three years' child'. When Captain Cuttle joins them, 'a sadder and a wiser man', ¹²⁶ the presence of Coleridge's poem is explicit:

The truth was, that the simple-minded uncle in his secret attraction towards the marvellous and adventurous – of which he was, in some sort, a distant relation, by his trade – had greatly encouraged the same attraction in the nephew; and that everything that had ever been put before the boy to deter him from a life of adventure, had had the usual unaccountable effect of sharpening his taste for it. This is invariable.¹²⁷

Donald D. Stone cites Dickens's 'celebration of the imagination as means of personal and social salvation' as evidence that he was 'an instinctive Romantic'.¹²⁸ Love and imagination, the central values of this novel, starkly conspicuous by their absence in the Dombey household, are embodied in the characters associated with the wooden midshipman. Sol's old, imperfect chronometer, 'this precious possession' in which he lays his trust, is a symbol of those central values, just as Dombey's 'heavy gold watch-chain'¹²⁹ symbolises his; as Julian Moynahan writes of Dickens, 'he often arranges his most important meanings on the outside'.¹³⁰ Love and imagination are of course attributes of man, not nature, and therefore more to be trusted than the increasingly accurate but increasingly dehumanised technology of the industrial revolution, and more even than nature, 'the very sun itself'.¹³¹ I believe that the essence of the mature Dickens's artistic and personal values are encapsulated within this passage, which ends with Walter's radically prophetic toast: 'So here's to Dombey – and Son – and Daughter!'¹³²

Commonplace Obituaries, Infant Philosophy

The death of little Paul at the age of six brings this first part of the novel to an emotional climax which reduced the hard-nosed Francis Jeffrey, relentless critic of Wordsworth and Coleridge, to 'gentle sobs and delightful tears,'¹³³ and caused Thackeray to exclaim 'There's no writing against such power as this [...] it is unsurpassed – it is stupendous'.¹³⁴ The scene is shot through with the water imagery which is, as we have noted, so closely associated with Paul, and with time, in the novel. He is prostrate in his father's house in London, but his imagination is already heading downstream to the sea shore:

'How fast the river runs, between its green banks and the rushes, Floy! But it's very near the sea. I hear the waves! They always said so!'¹³⁵

Dickens ends the scene with a homily on the immortality granted by the Christian deity; but the poetry, the imagery of his writing here is much closer to the pantheistic sense of natural cycle and renewal that we have seen in the poems of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats and Byron, Wordsworth's contribution to which had in 1814 provoked Jeffrey's famous dismissal: 'This will never do'.¹³⁶ Jeffrey's unwitting conversion epitomises Dickens's role in the history of Romantic thought: he recast Romantic values in such a way as to render them not only acceptable, but evidently irresistible, to his mid-nineteenth-century audience, and passed them on to future generations of readers and writers.

Jeffrey's and Thackeray's responses to *Dombey and Son* are typical of contemporary reaction. Just as the storm scene in *David Copperfield* drew critical attention from the start, so the death

of Paul Dombey was the chief focus here. Reviewing the first six numbers in the *Westminster Review* for April 1847, William E. Hickson commented:

The first part describes a dying mother – the fifth a dying child – subjects of the most commonplace obituaries, but here treated by a master. No other writer can approach Dickens in a perfect analysis of the mind of children [...] It was a novel but happy idea to sketch society, and human weaknesses, as seen through the eyes of infant philosophy.¹³⁷

Commonplace subjects, infant philosophy: the echoes of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's credos, in the 1800 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads* and in the *Biographia Literaria*, are clear. Reviewing the whole novel for the *Sun* the following year, editor Charles Kent concurred with Hickson, revealing a subtle appreciation of how the treatment of character in fiction can convey moral values, 'inferentially':

We envy not the man who can read for the first time the account of the death of little Paul Dombey with a heart unmoved and an eye tearless [...] Like most of the preceding fictions of Mr. Dickens, *Dombey and Son* inculcates a great moral inferentially [...] by the transformation of a temperament.¹³⁸

The appositeness of this 'moral' to contemporary society was not lost on the *Economist's* anonymous reviewer: 'There was urgent need to paint such a man as Dombey. The world of London is filled with cold, pompous, stiff, purse-proud men like this'.¹³⁹

There is ample evidence then for John Forster's famous comment that Dickens's evocation of Paul's death 'threw a whole nation into mourning'.¹⁴⁰ There were however dissenting voices, notably the satirical 'Inquest on the late Master Paul Dombey' which appeared in *The Man in the Moon* in March 1847:

The popular demonstrations of grief were striking and general. Passing bells were rung by various respectable artisans, who, from an early hour, perambulated the streets and squares of the metropolis, carrying cuckoo clocks – emblems of the fleeting nature of time – under their arms, and sounding a monotonous peal upon the alarums of these useful household implements.¹⁴¹

The time imagery was noted, then, but not taken seriously. *Parker's London Magazine* also found the novel 'full to overflowing of waves whispering and wandering; of dark rivers rolling to the sea [...] which are sometimes very pretty, generally very untrue, and have become, at all events, excessively stale'.¹⁴² Dickens's first attempt at a unifying structure of imagery, where it was noticed at all, did not meet with approval or appreciation.

A Wandering Princess and a Good Monster

After Dickens's death Wilkie Collins was severe on 'the latter half of *Dombey*', which he wrote privately that 'no intelligent person can have read without astonishment at the badness of it'¹⁴³ – a judgment which is instructive. This 'latter half' of the novel is characterised by the emergence of what I have referred to as the sub-plot, involving the characters associated with the Wooden Midshipman, and particularly Walter Gills, into the main action. The increased interaction between the two groups of characters affords the reader a closer, more detailed comparison between the working out of the values of Dombey and his circle, and those of Walter and his, which is the burden of the rest of the novel. 'In a parodic mirror image of the Dombey house,' Carolyn Oulton comments, 'the failed business premises contain a nurturing home, where Florence is able to find temporary relief from an actual home based on emotional deprivation and sustained by the accumulation of sterile wealth'.¹⁴⁴ In the chapter immediately following Paul's death, Captain Cuttle learns of Walter's impending departure for the West Indies in one of Dombey's ships, and thus of the possibility that Sol and his nephew may never see each other again. In response he 'flashed such golden prospects' before them, portraying the news as 'a great advance towards the realisation of the romantic legend of Lovely Peg', their metaphor for Florence.¹⁴⁵ At this stage of the novel the notion of a marriage between Dombey's daughter and his lowly clerk seems absurd. But the lives of these humble characters are enriched, ennobled even, by their imaginings, in a way that the lives of the wealthy are not. Dombey and his circle are deemed, and deem themselves, to have arrived, and have nothing to aspire to, nothing to imagine; Oulton's adjective 'sterile' is apt. Dickens himself abets the romancing beneath the wooden midshipman when he portrays Florence as 'like the king's fair daughter in the story',¹⁴⁶ and later likens her and the Captain to 'a wandering princess and a good monster in a story book'.¹⁴⁷ George Gissing comments on this phrase:

Precisely, our novel is become a sort of fairy-tale; and for all that, we suffer no shock, no canon of arts is outraged. Dickens's art is consistent with itself. And arts mean illusion, in different degrees, of various kinds.¹⁴⁸

Louise Yelin has argued convincingly that Dickens's uses of fairy-tale elements in *Dombey and Son* are not superficial or merely decorative, but complex and subversive, integral to the novel's overall meaning:

Dickens simultaneously invokes and attacks the classic situation of the fairy tale [...] the fairy princess is usually an orphan or a stepchild, or is treated like one because of the absence of her parent. But in *Dombey and Son* these relationships are reversed. It is Dombey who neglects Florence, turning her into a virtual orphan – as, indeed, Mrs. Skewton neglects Edith – and Florence's imprisonment in the moldy house is determined by her father's presence, not his absence.¹⁴⁹

In this way Dickens uses our expectations of 'the king's fair daughter in the story' to enrich and complicate his portrayal of gender, family and inheritance.

Returning to Wilkie Collins's damning opinion about this second half of *Dombey and Son*, Robert Clark argues:

From a rationalist point of view, Wilkie Collins was right [...] But the charm of the fairy tale is that it works on quite other definitions of the intelligent, those more satisfactory to our unconscious desires'.¹⁵⁰

This I think is the nub of the issue: the novel is all about conflicting values, and conflicting notions of intelligence based on those values. The novel suggests that these imaginings emanating from the wooden midshipman are not merely idle daydreams; on the contrary, the remainder of the plot can be seen as a vindication of the power of imagination, a working out of Blake's proverb 'What is now proved was once only imagin'd'.¹⁵¹ To Robert Higbie, Walter's first-hand experience of the sea is crucial to this process of imaginative realisation: 'like Paul, Walter can transform imagination because he has faced death [...] He goes to sea as if to learn what Paul saw, a belief that can enable him to overcome death and so return to life'.¹⁵² Crucial to Walter's development, then, is the experience and vindication of other notions of time than the mechanical ones which dominate the lives of Dombey, Parker Peps and the Blimbers.

The struggle for time, the imagery and conflicting values associated with it, are key to the novel's climax and denouement. On the day of Dombey's and Edith's wedding, Dickens evokes dawn at the church where little Paul and his mother are buried, and where Dombey is to remarry, with characteristically telling detail, in the present tense:

The steeple-clock, perched above the houses, emerging from beneath another of the countless ripples in the tide of time that regularly roll and break on the eternal shore, is greyly visible, like a stone beacon, recording how the sea flows on.¹⁵³

The steeple-clock as a mechanical timepiece, as a recorder of Benthamite time, is irrelevant here, its function being only to record the natural cycle of time. With such small but telling details Dickens echoes the movement away from Dombey's values towards those of the Wooden Midshipman, from Dombey to Florence and Walter Gay, which is the burden of this second half of the novel. Later the Benthamite ethos of mechanical time, and its attendant timetables, loom large in the death of James Carker. Fleeing from Dombey after his abortive elopement with Edith, Carker 'slunk into a railway carriage' and 'was soon borne far away from the sea'.¹⁵⁴ While the action of the novel, and some of its characters, are moving towards the final, redemptive scene on the sea shore, Carker, 'the unredeemed – though not necessarily unredeemable – villain of the book', Richard Hughes Gibson suggests,¹⁵⁵ is carried away from the sea. 'Irresistibly attracted' to the railway line,¹⁵⁶ warned that the 'Express comes through at four, Sir. – Don't stop',¹⁵⁷ he wanders on the line. Dombey catches up with him, and Carker backs away into the path of the express:

He heard a shout ... was beaten down, caught up, and whirled away upon a jagged mill, that spun him round and round, and struck him limb from limb, and licked his stream of life up with its fiery heat, and cast his mutilated fragments in the air.¹⁵⁸

Machine dismembers organism - Dickens's short phrases 'like fast cutting in a movie', Ian Carter suggests.¹⁵⁹ The disorientating, destructive potential of the railways, evoked in the earlier scenes in Staggs Gardens, and in Dombey's journey to Birmingham in Chapter XX,¹⁶⁰ reaches its graphic realisation here. And by a grim irony worthy of Thomas Hardy, Carker dies as a result of failing to heed that symbol of Benthamite time, a railway timetable.

The wave imagery continues throughout the novel, and ensures that the reader does not forget little Paul, with whom it is so closely associated. Although he dies relatively early in the novel, his continued presence in our minds is crucial to our understanding of its denouement. Thus when Walter and Florence set sail at the beginning of their married life, Dickens changes to the present tense once again to bring Paul vividly before us as she and Walter talk in the moonlight on deck. But now, Walter has joined Paul in the heart and mind of Florence:

'As I hear the sea,' says Florence, 'and sit watching it, it brings so many days into my mind. It makes me think so much - .'

'Of Paul, my love. I know it does.'

Of Paul and Walter. And the voices in the waves are always whispering to Florence, in their ceaseless murmuring, of love – of love, eternal and illimitable, not bounded by the confines of this world, or by the end of time, but ranging still, beyond the sea, beyond the sky, to the invisible country far away!¹⁶¹

Paul and Walter, liberated from time and space by Florence's love. From the peripheral figure of the early part of the book, Walter has now emerged as central. By this stage of *Dombey and Son* Florence too has emerged from the shadows of her father's neglect to play a central role in the action, the embodiment of unconditional love, of her father and brother throughout the novel, and now of Walter too. Florence's centrality remains crucially qualified by her gender, as Kristina Aikens observes: 'she is never considered an heir to the Dombey empire, a position usurped by her husband. While Dickens recognises Florence's power, it must ultimately be compartmentalised into the *Home* of Dombey, while the House of Dombey remains under patriarchal rule, assisted by loving support from its wives and daughters'.¹⁶² This is not quite fair on Walter Gay, or on Dickens: the 'Dombey empire' is bankrupted,¹⁶³ the home 'disposed of',¹⁶⁴ while Gay makes his own more modest way in the world. But Aikens's point about the compartmentalising of Florence's power is accurate. Her career is the resolution of those questions of values and gender raised at the outset, embodying Dickens's diagnosis of 'a nature that is ever, in the main, better, truer, higher, nobler, quicker to feel, and much more constant to retain, all tenderness and pity, self-denial and devotion, than the nature of men'.¹⁶⁵

The last note that Dickens made on this most carefully-planned of his novels to date reads: 'End with the sea – carrying through, what the waves were always saying'.¹⁶⁶ The final scene does take place on the sea shore, 'carrying through' and completing Dickens's first attempt at a unifying structure of imagery. On the wider social level there is no resolution of the tensions and polarities that Dickens has diagnosed. In this respect *Dombey and Son* is no different from his other fictions. 'At best', as Dominic Rainsford suggests, 'there are tiny communities with the potential to renew themselves'.¹⁶⁷ And in this novel that final community draws together individuals from the disparate social groupings presented earlier: a genuine 'renegotiation of available spaces and possible domesticities', as Holly Furneaux suggests.¹⁶⁸ Mr. Dombey is bankrupt, his home and business gone, and he lives on the discreet charity of John and Harriet Carker;¹⁶⁹ like Nell's grandfather in *The Old Curiosity Shop* when he loses his business, he seems 'to have lost all count of time'.¹⁷⁰ With the loss of his old reason for living, Dombey can now accept the love of his daughter; and his love of her, Walter, and their two children becomes the focus of his life. He now has different notions of how children should grow up, and they are not far from Coleridge's: 'And so they [the children] range away again, busily, for the white-haired gentleman likes best to see the child free and stirring'.¹⁷¹ He has experienced, Julian Moynahan suggests, 'a change of heart that reads like a second childhood';¹⁷² he 'has become a virtual child',¹⁷³ Louise Yelin writes. The symbols of mechanical, utilitarian notions of time that pervaded the first part of the novel have been routed, replaced by 'the sea-beach',¹⁷⁴ with all of its connotations with natural time and renewal. Stephen Gill's point about the ambiguity of the image: 'the element which from time immemorial has spoken of cleansing and rebirth as often as death and dissolution',¹⁷⁵ is germane here. Whereas the early sea-shore scenes with Paul were redolent of sickness and impending death, here at the end they are charged with a sense of cyclical continuity, the 'child free and stirring' being Florence's son, Dombey's grandson, not 'weak' like little Paul, but 'very strong'.¹⁷⁶ Dombey's reliance on patrilineality is dashed, replaced by a belated, partial recognition of, and dependence upon, the rights of the daughter and granddaughter, the role of patriarch and provider falling in the end to a man not his blood relative.

Dombey lives out the rest of his life, then, surrounded by love and affection. But he does not share the unalloyed happiness of Florence, Walter, Sol, Captain Cuttle, Mr. Toots and Susan Nipper, with which Dickens resolves the other strands of the plot; the structure is indeed so perfect that we are reminded of Miss Prism's words, 'The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means'.¹⁷⁷ Indeed the comparison makes Dombey's end all the more pointed: he is a broken man, able to love, able to regret, but unable to function in any other way – and to Dickens, scarred by experience of his own father's fecklessness,¹⁷⁸ a man unable to earn his own living is not fully a man.¹⁷⁹

I suggested earlier that love and imagination are the central values of this novel. At the end Dombey has one, but not the other. Nothing that has happened to him has enabled him to enter imaginatively into the lives of the people or the natural world around him. The comparison

with that other excellent man of business, Scrooge, is instructive here. At the end of *A Christmas Carol* Scrooge ‘became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew’.¹⁸⁰ His visionary dreams enable him to re-engage with the realities to which he had become desensitised, to empathise with others, and to imagine a better future for the Cratchits, while still remaining ‘a master’, able to support himself and whomever else he pleases. At the end, Scrooge is still able to function in ways that Dombey is not. The Blakean contraries of Urizen and Los,¹⁸¹ the demands of commerce and compassion, are triumphantly resolved in *A Christmas Carol*, but not in *Dombey and Son*. Tiny Tim, to whom Scrooge became ‘a second father’,¹⁸² did not die; little Paul, with Dombey as his biological father, died.

As we have seen, the later chapters of *Dombey and Son* have not convinced all readers. George Gissing writes that ‘the narrative of the latter part is ill-constructed, often wearisome, sometimes incredible’;¹⁸³ and Julian Moynahan, a reader who believes that literature should be ‘reduced to plain sense through analysis’,¹⁸⁴ believes that ‘the essential movement of the book is from complexity towards a weltering simplicity’, exemplifying ‘Dickens’s urge to simplify or to destroy outright the complex’.¹⁸⁵ William Axton, on the other hand, argues that Dickens’s ‘symbolic’ use of the contrasting settings of sea and shore achieves a ‘genuine mythic statement’:

under Dickens’s hands the ocean takes on its ancient value as a type of the dual nature of human experience, of the cruel fatality to which the materialists condemn themselves and of that divine love which sustains the humanists through adversity.¹⁸⁶

Axton’s argument for the ‘mythic universality’¹⁸⁷ of *Dombey and Son* is one possible explanation for the enduring appeal of the novel, which Wilkie Collins, Gissing and Moynahan do not account for. The universality of the struggle for time which is at the heart of this fiction, is another.

Our Mutual Friend: the Poorest of Mr. Dickens’s Works

In *Dombey and Son* the struggle for time is played out between groups of characters: Mr. Dombey, Blimber and James Carker embodying the values of Benthamite time, while little Paul, Florence, Walter, Sol Gills and Captain Cuttle, John and Harriet Carker, live in their different ways by Coleridgean notions of time. Seven years later, in *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens returns to the theme, to dissect the dichotomy more graphically and forensically, just as he had done with the theme of childhood in *Great Expectations*, some years after his first essay in *David Copperfield*. This time, instead of using opposing groups of characters to embody different aspects of the theme, the struggle for time is concentrated within the career of a single character, Bradley Headstone. And while the career of John Harmon and his love for Bella is ostensibly the main action of *Our Mutual Friend*, I will argue that their relationship appealed to Dickens’s imagination far less than the triangle involving Headstone, Eugene Wrayburn and Lizzie Hexam. Arnold Kettle commented on Harmon’s ‘significance’ within the novel: ‘he doesn’t really bear too much loading with that commodity’.¹⁸⁸

George Eliot and Henry James both found fault with Dickens's novels, essentially for not being the naturalistic kind of fiction that they themselves wrote. Writing in 1857 what George Levine calls 'a kind of manifesto of moral realism',¹⁸⁹ George Eliot asserts that Dickens 'scarcely ever passes from the humorous and external to the emotional and tragic, without becoming as transcendent in his unreality as he was a moment before in his artistic truthfulness'.¹⁹⁰ And Henry James, reviewing *Our Mutual Friend* in *The Nation* in December 1865, calls it

the poorest of Mr. Dickens's works. And it is poor with the poverty not of momentary embarrassment, but of permanent exhaustion [...] Accepting half of Mr Dickens's persons as intentionally grotesque, where are those exemplars of sound humanity who should afford us the proper measure of their companions' variations?'¹⁹¹

James was twenty-one when he wrote this review, and it appeared anonymously as most reviews did in the nineteenth century; but he was happy to reprint it under his own name in 1908. Both of these assessments had a lasting influence on subsequent criticism. As with most creative writers who are also critics, and particularly those who experience the anxiety of influence that Eliot and James would have done when thinking of Dickens, they tend to revise the recent canon in their own image. Martin Garrett's comment on the James review is apt: 'If you wanted, as a novelist, to strike out in a new direction, you needed the great man not to permeate your shoes. [...] James in 1865 needed to be brutal: to assess the new novel, not to regard it, amateurishly, as immune to critical analysis. In the process, of course, he could help to establish his own career.'¹⁹² Both George Eliot and Henry James saw realism, truth to their conception of 'nature', as the cornerstone of fiction. They were thus reluctant to comprehend Dickens's aspirations towards a more subtle condition of poetry, and poetic imagery, in prose fiction.

More recent commentators, Stephen Gill for example, have criticised *Our Mutual Friend* for a lack of unity.¹⁹³ But like *Dombey and Son*, *Our Mutual Friend* is unified by the thread of water imagery that provides a symbol for the novel's deepest levels of meaning. It is the sea in *Dombey and Son*; in this later novel it is the river. And where in the earlier novel the sea-shore imagery provides a sense of Byronic consolation at the end, in *Our Mutual Friend* the Thames exerts a much darker, more threatening and dangerous power over characters' lives. As Leon Litvac writes, the river 'can embody complex – often contradictory – meanings, in a multivalent text that is dark in its conception, panoramic in its observation of English society, and which contains some of Dickens's most powerful effects'.¹⁹⁴ The dichotomy between Benthamite time and Coleridgean time is ever-present, but its treatment is altogether more complex here, analysing the contrasting values, pressures and counter-pressures within a single psyche. The water imagery, and its opposing images of dust, also serve to unify the various other themes that Dickens explores: education, class, money and greed. George Levine links Dickens's methods with the scientific organicism of Darwin:

Our Mutual Friend, in its river and dust heaps, in its tale of the crossing of classes, makes the theme of “connections” both symbolic and literal. The mutual dependencies on which organic life depends in Darwin are dramatized socially in Dickens through his elaborate and multiple plotting and through his gradual revelations, often through the structure of a mystery plot, of the intricacy of relations disguised by sharp demarcations and definitions of classes.¹⁹⁵

With both clusters of imagery, literal, historical and scientific significance interplay with the metaphorical meanings. Stephen Inwood notes, ‘the Thames had always provided an excellent east-west highway’;¹⁹⁶ the key shifts in the action of *Our Mutual Friend* are mirrored by characters’ movements up and down this highway. On the theme of ‘dust’, R. H Horne contributed a short story on London dust to Dickens’s *Household Words* in 1850, and commented: ‘a Dust-heap of this kind is often worth thousands of pounds’.¹⁹⁷ As Sabine Schulting suggests,¹⁹⁸ Dickens may well have had Horne’s story in mind when he wrote *Our Mutual Friend*.

The novel begins on the river in the centre of London, with the ‘dredger’ Gaffer Hexam and his daughter Lizzie looking for drowned bodies, he ‘half-savage’, scanning the water with ‘a hungry look’ like ‘a roused bird of prey’, she rowing with ‘every lithe action’ and a ‘look of dread or horror’.¹⁹⁹ In the bottom of the small boat, between them, is the corpse of a drowned man. These opening pages establish the ambiguity of water imagery in this novel. It is necessary for life; it provides a living for those who own or work on the scores of boats that Gaffer and Lizzie pass, as well as for them. At the same time it is dangerous: humans cannot survive long in this element. It is the discovery in the river of the drowned body of George Radfoot, identified by John Harmon as himself, that sets the complex plot of the novel in motion, and prefigures the death by drowning of Bradley Headstone and Gaffer’s partner Rogue Riderhood at the novel’s climax. And as well as the ever-present threat of death by drowning, the river can be a source of corruption for those who work on it. The ‘lithe’ Lizzie retains what Dickens clearly suggests is a healthy, natural horror of her way of life; but Gaffer and Riderhood are desensitised by it, brutalised by the need to make a living. Tellingly, Gaffer is described as having ‘no fancies’.²⁰⁰ In ‘these times of ours’ – *Our Mutual Friend* is one of Dickens’s very few novels set in the present – water is not free from the taint of money, a point explicitly made in the only thing we actually see Gaffer pull out of the river in this opening scene:

... the upper half of the man came back into the boat. His arms were wet and dirty, and he washed them over the side. In his right hand he held something, and he washed that in the river too. It was money.²⁰¹

Gaffer dies in the river that he has scavenged from,²⁰² and Riderhood is almost drowned in a collision between two river boats.²⁰³

Having established the character of the water imagery in Chapter 1, Dickens immediately introduces the opposing dust imagery in Chapter 2. While the river will occasionally offer solace and renewal to characters later in the novel, in the case of the dust heaps the link with money, greed and falsehood is unmitigated. They are also by definition linked to industry and technology, the heaps of what was euphemistically termed ‘dust’ that proliferated in nineteenth-century cities being by-products, as well as raw materials, of factories, railways and other manifestations of the industrial revolution and its profit-making drive. ‘Writers on the subject never deny the foulness of the heaps’, Stephen Gill comments, ‘but it is clear that they were good business’.²⁰⁴ The subject is raised, tellingly, far away from factories and dust-heaps, at a lavish dinner party at the Veneerings’ house: in this fiction those who profit from the new manufactories usually stay well away from their unpalatable side effects. Lawyer Mortimer Lightwood tells the story of old John Harmon making a fortune out of dust, to a mixed company of faded gentility: Mr Twemlow and Lady Tippings, and ‘bran-new people’:²⁰⁵ the Veneerings themselves, the Podsnaps, Lady Tippings, Boots and Brewer: as so often in Dickens, the names speak volumes. At the end of his narration Mortimer receives word of young John Harmon’s death by drowning. As Arnold Kettle suggests, Harmon’s main ‘function’ within the structure of the novel is he ‘brings the mounds or dust-heaps into relation with the river, and this [...] is fundamental’.²⁰⁶ Thus in these first two chapters Dickens neatly establishes the contraries of water and dust, and their relationship: the symbolic structure that will unify the whole novel.

‘Favourite Dickens themes – class, education, mercenary marriage – reappear in *Our Mutual Friend*’, Paul Schlicke observes.²⁰⁷ However, there are also intimations of things to come. Also present at the Veneerings’ dinner is the upper-class Eugene Wrayburn, Mortimer Lightwood’s friend and hero since they were ‘boys together at a public school’;²⁰⁸ Mortimer ‘founded himself upon Eugene when they were yet boys’.²⁰⁹ Angus Wilson notes that Dickens has the two friends speak ‘in the world-weary *Yellow Book* tones of *The Importance of Being Earnest*’, and comments: ‘What is so extraordinary is that the tired Dickens should so nearly capture this world of the future, this world only glimpsed by a few in the seeming-solid surface of the sixties’.²¹⁰ This notion of ‘the tired Dickens’ writing *Our Mutual Friend*, which occurs frequently in twentieth-century criticism, supported no doubt by the facts of his ill-health when they came to light,²¹¹ had its roots in Henry James’s *Nation* review.

Some contemporary reviewers shared James’s verdict, the *Saturday Review* dismissing the novel as ‘a very tedious performance’,²¹² and the *Westminster Review* asserting that ‘His whole art [...] is founded upon false principles’.²¹³ These negative reviews made the most impact. Martin Garrett comments: ‘There’s a tradition that most of the reviewers were [...] unenthusiastic [...] – that the focus was on the author’s declining power of invention.’²¹⁴ But as Garrett demonstrates, there were many positive responses as well; overall, ‘its original reception was fairly cordial’, Philip Collins writes.²¹⁵ ‘Really one of his finest works’, E. S. Dallas wrote in the *Times*,²¹⁶ while Henry Fothergill Chorley in the *Athenaeum* rated it ‘one of Mr. Dicken’s richest and most carefully-wrought books’, with ‘an accumulation of fine, exact,

characteristic detail, such as would suffice to set up in trade for life a score of novel spinners'.²¹⁷ Dickens was particularly pleased with these two reviews, so much so in Dallas's case that he presented the manuscript of *Our Mutual Friend* to him.²¹⁸ However, as Philip Collins writes of the novel, 'the subtleties and profundities that are now discovered in it were not noticed by the reviewers'.²¹⁹ There was one exception, which I will discuss later.

A Battle Within and Without

Angus Wilson's perception of the ways in which Eugene Wrayburn and Mortimer Lightfoot anticipate the sensibilities of the 1890s has been mentioned. Eugene has Romantic and Dickensian antecedents too: wealthy, effortlessly elegant and indolent, he has much in common with David Copperfield's Byronic idol Steerforth. The two friends go with Lizzie's brother Charley Hexam, who brought the news of the drowning to Mortimer at the Veneerings', to deal with the legalities of the case. They, and we, learn that Charlie aspires to become a fully-qualified schoolmaster under the pupil-teacher scheme established in 1846 by Dickens's friend and ally James Kay-Shuttleworth.²²⁰ Charlie looks up to his mentor Bradley Headstone, 'highly certificated stipendiary schoolmaster',²²¹ in much the same way that Mortimer looks up to Wrayburn. The contrast between the two luminaries could not be more extreme. Headstone was 'a pauper lad' who has achieved a measure of respectability through years of mental toil and the subjugation of all emotion:

Bradley Headstone, in his decent black coat and waistcoat, and decent white shirt, and decent formal black tie, and decent pantaloons of pepper and salt, with his decent silver watch in his pocket and its decent hair-guard around his neck, looked a thoroughly decent young man of six-and-twenty. He was never seen in any other dress, and yet there was a certain stiffness in his manner of wearing this, as if there was a want of adaptation between him and it, recalling some mechanics in their holiday clothes.²²²

As the pocket watch suggests, Headstone's life as a teacher is circumscribed by mechanical time, by 'school-buildings, school-teachers, and school-pupils, all according to pattern and all engendered in the light of the latest Gospel according to Monotony'.²²³ Although in the case of Mr. Dombey, James Carker and the Blimbers, Benthamite time and its imperatives have become second nature, in Headstone's case they have not. There is this 'want of adaptation' to its demands; he is 'not at his ease. But he never was, quite'.²²⁴ The utilitarian man has not completely subdued the natural, pre-industrial man in Headstone. Rebecca Richardson links Bradley Headstone to the self-help movement epitomised by the speeches and writings of Samuel Smiles,²²⁵ and comments: 'despite all his self-improvement, Bradley has not changed his essential nature, but merely suppressed it'.²²⁶ This is a crucial perception. His lack of 'ease' stems precisely from the battle raging within him between Benthamite time, integral to his work and social standing, and the Coleridgean time which is his elemental, genetic identity. Learning is not for him an instinctive labour of love, but a self-imposed duty, his mind 'a place of mechanical stowage', arranged, Dickens stresses, as a 'wholesale warehouse, so that it might

be always ready to meet the demands of retail dealers',²²⁷ no different in essence from Dombey's 'House'. Michaela Mahlberg observes how Dickens mirrors Bradley's character in his speech, 'using words that are separated over-carefully and sound as if they were not the result of his thoughts but taken from a book'.²²⁸ Dickens's anger and contempt at ignorant, misguided, untrained teachers can be seen in his portrayals of Squeers, Creakle, Blimber and Mr. Wopsle's great aunt. His attitude to those who aspire to a more professional approach is hardly a ringing endorsement either, the utilitarian character of reforms such as the pupil-teacher scheme resulting in a less cruel but equally misguided regime, Dickens implies. There is also in this narrative a surprising lack of sympathy with characters who seek to escape from poverty and ignorance through education, a sense that humble people like Headstone and Charley, still less Boffin and Wegg in their reading of Gibbon,²²⁹ should not aspire to learning - a sense which runs counter to Dickens's much-vaunted work to spread education among the poor. Headstone is his one fictional attempt to characterise the new breed of qualified teachers that he and Kay-Shuttleworth had asserted the need for.²³⁰ Yet Dickens ascribes to Bradley 'a naturally slow or inattentive intellect',²³¹ which seems to scupper his professional aspirations from the start. By giving Headstone's rival the Christian name Eugene, which as Andrew Sanders notes 'derives from the Greek for "well-born"',²³² Dickens only deepens the gulf between them. Sanders believes that '*Our Mutual Friend* is in many ways Dickens's most radical study of social class';²³³ it is also, in this crucial rivalry between the 'pauper lad' Headstone and the public school-educated Wrayburn, his most uneven portrayal of class conflict.

Of course the character of Bradley Headstone encompasses far greater aspirations than the merely professional, and his opposition to Wrayburn extends beyond issues of class and social standing. He and Wrayburn both pursue Lizzie Hexam, and their struggle to win her love becomes the main focus of the novel's action, and of its author's imagination. In the letter of 1857 which I quoted earlier, Dickens chided Forster for his intolerance of 'the wayward and unsettled feeling which is part (I suppose) of the tenure on which one holds an imaginative life'.²³⁴ 'The complexities of Dickens's spirit are seldom so concisely revealed', Dirk den Hartog comments on this sentence: 'What we [...] get is simultaneously a positive valuing of the subversive and anarchic and an ennoblement of repression as the necessary cost of survival in the struggle of life'.²³⁵ Hartog perceives in this dilemma 'something of that continuance of the legacy of Romanticism within the alien framework of mainstream Victorian values'.²³⁶ Bradley Headstone is, I believe, the closest that Dickens ever came to a fictional study of this intensely personal yet representative dilemma. He is loved by his colleague Emma Peecher, and in terms of the social standing he craves, she would be a reasonable match. But he is 'insensible' of Emma,²³⁷ and his intense Romantic passion for Lizzie constantly threatens to subvert his very Victorian social aspirations. The development and resolution of John and Bella's relationship cannot compete in terms of emotional or imaginative intensity. After their marriage Dickens has Bella poring over 'a sage volume entitled *The Complete British Family*

Housewife [...] like some perplexed enchantress poring over the Black Art’;²³⁸ light humour is the author’s keynote here, not intense passion. Thus the relationship between John and Bella finally serves to restore order, humour and ‘normality’ after the unfolding of this central, elemental tragedy involving Headstone, Wrayburn and Lizzie, in which the river plays a central role.

Much of the drama and tension in *Our Mutual Friend* revolves around courtship. Discussing Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, Sally Shuttleworth argues that success in courtship is dependent upon an ability ‘to read the inner territory of the other while preserving the self unread’.²³⁹ Bradley Headstone’s failure in both of these areas effectively seals his fate. As Sean Patrick Magee suggests, ‘the triangular relationship of Lizzie Hexam, Bradley Headstone and Eugene Wrayburn makes secretiveness and readability the determining factors of the contest for Lizzie’s hand’.²⁴⁰ The first meeting between Headstone and Wrayburn is one of Dickens’s most searing depictions of class conflict:

Eugene looked on to Bradley Headstone. With consummate indolence, he turned to Mortimer, inquiring: ‘And who may this other person be?’

... Composedly smoking, he leaned an elbow on the chimneypiece, at the side of the fire, and looked at the schoolmaster. It was a cruel look, in its cold disdain of him, as a creature of no worth. The schoolmaster looked at him, and that, too, was a cruel look, though of the different kind, that it had a raging jealousy and fiery wrath in it.²⁴¹

This first confrontation is over which of them will pay for Lizzie’s education - Dickens seems to have no qualms about the propriety or wisdom of this humble person seeking learning! Wrayburn treats Headstone with cool contempt, and goads him to reveal far more of himself than he intends, thus gaining the upper hand in line with Shuttleworth’s dictum. Bradley expostulates:

‘Do you suppose that a man, in forming himself for the duties I discharge, and in watching and repressing himself daily to discharge them well, dismisses a man’s nature?’

‘I suppose you,’ said Eugene, ‘judging from what I see as I look at you, to be rather too passionate for a good schoolmaster.’ As he spoke, he tossed away the end of his cigar.²⁴²

Fatally, the object of Headstone’s passion is easily divined:

‘I strongly support [Charley Hexam] in his disapproval of your visits to his sister, and in his objection to your officiousness – and worse – in what you have taken upon yourself to do for her’

... ‘Are you her schoolmaster as well as her brother’s? – Or perhaps you would like to be?’ said Eugene.

It was a stab that the blood followed, in its rush to Bradley Headstone's face, as swiftly as if it had been dealt with a dagger.²⁴³

'Sexual innuendo underlies Eugene's taunting inquiry', Catherine Waters comments.²⁴⁴ It is clearly an uneven contest as Bradley's passionate anger inspires him to some eloquence:

'In the meanness of your nature you revile me with the meanness of my birth. I hold you in contempt for it. But if you don't profit by this visit, and act accordingly, you will find me as bitterly in earnest against you as I could be if I deemed you worth a second thought on my own account.'

With a consciously bad grace and stiff manner, as Wrayburn looked so easily and calmly on, he went out with these words, and the heavy door closed like a furnace-door upon his red and white heats of rage.²⁴⁵

Dickens's imagination is clearly fired by this confrontation of class and character: every apparently minor detail is as integral to the overall effect of the scene as the dialogue. Although he allows Wrayburn to win hands down on this everyday, social level, where Bradley Headstone's passionate nature seems a handicap, the drama is about to rise to an altogether higher, elemental level, where the magnitude and intensity of Headstone's passion dwarfs the 'meanness' of Wrayburn's.

Just as Wrayburn's love for Lizzie intensifies 'all that was wildest and most negligent and reckless'²⁴⁶ in him, so Headstone's powerfully passionate nature, all the emotions he represses in his professional life, are ignited by love. Whereas this intensification leaves Wrayburn much the same, in Headstone's case it tears him apart, his overmastering passion at odds with professional and social pressures. His approach to Wrayburn having failed, he appeals directly to Lizzie, 'grinding his words slowly out, as though they came from a rusty mill'; she rejects him, her face expressing 'some anger, more dislike, and even a touch of fear'.²⁴⁷ Pamela Hansford Johnson comments: 'The famous scene where Bradley, in frustration, dashes his fist on to a stone till it is covered in blood, is not fustian at all. This is the spontaneous consequence of rejection, and we believe in it totally.'²⁴⁸

Despite all this discouragement, Headstone gets Charley to use his influence upon her: 'Now Liz, be a rational girl and a good sister'.²⁴⁹ Charley leaves them together, appropriately - for a clearly doomed proposal - in a burial ground, and Bradley declares his love with the eloquence of despair:

The wild energy of the man, now quite let loose, was absolutely terrible ... 'No man knows till the time comes, what depths are within him. To some men it never comes; let them rest and be thankful! To me, you brought it; on me, you forced it; and the bottom of this raging sea,' striking himself upon the breast, 'has been heaved up ever

since ... I love you. What other men may mean when they use that expression, I cannot tell; what *I* mean is, that I am under the influence of some tremendous attraction which I have resisted in vain, and which overmasters me. You could draw me to fire, you could draw me to water, you could draw me to the gallows, you could draw me to any death, you could draw me to anything I have most avoided, you could draw me to any exposure and disgrace ... But if you would return a favourable answer to my offer of myself in marriage, you could draw me to any good – every good – with equal force.’²⁵⁰

It is a superb, despairing declaration, reminiscent of Pip’s feelings for Estella in *Great Expectations*:²⁵¹ in these last novels Dickens is surprisingly frank about sexual passion as the basis for relationships. By contrast, there is nothing of this visceral attraction in his portrayal of John and Bella’s feelings for each other. But Bradley, with his references to ‘some men’ and ‘other men’, senses that his eloquence is in vain. Lizzie, already in love with Wrayburn, reacts to Bradley’s proposal with fear and revulsion, and summarily rejects him.

Rejected in turn by her brother for refusing the proposal, afraid of Bradley’s passion and of Eugene’s power over her, Lizzie flees London. But she does not flee the river; the paper-mill at which she finds work draws its power from the fledgling Thames:

The water-wheel of the paper-mill was audible there, and seemed to have a softening influence on the bright wintry scene ... Perhaps the old mirror was never yet made by human hands, which, if all the images it has in its time reflected could pass across its surface again, would fail to reveal some scene of horror or distress. But the great serene mirror of the river seemed as if it might have reproduced all it had ever reflected between those placid banks, and brought nothing to the light save what was peaceful, pastoral and blooming.²⁵²

The ambiguity that we saw in the earlier imagery of the Thames in London is still present, but with an added sense of consolation and a promise of renewal (‘blooming’) which the man-made mirror does not possess. Of course, all of these evocations of the river work equally well on the level of physical, naturalistic description as they do of symbolic evocation; but it is precisely their psychological, symbolic significance, what Slater calls Dickens’s ‘emblematising art’,²⁵³ that lifts them beyond the level of the merely picturesque.

Wrayburn sets out to find Lizzie, spurning Mortimer’s advice to leave her alone for the sake of her reputation:

In the present task I have not got beyond this: - I am bent on finding Lizzie, and I mean to find her, and I will take any means of finding her that offer themselves. Fair means or foul means, all are alike to me.²⁵⁴

Mortimer notes the change in Eugene beneath the habitual indolence, ‘the unprecedented gleam of determination with which he had spoken of finding this girl’.²⁵⁵ Aware that Bradley is

following him at night, Wrayburn goads his jealousy and thwarted love. He learns of Lizzie's whereabouts and travels up river to find her, knowing that Bradley will follow. Headstone is leading two conflicting lives, the respectable schoolmaster by day, and the thwarted lover by night; the identity he has striven so hard to integrate is falling apart. He conceives a plan to kill Wrayburn and pin the blame on Rogue Riderhood, who is now the lock-keeper at Plashwater Weir Mill, close to where Lizzie is living. He dresses in identical clothes to Riderhood's: 'whereas, in his own schoolmaster clothes, he usually looked as if they were the clothes of some other man, he now looked, in the clothes of some other man or men, as if they were his own'.²⁵⁶ Alienated from society, physically powerful, torn between tumultuous extremes of love and homicidal hatred, with no friend or relative to guide him, Headstone at this point is remarkably akin to Frankenstein's creature in pursuit of the man he sees as the author of all his woes.

As with the climactic scenes of *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*, the natural elements, and water in particular, reflect the inner state of the protagonists. At Plashwater Headstone sees Wrayburn and Lizzie together; he seeks out Riderhood's cabin at the lock:

In the afternoon, a thunderstorm came up, and had but newly broken into a furious sweep of rain when he rushed in at the door, like the storm itself.

'You've seen him with her!' exclaimed Riderhood, starting up.

'I have.'

... He went into the pelting rain again with his head bare [...] All beyond his figure, as Riderhood looked from the door, was a vast dark curtain in solemn movement towards one quarter of the heavens.²⁵⁷

Headstone's overmastering passions are powerless to stop Wrayburn from pursuing Lizzie, at the risk of compromising her. "'Respect my good name'", she begs him,²⁵⁸ at the same time expressing 'something of her own love for him'.²⁵⁹ Walking by the river to think things through, Eugene considers leaving, but 'again he subsided into a reminiscence of his first full knowledge of his power just now, and of her disclosure of her heart. To try no more to go away, and to try her again, was the reckless conclusion it turned uppermost'. For once, Wrayburn is 'uneasy':

The rippling of the river seemed to cause a correspondent stir in his uneasy reflections. He would have lain them asleep if he could, but they were in movement, like the stream, and all tending one way with a strong current ... 'Out of the question to marry her,' said Eugene, 'and out of the question to leave her. The crisis!'²⁶⁰

Headstone attacks him, hitting him repeatedly with 'a broken oar', and he falls into the river. Lizzie hears the attack, sees the body in the moonlit water, and with a 'sure touch of her old practised hand',²⁶¹ using the skills she learned so reluctantly from her father, she rescues Wrayburn's insensible body from the water, and saves his life: a significant role reversal in

terms of both literary and social gender stereotypes, just as their marriage is, as Catherine Waters asserts, 'a defiance of paternal authority'.²⁶²

River and Rail

Having played a pivotal role in this elemental climax, the river continues to loom large in the denouement of this vital strand of the plot. For a long time Wrayburn is close to death, in a 'darkened and hushed room; the river outside the windows flowing on to the vast ocean'.²⁶³ His near-death experience - a quite literal immersion in an alternative time frame - jolts him into a reappraisal of his life and values, and he realises his love for Lizzie. He is too ill to be moved, and so Mortimer Lightwood and Bella travel to Plashwater to witness the wedding. In the company of the presiding parson they take the train, which parallels the river journey; in language which seems to resume where his indictment of the ravages that the railway construction wreaked in Staggs Gardens in *Dombey and Son* left off,²⁶⁴ Dickens hammers home the symbolic significance of river and rail, and their crucial link to time:

... the train rattled among the house-tops, and among the ragged sides of houses torn down to make way for it, and over the swarming streets, and under the fruitful earth, until it shot across the river: bursting over the quiet surface like a bomb-shell, and gone again as if it had exploded in the rush of smoke and steam and glare. A little more, and again it roared across the river, a great rocket: spurning the watery turning and doublings with ineffable contempt, and going straight to its end, as Father Time goes to his. To whom it is no matter what living waters run high or low, reflect the heavenly lights or darknesses, produce their little growth of weeds and flowers, turn here, turn there, are noisy or still, are troubled or at rest, for their course has one sure termination, though their sources and devices are many.²⁶⁵

The 'ineffable contempt' of the 'great rocket' echoes *Dombey's* attitude to the natural elements in the earlier novel. The metric rhythms and unforced assonance and alliteration in this passage are hallmarks of Dickens's imagination at its height, drawing together and unifying the deepest levels of meaning in the novel. The contrast between the mechanical, utilitarian railway, and the river, 'so quietly yielding to the attraction of the loadstone rock of Eternity',²⁶⁶ is beautifully clear. As well as drawing on and developing Romantic themes and values as a means of clarifying his subject-matter, Dickens develops parallel structures of organic imagery to unify his discourse.

Meanwhile Bradley Headstone has returned to his 'decent' schoolmaster's uniform and profession. He is tormented by the 'fraud' that 'Fate, or Providence, or be the directing Power what it might'²⁶⁷ has wrought upon him, just as Hardy's Tess will suffer as the 'sport' of the 'President of the Immortals'.²⁶⁸ Bradley knows that his rival is with Lizzie: 'his mind was never off the rack, and his raging sense of having been made to fling himself across the chasm which divided these two, and bridge it over for their coming together, never cooled down'.²⁶⁹ Rogue Riderhood's veiled threats to expose Headstone's guilt in front of his pupils finally push him

over the edge. Before pursuing the lock-keeper to Plashwater, 'he made a little parcel of his decent silver watch and its decent guard' and 'addressed the parcel to Miss Peecher',²⁷⁰ leaving behind for good that talisman of his utilitarian professional life and status, and his uneasy subservience to mechanical time. Until this point Headstone has tried to suppress his passionate nature, 'riding over it like a dragoon', as Dickens says of himself.²⁷¹ But when he abandons the watch he abandons all restraint with it. At the Lock House Riderhood demands money in return for his silence; his figure of speech is grimly apposite: "'You'd better by far be reasonable, Bradley Headstone, Master ... or I'll drain you all the dryer for it'".²⁷² Headstone grips him around the waist and grapples him into the lock, drowning them both. Bradley's awesome energy and passion, which had the potential for selfless greatness, end in mechanical stasis, his determination ends in death: when the bodies are found, Riderhood 'was girdled still with Bradley's iron ring, and the rivets of the iron ring held tight'.²⁷³

It is a cathartic climax to a classic tragedy, constantly shaped by Dickens's reconfiguration of the conflicting imagery of mechanical and natural time pioneered by Coleridge, Keats and Byron. Where their treatment of the theme was essentially personal and philosophical, Dickens makes it his own by making it social, broadening its implications to encompass the full range of mid-century society. Fittingly, the drama ends upstream from London, where Lizzie lives: the place of Headstone's passionate aspirations, of their thwarting, and of his death. This, I suggest, is the true climax of the novel, the neat happy endings and moralising of the remaining two chapters, which Miss Prism would surely have approved,²⁷⁴ being on an altogether lower imaginative plane, restoring order in the classical manner after the superhuman overreaching of Headstone's tragedy is played out, and the price paid.

I suggested earlier that there was one contemporary reviewer who demonstrated insight into this novel: this is the anonymous notice in the *London Review* of October 1865. After comparing Dickens's creation of characters which 'have the substance and freedom of actual existences' with that of Shakespeare, the reviewer suggests that 'Mr. Dickens's collateral conceptions are often better than his main purpose [...] John Rokesmith must, we suppose, be regarded as the hero; but he is certainly not the chief character, nor the most interesting'.²⁷⁵ Bradley Headstone, on the other hand, 'is a psychological study of the deepest interest, and, we are persuaded, of the profoundest truth':

The transformation of this pattern of all the decencies into a dark, haggard, self-tormenting evil genius, perpetually dogging the steps of Eugene Wrayburn, and at length making a murderous attack on him in a lonely place up the river, is one of the finest things in fiction.²⁷⁶

The reviewer shows more empathy with the character than its author is able to muster. He/she also appreciates the role of the Thames in the novel: 'We might almost mention the river itself as a character'.²⁷⁷ The echoes of Dickens's own questioning of who is the hero of a novel, in the first sentence of *David Copperfield*;²⁷⁸ the echoes of Coleridge's configuration of the

Primary Imagination: a 'living power [...] representative in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation';²⁷⁹ and the precise identification of those parts of the novel in which Dickens's creative imagination is at its most potent, are unique in contemporary criticism, and unusual in nineteenth-century criticism in general.

It can be argued, then, that the Romantic legacy raises Dickens's art to a higher level of imaginative intensity in each of the four fictions discussed so far. In *Our Mutual Friend* there are inconsistencies that make it a less satisfying work than *Great Expectations* or *Dombey and Son*. Most of these centre around the character of Eugene Wrayburn. Given that Dickens makes so much of the fierce independence of Betty Higden, the first character in the novel to make the crucial journey upstream from London, the reader feels some surprise over Dickens's apparent acceptance of Eugene's complacent idleness; are we to conclude that Betty's virtues are for the poor only, and that idleness is acceptable in those who can afford it? In the parts of the novel centred on the Veneerings, their affluence and thirst for social status are avidly satirised; yet it is precisely these, affluence and social status, that enable Wrayburn to exercise superiority over Bradley Headstone and intensify his unease. I have already noted Dickens's reservations about humble characters like Bradley and Charley, Boffin and Wegg, seeking to acquire learning; but again, it is Wrayburn's effortless command of language, the result of his education, that allows him to win every exchange with Headstone, and wrong-foot him at every turn. The inconsistency between this characterisation of Wrayburn and one of the values for which Dickens is most famous, his commitment to social equality and justice, is unavoidable.

Andrew Sanders argues that the aristocratic Twemlow's defence of Eugene's and Lizzie's marriage against the condemnations of Lady Tippings and her guests,²⁸⁰ confirms their status as 'gentleman' and 'lady':

Twemlow insists not on the supposed rights and privileges of a gentleman, but on the quality of a gentleman's behaviour [...] *Our Mutual Friend* [...] is not concerned with the idea of class conflict, but with class permeability. As Twemlow insists, the degree of gentleman 'may be attained by any man'.²⁸¹

However this argument ignores Wrayburn's very ungentlemanly behaviour in jeopardising Lizzie's reputation, despite her pleas to "Respect my good name".²⁸² It also ignores the fact that Dickens's sympathy for 'class permeability' does not apply to 'any man' in this novel – Bradley Headstone and Charley Hexam, to say nothing of Boffin and Wegg, seem to be precluded from the start.

Wrayburn is not the only character who raises doubts in the reader's mind. As we have seen, Lizzie Hexam breaks the mould of the stereotypical heroine by rescuing her hero and saving his life, rather than being rescued by him. As Claire Tomalin writes, 'her inner life remains closed to us. Dickens [...] can't get into the mind of Lizzie, and he gives her nothing but conventional ideas and feelings'.²⁸³ Having unwittingly pierced Headstone's armour of

‘decency’, she prefers Wrayburn’s mild intrigue to Bradley’s passion. Of course this is essential to Dickens’s portrayal of Wrayburn as another Steerforth, a decadent Byronic hero who effortlessly wins the woman of his choice. But where Steerforth dies in the water, and takes his place in the tragedy that unfolds, in this novel Wrayburn survives it, and takes his place in the neat Victorian denouement rather than in the timeless tragedy. Again, we are forced to wonder: was Lizzie, the poor girl susceptible to the charms of the decadent aristocrat, worthy of Headstone’s passion? In this sense Lizzie and Eugene, like Pip and Estella, deserve each other.

Finally, despite Dickens’s rejection of this ‘pauper lad’ from the Victorian gentleman’s club, the imaginative artist in him raises Headstone to a more lasting status, a higher plane of nobility; ‘the nobleness of life/ Is to do thus’,²⁸⁴ Mark Antony proclaims in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare’s play about the conflict between passion and worldly ambition and duty. Headstone’s passion is unrequited, but he alone in this novel is capable of this kind of nobility: the most intense passion for another human being. He is capable – just – of expressing that passion, a passion that dwarfs every other character in *Our Mutual Friend*. In this sense Dickens’s imagination has the last laugh over his anxious, class-obsessed Victorian mores. In Donald Stone’s words, Dickens’s ‘Romantic sympathies’ triumph over his ‘anti-Romantic views’.²⁸⁵ Like Frankenstein’s creature, Headstone stands alone: capable of great, selfless love, and unable to find a human being who will accept it. His surname of course marks the inevitability of his death, but it also marks his monumental quality: he is the character we will remember.

These false notes notwithstanding, *Our Mutual Friend* remains one of Dickens’s most intense and forward-looking achievements. As Angus Wilson noted as long ago as 1970, it is ‘an entirely modern novel’, ‘a novel before its time’.²⁸⁶ Paul Schlicke notes its influence on Ibsen and T. S. Eliot.²⁸⁷ It examines the changeless nature of love and passion, and in its depiction of the struggle between Benthamite and Coleridgean time, it explores how love and passion sit, or fail to sit, within the values and *mores* of a modern industrial society. In embodying essentially Romantic values, and their converse, within a hostile contemporary context, Dickens prepares his own Romantic legacy for subsequent generations.

¹ John Jeffrey-Cook, ‘William Pitt and his Taxes’, *British Tax Review*, 4 (2010), 376-91 (p.385).

² James A. Secord, *Victorian Sensation: The Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 24,26.

³ Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Vintage, 2016. First published 1973), p. 93.

⁴ E. P. Thompson, ‘Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism’, *Past and Present*, 38 (1967), 56-97 (p. 86). The quotation is from the anonymous *Chapters in the Life of a Dundee Factory Boy; an Autobiography* (Dundee: James Myles, 1850), p. 13.

⁵ *A Christmas Carol* was written in 1843, *Dombey and Son* was begun in 1844.

⁶ *CB*, Vol. 1, p. 47.

⁷ *CB*, Vol. 1, p. 53.

⁸ *CB*, Vol. 1, p. 63.

-
- ⁹ *CB*, Vol. 1, p. 128.
- ¹⁰ Brian Sabey, 'Ethical Metafiction in Dickens's Christmas Hauntings', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction*, 46 (2015), 123-46 (p. 128).
- ¹¹ *CB*, Vol. 1, p.68.
- ¹² Sabey, p. 128.
- ¹³ Pip sees his own name on a gravestone, but it is his father's grave: *GE*, p. 3.
- ¹⁴ Jennifer Ruth, 'Mental Capital, Industrial Time, and the Professional in *David Copperfield*', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 32 no.3, 303-30 (p. 314n).
- ¹⁵ *CB*, Vol. 1, p. 127.
- ¹⁶ *KPW* p. 365, ll. 1, 9, 10.
- ¹⁷ *KPW* p. 366, ll. 2, 9, 11-14.
- ¹⁸ 'Lethe, (Greek: "Oblivion"), in Greek mythology, daughter of Eris (Strife) and the personification of oblivion. Lethe is also the name of a river or plain in the infernal regions': <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Lethe> (accessed 16.5.14)
- 'Styx, in Greek mythology, one of the rivers of the underworld. The word styx literally means "shuddering" and expresses loathing of death': <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Styx-Greek-religion> (accessed 16.5.14)
- ¹⁹ Peter Ackroyd, *London Under* (London: Vintage Books, 2012), p.47.
- ²⁰ Stephen Gill, 'Introduction', *OMF* p. 29. It is significant that Scrooge's experience encompasses both polarities, and hence the success of the outcome.
- ²¹ 'A Hymne to God the Father', ll.13-14, in *Donne: Poetical Works* ed. by Sir Herbert Grierson (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 338.
- ²² Stephen Coote, *John Keats: A Life* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995), p. 128.
- ²³ Coote, p. 129.
- ²⁴ Coote, p. 129.
- ²⁵ 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' Part IV, ll. 232-33, in *CPW* p. 196.
- ²⁶ Part II, ll. 115-16, in *CPW* p. 190.
- ²⁷ Part I, l. 15, in *CPW* p. 187.
- ²⁸ ll. 1-5, in *CPW* p. 215.
- ²⁹ ll.332-3, 342-4, in *CPW* p. 227.
- ³⁰ Coote, p.129.
- ³¹ Dometa Weigand, 'Coleridge's 'Web of Time': The Herschels, the Darwins, and Psalm 19', in *The Coleridge Bulletin: The Journal of the Friends of Coleridge*, New Series 28 (2006), 91-100 (pp.96, 100).
- ³² Richard Bevis, *The Road to Egdon Heath: The Aesthetics of the Great in Nature* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), p. 124.
- ³³ Canto IV, Stanza XXXIII, ll. 7-9, in *BPW* p. 250.
- ³⁴ Canto IV, Stanza CLXXVIII, ll. 2-4, in *BPW* p. 250.
- ³⁵ Canto IV, Stanza CLXXIX, ll. 3-4, in *BPW* p. 251.
- ³⁶ Ll. 21-22, in *WPW* p. 149.
- ³⁷ Andrew Warren, *The Orient and the Young Romantics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p.
- ³⁸ Robin Gilmour, *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830-1890* (London: Longman, 1993), p. xiii.
- ³⁹ Humphrey House, *The Dickens World* (London: Oxford University Press, Second Edition, 1942), pp. 30-34. The first edition was published in 1941, but most commentators refer to the slightly-revised second edition of 1942, as I have done.
- ⁴⁰ Leon Litvac, 'Images of the River in *Our Mutual Friend*', *Dickens Quarterly* XX (2003) 34-55.
- ⁴¹ Matthew Bevis, 'Dickens by the Clock', in *Dickens's Style*, ed. by Daniel Tyler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 46-72.
- ⁴² Daragh Downes, 'The Best of Time, the Worst of Time: Temporal Consciousness in Dickens', in *Victorian Time: Technologies, Standardizations, Catastrophes*, ed. by Trish Ferguson (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 16-37.

-
- ⁴³ *Mill on Bentham and Coleridge*, ed. by F. R. Leavis (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950), p. 40.
- ⁴⁴ Leavis, pp. 102-03.
- ⁴⁵ Leavis, p.40.
- ⁴⁶ Leavis, pp.67-68.
- ⁴⁷ Leavis, p. 155.
- ⁴⁸ Philip Connell, *Romanticism, Economics, and the Question of 'Culture'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 284.
- ⁴⁹ Bevis, p. 58.
- ⁵⁰ Quoted in Nigel Thrift, 'The Making of a Capitalist Time Consciousness', in *The Sociology of Time* ed. by John Hassard (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), p. 122.
- ⁵¹ Thrift, p. 127.
- ⁵² *Household Words*, 11 November 1854: GA p.246. George Bradshaw published the first railway timetable, in 1839.
- ⁵³ Sir Courtney Ilbert, K.C.S.I., C.I.E, *Legislative Methods and Forms* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1901), p. 337.
- ⁵⁴ Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth* (London: Picador, 2000), p.99.
- ⁵⁵ DS, p.12.
- ⁵⁶ DS, p. 1.
- ⁵⁷ Nina Auerbach, 'Dickens and Dombey: A Daughter After All', in *Romantic Imprisonment: Women and Other Glorified Outcasts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), pp. 107-29.
- ⁵⁸ DS, p.33.
- ⁵⁹ Andrew Elfenbein, 'Managing the House in "Dombey and Son": Dickens and the Uses of Analogy', *Studies in Philology*, 92 (1995), 361-382 (p.364).
- ⁶⁰ Leavis, p. 69.
- ⁶¹ DS, p.12.
- ⁶² DS, p. 13.
- ⁶³ DS, p. 13.
- ⁶⁴ Catherine Waters, *Dickens and the Politics of the Family* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 42.
- ⁶⁵ Joss Lutz Marsh, 'Good Mrs. Brown's Connections: Sexuality and Story-Telling in Dealings with the Firm of Dombey and Son', *English Literary History*, 58 (1991), 405-426 (p.406).
- ⁶⁶ Auerbach, p. 96.
- ⁶⁷ DC, p.49.
- ⁶⁸ Geoffrey Hempil, *The Anxiety of Presence: Charles Dickens and the Self in Time. A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*, (The City University of New York, 2007), p.20.
- ⁶⁹ DS, p. 11.
- ⁷⁰ Valerie Purton, 'Introduction', *Dombey and Son* (London: J. M. Dent, 1997), pp. XXV-XXXVI (p. XXVI).
- ⁷¹ Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*, ed. by Norman Page (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), p. 217.
- ⁷² Malcolm Andrews, *Dickens and the Grown-up Child* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), p. 112.
- ⁷³ Andrews, p. 126.
- ⁷⁴ DS, pp. 128-29.
- ⁷⁵ Julian Moynahan, 'Dealings with the Firm of Dombey and Son: Firmness versus Wetness', in *Dickens and the Twentieth Century*, ed. by John Gross and Gabriel Pearson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), pp. 121-31.
- ⁷⁶ Michael Slater, *Charles Dickens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 260.
- ⁷⁷ DS, p. 475.

-
- ⁷⁸ *DS*, p. 109.
- ⁷⁹ *DS*, p. 11.
- ⁸⁰ Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *The Triumph of Time: A Study of the Victorian Concepts of Time, History, Progress, and Decadence* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1967), p. 2.
- ⁸¹ Auerbach, p. 110.
- ⁸² *Evening Chronicle*, 23rd April 1835: *SB*, p. 252.
- ⁸³ *HT*, p. 99.
- ⁸⁴ *GE*, p. 58.
- ⁸⁵ *DS*, p. 61.
- ⁸⁶ Catherine Waters, p. 42.
- ⁸⁷ Galia Benziman, 'Who Stole the Child?: Missing Babies and Blank Identities in Early Dickens', in *Dickens and the Imagined Child*, ed. by Peter Merchant and Catherine Waters (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015) pp. 27-41 (p. 35 n16)
- ⁸⁸ *DS*, p. 108.
- ⁸⁹ *DS*, pp. 116, 117. The autobiographical elements are confirmed by Dickens himself in a letter to Forster, 4th November 1846: *LCD*, Vol. IV, p. 652-53.
- ⁹⁰ Slater, p. 262.
- ⁹¹ Paul Schlicke, 'Dombey and Son', in *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens: Anniversary Edition*, ed. by Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 184-88 (p. 185).
- ⁹² *DS*, p.163.
- ⁹³ *DS*, p.162.
- ⁹⁴ *DS*, p.163.
- ⁹⁵ Downes, p. 17.
- ⁹⁶ *DS*, pp. 163-64.
- ⁹⁷ *DS*, p. 180.
- ⁹⁸ *DS*, p. 185.
- ⁹⁹ *DS*, p.189.
- ¹⁰⁰ Philip Collins, *Dickens and Education* (London: Macmillan, 1964), p. 142.
- ¹⁰¹ ll.332-3: *CPW* p. 227.
- ¹⁰² *DS*, p. 192.
- ¹⁰³ Rosemary Bodenheimer, 'Dickens and the Knowing Child', in *Dickens and the Imagined Child*, ed. by Peter Merchant and Catherine Waters (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 13-26 (p. 17).
- ¹⁰⁴ *DS*, p. 192.
- ¹⁰⁵ *DS*, pp. 189-90.
- ¹⁰⁶ William Axton, 'Dombey and Son: From Stereotype to Archetype', *English Literary History*, 31, (1964), 301-17 (p. 315).
- ¹⁰⁷ *DS*, p. 46.
- ¹⁰⁸ Carolyn W. de la L. Oulton, "'No Magic Dwelling-Place in Magic Story": Time, Memory and the Enchanted Children of *Dombey and Son*', in *Dickens and the Imagined Child*, ed. by Peter Merchant and Catherine Waters (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp.43-56 (p. 47).
- ¹⁰⁹ Holly Furneaux, *Queer Dickens: Erotics, Families, Masculinities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 53.
- ¹¹⁰ *DS*, p. 46.
- ¹¹¹ *DS*, p. 47.
- ¹¹² *DS*, pp. 52-3.
- ¹¹³ *DS*, pp. 34-5.
- ¹¹⁴ Rick Allen, *The Moving Pageant: a Literary Sourcebook on London Street-life, 1700-1914* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 15.

-
- ¹¹⁵ *DS*, p. 48.
- ¹¹⁶ *DS*, p.56.
- ¹¹⁷ *DS*, p. 20.
- ¹¹⁸ *DS*, p.300.
- ¹¹⁹ Matthew Bevis, p. 58.
- ¹²⁰ *DS*, pp. 79-80.
- ¹²¹ John Drew, 'Texts, paratexts and "e-texts": the poetics of communication in Dickens's journalism', in *Dickens and Modernity*, ed. by Juliet John (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 61-93 (p.67).
- ¹²² Auerbach, p. 110.
- ¹²³ *DS*, pp. 51-52.
- ¹²⁴ *DS*, pp. 53-54.
- ¹²⁵ Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1990), p. 48.
- ¹²⁶ *DS*, p. 57.
- ¹²⁷ *DS*, p. 55.
- ¹²⁸ Donald D. Stone, *The Romantic Impulse in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 250.
- ¹²⁹ *DS*, p. 11.
- ¹³⁰ Moynahan, p. 126.
- ¹³¹ *DS*, p. 48.
- ¹³² *DS*, p. 58.
- ¹³³ Letter to Dickens dated 5th July 1847; in Lord (Henry Thomas) Cockburn, *Life of Lord Jeffrey, with a Selection from his Correspondence* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1852), Vol. II, p.428.
- ¹³⁴ George Hodder, *Memoirs of My Time, Including Personal Reminiscences of Eminent Men* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1870), p. 277.
- ¹³⁵ *DS*, p. 253.
- ¹³⁶ Francis Jeffrey, review of Wordsworth's *The Excursion*, *The Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal* XXIV 47 (November 1814), p.1.
- ¹³⁷ 'H', *Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review*, xlvii, 5-11 (p. 6). For the attribution see *Dickens: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Philip Collins (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 225.
- ¹³⁸ [Charles Kent], *Sun*, 13th April 1848. For the attribution see Collins 1971, p. 227.
- ¹³⁹ [Anon.], *Economist*, 10th October 1846, 1324-25.
- ¹⁴⁰ John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens: Volume the Second, 1842-1852* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1873), p.323.
- ¹⁴¹ [Anon.], 'Inquest on the late Master Paul Dombey', *The Man in the Moon*, i. (March 1847), 155-60.
- ¹⁴² [Anon.], review of *Dombey and Son*, *Parker's London Magazine*, May 1848, 201.
- ¹⁴³ Wilkie Collins, marginal notes in his copy of Forster, quoted in Collins, 1971, p. 212.
- ¹⁴⁴ Oulton, p. 47.
- ¹⁴⁵ *DS*, p. 256. According to Andrew Sanders's note to this passage (p. 967, note 3), 'Lovely Peg' is a character in Charles Dibdin's popular sea-song 'The Saturday Night at Sea', written in 1789; Captain Cuttle also borrows 'Heart's-delight' from the song (p.363).
- ¹⁴⁶ *DS*, p. 352.
- ¹⁴⁷ *DS*, p.740.
- ¹⁴⁸ George Gissing, *The Immortal Dickens* (London: Cecil Palmer, 1925), p. 158.
- ¹⁴⁹ Louise Yelin, 'Strategies for Survival: Florence and Edith in "Dombey and Son"', *Victorian Studies*, 22 (1979), 297-319 (p.303).
- ¹⁵⁰ Robert Clark, 'Riddling the Family Firm: The Sexual Economy in Dombey and Son', *English Literary History*, 51, (1984), 69-84 (p. 74).
- ¹⁵¹ *MHH*, plate 10.

-
- ¹⁵² Robert Higbie, *Dickens and Imagination* (Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1998), p.85.
- ¹⁵³ *DS*, p. 475.
- ¹⁵⁴ *DS*, p. 838.
- ¹⁵⁵ Richard Hughes Gibson, *Forgiveness in Victorian Literature: Grammar, Narrative, and Community* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 64.
- ¹⁵⁶ *DS*, p. 840.
- ¹⁵⁷ *DS*, p. 841.
- ¹⁵⁸ *DS*, p. 842.
- ¹⁵⁹ Ian Carter, *Railways and Culture in Britain: The Epitome of Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 76.
- ¹⁶⁰ *DS*, pp. 310-14.
- ¹⁶¹ *DS*, p. 876.
- ¹⁶² Kristina Aikens, 'The Daughter's Desire in *Dombey and Son*', *Critical Survey*, 17 (2005), 77-91 (p. 88).
- ¹⁶³ *DS*, p. 877.
- ¹⁶⁴ *DS*, p. 913.
- ¹⁶⁵ *DS*, p. 40.
- ¹⁶⁶ *Dombey and Son*, ed. by Alan Horsman (Oxford: Clarendon Edition, Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 855.
- ¹⁶⁷ Dominic Rainsford, 'Out of place: David Copperfield's Irresolvable Geographies', in *Dickens and Modernity*, ed. by Juliet John (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 193-208 (p. 194).
- ¹⁶⁸ Furneaux, p. 53.
- ¹⁶⁹ *DS*, p. 884.
- ¹⁷⁰ *OCS*, p. 145.
- ¹⁷¹ *DS*, p. 947.
- ¹⁷² Moynahan, p. 129.
- ¹⁷³ Yelin, p. 298.
- ¹⁷⁴ *DS*, p. 947.
- ¹⁷⁵ Gill, p. 29.
- ¹⁷⁶ *DS*, p. 947.
- ¹⁷⁷ Oscar Wilde, *Complete Works, with an Introduction by Vyvyan Holland* (London: Collins, 1969), p. 341.
- ¹⁷⁸ See Fred Kaplan, *Dickens: A Biography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988), pp. 31-47.
- ¹⁷⁹ For Dickens's impatience with his sons' attempts to make a living, see ClaireTomalin, *Charles Dickens: A Life* (London: Viking, 2011), pp. 246-49, 371-73.
- ¹⁸⁰ *CB*, Vol. 1, p. 134.
- ¹⁸¹ William Blake, 'The First Book of Urizen' (1794), 'The Book of Los' (1795): *BCW*, pp. 222-37, 255-60. For a critical commentary see G. E. Bentley, (Jr), *The Stranger From Paradise* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 124-25, 152-57.
- ¹⁸² *CB*, Vol. 1, p. 134.
- ¹⁸³ Gissing, pp. 142-43.
- ¹⁸⁴ Moynahan, p. 122.
- ¹⁸⁵ Moynahan, pp. 127, 128.
- ¹⁸⁶ Axton, pp. 314-15.
- ¹⁸⁷ Axton, p. 314.
- ¹⁸⁸ Arnold Kettle, 'Our Mutual Friend', in *Dickens and the Twentieth Century*, ed. by John Gross and Gabriel Pearson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), pp. 213-24 (p. 214).
- ¹⁸⁹ George Levine, 'Introduction: George Eliot and the art of realism', in *The Cambridge Companion to George Eliot*, ed. by George Levine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 1-19 (p. 8).
- ¹⁹⁰ [George Eliot], 'The Natural History of German Life', *Westminster Review*, lxvi (July 1856), 51-79 (p. 55).
- ¹⁹¹ [Henry James], review of *Our Mutual Friend*, *The Nation*, 21 December 1865, 786-7.

-
- ¹⁹² Martin Garrett, 'Our Mutual Friend: Contemporary Responses', paper given at the Cambridge Dickens Fellowship, 14th March 2016, p.3.
- ¹⁹³ Stephen Gill, 'Introduction', *OMF* pp. 16-17.
- ¹⁹⁴ Litvac, p. 34.
- ¹⁹⁵ George Levine, *Darwin and the Novelists: Patterns of Science in Victorian Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 149.
- ¹⁹⁶ Stephen Inwood, *A History of London* (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 541.
- ¹⁹⁷ R. H. Horne, 'Dust; or Ugliness Redeemed', *Household Words* I (1850), 379-84 (p. 380).
- ¹⁹⁸ Sabine Schulting, *Dirt in Victorian Literature and Culture: Writing Materiality* (New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 40.
- ¹⁹⁹ *OMF* pp. 44-45.
- ²⁰⁰ *OMF* p. 47.
- ²⁰¹ *OMF* p. 45.
- ²⁰² *OMF* pp. 222-23.
- ²⁰³ *OMF* p. 502.
- ²⁰⁴ Stephen Gill, note 3, *OMF* p. 896. The note provides an excellent summary of the subject.
- ²⁰⁵ *OMF*, p. 48.
- ²⁰⁶ Kettle, p.214.
- ²⁰⁷ Paul Schlicke, 'Our Mutual Friend', in *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens: Anniversary Edition* ed. by Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 442-46 (p. 444).
- ²⁰⁸ *OMF*, p. 61.
- ²⁰⁹ *OMF*, p. 337.
- ²¹⁰ Angus Wilson, *The World of Charles Dickens* (London: Martin Secker and Warburg Limited, 1970), p. 280. Dickens again anticipates the decadence of the nineties in Jasper's drug-fuelled visions in the opium-den scene which begins *Edwin Drood: ED*, pp. 7-8.
- ²¹¹ Slater, p. 533.
- ²¹² [Anon.], review of *Our Mutual Friend*, *Saturday Review*, xx (1865), 612-13 (p.613).
- ²¹³ [Anon.], *Westminster Review*, n.s. xxix (1866), 582-85 (p. 582).
- ²¹⁴ Garrett, p. 1.
- ²¹⁵ Collins, 1971, p.453.
- ²¹⁶ [E. S. Dallas], *The Times*, 29th November 1865, 6. For the attribution see Collins, 1971, p. 464.
- ²¹⁷ [Henry Fothergill Chorley], *The Athenaeum*, 28th October 1865, 570. For the attribution see Collins, 1971, p. 453.
- ²¹⁸ Ackroyd, 1990, p. 968.
- ²¹⁹ Collins, 1971, p. 453.
- ²²⁰ See Collins, 1964, pp. 74, 180.
- ²²¹ *OMF*, p. 265.
- ²²² *OMF*, p. 266.
- ²²³ *OMF*, p. 268.
- ²²⁴ *OMF*, p. 275.
- ²²⁵ Smiles is best known now for *Self Help; With Illustrations of Character and Conduct* (1859).
- ²²⁶ Rebecca Richardson, 'Bradley Headstone's Bad Example of Self-Help: Dickens and the Problem with Ambition', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays in Victorian Fiction*, 44 (2013), 267-88 (p. 272).
- ²²⁷ *OMF*, pp. 266-67.
- ²²⁸ Michaela Mahlberg, *Corpus Stylistics and Dickens's Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 143.
- ²²⁹ *OMF*, pp. 103-04.

-
- ²³⁰ See Leon Litvac, 'Education', in *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens: Anniversary Edition* ed. by Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 214-18 (p. 215).
- ²³¹ *OMF*, p. 267.
- ²³² Andrew Sanders, 'The Aristocracy', in *Charles Dickens in Context*, ed. by Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 252-59 (p. 258).
- ²³³ Sanders, p. 259.
- ²³⁴ Letter to John Forster [5 September 1857], *SL*, p. 325.
- ²³⁵ Dirk den Hartog, *Dickens and Romantic Psychology: The Self in Time in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Houndmills: The Macmillan Press, 1987), p. 34.
- ²³⁶ Hartog, p. 34.
- ²³⁷ *OMF*, p. 268.
- ²³⁸ *OMF*, p. 749.
- ²³⁹ Sally Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Bronte and Victorian Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 170.
- ²⁴⁰ Sean Patrick Magee, *An Entertaining Study: Our Mutual Friend's Bradley Headstone and Dickens's Answer to Phrenology: A Thesis Presented to the Graduate and Research Committee of Lehigh University in Candidacy for the Degree of Master of Arts* (Lehigh University, Pennsylvania, 2000), p. 12.
- ²⁴¹ *OMF*, p. 341.
- ²⁴² *OMF*, p. 345.
- ²⁴³ *OMF*, p. 346.
- ²⁴⁴ Waters, p. 199.
- ²⁴⁵ *OMF*, p. 347.
- ²⁴⁶ *OMF*, p. 213.
- ²⁴⁷ *OMF*, pp. 400-01.
- ²⁴⁸ Pamela Hansford Johnson, 'The Sexual Life in Dickens's Novels', in *Dickens 1970*, ed. by Michael Slater (London: Chapman and Hall, 1970), pp. 173-94 (p. 189).
- ²⁴⁹ *OMF*, p. 452.
- ²⁵⁰ *OMF*, pp. 454-55.
- ²⁵¹ *GE*, p. 232.
- ²⁵² *OMF*, pp. 584-85.
- ²⁵³ Slater, p. 260.
- ²⁵⁴ *OMF*, p. 600.
- ²⁵⁵ *OMF*, p. 600.
- ²⁵⁶ *OMF*, p. 697.
- ²⁵⁷ *OMF*, p. 704.
- ²⁵⁸ *OMF*, p. 761.
- ²⁵⁹ *OMF*, p. 764.
- ²⁶⁰ *OMF*, p. 766.
- ²⁶¹ *OMF*, p. 768.
- ²⁶² Waters, p. 200.
- ²⁶³ *OMF*, p. 805.
- ²⁶⁴ *DS*, pp. 79-80.
- ²⁶⁵ *OMF*, pp. 821-22.
- ²⁶⁶ *OMF*, p. 822.
- ²⁶⁷ *OMF*, p. 863.
- ²⁶⁸ Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, ed. by David Skilton (London: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 489.
- ²⁶⁹ *OMF*, p. 864.
- ²⁷⁰ *OMF*, p. 867.

-
- ²⁷¹ Hartley, p. 325.
- ²⁷² *OMF*, p. 874.
- ²⁷³ *OMF*, p. 874.
- ²⁷⁴ Wilde, p. 341.
- ²⁷⁵ [Anon.], review of *Our Mutual Friend*, *London Review*, 28th October 1865, 467-68 (p. 467).
- ²⁷⁶ [Anon.], review of *Our Mutual Friend*, *London Review*, 28th October 1865, 467-68 (p. 468).
- ²⁷⁷ [Anon.], review of *Our Mutual Friend*, *London Review*, 28th October 1865, 467-68 (p. 468).
- ²⁷⁸ *DC*, p. 49.
- ²⁷⁹ *BL*, p. 167.
- ²⁸⁰ *OMF*, pp. 891-92.
- ²⁸¹ Andrew Sanders, 'The Aristocracy', in *Charles Dickens in Context*, ed. by Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 252-59 (pp. 258-59).
- ²⁸² *OMF*, p. 761.
- ²⁸³ Claire Tomalin, *Charles Dickens: A Life* (London: Viking, 2011), p. 343.
- ²⁸⁴ William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. by M. R. Ridley (London: Methuen and Co Ltd, 1967), p. 6.
- ²⁸⁵ Donald D. Stone, *The Romantic Impulse in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 249.
- ²⁸⁶ Wilson, pp. 280, 282.
- ²⁸⁷ Schlicke, p. 446.

Chapter 3: Progress

This chapter will examine notions of progress, and particularly the role of science and technology in redefining human progress, in the writings of Blake, Coleridge, Southey, Percy Shelley and Mary Shelley. I will then explore how Dickens was influenced by these Romantic ideas of progress in his critiques of contemporary society in *Bleak House* and *Hard Times* from the early 1850s.

Revolution and Science

The political revolutions in France and America towards the end of the eighteenth century, and the technological revolution which Britain spearheaded at much the same time, were inspired in their different ways by ideals of human progress. 'The oeuvre of Adam Smith admirably represents the intellectual bias of the period' in that it interprets the 'evolution of man in society' as 'on the whole an upward progress', Marilyn Butler argues.¹ I suggested in my Introduction that the Romantic movement in literature, which began to emerge at much the same time, was essentially a reaction to revolution and change rather than a revolution in itself; though certainly containing revolutionary elements, its history is that of an evolution, a progress, rather than a revolution. Much of Pitt's legislation around the turn of the century was

a direct response to one or other of these revolutions: supportive in the case of the industrial revolution, hostile in the case of the political, designed to ward off the threat of revolutionary ideals spreading from France. The Acts of Union of 1800,² for example, were a reaction to French involvement in the Irish rebellion of 1798.³

Coleridge and Southey hatched plans to realise their ideals of human perfectibility in the scheme of Pantisocracy. The essence of the scheme was that, given the right circumstances and a natural environment untainted by social and technical sophistry, human beings could progress towards an ideal, perfect state of being: ‘a heady cocktail of all the progressive idealism’ of the time, Richard Holmes notes.⁴

The industrial revolution was as important to Romantic literature as the political. Blake’s warnings as to the spiritual debilitation of urban industrial life, the ‘dark satanic mills’ of ‘Jerusalem’, are famous.⁵ In ‘London’, the technological appropriation of man’s environment: ‘each charter’d street’, and of nature: ‘the charter’d Thames’, leads to ‘every Man’ living with ‘mind-forg’d manacles’,⁶ alienated from nature. Blake’s illustration for the poem shows a man aged and crippled, his only guide a child. The progress of industry and technology is towards spiritual deformity, Blake warns. And in that key poem ‘The Schoolboy’ he specifically links progress to the natural cycle of organic growth and development: if ‘buds are nip’d/ And blossoms blown away’, there can be no ‘summer fruits’, no flourishing. In the 1805 *Prelude* Wordsworth contrasts ‘the monster birth / Engendered by these too industrious times’ with the ‘race of real children’ reared in nature.⁷ If the natural cycle is maintained and fruition achieved, even the gradual withering of autumn, and the death of nature in winter, can be pleasurable to human beings. With the experience of progress through blossoming and fruition to draw on, we can ‘bless the mellowing year, /When the blasts of winter appear’.⁸ As Coleridge prophesied in ‘Frost at Midnight’, ‘all seasons shall be sweet to thee’.⁹

Paradoxically, Coleridge was also fascinated by the science that enabled the technological revolution to alienate humanity from the natural state, as was Shelley: a paradox that Mary Shelley was to explore and embody in *Frankenstein*. Mark Kipperman’s comment is astute: ‘Shelley and Coleridge initially valued the new scientific discoveries not simply for their empirical elegance but for their potential, as Davy put it, to discover cause-effect patterns between human perceptions or ideas and the physical world, so that “by discovering them we should be informed of the laws of our existence, and probably enabled in a great measure to destroy our pains and increase our pleasures”’.¹⁰ Both poets dabbled in scientific experiments themselves. Coleridge and Wordsworth were friends of Humphry Davy; they and the Shelleys studied his works.¹¹

In 1829 Robert Southey, by then poet laureate, published two volumes of *Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society*. The fruit of correspondence with Walter Savage Landor in the early 1820s, which also led to Landor’s *Imaginary Conversations*, Southey’s *Colloquies* takes the form of a socratic dialogue between Southey himself, Thomas More, author of *Utopia*,

and one 'Montesinos, a stranger from a distant country'.¹² This format, as a vehicle for Southey's critique of the utopian optimism with which the Industrial Revolution was ushered in, seems promising. But the result is disappointing, mainly because there is no colloquy or debate to speak of, rather a soliloquy, each of the three *personae* echoing the author's own views. Raymond Williams characterises *Colloquies* as 'scattered assertion', though he does credit Southey with consistently pioneering, from 1807 onwards, 'the kind of criticism of the new manufacturing system which later became axiomatic'.¹³

Southey's Pantisocratic ardour had evaporated long before he wrote this book,¹⁴ but his conclusions on the subsequent industrialisation of England are pessimistic. Not only is it fundamentally unjust: '... it is the tendency of the commercial, and more especially of the manufacturing system, to collect wealth rather than to diffuse it';¹⁵ it is also fundamentally destructive: '... the wealth which is thus produced is no more an indication of public prosperity, than the size of one whose limbs are swollen with dropsy, is a symptom of health and vigour'.¹⁶ England, then, had regressed in the first decades of the century to a more unequal, more inhumane society than that of agrarian times, prone to the 'contagious insanities' that lead to financial crashes.¹⁷

Southey's unreasoning, impressionistic approach proved a soft target for Thomas Macaulay, who reviewed *Colloquies* in the *Edinburgh Review* in January 1830. Macaulay suggests that 'Mr. Southey does not bring forward a single fact in support of these views',¹⁸ and goes on to present a barrage of 'facts' and statistics on poor rates and mortality rates which point to conclusions diametrically opposed to Southey's, and which Mr Gradgrind would have applauded. Macaulay was often critical of Utilitarian thought,¹⁹ but his argument here is indistinguishable from it: he believes in 'the natural tendency of society to improvement ... We see the capital of nations increasing, and all the arts of life approaching nearer and nearer to perfection'.²⁰

Ideas of what constitutes progress, and of the effects of science, technology and urbanisation on human life in social, national and individual terms, were clearly hotly contested when Dickens began his career, and continued to be so throughout his lifetime. The English were entering uncharted territory, as Robin Gilmour notes: 'there were no precedents that industrialisation and urbanisation could fall back on'.²¹ But not all critiques of scientific progress were as easily brushed aside as Southey's.

In their separate 'Prefaces' to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Mary and Percy Shelley both note the links between the novel and the ideas of Erasmus Darwin,²² and Mary herself traces its genesis to conversations between Percy and Byron on galvanism.²³ Her perception of that paradoxical relationship between the Romantics' assertion of the importance of the natural environment, and their fascination with the science that seeks to dominate it, lies at the heart of *Frankenstein*. As Miranda Seymour notes, Mary Shelley wrote in her journal that she 'read the Introduction to Sir H. Davy's 'Chemistry'' on the 28th October 1816,²⁴ a time when 'she

was working on *Frankenstein* almost every day', Laura Crouch writes.²⁵ Anne Mellor suggests that the work referred to in the journal entry is Davy's 1802 *Discourse, Introductory to a Course of Lectures on Chemistry*,²⁶ in which he asserts that man is able to 'interrogate nature with power, not simply as a scholar, passive and seeking only to understand her operations, but rather as a master, active with his own instruments'.²⁷ Mellor's comment is astute: 'Here Davy introduces the very distinction Mary Shelley wishes to draw between the scholar-scientist who seeks only to understand the operations of nature and the master-scientist who actively interferes with nature'.²⁸

The novel's discourse is almost all presented as having been related by one scientist to another, and the two scientists fall precisely into Mellor's categories. Robert Walton seeks to discover the secrets of magnetism, and thus benefit mankind. But his aspirations do not transgress the natural order – he is one of Mellor's scholar-scientists. 'I shall kill no albatross', he assures his sister.²⁹ Victor Frankenstein, on the other hand, 'aspires to become greater than his nature will allow'.³⁰ 'I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation'.³¹ He prides himself on possessing 'an ardent imagination'."³² yet it is precisely his lack of imagination that triggers the tragedy of the novel as he sees his creation come to life:

I had selected his features as beautiful ... but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room.³³

Frankenstein possesses unique scientific skill and knowledge, but he is unable to imagine fully the consequences of his work; the 'beauty' of his 'dream' is superficial Fancy rather than creative Imagination, in terms of Coleridge's distinction in *Biographia Literaria*.³⁴ Frankenstein's reactions to his creation are shallow, based wholly on 'the aspect of the being I had created'. Before the creature has done anything, his maker has already condemned him as a 'demoniacal corpse'.³⁵ Frankenstein's dream of creating 'a new species' of 'happy and excellent natures'³⁶ is dashed, through his own inability to break through the superficiality of appearances and imagine the full complexity of his creation. When dealing with dead matter Frankenstein is a genius; it is the complexity of living things that baffles and scares him. 'Happy and excellent natures': it could be argued that he did indeed create a being of 'excellent' nature, but failed miserably to provide the conditions for that being to be 'happy'. When they meet and talk later on, Frankenstein can recognise that he has made 'a creature of fine sensations',³⁷ and that he has entirely failed in his own responsibilities: 'did I not as his maker, owe him all the portion of happiness that it was in my power to bestow?'³⁸ But he cannot consistently move beyond appearances: in his next breath he confesses 'when I saw the filthy mass that moved and talked, my heart sickened'.³⁹ Mary Shelley devises a structure for the novel that is even-handed in allowing her two protagonists, and Robert Walton, to have their say. She is also among the first to employ the rhythms, assonance and alliteration associated

with poetry in a novel; the proximity of Byron and Shelley must have made this seem natural. In this respect, however, she is anything but even-handed: the fact that the Creature speaks all of the poetry in the novel, culminating in the elegy to his dead creator with which it ends,⁴⁰ while the 'master-scientist' himself is limited to expressing the prosaic, the superficial, and the inconsistent, indicates where her deepest sympathies lie. Miranda Seymour stresses 'how close the Creature's plight was [...] to Mary's perception of herself':

She, like her creature, was unfairly condemned, judged not for what she was, but for how appearances made her seem. The fact that she was not married to Shelley did not make her wicked, any more than the Creature's unnatural birth and bizarre appearance made him evil.⁴¹

If the Creature embodies some of her own feelings of rejection, Victor Frankenstein is certainly endowed with much of Byron's and Shelley's confidence in science as a means to human progress. The 'master-scientist' who tries to play god and discover the secrets of life, 'I pursued nature to her hiding-places', ends up with death, 'dabbl[ing] among the unhallowed damp of the grave'.⁴² As Jonathan Bate comments, 'by making a child of his own without submission to the fecundity of a woman's womb, he symbolically kills mother nature'.⁴³ Frankenstein does not have the moral and imaginative nerve to cope with the needs and nature of his creation. He is, as Ashton Nichols writes, only 'a terrified medical student (neither a doctor nor a mad scientist) – afraid of his own creation and also afraid of his own powers as a creator'.⁴⁴ Frankenstein cannot comprehend that murderous violence and criminality are not innate; they are the result of unnatural neglect and superficial judgment, this novel suggests. Shelley adds the telling detail, perhaps gleaned from Davy's early attempts at nature poetry,⁴⁵ that before becoming a scientist Robert Walton had aspired to be a poet in the mould of Coleridge, 'the most imaginative of modern poets'; his efforts met with 'disappointment'.⁴⁶

Scientific knowledge and technological advancement alone do not constitute progress, this novel suggests; without active imagination and compassion they are liable to overreach human nature and the limits of human beings' natural capacities. The touchstone of progress for Mary Shelley, then, as for Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge, is whether we are moving closer to, or further away from, an understanding of 'Nature': our own human nature and our natural surroundings. Jonathan Bate notes that Frankenstein's scientific studies coincide with the death of his mother: 'Science is thus set in opposition to the female principles of maternity and natural landscape. The bond with both biological mother and mother nature is broken.'⁴⁷ The Creature on the other hand, learning everything the hard way from experience, makes consistent progress towards an understanding of his own nature, of human nature, and of the natural environment: and in the final scene he tells Walton:

My heart was fashioned to be susceptible of love and sympathy; and when wrenched to misery by vice and hatred, it did not endure the violence of the change, without torture such as you cannot imagine [...] He is dead who called me into being; and when I shall

be no more, the very remembrance of us both will speedily vanish. I shall no longer see the sun or stars, or feel the wind play on my cheeks. Light, feeling and sense will pass away; and in this condition must I find my happiness. Some years ago, when the images which this world affords first opened upon me [...] I should have wept to die; now it is my only consolation.’⁴⁸

Victor’s progress towards self-knowledge is sporadic at best. After initially aspiring to ‘banish disease from the human frame and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death’,⁴⁹ he is able at times to admit his own ‘presumption and rash ignorance’,⁵⁰ and to recognise that ‘I, not in deed, but in effect, was the true murderer’.⁵¹ These moments of self-awareness do not last; he cannot cope with the burden of guilt, and goes back to blaming his Creature. Extraordinary as a scientist, he is in every other respect a very ordinary man. Frankenstein’s tragedy is essentially a moral and imaginative loss of nerve.

Frankenstein has been cited as reflecting a bias against science among Romantic writers. Hans Eichner went so far as to assert that ‘Romanticism is, perhaps pre-dominantly, a desperate rearguard action against the spirit and the implications of modern science [...] The Romantics rejected not merely the foundations of the science of Descartes, Harvey, and Boyle but the foundations of science itself’.⁵² But this is to ignore the active interest of Coleridge and Shelley in science, and Wordsworth’s and Coleridge’s friendship with Davy. ‘The movement was not anti-science’, Walter Wetzels argues, ‘it eagerly embraced the new discoveries in the fields of electricity and chemistry’.⁵³ If it had not done so, there would have been no need to write *Frankenstein*, with its plea for ‘scholar-scientists’ who can enhance humans’ understanding of the natural world, rather than ‘master-scientists’ who threaten its continued existence.

‘The imaginary student pursued by the misshapen creature he had impiously made, was not more wretched than I’, Dickens has Pip bemoan in 1860.⁵⁴ But the influence of Shelley’s novel on his thought and writing began much earlier. Dickens had the *Bentley’s Standard Novels* edition of *Frankenstein* in his library by 1844,⁵⁵ and had read it by the time he wrote to Forster from the Alps in 1846.⁵⁶ Its themes and atmosphere began to permeate his work from this time, as George Levine demonstrates in his discussion of the ‘reverberations’ of *Frankenstein* in ‘The Haunted Man’ (1848).⁵⁷

Bleak House: Mudfog Revisited

I have explored how Dickens’s mature novels began to use patterns of imagery as a structuring, thematically unifying device. This process really started with *Bleak House*. The opening harks back to the original version of *Oliver Twist* serialised in *Bentley’s Miscellany*, (1837-9), where Mudfog is the town in which Oliver is born,⁵⁸ and to *The Mudfog Papers*, also published by Dickens in *Bentley’s* in 1837. These included a ‘Full Report of the First Meeting of the Mudfog Association for the Advancement of Everything’,⁵⁹ satirising the recently-founded British Association for the Advancement of Science, which had been founded in 1831.⁶⁰

Sixteen years later Dickens takes the two elements of the name Mudfog, and develops them in the opening pages of *Bleak House* into images which resonate throughout the novel: 'Fog everywhere',⁶¹ which impedes clear vision, and mud on the ground, which prevents people from making progress: 'tens of thousands of [...] foot passengers have been slipping and sliding since the day broke'.⁶² The setting is London, but Dickens makes it clear that the countryside is similarly blighted: 'Fog on the Essex Marshes, fog on the Kentish heights ... Gas looming through the fog in divers places in the streets, much as the sun may, from the spongy fields, be seen to loom by husbandman and ploughboy'.⁶³

'In *Bleak House* I have purposely dwelt upon the romantic side of familiar things. I believe I have never had so many readers as in this book', Dickens wrote in the 'Preface' to the first edition in 1853.⁶⁴ The first sentence echoes Wordsworth's intention in the *Lyrical Ballads* 'to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us', as Coleridge recalled in *Biographia Literaria*.⁶⁵ Donald D. Stone calls these words of Dickens's 'The novelist's most obvious tribute to Wordsworth'.⁶⁶ But the sentence that follows, though less frequently quoted, is equally intriguing, suggesting that Dickens believed this 'romantic' element is integral to the novel's appeal. I will explore how this surely-conscious allusion to the Romantic legacy colours the novel, and how this 'purpose' of Dickens's is played out.

The reader gleans from the opening pages of *Bleak House* a sense, not just of progress being impeded, but of progress reversed, humanity being driven backwards towards an insecure prehistory:

As much mud in the streets, as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill [...] adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud.⁶⁷

Dickens's awareness of recent geological discoveries, discussed in the previous chapter, is deftly combined here with an allusion to the Biblical flood⁶⁸ to add a deeper perspective to the web of imagery. And at the centre of the morass lies the heart of the problem:

Never can there come fog too thick, never can there come mud and mire too deep, to assort with the groping and floundering condition which this High Court of Chancery, most pestilent of hoary sinners, holds, this day, in the sight of heaven and earth. On such an afternoon, if ever, the Lord High Chancellor ought to be sitting here – as here he is [...] directing his contemplation to the lantern in the roof, where he can see nothing but fog.⁶⁹

Christine Corton writes that in these early pages of *Bleak House* Dickens creates ‘a powerful metaphor for the world of Chancery’ as well as ‘a more general metaphor for the state of London [...] a place where light is largely denied to individuals’.⁷⁰ Chancery exists, in Dickens’s portrayal, to maintain the status quo and prevent change. These aims are shared by the aristocratic landowner Sir Leicester Dedlock, who ‘supposes all his dependents to be utterly bereft of individual characters, intentions or opinions, and is persuaded that he was born to supersede the necessity of their having any’.⁷¹ He regards thought and invention in those below his station as ‘a move in the Wat Tyler direction’.⁷² Dedlock is blind to the thoughts and feelings of the people around him, and blind to his own, and his dynasty’s gradual decline.

This failure to perceive what is in front of one’s eyes, to apprehend what matters, is Dickens’s abiding preoccupation in *Bleak House*, and permeates subplots as well as the main action. Mrs Jellyby’s missionary zeal to establish ‘from a hundred and fifty to two hundred healthy families cultivating coffee and educating the natives [...] on the left bank of the Niger’,⁷³ while neglecting the health and education of her own family, is a case in point. Dickens notes her ‘handsome eyes, though they had a curious habit of seeming to look a long way off. As if [...] they could see nothing nearer than Africa’.⁷⁴ Similarly, Mrs Pardiggle is involved in several charitable schemes, but her prominent ‘choking eyes’ look out at the view from her own window ‘with curious indifference’.⁷⁵ Keen to foster moral improvement among the poor, she brings books on Christian morality to the brickmaker’s hovel, where no one can read,⁷⁶ but does nothing to assuage the extreme poverty that leads to their baby’s death.⁷⁷ John Jarndyce’s charitable friends Quale and Gusher are no better: ‘vehement in profession, restless and vain in action’.⁷⁸ In each of these instances we see a failure of vision comparable to the Lord High Chancellor’s, a failure to perceive the immediate predicament, which results in nothing substantial being achieved, no progress made.

It is no surprise that Lady Dedlock’s fashionable guests at Chesney Wold display the same wilful lack of perception. Dickens himself points the link: ‘Both the world of fashion and the Court of Chancery are things of precedent and usage; oversleeping Rip Van Winkles’.⁷⁹ The Dedlocks’ country house is, like Satis House in *Great Expectations*, one of Dickens’s ‘moribund great houses, [...] emblematic of their owner-families’, as Catherine Waters writes.⁸⁰ The Dedlocks and their fashionable Chesney Wold set are reactionaries ‘who have agreed to put a smooth glaze on the world, and to keep down all its realities’:

Who have found out the perpetual stoppage [...] Who are not to be disturbed by ideas. On whom even the Fine Arts, attending in power and walking backward like the Lord Chamberlain, must array themselves in the milliners’ and tailors’ patterns of past generations, and be particularly careful not to be in earnest, or to receive any impress from the moving age.⁸¹

And in London ‘The fashionable world – tremendous orb, nearly five miles round – is in full swing, and the solar system works respectfully at its appointed distance’.⁸² Dickens makes his

readers smile, but the underlying intent is serious enough. Cut off not just from their natural environment, but also from a sense of their place in the larger cosmic realities, the fashionable set live in a 'deadened world [...] unhealthy for want of air', a world that 'cannot hear the rushing of the larger worlds, and cannot see them as they circle round the sun'.⁸³ Dickens embodies in these characters a self-imposed myopia that arrests human progress, 'putting back the hands upon the Clock of Time, and cancelling a few hundred years of history'.⁸⁴ Humphry House analyses the 'powerful imaginative effect' of this sense of arrested time in the Chancery and Chesney Wold scenes, in a book where 'the sense of the passage of time is so peculiarly vivid, and makes more impression on the memory, perhaps, than the chronology of any of the novels'.⁸⁵ This duality, of change and progress in the natural world, and stasis or regression in those characters and houses cut off the natural environment, is at the centre of the meaning of this fiction.

As is usual in Dickens's mature novels, the minor characters echo these major preoccupations. Guppy's attempts to impress Esther with loud clothes and financial prospects demonstrate his blindness to her nature.⁸⁶ Old Turveydrop is equally vain and blind to others: 'he had everything but any touch of nature; he was not like youth, he was not like age, he was not like anything in the world but a model of Deportment'.⁸⁷ However, the main focus of Dickens's argument in *Bleak House*, where the cloying mud and blinding fog are thickest, is on his portrayal of the law and the aristocracy, and in particular how this reactionary myopia affects the growth and development of human beings and human relationships. G. K. Chesterton writes that *Bleak House* 'slowly and carefully creates the real psychology of oppression':

The endless formality, the endless unemotional urbanity, the endless hope deferred, these things make one feel the fact of injustice more than the madness of Nero. For it is not the activeness of tyranny that maddens, but its passiveness.⁸⁸

Richard Carstone's decline from 'handsome youth, with an ingenuous face, and a most engaging laugh [...] talking gaily, like a light-hearted boy',⁸⁹ loved by his cousin Ada, to 'delusive hopes in connexion with the suit already the pernicious cause of so much sorrow and ruin',⁹⁰ 'ungrown despair',⁹¹ and premature death,⁹² illustrates step-by-step the corrosive influence of Chancery. It is the most graphic and fully-developed evocation in the novel of a reversal and perversion of human progress and development. T. A. Jackson sums up Carstone as 'a youth of many good qualities' who is 'completely unsettled, morally, by the uncertainty of his financial prospects [...] in the Great Suit'.⁹³ Like Scrooge, Carstone's natural capacity for love and affection is gradually corrupted by the prospect of money, and he forfeits all enjoyment of the woman who loves him. But unlike the workaholic Scrooge, the lure of easy money from a resolution of the Jarndyce and Jarndyce suit renders Richard 'languid',⁹⁴ unable to commit himself to a profession. John Jarndyce, one of Dickens's repositories of virtue and good sense in the novel, diagnoses Richard's predicament in conversation with Esther Summerson: 'Chancery, among its other sins [...] has engendered or confirmed in him a habit

of putting off – and trusting to this, that, and the other chance, without knowing what chance – and dismissing everything as unsettled, uncertain, and confused’.⁹⁵ Esther, another of Dickens’s repositories of virtue and good sense in *Bleak House*, notes that Carstone’s ‘eight years in a public school’⁹⁶ had done nothing to prepare him for professional life.⁹⁷ But she confirms her guardian’s views about the root cause of Richard’s predicament: ‘I often observed [...] that the uncertainties and delays of the Chancery suit had imparted to his nature something of the careless spirit of a gamester, who felt he was part of a great gaming system’.⁹⁸ As D. A. Miller notes: ‘what is most radically the matter with being ‘in Chancery’ is not that there may be no way out of it [...] but, more seriously, that the binarisms of inside/outside, here/elsewhere become meaningless and the ideological effects they ground impossible’.⁹⁹ Esther witnesses the gradual decline of Carstone’s natural good looks and high spirits, meeting him not long before his death:

I found Richard thin and languid, slovenly in his dress, abstracted in his manner [...] About his large bright eyes that used to be so merry, there was a wanness and a restlessness that changed them altogether. I cannot use the expression that he looked old. There is a ruin of youth which is not like age; and into such a ruin Richard’s youth and youthful beauty had all fallen away.¹⁰⁰

Carstone’s career is an embodiment of Blake’s warnings as to what happens when:

tender plants are strip’d
Of their joy in the springing day,
By sorrow and cares dismay.¹⁰¹

His career, like Scrooge’s, is essentially a decline from the natural state of carefree high spirits and susceptibility to human love which he enjoyed as a youth: the reverse of progress.

This central strand is again echoed thematically by minor scenes and characters. Early on, Richard, Ada and Esther are accosted at Chancery by ‘a curious little old woman’ driven mad by waiting for a resolution of her case: ‘I was a ward myself. I was not mad at that time’.¹⁰² John Jarndyce’s relative Tom also had expectations from Jarndyce and Jarndyce, and ended up warning people ‘to keep out of Chancery’: ‘it’s being ground to bits in a slow mill; [...] it’s going mad by grains’.¹⁰³ Tom eventually shot himself in despair, Krook tells us.¹⁰⁴ Dickens’s ability to balance his ‘episodic intensification’ of minor characters such as Guppy and Turveydrop, the ‘curious’ old woman and Tom Jarndyce, with the ongoing central narrative of *Bleak House*, is for W. J Harvey the key to its success: ‘the extreme tension set up between the centrifugal vigour of its parts and the centripetal demands of the whole [...] is a tension between the impulse to intensify each local detail or particular episode and the impulse to subordinate, arrange, and discipline’.¹⁰⁵ This episodic ‘vigour’ is particularly intense in the scenes depicting the poorest members of society, and particularly Jo the child crossing-sweeper: ‘No father, no mother, no friends. Never been to school. What’s home?’¹⁰⁶ In depicting the funeral of Nemo,

the only adult who ‘was very good to me’,¹⁰⁷ Jo tells us, Dickens’s words echo the horror of Coleridge’s ‘Night-mare LIFE-IN-DEATH’¹⁰⁸ to invoke the ‘hemmed-in churchyard, pestiferous and obscene [...] with every villainy of life in action close on death, and every poisonous element of death in action close on life’.¹⁰⁹ The comparison with Dickens’s treatment of the poorest members of society in *David Copperfield*, where David shrinks in ‘secret agony’ and ‘shame’ from the ‘companionship’ of Mick Walker and Mealy Potatoes,¹¹⁰ is marked. Here, society’s blindness to the reality of poverty is ‘a shameful testimony to future ages, how civilization and barbarism walked this boastful island together’.¹¹¹ In *David Copperfield* Mick Walker and Mealy Potatoes play no part in the working out of the main story; in *Bleak House* Jo is integral to Lady Dedlock’s fate. The interlocking, interdependent relationships between different social strata are a key feature of this later novel.

It was these scenes involving Jo that met with most approval among contemporary reviewers. The *Eclectic Review*’s 1853 judgment that Jo was ‘the gem’ of *Bleak House* is typical.¹¹² Forster opined in the *Life* that Jo ‘has made perhaps as deep an impression as anything in Dickens’.¹¹³ But the overall reaction to the novel was more mixed. Henry Fothergill Chorley wrote in the *Athenaeum* of 1853 that ‘There is progress in art to be praised in this book, - and there is progress in exaggeration to be deprecated’.¹¹⁴ He too affirms the power of the episodes involving Jo: ‘The dying scene, with its terrible morals and impetuous protest, Mr. Dickens has nowhere in all his works excelled’.¹¹⁵ But he takes Dickens to task for his ‘cruel consideration of physical defects’, which he finds ‘false and repugnant’.¹¹⁶ The anonymous reviewer in *Bentley’s Miscellany* also finds the book uneven, and offers a fascinating anticipation of the opening words of *A Tale of Two Cities*: ‘*Bleak House* is, in some respect, the worst of Mr Dickens’ [sic] fictions, but, in many more, it is the best’.¹¹⁷ In the same year the *Illustrated London News* harked back to *The Pickwick Papers* and ‘the extraordinary character of his early performances [...] of one whose youth produced wonders’.¹¹⁸ *Bleak House*, in contrast, ‘fails in the construction of a plot [...] . No man, we are confident, could tell a story better, if he had but a story to tell’.¹¹⁹ On the same day, the 24th of September 1853, the *Spectator*’s George Brimley bemoans the novel’s ‘absolute want of construction [...] Mr Dickens discards plot, while he persists in adopting a form for his thoughts to which plot is essential, and where the absence of a coherent story is fatal to continuous interest’.¹²⁰ Surprisingly to a modern reader, Brimley asserts that ‘The great Chancery suit of Jarndyce and Jarndyce [...] exercises absolutely no influence on the characters and destinies of any one person concerned in it’.¹²¹ Philip Collins sees the reception of *Bleak House* as a turning-point in Dickens’s reputation: ‘For many critics in the 1850s, ‘60s, and ‘70s, it began the drear decline of ‘the author of *Pickwick*, *Chuzzlewit* and *Copperfield*’; for many recent critics – anticipated by G. B. Shaw – it opened the greatest phase of his achievement’.¹²² Dickens’s increasingly virulent anger against established families and institutions seems to have been a factor in his perceived ‘decline’, certainly for George Brimley: ‘Joe, the street-sweeping urchin, is drawn with a skill that is never more effectively exercised than when the outcasts of humanity are its subjects; a

skill which seems to depart in proportion as the author rises in the scale of society depicted'.¹²³ Sally Ledger sums up the book's reception: '*Bleak House* was commercially a massively successful novel that the critics on the whole tended to dislike'.¹²⁴ Like Wordsworth and Coleridge fifty years earlier, Dickens was discovering the limits of critics' toleration of his probing of established values and customs.

Old School

Despite George Brimley's assertion that 'The great Chancery suit' has 'absolutely no influence' on the people involved, Esther's narrative leaves the reader in no doubt that Jarndyce and Jarndyce was the reason why 'Richard's youth and youthful beauty had all fallen away'.¹²⁵ The aristocratic Sir Leicester Dedlock, on the other hand, never enjoyed youth and beauty from which to decline, all natural tendencies having been subsumed by his sense of the importance of his dynasty. Dickens has fun depicting Dedlock's attitude to nature:

His family is as old as the hills, and infinitely more respectable. He has a general opinion that the world might get on without hills, but would be done up without Dedlocks. He would on the whole admit Nature to be a good ideas (a little low, perhaps, when not enclosed with a park fence), but an idea dependent for its execution on your great country families.¹²⁶

Again, amid the humour, a serious point is being made: 'Dickens clearly associates Sir Leicester Dedlock [...] with the denial of natural laws', Emily Kobayashi comments.¹²⁷ Dedlock's attitude to progress could be predicted from his name. He cannot tolerate Mrs Rouncewell's son, and his mechanical inventions, on his land, and banishes him to the industrial north;¹²⁸ 'the whole framework of society' is dependent on people not 'getting out of the station unto which they are called - necessarily and for ever, according to Sir Leicester's rapid logic, the first station in which they happen to find themselves'.¹²⁹ The one inconsistency in his life is that he chose to marry beneath his station; but his relationship with the much younger Lady Dedlock is formal and superficial, based more on her good looks than on affection or understanding: 'He is ceremonious, stately, most polite on every occasion to my lady, and holds her personal attractions in the highest estimation'.¹³⁰ More than any other character in the novel, he has the means and leisure to engage with art and literature; instead he maintains a philistine superficiality, 'condescendingly perusing the backs of his books, or honouring the fine arts with a glance of approbation'.¹³¹ His attitude to books is not dissimilar to the convict Magwitch's in *Great Expectations*, gazing at Pip's books and expressing astonishment that 'you read 'em, don't you?'.¹³² The Dedlock family history is one of somnolent stasis: 'the Dedlocks of the past doze in their picture-frames'.¹³³ Dedlock indeed: inactivity, and intolerance of activity in others, characterises this type for Dickens: 'there is no end to the Dedlocks, whose family greatness seems to consist in their never having done anything to distinguish themselves, for seven hundred years'.¹³⁴

The law and the aristocracy, then, are in *Bleak House* the main impediments to human progress, correlatives of the mud and fog imagery. It is no surprise that Dedlock regards the Court of Chancery as ‘the perfection of human wisdom, for the eternal settlement (humanly speaking) of everything’.¹³⁵ The crucial link between law and aristocracy in the novel is the advocate Tulkinghorn. Like his client Sir Leicester, he is ‘old school – a phrase generally meaning any school that seems never to have been young’,¹³⁶ and ‘aged without experience of genial youth’;¹³⁷ Blake’s poem is again brought to mind here. But whereas even Sir Leicester has ‘one little touch of romantic fancy in him’, having married for love,¹³⁸ Tulkinghorn is never ‘troubled with love or sentiment, or any romantic weakness’.¹³⁹ He is an exception to the myopia, the failure to see what is in front of one’s eyes, that afflicts so many of the middle- and upper-class characters in *Bleak House*. He, and indeed every servant and tradesman who has dealings with them, can readily perceive ‘what is passing in the Dedlock mind’.¹⁴⁰ Tulkinghorn jealously conceals his own: ‘An oyster of the old school, whom nobody can open’, Dickens notes, and two pages later, for emphasis, ‘tight, unopenable Oyster of the old school!’.¹⁴¹ He is deferential, ‘retainer-like’¹⁴² in front of the Dedlocks. But the ‘many cast-iron boxes in his office’¹⁴³ bring to mind Jacob Marley’s chain of ‘cash boxes’ and ‘heavy purses wrought in steel’ in *A Christmas Carol*,¹⁴⁴ and have a comparably sinister aura. His methods, however, are more subtle than those of Scrooge and Marley. Beneath his deferential surface: ‘the butler of the legal cellar, of the Dedlocks’¹⁴⁵ and his other aristocratic clients, he is perpetually on the alert for any facts or situations that might eventually be turned to his advantage. Early on he quietly notes Lady Dedlock’s disturbed recognition of Nemo’s handwriting on a legal document,¹⁴⁶ and uses this knowledge gradually and slowly to learn her secrets, all the while concealing his own. Like the mud and the fog, Tulkinghorn’s influence permeates town and countryside alike:

More impenetrable than ever, he sits, he drinks, and mellows, as it were, in secrecy; pondering, at that twilight hour, on all the mysteries he knows, associated with darkening woods in the country, and vast, blank shut-up houses in town [...] all a mystery to every one.¹⁴⁷

Dickens stresses repeatedly the artificiality of the allegorical paintings on the ceilings of Tulkinghorn’s London apartments: ‘Allegory, in Roman helmet and celestial linen, sprawls among balustrades and pillars, flowers, clouds, and big-legged boys’.¹⁴⁸ Jonathan Ribner comments: ‘An indictment of English justice, the mute Roman on Tulkinghorn’s ceiling also points to the problematic condition of allegory in a century preoccupied by fact’.¹⁴⁹ The artifice of these paintings is at odds with nature, and ‘makes the head ache, as would seem to be Allegory’s object always, more or less’.¹⁵⁰ And as so often with Dickens, the character of the dwelling reflects that of the dweller: ‘Like as he is to look at, so is his apartment’.¹⁵¹ As John Cowper-Powys noted in 1938, one of Dickens’s most telling traits as an artist is his ability to render ‘the porousness of human souls to inanimate objects’.¹⁵² With the present tense highlighting this scene, Dickens stresses Tulkinghorn’s alienation from the natural world in a

delightful detail which recalls the young house in *A Christmas Carol* which gets lost in a gloomy yard and becomes Jacob Marley's home: 'When a breeze from the country that has lost its way, takes fright, and makes a blind hurry to rush out again, it flings as much dust in the eyes of Allegory as the law – or Mr. Tulkinghorn, one of its trustiest representatives – may scatter, on occasion, in the eyes of the laity'.¹⁵³

Tulkinghorn and his life's work are out of step with nature. And in the climactic confrontation between the lawyer and Lady Dedlock, Dickens again uses surroundings to illuminate and deepen character. Here, though the tense is again the more vivid present, instead of the artificial allegorical ceiling overhead, the backdrop is the natural world; and instead of the 'porousness' that Cowper-Powys notes, the illumination stems not from kinship with the human protagonists, but from antithesis: 'in the moonlight lie the woodland fields at rest ... under the watching stars upon a summer night'.¹⁵⁴ The setting does neither of them credit: 'Hosts of stars are visible tonight [...] If [Tulkinghorn] be seeking his own star, as he methodically turns and turns upon the leads, it should be but a pale one to be so rustily represented below'.¹⁵⁵ As George Levine writes:

The natural world, for Dickens, contains and limits human action. Often [...] it comments ironically on the action. But the effect is always larger than irony. The world is larger than anyone's imagination of it; connections extend out endlessly.¹⁵⁶

Tulkinghorn is 'so long used to make his cramped nest in holes and corners of human nature that he has forgotten its broader and better range'.¹⁵⁷ As he outlines his knowledge of Lady Dedlock's affair and illegitimate child, that will shatter Sir Leicester's image of her and bring about her ruin, he has 'his hands in his pockets and is going on in his business consideration of the matter, like a machine'.¹⁵⁸ Lady Dedlock 'stands in the window without any support, looking out at the stars – not up – gloomily out at those stars which are low in the heavens'.¹⁵⁹ For all their power and influence these are essentially small, limited people, unable to look up and aspire, unable to imagine. Friendless, alienated, they 'look at each other, like two pictures', rather than two organic human beings. It is perhaps not surprising that some contemporary critics found this devastating conclusion difficult to accept.

The news of his wife's liaison, with its implications for his social standing, sends Dedlock into a decline, 'probing the life-blood of his heart'.¹⁶⁰ By the end of the novel Tulkinghorn and Lady Dedlock are both dead, and Sir Leicester himself is close to death. He has no children, his ancient family will die out with him. The aptness of Cowper Powys's 'porousness' between human beings and their physical surroundings is again apparent:

the light of the drawing-room seems gradually contracting and dwindling until it shall be no more. A little more, in truth, and it will be all extinguished for Sir Leicester; and the damp door in the mausoleum which shuts so tight, and looks so obdurate, will have opened and relieved him.¹⁶¹

Bleak House was written only a few years before *The Origin of Species* appeared in 1859, but the geological, evolutionary discoveries that led to Darwin's book had been in train since the 1840s, and Dickens was well aware of them. Robert Chambers's *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*,¹⁶² published anonymously in 1844, caused a public sensation, as James Secord has demonstrated; together with its 'expanding array of representations'¹⁶³ in the form of reviews, extracts and precis, *Vestiges* ensured that 'Evolutionary theories became a common currency of conversation' in the 1840s, Secord writes.¹⁶⁴ The 'Megalosaurus' and mud deposits in the opening lines of the novel introduce a thread of references to geology and evolution which are closely linked with the themes of growth and development, and the lack of them, which I have traced. The science that Dickens weaves into the fabric of *Bleak House* is emphatically that of 'the scholar-scientist who seeks only to understand the operations of nature',¹⁶⁵ to return to Anne Mellor's crucial distinction. The portraits of the Dedlocks are like scientific exhibits in a natural history museum: 'a large collection, glassy eyed, set up in the most approved manner on their various twigs and perches, very correct, perfectly free from animation, and always in glass cases'.¹⁶⁶ And Dickens evokes the 'blazing fires of faggot and coal – Dedlock timber and antediluvian forest'¹⁶⁷ that burn in winter at Chesney Wold. Again, minor characters and subplots serve to enrich and deepen the exploration of these main themes. The episodes involving the Smallweed family mirror the resistance to change and development that characterise the Dedlocks. Judy Smallweed (again the family name speaks volumes) 'appears to attain a perfectly geological age, and to date from the remotest periods', and feeds her servant 'a Druidical ruin of bread and butter'.¹⁶⁸ These references serve to underline Dickens' main theme: the attempt to resist change, to stand still, is not a viable option for humanity. Stasis is actually decay. Human beings will inevitably change, either towards growth or towards decay.

Love One Another or Die

The aristocracy and the law, then, resist and frustrate natural human progress in *Bleak House*, and, Dickens's threads of imagery suggest, will take humanity back to an antediluvian stage of evolution. The contrast and corrective to this strand of the argument is provided by Ada Clare, Esther Summerson, John Jarndyce and Allan Woodcourt, Dickens's repositories of virtue and good sense in this novel. All play major roles in the discourse, and Esther narrates large portions of it. 'Esther writes herself against the law, putting into play a narrative of identity that will compete with the novel's legal narratives for supremacy',¹⁶⁹ Michelle Wilson comments. Esther's own words enable Dickens to inflect the narrative with her affectionate, positive values, as a contrast and corrective to the sinister, marmoreal atmosphere of the passages involving Tulkinghorn and the Dedlocks. Not all readers have responded positively to Dickens's attempt at creating a female narrator: 'too often weak and twaddling', Charlotte Brontë complained.¹⁷⁰ But Deborah Wynn asserts that '*Bleak House* is a feminist text despite feminists' responses to Esther',¹⁷¹ and Michael Slater notes Dickens's sympathy for the

‘dangers, frustrations and humiliations experienced by women in the male-orientated world of Victorian England’ in his middle-period novels.¹⁷²

Unaware of her parentage, Esther is made to feel ashamed of herself and of her mother by her aunt (and Lady Dedlock’s sister) Miss Barbary, who brings her up: ‘Your mother, Esther, is your disgrace, and you were hers’.¹⁷³ The aunt, like the Dedlocks and Tulkinghorn, is incapable of developing human relationships. But Esther clearly is: ‘[my] disposition is very affectionate’,¹⁷⁴ and after Miss Barbary’s death she is able to develop this aspect of her character at school: ‘whenever a new pupil came who was a little downcast and unhappy, she was so sure – indeed I don’t know why – to make a friend of me, that all new-comers were confided to my care. They said I was so gentle’.¹⁷⁵ Esther sees at their first meeting that she and Ada are kindred spirits: ‘such a bright, innocent, trusting face [...] such a natural, captivating, winning manner, that in a few minutes we were sitting in the window-seat, with the light of the fire upon us, talking together, as free and happy as could be’.¹⁷⁶ This warmth, both physical and emotional, and confiding openness, characterise the scenes in which they interact, in stark contrast to the lack of warmth, emotion and candour of the Tulkinghorn and Dedlock strand. At first, as we have seen, Richard Carstone shares Esther’s and Ada’s honesty and openness, the three of them lost ‘like the children in the wood’¹⁷⁷ when faced with the opacities of Chancery. His relationships with them, and particularly with Ada who becomes his wife, enable Dickens to chart each stage of his gradual corruption at the hands of Chancery, and to point the contrast between his increasing fecklessness and the women’s constancy. Like Scrooge, he loses the capacity to maintain loving relationships with others, as the lure of wealth takes over his being. When he is in his last illness Ada is expecting their child; he knows that he will not live to see his offspring,¹⁷⁸ ‘born before the turf was planted on its father’s grave’,¹⁷⁹ as though his death was a precondition for the new life: ‘to bless and restore his mother, not his father, was the errand of this baby, its power was mighty to do it’.¹⁸⁰ Ada too is close to death after the birth and the loss of Richard; but she gradually recovers. ‘The sorrow that has been in her face’, Esther muses, ‘seems to have purified even its innocent expression, and to have given it a diviner quality’.¹⁸¹ The links with the saintly Agnes Wickham in *David Copperfield* are clear.

As in Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge, a child has the power to restore life to the loving and considerate. Esther is one of little Richard Carstone’s ‘two mamas’,¹⁸² and has two daughters of her own. For Esther and Ada, as for Mrs Rouncewell and Caddy Jellyby, their line will continue beyond the Blakean ‘winter’ of their individual deaths into the next generation. Tulkinghorn and Dedlock, on the other hand, die alone and childless, their lines now extinct. Lady Dedlock has suppressed all maternal instincts and disowned her daughter from her birth: in her case her sister was right to describe Esther as her ‘shame’. In this context, Dickens’s carefully-placed evolutionary imagery suggests, being ‘good’, and relating to other people and to one’s natural surroundings, is not merely a matter of morals or religion; it is rather an evolutionary, ecological imperative, a matter literally of life and death, growth or decay, for

the species. 'My heart was fashioned to be susceptible of love and sympathy' Frankenstein's creature tells Walton; he can find no cure for the 'torture' of knowing that he has betrayed his nature.¹⁸³ The development of 'love' and 'sentiment' is not a 'romantic weakness', as Tulkington supposes,¹⁸⁴ but a precondition for the survival of one's line. 'We must love one another or die', as W.H. Auden was famously to put it in the next century.¹⁸⁵

Human beings can progress towards a full and satisfying life by developing caring relationships with the people and the natural world around them, or they can develop into self-centred, cocooned entities, frustrate others' attempts to progress, and face regression towards prehistorical chaos and extinction. The Romantic roots of Dickens's exploration of progress in *Bleak House* are clear, and his conclusions unequivocal. But he adds a crucial caveat in the character of Harold Skimpole. It is noticeable that Dickens always places Skimpole in the company of Esther, and allows her to narrate the passages in which he appears, her unselfish integrity used here as contrast and touchstone. Esther, Ada and Richard are 'all enchanted'¹⁸⁶ when they first meet Skimpole. He is as old as John Jarndyce, but Esther recalls:

he had more the appearance, in all respects, of a damaged young man, than a well-preserved elderly one. There was an easy negligence in his manner, and even in his dress (his hair carelessly disposed, and his neckerchief loose and flowing, as I have seen artists paint their own portraits), which I could not separate from the idea of a romantic youth who had undergone some unique process of depreciation.¹⁸⁷

Esther's sketch brings to mind Lamb's image of Coleridge in later life, 'an Archangel a little damaged'.¹⁸⁸ It is generally accepted that the character of Skimpole was based on Leigh Hunt, whom Dickens knew.¹⁸⁹ In terms of detail Coleridge seems every bit as apposite: Skimpole never finishes his poems and sketches,¹⁹⁰ just as Coleridge notoriously failed to complete 'Christabel' and 'Kubla Khan', and conceived of countless projects that never saw the light of day.¹⁹¹ Skimpole delights his listeners with his 'playful speeches',¹⁹² as Coleridge famously did.¹⁹³ Bloom's theories surrounding the anxiety of influence and the 'quest' of writers 'To unname the precursor while earning one's own name',¹⁹⁴ seems apposite here. Dickens was happy to acknowledge Leigh Hunt as the source, fearing no competition from him as a writer, while the true 'damaged young man' remained unnamed and unsuspected.

'He was full of feeling', Esther notes of that first meeting with Skimpole, 'and had such a delicate sentiment for what was beautiful or tender, that he could have won a heart by that alone'.¹⁹⁵ She is forced to question this initial impression as she gets to know him better. Discussing 'the Slaves on American plantations', Skimpole concedes that they are 'worked hard' and 'don't altogether like it': 'but, they people the landscape for me, they give it a poetry for me, and perhaps that is one of the pleasanter objects of their existence. I am very sensible of it, if it be and I shouldn't wonder if it were!'¹⁹⁶ Skimpole's sensitivity is limited to his own well-being only; he is obtuse regarding the feelings and well-being of others. He knows Mrs Jellyby,¹⁹⁷ and like her neglects his spouse and children; but whereas her failure to relate to

and accept responsibility for her family is a comical species of blindness to her immediate surroundings, Skimpole's neglect of his family is wilful and conscious. John Jarndyce and other friends helped him to 'several openings in life; but to no purpose'.¹⁹⁸ He refuses to grow and develop. 'I am a child, you know! You are designing people compared with me!' ¹⁹⁹ he tells the much younger Esther, Ada and Richard. Minutes later he is arrested for debt: 'It was a most singular thing that the arrest was our embarrassment, and not Mr Skimpole's'.²⁰⁰ He makes Richard and Esther part with what little money they have to settle the debt for him.²⁰¹ They are babes in the wood in his hands, every bit as much as they are in the hands of Chancery.

Skimpole repeatedly calls himself a child in order to avoid his adult responsibilities, and asserts his affinity with the natural world: 'Harold Skimpole loves to see the sun shine; loves to hear the wind blow; loves to watch the changing lights and shadows; loves to hear the birds, those choristers in Nature's great cathedral'.²⁰² When we last see Skimpole, he proclaims 'we are all children of one great mother, Nature';²⁰³ but his feeling for the natural world: the touchstone of progress in this novel, is no more convincing to the reader than is Sir John Chester's 'elegant little sketch, entitled 'Nature'',²⁰⁴ in *Barnaby Rudge*. By now even the charitable Esther can see through his 'questionable childishness'.²⁰⁵ Dickens's portrayal of Skimpole, the phoney Romantic who needs to grow up, is entertaining caricature. But it is also a serious warning in terms of the overall themes of the novel. Although he may not cause as much damage to the people around him as Tulkinghorn, Harold Skimpole is far closer to that self-centred man 'like a machine'²⁰⁶ than he is to John Jarndyce, Allan Woodcourt, Esther or Ada. Adults can be guided by the power of a child, as in Blake's illustration to 'London',²⁰⁷ but they cannot be a child as Skimpole claims. Love for one's fellows, and movement towards kinship with the natural world – progress – cannot be faked or easily achieved. They grow out of unselfish endeavour and attention. Dickens has Esther make the point on the last page of the novel, describing their neighbours' appreciation of her and Allan's care: 'We are not rich in the bank, but [...] I never go into a house of any degree, but I hear his praises, or see them in grateful eyes [...] Is not this to be rich?'²⁰⁸

W. J. Harvey sums up this ending aptly: 'The final impression is one of immense and potentially anarchic energy being brought – but only just – under control. The fact that the equipoise between part and whole is so precariously maintained is in itself a tribute to the energy here being harnessed'.²⁰⁹ If Esther's final words sound trite out of context, they are anything but trite as the culmination of *Bleak House*. Here they represent a hard-earned, hard-won poise, a victory for humane, Romantic values over a powerful, self-serving, dehumanising establishment, and a vindication of Dickens's avowed purpose in dwelling upon 'the romantic side of familiar things'²¹⁰ in *Bleak House*. Having examined the elements of Romanticism in *Dombey and Son* (1848) and *David Copperfield* (1850) in previous chapters it seems reasonable to ask: is *Bleak House* any more 'romantic' than the two novels which preceded it? All three fictions set out to restore essential humane, imaginative values to areas of contemporary society which were in Dickens's view in danger of losing them. *Bleak House*, with its depiction of a

maddening legal system, dinosaur aristocracy and institutionalised poverty, is in this sense no more and no less ‘romantic’ than the two novels which preceded it: either of them could have been prefaced with this statement. Indeed it could be argued, as Robert Newsome does, that the phrase ‘the romantic side of familiar things’ is less a description of *Bleak House*, more ‘an essential *novelistic* principle’²¹¹ in Dickens’s fictional art as a whole. What is every bit as interesting, however, is the sentence that follows: ‘I believe I have never had so many readers as in this book’,²¹² a clear public realisation that his readers *wanted* Romantic values, that this ‘romantic’ aspect of his work, this quest to re-humanise his society, is the key to his popularity. As we know, he placed great store by his close relationship with his readers, and their love of his works: ‘Is not this to be rich?’

Hard Times outside London

What it is to be rich, what it is to be fully human: abiding themes in *Bleak House*, are also central to *Hard Times*, written just a year later in 1854. The ‘harsh notes’²¹³ of the two titles, in Alexander Welsh’s phrase, certainly suggest commonality. But in style and texture the two fictions are very different. *Bleak House* is arguably Dickens’s most ‘complete’ novel: richly evocative, leisurely in pace yet bristling with energy and passion, varied in narrative voice, its characters set within the context not only of a society, but also of an evolving cosmos, with patterns of imagery subtly unifying the whole. *Hard Times* is terse by comparison, the shortest of all his completed novels, with brief chapters and a didactic tone overall. It is also, as Paul Schlicke notes, ‘the only one set entirely outside London’;²¹⁴ here Dickens is outside of his comfort zone, and it shows.

The roots of *Hard Times* in Dickens’s first-hand experience of the bitter industrial dispute in Preston during the winter of 1853-54 are well documented.²¹⁵ Michael Slater argues that ‘Dickens did not want it to be too narrowly related to the Preston strike in reader’s minds but rather to be understood as having a much wider application to the contemporary condition of England.’²¹⁶ Raymond Williams notes the crucial late eighteenth-century change in the use of the word ‘industry’ from an internal ‘human attribute’ to something external, ‘a thing in itself – an institution’. Just as the political revolution of 1789 ‘transformed France’, Williams continues, so the Industrial Revolution in England ‘produced, by a pattern of change, a new society.’²¹⁷ It is this ‘new society’ that is examined in *Hard Times*. ‘It is difficult now to conceive of the effort of creative awareness required to give such a synthesised account of a society only then newly emerging’,²¹⁸ Peter Coveney observes. This is all the more valuable given ‘the remarkably sparse and feeble literary response to a phenomenon so evident and momentous as England’s becoming the first predominantly industrial and urbanized community in the history of mankind’,²¹⁹ Philip Collins writes. Carolyn Berman detects in the novel ‘a marked self-consciousness about the Victorian novel’s divergent audiences’,²²⁰ an awareness that Dickens’s readership encompasses all walks of life, including those he satirises. Perhaps this awareness grew out of those reviews of *Bleak House* whose authors, like Henry Fothergill Chorley and George Brimley, sympathised with the upper-class targets of Dickens’s attacks.

In *Hard Times* the author himself, rather than the characters or plot, drives home his points: Dickens intervenes more openly and directly in this work than in any other of his fictions. Peter Ackroyd notes that the first number, in *Household Words* in April 1854, was ‘the only time that a signed article had appeared on its pages. No illustrations. Just two columns of print going from page to page, and presented in such a way that it might just as well be a leading article as a story’.²²¹ If *Bleak House* is an extended prose poem, *Hard Times* reads as a morality tale, even at times as a personal manifesto.

The terse tone of *Hard Times* is set in the briefest opening chapter of all Dickens’s fifteen novels, and the terseness accords with the view of humanity which Mr Gradgrind of industrial Coketown expounds to his assembled school. Human beings are “reasoning animals”, and therefore ‘Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else’.²²² Jessica Riskin writes that Gradgrind would have been ‘recognizable to readers of the popular weekly in which he appeared as a caricature of the dispassionate empiricist’,²²³ a familiar type in this ‘century preoccupied by fact’,²²⁴ as Jonathan Ribner characterises it. Dickens describes Gradgrind in the next chapter as a ‘ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to. It is a mere question of figures, a case of simple arithmetic’.²²⁵ The ‘everything else’ which must be rooted out of human beings is soon given more specific substance: the ‘regions of childhood’, and ‘tender young imaginations’ are ‘to be stormed away’ and replaced with ‘a grim mechanical substitute’.²²⁶ Gradgrind is encouraged in his views by the Coketown factory owner Bounderby, ‘a man made out of a coarse material, which seemed to have been stretched to make so much of him’.²²⁷ He is ‘as near being Mr Gradgrind’s bosom friend, as a man perfectly devoid of sentiment can approach that spiritual relationship towards another man perfectly devoid of sentiment’;²²⁸ ‘let us have hard-headed, solid-fisted people’,²²⁹ Bounderby urges, and blames ‘idle imagination’²³⁰ for the shortcomings of children.

Human progress, then, for Gradgrind and his circle, is based on the cultivation of the reasoning faculties and the suppression of emotion and imagination. Dickens’s lack of sympathy with all this is clear enough: this second chapter is titled ‘Murdering the Innocents’, and the names assigned to people and places are as ever eloquent. Gradgrind’s star pupil Bitzer knows bits o’ this and bits o’ that, but nothing whole: ‘no more than a mixture of fragmented Facts’, Aya Yatsugi comments.²³¹ This process of fragmentation in Gradgrind’s charges extends well beyond the cognitive. Bitzer is, as Malcolm Andrews writes, ‘a triumph of utilitarian and ‘politico-economical’ rationalism’.²³² The newly-qualified teacher Mr M’Choakumchild, is ‘clearly a product of the Teacher Training Colleges instituted in 1839 by James Kay-Shuttleworth’,²³³ Kathleen Blake writes, which as we have seen were also satirised in *Our Mutual Friend*. As a trainee teacher M’Choakumchild ‘had worked his stony way into Her Majesty’s most Honourable Privy Council’s Schedule B,’²³⁴ and had taken the bloom off the higher branches of mathematics and physical science, French, German, Latin, and Greek ... If he had only learnt a little less, how infinitely better he might have taught much more!’²³⁵

Dickens's caricature of the schooling that resulted from Kay-Shuttleworth's scheme seems exaggerated and fanciful, but Philip Collins finds ample historical justification for it: the training colleges 'attempted to do too much, too fast: and there was a factory-like aridity in too many of them, symbolised by their buildings'.²³⁶ That phrase 'taken the bloom off' recalls Blake's likening of childhood education to organic processes in 'The Schoolboy':

[...] if buds are nip'd, And
blossoms blown away [...]
How shall the summer arise in joy.²³⁷

Dickens develops the analogy in evoking Coketown, 'where Nature was as strongly bricked out as killing airs and gases were bricked in', and its working people, 'an unnatural family, shouldering, and trampling, and pressing one another to death'.²³⁸ Kate Flint writes:

The different worlds of this novel are yoked together by a recurrent emphasis on Dickens's part: that contemporary society, and the forms of its culture, can be classified as either natural or artificial. The former is always to be preferred over the latter.²³⁹

As we saw in *Bleak House*, progress depends on the cultivation of organic, 'natural' human growth, as it does for Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Mary Shelley.

Strangled in its cradle

Following his customary *modus operandi*, after this exposition of Gradgrind's Utilitarian creed and its products, Dickens immediately introduces an alternative set of values in the character of Sissy Jupe, a child of the travelling circus people encamped in Coketown. As Belinda Jack observes, 'Key to the novel is a contrast between the world of industry (associated with fact) and the world of the circus (associated with fancy)'.²⁴⁰ In the confrontation between Gradgrind and Sissy in Chapter 2 we have precisely the image that Blake evokes in the illustration to 'London', of a spiritually deformed adult and an innocent child.²⁴¹ In this case the adult spurns her guidance. Unfamiliar with the school's ways, Sissy begins to say 'I would fancy [...]', and is immediately pulled up by Gradgrind: 'But you mustn't fancy [...] You must discard the word Fancy altogether'.²⁴² Dickens's evocation of the circus, with its 'clashing and banging band [...] in full bray',²⁴³ is not wholly sympathetic. But his characterisation of the circus people is, as Flint suggests, diametrically opposed to the 'unnatural' callousness and selfishness he attributes to the Coketown workers. Despite the circus families' itinerant lifestyle, and their outlandish way of making a living as acrobats and trick horseriders, 'there was a remarkable gentleness and childishness about these people, a special inaptitude for any kind of sharp practice, and an untiring readiness to help and pity one another, deserving, often of as much respect, and always of as much generous construction, as the everyday virtues of any class of people in the world'.²⁴⁴ Gradgrind, the polar opposite, 'had no need to cast an eye upon the teeming myriads of human beings around him, but could settle all their destinies on a slate, and wipe out all their tears with one dirty little bit of sponge'.²⁴⁵ Although 'the combined literature

of the whole [circus] company would have produced but a poor letter on any subject',²⁴⁶ Sissy's father has a respect for learning. The woman he loved, Sissy's mother, died giving birth to her. She was 'quite a scholar',²⁴⁷ and Mr. Jupe wants his daughter to follow in her footsteps: 'He has been picking up a bit of reading for her, here – and a bit of writing for her, there – and a bit of cyphering for her, somewhere else', his friend Childers notes.²⁴⁸ If this sounds dangerously close to Bitzer's fragmented learning, Dickens makes it quite clear that the circus people's notions of education are very different from Gradgrind's. At her entrance interview Sissy tells Gradgrind that she read to her father 'thousands of times. They were the happiest – O, of all the happy times we had together', reading 'about the Fairies, sir, and the Dwarf, and the Hunchback, and the Genies'.²⁴⁹ As so often in Dickens, the stories of the *Arabian Nights* provide nurture for imagination and delight in humble people. So it is not only in the role of imagination that Sissy and her kin are at odds with Gradgrind's system: it is also in the notion that education and learning are a pleasure, indeed one of the greatest pleasures life has to offer. Her misery in his school, where all pleasure is repressed, is precisely that of Blake's Schoolboy: 'Nor in my book can I take delight, /Nor sit in learning's bower'.²⁵⁰

Whereas in *Bleak House* the two entities that are established in the opening chapters: the law and the aristocracy, are shown to share a common set of values, the two value systems set up at the beginning of *Hard Times*: those of Gradgrind and his circle, and those of Sissy Jupe and the circus people, are diametrically opposed. In many respects this antithesis replays the clash of views between the impressionistic Southey, without 'a single fact in support of [his] views' on industrialisation, and Macaulay with his barrage of 'facts', twenty years earlier.²⁵¹ Like the frequenters of the Wooden Midshipman in *Dombey and Son*, these circus people embody the values of emotion, imagination and delight, the polar opposites of the utilitarian world of commerce and industry manifested in Mr. Dombey and Gradgrind. Where in *Bleak House* the career of Richard Carstone serves to demonstrate the working out in human terms of the ideas and values at stake, in *Hard Times* it is the growth and development of Gradgrind's children Louisa and Thomas that fulfil this role. Gradgrind boasts, in that famous opening chapter, that his school's ethos 'is the principle on which I bring up my own children'.²⁵² They are Dickens's embodiments of the products, by birth, upbringing and education, of the Utilitarian ethos.

From the children's first appearance in the novel Dickens makes it clear that Gradgrind's attempt to 'root out' everything but 'facts' is not working; he catches Louisa and Thomas trying to get a glimpse of the circus that epitomises everything he most despises, and bemoans 'I should as soon have expected to find my children reading poetry'.²⁵³ It is instructive that poetry written the year before *Hard Times*: Matthew Arnold's 'The Scholar-Gipsy', also employs a 'wild brotherhood' of wandering people as a corrective to the 'sick fatigue' of modern life.²⁵⁴ Dickens leaves us in no doubt that Gradgrind's children are far from immune to the lure of the travellers. It is equally clear that Dickens is more interested in the daughter than the son:

There was an air of jaded sullenness in them both, and particularly in the girl: yet, struggling through the dissatisfaction of her face, there was a light with nothing to rest upon, a fire with nothing to burn, a starved imagination keeping life in itself somehow, which brightened its expression. Not with the brightness natural to cheerful youth, but with uncertain, eager, doubtful flashes, which had something painful in them, analogous to the changes on a blind face groping its way.²⁵⁵

Louisa is ‘a child now, of fifteen or sixteen’, and ‘pretty’:²⁵⁶ a type perennially fascinating to Dickens. Here the type is confronted with a new series of pressures: not the neglect that suppressed Florence Dombey, or the poverty of Lizzie Hexam, but the essentially masculine imperatives of Utilitarian values. Bounderby, a ‘year or two younger’ than her father, but who ‘looked older’,²⁵⁷ has designs on her, and kisses her. He then ‘went his way, but she stood on the same spot, rubbing the cheek he had kissed, with her handkerchief, until it was burning red. She was still doing this, five minutes afterwards’.²⁵⁸ Despite her obvious revulsion, her brother asks her accept Bounderby’s proposal so as to secure employment for himself in Bounderby’s Bank.²⁵⁹ Her father also urges her to accept the proposal now that she has become ‘quite a young woman’,²⁶⁰ quoting statistics demonstrating the prevalence of marriages ‘between parties of very unequal ages’:²⁶¹ ‘perhaps he might have seen one wavering moment in her, when she was impelled to throw herself upon his breast, and give him the pent-up confidences of her heart’, but with his ‘unbending, utilitarian, matter-of -fact face, he hardened her again, and the moment shot away into the plumbless depths of the past, to mingle with all the lost opportunities that are drowned there’.²⁶² Louisa accepts her fate: ‘I never had a child’s heart [...] I never dreamed a child’s dream’,²⁶³ and agrees to marry Bounderby. She is fully aware of what she is resigning, in giving up the inner world that the circus people embody: ‘From that moment she was impassive, proud, and cold – held Sissy at a distance – changed to her altogether’,²⁶⁴ Dickens writes. In Blakean terms Bounderby ‘binds to himself a joy’, and ‘Does the winged life destroy’.²⁶⁵

Bounderby is the owner of the factory whose ‘killing airs and gases’²⁶⁶ create the Coketown environment. Such factories were made possible by the scientific advances of the previous century which fascinated Coleridge and Percy Shelley. As Mary Shelley warned in *Frankenstein*, scientific knowledge can be used to increase human understanding of and respect for natural processes, or it can be abused in misguided attempts to improve or contravene those processes: Captain Walton and Victor Frankenstein, ‘scholar scientist’ and ‘master scientist’²⁶⁷, in Anne Mellor’s terms. Where the science that pervaded *Bleak House* clearly belonged to the first category, offering the long view of evolutionary perspective to the mid-nineteenth century setting, here in *Hard Times* Dickens reacts to the monstrous consequences of humans’ attempts to dominate and exploit the natural environment. These consequences are mainly embodied in the lives of Louisa and Tom Gradgrind, and Stephen Blackpool.

Dickens assigns to both Louisa and Tom an innate potential for emotional and imaginative development. But whereas in Louisa this takes the form of 'a struggling disposition to believe in a wider and nobler humanity than she had ever heard of',²⁶⁸ in Tom it takes a very different turn, and Dickens's language takes on a hostile, darkly ironic tone. The chapter dealing with Louisa's predicament is titled *Father and Daughter*; the one dealing with Tom is called *The Whelp*:

It was very remarkable that a young gentleman who had been brought up under one continuous system of unnatural restraint, should be a hypocrite; but it was certainly the case with Tom. It was very strange that a young gentleman who had never been left to his own guidance for five consecutive minutes, should be incapable at last of governing himself; but so it was with Tom. It was altogether unaccountable that a young gentleman whose imagination had been strangled in its cradle should be still inconvenienced by its ghost in the form of grovelling sensualities; but such a monster, beyond all doubt, was Tom.²⁶⁹

Imagination cannot be 'rooted out' of human beings, Tom's career demonstrates: its suppression spawns 'a monster'.

Stale, flat, and unprofitable

Thus far *Hard Times* has worked as a fiction in broadly similar ways to *Bleak House*: more or less static characters who develop little if at all – the Dedlocks, Tulkinghorn, Esther and Ada, Gradgrind, Bounderby, Sissy – embodying opposing value systems that are the focus of Dickens's urge to write; and dynamic, mobile characters whose development expresses the influence and effects of those value systems on human lives. There are two important respects in which *Hard Times* differs from the earlier novel. The first of these is Dickens's more overt partisanship here. In both novels we always know where his sympathies lie. But where *Bleak House* reveals and develops its meanings gradually and at leisure, using the extended structures and systems of imagery pioneered in *Dombey and Son*, here the frequent, blatant interjections of the author's point of view give the novel a very different tone and atmosphere.

The second significant difference between the schemes of the two novels revolves around the issue of social class. All of the major characters in *Bleak House*, together with the Gradgrinds and Bounderbys in *Hard Times*, are either middle or upper class. It is true that Sissy Jupe and the circus people are not middle class; because of the itinerant nature of their lives, they may be said to have dropped out of the social structure altogether. Lilian Young associates them with an 'old type' of 'lifestyle and community [...] that will not survive the industrial revolution';²⁷⁰ The circus-master Sleary, she continues, 'does not want to fit into Gradgrind's city or his life. The circus is past the edge'.²⁷¹ The circus people certainly cannot be described as working class. Indeed, given Dickens' fame as a champion of the poor and oppressed, it is surprising to note how few of his major characters are working class. Many of his male protagonists (and for Dickens, as we have seen, gender roles are crucial and usually non-

negotiable),²⁷² like *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield*, experience the deprivations of poverty and manual labour, but return finally to middle-class gentility. And until the breakthrough with *Pip* in 1860, working-class characters who attempt to work their way into middle-class gentility are not treated with much sympathy, as his portrayals of Bradley Headstone and Charley Hexam attest. As we have seen, Dickens accords Dan Peggotty a Wordsworthian grandeur in the later stages of *David Copperfield*. But Mr Peggotty makes no attempt to rise from his class; indeed, it is precisely Emily's aspirations in this respect that bring about her shame and social ostracising. Stephen Blackpool in *Hard Times* is Dickens's first fictional essay in developing and sustaining a major working-class character within an industrial setting, and like Daniel Peggotty, he shows no interest in becoming middle class. Perhaps because of this, Dickens treats both characters sympathetically; both are milestones on the way to his achievement in *Great Expectations*.

Writing in the mid-twentieth century, Peter Coveney hailed *Hard Times* as 'one of his greatest novels; as fine as anything he achieved within the intentions and methods he set himself'; he also notes its 'comparative neglect' until that point in time.²⁷³ Philip Collins notes the significance of contemporary reviewers' 'unaccustomed brevity'.²⁷⁴ The response of Richard Simpson, editor of *The Rambler*, in October 1854 is characteristic: 'Here and there we meet with touches not unworthy of the inventor of *Pickwick*; but, on the whole, the story is stale, flat, and unprofitable'.²⁷⁵ The contemporary reception of *Hard Times* did nothing to halt that sense of a novelist in decline from his youthful triumphs, which began with *Bleak House*. Simpson continues: 'It is a thousand pities that Mr Dickens does not confine himself to amusing his readers, instead of wandering out of his depth in trying to instruct them'.²⁷⁶ The verismo of Dickens's observations of the Chesney Wold set in *Bleak House*, who are 'not to be disturbed by ideas', so that an artist must 'be particularly careful not to be in earnest, or to receive any impress from the moving age',²⁷⁷ is borne out in such reactions. They could well be the source of the notion of Dickens as primarily an 'entertainer', which was prevalent throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and for much of the first half of the twentieth. F. R. Leavis famously excluded Dickens 'the great entertainer' from his 'Great Tradition' of English novelists - 'a valuation which', Paul Schlicke writes, 'impeded serious academic criticism of Dickens for a generation'.²⁷⁸ The sense that Dickens should know his place and stick to what he does best is also present in the *Westminster Review*'s anonymous notice: 'The most successful characters in *Hard Times*, as is usual with Mr Dickens, are those which are the *simplest* and least cultivated [...] But when [he] leaves his lowly-born heroes and heroines, and weaves personages of more cultivated natures into his plots, the difference of execution is very marked'.²⁷⁹ The reviewer compares Dickens unfavourably with Thackeray in this respect, and doubts 'whether his descriptions will be so intelligible fifty years hence: it is a language which speaks specially to the present generation'.²⁸⁰ John Ruskin reflected upon the reception of *Hard Times*, and the changing tide of Dickens's reputation, a few years later, and regretted that 'The essential value and truth of Dickens's writings have been unwisely lost sight of by many

thoughtful persons, merely because he presents his truth with some colour of caricature'. *Hard Times* as a novel is 'the greatest he has written': 'He is entirely right in his main drift and purpose in every book he has written; and all of them, but especially *Hard Times*, should be studied with close and earnest care'.²⁸¹ Ruskin perceptively diagnoses critics' reluctance to take Dickens seriously as a novelist: 'let us not lose the use of Dickens's wit and insight, because he chooses to speak in a circle of stage fire', and uses Stephen Blackpool: 'a dramatic perfection, instead of a characteristic example of an honest workman',²⁸² as his exemplar.

Perfect Integrity

Stephen does not appear until the tenth chapter of *Hard Times*, long after the initial oppositions have been established. But he is crucial to the achievement of Dickens's aims in the novel, a third dynamic, mobile character to go alongside Louisa and Tom. Stephen is forty when we first meet him,²⁸³ while Louisa and Tom are in their teens. In him Dickens traces the effects of utilitarian culture at a later stage of human life, and in a very different social stratum.

The Wordsworthian links with Daniel Peggotty are also evident in Stephen's appearance, experience and character: 'rugged earnestness'²⁸⁴ transferred to an urban, industrial context. Like Bounderby, Stephen 'looked older' than his age, a 'rather stooping man, with a knitted brow, a pondering expression of face, and a hard-looking head sufficiently capacious, on which his iron-grey hair lay long and thin'.²⁸⁵ Like Dan Peggotty, he is 'a man of perfect integrity':²⁸⁶

he had had a hard life. It is said that every life has its roses and thorns; there seemed, however, to have been a misadventure or mistake in Stephen's case, whereby somebody else had become possessed of his roses, and he had become possessed of someone else's thorns in addition to his own. He had known, to use his words, a peck of trouble. He was usually called Old Stephen, in a kind of rough homage to the fact.²⁸⁷

Stephen loves Rachael, a 'working woman' of 'a pensive beauty ... sweet-tempered and serene'²⁸⁸ who returns his love; but he is tied by marriage to 'a disabled, drunken creature ... foul to look at, in her tatters, stains and splashes, but so much fouler than that in her moral infamy':²⁸⁹ precisely the tragic triangle, the mismatch between letter and spirit,²⁹⁰ that Thomas Hardy was to explore with Jude, Sue and Arabella at the end of the century in *Jude the Obscure* (1895). But where this theme takes centre-stage in *Jude*, here it remains secondary to Dickens's examination of the effects of utilitarian values on human lives.

Stephen and Rachael both work in Bounderby's factory. Stephen is ostracised by his fellow-workers for refusing to join the union,²⁹¹ but remains 'faithful to his class under all their mistrust'²⁹² and is sacked by Bounderby for refusing to inform on them.²⁹³ His integrity earns him rejection by both men and masters, and the ultimate catastrophe for working people, the loss of his livelihood. Dickens has Bounderby's wife Louisa make his point: 'Then, by the prejudices of his own class, and by the prejudices of the other, he is sacrificed alike? Are the two so deeply separated in this town, that there is no place whatever, for an honest workman

between them?', she asks Rachael.²⁹⁴ Louisa offers Stephen money to ward off starvation: 'his manner of accepting it, and of expressing his thanks without more words, had a grace in it that Lord Chesterfield could not have taught his son in a century'.²⁹⁵ Dickens relocates the instinctive integrity and dignity of Wordsworth's country people into his own time, in a mid-century industrial milieu. Having done so, he can evidently no longer contain his anger and drops the mask of fiction to address his targets directly:

Utilitarian economists, skeletons of schoolmasters, Commissioners of Fact, genteel and used-up infidels, gabblers of many little dog's-eared creeds, the poor you will have always with you. Cultivate in them, while there is yet time, the utmost graces of the fancies and affections to adorn their lives so much in need of ornament; or, in the day of your triumph, when romance is utterly driven out of their souls, and they and a bare existence stand face to face, Reality will take a wolfish turn, and make an end of you!²⁹⁶

Hard Times is essentially an illustration of this central authorial message. The survival of Stephen's innate 'grace' is exceptional in a man of his age and circumstance. For everyone else it must be cultivated and nurtured, if the 'wolfish turn' is to be avoided. Gradgrind's rooting out of 'romance' leads in Louisa to an emotional and spiritual aridity, 'the drying up of every spring and fountain in her young heart as it gushed out'.²⁹⁷ She retains her moral compass, but despairs of any form of fulfilment. In Tom's case, however, the 'wolfish turn' is realised, as the careers of the three mobile characters begin to intertwine. While Louisa is trying to help Stephen, Tom devises a plan to rob his employer's bank and divert suspicion onto Stephen, a plan which succeeds and leads ultimately to Stephen's death.²⁹⁸ When confronted by Gradgrind (in a chapter titled 'Whelp-Hunting'), Tom blames his father's amoral guidance for his actions: 'So many people are employed in situations of trust; so many people out of many, will be dishonest. I have heard you talk, a hundred times, of its being a law. How can I help laws? You have comforted others with such things father. Comfort yourself!'²⁹⁹ And like so many of Dickens's characters who stray beyond the pale morally and socially, Tom is shipped off 'to North or South America, or any distant part of the world',³⁰⁰ spurning Louisa's affection as he goes.³⁰¹

'[S]uch a monster, beyond all doubt, was Tom'.³⁰² Dickens's treatment of the character and career of Tom Gradgrind exemplifies a crucial aspect of his engagement with Romantic values. Even in the most extended and detailed of Romantic documents, *The Prelude*, Wordsworth contents himself with contrasting 'the monster birth/ Engender'd by these too industrious times' with 'the race of real children' reared in nature, by describing them one after the other.³⁰³ Dickens on the other hand depicts at leisure the unnatural monsters interacting with society over time, and shows how they ruin not only their own lives but also the lives of others. Tom's machinations lead directly to Stephen's early death; Steerforth perverts Rosa Dartle and ruins Ham's life; Miss Havisham perverts Estella's character. The warning in these fictions is all the more powerful for its intricate working-out of human consequences, all the easier for readers

to identify with personally. Profound doubts about the universality of the 'Great Universal Teacher'³⁰⁴ are shared. The optimism and 'ideal grandeur' of 'the Poet's world'³⁰⁵ seems misplaced. In this way Dickens is able to 'unname the precursor while earning one's own name', which Harold Bloom claims is 'the quest of strong or severe poets'.³⁰⁶

Tom Gradgrind's life illustrates the 'wolfish turn' which Dickens warns will be the result of unchecked utilitarian principles, and Stephen's suggests that integrity and honesty are positive drawbacks under a utilitarian regime, exactly as Jude Fawley's loving kindness will unfit him for modern life in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*.³⁰⁷ Louisa separates from Bounderby. She never has children of her own, the natural cycle of renewal is not achieved in her; but she finds consolation, and a qualified salvation, Dickens implies, in her drawing ever closer to Sissy Jupe, and her love of 'happy Sissy's happy children': 'trying hard to know her humbler fellow-creatures, and to beautify their lives of machinery and reality with those imaginative graces and delights, without which the heart of infancy will wither'.³⁰⁸ a concise statement of the notion of progress, of evolution, that this novel embodies.

Louisa and Tom are, like Frankenstein's creature, victims of an arrogant progenitor's experimentation. In his *hubris* Gradgrind spurns the laws of nature and, abetted by Bounderby, uses his children as guinea pigs in a dispassionate experiment in social engineering. In Louisa's case it blights her natural instincts; in Tom's it turns him into a 'monster'. But they are not the only victims. Whereas Mary Shelley explores the results of scientific *hubris* in a single being, here Dickens depicts a whole community blighted by the abuse of science and technology, by the rigid application of a utilitarian political economy which, as Mary Poovey writes, had to 'generate an abstraction - 'society,' 'human nature,' or 'the market' - that somehow stood in for, but did not refer to, whatever material phenomena it was said to represent'.³⁰⁹ Thus Dickens has Gradgrind reflecting on 'an abstraction called a People',³¹⁰ and realising that he has treated his own children as part of this abstraction.

It is in keeping with Dickens's didactic intent in *Hard Times* that he allows Gradgrind, initially one of the most rigid and static of his characters, to be chastened by experience. Seeing the changes wrought in 'my favourite child' Louisa by her marriage to Bounderby, he admits that his actions have 'a little perverted her', and asks her uncomprehending husband to let her stay with Sissy Jupe, 'who understands her'.³¹¹ 'Did he see himself', Dickens has Gradgrind muse after his son's disgrace and banishment, 'a white-haired decrepit man, bending his hitherto inflexible theories to appointed circumstances; making his facts and figures subservient to Faith, Hope and Charity; and no longer trying to grind that Heavenly trio in his dusty little mills?'.³¹² In *Jerusalem* William Blake has Los, 'unmov'd by tears or threats', proclaim: 'I must create a system or be enslav'd by another man's'.³¹³ In *Hard Times* Dickens depicts a man 'unmov'd by tears' who is enslaved by the system he has himself created. That phrase 'his dusty little mills' suggests that Gradgrind's dark, grim schoolrooms are every bit as much 'mills' as are factories like Bounderby's, both spreading across the country. From first to last,

Blake's 'dark satanic mills', and the questions Blake asks about progress towards the building of Jerusalem,³¹⁴ are never far beneath the surface of this novel.

Finally the grim edifice of utilitarian culture established in the opening pages of the novel is seen to crumble. Even Tom is allowed a deathbed conversion: he 'died in penitence and love of you', Louisa learns.³¹⁵ At the end only Bounderby and Bitzer remain incorrigibly bound to 'facts'. The circus people gradually assume their rightful prominence in Dickens's schema, with the lisping circus-master Sleary, having been instrumental in Tom's escape, stressing to Gradgrind the novel's moral:

Don't be croth with uth poor vagabondth. People mutht be amuthed. They can't be alwayth a learning, nor they can't be alwayth a working, they an't made for it. You *mutht* have uth, Thquire. Do the withe thing and the kind thing too, and make the bethth of uth; not the wurtht!³¹⁶

In a brief closing paragraph of this very personal, manifesto-like work, Dickens makes a direct appeal to his 'Dear Reader' for the validity of fictional treatments of external reality: 'It rests with you and me, whether, in our two fields of action, similar things shall be or not. Let them be'. Raymond Williams, and more recently Garret Stewart, Catherine Gallagher and Daniel Wright have all discussed this allusion to the crucial relationship between fiction and reality at the end of *Hard Times*.³¹⁷ Wright detects here a 'vividly paradoxical tension' between the 'two fields of action': the writer's world of fiction, and the world of reality that the fiction depicts and that reader and writer both experience: 'Fiction and reality exist, for that moment, side by side [...] The best we can hope for, it seems, are these moments in which the two become unbearably close – so close that we might forget, stupidly, the impassable divide that keeps us apart.'³¹⁸ The mid-century political, social and industrial realities which Dickens depicts in *Hard Times* had evolved from the revolutionary ferment, political and scientific, of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Dickens's achievement here is to forge in fiction convincing alternatives to the rationalist, scientific notions of progress prevalent in the mid-nineteenth century, allowing the reader to believe that the 'impassable divide' can be healed. These alternatives appropriate Romantic critiques of the industrial and political revolutions, by pointing their continuing relevance to the realities of the mid-century as both critique and potential solution, to validate and vindicate the imaginative perceptions of that critique: 'What is now proved was once only imagin'd'.³¹⁹ Dickens's address to his 'Dear Reader' does not share the unqualified certainty that Blake expresses here about the prophetic power of imagination; Dickens's conclusion to this novel is more of a personal expression of hope, an appeal: Let them be.

Kate Flint's characterisation of *Hard Times*: 'different worlds [...] yoked together by a recurrent emphasis on Dickens's part: that contemporary society, and the forms of its culture, can be classified as either natural or artificial',³²⁰ is equally true of its predecessor. The sheer artistic perfection of *Bleak House* seems to have left him dissatisfied, needing to pare down his

convictions to the bone: this he does in *Hard Times*. In these two novels of the early 1850s, in the very different ways indicated, Dickens has synthesised his own essentially Romantic preoccupations and argued for their validity in addressing the problems of his own time and place in the history of human and global evolution.

¹ Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 23-24.

² For the full text of the acts see <http://www.rahbarnes.co.uk/Union/Union1800.php> (accessed 8.8.16).

³ For an analysis of French involvement in the Rebellion, see Thomas Pakenham, 'The French are on the Sea', in *The Year of Liberty: The Great Irish Rebellion of 1789* (London: Abacus, 1997).

⁴ Holmes 1989, pp. 62-63.

⁵ *BCW*, p. 480.

⁶ *SIE*, p. 46.

⁷ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1805), Book V, ll. 292-3, 436: *WTP*, pp. 75,79.

⁸ *SIE*, p. 53.

⁹ *CPW*, p. 242.

¹⁰ Mark Kipperman, 'Coleridge, Shelley, Davy, and Science's Millennium', *Criticism: a Quarterly for Literature and the Arts*, 40 (1998), 409-36 (p. 416). The quotation is from Davy's 'Essay on Heat, Light, and the Combinations of Light': see Kipperman's note 18, p. 433.

¹¹ See Roger Sharrock, 'The Chemist and the Poet: Sir Humphry Davy and the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, 17 (1962), pp. 57-76; Richard Holmes, *Shelley: the Pursuit* (London: Elisabeth Sifton/Penguin Books, 1987), pp. 153, 347; Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (London: John Murray, 2000), p. 173.

¹² Robert Southey, *Sir Thomas More, or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society* (London: John Murray, 1829), Vol. 1, p. 3.

¹³ Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society: 1780-1950* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971. First published 1958), pp. 214, 40-41.

¹⁴ J. Edmund White, 'Pantisocracy and Pennsylvania: Plans of Coleridge and Southey and of Cooper and Priestly', *Bulletin for the History of Chemistry*, 30 (2005), 70-76 (p. 75).

¹⁵ Southey, Vol. 1, p. 193.

¹⁶ Southey, Vol. 1, p. 178.

¹⁷ Southey, Vol. 1, pp. 178, 179.

¹⁸ [Thomas Babington Macaulay], review of Southey's *Colloquies*, *The Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal*, L (1830), 528-65 (p. 538). The article was reprinted by Macaulay in his *Critical and Historical Essays: Contributed to the Edinburgh Review* (1843).

¹⁹ See for example his review of Mill's *Essay on Government*: *Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal*, XLIX (1829), 159-89.

²⁰ Macaulay 1830, pp. 562-63.

²¹ Robin Gilmour, *The Victorian Period: the Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830-1890* (London: Longman, 1993), pp. 19-20.

²² Mary Shelley, 'Author's Introduction to the Standard Novels Edition' (1831), *MSF*, pp. 5-10 (p. 8).

Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Preface' (1818), *MSF*, pp. 11-12 (p. 11).

²³ Mary Shelley, 'Author's Introduction to the Standard Novels Edition' (1831), *MSF*, pp. 5-10 (p. 8).

²⁴ *Mary Shelley's Journal*, ed. by Frederick L. Jones (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1947), p. 67.

-
- ²⁵ Laura E. Crouch, 'Davy's *A Discourse, Introductory to A Course of Lectures on Chemistry*: A Possible Scientific Source of *Frankenstein*', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 27 (1978), 35-44 (p. 35).
- ²⁶ Anne K. Mellor, *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters* (New York: Routledge 1988), p. 91.
- ²⁷ Humphry Davy, *A Discourse, Introductory to a Course of Lectures on Chemistry, Delivered in the Theatre of the Royal Institution on the 21st of January, 1802* (London: The Press of the Royal Institution, 1802), p. 16.
- ²⁸ Mellor, p. 9.
- ²⁹ *MSF*, p. 19. The influence of 'The Ancient Mariner' on *Frankenstein* will be discussed in Chapter 4.
- ³⁰ *MSF*, p. 52.
- ³¹ *MSF*, p. 47.
- ³² *MSF*, p. 40.
- ³³ *MSF*, p. 56.
- ³⁴ *BL*, p. 167.
- ³⁵ *MSF*, p. 57.
- ³⁶ *MSF*, p. 52.
- ³⁷ *MSF*, p. 141.
- ³⁸ *MSF*, p. 141.
- ³⁹ *MSF*, p. 142.
- ⁴⁰ *MSF*, p. 214.
- ⁴¹ Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (London: John Murray, 2000), p. 172.
- ⁴² *MSF*, p. 53.
- ⁴³ Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth* (London: Picador, 2000), p. 51.
- ⁴⁴ Ashton Nichols, 'Fostered by Fear: Affect and Environment in Romantic Nature Writing', in *Wordsworth and the Green Romantics: Affect and Ecology in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Lisa Ottum and Seth T. Reno (Durham, New Hampshire: University of New Hampshire Press, 2016), pp. 146-63 (p. 152).
- ⁴⁵ See Sharrock, p.58.
- ⁴⁶ *MSF*, pp. 14-15, 19.
- ⁴⁷ Bate, p. 51.
- ⁴⁸ *MSF*, pp. 212, 214.
- ⁴⁹ *MSF*, p. 40.
- ⁵⁰ *MSF*, p. 77.
- ⁵¹ *MSF*, p. 90.
- ⁵² Hans Eichner, 'The Rise of Modern Science and the Genesis of Romanticism' *PMLA*, 97 (1982), 8-30 (pp. 8, 20).
- ⁵³ Walter Wetzels, 'Johann Wilhelm Ritter: Romantic Physics in Germany', in *Romanticism and the Sciences*, ed. by Andrew Cunningham and Nicholas Jardine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 199.
- ⁵⁴ *GE*, p. 339.
- ⁵⁵ *Letters*, 4, pp. 711-12.
- ⁵⁶ *Letters*, 4, pp. 618-19.
- ⁵⁷ George Levine, 'The Ambiguous Heritage of *Frankenstein*', in *The Endurance of Frankenstein: Essays on Mary Shelley's Novel*, ed. by George Levine and U.C. Knoepfelmacher (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1979), pp. 3-30 (pp. 21, 22-23).
- ⁵⁸ 'Oliver Twist, or, the Parish Boy's Progress. By Boz', Chapter 1, *Bentley's Miscellany*, 1 (February 1837), pp. 105-07 (p. 105). The name 'Mudfog' is omitted from all subsequent editions supervised by Dickens.
- ⁵⁹ [Charles Dickens], 'Full Report of the First Meeting of the Mudfog Association for the Advancement of Everything', *Bentley's Miscellany*, 2 (October 1837), 397-413. Dickens added another satire, 'Full Report of the Second Meeting of the Mudfog Association for the Advancement of Everything', the following year: *Bentley's Miscellany*, 4 (July 1838), 209-27.

-
- ⁶⁰ See Paul Schlicke, 'The Mudfog Papers', in *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens: Anniversary Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 394.
- ⁶¹ *BH*, p. 49.
- ⁶² *BH*, p. 49.
- ⁶³ *BH*, p. 49.
- ⁶⁴ *BH*, p. 43.
- ⁶⁵ *BL*, p. 169.
- ⁶⁶ Donald D. Stone, *The Romantic Impulse in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 252.
- ⁶⁷ *BH*, p. 49.
- ⁶⁸ Genesis, 6:9 - 9:17.
- ⁶⁹ *BH*, p. 50.
- ⁷⁰ Christine Corton, *London Fog: The Biography* (Cambridge Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015) p. 61.
- ⁷¹ *BH*, p. 134.
- ⁷² *BH*, p. 135.
- ⁷³ *BH*, p. 86.
- ⁷⁴ *BH*, p. 85.
- ⁷⁵ *BH*, pp. 152, 153.
- ⁷⁶ *BH*, p. 158.
- ⁷⁷ *BH*, p. 160.
- ⁷⁸ *BH*, p. 256.
- ⁷⁹ *BH*, p. 55.
- ⁸⁰ Catherine Waters, 'Domesticity', in *Charles Dickens in Context*, ed. by Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 350-57 (p. 355).
- ⁸¹ *BH*, p. 211.
- ⁸² *BH*, p. 705.
- ⁸³ *BH*, p. 55.
- ⁸⁴ *BH*, p. 211.
- ⁸⁵ Humphrey House, *The Dickens World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942).
- ⁸⁶ *BH*, pp. 173-75.
- ⁸⁷ *BH*, p. 244.
- ⁸⁸ G. K. Chesterton, *Charles Dickens, a Critical Study* (New York: Dodd Mead and Company, 1906), p. 204.
- ⁸⁹ *BH*, p. 78.
- ⁹⁰ *BH*, p. 374.
- ⁹¹ *BH*, p. 681.
- ⁹² *BH*, p. 927.
- ⁹³ T. A. Jackson, *Charles Dickens: The Progress of a Radical* (New York: Haskell House, 1971), p. 131. First published 1937.
- ⁹⁴ *BH*, p. 282.
- ⁹⁵ *BH*, p. 218.
- ⁹⁶ *BH*, p. 218.
- ⁹⁷ *BH*, p. 280.
- ⁹⁸ *BH*, p. 280.
- ⁹⁹ D. A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 62.
- ¹⁰⁰ *BH*, p. 878.
- ¹⁰¹ William Blake, 'The School-Boy', ll. 23-25, *SIE*, p. 53.
- ¹⁰² *BH*, p. 81.

-
- ¹⁰³ *BH*, p. 102.
- ¹⁰⁴ *BH*, p. 103.
- ¹⁰⁵ W. J. Harvey, 'Chance and Design in *Bleak House*', in *Dickens and the Twentieth Century*, ed. by John Gross and Gabriel Pearson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 145-57 (p. 146).
- ¹⁰⁶ *BH*, p. 199.
- ¹⁰⁷ *BH*, p. 203.
- ¹⁰⁸ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' l. 193, *CPW*, p. 194.
- ¹⁰⁹ *BH*, p. 202.
- ¹¹⁰ *DC*, p. 210.
- ¹¹¹ *BH*, p. 202.
- ¹¹² [Anon.], review of *Bleak House*, *The Eclectic Review*, n.s. vi, December 1853, p. 672.
- ¹¹³ John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1873), Vol. III, p. 27.
- ¹¹⁴ [Henry Fothergill Chorley], review of *Bleak House*, *Athenaeum*, 17th September 1853, 1087-8 (p.1087). Chorley later became 'a close friend and admirer of Dickens', Philip Collins notes: *Dickens: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 276.
- ¹¹⁵ Chorley, p. 1087.
- ¹¹⁶ Chorley, p. 1087.
- ¹¹⁷ [Anon.], 'A Gossip about New Books, *Bentley's Miscellany*, xxxiv, October 1853, 367-74 (p. 372).
- ¹¹⁸ [Anon.], review of *Bleak House*, *Illustrated London News*, 24th September 1853, 247.
- ¹¹⁹ *Illustrated London News*, 24th September 1853, p. 247.
- ¹²⁰ George Brimley, review of *Bleak House*, *The Spectator*, xxvi, 24th September 1853, 923-5 (p. 923).
- ¹²¹ Brimley, p. 923.
- ¹²² Collins, 1971, p. 272.
- ¹²³ Brimley, p. 924.
- ¹²⁴ Sally Ledger, *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 209.
- ¹²⁵ *BH*, p. 878.
- ¹²⁶ *BH*, p. 57.
- ¹²⁷ Emily V. Epstein Kobayashi, 'Detective or Defective Vision, a Matter of Breathing or Dying in *Bleak House*', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction*, 46 (2015), 185-207 (p. 188).
- ¹²⁸ *BH*, p. 138.
- ¹²⁹ *BH*, p. 453.
- ¹³⁰ *BH*, p. 57.
- ¹³¹ *BH*, p. 457.
- ¹³² *GE*, p. 320.
- ¹³³ *BH*, p. 705.
- ¹³⁴ *BH*, p. 138.
- ¹³⁵ *BH*, pp. 60-61.
- ¹³⁶ *BH*, p. 58.
- ¹³⁷ *BH*, p. 639.
- ¹³⁸ *BH*, p. 57.
- ¹³⁹ *BH*, p. 115.
- ¹⁴⁰ *BH*, p. 60.
- ¹⁴¹ *BH*, pp. 182, 184.
- ¹⁴² *BH*, p. 59.
- ¹⁴³ *BH*, p. 58.
- ¹⁴⁴ *CB1*, p. 57.

-
- ¹⁴⁵ *BH*, p. 59.
- ¹⁴⁶ *BH*, pp. 61-62.
- ¹⁴⁷ *BH*, p. 359.
- ¹⁴⁸ *BH*, p. 182.
- ¹⁴⁹ Jonathan P. Ribner, 'Law and Justice in England and France: The View from Victorian London', in *Law and the Image: The Authority of Art and the Aesthetics of Law*, ed. by Costas Douzinas and Lynda Nead (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 178-202 (p. 197).
- ¹⁵⁰ *BH*, p. 182.
- ¹⁵¹ *BH*, p. 182.
- ¹⁵² John Cowper Powys, *The Pleasures of Literature* (London: Cassell and Company, 1938), p. 118.
- ¹⁵³ *BH*, p. 359. The allusion to the 'young house' is in *CB1*, p. 54.
- ¹⁵⁴ *BH*, p. 633.
- ¹⁵⁵ *BH*, p. 631.
- ¹⁵⁶ George Levine, *Darwin and the Novelists: Patterns of Science in Victorian Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 148.
- ¹⁵⁷ *BH*, p. 639.
- ¹⁵⁸ *BH*, p. 637.
- ¹⁵⁹ *BH*, p. 635.
- ¹⁶⁰ *BH*, p. 784.
- ¹⁶¹ *BH*, p. 930.
- ¹⁶² [Robert Chambers], *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (London: John Churchill, 1844).
- ¹⁶³ James A. Secord, *Victorian Sensation: The Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 111.
- ¹⁶⁴ Secord, p. 37.
- ¹⁶⁵ Mellor, p. 32.
- ¹⁶⁶ *BH*, p. 588.
- ¹⁶⁷ *BH*, p. 445.
- ¹⁶⁸ *BH*, p. 348.
- ¹⁶⁹ Michelle L. Wilson, 'Esther Summerson's Narrative Relations: Re-inscribing Inheritance in *Bleak House*', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction*, 46 (2015), 209-30 (p. 210).
- ¹⁷⁰ Charlotte Bronte, letter to George Smith dated 11 March 1852, quoted in *Dickens: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Philip Collins (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 273.
- ¹⁷¹ Deborah Wynne, *Women and Personal Property in the Victorian Novel* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), p. 67.
- ¹⁷² Michael Slater, *Dickens and Women* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1983), p. 243. As well as *Bleak House*, Slater refers to *Dombey and Son*, *David Copperfield*, *Hard Times* and *Little Dorrit* in this section (pp. 243-77).
- ¹⁷³ *BH*, p. 65.
- ¹⁷⁴ *BH*, p. 64.
- ¹⁷⁵ *BH*, p. 73.
- ¹⁷⁶ *BH*, p. 77.
- ¹⁷⁷ *BH*, p. 81.
- ¹⁷⁸ *BH*, p. 927.
- ¹⁷⁹ *BH*, p. 932.
- ¹⁸⁰ *BH*, p. 932.
- ¹⁸¹ *BH*, p. 934.
- ¹⁸² *BH*, p. 934.
- ¹⁸³ *MSF*, p. 212.

-
- ¹⁸⁴ *BH*, p. 630.
- ¹⁸⁵ W. H. Auden, 'September 1 1939', 1.88: *Poetry of the Thirties*, ed. by Robin Skelton (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1981), pp. 280-83 (p. 283).
- ¹⁸⁶ *BH*, p. 119.
- ¹⁸⁷ *BH*, pp. 118-19.
- ¹⁸⁸ Charles Lamb, letter to Wordsworth, 26th April 1816: *The Works of Charles Lamb: A New Edition* (London: Edward Moxon, 1852) p. 217.
- ¹⁸⁹ See Luther A. Brewer, *Leigh Hunt and Charles Dickens: The Skimpole Caricature* (New York: Haskell House, 1971. First published in 1930).
- ¹⁹⁰ *BH*, p. 307.
- ¹⁹¹ Richard Holmes quotes the Preface to 'Kubla Khan' and comments, 'Here might be a model for the whole problem of fragmented or unfinished work in Coleridge's *oeuvre*': Richard Holmes, *Coleridge: Darker Reflections* (London: Harper Collins, 1998), p. 435.
- ¹⁹² *BH*, p. 121.
- ¹⁹³ See Holmes, p. 245. Coleridge's nephew Henry Nelson Coleridge recorded and published his *Table Talk* in 1836, two years after Coleridge's death.
- ¹⁹⁴ Harold Bloom, *The Anatomy of Influence: Literature as a Way of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 10.
- ¹⁹⁵ *BH*, p. 121.
- ¹⁹⁶ *BH*, p. 307.
- ¹⁹⁷ *BH*, p. 120.
- ¹⁹⁸ *BH*, p. 119.
- ¹⁹⁹ *BH*, p. 121.
- ²⁰⁰ *BH*, p. 125.
- ²⁰¹ *BH*, pp. 125-26.
- ²⁰² *BH*, p. 127.
- ²⁰³ *BH*, p. 656.
- ²⁰⁴ *BR*, p. 678.
- ²⁰⁵ *BH*, p. 656.
- ²⁰⁶ *BH*, p. 637.
- ²⁰⁷ *SIE*, p. 46.
- ²⁰⁸ *BH*, pp. 934-35.
- ²⁰⁹ Harvey, p. 146.
- ²¹⁰ *BH*, p. 43.
- ²¹¹ Robert Newsom, *Dickens on the Romantic Side of Familiar Things: Bleak House and the Novel Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p. 2.
- ²¹² *BH*, p. 43.
- ²¹³ Alexander Welsh, *Dickens Redressed: The Art of Bleak House and Hard Times* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p.1.
- ²¹⁴ Paul Schlicke, 'Hard Times', in *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens*, ed. by Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 266-70 (p. 266).
- ²¹⁵ See Michael Slater, *Charles Dickens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 369-70.
- ²¹⁶ Slater, p. 371.
- ²¹⁷ Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), pp. 13-14. A more detailed account of the changes in the meaning and usage of the word 'industry' is offered in Williams' *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fourth Estate, 2014), pp. 162-64.
- ²¹⁸ Peter Coveney, *The Image of Childhood. The Individual and Society: a Study of the Theme in English Literature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), pp. 150-51.

-
- ²¹⁹ Philip Collins, 'Dickens and Industrialism', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 20 (1980), 651-73 (p. 652).
- ²²⁰ Carolyn Vellenga Berman, '"Awful Unknown Quantities": Addressing the Readers in *Hard Times*', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 37 (2009) 561-582 (p. 562).
- ²²¹ Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1990), pp. 699-700.
- ²²² *HT*, p. 9.
- ²²³ Jessica Riskin, *Science in the Age of Sensibility: the Sentimental Empiricists of the French Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 1. Gradgrind first appeared in *Household Words* on the 1st of April 1854: see Fred Kaplan, *Dickens: a Biography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988), p. 308.
- ²²⁴ Ribner, p. 197.
- ²²⁵ *HT*, p. 10.
- ²²⁶ *HT*, p. 10.
- ²²⁷ *HT*, p. 21.
- ²²⁸ *HT*, p. 21.
- ²²⁹ *HT*, p. 23.
- ²³⁰ *HT*, p. 25.
- ²³¹ Aya Yatsugi, 'The Spiritual Orphans in *Bleak House*, *Hard Times*, and *Little Dorrit*', *Kasumigaoka Review*, 1 (1994), 129-47 (p. 130).
- ²³² Malcolm Andrews, *Dickens and the Grown-up Child* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), p. 84.
- ²³³ Kathleen Blake, *Pleasures of Benthamism: Victorian Literature, Utility, Political Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) p. 34.
- ²³⁴ This was the government document that established the syllabus for the new teacher training scheme. See Kate Flint's note: *HT*, p. 300, note 9 to Chapter 2.
- ²³⁵ *HT*, p. 15.
- ²³⁶ Philip Collins, *Dickens and Education* (London: Macmillan, 1964), p. 152.
- ²³⁷ William Blake, 'The Schoolboy', ll. 21-22, 26: *SIE*, p. 53.
- ²³⁸ *HT*, p. 68.
- ²³⁹ Kate Flint, 'Introduction', *HT*, pp. xi-xxxiii (p. xii).
- ²⁴⁰ Belinda Jack, 'Charles Dickens: *Hard Times* and Hyperbole', a lecture given at the Museum of London, 15th November 2016, p. 7: <http://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/charles-dickens-hard-times-and-hyperbole> (Accessed 28.11.16).
- ²⁴¹ *SIE*, p. 46.
- ²⁴² *HT*, p. 14.
- ²⁴³ *HT*, p. 18.
- ²⁴⁴ *HT*, p. 41.
- ²⁴⁵ *HT*, p. 99.
- ²⁴⁶ *HT*, p. 41.
- ²⁴⁷ *HT*, p. 63.
- ²⁴⁸ *HT*, p. 40.
- ²⁴⁹ *HT*, p. 53.
- ²⁵⁰ William Blake, 'The Schoolboy', ll. 11-12: *SIE*, p. 53.
- ²⁵¹ Macaulay, p. 538.
- ²⁵² *HT*, p. 9.
- ²⁵³ *HT*, p. 24.
- ²⁵⁴ Matthew Arnold, 'The Scholar-Gipsy', ll. 38, 165: *Arnold: Poetical Works*, ed. by C. B. Tinker and H. F. Lowry (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp.255-62 (pp. 256, 260).
- ²⁵⁵ *HT*, p. 19.
- ²⁵⁶ *HT*, p. 19.

-
- ²⁵⁷ *HT*, p. 21.
- ²⁵⁸ *HT*, p. 27.
- ²⁵⁹ *HT*, p. 98.
- ²⁶⁰ *HT*, p. 96.
- ²⁶¹ *HT*, p. 101.
- ²⁶² *HT*, p. 102.
- ²⁶³ *HT*, p. 104.
- ²⁶⁴ *HT*, p. 106.
- ²⁶⁵ William Blake, 'Eternity', ll. 1-2: *BCW*, p. 179.
- ²⁶⁶ *HT*, p. 68.
- ²⁶⁷ Mellor, p. 9.
- ²⁶⁸ *HT*, p. 169.
- ²⁶⁹ *HT*, p. 136.
- ²⁷⁰ Lilian M. Young, 'The Circus in *Hard Times*', 115 Vernon (2013), paper 27, p. 10.
http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/writing_associates/27 (accessed 12.9.16).
- ²⁷¹ Young, p.12.
- ²⁷² Florence Dombey is the notable exception.
- ²⁷³ Coveney, p. 150.
- ²⁷⁴ Collins, p. 300.
- ²⁷⁵ [Richard Simpson], review of *Hard Times*, *The Rambler*, n.s. ii (October 1854), 361-2 (p. 362).
- ²⁷⁶ Simpson, p. 362.
- ²⁷⁷ *BH*, p. 211.
- ²⁷⁸ Paul Schlicke, 'Leavis, F. R.', in Schlicke, p. 331. Ironically, *Hard Times* is the one work by Dickens that Leavis does discuss in *The Great Tradition*, as a 'moral fable' rather than a novel.
- ²⁷⁹ [Anon.], review of *Hard Times*, *Westminster Review*, n.s. vi (October 1854), 604-08 (p.605). Philip Collins conjectures that the author of this review is 'Mrs Jane Sinnett, who regularly did the *Westminster's* 'Belles Lettres' section at this time': Collins, p. 300.
- ²⁸⁰ *Westminster Review*, p. 607.
- ²⁸¹ John Ruskin, 'Unto this Last', *Cornhill Magazine*, ii (August 1860), 155-59 (p. 159).
- ²⁸² Ruskin, p. 159.
- ²⁸³ *HT*, p. 68.
- ²⁸⁴ *HT*, p. 151.
- ²⁸⁵ *HT*, p. 68.
- ²⁸⁶ *HT*, p. 69.
- ²⁸⁷ *HT*, p. 68.
- ²⁸⁸ *HT*, p. 297.
- ²⁸⁹ *HT*, p. 72.
- ²⁹⁰ Thomas Hardy quotes 'The letter killeth' on the title page of *Jude the Obscure*, 1895: *Jude the Obscure*, ed. by Norman Page (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), p.1. The words are from Corinthians 2, 3:6 'The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life'.
- ²⁹¹ *HT*, pp. 143-47.
- ²⁹² *HT*, p. 151.
- ²⁹³ *HT*, p. 155.
- ²⁹⁴ *HT*, p. 161.
- ²⁹⁵ *HT*, p. 163. Lord Chesterfield (1694-1773), satirised by Dickens as Sir John Chester in *Barnaby Rudge*, wrote *Letters to His Son* (1774), a manual of male etiquette. See Kate Flint's note: *HT*, p. 313, note 4 to Chapter 6.
- ²⁹⁶ *HT*, p. 166.

-
- ²⁹⁷ *HT*, p. 198.
- ²⁹⁸ *HT*, p. 276.
- ²⁹⁹ *HT*, p. 284.
- ³⁰⁰ *HT*, p. 283.
- ³⁰¹ *HT*, p. 285.
- ³⁰² *HT*, p. 136.
- ³⁰³ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1805), Book V, ll. 292-93, 436: *WTP*, pp. 75, 79.
- ³⁰⁴ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Frost at Midnight', l. 63: *CPW*, p. 242.
- ³⁰⁵ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1850), Book VII, ll. 479-80: *TP*, p. 253.
- ³⁰⁶ Harold Bloom, *The Anatomy of Influence: Literature as a Way of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 10.
- ³⁰⁷ '[...] he was a boy who could not himself bear to hurt anything [...] This weakness of character, as it may be called, suggested that he was the sort of man who was born to ache a good deal before the fall of the curtain upon his unnecessary life': Hardy, pp. 15-16.
- ³⁰⁸ *HT*, pp. 297-8.
- ³⁰⁹ Mary Poovey, 'The Structure of Anxiety in Political Economy and *Hard Times*', in *Literature and Culture*, ed. by Suzy Anger (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 151-71 (p. 151).
- ³¹⁰ *HT*, p. 296.
- ³¹¹ *HT*, p. 243.
- ³¹² *HT*, p. 296.
- ³¹³ William Blake, *Jerusalem*, Chapter 1, Plate 10, ll. 19-20: *BCW*, p. 629.
- ³¹⁴ William Blake, *Milton*, Plate 2, ll. 1-16: *BCW*, pp. 480-81.
- ³¹⁵ *HT*, p. 297.
- ³¹⁶ *HT*, p. 292.
- ³¹⁷ Raymond Williams, 'The Reader in *Hard Times*', in *Writing in Society* (London: Verso, 1983), pp. 166-76 (p. 173). Garrett Stewart, *Dear Reader: The Conscripted Audience in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 222-23. Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form, 1832-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985). Daniel Stuart, 'Let Them Be: Dickens's Stupid Politics', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction*, 46 (2015), 339-56.
- ³¹⁸ Stuart, p. 354.
- ³¹⁹ William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Plate 8: *BCW*, p. 151.
- ³²⁰ Flint, p. xii.

Chapter 4: Outsiders

In this final chapter I will examine the diversity of treatment of the issues of guilt, crime and punishment, and their alienating effects, in Wordsworth, Coleridge, Mary Shelley, Percy Shelley and Keats. I will then argue that these issues are central to Charles Dickens's critique of mid-century society in his mature novels, and that his treatment of them is essentially a response to that of his Romantic predecessors. *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Little Dorrit* provide the exemplary focus.

Guilt and Isolation

In *Biographia Literaria* of 1817 Coleridge recalls his early friendship with Wordsworth, in 1795: 'while memory lasts, I shall hardly forget the sudden effect produced on my mind, by his recitation of a manuscript poem'.¹ That poem was 'Salisbury Plain', the first version of a work which went through three distinct drafts, and part of which was published in the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) as 'The Female Vagrant'.² The most developed version is Wordsworth's poem 'Guilt and Sorrow, or, Incidents upon Salisbury Plain', in which a woman tells her tale of war, grief and loss: extremes of sorrow which unfit her for human society:

[...] From the sweet thoughts of home
And from all hope I was forever hurled.
For me – farthest from earthly port to roam
Was best, could I but shun the spot where man might come.³

Quentin Bailey links Wordsworth's preoccupations in these poems, and in the 1796 play *The Borderers*, to contemporary debates on criminalisation, and particularly on the issue of guilt.⁴ Bailey comments: 'Crime, in the writings of reformers, became a psychological condition to be treated in prisons with a regimen of isolation, discipline and labor, rather than a hazard brought on by poverty and ill fortune'.⁵ It is in *The Borderers*, Bailey argues, that Wordsworth's fears for the alienating results of such a regimen are most vividly embodied:

The penal techniques that coalesced around the idea of solitary confinement and that emphasized the power of the imagination to effect repentance and rehabilitation might, *The Borderers* suggests, produce not the repentant Sailor, but an aggressive and resourceful outsider – a truly "monstrous mind" – capable of creating a community that exists outside "the dicta of the magistrate".⁶

Blake too uses images of imprisonment in the poem 'London': 'the mind-forged manacles',⁷ and Coleridge's 'Frost at Midnight' speaks of his being 'pent' in the great city.⁸ Wordsworth recalled his experiences of London streets in the 1790s when writing Book VII of *The Prelude*, in 1804-5, and stressed their alienating, literally de-moralising influence: 'All laws of acting, thinking, speaking man/Went from me, neither knowing me, nor known'.⁹ Raymond Williams perceives in Wordsworth 'a new emphasis [...] on the dispossessed, the lonely wanderer, the vagrant', and comments: 'It is here that the social observation is linked to the perceptions of the lonely observer, who is also the poet'.¹⁰ In the climate of the 1790s, with the effects of industrial and political revolutions all too apparent to the sensibilities of these writers, the innocent are perceived as suffering along with the guilty. The protagonists of Blake's and Coleridge's poems have committed no crime, yet they feel imprisoned in the city; Wordsworth's Female Vagrant is innocent, but is condemned along with her guilty companion the Sailor to perpetual exile from home and society.

Raymond Williams detects something radically new in the connections that Blake reveals in 'London' between power and authority on the one hand, and violence and suffering on the other:

It is not just an observation of, say, the chimney-sweepers [...] It is a making of new connections, in the whole order of the city and of the human system it concentrates and embodies. This forcing into consciousness of the suppressed connections is then a new way of seeing the human and social order as a whole. It is, as it happens, a precise prevision of the essential literary methods and purposes of Dickens.¹¹

Williams put his finger here on a fundamental aspect of Dickens's Romantic legacy: the writer's quest to broaden his/her audience's consciousness of the dynamics of social and legal structures.

William Godwin's *Political Justice* of 1793 had set the tone of radical protest against the punitive legal system that was known by later commentators as the Bloody Code:¹² 'How few are the trials which an humane and a just man can read, terminating in a verdict of guilty, without feeling an uncontrollable repugnance against the verdict?'¹³ Recent research has supported Godwin's view. Bruce P. Smith argues that there was in England 'a statutory presumption of guilt', rather than innocence, for defendants 'charged with violating one of numerous statutes passed by Parliament during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries'.¹⁴ 'Judges in the 18th century held extensive discretionary power and they exercised it to mitigate and to nullify the law', Harriet Evans writes.¹⁵

The effect on Coleridge's mind of hearing Wordsworth read 'Salisbury Plain' in 1795 was deep. His own first attempts at drama, *Osorio* (1797)¹⁶ and *Remorse* (1797),¹⁷ are heavily influenced by Wordsworth's, and Coleridge included 'The Dungeon', a poem made of up brief extracts from these two plays on the theme of incarceration, in *Lyrical Ballads*:

Is this the only cure?
[...] uncomforted
And friendless solitude
[...] hopelessly deformed'.¹⁸

In *The Ancient Mariner* these ideas reach their maturity. Susan Eilenberg has analysed the close links between Coleridge's protagonist and Wordsworth's Female Vagrant: 'Her life [...] is guiltless but apparently cursed in much the same way as the Mariner's; she remembers her anguish and her calm at sea in words almost identical to those in which the Ancient Mariner remembers his'.¹⁹ The Mariner's crime of shooting the 'pious bird of good omen'²⁰ is

condemned by his shipmates as ‘a hellish thing’²¹ that would cause suffering for all, innocent and guilty alike. Yet there is no hint of malice aforethought in the killing. It echoes Godwin’s dictum: ‘the assassin cannot help the murder he commits any more than the dagger’.²²

The Mariner is marked out and vilified by his fellows:

Ah! Well a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.²³

His innocent shipmates die. But a worse punishment is reserved for the Mariner: he lives on to witness the consequences of his deed:

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.²⁴

The result is a sense of existential alienation, expressed in incantatory poetry that the reader finds as difficult to forget as does the Mariner:

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!²⁵

Coleridge has the Mariner repeat these lines to the wedding guest²⁶, to emphasise their centrality to the poem. Despite Raymond Williams’s belief that ‘alienation’ is ‘one of the most difficult words in the language’,²⁷ most commentators acknowledge what Daniel Shanahan calls ‘the linkages that exist between Romanticism and modern alienation’.²⁸ In Williams’s *Keywords* survey, the areas of meaning that seem most pertinent here are ‘*meaninglessness* – a feeling of lack of guides for conduct and belief’, and ‘*isolation* – estrangement from given norms and goals’.²⁹ The Mariner’s traditional Christian piety, which David Miall describes as ‘manifestly inadequate as a summing up of what the voyage has taught him’,³⁰ does nothing to blunt the raw pain of his memory of the killing and its consequences, which call into question human beings’ relationship with their environment. Peter Heymanns notes the radical ‘ecological reach’ of Coleridge’s exploration of the theme of alienation:

“The Ancient Mariner” demonstrates that environmentalism is not about being nice to birds because they remind us of ourselves or of things we know. Rather, it is about becoming aware of the ugly, dysfunctional and inhuman quality of the things we

thought we knew. It is this sense of alienation that [...] stimulated a more detached and scientific perception of nature, which in turn revealed that everything was mired in the same interdependent biological reality.³¹

This sense of interdependence between human beings and their environment is also explored in 'Frost at Midnight'.

The laws of this biological reality are at the heart of *Frankenstein*. Mary Shelley leaves the reader in no doubt that her protagonist's act of bringing dead flesh back to life, while not criminal in any legal sense, is a crime against these natural biological laws. As a child Mary Shelley had heard Coleridge read 'The Ancient Mariner' aloud to her father and his friends;³² its influence upon her novel is explicit. Beth Lau argues that 'the two writers were profoundly akin in their temperaments and outlooks'.³³ Shelley invites comparison with Coleridge's protagonist in the first pages of the novel - 'I shall kill no albatross'.³⁴ When Victor flees from the first sight of his creature Shelley has him quote six lines from 'The Ancient Mariner', and acknowledges the source in an author's note:

Like one, on a lonesome road who,
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And, having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.³⁵

As a result of his unnatural deed Victor, like Wordsworth's and Coleridge's protagonists discussed above, becomes an outcast, alienated from human society, the emaciated figure driven on by inner forces that Walton encounters as he approaches the uninhabited polar regions.³⁶

In the cases I have looked at so far: the Female Vagrant, the Mariner, and Victor Frankenstein, the feeling of alienation, and the fact of isolation, develop as a result of deeds and experiences. But in the case of Frankenstein's creature, alienation and isolation are present before he has done or experienced anything. As soon as he is brought to life and consciousness, Victor abandons him and he is forced to make his way alone: 'finding myself so desolate [...] I sat down and wept'.³⁷ In her comparative analysis of 'The Ancient Mariner' and *Frankenstein*, Sarah Goodwin sees the creature as parallel to Coleridge's 'LIFE IN DEATH, the fatal woman with the golden locks'; and identifies the authors' treatment of the two as the essential difference between the two works: 'Unlike Coleridge, Shelley gives voice to the monster, bringing it in from the margins, revealing its presence in the home'.³⁸ Where Coleridge

concentrates solely on the experience of the Mariner, leaving the beings he encounters shadowy and unspeakable, Shelley presents a radical antithesis, and explores the unspeakable.

As previously noted, Shelley has Victor concede that his creation is 'a creature of fine sensations'.³⁹ He is susceptible to the beauty of some humans: 'their grace, beauty, and delicate complexions', and is thus able to perceive his own ugliness: 'how was I terrified, when I viewed myself in a transparent pool!'⁴⁰ Along with his letters, he learns from the De Lacey family about family and society, and wonders how he fits in:

And what was I? [...] I possessed no money, no friends, no kind of property [...] When I looked around I saw and heard of none like me. Was I, then, a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled and whom all men disowned? [...] where were my friends and relations?⁴¹

He feels love for the cottagers, but also 'the bitter gall of envy'⁴² towards them: 'no Eve soothed my sorrows nor shared my thoughts; I was alone'.⁴³ He takes advantage of the cottagers' leaving their blind grandfather alone in the house to plead with the old man for help. A sense of undeserved isolation, which we saw in the early Wordsworth and Coleridge poems and plays, creates immediate rapport between them: 'I am poor and an exile', old De Lacey says, 'but it will afford me true pleasure to be in any way serviceable to a human creature'.⁴⁴ The significance of the final phrase, spoken by the old man in all innocence, is not lost on the creature: 'You raise me from the dust by this kindness; and I trust that, by your aid, I shall not be driven from the society and sympathy of your fellow-creatures'.⁴⁵ 'Your', not 'my'; but the old man does not detect the significance of the possessive: 'Heaven forbid! Even if you were really criminal, for that [ie isolation] can only drive you to desperation, and not instigate you to virtue'.⁴⁶ Old De Lacey echoes here Wordsworth's and Coleridge's warnings about the criminalising dangers of alienation. It is a turning-point in the novel. As soon as De Lacey has spoken these words his family return and violently drive the creature away 'to desperation, and not [...] to virtue'.

From this point on, and as a result of this rejection and condemnation to solitude, the creature becomes, in Bailey's graphic phrase, 'an aggressive and resourceful outsider – a truly "monstrous mind"'.⁴⁷ He murders Frankenstein's little brother and plants evidence that lays the blame on family companion Justine,⁴⁸ who is executed for the crime.⁴⁹ But he never loses sight of the source of his desperation. 'You raise me from the dust by this kindness', he tells De Lacey, already able to enrich his language by allusion to his reading.⁵⁰ Kindness and companionship are what make life worth living, he understands, 'the interchange of those sympathies necessary for my being'.⁵¹ The agonies of alienation, then, are at the heart of the creature's predicament, and are the driving force of his violence. 'No Eve soothed my sorrows': he realises that only Frankenstein, with his scientific skill and knowledge, has the power to

assuage his creature's anguish. Thus when they meet in the Alps, and the creature calls Frankenstein to account for his neglect, the Wordsworthian link between solitude and crime is at the heart of his argument: 'If I have no ties and affections, hatred and vice must be my portion [...] My vices are the children of a forced solitude that I abhor'.⁵² His demand is predictable, and entirely reasonable:

I am alone, and miserable; man will not associate with me; but one as deformed and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me. My companion must be of the same species, and have the same defects. This being you must create.⁵³

Victor's response is again predictable, and unreasonable. He promises to comply, retires to another place uninhabited by humans, 'one of the remotest of the Orkneys',⁵⁴ and begins work on a female, raising the creature's hopes of relief from alienation. But he cannot carry it through:

I trembled, and my heart failed within me, when, on looking up, I saw, by the light of the moon, the daemon at the casement [...] I thought with a sensation of madness on my promise of creating another like to him, and trembling with passion, tore to pieces the thing on which I was engaged. The wretch saw me destroy the creature on whose future existence he depended for happiness, and, with a howl of devilish despair and revenge, withdrew.⁵⁵

Frankenstein's all-too-human vacillation is contrasted with the creature's a-human, unwavering consistency. One by one he murders the people on whom Victor's happiness is based, until the only being left to him is the creature himself. For the creature, in the absence of a female of his own species, his begetter has always been the only other being capable of understanding him and rescuing him from isolation and alienation; and now for Victor too, the only possible relationship that remains for him, is with his creature. But this never enters his mind. Where once the creature followed him, he now follows the creature, to the yet-more alien polar regions, intent on annihilating his creation. Instead, he himself dies.

Victor moves, then, from a state of familial and romantic love and support, to a state of isolation and alienation as a result of bitter experience. The Creature, on the other hand, starts isolated, and knows nothing else in his life. His is a state of existential alienation, the result of no initial crime. Within the structure of the novel he is a pole of alienation, and Victor's life journey is a journey towards that pole. He loses the loved ones his creature has never known.

Victor refers to 'the mighty Alps' as 'belonging to another earth, the habitations of another race of beings'.⁵⁶ It is significant that Shelley locates the meetings between Frankenstein and the creature in isolated places hostile to human habitation: the Alps, the Orkneys, and the Polar

regions, just as Coleridge located the experiences of the Mariner in the Polar regions, and Wordsworth the lives of so many of his protagonists 'among the untrodden ways'.⁵⁷ In these works the ecology of alienation precisely reflects the psychology, as it does in Percy Shelley's 'Alastor; or the Spirit of Solitude' of 1815. Here, however, it is the creative writer who experiences isolation, who seems to belong to 'another race of beings':

He lived, he died, he sung, in solitude.
[...] When early youth had passed, he left
His cold fireside and alienated home
To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands.
Many a wide waste and tangled wilderness
Has lured his fearless steps
[...] he would linger long
In lonesome vales, making the wild his home.⁵⁸

Shelley's personal identification with his protagonist is clear enough, here and throughout the poem. He makes the point again in his 1817 Preface to *The Revolt of Islam*: 'I have been familiar from boyhood with mountains and lakes and the sea, and the solitude of forests'.⁵⁹ Where Mary Shelley developed the themes of alienation and its links to crime, together with the more extreme, existential form of alienation, both explored by Wordsworth and Coleridge, Percy Shelley asserts the explicitly personal perspective of Williams's 'lonely observer, who is also the poet'.⁶⁰ Martina Moeller comments that in Romantic literature 'the feeling of unease induced by changing structural conditions is translated into [...] identity troubles based upon feelings of alienation'.⁶¹ However, Keats takes a more light-hearted approach to these themes, playing with the notion of solitude in one of the sonnets published in the 1817 volume, addressing 'Solitude', but concluding that

[...] the sweet converse of an innocent mind,
Whose words are images of thoughts refin'd,
Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be
Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,
When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.⁶²

Solitude for two, in other words! The ecological aspects of the theme are also present, Keats pleading with Solitude:

[...] if I must with thee dwell,
Let it not be among the jumbled heap
of murky buildings; climb with me the steep, -
Nature's observatory'.⁶³

In 'Old Meg', written the following year in a letter to his younger sister Fanny,⁶⁴ he gives the ecological element, and the whole theme, the carefree lilt of a children's rhyme:

Her Brothers were the craggy hills,
Her sisters larchen trees –
Alone with her great family
She liv'd as she did please.⁶⁵

What was in Wordsworth, Coleridge and Mary Shelley a source of existential torment, and in Percy Shelley a precondition of creativity, is here a source of child-like delight. Diverse perspectives then, but common preoccupations.

Dickens and Master Humphrey

Beth Herst sees alienation as a central theme in Dickens's fiction, his heroes and heroines following a 'characteristic progress [...] from alienation, through self-discovery, to alienation once more'.⁶⁶ Juliet John suggests, however, that in 'earlier texts like *A Christmas Carol*, *The Pickwick Papers* and *The Old Curiosity Shop* [...] idealism and sentimentality occlude anxieties about alienation and change'.⁶⁷ I will argue here that, in the case of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Malcolm Andrews's assessment is more accurate: 'in this novel Dickens is so often able to capture and distil that feeling of alienation, which is at once so elusive and yet so easily triggered off'.⁶⁸ Andrews calls *The Old Curiosity Shop* 'perhaps the most improvised of all Dickens's novels',⁶⁹ and this lack of, or perhaps freedom from, conscious design and control allowed his imagination free rein to explore themes that were not otherwise available to him at this relatively early stage of his career – the novel was begun in 1840 – and to work towards new structural principles for the novel, that 'unity of sentiment and atmosphere' that Chesterton perceived.⁷⁰

Throughout his adult life Dickens himself was a 'lonely wanderer', an outsider looking in on the lives and conditions of others. His long daily walks 'turned into something of an obsession', Peter Ackroyd writes.⁷¹ Writing to Forster from Lausanne in 1846 Dickens repeatedly bemoans the effect on his work of 'the absence of streets': 'I can't express how much I want these. It seems as if they supplied something to my brain'.⁷² In a later letter he continues: 'at night I want them beyond description'.⁷³ Writing in *All the Year Round* in 1860, he evokes his night walks through the streets of London: 'In the course of those nights, I finished my education in a fair amateur experience of houselessness'.⁷⁴ Patrick Parrinder notes that already in these early novels 'the "sacred enclosure" at the heart of the ancient city has become something irredeemably fallen and secular: a criminal underworld [...], a citadel, or jail'.⁷⁵ Julian Wolfreys rightly urges the reader not to be fazed by the volume of commentary on 'Dickens's London', and to engage directly with his fictional evocations of the city, these 'descriptions

which speak of [...] unspeakability',⁷⁶ just as Mary Shelley articulated the unspeakable in the voice of Frankenstein's creature.

The genesis of *The Old Curiosity Shop* in Dickens's periodical project *Master Humphrey's Clock* is crucial to its character. In the opening number we learn that Master Humphrey is a 'mis-shapen, deformed old man' who experienced in early childhood a traumatic realisation, akin to the 'deformed and horrible'⁷⁷ creature's first sight of himself in a pool in *Frankenstein*,⁷⁸ that he is different from his healthy, 'beautiful' playmates: 'the truth broke upon me for the first time, and I knew, while watching my awkward and ungainly sports, how keenly [my mother] had felt for her poor crippled boy'.⁷⁹ The 'little tale' which evolved into *The Old Curiosity Shop* begins in the fourth number (25th April), and is initially related by Master Humphrey. He habitually roams the streets of London at night, as obscurity 'favours my infirmity': a 'sick man' listening to 'the dull heel of the sauntering outcast'.⁸⁰ This striking anticipation of Baudelaire's *flâneur*,⁸¹ the roaming observer of life on the city streets that Walter Benjamin was to characterise as a key modern type,⁸² becomes the pattern of this fiction. Hannah Arendt notes a crucial distinction, however: the *flânerie* that Baudelaire's 'Paris streets actually invite', 'all other cities seem to permit only reluctantly to the dregs of society'.⁸³ The London *flâneur* is thus doomed to be a 'sauntering outcast'. Frank Kermode's essay 'The Artist in Isolation' links the development of 'the Image' in nineteenth-century literature with the experience of alienation: 'these notions of Image and isolation developed independently in England, from native Romantic roots'.⁸⁴ Master Humphrey is insignificant in terms of plot, and Dickens drops him as narrator at the end of Chapter 3.⁸⁵ Yet for G. K. Chesterton the fragments of *Master Humphrey's Clock* 'show us better than anything else the whole unconscious trend of Dickens, the stuff of which his very dreams were made'.⁸⁶ In terms of the new ideas and structural devices that Dickens was evolving as he 'improvised': unifying threads of theme, imagery, mood and atmosphere, Master Humphrey establishes the pattern for all that is to come.

It is through his eyes that Dickens presents the first impressions of most of the main characters, beginning with Nell Trent, whom he encounters wandering alone, like himself, in the city streets at night. He sees her as a Wordsworthian innocent, 'so fresh from God',⁸⁷ who is not repelled by his deformity. She has lost her way in the dark, and trusts Master Humphrey to escort her home. And if Master Humphrey recalls Mary Shelley's tragic outcast, Little Nell evokes the fairy-tale atmosphere of Keats's poem. She has 'a little bed that a fairy might have slept in': 'The child took a candle and tripped into this little room'.⁸⁸ Afterwards the scene stays in Master Humphrey's mind:

I sat down in my easy-chair; and falling back upon its ample cushions, pictured to myself the child in her bed: alone, unwatched, uncared for (save by angels), yet sleeping peacefully. So very young, so spiritual, so slight and fairy-like a creature passing the

long dull nights in such an uncongenial place – I could not dismiss it from my thoughts.⁸⁹

The ‘slight and fairy-like’ child, who ‘trips’ rather than walks, evoking Coleridge’s ‘limber elf’⁹⁰ in *Christabel* as much as the Keats poem, captivates the solitary old man. The two of them together inevitably call to mind de Beaumont’s fairy tale *Beauty and the Beast* (1756).⁹¹ Like him, she is an outcast, ‘knowing no companions of thy own age nor any childish pleasures’, growing up in ‘solitude’.⁹² The contrast between Nell’s trusting innocence and her grandfather’s mercenary selfishness – a clash of values that Dickens was to return to in his portrayal of Mr. Dombey and Florence – is also established through Master Humphrey’s eyes.⁹³ ‘Even the cheap delights of childhood must be bought and paid for’, old Trent asserts,⁹⁴ adding that he fully intends to make the most of Nell’s inheritance when it materialises:

‘[...] the time is coming when she shall be rich. It has been a long time coming, but it must come at last; a very long time, but surely it must come. It has come to other men who do nothing but waste and riot. When *will* it come to me!’

‘I am very happy as I am, grandfather,’ said the child.⁹⁵

The contrast here is not primarily between youth and age; rather, it is a clash of values. Nell lives for love and affection; her grandfather for what money can bring him. Master Humphrey, the ‘deformed old man’, clearly sides with Nell, and delights in this embodiment of his own values. Old Trent is a solitary, isolated from society as they are, but there the likeness ends.

The novel’s central image, the old curiosity shop of the title, is also portrayed through Master Humphrey’s eyes. In terms of the novel’s plot, the shop and the title seem irrelevant, hardly mentioned after the opening chapters.⁹⁶ But in terms of the new structural devices that were evolving in this novel, Master Humphrey’s evocation of the shop is central, an environment that comprehends both poles of value of its original owners. The ‘fantastic carvings’, ‘tapestry and strange furniture that might have been designed in dreams’⁹⁷ clearly evoke the fairy-tale innocence and otherworldliness of Nell. At the same time Dickens intimates that these items are commodities, to be bought and sold in a shop, emblems of the grandfather’s sepulchral avarice: ‘the haggard aspect of the little old man was wonderfully suited to the place; he might have groped among old churches and tombs and deserted houses and gathered all the spoils with his own hands’.⁹⁸ Juliet John sees this evocation of the shop as epitomising a key aspect of Dickens’s art:

Like Dickens’s novels, the shop does not simply sell things: it frames and exhibits them. In holding objects up for view, in announcing their status as anthropomorphic spectacle, Dickens simultaneously announces their constructedness and intensifies their presence or ‘aura’, to use Walter Benjamin’s term.⁹⁹

John's allusion to Walter Benjamin's 'groundbreaking'¹⁰⁰ 1936 essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction',¹⁰¹ confirms the impression that Dickens too is breaking new ground in *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Master Humphrey himself makes the connection between external objects and inner states of mind quite explicit, attributing his obsession with Little Nell in large part to the shop's strange wares. They intensify Nell's aura for Master Humphrey:

... I am not sure that I should have been quite so possessed by this one subject, but for the heaps of fantastic things I had seen huddled together in the curiosity-dealer's warehouse. These, crowding upon my mind, in connection with the child, and gathering round her, as it were, brought her condition palpably before me. I had her image ...¹⁰²

Holly Furneaux characterises *Master Humphrey's Clock* as 'Perhaps Dickens's most thorough object lesson in the joys of thing-loving'.¹⁰³ Dickens's affinity with 'things', that sense of 'the porousness of human souls to inanimate objects',¹⁰⁴ in Cowper Powys's phrase, is the root of his success with psychological imagery, and begins, for the first time in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, to shape a whole novel, and establish not only what John calls 'the modernity of Dickens's aesthetic practice',¹⁰⁵ but also 'the whole unconscious trend of Dickens, the stuff of which his very dreams were made',¹⁰⁶ as Chesterton noted in 1911. These first three chapters, then, narrated by Master Humphrey, set the tone, themes and atmosphere for all that follows. And his evocation of the old curiosity shop stays with the reader as a symbol of the clash of values that the novel will explore.

Unnatural Oppositions

Valerie Purton writes that '*The Old Curiosity Shop* [...] is built on polarities, on binary oppositions'.¹⁰⁷ Clash and contrast are everywhere in this fiction, and are portrayed within what are traditionally regarded as close human relationships. After Nell and her grandfather comes a yet more grotesque mismatch, between the dwarf Daniel Quilp and his wife, 'a pretty little, mild-spoken, blue-eyed woman'¹⁰⁸ who lives in fear of Quilp's demonic aggression. Husband and wife are alienated from each other through Quilp's unnatural joy in tormenting her. 'Quilp perverts the idea of the natural in the novel',¹⁰⁹ Christine Corton writes, while John Lucas notes that Dickens 'reinforces the concept of Quilp as supremely unnatural'.¹¹⁰ Like Nell's grandfather, Quilp lives for money. But where old Trent signally fails to make money - like Sol Gill's shop under the sign of the Wooden Midshipman in *Dombey and Son*, we never see any business transacted in the old curiosity shop - Quilp succeeds, and eventually takes possession of the premises,¹¹¹ raising the central question that this fiction asks: does he take possession of Nell's rich inner life, along with the goods and chattels?

Thus far the transition from Master Humphrey's narration to that of an anonymous, omniscient narrator has been seamless. But his evocation of Nell Trent as 'so very young, so spiritual, so

slight and fairy-like a creature', ¹¹² a prepubescent Wordsworthian child 'so fresh from god', ¹¹³ undergoes a significant revision in Chapter 7, where the new narrator describes her as 'nearly fourteen', with 'a very pretty face', a 'fine girl of her age, but small'. ¹¹⁴ As many commentators have noted, Dickens's memories of the death of Mary Hogarth in 1837 were still fresh in his mind when writing *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and from this point on Nell becomes his second attempt, after Rose Maylie in *Oliver Twist*, to portray Mary in his fiction. As we have seen, this type: the beautiful, physically attractive but still innocent young woman, the 'Marys' as Michael Slater calls them, became an abiding obsession, provoking 'a succession of stained-glass memorials to Mary Hogarth as she had become angelically transformed in Dickens's mind'. ¹¹⁵

What distinguishes Dickens's portrayal of Nell from the other 'Marys' is the level of threat to her integrity with which she is confronted. Robert Higbie argues that 'Nell inhabits "cruel reality" because she embodies Dickens's attempt to find a belief that can deal with that reality'. ¹¹⁶ Fred Trent's plan to marry his sister off to Dick Swiveller so that they can both get at her money, ¹¹⁷ presents a clear threat to Nell's integrity. And the money-mad Quilp also has designs on her: assuming that his first wife will not survive his cruelty for long, he plans to have Nell, and her inheritance, as his second. ¹¹⁸ These sketches of lust and cupidity are contrasted with Kit Nubbles's disinterested love for Nell. He waits for hours outside her house in the hope of catching a glimpse of her: 'His eyes were constantly directed towards one object, the window at which the child was accustomed to sit'. ¹¹⁹ Terrified and repelled by Quilp's advances, Nell is able to recognise and respond to the real thing in Kit. When she and her grandfather lose their home to Quilp, Kit offers them space in his mother's small house:

Surrounded by unfeeling creditors, and mercenary attendants ... it is not surprising that the affectionate heart of the child should have been touched to the quick by one kind and generous spirit, however uncouth the temple in which it dwelt. ¹²⁰

Dickens establishes clear links between, on the one hand, selfish sexual lust and the lust for money, in Quilp, Fred and Dick, and on the other, 'pure' disinterested love and indifference to wealth, in Nell and Kit. And in the satanic tradition established in *Paradise Lost*, ¹²¹ Quilp's hostility to Kit, and chief motivation for plotting to get him imprisoned, centres upon his envy of Kit's happiness in love. Similarly, Frankenstein's creature envies him his loving relationships.

On this spectrum of values Nell's grandfather lies somewhere between the two extremes. He wants to get his hands on her money, but he does not think of prostituting her in order to achieve this, as her brother does. Indeed he repeatedly insists that he only wants money in order to make his granddaughter happy. Nell herself, Dickens's touchstone of genuine human feeling in this novel, attests to his love for her. ¹²² But his affections have been perverted by greed:

‘God knows that this one child is the thought and object of my life, and yet he never prospers me – no, never’.¹²³ Quilp, with his ‘ghastly smile’ which has ‘no connection with any mirthful or complacent feeling’,¹²⁴ gleefully torments his affectionate wife, and regards all human affection as weakness which hampers the single-minded ruthlessness required to succeed in the contemporary world of commerce. By this yardstick, old Trent’s vestiges of emotion unfit him for commercial success. ‘The crafty dwarf’¹²⁵ thus ensnares him in debt and gains possession of his business. As we will see, the nub of the conflicts that this novel explores is played out in the minds of Quilp, Kit Nubbles and Old Trent, rather than in Nell’s. She remains central, but essentially passive.

Lonely Wanderers

The loss of the shop precipitates a physical and mental breakdown in Nell’s grandfather, with ‘a raging fever accompanied with delirium [...] for many weeks in imminent peril of his life’.¹²⁶ He survives and partially recovers, but remains damaged, suffering from a ‘disordered imagination’;¹²⁷ even before the loss he had never achieved the necessary balance between emotion and practicality. His failure in business is a traumatic loss, but he is hardly ‘debilitated by madness’ as some commentators have suggested.¹²⁸ On the contrary, Dickens allows him sufficient presence of mind to realise that ‘the haunts of commerce [...] murmuring that ruin and self-murder were crouching in every street’¹²⁹ are corrosive of the finer feelings. The ‘heaps of fantastic things’ in the curiosity shop are no longer desired or required in a mercantile culture; these dreamlike, fairy-tale wares can no longer provide a living for Old Trent and Nell, or any protection for her innocent integrity. Their only hope, he tells Nell, is to flee from the city: ‘we will travel afoot through fields and woods, and by the side of rivers, and trust ourselves to God in the places where he dwells’.¹³⁰ Nell responds accordingly: ‘She saw in this [...] a return of the simple pleasures they had once enjoyed [...] an escape from the heartless people by whom she had been surrounded’.¹³¹ The kinship between the old man’s prognosis for his granddaughter here, and Coleridge’s hopes for his son in those lines from ‘Frost at Midnight’ which keep recurring in this discussion,¹³² is close.

Thus they leave London, the city whose increasingly commercialised culture marginalises humane values of love and affection, and so makes people strangers to one another. Flight, self-imposed exile is the only solution available to them. At first the move pays off:

The freshness of the day, the singing of the birds, the beauty of the waving grass, the deep green leaves, the wild flowers, and the thousand exquisite scents and sounds that floated in the air [...] sunk into their breasts and made them very glad [...]

‘Are you tired?’ said the child, ‘are you sure you don’t feel ill from this long walk?’

‘I shall never feel ill again, now that we are once away,’ was his reply.¹³³

Another clash: city and country, manufacture and nature, is thus established in the novel, and Nell and her grandfather are established from this point on as 'lonely wanderers', fleeing from those streets where, as Wordsworth wrote, 'All laws of acting, thinking, speaking man' are uprooted, 'neither knowing me, nor known'.¹³⁴

First published reactions to *The Old Curiosity Shop* were mostly positive. The *Metropolitan Review* of December 1840 hailed Dickens as an efficacious 'moral teacher': 'There are [...] millions who are just emerging from ignorance into what may be called reading classes; all of whom Mr Dickens is educating to honesty, good feeling, and all the finer impulses of humanity'.¹³⁵ A later notice in the *Metropolitan* takes Dickens to task on one point: 'The heroine, little Nelly [...] demands and deserves a better fate than to die so prematurely [...] However, it is all beautifully related, and deeply affecting'.¹³⁶ In a review for the *Athenaeum* of November 1840, poet Thomas Hood responded to Dickens's evocation of :

the Child, asleep in her little bed, surrounded, or rather mobbed, by ancient armour and arms, antique furniture, and relics sacred or profane, hideous or grotesque: - it is like an Allegory of the peace and innocence of Childhood in the midst of Violence, Superstition, and all the hateful or hurtful Passions of the world.¹³⁷

Most contemporary readers saw the novel solely as Nell's story. Writing in the *Westminster Review* in 1847, 'H' asserts that 'Her death is a tragedy of the true sort, that which softens, and yet strengthens and elevates'.¹³⁸ As Philip Collins writes, 'she predominated, as no other hero or heroine in Dickens has done, and the novel stood or fell according to one's response to her'.¹³⁹ One exception was an anonymous assessment in the *Ecclesiastic and Theologian* in 1855, which sensed the uniqueness of *The Old Curiosity Shop*: 'more completely *sui generis*' than any of the other novels to date, in 'the mingling of a conception of great poetical beauty with the events and persons of common life',¹⁴⁰ a comment which seems to be reaching towards Dickens's key formulation 'the romantic side of familiar things' in the Preface to *Bleak House* two years earlier.¹⁴¹

The focus on Little Nell, and lack of attention to other aspects of the novel, continued to characterise later nineteenth- and early to mid twentieth-century views of the novel, and reflected changing tastes. Oscar Wilde notoriously quipped: 'one must have a heart of stone to read the death of Little Nell without laughing'.¹⁴² Later modernist reactions shared Wilde's revulsion, but lacked his wit: Aldous Huxley found the death scene 'inept and vulgarly sentimental', and deplored its 'atrocious blank verse [which] is meant to be poetical [...] and succeeds in being the worst kind of fustian'.¹⁴³ Valerie Purton adroitly indicates the elitism inherent in that final choice of word.¹⁴⁴ As late as the nineteen sixties, Gabriel Pearson was equally at a loss: 'where is the artistic shaping, let alone integrity?'.¹⁴⁵ However, the tide was beginning to turn; in 1964 Eric Bentley argued that 'our modern antagonism to self-pity and

sentiment goes far beyond the rational objections that may be found to them [...] Attacks on false emotion often mask a fear of emotion as such. Ours is, after all, a thin-lipped, thin-blooded culture.’¹⁴⁶ By the early nineties Mark Hennelly was able to offer a more full-blooded, inclusive assessment of Dickens’s ‘carnavalesque’ achievement in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, revealing how its parts contribute to, and are integral to, the whole,¹⁴⁷ and Paul Schlicke analysed ‘The true pathos of *The Old Curiosity Shop*’.¹⁴⁸

Minor characters and fleeting scenes deepen the meaning of this novel. Alongside ‘the lonely wanderers’ Nell and Old Trent, Dickens introduces other outsiders, characters illustrating alternative ways of life to the commercialism that dominates the cities, whom Nell and Old Trent encounter on their wanderings. At this early stage of Dickens’s career the reader can already see the justice of T. S. Eliot’s words: ‘Dickens can with a phrase make a character as real as flesh and blood’.¹⁴⁹ The Punch and Judy men,¹⁵⁰ Grinder’s lot,¹⁵¹ and the workers at Mrs Jarley’s waxworks¹⁵² are strolling entertainers who make their living appealing to the wonder and imagination of their audiences, qualities beyond the grasp of Quilp. The point is brought home by Nell, ‘terrified’ by the sight of ‘two monstrous shadows [...] stalking towards them’ in the moonlight, which turn out to be merely ‘a young gentleman and a young lady on stilts’ who work with Grinder.¹⁵³ While the fantastic, dreamlike objects in the old curiosity shop are redundant in mercantile London, fantasy and make-believe can still eke out a living in the countryside. Dickens returns repeatedly to the Coleridgean mysticism inherent in ‘Nature’, his words evoking earlier precedents too: ‘the further they passed into the deep green shade, the more they felt that the tranquil mind of God was there, and shed his peace on them’.¹⁵⁴ Nell feels ‘a companionship in the bright stars’,¹⁵⁵ consolation for the rootless isolation of her life: ‘a companionship in Nature so serene and still, when noise of tongues and glare of garish lights would have been solitude indeed’.¹⁵⁶

However, the consolations of their flight from the city do not last. Old Trent is seduced by the sight of a game of cards at an inn,¹⁵⁷ and takes Nell’s purse so that he can join in, insisting ‘I’ll right thee one day, child, I’ll right thee, never fear’.¹⁵⁸ Dickens portrays in this relationship what he calls in *Our Mutual Friend* the ‘dire reversal of the places of parent and child’.¹⁵⁹ As the addiction and the losses take hold again, Old Trent robs his granddaughter in the night.¹⁶⁰ Evoking Nell’s horror and revulsion at witnessing this, Dickens comes close to Coleridge’s distinction between Fancy and Imagination in *Biographia Literaria*.¹⁶¹ Fancy is unable to comprehend the trauma of the experience; but Imagination fixes it forever within her:

The grey-headed old man gliding like a ghost into her room and acting the thief while he supposed her fast asleep, then bearing off his prize and hanging over it with the ghastly exultation she had witnessed, was worse [...] than anything her wildest fancy could have suggested ... Hark! A footstep on the stairs, and now the door was slowly opening. It was but imagination, yet imagination had all the terrors of reality; nay, it

was worse, for the reality would have come and gone, and there an end, but in imagination it was always coming, and never went away.¹⁶²

Attempting to escape from this danger, they flee along the man-made canal to ‘some great manufacturing town’,¹⁶³ ‘as strange, bewildered, and confused, as if they had lived a thousand years before, and were raised from the dead and placed there by a miracle [...] two poor strangers, stunned and bewildered by the hurry they beheld but had no part in’:¹⁶⁴ a classic statement of existential alienation. Robin Gilmour sees ‘This sense of emotional exile in a changing world’ as ‘at the heart of the Victorian *angst*’.¹⁶⁵ Dickens makes its antecedents clear enough, with Nell and Old Trent ‘feeling amidst the crowd a solitude which has no parallel but in the thirst of the shipwrecked mariner, who, tossed to and fro upon the billows of a mighty ocean, his red eyes blinded by looking on the water which hems him in on every side, has not one drop to cool his burning tongue’.¹⁶⁶ Old Trent may have earned his fate, but Nell has done nothing to deserve hers: like Wordsworth’s woman in the Salisbury Plain poems, and Frankenstein’s creature at the outset, her alienation is the result of the actions of others. Throughout their wanderings ecology precisely reflects psychology, as it does in the works of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Mary and Percy Shelley discussed earlier in this chapter.

While flight to the manufacturing town may have saved Old Trent from ruin, it is disastrous for Nell. By eroding human relationships based on neighbourliness, kinship and love; by replacing humane values and interactions with monetary values and transactions, the profiteering ethos of the new town has isolated its inhabitants from one another. Nell watches them pass by: ‘in some countenances were written gain; in others loss’.¹⁶⁷ The echo here of Blake’s ‘London’: ‘And mark in every face I meet/ Marks of weakness, marks of woe’,¹⁶⁸ is unmistakable. But this is not London, not the ‘venerable suburb [...] full of echoes’¹⁶⁹ that Master Humphrey frequents. This is one of the new towns thrown up by the proliferation of industry, and its alienating effects are raw and deadly for the human spirit. As Raymond Williams notes, Dickens takes ‘that experience of the streets – the crowd of strangers – [...] which in Blake and Wordsworth was seen as strange and threatening [...] and extends this experience, in a new range of feeling’.¹⁷⁰ Nell and her grandfather wander the streets in the night rain, ‘with the same sense of solitude in their own breasts, and the same indifference from all around [...] ill in body, and sick to death at heart, the child needed her utmost firmness and resolution even to creep along’.¹⁷¹ It is the beginning of Nell’s decline, and Dickens stresses repeatedly that the havoc caused to human beings by industrial culture is psychological and emotional as well as physical. With a brilliant stroke of imagination he assigns the human trauma, ‘the horror of oppressive dreams’, to the new machines: ‘strange engines spun and writhed like tortured creatures; clanking their iron chains, shrieking in their rapid whirl from time to time as though in torment unendurable, and making the ground tremble with their agonies’.¹⁷²

Thus they begin their 'last journey'¹⁷³ from manufacture to nature. The schoolmaster who offers them a house in the tiny hamlet where he works,¹⁷⁴ the 'old bachelor' who furnishes it for them,¹⁷⁵ and the widowed clergyman who is their neighbour,¹⁷⁶ are outcasts like them. This final refuge gives Nell a sense of peace that she has not experienced since leaving the old curiosity shop; it shares something of the dreamlike, fantastical atmosphere of the shop, suggesting that on one level their journey has been cyclical rather than linear:

The room into which they entered was a vaulted chamber once nobly ornamented by cunning architects, and still retaining, in its beautiful groined roof and rich stone tracery, choice remnants of its ancient splendour. Foliage carved in the stone, and emulating the mastery of Nature's hand, yet remained to tell how many times the leaves outside had come and gone, while it lived on unchanged.¹⁷⁷

The articles with which the old bachelor makes the house comfortable for them are from 'a certain collection of odds and ends he had at home, and which must have been a very miscellaneous and extensive one, as it comprehended the most opposite articles imaginable [...] in a promiscuous heap'.¹⁷⁸ This evocation clearly echoes Master Humphrey's impressions of the old curiosity shop. But there are two elements in this last refuge which the shop did not share. The first is its harmony with the rural, natural setting of the hamlet, with human work 'emulating the mastery of Nature's hand'.¹⁷⁹ The second is the proximity to a churchyard, with its constant reminder of mortality. And Dickens has Nell irresistibly drawn to both. She repeatedly 'stole back to the old chapel'¹⁸⁰ to sit 'among the stark figures on the tombs'.¹⁸¹ Finding the church tower, she 'climbed the winding stair in darkness':

At length she gained the end of the ascent and stood upon the turret top.

Oh, the glory of the sudden burst of light; the freshness of the fields and woods, stretching away on every side and meeting the bright blue sky [...] the smoke that, coming from among the trees, seemed to rise upward from the green earth; the children yet at their gambols below. It was like passing from death to life; it was drawing nearer heaven.¹⁸²

The ambiguity and uncertainty within that last sentence – life on earth, or life after death? – is crucial. The power of nature is not strong enough to save the innocent Nell, after the traumas of the mercenary, alienating cities. In this relatively early novel, with the death of Little Nell Dickens interrogates the Romantic dualism between nature and manufactory, country and city, and finds the solace of the former insufficient to save humans' life on earth from the destructive effects of industrialisation.

Nell's death is one of a trio of climactic events which together make up the meaning of the novel. The ending of *The Old Curiosity Shop* represents a radical departure from the neat, self-

consciously crowd-pleasing ‘happy ending’ of its predecessor *Oliver Twist*, and of most of the middle-period novels which came after. Instead, it looks forward to the more muted, ambiguous endings of *Great Expectations*, and in this respect again the ‘improvisatory’ *modus operandi* of this novel seems to have spurred Dickens on to dig deeper and search for new possibilities for denouement.

Nells’s death, then, has its full meaning within the context of two related events which immediately precede it. The first is the grisly death of Quilp. The revelation of his plot to have Kit Nubbles wrongly imprisoned brings the authorities to bear upon him. Fleeing to his riverside compound, Quilp slips and drowns in the fog and darkness, having himself locked the gates so that his pursuers cannot reach him: a death which epitomises the existential alienation, the sense of isolation from other people, which, as Malcolm Andrews notes,¹⁸³ characterises this narrative:

For all his struggling and plashing, he could understand [...] that they were all but looking on while he was drowned; that they were close at hand, but could not make an effort to save him; that he himself had shut and barred them out.¹⁸⁴

The water ‘toyed and sported with its ghastly freight’ [...] until, tired of the ugly plaything, it flung it on a swamp – a dismal place where pirates had swung in chains, through many a wintry night – and left it there to bleach.¹⁸⁵

The atmosphere of *Great Expectations*, the marshes and estuary haunted for Pip by ‘the gibbet with some chains hanging to it which had once held a pirate’,¹⁸⁶ is again prefigured here. But where Magwitch and Compeyson’s death-struggle in the water is with each other,¹⁸⁷ Quilp’s is with the elemental forces, as Christine Corton notes: ‘His punishment and death, through the natural elements of fog, water and fire, is completely appropriate in thematic terms, since Quilp is so associated with man-made smoke, the industrial condition, and the denial of nature’.¹⁸⁸ He dies alone and unloved, his obsession with money having cut him off from all humane contact, his satanic energy no match for the power of the elements.

On the very next page of the book Dickens narrates the second of the three climactic events, the release of Kit from prison. The contrast with Quilp’s fate is stark, and surely intentional:

Lighted rooms, bright fires, cheerful faces, the music of glad voices, words of love and welcome, warm hearts, and tears of happiness – what a change is this!¹⁸⁹

Kit’s integrity, his refusal to subscribe to mercenary values earned him the spite and envy of Quilp and landed him in prison, alienated from an alienating culture. Thus he remains the ‘kind

and generous spirit' that Nell, the touchstone of purity and integrity in the novel, recognised early on.¹⁹⁰ When he is released, loving, humane relationships resume.

The morality-tale elements of the story are coming to a head at this point, with the fates of the hellish Quilp, the earthbound Kit and the heavenly Nell coinciding. Kit and Quilp were of course rivals for Nell's 'affectionate heart'.¹⁹¹ The infernal, 'supremely unnatural'¹⁹² Quilp is obviously unworthy, and reaps the grisly rewards of his presumption. Nor are the humane, earthbound qualities of Kit destined to win her. By the time he is free to travel north to see her again he no longer sees her as a potential bride: 'I have been used [...] to talk and think of her almost as if she was an angel',¹⁹³ he confides to Barbara.

Elemental nature is again present on Kit's 'cold, bleak journey' through the snow with Mr Garland and the single gentleman¹⁹⁴ which is the prelude to the third and final climactic event of the novel, Little Nell's death. The reader senses here a prefiguring of the great storm scenes in *David Copperfield* and *Our Mutual Friend* which herald death and destruction.¹⁹⁵ But to Kit, the only character in the novel untainted by alienation, the elements bear none of the hostility of Quilp's watery end. To him, in Coleridge's words, 'all seasons' are 'sweet':

There was a freedom and freshness in the wind, as it came howling by, which, let it cut never so sharp, was welcome. As it swept on with its cloud of frost, bearing down the dry twigs and boughs and withered leaves, and carrying them away pell-mell, it seemed as though some general sympathy had got abroad.¹⁹⁶

Nell is the only other character in the novel to share this 'sympathy' with the natural elements. But while with Kit it remains an earth-bound affair, in Nell's case Dickens adds a supernatural, spiritual element that has characterised her throughout. Kit has already recognised that Nell will never be his mundane bride; like David Copperfield and Dora, their union would have been 'a fairy marriage', 'always in a dream'.¹⁹⁷ The three travellers identify her house by seeing a light shining from 'an old oriel window': it 'sparkled like a star', seeming 'to claim some kinship with the eternal lamps of Heaven, and burn in fellowship with them'.¹⁹⁸ Thoughts of the journey of the Magi through the snow are surely not coincidental. 'She is sleeping soundly', Old Trent tells Kit when they reach her hamlet:

'but no wonder. Angel hands have strewn the ground deep with snow, that the lightest footstep may be lighter yet; and the very birds are dead, that they may not wake her. She used to feed them, sir. Though never so cold and hungry, the timid things would fly from us. They never flew from her!' [...] Kit had no power to speak. His eyes were filled with tears.¹⁹⁹

Nell dies surrounded by love and affection. But Dickens has the reader, and the three travellers, wonder whether they are witnessing a death or a birth:

She was dead. No sleep so beautiful and calm, so free from trace of pain, so fair to look upon. She seemed a creature fresh from the hand of God, and waiting for the breath of life; not one who had live and suffered death.²⁰⁰

The anticipation of T. S. Eliot's magi: 'were we led all that way for / Birth or Death?',²⁰¹ is remarkable.

Oscar Wilde's quip on Nell's death characterises critical attitudes towards sentimentality in his and subsequent generations. But Wilde's wit should not be allowed to mask his callowness here. Marcia Eaton has analysed the necessary distinctions and connections between ethical and aesthetic judgements,²⁰² and Valerie Purton has recently demonstrated the integral importance of the sentimental tradition in Dickens's art. Purton argues for 'the ultimate coherence of Dickens's poetic vision':

The reifying, indeed, deifying, of Nell's body, to which so many later readers have objected, has to be set against the ruthless deconstruction of the notion of identity elsewhere in the novel. The powerful sentimentalist rhetoric of anaphora surrounding Nell asserts permanence; the rest of the novel insists on flux.²⁰³

Whether readers share his religious sentiments or not, we need to concede their centrality to what Dickens is saying in this novel, and in the many other novels where this archetype of the innocent/attractive girl/woman is explored. David Copperfield is allowed to marry his saintly mentor and have his life guided by her permanence, her presence 'pointing upward'.²⁰⁴ But in this earlier incarnation she dies unmarried, her love directed towards the afterlife.

Thus this morality tale is resolved, not by the happy endings that characterise *David Copperfield* and many other middle-period novels, but by just deserts. The hellish death of Quilp is still fresh in our minds while we witness the passive apotheosis of Nell. Garrett Stewart notes 'How careful Dickens is to have them die "together" [...] "She died soon after Daybreak" on the morning (so we discover by working backward) just after Quilp's death, with the first coming of light after his black terror'.²⁰⁵ Old Trent only realises that what he values most is his relationship with Nell, rather than money, when he is about to lose her: 'I have no relative or friend but her – I never had – I never will have. She is all in all to me'.²⁰⁶ He dies soon after.²⁰⁷ Kit recognises that neither he nor any other man should hanker after a celestial love such as Nell's. Nature will not allow the heavenly, or the demonic, to survive on earth, only the earthly will prosper in the long run. Kit accepts his earthbound fate, and the love of an equally earthbound woman, 'soft-hearted, gentle, foolish little Barbara'.²⁰⁸ But along with the

Wordsworthian ‘assurances of immortality’²⁰⁹ that all the surviving characters experience, there is also a mischievous hint of some crossing of the elemental boundaries in the opposite direction in the union of Kit and Barbara: ‘Devilish pretty girl that!’²¹⁰ Chuckster exclaims. As noted earlier, Nell remains essentially passive, the still centre of a drama played out in the actions of the male protagonists around her. She has no selfish motives, her every action being for the benefit of others.

A moralistic denouement, then, expressed in broadly Christian moral terms. But looming over it is the spectre of a quite amoral, existential alienation, linked to Purton’s ‘ruthless deconstruction of the notion of identity’ that blights the guilty and the blameless alike. Dickens’s ‘attempt to find a belief that can deal with [...] reality,’²¹¹ in Robert Higbie’s words, has not succeeded in this novel. However, the process of searching for such a belief, as Sarah Winter writes, has begun: ‘The novel argues that it is precisely when you don’t know the answer but can begin to formulate a new kind of question that the possibility of change emerges’.²¹² The new kind of question that Dickens begins to ask in *The Old Curiosity Shop* revolves around the nature of human relationships and human interaction, and the relationship between human beings and their environment, in a post-revolutionary world: the kind of questions that Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth and Mary Shelley had asked during the birth-pangs of the political and industrial revolutions. In contrast to Coleridge’s undimmed faith in the power of nature to guide and sustain human life, Dickens suggests in this story that the healing power of nature is not sufficient to save Nell’s innocence for this world. *The Old Curiosity Shop* has never been a popular novel among Dickens’s output, perhaps because it confounds so many of our notions of an ‘early’ picaresque Dickens novel.²¹³ It is, as the *Ecclesiastic and Theologian*’s critic perceived in 1855, ‘more completely *sui generis*’²¹⁴ than any other Dickens novel. John Bowen rightly suggests that ‘*The Old Curiosity Shop* is a more significant and sophisticated text than is often recognized’.²¹⁵ If the reader sets aside preconceptions and approaches it on its own terms this novel can be enjoyed for what it is: a startlingly successful and intriguing anticipation of themes, questions and modes of writing, each of them linked to the Romantic legacy, that Dickens was to return to and develop in later fictions. It can be seen as effectively the start of Dickens the novelist’s engagement with ‘High Romanticism’.

Little Dorrit: Mind-forged Manacles

It is significant that the arch money-maker Quilp’s chosen mode of revenge on his rival Kit, of all the gruesome possibilities at his disposal, is to have him imprisoned. Prison, and the threat of it, becomes the abiding image which Dickens uses to unify *Little Dorrit*, begun in 1857, a novel which, although bearing signs of far more careful planning,²¹⁶ has many themes in common with *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Just as the shop, with its fantastical, dream-like wares which are marginalised in an industrialised world, works as a precise emblem of the conflicting values which the novel depicts, so in *Little Dorrit* the debtors’ prison is a precise image of the idiotic values of the mercenary society which Dickens depicts, distorting and alienating people

from normal human relationships while at the same time depriving the debtors of the opportunity to work and clear their debts. While the threat of ‘confinement or imprisonment’ both ‘literal and metaphorical’, in Michael Slater’s words,²¹⁷ looms over the whole of this fiction in various guises, the natural world is again offered by Dickens, if not as a panacea for the dehumanising effects of capitalism on society as a whole, at least as a relief from them for some individuals. Diane Elam links Dickens’s treatment of alienation in *Little Dorrit* to the theme of time, characterising the problem as one of ‘unresolved strangeness and distance from the present [...] alienation proceeds from a failed search for a universal language of time’.²¹⁸ The theme of time is certainly significant in this respect, as it is in most of Dickens’s mature fiction, but I will argue here that his exploration of alienation in *Little Dorrit* stems chiefly, as it did in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, from his anxiety over the High Romantic treatment of alienation explored at the beginning of this chapter, with its emphasis on alienation not from time, but from human beings and humane relationships.

On the first page of *Little Dorrit* Dickens evokes the man-made port at Marseilles, centre of international commerce, and points the contrast between ‘the foul water within the harbour’ and ‘the beautiful sea without’:

The line of demarcation between the two colours, black and blue, showed the point which the pure sea would not pass; but it lay as quiet as the abominable pool, with which it never mixed.²¹⁹

On the next page Dickens introduces the ‘villainous prison’ of Marseilles, and the stark contrasts already established are further developed. The ‘universal stare’ of the ‘blazing sun’ penetrates the whole town: ‘Grant it but a chink or keyhole, and it shot in like a white-hot arrow’.²²⁰ But it cannot reach inside the prison, where humans and inanimate objects alike are ‘all deteriorated by confinement’:

Like a well, like a vault, like a tomb, the prison had no knowledge of the brightness outside, and would have kept its polluted atmosphere intact in one of the spice islands of the Indian ocean.²²¹

Long before the Marshalsea is introduced, Dickens impresses the damning effects of prison on the reader’s mind. ‘Black and blue’: the ‘villainous’ works of humanity, and the ‘pure’ natural world – the antitheses are clearly established at the start of *Little Dorrit*.

This opening evocation of Marseilles and its prison anticipates precisely Arthur Clennam’s experiences on his return to London: ‘Through the heart of the town a deadly sewer ebbed and flowed, in the place of a fine fresh river’.²²² On this first day back he walks the city streets alone, in the rain:

In the country, the rain would have developed a thousand fresh scents. And every drop would have had its bright association with some beautiful form of growth or life. In the city, it developed only foul stale smells, and was a sickly, lukewarm, dirt-stained, wretched addition to the gutters.²²³

This paragraph, along with the rain, ends up in ‘the gutters’, along with the city’s waste and excrement, in decay instead of growth. Clennam has lived most of his forty years in China, but has not escaped the effects of utilitarian mercantile culture. Although from a wealthy, religious family, his life has been as brutal and dehumanised as those of the workers that Little Nell encountered in the ‘great manufacturing town’.²²⁴ Clennam confesses to Meagles:

‘Trained by main force; broken, not bent; heavily ironed with an object on which I was never consulted and which was never mine; shipped away to the other end of the world before I was of age, and exiled there until my father’s death there, a year ago; always grinding in a mill I always hated [...] I am the only child of parents who weighed, measured, and priced everything; for whom what could not be weighed, measured and priced, had no existence’.²²⁵

Clennam’s ‘exile’ has clearly been psychological and emotional as well as physical, his parents’ values echoing Gradgrind’s and Dombey’s. Clennam feels alienated from his innate motivating energies: ‘Will, purpose, hope? All those lights were extinguished before I could sound the words’.²²⁶ Ben Parker writes: ‘It is well known that Dickens’s mystery novels are at the same time novels of social criticism [...] [which] takes the form of mystery because it is a criticism of mystery, of institutions and organizations that produce mystery’.²²⁷ Arthur Clennam’s quest to uncover the mystery of his family’s part in the Dorrits’ downfall is both a quest to recover personal identity and at the same time an entry into the mysteries of the Circumlocution Office, of Casby and Bleeding Heart Yard, and of Merdle’s financial empire.

Blake’s ‘mind-forged manacles’²²⁸ are not far from the surface in this first encounter with Clennam. Nor are they in his first encounter with the woman he believes to be his mother, whom Dickens characterises with a startling echo of that key line from Coleridge’s ‘Frost at Midnight’: ‘“All seasons are alike to me,” she returned, with a grim kind of luxuriousness. ‘I know nothing of summer and winter, shut up here. The Lord has been pleased to put me beyond all that’’.²²⁹ In an inversion of Coleridgean values, her religion is divorced from Nature, and as Dickens stresses, from human nature too: ‘her being beyond the reach of the seasons seemed but a fit sequence to her being beyond the reach of all changing emotions’.²³⁰ Karl Smith notes that this scene ‘sets the tone for the whole novel’:

The clouds of dust within the house represent an attempt to restrict the visibility of truth and of its owner's relationships of obligation to external humanity and the fog of the city expands their symbolic meaning. This effect amplifies the sense that the Puritanism making London so close and stale on Sundays is motivated by a similar concealment of fraternal social obligation.²³¹

When Clennam asks his mother, in a later visit, about their dealings with the Dorrits, and reparation, she responds, to an absent witness: 'let him look at me, in prison, and in bonds here [...] Reparation! Is there none in this room?'²³² Mrs Clennam's emotional decrepitude and sterility are mirrored in her physical surroundings. One side of her house is 'propped up' on 'some half-dozen gigantic crutches'.²³³ Her servant Flintwinch 'had a one-sided, crab-like way with him, as if his foundations had yielded at about the same time as those of the house, and he ought to have been propped up in a similar manner'.²³⁴ It comes as no surprise that when Mrs Clennam's dishonesty is finally revealed and her mask of rectitude falls,²³⁵ the house falls too;²³⁶ like Poe's House of Usher,²³⁷ the fall of the house of Clennam is physical, moral and psychological. Dickens's 'possession of a certain imaginative power that suggests, as only the most magical poetry can do, the real relation of the animate to the inanimate',²³⁸ in Cowper Powys's apt phrase, is epitomised in this evocation of Mrs Clennam's household. The point is also made about the Merdles' set and their high houses, both 'very grim with one another'.²³⁹

Like Miss Havisham in Satis House, Mrs Clennam has stopped 'the clock of busy existence',²⁴⁰ and lives in her crumbling house in a state of self-imposed alienation, which is also a self-imposed imprisonment. She has shut herself off from humanity and from the natural world, her only contact being with the 'eccentric mechanical force'²⁴¹ of Flintwinch. And in the case of both mother-figure and son the condition is inward as well as outward, psychological and emotional as well as physical. Arthur Clennam may be outwardly free to move and mix with others, but inwardly he too is imprisoned, shut off from the springs of motivation and emotion by his past. Both are outsiders. Images of prison and imprisonment, the links between imprisonment and alienation, and the notion of prison being a state of mind as well as a physical state, are thus firmly established in these opening chapters, preparing the reader for the introduction of the Marshalsea, its Father, and its Child.

Dickens's portrayal of William Dorrit is his main vehicle for exploring this novel's themes of imprisonment and alienation, and the idiocy of prison as a punishment for debt. The father of Little Dorrit, known also as the 'Father of the Marshalsea' due to the number of years he has spent in the debtors' prison, William seems blithely unaware of the falsity of his position, preferring to play up to the fantasy role of head and patron of a 'College' rather than face the humiliating truth of his years as a debtor. With his usual acuity of detail Dickens sketches William with his brother Frederick:

walking up and down the College-yard – of course on the aristocratic or Pump side, for the Father made it a point of his state to be chary of going among his children on the poor side [...] Frederick the free, was so humbled, bowed, withered, and faded; William the bond, was so courtly, condescending, and benevolently conscious of a position; that in this regard only, if in no other, the brothers were a spectacle to wonder at.²⁴²

Frederick is a classic outsider, a shabby-genteel, down-at-heel theatre musician enjoying no 'other part in what was going on than the part written out for the clarionet; in private life, where there was no part for the clarionet, he had no part at all'.²⁴³ William, on the other hand, appears to enjoy a clear social role within the walls of the prison, jealously guarding his nugatory status. He patronises Old Nandy on his days out from the workhouse, 'as if the old man held of him in vassalage under some feudal tenure. He made little treats and teas for him',²⁴⁴ using money scrounged from Clennam and other visitors. But when Amy is seen in public with Old Nandy, William regards this as a personal 'humiliation'. He sobs: 'I have seen my child, my own child, my own daughter, coming into this College out of the public streets – smiling! Smiling! – arm in arm with – O my God, a livery!'.²⁴⁵ Where Clennam and his mother are fully aware of their isolation from natural human relationships, William is determinedly unconscious of his. Dickens's portrayal of William Dorrit anticipates precisely Freud's analysis of 'the strange state of mind in which one knows and does not know a thing at the same time'.²⁴⁶ As with Affery's recurrent 'dreams'²⁴⁷ of the conversations she overhears between her husband Flintwinch and Mrs Clennam, reality is suppressed from the conscious mind. Like Mrs Clennam's, William Dorrit's alienation is both physical and mental; but his suppression of any acceptance of his actual position as a prisoner, renders his case more comic and more complex, and makes his subsequent inability to deal with reality outside the prison, in the novel's second book, all the more inevitable and psychologically convincing.

Blithely unconscious of his alienation from society when in prison, William only feels it when he is free to mix and travel: 'even in the midst of all the servants and attendants', Amy writes to Clennam from Italy, 'he is deserted'.²⁴⁸ Dorrit, together with his son and elder daughter, repeatedly chide Amy for her 'unnatural conduct' in Italy, helping other people 'like a menial'²⁴⁹ instead of adhering to the social norm of idleness as they do. William, Fanny and Edward live in fear of their past links with the Marshalsea being exposed. William's life 'was made an agony by the number of fine scalpels that he felt to be incessantly engaged in dissecting his dignity'.²⁵⁰ He achieves his highest aspiration by securing Merdle's friendship, but it remains 'a rapturous dream to Mr Dorrit',²⁵¹ with no secure basis in his mind. In this way Dickens makes it seem only a matter of time before Dorrit himself exposes his past, 'no longer able', as Zachary Samalin notes, 'to straddle coherently the widening gulf between the fantasized world he actually inhabits and the denied realities on which that world depends'.²⁵² The climactic dinner at the Merdles' house, at which he loses all sense of reality, thinks himself

back in the Marshalsea and reveals all to his new associates,²⁵³ is excruciating to read, but comes as no surprise.

Pillars of Society

William Dorrit embodies Dickens's most detailed exploration of the themes of isolation and alienation in this fiction. But almost all the characters in *Little Dorrit* are in some sense outsiders, cut off from human relationships based on mutual affection and esteem by what Edmund Wilson calls 'imprisoning states of mind':

The implication is that, prison for prison, a simple incarceration is an excellent school of character compared to the dungeons of Puritan theology, of modern business, of money-ruled Society, or of the poor people of Bleeding Heart Yard who are swindled and bled by all of these.²⁵⁴

Arthur Clennam finds Old Christopher Casby, like his mother, 'as little touched by the influence of the varying seasons as the old rose leaves and old lavender in his porcelain jars'.²⁵⁵ Natural life and impulse have been suppressed in Old Casby and his house, and replaced by mechanical momentum: 'There was a grave clock, ticking somewhere up the staircase; and there was a songless bird in the same direction, pecking at his cage, as if he were ticking too. The parlour-fire ticked in the grate'; and when the maid announces Clennam's arrival she 'ticked the two words 'Mr Clennam''.²⁵⁶ Panks too is portrayed throughout as 'a little labouring steam-engine'.²⁵⁷ The Tite Barnacles run the Circumlocution Office 'mechanically',²⁵⁸ ensuring that 'Unfortunates with wrongs, or with projects for the general welfare [...] never reappeared in the light of day'.²⁵⁹ Merdle's impulses are similarly divorced from human considerations. Dickens plays gleefully on the word 'bosom', with its connotations of 'loving care or protection',²⁶⁰ in portraying the grand 'speculation' that is Merdle's marriage:

This great and fortunate man had provided that extensive bosom with so much room to be unfeeling enough in, with a nest of crimson and gold some fifteen years before. It was not a bosom to repose upon, but it was a capital bosom to hang jewels upon. Mr Merdle wanted something to hang jewels upon, and he bought it for that purpose [...] Like all his other speculations, it was sound and successful.²⁶¹

Like William Dorrit's, Merdle's values begin as a source of fun and irony, and end in human tragedy. His 'desire was to the utmost to satisfy Society (whatever that was)', yet:

In this same Society (if that were it which came to his dinners, and to Mrs Merdle's receptions and concerts), he hardly seemed to enjoy himself much, and was mostly to be found against walls and behind doors [...] a little fatigued, and upon the whole rather more disposed for bed.²⁶²

Merdle is another outsider, feeling alienated in his own home.

Yet the Merdles regard themselves, and are regarded by their acquaintance, as at the heart of 'society', the nub of human interaction: 'Society was aware of Mr and Mrs Merdle. Society had said 'Let us licence them; let us know them''.²⁶³ The same can be said of the Tite Barnacles, and of Mrs Gowan and the other 'Bohemians' who live off the state in the grace-and-favour apartments at Hampton Court.²⁶⁴ the parallels between these upper-class idlers and the debtors of the Marshalsea are not lost upon the reader. Later Dickens points the similarities explicitly when he has Amy muse on the wealthy visitors to Venice, who 'had precisely the same incapacity for settling down to anything, as the prisoners used to have'.²⁶⁵ It is in this way that Dickens's 'essential literary methods and purposes', in Raymond Williams's phrase, adopt and extend those of Blake, in revealing the 'suppressed connections'²⁶⁶ of the social order. As Julian Wolfreys writes: Dickens's 'later novels', including *Little Dorrit*, 'can be read as calling into question and opening up the fixed, essential, and monumental'.²⁶⁷ Terry Eagleton, on the other hand, dismisses Dickens as a 'petty bourgeois' whose novels reflect, rather than question, the status quo: 'The anarchic, decentred, fragmentary forms of the early novels correspond in general to an earlier, less organised phase of industrial capitalism; the unified structures of the mature fiction allude to a more intensively coordinated capitalism'.²⁶⁸ This is to ignore the insistent notes of anger and protest in the later novels, and the ways in which Dickens channels his anger, neatly captured in Julian Wolfrey's more subtle analysis of:

the strategic use of the fragmentary situation of the city as a non-hierarchical counterbalance to the monolithic imposition upon the urban narrative of the juridic, capitalist, bureaucratic, ideological architectures [...] The fulcrum becomes in effect a lever.²⁶⁹

This is a valuable insight into Dickens's aims and methods in *Little Dorrit*; the fulcrum, symbol of what Zachary Samalin calls 'Enlightenment models of disinterested judgment',²⁷⁰ is rejected, reflecting a 'deep ambivalence toward the very forms of cultivated distancing that enable a systematic critique of the social totality',²⁷¹ in Amanda Anderson's words. Samalin argues that *Little Dorrit* 'consistently presents society's cultivated veneer of disinterest as a semi-willed blindness, describing a perceptual regime under which one sees because one refuses to look'.²⁷² The Merdles, the Tite Barnacles, the Bohemians, and their acquaintance, are Dickens's 'lever', embodying the 'monumental' norms of the society that he depicts, opening up to the reader his perceptions of a rigid hierarchy impelled by monetary rather than humane or spiritual values, in which idleness and inactivity pay dividends, active kindness such as Amy's is an affront, and innovation and reform meet with dogged resistance.

Within such a society it might be supposed that those who fail financially would be the lowest of the low. But Dickens, ever alive to the hypocrisies, contradictions and sheer idiocies of his

subject-matter, depicts its fiscal failures, the debtors imprisoned in the Marshalsea, as relatively comfortable and dignified compared to the cohort of ‘nondescript messengers, go-betweens, and errand-bearers’ that they employ:

The shabbiness of these attendants upon shabbiness, the poverty of these insolvent waiters upon insolvency, was a sight to see [...] Mendicity on commission stooped in their high shoulders, shambled in their unsteady legs, buttoned and pinned and darned and dragged their clothes, frayed their button-holes, leaked out their figures in dirty little ends of tape, and issued from their mouths in alcoholic breathings.²⁷³

Dickens’s imagination catches fire here, creating a fine fusion of visual image and idea in this evocation of these ultimate outsiders. And by the supreme irony that lies at the heart of this novel’s meaning, William Dorrit, a debtor for twenty-three years and an outcast according to all social touchstones, is depicted as wholly at home in his surroundings, while the society’s paragon of success, the ‘great and fortunate’ Merdle, feels at home nowhere, least of all in his own home, in the bosom of his family.

Familiar yet Misplaced

When Arthur Clennam first encounters Amy, in the company of his mother and Flintwinch, he can see that she too is an outsider, ‘conscious of being out of place among the three hard elders’.²⁷⁴ As he learns more of her and the places she frequents, he becomes aware of ‘a great soul of fidelity within her’:²⁷⁵

He thought of her having been born and bred among these scenes, and shrinking through them now, familiar yet misplaced; he thought of her long acquaintance with the squalid needs of life, and of her innocence; of her solicitude for others, and her childish aspect.²⁷⁶

That phrase, ‘familiar yet misplaced’, goes to the heart of Dickens’s diagnosis of urban alienation, and is as apt for Little Nell as for Little Dorrit. Amy feels tainted by the Marshalsea, and by her father’s ways there. Yet when Clennam entreats her not to call it ‘home’, she retorts: ‘But it is home! What else can I call home? Why should I ever forget it for a single moment?’.²⁷⁷ Clennam himself, returning to his mother and his family house after so many years away, is not so different: it is the only home he has, yet he is not at home there. Dickens’s ironic title for that chapter, ‘Home’, marks this recurrent theme in the novel. Even the wealthy, successful Merdle, as we have seen, is ‘never at home’,²⁷⁸ feels out of place in his own home, ‘familiar yet misplaced’. As Jeremy Tambling writes: ‘Dickens makes character a state of anxiety or of desire, which divides it’.²⁷⁹ The central irony of this first part of *Little Dorrit* is that the character who feels most at home in his surroundings is the prisoner, William Dorrit.

As noted in the previous chapter, the two novels that preceded *Little Dorrit: Bleak House* (1853) and *Hard Times* (1854), were seen by reviewers as evidence of Dickens's decline from 'the extraordinary character of his early performances',²⁸⁰ his opening up of the higher reaches of society to scrutiny was seen as symptomatic of that decline, his skill seeming 'to depart in proportion as the author rises in the scale of society depicted'.²⁸¹ It is no surprise then that the more intense probing of the roots of mid-Victorian values that Dickens essays in *Little Dorrit*, and the explicit links that he explores between high society and crime, was seen as evidence of further decline by many contemporary reviewers. Writing in *Fraser's Magazine* for March 1857, three months before the serialisation was complete, William Forsyth opined that 'his latter works have proceeded in a descending scale. That which is now issuing from the press, *Little Dorrit*, is decidedly the worst'.²⁸² In *Blackwood's* the following month Edward Hamley suggested that Dickens should stick to comedy:

he aims at being, besides artist and moralist, politician, philosopher, and ultra-philanthropist [...] In executing this piebald plan, the old, natural, easy, unconscious Pickwickian style has given place to one to which all those epithets are totally inapplicable; and the characteristics of which, always to us unpleasant, are growing more prominent in every successive work.²⁸³

James Stephen, brother of Leslie Stephen, complained in the *Edinburgh* that Dickens's portrayal of society in *Little Dorrit* is unjust:

We wish he had dealt as fairly and kindly with the upper classes of society as he has with the lower; and that he had more liberally portrayed those manly, disinterested, and energetic qualities which make up the character of an English gentleman. [...] in truth we cannot recall any single character in his novels, intended to belong to the higher ranks of English life, who is drawn with the slightest approach to truth or probability. His injustice to the institutions of English society is, however, even more flagrant.²⁸⁴

'*Little Dorrit* became a by-word for the bad Dickens',²⁸⁵ Philip Collins concludes. Aspects of his work which are now seen as integral to his art were disparaged. Forsyth cites, for example, his 'passion [...] for giving to inanimate objects all the attributes of life',²⁸⁶ an early formulation of Cowper Powys's 'porousness', and comments on the likening of Pancks to a tugboat: 'We have the Tug puffing and snorting and coaling and pulling and hauling; until we really forget that all the time it is the description of a person and not of a steamboat'.²⁸⁷

The non-literary roots of much of this criticism did not go unchallenged. John Hollingshead, writing a dialogue on 'Mr. Dickens and his Critics' for *The Train* of August 1857, commented: 'They attempt to pull down the idol more for political than for literary reasons. Mr. Dickens, in common with all men of quick sympathy and high imagination, is totally opposed to what

he considers the hard, dry, unfeeling dogmas of political economy'. When 'the turmoil of the present century' settles, Hollingshead believes, Dickens will be judged as 'Truly a fit companion for that low player of the olden time, who wrote *King Lear*, and acted at the Globe'.²⁸⁸ Dickens himself was understandably pleased with Hollingshead's piece, and recruited him to write for *Household Words*.²⁸⁹ Yet his 'pretty little paper',²⁹⁰ as Dickens accurately named it, goes no further than his detractors in articulating how the art and craft of *Little Dorrit* achieves its ends.

Nearly Everything of Importance

The title of this novel depicting a society based on dehumanised, mechanical social transactions, and the difficulty of maintaining humane values within it, conveys two key ideas. Firstly, Amy Dorrit, the repository of those humane values, is for Dickens its central focus. Secondly, the nickname indicates the little regard this society has for the qualities she embodies, and the little power and influence her values exert when up against the utilitarian mechanical forces that prevail around her. John Carey sums up Amy as 'the unsullied child surrounded by decay'.²⁹¹ Again, the phrase applies equally to Little Nell. Dickens has taken the Romantic figure of the innocent child out of her original Wordsworthian home in nature, and planted her in the heart of the modern city, to explore how her values will fare.

On the other hand, Dickens's adherence to the original Romantic tenet that the true home of innocence and integrity is the natural world, is demonstrated throughout *Little Dorrit*. It was established on its first page, as we have seen, in the contrast between the 'pure' sea and the 'abominable' polluted, man-made harbour. And when Dickens has Amy muse on her father's fate, her sharpest regret is his alienation from nature:

As she gently opened the window, and looked eastward down the prison yard, the spikes upon the wall were tipped with red, then made a sudden purple pattern on the sun as it came flaming up into the heavens. The spikes had never looked so sharp and cruel, nor the bars so heavy, nor the prison space so gloomy and contracted. She thought of the sunrise on rolling rivers, of the sunrise on wide seas, of the sunrise on rich landscapes, of the sunrise on great forests where the birds were waking and the trees were rustling; and she looked down into the living grave on which the sun had risen, with her father in it three-and-twenty years, and said, in a burst of sorrow and compassion, 'No, no, I have never seen him in my life!'²⁹²

Her father's character, the man he might have become, has been perverted by the spikes 'tipped with red' that come between him and the sun, lost to Amy by the years of unnatural confinement. But Amy herself, susceptible to the sunrise, has retained her integrity, her Wordsworthian 'innocence', despite the influence of the Marshalsea. Arthur Clennam too has not lost his innate nature: his feelings were suppressed by his parents, but not extinguished:

‘the fierce dark teaching of his childhood had never sunk into his heart’.²⁹³ Again like Amy, this integrity is linked to a susceptibility to the influence and wisdom of the natural world. Walking ‘through the meadows by the river side’,²⁹⁴ he stops ‘many times, to look about him and suffer what he saw to sink into his soul’.²⁹⁵ When he learns that Pet is to be married to Gowan, he throws the roses she has given him into the river; the validity of his feelings for Pet is put to the test of the natural world, and found wanting: ‘Pale and unreal in the moonlight, the river floated them away’.²⁹⁶ The ‘Great universal Teacher’²⁹⁷ divines the delusive nature of Clennam’s feelings for Pet, when he as yet cannot. Clennam is unaware at this stage of Amy’s love for him, but Dickens has made it clear enough to the reader how much of substance they have in common, and that Amy is Clennam’s best hope of recovering his long-suppressed nature. For while his parents’ influence ‘had never sunk into his heart’,²⁹⁸ Amy’s clearly has, from his first visit to the Marshalsea: ‘Evidently in observance of their nightly custom, she put some bread before herself, and touched his glass with her lips; and Arthur saw she was troubled and took nothing. Her look at her father, half admiring him and proud of him, half ashamed for him, all devoted and loving, went to his inmost heart’.²⁹⁹

Since the death of her mother, when Amy was eight years old, she has become the ‘Little Mother’,³⁰⁰ and has grappled with those ‘squalid needs of life’³⁰¹ so that her father and siblings can ignore them. This ambivalence towards blood relatives is another trait that Amy and Clennam share. The great difference between them is that whereas Clennam’s natural drives and affections have been suppressed, Amy has retained hers, and is able to devote her energies to supporting her loved ones. Clennam’s journey in the novel is essentially towards the knowledge that only Amy, with her selfless vitality and innate kinship with the wisdom of the natural world, can restore him to himself. Towards the end of the novel Dickens again evokes land and sea ‘in joyful animation’, and contrasts this with the Marshalsea ‘looking ignorantly at all the seasons with its fixed, pinched face’.³⁰² The prison-nature antithesis which began the story has returned. But this time there is a new element, a new presence, which completes the circle:

Clennam, listening to the voice as it read to him, heard in it all that great Nature was doing, heard in it all the soothing songs she sings to man. At no Mother’s knee but hers had he ever dwelt in his youth on hopeful promises, on playful fancies, on the harvests of tenderness and humility that lie hidden in the early fostered seeds of the imagination [...] But, in the tones of the voice that read to him, there were memories of an old feeling of such things, and echoes of every merciful and loving whisper that has ever stolen to him in his life.³⁰³

Amy Dorrit reading to the man she loves in an urban prison may be a far cry from Coleridge’s ‘damsel with a dulcimer/ In a vision’ in ‘Kubla Khan’.³⁰⁴ But her voice performs a parallel function here: to rebuild through ‘soothing songs’, to restore what has been lost from the male

protagonist's psyche, the 'early fostered seeds of the imagination'. And this comparison exemplifies Dickens's way of dealing with the anxiety of influence in a nutshell. He brings the idealistic High Romantic 'vision' down to earth, and brings it to bear on the contemporary predicament without losing sight of its visionary quality. For the poet John Wain '*Little Dorrit* is the most satisfying of [Dickens's] books because it is both grand and apocalyptic, setting out a vision of human society that includes nearly everything of importance, and also lovingly shaped'.³⁰⁵ In this exploration of the validity of Romantic values within the mid-Victorian city, Dickens qualifies the optimism of those pioneering poems in crucial respects. Nature, Coleridge's 'Great universal Teacher', is helpless to halt the crumbling of the fabric of a mercenary society. But on an individual, personal level, it still has the power to restore to man the innate, joyful drives and urges that society represses. And the word 'man' here does seem gender-specific: it is the role of the 'pure', selfless woman to effect this restoration of her man, this fiction suggests.

Little Dorrit. Little Nell. The diminutive is a reminder that David Trotter's dictum: 'Where there is proportion [...] there can be meaning', applies in Dickens to character as well as to 'things'.³⁰⁶ In both of these fictions Dickens portrays a diminutive female: part-child, part-woman, part-mother, as the embodiment of whatever hope he can find of rescue from the alienating effects of modern society. Recalling Sarah Winter's comment on *The Old Curiosity Shop*, 'it is precisely when you don't know the answer but can begin to formulate a new kind of question that the possibility of change emerges',³⁰⁷ it is possible to see that the process of formulating those questions continues and is partially resolved in *Little Dorrit*. Whereas Little Nell dies, Little Dorrit lives on. *The Old Curiosity Shop* offers hope only in the next world; but *Little Dorrit* raises the prospect of a limited restoration of humane values, within individual relationships, in this world. In *Little Dorrit* so much of humanity is killed off, literally as well as figuratively: William Dorrit, Frederick Dorrit, Rigaud, and Merdle die, isolated from humanity. Beth Herst's formulation of the 'characteristic progress' of the Dickens hero: 'from alienation, through self-discovery, to alienation once more'³⁰⁸ may be sustainable for these characters, but only partly so for the actual hero and heroine of the novel. Dickens leaves Amy and Clennam still alienated from society, but in their personal lives they defy the pressures of alienation and re-establish loving, humane relationships with each other. Dickens rejects the 'Great universal Teacher' as a universal panacea, offering only this limited, personal consolation. He doesn't know the answer for his society, but formulates precisely the questions that needed to be asked of it. As Harold Bloom writes, 'To unname the precursor while earning one's own name is the quest of strong or severe poets'.³⁰⁹ In this resolution of *Little Dorrit* Dickens wilfully misreads the Romantic script, and builds up his own legacy for future generations to read, or misread.

-
- ¹ *BL*, p. 47. Coleridge was at this time in his 23rd year, not 24th as stated here in *Biographia Literaria*.
- ² William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads, with a few other poems* (London: Penguin Poetry First Editions, 1999), pp. 36-44. See also Stephen C. Gill "'Adventures on Salisbury Plain" and Wordsworth's Poetry of Protest 1795-97', *Studies in Romanticism*, 11 (1972), 48-65.
- ³ William Wordsworth, 'Guilt and Sorrow, or Incidents upon Salisbury Plain', ll.357-60: *WPW*, p. 24.
- ⁴ Quentin Bailey, *Wordsworth's Vagrants: Police, Prisons, and Poetry in the 1790s* (Farnham, Ashgate 2011).
- ⁵ Bailey, p. 81.
- ⁶ Bailey, p. 87.
- ⁷ William Blake, 'London', l. 8: *SIE* plate 46.
- ⁸ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Frost at Midnight', l. 52: *CPW*, p. 242.
- ⁹ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Book VII, ll. 605-6: *WTP*, pp. 121-22.
- ¹⁰ Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Vintage, 2016), p. 188.
- ¹¹ Williams, 2016, p. 216.
- ¹² Harriet Evans, 'The Bloody Code', *Manchester Student Law Review*, 2 (2013), 28-40
- ¹³ William Godwin, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness*, ed. by Isaac Kramnick (London: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 654. Coleridge wrote a poem in tribute 'To William Godwin, Author of Political Justice', in 1795: *CPW* p. 86. For an account of Godwin's influence on Wordsworth see Alan Grob, 'Wordsworth and Godwin: A Reassessment', *Studies in Romanticism*, 6, (1967) 98-119.
- ¹⁴ Bruce P. Smith, 'The Presumption of Guilt and the English Law of Theft, 1750-1850', *Law and History Review*, 23 (2005), 133-171 (p. 135).
- ¹⁵ Evans, p. 30.
- ¹⁶ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Osorio, A Tragedy: CCW*, Vol. II, pp. 518-97.
- ¹⁷ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Remorse, A Tragedy in Five Acts: CCW*, Vol. II, pp. 819-83.
- ¹⁸ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'The Dungeon', ll.5, 12-13, 18: *CPW*, p. 185.
- ¹⁹ Susan Eilenberg, 'Voice and Ventriloquy in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"', in *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, ed. by Paul Fry (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), pp. 282-314 (p. 300). Eilenberg also points out that 'The Female Vagrant' is printed in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* 'only a few pages further on from the 'Rime'' (p. 300).
- ²⁰ From the marginal gloss to ll.79-82 of 'The Ancient Mariner', first published in 1817 in *Sibylline Leaves: CPW*, p. 189.
- ²¹ L. 91: *CPW*, p. 190.
- ²² Godwin, p. 633.
- ²³ Ll. 139-42: *CPW*, p. 191.
- ²⁴ Ll. 236-39: *CPW*, pp. 196-97.
- ²⁵ Ll. 232-33: *CPW*, p. 196.
- ²⁶ Ll. 597-98: *CPW*, p. 208.
- ²⁷ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fourth Estate, 2014), p. 31.
- ²⁸ Daniel Shanahan, *Toward a Genealogy of Individualism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), p. 96.
- ²⁹ Williams 2014, p. 34.
- ³⁰ David S. Miall, 'Guilt and Death: The Predicament of The Ancient Mariner', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 24 (1984), 633-653 (p. 634).

³¹ Peter Heymanns, *Animality in British Romanticism: The Aesthetics of Species* (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 59-60.

³² Miranda Seymour, *Mary Shelley* (London: John Murray, 2000), p. 40. Seymour's description is suggestive: 'His recital one evening of 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' left Mary, hiding behind a sofa when she should have been in bed, with an unforgettable memory of an ice-bound sea and a man haunted by the swift, unstoppable treading in his wake of 'a frightful fiend'. The image stuck; it haunts the story of *Frankenstein*'.

³³ Beth Lau, 'Romantic Ambivalence in *Frankenstein* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*', in *Fellow Romantics: Male and Female British Writers, 1790-1835*, ed. by Beth Lau (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009) pp. 71-98 (p. 77).

³⁴ *MSF*, p. 19.

³⁵ *MSF*, p. 58. The first line of Shelley's quotation departs from all known editions of the poem. In *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) the line reads 'Like one that on a lonely road', and in all subsequent editions it appears as 'Like one that on a lonesome road': *CPW*, p. 203. It seems likely that she was quoting from memory.

³⁶ *MSF*, p. 24.

³⁷ *MSF*, p. 99.

³⁸ Sarah Webster Goodwin, 'Domesticity and Uncanny Kitsch in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and *Frankenstein*', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 10 (1991), 93-108 (p. 100).

³⁹ *MSF*, p. 141.

⁴⁰ *MSF*, p. 110.

⁴¹ *MSF*, pp. 116-17.

⁴² *MSF*, p. 126.

⁴³ *MSF*, p. 127.

⁴⁴ *MSF*, p. 130.

⁴⁵ *MSF*, p. 130.

⁴⁶ *MSF*, p. 130.

⁴⁷ Bailey, p. 87.

⁴⁸ *MSF*, pp. 138-39.

⁴⁹ *MSF*, p. 85.

⁵⁰ 'he formd thee, *Adam*, thee O Man/Dust of the ground': John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book VII, ll. 524-25. The creature's extensive biblical knowledge is from *Paradise Lost*. Here Milton echoes Genesis 2:7: 'And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul' (King James Bible).

⁵¹ *MSF*, p. 140.

⁵² *MSF*, p. 142.

⁵³ *MSF*, p. 139.

⁵⁴ *MSF*, p. 158.

⁵⁵ *MSF*, p. 161.

⁵⁶ *MSF*, p. 91.

⁵⁷ William Wordsworth, 'She Dwelt among the untrodden ways', l. 1: *WPW*, p. 86.

⁵⁸ Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Alastor, or The Spirit of Solitude', ll.60, 75-79, 98-99, 16-17: *SPW*, pp. 15-17.

⁵⁹ *SPW*, p. 34.

⁶⁰ Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Vintage, 2016), p. 188.

⁶¹ Martina Moeller, *Rubble, Ruins and Romanticism: Visual Style, Narration and Identity in German Post-War Cinema* (Verlag: Bielefeld, 2013), p. 59.

⁶² John Keats, 'Solitude', ll.10-14: *KPW*, p.36.

⁶³ 'Solitude', ll.1-4: *KPW*, p. 36.

⁶⁴ John Keats, letter to Miss F. M. Keats, July 2nd [1818]: *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. by Maurice Buxton Forman (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), Vol. I. pp179-81.

-
- ⁶⁵ John Keats, 'Old Meg', ll. 9-12: *KPW*, p. 386.
- ⁶⁶ Beth F. Herst, *The Dickens Hero: Selfhood and Alienation in the Dickens World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), p.145.
- ⁶⁷ Juliet John, 'Introduction', in *Dickens and Modernity*, ed. by Juliet John (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 1-18 (p. 4).
- ⁶⁸ Malcolm Andrews, 'Introduction', *OCS*, pp. 11-31 (p. 31).
- ⁶⁹ Andrews, p. 16.
- ⁷⁰ G. K. Chesterton, *Appreciations and Criticisms of the Works of Charles Dickens* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1911) p. 62.
- ⁷¹ Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1990), p. 292.
- ⁷² Letter to Forster, [30th August 1846]: *SL*, p. 171.
- ⁷³ Letter to Forster, [20th September 1846]: *SL*, p. 173.
- ⁷⁴ *DJ*, Vol. 4, p. 150.
- ⁷⁵ Patrick Parrinder, "'Turn Again, Dick Whittington!': Dickens, Wordsworth, and the Boundaries of the City", *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 32 (2004), 407-19 (p. 409).
- ⁷⁶ Julian Wolfreys, *Writing London: The Trace of the Urban Text from Blake to Dickens* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 1998), p. 142.
- ⁷⁷ *MSF*, p. 139.
- ⁷⁸ *MSF*, p. 110.
- ⁷⁹ *Master Humphry's Clock*, 4th April 1840. p. 12.
- ⁸⁰ *OCS*, p. 43.
- ⁸¹ 'For the perfect *flâneur*, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite': Charles Baudelaire, 'The Painter of Modern Life', 1863, quoted in Kenneth E. Roon Junior, 'John Rechy's Borderless City of Night', in *The Idea of the City: Early Modern, Modern and Post-Modern Locations and Communities*, ed. by Joan Fitzpatrick (Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), pp. 181-92 (p. 182). Roon and many other commentators suggest that Baudelaire was influenced in this essay by Poe's story 'The Man in the Crowd'.
- ⁸² Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, translated by Harry Zohn (London, NLB, 1973), pp. 54-55.
- ⁸³ Hannah Arendt, 'Introduction', in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1973), pp. 1-55 (p.21).
- ⁸⁴ Frank Kermode, 'The Artist in Isolation', in *Romantic Image* (Glasgow, Collins 1976. First published 1957), pp. 13-42 (p. 17).
- ⁸⁵ Master Humphrey returns at the end of the original periodical version, but not in any subsequent edition: *OCS*, Appendix ii, pp. 679-80, and see note 1 p. 682.
- ⁸⁶ Chesterton, p. 237.
- ⁸⁷ *OCS*, p. 46.
- ⁸⁸ *OCS*, p. 47.
- ⁸⁹ *OCS*, p. 55.
- ⁹⁰ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Christabel', l. 656: *CPW*, p. 284.
- ⁹¹ Le Prince de Beaumont, Jeanne-Marie, *La Belle et la Bête*, Trans. Anonymous, 1756 (Charleston, South Carolina: Forgotten Books, 2008).
- ⁹² *OCS*, p. 70.
- ⁹³ Florence too wanders the London streets and loses her way: *DS*, pp. 85-91.
- ⁹⁴ *OCS*, p. 49.
- ⁹⁵ *OCS*, p. 51.
- ⁹⁶ The shop is mentioned briefly in Ch41: *OCS*, p. 388.

⁹⁷ *OCS*, p. 47.

⁹⁸ *OCS*, p. 70.

⁹⁹ Juliet John, 'Things, Words and the Meanings of Art', in *Dickens and Modernity*, ed. by Juliet John (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 115-32, p. 129.

¹⁰⁰ The word 'groundbreaking' is used by many commentators to describe the essay. See for example Teodor Mladenov, *Critical Theory and Disability: A Phenomenological Approach* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 147, note 68, and Dani Cavallaro, *Anime and the Art of Adaptation* (Jefferson: McFarland and Company, 2010), p. 11.

¹⁰¹ Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1973), pp. 219-53.

¹⁰² *OCS*, p. 56.

¹⁰³ Holly Furneaux, 'Dickens, Sexuality and the Body; or, Clock Loving: Master Humphrey's Queer Objects of Desire', in *Dickens and Modernity*, ed. by Juliet John (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 41-60 (p. 44).

¹⁰⁴ John Cowper Powys, *The Pleasures of Literature* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd, 1938), p. 118.

¹⁰⁵ John, 'Things', 2012, p. 131.

¹⁰⁶ Chesterton, p. 237.

¹⁰⁷ Valerie Purton, *Dickens and the Sentimental Tradition: Fielding, Richardson, Sterne, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Lamb* (London: Anthem Press, 2012), p. 103.

¹⁰⁸ *OCS*, p. 73.

¹⁰⁹ Christine L. Corton, 'Drowning in the Fog: The Significance of Quilp's Death in *The Old Curiosity Shop*', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays in Victorian Fiction*, 44 (2013), 111-26 (p. 121).

¹¹⁰ John Lucas, *The Melancholy Man: A Study in Dickens's Novels* (London: Methuen, 1970), p. 86.

¹¹¹ *OCS*, p. 136.

¹¹² *OCS*, p. 55.

¹¹³ *OCS*, p. 46.

¹¹⁴ *OCS*, p. 103.

¹¹⁵ Michael Slater, *Dickens and Women* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1983), p. 234.

¹¹⁶ Robert Higbie, *Dickens and Imagination* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), p. 60.

¹¹⁷ *OCS*, p. 103.

¹¹⁸ *OCS*, p. 93.

¹¹⁹ *OCS*, p. 130.

¹²⁰ *OCS*, p. 144.

¹²¹ John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book IV, ll. 358-92: *The Poems of John Milton*, ed. by Helen Darbishire (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 255-56.

¹²² *OCS*, p. 51.

¹²³ *OCS*, p. 49.

¹²⁴ *OCS*, p. 65.

¹²⁵ *OCS*, p. 129.

¹²⁶ *OCS*, p. 136.

¹²⁷ *OCS*, p. 246.

¹²⁸ Paul Schlicke, 'The Old Curiosity Shop', in *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens: Anniversary Edition*, ed. by Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 432-37 (p. 435).

¹²⁹ *OCS*, p. 172.

¹³⁰ *OCS*, p. 148.

¹³¹ *OCS*, p. 142.

¹³² Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Frost at Midnight', ll. 54-64: *CPW*, p.242.

¹³³ *OCS*, pp. 174-75.

¹³⁴ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Book VII, ll. 605-6: *WTP*, pp. 121-22.

-
- ¹³⁵ [Anon.], review of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Metropolitan Magazine*, xxix (1840), 111.
- ¹³⁶ [Anon.], review of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Metropolitan Magazine*, xxx (1841), 78.
- ¹³⁷ Thomas Hood, *Athenaeum*, 7th November 1840, 887-88 (p. 887).
- ¹³⁸ 'H', review of *Dombey and Son*, *Westminster Review*, xvii (April 1847), 5-11 (p. 5). Philip Collins writes that 'H' 'was possibly William Hickson (1803-70), Editor of the *Westminster Review*, 1840-52': *Dickens: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Philip Collins (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 225.
- ¹³⁹ Collins, p. 91.
- ¹⁴⁰ [Anon.] review of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Ecclesiastic and Theologian*, xvii (October 1855), 467.
- ¹⁴¹ *BH*, p. 43.
- ¹⁴² Cited in Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997), p. 441.
- ¹⁴³ Aldous Huxley, *Vulgarity in Literature* (London: Chatto and Windus 1930), p. 56.
- ¹⁴⁴ Purton, p. 155.
- ¹⁴⁵ Gabriel Pearson, 'The Old Curiosity Shop', in *Dickens and the Twentieth Century*, ed. by John Gross and Gabriel Pearson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 77-90 (p. 79).
- ¹⁴⁶ Eric Bentley, *The Life of the Drama* (New York: Athenaeum, 1964), p. 198.
- ¹⁴⁷ Mark M. Hennelly Jr., 'Carnavalesque "Unlawful Games" in *The Old Curiosity Shop*', *Dickens Studies Annual*, 22 (1993), 67-120.
- ¹⁴⁸ Paul Schlicke, 'The True Pathos of *The Old Curiosity Shop*', *Dickens Quarterly*, 7 (1990), 189-99 (p.189).
- ¹⁴⁹ T. S. Eliot, 'Wilkie Collins and Dickens' (1927): *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), pp. 460-70 (p. 462).
- ¹⁵⁰ *OCS*, pp. 182-85.
- ¹⁵¹ *OCS*, pp. 192-95.
- ¹⁵² *OCS*, pp. 263-88.
- ¹⁵³ *OCS*, p. 192.
- ¹⁵⁴ *OCS*, p. 248. The earlier precedent is Andrew Marvel, 'a green thought in a green shade' in the poem 'The Garden' l. 48: *Andrew Marvell: The Complete Poems*, ed. by Elizabeth Story Donno (London: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 101.
- ¹⁵⁵ *OCS*, p. 289.
- ¹⁵⁶ *OCS*, p. 396.
- ¹⁵⁷ *OCS*, p. 292.
- ¹⁵⁸ *OCS*, p. 293.
- ¹⁵⁹ *OMF*, p. 292. In *Our Mutual Friend* the reversal occurs in the relationship between Jenny Wren and her father.
- ¹⁶⁰ *OCS*, p. 301.
- ¹⁶¹ *BL*, p. 167.
- ¹⁶² *OCS*, p. 303.
- ¹⁶³ *OCS*, p. 412.
- ¹⁶⁴ *OCS*, p. 413.
- ¹⁶⁵ Robin Gilmour, *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830-1890* (London: Longman, 1993), pp. 22-23.
- ¹⁶⁶ *OCS*, p. 413. See Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'The Ancient Mariner', ll. 119-22: *CPW*, p.191.
- ¹⁶⁷ *OCS*, p. 413.
- ¹⁶⁸ William Blake, 'London', ll. 3-4: *SIE*, p. 46.
- ¹⁶⁹ *Master Humphrey's Clock*, pp. 5-6.
- ¹⁷⁰ Williams, 2016, pp. 231-32.
- ¹⁷¹ *OCS*, p. 414.
- ¹⁷² *OCS*, p. 424.
- ¹⁷³ *OCS*, p. 423.

-
- ¹⁷⁴ *OCS*, p. 482.
- ¹⁷⁵ *OCS*, p. 487.
- ¹⁷⁶ *OCS*, p. 485.
- ¹⁷⁷ *OCS*, p. 480.
- ¹⁷⁸ *OCS*, p. 487.
- ¹⁷⁹ *OCS*, p. 480.
- ¹⁸⁰ *OCS*, p. 496.
- ¹⁸¹ *OCS*, p. 494.
- ¹⁸² *OCS*, pp. 494-96.
- ¹⁸³ Andrews, p. 31.
- ¹⁸⁴ *OCS*, p. 620.
- ¹⁸⁵ *OCS*, p. 620.
- ¹⁸⁶ *GE*, p. 7.
- ¹⁸⁷ *GE*, pp. 445-46.
- ¹⁸⁸ Corton, p. 120.
- ¹⁸⁹ *OCS*, p. 622.
- ¹⁹⁰ *OCS*, p. 144.
- ¹⁹¹ *OCS*, p. 144.
- ¹⁹² Lucas, p. 86.
- ¹⁹³ *OCS*, p. 631.
- ¹⁹⁴ The precise identity of Kit's third companion is irrelevant to the story; the crucial, symbolic point is that there are three of them, as with the journeying magi: see Matthew ii.
- ¹⁹⁵ *DC*, pp. 857-66. *OMF*, Book 4 Chapter 1, pp. 704-07.
- ¹⁹⁶ *OCS*, p. 635.
- ¹⁹⁷ *DC*, pp. 697, 699.
- ¹⁹⁸ *OCS*, pp. 643-44.
- ¹⁹⁹ *OCS*, p. 648.
- ²⁰⁰ *OCS*, p. 652.
- ²⁰¹ T. S. Eliot, 'The Journey of the Magi', ll. 35-36: *Collected Poems 1909-1962* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1970), p. 110.
- ²⁰² Marcia Muelder Eaton, 'Laughing at the Death of Little Nell: Sentimental Art and Sentimental People', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 6 (1989), 269-282.
- ²⁰³ Purton, p. 107.
- ²⁰⁴ *DC*, p. 950.
- ²⁰⁵ Garrett Stewart, *Dickens and the Trials of Imagination* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 98.
- ²⁰⁶ *OCS*, p. 652.
- ²⁰⁷ *OCS*, p. 663.
- ²⁰⁸ *OCS*, p. 624.
- ²⁰⁹ *OCS*, p. 659.
- ²¹⁰ *OCS*, p. 633.
- ²¹¹ Higbie, p. 60.
- ²¹² Sarah Winter, 'Curiosity as Didacticism in "The Old Curiosity Shop"', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 34 (2000) 28-55 (p. 49).
- ²¹³ For example, Barry McCrea discusses *The Pickwick Papers* and *Oliver Twist* as picaresque novels, and Alexander Blackburn chooses *Oliver Twist* and *Martin Chuzzlewit* to illustrate the later stages of 'the picaresque strain in the novel, 1715-1844'. Barry McCrea, *In the Company of Strangers: Family and Narrative in Dickens, Conan Doyle, Joyce and Proust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), pp. 26-41. Alexander

Blackburn, *The Myth of the Picaro: Continuity and Transformation of the Picaresque Novel, 1554-1954* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), pp. 103-03.

²¹⁴ [Anon.], review of *The Old Curiosity Shop, Ecclesiastic and Theologian*, xvii (October 1855), 467.

²¹⁵ John Bowen, 'A Garland for *The Old Curiosity Shop*', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction*, 37 (2006), 1-16 (p. 1).

²¹⁶ The two volumes of the manuscript of *Little Dorrit* begin with 'elaborate notes, which show Dickens carefully allotting his material to chapters, [...] thinking closely and all the time of balance and organisation', John Holloway writes: 'Introduction', *LD*, p. 13.

²¹⁷ Michael Slater, *Charles Dickens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 392.

²¹⁸ Diane Elam, '"Another Day Done and I'm Deeper in Debt': *Little Dorrit* and the Debt of the Everyday', in *Dickens Refigured: Bodies, Desires and Other Histories*, ed. by John Schad (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp. 157-77 (pp. 168-69).

²¹⁹ *LD*, p. 39.

²²⁰ *LD*, pp. 39-40.

²²¹ *LD*, p. 40.

²²² *LD*, p. 68.

²²³ *LD*, p. 70.

²²⁴ *TOCS*, p. 412.

²²⁵ *LD*, p. 59.

²²⁶ *LD*, p. 59.

²²⁷ Ben Parker, 'Unhappy Consciousness: Recognition and Reification in Victorian Fiction', Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Columbia University, 2014, p. 35.

²²⁸ William Blake, 'London', l. 8: *SIE*, p. 46.

²²⁹ *LD*, p. 74.

²³⁰ *LD*, p. 74.

²³¹ Karl Smith, 'Little Dorrit's "speck" and Florence's "daily blight": Urban Contamination and the Dickensian Heroine', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction*, 34 (2004), 117-54 (p. 148).

²³² *LD*, p. 89.

²³³ *LD*, p. 71.

²³⁴ *LD*, p. 72.

²³⁵ *LD*, p. 858.

²³⁶ *LD*, p. 862.

²³⁷ Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Fall of the House of Usher', in *Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe: Poems, Tales, Essays and Reviews*, ed. by David Galloway (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), pp. 138-57.

²³⁸ Cowper Powys, p. 118.

²³⁹ *LD*, p. 292.

²⁴⁰ *LD*, p. 388.

²⁴¹ *LD*, p. 388.

²⁴² *LD*, p. 264.

²⁴³ *LD*, p. 282.

²⁴⁴ *LD*, p. 415.

²⁴⁵ *LD*, p. 421.

²⁴⁶ Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey (New York: Basic Books Inc., 2000), p. 117n.

²⁴⁷ *LD*, p. 222.

²⁴⁸ *LD*, p. 523.

²⁴⁹ *LD*, p. 506.

-
- ²⁵⁰ LD, p. 511.
- ²⁵¹ LD, p. 677. Dickens emphasises this phrase by repeating it in the next paragraph.
- ²⁵² Samalin, p. 239.
- ²⁵³ LD, p. 708.
- ²⁵⁴ Edmund Wilson, *The Wound and the Bow* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1997), p. 46.
- ²⁵⁵ LD, p. 186.
- ²⁵⁶ LD, p. 186,
- ²⁵⁷ LD, p. 190.
- ²⁵⁸ LD, p. 146.
- ²⁵⁹ LD, p. 146-47.
- ²⁶⁰ Catherine Soanes and Sara Hawker, eds., *Compact Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 107.
- ²⁶¹ LD, p. 293.
- ²⁶² LD, p. 293.
- ²⁶³ LD, p. 292.
- ²⁶⁴ LD, pp. 359-60.
- ²⁶⁵ LD, p. 565.
- ²⁶⁶ Williams 2016, p. 216.
- ²⁶⁷ Wolfreys, p. 145.
- ²⁶⁸ Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory* (London: Verso, 1978), p. 130.
- ²⁶⁹ Wolfreys, p. 151.
- ²⁷⁰ Zachary Samalin, 'Dickens, Disinterestedness, and the Poetics of Clouded Judgment', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction*, 45 (2014), 229-45 (p. 234).
- ²⁷¹ Amanda Anderson, *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 70.
- ²⁷² Samalin, p. 238.
- ²⁷³ LD, p. 131.
- ²⁷⁴ LD, p. 93.
- ²⁷⁵ LD, p. 138.
- ²⁷⁶ LD, p. 140.
- ²⁷⁷ LD, p. 308.
- ²⁷⁸ LD, p. 449.
- ²⁷⁹ Jeremy Tambling, *Dickens's Novels as Poetry: Allegory and Literature of the City* (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 210.
- ²⁸⁰ Anonymous review of *Bleak House*, *Illustrated London News*, 24th September 1853, p. 247.
- ²⁸¹ George Brimley, review of *Bleak House*, *The Spectator*, xxvi, 24th September 1853, 923-5 (p. 924).
- ²⁸² William Forsyth, 'Literary Style', *Fraser's Magazine*, lv (March 1857), 260-63 (p.260)
- ²⁸³ Edward B. Hamley, 'Remonstrance with Dickens', *Blackwood's Magazine*, lxxxi (April 1857), 490-503 (pp. 495, 496)
- ²⁸⁴ James Fitzjames Stephen, 'The Licence of Modern Novelists', *Edinburgh Review*, cvi (July 1857), 124-56 (p. 126) Dickens was moved to respond to Stephen's attack: see Collins, p. 366.
- ²⁸⁵ Collins, p. 356.
- ²⁸⁶ Forsyth, p. 261
- ²⁸⁷ Forsyth, p. 263.
- ²⁸⁸ John Hollingshead, 'Mr Dickens and his Critics', *The Train*, iv (August 1857), 76-9. Hollingshead became a contributor to *Household Words* after writing this piece: see Collins, p. 375.
- ²⁸⁹ Collins, p. 375.

-
- ²⁹⁰ Letter to W. H. Wills (assistant editor of *Household Words*), 26th September 1857, quoted in Collins, p. 375.
- ²⁹¹ John Carey, *The Violent Effigy* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), p. 151.
- ²⁹² *LD*, p. 276.
- ²⁹³ *LD*, p. 368.
- ²⁹⁴ *LD*, p. 381.
- ²⁹⁵ *LD*, p. 382.
- ²⁹⁶ *LD*, p. 387.
- ²⁹⁷ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Frost at Midnight', l. 63: *CPW*, p. 242.
- ²⁹⁸ *LD*, p. 368.
- ²⁹⁹ *LD*, p. 122.
- ³⁰⁰ This phrase is the title of Chapter 9 of Book 1: *LD*, p. 130.
- ³⁰¹ *LD*, p. 140.
- ³⁰² *LD*, p. 883.
- ³⁰³ *LD*, pp. 883-84.
- ³⁰⁴ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Kubla Khan', ll. 37-38: *CPW*, p. 298.
- ³⁰⁵ John Wain, 'Little Dorrit', in *Dickens and the Twentieth Century*, ed. by John Gross and Gabriel Pearson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 175-86 (p. 186).
- ³⁰⁶ David Trotter, 'Household Clearances in Victorian Fiction', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 6 (2008), 1- 19 (p. 7): <http://www.19.bbk.ac.uk/articles/abstract/10.16995/ntn.472/> (accessed 19.3.15).
- ³⁰⁷ Winter, p. 49.
- ³⁰⁸ Herst, p. 145.
- ³⁰⁹ Harold Bloom, *The Anatomy of Influence: Literature as a Way of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 10.

Conclusion

writing that has real poetic life [...] is a revealing of something that the writer doesn't actually want to say but desperately needs to communicate, to be delivered of. Perhaps it's the need to keep it hidden that makes it poetic – makes it poetry. The writer daren't actually put it into words, so it leaks out obliquely, smuggled through analogies. We think we're writing something to amuse, but we're actually saying something we desperately need to share. The real mystery is this strange need [...] Why do human beings need to confess? Maybe if you don't have that secret confession, you don't have a poem – don't even have a story.

Ted Hughes, interview, *Paris Review*¹

This thesis has demonstrated that Charles Dickens's debt to his Romantic Period predecessors is far more extensive and significant than had previously been recognised. The four chapters have analysed the relationship between canonical Romanticism and Dickens's fiction, a relationship that constitutes the peculiarly Dickensian Romanticism which he passed on to subsequent readers and writers. In each instance Dickens retains features of his predecessors, and turns them into something new and strikingly relevant, effectively 'unnam[ing] the precursor while earning [his] own name',² as Harold Bloom claims. I will conclude by summarising the dominant features of Dickens's relationship with his Romantic predecessors, and argue that an appreciation of his engagement with Romanticism is essential in order to comprehend his overall achievement as a writer of fiction. I will suggest why this Dickensian Romantic legacy matters, and trace its influence on twentieth- and twenty first-century fiction.

Perhaps the most important point of commonality between Dickens and canonical Romanticism is the belief that human society is urgently in need of change, and that writers have the power to effect that change. Dickens's statement in a letter to Henry Carey of 1854:

To interest and affect the general mind in behalf of anything that is clearly wrong – to stimulate and rouse the public soul [...] I believe to be one of fiction's highest uses. And this is the use to which I try to turn it',³

is akin to Wordsworth's in a letter to John Wilson of 1802:

A great poet [...] ought to a certain degree to rectify men's feelings, to give them new compositions of feeling, to render their feelings more sane, pure and permanent, in short, more consonant with nature.⁴

James Marlow's comment is instructive here: 'Like Wordsworth, Dickens seems to have viewed his own life as representative of the age in which he lived'.⁵ Shelley too asserted that 'Poets [...] are, in one sense, the creators, and in another, the creations, of their age', and confessed to 'a passion for reforming the world'.⁶ This reformist zeal is central to Dickens's relationship with his Romantic predecessors, and contains the germ of much that follows.

However, these statements also indicate a crucial distinction. While Wordsworth and Shelley talk about their work as that of a 'poet', Dickens identifies himself as a writer of 'fiction'. If this seems an obvious point, it is an essential one, accounting for many of the ways in which Dickens's Romantic legacy established its newness and difference from what went before. Just as it is difficult to imagine Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge or Keats writing a novel,⁷ so it is difficult to imagine Dickens confining himself to the linguistic and formal discipline of poetry. As Milan Kundera writes, 'the novel is defined [...] by the realm of reality it has to "discover"'.⁸ Dickens had no need 'to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society'⁹ is adapted to literary purposes, as Wordsworth and Coleridge did; as a storyteller in prose he could make use of the language he heard spoken all around him in the 'realm of reality' that is his subject, in order to serve his purpose. If the Romantics sought to introduce the prosaic and quotidian as a legitimate element of poetry, Dickens sought to introduce the poetic and imaginative as legitimate elements of prose fiction, exploring characters torn between the prosaic and the poetic, and creating writing that, in Jeremy Tambling's words, 'can be magnificently unsure of itself because it knows the self as double'.¹⁰

It is no surprise to find autobiographical elements in the work of writers who see their lives as representative of their age. In such classic autobiographical works as Wordsworth's *The Prelude* and Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, and in most of the scores (if not hundreds) of first-person poems by Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Keats, Byron and Shelley, the reader has little reason to suppose that the 'I' represents anyone other than the author. Even in pieces like Blake's 'The Little Black Boy' and 'The Chimney Sweeper' which are spoken by the eponymous protagonists, the voice is indistinguishable from the author's in the surrounding first-person poems. In Dickens's fiction the author's presence is also ubiquitous, as close 'as I am to you, and I am standing in the spirit at your elbow,'¹¹ as he says to the reader of *A Christmas Carol*. But his concerns, and the elements of autobiography he 'desperately needs to [...] be delivered of', in Ted Hughes's words,¹² are almost always conveyed obliquely through a series of fictional characters and settings embodying opposing sets of values. Jean Carr writes of 'the complicated ambivalence of Charles Dickens toward attempts to represent a life, and particularly of such a grand subject as himself'.¹³ We are never in much doubt as to where Dickens's sympathies lie, but they are mostly communicated through character, setting and story. A direct authorial intervention comes as something of a shock in Dickens's fiction, as when he turns in fury on the 'Utilitarian economists,

skeletons of schoolmasters, Commissioners of Fact' in *Hard Times*.¹⁴ Among canonical Romantic writers only the novelist, Mary Shelley, creates a series of contrasting fictional characters in contrasting settings: Walton, Victor, and the Creature, as a way of voicing her concerns. In this respect *Frankenstein* was the blueprint for precisely the kind of fiction that Dickens wanted to write.

Romantic Period writers, aware that they were evolving a new poetics profoundly at odds with what Warren Roberts calls 'the repressiveness and climate of fear that gripped the country during the 1790s',¹⁵ were unsure of their audience. Byron is an obvious exception, but the others tended to write either for each other, in the case of Wordsworth and Coleridge, or in the hope of an idealised, more enlightened future readership, as Andrew Bennet argues.¹⁶ This is in sharp contrast to Dickens who, as we have seen, forged a close, direct relationship with his readers from the start of his career. As Peter Ackroyd writes: 'For him the "public" was not some amorphous entity but at times a group of friends and at other times an extension of his family'.¹⁷ Dickens's sense of what Karl Smith calls 'obligation to external humanity' and 'fraternal social obligation',¹⁸ is surely at the heart of almost all of his published work. This difference in the Romantics' view of their audience and Dickens's conditioned their writing in important ways. Even when examining social and political issues, the focus in Romantic writing tends to be on outsiders, individuals unconnected with other human beings: Blake's children, Wordsworth's vagrants, and very often the poet personally. As M. H. Abrams writes: 'many Romantic poems [...] invited the reader to identify the protagonists with the poets themselves':

whether Romantic subjects were the poets themselves or other people, they were no longer represented as part of an organized society but, typically, as solitary figures engaged in a long, and sometimes infinitely elusive quest; often they were also social nonconformists or outcasts.¹⁹

Of course Dickens too uses outcasts as his subjects, as discussed in Chapter 4. But in every case he uses the open-ended nature of the storyteller's art to portray in minute detail the 'organized society' from which they are outcast, and to expose those dehumanising aspects of that society which led to the protagonists' alienation from it. And this society is almost invariably the one which Dickens and his original audience inhabited. Hermann Hesse sees this as essential to the storyteller's art: 'Storytelling presupposes listeners and demands of the storyteller a courage which he can summon up only when he and his listeners have a setting, a society, an ethic, a language, and a manner of thinking in common'.²⁰ Hesse could have been writing with Dickens in mind. Where the Romantic writers viewed their vocation as detached, even solitary, Dickens saw his role as a social one, and the storyteller as a necessary member of a his/her society. There is no doubt that his critiques of post-revolutionary England, though based on a more advanced phase of

industrialisation and political reaction, are closely akin to those of the Romantic writers. But where their critiques mostly offered a single perspective, detached from ‘organized society’ as Abrams notes, Dickens constructs in his mature fictions a gripping, multifaceted vision of society *in toto*, from the perspectives of rich and poor, outsiders and insiders, virtuous and villainous, which could not be ignored or marginalised, and which is close to the heart of his legacy overall.

In addition to these social concerns, Dickens shares with the Romantic writers a concern for the natural world, a belief that the exploitative approach to technology and commerce that characterised the Industrial Revolution is a step backward for mankind in that it creates relationships based on monetary values rather than human love and esteem. In those famous Romantic statements of the power of Nature to guide human beings towards an ‘eternal language’²¹ of divine wisdom and truth, commentators from Raymond Williams to Jonathan Bate have detected ‘the real relation between man and nature’, and the ‘green language’²² of a new poetry, a ‘radical [...] realignment [that] clears the way for a caring as opposed to an exploitative relationship with the earth’.²³ These ideas were crucially related to Romantic notions of childrearing and education, the ‘monster birth, /Engender’d by these too industrious times’²⁴ giving way to ‘A race of real children, not too wise, /Too learned, or too good, but wanton, fresh’, gathering for themselves ‘Knowledge not purchas’d with the loss of power!’²⁵ Ecology was a logical development from Romanticism.

For the Romantic writers, then, concern for the welfare of the planet goes hand-in-hand with concern for the welfare of humanity. There is an implicit trust in the power of Nature to redeem mankind. These concerns are also linked in Dickens’s fiction, where time and again ecology precisely reflects psychology, such as in Nell and Old Trent’s wanderings in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, the sea in *Dombey and Son*, evocations of country and city in *Bleak House* and *Hard Times*, the river in *Our Mutual Friend*, and of the marshes in *Great Expectations*. As George Levine writes: ‘The natural world, for Dickens, [...] is larger than anyone’s imagination of it; connections extend out endlessly’.²⁶ As with his Romantic predecessors, Dickens’s evocation of setting and ‘things’, although it functions on the level of realism, takes on a psychological power which reflects or even engages with characters’ states of mind. However, Dickens’s vision of the world and people around him is also informed by the evolutionary works of Robert Chambers and others, creating a ‘deep-time’ perspective that was unavailable earlier in the century, which made human beings’ place in nature seem less central, less certain. Where in those Romantic statements the contrast between the ‘monster birth’ of ‘these too industrious times’ and the ‘race of real children’ reared in nature is absolute, faith and confidence in the power of Nature to redeem humanity is unqualified, Dickens’s confidence in that power is altogether more provisional. At times the contrast between the works of nature and those of man has an absolute quality that echoes the Romantic trope, as in the evocation of the Marseilles prison and harbour at the beginning of *Little*

Dorrit, and the two sterile, ‘smoke-dried’ trees in *Dombey*’s London garden.²⁷ But in *Bleak House* the fog blights city and country alike; Nell’s final refuge in nature is powerless to redeem her for this world; and Amy Dorrit succeeds in restoring Clennam’s innate integrity within the walls of the Marshalsea prison, in the heart of London. As a result of this more qualified faith in nature’s powers as a ‘Great universal Teacher’, Dickens’s view of humanity’s potential is comparably less confident, less grandiose; there is no hope of building Jerusalem in these fictions, only what Rick Allen calls ‘pockets of redemption’²⁸ for a fortunate few.

This uncertain, provisional quality, ‘magnificently unsure of itself’,²⁹ is, I argue in this thesis, the essence of Dickensian Romanticism. The ‘struggling disposition to believe in a wider and nobler humanity than she had ever heard of’³⁰ that Dickens assigns to Louisa Gradgrind is precisely his own artistic bent. Living through the hard times of the mid-century, he cannot share the millennial, supremely confident prophecies with which the first-generation Romantics heralded the post-revolutionary era. Nor does he despair of them altogether. The contrived ‘happy endings’ of *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* and *Our Mutual Friend* do not begin to resolve the seething moral, social and psychic tensions that such novels bring to life. The reader is left with a sense of the inadequacy of society to provide a sense of belonging for its citizens. Dickens offers no panacea for the injustices of his society, no faith in a ‘Great universal Teacher’.³¹ What we find instead are those ‘pockets of redemption’³² for a few individuals, such as Joe Gargery and Biddy, Walter Gay and Florence Dombey, Ada, Esther Summerson and Alan Woodcourt. This redemption invariably involves loving relationships – a loving woman is as sure a guide to salvation as nature in Dickens – and results in children brought up by their biological parents. There is even a kind of partial, qualified redemption for the likes of Dombey and Gradgrind, Pip and Estella, who realise the error of their ways too late. And the unredeemed: Quilp, Carker, Tulkinghorn, Merdle, die alone, unloved and childless.

These, then, are the components of the Dickensian Romantic legacy: a concern with humane values and relationships, and a sense that they are under threat from contemporary society and culture; a relationship with environment, ecology and evolution, and a sense of their importance to human wellbeing; a use of imagery which fuses together the ecological and social concerns; a move from poetry to prose fiction which allows communication from a variety of contrasting viewpoints through character, setting and story; and a close relationship with readers as individuals, cultivating shared concerns and values, and, crucially, a shared sense of humour. As Robert Newsome writes, ‘Dickens has “purposely dwelt upon the romantic side of familiar things,” but he has not allowed them to cease to be familiar or to become entirely romantic’.³³ Dickens’s engagement with Romanticism is essentially an exploration of the question of how Romantics values and tropes, forged in the white heat of revolution, sit, or fail to sit, in his own unsettled, evolutionary (in all senses of that word) times.

It has been the aim of this study to fill that gap identified at the outset: the absence of an entry on Romanticism in the 2011 *Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens* which reflects the relative neglect of this area of Dickens studies. Juliet John's arguments in *Dickens's Villains*, discussed in the Introduction, against Dickens's being in any sense a Romantic legatee were perhaps a contributory factor to this neglect. It was never my intention to suggest that previous studies of Dickens's influences were incorrect, rather that they were incomplete. Romanticism is a vital component, enshrining the moral, social and ecological values which Dickens wished to 'absorb and exceed',³⁴ in John Bowen's phrase, in ways that his other influences did not. However, having made the case for the role of canonical Romanticism as a key influence upon Dickens's fiction, it is important not to overstate the case. It is Dickens's creative fusion of the Romantic legacy with the picaresque novel, melodrama, journalistic reporting, and the gothic and sentimental traditions, along with his own unrivalled gifts of recall, observation and expression, that together create the unique power of his stories.

The impact of that power is all around us. Walter Bagehot identified something of its range as early as 1858: 'There is no contemporary English writer whose works are read so generally through the whole house, who can give pleasure to the servants as well as to the mistress, to the children as well as to the master'.³⁵ By 1912, the centenary of Dickens's birth, the *Observer* extended that range to the national and political spheres, claiming that he had 'revealed Democracy to itself, and made it believe in itself and its power'.³⁶ A hundred years later, and in the years following the bicentenary, the diversity of his appeal is reflected in his ubiquity in print, screen, stage and online, as well as in the academy. His name and his fictional characters are used to sell everything from food and clothing to antiques, 'heritage' travel and tourism. It seems appropriate to end this study of Dickens's relationship with the Romantic movement by tracing a peculiarly literary influence which Dickensian Romanticism has exerted on the twentieth- and twenty-first century novel.

Between those two centenary birthdays Dickens's reputation fell foul of changing tastes, particularly in the years after the First World War. General readers never wavered in their demand for his work, but with writers and critics it was another matter.³⁷ In 1925 Virginia Woolf wrote:

a Dickens novel is apt to become a bunch of separate characters loosely held together, often by the most arbitrary conventions, who tend to fly asunder and split our attention into so many different parts that we drop the book in despair.³⁸

Woolf made an exception for *David Copperfield*, but otherwise Dickens was dismissed. Aldous Huxley's disdain at Dickens's 'inept and vulgarly sentimental'³⁹ treatment of the death of Little Nell in *Vulgarity in Literature* (1930) has already been noted. And Evelyn Waugh's condemnation of his character Tony Last to an endless reading aloud of Dickens's works to his captor in *A*

Handful of Dust (1934) is well known. These views were influential in the English-speaking world, but were not so readily accepted in other parts of the globe. The Argentine writer Jorge Louis Borges (1899-1986) grew up in Buenos Aires in a house full of English novels, poems and essays, and it was his voracious early reading of these that provoked the mature writing, Alberto Manguel says.⁴⁰ The hundreds of books in Borges's parents' house in the early years of the twentieth century were not contemporary. Buenos Aires was a long way from London, Paris, New York, and other centres of modernism, and communication was slow. The books Borges read in his formative years were nineteenth-century or earlier, and his approach to his craft, Manguel believes, was that of the Victorian or Edwardian man of letters.⁴¹ In the essay 'Literary Pleasure' (1927), Borges names Dickens as one of only five 'writerly friendships'⁴² that developed in his imagination from this early reading. Borges confesses, 'not without remorse', that 'new readings do not enthrall me'.⁴³

There is no doubt then, that the kind of writer Borges became, in the nineteen twenties and thirties, has far more in common with the nineteenth-century man of letters, and with Charles Dickens in particular, than with the modernist writers who held sway in the west. And the kind of writer that Borges became, became in turn the prototype for the generations of South American authors who followed him. Salman Rushdie cites Borges as one of the 'formal antecedents'⁴⁴ of the art of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, whose 1967 novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is widely regarded as the epitome of South American magic realism, and the catalyst for the movement that followed.

Thus there is a clear, credible pathway between Charles Dickens and the South American Magic Realism of the second half of the twentieth century, via Borges. A sentence from the Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier: 'What is the story of Latin America if not a chronicle of the marvelous in the real?',⁴⁵ is thought to be the origin of the term magic realism. Carpentier's formula is close to Robert Newsom's 'double perspective which requires us to see things as *at once* "romantic" and "familiar"'⁴⁶ in Charles Dickens. It is certainly not difficult to see the parallels in the fictions themselves. *A Christmas Carol*, for instance, with bells that peal out in Scrooge's house when no one rings them; ghosts from his past; humans and ghosts flying incredible distances through the air over land and sea; spectres of the future, some that turn out to be prophetic, like the characters at his nephew's house on Christmas day, and others, like his wretched, lonely death and burial, that are avoided in reality. Or *Little Dorrit*, with characters like Affrey who cannot distinguish reality from dream, and the crumbling Clennam house 'intent on burying the crushed wretch [Rigaud] deeper'.⁴⁷ Mysterious powers effecting magical changes on a harsh reality – this is very much the essence of magic realism. Time and again Dickens's fictions blend reality with magical forces, whether these be termed 'fancy', 'fairy tale', 'imagination', or 'dream'; and these forces exert a decisive influence upon reality. Marquez's famous dictum: 'you can get people to believe anything if you tell it convincingly enough',⁴⁸ might have been written with such fictions in mind.

There are also clear social and cultural parallels. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* Marquez describes the first train to arrive in the village of Macondo, 'eight months late':⁴⁹

At the start of another winter [...] a woman who was washing clothes in the river during the hottest time of the day ran screaming down the main street in an alarming state of commotion.

'It's coming,' she finally explained. 'Something frightful, like a kitchen dragging a village behind it.'⁵⁰

The raw newness of the experience, of a railway reaching into the rural heartlands of South America, is perfectly caught. But of course Charles Dickens witnessed the coming of the first trains on the planet, and captured that raw newness a hundred and fifty years ago in *Dombey and Son*, in his evocation of the chaos caused by railway construction in Staggs Gardens: 'The first shock of a great earthquake [...] a hundred thousand shapes and substances of incompleteness, wildly mingled out of their places, upside-down, [which] wholly changed the law and custom of the neighbourhood.'⁵¹ The Dickensian elements absorbed by Marquez and his followers: a vision of reality at once imaginative and recognisably reflecting social realities, a concern with the effects of technological innovation on individuals and on society, belong unmistakably to the Romantic legacy.

Magic realism, Rushdie writes, 'deals with what Naipaul has called 'half-made' societies, in which the impossibly old struggles against the appallingly new, in which public corruptions and private anguishes are somehow more garish and extreme than they ever get in the so-called 'North', where centuries of wealth and power have formed thick layers over the surface of what's really going on'⁵² - an acute diagnosis. Yet this is precisely the situation that Dickens faced in nineteenth-century England, as a result of the political revolutions in America and France, and the industrial revolution happening for the first time on the planet in England: the 'impossibly old': the Circumlocution Office, the Court of Chancery, Sir Leicester Dedlock and his like, confronted with 'the appallingly new': utilitarianism masquerading as progress, industrialisation scarring the landscape and commodifying human relationships, a confrontation that, as Dickens wrote, 'wholly changed the law and custom' of his country. And Dickens's precise aim was to pierce those thick layers of fog, circumlocution and obfuscation and reveal to his readers 'what's really going on'.

Like Marquez, Dickens writes for a specific audience in a specific time and place; such writers possess, in Hermann Hesse's words, 'a courage which [the writer] can summon up only when he and his listeners have a setting, a society, an ethic, a language, and a manner of thinking in common'.⁵³ Like Marquez, and like Hesse and Borges before him, Dickens doesn't concern himself with whether he's writing 'novels', as defined by critics from George Eliot and Henry

James to Virginia Woolf and Aldous Huxley, or whether he's not. Dickens and the Magic Realist writers belong to an older tradition of storytellers whose tales were the repositories of the history and wisdom of a people, of their 'ethic, language, and manner of thinking'. This tradition reaches back long before the advent of the written word – it's no accident that Dickens spent so much time and energy in his later years reading aloud, to as many of his people as he could reach. He is indeed the 'story-weaver at his loom', knowing that if he attends to his craft, and weaves the 'finer threads' into 'the whole pattern',⁵⁴ then the magic will come of its own accord. There's no doubt in my mind that writers of the twenty-first century will continue to discover in Dickens's fictions, with their qualified, uncertain Romanticism for unsettled, evolving societies, the way forward for weaving their own finer threads and patterns, as those of the twentieth century did.

¹ Ted Hughes, 'The Art of Poetry' (interview by Drue Heinz), *Paris Review* 134, 1995: <http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/1669/ted-hughes-the-art-of-poetry-no-71-ted-hughes> (accessed 8.10.2016).

² Bloom, Harold, *The Anatomy of Influence: Literature as a Way of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 10.

³ Charles Dickens, letter to Henry Carey, 24th August 1854: *LCD*, vol. VII, p. 405.

⁴ William Wordsworth, letter to John Wilson, 7th June 1802: Alan G. Hill, ed., *Letters of William Wordsworth: a New Selection* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 52.

⁵ James E. Marlow, *Charles Dickens: the Uses of Time* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1994), p. 28.

⁶ Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Preface' to *Prometheus Unbound*: *SPW*, pp. 206, 207.

⁷ Percy Shelley did write fiction, notably *Zastrozzi* and *St Irvyne*: see Stephen C. Behrendt, ed., *Percy Bysshe Shelley: Zastrozzi and St Irvyne* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). And Byron's *Child Harold* and *Don Juan* are verse narratives.

⁸ Milan Kundera, *The Curtain: An Essay in Seven Parts* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), p. 8.

⁹ William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Advertisement', *Lyrical Ballads, with a few other poems* (London: Penguin Poetry First Edition, 1999), p. 5.

¹⁰ Jeremy Tambling, *Dickens's Novels as Poetry: Allegory and Literature of the City* (New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 189.

¹¹ *CC* p.68.

¹² Hughes, 1995.

¹³ Jean Ferguson Carr, 'Dickens and Autobiography: A Wild Beast and His Keeper', *English Literary History* 52 (1985), 447-69 (p. 447).

¹⁴ *HT*, p. 166.

¹⁵ Warren Roberts, *Jane Austen and the French Revolution* (London: Athlone Press, 1995), p. 203.

-
- ¹⁶ Andrew Bennett, *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- ¹⁷ Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1990), p. 855.
- ¹⁸ Karl Smith, 'Little Dorrit's "speck" and Florence's "daily blight": Urban Contamination and the Dickensian Heroine', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction*, 34 (2004), 117-54 (p. 148).
- ¹⁹ M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Stamford: Cengage Learning, 11th edition 2015), p. 240.
- ²⁰ Hermann Hesse, 'The Interrupted Class' (1948), in *Stories of Five Decades*, ed. by Theodore Ziolkowski (St Albans: Triad/Panther, 1976), pp. 320-33 (p. 320).
- ²¹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Frost at Midnight' l. 60: *CPW*, p. 242.
- ²² Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Vintage, 2016. First published 1973), pp. 182, 191.
- ²³ Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth* (London: Picador, 2000), p. 112.
- ²⁴ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1805), ll. 292-93: *WTP*, p. 75.
- ²⁵ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1805), ll. 436-37, 449: *WTP*, p. 79.
- ²⁶ George Levine, *Darwin and the Novelists: Patterns of Science in Victorian Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 148.
- ²⁷ *DS*, p. 34.
- ²⁸ Rick Allen, discussion of *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens Fellowship, Cambridge Branch, Wolfson College, Cambridge, 14th March 2016.
- ²⁹ Tambling, p. 189.
- ³⁰ *HT*, p. 169.
- ³¹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Frost at Midnight' l. 63: *CPW*, p. 242.
- ³² Allen, 2016.
- ³³ Robert Newsom, *Dickens on the Romantic Side of Familiar Things: Bleak House and the Novel Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p. 7.
- ³⁴ John Bowen, review of Juliet John's *Dickens's Villains*, *Victorian Studies*, 45 (2003), 352-53 (p. 353).
- ³⁵ Walter Bagehot, review of the 'Cheap Edition' of Dickens's *Works* (1857-58), *National Review*, vii (October 1858), 458-86 (p. 458).
- ³⁶ Anon., *The Observer*, 10th February 1912, cited in Juliet John, 'Introduction', in *Dickens and Modernity*, ed. by Juliet John (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 1-18 (p. 6).
- ³⁷ T. S. Eliot's 'Wilkie Collins and Dickens' (1927), discussed in the Introduction, is a clear exception.
- ³⁸ Andrew McNeillie, ed., *The Essays of Virginia Woolf, Volume IV: 1925-1928* (London: Hogarth Press, 1986), p. 288.
- ³⁹ Aldous Huxley, *Vulgarity in Literature* (London: Chatto and Windus 1930), p. 56.
- ⁴⁰ Alberto Manguel, 'Jorge Louis Borges', a lecture given at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, 24th October 2016. Manguel knew Borges personally and was his amanuensis in the 1960s.
- ⁴¹ Manguel, *loc.cit.*
- ⁴² Jorge Louis Borges, 'Literary Pleasure', in Eliot Weinberger, ed., *The Total Library: Non-Fiction 1922-1986* (London: Allen Lane, 2000), pp. 28-31 (p. 28).
- ⁴³ Borges, p. 28.
- ⁴⁴ Salman Rushdie, 'Gabriel Garcia Marquez', in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Vintage Books, 2010. First published 1991), pp. 299-307 (p. 300).
- ⁴⁵ See Brian Edwards, *Theories of Play and Postmodern Fiction* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), p. 193.
- ⁴⁶ Robert Newsom, *Dickens on the Romantic Side of Familiar Things: Bleak House and the Novel Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p. 7.

⁴⁷ *LD*, p. 862.

⁴⁸ Gabriel García Márquez, 'The Art of Fiction', *Paris Review*, 82 (1981): <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/3196/gabriel-garcia-marquez-the-art-of-fiction-no-69-gabriel-garcia-marquez> (accessed 20.10.2016).

⁴⁹ Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (London: Penguin Books, 1970. First published in Spanish 1967), p. 228.

⁵⁰ Marquez 1970, p. 227.

⁵¹ *DS*, p. 79.

⁵² Rushdie, pp. 301-02.

⁵³ Hesse, p. 320.

⁵⁴ *OMF*, p. 893.

Bibliography

Authors' names in square brackets are used for anonymous articles with a generally-accepted attribution.

Primary Sources

Blake, William, *Complete Writings*, ed. by Geoffrey Keynes (London: Oxford University Press, 1969)

Blake, William, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, facsimile with Introduction and Commentary by Geoffrey Keynes (London: Oxford University Press, 1972)

Blake, William, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, facsimile with Introduction and Commentary by Geoffrey Keynes (London: Oxford University Press, 1975)

Byron, George Gordon, *Poetical Works*, ed. by Frederick Page, new edition corrected by John Jump (London: Oxford University Press, 1970)

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, *Biographia Literaria: or, Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions* ed. by George Watson (London: Dent, 1971)

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, *Lectures 1808-1819 on Literature*, ed. by R. A. Foakes, 2 volumes (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987)

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, *Poetical Works*, ed. by Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: Oxford University Press, 1967)

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. by Ernest Hartley Coleridge, 2 volumes (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968)

Dickens, Charles, *American Notes and Pictures from Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987)

Dickens, Charles, *A Tale of Two Cities*, ed. by Richard Maxwell (London: Penguin Books, 2003)

Dickens, Charles, *Barnaby Rudge*, ed. by Gordon Spence (London: Penguin Books, 1986)

Dickens, Charles, *Bleak House*, ed. by Norman Page (London: Penguin Books, 1985)

Dickens, Charles, *Dombey and Son*, ed. by Andrew Sanders (London: Penguin Books, 2002)

- [Dickens, Charles], 'Full Report of the First Meeting of the Mudfog Association for the Advancement of Everything', *Bentley's Miscellany*, 2 (October 1837), 397-413
- [Dickens, Charles], 'Full Report of the Second Meeting of the Mudfog Association for the Advancement of Everything', *Bentley's Miscellany*, 4 (July 1838), 209-27
- Dickens, Charles, *Great Expectations*, ed. by Charlotte Mitchell (London: Penguin Books, 1996)
- Dickens, Charles, *Hard Times*, ed. by Kate Flint (London: Penguin Books, 1995)
- Dickens, Charles, *Journalism*, ed. by Michael Slater and John Drew, 4 volumes. (London, J. M. Dent, 1994-2000)
- Dickens, Charles, *Little Dorrit*, ed. by John Holloway (London: Penguin Books, 1988)
- Dickens, Charles, *Nicholas Nickleby*, ed. by Michael Slater (London: Penguin Books, 1986)
- Dickens, Charles, *Oliver Twist*, ed. by Peter Fairclough (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985)
- Dickens, Charles, 'Oliver Twist, or, the Parish Boy's Progress. By Boz', Chapter 1, *Bentley's Miscellany*, 1 (February 1837), p. 105-15
- Dickens, Charles, *Our Mutual Friend*, ed. by Stephen Gill (London: Penguin Books, 1985)
- Dickens, Charles, *Selected Journalism 1850-1870*, ed. by David Pascoe (London: Penguin Books, 1997)
- Dickens, Charles, *Selected Letters*, ed. by Jenny Hartley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)
- Dickens, Charles, *Selected Short Fiction*, ed. by Deborah A. Thomas (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976)
- Dickens, Charles, *Sketches by Boz*, ed. by Dennis Walder (London: Penguin Books, 1995)
- Dickens, Charles, *The Christmas Books*, ed. by Michael Slater, 2 volumes (London: Penguin Books, 1985)
- Dickens, Charles, *The Letters*, ed. by Madeline House, Graham Storey, Kathleen Tillotson, K. J. Fielding, Nina Burgis et al., 12 volumes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965-2002)
- Dickens, Charles, *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit*, ed. by P. N. Furbank (London: Penguin Books, 1994)

- Dickens, Charles, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, ed. by David Paroissien (London: Penguin Books, 2002)
- Dickens, Charles, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, ed. by Angus Easson (London: Penguin Books, 1985)
- Dickens, Charles, *The Personal History of David Copperfield*, ed. by Trevor Blount (London: Penguin Books, 1985)
- Dickens, Charles, *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, ed. by Mark Wormald (London: Penguin Books, 2003)
- Dickens, Charles, *The Speeches*, ed. by K. J. Fielding (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960)
- Hardy, Thomas, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, ed. by David Skilton (London: Penguin Books, 1985)
- Hardy, Thomas, *Jude the Obscure*, ed. by Norman Page (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999)
- Keats, John, *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St Agnes and Other Poems* (London: Penguin Poetry First Editions, 1999)
- Keats, John, *Poetical Works*, ed. by H. W. Garrod (London: Oxford University Press, 1970)
- Keats, John, *The Letters*, ed. by Maurice Buxton Forman, 2 volumes (London: Oxford University Press, 1931)
- Márquez, Gabriel García, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (London: Penguin Books, 1970. First published in Spanish 1967)
- Shelley, Mary, *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus*, ed. by Maurice Hindle (London: Penguin Books, 1992)
- Shelley, Mary, *Journal*, ed. by Frederick L. Jones (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1947)
- Shelley, Mary, *The Letters*, ed. by Betty T. Bennett, 3 volumes (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press 1980-88)
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Poetical Works*, ed. by Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1968)
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *The Letters*, ed. by Frederick L. Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964)

Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Zastrozzi and St Irvyne*, ed. by Stephen C. Behrendt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986)

[Southey, Robert], 'Bell and Lancaster's Systems of Education', *Quarterly Review* VI (1811), 264-304

Southey, Robert, *The Origin, Nature, and Object of the New System of Education* (London: John Murray, 1812)

Southey, Robert, *Sir Thomas More, or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society*, 2 volumes (London: John Murray, 1829)

Wordsworth, William, *Letters: a New Selection*, ed. by Alan G. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984)

Wordsworth, William, *Poetical Works*, ed. by Thomas Hutchinson, revised by Ernest de Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1971)

Wordsworth, William, *The Prelude, or, Growth of a Poet's Mind (Text of 1805)*, ed. by Ernest de Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1969)

Wordsworth, William, *The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850*, ed. by Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979)

Wordsworth, William, Gill, Stephen, ed., *The Salisbury Plain Poems*, ed. by Stephen Gill (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1975)

Wordsworth, William, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads, with a few other poems* (London: Penguin Poetry First Editions, 1999)

Secondary Sources

Abrams, M. H., and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Stamford: Cengage Learning, 11th edition 2015)

Ackroyd, Peter, *Dickens* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1990)

Ackroyd, Peter, *Blake* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1995)

- Ackroyd, Peter, *London Under* (London: Vintage Books, 2012)
- Aikens, Kristina, 'The Daughter's Desire in *Dombey and Son*', *Critical Survey*, 17 (2005), 77-91
- Allen, Rick, *The Moving Pageant: a Literary Sourcebook on London Street-life, 1700-1914* (London: Routledge, 1998)
- Amigoni, David, *Victorian Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011)
- Anderson, Amanda, *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001)
- Andrews, Malcolm, *Dickens and the Grown-up Child* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994)
- Andrews, Malcolm, 'Introduction', *The Old Curiosity Shop*, ed. by Angus Easson (London: Penguin Book, 1985), pp. 11-31
- [Anon.], report of Coleridge's lecture of 18th November 1813, *Bristol Gazette* 25th November 1813, in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lectures 1808-1819 on Literature*, ed. by R. A. Foakes (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), Vol. I, pp. 582-89
- [Anon.], review of Coleridge's 'Frost at Midnight', *British Critic*, XIII, (1799), 662-63
- [Anon.], review of *Master Humphrey's Clock*, *Metropolitan Magazine*, xxix (1840), 111
- [Anon.], review of *Master Humphrey's Clock*, *Metropolitan Magazine*, xxx (1841), 78
- [Anon.], 'Inquest on the late Master Paul Dombey', *The Man in the Moon*, I (March 1847), 155-60
- [Anon.], review of *Dombey and Son*, *Parker's London Magazine*, May 1848, 201
- [Anon.], *Chapters in the Life of a Dundee Factory Boy; an Autobiography* (Dundee: James Myles, 1850)
- [Anon.], 'Charles Dickens and David Copperfield', *Fraser's Magazine*, xliii (1850), 698-710
- [Anon.], review of *Bleak House*, *Illustrated London News*, 24th September 1853, 247
- [Anon.], 'A Gossip about New Books', *Bentley's Miscellany*, xxxiv, October 1853, 367-74
- [Anon.], review of *Bleak House*, *The Eclectic Review*, n.s. vi, December 1853, p. 672

- [Anon.], review of *Hard Times*, *Westminster Review*, n.s. vi (October 1854), 604-08
- [Anon.], review of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Ecclesiastic and Theologian*, xvii (1855), 467
- [Anon.], review of *Great Expectations*, *Saturday Review*, xii (1861) 69
- [Anon.], review of *Our Mutual Friend*, *Saturday Review*, xx (1865), 612-13
- [Anon.], review of *Our Mutual Friend*, *London Review*, 28th October 1865, 467-68
- [Anon.], review of *Our Mutual Friend*, *Westminster Review*, n.s. xxix (1866), 582-85
- Arendt, Hannah, 'Introduction', in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1973), pp. 1-55
- Arizpe, Evelyn, and Morag Styles, *Reading Lessons from the Eighteenth Century: Mothers, Children and Texts* (Lichfield: Pied Piper Publishing, 2006)
- Auerbach, Nina, 'Dickens and Dombey: A Daughter After All', in *Romantic Imprisonment: Women and Other Glorified Outcasts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985)
- Avner, Jane, 'A Medway Childhood: The Dickensian "arriere-pays"?' in *Dickens and the Imagined Child* ed. by Peter Merchant and Catherine Waters (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 93-110
- Axton, William, 'Dombey and Son: From Stereotype to Archetype', *English Literary History*, 31, (1964), 301 -17
- Bailey, Quentin, *Wordsworth's Vagrants: Police, Prisons, and Poetry in the 1790s* (Farnham, Ashgate 2011)
- Baines, Paul, and Edward Burns, 'Introduction', in *Five Romantic Plays: 1768-1821*, ed. by Paul Baines and Edward Burns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. vii-xxix
- Bate, Jonathan, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1991)
- Bate, Jonathan, *The Song of the Earth* (London: Picador, 2000)
- Beer, Gillian, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction. Third Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

Bell, Andrew, *An Experiment in Education, Made at the Male Asylum of Madras. Suggesting a System by which a school or Family may teach itself under the Superintendence of the Master or Parent* (London: Cadell and Davies/Edinburgh: W. Creech, 1797)

Benjamin, Walter, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, translated by Harry Zohn (London, NLB, 1973)

Benjamin, Walter, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1973), pp. 219-53

Bennett, Andrew, *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Bennett, Betty T. ed., *The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press 1980-88)

Bentley, Eric, *The Life of the Drama* (New York: Athenaeum, 1964)

Bentley, G. E. (Jr), *The Stranger From Paradise* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003)

Benziman, Galia, 'Who Stole the Child?: Missing Babies and Blank Identities in Early Dickens', in *Dickens and the Imagined Child*, ed. by Peter Merchant and Catherine Waters (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015) pp. 27-41

Berman, Carolyn Vellenga, '"Awful Unknown Quantities": Addressing the Readers in Hard Times', *Victorian Literature and Culture* , 37 (2009) 561-82

Bevis, Matthew, 'Dickens by the Clock', in *Dickens's Style*, ed. by Daniel Tyler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 46-47

Bevis, Richard, *The Road to Egdon Heath: The Aesthetics of the Great in Nature* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999)

Blackburn, Alexander, *The Myth of the Picaro: Continuity and Transformation of the Picaresque Novel, 1554-1954* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979)

Blake, Kathleen, *Pleasures of Benthamism: Victorian Literature, Utility, Political Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Bloom, Harold, *The Anxiety of Influence: a Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, second edition 1997. First published 1973)

- Bloom, Harold, *The Anatomy of Influence: Literature as a Way of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011)
- Bodenheimer, Rosemary, 'Knowing and Telling in Dickens's Retrospects', in *Knowing and Telling the Past*, ed. by Suzy Anger (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001) pp. 215-33
- Bodenheimer, Rosemary, 'Dickens and the Knowing Child', in *Dickens and the Imagined Child*, ed. by Peter Merchant and Catherine Waters (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 13-26
- Borges, Jorge Louis, 'Literary Pleasure', in Eliot Weinberger, ed., *The Total Library: Non-Fiction 1922-1986* (London: Allen Lane, 2000), pp. 28-31
- Bowen, John, review of Juliet John's *Dickens's Villains*, *Victorian Studies*, 45 (2003), 352-53
- Bowen, John, 'A Garland for *The Old Curiosity Shop*', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction*, 37 (2006), 1-16
- Brewer, Luther A., *Leigh Hunt and Charles Dickens: The Skimpole Caricature* (New York: Haskell House, 1971)
- Brice, Alec W., 'Reviewers of Dickens in *The Examiner*: Fonblanque, Forster, Hunt and Morley', *Dickens Studies Newsletter*, III (1972), pp. 67-80
- Briggs, Asa, 'Struggle: fighting for the Education Act, 1870', in *The Collected Essays of Asa Briggs. Volume 3: Serious Pursuits: Communications and Education*. (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), pp. 246-83
- Brimley, George, review of *Bleak House*, *The Spectator*, xxvi, 24th September 1853, 923-25
- Brooks, Peter, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995. First published 1976)
- Brown, Bill, *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003)
- Buckley, Jerome Hamilton, *The Triumph of Time: A Study of the Victorian Concepts of Time, History, Progress, and Decadence* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1967)
- Buell, Lawrence, *The Environmental Imagination. Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1995)
- Butler, Marilyn, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981)

Carey, John, *The Violent Effigy* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973)

Carr, Jean Ferguson, 'Dickens and Autobiography: A Wild Beast and His Keeper', *English Literary History* 52 (1985), 447-69

Carter, Ian, *Railways and Culture in Britain: The Epitome of Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001)

Chadwick, Owen, *Victorian Miniature* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1997)

Chailant, Maria Teresa, 'The Adult Narrator's Memories of Childhood in David's, Esther's and Pip's Autobiographies', in *Dickens and the Imagined Child*, ed. by Peter Merchant and Catherine Waters (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 77-91

[Chambers, Robert], *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (London: John Churchill, 1844)

Chandler, James K., *Wordsworth's Second Nature: a Study of the Poetry and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984)

Chesterton, G. K., *Charles Dickens, a Critical Study* (New York: Dodd Mead and Company, 1906)

Chesterton, G. K., *Appreciations and Criticisms of the Works of Charles Dickens* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1911)

Chittick, Kathryn, *Dickens and the 1830s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

[Chorley, Henry Fothergill], review of *Bleak House*, *Athenaeum*, 17th September 1853, 1087-8

[Chorley, Henry Fothergill], review of *Our Mutual Friend*, *The Athenaeum*, 28th October 1865, 570

Clark, Robert, 'Riddling the Family Firm: The Sexual Economy in *Dombey and Son*', *English Literary History*, 51, (1984), 69-84

Cochran, Peter, *"Romanticism" - and Byron* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009)

Cockburn, Lord (Henry Thomas), *Life of Lord Jeffrey, with a Selection from his Correspondence* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1852)

- Coleridge, Ernest Hartley, 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge', in *Chambers's Cyclopaedia of English Literature* (London: W. & R. Chambers Ltd, 1903), Vol. III, pp. 56-71
- Collins, Philip, *Dickens and Education* (London: Macmillan, 1964)
- Collins, Philip, ed., *Dickens: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971)
- Collins, Philip, 'Dickens and Industrialism', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 20 (1980), 651-73
- Connell, Philip, *Romanticism, Economics, and the Question of 'Culture'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)
- Cook, Peter A., 'Chronology of the 'Lake School Argument: Some Revisions'', *Review of English Studies*, XXVIII (1977), 175-81
- Coote, Stephen, *John Keats: A Life* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995)
- Corton, Christine L., 'Drowning in the Fog: The Significance of Quilp's Death in *The Old Curiosity Shop*', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays in Victorian Fiction*, 44 (2013), 111-26
- Corton, Christine, *London Fog: The Biography* (Cambridge Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015)
- Cottle, Joseph, *Reminiscences of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey* (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1847)
- Coveney, Peter, *The Image of Childhood. The Individual and Society: a Study of the Theme in English Literature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967)
- Crabb Robinson, Henry, letter to Mrs Clarkson of 7th May 1808, in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lectures 1808-1819 on Literature*, ed. by R. A. Foakes (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), Vol. I, pp. 105-09
- Crawford, Iain, 'Pip and the Monster: The Joys of Bondage', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 28 (1988), 625-48
- Cronin, Richard, *Romantic Victorians: English Literature, 1824-1840* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002)
- Crouch, Laura E., 'Davy's *A Discourse, Introductory to A Course of Lectures on Chemistry: A Possible Scientific Source of Frankenstein*', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 27 (1978), 35-44

[Dallas, E. S.], review of *Our Mutual Friend*, *The Times*, 29th November 1865, 6

Darbishire, Helen, ed., *The Poems of John Milton* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961)

Davy, Humphrey, *A Discourse, Introductory to a Course of Lectures on Chemistry, Delivered in the Theatre of the Royal Institution on the 21st of January, 1802* (London: The Press of the Royal Institution, 1802),

Den Hartog, Dirk, *Dickens and Romantic Psychology: The Self in Time in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Houndmills: The Macmillan Press, 1987)

De Stasio, Clotilde, 'Starvation vs Cramming: Children's Education and Upbringing in Charles Dickens and Herbert Spencer', *Dickens Quarterly*, 27 (2010), 299-306

Dockstader, James Darryll, 'The Place of Charles Dickens in English Environmental Literature', A Dissertation submitted to the Department of English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Florida State University (2001)

Donne, John, *Poetical Works* ed. by Sir Herbert Grierson (London: Oxford University Press, 1973)

Donno, Elizabeth Story, ed., *Andrew Marvell: The Complete Poems*, (London: Penguin Books, 1985)

Douglas-Fairhurst, Robert, *Becoming Dickens: The Invention of a Novelist* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press, 2011)

Downes, Daragh, 'The Best of Time, the Worst of Time: Temporal Consciousness in Dickens', in *Victorian Time: Technologies, Standardizations, Catastrophes*, ed. by Trish Ferguson (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)

Drew, John, 'Texts, paratexts and "e-texts": the poetics of communication in Dickens's journalism', in *Dickens and Modernity*, ed. by Juliet John (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 61-93

Eagleton, Terry, *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory* (London: Verso, 1978)

Eaton, Marcia Muelder, 'Laughing at the Death of Little Nell: Sentimental Art and Sentimental People', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 6 (1989), 269-82

- Edwards, Brian, *Theories of Play and Postmodern Fiction* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998)
- Eichner, Hans, 'The Rise of Modern Science and the Genesis of Romanticism' *PMLA*, 97 (1982), 8-30
- Eilenberg, Susan, 'Voice and Ventriloquy in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"', in *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, ed. by Paul Fry (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), pp. 282-314
- Elam, Diane, '"Another Day Done and I'm Deeper in Debt': *Little Dorrit* and the Debt of the Everyday', in *Dickens Refigured: Bodies, Desires and Other Histories*, ed. by John Schad (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp. 157-77
- Elfenbein, Andrew, 'Managing the House in "Dombey and Son": Dickens and the Uses of Analogy', *Studies in Philology*, 92 (1995), 361-82
- [Eliot, George], 'The Natural History of German Life', *Westminster Review*, lxvi (July 1856), 51-79
- Eliot, T. S., 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919): *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), pp. 13-22
- Eliot, T. S., 'Wilkie Collins and Dickens' (1927): *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), pp. 460-70
- Eliot, T. S., *Collected Poems 1909-1962* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1970)
- Ellmann, Richard, *Oscar Wilde* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997)
- Epstein Kobayashi, Emily V., 'Detective or Defective Vision, a Matter of Breathing or Dying in *Bleak House*', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction*, 46 (2015), 185-207
- Evans, Harriet, 'The Bloody Code', *Manchester Student Law Review*, 2 (2013), 28-40
- Flint, Kate, 'Introduction', Charles Dickens, *Hard Times for These Times* (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1995), pp. xi-xxxiii
- [Forster, John], review of *Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Examiner*, 27th October 1839, 677-78
- Forster, John, *The Life of Charles Dickens* (London: Chapman and Hall, three volumes, 1873)

- Forsyth, William, 'Literary Style', *Fraser's Magazine*, lv (March 1857), 260-63
- Frank, Lawrence, *Charles Dickens and the Romantic Self* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984)
- Freud, Sigmund, and Joseph Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey (New York: Basic Books Inc., 2000)
- Furneaux, Holly, 'Charles Dickens's Families of Choice: Elective Affinities, Sibling Substitution, and Homoerotic Desire', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 62 (2007), 153-92
- Furneaux, Holly, *Queer Dickens: Erotics, Families, Masculinities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)
- Furneaux, Holly, 'Childhood', in *Charles Dickens in Context*, ed. by Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 186-93
- Furneaux, Holly, 'Dickens, Sexuality and the Body; or, Clock Loving: Master Humphrey's Queer Objects of Desire', in *Dickens and Modernity*, ed. by Juliet John (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012) pp. 41-60
- Gallagher, Catherine, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form, 1832-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985)
- Galloway, David, ed., *Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe: Poems, Tales, Essays and Reviews*, ed. by David Galloway (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971. First edition 1967)
- Garcia, Jose Maria Rodriguez, 'Scientia Potestas Est - Knowledge Is Power: Francis Bacon to Michel Foucault', *Neohelicon*, 28 (2001) 109-21
- Garrett, Martin, 'Our Mutual Friend: Contemporary Responses', paper given at the Cambridge Dickens Fellowship, 14th March 2016
- Gaull, Marilyn, 'On Jonathan Bate, Ted Hughes, Wordsworth, and Coleridge', *Wordsworth Circle*, 46 (2015), 201-03
- Gibson, Richard Hughes, *Forgiveness in Victorian Literature: Grammar, Narrative, and Community* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015)
- Gilchrist, Alexander, *Life of William Blake, with Selections from his Poems and Other Writings*, 2 volumes (London: Macmillan and Co., second edition, 1880)

Gill, Stephen C., "'Adventures on Salisbury Plain" and Wordsworth's Poetry of Protest 1795-97', *Studies in Romanticism*, 11 (1972), 48-65

Gill, Stephen, *William Wordsworth: The Prelude* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)

Gilmour, Robin, *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830-1890* (London: Longman, 1993)

Gissing, George, *The Immortal Dickens* (London: Cecil Palmer, 1925)

Godwin, William, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness*, ed. by Isaac Kramnick (London: Penguin Books, 1985)

Goodwin, Sarah Webster, 'Domesticity and Uncanny Kitsch in 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' and *Frankenstein*', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 10 (1991), 93-108

Grob, Alan, 'Wordsworth and Godwin: A Reassessment', *Studies in Romanticism*, 6 (1967), 98-119

'H', review of *Dombey and Son*, *Westminster Review*, xvii (April 1847), 5-11

[Hamley, Edward B.], 'Remonstrance with Dickens', *Blackwood's Magazine*, lxxxi (April 1857), 490-503

Harvey, W. J., 'Chance and Design in Bleak House', in *Dickens and the Twentieth Century*, ed. by John Gross and Gabriel Pearson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 145-57

Harvey, William R., 'Charles Dickens and the Byronic Hero', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 24 (December 1969), 305-16

[Hazlitt, William], 'Mr. Coleridge's Christabel', *Examiner*, (2 June 1816), 348-49

Hempill, Geoffrey, *The Anxiety of Presence: Charles Dickens and the Self in Time*, A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the City University of New York, 2007

Hennelly, Mark M. Jr., 'Carnavalesque "Unlawful Games" in *The Old Curiosity Shop*', *Dickens Studies Annual* 22 (1993), 67-120

Herst, Beth F., *The Dickens Hero: Selfhood and Alienation in the Dickens World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990)

- Hesse, Hermann, 'The Interrupted Class' (1948), in *Stories of Five Decades*, ed. by Theodore Ziolkowski (St Albans: Triad/Panther, 1976), pp. 320-33
- Heymanns, Peter *Animality in British Romanticism: The Aesthetics of Species* (New York: Routledge, 2012)
- Higbie, Robert, *Dickens and Imagination* (Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1998)
- Hilton, Boyd, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People? England 1783-1846* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006)
- Hodder, George, *Memoirs of My Time, Including Personal Reminiscences of Eminent Men* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1870)
- Holmes, Richard, *Shelley: the Pursuit* (London: Elisabeth Sifton/Penguin Books, 1987)
- Holmes, Richard, *Coleridge: Early Visions* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989)
- Holmes, Richard, *Coleridge: Darker Reflections* (London: Harper Collins, 1998)
- [Hood, Thomas], review of *Master Humphrey's Clock* Volume I, *Athenaeum*, 7th November 1840, 887-88
- [Horne, R. H.], 'Dust; or Ugliness Redeemed', *Household Words* I (1850), 379-84
- Horsman, Alan, ed., *Dombey and Son*, (Oxford: Clarendon Edition, Oxford University Press, 1974)
- House, Humphrey, *The Dickens World* (London: Oxford University Press, Second Edition, 1942)
- Hughes, Ted, 'The Art of Poetry' (interview by Drue Heinz), *Paris Review* 134, 1995: <http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/1669/ted-hughes-the-art-of-poetry-no-71-ted-hughes> (accessed 8.10.2016).
- Huxley, Aldous, *Vulgarity in Literature* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930)
- Ilbert, Sir Courtney, K.C.S.I., C.I.E, *Legislative Methods and Forms* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1901)
- Innes, Joanna, 'Origins of the Factory Acts: the Health and Morals of Apprentices Act, 1802', in *Law, Crime and English Society: 1660-1840*, ed. by Norma Landau (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 230-55

Inwood, Stephen, *A History of London* (London: Macmillan, 1998)

Jack, Belinda, 'Charles Dickens: *Hard Times* and Hyperbole', a lecture given at the Museum of London, 15th November 2016: <http://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/charles-dickens-hard-times-and-hyperbole> (accessed 20.11.16)

Jackson, T. A., *Charles Dickens: The Progress of a Radical* (New York: Haskell House, 1971)

[James, Henry], review of *Our Mutual Friend*, *The Nation*, 21 December 1865, 786-87

Jeffrey, Francis, review of Wordsworth's *The Excursion*, *The Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal* XXIV 47 (November 1814), p. 1

Jeffrey-Cook, John, 'William Pitt and his Taxes', *British Tax Review*, 4 (2010), 376-91

John, Juliet, *Dickens's Villains: Melodrama, Character, Popular Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

John, Juliet, 'Introduction', in *Dickens and Modernity*, ed. by Juliet John (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 1-18

John, Juliet, 'Things, Words and the Meanings of Art', in *Dickens and Modernity*, ed. by Juliet John (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 115-32.

Johnson, Pamela Hansford, 'The Sexual Life in Dickens's Novels', in *Dickens 1970*, ed. by Michael Slater (London: Chapman and Hall, 1970), pp. 173-94

Jones, Jonathan, 'Orphans: Childhood Alienation and the Idea of the Self in Rousseau, Wordsworth and Mary Shelley', a Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English, University of Warwick 2003

Kaplan, Fred, *Dickens: A Biography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988)

[Kent, Charles], review of *Dombey and Son*, *The Sun*, 13th April 1848

Kermode, Frank, 'The Artist in Isolation', in *Romantic Image* (Glasgow, Collins 1976. First published 1957), pp. 13-42

Kettle, Arnold, 'Our Mutual Friend', in *Dickens and the Twentieth Century*, ed. by John Gross and Gabriel Pearson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), pp. 213-24

Kipperman, Mark, 'Coleridge, Shelley, Davy, and Science's Millennium', *Criticism: a Quarterly for Literature and the Arts*, 40 (1998), 409-36

Kundera, Milan, *The Curtain: An Essay in Seven Parts* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007)

Lancaster, Joseph, *Improvements in Education, as it respects the industrious classes of the community: containing a short account of its present state, hints towards its improvement, and a detail of some practical experiments conducive to that end* (London: Darton and Harvey, J Mathews, and W. Hatchard, 1803)

Larkin, Philip, *High Windows* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974)

Lau, Beth, 'Romantic Ambivalence in *Frankenstein* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*', in *Fellow Romantics: Male and Female British Writers, 1790-1835*, ed. by Beth Lau (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009) pp. 71-98

Leavis, F. R., ed., *Mill on Bentham and Coleridge* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950)

Ledger, Sally, *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Ledger, Sally, and Holly Furneaux, eds., *Charles Dickens in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

Lefebure, Molly, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Bondage of Opium* (London: Quartet Books, 1977. First published 1974), pp. 109-19

Levine, George, 'The Ambiguous Heritage of *Frankenstein*', in *The Endurance of Frankenstein: Essays on Mary Shelley's Novel*, ed. by George Levine and U.C. Knoepfelmacher (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1979), pp. 3-30

Levine, George, *Darwin and the Novelists: Patterns of Science in Victorian Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991)

Levine, George, 'Introduction: George Eliot and the art of realism', in *The Cambridge Companion to George Eliot*, ed. by George Levine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 1-19

Litvac, Leon, 'Images of the River in *Our Mutual Friend*', *Dickens Quarterly* XX (2003) 34-55

Litvac, Leon, 'Education', in *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens: Anniversary Edition* ed. by Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 214-18

Lucas, John, *The Melancholy Man: A Study in Dickens's Novels* (London: Methuen, 1970)

MacCarthy, Fiona, *Byron: Life and Legend* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003)

[Macaulay, Thomas Babington], review of Mill's *Essay on Government*: *Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal*, XLIX (1829), 159-89

[Macaulay, Thomas Babington], review of Southey's *Colloquies*, *The Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal*, L (1830), 528-65

Magee, Sean Patrick, *An Entertaining Study: Our Mutual Friend's Bradley Headstone and Dickens's Answer to Phrenology: A Thesis Presented to the Graduate and Research Committee of Lehigh University in Candidacy for the Degree of Master of Arts* (Lehigh University, Pennsylvania, 2000)

Mahlberg, Michaela, *Corpus Stylistics and Dickens's Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 2013)

Manguel, Alberto, 'Jorge Louis Borges', a lecture given at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, 24th October 2016

Marlow, James E., *Charles Dickens: the Uses of Time* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1994)

Márquez, Gabriel Garcia, 'The Art of Fiction', *Paris Review*, 82 (1981): <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/3196/gabriel-garcia-marquez-the-art-of-fiction-no-69-gabriel-garcia-marquez> (accessed 20.10.2016)

Marsh, Joss Lutz, 'Good Mrs. Brown's Connections: Sexuality and Story-Telling in Dealings with the Firm of Dombey and Son', *English Literary History*, 58 (1991), 405-426

Martineau, Harriet, *Autobiography* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., three volumes, 1877)

Marvell, Andrew, *The Complete Poems*, ed. by Elizabeth Story Donno (London: Penguin Books, 1985)

McCrea, Barry, *In the Company of Strangers: Family and Narrative in Dickens, Conan Doyle, Joyce and Proust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011)

McSweeney, Kerry, 'David Copperfield and the Music of Memory', *Dickens Studies Annual*, 23 (1994), 93-119

Mellor, Anne K., *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters* (New York: Routledge 1988)

Merchant, Peter, and Catherine Waters eds., *Dickens and the Imagined Child* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015)

Miall, David S., 'Guilt and Death: The Predicament of The Ancient Mariner', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 24 (1984), 633-653

Miller, D. A., *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989)

Mladenov, Teodor, *Critical Theory and Disability: A Phenomenological Approach* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015)

[Moody, C. L.], review of Coleridge's 'Frost at Midnight', *Monthly Review*, XXIX (May 1799), 43-47

Moynahan, Julian, 'Dealings with the Firm of Dombey and Son: Firmness *versus* Wetness', in *Dickens and the Twentieth Century*, ed. by John Gross and Gabriel Pearson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), pp. 121-31

Newbon, Peter, 'Representations of Childhood in the Wordsworth Circle', a Dissertation Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Kings College Cambridge 2011

Newsom, Robert, *Dickens on the Romantic Side of Familiar Things: Bleak House and the Novel Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977)

Newsom, Robert, 'Criticism and Scholarship: Biographical', in *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens: Anniversary Edition*, ed. by Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 135-37

Ottum, Lisa, 'Reading, Romanticism, and Affect in Environmental Education', in *Wordsworth and the Green Romantics: Affect and Ecology in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Lisa Ottum and Seth T. Reno (Durham, New Hampshire: University of New Hampshire Press, 2016), pp. 208-32

Oulton, Carolyn W. de la L., "'No Magic Dwelling-Place in Magic Story': Time, Memory and the Enchanted Children of *Dombey and Son*", in *Dickens and the Imagined Child*, ed. by Peter Merchant and Catherine Waters (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp.43-56

Pakenham, Thomas, *The Year of Liberty: The Great Irish Rebellion of 1789* (London: Abacus, 1997)

Parker, Ben, 'Unhappy Consciousness: Recognition and Reification in Victorian Fiction', Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Columbia University, 2014

Parrinder, Patrick, "'Turn Again, Dick Whittington!': Dickens, Wordsworth, and the Boundaries of the City', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 32 (2004), 407-19

Patten, Robert L., 'Whitewashing the Blacking Factory', *Dickens Studies Annual*, 46 (2015), 1-22

Pearson, Gabriel, 'The Old Curiosity Shop', in *Dickens and the Twentieth Century*, ed. by John Gross and Gabriel Pearson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 77-90

Perry, Seamus 'Romanticism: The Brief History of a Concept', in *A Companion to Romanticism*, ed. by Duncan Wu (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 3-11

Peters, Laura ed., *Dickens and Childhood* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012)

Philips, Samuel, 'David Copperfield and Arthur Pendennis', *The Times*, 11th June 1851, 8

Poole, Adrian, review of Juliet John's *Dickens's Villains*, *Review of English Studies*, ns 53 (2002), 568-70

Poovey, Mary, 'The Structure of Anxiety in Political Economy and *Hard Times*', in *Literature and Culture*, ed. by Suzy Anger (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 151-71

Powys, John Cowper, *One Hundred Best Books: With Commentary and an Essay on Books and Reading* (New York: G.A. Shaw, 1916)

Powys, John Cowper, *The Pleasures of Literature* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd, 1938)

Purton, Valerie, 'Introduction', *Dombey and Son* (London: J. M. Dent, 1997), pp. XXV-XXXVI

Purton, Valerie, *Dickens and the Sentimental Tradition: Fielding, Richardson, Sterne, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Lamb* (London: Anthem Press, 2012)

Pykett, Lyn, *Charles Dickens* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002)

Radford, Andrew, and Mark Sandy, 'Introduction: Romanticism and the Victorians', in *Romantic Echoes in the Victorian Era*, ed. by Andrew Radford and Mark Sandy (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008) pp. 1-14

Rainsford, Dominic, 'Out of place: David Copperfield's Irresolvable Geographies', in *Dickens and Modernity*, ed. by Juliet John (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 193-208

Ribner, Jonathan P., 'Law and Justice in England and France: The View from Victorian London', in *Law and the Image: The Authority of Art and the Aesthetics of Law*, ed. by Costas Douzinas and Lynda Nead (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 178-202

Richardson, Angélique, and Chris Willis, eds., *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact: Fin-de-siecle Feminisms* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001)

Richardson, Rebecca, 'Bradley Headstone's Bad Example of Self-Help: Dickens and the Problem with Ambition', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays in Victorian Fiction*, 44 (2013), 267-88

Riskin, Jessica, *Science in the Age of Sensibility: the Sentimental Empiricists of the French Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002)

Roberts, Warren, *Jane Austen and the French Revolution* (London: Athlone Press, 1995)

Robinson, Jeffrey, 'Occupy Romanticism', a paper given at the Poetry & Revolution International Conference at the CPRC, Birkbeck College, University of London, Friday 25 May 2012 - Sunday 27 May 2012 (27 May 2012). downloaded from http://www.bbk.ac.uk/cprc/events/Jeffrey_C_Robinson_-_Poetry_and_Revolution_conference_paper.pdf (accessed 6.1.15)

Roon, Kenneth E., Junior, 'John Rechy's Borderless *City of Night*', in *The Idea of the City: Early Modern, Modern and Post-Modern Locations and Communities*, ed. by Joan Fitzpatrick (Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), pp. 181-92

Rushdie, Salman, 'Gabriel Garcia Marquez', in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Vintage Books, 2010. First published 1991), pp. 299-307

Ruskin, John, 'Unto this Last', *Cornhill Magazine*, ii (August 1860), 155-59

Ruth, Jennifer, 'Mental Capital, Industrial Time, and the Professional in *David Copperfield*', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 32 no.3, 303-30

Sabey, Brian, 'Ethical Metafiction in Dickens's Christmas Hauntings', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction*, 46 (2015), 123-46

Sadrin, Anny, *Great Expectations* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988)

Samalin, Zachary, 'Dickens, Disinterestedness, and the Poetics of Clouded Judgment', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction*, 45 (2014), 229-45

Sanders, Andrew, 'Death and Funerals', in *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens: Anniversary Edition*, ed. by Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 154-55

Sanders, Andrew, 'The Aristocracy', in *Charles Dickens in Context*, ed. by Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 252-59

Schlicke, Paul, 'The True Pathos of *The Old Curiosity Shop*', *Dickens Quarterly*, 7 (1990), 189-99

Schlicke, Paul, 'Dombey and Son', in *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens: Anniversary Edition*, ed. by Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 184-88

Schlicke, Paul, 'Hard Times', in *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens*, ed. by Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 266-70

Paul Schlicke, 'Leavis, F. R.', in *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens*, ed. by Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 331

Schlicke, Paul, 'Our Mutual Friend', in *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens: Anniversary Edition* ed. by Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 442-46

Schlicke, Paul, 'The Mudfog Papers', in *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens: Anniversary Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 394

Schulting, Sabine, *Dirt in Victorian Literature and Culture: Writing Materiality* (New York: Routledge, 2016)

Secord, James A., *Victorian Sensation: The Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000)

Seymour, Miranda, *Mary Shelley* (London: John Murray, 2000)

Shaffner, Randolph, *The Apprenticeship Novel: A Study of the 'Bildungsroman' as a Regulative Type in Western Literature, with a Focus on Three Classic Representatives by Goethe, Maugham and Mann* (New York: Peter Lang, 1984)

Shakespeare, William, *Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. by M. R. Ridley (London: Methuen and Co Ltd, 1967)

- Shanahan, Daniel, *Toward a Genealogy of Individualism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992)
- Sharrock, Roger, 'The Chemist and the Poet: Sir Humphry Davy and the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, 17 (1962), pp. 57-76
- Shuttleworth, Sally, *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996)
- Simon, Leslie S., 'Dickens' Novels as Poetry: Allegory and Literature of the City by Jeremy Tambling' (review), *Dickens Quarterly*, 33 (2016), 68-71
- [Simpson, Richard], review of *Hard Times*, *The Rambler*, n.s. ii (October 1854), 361-2
- Skelton, Robin, ed., *Poetry of the Thirties*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1981)
- Slater, Michael, ed., *Dickens 1970: Centenary Essays* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1970)
- Slater, Michael, *Dickens and Women* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1983)
- Slater, Michael, *Charles Dickens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009)
- Smith, Bruce P., 'The Presumption of Guilt and the English Law of Theft, 1750-1850', *Law and History Review*, 23 (2005), 133-71
- Smith, Karl, 'Little Dorrit's "speck" and Florence's "daily blight": Urban Contamination and the Dickensian Heroine', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction*, 34 (2004), 117-54
- Soanes, Catherine, and Sara Hawker, eds., *Compact Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)
- Speak, Tiiu, 'Environment in Literature: Lawrence Buell's Ecocritical Perspective', in *Proceedings of the Estonian Academy of Arts, December 4, 1998: Place and Location: Studies in Environmental Aesthetics and Semiotics*, ed. by Kaia Lehari and Virve Sarapik. Tallinn, (Estonian Academy of Arts, 2000) pp. 160-71
- Stewart, Garrett, *Dickens and the Trials of Imagination* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1974)
- Stewart, Garrett, *Dear Reader: The Conscripted Audience in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 222-23
- Stone, Donald D., *The Romantic Impulse in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980)

Stuart, Daniel, 'Let Them Be: Dickens's Stupid Politics', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction*, 46 (2015), 339-56

Styles, Morag, *From the Garden to the Street: an Introduction to 300 Years of Poetry for Children* (London: Cassel, 1998)

Tambling, Jeremy, *Dickens's Novels as Poetry: Allegory and Literature of the City* (New York: Routledge, 2015)

Thompson, E. P., 'Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism', *Past and Present*, 38 (1967), 56-97

Thompson, E. P., *The Romantics: England in a Revolutionary Age* (New York: The New Press, 1997)

Thrift, Nigel, 'The Making of a Capitalist Time Consciousness', in *The Sociology of Time* ed. by John Hassard (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990)

Tinker, C. B., and H. F. Lowry, eds., *Arnold: Poetical Works* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969)

Tomalin, Claire, *The Invisible Woman: the Story of Nelly Ternan and Charles Dickens* (London: Penguin Books, 1991)

Tomalin, Claire, *Charles Dickens: A Life* (London: Viking, 2011)

Townsend, Dabney, 'The Picturesque', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 55 (1997), 365-76

Trotter, David, 'Introduction', *Charles Dickens, Great Expectations*, ed. by Charlotte Mitchell (London, Penguin Books 1996), pp. vii-xx

Trotter, David, 'Household Clearances in Victorian Fiction', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 6 (2008), 1- 19: <http://www.19.bbk.ac.uk> (accessed 29.3.2014)

Wain, John, 'Little Dorrit', in *Dickens and the Twentieth Century*, ed. by John Gross and Gabriel Pearson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 175-86

Warren, Andrew, *The Orient and the Young Romantics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)

Waters, Catherine, *Dickens and the Politics of the Family* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Waters, Catherine, 'Domesticity', in *Charles Dickens in Context*, ed. by Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 350-57

Weigand, Dometa, 'Coleridge's 'Web of Time': The Herschels, the Darwins, and Psalm 19', in *The Coleridge Bulletin: The Journal of the Friends of Coleridge*, New Series 28 (2006), 91-100

Welsh, Alexander, *Dickens Redressed: The Art of Bleak House and Hard Times* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000)

Wetzels, Walter, 'Johann Wilhelm Ritter: Romantic Physics in Germany', in *Romanticism and the Sciences*, ed. by Andrew Cunningham and Nicholas Jardine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

White, Carol Anne, 'Responses to Byron in the Works of Three Nineteenth-Century Novelists: Edward Bulwer, Charles Dickens and Charlotte Brontë', A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy Graduate Department of English University of Toronto, 1997

White, J. Edmund, 'Pantisocracy and Pennsylvania: Plans of Coleridge and Southey and of Cooper and Priestly', *Bulletin for the History of Chemistry*, 30 (2005), 70-76

Wilde, Oscar, *Complete Works, with an Introduction by Vyvyan Holland* (London: Collins, 1969)

Williams, Raymond, *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971)

Williams, Raymond, 'The Reader in *Hard Times*', in *Writing in Society* (London: Verso, 1983), pp. 166-76

Williams, Raymond, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fourth Estate, 2014)

Williams, Raymond, *The Country and the City* (London: Vintage, 2016)

Wilson, Angus, 'Dickens on Children and Childhood', in *Dickens 1970: Centenary Essays*, ed. by Michael Slater (London: Chapman and Hall, 1970), pp. 195-227

Wilson, Angus, *The World of Charles Dickens* (London: Martin Secker and Warburg Limited, 1970)

Wilson, Edmund, *The Wound and the Bow* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1997)

Wilson, Michelle L., 'Esther Summerson's Narrative Relations: Re-inscribing Inheritance in *Bleak House*', *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction*, 46 (2015), 209-30

Winter, Sarah, 'Curiosity as Didacticism in "The Old Curiosity Shop"', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 34 (2000) 28-55

Wolfreys, Julian, *Writing London: The Trace of the Urban Text from Blake to Dickens* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 1998)

Wynne, Deborah, *Women and Personal Property in the Victorian Novel* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2010)

Yatsugi, Aya, 'The Spiritual Orphans in *Bleak House*, *Hard Times*, and *Little Dorrit*', *Kasumigaoka Review*, 1 (1994), 129-47

Yelin, Louise, 'Strategies for Survival: Florence and Edith in "Dombey and Son"', *Victorian Studies*, 22 (1979), 297-319

Young, Lilian M., 'The Circus in *Hard Times*', 115 *Vernon* (2013), paper 27, p. 10. http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/writing_associates/27 (accessed 12.9.16)