CARLYLE AND DICKENS :

THE QUESTION of INFLUENCE

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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INTRODUCTION

'That man', wrote Caroline Fox of Dickens in 1841, is carrying out Carlyle's work more emphatically than any...'[1] The novel that inspired this judgement was The Old Curiosity Shop, and her reasons for coming to such a conclusion reflect a view of Carlyle that was to become increasingly rare during his lifetime. Dickens, continued Caroline Fox, 'forces the sympathies of all into unwonted channels, and teaches us that Punch and Judy men, beggar children, and daft old men are also of our species, and are not, more than ourselves, removed from the sphere of the heroic.' This seems, perhaps, a curious point of comparison to us, though at this point in time Carlyle was regarded as being kindlier than his later reputation might suggest. The two men's names were again linked, some ten years later, in a way which reflects to some extent a change that had already taken place in the critical atmosphere surrounding Carlyle's work s. The writer's assessment of the tendency of Dickens's writings is similar to that of Caroline Fox; but he evokes Carlyle's name with a very different intention: '...it is certain,' wrote Fraser's Magazine in 1850,

> that no one has been more instrumental than Dickens in fostering that spirit of kindly charity which impels a man to do what he can, however narrow his sphere of action may be, to relieve the sufferings and to instruct the ignorance of his brethren; while Carlyle, on the other hand, treats all such efforts with lofty disdain, and would call them mere attempts to tap an ocean by gimlet-holes, or some such disparaging metaphor.'[2]

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1. Fox, C., Memories of Old Friends, London, 1882, 117.
2. "Charles Dickensand David Copperfield", Fraser's Magazine, XLll (1850), 709.

Trollope's implied contrast of Dickens (portrayed as 'Popular Sentiment') and Carlyle ('Pessimist Anticant') in The Warden can be seen, perhaps, to underline this judgement. Carlyle and Dickens were probably seen by their readers, I think, as being very different. The comparison between them (though it was certainly made, from time to time) was not an inevitable one for the Victorian mind, even when (as I shall argue) Dickens saw himself - demonstrably in The Chimes and Hard Times - as conveying Carlylean ideas. The debt of the novelist to the sage has, perhaps, been more readily acknowledged by recent critics than it was at the time. 'His influence upon Dickens was profound', writes Professor Ford;[3] Humphry House suggests that Dickens 'took a good deal ... from Carlyle;'[4] and Professor Tillotson believes that the evidence for the response to Carlyle, not only of Dickens but of other novelists, 'is overwhelming.'[5]

The similarities between Carlyle's social theory and Dickens's are certainly, at times, very striking, and one is led to wonder why they were not more commonly acknowledged during Dickens's lifetime. The two writers both had an enormous public - their works were often advertised together, in tandem, and together they headed Chapman and Hall's list of bestsellers for years - and though their writings might be imagined to appeal to rather different kinds of reader, they must frequently have been housed in the same bookcase. One reason for the relative infrequency of contemporary attributions to the sage of some of the more Carlylean ideas in Dickens's novels is to be found, perhaps, in the nature of Carlyle's massive influence, not over Dickens merely,

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3. Ford, G.H., Dickens and his Readers, London, 1955, 88.
4. House, H., The Dickens World, London, 1960, 51.
5. Tillotson, K., Novels of the Eighteen-forties, London, 1961,153.

or even over literary circles, but over his whole age. Carlyle became influential, not because his message constituted a revelation of new and unsuspected truths, but because at a moment in English History when men were bewildered and fearful of the future, he put the problems of the period - and especially of the late 'thirties and early 'forties - into words whose meaning could not be mistaken, and implied, by his personality rather than by any new revelation, that, like Oedipus, he somehow possessed the strength and vision needed to guide his countrymen through their darkness. But the problems already existed. Carlyle articulated uncertainties that were already felt: perhaps this is why few felt the need, both during and after the height of his reputation, to attribute any such attempt as Dickens's to examine these uncertainties, to his reading of Carlyle. Better than we can, they referred Dickens's understanding of society to its source, rather than to a literary intermediary, no matter how eminent.

If Dickens had a mentor, nevertheless, it was certainly Carlyle. In their personal relations, he extended to him a respect, amounting to reverence, for which there is no parallel in his attitude to any other of his contemporaries. We have evidence for his knowledge of The French Revolution (which was intimate), and for his acquaintance with Sartor Resartus[6], and textual indications for the effect on certain of his novels of these two works, and of Chartism and Past and Present.[7] We have reason to believe, in other words, that Dickens knew at least fairly well the four works that can be reasonably seen as constituting the summit of Carlyle's mature achievement, and

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6. For FR, See Forster, 505; for SR, see MP, 359.
7. For FR, see pp 200ff below; for SR, see pp 158 and 312-3 below, for Chartism, see pp 129, 301, and 355 below; for PP, see p 310 below.

that these works had a discernible affect on his writings. We can also observe at least two points in Dickens's career at which he almost certainly saw himself as writing under Carlyle's influence, a fact which he attempted to bring to Carlyle's attention at the time. We have no such evidence for Dickens's admiration of any comparable figure; as Professor Collins suggests, 'Dickens was not well acquainted with the philosophers, nor even with the "thinkers" or "sages" of his day, except for Carlyle.'[8] Dickens made no secret of his respect for the Prophet of Chelsea, and his son Henry recalled long afterwards that Dickens 'used to say -- and indeed he has said it to me -- that the man who had influenced him most was Thomas Carlyle.'[9]

Dickens, it is fairly easy to demonstrate, was certainly influenced by Carlyle. What needs to be decided, I think, is how this influence can be seen to operate, and how useful it is to know about it. Suggestions of 'influence' are, I think, of dubious value unless some care is taken over their assertion; the great danger is that they tend to reduce the importance of the writer's own powers, to make him appear less the centre of his own creative world than an intelligent critical interest in a particular work might otherwise suggest. To demonstrate the influence of one writer over another is a proceeding fraught with danger, if for no other reason than that it demands a valid critical understanding of the workings of not one, but two creative imaginations, who should ideally be shown as mutually self-revealing, but may well in practice be the reverse. Professor Marcus, for instance, suggests that the references to clothes throughout Oliver Twist

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8. Collins, P., "Dickens's Reading", Dickensian, LX (1964), 143.
9. Dickens, H., "A Chat about Charles Dickens", Harper's Magazine, (European Edition), LXVlll (1914), 189. Henry continues, nevertheless, that 'this somewhat surprised me. I could understand this in connection with his book, A Tale of Two Cities, but not when taken in its general sense. I gathered, however, that what he most admired in Carlyle was his sincerity and truth.'

(Oliver's moving from the criminal underworld to middle-class safety and back again being always dramatised by a change of clothing) show that Dickens may have recently read Sartor Resartus, with its exposition of Carlyle's 'philosophy of clothes'.[10] Two replies can be made to such a suggestion. Firstly, that Sartor Resartus had only appeared in England in its serialisation in Fraser's Magazine (1833-4), at a time when Carlyle was virtually unknown, and was not republished in book form until 1838. Dickens, therefore, unless - as seems improbable - he had read Sartor in Fraser's or in an American edition of 1836 or 1837, is very unlikely to have read Sartor Resartus by the time he wrote Oliver Twist, the serialisation of which began in 1837. A private reprint from the Fraser's serialisation was published in 1834 for Carlyle's friends, but this is not an edition Dickens was likely to have known. It is not always so easy, however, to argue against such suggestions of influence on circumstantial grounds, and the important objection to this one is critical, and hence, to some extent, a question of personal judgement. I do not see Dickens's references to clothes in Oliver Twist as having any real affinities with the symbolism of Carlyle's 'philosophy of clothes', and if I am right, the effect if not the intention of such a suggestion of influence (if it is taken to its logical conclusion) is to foster a critical misjudgement of Dickens's novel. What I, at any rate, take to be a simple example of novelistic 'stage business' is, by an effort of - I think - mistaken critical imagination, raised to the awful level of 'philosophy' and 'symbolism'. There is a similar danger in attributions to a Carlylean source of Dickens's social theory. Dickens's feelings about society came in the first place from life and not from books about it, and unless an examination of Carlyle's

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10. Marcus, S., Dickens from Pickwick to Dombey, London, 1965, 80.

undoubted effect on Dickens in this field takes account of how essentially Dickensian the 'Carlylean' elements in his social thinking remain, they reduce our understanding of the personal involvement on Dickens's part that it required, and are likely to contribute towards a misapprehension of its content.

What we need to ask here, is not so much whether such influence existed, but how, and where, it operated. How much of Dickens's awareness of his society would have remained unrealised without Carlyle? How much Carlylean influence over, say Hard Times, is real, and how much apparent? How much of Carlyle's influence over Dickens, even when Dickens clearly saw himself as writing under the Prophet's shadow, rested on a complete understanding of the intellectual and spiritual bases of Carlyle's oeuvre, and how much on an unconscious moulding of the prophet in Dickens's own image? 'These', in Carlyle's words, 'are Questions:' To attempt an answer to them we need to understand, at least in part, not simply the undoubted and extensive parallels, especially in the second half of Dickens's career, that exist between his works and social theory and Carlyle's; we need to point out at some length too, other strands in Dickens's understanding of the questions involved, and to show that Carlylean thought in Dickens's novels, where it is alleged, is distinctively so, and was unlikely to come from other sources. I agree with Professor Collins that, though Dickens himself acknowledged his debt to Carlyle, he 'was incurious about the processes of his [own] thought and art', and that' To assert that Dickens was influenced by Carlyle here or there, that he would not have written thus if he had not read Carlyle, is often tempting but rarely safe.'[11] In every instance where I have

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11. Collins, P., Dickens and Education, London, 1963, 216.

found Carlyle's influence over Dickens, I have also found an alternative, and often (as I hope to show) more fundamental, reason why he should have been thinking along 'Carlylean' lines, Carlyle's effect on Dickens's thinking was a forming and shaping one, I think; it did not operate as a simple transference of ideas from one mind to another. My conclusion is that of Professor Cazamian, that 'L'influence de Carlyle a precisé et fortifié ses propres tendances et leur a souvent donné leurs formules'.[12]

This is not, however, to minimise the great importance of Carlyle for Dickens; rather, it modifies our definition of the word 'influence'. Carlyle rarely, if ever, changed Dickens's opinions, but he did perform the vital function of presenting conclusions, analogous in some way to ones Dickens had already arrived at but, perhaps, not fully realised, and helping Dickens to reach his own position in a form which, though sometimes demonstrably indebted to the sage, remained distinctively and vitally Dickensian. Carlyle's influence over Dickens is demonstrated most comprehensively, and in very different ways, in two novels, published five years apart: Hard Times, and A Tale of Two Cities. In both these novels, we can see a heavy debt to Carlyle, the meaning of which only becomes apparent when we examine the way in which Carlylean assumptions and material can be seen to overlap, sometimes almost indistinguishably, other equally demonstrable influences on Dickens's thinking. In Hard Times, we must show a partly (and probably intentionally) Carlylean social philosophy as being almost completely explicable, at the same time, in terms of Dickens's own topical concerns, and of a body of private opinion whose genesis had nothing to do with Carlyle; in the Tale, we must show a mass of historical

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12. Cazamian, E., Le Roman Social en Angleterre, 1830-1850. Quoted Collins, op cit., 216.

detail for which Dickens was indebted to The French Revolution, against an overlapping mass which Dickens culled from other sources, and against a 'philosophy' of History very different, I think, from that of Carlyle's history. The second section of this study is concerned with a detailed examination of some of the overlapping sources, Carlylean and otherwise, of these two novels. The third section seeks to examine other instances of Carlyle's influence over Dickens, and to place our understanding of them, and of his two most consistently Carlylean novels, in the general context of Dickens's evolving beliefs. The first section considers the considerable body of biographical evidence for Dickens's admiration of Carlyle, and part of the sometimes interesting, but less trustworthy stylistic evidence for his influence over Dickens's works.

Before the question of Carlyle's influence over Dickens can be examined however, one vital topic must be discussed, without some understanding of which the main theme of this study would lose much of its meaning. Dickens's reactions to the teachings of the prophet of Chelsea must be seen, not as an isolated phenomenon, but as one more example of how in tune he often was with the forces that moulded a wider public opinion. The significance of Carlyle's influence over Dickens cannot be fully grasped until we have made some attempt at an understanding of the sage's massive influence over the age to which Dickens often reacted so intimately. Dickens's own response to Carlyle was often, I believe, analogous to that of Carlyle's vast public. What, then, was the Prophet's meaning for the Victorian mind? What were the factors that projected him into the unique position he occupied for more than three decades? We must now attempt to answer these questions.

Chapter One: CARLYLE AND THE VICTORIANS

In 1895, George Saintsbury noted sadly the decline in Carlyle's stock. 'I believe it will be generally admitted,' he wrote, 'that there is nowadays no more distinct sign of a man's having reached the fogey, and of his approaching the fossil, stage of intellectual existence than the fact that he has an ardent admiration for Carlyle.' The decline, Saintsbury thought, had been a rapid one: 'it was but...the other day that to admire Carlyle was still a mark, not indeed of intense or daring innovation...but yet of heresay and opposition to the settled precepts of the sages.'[1] Saintsbury's 'only the other day' needs some qualification, of course. By his death in 1881 most people saw him as the lone survivor of a lost era. The same winter carried away another, younger voice. 'The common season of their departure,' noted a writer in the Contemporary Review, 'records a revolution of thought. Thomas Carlyle and George Eliot, though separated by the interval of a bare generation, represented two intellectual eras: - the great Englishwoman who has made fiction the vehicle of an impressive moral doctrine belongs wholly to the present; the great Scotchman who has done the like by history belongs to a phase of development that we have already left far behind us. With all the characteristic tendencies of the day he was out of sympathy, with most of them we might say he was out of relation. His figure stands out clearly only in the light of the past.'[2] Three years before Carlyle's death, Swinburne, that unlikely disciple of John Stuart Mill, had made the same point, coupling his name with that of Newman:

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1. Saintsbury, G., Corrected Impressions, London, 1895, 41 - 2.
2. "A Study of Carlyle", Contemporary Review, XXXIX (1881), 584.

Your world of Gods and kings, of shrine and state,
  Was of the night when hope and fear stood nigher,
  Wherein men walked by light of stars and fire
Till man by day stood equal with his fate.
Honour not hate we give you, love not fear,
  Last prophets of past kind, who fill the dome
Of great dead Gods with wrath and wail, nor hear
  Time's word and man's: "Go honoured hence, go home,
Night's childless children; here your hour is done;
Pass with the stars, and leave us with the sun".[3]

Carlyle, it was clear at his death, had outlived his influence on his age, partly, thought the Annual Register, 'through a considerable narrowness of vision, which was in one sense the cause of his strength, but which prevented him passing from the needs of one generation to those of another.'[4] It is difficult, more than a century later, to understand the pervasiveness of Carlyle's influence at its height. Without unusual persistence, his repetitiveness and his rebellion against rationally organised language usually discourage today the kind of excitement felt by his first readers, and his ideas on society can now be seen as either unoriginal where they were sound, as impotent against the tide of history they struggled to arrest and reverse, or as sinister, even horrifying, where they mirrored latent feelings that were to come to a grim fruition nearly a century later. 'It is hard at this date,' as Dr Leavis says, 'to realize why Carlyle in his own time should have been felt to be so great and profound an influence...'[5] But Dr Leavis's irritation leads him to a serious

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3. Swinburne, A., "Two Leaders", Poems and Ballads, second series, London, 1878, 107 - 8.
4. Annual Register, London, 1881, part 1, 433.
5. Leavis, F.R., introduction to Mill on Bentham and Coleridge, London, 1950, 14.

misjudgement. 'If Carlyle is to get some attention,' he continues, '...it might reasonably be given by way of an essay on the debt the young Mill may be imagined to owe him.'[6] The inadequacy of this view can only be suggested by an appeal to Carlyle's own age, to what Dickens in another context called 'the tremendous testimony of men living at the time.' Mill, it is clear, was by no means the only important figure to come under Carlyle's spell at some stage in his career. His effect on some men of eminence was noted, in 1851, by Hogg's Instructor, which mentioned, among novelists, Bulwer, Kingsley, Thackeray and Dickens; among politicians, Charles Buller and John Bright; among scientists, Hugh Miller (the geologist) and Samuel Brown (the chemist); among christian teachers, 'philosophers', and scholars, Thomas Chalmers, Edward Irving, Thomas Irskine, F.D. Maurice and Dr Arnold; and among poets, Tennyson. By all these men, recorded Hogg's, in spite of the differences between their various opinions and his own, he has been 'heartily, lovingly honoured. Each of them, from his own throne, has recognised, if not a higher, a more central one on which Carlyle sits'; all, continued the writer, had at some time stepped from his own sphere into Carlyle's, expecting and receiving guidance.[7] In 1850, the North British Review, noting that it was then 'nearly half a generation since Mr Carlyle became an intellectual power in this country,' pronounced that 'rarely, if ever, in the history of literature, has such a phenomenon been witnessed as that of his influence.' His spirit, the writer continued, had pervaded the whole country, and there was probably not an educated man under forty

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6. Ibid, 14 - 15.
7. "Portrait Gallery: Thomas Carlyle", Hogg's Instructor, N.S.Vll (1851), 81.

who could honestly say that he had not been more or less affected by it;

> And in literature the extent to which he has operated upon society is still more apparent. Not to speak of his express imitators, one can hardly take up a book or a periodical without finding in every page some expression or some mode of thinking that bears the mint-mark of his genius. "Hero-worship," "the Condition-of-England question," "Flunkeyism," - these, and hundreds of other phrases, either first coined by him, or first laid hold of and naturalised by him, are now gladly used by many that upon the whole have no great liking for him, or even hold him in aversion.[8]

Carlyle might be as detested in some quarters as he was venerated in others, but no one could ignore him. The strongest of critics, wrote Leslie Stephen on Carlyle's death over thirty years later, 'would find it hard to exhaust the full significance of so remarkable a phenomenon.'[9] 1850, of course, is the year of Latter-day Pamphlets, and is probably a good date at which to begin plumbing the depths of Carlyle's influence on his age. The public reaction to his unprecedentedly reactionary and aggressive Pamphlets was overwhelmingly hostile, so hostile that it would not be surprising if the publication of the Pamphlets had effectively ended Carlyle's influence. It was certainly a crisis in his reputation, which few other men would have weathered. One writer described, in the Eclectic Review, the effect it had on a radical friend who burst into his rooms one evening:

> Horror was depicted in his countenance - the fire of a righteous indignation flashed from his eyes - he wore the aspect of a man but just escaped from the hellish clutch of the furies, or some over-excitable enthusiast whose bubble Utopia had suddenly collapsed - whose anxiously-watched

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8. "Latter-Day Pamphlets. Edited by THOMAS CARLYLE", North British Review, XIV (1850), 4.
9. Stephen, L., "Thomas Carlyle", Cornhill Magazine, XLIII(1881),349 - 58.

> mountain had brought forth a mouse. 'I have come, sir,' began my friend 'to ask you to help me to unmask a traitor - to put down a man who has betrayed the people's cause... Look, sir, read' - he continued, throwing down a neat, but unpretending looking pamphlet - 'there, sir, is the death-warrant of the popularity of Thomas Carlyle, signed by Thomas Carlyle himself. He has done for himself now, sir. The mask of liberalism is torn off, and he proclaims himself to have been all along a mere Tory in disguise.'[10]

But the Tories were just as angry; '...we pass from the Latter-Day Pamphlets,' wrote Blackwood's Magazine, 'with the sincere conviction that their author as a politician is shallow and unsound'; and the writer pronounced that Carlyle was 'obscure and fantastic in his philosophy...'[11] The Christian Observer found the Pamphlets so scurrilous that its reviewer thought 'the whole of his volumes should now be banished 'by a general proscription from all the boudoirs and dressing-tables, especially of the young, in the three kingdoms'.[12] Some periodicals, of course, had always given Carlyle a bad press, and the general attack found them in their element. The Athenaeum had reviewed on their publication all Carlyle's works (except the Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question (1849)) since he established his reputation with The French Revolution, and had attacked them all, condescendingly and uncompromisingly. Now, it speculated with satisfaction on the probable effect of the Latter-Day Pamphlets on Carlyle's reputation:

> To the friends of his school we must believe that the extravagance of his present teaching will in any case give great pain:-to ourselves, these escapades, distressing as they

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10. "A Pilgrimage to Utopia", Eclectic Review, XXVII (1850), 353-4.
11. "LATTER-DAY PAMPHLETS", Blackwood's Magazine, LXVII (1850), 658.
12. "Carlyle's Latter-Day Pamphlets", Christian Observer, L(1850), 496.

> are to read, yield a certain satisfaction. We cannot but think that they are eminently calculated to break his own unwholesome spell, - to disenchant the disciples of a vicious school.... As the case now stands, we are not without a reasonable expectation that his school will dissolve of itself, and the scholars who have clung to it so far, seek sounder teaching.[13]

And Punch reported that

> Yesterday a gentleman of the name of THOMAS CARLYLE was brought before Mr Punch, charged with being unable to take care of his own reputation - a very first-rate reputation until a few months past - but now, in consequence of the reckless and alarming conduct of the accused, in a most dangerous condition; indeed, in the opinion of very competent authorities, fast sinking.[14]

But the permanent effect on his reputation of this hail of protest was probably not as overwhelming as these commentators thought it would be. The nature of Carlyle's influence was probably adjusted to something nearer its natural field of action: it was now impossible for some of his radical and philanthropic admirers to paper over the cracks between their own beliefs, and their admiration for Carlyle's high prophetic seriousness. Nevertheless, after the dust had settled, it became clear that though a whole school of Victorian thought was now alienated, Carlyle's influence had been tested by fire and had survived the ordeal. It was now impossible to think of him as a Whig (as many had done) let alone as a full-blown philosophic radical, though eccentric old gentlemen were known, sometimes, to mumble over their port that he was nothing but a damnable Chartist. But his influence was, nevertheless, not now limited to nigger-baiters and Tory reactionaries, though it was certainly diminished; in 1856 an avowed

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13. "Latter-Day Pamphlets - Number Two. Model Prisons. By Thomas Carlyle", Athenaeum, (1850), 228. Original emphasis.
14. "PUNCH'S POLICE: A very melancholy case", Punch, XVIII (1850), 107.

disciple could write in the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine, that 'Carlyle has lost his temper in these later utterances of his; and the world has found it out, and would revenge itself by mockery and neglect.'[15] But he could still appeal to younger and more open minds than his own. Edward Caird, later a fellow of Merton College, Oxford and professor of philosophy at Glasgow, who in spite of his own low estimate of Latter-Day Pamphlets was greatly influenced by Carlyle, began his undergraduate career in the autumn of 1850, in the middle of the uproar over the Pamphlets and recorded, over forty years later, that Carlyle was the 'author who was the greatest literary influence of my own student days,' and that 'undoubtedly, at that time, Carlyle was the author who exercised the most powerful charm upon young men who were beginning to think.'[16] Five years after the appearance of the Latter-Day Pamphlets, George Eliot (an interesting test case) could write, though admitting that many questioned the 'exaggerations' of the Pamphlets and were very far from accepting the idea of government by a Carlylean hero, that '...for any large nature, those points of difference are quite incidental.'[17] Her estimate of Carlyle's appeal is not out of place in this decade; when John Morley went up to Oxford in 1856, there were still 'bands of Carlylites' there, passing 'many an hour of strenuous idleness', discussing 'the imperative duty of work.'[18] Coming from such a source, George Eliot's

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15. Nevertheless, the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine itself showed its neglect of Carlyle by publishing no fewer than five articles on him during 1856. "Carlyle as a writer", Oxford and Cambridge Magazine, I (1856), 712.
16. Caird, E., Essays on Philosophy and Literature, Glasgow, 1892, I,231, (my emphasis), and Dictionary of National Biography, supplement 1901 - 11, Oxford, 1920, I 292.
17. Eliot, G., "Passages selected from the writings of Thomas Carlyle... By Thomas Ballantye", Leader, VI (1855), 1034-5, reprinted in Essays of George Eliot, ed. Pinney, T., London, 1963, 248 ff.
18. Morley, J., Critical Miscellanies, first series, London, 1871, 196.

view of Carlyle's influence should carry some weight as a reply to Dr Leavis's. And both its date (1855) and its matter tell us something about the real long-term effect of the Latter-Day Pamphlets themselves:

> It is an idle question to ask whether his books will be read a century hence: if they were all burnt as the grandest of Suttees on his funeral pile, it would be only like cutting down an oak after its acorns have sown a forest. For there is hardly a superior or active mind of this generation that has not been modified by Carlyle's writings; there has hardly been an English book written for the last ten or twelve years that would not have been different if Carlyle had not lived. The character of his influence is best seen in the fact that many of the men who have the least agreement with his opinions are those to whom the reading of Sartor Resartus was an epoch in the history of their minds. The extent of his influence may be best seen in the fact that ideas which were startling novelties when he first wrote them are now become common-places. And we think few men will be found to say that this influence on the whole has not been for good.[19]

George Eliot's analysis of the modus operandi of Carlyle's influence points to one factor in its survival after 1850 and, incidentally, suggests why Dr Leavis may be temperamentally disqualified from understanding it at any period: 'It is not as a theorist', she wrote, 'but as a great and beautiful human nature, that Carlyle influences us.'[20] This is discouraging for anyone, like Dr Leavis, trying to 'extract' a 'system of thought or body of wisdom,'[21] and however we might assess the intellectual stringency of Carlyle's writings, it is obvious, that if we are to approach an understanding of what he meant to his age,

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19. Eliot, G., op. cit., 213 - 4.
20. Ibid, 214.
21. Leavis, op, cit., 14.

we must be prepared to deal in counters less definite than Dr Leavis will accept.

George Eliot's judgement takes us back to the reaction to Latter-Day Pamphlets, which it may be worth examining a little more closely. Two main points emerge clearly: firstly, that Carlyle's tremendous personal appeal and prophetic stature weighed heavily with some reviewers, for whom the condemnation of parts of the Pamphlets that they found themselves forced to pronounce was difficult, even agonising: a writer in the North British Review, discussing an extract from the pamphlet on "Model Prisons", felt bound to admit that there was 'no other passage in the whole range of the Pamphlets that provoked in us at the first reading, or that does now provoke in us, such a rush of sentimental and deeply-moved negation. "Wrong, wrong"! we cried, "by these tears, this nervous tremour, noble man as thou art, thou art here wrong..."[22] This leads to a second interesting feature of the reaction to Latter-Day Pamphlets; although there was much wholesale condemnation, like the Athenaeum's, of the whole series, a surprisingly large body of opinion, while horrified by one or more of the ideas of the Pamphlets, must at the same time have strongly supported other ideas which seem to a modern reader very similar in their moral and political implications. Nearly everyone was horrified by the Pamphlet on "Model Prisons", most of them, like the writer quoted above, on grounds of christian compassion. The same writer quoted several texts from the New Testament against Carlyle, among them 'they that be whole need not a physician, but they that be sick.' At the same time, he applauded Carlyle's argument in "Downing Street", against the emancipation of the slaves of Jamaica ('...are we to look for a

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22. "Carlyle's Latter-day Pamphlets", North British Review (1850), op. cit., 27.

time when all the horses also are to emancipated...?'[24]), and the violent anti-popery of the "Jesuitism" Pamphlet, and thought that Carlyle's advocacy of forming the unemployed into savagely disciplined 'industrial regiments' well worth considering. A striking example of the respect, even reverence, that Carlyle could evoke, and the resulting eagerness to find some common ground with him, despite the most merciless attack on some cherished article of faith, was the reaction to the Pamphlets of the Catholic Dublin Review; in spite of Carlyle's scurrilous denunciation of Ignatius Loyola and of the modern Catholic Church and all its works, the reviewer could still acknowledge with approval both Carlyle's influence and his relevance to the spiritual dilemma posed by rationalism: 'In this crisis of modern speculation', thought the Dublin Review,

> It is quite impossible not to be arrested by a thinker like Mr Carlyle, a man of unquestioned genius, whose influence upon the literature of his time has been large and palpable. Possessing a deep, almost fanatical earnestness of character, and having devoted all his powers to the consideration of the questions now agitating mankind, whatever he has written, agree with him or differ with him, cannot fail to awaken serious thought.[25]

And the same writer, in spite of the rabid anti-popery of one of the Pamphlets, found that on the whole 'To us they have been neither alarming or offensive', even though they were 'filled with matter designed to be most offensive to Catholics.'[26] Walter Bagehot suggested in 1856 that those who spoke with contempt of the eighteenth century were mostly disciples of Carlyle or of Newman and

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24. LDP, 284.
25. "Carlyle's Works", Dublin Review, XXIX (1850), 171.
26. Ibid, 172.

this article suggests, perhaps, that the Newmanite horror of that century's philosophy was strong enough to overcome many strong reservations: even in the face of "Jesuitism" the strength and (presumably) the effectiveness of the Carlylean attack on rationalism and scepticism outweighed both the pantheistic 'Germanism' of Carlyle's theology and his persistent attacks on the church herself. And distasteful as was the heretical transcendentalism of which Carlyle was the weightiest British exponent, as a corrective to the 'speculative infidelity of the day,' it had its place; although transcendentalism was not religion, the ideas and emotions it awakened might lead the simple and the pure of heart to their natural refuge, just as the philosophy which denied 'everything transcendent,' withered religion at its roots. It was here, in the fight against atheism and rationalism, that Carlyle's importance lay; significantly, perhaps, his refusal to suggest a positively articulated alternative to the philosophy he was bent on destroying, was seen by the writer as a positive advantage. This may point to one reason for Carlyle's amazing catholicity of appeal: his diagnosis of the age's malady left a convenient blank space for others to insert their own cure:

> In devoting great power and earnestness to the overthrow in English minds of the reign of this mechanical philosophy; in recalling the hearts of an unbelieving generation to the recognition of eternal truths, we feel sure that Carlyle has done good; the more, because he is so impotent to solve a single question that he thus awakens; -because the only solution in which the human heart and reason can find rest, is that of the Catholic Church.[27*]

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27. Ibid. 179 - 80.

This ability to pick out for praise those parts of Carlyle's response to his age that mirrored a reader's prejudices, while leaving him free to attack the rest, can be observed in the reaction to the Latter-Day Pamphlets of other organs of opinion. The Tory Blackwood's Review deplored Carlyle's attack on established methods of government, and savagely criticised the whole series of pamphlets. At the same time, it applauded his attack on the results of the emancipation of Jamaican slaves, quoting with delighted approval (like the North British Revew) the famous - or infamous - passage on the emancipation of horses, and construing his attack on British Colonial Administration, not as part of a general attack on all existing methods of government, but as one on the colonial policy of the Whigs in particular. Both these attacks, thought the reviewer significantly, were of special value as coming from a 'liberal philosopher,' one who until recently was considered by the Whigs to be one of the 'deepest thinkers of the age.'[28] The dissenting Eclectic Review, like the Catholic Dublin Review, began with the assumption of Carlyle's importance. No one would knowingly ignore anything written by him, thought the reviewer; 'taken as a whole, his writings constitute a real addition to the literature of the age, while, in many respects, they lay the foundations of a new school in criticism and morals.' The items singled out for praise or blame are predictable: the writer was delighted by the "Jesuitism" pamphlet and horrified by the attack on 'Exeter Hall emancipation,' and by the "Model Prisons" pamphlet. What is interesting in this predominantly hostile article, as well as this particular mixture of praise and blame, is the general tone of the attack. Many critics did not pull their punches; Carlyle was

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28. Blackwood's (1850), op. cit., 655.

obviously beyond the pale, and there was nothing to gained by balanced assessment. But despite Carlyle's dismissals of one cherished belief or another, many people qualified their retaliation, obviously believing that here was a heretic well worth reclaiming. Carlyle's Pamphlets, said the Eclectic, were 'a failure, and anything but a happy specimen of moral demonstration.' But there were 'many admirable things scattered throughout;' despite the writer's total dismissal of democracy and of Exeter Hall; despite his definitive pronouncements on the hopelessness of the age, the reviewer could still maintain intact both his optimism, his Victorian belief in progress and, apparently, his faith in Carlyle's prophetic stature. He did so partly perhaps, by twisting the record slightly: properly read, he maintained, the Pamphlets were a blow for democracy, since they showed that the hope of the country did not lie 'in any of those sections of the people that have hitherto exercised exclusive privileges, and thereby occasioned so much of misgovernment and misery.' From this notable distortion, the writer proceeded to a piece of wishful thinking, in the circumstances perhaps no less significant:

> Let Mr Carlyle betake himself to a new reading of the age that is passing over us, and we do not despair of his coming round to more righteous and practical opinions. He has given a correct interpretation of the 'ou'clo'' cry that is heard in our streets, and has sent the moral of it abroad with a power which belongs to genius alone....

But Carlyle's regressive appeal to government by the strongest could not shake the writer's faith in democracy or his optimistic Victorian belief in progress:

> For our part we have no desire to return either to the Egypt of the Middle Ages on the one hand, or to the New Downing-street Kings of Tudor or Stuart eras on the other. We are content to go forward; waiting, hoping, working, for the better and brighter times that lie spread before us in the future.[29]

If the year 1850 does not mark the end of Carlyle's social influence, it does mark a kind of watershed in it. The Latter-Day Pamphlets crystallised a reaction that had probably been latent for some time, especially among radicals; it made clear beyond doubt tendencies in his earlier work that to us, with hindsight, seem obvious, (though as I shall show, most of these tendencies had already been noticed and recorded by some writers). It also marks a hardening of Carlyle's own perceptions; The French Revolution could not have been written by the Carlyle of the 1850's. Moreover, Carlyle's relationship with his age was bound to change as the times moved on and he, if anything, regressed further into the past. The England of the 1850's, feeling more secure against the threat of revolution, gathering prosperity and selfconfidence together, was no longer the England of the hungry 'forties, torn apart by sedition and violent uprisings. Carlyle gained his influence in an England on the verge of revolution, undergoing a crisis of self-confidence; it was bound to be modified by the growing optimism and belief in progress of many people.

But though it was readjusted sharply around 1850, Carlyle's influence remained strong. Why was Carlyle so difficult to discredit? How was his influence modified in the 'fifties? These questions have obvious relevance to a study of his continuing influence on many writers,

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29. "Latter-Day Pamphlets. Edited by Thomas Carlyle", Eclectic Review, XXVIII (1850), 385 - 409.

including Dickens. Dickens first came under Carlyle's spell in the forties, and the most important results of his influence can be seen in the 'fifties, above all in Hard Times and A Tale of Two Cities. To understand why his influence continued, and how, if at all, it was changed, we must first see on what foundations it was established.

Like Dickens after the appearance of Pickwick Papers, Carlyle became a literary household word in 1837, on the publication of The French Revolution. He was forty-two and virtually unknown, and had behind him, among other works, a huge body of essays on German literature, a Life of Schiller, a translation of Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, the two important essays "Signs of the Times" and "Characteristics", and Sartor Resartus, which though virtually ignored in its first appearance in Fraser's Magazine, was to become one of the most popular and lasting of all his works.

The French Revolution's almost immediate success was probably due in the first place to an enthusiastic article in the Westminster Review, by John Stuart Mill. What impressed Mill most was the imaginative power by which Carlyle breathed life into his inert materials. Ironically, in showing appreciation of this quality above all others, Mill defined better than anyone else could have done, not only one of the facets of Carlyle's mind which was to appeal most strongly to the Victorian imagination, but also an issue which was to distinguish Mill and his school in the public mind (and in Carlyle's own) from the prophet of Chelsea. Matthew Arnold, writing in 1848 of an article by Carlyle, makes something like Mill's point; '...the thoughts extracted and abstractly stated are every newspapers's,' he wrote; 'It is the style and feeling by which the beloved man appears.' And Arnold places

his admiration for Carlyle's 'style and feeling' by an opposition: 'How short could Mill write Job?'[30]: this is unfair but understandable, and sits interestingly by Mill's own isolation of the same framework of discrimination in his review of The French Revolution:

> Never before did we take up a book calling itself by that name, a book treating of past times, and professing to be true, and find ourselves actually among human beings. We at once felt, that what had hitherto been to us mere abstractions, had become realities; the "forms of things unknown", which we fancied we knew, but knew their names merely, were, for the first time, with most startling effect, "bodied forth" and "turned into shape." Other historians talk to us indeed of human beings; but what do they place before us? Not even stuffed figures of such, but rather their algebraical symbols; a few phrases, which present no image to the fancy ...[31]

Many years later, Mill was to compare himself with Carlyle in a way which not only reinforces the 'fact' versus 'fancy' distinction between himself and Carlyle, but which clarifies 'style and feeling', not simply as a way of making dull facts come to life, but as a means of perception, a channel, almost, for revealed truth: even in the years of their friendship, wrote Mill in his Autobiography (1873),

> I did not ... deem myself a competent judge of Carlyle. I felt that he was a poet, and that I was not; that he was a man of intuition, which I was not; and that as such, he not only saw many things long before me, which I could only when they were pointed out to me, hobble after and prove,

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30. Arnold, M., Letters to Clough, ed. Lowry, H., Oxford, 1932, 75.
31. Mill's Essays on Literature and Society, ed. Schneewind, J.B. New York, 1965, 186 - 7.

> but that it was highly probable he could see many things which were not visible to me even after they were pointed out.[32]

This imaginative power of insight was, perhaps, the single factor without which Carlyle's astonishing reputation would never have been established, and on which, throughout his career, it rested as firmly as on what he actually said; denials of his originality, even among his admirers, were frequent throughout his career, and probably represent the consensus of opinion on this point. 'There is not much novelty of matter,' said the British and Foreign Review of Chartism;

> Indeed we do not know that we have found a single thing in it absolutely new. But the power of painting, the vividness with which each separate element is worked up into the general picture, the brilliancy of colouring, and the force with which the whole view is made to strike the imagination, are exactly such as we have been accustomed to admire in Mr Carlyle's writings. We look upon this little book therefore, appearing at such a time as this, to be a very valuable one; not because it gives us views or information which we were absolutely without before, but because it combines the whole subject into a living form, and graphically as well as forcibly places it before our eyes.[33]

The reviewer is obviously talking about something more than a highly coloured popular presentation of an already apparent malaise; it is Carlyle's capacity for the 'combination of the whole subject into a living form' that is found so valuable, and which, perceived by his contemporaries in works directly relevant to the social and the

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32. Mill, J.S., Autobiography, Oxford, 1924, 149.
33. "Chartism and Church Extension", British and Foreign Review, XI (1840), 2.

spiritual dilemma of the late 'thirties and the 'forties, was to project Carlyle into the central position he enjoyed during this period. Carlyle's work conveyed the impression of a living and strongly individual intelligence, somehow projected through the printed page that mysterious phenomenon, charisma. After the publication of The French Revolution, it soon became clear to the reading public that a 'very remarkable man'[34] had appeared on the scene, obviously gifted with a more than common insight, and cast in a high prophetic mould. 'His earnestness of belief;' wrote the Dublin Review in 1838, 'his sincerity of heart are beautiful and soul possessing. His learning is immense; his industry untiring; his shrewdness, his powers of detecting the truth amid masses of error, quite extraordinary.'[35] From the other end of the moral and political spectrum, Carlyle was cast in a very similar role[36*]; '...Here, in our judgement', wrote the Westminster Review in 1839, surveying Carlyle's works, '...we have the thought of a wide, and above all of a deep soul, which has expressed, in fitting words, the fruits of patient reflection, of piercing observation, of knowledge many-sided and conscientious, of devoutest awe and faithfullest love.' Carlyle's pre-eminent characteristics were 'the clearness of the eye' and 'the strength of heart', that entitled him to the 'fame of the most generous order of greatness.'[37] Not everyone was quite so

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34. "Carlyle's Works", Dublin Review, V(1838), 350.
35. Ibid., 358.
36. Though the Westminster Review made it plain at the end of this article (possibly by Sterling) that the Review's 'conductors are in no respect identified with the opinions delivered in the present criticism, either when the writer concurs with, or when he differs from those of Mr. Carlyle'.
37. "Carlyle's Works", Westminster Review, XXXIII (1839), 11.

starry-eyed, but most reviewers accorded respect if not total approval. The Tory Quarterly Review, also reviewing Carlyle's works in 1839, exhibited the curious mixture, not unfamiliar in critical reactions to Carlyle, of total rejection of much of his most central doctrine, mingled with a perception of his undeniable stature, and what seems almost like a kind of personal affection. There is also a discernment in Carlyle of certain qualities whose notable absence some ten years later was to arouse savage resentment. 'These remarkable volumes', wrote the Quarterly, 'contain many grave errors: they exhibit vagueness, and misconception, and apparently total ignorance in points of the utmost importance.' Nevertheless, there was so much truth in them, the reviewer thought, 'and so many evidences, not only of an enquiring and deep-thinking mind, but of a humble, trustful and affectionate heart, that we have not the slightest inclination to speak of them otherwise than kindly.'[38] The tone of this review, though friendly, distinguishes it from others of this period, which clearly convey that the writer has succumbed to some kind of mystique, to the aura of revealed truth, of almost magical insight that was obviously seen by many to emanate from Carlyle. The 'ordinary reader', thought Fraser's Magazine, reviewing The French Revolution in 1837, might think that Carlyle had in abundance the power of creating images to convey his meaning. But, pronounced the writer: 'we deny it! Mr Carlyle's images are all given to him - none are made by him, as a poet makes them': hence his indifference to formulas, in Church and State.[39] The mystique

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38. "Carlyle's Works", Quarterly Review, LXVI (1839), 446.
39. "Thomas Carlyle's French Revolution", Fraser's Magazine, (1837) 97.

surrounding Carlyle included the idea that, like an Old Testament prophet, he was somehow set apart, separated from the ordinary run of mankind by his burning contact with ultimate truth: 'his criticisms', wrote Fraser's, 'are breathings of a high devout soul feeling always that here he has no home, but looking as in a clear vision, to a city that hath foundations.'[40]

The clarity of vision, the apparent certainty of Carlyle's voice, and the authority it succesfully claimed for itself, were reinforced in the public mind by the self-confidence with which Carlyle seemed to go to the root of both the immediate and sometimes terrifying social realities of the 'thirties and 'forties, and also the more intangible problems of the period, the collapse of traditional religious belief, the difficulty of evolving a new framework of certainty around a rapidly changing industrial society. Carlyle dealt with both the spiritual problems of the individual and the social consciousness of the times, and related them to each other indissolubly by seeing both in terms of an underlying world spirit. Teufelsdröck's spiritual collapse, in Book II of Sartor Resartus, is the account of an individual crisis of self-confidence, and, by implication, an epitome of the affliction of a whole society; his private agony is translated by a public symbol, the machine, the emblem of a new world and of the disappearance of an old one:

> I had, practically, forgotten that [the men and women around me] were alive, that they were not merely automatic. In the midst of their crowded streets and assemblages, I walked solitary... Some comfort it would have been, could I, like a

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40. Ibid. 96.

> Faust, have fancied myself tempted and tormented of the Devil... but in our age of Down-pulling and Disbelief, the very Devil has been pulled down, you cannot so much as believe in a Devil. To me the Universe was all void of Life, of Purpose, of Volition, even of Hostility: it was one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on, in its dead indifference, to grind me limb from limb.[41]

Teufelsdröck has already indicated part of the cause of his despair, of his sense of loss, and hinted at a possible regeneration:

> Had a divine Messenger from the clouds, or miraculous Handwriting on the wall, convincingly proclaimed to me This thou shalt do, with what passionate readiness...would I have done it...Thus, in spite of all Motive-grinders, and Mechanical Profit-and-Loss Philosophies, with the sick ophthalmia and hallucination they had brought on, was the Infinite nature of Duty still dimly present to me...[42]

Teufelsdröck's mood here, as Professor Houghton suggests,[43] is to some extent that of the age, suddenly bereft of its traditional beliefs, and parched by the emotionally barren inheritance of the 'men of the eighteenth century' conveyed by their modern legatees, the Benthamites, whom Teufelsdrock, of course, is attacking here. Carlyle's appearance was obviously seen by many as almost heaven-sent; here, at last, was a man in earnest: 'Is it not...strange', wrote the Westminster Review, 'that in such a world, in such a country, and among those light-hearted Edinburgh Reviewers, a man should rise and proclaim a creed; not a new and more ingenious form of words, but a truth to be embraced with the whole heart, and in which the heart shall

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41. SR, 126.
42. Ibid, 125.
43. Houghton, W., The Victorian Frame of Mind, Yale, 1957, 64.

find as his has found, strength for all combats, and consolation, though stern not festal, under all sorrows?'[44]

The classic statement about the age and what Carlyle meant to it is, of course, that of his disciple J.A. Froude. Froude's testimony underlines Carlyle's influence among 'young men especially whose convictions were unformed and whose line of life was yet undetermined for them.'[45] Froude is a link with Newman, that other great touchstone of the reaction against rationalism and the obverse hunger for spiritual assent. He himself fell under Newman's influence before accepting Carlyle's, probably more totally than any other well-known Victorian. Froude was twenty in 1838, and although his conversion from Newmanism took place some years later, his memory of the effect of Carlyle's appearance on the scene belongs to this point in time. His anatomisation of the intellectual condition of the period recalls to our attention that Benthamism and the loss of religious certainty were only the most apparent sources of bewilderment. The 'critical and inquiring spirit,' checked by the aftermath of the French revolution, was getting under way again. Modern subjects, history, languages and literature were beginning to be taught in schools and universities. Physical science was 'giving proof of capacity which could no longer be sneered at' and was forming its own philosophy. Young men were told to enquire, but 'with a preconceived resolution that the orthodox conclusion must come out true' - which not everyone could manage. 'Thus all around us, the intellectual lightships had broken from their morrings...'; the modern generation, said Froude,

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44. Westminster Review, (1839), op. cit., 3 .
45. Life in London, I, 289.

writing in the eighties, 'will never know what it was to find the lights all drifting, the compasses all awry, and nothing left to steer by except the stars.'[46] The assessment of Carlyle's effect on such an intellectual and spiritual scene, which follows, might, written so many years later be seen as hindsight; but as I have shown, such assessments were made at the time. Carlyle's early audiences were self-consciously aware of the peculiar temper of their age, and the elaborate scene-setting, which precedes Froude's simple declaration of faith, represents not simply the retrospective assessment of an historian, but also the self-consciousness of the period itself. His statement, re-cast in the present tense, could almost have been written at the time: 'in this condition,' he wrote,

> the best and bravest of my own contemporaries determined to have done with insincerity, to find ground under their feet, to let the uncertain remain uncertain, but to learn how much and what we could honestly regard as true, and believe that and live by it....to the young, the generous, to everyone who took life seriously, who wished to made an honourable use of it, and could not be content with sitting down and making money, his words were like the morning reveille.[47]

It is not easy to recapture, across the institutionalised sterility and growing irrelevance of Carlyle's old age, the excitement generated by the first appearance of The French Revolution, of Chartism and of Past and Present, and by the reappearance of Sartor Resartus. Edward Caird was already noting, in the last decade of the century that it was 'hardly possible for those who now for the first time take up Carlyle's works to realise how potent [his] charm was;'[48]

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46. Ibid., 290 - 1.
47. Ibid., 291.
48. Caird, E., op. cit., 231.

or as Lytton Strachey put it, nearly forty years later, 'it is so very difficult to believe that real red-hot lava ever flowed from that dry neglected crater...'[49] 'A new book from Thomas Carlyle!' wrote The Contemporary Review in 1881 of the posthumous Reminiscences; 'What memories revive at the Words! We breathe again an atmosphere of vague, vast possibility, we live once more in the sudden sense of wealth with which everyone first yields himself up to the influence of a great genius.'[50]

One place and time where this excitement can be seen clearly was Oxford in the 1840's. With Newman, Carlyle was almost certainly an important influence over a generation of Oxford undergraduates and graduates. The famous passage from Matthew Arnold's lecture on Emerson (1883), beginning 'Forty years ago, when I was an undergraduate at Oxford, voices were in the air there, which haunt my memory still,' is usually quoted for the light it sheds on Newman's influence, but as Professor Kathleen Tillotson has pointed out, Matthew Arnold was referring also to 'Carlyle's puissant voice...reaching our hearts with true pathetic eloquence,' as well as to the 'spiritual apparition' of Newman. J.C. Shairp pointed to the publication of the Miscellanies as a source of great excitement at Oxford, and remembered 'how they reached the more active-minded, one by one, and thrilled them as no printed book ever before had thrilled them....Indeed it used to be said, and I believe with truth, that,with but few exceptions, none of the abler young men of that date escaped being, for a time at least, Carlyle-bitten.'[51] Tom Arnold describes a circle of Oxford men to

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49. Strachey, L., Portraits in Miniature, London, 1931, 198.
50. Contemporary Review, (1881), op. cit., 585.
51. Shairp, J.C., Aspects of Poetry, Oxford, 1881, 412

which he and his brother Matthew belonged, a 'little interior company' comprising, as well as the two brothers, Clough and Theodore Walrond, who breakfasted every Sunday in Clough's rooms to discuss politics. Together with several others, including Shairp, they formed a debating society called The Decade, which lasted from 1843 to 1845. Clough's speeches were particularly memorable; Tom Arnold remembered one, in favour of Lord Ashley's Ten Hours Bill, in which he 'combated the doctrines of laissez-faire and the omnipotence and sufficiency of supply and demand, then hardly disputed in England, with an insight marvellous in one who had so little experience of the industrial life...'[52] This probably points to Past and Present (1843) and indicates again the freshness for many people of Carlyle's ideas at this time; laissez-faire was then 'hardly disputed in England.' Another Oxford man of the 'forties, Tom Hughes, provides corroboration of this in his autobiographical description of the effect of Carlyle on the undergraduate Tom Brown. In Tom's case, the revelation is all the more blinding for his having soaked up, at the instigation of a villainous tutor, the doctrines of Benthamism. His salvation comes from Past and Present:

> How he did revel in it - the humour, the power, the pathos, but above all in the root and branch denunciations of many of the doctrines in which he had been so lately voluntarily and wearily chaining himself! ...in his exaltation he kept spouting out passage after passage in a song of triumph, "Enlightened egoism never so luminous is not the rule by which man's life can be led - laissez-faire, supply and demand, cash payment for the sole nexus, and so forth, were

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52. Arnold, T., "Arthur Hugh Clough" The Nineteenth Century, XLIII (1898) 107.

> not, are not, and never will be, a practical law of union for a society of men"....
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> He had scarcely ever in his life been so moved by a book before.[53]

Again and again during the 'forties, as Professor Burn says,[54] we come back to Carlyle. 'In and from 1840', wrote David Masson, who was twenty in 1842, 'Carlyle's name was running like wildfire through the British Islands... There was the utmost avidity for his books wherever they were accessible, especially among the young men; phrases from them were in all young men's mouths and were affecting the public speech.' His house 'was already looked at...as the home of the real king of British Letters.'[55] The catch-phrase of the decade, the Condition of England Question, was, appropriately, coined by him. Again, one asks why he should occupy this central position. His emphasis on immaterial values, conveyed by his own peculiar brand of prophetic imaginative white-heat, can be seen as obviously relevant to the times and provides one answer; but this does not entirely account for the feeling conveyed by his writings, not simply of topicality, but of breathless urgency. One factor was certainly the political instability of the late 'thirties and early 'forties: to many Englishmen, it seemed far from improbable that England was on the verge of revolution. The subject of Carlyle's first best-seller, was that of the century's great shaping myth-event, and the book's appearance in 1837 was a piece of inspired timing: some people undoubtedly saw the book as a direct warning of what might happen all too easily here.

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53. Hughes, T., Tom Brown at Oxford, London, 1861, III, 41-2.
54. Burn, W.L., The Age of Equipoise, London, 1964, 66.
55. Masson, D., Carlyle personally and in his writings, London, 1885, 67.

Thackeray's review of The French Revolution, in The Times, must represent one strand in the reaction of many of the book's first readers. 'We need scarcely recommend this book and its timely appearance', he wrote, 'now that some of the questions solved in it seem almost likely to be battled over again.' Hot radicals, thought Thackeray, might learn by it that the authority that protected life and property, was even more necessary than their 'mad liberty.' The book taught moderation, to both rulers and ruled, and yet there were many who would not heed its lessons; 'pert quacks at public meetings joke about hereditary legislators, journalists jibe at them, and moody starving labourers, who do not know how to jest, but can hate lustily, are told to curse crowns and coronets as the origin of their woes and their poverty, and so did the clever French spouters and journalists jibe at royalty until royalty fell poisoned under their satire; and so did the screaming hungry French mob curse royalty until they overthrew it: and to what end? To bring tyranny and leave starvation, battering down bastilles to erect guillotines, and murdering kings to set up emperors in their stead.' Roebuck was not Robespierre; but men altered with circumstances: six months before the kings's execution, Robespierre was speaking about him with tears in his eyes, and was extolling the merits of a constitutional monarchy. The English were not the French, of course, and England was too enlightened for such things to happen. But one never knew.[56]

The possibility of revolution, if the Condition of England Question was not solved, implied by The French Revolution, was made explicit by Carlyle in Chartism and Past and Present, both of which refer repeatedly to France before the revolution in their evocations of the condition of

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56. [Thackeray, W.M.,] "The French Revolution, by T. Carlyle", The Times, Aug. 3, 1837.

modern England. The point was not lost. 'Well may Mr Carlyle point to the French revolution', wrote the British and Foreign Review of Chartism; not that anything of the kind was to be feared in England, of course; 'not because the cases are absolutely dissimilar, but because the hearts of the great body of the English nation are still sound...," and the writer was convinced, that once the true state of things was known, many people would be ready to remedy it. ...'but ere this knowledge be brought home to people's minds', the writer continued, 'much pressure of want and misery, much sullenness of discontent, many a deed of violence and bloodshed, must probably be endured. Would that men would calmly look at the evil before such dreadful dangers force it in its worst form upon their attention!'[57] This indicates again some-thing of the function of Carlyle's writings about society; although they were not always original in themselves, they do seem to have crystallised a latent public opinion on the conditions of the working class.[58] Carlyle's appeal to the ruling classes acted in two directions; he appealed to their consciences by showing them in a 'living form' what actually was, and to their sense of self-preservation by bringing before their imagination what might be if they remained inactive. The great social problem of the decade, the relationship between rich and poor, the rulers and the ruled, would certainly have been seen very differently without Carlyle's apocalyptic, questioning voice. He may have overdone the Perils of the Nation a little, a fact which certainly reduced his credibility from about 1850 onwards. With hindsight, R.H. Hutton wrote of Carlyle after his death that 'judging too much by an exceptional people awaking to their misery at a time when that misery was exceptionally great, [he] exaggerated unconsciously the wildness of the anarchy of which any Teutonic

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57. British and Foreign Review, (1840), op.cit., 13 - 14
58. The frequency with which Engels (The Condition of the Working Class(1845)), quotes fairly lengthy passages from Carlyle in support of his own factual assertions demonstrates, perhaps, the freshness and the authority that Carlyle's views on The Condition of England Question had for his early readers.

democracy was capable...'; Carlyle failed to understand the 'sound moral convictions' and the middle-class conventionalism to which the English could rise. Nevertheless, Hutton thought, his most important effect on politics was that he raised a 'salutary, even if often extravagant, fear of the destructive capacity of democracies when not nobly led...'. Carlyle's vision of revolution 'produced a profound effect', by making apparent the helplessness of the upper classes when they were out of touch with the masses, for whose benefit alone the state really held its right to control them:

> It is here that Mr Carlyle's greatest influence over modern politics has been exerted, an influence equally mingled of dread, sympathy, and the sense of obligation due from the educated to the ignorant, and one which, on the whole, has done wonders, like the ancient tragedy, to purify men "by pity and by fear". Carlyle, indeed, has produced on our own age, by widely different means, more of the characteristic effects of the Greek drama than any other English writer.[59]

Hutton's assessment brings us back to our original question. How much of this profound effect remained, when pity had become partly dimmed by complacency, and fear had been allayed by the increasingly apparent stability of mid-Victorian England, and when Carlyle had made it clear, beyond any doubt, by his Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question and by Latter-Day Pamphlets, that much of his thinking was repugnant to an age which, on the whole, believed not in the past but in the future, and which was to become increasingly convinced of the efficacy of democracy? As I have suggested, probably a surprising amount. George Saintsbury, who was twenty in 1865, thought that his

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59. Hutton, R.H., "Mr Carlyle as a political power", Spectator, LIV (1881), 210.

main influence was felt in the third quarter of the century,[60] and though this is certainly an exaggeration, this period is not lacking in evidence of the power, where it was heard, of his voice, or perhaps, of what had become his legend. With the brief exception of Shooting Niagara (1867) Carlyle for the most part withdrew from the kind of direct statement about society that had, partly, established his original reputation. But his earlier books continued to be read and admired; and when he did make his opinion known, it was still listened to. It is worth remembering that when, in 1874, Disraeli advised the Queen to recognise the importence of literature, he suggested that she should do so by conferring honours, a knighthood and a pension, and a baronetcy respectively, on Carlyle and Tennyson. The reasons for Carlyle's nomination are interesting: his name was the suggestion of Lord Derby, who wrote to Disraeli that 'it would be a really good political investment', since Carlyle was 'for whatever reason very vehement against Gladstone.'[61] That two such shrewd political operators as Derby, and, especially, Disraeli, should go out of their way to ingratiate themselves with this querulous old man, argues strongly that his opinions, even in the 'seventies, were still not without weight. Certainly, in the 'fifties and 'sixties, Carlyle's influence was still powerful. In 1881 Hutton listed in The Spectator five major issues in the decade 1861 to 1871 in which 'Mr Carlyle's powerful influence over the ground-ideas of politics showed itself in very potent currents of English thought.'[62] The five issues were the American civil war, the Governor Eyre controversy, the attack of Prussia and Austria on Denmark, the Franco-Prussian war, and the Paris commune. The actual extent of Carlyle's influence on all these issues except one was probably not of prime importance. Nevertheless at least one intelligent contemporary thought so, and he was almost certainly not alone. Carlyle could still symbolise, and credibly appear to be

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60. Saintsbury, op. cit., 42.
61. Blake, R., Disraeli, London,1966, 552.
62. Hutton, op. cit., 209.

the originator of, a current of public opinion.

The Franco-Prussian war is a good example. British public opinion at the outbreak of the war had been with Prussia since France was so obviously the aggressor, and was, in any case, the traditional enemy. But when it became clear that the Germans were not only going to win, but were going to retain the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, opinion turned against them. Carlyle, predictably, supported the Prussian view, and dictated a long letter to The Times. 'It appeared in the middle of November' says Froude, 'and at once cooled the water which might otherwise have boiled over. We think little of dangers escaped; but wise men everywhere felt that in writing it he had rendered a service of the highest kind to European order and justice.'[63] Froude is a suspect witness, but Carlyle's letter certainly produced an effect. Floods of letters, 'wise, foolish, sane, mad', streamed in on Carlyle, many written from their trenches by grateful Prussian soldiers. The same month, a telegram emanating evidently from the highest circles, was forwarded to Carlyle from the Prussian ambassador, who added his own expressions of his countrymen's gratitude.[64]

A clearer case of Carlyle's power to influence or to symbolise a specific issue was the Governor Eyre controversy of 1866. Carlyle of course, was the doyen of the Eyre defence committee, and he certainly attracted to Eyre's cause more weighty support that it might otherwise have gained. As one writer puts it, 'the Eyre Defence Committee [now] promised to be a much more formidable body than the assortment of peers, generals, sycophants and Tory nigger-baiters'

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63. Froude, op. cit., II, 403.
64. Ibid., II, 404 - 5.

that had greeted Eyre on his return from Jamaica.' His real influence, perhaps, was more indirect. It was not Carlyle, but Ruskin who was the first notable writer to come to Eyre's defence. In December 1865, he wrote to the Daily Telegraph. His letter isolates some of the main issues that, as The Spectator put it fifteen years later, 'divided into two hostile camps the whole of British society.'[65] Although, Ruskin said, his support for the cause of the working man had led him to support politically both J.S. Mill and Thomas Hughes (both MP's at this time) he

> thought better of them both than they would countenance this fatuous outcry against Governor Eyre. In most directions of thought and action, they are for Liberty, and I am for Lordship; they are Mob's men, and I am a King's man.

Ruskin went on to propound another Carlylean idea, that before we begin to worry about the slavery of the Jamaican negro, we should concern ourselves with the slavery of the English working classes, the slavery imposed by laissez-faire. 'I more dislike', he wrote, 'the slavery which makes [women] throw their children into wells... I would willingly hinder the selling of girls on the Gold Coast; but primarily, if I might, would hinder the selling of them in Mayfair.'[66] This, of course, is pure Carlyle; not only the matter, but even the target (many, if not most members of the Jamaica Committee were supporters of Exeter Hall) is the same as that of Carlyle's Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question, published over sixteen years before. '...poor Exeter Hall', Carlyle had written;

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65. Hutton, op. cit., 209.
66. Daily Telegraph, 20 Dec., 1865; quoted in Dutton, G., The Hero as Murderer, London, 1967, 351 - 2.

'cultivating the Broad-brimmed form of Christian Sentimentalism... has it not worked out results? Our West-Indian Legislatings, with their spoutings, anti-spoutings... and beautiful Blacks sitting there up to the ears in pumpkins, and doleful whites sitting here without potatoes to eat'[67]. This point was taken up by several of the Eyre committee supporters, including Dickens, who, as I shall discuss, said much the same thing on at least two occasions. There were uglier versions, too, of something like the same idea. John Tyndall, the only scientist on the Eyre committee, argued quite simply that British standards did not apply since negroes were incontestably inferior to whites. Many, if not most, Victorians would have agreed with Tyndall's assertion of the inferiority of black people, but his remarks can certainly be seen in a narrowly Carlylean setting. He was, of course, a personal friend and disciple of the sage of Chelsea, and in support of his position, actually quoted Carlyle in a speech to the Eyre committee.

Carlyle's influence, then, stretched over three or even four decades, though by the seventies it was wearing thin. What elements in the public attitude remained more or less consistent throughout his sway? What did the Victorians notice about Carlyle? The answer to this question probably adds to an understanding of Carlyle's survival of the Latter-Day Pamphlets onslaught: many of Carlyle's most admiring early critics were aware from the beginning of tendencies which were to find their ultimate

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67. "NQ", 296.

expression in the Pamphlets. Many people, notably the philosophic radicals, who seem in retrospect to have almost wilfully ignored what was unacceptable in Carlyle's doctrines until it became impossible to do so any longer, did recoil from Carlyle in 1850, if they had not already done so the previous year. But others had noted, much earlier, the faults of commission and ommission that were to provide the basis of the recriminations hurled at Carlyle, and had decided, either that they were unimportant, or that his genius in other directions outweighted his obvious faults. Carlyle's lack of originality; his failure to give answers to the questions he posed; the disturbing lack of Christian compassion in his outlook; the unacceptability of the heroic ideal in a democratic age; above all his style, his 'overloaded', 'germanic', 'affected' style, all these were not uncommon in discussions of Carlyle's work before 1850.

Carlyle's style, of course, was impossible to ignore, and (for most readers perhaps), almost equally difficult to accept. How much hostility the strange, gawky high sublimity of Carlyle's rhetoric was capable of arousing, may be seen in the Athenaeum's review of The Life of John Sterling. For the first time in Carlyle's career, this periodical praised both style and matter in his writings. For once, thought the reviewer, Carlyle's heart was in his task, and he could forget both his 'peculiar theories' and his odd, cumbrous style. His manner was 'simple, beautiful and pathetic'. In its freedom from eccentricity, it recalled his earlier writings, notable the Life of Schiller. There were occasional relapses, perhaps, but, on the whole,

> ...this work is a model of vigour and simplicity. Here we have no "apes of the Dead Sea", no "phantasm

> captains", few "shams", "cants", or "flunkeydoms". Our old opinion that Mr Carlyle's turgid style was the growth of an affectation, is confirmed by the very simplicity of his new volume. When the heart speaks it does not fail to speak intelligibly[68].

Part of the hostility towards Carlyle's style was, like the Athenaeum's, due to a failure of sympathy with 'Carlylism' itself, to which any reader was entitled; it was also, perhaps, often simply an indication of outraged respectability. Carlyle's 'manner' was itself the most tangible and apparent part of his assault on Victorian middle-class conventionality, on 'gigmanity'. 'In an age of anti-macassars', wrote the Eclectic Review in 1861, 'we are surely not astonished that Carlyle should be unpopular': Carlyle's style was the negation of the useless and 'ingeniously ridiculous'; his force of character produced in his writing a rough, granite-like strength and irregularity, 'an invincible mannerism, not always pleasant to ears accustomed only to the smooth flowings of polished imitators'[69].

Something like the same complacent inflexibility, perhaps, was implicit in another complaint: Carlyle's style was not only incorrect, it was not only difficult to read; it was also un-English. It was bad enough, thought one writer in 1840, that modern novels and even everyday conversation were infested by French phrases; but if more serious literature were to be infected by the German language what was to become of our 'pure well of English undefiled'? Just as an individual's style reflected his moral character, so a change in a country's style was 'not unconnected with deeper changes of national principle'.

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68. "The Life of John Sterling. By Thomas Carlyle", Athenaeum, (1851), 1088.
69. Eclectic, (1861), op. cit., 39.

If we would not change our national anthem or our flag, why should we change our language? 'Learn to talk in German, and... you will cease to think as an Englishman'[70]. In less measured tones, others were reacting with the same hostility towards this foreign contamination. 'Caricaturing the worst manner of the worst part of the worst German school', wrote The Literary Gazette, reviewing The French Revolution, 'Mr Carlyle out-Richter's Richter and robs Paul to the last farthing without satisfying Peter, or anybody else, with the plunder'[71]. And the Athenaeum, never behind in detecting ground for criticising Carlyle, appealed to its readers' English solidity in rebutting the Germanism of Carlyle's matter as well as of his manner, and took the occasion of its review of Carlyle's history to protest 'against all and sundry attempts to engraft the idiom of Germany into the King's English, or to transfuse the vague verbiage and affected sentimentality of a sect of Germans into our simple and intelligible philosophy'[72].

But despite the hostility aroused by Carlyle's manner among his enemies, and even among his friends, his style and all it implied was a vital part of his mystique. 'It is by the style and feeling that the beloved man appears'. Matthew Arnold's remark reminds us that, for perhaps the most important class of Carlyle's admirers, matter and manner were one and indivisible. 'Surely there is no one who can read and relish Carlyle', wrote George Eliot, 'without feeling that they could

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70. Quarterly, (1839), op. cit., 455.
71. "The French Revolution... by Thomas Carlyle", Literary Gazette (1837) 330.
72. Athenaeum (1837), op. cit., 353.

no more wish him to have written in another style than they could wish Gothic architecture not to be Gothic, or Rafaelle not to be Rafaellesque'. George Eliot goes on to make a related point; for her, she said, though he was spoken of 'almost exclusively' as a philosopher, Carlyle was far more an artist.[73] This is certainly true of other writers, by whom his language was certainly understood as that of an artist: and in intellectual circles, as perhaps the Governor Eyre controversy suggests, it is probably among imaginative writers that the conviction of his genius remained most strongly during his years of comparative decline. Carlyle's style meant Carlyle himself; it was, as R. H. Horne put it, 'the significant articulation of a living soul: God's breath was in the vowels of it'[74].

Matthew Arnold provides an unusually clear-cut example of how Carlyle's influence could remain, even when his intellectual formulations had been rejected. Arnold's disillusionment was probably caused in the first place by the Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question; in 1848, Carlyle was still 'the beloved man'; in 1849, Arnold was writing about 'moral desperadoes like Carlyle'[75]. Much of Carlyle's influence on Arnold and his century was, as Professor Tillotson has pointed out, that of a poet. A further point must be underlined; for Arnold, poet and moral influence were, in the end, inseparable. We can see Carlyle's influence in both these roles, in "The Scholar Gypsy", written three years after Latter-Day Pamphlets, in

> Rapt, twirling in thy hand a wither'd spray
> And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall...

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73. Eliot, G., op. cit., 214 - 5.
74. Horne, R.H., A New Spirit of the Age, London, 1844, II, 258.
75. Arnold, M., op. cit., 75 and 111.

And in

> Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt...

And in

> Thou waitest for the spark from Heav'n! And we,
> Light half-believers of our casual creeds...

This corresponds clearly with the following passage from Heroes and Hero-worship:

> But I liken common languid Times, with their unbelief, distress, perplexity, with their languid doubting characters... impotently crumbling-down into ever worse distress... - and all this I liken to dry dead fuel, waiting for the lightning out of Heaven that shall kindle it[76].

The Scholar Gypsy is not a Carlylean figure of course, but his theme is doubt, and it was to his readers' doubts that Carlyle spoke most strongly. Perhaps for this reason, Sartor Resartus occupied a special position, above the fray, in the Carlylean canon; when George Eliot wrote of the irrelevance of Carlyle's reactionary philosophy, she was thinking of Sartor[77]. The 'spark from heaven' of The Scholar Gypsy is a quasi-religious as well as a 'poetic' image, and summarises neatly the kind of magical solution, the sudden dissolution of doubts that some readers looked for in Carlyle. Carlyle provided, if not the reality, at least the distant vision or the temporary illusion, of "The Eternal Yea". And Sartor was not simply a source of confidence, but an inspiration to the poetic imagination, even, a weapon against materialism and insensitivity: Carlyle himself used the word 'Philistinism' before Matthew Arnold, to describe the forces against which Teufelsdröck found himself struggling, and he used it in a sense not unreminiscent of Arnold's. In the relevant passage from Sartor, Teufelsdrock

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76. I am indebted to Professor Kathleen Tillotson for this textual parallel. See Tillotson, G. and K., Mid-Victorian Studies, London, 1965, 217.
77. Eliot, G., op. cit., 214.

seems to embody something remarkably similar to Arnold's 'sweetness and light'; 'his soul' wrote Carlyle, 'is as one sea of light, the peculiar home of Truth and Intellect; wherein also Fantasy bodies forth form after form, radiant with all prismatic hues'. But at the same gathering appears a character evidently meant as the negation of all Teufelsdröck embodies:

> It appears, in this otherwise so happy meeting, there talked one "Philistine"; who even now, to the general weariness, was dominantly pouring forth Philistinism (Philistriositaten); little witting what hero was here entering to demolish him![78].

Tennyson, like Arnold, was a poet concerned with doubt and was at the same time affected by the 'poetic' qualities of Carlyle's writing. The above quotation from Sartor comes from the chapter in Book II entitled "Romance", which describes Teufelsdrock's ecstatic love for Blumine, a girl 'high-born, and of high spirit; but unhappily dependent and insolvent'[79]. Blumine rejects her penniless suitor for Herr Towgood, a better financial proposition, and Teufelsdrock's 'sorrows' and rejection of society and of rationalist philosophy follow. This is very like the situation of Locksley Hall, despite obviously un-Carlylean elements in the poem; Amy rejects her lover for a rich man, because of the social difficulties of marrying into poverty, an action which prompts Tennyson into some fine and more than Carlylean anti-materialist sentiments. Details of imagery too, remind us of Carlyle;

> ...our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips[80]

recalls Sartor; and a comparison with what is perhaps the equivalent image in Carlyle demonstrates, if nothing else, Carlyle's claim to be considered as a poet. His handling of

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78. SR, 108 - 9.
79. Ibid, 106.
80. Tennyson, A., "Locksley Hall". Poetical Works, Oxford, 1953, 92.

a very similar basic idea conforms far more closely to modern criteria of what constitutes poetic language:

> ...their lips were joined, their two souls,
> like two dew-drops, rushed into one...[81]

Blumine and Teufelsdrock at the height of their love, live 'in... a many-tinted radiant Aurora'; 'even as a Star, all Fire and humid Softness, a very Light-ray incarnate![82]. This recalls imagery of light used by Tennyson though there is an obvious shift, in the poem's immediate layer of sense. When the lover of Locksley Hall declares himself to Amy,

> On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour
> and a light,
> As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night[83].

But though she loves him, Amy rejects this suitor, and he falls, like Teufelsdrock, into a state of total despair, which has a strong effect on his attitude to society; no longer can he believe in 'the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world', or feel the vision of

> Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping
> something new:
> That which they have done but earnest of the things that
> they shall do[84]

This (the 'Parliament of man' apart) is one Carlylean vision; and his disillusionment produces another: like Carlyle in Chartism, he sees 'a hungry people, as a lion creeping higher'; and curses 'the social lies that warp us from the living truth', adopting something very like Carlyle's 'philosophy of clothes':

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81. SR, 113.
82. Ibid, 111.
83. Tennyson, op. cit., 92.
84. Ibid., 94.

> Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule!
> Cursed be the gold that gilds the straitten'd
> forehead of the fool![85]

The lover's only solution to this despair is Carlyle's 'work while it is yet the day':

> ...wherefore should I care?
> I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair[86]:

And though no 'Everlasting Yea' results, his problem now becomes 'what is that that which I should do?'[87]

The identity of 'style and feeling' in Carlyle's writing, seen as Matthew Arnold saw it, leads us back to his position in the evolution of nineteenth century culture. Carlyle is firmly in the tradition of the reaction against the eighteenth century. He was born in the same year as Keats, and is perhaps the century's most vital overt link between the romantic liberation of the imagination, and the Victorian earnestness with which it had become mingled by the middle of the century, most notably by Tennyson. R.H. Horne saw him in 1844 as the natural antithesis for Jeremy Bentham:

> Each headed a great movement among thinking men; and each made a language for himself to speak with; and neither of them originated what they taught. Bentham's work was done by systematizing; Carlyle's, by reviving

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85. Ibid., 93.
86. Ibid., 94.
87. Ibid.

> and reiterating. And as from the beginning of the world, the two great principles of matter and spirit have combated, - whether in man's personality, between the flesh and the soul; or in his speculativeness, between the practical and the ideal; or in his mental expression, between science and poetry, - Bentham and Carlyle assumed to lead the double van on opposite sides[88].

This reminds us Mill's antithesis between Bentham and Coleridge, in whose tradition (despite his own contemptuous dismissal of the older sage) Carlyle's influence operated, as some of his earliest critics pointed out. Carlyle's name, from the beginning of his wider reputation, was coupled with those of Coleridge and Wordsworth, as part of a tradition of English thought that was seen as fighting against the merely rational and material, struggling to lighten the darkness 'that envelopes... the moral Egypt'[89]. Harriet Martineau was reiterating an assessment as old as Carlyle's influence when, in the 'fifties, she coupled his impact on the age with Wordsworth's. 'What Wordsworth did for poetry', she wrote, 'in bringing us out of a conventional idea and method to a true and simple one, Carlyle has done for morality'.[90] Fraser's Magazine, reviewing The French Revolution in 1837, seemed to suggest a kind of priesthood, almost an apostolic succession, watching over a dark century, and dedicated to revitalising 'the wells of life' of a parched land. In every age, thought Fraser's,

> ...however far gone in the mere intellectual or the sensible, - however sunk in materialism, experimentalism,

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88. Horne, op. cit., 259 - 60.
89. 'Thomas Carlyle's French Revolution", Fraser's Magazine, XVI, (1837), 104.
90. Martineau, H., Autobiography, London, 1877, I, 387.

> empiricism, and sciolism, - there has always been a fountain of truth, though probably sealed up in the heart of man; and it has been the good pleasure of Providence that guardian angels should watch beside the wells of life, and indicate their existence to the atheist and the wayfaring. The present age has been rich in such genii. Coleridge was lately, Wordsworth is yet among us; Mr. Thomas Carlyle is still in the vigour of his faculties.[91]

The Quarterly Review, too, linked Carlyle's name, though less directly, with Wordsworth and Coleridge. Carlyle's popularity, thought the Quarterly, was 'a striking symptom of the state of the times'. His contribution was to state more clearly than anyone else the 'shallowness' of the English mind for the last century. But the first glimmerings of a reaction against the idea that man was simply 'a machine for grinding logic' could be traced in the works of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Coleridge, by hinting at mysteries beyond the grasp of the logical faculty had 'dissipated the ennui which the more energetic minds felt in travelling over the smooth uninteresting Macadamised road of modern English literature'. Wordsworth had performed an even more vital service, by inaugurating a poetry not only of deep thought, but also of 'pure and warm feeling'. Coleridge and Wordsworth were twin instruments of God; the former addressed the head, the latter the heart. Carlyle, the writer evidently thought, was less central than either, being simply a portent of a general 'stirring of English philosophy' that had been catalysed by the two poets:

> A new school of thought and feeling is undoubtedly forming itself: and what is more satisfactory, it

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91. Fraser's (1837), op cit, 104.

> does not appear to be gathering itself round any one individual as a nucleus; but one and the same spirit seems to be breaking forth and struggling into life from the most independent sources.[92]

Carlyle, in fact, was probably seen by few as an original thinker. His place in the tradition of the English romanticism of the early part of the century, as well as his obvious and frequently noticed indebtedness to specifically German romanticism (another link with Coleridge) were noticed at the very beginning of his career as a sage-figure. The lack of originality in many of his moral and political ideas was also noted, as I have pointed out, even by those favourable to his analysis. For those who fell under his spell, this quality was not thought to be a failing; Carlyle's moral function was to present these ideas in a 'living form', to capture the imagination with them, to effect a regeneration, by presenting rationally obvious or purely traditional notions as though they were the result of private intuition, even of revelation. As a moralist, thought Blackwood's in 1859, Carlyle was hardly original;

> That to be is better than to seem - that it is good to reverence worth - that many evils exist in the world - and that if we could find out the ablest men among us, and give them due authority, many of these might be remedied - that there is an inner light or conscience to teach us right and wrong - that there is work appointed to every man which he neglects at his peril, - these are surely no new doctrines, but old as society - at any rate old as morality and philosophy - and ages before Thomas Carlyle was born were embalmed in the proverbs of many peoples. Yet it is by reiterating such doctrines in forms more or less fantastic, that he has achieved his very considerable reputation.[93]

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92. Quarterly (1839), op. cit., 449.
93. "Carlyle. Mirage Philosophy", Blackwood's Magazine, LXXXV (1859) 138.

And yet, thought the writer, Carlyle's fame rested on 'an excellent and solid basis'. His great merit was his total consistency, and (again we return to the spirit informing Carlyle's matter, to his personal magic) the peculiar way in which his ideas coloured all his utterances: it was one thing for a man to feel conscious of truths, another for him 'to be so imbued with their spirit that it tinges - nay, dies deeply - all the products of his mind'. Carlyle's morality, no matter how commonplace if summarised briefly by a lesser man, drew its force from being the personal utterance of Carlyle himself, of a man 'to whom the earth and all its glories are in truth a vapour and a Dream and the Beauty of Goodness the only real possession'[94].

Needless to say, this kind of argument carried little weight with the unconverted, especially when discussion turned to Carlyle's topical pronouncements on particular social issues. Not only was Carlyle's social analysis not new, thought the critics; it was also almost purely negative. Carlyle, it was clear, had no idea what had to be done; it was easy to say, as he did in Chartism, for example, that the condition of the working classes was unendurable, that England was on the verge of revolution, and that the upper classes were blind to their responsibilities: 'Yet what is the remedy which follows these fearful givings out? Why that the summities of the nation should forthwith meet, and combine to do - something;' It was all very well to say that this included many things: all Carlyle would set down were universal education and emigration, neither of which, as this commentator pointed out was an original suggestion [95]. And even if everyone were to agree

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94. Ibid.
95. Athenaeum (1839), op. cit., 27.

on the desirability of these two 'grand specifics' (which was certainly not the case), they were obviously not the root of the matter. Some doubted whether Carlyle was serious: 'Reading and emigration! reading and emigration!! reading and emigration!!!' spluttered the Quarterly; 'is Mr. Carlyle aware that he is required to explain his meaning more at large - that he is generally misunderstood?' And just as Carlyle was seen to have few practical proposals to put forward in the political field, so, it was pointed out, were his moralisings almost purely negative; he was 'the censor of the age' [96]. He denounced the age's mechanistic thinking, deplored its lack of faith, threatened it with revolution; 'and yet', noted Blackwood's as early as 1843, 'neither in philosophy, in religion, nor in politics, has Mr Carlyle any distinct dogma, creed, or constitution to promulgate' [97]. In 1850, the same periodical, in the heat of the attack on Latter-Day Pamphlets, looked back over Carlyle's works, and emphasised his failure to provide a workable cure for the ills he diagnosed: if Carlyle wished to denounce shams, he should be genuine himself; if he wished to regenerate society, he should be a man of immense practical ability. And yet, had he ever suggested any useful course of action in his works? 'Can any living man', thundered Blackwood's, 'point to a single practical passage in any of these volumes? If not, what is the real value of Mr Carlyle's writings? What is Mr Carlyle himself but a Phantasm of the species which he is pleased to denounce?' [98]

Many of the grounds upon which Carlyle was attacked in 1850, then, were not new. The onslaught was different only in scale from previous attacks, and perhaps this partly explains its failure

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96. Quarterly (1839), op. cit., 496.
97. "Past and Present, by Carlyle", Blackwood's LIV (1843), 121.
98. Blackwood's (1850), op. cit., 642.

to bring about that permanent destruction of his influence that the Athenæum hoped for. And Carlyle's faults, too, were seen as the obverse of corresponding virtues. Unrepentant anti-Carlylists apart, his barbaric and unwieldy style, even if uncongenial to some, was seen to be that of a man who eschewed dogma and ready-made formulas; and although his thought was unoriginal, had not the original thought of the Benthamites and the scientists destroyed the Englishman's capacity for faith and assent? His failure to provide positive answers was only to be expected from a man whose concern was not the mere practical mechanical arrangements of existence, but the deeper springs of the human heart.

The most serious ground of uneasiness, however, did have a deeper effect, though this, too, fits in a complementary way with one of the sources of Carlyle' influence, and was noticed before 1850. The terrible austerity of Carlyle's voice, his almost Sophoclean insistence on the insignificance of human happiness, even of human life, was restated in a form impossible to ignore in Latter-Day Pamphlets, above all in the pamphlet on "Model Prisons". In private life, Carlyle was a kind man, and performed many acts of kindness to individual poor people. But he also showed a fascinated sympathy with a kind of savage destiny; the truth that Carlyle saw in the universe, tearing through falsehood and deception, and establishing itself in political terms only through the rule of the hero, had no respect for individual human beings. Why, if the present moment was merely the confluence of two eternities, should it? At his worst, Carlyle seems almost to reveal in himself a kind of suppressed blood-lust; his doctrine of submission to destiny

to 'The Immensities', reveals itself, in places, in dark forms. 'The Highland wife, with her husband at the foot of the gallows', relates Carlyle in Chartism, apparently with grim approval, 'patted him on the shoulder... and said amid her tears: "Go up, Donald, my man; the Laird bids ye". To her it seemed the rights of lairds were great, the rights of men small, and she acquiesced'[99]. Although in Chartism Carlyle proclaims himself on the side of the rights of men, asserting that 'All men are justified in demanding and searching for their rights'[100], there is an uneasy ambivalence in this anecdote, as there is in Carlyle's descriptions of destiny working itself out in the savagery of the French Revolution, above all in the September Massacres, which he explicitly justifies: '... instead of shrieking more, it were perhaps edifying ('alas, no!'), interjected the Westminster Review, in its quotation of this passage[101]),

> ... to remark, on the other side, what a singular thing Customs (in Latin, Mores) are; and how fitly the Virtue, Virtus, Manhood or Worth, that is in a man, is called his Morality or Customariness. Fell Slaughter, one of the most authentic products of the Pit you would say, once give it Customs, becomes War, with Laws of War; and is Customary and Moral enough; and red individuals carry the tools of it girt round their haunches, not without an air of pride, - which do thou nowise blame[102].

It is Carlyle's fatalistic denial of the importance, and the difficulty, of individual moral decision that some Victorians found hard to accept. As the Christian Observer protested, Carlyle's

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99. Chartism, 68 - 9.
100. Ibid., 69.
101. Westminster, (1839), op. cit., 61.
102. FR, II, 200.

pamphlet on "Model Prisons" was, apart from any other consideration, altogether too facile; '...nothing is easier than to write in this way', expostulated the reviewer, 'because nothing is easier than to declaim on one side of an intricate subject, carefully keeping the other side out of view. For ourselves, we think the subject so intricate that we do not desire to enter upon it here...'[103]. One was either in tune with the universe, said Carlyle, or one was not; one obeyed its laws, or one disobeyed them. There was no other course. This is, perhaps, Carlyle's most central doctrine and its acceptance or rejection by the Victorians can be understood most clearly perhaps as an index of the course of the great spiritual battle of the century, the struggle between the ideas of morality as an infinitely complex individual matter, and as an acceptance of some variety of external, revealed truth, no matter how damaging to the individual. Carlyle's political ideas are a clear extension of this theme; democracy is the politics of private moral conflict, just as hero-worship is the unquestioning acceptance of the 'laws of the universe'. As the Westminster Review commented, on this passage from The French Revolution, 'the difference [between battle and massacre] is not in many or few, custom or no custom, hodden or scarlet, but in the souls, the purposes, the feelings of the men who do the deed'[104]. Other reviewers were distressed by this theme in The French Revolution. Carlyle, it was noted, perceived truth in the actions of those revolutionary figures distinguished by energy of character, in 'the man who has an eye - that is who glares on you like a tiger'[105]. But 'all

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103. Christian Observer (1850), op. cit.
104. Westminster (1839), op. cit., 62.
105. Blackwoods (1843), op. cit., 126.

who acted with an ill-starred moderation, who strove, with ineffectual but conscientous effort'[106] to stay the course of the revolution, were dismissed with contempt, or at best pity.

This point of view distressed the philanthropic christianity of some of his readers, the agnostic humanism of others. Carlyle was seen as Roman, rather than Greek, as conveying the spirit of the Old, rather than the New Testament. 'The qualities he admired with his whole soul', wrote Leslie Stephen, 'were force of will, intensity of purpose, exclusive devotion to some worthy end'[107]. Despite Sartor, it is in the distinction between Hebraism and 'sweet reasonableness', as Professor Tillotson suggests, that we can isolate one of the radical differences between Arnold and Carlyle [108]. Carlyle had knocked a window from the blind wall of his century, said R. H. Horne; but he noted that 'some men complain of a certain bleakness in the wind which enters at it...'[109]. Nevertheless, though Carlyle's authoritarian morality was noticed before 1850, it was not until the publication of The Latter-Day Pamphlets that it became impossible to ignore his savage fatalism: Carlyle's early readers found it quite possible to talk of his toleration for those who disagreed with him, and could write about his humility and his love for mankind, of his 'humble, trustful and affectionate heart'[110].

The attitude of Carlyle's readers in the years following the Pamphlets tended to show itself in one of three ways. Either, like

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106. Ibid.
107. Stephen, op. cit., 351.
108. Tillotson, op. cit., 134.
109. Horne, op. cit., 256.
110. Quarterly (1839), op. cit., 446.

Exeter Hall and the philosophic radicals, they pronounced him anathema, or they remained in his fold, uneasily swallowing his 'exaggerations', and perhaps, like George Eliot, pronouncing them as 'quite incidental', or, a third possibility, they heartily approved of his stand. In the first category were Mill and his followers; in the second, were such figures as Harriet Martineau, G.H. Lewes and George Eliot and, probably, Tennyson; in the third were Ruskin, Kingsley, and with a few reservations, Dickens himself. The existence of the second group of Victorians, those who regretted Carlyle's excesses but nevertheless persisted in the belief that his influence on his age was a healthy one, indicates again the complexity of his appeal. Even after Latter-Day Pamphlets, Carlyle was still venerated by many for whom the virtues of tolerance and flexibility were important. Perhaps the same people were precisely those most in need, having abjured it, of moral certainty and the sense of life and purpose that seemed to go with it, commodities which formed the basis of Carlyle's appeal. 'When criticism has done its just work... on the nature of Mr Carlyle's opinions and their worth as specific contributions', wrote John Morley, a civilised man, who like Matthew Arnold, battled against philistinism and intolerance, 'very few people will be found to deny that his influence in stimulating moral energy, in kindling enthusiasm..., and in stirring a sense of the reality on the one hand, and the unreality on the other, of all that man can do or suffer, has not been surpassed by any teacher now living'[111]. Perhaps this indicates something of the nature of Carlyle's influence; Carlyle's own inconsistency and inchoate vitality corresponded with the moral contradictions that bewildered many intelligent people

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111. Morley, op. cit., 196.

who could see the dehumanising potency of mere dogma but needed something to replace the certainty that dogma provided. Carlyle both destroyed the authority of rigid formulas and, while refusing to allow his own dogma to crystallise in a coherent and systematic form, provided nevertheless, moral authority, the feeling that, after all, 'reality' and 'unreality' were quite easy to tell apart; curiously, for some Carlyleans at least, this feeling was easily separable from the more unacceptable local conclusions of Carlyle himself. And, above all, by concentrating his attack, both implicitly and explicitly, on mere rationality, Carlyle covered his own inconsistencies, his intellectual and moral lack of focus, and allowed his readers to forget their own.

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One reaction of the Victorians to their moral uncertainties was to adopt a certain tone, a kind of strenuous earnestness, an austere but sometimes paper thin self-confidence;[112] it is to this impulse that Carlyle appealed, and which he strengthened in his contemporaries. Carlyle, thought the Westminster Review in 1850, had dispersed the remains of reverence for religious orthodoxy. But

> ... he has raised the moral tone of the age, and awakened a noble spirit of strength and courage amongst the young men of the present generation, which far transcends anything they will actually show to the world. The influence he has had on the manliness of the age cannot be sufficiently estimated.
>
> It is true that he gives no prescriptive rule of life, but he is, as it were, the voice of the trumpet inciting to the battle and enduing men with the resolution to "do with all their might" whatever they may find appointed.[113]

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112. See Houghton, op. cit., 239 - 62.
113. "Religious Faith and Modern Scepticism", Westminster Review, LII (1850), 397.

The popular Eliza Cook's Journal, also in 1850, emphasised the influence of Carlyle's moral tone, coupling it, like the Westminster Review, with his call to action. His seriousness is also linked with his powers of imaginative vision; in the mind of the writer, 'suggestiveness' clearly leads to the idea of action, which in its turn is linked with Carlyle's earnestness:

> In some respects, he is a great poet, and pierces the marrow of a thought with the keen vision of a Seer. He sometimes lays open, in a few brief sentences, a whole realm of thought to the thinker. He is eminently suggestive. He incites the minds of others to action. He wields that great power over others, which the earnest man invariably exercises[114].

It was Carlyle's effect on the earnestness of his age, rather than his brutal authoritarianism, that most disquieted Lytton Strachey[115]. The idea of 'moral tone' still contains the twentieth century's popular notion of the Victorian age, and in this sense of the word, Carlyle is the most Victorian figure of them all. Strachey failed to realise that Carlyle's attack on 'Victorianism' was infinitely more searching and more deeply felt than his own could ever be; nevertheless, Carlyle's effect on the seriousness and on the manliness (two inseparable qualities) of the Victorians was probably considered, by the end of his career, to be his most important contribution. Carlyle, thought Harriet Martineau, had 'infused into the mind of the English nation a sincerity, earnestness, healthfulness and courage which can be appreciated only by those who are old enough to tell what was our morbid state when

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114. "Notices of New Works: Latter-Day Pamphlets No. 1", Eliza Cook's Journal, (1850), 398.
115. Strachey, op. cit., 186-7.

Byron was the representative of our temper, the Clapham Church of our religion, and the rotten-borough system of our political morality. If I am warranted in believing that the society I am bidding farewell to is a vast improvement upon that which I was born into, I am confident that the blessed change is attributable to Carlyle more than to any single influence besides'[116]. Whether or how this process would have taken place without Carlyle is one of the imponderables of cultural history. Certainly, many educated and sensitive minds obviously accepted the phenomenon as to a large extent Carlyle's responsibility; But it is difficult to credit that the Victorians would not have believed in the virtues of seriousness without Carlyle. For Matthew Arnold, Carlyle 'was always "carrying coals to Newcastle", ...preaching earnestness to a nation that had it by nature, but was less abundantly supplied with other things'[117]. One of the 'other things' Arnold means here, underlines how paradoxical was Carlyle's appeal to some literary people. It is Carlyle's creative powers, his liberating imaginative genius, to which Arnold most readily responded, qualities which were the negation of the inflexible and the insensitive, in a word of Philistinism. But Carlyle, especially in his later years, was the most powerful of all the champions of Philistinism. Carlylean 'earnestness' seems, somehow, a bewildering and versatile phenomenon, a Jekyll and Hyde, hard to pin down behind any one tendency of Victorian intellectual, or anti-intellectual, life. At its best, it was seen as the product of his contempt for formulas, and of his 'suggestiveness'; At its worst, as it is for Arnold here, it was an extension of the terrible inflexibility and intolerance that became increasingly characteristic of Carlyle's mind.

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116. Martineau, op. cit., I, 387.
117. Quoted by Tillotson, K., op. cit, 148.

Chapter Two: THE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP.

The affinity of Carlyle's thinking with all that was dehumanising in Victorian earnestness indicates what is, perhaps, the most vital divergence between his mentality and Dicken's. The antithesis is so radical, that it becomes obvious, once we have registered it, that the question it irresistably proposes is one of the most important to be answered by an investigation of their relationship: how could such a personality as Dicken's be so attracted by such an opposite? Perhaps, in the end, the question has to be modified before something like a real answer can be attempted. Dickens and Carlyle, were certainly more complex and less static than this particular discrimination suggests. Nevertheless, the contrast indicated by their respective positions in the Victorian popular imagination does present our most fundamental problem. Carlyle himself gives us our starting point: 'His theory of life was entirely wrong, Gavan Duffy reports him saying of Dickens, in the mid-forties;

> He thought men ought to be buttered up, and the world made soft and accomodating for them, and all sorts of fellows have turkey for their Christmas dinner. Commanding and controlling and punishing them he would give up without any misgivings in order to coax and soothe and delude them into doing right. But it was not in this manner the eternal laws operated, but quite otherwise. Dickens had not written anything which would be found of much use in solving the problems of life.[1]

Carlyle's attitude to Dickens was warmer, and more complicated, than this and Dickens himself came to believe more in 'commanding and controlling and punishing' than Carlyle realised; but this over-simplification does contain much of the truth about the two men and

1. Duffy, Sir C.G., Conversations with Carlyle, London, 1892, 75.

their relationship and also about the way in which their contemporaries regarded them: the public attitudes evoked respectively by Carlyle and by Dickens were neatly, if partially, delineated by Trollope[2] in his characterisations of them as Dr. Pessimist Anticant and Mr. Popular Sentiment, and Dickens's statement of policy for a periodical he once thought of starting, sums up one aspect (perhaps the most important) of his meaning for his age: '<u>Carol</u> philosophy, cheerful views, sharp anatomisation of humbug, jolly good temper; papers always in season, pat to the time of year; and a vein of glowing, hearty, generous, mirthful, beaming reference in everything to Home, and Fireside'[3]. This is just as 'Victorian' as Carlyle's spartan austerity, and represents a response to his times as vital and as authentic, for Dickens, as does 'the eternal nature of Duty', for Carlyle. This is the 'early' Dickens speaking, of course, and the contrast, even at this date (1845) was already not as clearcut as this; but it certainly contains enough of the truth (and for the whole period of their relationship) to be worth considering, for the moment, as it stands.

Part of the explanation for the apparent paradox of Dickens's devotion to Carlyle, lies, of course, in the fact that their relationship was not simply a literary, but also a personal one. Many Victorians reacted to the magic of Carlyle's personality on the evidence of the printed page; Dickens reacted to it as well, at first hand: when he told Forster that he would go 'at all times farther to see Carlyle than any man alive',[4] he was speaking of him as a person, for whom he had affection, and not simply as an

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2. Trollope, A., <u>The Warden</u>, Oxford, 1952, ch. xv.
3. Forster, 378.
4. Ibid., 839. Undated.

influential literary figure. And though, in company, Carlyle was much given to dununciatory monologues, especially as he grew older, there is as much emphasis in many eye-witness accounts, on his exuberance and his collossal laughter. Dickens's personal attitude to Carlyle, in the 'forties and 'fifties at any rate, was an engaging mixture of devotion and exuberant gaiety; the novelist's natural high spirits seem, if anything, to have been stimulated, rather than crushed, by the Prophet of Chelsea. Percy FitzGerald gives us the tone of several reminiscences of their personal relations, in his memory of 'Boz "playing round" the sage as Garrick did round Johnson - affectionately and in high good humour and wit, and, I could well see, much pleasing the old lion'[5].

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We can see the mingled devotion and high spirits that Carlyle, in the flesh, could inspire in Dickens in two accounts of a meeting in 1849. In May, Dickens gave a dinner, to celebrate the launching of David Copperfield, the first number of which was in the book-sellers' windows, and Carlyle overcame his distaste for 'leg of mutton eloquence' sufficiently to attend it. He was accompanied by his wife and by the young David Masson, who was then unknown enough to feel it 'promotion to get into such company'. The other guests, apart from Carlyle and his wife, included Thackeray, the formidable Samuel Rogers, Mrs. Gaskell, John Kenyon, and, of course, the ever-present Forster. Masson's clearest memory was of the warmth of their reception, of Dickens's unusual cordiality'. He

> ...seemed particularly rejoiced at the sight of them and hurried to greet Carlyle, and shook him very warmly by the hand, saying several times how glad he was to see him, and putting many questions in a filial way about his health, till at last Carlyle laughed and replied,

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5. FitzGerald, P., Memories of Charles Dickens, London, 1913, 91.

> in the very words of Mrs Gummidge in the third chapter of David Copperfield; - "I know what I am. I know that I am a lone lorn creetur', and not only that everythink goes contrary with me, but that I go contrairy with everybody". The pat quotation made Dickens entirely happy, he laughed and laughed, - it was a treat to see him...[6]

Forster's recollection of the incident is very similar:

> ...it was a delight to see the enjoyment of Dickens at Carlyle's laughing reply to questions about his health, that he was, in the language of Mr Peggotty's housekeeper, a lorn lone creature and everything went contrairy with him[7].

Dickens had to drag himself away to receive another guest who had just arrived but their conversation must have been slightly one-sided; Dickens 'was always "edging to be within hearing" of Carlyle, - it was easy to see who was the hero of the evening to him'[8]. This 'filial' hero-worship conveys the tone of Dickens's, and (not insignificantly)of Forster's personal attitude to Carlyle, from the late forties (and probably sooner) onwards. Percy FitzGerald saw them together several times, and noted 'the devout and affectionate bearing of both men to the "sage of Chelsea," and his solemn good humour shown to both in return'[9].

Dickens's Carlyle, then was possibly more in keeping with 'Carol Philosophy' than the Carlyle of the Victorian popular imagination, or the Carlyle of reality, for whom 'turkey for their Christmas

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6. Recounted by Masson to Wilson, D.A.W., Carlyle at his Zenith, London 1927, 88.
7. Forster, op. cit., 528.
8. Wilson, op. cit., 88.
9. FitzGerald, op. cit., 84.

dinner' was, certainly by the 'fifties, not only irrelevant, but anathema. Partly, this inconsistency was due to a curious split in Carlyle's own personality, which made one side of him capable of being stimulated, quite unhypocritically, by Dickens's warmth and vitality, a spontaneous reaction which soon became engulfed by a deeply entrenched calvinistic recoil against such foolishness, an impulse that increasingly extended, not only to Dickens, but to all imaginative writers. Dickens, of course, never saw this side of Carlyle's feelings about him; he only saw and felt the liberating and cheering effect he himself had on the old sage, and, perhaps, unconsciously incorporated him into his own world, partly in his own image: it is possibly not too fanciful to see Carlyle, in Dickens's mind, as a Dickensian 'character'; it was to people and their idiosyncracies, above all, that Dickens reacted, and Carlyle had in person, all the necessary qualifications: he was a compelling raconteur, a man of great laughter, of overpowering and individual personality, the subject of innumerable anecdotes. Dickens himself took pleasure in 'irresistible' imitations of his broad Annandale speech at the dinner-table and elsewhere,[10] a sign perhaps, that Carlyle's personality had engaged Dickens's novelist's imagination, a faculty which we cannot separate from his actor's interest in details of characterisation.

The closeness between the actor and the novelist in Dickens was certainly understood by Carlyle[11]. There is nothing lukewarm, when he let himself go about his reaction to Dickens's comic characters, and when they were acted for him by Dickens himself, he was reduced

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10. DeWolfe Howe, M.A., Memories of a Hostess, Boston, 1922, 141; Yates, E., Recollections and Experiences, London, 1884, 166-7.
11. See Wilson, op. cit., 418.

to utter helplessness. 'Tonight I saw the greatest thing in London', wrote James S. Pike, then United States Minister at the Hague, in 1863,

> It was Dickens reading Pickwick's Trial to Thomas Carlyle. I thought Carlyle would split, and Dickens was not much better. Carlyle sat on the front bench, and he haw-hawed right out, over and over again till he fairly exhausted himself. Dickens would read and then he would stop in order to give Carlyle a chance to stop. Of course the whole crowded audience were in the same mood and the uproar was tremendous. I laughed till my jaws ached, and I caught myself involuntarily stamping.... His acting is splendid. It cannot be exceeded. Carlyle had a young companion with him, and, speaking to him in answer to some remark, said: 'he is a wonderful creature with a book'.... When Mr Dickens came on the stage the two saluted with a nod and between the readings Mr Carlyle was taken out to meet him.[12]

The 'young companion' was Thomas Woolner, the sculptor, and in the interval, he and Carlyle joined Dickens backstage for brandy and water. 'Carlyle took his glass and nodding to Dickens said, "Charley, you carry a whole company of actors under your own hat"'[13]. Against Dickens in the flesh, it appears, Carlyle was powerless. But it is illuminating to compare this account with Carlyle's own. The next day, writing to Froude in the seclusion of his study at Cheyne Row, he seems while admitting it, to be slightly ashamed of his immoderate behaviour the evening before, and perhaps defensively, a note of condescension creeps in:

> I had to go yesterday to Dickens's Reading, 8 p.m. Hanover Rooms to the complete upsetting of my evening

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12. Pike, J.S., "Dickens, Carlyle and Tennyson", Atlantic Monthly, CLXIV (1939), 811.
13. Woolner, A., Thomas Woolner, R.A., Sculptor and Poet, London, 1917, 232-3.

> habitudes and spiritual composure. Dickens does do it capitally, such as it is; acts better than any Macready in the world; a whole tragic, comic, heroic theatre visible, performing under one hat, and keeping us laughing - in a sorry way, some of us thought - the whole night. He is a good creature, too, and makes fifty or sixty pounds by each of these readings.[14]

Carlyle's feelings about Dickens and about his writings, alternated curiously for over forty years between condescension, even contempt, and an affectionate warmth tinged strongly with genuine respect. Their first meeting was in 1840 and, though Carlyle's reaction was certainly friendly, we can distinguish in his account of the event the first signs of both attitudes. We can see the obvious fascination with Dickens's personality (which on this occasion engaged all Carlyle's considerable powers of observation) as well as the habitual puritan's condescension, which Dickens was, in any case, far from alone in attracting. '...Pickwick, too, was of the same dinner party,' he wrote to his brother of a gathering at Lord Stanley's house, 'though they do not seem to heed him overmuch. He is a fine little fellow - Boz, I think. Clear blue, intelligent eyes, eyebrows that he arches amazingly, large protrusive rather loose mouth, a face of most extreme mobility, which he shuttles about - eyebrows, eyes, mouth and all - in a very singular manner while speaking. Surmount this with a loose coil of common-coloured hair, and set it on a small compact figure, very small, and dressed à la D'Orsay rather than well- this is Pickwick. For the rest a quiet, shrewd-looking little fellow,

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14. Froude, J.A., Carlyle's Life in London, London, 1884, II, 270.

who seems to guess pretty well what he is and what others are'.[15] Carlyle did not meet Dickens without preconceptions. He had read some numbers of Pickwick soon after their first appearance, on the recommendation of an article in the Westminster Review by Charles Buller. His disappointment was nearly unqualified. 'Thinner wash, with perceptible vestige of a flavour in it here and there, was never offered to the human palate', he wrote to Stirling; 'I will henceforth call Buller not the worst critic in Britain, but a critic I will not be led by'. His dismissal was not complete: 'Ought there not to be books of that kind?', he asked; 'it is not certain Yes; and yet not certain No: the Turks endeavour "to combine exercise with total passivity of indolence"; the human constitution has many wants. Requiescat Pickwick!'[16] This contemptuous show of indecision is not to be taken at its face value, nor is his dismissal of Buller as 'a critic I will not be led by'. His review[17], though favourable, was not uncritical, and included long extracts from Pickwick itself, which made it quite clear what kind of writing was being discussed. Carlyle's disappointment may well have been not with Pickwick, but with himself. In another letter of the same year, he wrote, more revealingly this time:

> It is worth noting how loath we are to read great works, how much more willingly we cross our legs, back to candles, feet to fire over some Pickwick, or lowest trash of that sort. The reason is we are very indolent, very wearied and forlorn, and read oftenest chiefly that we may forget ourselves.

His contempt is aimed as much at himself as at Pickwick to which he had turned, as he wrote to Stirling, when bogged down in a solid German historical treatise:

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15. Ibid., I, 177-8.
16. Carlyle, T., Letters to Mill, Stirling and Browning, London, 1923.
17. / Buller, C./ "The works of Dickens", Westminster Review, XXVII (1837), 194-215.

> I brought Müller's History ... with me: a work of endless research, of great talent; but unsuitable for me; unedifying, with its high Tacitus-Philosophy and classicality, not without a touch of pedantry. I am still in the Third volume. On the other hand, I did read - Pickwick!.... On the whole... is it not to be considered that I, for instance, did read Pickwick, and have not yet read Johannes von Müller? I sat almost a whole day reading it[18].

A long time to spend, perhaps, on something allegedly so flavourless: it is difficult to escape the impression here of Carlyle, who was to become the most influential of all the Prophets of manly, self-reliant earnestness, escaping from his own terrible austerity into a warmer and more human world. Carlyle's ambivalence towards Dickens the entertainer never resolved itself; a quarter of a century later, the same struggle of conscience was still asserting itself over Great Expectations. Carlyle was still caught between, on the one hand, an urge to dismiss Dickens as all too representative of the frivolity of a sinful generation, and on the other, his total inability to resist the temptation of reading him. Jane Carlyle 'would laughingly relate what outcry there used to be on the night of the week when a number was due, for "that Pip nonsence!" and what roars of laughter followed, though at first it was entirely put aside as not on any account to have time wasted over it.[19]'

The contempt that Carlyle felt, in his most characteristic mood, for Dickens's literary efforts was not, of course, confined to Dickens alone; he increasingly despised all literary people, and his deprecatory remarks about Dickens are not untypical of the general tone of his judgements of other writers and their work. Macaulay's History of England, he pronounced 'Flat: without a ray of genius'[20];

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18. Carlyle, T., op. cit., 206 - 7, My emphasis.
19. Forster, op. cit., 737n. My emphasis.
20. Carlyle, T., and Emerson, R.W., Correspondence, London, 1964, 453.

Trollope was 'a distylish little pug,...irredeemably embedded in commonplace...'[21]; Bulwer Lytton was 'one of the wretchedest phantasms... [he] had yet fallen in with'[22]; Balzac and Georges Sand he, oddly, lumped together as 'the literature of desperation'[23]; Monkton Milnes's Life of Keats was 'fricassee of dead dog'[24]; Jane Austen's novels were 'dishwashings'[25]; his comment after deciding that one of George Eliot's novels 'would not do', was a terse 'Poor Lewes! poor fellow!'[26]. And even where he could praise a writer, there was, somewhere, nearly always an inevitable depreciation of him. If for no other reason, such denigration was pronounced as the product of Carlyle's growing distrust of any kind of literary effort. In 1844, Tennyson (probably the writer whom Carlyle most respected) was 'one of the few who are and remain beautiful to me; - a true human soul, or some authentic approximation thereto, to whom your own soul can say, Brother!'[27] But three years later, though he was still 'a truly interesting Son of Earth, and Son of Heaven'[28], Tennyson had 'lost his way among the will-o-wisps'; Carlyle no longer, as he had done in 1843, praised him as being one of the few capable of 'singing in our curt English speech'[29]: now, thought Carlyle, 'he wants a task and, alas, that of spinning rhymes, and naming it "Art", and "high Art" in a time like ours, will never furnish him'[30].

Carlyle's dismissal here of Tennyson's poetry as irrelevant to the times, applied increasingly in his mind to all poets and

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21. Carlyle, T., Letters to his Wife, London, 1953, 381.
22. Carlyle and Emerson, op. cit.,227.
23. Espinasse, F., Literary Recollections, London, 1893, 223-4.
24. Wilson, D. A. W., op. cit., 15.
25. Espinasse, op. cit., 216-8.
26. Wilson, D. A. W., Carlyle to Threescore and Ten, London, 1929, 573.
27. Carlyle and Emerson, op. cit., 363.
28. Ibid., 463.
29. Ibid., 353.
30. Ibid., 463.

novelists, including Dickens. This is partly responsible for what is, to us, a curious paradox. The idea of Dickens as being concerned deeply with the disease of Victorian society, the notion of him as a 'social reformer', is so natural to his modern audience that it needs an effort of imagination to grasp Carlyle's consistent judgement of his writings: for Carlyle, Dickens was simply an entertainer, a 'showman whom one gives a shilling to once a month to see his raree-show, and then sends him about his business'[31]. It is not easy to understand Carlyle's seemingly total inability to see what was in front of his nose. He could be amused by Dickens but he rarely saw that Dickens, often under his own influence, was just as intent on decrying the evils of the times as was the 'Censor of the Age' himself:

> We seem to me a people so enthralled and buried under bondage to the hearsays and the cants and the grimaces, as no people ever were before....surely, I say, men called "of genius", if genius be anything but a paltry toy box fit for Bartholomew Fair, - are commissioned and commanded under pain of eternal death, to throw their whole "genius", however great or small it be, into the remedy...And they spend their time in traditionary rope-dancings, and mere Vauxhall gymnastics.... Oh for thousand sharp sickles in as many strong right hands! and I poor devil have but one rough sickle and a hand that will soon be weary... Dickens writes a Dombey and Son, Thackeray a Vanity Fair; not reapers they, either of them! In fact the business of the rope-dancing goes to a great height...'[32].

And yet, strangely, Carlyle does seem to have had fleeting inklings of a common purpose. In 1855 he conveyed to Dickens his approval

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31. FitzGerald, E., Letters and Literary Remains, London, 1889, I, 198.
32. Carlyle, T., Letters to Mill etc., op. cit., 281-4.

(with its unavoidable qualification) of the latest number of Little Dorrit; 'Recommend me to Dickens', he wrote to Forster, 'and thank him a hundred times for "the circumlocution office", which is priceless after its sort! We have laughed loud and long over it here; and laughter is by no means the supreme result in it - Oh heaven!'[33] But such moments of insight seem to have been rare. And if Carlyle did see sometimes what Dickens was aiming at, his loss of faith in all literature as a means of solving 'the problems of life' underlined this tendency to see only the entertainer and the 'Carol philosophy' in Dickens's writings, and to ignore the darker, and often nearly Carlylean, understanding of society that modern critics most admire. Carlyle seems to have failed totally to comprehend the value or meaning of the Victorian novelist's engagement in his society. And he also seems to have been quite unable to tell a novel or novelist of genius from a gifted or merely competent one. All novels were very much the same, simply 'rope-dancing', amusing enough, but quite useless; Dickens himself, he compared (unfavourably) on one occasion with Bret Harte, on another he lumped indiscriminately together Dickens's earliest 'dark' social reforming novel and a comic tale by Charles Lever: 'Modern literature is all purposeless and distracted, and leads I know not whither', he told Gavan Duffy in 1865; 'Its professors are on the wrong path just now, and I believe the world will soon discover that some practical work done is worth innumerable "Oliver Twists" and "Harry Lorrequers", and any amount of other ingenious dancing on the slack rope.'[34]

The more we consider how fundamentally Carlyle's criticisms of Dickens spring from his most deeply held beliefs, the more perplexing

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33. Forster Collection, undated.
34. Duffy, op. cit., 221-3.

it becomes to return to his obvious delight in him, both as a man and as a writer. The impression becomes increasingly clear of a man unable to bear the implications of his own lonely and cheerless posture, seeking relief in the human warmth of Dickens's world. It is interesting, here, to compare his views of Dickens and Thackeray:

> Of Dickens he often said that he was the only man of his time in whose writings genuine cheerfulness was to be found. Of Thackeray's earlier performances Carlyle said that they showed 'something Hogarthian' to be in him, but that his books were 'wretched'. Of course this was before the appearance of Vanity Fair, the immense talent displayed in which Carlyle fully recognised, pronouncing Thackeray 'a man of much more judgement than Dickens'. Yet, when Vanity Fair in its yellow cover was being issued contemporaneously with Dombey and Son in its green ditto, Carlyle spoke of the relief which he found on turning from Thackeray's terrible cynicism to the cheerful geniality of Dickens.[35]

Although Carlyle's view of Thackeray's literary ability can be seen to vary in the same way as his attitude to Dickens's, as a novelist, he seems to have attached more weight to Thackeray, preferring (perhaps strangely in view of his own writing) his comparative realism to Dickens's more grotesque and fantastic world. His preference, admittedly, could be expressed in a strange way; Gavan Duffy suggested to Carlyle

> ...that the difference between [Dickens's] men and women and Thackeray's seemed... like the difference between Sinbad the Sailor and Robinson Crusoe.
>
> Yes, he said, Thackeray had more reality in him and would cut up into a dozen Dickenses. They were altogether different at bottom. Dickens was doing the best that was in

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35. Espinasse, op. cit., 215.

> him, and went on smiling in perennial good humour; but Thackeray despised himself for his work, and on that account could not always do it even moderately well[36].

Perhaps it is worth suggesting that Carlyle might have envied Dickens's perennial good humour', and even that he identified himself with what he saw as Thackeray's self-contempt, and that the more cynical view of this novelist was sometimes nearer to his own predominant view of the world and therefore alternately attractive and oppressive to him. He could enjoy Dickens's readings; he turned with relief from the gloom of Vanity Fair to Dombey and Son. To Forster, he once recounted an anecdote that seems to show his wry and ambiguous appreciation of the Dickensian power of consolation to the 'very wearied and forlorn'. Jane being confined to bed, Carlyle wrote asking for books 'calculated to enliven the temper of a sick room'. 'Dombey we have', he told Forster,

> and almost nothing other in that department. - An archdeacon with his own venerable lips, repeated to me, the other night, a strange profane story: Of a solemn Clergyman who had been administering ghostly consolation to a sick person... having finished, satisfactorily as he thought, and got out of the room, he heard the sick person ejaculate: "Well, thank God, Pickwick will be out in ten days anyway!" -- This is dreadful.[37]

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If Dickens had known exactly what Carlyle thought of his writing, it would probably have come as a profound shock. There is little

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36. Duffy, op. cit., 76.
37. Forster Collection, 12 Dec. 1846; partly reprinted, Sanders C., "Carlyle's Letters", Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, XXXVIII (1955) - (1956), 221.

doubt that he was very anxious for Carlyle's good opinion of his work, and not simply as an entertainer: Dickens, on several occasions, went to some pains to indicate to him his claims to be taken seriously, as one of the 'thousand sharp sickles', cutting away the 'cants and hearsays' of Victorian society that Carlyle longed for. Even Pickwick, which Carlyle understandably, as we have seen, simply saw as pure entertainment, was brought into the effort: when Dickens invited him to attend one of his readings, he suggested that if Carlyle would come on an evening when the trial scene was to be read, he would 'find a healthy suggestion of an abuse or two, that sets people thinking in the right direction'[38]. But if Dickens tried to bring even his most unashamedly comic writing to Carlyle's attention for its social import, Carlyle, for his part, probably saw only comedy in Dickens's most serious attempts to come to grips with his society. Of his reaction to Hard Times, certainly Dickens's most 'Carlylean' novel, we seem to have no record, though, since the book was dedicated to him, there must presumably have been one. But all his comments on Dombey, which was certainly written under his own shadow, seem to indicate, incredibly, that he was quite unaware either of any point of contact with his own thinking, or even of any serious intention in the book: Dombey and Son was, at worst, mere 'rope-dancing', at best, a cheerful relief from a wretched and cynical world.

Seen against Carlyle's steadfast incomprehension of the seriousness of his intentions, there is something slightly pathetic about Dickens's attempts to bring himself to his attention as a serious social critic. He began the effort with The Chimes, which as Dr Michael Slater has suggested, was certainly the first significant stirring of

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38. Letters, III, 348, 13 April, 1863.

the 'later' Dickens, the prelude to the second half of Dickens's career. It was also, without doubt, the first work in which Dickens consciously saw himself as working in Carlyle's tradition, and he took good care that Carlyle should observe his allegiance for himself. In October, 1844, before the story was completed, he wrote to Forster from Genoa, to suggest that he should read the finished tale to a 'little circle' assembled for the purpose. There is no doubt about whom the guest of honour, perhaps even the raison d'être of this group, was to be: 'Shall I confess to you', Dickens wrote, 'I particularly want Carlyle above all to see it before the rest of the world, when it is done; and I should like to inflict the little story on him...with my own lips ...'[39] The next month, he was writing again, to say that the story was finished, and to repeat his request for Forster to organise a small private reading: 'Don't have anyone, this particular night, to dinner, but let it be a summons for the special purpose at half-past 6. Carlyle, indispensable, and I should like his wife of all things: her judgement would be invaluable'[40].

There seems to be no record of Carlyle's reaction to this reading of The Chimes; the 'grave attention'[41] of his expression that Forster noticed (vouching for its accuracy) in Maclise's drawing of the occasion, might equally well be sheer boredom. But Carlyle certainly has the seat of honour, at Dickens's right hand, and here the drawing could be seen to fit, if nothing else, Dickens's feelings towards Carlyle. The Chimes is Dickens's first attempt at producing a fictional work pervaded throughout by (rather than dealing locally with) social issues. It is possible, as I hope to show, to see a clear line of descent, partly via Dombey and Son, between The Chimes and Hard Times. And it was this now controversial

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39. Forster, op. cit., 355.
40. Ibid., 356.
41. Ibid, 363.

novel that produced, implicitly and explicitly, Dickens's most thorough-going and unmistakable statement of his allegiance to Carlyle. It is just possible to grasp that it is quite likely that Carlyle failed to see, on the strength of the novel itself that Dickens was trying hard to work in the same direction as himself: although there is (probably) no surviving record of Carlyle's reaction to Hard Times, a comparison of his statements about Dickens before and after 1854, shows no perceptible change in his attitude. Conceivably, perhaps, though he had given permission for its dedication to him, 'it was entirely put aside as not on any account to have time wasted over it'. Carlyle certainly took little pleasure in disciples, and even found them embarrassing; they were usually, with or without tact, discouraged. This may explain why, even in the face of the unmistakable evidence of Dickens's letter, asking his permission for the dedication, Carlyle stubbornly persisted, for the rest of his life (despite a dim but, probably, rarely conscious realisation that Dickens was 'genuine' that he was not a 'sham') in seeing only the 'perennial good humour' of Dickens, and ignoring the rest. 'My dear Carlyle', Dickens wrote from Boulogne in July 1954,

> I am going, next month, to publish in one volume a story now coming out in Household Words, called Hard Times. I have constructed it patiently, with a view to its publication altogether in a compact cheap form. It contains what I do devoutly hope will shake some people in a terrible mistake of these days, when so presented. I know it contains nothing in which you do not think with me, for no man knows your books better than I. I want to put in the first page of it that it is inscribed to Thomas Carlyle. May I?[42]

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42. Letters, II, 567, 13 July, 1854.

Whatever Carlyle's reaction to Hard Times, however, Dickens's next pervasively 'Carlylean' novel appears to have given him pleasure; at any rate, he wrote to Dickens to say so. Carlyle was known to tell his friends, not always quite sincerely, that he had enjoyed their books, probably out of regard for their feelings; this may or may not have been the case with A Tale of Two Cities. Nevertheless, Dickens took a boyish delight in telling people of the Sage's approval. It seems possible, however, that as well as pleasing Dickens, the note also exacerbated his dissatisfaction with the novel's mode of publication, since, as a letter written some months later indicates, it probably referred to the shortcomings of publication in weekly serial form. This may well explain some (though by no means all) of Dickens's exasperation with the brief episodes. 'The small portions thereof, drive me frantic;' he wrote to Forster in March 1859, after the first episodes had appeared, 'but I think the tale must have taken a strong hold.... A note I have had from Carlyle about it has given me especial pleasure'[43]. Of course, Dickens had never liked weekly serial publication, but Carlyle's reference to it (possibly made in this note) obviously struck home; some six months later, he wrote to a lady admirer, thanking her for a complimentary letter about the serial, and adding 'I hope you will be confirmed in that opinion when you can better perceive my design in seeing it all together, instead of reading it in what Carlyle (writing to me of it, with great enthusiasm) calls "teaspoons"[44]. Carlyle was still reading the weekly parts in October and wrote to Forster '...when you go to Dickens, our best regards. A Tale of Two Cities is wonderful'[45]. Dickens was pleased by this message, but his reply

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43. Forster, op. cit., 730.
44. Letters, III, 119, 28 Aug., 1859.
45. Forster Collection, 26 Oct., 1859; reprinted, Sanders, op. cit., 222.

may show that his own dissatisfaction with weekly publication was still being made worse for him by the comment Carlyle had made months before about 'teaspoons': this very possibly explains his anxiety to let Carlyle see the overall plan of his novel without further delay. Four days after Carlyle sent his message, through Forster Dickens wrote to him: 'Forster is here, and has given me your message concerning the Tale of Two Cities - which has heartily delighted me. It will be published some three weeks hence in one dose, after have occasioned me the utmost misery by being presented in the "tea-spoonful" form. Nevertheless, I should like you to read what remains of it, before the Many-Headed does, and I therefore take heart to overwhelm you with the enclosed proofs. They are not long...'[46].

In view of Dickens's obvious concern with Carlyle's opinion of his work, it was fortunate that the Sage took care not to tell Dickens to his face what he said behind his back. Whatever Carlyle's real opinion of the Tale, it may be significant that his favourable remarks about it were made to the author and his best friend, and that nearly all Carlyle's surviving comments about Dickens's writing that were not intended to reach him, were, even at their best, far from unreserved in their praise, and at their worst revealed contempt, even prophetic saeva indignatio.[47]

But whatever judgement Carlyle allowed himself of Dickens's novels,

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46. Letters, III, 131, 30 Oct., 1859.
47. See, e.g., pp 70 - 71 above.

there can be no doubt of the warmth of their personal relationship. Dickens's personal regard for Carlyle began in his gratitude for the assistance he received from him at a difficult time. During his first visit to America, Dickens had taken the opportunities offered to him to air his views on the subject of international copyright. He himself suffered an enormous loss of income as a result of pirated American editions, and his crusading blood was aroused. He had already made one public speech against it when in February 1842, he spoke out again at a public dinner in New York. 'I wish you could have heard how I gave it out', he wrote to Forster; 'My blood so boiled as I thought of the monstrous injustice that I felt as if I were twelve feet high when I thrust it down their throats'.[48] No sooner had he made his speech when such an outcry began,' as an Englishman can form no notion of'. But although Dickens was subjected to a campaign of concentrated vilification, he refused to be cowed, and wrote to Forster, asking him to gather signatures for a letter, protesting against the absence of international protection for writers, from as many English men of letters as possible. In response to Forster's appeal, Carlyle sent a separate letter of protest. 'Dickens deserves praise and support', he wrote to Forster in a covering note, 'but the claims of authors seem to me so infinitely beyond what anybody states them at, or what any congress will hear of, that I can seldom speak of them without getting into banter, or a tone inconveniently <u>loud</u>, which is worse. Congress will evidently throw out this proposal, and the next, and the next, and babble of the thing for many years, - and then do it. We are all right to shorten the <u>years</u> as we can'[49]. His letter, together with one signed by, among others, Lytton, Tennyson, Hood, Leight Hunt and Samuel Rogers, appeared in the New York <u>Evening Post</u> in May 1842. The two letters

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48. Forster, op. cit., 219.
49, Forster Coll., 26 March, 1842.

were accompanied by one from Dickens, which makes it clear which of them he considered to carry the most weight, in spite of the number and importance of the signatures Forster had collected for the other. Dickens may have already noted Carlyle's reputation in America; by 1842 Carlyle was as well known in America as in England and Dickens noticed in Boston how wide, through Emerson, his influence was [50]. 'I would beg to lay particular stress upon the letter from Mr Carlyle, Dickens wrote: 'not only because the plain and manly truth it speaks is calculated, I should conceive to arrest attention and respect in my country, and most of all in this, but because his creed in this respect is , without the abatement of one jot or atom, mine'[51]. Writing to C.C. Felton twelve days later, Dickens gave what are perhaps revealingly different reasons: 'I anticipated objection to Carlyle's letter. I called particular attention to it for three reasons. Firstly, because he boldly said what others think, and therefore deserves to be manfully supported. Secondly because it is my decided opinion that I have been assailed on this subject in a manner which no man with any pretensions to public respect or with the remotest right to express an opinion on a subject of universal literary interest would be assailed in any other country...'[52]. Carlyle himself was not primarily concerned about Dickens's personal predicament, but it was this contribution to his campaign that probably sowed the seeds in Dickens's mind of an affection that was to grow with time, and lasted until his death twenty eight years later: 'This brave letter', as Forster says, 'was an important service rendered at a critical time, and Dickens was very grateful for it. But as time went on, he had other and higher causes for gratitude to its writer. Admiration of Carlyle increased with his years; and there was no one whom in later

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50. AN, 57.
51. Letters, I, 447, 30 April 1842.
52. Ibid., I, 456, 21 May, 1842.

life he honoured so much, or had a more profound regard for'.[53] Their relationship was certainly sent off to a happy start by the international copyright affair. Dickens was grateful to Carlyle; and Carlyle, on his side, must have been impressed by Dickens's courage. On his return to England, Carlyle wrote to Dickens, to congratulate him on his stand. Dickens's reply may well refer, not simply to the effect on him of Carlyle's support, but also to what he knew of Carlyle's writings. 'My dear Carlyle, he wrote,

> I have been truly delighted by the receipt of your most welcome letter. You will believe me, I know, when I tell you that having always held you in high regard for the manliness and honesty with which you have exercised your great abilities, there are few men in the world whose commendation, so expressed, would so well please me.
>
> I am going down into Cornwall for a few days. When I return, I shall come to Chelsea to report myself. For as we are to know each other <u>well</u> (which I take to be clearly recognised as a fact in perspective, by both of <u>us</u>) the sooner we begin, the better.
>
> Ever believe me
> Heartily yours
> Charles Dickens.[54]

Carlyle, in 1842, was nearing the height of his fame, and Dickens's reference to his 'manliness and honesty' here is a useful link between his own admiration for Carlyle, and the Prophet's wider reputation as one whose peculiar abilities, whose 'steadfastness' and 'courage', enabled him, almost magically, to see truth through a mass of falsehood and to present it in a 'living form'[55]. Dickens, if he was not already, like many others, partially under the spell of

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53. Forster, op. cit., 227.
54. MS., New York public library, 26 Oct., 1843.
55. See p 25 above.

the Carlylean prophetic aura, was soon to become so. By 1844, Carlyle's social teachings had begun to have their effect, and in December, (after having read it to Carlyle) Dickens published The Chimes, which he had just composed with such great difficulty, in Italy. The book represents the beginning of a new phase in Dickens's career. 'Several months before he left England', Forster 'noticed in him the habit of more gravely regarding many things before passed lightly enough; the hopelessness of any true solution of either political or social problems by the ordinary Downing-street methods had been startlingly impressed upon him in Carlyle's writings; and in the parliamentary talk of that day he had come to have as little faith for the putting down of any serious evil, as in a then notorious city alderman's gabble for the putting down of suicide'[56]. How much this change was brought about, not simply by Carlyle's writings, but also by his personal influence, is difficult to tell. Carlyle was a famous and voluble talker, and (certainly later and perhaps already) Dickens was observed listening to him with respect. Espinasse contrasted him, in this respect, with Thackeray: 'Personally, Carlyle preferred Dickens, who always treated him with deference, to Thackeray, who often opposed to his inopportune denunciations of men and things at miscellaneous dinner-parties some of that persiflage which was more disconcerting to Carlyle than direct contradiction'[57]. By 1844, Carlyle and Dickens had established a warm though certainly not intimate, friendship. 'I truly love Dickens; and discern in the inner man of him a tone of real Music, which struggles to express itself as it may, in these bewildered, stupified [sic] and indeed very empty and distracted days, - better or worse! This, which makes him in my estimation one of a thousand I could with great joy and freedom testify to all persons, to himself first of all, in any good way'[58].

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56. Forster op. cit., 347.
57. Espinasse, op. cit., 215-6.
58. Forster Coll. [1844].

Carlyle's estimate of Dickens, both personal and literary, was, as I have pointed out, alarmingly inconsistent, but beneath all Carlyle's wintry denunciations, this attitude probably persisted throughout their relationship. And, certainly, it was more than reciprocated by Dickens himself. Their personal relationship, however, though it partly helps to explain the attraction of Carlyle's writings for Dickens, also has the effect of diverting our attention from the very real difference between what they separately stood for: despite the obvious mutual affection of the two men, one has the impression that for both, their relationship engaged only part (for Carlyle, perhaps the least important part) of their personalities. The idea of a tragic, even a reactionary Dickens, does not, really, modify the paradox very much; as we have seen, Dickens himself responded to a Carlyle rather different from the one received by most of his readers, and Carlyle, like other Victorians, certainly did not look for a despairing, socially engaged Dickens, even when it stared him in the face. Carlyle's writings may have been a factor in the increasingly reactionary attitudes adopted by Dickens as he grew older, but as I hope to show, there were usually other factors, beside Carlyle's influence, at work; and they were often (sometimes despite superficial appearances) more important for Dickens than Carlyle's teachings. Despite the frequent, and occasionally very close, convergences of their attitudes, the differences between the two men, their writings, their attitude to human life, remain overwhelmingly more important than their similarities. One has the impression, that both men saw in the other what they <u>wanted</u> to see, a selectivity that extended itself, partly, to their writings. The more one looks at their relationship, both personal and literary, the more it takes on every appearance, for both Carlyle and Dickens, of a case of mistaken identity.

Nevertheless, Carlyle's influence on Dickens has become, rightly, a truism of modern scholarship. Why should Dickens have responded to Carlyle? This remains our key question. The contrast in their attitudes to the problems of existence, to what for want of a better word must be called the 'religious' dimension of life, suggests their most crucial difference. Carlyle was a transcendentalist, formed by the Old Testament and then by German idealism, a romantic built on a base of Scottish Calvinism; he believed in the division of the world's population into the elect and the non-elect, and in the existence of a pantheistic spirit of truth, that surged and bubbled like molten lava beneath a thin crust of earthly forms, and which must, one day (as he showed it in The French Revolution), burst through and consume its containing membrane of falsehood, destroying it like the God of the Old Testament, and creating new and truthful forms. Dickens was a vague believer in the sermon on the mount whose moral beliefs were formed in the first place, by his child's bitter sense of personal injustice and deprivation, and by the New Testament. Carlyle believed at root, in a God of vengeance; Dickens believed (perhaps more emphatically at the beginning of his career) in a God of mercy, who pitied and raised up the suffering and the oppressed. Carlyle's father was an unorthodox Scottish Dissenter, a grim, silent man, 'strictly temperate, pure, abstemious, prudent, and industrious'[59]. Carlyle's admiration for him shows how great was his influence on his son:

> More remarkable man than my father I have never met in my journey through life; sterling sincerity in thought, word, and deed, most quiet, but capable of blazing into whirlwinds when needful, and such a flash of just insight and brief natural eloquence and emphasis, true to every feature of it

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59. Froude, J.A., Thomas Carlyle: A History of the First Forty Years of his Life, London 1882, I, 7.

> as I have never known in any other. Humour of a most grim Scandinavian type he occasionally had ... No man of my day, or hardly any man, can have had better parents[60].

Dicken's father was amiable and feckless, and probably his religious belief, such as it was, was vaguely Anglican. He, too, had a decisive effect on his son's character, both by his responsibility for the trauma of the blacking warehouse, and by his engaging and comic eccentricity: his son's attitude to him later in life was a complex amalgam of affection and resentment, and he became the model, successively, for Mr. Micawber and for William Dorrit. The contrast between James Carlyle and John Dickens, and more importantly, between the attitude they evoked in their sons can be seen to delineate approximately the gulf between the Prophet and the novelist.

Nevertheless, Carlyle possessed three overriding qualities which Dickens himself differently epitomised, and to which it is not amazing that he responded in Carlyle. And they are all facets of his genius that not only Dickens, but his age, valued most in Carlyle; here as elsewhere, Dickens reflected the public assessment. The three great hall-marks of Carlyle's prophetic utterances (to which his public could and often did respond separately from the actual content of what he said) were seen by the victorians to be, briefly, his anti-mechanistic imaginative vision; his vitality; and his honesty, his undying hatred of falsehood and cant.

The effect of these qualities on Dickens can only be shown fully at some length but the documentary evidence we possess can be seen to fit this suggestion. Perhaps Carlyle's attack on cant is his most obvious link with Dickens, even with the Christmassy Dickens: embedded in the list of benevolent virtues he proposed in 1845 for an unrealised

60. Ibid, 11.

periodical, between 'cheerful views' and 'jolly good temper', is 'sharp anatomisation of humbug.' The substructure of meaning implied by Dickens's 'humbug' is certainly not the same as that contained by Carlyle's 'cant', but the two ideas are near enough for all practical purposes, and Dickens's mind was not one to be concerned with such underlying semantic distinctions. The international copyright affair shows both of them embattled together against one egregious humbug, and Carlyle's famous reference, in Past and Present, to 'Schnüspel the distinguished novelist', though certainly condescending, nevertheless confers on him the greatest of Carlylean accolades: for Carlyle, Dickens was 'genuine', he was not a 'sham'.[61*] From his first recorded personal statement about Dickens in 1840, to his heartfelt and touching statements of his grief at the younger man's death in 1870, this judgement underlies all Carlyle's wildly inconsistent feelings about Dickens. The adjectives 'cheery' and 'genuine' recur again and again, often together, in Carlyle's remarks on the popular novelist. And for Dickens, this opinion was reciprocated tenfold. Carlyle was distinguished by his 'manliness and honesty'; and his qualities were set apart from those of lesser men by such epithets as 'noble'.[62*] This link between the two men goes a long way to explain the relevance, for Dickens, of Carlyle's critique of his age.

Carlyle's emphasis on the 'genuine', his persistent (and in the end almost routine) attack on cant, goes with his honesty and his genuine,

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61. 'Oh, if all Yankee-land follow a small good "Schnüspel the distinguished Novelist" with blazing torches, dinner-invitations, universal hep-hep-hurrah, feeling that he, though small, is something; how might all Angle-land once follow a hero-martyr and great true Son of Heaven!'
PP, 55.

62. Forster, op. cit., 341.

but not always obvious, hatred of injustice; it also links with his hatred of mechanistic thinking and his imaginative genius, his power of transforming the mere data of life into what appeared to be the living truth. In a different way, these last two qualities are at the very root of Carlyle's considerable influence on the two most Carlylean novels Dickens wrote, Hard Times and A Tale of Two Cities: despite all their differences in kind and in content, it is the quality and operation of Carlyle's imaginative vision that provides the great link between the two novels. The romantic distinction between fact and fancy (seen in a way to which Carlyle is obviously relevant) is the clearest underlying theme of Hard Times; and Dickens himself suggests the relevance of this theme to the extensive body of historical material in A Tale of Two Cities, for which The French Revolution provided the source. To an American hostess, over dinner, he once described the effect of the book on him:

> C.D. told me that the book of all others which he read perpetually and of which he never tired, the book which always appeared more imaginative in proportion to the fresh imagination he brings to it, a book for inexhaustiveness to be placed before every other book, is Carlyle's "French Revolution".

One of the things that made him go through its pages again and again was his fascination with the imaginative fusion by which Carlyle transformed disjointed historical statistics into something complete and living. When Dickens was writing A Tale of Two Cities, he asked Carlyle to let him have some of the books which he had used when writing his history. Carlyle sent him a large quantity of books from the London Library, and (as he claimed) Dickens ploughed faithfully through them:

> ...the more he read the more he was astounded to find how the facts but passed through the alembic of Carlyle's brain and had come out and fitted themselves each as a part of one great whole, making a compact result, indestructible and unrivalled, and he always found himself turning away from the books of reference and re-reading this marvellous new growth from those dry bones with renewed wonder.[63]

The points of, as it were electrical, contact between the two writers are certainly as striking as the perhaps more frequent points at which this contact broke down. To see how the Carlylean current flowed, and to judge how much of its effect was real, and how much apparent, we must turn our attention to two novels: Hard Times, perhaps his only true 'social novel', and A Tale of Two Cities, perhaps the most popular and the most a-typical of all the writings of the second half of Dickens's career. Before we do this, however, we must attempt to answer an important question. If Dickens was indeed so fascinated by the creative workings of Carlyle's mind, above all in The French Revolution, we might expect that Carlylean influence on Dickens would manifest itself, among other ways, by its effect on his use of language. Is this the case? And if so, in what way does the process take place?

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63. Dewolfe Howe, M. Memories of a hostess, Boston, 1922, 191.

Chapter Three: DICTION

'A good deal of the diction', wrote the Christian Remembrancer in 1845, of The Chimes, 'is a palpable borrowing from Carlyle...'[1] Few people reading this criticism at the time would have any doubt as to what the accusation meant. Carlyle's stylistic unorthodoxy was the most immediately noticeable facet of his writing, and whenever his critics wrote about him, or his readers talked about him, his diction was likely to come under discussion. Of the reviews and contemporary articles about his works that I have read, the majority pay at least passing attention to his style. Certainly, Carlyle's use of the English language was rarely ignored, and throughout his career attracted dazed admiration, hostility, and puzzled forbearance. Reaction to his style almost universally mirrored a reader's attitude to Carlyle himself: some admirers thought that Carlyle's style was a cross that had to be borne, but others, less lukewarm, could see clearly that Carlyle's language was his thought, and that an attack on his style was a rejection of his philosophy; at the same time those who were most resistant to his ideas significantly failed, on the whole, to make the connection between the living thought and the language in which it was expressed. The Athenaeum, for instance, throughout Carlyle's career attacked his style as showing mere wilful eccentricity. Not only was The French Revolution poor and inefficient as history, it thought, but its mode of expression, though undeniably original, was clearly obtained in 'the university of Bedlam': 'Originality, without justness of thought, is but

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1. "The Chimes....By Charles Dickens", Christian Remembrancer, IX(1845), 303.

novelty of error: and originality of style, without sound taste and discretion, is sheer affectation.'[2] This kind of failure of understanding characterises all the Athenaeum's judgements on Carlyle's style. Three years later, reviewing Chartism, the same writer was bemoaning the hopelessness of reforming 'Mr Carlyle's very peculiar style', and protesting against his 'tamperings with our beautiful language.' Nothing but affectation, he thought, could induce such a writer to go out of his way 'in search of crudities and quaintnesses which obscure his thoughts, and grate upon the ear, rendering it scarcely possible to read his essay aloud, so as to be intelligible.'[3] Some twenty years later, the Eclectic Review noted that his style 'is everywhere the great ground of quarrel with Carlyle. People say they cannot read him...'[4] Those who could read him were divided into outright devotees of his style and (possibly a more numerous group) those who alternated between admiration and bewilderment. Reviewing his works in 1840, the Quarterly Review demonstrated this response. To his peculiarity of style, the writer attributed much of the interest that Carlyle had evoked, and indicates perhaps that the Athenaeum's complaints of Carlyle's lack of 'sound taste and discretion' was precisely what many found so refreshing: 'Readers are sick of the weak, vapid slops with which the press is now inundated', wrote the Quarterly: 'The general correctness of style at present is a remarkable fact.' And not a healthy one, thought

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2. "The French Revolution, A History. By Thomas Carlyle", Athenaeum, (1837), 353.
3. "Chartism, by Thomas Carlyle", Athenaeum, (1840), 27.
4. "Thomas Carlyle and his critics", Eclectic Review , N.S.I. (1861), 40

the writer. 'At present, when no one thinks, everyone writes and speaks correctly.' For Carlyle, 'the internal spirit of thought' and the 'external form into which it is cast' were vitally linked.[5] Carlyle's was the style, implied the Quarterly, of a man who thought, who saw to the heart of things, before he wrote. But the defence was not wholehearted, and the same writer soon lapses into applying the criterion of 'correctness' he has just attacked: two pages later, he was lamenting that Carlyle's early works, in which there was 'far the most truth and genuine good sense', were the freest from his 'faults'. In later works, like Chartism and Sartor Resartus, 'he runs wild in distortions and extravagancies'.[6] Surveying Carlyle's writings three years later, Blackwoods demonstrated the same ambivalence, the same curious double-standard of apparent understanding and conventional expectations. The French Revolution could not be criticised, thought the writer, without loud and frequent protest. It would be absurd, of course, to criticise the style, for all its grotesqueness, since it was of the essence of Carlyle's identity as a thinker. Nevertheless, it was not the right style for a history, whose function was to convey information:

> The attempt to censure the oddities with which it abounds - the frequent repetition - the metaphor and allusion used again and again till the page is covered with a sort of slang - would only subject the critic himself to the same kind of ridicule that would fall upon the hapless Wight who should bethink him of taking some Shandean work gravely to task for its scandalous irregularities, and utter want of methodical arrangement. Such is Carlylism; and this is all that can be said upon the matter.[7]

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5. "Carlyle's Works", Quarterly Review, LXVI (1840), 451.
6. Ibid, 453.
7. "Past and Present, by Carlyle", Blackwood's Review, LIV (1843), 125.

At the same time, such a style was 'inconvenient' for a history, in which style should never draw attention to itself; 'to convey mere information', pronounced Blackwood's, Carlyle's manner of writing was 'quite unserviceable.'[8] This nervous half-acceptance of the heady brew of Carlyle's style was probably characteristic of many, perhaps most, of Carlyle's admirers who, as the Dublin Review put it guardedly in 1850, 'bear with it, and even come to relish it, as giving nerve and point to his ideas...'[9] The writer probably reflected the degree of conviction of such an appreciation by a qualification of his own apology for Carlyle's writing. The particular blend of defence and reservation is a familiar one: Carlyle's style was not affectation, the writer argued; it was simply 'Carlylese', and seemed to be, 'in some degree, a fit vehicle of his singularity of thought.' At the same time, like many admirers, the Dublin Review mourned the 'purity and grace' of Carlyle's early style and (somewhat inconsistently with the suggestion that 'Carlylese' showed the interrelation of style and thought) argued that the simplicity of his earlier writing demonstrated how far his later singularity of expression was 'not his indigenous language.'[10]

It is still easy to see why Carlyle's manner should have inspired such bewilderment, and despite all the ways in which the English language has been used during the last hundred years, his style is still a major obstacle for many of his modern readers. But Dickens's style seems straightforward enough now, and it requires an effort of imagination to understand that it was regarded by many of his first

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8. Ibid.
9. "Carlyle's Works", Dublin Review XXIX (1850), 182.
10. Ibid.

readers as being very unorthodox indeed. Trollope considered it 'jerky, ungrammatical, and created by himself in defiance of rules - almost as completely as that created by Carlyle.'[11] This seems to us an astonishing judgement, and even at the time was probably unrepresentative; although Dickens's stylistic unorthodoxy undoubtedly attracted attention, it was far from providing the invariable topic of comment for notices of his novels, that Carlyle's manner provided for his own reviewers. Certainly, Trollope's remark cannot be taken as substantiating Dr Goldberg's judgement, that 'to his contemporaries he seemed to be every bit as revolutionary an innovator as Carlyle.'[12] 'Revolutionary', Dickens's style may have seemed, and this is the word used by Professor Ford to describe the effect of Dickens's prose on his contemporaries. Nevertheless it is, I think, clear, though Dickens's prose certainly drew accusations of incorrectness and unorthodoxy, that Carlyle's prose consistently attracted more attention and greater strength of feeling, for and against it, than Dickens's.

At first sight, the attacks of some critics against their respective uses, or abuses, of the English language, seem very similar in essence. The crime of both writers was that they offended against certain ideals of stylistic correctness; style was something that had rules, which had to be learnt and conformed with. The English of Johnson was still the ideal for many, and Dickens egregiously violated its canons; the scene in Cranford, describing a controversy between the supporters of Pickwick and those of Rasselas is, suggests Professor Ford, almost symbolic.[13] Carlyle himself certainly saw

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11. Trollope, A., Autobiography, Oxford, 1923, 227.
12. Goldberg, 240.
13. Ford, 114.

his own rebellion against rationally balanced language as part of a general process of dissolution, and it is Johnson's English that he saw himself as assailing. 'Do you reckon this really a time for Purism of Style', he wrote to Sterling in 1835, 'or that Style (mere dictionary Style) has much to do with the worth or unworth of a Book? I do not. With whole ragged battalions of Scott's Novel Scotch, with Irish, German, French, and even Newspaper Cockney...storming in on us, and the whole structure of our Johnsonian English breaking up from its foundations, revolution there as visible as anywhere else.'[14] In 1845, a reviewer listed some of Dickens's most 'gross offences against the English language' in Martin Chuzzlewit, published in book form the previous year:

> For instance, many words, in themselves good and classical, are used in such a collocation that, to make any sense of them at all, we must suppose that the author has imported some new meaning of them from America during his transatlantic trip. Thus, we have impracticable nightcaps, impossible tables and exploded chests of drawers, mad closets, inscrutable harpsichords, undeniable chins, highly geological home-made cakes, remote suggestions of tobacco lingering within a spittoon, and the recesses and vacations of a toothpick....[15]

The continuation of the reviewer's remarks underlines a distinction between the ways in which Carlyle and Dickens were seen to assail the rules of good taste, recalling, perhaps, Carlyle's inclusion of 'newspaper Cockney' in his list of revolutionary styles:

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14. Letters to Sterling etc., 192.
15. /Cleghorn, J./ "The Writings of Charles Dickens", North British Review, III (1845), 76, Quotes in Dickensiana, 98, with errors.

> But he goes further, and offends grievously against the rules of grammar. Catching the infection from his own actors, he adopts their forms of expression, and offends the shade of Lindley Murray with such barbarisms as, "It had not been painted or papered, had'nt Todgers', past the memory of man". "She was the most artless creature, was the youngest Miss Pecksniff." "Nature played them off against each other; they had no hand in it, the two Miss Pecksniffs."[16]

Carlyle's style might be grotesque; it might be affected; but few people would have called it vulgar, or attributed its irregularities to Carlyle's ignorance. In a man whose learning was so massively evident, this was, in any case, inconceivable. But Dickens was obviously a different matter. 'Dickens's genius', wrote W.S. Lilly, as late as 1895, 'great as it was, never enabled him to overcome the vulgarity of his early education. He represents the invasion of the novel by the democratic spirit.'[17] Rereading Dickens, Lilly had stood aghast 'at the intolerable ineptness of much of his diction.'[18] Dickens's stylistic innovations must often have been seen in this way. Thomas Powell, writing in 1849, complained of 'those manifold vulgarities and slipshod errors of style which unhappily have of late years so disfigured his productions.'[19]

Carlyle's irregularities, and Dickens's, then, were, in one way, probably seen rather differently by their first readers. Trollope's implicit comparison of the styles of Carlyle and Dickens, nevertheless, suggests one obvious way in which we might expect to see influence of the former on the latter, if it exists, manifesting itself. If, as

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16. Ibid.
17. Lilly, W.S., Four English humourists of the Nineteenth Century, London, 1895, 17.
18. Ibid, 14.
19. Powell, T., The Living Authors of England, New York, 1849, 153.

some admirers held, Carlyle's language mirrored his thought, one might expect Carlylean influence on Dickens's thought to be paralleled in some way by influence on his language. And as I shall argue, this proposition can certainly, up to a point, be borne out. What is interesting, I think, is less the fact that the process takes place at all, than the way in which it takes place, the peculiar way in which Carlyle's style can be seen to modify Dickens's.

The most obvious point to be made is that the great mass of Dickens's prose shows no signs of this influence at all. When Dickens waxes transcendental, for instance, his prose tends to become like bad blank verse, rather than to show affinities with Carlyle's nervous, sophisticated rhythms. And when Dickens's style does more justice to his genius, in such characteristically grotesque comic images as those from Martin Chuzzlewit quoted by a reviewer to substantiate his charges of 'impurity of expression', we can scarcely claim that the imaginative quality involved has any affinity with Carlyle's. Both accusations of linguistic impropriety that I have quoted, however, might be seen to suggest a less far-reaching, but more probable idea. Both critics, writing in the forties, saw Dickens's vulgarity as being of recent growth, showing, in the words of one of them, 'a very striking declension from the purity and unassuming excellence which marked his earlier compositions.' Thomas Powell's annoyance, in 1849, at the 'slipshod errors of style' of Dickens's more recent productions was partly caused by his knowledge that, in the past, he had shown that 'no man can write simpler and stronger English than the celebrated Boz...'[20] It may be that, by the time he came to write Martin Chuzzlewit Carlyle's example and success, after 1837,

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20. Ibid.

encouraged him to give a looser rein to his own developing imagination.

Whatever the truth of this, however, Martin Chuzzlewit contains examples of identifiably Carlylean diction, in at least two passages. The passages are short and isolated, and add little to either their immediate context, or to the novel as a whole. In these respects, I think, they are typical of all the quasi-Carlylean language that we can find in Dickens. The first passage is perhaps the first example of a particular Carlylean mannerism that appears from time to time in Dickens's writings: the habit of apostrophising some form of absurdity or social evil in the form of an abstract representation of those who commit it:

> Oh, moralists, who treat of happiness and self-respect, innate in every sphere of life, and shedding light on every grain of dust in God's highway, so smooth below your carriage-wheels, so rough beneath the tread of naked feet, bethink yourselves in looking on the swift descent of men who have lived in their own esteem, that there are scores of thousands breathing now, and breathing thick with painful toil, who in that high respect have never lived at all, nor had a chance of life! Go ye, who rest so placidly upon the sacred Bard who had been young, and when he strung his harp was old, and had never seen the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging their bread; go, Teachers of content and honest pride, into the mine, the mill, the forge, the squalid depths of deepest ignorance, and uttermost abyss of man's neglect, and say can any hopeful plant spring up in air so foul that it extinguishes the soul's bright torch as fast as it is kindled!....[21]

The use here of what we might term the prophetic vocative, seems

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21. MC, 224.

Carlylean enough; and the appeal to change the conditions of the oppressed before exhorting them to better behaviour is faintly reminiscent of Chartism. The passage is, I think, an example of Carlyle's influence on Dickens's way of writing, and there is a supporting indication for this impression, which I shall discuss. But what is striking here, perhaps, is the way in which Dickens has taken one superficial mannerism from Carlyle's way of writing, without absorbing any other distinguishing accompaniment of Carlyle's use of the same device. The comparison with a passage from Carlyle makes the point clear:

> Thy No-thing of an Intended Poem, O Poet who hast looked merely to reviewers, copyrights, booksellers, popularities, behold it is not yet become a Thing; for the truth is not in it! Though printed, hot-pressed, reviewed, celebrated, sold to the twentieth edition: what is all that? The Thing, in philosophical uncommercial language, is still a No-thing, mostly semblance, and deception of the sight; - benign Oblivion incessantly gnawing at it, impatient till Chaos, to which it belongs, do reabsorb it! - [22]

One obvious point to emerge from this comparison is that Dickens's prose here is seen at its very worst, Carlyle's nearly at its best. Another is that the structure and final effect of the two passages could scarcely be more different. Dickens is seen here in the mood which causes the hearts of his greatest admirers to sink. The style is heavy, the sentences unilinear and overloaded, the tone self-righteous, the use of language unfelt and unthinking. His exhortation gives the impression of the very lack of involvement that it condemns. Its intention purports to be the awakening of a certain class to a

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22. PP, 198.

sense of realities hitherto ignored; its effect is to blur these realities, to inter a sense of first hand contact with an important truth beneath a sea of second-hand and second-rate verbiage. Dickens's manner here is that of ceremonial piety, of the sounding 'appeal to human nature' that he himself, later in the same passage, claims to reject. The passage from Carlyle is different most obviously in its characteristic irregularity. It wheels and tacks, continually breaking up any regular rhythm before it can establish itself. It too implies a tone of voice, but in contrast with Dickens's sleep-inducing sermon, it is a tone which demands our attention, which makes demands upon us. Whereas Dickens takes over the conventional word and phrase unchallenged ('painful toil', 'the sacred Bard', 'the righteous forsaken', 'the soul's bright torch') Carlyle here takes apart and presents as if newly coined one of the most frequently used and unarresting words in the language. Like Dickens, Carlyle claims to see beneath the surface of the seeming world; unlike him, he makes his claim in language which shows the imaginative life necessary to one who questions any formula.

The style of this passage from Martin Chuzzlewit, then, is Carlylean only in the most inessential way. This poses two questions: firstly, how can we be reasonably certain that Dickens's use here of this 'prophetic vocative' was inspired by Carlyle; and secondly, if it was, why does it matter? The first question, I think, can be answered by quoting a similar passage, again from Martin Chuzzlewit. Here, the same Carlylean mannerism can be seen in conjunction with what is, I think, more identifiably Carlylean matter. We note, too, a very welcome access of stylistic vigour, though the rhythms of Dickens's prose remain unaffected by those of Carlyle's:

> Oh late-remembered, much-forgotten, mouthing, braggart duty, always owed, and seldom paid in any other coin than punishment and wrath, when will mankind begin to know thee! When will men acknowledge thee in thy neglected cradle, and thy stunted youth, and not begin their recognition in thy sinful manhood and thy desolate old age! Oh ermined Judge whose duty to society is, now, to doom the ragged criminal to punishment and death, hadst thou never, Man, a duty to discharge in barring up the hundred open gates that wooed him to the felon's dock, and throwing but ajar the portals to a decent life! Oh prelate, prelate, whose duty to society it is to mourn in melancholy phrase the sad degeneracy of these bad times in which thy lot of honours has been cast, did nothing go before thy elevation to the lofty seat, from which thou dealest out thy homilies to other tarriers for dead men's shoes, whose duty to society has not begun! Oh magistrate, so rare a country gentleman and brave a squire, had you no duty to society, before the ricks were blazing and the mob were mad; or did it spring up, armed and booted from the earth, a corps of yeomanry, full-grown![23]

Dickens's appeal to various representatives of upper-class power to remember their duty to society, and the emphasis on the word 'duty' itself, are both obviously Carlylean. So, too, is another Carlylean mannerism, not found in the first passage I have quoted from Martin Chuzzlewit: the rhetorical question demanding the answer 'yes', and as here, and as often in Carlyle, underlining a failure in responsibility. The emphasis here on looking to root causes rather than to symptoms is also Carlylean, and this passage was written at a particular time, at which, there are other reasons for supposing, Dickens's thought was demonstrably under the influence of Carlyle.[24]

Martin Chuzzlewit, of course, is hardly a Carlylean novel, and the

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23. MC, 497-8.
24. See pp 301-2 below.

chief value of identifying these two passages as in some sense Carlylean, is that they allow us to observe two early indications of Carlyle's influence asserting itself on the novelist's mind, a process whose first notable manifestation, as I shall argue, was in The Chimes, published a year later than the second Carlylean passage from Martin Chuzzlewit. 'Boz has taken to Carlyle, though he does not own it', wrote the Christian Remembrancer, reviewing Dickens's short work; and two pages earlier, the same writer made the claim I have quoted at the opening of this chapter, that 'a good deal of the diction' of the Christmas Book 'is a palpable borrowing from Carlyle'. How justified was the Christian Rembrancer's reviewer in making such a suggestion?

There are certainly a number of fleeting instances of quasi-Carlylean writing in The Chimes, as Dr Michael Slater suggests, though most examples of linguistic 'influence' are open to the kind of reservation I have already sounded. Dr Slater, for instance, suggests the speech of the Goblin of the Great Bell as containing Carlylean echoes:-

> 'The voice of Time', said the Phantom, 'cries to man, Advance! Time is for his advancement and improvement; for his greater worth, his greater happiness, his better life; his progress onward to that goal within its knowledge and its view, and set there, in the period when Time and He began. Ages of darkness, wickedness, and violence, have come and gone - millions uncountable, have suffered, lived, and died - to point the way before him. Who seeks to turn him back, or stay him on his course, arrests a mighty engine which will strike the meddler dead; and be the fiercer and the wilder, ever, for its momentary check!'[25]

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25. Chimes, 123

This is the voice of History speaking, and implies a historical judgement consistent with Carlylean thought. The use of the idea of Time with its portentous Capital, and the lofty, rhetorical tone, seem slightly Carlylean, and can be compared perhaps with the following, from The French Revolution:

> Sovereigns die and Sovereignties: how all dies, and is for a Time only; is a "Time-phantasm, yet reckons itself real!" The Merovingian Kings, slowly wending on their bullock-carts through the streets of Paris, with their long hair flowing, have all wended slowly on, - into Eternity.[26]

Dickens's diction might be thought similar to Carlyle's here, too, in its staccato use of the semi-colon. Professor Kathleen Tillotson notes that Dickens's use of the colon and semi-colon in the early forties may have been influenced by Carlyle's. Working over an earlier text of Oliver Twist for the monthly-part and one-volume edition of 1846, 'Dickens constantly subsituted colons and semi-colons for commas and dashes, semi-colons for commas, and periods for semi-colons - often, of course, with the consequent re-shaping of a sentence. These changes even extend to the chapter-titles. Their deliberation is not in doubt, and it can be traced in Dickens's work from the latter half of 1842, beginning in American Notes and continuing in Martin Chuzzlewit. The date, combined with other evidence, suggests that he may have been partly influenced by his reading of Carlyle'.[27]

The diction of this passage from The Chimes, however, though its tone

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26. FR, I, 9.
27. Dickens, C., ed Tillotson, K., Oliver Twist, Oxford, 1966, xxxviii.

may have been slightly modified by Carlyle, can hardly be said to have been 'borrowed' from him: it still seems more typical of Dickens than of Carlyle. Certainly, it does not, even seen in conjunction with stylistic echoes of Carlyle elsewhere in The Chimes justify (as Dr Slater's view confirms[28]) the Christian Remembrancer's charge. Dr Slater suggests one paragraph where Carlyle's influence can be seen more strongly. As in many other instances in Dickens's works, it is an apostrophe, addressed to a representative type:

> What, Alderman! No word of Putting Down? Remember, Justice, your high moral boast and pride. Come, Alderman! Balance those scales. Throw me into this, the empty one, no dinner, and Nature's founts in some poor woman, dried by starving misery and rendered obdurate to claims for which her offspring has authority in holy mother Eve. Weigh me the two, you Daniel, going to judgement, when your day shall come!.... Or supposing that you strayed from your five wits - it's not so far to go, but that it might be - and laid hands upon that throat of yours, warning your fellows (if you have a fellow) how they croak their comfortable wickedness to raving heads and stricken hearts. What then![29]

Despite the fact that even this is very far from reproducing exactly Carlyle's own style, this is certainly very reminiscent of it, in its distinctive use of the vocative case, its irregular staccato rhythms, its hectoring tone, and its impatient questionings, designed to reveal lack of understanding or failure of responsibility. What it may be pertinent to question at this point, however, is the value of such stylistic indentifications. Such short passages (even in The Chimes) are scattered, and I agree with Dr Slater that 'Dickens had too strongly

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28. Slater, 84.
29. Chimes, 129 - 30.

individual a style... for it to be more than momentarily submerged beneath that of his mentor'.[30] The fleeting and occasional nature of Carlyle's stylistic effect on a work so heavily 'influenced' by Carlyle's ideas rules out, I think, any suggestion of a consistent link between a Carlylean style and Carlylean ideas in Dickens's writing. Such paragraphs certainly put us on our guard, and may help to confirm Carlylean influence where it is already suspected. But this is by no means consistently the case, and a Carlylean echo is not always connected with a Carlylean idea. Pip's narrative voice, addressing Joe Gargery in recollection, ('O dear good Joe....O dear good faithful tender Joe'[31]) may well, for instance, be an example of his use of a stylistic mannerism he learned, as it were, at Carlyle's knee; but it is very obviously not an indication of Carlylean influence in any other respect. And even when there is evidence of Carlyle's influence on the thought, even on the imagery of a passage, the style - perhaps more often than not - remains firmly that of Dickens. The most striking example of this, is to be found in the scene describing the fall of the Bastille in A Tale of Two Cities. As I shall show, there is a very intimate relationship indeed, in imagery and incident, between the text of Dickens's description of this episode, and that of Carlyle's. What is very noticeable however, when we compare the two accounts, is in their almost completely opposed stylistic techniques. One distinctive feature of Carlyle's vivid evocations of mob violence is in his continual momentary withdrawals from the madness of the situation, in his reiterated breaking of the reader's involvement in the excitement of the scene, so that he can impose on him an assessment of what is happening. Often,

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30. Slater, 85
31. GE, 133.

this is done by a conscious appeal to the 'thought' of the scene rather than to its heat; the tension is suddenly relaxed, there is a calm interlude in the action; we remain involved in the excitement of the action that has been and is to come, and yet our historical sense, our intellectual distance from the scene, are firmly appealed to. The technique is akin, in a way, to that of Brechtian drama; when there is any danger in our over-involvment in the action, a placard appears, we are made aware that we are in a theatre:

> What shall De Launay do? One thing only De Launay could have done: what he said he would do. Fancy him sitting, from the first, with lighted taper, within arm's-length of the Powder-Magazine; motionless, like old Roman Senator, or Bronze Lamp-holder...[32]

Even at the height of the action, Carlyle's prose demands assessment rather than empathy. Questions are asked; images obtrude themselves on our attention rather than being subordinated to the action:

> Blood flows; the aliment of new madness. The wounded are carried into houses of the Rue Cerisaie; the dying leave their last mandate not to yield till the accursed Stronghold fall. And yet, alas, how fall?[33]

Dickens goes for empathy. Not only here, but throughout the novel, the political situation is ignored. Hence, the massacre of Foulon follows, in Dickens's narration, hard upon the fall of the Bastille, though a week of comparative peace, filled with political manoeuverings (which Carlyle describes in detail) actually separated the two events: Dickens does not want to let down the tension. Much the same point can be made about his prose style; his description of the actual fall

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32. FR, I, 188
33. Ibid, 187.

of the Bastille, for example, is free from the comples accumulation of qualifications and apostrophes, the deliberately self-conscious imergy, and the perpetual changes of tempo and rhythm of Carlyle's. Dickens is aiming at a kind of ritual exaltation, which he gains by simple percussive rhythmic effects and by a crude descriptive impressionism:

> Cannon, muskets, fire and smoke; but, still the deep ditch, the single drawbridge, the massive stone walls, and the eight great towers. Slight displacements of the raging sea, made by the falling wounded. Flashing weapons, blazing torches, smoking waggon-loads of wet straw, hard work at neighbouring barricades in all directions, shrieks, volleys, execrations, bravery without stint, boom, smash and rattle...[34]

The details come from The French Revolution,[35] but here at any rate, the prose is Dickens's. At one point, however, the nearly authentic voice of the prophet breaks through:

> Seven prisoners released, seven gory heads on pikes, the keys of the accursed fortress of the eight strong towers, some discovered letters and other memorials of prisoners of old time, long dead of broken hearts, - such, and such-like, the loudly echoing footsteps of Saint Antoine escort through the Paris streets in mid-July, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine. Now, Heaven defeat the fancy of Lucie Darnay, and keep these feet far out of her life![36]

The tones of Carlyle are announced by the use of the historic present, and the chopped, miscellaneous sequence of ideas under which is

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34. TTC, 205 - 6.
35. See pp 203-4 below.
36. TTC, 210.

buried the grammatical structure (still functioning, but deformed), by the invocation of the second sentence, not quite authentic, but certainly adding to the general effect of Carlylean insistence. Again, like other Carlylean passages in Dickens, this one is characterised by its isolation and its briefness. What it serves to underline, perhaps, is that, in the one moment of Dickens's writing career when we can show his imagination consistently fired by Carlyle's, throughout the length of a sustained description of several pages, when we can show such an intimate and consecutive use of Carlyle's own imagery and situations, that we can nevertheless only discover his stylistic influence in one brief paragraph, and then manifested in a way which adds little to our awareness of the scene Dickens is recreating.

Carlyle's stylistic influence on Dickens, I suggest, then, amounts to little more than the very occasional use of certain mannerisms (notably the apostrophe to a representative type), which are often used in an only superficially Carlylean way. Professor Ford however (endorsed by Dr Goldberg), puts forward an hypothesis which, if accepted, would refute this argument. 'His influence on the later style of Dickens's novels', he thinks, 'is easily seen...'[37] Elsewhere, he indicates one novel he appears to be thinking of particularly: Bleak House. Professor Ford refers to the increased versatility of Dickens's mature prose style, 'which flows almost effortlessly in Copperfield and, in the succeeding novel, takes on a harsh, jabbing, Carlylean rhythm, as broken-backed and discordant as the bleak London world it reflects'.[38] This, if it were true, would certainly argue a much more comprehensive and consistently realised stylistic debt to

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37. Ford, 90, Goldberg, 241.
38. Ford 122.

Carlyle than I have suggested exists: The rhythm of Carlyle's prose is very distinctive indeed, and if that of Dickens's prose in Bleak House can be seen as Carlylean, this would certainly be a strong argument in favour of Professor Ford's suggestion. The novel's opening chapter provides the most famous example of the kind of prose Professor Ford means:

> Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green aits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping, and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex marshes, fog on the Kentish heights. Fog creeping into the cabooses of collier-brigs; fog lying out in the yards, and hovering in the rigging of great ships; fog drooping on the gunwales of barges and small boats. Fog in the eyes and throats of ancient Greenwich pensioners, wheezing by the firesides of their wards; fog in the stem and bowl of the afternoon pipe of the wrathful skipper, down in his close cabin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of his shivering little 'prentice boy on deck.[39]

For the purposes of comparison, here is a passage from The French Revolution, - the work of Carlyle for which we have the most conclusive evidence of Dickens's close knowledge- selected at random:

> While the unspeakable confusion is everywhere weltering within, and through so many cracks in the surface sulphur-smoke is issuing, the question arises: Through what crevice will the main Explosion carry itself?....In every Society are such chimneys, are Institutions serving as such: even Constantinople is not without its safety-valves; there too Discontent can vent itself,- in material fire; by the number of nocturnal conflagrations, or of hanged bakers, the Reigning Power can read the signs of the times, and change course according to these.[40]

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39. BH, 1.
40. FR, I, 61.

One thing emerges clearly from this comparison, I think: that though the rhythm of Dickens's prose in the passage I have quoted may perhaps be described as 'harsh' and 'jabbing', it emphatically cannot be described as Carlylean. Indeed, it becomes clear that the word 'Carlylean' is being used by Professor Ford very loosely, to describe unorthodox prose whose movements are jerky rather than smooth. It will be seen quite obviously, I think (as in the comparison between the two writers' descriptions of the fall of the Bastille), that the function, technique, and final effect of the two passages could scarcely be more different. Nor is this particular comparison unfair: the same could be said, I think, of any other two representative passages from Bleak House and from The French Revolution, or any other of Carlyle's mature works. Despite its differences with the smoothly flowing diction of David Copperfield, this example of the style of Bleak House is still distinguishable from that of Carlyle by its regularity; the rhythmic contrast is perhaps most easily seen as that which distinguishes public and private expression: if we imagine these two passages in the mouths of their creators, we see Dickens on a platform, reading to a large audience, and Carlyle at the dinner table, delivering himself of one of his long monologues. Carlyle's prose is irregular and questioning, as in private argument: Dickens's -for all its unorthodoxy - has its own regularity, slices itself up, balances and emphasises itself, as if for public performance. Dickens's style here is a conscious tour de force; Carlyle's is the natural expression of the material it embodies.

The influence of Carlyle's style on Dickens's, I think, is a very occasional phenomenon which, even where it exists, operates in terms of superficial speech mannerisms, rather than anything more intimately

connected with Dickens's identity as a writer. The one reservation we might make in this judgement is in Dickens's use of what I have called the prophetic vocative, which often reflects the hatred of cant and injustice they shared. But Carlyle's stylistic influence over Dickens, where it exists, takes effect on a very much less important level than his ideological influence. The diction of his two most importantly 'Carlylean' works, Hard Times and A Tale of Two Cities, is almost entirely unaffected by Carlyle. This, in itself, may suggest a question which we must now attempt to answer: how 'Carlylean', in fact, are these two novels? Does their almost complete lack of Carlylean diction serve to confirm that their debt to Carlyle is more apparent than real? The answer to these questions lies not in the manner, but in the matter of these two novels; and to their matter we must now turn our attention.

PART TWO

Chapter four: HARD TIMES

Carlyle was the foremost anti-rationalist of his age; Hard Times is an attack on a kind of extreme and perverted rationalism. This, together with Dickens's famous letter to Carlyle,[1] might be thought enough to establish at least partially, that Hard Times is influenced by Carlyle: the 'Hard Facts' philosophy expounded in the novel is obviously the 'terrible mistake of these days' that Dickens is writing about to the Sage, and this is fairly clearly part of what Dickens is referring to when he says 'I know it contains nothing in which you do not think with me'. But of course, all the letter can justify is a suggestion that Dickens certainly thought that he was reflecting Carlyle's teachings; whether or not, and if so how much he actually did so, is another matter. The novel's attack on 'Hard Facts', by itself is clearly not enough to make it necessary to evoke Carlylean influence as an indispensable framework of reference for the novel: what Dickens, and what Carlyle, respectively perceive as the human inadequacy of mere logicality can be seen to differ most simply, by observing what Dickens (partly but vitally) opposes to it. Sleary's horseriding epitomises, as nearly as one could imagine, everything Carlyle anathematised in 'modern literature'. If the circus were called 'Sleary's rope-dancing', some critics might be a little more careful about the precise way in which they outline Carlyle's influence on the novel. The horseriding should remind us of Carlyle's dismissal of Dickens as 'a showman whom one gives a shilling to once a month to see his raree-show, and then sends him about his business',[2] and 'rope-dancing' or dancing on the 'slack-Jeff' is, of course as one would expect of a self-respecting

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1. For the full text of this letter, see p. 79 above.
2. Fitzgerald, E., Letters and Literary Remains, London, 1889, I, 198.

circus, an item of Sleary's programme. Dr M.K. Goldberg, in his unpublished thesis on Carlyle's influence on Dickens, is surely very wrong in his suggestion that what Dickens opposes to his 'satire on utilitarian facts' is closely 'a derivative of Carlyle's romantically tinged concept of the imagination'.[3] It is nothing of the sort: Hard Times must, of course, as Professor Collins points out, be seen in the context of the romantic anti-rationalist tradition, in which Carlyle was one vital link. But to talk, as Dr Goldberg does, of Dickens's 'advocacy of the Carlylean sense of wonder', is surely taking semantic imprecision beyond acceptable limits: the contrast between Dickens's sense of wonder and Carlyle's, must never, I suggest, be lost sight of, if an outline of the very real debt of the Novelist to the Sage is to have any meaning.

The point must not, of course be overemphasised. Carlyle's anti-rationalism certainly does have interesting analogues with Dickens's, and it is open to doubt whether the novelist would have pressed as far as this a distinction between his 'sense of wonder' and Carlyle's. This does not invalidate the contrast or its importance for us; it emphasises, on the contrary, how large a part was played, in Carlyle's influence on Dickens, by the novelist's misinterpretation of Carlyle's deepest purpose. Carlyle's description of Teufelsdröck's education (as I shall suggest) is certainly relevant to the Educational theme of Hard Times. But even if we forget that Dickens is no transcendentalist, Sartor itself contains ample material to emphasise how even Hard Times demonstrates the temperamental difference between them. After describing the narrowness and strictness of Teufelsdröck's upbringing, Carlyle continues:

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3. Goldberg, 140 - 1.

> In an orderly house, where the litter of children's sports is hateful enough, your training is too stoical; rather to bear and forbear than to make and do. I was forbid much: wishes in any measure bold I had to renounce; everywhere a strait bond of Obedience inflexibly held me down....In which habituation to Obedience, truly, it was beyond measure safer to err by excess than by defect. Obedience is our universal duty and destiny; wherein whoso will not bend must break...[4]

This reminds us perhaps, by contrast, of Dickens's attitude to Arthur Clennam's childhood and, in a different way, of David Copperfield. Perverted rationalism in Hard Times, has also the distinctly non-Carlylean dimension of monstrous, flower and child-crushing authority. Gradgrind is no Murdstone; but David's escape into, inter alia, the Arabian Nights shows that fancy was an antidote for Dickens not uniquely to rationalism, but also to power, especially the potentially monstrous power of the adult over the child. 'The Carlylean sense of wonder' may at times seem like Dickens's, and Dickens himself very possibly thought it was: but the difference in emphasis is nevertheless immense.

Although the genealogies of Dickens's and Carlyle's attacks on rationalism are very different, however, I hope to show that the critique of rationality in Hard Times should, nevertheless be seen as Carlylean in an essential and not a merely peripheral way. At the same time, Dickens's reading of Carlyle's onslaught on 'logic-chopping' has to be seen (apart from the reservations I have just voiced) against the background of two related masses of alternative information. Firstly, as I hope to indicate in the chapter, it must be seen against Dickens's journalistic involvement in the present, in what he and the newspapers

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4. SR, II,ii, 75-6.

were concerned with, almost at the very moment of writing; secondly, it must be related, as I hope to outline, to the evolving structure of Dickens's beliefs, to his reading over the years, to the slow accretion of his reactions to innumerable topicalities, and to his own emotional life. This may seem a tall order, and such a monstrous task can obviously be attempted here only in a very selective way. Moreover, these two 'blocks' of information have an only artificial distinction. Nevertheless we can, imperfectly, separate the data that have a specific interest to Hard Times, and those which must be referred to the whole evolving corpus of Dickens's work and life. I shall, however inadequately, refer in more detail to this latter part of the background to Hard Times in the third part of this thesis. My aim in this chapter is to show, firstly, that Hard Times contains a peculiar structure of ideas that demonstrates, if nothing else, that Dickens had an intellectual grasp of a body of belief, that can only be explained by his knowledge of the writings of Thomas Carlyle; secondly that, although he did up to a point understand and accept this body of belief, there were other topical issues at the time he wrote Hard Times, in which he was vitally interested, and which provide important motivation for an engaged popular dissemination of 'Carlylean' ideas, especially of the attack on logic. Contemporary references could even be taken as a complete and independent explanation for this particular 'Carlylean' theme. Thirdly, that in fact, topical ideas do not completely give such an explanation, and that one element in Dickens's attack on Hard Facts, vital to its success, must be seen in a specifically Carlylean way. What these topical themes do show, however, is the complexity involved in the operation of Carlyle's influence on Dickens; this will, I hope, be indicated even more clearly in later

chapters. What I shall try to show, is that we cannot see Carlyle's influence on Dickens as operating in terms of a simple transference of ideas, but that we must look on Dickens's understanding of his works as one unifying strand in a complex polyphony.

Taking Carlyle as our point de repère, we can see two tendencies in the novel, one which is, more or less, carried by the tide of his influence (on others besides Dickens), and one which - as I have suggested - might be seen almost as swimming upstream against it. Sissy Jupe and Sleary's circus, and everything they imply, remain our greatest obstacle to a Carlylean reading of Hard Times, and the emphasis we place on this part of the novel is therefore important for us. The circus has attracted weighty adverse criticism from Dr Holloway, who objects, to Dr Leavis's attribution to the circus of Lawrentian 'vital human impulse', and to other high flown claims for Sleary, that what the circus represents, 'like its opposite, operated (for all its obvious common sense and its genuine value) at a relatively shallow level of consciousness, one represented by the Slearies not as vital horsemen but as plain entertainers'.[5] But this is surely to falsify the horse-riding in the other direction; it is not as crude as this. Dr Holloway, of course, is concerned with demonstrating that 'the creed which Dickens champions in the novel, against Gradgrind's, seems in the main to be that of "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy".'[6] The horseriding certainly represents amusement, which as Dr Holloway rightly points out is one of Dickens's (surely justifiable) pre-occupations in the novel, and which does embody a relevant and valid

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5. Holloway, J., "Hard Times: A History and a Criticism", In Dickens and the Twentieth Century, London, 1963, 168.

6. Ibid.

partial response to the plight of the working man at the time Dickens was writing. But the circus represents also kindness and inter-reliance, which are more important (and from a critical point of view, surely just as valid and 'serious' as Dr Leavis's more respectable Lawrentian 'vitality') to Dickens's antidote against perverted rationality; Louisa's collapse is credibly shown as being not simply the result of lack of amusement. The horseriding can be seen as a more subtle and a more flexible comment on the 'terrible mistake of these days' than Dr Holloway will allow, and is relevant in a completely natural way to the three main contemporary concerns of the novel. For Industrialism, the horseriding represents a world of colour and laughter, not subject to the dehumanising regularity of life in the factory, or to the Cash Nexus. It presents, too, a model of a kindly, interdependent society, whose polar opposite is demonstrated by Coketown, with its total breakdown in human contact between Masters and Men, and even (through Dickens's incomprehension of Trades Unionism) between the workers themselves. The way in which the circus and in which Coketown respectively treat Tom Gradgrind and Stephen Blackpool, the two outcasts of Hard Times, shows this contrast in action. For education the horseriding represents the failure of ideas, especially for the child mind, when they are separated from a sense of wonder and from a felt understanding of them; Sissy has known about horses all her life, but she cannot define one. For Utilitarianism, the circus represents life's refusal to be tabulated and systematised; it makes not only appealing, but important, its own chaotic variousness and (in the best sense) its sentimentality. All these meanings of the circus are also, and centrally, part of Dickens's 'philosophy of life' and place Hard Times firmly in the mainstream of Dickensian tradition.

Nevertheless, Hard Times has, rightly, been singled out as a special case. It is Dickens's nearest approach to a novel 'of ideas'; it is better disciplined, and shorter than most of his novels; it is patently a 'serious' book. And despite the circus, there are important reasons for seeing the book's special character as being connected with Carlyle's influence. Carlyle's reasons for attacking unbending utilitarian logic-chopping must be distinguished from Dickens's. Nevertheless the opposition between rationality and instinct that Hard Times explores must be seen in a Carlylean setting.

The first reason is one of context. Hard Times is the most openly and consistently didactic of Dickens's novels, and the Hard Fact philosophies of Bounderby, the Captain of Industry, and Gradgrind, the logic-chopper, are examined in several ways. Dickens obviously thought of his didactic purpose as being one that Carlyle would approve of, and his letter to him is the clearest indication, in his own words, of a relationship between their ideas, that we possess. There exist other letters and anecdotes confirming Dickens's admiration for Carlyle; here we have a positive profession of belief. What was Dickens thinking of specifically when he wrote 'it contains nothing in which you do not think with me'? This is obviously a matter of conjecture, but it seems possible to surmise that, whatever else he may have been thinking of as well, Stephen Blackpool was certainly on his mind when he composed his letter. It was written on July 13th, 1854; the following day, Dickens wrote to Forster, 'I am three parts mad, and the fourth delirious, with perpetual rushing at Hard Times', he told him; 'I have done what I hope is a good thing with Stephen, taking his story as a whole; ....I have been looking forward through so many weeks and sides of paper to this Stephen business, that now - as usual - it being over, I

feel as if nothing in the world, in the way of intense and violent rushing hither and thither, could quite restore my balance'.[7] Whatever we may think of Stephen's death scene, to Dickens it was obviously important, both in itself and as part of the total structure of the novel. Writing the same day to Wills, Dickens reiterated an idea from his letter to Forster: 'The MS now sent, contains what I have looked forward to through many weeks'.[8] Obviously, Stephen was only one element in this, but he was an important one for Dickens. We can at least suggest that when he wrote to Carlyle that Hard Times 'contains nothing in which you do not think with me', 'this Stephen business' was very clearly in his mind for other reasons. And since, as I shall show, Stephen is the novel's most explicit and probably conscious link with Carlylean ideas, he was probably thinking of him, among other things, when he wrote to Carlyle.

Few critics today are entirely happy about Stephen Blackpool, for obvious reasons. Even on the book's first appearance there were those who found him a little difficult to take. A parody of his death scene that appeared three years afterwards sums up all that needs to be said about how seriously we need take him as a fictional creation. '...How dost thou feel?' asks the parody's Rachel, after Stephen has been pulled up from the old Hell Shaft:

> 'Hoomble and happy, lass. I be grateful and thankful. I be obliged to them as have brought charges o' robbery agin me; an' I hope as them as did it will be happy an' enjoy the fruits. I do only look on my being pitched down that sheer shaft, and having all my bones broke, as a mercy and a providence, and God

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7. Forster, op. cit., 566n.
8. Letters, II , 567 , July,14, 1854.

bless ev'rybody!'

'Stephen, your head be a wandering'.

'Ay, lass; awlus a muddle.'[9]

Nevertheless, for our limited purpose, his part of the novel is entirely satisfactory; his utterances contain, beneath their rude surface, some of the thoughts on 'Industrialism' which were uppermost in Dickens's mind when he was writing Hard Times; at the same time, they express these thoughts in the form of the most comprehensively and consistently Carlylean analysis of society to be found anywhere in his writings. Instead, as so often, of sensing an unelaborated Carlylean theme or overtone, we are here, for once, dealing with a concrete and reasonably complex intellectual formulation, covering a fairly wide area.

Stephen's death scene is a maudlin affair in the best Dickensian tradition, replete with a vague wash of Dickens's brand of all-purpose religion: 'Often as I coom to myseln, and found it shinin'on me down there in my trouble, I thowt it were the star as guided to Our Saviour's home'.[10] This is so near to self-parody that it is difficult to realise that Dickens himself took it very seriously indeed, and embedded in Stephen's dying words are two ideas that he certainly thought would be underlined rather than compromised by their appearance here. His death scenes had always gone down big with his readers (although the taste for this kind of thing was passing), and Dickens was probably working on the principle that a man's dying words

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9. Yates, E.H., and Brough, R.B., "Hard Times (refinished), by Charles Diggins" Our Miscellany, London, 1857, 143.
10. HT, 208.

had somehow an additional weight. Stephen reiterates two pregnant pronouncements of which he has already unburdened himself, together with other perilous matter, in his second interview with Mr Bounderby: firstly, the idea of protective government action: Stephen has fallen into a pit, which has been the vain subject of a public petition, 'as onny one may read, fro' the men that works in pits, in which they ha' pray'n an' pray'n the lawmakers for Christ's sake not to let their work be murder to 'em, but to spare 'em for th'wives and children that they loves as well as gentlefo k loves theirs. When it were in work, it killed wi'out need; when 'tis let alone it kills wi'out need'.[11] Stephen also laments once more the lack of sympathy between workers and employers. This was a burning topic of the moment, and not only in the context of the Preston strike. Dickens's old friend Talfourd, the judge, had died in March, 1854. Shortly before his death, Talfourd addressed some remarks on the subject to the grand jury of the Staffordshire Assizes, while deploring the rise in the crime-rate, which he attributed to 'that separation between class and class which is the great curse of British Society'.[12] Dickens recalled his words when he wrote an obituary of his friend for Household Words, and interestingly implied, perhaps unconsciously, that they were uttered on his death bed; he also put into the Judge's dying mouth some of the ideas he himself was then transposing into fictional form: 'Who, knowing England at this time', he wrote, 'would wish to utter with his last breath a more righteous warning than that its curse is ignorance, or a miscalled education which is as bad or worse, and a want of the exchange of innumerable graces and sympathies among the various orders

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11. HT, 207.
12. "A Memoir of Mr Justice Talfourd", Law Magazine, n.s. XX (1854), 323.

of society, each hardened unto each and holding itself aloof?'[13] Who, one might add, indeed? 'In my pain and trouble', says Stephen, with his last breath, '...I ha' seen more clear, and ha' made it my dyin' prayer, that aw' th' world may on'y coom together more, an' get a better unnerstan'in o' one another, than when in't my own weak seln'.[14] 'If Mr Bounderby had ever know'd me right - if he'd ever know'd me at aw - he would'n ha' took'n offence wi'me. He would'n ha' suspect'n me',[15] he says earlier. Stephen is, above all, a vehicle for the 'two nations' theme, which, for nearly two decades, from The French Revolution on wards, had been one of the most constantly reiterated ideas in the Carlylean armoury. Carlyle, of course, did not have a monopoly of the idea. In a very different way, Utilitarian Economists believed in the identity of interests between employers and workers, and the newspapers during the time of the Preston strike were full of the idea that workers and employers should understand each other more; that there was a gulf between the different classes of society was one of the political truisms of the time.[16] It had also been examined by other novelists. It was, of course, Disraeli who coined the famous phrase 'The Two Nations', and Kingsley and Mrs Gaskell had also worked the same wein. All these novelists may themselves have been writing under the influence of Carlyle, Disraeli possibly,[17*] Mrs Gaskell probably,[18] and Kingsley certainly. The idea, partly through the influence of Carlyle (which during the forties was, as we have seen, at its height) and partly because it was forced to the surface by popular unrest, was as much part of the thinking Englishman's political vocabulary as, say, the - notion that

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13. [Dickens, C.], "The late Mr Justice Talfourd", Household Words, IX (1854), 117 - 8.
14. HT, 207.
15. Ibid.
16. See Carnall, G., "Dickens, Mrs Gaskell and the Preston Strike", Victorian Studies, VIII, (1964), 31 - 48.
17. See Blake, R., Disraeli, London, 1966, 190 - 2.
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Britain has Lost an Empire without finding a Rôle, is today. Dickens could have been looking towards alternative (and possibly Carlyle - oriented) sources for his thinking on this point; or he could have been responding directly to political actuality. But there are reasons for thinking that he was influenced at least as much here by Carlyle's writings themselves.

The most important reason is one of context. None of the individual ideas for which Stephen is made the vehicle can be claimed to be exclusively Carlylean; but the combination of them undoubtedly is. The same argument will serve for other points in Stephen's analysis, some of which are important to our assessment of the novel as a whole. Taken separately, some of these ideas can be placed intelligibly outside a strictly Carlylean setting; together they form an interdependent and recognisably Carlylean corpus of ideas.

The fullest exposition of Stephen's views is given in his second confrontation with Bounderby. To make his ideas clearer, I will paraphrase his utterances in Queen's English, instead of quoting him in Dickens's dubious Lancastrian. After refusing to condemn his fellow workers, Stephen also refuses to place the responsibility entirely on Slackbridge: 'I am as sorry as you are when the people's leaders are so bad; it is one of their greatest misfortunes when they can get no better'. Bounderby expostulates, but Stephen still refuses to betray his fellow workers. Bounderby again tries to make Stephen deliver what he thinks ought to be a typical operative's speech, for the benefit of Harthouse: 'What...do you people in a

general way complain of?' Stephen replies, at length, and his reply is worth paraphrasing in full. For purposes of analytic convenience, I shall place a reference letter in parenthesis after each clearly identifiable Carlylean idea:[19]

> I was never very good at demonstrating [what is wrong], though I had my share of feeling it (A). We are in a muddle. Look around this town, which is so rich, and observe how many people have been born here, to weave and card and scrape a living, all alike from the cradle to the grave. Look where we live and in what numbers and with what monotony, and look how the mills are always working, but never provide us with any ultimate goal except Death (B). Look how you think and write and talk about us, and go with deputations about us to Secretaries of State (C), and how you are always right and we are always wrong, and never had any reason in us since our birth. Look how our problems have grown continually through the years, from generation to generation (D). Who can look at all this and say it is not a muddle?

To this, Bounderby, not unjustly, asks Stephen for his solution. 'I don't know, replies Stephen, 'I cannot be expected to. It is not I who should be looked to for that. It is those who are in authority over myself and all of us. What do they take upon themselves if not that?' (E) Bounderby's analysis is different: to transport a few agitators as an example. Stephen demurs:

> If you were to take a hundred Slackbridges...and were to sink them in the deepest ocean... you would alter nothing... the trouble is not made by mischievous strangers... instead of taking them from their trade, their trade should be taken from them....

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19. All reference in Stephen Blackpool's analysis are to <u>HT</u>, 111-116. 116.

> just as that clock is not time itself, but only an indication of time, so Slackbridge is only a sympton, rather than the cause, of the trouble (F).... I cannot, being uneducated give the solution for all this(A) but I can say what is not the solution. Physical power and unjust compulsion is not the solution (G), nor is laissez faire ('lettin' alone') (H). Let the masses alone, and there will be an impassable gulf between you (I); for as long as such misery is capable of lasting (J). Refusal to cherish the people in a kindly way is no solution to the problem(K) Above all, to consider people in terms of physical energy, and to regulate them like arithmetical counters or machines, without any human feelings, or souls capable of hope or weariness when all goes in your own interest, and to use such feelings as a stick to beat them with when you need to, this also will not solve the problem (L).

After this, of course, Stephen is dismissed, and goes his way towards his fate.

What is Carlylean about this analysis? Firstly, perhaps, we can note that it is put into the mouth of an inarticulate worker (A); although Stephen talks at great length, and gives what we might think a very coherent analysis of the workers' situation we are meant to take at its face value his opening remark to Bounderby, '...I were never good at showin' o't though I hadn' my share in feelin' o't'.' The impenetrable rudeness of his speech serves to camouflage the fact that, on paper, he is far from incoherent. The general effect conveyed by Stephen reminds us of one standard Carlylean dramatis persona; Bounderby and Harthouse, Stephen's audience, remind us of two more. The three of them, taken together, are as Carlylean a trio as we will find anywhere in nineteenth century fiction:

> Mark on that nose the colour left by too copious port and viands;

> to which the profuse cravat with exorbitant breastpin, and the fixed, forward, and as it were menacing glance of the eyes correspond. That is a "Man of Business;" prosperous manufacturer, house-contractor, engineer, law-manager; his eye, nose, cravat, have, in such work and fortune, got such a character: deny him not thy praise, thy pity. Pity him too, the Hard-Handed, with bony brow, rudely combed hair, eyes looking out as in labour, in difficulty and uncertainty; rude mouth, the lips coarse, loose, as in hard toil and lifelong fatigue they have got the habit of hanging: - hast thou seen ought more touching than the rude intelligence, so cramped, yet energetic, unsubduable, true, which looks out of that marred visage.... Or what kind of baking was it that this other brother mortal got, which has baked him into the genus Dandy? Elegant Vacuum.... The doom of Fate was, Be thou a Dandy! Have thy eye-glasses, opera glasses, thy Long-Acre cabs with white-breeched tiger, thy yawning impassivities, pococurantisms...[20]

Each point conveyed by Stephen is either essentially or peripherally part of the Carlylean 'system'. His inarticulateness though it is apparently, like Othello's, contradicted by the printed evidence, is an essential part of his persona. His inability to speek in his own interests (A) goes with his inability to give an answer to Bounderby's request that Stephen should say 'how you would set this muddle to rights'. His answer, like Carlyle's, is 'give me a leader' (E). Like Carlyle, he suggests the doctrine of laissez-faire as a root cause of the gulf between employer and employed (H,I); like Carlyle he points to the responsibility of employers for the human needs of their employees (I,K) and suggests that the relations between them should be based on spiritual rather than on material, formulistic considerations and self-interest (L). Stephen echoes Carlyle's concern about the monotony and the spiritual debility of Industrial

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20. PP, 125-6.

society (B), and his insight that the problem is a deep-rooted one (D), not to be cured by attempts to suppress its symptoms (F). He agrees with Carlyle that coercion of the working classes, without just understanding of their needs, will achieve nothing (G). Like Carlyle too, Stephen emphasises that this problem is not one which can be solved by Parliamentary methods, by 'deputations to Secretaries of State' (C): it has grown 'from generation to generation'; the root problem of the working classes as Carlyle puts it in Chartism is 'weighty, deep-rooted, far-extending; did not begin yesterday; will by no means end this day or to-morrow'.[21]

In a way, this is the most Carlylean point of all, and it is elaborated in Stephen's remarks on Slackbridge. Perhaps Stephen indicates here an important general point of contact (not of influence) between Carlyle and Dickens, in pointing to the fatuousness of dealing with symptoms rather than with causes:

Hard Times.	Chartism.
'We'll indict the blackguards for felony, and get 'em shipped off to penal settlements.' .... 'Sir,' returned Stephen, If yo was t'tak a hundred Slackbridges ...an' was t' sew 'em up in separate sacks... yo'd leave the muddle just wheer 'tis.... 'tis hopeless and useless to dream o' takin them fro their trade, 'stead o' takin their trade fro them!.... Put that clock aboard a ship... an' the time will go on just the same.[22]	What will execration; nay, at bottom, what will condemnation and banishment to Botany Bay do for it? Glasgow Thuggery, Chartist torch-meetings, Birmingham riots, Swing conflagrations, are so many symptoms on the surface; you abolish the symptom to no purpose, if the disease is left untouched.[23] - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Is the condition of the English working people wrong...? A most grave case, complex beyond all others in the world; a case wherein Botany Bay, constabulary rural police, and such like, will avail but little.[24]

21. Chartism, 37.
22. HT, 115.
23. Chartism, 37.
24. Ibid, 38.

That we should judge by the root causes of phenomena rather than by their symptoms is, clearly enough, a belief held by both Carlyle and Dickens (though it is not a central theme of Hard Times itself) and is a vital source of the creative energy of both writers. Equally clearly this idea, seen by turn in a Carlylean and a Dickensian context, undergoes a distinct change in meaning. For Dickens, it is part of his general fund of passionate decent-mindedness, part of the impulse to expose hypocrisy and cant; for Carlyle, it is this and something besides: seen in a Carlylean setting the idea becomes part of a highly idiosyncratic complex of ideas. Associated with the idea of causes and symptoms is Carlyle's whole philosophy of truth and falsehood: the truth is a kind of volcanic force, which can be kept down by a crust of falsehood only for so long; eventually, the truth will blast a way through. Physical force, for instance, unless justly applied, is useless in the long run:

> Conquest, along with power of compulsion, an essential universally in human society, must bring benefit along with it, or men, of the ordinary strength of men, will fling it out.[25]

And:

> Injustice, infidelity to truth and fact and Nature's order, being properly the one evil under the sun, "our grand question as to the condition of these working men would be: Is it just?[26]

Injustice is a kind of 'falsehood' that cannot last.

This kind of thing takes us a long way outside the boundaries inside which we are accustomed to see Dickens's mind working. Such thinking

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25. Ibid, 63.
26. Ibid, 64.

depends, not simply on an attitude to 'society', but on an attitude to 'the universe' as well. Sooner or later, social problems, no matter how immediate, always become problems of existence for Carlyle. When Dickens waxes mystical, it is usually at the expense of his prose: the most obvious example is Dombey and Son's constant references to 'what the sea is always saying'. Dickens is not very good when he starts to write about the infinite; and when he writes about his society, it is not usually the prelude to some such statement as 'sooty Manchester, it too rests upon the great abysses'. Nevertheless, Hard Times contains one or two hints of what may be the undigested influence of such thinking. Stephen attacks capitalists for their failure to provide "onny dis'ant object - ceptin awlus Death,'[27] and seems to hint at the Carlylean notion of the impossibility that a transgression of 'Nature's order' can last (J) when he says that if the employers leave the people alone, there will be a 'black unpassable world betwixt yo, just as long or short a time as sitch-like misery can last.'[28] The nuance is a slight one, but in context, this fits in well with a Carlylean interpretation. A more unequivocal transposition from industrial society to eternity occurs at the beginning of Book I, chapter 11:

> So many hundred Hands in this Mill; so many hundred horse Steam Power. It is known, to the force of a single pound weight, what the engine will do; but, not all the calculators of the National Debt can tell me the capacity for good or evil, for love or hatred, for patriotism or discontent, for the decomposition of virtue into vice, or the reverse, at any single moment in the soul of one of these its quiet servants, with the composed faces and the regulated actions. There is no mystery in it; there is an unfathomable mystery in the meanest of them, forever. -Supposing

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27. HT, 114.
28. HT, 116.

> we were to reserve our arithmetic for material objects, and to govern these awful unknown quantities by other means![29]

Even this is a long way short of a full-blown Carlylean statement; Carlyle's critique of mechanism is only partially that it and the ways of thinking analogous to it have no 'unfathomable mystery', that mechanistic thinking is inadequate to sum up human motivations and vitality. This is, of course, a point he made early in his career; attacking Benthamite political philosophers in Signs of the Times, he criticises them, as Mill himself was to criticise Bentham, for an inadequate view of human nature. They

> ...deal exclusively with the Mechanical province; and occupying themselves in counting up and estimating men's motives, strive by curious checking and balancing, and other adjustments of Profit and Loss, to guide them to their true advantage: while, unfortunately, those same "motives" are so innumerable, and so variable in every individual, that no really useful conclusion can ever be drawn from their enumeration.... Consider the great elements of human enjoyment, the attainments and possessions that exalt man's life to its present height, and see what part of these he owes to institutions, to Mechanism of any kind; and what to the instinctive, unbounded force, which Nature herself lent him, and still continues to him.[30]

This is, in essence, a large part of Dickens's case in Hard Times; nevertheless, this is far from demonstrating that the opposition between Hard Facts and Spontaneity, between Heart and Head, in the novel is a Carlylean one. In one way this passage is untypical of Carlyle's more influential later work, in its slightly surprising emphasis on

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29. HT, 53.
30. "S of T", 474.

'human enjoyment': this seems far more like Dickens's creed. And it does not touch on the real nub of Carlyle's philosophy of the machine age, the idea on which his entire philosophy and influence were built; it will be necessary to indicate that this idea forms a significant element in Dickens's attack on rationalism if a serious case is to be made out for seeing Hard Times as in any important sense a Carlylean novel. 'Faith is gone out' wrote Carlyle in The French Revolution, attacking the Philosophes, spiritual forbears of the Benthamites; 'Scepticism is come in. Evil abounds and accumulates; no man has Faith to withstand it, to amend it...'.[31] Carlyle's attack on rationalism is essentially an extension of this theme. Logic does not simply destroy man's vitality, (in the narrowest sense of the word) it also destroys, if it becomes too powerful, his whole capacity for belief. It attacks, not simply his capacity for enjoyment but his reason for existing. If Hard Times can be seen to emphasise this element of Carlyle's critique of rationalism in its own, the case for seeing Carlyle's works as an indispensable part of the novel's background will be greatly strengthened. Later in this chapter, I shall emphasise this Carlylean element in Dickens's attack on perverted logicality.

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Hard Times, as Dickens's famous visit to Preston suggests, was very much an expression, not simply of beliefs that had been evolving over the years, but of his reaction to the events of the moment. Dickens's most philosophic 'novel of ideas' was also one of his most journalistic. The novel, indeed, could be seen almost entirely in terms of ideas and topics that were in the air, and being reported in the newspapers, at the time Dickens was writing and planning it. We have no need to go to Carlyle's writings to understand why someone of Dickens's immediate

31. FR,I,15-16.

interest in society should have been very concerned about the 'terrible mistake of these days' he wrote about to the Sage of Chelsea. The notion of the imprisonment of human spontaneity by rigid, formulistic dogma was a topic of the moment, and the subject of some controversy, even as Dickens wrote, and with particular reference to areas Hard Times is closely concerned with: Industrialism, and the relations between Masters and Men; Benthamite political economy; and Education. And all these were not only topical, but were so in such a way that Dickens was either likely or certain to be aware of them as he wrote Hard Times; in some cases, it seems more than possible that such topics provided him with the direct impulse for important parts of the novel. But it is my purpose here, merely to suggest other reasons, besides the influence of Carlyle, why Dickens should have been deeply concerned, in a practical and not a merely abstract way, with the struggle between rationality and instinct.

He was involved in the struggle against rigid formulae, on the most immediate level, as an inescapable result of his lifetime's commitment on behalf of the oppressed. Rationalist dogma was certainly one weapon, used by its protagonists on behalf of a hard society, many of whose members did not believe (very like Carlyle, that society's most formidable critic) in making things easy for the weak and helpless. The 'hard way' was an implicit article of faith for many industrialists and other apostles of progress.[32] One thing Dickens (perhaps more than anyone) offered his age, was a temporary release, a vision, however fleeting and fantastic, of a more human and less unyielding world; hence, arguably, the enormous appeal of his 'philosophie de noël'; A Christmas Carol can be understood, perhaps, as a contemporary myth,

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32. See Briggs, A., The Age of Improvement, London, 1959, 397-400.

the wish-fulfilment dream of a vast section of Victorian society. 'He has not left an unconverted Scrooge in the great Hardware Metropolis', wrote The Times in January, 1854, reporting a reading of his own works that Dickens had given at Birmingham, while he was already at work on Hard Times. Dickens had made a point of insisting that seats were available for working men:

> ... it was indeed a spectacle of some novelty, and not devoid of high interest, to see 2,000 people, whose lives are one long round of material toil, resigning themselves during long hours that never sped more swiftly to the pleasure of the imagination and the present influence of genius. They formed an eagerly attentive and delighted audience, catching up with their applause every stroke of humour and melting at each touch of pathos, sensitive to all the changing emotions which it is the object of fiction to evoke, and yielding a ready homage to that magic power which, by the bonds of sympathy, "makes the whole world kin."[33]

One place where these 'bonds of sympathy' were badly needed at just that time was the cotton town of Preston, where a strike, or lock-out, had been dragging on since the previous September. The strike (or the 'unnatural feud existing between capital and labour', as The Times called it) like any other, can be seen simply as a material struggle for an increase in wages (in this case a ten percent increase) on the part of the men, and a refusal to compromise on the part of the Masters. The strike also had deeper implications. For the men it was a symbolic struggle against injustice; for the masters, it was seen as a defence, to be fought to the last ditch, of a principle which they saw as a foundation of their progress and prosperity. The men's injustice and the masters' principle were summed up for both in 'the laws of

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33. The Times, Jan 2, 1854.

political economy'; in one way the strike can be seen as a struggle for and against an unyielding economic doctrine. 'The object of the Masters' Association', wrote George Cowell to The Times in April 1854 (when the movement he was leading was on the verge of collapse), 'has been and still is... to set at defiance reason, justice and humanity, and rely upon a fallacious dogma in political economy'[34]. This was a constant theme of his speeches. In January, he had made very much the same point. 'They tell us the working classes are ignorant,' he addressed his hearers,

> ...that we don't understand the laws by which capital and labour are regulated. What is there about the matter that we don't understand? We have had a Cobden and a Bright and a number of other men, and Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations into the bargain, to explain to us all about political economy; and yet, after all, there is such a mystery about it, that we don't understand it....The sooner we can rout political economy from the world the better it will be for the working classes of this country.[35]

Adam Smith (after whom Mr Gradgrind names one of his children) was, of course 'the greatest exponent of the view that, provided there is for each commodity or service a market in which there are a great number of buyers and a great number of sellers, there will emerge from the contending bids an objective price.'[36] A man's labour was a commodity like any other, and was therefore subject to the laws of the market. This was the 'dogma' against which Cowell and his followers had set their face. As the employers put it, in a statement issued in explanation of their refusal to countenance what we would

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34. Ibid., April 22, 1854.
35. Ibid., Jan 23, 1854.
36. Checkland, S.G., The Rise of Industrial Society in England, London 1964, 384.

now call arbitration in the Preston dispute, 'Rates of wages cannot be settled by mediation, but must be left to the free operation of supply and demand.' This was the orthodox standpoint of the anti-strike party. 'The men employed in the factory district,' recorded the Annual Register,[37] 'proceeded to enforce demands perhaps not justified by the state of things - certainly not by the rules of political economy - and by means contrary to the well-being of society.' Preston was only one example of the deep-rooted distrust among the labouring classes for the abstract generalisations of laissez-faire economics. Six years after the strike had been finally crushed, a statistician compiling a paper of the rate of wages in the manufacturing districts of Lancashire bewailed the reluctance of operatives to co-operate in furnishing him with information, and 'much regretted to find that some of the leading members of Trades' Unions attempted to deny the existence and operation of the law of Political Economy in regard to Supply and Demand governing the price of LABOUR, as well as of all materials and products...'[38]

How familiar was Dickens with the issues involved in the strike? The controversy was reported in the newspapers, especially the The Times and The Daily News, who had sent reporters to Preston, and the Illustrated London News had sent an illustrator. And since Dickens must have planned for some time to make the journey to Preston to gather background impressions for Hard Times and material for an article which appeared in Household Words under the title "On Strike", on February 11, 1854, he clearly had not only the opportunity but also the inclination for reading the statements of employers and strike

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37. Annual Register, 1853, Chronicle, 57.
38. Chadwick, D., "On the Rate of Wages in Manchester and Salford, and the manufacturing districts of Lancashire, 1839-59", Journal of the Statistical Society of London, XXIII (1860), 22. Original emphasis.

leaders. The general argument for and against political economy may well have blended in his mind with his existing prejudices. In quoting Cowell's speech, I have omitted an interesting passage:

> Political Economy! What is it? The doctrine of buying cheap and selling dear - a doctrine utterly irreconcilable with the Divine precept, "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you".[39]

This has obvious relevance to one of Sissy Jupe's howlers in chapter 9 of Hard Times:

> ...after eight weeks of induction into the elements of Political Economy, she had only yesterday been set right by a prattler three fee high, for returning to the question, "what is the first principle of this science?" The absurd answer, "to do unto others as I would that they should do unto me."[40]

Cowell's speech was delivered on Saturday, January 21st, exactly a week before Dickens's arrival in Preston in search of material for Hard Times; it is not unreasonable to suppose that Dickens would read the newspaper reports of the strike-leaders' speeches with more than usual attention in the week before his journey there to hear them in person, and that he may therefore have seen the Times report of this one, which was published five days before his departure. If not, he had another chance of reading it in the Preston Advertiser's report, which appeared on the very day of Dickens's arrival in Preston.

Cowell's attack on the laws of political economy was a reply to two recent speeches attacking the strikers. If Dickens did, as seems quite possible, read one of the reports of Cowell's speech, the name of

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39. The Times, Jan 23, 1854.
40. HT, 43.

one of the objects of the strike leader's contempt would have strongly arrested his attention. The opening chapters of Hard Times (which may have been written when Dickens visited Preston[41]) are in part, as Professor Fielding and Professor Collins have shown, a satire on certain recent developments in education. On Wednesday, 11 January the author of those developments, Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, gave a speech at the opening of a trade school at Padiham. His speech can be divided into two sections, the first dealing with education, the second with the Preston strike.

Kay-Shuttleworth's remarks on Preston, but not on education, attracted wide attention. Newspaper reports of the speech not unnaturally, concentrated on the second half of his remarks, which was more controversial, and therefore better copy. Only the Manchester Guardian seems to have given a full report of the entire speech; the Examiner, the Daily News, and the Morning Post ignore Kay-Shuttleworth's educational pronouncements, and no report at all appeared in The Times. Most importantly from our point of view, perhaps, a brief report of it appeared in The Household Narrative for January, 1854. This, together with the fact that the controversy it aroused was still fresh in the public mind, when Dickens arrived in Preston as a journalist wishing to grasp the local situation, confirms, perhaps, his awareness of the speech; it may, too, increase the likelihood that he read a fuller account of it than appears in the Narrative.

The section of the speech dealing with the strike is of obvious interest to the reader of Hard Times. The themes of education and industrial relations in the novel, when they are related by commentators, are

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41. In a letter written on March 11, Dickens claimed that 'the title was many weeks old, and chapters of the story were written before I went to Preston or thought about the present strike. Letters, II, 546.

usually seen as having a purely symbolic connection. Here, one object of Dickens's educational satire can be seen making pronouncements on industrialism, and making them by explicitly relating educational and industrial themes in a directly logical way, rather than a purely symbolic one. Kay-Shuttleworth ends his remarks on education with a modulation to his new subject which might appear forced to the casual reader, but which evidently appears perfectly natural to him. He has been discussing the various ways in which education can promote the advancement of the individual and the progress of society. Ignorance, to Kay-Shuttleworth, is the most serious impediment to progress, especially material progress: 'It is in proportion as art and science exert their influence on human industry, that men become gradually emancipated from the coarser modes of toil'.[42] But the effect of art and science on 'social progress' cannot be fully understood without understanding another branch of knowledge, 'the neglect of which has caused... some of the most serious of our social embarrassments. I refer to... political economy.'

Ignorance has caused many barriers to progress, Kay-Shuttleworth continued: The destruction of machinery by unreasoning mobs, the preaching by demagogues of 'the false and wicked doctrine of a necessary antagonism between capital and labour', the failure to grasp the fact that to protect capital and support the application of science to the development of machinery are in the interest of the working classes, all these are the result of an educational debility. Kay-Shuttleworth then came to what we can see as the crux of his argument, and in doing so enunciated a principle, which is, virtually, a claim for the necessity

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42. Manchester Guardian, Wed., Jan 18, 1854, References to Kay-Shuttleworth's remarks on Education are taken from this issue; for his views on the Preston Strike, see MG, Sat Jan 14, 1854.

that human instinct should be subjected to intellectual formulae: 'to understand what are the true relations of capital and labour', he says, 'involves the study of a class of abstract truths, easily obscured or perverted to an uneducated people.' Here, from the other side of the fence, is the central theme of Hard Times; if for 'abstract truths' we substitute 'Hard Facts', this might almost be Gradgrind talking. In one way, we can see Dickens's novel as the expression of a profound anti-intellectualism. Although Dickens had, in speeches, repeated the Benthamite formulae about a necessary community of interest between masters and men, he was emotionally incapable of seeing that their relations, or anyone's relations, could ever be governed by 'abstract truths.'

In view of this, the Household Narrative's report of Kay-Shuttleworth's speech is very interesting indeed, not so much for what it contains, as for what it omits. Kay-Shuttleworth's remarks on the necessity of regarding political economy as the key to the problem are suppressed; instead, about half of this short report is given over, after references to Kay-Shuttleworth's pronouncements on the mischief caused by strikes, to a quotation of his brief qualifying remarks about 'abstract truths', which in the context of the speech itself, as fully reported by the Manchester Guardian, are very much less important than the Narrative's account suggests. The effect of this quotation out of context is to completely distort the speech, and to make Kay-Shuttleworth's views appear to coincide almost exactly with Dickens's own:

> As a remedy [to strikes], he recommended good feeling between the employers and the work-people, the example of which ought to be set by the employers. "The workmen", he said, "who are inaccessible to reasoning on abstract truths, and even slow to be taught by

> experience, may be more open to kindly sympathies.... They are sooner to be won by the heart than by the head. A master who ceases to think that his workmen are a part of his machinery, and is impressed with the conviction that they are beings for whose destiny, morally and socially, he must give account when the secrets of all hearts are laid open, will have solved the mystery of trades' unions".[43]

The strictly educational section of his speech takes us straight into the world of Hard Times, as much, perhaps, in the localised questions it discusses as in its broad principles. After mentioning the 'superior qualifications' of the teachers then emerging from the training colleges (M'Choakumchild?), for instance, Kay-Shuttleworth talked about the problem of a class of child which did not come from ordered homes, which was generally at the elementary schools on a part-time basis. These children were often unable to read, and were 'without any other ideas than those which they have gathered as it were by instinct, ...from their own intercourse with nature' (Sissy?). 'Such scholars', continued Kay-Shuttleworth, 'formidably increase the embarrassments of the teacher. They hang like a dead weight on him in all his efforts to raise the general range of acquirements in his school; and it must be confessed are not associates whom an anxious parent would select as associates for his child'; it is Sissy, of course, who is blamed for Tom's and Louisa's unauthorised peeping at the circus. One of the advantages of elementary education, Kay-Shuttleworth went on, was in the opportunities it afforded for rising in the social scale; 'I could name several', he said, 'who have been placed in offices of trust, as clerks etc.' (Bitzer?). Dickens may or may not have been thinking of these

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43. "Social, Sanitary, and Municipal Progress", Household Narrative, (Jan 1854), 12.

specific references in Hard Times. One specialised educational topic he was thinking of however, was also among those discussed by Kay-Shuttleworth and provides us, inside the framework of the 'terrible mistake of these days', with an interesting link between the theme of industrialism in his speech, and the educational satire of the opening chapter of Hard Times. Speaking of the economic importance of education, he went on to give various examples, in illustration of his subject, among which was that of the field of industrial design. The French, said Kay-Shuttleworth, were dangerous rivals in the industrial field, because their design was aesthetically superior. To improve British industrial design, he reminded his audience, the Department of Practical Art was formed. This brings us, of course, to the 'third gentleman' of Chapter two. As Professor Fielding has shown, the third gentleman is a caricature of the general superintendent of the Department, Henry Cole, and his ideas are certainly a satire of those of the Department. Professor Fielding also suggests that such a satire is out of place in a school setting, since, 'there was no connection between Practical Art and ordinary schools for children.' [44] This suggestion needs some qualification. As Kay-Shuttleworth's lecture points out, 'one of the earliest acts of this department has been to concert, with the Committee of Council on Education, arrangements for the introduction of the rudiments of the arts of design into ordinary schools.' Elementary schools had so far shown little interest in art education. One scheme undertaken by the Department of Practical Art was to provide inducement to the schools to give elementary art instruction in form and colour. Richard Redgrave, the Department's Art Superintendent, made a series of graded drawing copies and examples

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44. Fielding, K.J., "Dickens and the Department of Practical Art", MLR, XLVIII (1953), 270-7.

which were distributed at half price to interested schools. The Committee of Council on Education co-operated, by circulating a minute that 'evidence of a certain proficiency in drawing should be afforded by each student on account of whose examination the training schools receive a grant.'[45] The Department of Practical Art announced that it would appoint a teacher, help with his salary, and supply the necessary materials to interested elementary schools, provided certain conditions were met. Plans were also made to organise a body of itinerant teachers whose duties were to visit schools in possession of the Department's graded drawing examples, and instruct the masters and mistresses in their use.[46] By 1856, over 22,000 children were being taught drawing, and over 12,000 teachers and pupil teachers had become qualified in elementary art instruction.[47]

The principles that such instruction should follow had been outlined in two lectures, given by the Department of Practical Art's general superintendent, Henry Cole, and its Art superintendent, Richard Redgrave, in November, 1852. These lectures were issued in pamphlet form in 1853, the year before the publication of Hard Times. The pamphlet, like Kay-Shuttleworth's lecture, breathes the atmosphere of that brand of individualism which was the very spirit of Victorian laissez-faire. Cole sets the tone at the beginning of his remarks and gives us another useful example of the potency, for a certain kind of Victorian mind, of abstract notions: the Department, he thought, although partly dependent on public funds, must remain independent of Government control: 'It is only in accordance with immutable laws, and is now an admitted political axiom, that Corporate or Government work must necessarily be

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45. Cole, H. and A., Fifty Years of Public Life of Sir Henry Cole, K.B., London 1884, 302.
46. Redgrave, Richard, and Cole, Henry, Addresses of the Superintendents of the Department of Practical Art, London, 1853.
47. Cole, H. and A., op. cit., 303.

inferior in quality to the work of individuals'.[48] For the reader of Hard Times, Redgrave's lecture is, perhaps, slightly more interesting because it provides us rather more clearly than Cole's with an example of the peculiar temper of mind against which Dickens can be seen reacting so strongly in his novel. The principle at the root of Redgrave's ideas seems to be that Art Instruction should be made less random, more scientific and, in the literal sense of the word, more utilitarian, more useful. Criticising, for example, the method of teaching drawing by making 'persepective imitation of solid objects', he complained that 'the geometrical representation of objects - and by geometrical I mean the real imitation, exact as to parts and proportions, as contrasted with the perspective delineation... has no place in it, and seems perfectly overlooked.'[49] Given Redgrave's terms of reference, this is fair enough: 'How many are there', he went on, 'to whom a power of geometrical imitation is far more valuable than that of perspective imitation! For instance, in all drawing as explanatory between employer and employed, in working drawings, and patterns...'[50] Nevertheless, there is a certain chilliness about Redgrave's analysis which makes it difficult to resist the conclusion that Dickens may have got hold of at least part of the truth about what the Department represented. Part of the aesthetic creed underlining its programme is outlined towards the end of Redgrave's lecture. It reminds us, perhaps, of Cole's phrase 'immutable laws', or of Kay-Shuttleworth's remarks on the application of 'abstract truths' on industrial relations:

> Until men turn their attention to the subject they are little aware how entirely empirical most of their judgements in matters

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48. Redgrave and Cole, op. cit., 7.
49. Ibid., 49.
50. Ibid., 50.

> of taste are, and consequently, as to what is correct and just in Decorative Design also. Men are inclined to believe that judgement on objects of taste does not depend on any acknowledged principles nor can be defined by any rules, but is an innate feeling or perception; and the trite maxim that "taste is not to be disputed" - which is as much as to say that it is amenable to no laws - is still the measure of public opinion in the matter.[51]

This is exactly the sort of thing the third gentleman would say. Professor Fielding has shown that the source of part of his remarks is an introduction by Owen Jones to the catalogue of an exhibition of bad design given by the Department of Practical Art after the Great Exhibition of 1851. Perhaps there is also an element of Redgrave in the government gentleman. In his lecture, Redgrave spent some time in giving his ideas on elementary colour and drawing. Imitation, he thought, was a good way of learning to draw, and one way of doing this was by 'geometrical free-hand imitation; and geometric drawing wherein the draughtsman is aided by the use of instruments, applicable to right-lined forms and curves of known centres.'[52] Colour, too, should be systematised; and ignorance of 'the laws of colour' could lead to dreadful mistakes, and demonstrate 'how little... choice could be consonant with what was really good taste, from... want of knowledge...[53] To help remedy the situation, Redgrave had prepared 'a diagram to show you that colours must be arranged together in specific and absolute quantities to be agreeable to the eye... Thus, in arrangements of the primaries, a surface quantity of three yellow requires, to be agreeable to the eye, a surface of five red and eight blue; or three yellow harmonises with its secondary purple as three to thirteen in surface quantity.'[54] This is so like Dickens's satire on the Department's

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51. Ibid., 72.
52. Ibid., 51.,
53. Ibid., 78.
54. Ibid., 78-9.

policy that it may even be directly behind part of it. Certainly, it explains his misgivings. The government gentleman of chapter two ends his disquisition on interior design with the following crushing statement: '"...You must use," said the gentleman, "for all these purposes, combinations and modifications (in primary colours) of mathematical figures which are susceptible of proof and demonstration. This is the new discovery. This is Fact. This is taste" '.[55]

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Dickens, then, was certainly not dependent, for his understanding of the 'terrible mistake of these days', uniquely on Carlyle's critique of 'mechanism'. All the examples of formulistic thinking that I have just quoted were topical as Dickens was writing, and Hard Times refers directly to some of them, if not to all. That Hard Times is undoubtedly a criticism of mechanistic thinking, is not by itself enough to prove that it is an outstanding example of Carlyle's influence. Nor, even, is the fact that Dickens certainly saw the book's message as a Carlylean one: we have seen that Carlyle was regarded by many as a useful figure whose works (selectively read) provided backing for some very un-Carlylean causes. Many people read Carlyle, responded to those parts of his unsystematic message that mirrored their own ideas and prejudices, and ignored or even attacked the rest. The fact that Hard Times attacks rationalism does not, by itself, show that the novel would have been different without Carlyle's writings. Nevertheless, it is clear enough that Dickens, in formulating his ideas, thought naturally of Carlyle's analogous attack on mechanism when he was writing Hard Times. The book's dedication, and Dickens's letter to Carlyle, show this obviously enough; and in at least one part of the book, the

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55. HT, 6.

attack on rationalism does appear in an unmistakably Carlylean context. I have already examined Stephen Blackpool's remarks on the situation of the working class, to demonstrate Dickens's grasp of a corpus of Carlylean notions, and the necessary appearance in this structure of ideas of the attack on mechanism certainly confirms that, when Dickens thought of 'Hard Facts', it was natural for him to think of Carlyle. And this is the only part of Stephen Blackpool's analysis that is not only a statement of the conditions of working people in the industrial areas, but also a contribution to the theme which pervades the whole book. Stephen's expression of the 'Hard Facts' idea is very obviously, in content and by context, Carlylean:

> ...rating 'em as so much Power, and reg'latin 'em as if they was figures in a soom, or machines; wi'out loves and likens, wi'out memories and inclinations, wi'out souls to weary and souls to hope - ... this will never do't, Sir...[56].

How far is Stephen's emphasis, not simply on the inadequacy of Hard Facts, but on their effect on the human personality, on the 'souls' of those imprisoned by Mechanism, maintained in the novel's general attack? The 'terrible mistake of these days' that Dickens refers to in his letter to Carlyle is so insistently and so clearly stated throughout the novel that the answer ought to be easy to determine. Whatever else, for instance, Dickens is aiming at, Hard Times can scarcely be seen, as John Holloway points out,[57] as a sweeping criticism of Utilitarianism as a system. But Dr Holloway surely narrows down the range of attention of the novel unduly, while making his point: Dickens's novel may not be searching in its attitude to Utilitarianism (does it claim to

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56. HT, 116.
57. Holloway, op. cit., 159.

be?); but it does contain more than his account implies. Even less can its content be accepted, as Dr Leavis is very ready to, as embodying 'a comprehensive vision, one in which the inhumanities of Victorian Civilisation are seen as fostered and sanctioned by a hard philosophy, the agressive formulation of an inhumane spirit'.[58] The word 'philosophy' claims too much for what Gradgrind (let alone Bounderby) represents, and 'comprehensive vision' too much for what Dickens achieves, even, perhaps, for what he aims at achieving. The conversation between Stephen and Bounderby that we have examined shows one side of Dickens's attitude to 'the inhumanities of Victorian Civilisation', which can indeed be seen here as 'fostered and sanctioned by... the agressive formulation of an inhumane spirit'. Stephen also places the problem firmly with that of the urban worker in general, and hence, it might be argued, hints at a condemnation of the whole process of the industrial revolution. It might even show Dickens as Shaw saw him in Hard Times, 'rising up against civilisation itself as against a disease, and declaring...that it is not merely Tom All Alone's that must be demolished and abolished,...but our entire social system'.[59] But, of course, not only does Hard Times reflect only part of the truth about Victorian Civilisation; it also reflects only one side of Dickens's own thinking about it. The instalment of Hard Times that contains the conversation between Stephen and Bounderby, reflects this part of Dickens's attitude to the modern world. An article by Henry Morley that appeared in the same issue of Household Words, sums up an apparently contradictory belief, that he held just as strongly: Dickens would certainly not have published such material if its assumptions had been unacceptable to him. The article can fairly be described as a panegyric on urban civilisation.

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58. Leavis, F.R., The Great Tradition, London, 1962, 250.
59. Shaw, G.B., Introduction to Hard Times, London, 1912.

Here is part of it:

> Towns that are now insignificant and reckoned with the country, will grow as Liverpool and Manchester have grown, and will become, if all goes well, great centres of population.
>
> The change will not be landowners' grievance; it will be a conversion of so much poor land into rich land; of land worth of tens or hundreds of pounds sterling per acre into land worth hundreds or thousands. It will be a multiplication of the means of life more rapid than the multiplication of men to be supported. Within the sphere of its own influence, it will be a slow drawing of the sting from poverty, rendering not only the means of life, but also, it is to be hoped, the best objects of life, more accessible. Every new town set among fields is, to a great extent, and will be to a much greater extent than it now is, another star set in the earthly firmament...,[60]

That Dickens was prepared to sanction the publication of this materialist representation of the Industrial Revolution shows that Hard Times somewhat oversimplifies his position. Dickens believed in the modern world, just as he recoiled from the barbarism of the past. 'Few things that I saw, when I was away', he wrote to Mrs Watson in January, 1854, about a trip to Italy from which he had just returned, 'took my fancy so much as the Electric Telegraph, piercing, like a sunbeam, right through the cruel old heart of the Coliseum at Rome. And on the summit of the Alps, among the eternal ice and snow, there it was still, with its posts sustained against the sweeping mountain winds by clusters of great beams - to say nothing of its being at the bottom of the sea as we crossed the Channel.'[61] This was the Dickens that Ruskin was talking about when he wrote, shortly after his death, that he 'was a pure modernist - a leader of the steam-whistle party par excellence.'

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60. [Morley, H.] "Chips: A Lesson in Multiplication", Household Words, IX (1854), 398.
61. Letters, II, 523, Jan 13, 1854.

'His hero,' Ruskin added, 'is essentially the ironmaster; in spite of Hard Times, he has advanced by his influence every principle that makes them harder.'[62] The pages of Household Words, certainly an important vehicle for Dickens's influence, abound with articles about technological and commercial progress. Dickens's attitude to industrial society, like that of many Victorians, was not a consistent one; and Carlyle shares this ambivalence. Although he could deplore the social and spiritual implications of the machine age, he was excited by machines and by the possibilities for progress they opened up.

Hard Times, then (if we regard it as a strictly 'Industrial Novel'), simplifies considerably both the realities of the Victorian situation and even Dickens's own view of what those realities were. The simplification, as I have suggested, does not go as far as Dr Holloway says it does; the novel does not simply say that all work and not play makes Jack a dull boy, and that the Arabian Nights is more agreeable than Cocker's Arithmetic. Nevertheless, his account does appear to cover much of Dickens's intellectual formulation of 'the terrible mistake of these days', if it does not account for the reverberations this formulation successfully sets up, and was meant to set up, in the book's human relationships. We can sum up this part of the novel's scope by saying, in the words of the Examiner's reviewer that its 'message' is that

> We may starve the mind upon Hard Fact as we may starve the body upon meat, if we exclude all lighter diet, and all kinds of condiment.[63]

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62. The Works of John Ruskin, Ed. Cooke, E., and Wedderhurn, A., London, 1909, XXXVII, 7.
63. The Examiner, Sept 9, 1854.

Some at least of Dickens's contemporaries thought the point worth making. The Gentleman's Magazine thought that , although Dickens in Hard Times was 'sufficiently exaggerative to throw discredit on his truths', he had nevertheless 'got hold of a dangerous tendency which is one of the signs of the times...'. 'We feel confident', the reviewer continued, 'that political economists and that many educators of the people rely by far too much on information and clearness in a certain round of facts for the improvement of the poor.'[64]

Dickens's aversion to Hard Facts could, if we were not interest in pressing the matter, be quite satisfactorily explained in terms of his reactions to contemporary trends. The most obvious was to recent developments in education, and some reviewers highlighted this together with the attack on political economy. The reduction of two such different areas as industrial relations and aesthetic expression to 'abstract laws', that I have already discussed, was another. A further contemporary reference in the novel was to the still embryonic but already healthily kicking science of statistics, which had been given a sharp boost during the preceding twenty years by the statistical bureaux and commissions set up by the government in connection with the carrying into action of such legislation as the New Poor Law. Dickens's attitude to statistics in HT is less discriminating, perhaps, than it was in reality; as he wrote to Charles Knight the following year, 'My satire is against those who see figures and averages and nothing else.' This, it will be seen, is substantially the burden of Carlyle's famous chapter on Statistics in Chartism, which, as I shall suggest, may be relevant (despite reservations) to Dickens's attitude to statistics, not only in HT, but elsewhere. But in Hard Times, Dickens's position

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64. "Lectures on Education...", Gentleman's Magazine, XLII (1854), 277.
65. Letters, II, 620, to Charles Knight, Jan 30, 1855.

on statistics fits in with the imaginative process that seems to be at work throughout much of his social comment in the novel; here, as in his comments on 'Utilitarianism' in general, and on Industrialism and Education, Dickens selects what he needs for his purpose, and supresses the rest. In Hard Times, statistics are treated as a kind of background emotional atmosphere; they are almost villainous; you would hiss them if they could be embodied. The 'dry Ogre chalking ghastly white figures' on a large blackboard, from whom the young Gradgrinds receive their first education, is 'a monster in a lecturing castle, with Heaven knows how many heads manipulated into one, taking childhood captive, and dragging it into gloomy statistical dens by the hair.'[66] One of the functions of statistics is to prevent the enjoyment of life: the little Gradgrinds cannot be told fairy stories because of them, the Coketown operatives' few sources of escape are similarly threatened:

> ...the Teetotal Society...complained that these same people would get drunk, and showed in tabular statements that they did get drunk,... Then came the chemist and druggist, with other tabular statements, showing that when they didn't get drunk, they took opium. Then came the experienced chaplain of the jail, with more tabular statements,...showing that the same people would resort to low haunts... where A.B., aged twenty-four next birthday, and committed for eighteen months solitary, had himself said...his ruin began, as he was perfectly sure and confident that otherwise he would have been a tip-top moral specimen.[67]

This operates on the level which Dr Holloway sees as characteristic of the whole novel,[68] in its emphasis on 'a little more play,' and in the slightly child-like attack on 'tabular statements' per se. But

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66. HT, 7.
67. Ibid, 18.
68. Holloway, op. cit., 168-9.

Statistics are also used in a more profound way in Hard Times, to convey the emotional paralysis that the novel is really concerned with. And it is the way in which Dickens sees and presents this emotional paralysis that gives the novel's attack on rationality the dimension it needs for us to be able to say, without the assertion losing its meaning, not simply that Dickens saw himself as writing under Carlyle's influence, but that Hard Times is in a real way (despite important reservations) a Carlylean novel. Distrust of 'mechanism', by itself, is not Carlylean; but the assertion of a link between mechanism and loss of belief, between perverted rationalism and the incapacity for assent, definitely is.

One of the novel's central scenes, that in which Gradgrind proposes Bounderby to Louisa as her husband, presents this vital connection in an easily demonstrable form. The confrontation is justly quoted by Dr Leavis as 'a triumph of ironic art';[69] it is one of the book's most brilliant and spine-chilling set pieces. The attack on statistics is on the same selective level that we see elsewhere; but here, an added meaning must be registered. Louisa asks her father on what her marriage should be based, since it will not be on love. His reply could be interpreted as showing, not the danger of statistics in themselves, but the failure of any branch of enquiry when its methods are used in a limited and unimaginative way. If this interpretation could be sustained, the passage would be making the same point as Dickens's letter to Knight, and Carlyle's chapter in Chartism. But this is probably not Dickens's intention here: we are meant to see Gradgrind's speech as a root and branch attack against a whole intellectual approach.

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69. Leavis, op. cit., 262.

The result is a curious blend, of subtlety in the satiric method of the passage, and crudeness in the discrimination of its target: nevertheless, the critique of statistics moves one stage further than what we can see elsewhere as a kind of Arts man's distrust of figures:

> ... I would advise you (since you ask me) to consider this question, as you have been accustomed to consider every other question, simply as one of tangible Fact.... Now, what are the Facts of this case? You are, we will say in round numbers, twenty years of age; Mr Bounderby is, we will say in round numbers, fifty. There is some disparity in your respective years, but in your means and positions, there is none; on the contrary, there is a great suitability. Then the question arises, Is this one disparity sufficient to operate as a bar to such marriage? In considering this question, it is not unimportant to take into account the statistics of marriage, so far as they have yet been obtained, in England and Wales. I find, on reference to the figures, that a large proportion of these marriages are contracted between parties of very unequal ages, and that the elder of these contracting parties is, in rather more than three-fourths of these instances, the bridegroom.[70]

This scene concentrates, in a vital way, what is arguably the book's real theme: not simply that Hard Facts are dull, or cruel, or humanly inadequate; but that a life ruled entirely by logical considerations is perverted and undermined at its very roots: Louisa, quite simply, marries Bounderby because she does not care whether she lives or dies. Her single weary question 'what does it matter?' indicates the dimension of the Hard Facts theme that is so notably missing from Dr Holloway's account of Hard Times, and which produces, inevitably, a misjudgement of the novel's scope: after reading the whole scene between Gradgrind and

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70. HT, 75.

Louisa, it may be instructive to remind ourselves of Dr Holloway's judgement, if for no other reason, to show what must be our account of Hard Times if its one vital ingredient is not detected: '...the creed which Dickens champions in the novel, against Gradgrind's,' says Dr Holloway, 'seems in the main to be that of "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" '.[71] Sleary's circus, of course, is the main symbol of this important (but, I suggest, subsidiary) theme: but the circus also symbolises other elements in what Dickens 'champions' against Gradgrind: 'the sacredness of the heart's affections' is the Lawrentian ideal that we might (with suitable reservations) suggest (rather than Dr Leavis's Lawrentian vitality) as perhaps the most important part of the circus's meaning. This is not particularly Carlylean in itself, but the pattern involved in a connection between the human encapsulation, the loneliness caused by lack of love, or simply of human contact, and the tyranny of unyielding mechanistic ideals, shown as culminating in a spiritual crisis, provides Hard Times with its just dramatic culmination in Louisa's (surely not hollowly 'melodramatic') collapse, and in Gradgrind's very movingly realised loss of faith. Book II of Sartor Resartus as I shall suggest, is the relevant Carlylean analogue for this most vital pattern of Hard Times.

James Harthouse is the living embodiment of Louisa's lack of belief, and he strengthens a Carlylean theme in the book. He himself is a recognisably Carlylean character, though the type he belongs to has a long literary tradition behind it. The aristocratic layabout has always had a fascination for both the play-going and novel-reading public. The 1830's had seen the vogue for silver-fork novels, and Disraeli was

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71. Holloway, op. cit., 168.

probably the most gifted exponent of the tradition, in which he followed, with tongue only partly in cheek, and prolonged so brilliantly beyond its natural time-span. In one way Harthouse can be seen as this kind of character. But the high-born place-seeker was not only a stock literary figure; he was also a social and political problem in an age when the patronage of sinecure posts with tidy salaries attached was looked on as a legitimate means both of taking care of the younger sons of peers and others, and of exerting political influence.[72] What to do with high-born young men without either training or inclination for work was a topical question while Dickens was writing Hard Times. On January 27, 1854, an editorial appeared in The Times on the subject of 'electoral purity.' The problem of such difficult misfits is discussed. Life is difficult, thought The Times, ironically, unless a man is prepared to take risks: ' "What if we make young PINKERTON secretary to a Peer or a House of Commons man?" ', the writer imagined a typical grappling with the problem, ' "The lad evidently has no stomach for hard work; in fact he declines it on principle" '. After discussing a few possibilities, this imaginary wielder of patronage decided on a pursuit for the young man:

> "We have not much interest with peers, so he shall be secretary to an MP. There is not much trouble involved in the pursuit. It is astounding, after a three months' manipulation of blue-books, how intensely wise a man may appear in the eyes of those who do not affect that class of literature. There is no responsibility..."[73]

Harthouse, of course, 'coached himself up with a blue-book or two',[74] and 'with a discreet use of his blue coaching, came off triumphantly, though with a considerable accession of boredom.'[75] Harthouse is partly

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72. See Blake, R., Disraeli, London, 1967. 387-921.
73. The Times, Jan 27, 1854.
74. HT, 95.
75. HT, 99

explicable in terms of topical interest (indeed, on the appearance of Hard Times, a rumour began to circulate that he was drawn from the life, as the portrait of an actual Liberal MP,[76]) and partly by referring to literary tradition. But there is more to him than can be completely covered by either frame of reference:

> And yet he had not, even now, any earnest wickedness of purpose in him. Publicly and privately, it were much better for the age in which he lived, that he and the legion of whom he was one were designedly bad, than indifferent and purposeless. It is the drifting icebergs setting with any current anywhere, that wreck the ships.
>
> When the Devil goeth about like a roaring lion, he goeth about in a shape by which few but savages and hunters are attracted. But, when he is trimmed, smoothed, and varnished, according to the mode; when he is aweary of vice, and aweary of virtue, used up as to brimstone, and used up as to bliss; then, whether he take to the serving out of red tape, or to the kindling of red fire, he is the very Devil.[77]

In both content and imagery, this is very reminiscent of a famous passage in Sartor Resartus, and there is an almost visible shift to a neo-biblical, 'Carlylean' style in the second paragraph as Dickens warms to his theme. This is how Carlyle deals with the same idea:

> Some comfort it would have been, could I, like a Faust, have fancied myself tempted and tormented of the Devil; for a Hell, as I imagine, without Life, though only diabolic Life, were more frightful: but in our age of Down-pulling and Disbelief, the very Devil has been pulled down, you cannot so much as believe in a Devil.[78]

This is substantially the same idea, and it is explored by Dickens in

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76. , , Court Journal, (Aug 12, 1854)
77. HT, 137. My emphasis.
78. SR, 126. My emphasis.

language which is reminiscent enough of this passage to make it worthwhile to suggest that it may have directly provided Dickens with the impulse behind his heavy statement on the Harthouses of this World. Referring to his isolation, Carlyle's hero, Teufelsdröck, has referred to his 'devouring' his own heart 'as the tiger in the jungle.' This reminds us of Dickens's 'Roaring Lion' and an earlier passage of this chapter of Sartor reminds us of Louisa. Teufelsdröck's feeling of the purposelesness of life is intimately linked with his separation from other living beings: 'was there, in the wide world, any true bosom I could press trustfully to mine?'[79], he mournfully asks himself. Louisa begins to gain a sense of the meaning of life as she finds a refuge in Sissy's affection:

> "Forgive me, pity me, help me! Have compassion on my great need, and let me lay this head of mine upon a loving heart!"
> "O lay it here!" cried Sissy. "Lay it here, my dear".[80]

The similarity between Dickens's disquisition on Harthouse and the passage from Book II of Sartor Resartus that I have quoted, directs our attention to the obvious parallel between the plot of Hard Times, and the central event described by that part of Carlyle's work. The context in which I have already invoked this part of Sartor,[81] reminds us too, perhaps, that in connecting the loss, or absence of 'belief' with mechanistic or Benthamite thinking, Dickens was making a widely accepted connection. Teufelsdröck's collapse, I have suggested, was probably emblematic for many of their own loss of faith, and Dickens may well have had it in mind when he was writing about Gradgrind's collapse. There are dissimilarities of course: nevertheless, Louisa's collapse and

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79. Ibid.
80. HT, 172
81. See pp 28-9 above.

Gradgrind's, taken together, do remind us of Teufelsdröck's. The dramatic truthfulness of this part of the book is underlined by the parallel, which has been drawn by Professor Fielding and others, between it and the famous spiritual crisis of John Stuart Mill.[82] Louisa's thorough-going rationalist upbringing is certainly even more startlingly like Mill's than like Teufelsdröck's.

Harthouse, then, represents Carlylean loss of faith in one important way. He may refer directly to Sartor Resartus: and he certainly embodies, too, another rather different Carlylean emphasis. He not only represents the lack or the collapse of belief and its connection with Mechanism; he is also, and as a function of this, shown as being one partner of an even more distinctly Carlylean alliance. The entente between Dilettantism and Mammonism, taken in conjunction with the overlapping but distinguishable connection between loss of faith and mechanism, establishes Harthouse as a definitely Carlylean figure. Harthouse (dilettantism and loss of faith), Gradgrind (logic-chopping rationalism), and Bounderby (mammonism) can be seen as three figures in a Carlylean allegory. Dickens establishes part of the meaning of Harthouse's appearance on the scene at the beginning of Book II, chapter ii:

> The Gradgrind party wanted assistance in cutting the throats of the graces. They went about recruiting; and where could they enlist recruits more hopefully, than among the fine gentlemen who, having found out everything to be worth nothing, were equally ready for anything?
>
> Moreover, the healthy spirits who had mounted to this sublime height were attractive to many of the Gradgrind school.... They became exhausted in imitation of them; and they yaw-yawed in their

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82. Fielding, K.J., "Mill and Gradgrind", Nineteenth Century Fiction, XI (1957), 148-151.

> speech like them; and they served out, with an enervated air, the little mouldy rations of political economy, on which they regaled their disciples.[83]

This passage shows Dickens attacking mere rationalism with the tools, and the metaphors of Carlylean allegory; it neatly epitomises, too, how Dickens, in the rest of the book, can be seen to fit his own reading of the opposition between fact and fancy into a Carlylean conceptual framework. Harthouse, it will be seen, is not quite a Carlylean figure here; or, rather, there is something about him that belongs, if anywhere, to a period in Carlyle's career about twenty years before the appearance of Hard Times, to the writing of Sartor Resartus: Carlyle's ideas of Dilettantism or of Mechanism do not normally include the notion that one of their besetting sins is 'cutting the throats of the graces', an activity to which, in any case, Carlyle himself became more and more addicted as he grew older. The pleasures of art and the unmechanistic response to life and human enjoyment, nevertheless, can be seen as one theme of Sartor, a theme which distinguishes it from later works. And the traditional romantic oposition between fact and fancy is certainly restated by Carlyle in Sartor (among other places) in a way highly relevant to Hard Times, as Professor Collins points out. It is in the educational field that Dickens first brings to our attention the 'terrible mistake', and quite apart from the general distrust of mechanistic thinking, for which Carlyle was certainly the most obvious Victorian spokesman, there are also, again notably in Sartor, passages directly relevant to Dickens's parody of certain educational developments, which may even have provided Dickens with a vague ideological background for his attack. Professor Collins is right to go no further than to suggest the education of Teufelsdröck (among other Carlylean parallels)

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83. HT, 94-5.

as an analogue for the educational satire of Hard Times. Nevertheless the similarities of theme, even, in one instance, the textual similarity, that I have noticed between the nove. and Book II of Sartor, suggest that Carlyle's ideas on education here, should be seen as forming directly, rather than indirectly, part of the background for Hard Times. 'We find', says Carlyle, that Teufelsdröck's 'Greek and Latin were "mechanically" taught; Hebrew scarce even mechanically; much else... no better than not at all. So that, except inasmuch as Nature was still busy; and he himself "went about, as was of old his wont, among the Craftsmen's workshops, there learning many things"; and farther lighted on some small store of curious reading, in Hans Wachtel the Cooper's house ... - his time, it would appear, was utterly wasted.'[84] We have in Sartor the same contrast as in Hard Times between the educational value of mechanistic pedantry and that of the wisdom of everyday life (here, as in Hard Times, humble everyday life) and of Nature. Teufelsdröck's description of his own education outlines almost exactly the same romantic opposition between the sterility of Hard Facts, and the mysterious vital power of Nature, that is the main theme of the book

> "My Teachers", says he, "were hide-bound Pedants, without knowledge of man's nature, or of boy's; or of ought save their lexicons and quarterly account-books. Innumerable dead Vocables (no dead Language, for they themselves knew no Language) they crammed into us, and called it fostering the growth of mind. How can an inanimate, mechanical Gerund-grinder, the like of whom will, in a subsequent century, be manufactured at Nürnberg out of wood and leather, foster the growth of anything; much more of Mind, which grows, not like a vegetable (by having its roots littered with etymological compost), but like a spirit, by mysterious contact of Spirit; Thought kindling itself at the fire of living

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84. SR, 80-1.

> Thought? How shall he give kindling, in whose own inward man there is no live coal, but all is burnt out to a dead grammatical cinder?[85]

The effect of a merely mechanistic education, coupled with the sense of isolation from mankind that this (together with an unhappy love-affair) produces, leads to his famous spiritual crisis, hence foreshadowing, almost exactly (apart from obvious divergences) Louisa's own story in Hard Times.

Hard Times was almost certainly written under Carlyle's 'influence', whatever we accept as the meaning of that word. Carlyle's oeuvre is such that it is difficult to isolate with any certainty exactly which works Dickens was drawing on; perhaps Sartor and Chartism seem the least uncertain guesses. In the end, perhaps, the problem is not an important one; almost anything that Carlyle said in one work, he said in an only marginally different way elsewhere. It is the broad lines of Carlylean teaching that we must distinguish, and Hard Times, for all the various reasons I have given, and with all the reservations I have made, can be seen in a significant, though sometimes inexact way, to retrace these lines. Nevertheless, what is almost as important to note as the existence of Carlyle's influence, are the conditions under which it operates. Hard Times, like many of Dickens's novels, can be seen as a protest against one or more specific kinds of injustice; Hard Times reflects, in an obvious way, Dickens's instinctive and immediate journalist's reaction to his world. Nearly all Dickens's material for the broad topics of the novel was drawn from sources and events of the moment, about which he would probably have felt no less passionately if

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85. SR, 81.

he had not read a word of Carlyle. What is perhaps most significantly Carlylean is the way in which all these topical events are related. Hard Times is perhaps Dickens's most insistent and highly disciplined Novel, and one way in which the discipline is achieved can be seen as essentially Carlylean. It is in the delineation of nearly all the varied interests of the novel - education, industrialism, political philosophy - as being all embodiments of one insistent, underlying idea, that Carlyle's influence might be seen, perhaps, to be most pervasive. Not only is the idea itself, 'the terrible mistake', one which irresistably suggests Carlyle's works, rather than those of anyone else, as its natural background; perhaps it is by the peculiar way in which the most various material embodiments of a theme are seen and inter-related, that we can discern the less tangible effect of Carlyle's mind: It is the peculiar insistence of Hard Times, the shaping power of one endlessly reiterated and repetitively articulated idea, that Hard Times is uncharacteristic of Dickens's works as a whole, and might be thought to be reminiscent of Carlyle's. But, though Hard Times would certainly have been a very different novel but for Carlyle, it is probably a safe guess that Dickens's feelings about 'the terrible mistake of these days', though perhaps less articulately realised, would have been very much the same. And, for all Carlyle's undoubted influence on the novel, there is still Sleary's Circus.

Chapter Five: A TALE OF TWO CITIES

Carlyle's 'influence' on Hard Times, I have suggested, was more complex than this word is often taken to imply. His writings can be seen to have modified, in an important way, Dickens's articulation of 'the terrible mistake of these days': but the assumption sometimes contained in suggestions of Carlyle's influence on Dickens, of a fairly simple transference of ideas from one mind to another, is very obviously foolish: the basic idea of this novel did not need to be transferred.[1] Probably Carlyle played a part in Dickens's realisation that it was there, and contributed a framework of ideas that, without any doubt, helped him to give it expression. But, in any case, Carlyle's contribution was simply one of many.

A Tale of Two Cities demonstrates something like the same pattern, and poses something like the same problem. With important exceptions, it is often the case that when material from Dickens's novel could be claimed to derive from material in Carlyle's French Revolution (very obviously the relevant Carlylean work), there are one or more probable alternative sources. Often, Carlyle's predominant or unique influence can be demonstrated. But, taking the novel as a whole, we can see it as a kind of collage, assembled from the most diverse sources, the component parts of which often overlap almost indistinguishably.

A Tale of Two Cities is a fascinating example of how a writer's private

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1. Mildred Christian, for instance [Trollopian,(1947)], in suggesting Carlyle's influence, merely points out parallels between Hard Times and Carlyle's writings, without considering any contemporary sources besides Carlyle or any topical references which also explain Dickens's distrust of rationalism: the implication of this, clearly, is that ideas passed directly from Carlyle to Dickens like a kind of contagion.

life, his reaction to wider public events and tendencies,[2] and the literary influences on his writing, can intertwine. The first impulse towards the Tale came, of course, during the Jerrold benefit performances of The Frozen Deep, in which Dickens played the tormented hero (or anti-hero) Richard Wardour.[3] This play very obviously provides the Tale with its theme of an ennobling unrequited love leading to redemption through sacrifice; although, as we shall see, there are other possible sources with a claim to be considered as the origin of Sidney Carton's story, The Frozen Deep almost certainly provided the first literary stimulus for this idea. There is another indication for his involvement in the play. Professor R.L. Brannan's study of the prompt-book manuscript of the play has led him to the conclusion that 'when Collins wrote the script, he tailored it to meet the requirements of a notion suggested by Dickens and of an amateur cast selected by Dickens. Finding that the script did not meet these requirements, Dickens extensively revised it. Dickens's part in the genisis of the idea and of the script and Dickens's contributions as manager and actor make the 1857 version of The Frozen Deep at least as much Dickens's work as Collins's.'[4]

The Frozen Deep, for all its weaknesses, is a potentially surprisingly effective play; here, I disagree with Professor Brannan. Despite its obvious literary failings, it is not difficult to imagine an effective performance of it, given good direction and convincing acting. Act I is set in an English Country House, where four ladies are living

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2. Besides the possible sources for A Tale of Two Cities that I shall discuss in the chapter, there was, I believe, another impulse behind the novel: Dickens's reaction to the Indian Mutiny. I shall discuss this theory in more detail on pp 261-3 below.
3. See Johnson E., Charles Dickens, New York, 1952, II, 866-8, and Letters, II, 876, to Miss Coutts, Sept 5, 1857.
4. Brannan, R.L., Under the Management of Mr Charles Dickens; His Production of THE FROZEN DEEP, New York, 1966, 5.

together during the absence of their menfolk on an Arctic Expedition. One of these, Clara Burnham, has been acting oddly and her strange conduct has culminated in a 'nervous seizure.' An eminent doctor recommends a change of scene, but only after her mind has been relieved of any secret anxieties that are preying on it. Lucy Crayford gains Clara's confidence, and she tells her secret: her fiancé, Frank Aldersley, and her rejected suitor, Richard Wardour, are both, unknown to each other, members of the expedition. Wardour has sworn a terrible revenge on the man who has robbed him of Clara; and 'one chance syllable between them might discover everything!'[5] The Act closes as the clairvoyant nurse Esther proclaims that she sees Aldersley and Another (presumably Wardour) together, and that there has been foul play.

Act II takes place in 'A Hut in the Artic Regions.' The expedition has been shipwrecked, and its members are living in two huts, one for the survivors of each ship. Conditions are getting worse, and it is decided that everyone shall live together. Aldersley and Wardour are now under the same roof. Wardour discovers, unknown to Aldersley the relationship between Aldersley and Clara; Wardour now knows the identity of the man, whose murder is the reason for his existence. At the end of the act, an expedition leaves for supplies and help, of which the two men are members. Crayford, realising the situation, tries to dissuade Aldersley from going, but in vain.

Act III is set in a cave in Newfoundland. Everyone has been rescued, except Wardour and Aldersley, who are lost together in the Arctic. Lucy and Clara arrive in Newfoundland to find out the expedition's fate.

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5. Ibid, 115.

It becomes obvious that Wardour has killed Aldersley, and everyone tries as hard as possible to shield Clara from the truth. Suddenly Wardour appears, reduced by suffering. It is assumed that he is a murderer, and Crayford denounces him: 'Look at this conscience-stricken wretch', he declaims: 'confess, unhappy ruin of a man!'[6] But Aldersley is alive, saved by the self-sacrifice of Wardour, who has 'given all his strength to [Aldersley's] weakness'[7] to preserve him for Clara. 'I have made her happy,' he says; 'I may lay down my weary head now on the mother earth that hushes all her children to rest at last.' Clara has been the vision that has saved Wardour from 'the fiend within me,' and he dies in her arms.

Dickens identified himself as intensely with Richard Wardour as later he was, to himself, to 'embody in [his] own person'[8] (an interesting phrase, certainly reminding us more of acting than of novel-writing) the character of Sidney Carton. The tortured violence of Wardour's unrequited passion for Clara Burnham was, in one way, analogous to his own fevered restlessness as he realised increasingly that his marriage was an unredeemable failure, and felt, as he had put it to Forster in 1854, that 'a sense comes always crushing on me now...as of one happiness I have missed in life, and one friend and companion I have never made.'[9] Rejected love and love gone sour are not the same thing, but Wardour's tormented state of mind obviously had meaning for Dickens. He was certainly attracted by the grand pathos of Wardour's end. This may have been partly due to his own identification with Wardour's predicament, and partly due to its embodiment of a Victorian article of faith, cherished as much by Dickens as by his audiences, of the ennobling

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6. Ibid, 157.
7. Ibid, 159.
8. TTC, preface
9. Forster, 639.

and redeeming power of Woman. 'Should I have been strong enough to save him,'says the dying Wardour to Clara Burnham, 'if I could have forgotten you?'[10] Wardour's end had planted in Dickens's mind the germ of a new story. At the beginning of September 1857, he told Miss Coutts about it: '...sometimes of late,' he wrote, 'when I have been very excited by the crying of two thousand people over the grave of Richard Wardour, new ideas for a story have come into my head...with surprising force and brilliance. Last night, being quiet here, I noted them down in a little book I keep.'[11]

Dickens's own emotional life then, was obviously relevant to the essential plot situation of A Tale of Two Cities. The preface of the Tale suggests Dickens's own identification with Sidney Carton, which in one way was a kind of reprise of his involvement in the characterisation of Wardour, and the idea of an 'anti-hero', regenerated by the love of an idealised heroine, sacrificing himself for her by saving her lover and his own rival from death, is common to both. The two stories are further linked by another, "The Perils of Certain English Prisoners." Like The Frozen Deep, it was written by Collins and Dickens, and, like the Tale, it contains a central character named Carton. Something like the same pattern of sacrifice is involved in it, and, again, Dickens is demonstrably identified with the rejected lover. I shall discuss the importance of this story in a later chapter.

Carton's self-sacrifice, however, has a more complicated, and a more literary, ancestry than this, as do other parts of the Tale. Dickens's second attempt at the historical novel is a source-hunter's paradise. Most of the attention of scholars and others has been centred on two

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10. Frozen Deep, ed. cit., 160.
11. Letters, II, 876.

problems: firstly, on the origin of Sidney Carton's substitution of himself for Darnay, and the sacrifice of his life for the sake of his rival's wife; secondly, on the source of Dr Manette's long incarceration in the Bastille, and his own return to normal life. And for both these situations, there is probably a fairly complex literary genealogy. But what makes both of them memorable, so that they become, not simply a rehash of existing material but identifiably characteristic examples of Dickens's genius, can be reasonably confidently traced to a single source. The points de depart for the dramatic touches which make us remember Carton's execution and Dr Manette's incarceration, and its aftermath, long after we have forgotten (if we ever knew) Dickens's many 'sources', can almost certainly be found in The French Revolution.

Apart from Carlyle's work, only one of the alleged sources of the Tale has, I think, been claimed as having a bearing on both these situations. Watts Phillips's play The Dead Heart was accepted for eventual production, and paid for, by Benjamin Webster the actor manager, about three years before the serialisation of the Tale in All the Year Round. After a few numbers had appeared, Phillips became alarmed, and wrote to Webster; Dr Manette's story looked dangerously like a central situation of his play: '... you will see how the character of the man "dug out" of the Bastille will clash with the man in The Dead Heart written more than three years ago... And now, owing to a delay of years, Dickens puts into words what I had hoped to ago to see you put into ACTION. The tone of this resurrection ought to have been fresh on my play, not on his story.'[12]

Webster immediately decided to produce Phillips's play, which opened

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12. Phillips, H.W., Watts Phillips, Author and Playwright, London 1891, 46-7.

on November 12, 1859. Some two months later, on Jan 18, 1860, Tom Taylor's adaptation of A Tale of Two Cities opened at the Lyceum. Both plays were a great success, and the similarities between them became obvious. There were accusations and counter-accusations of plagiarism. The details of the squabble do not concern us;[13] the most important thing to emerge from it is what seems to be fairly incontrovertible evidence that Dickens knew the text of Phillips's play. In defence of his playwright, Webster wrote to two of the newspapers that had been attacking him, making it clear that he had received the text of Phillips's play long before the appearance in All The Year Round of the Tale. About ten days later he wrote a letter to say that the play had been 'seen by Dickens long ago' when he had taken it to Brighton and read it to two or three friends, one of whom was the author of A Tale of Two Cities.[14] It is highly unlikely Webster would have made such an assertion if it had been untrue; not only was Dickens a friend, he was also a 'hot property', whom no actor manager would willingly antagonise for the sake of someone as relatively unimportant as Watts Phillips. Further, Dickens could (and would) have publicly denied Webster's statement if it had been false. Carl R. Dolmetsch has argued, I think convincingly, that Webster probably read The Dead Heart to Dickens in March, 1857.[15] In other words (if we accept this) Dickens heard Phillips's play more or less at the beginning of the period of gestation of the Tale: Dickens had already acted the part of Richard Wardour four times in January.

The similarities between The Dead Heart and A Tale of Two Cities are

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13. For an account of it, see Coleman, J., "The Truth About The Dead Heart and A Tale of Two Cities," New Review, I (1889) 543-51.
14. Phillips, H.W., op. cit., 49. Miss Phillips does not give details about the letter, and I have been unable to trace to which paper it was written. But it was not written to The Sun, as Dolmetsch assumes, through a misunderstanding of Miss Phillips's text.
15. See Dolmetsch, C., "Dickens and The Dead Heart", Dickensian, LV(1959) 183.

certainly striking. The setting is France, immediately before and during the revolution. The Count de St. Valérie is in love with Catherine Duval, who is betrothed to Robert Landry. The Abbé de Latour, in league with St. Valérie, has Landry arrested through a lettre de cachet, and he is imprisoned in the Bastille for seventeen years (Manette is incarcerated for eighteen years). Catherine believes that he has died in England, and marries St. Valérie.. On Landry's release, at the fall of the Bastille, he swears vengeance on Latour and on Catherine's husband. During his imprisonment, he has nurtured his feelings of revenge, and their names are scratched on the wall of his cell. Landry also swears vengeance against Catherine's son, who bears the hated name of St Valérie. He is insensible to feelings of pity: 'they plucked me from the tomb, a living man, but with a dead heart! Do you mark me, Catherine, the body was still living—but the heart - the heart was dead![16] Landry becomes a revolutionary representative, and denounces Latour and Catherine's son, who are condemned to the guillotine. From papers found on Latour, it becomes obvious that Catherine is innocent. It is too late to halt the execution. Landry steps into the young St Valérie's place, and the play ends with a tableau:' in the extreme background, upon scaffold, 'run the stage directions, stands ROBERT LANDRY, prepared for fatal axe. He extends his arms in direction of COUNTESS, as curtain slowly falls.'

The two basic situations of A Tale of Two Cities are hence both contained in The Dead Heart: Dr Manette's 'living grave,' and Carton's self-sacrifice, are both strikingly reminiscent of Robert Landry's story. Dr Manette's story has in common with Landry's two things: a long, unjust incarcaration in the Bastille, and the effect of this on the

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16. Watts Phillips, The Dead Heart, London, [1858], 34.

prisoners: Landry's heart is dead.' Dr Manette, however, suffers a much more serious breakdown of the personality: Landry has no apparent difficulty in readjusting himself to normal life again - he simply thinks that he is incapable of feeling love anymore. A more obvious source for Manette's severe neurotic condition can be found in Mercier's Tableau de Paris, which Dickens, of course, gave as the source for his wicked Marquis in the first part of the book. Mercier's work is a collection of short impressionistic chapters on various aspects of Parisian life, in four volumes. The third of these volumes, I shall suggest, is the source, not only for most of the Marquis's characterisation, but for the 'recalled to life' theme, too. A sequence of six chapters in volume III seems to contain most of Mercier's contribution. One of these chapters, entitled simply 'Anecdote' is sandwiched between one on the Bastille, and two more on other prisons, and is the story of an old man, released at Louis XVI's accession to the throne, who learns that his wife has died of misery thirty years before, and that his children have gone abroad. Everything seems unreal, like a dream. In his distress, he goes to the minister who released him. He is touched, and lets him talk to an old porter, who can still talk to him of his wife and children. In the end, he makes a solitary retreat for himself in the city, and lives alone, recreating the exact conditions in which he had lived for so long in the Bastille.[17]

If we assume, as surely we must, that this story did contribute to Manette's we can say that, together with repeated references in Mercier[18] to the infamous 'lettres de cachet', we have now covered, more or less, Manette's arrest, release at the taking of the Bastille, tragic

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17. Mercier, L.S., Tableau de Paris, Amsterdam, 1782, III,172-4
18. Ibid, III,175,178 etc.

separation from his wife, the emigration of his child, and his difficulty in readjusting to life on his release. But there are other sources for this part of Dickens's story, which we can begin to see as part of a kind of montage of related material. It is here that Carlyle begins to come into the picture. Writers on the sources of the Tale have not failed to notice a striking similarity between a passage from the novel, and one from Carlyle's history:

If it had pleased GOD to put it in the hard heart of either of the brothers, in all these frightful years, to grant me any tidings of my dearest wife - so much to let me know by a word whether alive or dead - I might have thought that He had not quite abandoned them.[19]	If for my consolation Monseigneur would grant me, for the sake of God and the Most Blessed Trinity, that I could have news of my dear wife; were it only her name on a card, to show that she is alive! It were the greatest consolation I could receive; and I should for ever bless the greatness of Monseigneur.[20]

Earle Davis, in The Flint and the Flame follows Böttger and others[21] in comparing these two passages, and draws some surprising conclusions:

> Mention of the prisoner's wife suggests the existence of a child. Dickens needed the girl for whom Carton would die. What better than that she should be Doctor Manette's child, sent to England after her mother's death and her father's imprisonment, ignorant of his fate? That Darnay...should also go to England, love and marry Lucy [sic] Manette, appealed to Dickens as another dramatic source of emotion. This circumstance would set the stage for Manette's Parisian and revolutionary friends to take revenge on all the descendants of Monseigneur for his past evil deeds, and it would provide the excuse for Darnay's death sentence.[22]

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19. TTC. 315.
20. FR, I, 192.
21. Davis, E., The Flint and The Flame, London, 1964, 244. See eg Böttger, C., Dickens' Historischer Roman A Tale of Two Cities und Seine Quellen, Königsberg, 1913, 18, and Falconer, A., "The Sources of A Tale of Two Cities", MLN, XXXVI (1921), 1-10.
22. Davis, op. cit., 244.

Perhaps Mr Davis is anxious to strike fire from his flint prematurely. The idea of vengeance against the descendants of St. Evrémonde can be much more satisfactorily explained by a comparison with the Dead Heart: Landry swears vengeance against his enemy's son because he bears his father's name.[23] As for 'Dr Manette's child, sent to England after her mother's death,' Mercier's account of the old man's release from the Bastille, when he finds his wife and his children in a foreign clime seems more likely to be the source for this.

Mr Davis's conclusions about Dickens's sources illustrate, I think, the difficulty of unravelling the creative processes of any imaginative mind. Where does imagination begin to build on the foundation provided by 'source' material? What, indeed, is foundation, and what superstructure? Despite the difficulties of the problem, though, it seems clear that we ought to consider Mercier's account, when examining Dickens's imaginative processes in formulating obviously similar material in the Tale. Professor Davis prefers to credit Dickens's imagination with the parts of the plot we have just considered. His remarks on Mercier give, I think, a misleading picture of Dickens's debt to this important source. 'Actually,' he thinks, 'all Dickens got from it was an atrocity or two. Mercier provided a meticulous rendition of the years which preceded the revolution. His several-volume history covered the entire story and gave Carlyle important parts of his data. Among Mercier's facts and rumours of facts were instances of ... feudal

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23. Phillips, W., op. cit., 33-5:

Countess: My Son! (Covers her face.)
Landry: (....) You are in the right Catherine.
St Valérie is the name of your son!
Countess: (....) And -.
Landry: I have written it upon my dungeon wall!

24. Davis, op. cit., 243.

privileges...These included... the so-called droit du [sic] Seigneur.'[25] In fact, the Tableau de Paris contains no 'atrocities' in any accepted sense of the word, it is not 'a meticulou rendition of the years which preceded the revolution,' it is not a history and it does not cover the entire story. It does not mention the droit de Seigneur.

One of Professor Davis's conclusions must be discussed: that Bulwer Lytton's Zanoni was a source, indeed the only source, for Sidney Carton's substitution of himself for Darnay.[26] As Mr Dometsch points out,[27] though this is a 'plausible' theory to account for Sidney Carton's death, it does not cover, as The Dead Heart does, other elements in the story. The only things that concern us about Zanoni are its setting in the French Revolution, and its conclusion. Zanoni is gifted with ever-lasting life, on condition that he does not feel earthly passions, including that of love. He falls in love with a girl called Viola; she is sentenced to be guillotined. Zanoni knows that Robespierre is about to fall and to make up the required number substitutes himself for her, thus delaying her death by one day, by which time the reign of terror is over. Zanoni was published in 1842, and its relationship with A Tale of Two Cities, although probably impossible to determine, may well have been overstated, not only by Earle Davis but by Jack Lindsay,[28] whose theory is that it is the common source for both A Tale of Two Cities and The Dead Heart. A variant of the same theory would be that Zanoni influenced Dickens at one remove, by first influencing The Dead Heart from which Dickens got his idea. All the writers on this subject appear

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25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., 240. Mr Davis calls Zanoni the 'main inspiration for the transposition,' but since no other 'inspiration' is suggested, he must imply this.
27. See Dolmetsch, op. cit., 179.
28. Lindsay, J., Charles Dickens, London, 1950, 364-6.

to have overlooked one piece of evidence, however, a letter,[29] in which Phillips himself gave his source for this episode as the following incident from The French Revolution:

> The notable person is Lieutenant-General Loiserolles, a nobleman by birth and by nature; laying down his life here for his son. In the Prison of Saint-Lazare, the night before last, hurrying to the Grate to hear the Death-list read, he caught the name of his son. The son was asleep at the moment. "I am Loiserolles," cried the old man: at Tinville's bar, an error in the Christian name is little; small objection was made.[30]

Other sources, besides Zanoni, have been suggested for the substitution episode,[31] without any evidence that Dickens had any contact with them. We have such evidence for The Dead Heart, and for The French Revolution, and none of the other suggested stories (unlike these two) seem to have any similarity beyond that of the substitution. It seems very likely that Dickens got this idea from Carlyle, either directly, or by the agency of Watts Phillips. We know that Dickens had an intimate knowledge of the text of The French Revolution, and a probable acquaintance with that of The Dead Heart: it is unlikely that the letter from Webster (who was a friend of Dickens's and therefore unlikely to lie), in which he claimed that The Dead Heart had been read to Dickens, was actually a forgery, and the combination of the two ideas, of the substitution and the 'recalled

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29. Phillips, H.W., op. cit., 44. To Fred Jones:

> My only borrowing was from an incident related in Carlyle's history... in which an old man, the Marquis de something, answers to the roll-call in place of his son (who is asleep) and takes his place in the tumbril.
> (Original emphasis).

30. FR, II, 423.
31. See Coleman, J., op. cit., for other suggestions.

to life' theme, was a very unusual one. If there is any evidence to suggest Dickens's definite knowledge of Zanoni or other stories about the Revolution it has not been brought forward. Further, the candidacy of Carlyle here is significantly strengthened by the proximity, in the text of The French Revolution, of the passage I have quoted, to other material in Carlyle's history which, as I shall show, seems almost certain to have been in Dickens's mind.[32]

So far I have suggested that Dr Manette's story may have been influenced by the Anecdote from Mercier, by the passages I have quoted from The French Revolution, and by Robert Landry's seventeen-year incarceration in The Dead Heart. Perhaps there are other possible sources to be considered. One of these is, again, from Mercier. In Book III of the Tableau de Paris, there is a continuous sequence of six chapters, the titles of which run as follows:

Servante Mal Pendue
Bastille
Anecdote
Maisons de Force
Dépôts ou Renfermeries
Vie d'un Homme en Place.

The last of these chapters provides, I hope to show, some of Dickens's material for the wicked Marquis. I have already described the third chapter mentioned above. The second, fourth and fifth, are descriptions of different prisons, which may well have nurtured Dickens's ideas for Manette's incarceration. For instance, the 'Tour de Vincennes,' Mercier

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32. See pp 181-3 below.

says 'renferme encore des prisonniers d'état qui paraissent devoir y finir leurs tristes jours,'[33] recalling, perhaps, Dr Manette's 'North Tower.'

The chapter entitled 'Servante mal pendue' is very reminiscent of the lurid narration of Manette's hidden document, and fits in, too, with his own return to life. It concerns a young peasant girl who goes into service with a rich and corrupt bourgeois, who is much taken by her charms. She resists his advances and in revenge he hides some of his property among her effects, and accuses her of theft. She is tried, condemned and hanged. But the hangman, being only an apprentice, does his job badly, and a surgeon who has bought the 'corpse' for dissecting, discovers that the girl is still alive, and nurses her back to health.[34] This story has in common with Manette's the idea of the sexual desire for a servant of her master, and his retaliation when foiled in his lustful designs. It also suggests the idea of resurrection,[35] a theme not only of Manette's story, but of Carton's. Mercier uses an interesting and (perhaps) significant phrase in his description of the return to life of the servant girl: 'ses soins pour la rappeler à la vie ne furent pas inutiles.'[36] For someone of Dickens's obviously moderate attainments in the French language it would be natural to translate 'rappeller à la vie' as 'to recall to life.' It is this kind of over-literal translation that Sir James FitzJames Stephens criticised in the Saturday Review, in the dialogue of the French characters of the Tale; here is another example of exactly the same kind of direct linguistic transposition.

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33. Mercier, op cit., III, 170.
34. Ibid., III, 167-8.
35. An idea which is emphasised by the end of the story: on recovering, the girl, thinking she is dead, mistakes a priest who has been brought to her bedside for the Deity, and exclaims 'Pere eternel vous savez mon innocence, ayez pitié de moi.' Mercier, op. cit., III, 168.
36. Ibid.

'Recalled to Life' is, of course, the title of the first section of Dickens's novel.

To the Dr Manette story, The French Revolution acts as general background (the 'lettres de cachet' are frequently mentioned by Carlyle, as inevitably by other writers on this period of French history) and as the probable source for several important ideas. I have mentioned the very close textual parallel between the passage in Manette's document about his wife, and a similar one from The French Revolution. The document itself, which, of course, is the evidence that finally condemns Darnay to the guillotine, is discovered in Manette's cell where it is secreted 'in the wall of the chimney, where I have slowly and laboriously made a place of concealment for it.'[37] The evidence which finally condemned Louis XVI was a collection of secret letters which were hidden in a wall by Louis and a locksmith who, says Carlyle, 'fabricated an "Iron Press, Armoire de Fer," cunningly inserting the same in a wall of the royal chamber in the Tuileries; invisible under the wainscot ...'; the locksmith, 'attended by the proper Authorities,... discloses the Iron Press - full of Letters and Papers! Roland clutches them out; conveys them...to the fit assiduous Committee, which sits hard by.'[38]

The association between Louis and the locksmith, one Gamain, is an interesting one for us. Perhaps the most brilliant part of Dickens's depiction of the deep-rooted neurosis implanted in Manette by his imprisonment, is in his use of the 'stage prop' which conveys to us that he is regressing to his former state. The obsessional activity that has been Manette's refuge during the long years in the Bastille is that of a

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37. TTC, 303.
38. FR, II, 241.

shoe-maker; when Manette receives a severe emotional shock long after his release, he returns to his last as if his release had never taken place. This is something like the story in Mercier of the old man who on his release from the Bastille recreates in a small room the conditions of his cell. But the use of an obsessional activity as an escape from painful realities may well have grown from a germ in The French Revolution. Louis XVI, as the situation around him grew more and more complex and beyond his grasp, would often disappear and, in seclusion from the world, lose himself in the pretence that he was a locksmith. Louis learned his trade from the locksmith Gamain, who, as Carlyle tells us, finally betrayed his hiding place for secret documents.[39] The combination of the idea of documents hidden in a wall with that of an activity giving release from the world is present in both cases, and is, surely, unusual enough to justify an assumption that either Carlyle or (less probably) some other writer on the French revolution is influencing Dickens here.[40]

Whether Dickens was thinking directly, or indirectly, via Phillips, of Carlyle's account of Loiserolles' substitution of himself for his son, probably does not matter.[41] But that there was, at some stage, a direct reference to Carlyle's account of this episode, seems likely. In the same chapter of The French Revolution, some two pages later, a passage occurs, describing the last ride of Robespierre, and this is almost certainly the source for Carton's final journey:

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39. Ibid., 240.
40. Carlyle's own source for Louis' betrayal seems to be the Histoire Parlementaire (see FR, II, 241n).
41. I am, of course, assuming the correctness of my suggestion that Phillips and Carlyle are very much more likely sources than Zanoni and other suggested material.

There is a guard of sundry horsemen riding abreast of the tumbrils, and faces are often turned up to some of them....The horsemen abreast of [the third cart] frequently point out one man in it with their swords. The leading curiosity is, to know which is he.... Here and there in the long street of St Honoré, cries are raised against him.[42]	All eyes are on Robespierre's Tumbril....The Gendarmes point their swords at him, to show the people which is he.[43]
	His poor landlord, the Cabinet-maker in the Rue Saint-Honoré, loved him ...[44]

Three more details from Carton's progress to the guillotine are probably from Carlyle. During Madame Roland's imprisonment Carlyle says, she calls 'the beheaded Twenty-two [Girondin députés] "Nos amis, our Friends," - whom we are soon to follow.'[45] The seamstress, whom Carton follows is the twenty-second victim that day: 'she goes next before him - is gone; the knitting-women count Twenty-Two.'[46] Madame Roland herself, on her way to the guillotine, comforted a fellow-sufferer, as Carton does the young girl.[47] Carlyle's description of Madame Roland's death almost certainly triggered off the train of thought which gave us Carton's final speech, and perhaps one of the most memorable and universally-known sentences in English Literature. 'Biography', says Carlyle, 'will long remember that trait of asking for a pen "to write the strange thoughts that were rising in here." It is a little light-beam, shedding softness, and a kind of scredness, over all that preceded: so in her too there was an

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42. TTC, 354.
43. FR, II, 425.
44. Ibid., 426.
45. Ibid., 355.
46. TTC, 357.
47. FR, II, 355, and TTC, 356-357.

Unnamable: she too was a Daughter of the Infinite; there were mysteries which Philosophism had not dreamt of!'[48] Carton's final utterance, evidently, fulfils this kind of function; it is clearly meant to shed 'a kind of sacredness over all that proceeded.' This page of Carlyle's history is a memorable one, for Dickens or anyone else, and contains Madame Roland's famous utterance, 'O Liberty, what things are done in thy name!' Any doubts as to whether or not Dickens is thinking of Madame Roland are removed by him:

> One of the most remarkable sufferers by the same axe - a woman - had asked at the foot of the same scaffold, not long before, to be allowed to write down the thoughts that were inspiring her. If he had given an utterance to his, and they were prophetic, they would have been these:[49]

Carton's famous last words follow.

When we transfer our attention from the private to the public drama of A Tale of Two Cities, from Dr Manette and Sidney Carton to the storming of the Bastille and the September Massacres, the undeclared scholarly strife, evident in discussions of the novel's plot, is conspicuous by its absence. After paying due regard to Mercier's Tableau de Paris, and, perhaps, to Rousseau, most scholars concerned with A Tale of Two Cities are almost unanimous in their assumption that it is to The French Revolution that Dickens went for his historical background material. His admiration for Carlyle's masterpiece is well known. According to Froude (though his statement is probably not a first hand one, and not to be completely relied on) he carried a copy of it everywhere with him when the book first

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48. FR, II, 355.
49. TTC, 357.

appeared in 1837;[50] by 1851 he claimed to have read it five hundred times.[51] There has been little attempt that I am aware of, to take the search any further than the sources that Dickens himself mentions, in a letter to Forster, and in the preface of A Tale of Two Cities.[52]

Some critics go no further than Carlyle. The French Revolution is 'La source historique essentielle du tale.[53] According to Chesterton Dickens 'read nothing about the French Revolution at all except for Carlyle.'[54]

Some critics make a further, related point, again inspired by Dickens's preface with its reference to the 'philosophy' of The French Revolution: Carlyle's book gives Dickens, not only his historical facts, but his theory of history too. This obviously is a more important proposition. 'La Thèse du Romancier,' asserts Professor Monod, 'est toute entière contenue dans l'ouvrage de Carlyle...'[55] Curt Büttger says very much the same thing: A Tale of Two Cities is 'in seiner Revolutions-handlung eine Popularisierung der Carlyle'schen Ideenwelt.'[56]

We have, therefore, two related but separable conclusions to examine; that Dickens's historical material comes substantially from Carlyle, and that the 'philosophy' (the word is Dickens's own, so we may as well continue to use it) of A Tale of Two Cities comes from The French Revolution. The implications of the second proposal are obviously more important than those of the first. Dickens's acquaintance with

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50. Froude, Life in London, op. cit., I, 93.
51. Forster, op, cit., 505.
52. See Büttger, op. cit., 505.
53. Monod, op. cit., 502.
54. Chesterton, G.K., Appreciations and Criticisms of the Works of Charles Dickens, London, 1911, 193.
55. Monod, op. cit., 425.
56. Büttger, op. cit., 45.

The French Revolution may have already stretched over more than twenty years. Certainly, he knew it intimately by 1850. If he accepted its historical thesis (which is fundamental to Carlyle's philosophy of life) in 1859, why should he not have done so long before this date? On the other hand, if there is no relationship or only a marginal one between the 'Philosophy' of the two books, this will be a valuable indication, given Dickens's known admiration for and intimate knowledge of The French Revolution, of the limits inside which Dickens's mind was really susceptible to the essence, the intellectual and spiritual base, of Carlyle's teaching, rather than simply its localised conclusions.

Our answer to the first question (that of the source of Dickens's historical incident) will help us to decide the second - whether or not there is really a correspondence between the temper of mind that is represented by The French Revolution, and that which is revealed in A Tale of Two Cities. If Dickens did depend on Carlyle for material, what parts of the Tale are most clearly affected? If other sources are involved, are these used for scenes and incidents which were essential for Dickens's purpose, but for which suitable material simply does not exist in The French Revolution? The answer to this question tells us again much that we have already noted in other contexts about the relationship between the two minds.

The clearest correspondence between the two books is in the material dealing with the outbreak and the progress of the Revolution. The picture of France before the revolution, nevertheless, owes some telling details to Carlyle. The gallows, for instance, from which the Marquis's assassin is hanged, is forty feet high,[57] Carlyle relates that two members

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57. TTC, 163.

of a crowd that had marched to Versailles in 1775 with a petition of grievances were hanged on a 'new gallows forty feet high.'[58] The forty foot gallows becomes a Carlylean symbol (reiterated so constantly that Dickens could hardly have missed it) for the failure of France's rulers to understand the needs of the people.

But, on the whole, Dickens does not draw on Carlyle for the substance of his material until his description in Book II Chapter xxi of the taking of the Bastille. Up to this point in time, his borrowings are confined to unrelated details. The names of his conspirators, for example, Jacques One, Jacques Two, and so on, may come from Carlyle's references to 'Jacqueries, meal-mobs; low-whimpering of infinite moan; unheeded of the earth; not unheeded of Heaven;'[59] though 'Jacqueries' is not an exclusively Carlylean term. But Dickens needs more than this kind of thing for his purpose. The theory of history (if the phrase isn't too ponderous to describe what is involved here) that Dickens illustrates in the Tale is simple enough, and he sums it up for us in his final chapter:

> Crush humanity out of shape once more, under similar hammers, and it will twist itself into the same tortured forms. Sow the same seed of rapacious licence and oppression over again, and it will surely yield the same fruit according to its kind.[60]

Dickens had come to this conclusion about the meaning of the French revolution at least ten years before he wrote these words. Replying in 1848, in The Examiner, to a heavy statement from the Bench (designed to confound the Chartists) that 'previous to the Revolution in France, of 1790, the physical comforts possessed by the poor greatly exceeded those

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58. FR, I, 35, 38.
59. FR, I, 53.
60. TTC, 352.

possessed by them subsequent to that event,' Dickens summarised what he took to be the meaning of the revolution:

> It was a struggle on the part of the people for social recognition and existence. It was a struggle for vengeance against intolerable oppression. It was a struggle for the overthrow for a system of of oppression, which in its contempt of all humanity, decency, and natural rights, and in its systematic degradation of the people, had trained them to be the demons that they showed themselves, when they rose up and cast it down for ever.[61a]

This is substantially the 'philosophy' of A Tale of Two Cities. The idea is elementary enough, and of course Carlyle makes something like the same point (as he can scarcely avoid doing) in The French Revolution, both implicitly, and occasionally, explicitly. 'Horrible, in Lands that had known equal justice!' he says, of the death of Berthier:

> Not so unnatural in Lands that had never known it. 'Le sang qui coule, est-il donc si pur?' asks Barnave; intimating that the Gallows, though by irregular methods, has its own.[62]

But the Dickensian phrase 'rapacious licence and oppression' suggests a vital distinction: pre-revolutionary France is obnoxious to Carlyle, not so much because it is oppressive, as because it is unreal; its crimes have to do, not in the first place with lack of humanity, but with lack of truth. For Carlyle the French Revolution is 'the End of the Dominion of IMPOSTURE (which is Darkness and opaque Fire-damp); and the burning up, with unquenchable fire, of all the Gigs that are in the Earth;'[63] as its historian, Carlyle sees his function as 'a kind of sacred one ;' for all its

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61a. MP, 133.
62. FR, I, 201.
63. FR, II, 461.

horrors, the French Revolution is an almost divine explosion of Truth in a dark and false world, and his relation of it is almost that of a priest relating God's word: 'for whatsoever once sacred things become hollow jargons, yet while the Voice of Man speaks with Man, hast thou not there the living fountain out of which all sacrednesses sprang, and will yet spring?'[64] Carlyle's French Revolution is the shattering of a crust of falsehood on top of a volcano of truth. That of Dickens is an illustration of the idea that one form of evil and cruelty will, in its turn, produce another. The later Wordsworth could exclaim of Carlyle's history,

> Portentous change! When History can appear
> As the cool Advocate of foul device....
> Hath it not long been said the wrath of Man
> Works not the righteousness of God? Oh bend,
> Bend, ye Perverse! to judgements from on High...[65]

There was never any danger of accusing Dickens of this kind of sympathy with the revolution. Oppressed the members of the Paris mob may have been, but once they are in full cry, Dickens can see only 'their frenzied eyes; - eyes which any unbrutalised beholder would have given twenty years of life, to petrify with a well-directed gun.'[66] 'That "well-directed" ', suggests John Gross, 'has the true ring of outraged, rate-paying respectability, while the image seems oddly out of place in a book which has laid so much stress on the stony faces and petrified hearts of the aristocracy.'[67] Nevertheless, there is one important way in which Carlyle's and Dickens's ideas about the French Revolution have been seen to converge. Dickens gave what can been seen as a summary of the Tale's philosophy in an article for Household Words, in which he described (a

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64. Ibid,
65. Wordsworth, W., Ed. de Selincourt, E., and Darbishire, H., Poetical Works, Oxford, 1947, 130.
66. TTC, 249.
67. Gross, J., in Dickens and the Twentieth Century, Ed. Gross J., and Pearson, G., London, 1962, 192.

useful situation for him on more than one occasion) a train conversation with a suitably reactionary passenger:

> Monied Interest and I re-entering the carriage first, and being there alone, he intimates to me that the French are "no go" as a Nation. I ask why? He says, that Reign of Terror of theirs was quite enough. I ventured to inquire whether he remembers anything that preceded said Reign of Terror? He says not particularly. "Because", I remarked, "the harvest that is reaped, has sometimes been sown." Monied Interest repeats, as quite enough for him, that the French are revolutionary, - "and always at it."[68]

I have suggested that Dickens's ideas of historical causality and Carlyle's ought to be distinguished. As I have pointed out, other commentators have not made this distinction. The book's most insistent theme, says Professor Fielding 'was the same as that of the French Revolution: that certain conditions must always lead to anarchy and anarchy destroys itself...'[69] Professor Fielding advances a slightly different proposition, when he suggests that, in the Tale, 'the doctrine of determinism was derived from Carlyle...'[70] The first part of the novel, certainly, is heavy with hints of historical fatality, with ironic symbols of the ensuing upheaval; the most obvious is the spilt wine-barrel, which gives the opportunity for some (surely not very impressive) intimations of historical inevitability:

> The wine was red wine, and has stained the ground of the narrow street in the suburb of Saint Antoine, in Paris, where it was spilled.... Those who had been greedy with the staves of the cask, had acquired a tigerish smear about the mouth; and one tall joker so besmirched, his head more out of a long squalid bag of a night-cap than in it, scrawled upon a wall with his finger dipped in muddy

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68. RP, 477.
69. Fielding, op. cit., 199.
70. Ibid.

wine-lees - BLOOD.

The time was to come, when that wine too would be spilled on the street-stones, and when the stain of it would be red upon many there.[71]

Carlyle, too, certainly, can frequently be seen in the early part of The French Revolution to foreshadow the tragedy to come with ironic prophetic references to the future, and this can be seen to underline his own view of historical causality, which he expresses in metaphors sometimes strikingly reminiscent of Dickens's:

> How often must we say... The seed that is sown, it will spring! Given the summer's blossoming, than there is also given the autumnal withering: So is it ordered not with seedfields only, but with transactions, arrangements...French Revolutions...The Beginning holds in it the End...as the acorn does the oak...[72]

But this does not show that Carlyle believed in historical inevitability; nor, even, does his discernment of a process which he describes as "an endless Necessity environing Free-will": this quotation is taken by Dr Goldberg to show that Carlyle was a fatalist, who believed that the process of the revolution was already determined before it started.[73] I disagree: it shows, on the contrary, the importance for Carlyle of individual moral self-realisation, which for him meant, among other things, an understanding of oneself and of one's necessary environment, and the achievement of a proper relationship between the two, between necessity and the capability of the individual. The result is positive action, not the acceptance of fatality. As he puts it in Sartor, 'Not what I Have... but what I Do is my Kingdom. To each is given a certain inward

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71. TTC, 28.
72. FR, I, 377.
73. Goldberg, op. cit., 222.

Talent, a certain outward Environment of Fortune; to each, by wisest combination of these two, a certain maximum of Capability.... Always too the new man is in a new time, under new conditions; his course can be the fac-simile of no prior one, but is by its nature original. And then how seldom will the outward Capability fit the inward...[74]' This, I think, is what Carlyle means by 'Necessity environing Freewill;' as Dr Hedva Ben-Israel points out, Carlyle was quite opposed to the deterministic ideas on the French Revolution of Thiers; such a historical viewpoint inevitably reduced the moral responsibility of the individual actors in the drama, by emphasising the fatality of events. Given Carlyle's view of history, and his belief in the shaping power of heroic individuals, it was impossible for him to believe in historical determinism, except in such a heavily qualified form as to make the word meaningless. It was, as he wrote ironically to Mill, 'a wonderful system of ethics...every hero turns out to be perfectly justified in doing whatsoever he succeeded in doing.'[75] Broadly, Carlyle shows the French Revolution as something, inevitable in itself (this is as far as his 'determinism' takes him), but which could have been avoided in the form it finally took by individual action: hence the importance he attaches to the untimely death of Mirabeau, one of the great heroes of his history. Dickens, on the other hand, does place a great deal more emphasis on the relentless march of events, and nowhere does he suggest that the Revolution, or even the Terror, were avoidable; he heavily implies, rather, that they were fated to happen. Dickens may well owe more to Thiers than to Carlyle for this part of his 'philosophy.' Thiers was a notable exponent of inevitability, and Dickens certainly knew his History of the French Revolution; in his Examiner article of 1848 he gave the following quotation from it (rather, significantly, than one from Carlyle's History) to demonstrate the state

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74. SR, 92-3.
75. Ben-Israel, H., English Historians on the French Revolution, Cambridge 1968, 134, and Carlyle, Letters to Mill Etc., Ed. cit., 33-4, 12 Jan., 1833.

of France before the Revolution:

> All...was monopolised by a few hands, and the burdens bore upon a single class. The nobility and the clergy possessed nearly two-thirds of the landed property. The other third, belonging to the people, paid taxes to the King, a multitude of feudal dues to the nobility, the tithe to the clergy, and was, moreover, liable to the devastations of noble sportsmen and their game. The taxes on consumption weighed heavily on the great mass, and consequently on the people. The mode in which they were levied was vexatious. The gentry might be in arrear with impunity; the people, on the other hand, ill-treated and imprisoned, were doomed to suffer in body, in default of goods. They defended with their blood the upper classes of society, without being able to subsist themselves.[76]

Thiers was certainly known in England as an apostle of determinism, and T.W. Redhead, one of his English translators, found it necessary to defend him, in 1845, against the critism brought on by 'the view of inevitability, or fatalism, which he inclines to take of many of the atrocities committed during the revolution;'[77] nevertheless, thought Redhead, 'this is an opinion daily gaining ground...'[78] Dickens had no need to get his 'fatalism' from Carlyle, since he knew Thiers from Schoberl's English translation of 1838, from which comes the above quotation.[79] (as I shall suggest, Thiers may also have supplied some of

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76. MP, 132.
77. Redhead, T.W., trans., Thiers, M.A., History of the French Revolution, London, 1845, viii.
78. Ibid.
79. Schoberl, F., trans., Thiers, M.A., History of the French Revolution, London, 1838, I, 20. We can identify Dickens's quotation, despite minor modifications, as almost certainly coming from Schoberl's translation. A comparison with Redhead's translation, for instance, shows how very differently the same passage was capable of being translated. In Dickens's quotation for obvious reasons, the word 'therefore' is omitted from the first sentence ('All was therefore monopolised by a few hands, etc') and his final sentence is slightly different from Schoberl's which reads 'It subsisted therefore by the sweat of the brow; (Dickens omits this part of the sentence) it defended with its blood the upper classes of society, without being able to subsist itself.' The rest is identical.

the Tale's background historical material. Furthermore, if he did derive his not very subtle ideas of 'determinism' (which, in any case, are behind some of the most tiresome and ineffective passages of the book) from Carlyle, it was through a serious misinterpretation of his purpose. This cannot be ruled out, of course; Dickens, as it is one of the purposes of this thesis to suggest, was quite capable of misinterpreting Carlyle.

Another suggestion about the 'philosophy' of A Tale of Two Cities must be considered. Dr Goldberg suggests that Dickens's ambiguous mixture of sympathy and revulsion for the mob reflected 'an equivocal position, very similar to Carlyle's,'[80] sympathy for the grievances of the revolutionaries being, presumably, an uncommon attitude, and that Carlyle's own view of the Revolution as an event with valid causes 'contradicted what had been the prevailing English view, which was essentially Tory.' This is very far from accurate. There had always been two alternative English traditions of thought about the Revolution, one traceable back to Burke, the other to a school of thought whose main spokesman was Fox. 'It was mainly Fox's attitude which was to become common in England. It grew from pre-revolutionary English principles and not from the Revolution itself, and it was unhistorical in denying anything new in the principles of the French Revolution. When Burke spoke of anarchy in France, Fox replied by balancing the crimes against past sufferings and future benefits.'[81] More recently, the first Revolution had regained topicality, because of the July Revolution of 1830, and the debate on democracy which preceded the Reform Bill of 1832. The two views were now widely reiterated, in support of the bill and in opposition to it. The mildness of the 1830 uprising was compared with the wildness of the first Revolution, and

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80. Goldberg, op. cit., 195.
81. Ben-Israel, op, cit., 8.

interpreted by radicals as a good omen for reform in England: reform, it was held, did not necessarily lead to violent upheavals. 'The apologetic argument that the blame for the violence lay with the example and brutalising effect of the old régime greatly gained force. It was said that the violence of a revolution is in proportion to the misrule which preceded it...'.[82] Dickens, of course, was a parliamentary reporter when the Reform Bill was passed, having begun work in the press gallery of the House of Commons the year before, as a writer for the True Sun. He was therefore likely to have been intimately in touch with the arguments for and against the Bill, both from his possible knowledge of the debates in the House, and, perhaps, from lobby-correspondents' talk. Furthermore, he was at the time (he was 20 in 1832) a radical in the making, and therefore perhaps, likely to support a radical interpretation of the first French Revolution.

Though Dickens certainly sympathised with those radicals who held that the French Revolution was justified, there is a further complication in his attitude to note. Underlying Dickens's historical theme, both before and after his description of the 'general overthrow' is a characteristic reaction, which was probably more deep-rooted in his emotions than any of the historical theories he may have supported as approximating to his own feelings: sympathy with the underdog. It is difficult to believe, that in his picture of imprisoned aristocrats, he is talking about the same class of which the Marquis is intended to be the type; what before was seen as the dead formalism of cruel aristocrats is now transformed into culture confronting anarchy; Darnay is shown into a vaulted chamber crowded with imprisoned aristocrats: he is

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82. Ibid., 98-9.

astonished by their 'rising to receive him, with every refinement of manner known to the time, and with all the engaging graces and courtesies of life.'[83] Dickens's thesis depends equally on the brutality of those in control of France before and after the Revolution. He needs to show that, if the Paris mob was guilty of brutality and oppression, so too were the aristocratic rulers of France, and in equal measure. It is on this point that those who criticised Dickens's historical accuracy fixed. Sir James FitzJames Stephen, in The Saturday Review, accepted with qualifications Dickens's theory, pointing out however, that 'it is such a very elementary truth that, unless a man had something new to say about it, it is hardly worth mentioning...'. What is discreditable about the novel, says Stephen, is that Dickens supports his thesis 'by specific assertions which, if not absolutely false, are at any rate so selective as to convey an entirely false impression...: [the story of] the wicked Marquis who violates one of his serfs and muders another, is a grossly unfair representation of the state of society in France in the middle of the eighteenth century.... the sort of atrocities which Mr Dickens depicts as characteristic of the eighteenth century were neither safe nor common in the fourteenth.'[84] A modern French critic agrees. Quoting Dickens's Marquis ('Repression is the only lasting philosophy. The dark deference of fear and slavery... will keep the dogs obedient to the whip...'[85]) Professor Monod comments that 'il est fort possible que de tels propos aient été tenus dans la realité, mais ils ne representent sans doute qu'un cas extrême et non la monnaie courante du style des nobles comme Dickens le donnerait volontiers à penser.'[86]

Obviously, the Marquis, and Dickens's whole picture of France before the revolution, cannot be taken seriously if we are looking for insight into

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83. TTC, 242.
84. In The Dickens Critics, Ed. Ford., G.H., and Lane, L., New Yord, 1961, 44-6.
85. TTC, 116.
86. Monod, op. cit., 425.

what was involved, either in the first French Revolution itself, or in any other revolutionary situation that Dickens, writing in 1859, could have drawn on. His attitude to history, here as elsewhere, involves little more than an unelaborated jibe at 'The wisdom of our ancestors.' We are dealing with a novelist, and not with an historian, and this might not be thought entirely relevant to a judgement on a work of fiction. But Dickens himself accepted this historical standard of judgement, and defended himself against criticisms of the novel's inaccuracy, not by claiming poetic licence, but by asserting that his picture of the Marquis was historically valid, and, leading with his chin, gave his sources:

> No later inquiries or provings by figures will hold water against the tremendous testimony of men living at the time. There is a curious book printed at Amsterdam, written to make out no case whatever, and tiresome enough in its literal dictionary-like minuteness; scattered up and down the pages of which is full authority for my marquis. This is Mercier's Tableau de Paris.[87]

Mercier, Dickens implies, is not only impartial, but accurate. His defence, moreover, suggests not simply that there were people like the Marquis in existence, but that they were typical enough for a composite portrait of such a type to be adequate to convey the debility of French society before 1789.

An examination of the 'scattered' material from Mercier that, more or less obviously, provided Dickens with many of his notions about pre-revolutionary France, can either be seen as an example of how disparate material can be taken out of context, slightly exaggerated or misinterpreted, and assembled to prove a prejudged hypothesis, or it can be seen as a

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87. My emphasis. Forster, op. cit., 731.

fascinating example of how an imagination like Dickens's can digest material, select it, imaginatively transform it, and fuse it with embryonic notions drawn from other sources, already waiting for fertilisation. It would be encouraging if one could add that in so doing one was anatomising a summit of literary achievement. The movements of Dickens's imagination may be interesting to perceive here (however dimly) but few critics would contend that the scenes showing his wicked Marquis (including his appearance as a young man, in Dr Mannette's hidden manuscript) show Dickens's creative powers working at full stretch.

The Marquis and his environment seem to be suggested in Mercier by two kinds of material. The first kind is general comment on the state of society. The aristocracy think only of their own luxuries, says Mercier; 'Ils aiment mieux nourrir des chevaux que des hommes....s'ils obéissent à quelque caprice ruineux, ce caprice est toujours petit, obscur, et extravagant.'[88] The aristocracy are cruel, but in an indirect way: 'Les impitoyables voluptés des riches, avec leurs arts de sensualité et de frivolité, immolent des generations à un luxe fou et cruel.'[89] This is not the kind of cruelty that Dickens is interested in. The Marquis shows his colours in several ways. He runs over a child in his carriage, making it clear that he would quite like to destroy the whole crowd while he is about it; he seduces a female serf and murders her and her brother, and has Dr Manette sent to the Bastille by a <u>lettre de cachet</u>.

The mechanism of the <u>lettre de cachet</u> might well have come from Mercier,

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88. Mercier, op. cit., I, 101.
89. Ibid., II, 100.

who has many scattered references to them, (some of which I have already discussed): 'Une Lettre de cachet enlève, transporte un homme dans un cachot, et l'y laisse pourrir le reste de ses jours.'[90] I have already suggested that Dr Manette's imprisonment and its effect on him can be traced to both Mercier and to Carlyle. The seduction and murder story is a more difficult proposition, if we are looking for an aristocratic culprit (as Dickens's letter suggests that we should). The source for this is probably the curious incident that I have already discussed, of the servant girl who, resisting the advances of her lecherous master, is in revenge falsely accused of theft, incompletely hanged, and 'recalled to life' by a doctor who has bought her body for dissection. This has in common with Dickens's story the attempted seduction of a servant girl, her resistance, her 'death' as a consequence, and an attempt by a doctor (in this case successful) to save her. But Mercier recounts the story as a piece of unrelated tittle-tattle, and not for any social significance it might have, and the girl is not in any case the victim of an aristocrat, of the 'droit de seigneur', but of a rich bourgeois.[91] Mercier, in any case, is not interested in a root and branch attack on his society, and takes care to point out, for instance, that violent punishments are no longer inflicted in the Bastille, by a government which is 'aujourd'hui plus doux et plus humain qu'il ne l'a jamais été depuis la mort de Henri IV.'[92]

The decadence and luxuriousness of the Marquis and his world is conveyed in the scene in which he waits in the ante-chamber of the all-powerful 'Monseigneur'. Much of the material for this scene almost certainly comes from a chapter entitled 'Vie d'un homme en place' in which Mercier describes the life of a minister. He rises in the morning and his

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90. Ibid., III, 177.
91. Ibid., III, 167-9.
92. Ibid., III, 171.

ante-chamber is already full of petitioners. 'Il songe toute sa vie, non au devoir de sa place, mais a rester en place.' The valet de chambre of such a man is well-paid and himself has a valet, who in turn has another under his orders. It is a fourth who cleans the clothes and prepares the wig of Monseigneur: the chief valet receives it from this fourth hand, 'il ne fait que la poser sur la tete ministerielle...'. This, perhaps, suggested to Dickens his four flunkeys bearing Monseigneur's chocolate. The Marquis's fall from favour and the way in which this is manifested at 'Monseigneur's' levée seems to be suggested in the same chapter: 'Monseigneur est tout puissant a onze heures du matin; ils donne audience et son sallon est rempli. D'un coup d'oeil il distribue la faveur. Heureux ceux qu'il a regardé!' Suddenly he falls from power and all his sycophants desert him.[93]

It is on the Marquis's cruelty that Dickens (still judging by standards of strict historical plausibility) is on uncertain ground. The scene, for instance, in which a child is killed by the Marquis, shows the depths of villainy of which he is really capable. The germ for this incident is a chapter in Mercier on the recklesness of all coach drivers in Paris: 'Le Medecin en habit noir, le maitre à danser dans un cabriolet, le maitre en fait d'armes dans un diable et le prince;' all, complains Mercier, drive as though they were in open country. Carriages and cavalcades cause many accidents. People are often hurt, and compensation is given according to a set tariff for the various parts of the body injured.[94] Obviously, this does <u>not</u> imply that the aristocracy, or even the well-to-do, are cruel and oppressive in quite the way that Dickens's use of this material suggests.

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93. Ibid., III, 178-80.
94. Ibid., I, 30-40.

Mercier, nevertheless, suggests a kind of cruelty, that involved in a materialist society's unawareness of human needs: How terrible, he says, to 'préférer une piece d'or à la vie de son frère, de son semblable'[95] (a phrase which, out of context, seems to fit well into Dickens's interpretation of the carelessness of coach drivers in Paris). This is obviously not Mercier's thesis, but a change of emphasis together with a good deal of lurid local colour (the dints in the Marquis's nose, his intemperate and purely imaginary political philosophy, and so on) gives Dickens his historical slant.

Little of Dickens's pre-revolutionary material, as I have suggested, comes from Carlyle. If the two writers were concerned with illustrating similar historical notions, we might expect that Carlyle would be a natural source, not only for scenes of the revolution, but also for descriptions of the oppression that produced it. Perhaps one might surmise that Dickens looked for suitable material in The French Revolution but looked in vain; there is, of course, scattered evidence in Carlyle's work of aristocratic cruelty. But this is not the bee in Carlyle's bonnet and cruelty for him is only an incidental by-product of a much deeper evil: unreality. Carlyle's description of the hanging of two members of a bread mob from a gallows forty foot high compared with Dickens's use of the same fragment of data, indicates neatly the extent of the chasm between them. In Carlyle we see a failure of understanding of the part of King and court, an unawareness of historical reality; in Dickens we see naked oppression, 'the wisdom of our ancestors.'

Dickens's evocation of the revolution begins more than half way through A Tale of Two Cities, in Book II Chapter xxi, when we find ourselves

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95. Ibid., I, 102.

in medias rebus at the taking of the Bastille and we are plunged, not simply into the revolution in France, but into Carlyle's recreation of it; we are here, without any doubt, in the world of The French Revolution. Page after page recalls Carlyle's situations and imagery so vividly that we can say with near certainty that Dickens either knew the relevant passages in Carlyle's history almost by heart, or that he actually had his copy open before him as he wrote.

The first chapter and a half (i.e. the remainder of Chapter xxi and the whole of Chapter xxii) of Dickens's French Revolution describes the following sequence of events which I shall number for purposes of closer examination: (1) the arming of the crowd; (2) the seige of the Bastille and its fall; (3) the search for Dr Manette's document by Defarge; (4) the murder of the Bastille governor and of a soldier by the crowd; (5) the release of seven prisoners and the parade of seven heads through the streets; and (6) the discovery and massacre of old Foulon and then of his son-in-law. All these events have their close equivalent in The French Revolution, and with the exception of one episode (the search for Manette's document) occur in this sequence. The whole cycle of events, with this exception, unfolds in Dickens almost exactly as it does in Carlyle, with one important qualification; Dickens omits any reference to the political background of the events he describes: he is not interested in the historical assessments that can be seen as part of the fibre even of Carlyle's most fevered descriptions. Dickens is interested in sustaining the tension of his narrative; hence, the week of political manoeuvres (related by Carlyle) which actually separated the fall of the Bastille and the massacre of Foulon, are omitted.

These two chapters, as I have suggested, can be seen as a sequence of

six events, all of which have Carlyle as their principal and (with one exception) probably their only source. Since short quotations, from both Dickens and Carlyle, give an inadequate idea of what is involved, I shall place extracts from the two texts side by side.

(1). The arming of the mob.

The mob, according to Carlyle, armed itself with weapons from the cellars of the Hotel des Invalides. Hence perhaps, in Dickens's account, 'every weapon or semblance of a weapon that was thrown up from the depths below.' Common to both descriptions is the fervour of the mob's desire for arms, in Carlyle's words,'more ravenous than famishing lions over dead prey'; and the general visual effect of Dickens's crowd, in its 'clutching' movement (both descriptions use the word), and its contrast of light and dark, of the 'frequent gleams of light' over the 'vast dusky mass' of the mob, recalls Carlyle's crowd, with its contrast (also involving fire-arms) of 'darkness' and 'fiery light'. 'Saint Antoine', of course, is Carlyle's as well as Dickens's personification of the mob:

continued .....

A TALE OF TWO CITIES	THE FRENCH REVOLUTION
Saint Antoine had been... a vast dusky mass... with frequent gleams of light above the billowy heads, where steel blades and bayonets shone in the sun...	... firelocks are on the shoulders of... National Guards, lifted thereby out of darkness into fiery light. (I.183)
...all the fingers convulsively clutching at every weapon or semblance of a weapon that was thrown up from the depths below.	Patriotism... rummaging distractedly for arms. What cellar, or what cranny can escape it? The arms are found... More ravenous than famishing lions over dead prey, the multitude, with clangor and vociferation, pounces on them; struggling, dashing, clutching... (I.182-3)
Over the heads of the crowd like a kind of lightning... muskets were being distributed - so were cartridges, powder and ball, bars of iron and wood, knives, axes, pikes, every weapon that distracted ingenuity could discover or divise. People who could lay hold of nothing else... forced stones and bricks out of their places in walls. Every pulse and heart in Saint Antoine was on high-fever strain and at high-fever heat. (204)	...heaps of paving stones, old iron and missiles lie piled... (I.183)

(2) The living sea

The first use by Dickens of water imagery to describe the crowd is in its comparison with a whirlpool. This clearly comes from Carlyle. The crowd then becomes the sea itself, an image which Dickens elaborates for all it is worth. Many details show that Dickens was following Carlyle closely at this point:

A TALE OF TWO CITIES	THE FRENCH REVOLUTION
As a whirlpool of boiling waters has a centre point, so, all this raging circled round Defarge's wine-shop, and every human drop in the caldron had a tendency to be sucked towards the vortex where Defarge himself, already begrimed with gunpowder and sweat... laboured and strove...(204-5)	Paris wholly has got to the acme of its frenzy; whirled, all ways, by panic madness. At every street-barricade, there whirls simmering a minor whirlpool... and all minor whirlpools play distractedly into that grand Fire-Mahlstrom which is lashing round the Bastille. (I, 186) And so it lashes and roars....
With a roar... the living sea rose, wave on wave, depth on depth, and overflowed the city to that point. Alarm-bells ringing, drums beating, the sea raging and thundering on its new beach, the attack begun. (205)	Our National Volunteers rolling in long wide flood.... (I, 182) ... how the multitude flows on, welling through every street: tocsin furiously pealing, all drums beating... The Suburb Saint-Antoine rolling hitherward wholly, as one man!(I,184)
...The sea cast him up against a cannon.... Slight displacements of the raging sea, made by the falling wounded...the furious sounding of the living sea.... (205-6)	Ever wilder swells the tide of men; their infinite hum waxing ever louder... (I, 184) Upwards... flashes one irregular deluge of musketry... (I, 186) And still the fire-deluge abates not.... (I, 187) ...The crowd seems shoreless. (I,188)
...suddenly the sea rose immeasurably wider and higher, and swept Defarge... over the lowered drawbridge, past the massive stone outer walls, in among the eight great towers surrendered!	Sinks the drawbridge... rushes in the living deluge: The Bastille is fallen!.... (I, 189)

continued .....

So resistless was the force of the ocean bearing him on, that even to draw his breath or turn his head was as impracticable as... in the surf of the South Sea.... ...'The Prisoners!' was the cry most taken up by the sea that rushed in, as if there were an eternity of people, as well as of time and space.... (206)	As we said, it was a living deluge, plunging headlong.... (I, 190)
...so tremendous was the noise of the living ocean, in its irruption into the Fortress, and its inundation of the courts and passages and staircases. (207)	And so it goes plunging through court and corridor; billowing uncontrollable.... (I, 190)

(3) Dr Manette's document

As the Bastille is ransacked after its fall, Carlyle says, 'ashlar stones of the Bastille continue thundering through the dusk; its paper archives shall fly white. Old secrets come to view; and long-buried Despair finds voice.'[96] There follows the passage, already quoted, which is so similar to the end of Manette's hidden document. The implications, not simply of the similarity of these two passages but of their respective position in their own sequence of events, are interesting. The immediate equivalent of the original letter in The French Revolution is not the passage so similar to it in Dickens, but the search for Manette's document by Defarge. The document itself reappears towards the end of the book, to give the plot its ironic twist. Carlyle's letter must also be the primary source for the 'recalled to life' theme: Mercier and Watts Phillips fit better into the whole sequence of events implied by the discovery of the letter, than the other way round. The passage from Carlyle can be seen as the cornerstone of the whole plot, looking backward to Manette's incarceration, and forward to the trial of his son-in-law. The French Revolution is the only possible source (apart from Carlyle's own source[97]

96. FR, I,192.
97. See Note 137 below.

for the 'buried alive' theme which because of close textual similarities is indisputably a source for Manette's document and all it implies and which involves both the discovery of a hidden document, and the fall of the Bastille. Hence, The French Revolution can be seen, not only as a major source but in a sense as the foundation of the whole plot: only Sidney Carton is missing.

(4) The murder of the Bastille governor and of a soldier

A TALE OF TWO CITIES	THE FRENCH REVOLUTION
Saint Antoine was clamorous to have its wine-shop keeper foremost in the guard upon the governor who had defended the Bastille and shot the people. Otherwise, the governor would not be marched to the Hôtel de Ville for judgement.... (208-9)	De Launay "discovered in gray frock with poppy-colored ribbon," is for killing himself with the sword of his cane. He shall to the Hotel-de-Ville; Hulin, Maillard and others escorting him... (I, 190)
In the howling universe of passion and contention that seemed to encompass this grim old officer conspicuous in his grey coat and red decoration, there was but one quite steady figure, and that was a woman's.... (209)	Through roarings and cursings...(I, 190) Rigorous De Launay... (I,191) [...Demoiselle Théroigne, with pike and helmet, sits there as gunneress (cf. Defarge).... Maillard has his Menads in the Champs Elysees.... A small nucleus of order is round his drum; but his outskirts fluctuate like the mad océan. (cf. Madame Defarge (I,246)]
She... remained immovable close to him when he was got near to his destination, and began to be struck at from behind; remained immovable close to him when the long-gathering rain of stabs and blows fell heavy; was so close to him when he dropped dead under it, that, suddenly animated, she put her foot upon his neck, and with her cruel knife - long ready - hewed off his head. (209)	Through roarings and cursings; through hustlings, clutchings, and at last through strokes! Your escort is hustled aside, felled down; Hulin sinks exhausted on a heap of stones. Miserable De Launay! He shall never enter the Hôtel-de-Ville: only his "bloody hair-queue, held up in a bloody hand"; That shall enter, for a sign. The bleeding trunk lies on the steps there; the head is off through the streets; ghastly, aloft on a pike. (I, 190-1)

(5) The seven heads and seven prisoners

I have quoted this passage (in section 1, chapter 3) to show Carlyle's style breaking through Dickens's normal prose; the corresponding passage from The French Revolution runs as follows: 'Along the streets of Paris circulate seven Bastille Prisoners, borne shoulder-high; seven Heads on pikes; the Keys of the Bastille; and much else'.[98] Dickens's phrase 'such, and such like', seems to correspond to Carlyle's 'and much else'. The first three items in Carlyle occur in Dickens, in the same order, and Dickens's 'discovered letters and other memorials' come from the next paragraph in Carlyle's account which we have discussed (in paragraph 3) above. In the third papagraph in The French Revolution occurs Carlyle's reference to the time and season, as well as a reference to the continued activity in the streets: 'so does the July twilight thicken; so must Paris... brawl itself finally into a kind of sleep....patrols go clashing...there go rumors; alarms of war, to the extent of "fifteen thousand men marching through the Suburb Saint-Antoine"...'[99] is paralleled in the Tale by the reference to mid-July, and the 'loudly echoing footsteps of Saint-Antoine'.[100]

(6) The discovery and massacre of old Foulon and his son-in-law

This is Dickens's most horrifying description, because of its personal nature, as with other descriptions in Dickens of mob violence, we can see a kind of dual sympathy, with Berthier and Foulon because they are victims and with the mob because of its infectious violence and its righteous anger. It is interesting that in this most lurid and personally-felt of the mob's outrages, Dickens should emphasise the culpability of the victims, though it is difficult to feel at this point that this stress is strongly felt. Partly, of course, it is due to the closeness with which Dickens follows his source, which is (without any doubt here) The French Revolution:

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98. FR I, 192.
99. Ibid., 193.
100. TTC, 210.

A TALE OF TWO CITIES	THE FRENCH REVOLUTION
Haggard Saint Antoine had had only one exultant week, in which to soften his modicum of hard and bitter bread ....Madame Defarge... sat in the morning light and heat.... (211) "Does everybody here recall old Foulon, who told the famished people that they might eat grass, and who died, and went to Hell?"...."He is among us"...."...he caused himself to be represented as dead, and had a grand mock-funeral. But they have found him alive, hiding in the country, and have brought him in. I have seen him... on his way to the Hôtel de Ville...." Wretched old sinner of more than threescore years and ten... (212)	We are but at the 22 d of the month, hardly above a week since the Bastille fell, when it suddenly appears that old Foulon is alive; nay, that he is here, in early morning, in the streets of Paris: the extortioner, the plotter, who would make the people eat grass.... The deceptive "sumptuous funeral" (of some domestic that died); the hiding place at Vitry towards Fontainebleau, have not availed that wretched old man.... Merciless boors of Vitry unearth him; pounce on him, like hell-hounds: Westward, old Infamy; to Paris, to be judged at the Hôtel-de-Ville! His old head, which seventy-four years have bleached, is bare.... (I, 199)
This Foulon was at the Hôtel de Ville, and might be loosed. Never, if Saint Antoine knew his own sufferings.... They were all by that time choking the Hall of Examination where this old man, ugly and wicked, was, and overflowing into the adjacent open space and streets	Sooty Saint-Antoine, and every street, musters its crowds as he passes;- the Hall of the Hôtel-de-Ville, the Place de Grève itself, will scarcely hold his escort and him. Foulon...must...be judged...without any delay.... Delay, and still Delay!.... (I,200)
"See!" cried madame, pointing with her knife. "See the old villain bound with ropes. That was well done to tie a bunch of grass upon his back. Ha, ha!...let him eat it now!" Madame put her knife under her arm, and clapped her hands as at a play.(213)	...they have tied an emblematic bundle of grass on his back... in this manner; led with ropes; goaded on with curses and menaces, must he, with his old limbs, sprawl forward; the pitiablest, most unpitied of all old men... (I, 199)
The people immediately behind Madame Defarge, explaining the cause of her satisfaction to those behind them, and those again explaining to others, and those to others, the	Ought not the truth to be cunningly pumped out of him,- in the Abbaye Prison? It is a new light! Sansculottism claps hands; - at which hand-clapping, Foulon ... also claps. "See! they understand

neighbouring streets resounded with the clapping of hands.... (213)
At length the sun rose so high that it struck a kindly ray as of hope or protection, directly down upon the old prisoner's head. (214)

one another!" cries dark Sansculottism blazing into fury of suspicion....
(I, 200)

The favour was too much to bear; in an instant... Saint-Antoine had got him!.... Defarge... folded the miserable wretch in a deadly embrace ... the cry seemed to go up, all over the city, 'Bring him out! Bring him to the lamp!'

Down, and up, and head foremost ...stifled by the bunches of grass and straw that were thrust into his face by hundreds of hands; torn, bruised, panting, bleeding, yet always entreating and beseeching for mercy; now full of vehement agony of action, with a small clear space about him as the people drew one another back that they might see; now, a log of dead wood drawn through a forest of legs; he was hauled to the nearest street corner where one of the fatal lamps swung .... Once he went aloft, and the rope broke, and they caught him shrieking; twice, he went aloft, and the rope broke, and they caught him shrieking; then, the rope was merciful, and held him, and his head was soon upon a pike, with grass enough in the mouth for all Saint Antoine to dance at the sight of. (214)

With wild yells, Sansculottism clutches him, in its hundred hands: he is whirled across the Place de Grève, to the "Lanterne", Lamp-iron which there is at the corner of the Rue de la Vannerie; pleading bitterly for life, - to the deaf winds.

Only with the third rope - for two ropes broke, and the quavering voice still pleaded - can he be so much as got hanged! His Body is dragged through the streets; his Head goes aloft on a pike, the mouth filled with grass: amid sounds as of Tophet, from a grass-eating people.

BERTHIER

Nor was this the end of the day's bad work, for Saint-Antoine so shouted and danced his angry blood up, that it boiled again, on hearing when the day closed in that the son-in-law of the despatched, another of the people's enemies and insulters, was coming into Paris under a guard five hundred strong, in cavalry alone. Saint-Antoine wrote his crimes on flaring sheets of paper, seized him - would have torn him out of the breast of an army to bear Foulon company - set his head and heart on pikes, and carried the three spoils of the day, in Wolf-procession, through the streets. (215)

Berthier... sycophant and tyrant... is he not Foulon's son-in-law; and, in that one point, guilty of all?....At the fall of day, the wretched Berthier... arrives at the Barrier; in an open carriage; with the Municipal beside him; five hundred horsemen with drawn sabres; unarmed footmen enough... Placards go brandished round him; bearing legibly his indictment, as Sanscullotism, with unlegal brevity, "in huge letters", draws it up.

[Berthier is taken to the Hôtel-de-Ville for questioning; refuses to answer questions, demands sleep. He leaves the Hôtel-de-Ville under guard, for the Abbaye prison.] At the very door of the Hotel-de-Ville, they are clutched; flung asunder, as by a vortex of mad arms; Berthier whirls towards the Lanterne....he is brune down, trampled, hanged, mangled: his Head too, and even his Heart, flies over the City on a pike. (1.201)

The chapters that follow in A Tale of Two Cities are by their nature much less intimately related to the text of The French Revolution. The 'historical' material now reverts to its role as a kind of shaping and informing background to the plot that Dickens has evidently worked out with some care. Obviously fact and fiction cannot be separated: the principal plot owes its first impulse to a clearly identifiable historical source which is vitally linked with scenes in the Tale which approach nearer to being a non-fictional account of actual events than anything in the novel.

One can, nevertheless, see a continuing relationship with the text of The French Revolution, though there is a blurring of focus until book III; Dickens no longer bases his details so closely on those of Carlyle. At the beginning of Book II Chapter xxiii, for example, Dickens describes the poverty of the countryside: 'Far and wide lay a ruined country, yielding nothing but desolation. Every green leaf, every blade of grass and blade of grain, was as shrivelled and poor as the miserable people.... Habitations, fences, domesticated animals, men, women, children, and the soil that bore them - all worn out.'[101] In the corresponding passage in The French Revolution however, Carlyle,points out that at this time the harvest was good, but that for various reasons, food was not being sold or distributed: this was the cause of the continuing starvation: 'Heaven has at length sent an abundant harvest: but what profits it the poor man, when Earth with her formulas interposes?'[102] But Dickens continues to be nourished in his imagery and local situations by Carlyle's heightened visions. The chapter in the Tale which describes the arrival of a 'Jacques', whose mission is to set on fire the chateau of the

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101. TTC, 216.
102. FR, I, 217.

Evremondes, seems to owe a good deal to Carlyle's description of 'the general over-turn.' The mysterious incendiary according to Dickens, is a 'rough figure... a shaggy-haired man, of almost barbarian aspect, tall, in wooden shoes that were clumsy even to the eyes of a mender of roads, grim, rough, swart...'.[103] He is obviously one of Carlyle's imagined horde, who sprung up over the whole country to fire the aristocrats' chateaux:

> Fancy, then, some Five full-grown Millions of such gaunt figures, with their haggard faces...in woollen jupes, with copper-studded leather girths and high Sabots starting up to ask, as in forest-roarings...this question: How have ye treated us; how have ye taught us, fed us and led us, while we toiled for you? The answer can be read in flames, over the nightly summer-sky. <u>This</u> is the feeding and leading we have had of you:[104] EMPTINESS,- of pocket, of stomach, of head and of heart.

Dickens points out the hunger of his 'rough figure' and of the road-mender. Other details from Carlyle's account, after a sea-change reappear in the <u>Tale</u>. Among those who must now be wary, says Carlyle, is the tax-gatherer who, 'long hunting as a biped of prey, may now find himself hunted as one...'[105] One of the taxes that have opressed the people, Carlyle has already told us, is the <u>Gabelle</u>,[106] salt tax. Hence the appearance of Gabelle, the unjustly accused agent of Darnay, an important (if slightly creaking) mechanism for the future movement of the plot.

Until our next immersion in revolutionary horrors, Carlyle's contribution

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103. <u>TTC</u>, 217.
104. <u>FR</u>, I, 219.
105. Ibid., 220.
106. <u>FR</u>, I, 14, 79.

to the Tale's progress is of this indirect kind. Gabelle's subsequent arrest leads to the plot sequence culminating in Darnay's arrest and trial, an episode which takes place against the background of the September Massacres, the second period in Dickens's narrative which demands, not simply an atmospheric background picture of events that were likely to happen over a fairly undefined period - the firing of chateaux, the persecution of tax collectors and other aristocratic agents, the airy boasting and fruitless plans of the emigrés - but actual notorious events that happened during a short and clearly defined period.

Dickens's account of the September Massacres corresponds in many details with Carlyle's. A notable Dickensian stage-prop, the grindstone which gives its name to Book III Chapter ii, seems to have been suggested by a sentence from Carlyle's relation of the gruesome events of September 1792: 'Man after man is cut down; the sabres need sharpening, the killers refresh themselves from wine-jugs.'[107] Dickens once more plunges himself into the scandalised description of actual events and establishes both his knowledge of them and his characters' involvement in them by his use of details. The house of 'Monseigneur' is confiscated on September 3,[108] Carlyle makes it clear that the massacres lasted from September 2 until September 6 and stresses the length of time that they covered: '"O everlasting infamy," exclaims Mongaillard, "that Paris stood looking on in stupor for four days, and did not interfere!"'[109] When Dr Manette goes out to ensure that his son-in-law is not a victim of the 'Septembriseurs', he is absent for exactly this period: 'Doctor Manette did not return until the morning of the fourth day of his absence.'[110] Another detail from The French Revolution

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107. My emphasis, FR, II, 183.
108. TTC, 245.
109. FR, II, 193.
110. TTC, 256.

follows: Lucie Manette learns only later that 'eleven hundred defenceless prisoners...had been killed by the populace; that four days and nights had been darkened by this deed of horror; and that the air around her had been tainted by the slain.'[111]

After discussing various figures, Carlyle accepts the assessment of Maton de la Varenne, that 'not less than' 'a thousand and eighty-nine' prisoners were slaughtered.[112] Dickens's description of the 'trial' and subsequent probable massacre of the prisoners of La Force[113] (one of the jails mentioned by Carlyle) corresponds roughly with Carlyle's account, but is less detailed. Dr Manette presents himself before the tribunal, and 'ascertained, through the registers on the table, that his son-in-law was among the living prisoners',. 'So sit these sudden Courts of Wild Justice' recounts Carlyle, 'with the Prison-Registers before them...[114]. 'The mad joy over the prisoners who were saved' that astounds Manette 'scarcely less than the mad ferocity against those who were cut to pieces'[115] corresponds to Carlyle's description of the formula by which the crowd knew whether or not to massacre someone emerging from the prison gates: 'A few questions are put; swiftly this sudden Jury decides: Royalist Plotter or not? Clearly not; in that case, let the Prisoner be enlarged with Vive la Nation. Probably yea; then still, Let the Prisoner be enlarged, but without Vive la Nation....Volunteer Bailiffs seize the doomed man; he is..."enlarged"...into a howling sea...'[116]. This passage might also have been suggested by Carlyle's account of the trial and release of Jourgniac St-Méard. On his release, Carlyle recounts, 'there arose vivats within doors and without; "escort

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111. Ibid.
112. FR, II, 194.
113. TTC, 256.
114. FR, II, 182.
115. TTC, 257.
116. FR, II, 182.

of three", amid shoutings and embracings: thus Jourgniac escaped from jury-trial and the jaws of death.'[117]

But Carlyle is not the only possible source for Dickens's knowledge of the September Massacres. As I have suggested, Dickens knew Thiers' History, and some of the details I have discussed above might equally have come from his account of the Massacres. Thiers may well have supplied Dickens with one detail in the Tale's description of the events of September, which could also have been behind one of the novel's best known pre-revolutionary scenes. I have already quoted part of a passage describing the spilling of the wine, which plays heavily on the wine's similarity to blood, and which fairly clearly looks forward to the September Massacres, when Dickens again evokes the association between blood and wine to underline, here, the horrors of the scene:

> ...their hideous countenances were all bloody and sweaty, and all awry with howling, and all staring and glaring with beastly excitement and want of sleep. As these ruffians turned and turned, their matted locks now flung forward over their eyes, now flung backward over their necks, some women held wine to their mouths that they might drink; and what with dropping blood, and what with dropping wine, and what with the stream of sparks struck out of the stone, all their wicked atmosphere seemed gore and fire.[118]

Three passages from Thiers' description of the September Massacres may be behind this association. Thiers describes how Maillard, in the full heat of the massacre,

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117. FR, II, 191.
118. TTC, 248-9.

> Covered with blood and perspiration, ... went in to the committee of the section of the Quatre-Nations, and asked for wine for the brave labourers who were delivering the nation from its enemies. The committee shuddered, and granted them twenty-four quarts.
>
> The wine was poured out in the court at tables surrounded by the corpses of the persons murdered in the afternoon.[119]

Thiers then evokes the continuation of the Massacres and some of his descriptions reiterate the blood-wine association, and can also be seen to correspond to passages in the Tale for which I have given above (p213-4) Carlylean parallels:

> The massacre continued throughout that horrid night! The murderers succeeded each other at the tribunal and at the wicket, and became by turns judges and executioners. At the same time they continued to drink, and set down upon a table their blood-stained glasses. Amidst this carnage, however, they spared some victims, and manifested unconceivable joy in giving them their lives. A young man, claimed by a section and declared pure from aristocracy, was aquitted with shouts of Vive la nation! and borne in triumph in the bloody arms of the executioners.[120]

The most vivid and unequivocal possible source for the blood-wine image however, one which it would be difficult to ignore, is a passage immediately following the one already quoted, in which Thiers describes how Sombreuil, the governor of the Invalides, was saved by his daughter:

> ...As if to subject that sensibility which overpowered them to a fresh trial, "Drink", said they to this dutiful daughter, "drink the blood of the aristocrats!" and they handed to her a pot full of blood. She drank - and her father was saved![121]

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119. Schoberl, trans., op. cit,II,33.
120. Ibid., 36 .
121. Ibid..

Darnay is saved from death in the September Massacres, but Manette finds it impossible to achieve his trial or his release. Time passes, and Dickens produces a few facts to suggest the historical background. The King's trial and beheading, the black flag waving from Notre Dame, the raising of a national army of three hundred thousand men, the beheading of Marie Antoinette. All these details appear, widely scattered, in The French Revolution,[122] but could have come equally well from Thiers or from any other history. A Closer parallel is Dickens's 'revolutionary tribunal in the capital, and forty or fifty thousand revolutionary committees all over the land...,'[123] with Carlyle's 'Tribunal Revolutionnaire', together with his 'Comités Révolutionnaires.... some forty-four thousand of them awake and alive over France...'[124] Dickens's 'sick jokes' about the guillotine[125] are very reminiscent of Carlyle's comments on the execution of nineteen 'Hébertistes':

> They too "must look through the little window"; They too "must sneeze into the sack", ...Sainte-Guillotine, meseems, is worse than the old Saints of Superstition; a man-devouring Saint?[126]

Dickens's references to the 'twenty-two' Girondistes (a figure which later re-appears as the number of those executed before Carton) and to the name of the executioner Samson (the Tale's 'strong man of Old Scripture')[127] are both paralleled in The French Revolution[128] as is that to 'the rivers of the South... encumbered with the bodies of the violently drowned by night, and prisoners... shot in lines and squares under the southern wintry sun.'[129]

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122. FR, II, 218-64, 282, 284.
123. TTC, 259.
124. FR, II, 289.
125. TTC, 260.
126. FR, II, 395.
127. TTC, 260.
128. FR, II, 261.
129. FR, II, 358-367; TTC, 260.

There is nothing in Dickens's use of these details that enables us to attribute them with complete certainty to his reading of The French Revolution but one episode which does seem to have Carlyle as its source is that of Darnay's release, 'one of those extraordinary scenes with which the populace sometimes gratified their fickleness, or their better impulses towards generosity and mercy...'[130] This reminds us of the fickleness of the crowds of the September Massacres,[131] and the scene of Darnay's release is very reminiscent of Carlyle's description of Marat's triumphal progress after a similar ordeal. Dickens's crowd, as Carlyle's, is 'like a sea', recalling his own, and Carlyle's, descriptions of the storming of the Bastille and it behaves very like Marat's acclaiming mob:

They put him into a great chair they had among them... Over the chair they had thrown a red flag, and to the back of it they had bound a pike with a red cap on its top. In this car of triumph... [he was] carried...on mens' shoulders, with a confused sea of red caps heaving about him,...

In wild dreamlike procession, embracing whom they met and pointing him out, they carried him on.[132]

And so the eye of History beholds Patriotism ... break into loud jubilee, embrace its Marat; lift him into a chair of triumph, bear him shoulder-high through the streets. Shoulder-high is the injured People's-Friend...amid the wavy sea of red nightcaps, carmagnole jackets, grenadier bonnets and female mob-caps; far-sounding, like a sea!'[133]

Although the correspondence of such passages and of many details confirms the heavy debt that Dickens owed to Carlyle there is a slight complication here. According to Dickens, Carlyle lent him 'two cartloads' of books

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130. TTC, 271.
131. See notes 115 and 120 above.
132. TTC, 272.
133. FR, II, 300.

from the London Library, which Dickens claimed to have read.[134] Some of Carlyle's own sources, therefore, were available to him. It is difficult to determine how much Dickens got from them. If we compare, for instance, the storming of the Bastille with the four sources that Carlyle gives for this episode (though there may be more), we can make several points. Firstly, that copies of all of these sources were possessed by the London Library in 1859; they were therefore quite probably among the 'two cartloads'. Nevertheless, it seems fairly clear that Carlyle is a more likely source for Dickens than any of them. Only one of these sources[135] gives a consecutive account of the day's events, and this contains much less information than Carlyle's, or even Dickens's, narrative, and clearly has little or no literary relationship with either text. This source, like the other three[136], is unexciting, and they all seem very unlikely to have caught Dickens's attention as strongly as Carlyle's account. Furthermore, compared with Carlyle's evocation of these events, the effect of these exciting events as related by these first-hand sources is not only diffuse and lack-lustre; each writer is too close to his own part in the day's events to give anything like a total picture, or even sense the volcanic energy of the process unleashing itself. This seems to be Carlyle's contribution. Dickens later marvelled at Carlyle's ability to produce such a 'compact result' from such 'dry bones'. This is perhaps the most telling point: it is Carlyle's particular assemblage of the confused events of July 14 that Dickens is following here. Dickens, could, for instance, have got the letter which is the source for the final paragraph of Dr Manette's document, from Carlyle's own source[137] a copy of which was in the London Library. But to find it, Dickens would have had to wade through an appendix of only marginally related material. In Carlyle, he found it as a vital and exciting part of the day's action, set in a sequence of events that he himself was, more or less, to follow. Dickens mentions Carlyle's sources only to exclaim

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134. Letters, III, 97.
135. Histoire Parlementaire, ed. Buchez, P., et Roux, P., Paris, 1834 - 8, II, 102 - 3.
136. Mémoires du Baron de Besenval, ed. Berville, S.A., et Barrière, J., Bruxelles, 1823, III, 295 - 300.
. Mémoires de Bailly, ed. Berville, S-A., et Barrière, J., Paris,
Mémoires de Linguet et de Dusaulx, ed. Berville, S-A., et Barrière, J., Paris, 1821, 292 - 307.
137. Mémoires de Linguet et de Dusaulx, op cit., 199.

at their dryness and to wonder at Carlyle's genius at producing such a result from such material.[138]

A definitive study for the sources for A Tale of Two Cities does not exist. As Professors Butt and Tillotson suggest of Barnaby Rudge, 'Dickens's use of his historical sources ... has never received the detailed consideration it deserves...'[139] This is true of A Tale of Two Cities, and I have attempted no more here than to indicate the complexity of the problem. There are undoubtedly other sources for the Tale than the ones I have discussed, and the size simply of the collection of books on the French Revolution possessed by The London Library in 1859, which would fit nicely into 'two cartloads' [a note on the possible contents of which will be found in an appendix], suggests that whoever undertakes to fill the blanks left by previous studies has a large task ahead of him. I have indicated some sources (possibly the most important) for the broad lines of the plot, and some of the material behind the novel's historical detail, and indicated that Carlyle certainly played a major role, perhaps the major role, in both areas. But there is a mass of unrelated detail that cannot be traced to any of the sources I have considered, and which it is outside the scope of this chapter to track down.

In a way, Carlyle's functions for the Tale and for Hard Times were analogous. As for the response to Modern England of Hard Times, Dickens's historical attitudes and material had a number of sources of which Carlyle was one. Carlyle's contribution to the ideas of Hard Times and the historical material of the Tale was, in very differing ways, a forming and shaping one. I have suggested a Carlylean origin for Dr Manette's

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138. de Wolfe Howe, op. cit., 190.
139. Butt and Tillotson, op. cit., 85.

document, the finding of which, about half-way through the book, can be seen as the cornerstone of the plot. But in some important ways, Hard Times is more indebted to Carlyle than is A Tale of Two Cities. Dickens, I have suggested, was influenced by Carlyle in an essential way, in his understanding and articulation of the central theme of Hard Times, of the idea that informs all the novel's 'material', most of which had its roots in modern life. In A Tale of Two Cities, as I have suggested, the emphasis is reversed; Dickens's 'idea' of the Revolution is his own (or at any rate, comes from non-Carlylean sources) and Carlyle supplies much of the 'material'. The historical theory of A Tale of Two Cities is certainly less important to it than is the social theory of Hard Times to the most engaged 'social novel' Dickens wrote; in Hard Times the idea is the novel: in the Tale the idea covers only part of the story's scope. It does not refer at all, for instance, to Sidney Carton, whose plot, though it has great meaning is quite independent of the novel's historical idea. This, in itself, could be seen to demonstrate more clearly than anything else the extent of the ideological divergence between Dickens's novel and Carlyle's history: Sidney Carton is the novel's one link (emphasised by his obvious similarities to James Harthouse) with the Carlylean theme of lack of belief. Harthouse's nihilism epitomises the vital element of Hard Times's critique of mechanism that makes it a Carlylean novel; Carton's is vital to the plot of the Tale, but not to the book's historical idea. The philosophy of Carlyle's Revolution fails to transfer to the philosophy of Dickens's; it gets stuck, as it were, half-way: The French Revolution is clearly relevant to Carton: but Carton makes no contribution to the historical ideology of his novel.

That Carton is a 'Carlylean' figure is less obvious than that Harthouse is;

nevertheless, with obvious reservations, he is certainly in the Carlylean tradition of the dilettante figure of Hard Times. It is interesting, embodying lack of faith as he does, that he is also a lawyer. The plot demands it, of course, (though not imperatively); nevertheless he reminds us interestingly of a passage in The French Revolution, in which Carlyle is discussing the spiritual condition of France before the Revolution. '...there is a new recognised Noblesse of Lawyers', notes Carlyle, and links their rise with that of the philosophes: the effect of all this, he says, is that' 'Faith is gone out; Scepticism is come in.' His next remarks might be thought reminiscent of Carton: 'Evil abounds and accumulates; no man has Faith to withstand it, to amend it, to begin by amending himself; it must even go on accumulating.' Carton, too, cannot amend himself, cannot free himself from 'the cloud of caring for nothing, which overshadowed him with such a fatal darkness, [and] was very rarely pierced by the light within him.'[140] Carlyle's use of the analogous theme in The French Revolution indicates, again, how distinct is his 'philosophy' from Dickens's:

> While hollow langour and vacuity is the lot of the Upper, and want and stagnation of the Lower, and universal misery is very certain, what other thing is certain? That a Lie cannot be believed! Philosophism knows only this: her other belief is mainly, that in spiritual supersensual matters no Belief is possible.[141]

For Carlyle, it is this spiritual debility of pre-revolutionary France, rather than her rampant injustice, that is the essential cause of the Revolution and of its violence. Philosophism is concerned only with sweeping away falsehood: but,

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140. TTC, 142.
141. FR, I, 15-16.

> ...the Lie with its Contradiction once swept away, what will remain? The five unsatiated Senses will remain, the sixth insatiable Sense (of vanity) the whole demonic nature of man will remain, - hurled forth to rage blindly without rule or rein; savage itself, yet with all the tools and weapons of civilisation: a spectacle new in History.

Carton, then, though he can in one way be seen as a Carlylean figure, lacks as a character one essential to make his lack of belief significant in these terms: the same kind of connection with the historical process of A Tale of Two Cities as Harthouse has with the social theme of Hard Times. At the same time, Carlyle's contribution to the great debate on 'belief' (or on the lack of it) forms, clearly, an important part of his attraction for Dickens, as for many other literary figures. The Bases of Carlyle's and of Dickens's 'belief' are obviously divergent in terms of the most natural frame of reference, the religious one; but we could make the same point, say, about the many Catholics who revered Carlyle as a great teacher. The question of belief brings us back to our original question about the ideological relationship between Carlyle and Dickens: Why? Part of the answer (though only part), I think, is in the peculiar emphasis of Carlyle's ideas about Belief: Carlyle, throughout his career, stressed less the importance of some particular belief, than the dangers of the lack of one. This is not at all the same thing, of course; and this emphasis, I suggest, is relevant if we are to understand one element in his emotional meaning for Dickens. To attempt this, we must now give more detailed attention to Harthouse and Carton, and to the Dickensian tradition of which they form a part.

P A R T T H R E E

Chapter Six: DEVOTION AND BELIEF

James Harthouse is, unmistakably, a Carlylean Dilettante; hence, he is an important link between the meaning for Dickens of Carlyle's philosophy and that of a procession of aristocratic and languid characters in the novels, with whom he has very striking similarities. The common factor of all these types is easy to see; they all represent the antithesis of a Victorian, and a Dickensian ideal; fixed, methodical purpose, linked with the capacity for devotion. Usually, in Dickens, this means devotion to a particular type of idealised woman. Hence, the natural complement to these public-school wastrels is the character stereotype of which Agnes, in David Copperfield, is the most notable example. Perhaps the relationship of Lucie Darnay and Sidney Carton best isolates how the two recurrent types can be seen, directly or indirectly, to underpin each other's meaning: 'Redemption' and purpose on one hand, and nihilism on the other, are mutually indispensable concepts. Sir John Chester, in Barnaby Rudge, (despite obvious distinctions with later representatives of the type) is the first of the line, and he demonstrates some of the conventions of the tradition. His character is established by contrast with his son, a young man of great earnestness and candour. In one confrontation, he comes to ask his father for help. Chester asks his son to be brief, since, as he says, 'I cannot fix my mind for any long period upon one subject.' Edward shows, by contrast, his own constancy, manliness, and determination for self-help. He asks his father for the means of independence:

> Time has been lost and opportunity thrown away, but I am yet a young man, and may retrieve it. Will you give me the means of devoting

> such abilities and energies as I possess, to some worthy pursuit? Will you let me try to make for myself an honourable path in life?[1]

Chester refuses, of course; and suggests that his son should reject Emma Haredale, a good example of the Agnes breed, and marry money instead. Chester's characterisation establishes the general outlines in which a whole succession of Dickensian cynics were to be sketched: A refined and debilitating upper-class education; languor of manner; lack of fixed purpose.

Chester is separated from the rest of the line both by his date, and by the villainous role he fulfils in his novel; the Dickensian dilettantes from Harthouse onwards are morally more difficult to classify. But, like Chester, they all find it difficult 'to fix [their minds] for any long period upon one subject.' Eugene Wrayburn has exactly this problem, but with an additional dimension:

> Now, I have been inclined to pursue such a subject; now, I have felt that it was absurd, and that it tired and embarrassed me. Absolutely, I can't say. Frankly and faithfully, I would if I could.... You know that when I became enough of a man to find myself an embodied conundrum, I bored myself to the last degree by trying to find out what I meant.[2]

This, in turn, recalls Harthouse;

> ...whither <u>he</u> tended, he neither considered nor cared. He had no particular design or plan before him; no energetic wickedness ruffled his lassitude. He was as much amused and interested, at present, as it became so fine a gentleman to be...[3].

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1. <u>BR</u>, 177.
2. <u>OMF</u>, 286.
3. <u>HT</u>, 127.

His connection with Gradgrind's philosophy emphasises that for Dickens as for Carlyle, Mechanism is seen as one great antithesis for fixed purpose and the capacity for reverence:

> The not being troubled with earnestness was a grand point in his favour, enabling him to take to the hard Fact fellows with as good a grace as if he had been born one of the tribe...[4]

Despite their similarities each of these dilettante characters is quite distinct. There are, perhaps, two lists to draw up: characters who belong strictly to the type, and characters who belong to it through one or more traits, but are disqualified for other reasons. The first list is obvious enough: Chester himself; James Harthouse; Henry Gowan; Sidney Carton; and Eugene Wrayburn. For the second, among Dickens's more important characters, we can suggest Arthur Clennam for lack of purpose but not for indifference, and (very different) Steerforth for upper-class self-assurance and lack of fixed purpose, but not for languor. Unlike the inspirational virgins of the complementary Dickensian tradition, most of the members of this one are both interesting as characters and important to the books in which they appear. We can also say, that they had an important personal meaning for Dickens himself, and an only slightly different one for his Victorian readership.

The meaning of these characters for Dickens's first readers can be discussed in terms to which Carlyle is clearly relevant. Both Dickens and Carlyle believed in the gospel of work, and in one way the delineation of these characters, perhaps, shows Dickens preaching it. Arthur Clennam, despite his obvious dissimilarities with Harthouse and the rest, has a peripheral association with the tradition, but with the inspiration of Little Dorrit, shakes himself free of it completely. The sunshine into

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4. Ibid.

which they both stride at the end of their story illuminates the Victorian ideal, which both Dickens and (less obviously) Carlyle, in their different ways, helped to strengthen:

> They paused for a mement on the steps of the portico, looking at fresh perspective of the street in the autumn morning sun's bright rays, and then went down.
>
> Went down into a modest life of usefulness and happiness.... They went quietly down into the roaring streets, inseparable and blessed; and as they passed along in sunshine and shade, the noisy and the eager, and the arrogant and the forward and the vain, fretteed, and chafed, and made their usual uproar.[5]

This is obviously more Dickensian than Carlylean: but the weight attached to the word 'usefulness' here has been strengthened by Arthur's steady work for Clennam and Doyce. Of course, there is an important distinction: it is precisely the unbending rigour of such stern biblical exhortations as Carlyle's obsessive 'Work while it is called To-day; for the Night cometh, wherein no man can work',[6] that (until Little Dorrit 'redeems' him) has rendered Arthur unfit for sustained effort. Arthur is a victim of the unbending Hebraic strain in Victorian Christianity, of which Carlyle himself was a product and to some extent a vehicle. Nevertheless, Dickens's anti-heroes and Carlyle's dilettantes both nourished the same popular tradition: how closely they antithesised the same ideal can be seen by the ease with which the Dickens Stereotype is adapted, in Hard Times, to a more precisely Carlylean idiom. Neither Wrayburn at one end of the line, nor Chester at the other, have any strictly Carlylean overtones at all, demonstrating, perhaps, that these characters, even when Carlyle is relevant to their meaning in context, have an independent life

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5. LD, 826.
6. SR, 149.

for Dickens himself.

One quite unCarlylean meaning of Dickens's dilettantes is easy to demonstrate. Apart from Chester, they can all be seen to reflect one aspect of his own life: his disappointment with his children. The same year that Hard Times appeared, Dickens wrote sadly of his eldest son Charley, then seventeen, that 'he has less fixed purpose and energy than I could have supposed possible in my son.'[7] And the emotional impact on Dickens's life of his own father's fecklessness had been incalculable; Professor Collins suggests that this may well have been one of the main reasons for his own obsession with punctuality and tidiness, and the strictness with which he brought up his own children. But his efforts were in vain; in 1867 he wrote describing his sons, 'with a curse of limpness on them. You don't know what it is to look round the table and see reflected from every seat at it... some horribly well remembered expression of inadaptability to anything.'[8] Dickens's languid heroes, Sir John Chester aside, may refer, not simply to his sons but also to his wife, whom he had left eight years before he wrote this, and whose increasing placidity and indolence had contributed to the break: this may well explain the reference to 'some horribly well remembered expression...'; it may also, of course, refer to his father. His incompatibility with his wife and the void that had been left by the death of Mary Hogarth was probably partly behind a series of characters that we can see as fulfilling a complementary role to that of the Harthouses and the Wrayburns. The Dickensian Heroine represents (among other things) the inspiration in the hero of energy and purpose; she steadies the uncertainty involved in his heroes' lack of a fixed centre of belief, and leads him to higher things. To the ennobling influence of Agnes,

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7. Letters from Charles Dickens to Angela Burdett-Coutts, ed. Johnson E., London, 1953, 254.
8. Quoted by Collins, Dickens and Education, op cit., 50.

David Copperfield owes all that he has become:

> She filled my heart with such good resolutions, strengthened my weakness so, by her example, so directed - I know not how, she was too modest and gentle to advise me in many words - the wandering ardour and unsettled purpose within me, that all the little good I have done, and all the harm I have forborne, I solemnly believe I may refer to her.[9]

The phrase 'wandering ardour and unsettled purpose within me' emphasises, perhaps, another aspect of this theme for Dickens himself. The languor of his dilettante figures may partly refer to his family; their restlessness has to do, also, with himself. The recurrence of Dickens's virginal heroines, though it should also be discussed in terms of literary convention, must be partly explained by his own increasing loneliness and uncertainty. The overwhelming effect on him of the death of Mary Hogarth lasted for many years, and these heroines may well represent much of what he felt she had embodied.

Dickens's restlessness is hard to explain, perhaps most obviously because he could not explain it himself. But as for many others, before and since, one answer was clear: he needed the right woman. 'Why is it', he wrote to Forster in 1854, 'that as with poor David, a sense comes always crushing on me now, when I fall into low spirits, as of one happiness I have missed in life, and one friend and companion I have never made?[10] The kind of woman he had always idealised in his novels, however, makes it clear that for him, a woman was to be as much an idealised object of veneration, a rock to which to cling in an uncertain world, as a creature of flesh and blood. Dickens's heroines, in the novels at least, up to

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9. DC, 519.
10. Forster, 639.

1859, mirror exactly one Victorian ideal.

The contemporary notion of womanhood that Dickens certainly accepted, provided, for many Victorians, a kind of quasi-religious article of faith. Woman represented an oasis of calm and devotion; she embodied ideals of goodness, purity and self-abnegation that the Church herself was becoming increasingly impotent to provide convincingly. In a way, a certain kind of Victorian woman performed a more delicate, but nevertheless (despite obvious reservations) an analogous function to that fulfilled for his age by Carlyle himself: she provided a substitute, or an accessory, for religion; certainty (or its illusion) in an uncertain world; the embodiment of moral stability. Thus, the home became a kind of shrine.

'Why', the Reverend James Baldwin Brown addressed his women readers in The Home Life (1866),

> has the Father shut you within the charmed circle into which the toils, the hard necessities, the fierce storm of the battle are forbidden to pass? Your husbands keep them outside the citadel with strong arm and brave heart, but ofttimes sorely weary and sick of the strife. And you within? Shut up with the fairest and most gracious flowers that God has planted, and the angels tend - these little ones whose angels do always behold the face of their Father which is in heaven; with a state to rule which is all within easy touch of your hand; with books, and flowers, and music, and all lovely things; with a heart which God has made intuitive of great truths, and capable of high resolves; with a sense kept fine and sensitive to all that men get hardened to, by the genial influences which play around your life. Women, where is the courage, the patience, the constancy, the faith, the hope, the joy, fed ever from divine springs, which God meant you to store up at home? Where is the honey of the higher life which the weary soldiers may taste and grow strong again, when they come home strained and sad from their toils? At home! At home for a man,

> ought to mean, shut up awhile with truth, purity, dignity, goodness, and charity, zoned with a cestus of beauty, and dressed in a lustre of love.[11]

This concept of woman draws on the widespread need for reassurance and stability which, in a very different way, was the most fundamental source of Carlyle's influence. This ideal of womanhood, and the popular reaction to Carlyle, have in common their quasi-ecclesiastical idiom; and Carlyle's most basic tenet is the need of every human being for reverence: for Carlyle this was for an undefined God, for 'The Immensities', or in political terms, for an unrealisable human leader. The Victorian impulse to transfigure their women as objects of the instinct for reverence, can, I think, be usefully pointed out when we try to understand Carlyle's influence over his age. Both the teachings of the prophet of Chelsea, and the ideal of womanhood of the age that embraced him as its greatest spiritual leader, owed their potency to something like the same cause: the inability of the Victorian era to evolve a stable corporate ideal, that could fulfil the same function as the Church had done for previous generations, and to which private as well as public uncertainties could be referred.

Dickens himself certainly felt increasingly the need for such a framework of reference, though it is a critical commonplace to point out the sentimental prettiness and apparent lack of conviction of 'religious' passages in his novels. 'What the waves are always saying' in Dombey and Son, and 'the star that guided us to our Saviour's home' on which Stephen Blackpool gazes while he is dying in the Old Hell Shaft, are certainly unhappy attempts at conveying transcendent or religious feelings. But

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11. Brown, J.B., The Home Life, London, 1866, 19-20 .

sentimentality and literary failure do not necessarily rule out Dickens's total sincerity, as Stephen Blackpool perhaps indicates. It can, of course, be argued that, apart from its sentimentality, Dickens's religious feeling was both inconsistent and cut off from tradition. Yet, as Professor Fielding points out, 'this would never have been recognised by Dickens himself; it is strongly contradicted by the experience of many who read him; and though it may be that there is sometimes a certain technical superficiality in his art as a novelist in expressing his faith, it is evident that he came to have a deeper concern with the spiritual view of life than many of his more critical readers allow.'[12] Some entries in the notebook he began keeping in the 'fifties, seem to reflect a personal predicament which, though not religious in itself, must, I think, be related to his religious and quesi-religious impulses: He saw himself, perhaps, as

> ...playing hide-and-seek with the world and never finding what Fortune seems to have hidden when he was born;

And as

> ...the man who is incapable of his own happiness. Result, where is happiness to be found then. Surely not everywhere?... Is <u>this</u> my experience?[13]

It is, I think, partly this kind of uncertainty that lies behind his fascination, especially during the fifties, with restless characters like Harthouse, and during his whole career up to 1859, with their obverse, represented most clearly by characters like Agnes, who, though totally

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12. Fielding, K.J., "Dickens's Novels and the Discovery of the Soul", <u>Aryan Path</u>, XXXIII(1962), 210.
13. Ibid., 211.

unsatisfactory as women, reveal through their total blankness, more poignantly than anything else could, Dickens's need to fulfil somehow his 'sad unhappy lack or want of something.' The 'something' remains undefined, only half-understood, and the total non-personality of Agnes herself corresponds perfectly with this lack of definition. Her image remains insubstantial, but glowing with promise:

> I cannot call to mind where or when, in my childhood, I had seen a stained glass window in a church. Nor do I recollect its subject. But I know that when I saw her turn round, in the grave light of the old staircase, and wait for us, above, I thought of that window; and I associated something of its tranquil brightness with Agnes Wickfield ever afterwards.[14]

'David has that relation to Agnes', thinks Professor Hillis Miller, 'which a devout Christian has to God, the creator of his selfhood, without whom be would be nothing'.[15] Agnes herself (let alone David) is surely not substantial enough to justify this; what we can say, though, is that Agnes certainly represents David's (and Dickens's) need to define this 'selfhood', if not the real conviction of its attainment.

This need, I tentatively suggest, provides a partial answer to an important question. Why, we have to ask, should Dickens have been susceptible to Carlyle's influence in the first place? What did Carlyle supply that Dickens needed? In a way, this is the most vital question of all. On its answer must partly depend the weight we give to Carlyle's influence among all the many others that crowded in on his consciousness, both private and social. Dickens's response to Carlyle is, I think, a

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14. DC, 223.
15. Hillis Miller, J., Charles Dickens: The World of his Novels, London, 1959, 157.

complex phenomenon, and it would be naive to single out any one reason for it more than others. Nevertheless, one partial explanation, I think, may well have something to do with Dickens's uncertainty about himself, about his 'selfhood'. Carlyle, beyond any doubt, was a vague but powerful influence over many sensitive people who, for a wide variety of reasons, felt unsure about life and about themselves. In 1855, the reviewer of a selection of Carlyle's works scornfully gave a splendid list of various classes of reader to whom he thought the sage appealed the most. 'The influence of Mr Carlyle's writings', he thought, 'and especially of his Sartor Resartus, has been primarily exerted on classes of men most exposed to temptations of egotism and petulance, and least subjected to anything above them - academics, artists, littératteurs, "debating" youths, Scotchmen of the phrenological grade and Irishmen of the Young Ireland School'.[16] If for 'egotism and petulance', we subsitute 'uncertainty or scepticism about established religion and accepted morality', we have here a general explanation for part of Carlyle's influence. Carlyle appealed to the general doubts of his age, and to the individual uncertainties of each of his readers. He gained his influence in what Bulwer Lytton, for instance, called 'an age of visible transition - an age of disquietude and doubt',[17] to which his message was entirely appropriate. And his influence, as the list I have just quoted suggests, was obviously more powerful for those who were sensitive to this facet of the period. The effect of this doubt was often the 'universal spiritual paralysis'[18] of which Carlyle himself was the best known observer or the 'depression and ennui' that Arnold wrote of as 'Characteristics stamped on how many of the representative works of modern times.'[19] This widespread mood certainly had much to do with

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17. Lytton, E.B., England and the English, London, 1874 , 281.
18. HHW, 247.
19. Arnold, M., Essays, London, 1914, 468.

such factors as the breakdown of traditional thought and religion. At the same time, as Professor Houghton points out, phrases such as Carlyle's 'languor and paralysis' describe a neurosis, and 'in every genuine instance...personal factors, now for the most part beyond reach of recovery, were undoubtedly at its root.'[20] Dickens himself cannot be described, of course, as either languid or paralysed, but he was certainly intensely affected by the languor and paralysis of others, and the 'disquietude and doubt' that characterised one aspect of the age found an approximate analogue in one aspect of his own situation. Despite his enormous vitality and joyous sense of fun (which, despite the temptations, must never be lost sight of), Dickens was, at the same time, often confused and intensely depressed. What was involved in this feeling, I think, has something to do with the 'sad unhappy lack or want of something' that David Copperfield complains of before his marriage to Agnes, and which helps to explain, I think, why Carlyle more than anyone else should have come to exert such an influence over him.

Partly, I think, Dickens responded to a general impulse, mirroring, as he often did, a movement of public opinion. Partly, too, his allegiance to Carlyle can probably be explained by his private emotional life. What were the personal factors that made Dickens more susceptible to Carlyle's influence? As I have suggested, this influence can be seen to have begun, effectively, around 1844, with the writing of The Chimes. We have a piece of evidence dating from this period, which, in the general context of what we know about his life, must, I think, be seen as a very valuable indication of his emotional life at this time. While he was engaged on The Chimes, Dickens wrote a letter to Forster, in which he outlined at some length a dream he had had during the composition of

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20. Houghton, W., op. cit., 65.

his Christmas Story. We do not need to apply half-digested Freudian symbolism to make its psychological meaning clear. Its relevance to his conscious (and not only to his less determinate subconscious) life is obvious, and fits well with the biographical knowledge we have of this period. And Forster himself certainly interpreted it in this way.

Dickens himself evidently attached great weight to the dream. On waking from it at dawn, he woke his wife, 'and repeated it three or four times over, that [he] might not unconsciously make it plainer or stronger afterwards.' His lengthy account of it to Forster is well worth examining:

> In an indistinct place, which was quite sublime in its indistinctness, I was visited by a Spirit. I could not make out the face, nor do I recollect that I desired to do so. It wore a blue drapery, as the Madonna might in a picture by Raphael; and bore no resemblance to anyone I have known except in stature. I think (but I am not sure) that I recognised the voice. Anyway, I knew it was poor Mary's spirit. I was not at all afraid, but in a great delight, so that I wept very much, and stretching out my arms to it called out 'Dear'. At this, I thought it recoiled; and I felt immediately, that not being of my gross nature, I ought not to have addressed it so familiarly. 'Forgive me!' I said. 'We poor living creatures are only able to express ourselves by looks and words. I have used the word most natural to <u>our</u> affections; and you know my heart'. It was so full of compassion and sorrow for me - which I knew spiritually, for, as I have said, I didn't perceive its emotions by its face - that it cut me to the heart; and I said, sobbing, 'Oh! give me some token that you have really visited me!'

He himself chose the extrication of his mother-in-law from 'great distresses' as the sign for this. The spirit agreed. At this Dickens hastily asked another question:

> 'But answer me one other question!' I said, in an agony of entreaty lest it should leave me. 'What is the True religion?' As it paused a moment without replying, I said - Good God, in such an agony of haste, lest it should go away! - 'You think, as I do, that the Form of religion does not so greatly matter, if we try to do good? - or', I said, observing that it still hesitated, and was moved with the greatest compassion for me, 'perhaps the Roman Catholic is the best? perhaps it makes one think of God oftener, and believe in him more steadily?' 'For you', said the Spirit, full of such heavenly tenderness for me, that I felt as if my heart would break; 'for you, it is the best!' Then I awoke, with the tears running down my face, and myself in exactly in the condition of the dream. It was just dawn.[21]

The interpretation of dreams is a chancey business. Nevertheless this one (given our knowledge of Dickens) is surely not a difficult proposition. Mary Hogarth, and the many Dickens heroines behind whom she lurks, clearly represented for Dickens a dimension that we can only call 'religious', despite his obvious limitations in this field. And certainly, Forster himself clearly interpreted the dream as the reflection of some kind of internal struggle, probably 'religious' in character. As he commented on it,

> It was perhaps natural that he should omit, from his own considerations awakened by the dream, the very first that would have risen in any mind to which his was intimately known - that it strengthens other evidences, of which there are many in his life, of his not having escaped those trying regions of reflection which most men of thought, and all men of genius have at some time to pass through.

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21. Forster, 348-9. Forster prefaces his account by saying, interestingly, that it exhibited 'aspirations of a more solemn import [than his ambition to help the poor] that were not less part of his nature. It was depth of sentiment rather than clearness of faith which kept safe the belief on which they rested against all doubt or question of its sacredness, but every year seemed to strengthen it in him.'

Forster continues, interestingly, that 'in such disturbing fancies during the next year or two I may add that the book which helped him most was the Life of Arnold'. Forster had written to Italy, giving some extracts from Dean Stanley's recently published biography. 'I respect and reverence his memory' Dickens wrote in reply, 'beyond all expression. I must have that book. Every sentence that you quote from it is the text-book of my faith.'[22] Tantalisingly, we do not know what these sentences were. But this avowal shows again, perhaps, the seriousness of Dickens's mood at this period, 'the habit of more gravely regarding many things before passed lightly enough',[23] that Forster partly associated with his reading of Carlyle. Dickens's word 'reverence' is interesting in the context of the dream, and is even more appropriate to his feelings about Carlyle, demonstrably a direct influence on his thinking at this time. There is one puzzle: why, in the dream, does the spirit of Mary Hogarth confirm that for Dickens the Catholic religion was the best? In fact, of course, Dickens detested Catholicism. It may be worth surmising that what he may have found attractive about it, despite his strong reservations, was the certainty and peace with which it claimed to provide the faithful. Newman's account of his own conversion to Rome corresponds, in a way, to a Victorian dream; since embracing Catholicism, Newman wrote,

> I have been in perfect peace and contentment. I never have had one doubt. I was not conscious, on my conversion, of any inward difference of thought or of temper from what I had before. I was not conscious of firmer faith in the fundamental truths of revelation, or of more self-command; I had not more fervour; but it was like coming into port after a rough sea; and my happiness on that score remains to this day without interruption.[24]

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22. Ibid., 350.
23. Ibid., 347.
24. Newman, J., Apologia pro Vita Sua, London, repr. 1965, 275.

The end of uncertainty is obviously what Dickens seeks in his dream from the Madonna-figure of Mary Hogarth, just as David Copperfield seeks it from Agnes. Catholicism itself was obviously out of the question for Dickens. But, as many Catholics admitted, Carlyle himself, by the strength and persuasiveness of his attack on modern scepticism, provided a recognisable and potent alternative, which had somehow the strength of dogma without its precise and inflexible definition. Dickens's reverence for Dr Arnold is perhaps interesting here. One Arnoldian emphasis that probably appealed to Dickens (though this is to oversimplify Arnold's aims) was that on the importance of 'character' as opposed to intellect: in this, as Professor Collins suggests,[25] Dickens was very English, and the quality of 'Englishness' involved is similar to that bewailed on one occasion by Newman, who found himself forced to admit sadly that 'it is not at all easy (humanly speaking) to wind up an Englishman to a dogmatic level.'[26] The emphasis on 'character', it will be seen, also fits two Carlylean notions - the complementary ideas, firstly of a hierarchy of just, heroic leaders (to whom 'character' is obviously relevant), and secondly of a distrust of rational inquiry, even of intellectualism: these notions can be seen perfectly to complement this public-school ideal. A man of 'character', in this classical sense, was one with a firm and decisive innate sense of values (this obviously ruled out Popery), who had no hesitation, intellectual or or moral, as to his own position in the scheme of things. Perhaps his acceptance of this ideal partly explains Dickens's decision to educate his son Charley at Eton; if so, his disappointment was bitter indeed.

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25. Collins, P., Dickens and Education, ed. cit., 123.
26. Newman, op. cit., 251.

Carlyle's influence on Dickens, I am not the first to point out, began effectively around 1844. No-one, however, has asked whether or not it ended, or at least, waned in importance. Nevertheless, there is, I believe, a date for this that can be isolated, and it was a very important one for Dickens for other reasons. The appearance in 1859 of a Tale of Two Cities marks, in my opinion, the last notable example of Carlyle's influence over him. The three novels that appear after this date do not seem to me to contain any importantly and distinctively Carlylean elements: apparent Carlylean influence which has been noted by some scholars during this period, especially in Our Mutual Friend, does not seem to me (as I shall discuss) to involve more than coincidence of view for which (unlike the coincidences of Hard Times) Carlyle cannot be shown to be necessary to Dickens's formulation.

The novels that appeared after 1859 have another distinction: the appearance on the Dickensian stage of a new kind of woman character. The new dimension in Dickens's attitude to his heroines, it has been a critical commonplace to suggest, was the product of his affair with Ellen Lawless Ternan. Many writers have pointed out the resonance her name finds in three characters from Dickens's last novels - Estella, Bella Wilfer, and Helena Landless: Now Dickens had a real woman, his fictional women are no longer seen on a pedestal, or against a stained glass window. It may be worth while to suggest that Dickens did not fully realise what he was letting himself in for when he separated from his wife in 1858, and that the obvious modification in his quasi-religious attitude to women did not fully develop until well after the imprisonment of his marriage had been broken. He was quite capable of conceiving a a character like Lucie Darnay, (with all she implies) though he had

already left his wife by then. In the course of the extraordinary spate of self-rightous utterances that he churned out for his public afterwards, he could defend Ellen (without any doubt utterly sincerely) in terms far more reminiscent of Lucie or Agnes than of Estella or Bella Wilfer. In reply to accusations by his wife's mother and younger sister, Dickens circulated a statement that was published in all the leading papers. 'Two wicked persons', Dickens wrote,

> who should have spoken very differently of me in consideration of earned respect and gratitude, have ... coupled with this separation the name of a young lady for whom I have great attachment and regard. I will not repeat her name - I honour it too much. Upon my soul and honour, there is not on this earth a more virtuous and spotless creature than that young lady. I know her to be innocent and pure, and as good as my own dear daughters.[27]

The idea of Ellen's purity may well have played a part in her appeal for him at the beginning of their relationship. Dickens is supposed to have found the young actress backstage in tears over having to wear a scanty costume,[28] and presumably offered comfort, and sympathy with her against this outrage to purity and innocence. Dickens, though, might simultaneously have had a rather less ideal reaction: a review of her performance described her as 'a debutante with a pretty face and well-developed figure, who when she had gained more confidence would become an acquisition.'[29] Dickens's subsequent private life certainly vindicated this judgement, though hardly in a way the reviewer could have foreseen.

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27. New York Tribune, August, 16, 1858. Quoted, Nisbet A., Dickens and Ellen Ternan, London, 1952, 15.
28. Wright, T., The Life of Charles Dickens, New York, 1936, 244.
29. Era, April 19, 1857. Quoted, Wright, op. cit., 249 .

Our knowledge of their affair is necessarily vague. One thing, however, is beyond any doubt: Dickens's devotion to Ellen. In 1859, he refused the offer of a reading tour in America, 'for a private reason, rendering a long voyage and absence particularly painful to me.'[30] Seven years later, he was still reluctant about the idea, and wrote to Dolby, his manager: 'I have had a very large proposal from America, but cannot bear the thought of the distance and absence.'[31] It is clear, as Ada Nisbet suggests, 'that love for the young actress twenty-eight years his junior was a sincere and deep-seated as it was passionate.'[32]

This leads me to a tentative and partial theory, which though it might be thought simpliste, is, I think, worth outlining. The years 1845 to 1859, it seems to me, span (as I hope to show) the period of Carlyle's greatest influence over Dickens. They were also the years during which Dickens most felt in his personal life, through his increasingly unsatisfactory marriage, David Copperfield's 'sad unhappy lack or want of something.' I suggest that Dickens's increasing personal loneliness during this period was inevitably projected, to some extent, onto his attitude to life in general. Dickens was not a religious man in any strict sense. We can say perhaps, that, aided by Victorian ideals of womanhood, he confused, to some extent, his personal uncertainties (difficulties for which the Church was perhaps traditionally more appropriate) with his loneliness and may have partly equated the ending of this loneliness with the satisfaction of the 'want of something', a something he could never define. For a man whose emotional condition can, at least partly, be described in these terms, Carlyle's certainties would be likely to appeal very strongly. His quasi-prophetic

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30. MS, Morgan Library, Quoted, Nisbet, op. cit., 54.
31. Letters, III, 480.
32. Nisbet, op. cit., 55.

authority for those whose values (religious, moral or personal) were in a state of indecision was (even though not entirely appropriate) precisely such as might, perhaps, be expected to attract Dickens during this difficult period in his life. Behind every political, philosophical and social attitude, no matter how objectively held or by whom, there are always a complex tracery of personal and emotional factors: behind Dickens's heavily modified Carlylism, I believe, lay (among many other factors) the increasingly impossible relationship with his wife, and the great gap in his life that had been left by the death of his wife's sister Mary in 1837.

The theory, it may be thought, is a crude one to explain such a phenomenon as the influence of one complex genius over another, and, it cannot be over-emphasised, certainly covers only part of the relevant ground. My suggestion, virtually, is that Dickens was lonely, and desperately needed a girl (this is beyond dispute); and that until he had found one and broken the imprisonment of his marriage, Carlyle's personal prophetic aura made a stronger appeal than it would normally have done. The inappropriateness of such a substitute seems the most obvious objection to this. But the tendency of lonely and unhappy people to espouse, in one way or another, some particular 'philosophy of life' (especially one which offers firm moral authority) in an unconscious attempt to solve their personal problems, is almost proverbial. Part of Dickens's emotional life can certainly be discussed in these terms, despite his undimmed capacity for enjoyment and laughter. A signpost to some kind of association between Carlyle's influence on Dickens, and the novelist's private life, may be the character of Stephen Blackpool. Stephen, I have noted, provides the most unmistakably Carlylean formulation in all Dickens's works; and he is, at the same time, a very interesting example of the obtrusion into Dickens's fictions of

his own life. He is both a Carlylean worker, hungry for just authoritarian government, and release from social isolation and 'mechanism', and Dickens himself, longing for a divorce from his wife, and a woman to replace her with. Stephen's obsessive refrain, 'It's aw' a muddle', refers indiscriminately to both roles. This combination of meanings in one character is, perhaps, curious enough to attract our attention; and Stephen, as I have suggested, was more important for Dickens and to Hard Times as a whole than he has seemed to modern critics. Certainly, he gives a revealing glimpse of one important layer of feeling in Dickens's life when he wrote Hard Times. Carlyle provided, I suggest, exactly what someone with such problems as Dickens might respond to: an absence of specifics; vague uplifting suggestions which could be ignored if they didn't fit, or subtly altered to reflect the personality of the wearer; and at the same time and above all, the appearance of solidity, of unshakeable moral authority. Carlyle's was the philosophy for those who doubted, and needed a rock, or even a straw to cling to; precisely what the 'doubt' referred to was not necessarily important. It was enough to have, in some aspect of one's life, 'nothing to steer by but the stars', even if the original context of this phrase, Froude's description of Carlyle's first intellectual effect on young university men, did not strictly apply. Carlyle's effect on Dickens was, of course, rather different from the influence over intellectuals at Oxford and elsewhere that he exerted from the forties onwards. But Carlyle's defiance of 'The Everlasting No' could appeal equally to someone who (like Teufelsdröck) had lost his girl and was nursing a broken heart, or to someone bewildered (perhaps simultaneously) by loss or lack of faith, or to someone simply disoriented by the inhumanity and growing practical influence of modern rationalism, and by the pressures of modern life. And Teufelsdröck's famous assertion of himself epitomises, not simply the appeal of Sartor itself, but also much of the influence of Carlyle's whole oeuvre.

Teufelsdröck's defiance can be seen as an amazingly flexible statement. It deals simultaneously, it will be recalled, with the effects of both his personal and his social problems as well as with his relationship with 'The Universe'; it counteracts Blumine (the faithless object of Teufelsdröck's love), the effects of Benthamite rationalism, and his lack of a sense of existence, all at the same time. It follows hard upon parts of Sartor which I have discussed as having probable relevance to Hard Times, and is one of the first and most notable examples in modern civilisation of that vague but potent phenomenon, The Power of Positive Thinking:

> Full of such humor, and perhaps the miserablest man in the whole French Capital or Suburbs, was I, one sultry Dog-day, after much perambulation, toiling along the dirty little Rue Saint-Thomas de l'Enfer, among civic rubbish enough, in a close atmosphere, and over pavements hot as Nebuchadnezzar's Furnace; whereby doubtless my spirits were little cheered; when, all at once, there rose a Thought in me, and I asked myself: 'What art thou afraid of? Wherefore, like a coward, dost thou forever pip and whimper, and go cowering and trembling? Dispicable biped! What is the sum-total of the worst that lies before thee? Death? Well, Death; and say the pangs of Tophet too, and all that the Devil and Man may, will or can do against thee! Hast thou not a heart; canst thou not suffer whatsoever it be; and, as a Child of Freedom, though outcast, trample Tophet itself under thy feet, while it consumes thee? Let it come then; I will meet it and defy it!' And as I so thought, there rushed like a stream of fire over my whole soul; and I shook base Fear away from me forever. I was strong, of unknown strength; a spirit, almost a god. Ever from that time, the temper of my misery was changed: not Fear or whining Sorrow was it, but Indignation and grim fire-eyed Defiance.[33]

The intellectual content, function, and adaptability of this famous

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33. SR, 128.

passage, despite its lofty tone, are about the same as can be seen in 'Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile.' And yet, Carlyle's effectiveness in encouraging positive attitudes and dissipating uncertainty (though perhaps often only temporarily) cannot be questioned. It is Carlyle's own character and personality (which somehow, undefinably, convey themselves in this passage as in all his works) that give Teufelsdröck's defiance its authority. Carlyle's message must be judged by its effect on his contemporaries, whose witness is overwhelming. 'He has raised the moral tone of the age, and awakened a noble spirit of strength and courage in the young'; his is 'the voice of the trumpet'; 'he incites the mind of others to action'; he has 'infused into the mind of the English nation... sincerity, earnestness, healthfulness and courage': these reactions to Carlyle[34] represent the consensus of a vast section of Victorian opinion, and without any doubt, mirror exactly those of Dickens himself.

In the phrase 'a noble spirit of strength and courage in the young', we recognise the authentic tones of one aspect of the Victorian age. The impulse involved has to do with the Christian emphasis on self-sacrifice that is clearly behind, for instance, Carton's death. It also has close analogues with the ethic of Victorian Imperialism, to which Carlyle's influence has a relevance so obvious as scarcely to require demonstration.

The Carlylean ideals of earnestness, nobility and action, nevertheless, would almost certainly have been as important to his age if he had never lived; he was their 'trumpet'. And Dickens himself responded, not only to Carlyle, but to a general climate, and to his own private condition. He responded, for both private and public reasons, to the ideals of duty implicit in the Victorian myth of woman, as well as to those implied in the overlapping Victorian (and Carlylean) creed of action and courage.

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34. See pp 60-2 above.

We can observe Dickens's feelings about some of these interlocking ideals - the ennobling character and purity of woman; the necessity for action; and the nobility of self-sacrifice - in his spontaneous reactions to one of the classical moments in the evolution of 'Victorianism': the Indian Mutiny. Dickens's feelings about the Mutiny provide us with one more example of the fusion, perhaps the confusion, in his mind between personal and public values and one more example too, of how Carlyle's values can be seen to coincide with instinctive, almost animal reactions that he would have felt in any case, and which reflect his own deepest impulses.

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The Indian Mutiny provides a frightening set-piece of 'public opinion' in action. The first news of the insurrection reached England at the beginning of June, 1857, and 'excited a profound feeling of anxiety and alarm.'[35] By September, when news of the Cawnpore massacres was generally known, the public reaction changed to one of sheer horror, and there was an almost universal demand for bloody vengeance on the mutineers. Of course, there were those who kept their righteous indignation under proper control. The most influential voice was that of Lord Canning, the Governor General of India. To deal with the emergency, Canning had drawn up an Act, making complicity in acts of mutiny punishable by death, transportation or imprisonment. In the disturbed regions, commissions, against whose sentence there was no appeal, were appointed with full powers to carry the Act into effect. Before long, Canning was worried about the way in which it was being used as an instrument of bloody vengeance. In July, he circulated a resolution. The Law, he said, must be administered severely, and order restored. But once this had been done,

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35. Annual Register, 1857, Hist., 125 .

> ...the punishment of crimes should be regulated with discrimination.. .... it would greatly add to the difficulties of settling the country hereafter, if a spirit of animosity against their rulers were engendered in the minds of the people, and if their feelings were embittered by the remembrance of needless bloodshed.

The resolution was a private instruction, circulated to the relevant officials. But, somehow, there was a leak. A copy was published by the Calcutta Press, and on October 17, the full text appeared in The Times, and a leading article attacked the Governor General with ponderous irony. It was here that the phrase 'The Clemency of Canning' was coined.[36]

The public was not in the mood for 'clemency'. The general hysteria had been whipped up, not only by authentic accounts of what actually happened, but by highly coloured inventions, many contained in letters home and published eagerly by the press, of all kinds of loathsome and barbaric incidents. The Nana Sahib, according to the Bombay Correspondent of the Daily News, had selected about five women for his harem, and kept thirty more as hostages. 'No fewer than two hundred and forty officer's and soldier's wives and children', he went on 'were sold by public auction in the streets of Cawnpore and afterwards massacred. The blood of English wives and babes cries for revenge on the relentless enemy, who has outraged every sentiment of humanity and honour.'[37] In England, most people agreed, though a few lone voices were raised against the general bloodlust. Disraeli warned, at the end of September 'against meeting atrocities by atrocities', and was rapped on the knuckles by The Times in a leading article which appeared on October 2. A Letter to The Times which appeared in the same issue, calling for easier promotion from the ranks

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36. McLagan, M., Clemency Canning, London, 1962, 135.

37. Examiner, Sept 5, 1857.

in the Indian Army, appeals to the general feeling. '...might not the just and honourable desire of our English youth of the middle class', asks the writer, 'to serve against those who have outraged and cruelly murdered their sisters and their sisters' children in India be gratified by making some slight modifications of our existing army system...?' If every third commission were given to a non-commissioned officer or a private, 'a prospect of promotion would be added to the motive from righteous indignation at atrocities greater than any which are known to have been perpetrated since the world began.'[38]

Dickens probably read this letter. At any rate, he agreed violently with it on the desirability both of easier promotion in the Indian Army, and of exacting bloody retribution against the rebels, and he seems to be referring to it in a letter written two days later, on Oct. 4, to Miss Coutts; although he speaks of a series of letters, there was only one on this subject in The Times in the preceding four weeks:

> When I see people writing letters in The Times day after day, about this class and that class not joining the army and having no interest in arms - and when I think how we all know that we have suffered a system to go on which has blighted generous ambition, and put reward out of the common man's reach... I become Demonaical.
>
> And I wish I were Commander in Chief in India. The first thing I would do to strike that Oriental race with amazement (not in the least regarding them as if they lived in the Strand, London, or at Camden Town), should be to proclaim to them in their language, that I considered my holding that appointment by the leave of God, to mean that I should do my utmost to exterminate the Race upon whom the stain of the late cruelties rested; and that I was there for that purpose and no other, and was now proceeding, with all convenient dispatch and merciful swiftness of execution, to blot it out of mankind and raze it off the face of the Earth.[39]

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38. Times, Oct 2, 1857.
39. Letters, II, 889.

A general feeling touched off by the Mutiny which was a major element in the general hysteria, certainly in Dickens's, was the alleged massacre and worse of the mutineers' female victims. Overnight, British wives in India became objects of veneration. The treatment by the mutineers of English women was the most direct outrage imaginable against the whole Victorian concept of woman as pure and inviolable, the source of the calm and sanctity of hearth and home. The growing imperialism of the Victorians had already been quickened by the Crimean War,[40] and this crop of martyrs fed the general appetite for the worship of heroes and heroism, of devotion to duty and self-sacrifice. As the Annual Register summed it all up afterwards,

> ...never, since England was a nation, were the splendid qualities of courage, endurance, fidelity to duty, and unflinching fortitude under disaster, which distinguish the Anglo-Saxon race, so conspicuously displayed as in the great Indian Mutiny. Well may we be proud of our countrymen and countrywomen in India, who failed not in the hour of extremest peril, but calmly and steadily accepted the fate which in God's mysterious Providence was marked out for them, and upheld the honour of their nation by their unflinching and desperate resolution.[41]

Dickens was swept along in the general tide, and resolved to do something to commemmorate the heroism of the British in India, especially of British Women. He decided to write a Christmas story for Household Words, in collaboration with Wilkie Collins. The story was to be in three chapters, of which he was to write the first and the last, and Collins was to write the second. The title was The Perils of Certain English Prisoners. He set about gathering material, and on October 18, wrote to Morley, asking him if he knew

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40. See Houghton, op. cit., 324-5.
41. Annual Register, 1857, History, 335.

> Whether, at any time within a hundred years or so, we were in such amicable relations with South America as would have rendered it reasonably possible for us to have made, either a public treaty, or a private bargain, with a South American Government, empowering a little English colony, established on the spot for the purpose, to work a Silver Mine (on purchase of the right), and whether in that suppositious case, it is reasonably possible that our English Government at home would have sent out a small force of a few marines or so, for that little colony's protection; for (which is the same thing) would have drafted them off from the nearest English military Station.
>
> Or can you suggest from your remembrance any more probable set of circumstances in which a few English people - gentlemen, ladies and children - and a few English soldiers, would find themselves alone in a strange wild place and liable to hostile attack? I wish to avoid India itself; but I want to shadow out, in what I do the bravery of our ladies in India.[42]

Towards the end of November, the Christmas number was finished, and Dickens was evidently pleased with the result of his collaboration with Collins. 'I think it will make a prodigious noise', he wrote to Benjamin Webster, suggesting that Webster should do a stage version of the story; 'it lights up all the fire that is in the public mind at this time, and you might make your theatre blaze with it.' The following day, he wrote to Angela Burdett-Coutts, inviting her to dinner to hear the new Christmas Number. 'It is all one story this time, of which I have written the greater part (Mr Collins has written one chapter), and which I have planned with great care in the hope of commemorating, without any vulgar catchpenny connexion or application, some of the best qualities of the English character that have been shewn in India. I hope it is very good and I think it will make a noise.'[43] A few days later, he sent advanced proofs of The Perils to Lady Olliffe and to Macready.[44]

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42. Letters. II, 891 -2.
43. Letters, II, 894.
44. Ibid., 894-5.

The story's reference to the Indian Mutiny could hardly be more pointed. It is told by Gill Davis, a private in the Royal Marines, whose ship has been sent to pursue a gang of cruel pirates, who have been guilty of unspecified bestialities against British Women and Children. The women and children of a British colony are left with a few of the marines, while the main body goes in search of the pirates, who have been seen by an over-demonstratively faithful 'Sambo' (a half-negro, half-Indian native), called Christian George King. After the Marines have left, the women and children are captured by the pirates; King is a traitor, and his information about the pirates is a trick to leave the colony defenceless. The pirate chief takes them all through a dense jungle to a ruined temple, where he sets the men to work felling trees. The party escapes down a conveniently placed river in the middle of the night on a raft hastily made from these trees, and is rescued by a boatload of marines under the command of the interestingly named Captain George Carton. Mis Maryon, whom Gill Davis loves, and whom he has devoted himself to protecting, eventually marries Carton, and after many years finds Davis and makes him a retainer at her country home.

The character of Christian George King is an expression of the pathological hatred of 'natives' that swept over England during the mutiny: Dickens was not, as I shall discuss, very well disposed towards dark-skinned races, and King is a kind of all-purpose 'wog', half negro and half Indian, on to whom he can fasten his loathing. We can see Davis as Dickens's mouthpiece when he says 'I never did like Natives, except in the form of oysters',[45] and confesses that, given the opportunity, he would have 'kicked Christian George King - who was no more a Christian than he was a King or a George - over the side, without exactly knowing

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45. PCEP, 170.

why, except that it was the right thing to do.'[46] Everyone, except Davis, is convinced by King's devotion ('Very much attached to us all. Would die for us', says Miss Maryon) - just as Army Officers in India had been convinced of the loyalty of their native troops.

Much of the confidence of the Indian officers was due to sheer blindness, and there was criticism later of the deplorable state of the British Intelligence services in India, and of the clear lack of understanding between officers and men. For many, the mutiny was the result of a lack of proper leadership, both in the army, and at government level. There had, indeed, already been criticism of the Indian army, which had been largely unheeded. There were now not lacking those to say 'I told you so.'

Carlyle, not unpredictably, was one of them. On October 7, in a letter to Varnhagen von Ense, almost in self-parody, he wrote:

> The Indian mutiny is an ominous rebuke. It seems probable that they <u>will</u> get it beaten down again, but I observe those who know least about it, make lightest of it. What would Friedrich Wilhelm have said to such an 'army' as that black one has been <u>known</u> for thirty years past to be![47]

'People only weary me, assigning "causes",' he pronounced one evening in one of his after-dinner monologues; ' - I seek, at present, no further than the <u>uppermost</u> cause: an army commanded for fifty years by imaginary captains; ....and capable of fermenting into results of any required degree of hideousness.'[48] Dickens agreed, like most people. Leadership was what India needed and now, in this great crisis, there were many who

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46. Ibid., 166.
47. <u>Last Words,</u> 282-3.
48. Wilson,D.A., <u>Carlyle to Threescore and Ten</u>, London, 1929,298

claimed that she was not getting it. The inefficiency of the government became, in the public mind, the appropriate antithesis for the heroism and devotion to duty of those, including the women, who had saved India for the Empire. On September 26, for example, the Examiner quoted a Daily News report that, at the beginning of the mutiny, a force of Ghurkas had been offered by a friendly Native ruler to the Resident of Khatmandou. The Resident had accepted, and the Ghurkas had been marched to the frontier. The Resident, according to this report, was reprimanded by Lord Canning for not going through the proper channels, and the three thousand troops began the long march back. Canning then gave his official acceptance, and once more, the Ghurkas retraced their steps, only to arrive too late to prevent the mutiny of a regiment at Seglowee. 'Lord Canning's bigotry to etiquette has given a fresh impetus to mutiny;' thundered The Examiner; 'and it may shake the good faith of neighbouring states. When Jung Bahadoor heard of Lord Canning's vacillation, he asked "Does the English Government hope to retain India with such a Governor-General?" '.[49]

All these themes are dealt with in The Perils of Certain English Prisoners. Lord Canning's 'bigotry to etiquette', and his allegedly over-developed 'clemency' seem to be parodied in a character in the tale called Mr Commissioner Pordage; and Captains Maryon and Carton embody all those virtues that public opinion, and Dickens with it, were calling out for; decisive leadership, the capacity for action rather than words, and a merciless determination to revenge the victims of outrage. When Maryon is dealing with the crisis caused by his ship's springing a leak (it has been scuttled, of course, by the dastardly 'Sambo', Christian George King), Mr Pordage bears down on him, ordering the ship to be saved

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49. Examiner, Sept 26, 1857.

through the proper channels. 'There hath been no written correspondence', he expostulates,

> No documents have passed, no memoranda have been made, no minutes have been made, no entries and counter-entries appear in the official muniments. This is indecent. I call upon you, Sir, to desist, until all is regular...[50]

When Captain Carton's expedition against the Pirates is about to leave, Pordage warns him to exercise 'clemency' towards them. Carton's reply is strickingly reminiscent of Dickens's letter of October 2 to Miss Coutts: 'I presume you know', says Carton, 'that these villains... have despoiled our countrymen of their property...barbarously murdered them and their little children, and worse than murdered their wives and daughters?' Pordage answers that 'It is not customary...for Government to commit itself.' Carton replies:

> It matters very little, Mr Pordage, whether or no. Believing that I hold my commission by the allowance of God, and not that I have received it direct from the Devil, I shall certainly use it, with all avoidance of unnecessary suffering and with all merciful swiftness of execution, to exterminate these people from the face of the earth.[51]

If The Perils refers closely to public events, it also reflects the continued theme in Dickens's private life, that I have discussed, the 'sad unhappy lack', the longing for the 'one companion I have never made.' Richard Wardour's frustrated adoration for Clara Burnham had struck a chord in Dickens's mind; now something like the same situation recurred in this Christmas story. Except for a momentary identification with

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50. PCEP, 172-3.
51. Ibid., 179.

Carton, Dickens himself is obviously represented by Gill Davis, who was a 'foundling child, picked up somewhere or other', and part of whose childhood was spent 'betwixt Chatham and Maidstone.'[52] Like Pip, he cannot aspire to the hand of his beloved because he is too humble. 'What put it in my low heart to be so daring...', he says, 'I am unable to say; still, the suffering to me was just as great as if I had been a gentleman. I suffered agony - agony. I suffered hard, and I suffered long.'[53] But his love is a purifying one. Just as Richard Wardour before, and Sidney Carton after him, Gill Davis is redeemed (from a dimly hinted future degeneration) by the love of a shining, unattainable lady. Like Lucie Manette, Marion Maryon is conscious of her role. She gives Gill Davis a ring as reward for his devotion:

> The brave gentlemen of old - but not one of them was braver, or had a nobler nature than you - took such gifts from ladies, and did all their good actions for the givers' sakes. If you will do yours for mine, I shall think with pride that I continue to have some share in the life of a gallant and generous man.[54]

And Gill keeps the memory of her injuction sacred: 'I thought of her last words to me ... and I never disgraced them. If it had not been for those dear words, I think I should have lost myself in despair and recklessness.[55]

The women in India earned the worship of their countrymen at home for two reasons; their martyrdom and allegedly violated purity, and their unstinting courage in the face of the enemy, as they joined in the fighting like the men. In the reports that appeared in the papers,

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52. Ibid., 163.
53. Ibid., 207.
54. Ibid., 206.
55. Ibid., 207.

British woman-kind seems to be the object of two distinct kinds of hero-worship, which somehow merge: for the stained-glass madonna, inspiring men by their higher natures, and at the same time, for the heroine of action, who joined in and fought with the men. Like Florence Nightingale in the Crimea, they are both idealised and down to earth. In The Perils, Miss Maryon and another lady, during the siege of the camp by the pirates, help with the loading of rifles:

> Steady and busy behind where I stood, those two beautiful and delicate young women fell to handling the guns, hammering the flints, looking to the locks, and quietly directing others to pass up powder and bullets from hand to hand, as unflinching as the best of tried soldiers.[56]

Miss Maryon is a heroine of action; she is also as pure and inviolable as Agnes Wickfield herself. Before battle is joined, she makes Gill Davis swear solemnly to kill her rather than allow her to be taken by the pirates. 'If you cannot save me from the Pirates, living', she pleads, 'you will save me, dead. Tell me so.'[57] For the rest of the story, Davis devotes himself totally to the idea of her protection.

In the instant mythology that burgeoned around the events of the Idian Mutiny, the ideals of action and fortitude go hand in hand with those of innocence and purity; those Victorian 'Household Gods' the woman and the child are transferred practically unmodified to the field of battle. The 'refined' and the 'gentle' fought side by side with the 'rude' and the 'simple'; the necessity for immediate action, for the unhesitating practical solution of problems takes on a quasi-religous aspect.

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56. Ibid., 186.
57. Ibid., 185.

The Times, reviewing Dickens's and Collins's story, found that it successfully brought out 'the salient traits so recently displayed by his countrymen and countrywomen' in India:

> Their intrepidity and self-confidence, their habit of grumbling at each other without occasion, and of helping each other ungrudgingly when occasion arises, the promptitude with which they accommodate themselves to any emergency and the practical ability with which they surmount every embarrassment, the latent sympathy between gentle and simple, the rude and refined which common hazards stimulate and common sufferings sanctify; in short, the spirit of mutual reliance, of reciprocal service and sacrifice, which they have exhibited in fact, Mr. Dickens has striven to reproduce in fiction.[58]

To the twin ideals embodied by Captain Carton and Miss Maryon (a well-matched couple) are opposed two dreadful evils, for which they are the antidote. Most obviously there is the archetypal villainy, epitomised in fiction by Dickens's pirate chief, and in real life, by the Nana Sahib: sheer black evil, horrible, unthinkable lechery, 'motiveless malignity.' The other evil with which British heroism in India was contrasted was one with which Dickens himself had already done battle in another context; officialdom, redtape, delay, inefficiency: the besetting sins of the Circumlocution Office. Heroism also became identified with the thirst for vengeance, just as 'clemency' was equated with red tape and bungling inefficiency. After the Sepoys themselves, Lord Canning and the India Office were the villains of the piece. The Examiner referred to Little Dorrit in its attack. 'The Home Government [of India]', it admonished, 'is truly one of divided power and resonsibility, or rather of no responsibility at all.... neither Parliament or the public can ever tell with whom it resides... It is a Circumlocution

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58. Times, Dec 24, 1857.

Office on a huge scale...'.[59] Earlier, The Examiner had questioned Canning's fitness for his post and suggested his removal.[60]

Some contrasted the unheroic bureaucracy displayed in some quarters with the heroism and the efficiency shown during the crisis by men like Sir John Lawrence. Two years later, on Lawrence's return to England, Dickens carried out a campaign on his behalf in All the Year Round. The Prime Minister was bringing the Peerage into greater disrepute 'by closing the doors of the House of Lords on Sir JOHN LAWRENCE, whose merit is that he saved India; and opening them to three country gentlemen, whose merit is that they have plenty of money',[61] wrote Dickens's magazine on May 21, 1859. Later in the month, on the publication of the General Report of the Administration of the Punjab, All the Year Round took up the cry again. 'In the account book of the British Nation', Sir John's salvation of India 'stands as a debt half-paid.' Sir John had used to the full 'those two obedient young giants, Electricity and Steam.' Sometimes, during the crisis, he sent and received a hundred telegrams a day. But 'India was not to be saved only by wise counsel, electricity and steam', the article concludes, 'but by wise counsel in direction and by the best material results of knowledge serving in aid of a high-hearted race.'[62]

Captains Maryon and Carton on the one hand, and Mr. Pordage on the other, fit into the great myth of the Indian Mutiny, which was partly created by the Press. Dickens's personal reaction is certainly an example of how in tune with public opinion he often was. The Perils of Certain English Prisoners reflects fairly accurately the often

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59. Examiner, Oct 10, 1857.
60. Ibid., Oct 3, 1857.
61. "Occasional Register", AYR, I (1859), 83.
62. "An Empire Saved", AYR, I (1859), 109-11.

hysterical reactions of most people to the frightening events of 1857. But it would be surprising if his attitude was not preconditioned to a certain extent by his reading of Carlyle. It was only three years before that he had told Carlyle 'no man knows your books better than I'; and four years before that, Carlyle had published his Latter-day Pamphlets, two of which have a close bearing on the public controversy aroused by the Indian Mutiny.

The third of these pamphlets, entitled 'Downing Street', is a ferocious attack against 'the ineffectuality of what are nicknamed our "red-tape" establishments, our Government Offices, Colonial Office, Foreign Office and the others...' Interestingly, Carlyle spend a good deal of his space in an attack on colonial administration. 'Every colony, every agent for a matter colonial', he asserts, 'has his tragic tale to tell you of his sad experiences in the Colonial Office; what blind obstructions, fatal indolences, pedantries, stupidities, on the right and on the left, he had to do battle with; what a world-wide jungle of red-tape, inhabited by doleful creatures, deaf or nearly so to human reason or entreaty, he had entered on...'[63] In Foreign, as in Colonial affairs, there is far too much 'protocolling' and 'having the honour to be.'[64] What the Nation, and the Empire needs, is 'some real Captaincy instead of an imaginary one: to remove resolutely... its own peculiar species of teaching and guiding histrios... while the play is still good, and the comedy has not yet become tragic;... This Britain might learn: but she does not need a protocolling establishment, with much "having the honour to be", to teach it her.'[65] Dickens may well have thought that the Indian Mutiny showed exactly what Carlyle

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63. LDP, 339 - 40.
64. Ibid., 341 - 2.
65. Ibid., 342 - 3.

had feared - the comedy of inefficiency and refusal of responsibility had become tragic indeed. Perhaps the whole mutiny might have been nipped in the bud if only there had been a 'real Captain,' a leader of sufficient presence of mind, at Meerut, where the whole ghastly tragedy began. General Hewitt, the commander of the garrison there, was too old for decisive action, and quoted section XVII of the regulations to show that no responsibility lay with him.[66]

The Indian Mutiny provides an interesting historical link between two ideas which, in Carlylean ideology, are inseparable almost by definition: the loss of belief, of the sense of 'the Eternal Nature of Duty', and the fear of revolution. For Carlyle, the first French revolution itself was a direct result of the spiritual debility of the ancien régime. The popular reaction to the Indian Mutiny reflected, in a way, an interpretation of the insurrection in something like these terms: just as ideal female purity was obviously antithesised by rape, so Duty was the natural antithesis for anarchy. The equation, too, of inefficiency and lack of the heroic temper brings the popular mythology of the Indian Mutiny further into the orbit of the Carlylean vocabulary.

Dickens's story about the Mutiny, I have suggested, looks back to The Frozen Deep, and forward to A Tale of Two Cities. It provides us, I think, with some valuable clues about the genesis of the Tale, which seem to indicate a link between Dickens's hysterical reaction to the massacres of the Indian Mutiny, and the conviction behind his horrified descriptions, published less than two years later, of some of the most gruesome events of the French Revolution.

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66. McLagan, op. cit., 79 - 80.

When the Mutiny broke out, Dickens had already acted the part of Richard Wardour four times. As we have seen, the first impulse for Carton's self-sacrifice probably came from Wardour's. The idea was certainly clearly in his mind when the popular reaction to the insurrection was at its height, and the Perils shows, perhaps, that he made an association between the nobility of Wardour's end, and the self-sacrifice of British women (and men) in India. What these women represented is clearly relevant to A Tale of Two Cities, and fits in exactly with Dickens's female ideal. Just as Marion Maryon hopes that Gill Davis (with whom Dickens himself is obviously identified) will do all his good actions for her sake, so Lucie Darnay appeals to Carton's better impulses: '... can I not save you, Mr. Carton?', she asks him, 'in earnest tears'; 'Can I not recall you... to a better course?'[67] Sidney Carton himself reminds us of the striking appearance in the Perils of Captain George Carton. In the Christmas Story, of course, Captain Carton is on the right corner of the eternal triangle, and it is the humble Gill Davis who, though rather less impressively than the hero of the Tale, sacrifices himself for the unattainable woman. Nevertheless, the Tale shows the same association between a triangular love story and conditions of physical danger, between protective sacrifice and anarchy, in this case the anarchy of the Indian Mutiny to which the story's reference was intended by Dickens to be clearly understood by his readers. The striking recurrence in A Tale of Two Cities of these themes, which Dickens had treated less than two years before, together with the date of his historical novel, justify, I think, an hypothesis. A Tale of Two Cities, clearly, does not refer to the dangers of revolution in England. By

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67. TTC, 144.

1859, this fear was much less immediate than it had been, for example, when he had written Barnaby Rudge, some twenty years earlier. Much of the horrified conviction of Dickens's description of massacres in the Tale may well be explained by his reactions to the Indian Mutiny. The insurrection took place, as we have seen, during the Tale's period of gestation, and Dickens's intense feelings about the Mutiny produced a story in which the central situation of The Frozen Deep, which was to recur in a recognisable form in the Tale, was associated with the perils undergone by the British in India. And the importance of the recurrence in the Tale of the name Carton should not be underemphasised. The names of his characters were very important to Dickens, and this kind of repetition of surnames is rare.

If we can accept this hypothesis, it may provide us with one more fragment of supporting evidence for the partial explanation I have suggested of Carlyle's influence over Dickens. By his similarities with Harthouse if for no other reason, Carton's nihilism can be closely linked with that of the Carlylean dilettante. What Dickens opposes to his spiritual debility, the inspiring love for a good woman, is strictly unCarlylean. At the same time, the Victorian ideal of womanhood involved here reflects a public frame of mind of which, I have suggested, Carlyle's vast influence was a very different, but in a way parallel, manifestation. Dickens's own veneration for Carlyle, and his own ideas about the role of women, seem to me to have something like the same analogous relationship.

This view of Carlyle's influence over Dickens, in conjunction with A Tale of Two Cities and its background, leads us to another recurrent Dickensian theme: that represented in his books by his dramatic interest

in the violence of the mob. The image of violent uprisings had a grim fascination for Dickens, as for his age; and the classic Victorian essay on the causes and effects of bloody insurrection was, of course, The French Revolution. Carlyle, more powerfully than any other influential literary figure, articulated, in his social writings as well as in his famous history, the early Victorian fear that it might all happen here. We must now, therefore, examine Dickens's ideas about Revolution and their relationship with those of Carlyle.

Chapter Seven: THE PEOPLE; REVOLUTION AND RADICALISM

In two of Dickens's novels, descriptions of insurrectionary mobs are centrally important; in three more there are brief but convincing scenes involving rioting crowds which, though less important to their context, fit interestingly into an overall pattern. Dickens's literary fascination with crowd behaviour spans a large part of his career; the long period of gestation of Barnaby Rudge started around May 1836,[1] and the final number of A Tale of Two Cities appeared in All the Year Round in November 1859. And during these years, his interest breaks to the surface in short scenes in Oliver Twist, The Old Curiosity Shop, and Little Dorrit. This preoccupation is central to him, for reasons that are fairly clear. The mob, like the prison and the fireside, is a great centralising emblem, enacting in dramatic form and fusing together such Dickensian (and Victorian) concerns, as the need for order and control, the fear of cruelty, the horror of anarchy, and its converse, the belief in 'civilisation' and the values of hearth and home. Though Dickens's admiration for Carlyle's French Revolution is beyond dispute, and his knowledge of its mob scenes was (certainly later in his career) very intimate indeed, his response to it was certainly preconditioned by quite independent factors. In the same way, the success of The French Revolution, on its appearance in 1837, reflected and to some extent fostered, but did not create, the nervous fear of the mob felt by many of its first readers.

One reason why the mob should have engaged Dickens's attention so compellingly, especially in the early part of his career, is obvious

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1. Tillotson, K., and Butt, J., Dickens at Work, London, 1957, 76.

enough. His first years as a fully fledged novelist saw the growth of the popular agitation which reached its peak in the late thirties and early forties, and which led to such apprehension among the upper and middle classes. 'Once more', as Élie Halévy suggests, 'the memory of the French Revolution obsessed their imagination.'[2] The period of gestation of Barnaby Rudge overlaps, more or less, the development of this first and most violent phase of the Chartist era, the period in which it was natural for a prophet like Carlyle to create his reputation with the publication of The French Revolution, and to consolidate it with Chartism. When Barnaby Rudge was published, the perils of insurrectionary Chartism had been successfully contained, but few people realised this at the time, and the contemporary associations of Dickens's first historical novel must have been irresistible for most readers. The riots themselves (though the Gordon Riots were on a much larger scale than any Chartist equivalent), the preparations for insurrection, the secret plottings, even the petition of 1839, are all paralleled in Barnaby Rudge. But Dickens's novel is not a tract for the times, as The French Revolution clearly is. Dickens makes no attempt to show why the Gordon Riots took place; he has a dig or two at 'the good old Tory times', but there is little conscious effort to make connections of cause and effect, as he does later in A Tale of Two Cities. It is enough for his purpose in Barnaby Rudge to produce villainous master minds like Gashford and Chester as the root of the trouble. Madame Defarge is a Dickensian villain in the same tradition, but unlike Gashford's and Chester's, her malignity has a more or less convincing motive, which is successfully, if not very subtly, shown as part of a whole historical undertow. Although Sim Tappertit hints in passing at 'an altered state of society', there is no attempt, as there is in the

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2. Halévy, É., Victorian Years, London, 1961, 299.

later story, to give the phrase any real meaning behond a slightly ponderous facetiousness.

The mob scenes in Barnaby Rudge, as I shall argue, can nevertheless be seen partly as a response to a concrete external situation. But Dickens's reactions to the crowd in action reflect part of his own personality, as well as the early Victorian fear of the unleashed fury of the populace. Like his public readings of the murder of Nancy, from Oliver Twist, crowds show Dickens emotionally at full stretch. His descriptions of them in full cry are similar, too, in their ambivalence; he both fears them and exults in them. He is stirred by the mob's fierce energy, fascinated by and totally caught up in its mysterious unleashing of violence. 'I have just burst into Newgate, and am going in the next number to tear the prisoners out by the hair of their heads', he wrote excitedly to Forster in December 1841, when his account of the Gordon Riots in the serialisation of Barnaby Rudge was reaching its climax.[3] He is carried away by the mob's energy; at the same time, he is terrified by its destructiveness, a terror which he feels in a acutely personal way. The first mob scene in Dickens is also a flight from retribution; in Oliver Twist it is a mob that hounds Bill Sikes to the garish Nemesis demanded by the conventions of the 'Victorian Sensation Novel.'[4] The idea of retribution is a stock solution of melodrama, but it is obviously one that has some meaning for Dickens; like that of Quilp, the scene evoking Bill Sikes's death is one of Dickens's most convincingly horrific and Sikes's own violence is akin, in a way, to that of the mob which indirectly destroys him; though this particular crowd is relatively well-behaved, it is nevertheless uncontrolled,

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3. Forster, 169.
4. Phillips, W., Dickens, Reade, and Collins, New York, 1962, 15-17.

anarchic, unpredictable. Dickens is involved in the mob's fierce energy in both an active and a passive way. He is both an excited member of the mob itself, and, at the same time, its victim, perched terrified on the rooftop with Sikes. In the same way, in his reading from Oliver Twist, he involved himself totally in the situations of both Sikes and Nancy, became murderer and victim in a way which surely cannot be completely explained merely in terms of the acting demands of his roles.

The mob's character as a kind of avenging fury seems to contain a certain part of its meaning for Dickens. That this is true of A Tale of Two Cities scarcely need underlining; the dark fatefulness of Madame Defarge's knitted blacklist of victims for the vengeance of the people is one of the novel's less subtle motifs. And apart from Bill Sikes, Dickens gives us two earlier glimpses of this idea. Neither Barnaby Rudge's father nor Rigaud alias Blandois is psychologically convincing, as Bill Sikes, inside the limitations imposed by his brand of characterisation, obviously is; and neither of them is in any way central to the novel in which he appears. But both of them have at least one moment which carries conviction. Rigaud is in prison, charged with the murder of his wife. Outside, a mob waits for him. The jailer comes to release him, telling him of the hostile crowd:

> He passed on out of sight, and unlocked and unbarred a low door in the corner of the chamber. 'Now', said he, as he opened it and appeared within, 'come out'.
>
> There is no sort of whiteness in all the hues under the sun at all like the whiteness of Monsieur Rigaud's face as it was then. Neither is there any expression of the human countenance at all like that expression, in every little line of which the frightened heart is seen to beat. Both are conventionally compared with

> death; but the difference is the whole deep gulf between the struggle done, and the fight at its most desperate extremity.[5]

This has many of the marks of Dickens's prose at its worst; the over-ripe hyperbole of 'there is no sort of whiteness...'; the inappropriately rhetorical repetition of 'whiteness'; the fulsomeness of 'the frightened heart'. This ought to be bad writing and yet, once we have penetrated its prosiness, the passage carries conviction. The momentary truthfulness of these few lines is quickly dissipated by what follows; Rigaud lights a cigar, places it tightly between his teeth, covers his head with a soft slouched hat, throws the end of his cloak over his shoulder, and slinks out, accompanied by our hisses. Rigaud, of course, comes well after the heyday of the full-blown Dickensian villain. Rudge comes between Bill Sykes and Quilp, and Jonas Chuzzlewit, and though a less successful character, still has something of their lurid fascination. It is interesting that Rudge <u>in extremis</u> places himself in his diseased imagination in a situation not unlike that of Sikes near his end, or Rigaud as, out of context, I have shown him. Rudge has been captured for a murder committed many years before, and when the rioters come to sack Newgate, he is awaiting trial there. He is awakened by 'the roar of voices, and the struggling of a great crowd':

> He started up as these sound met his ear, and, sitting on his bedstead, listened.
>
> After a short interval of silence the noise burst out again. Still listening attentively, he made out, in course of time, that the jail was besieged by a furious multitude. His guilty conscience instantly arrayed these men against himself, and brought the fear upon him that he would be singled out, and torn to pieces.

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5. <u>LD</u>, 13.

> Once impressed with the terror of this conceit, everything tended to confirm and strengthen it....He was one man against the whole united concourse; a single, solitary, lonely man, from whom the very captives in the jail fell off and shrunk appalled....
>
> Every shout they raised, and every sound they made, was a blow upon his heart. As the attack went on, he grew more wild and frantic in his terror: tried to pull away the bars that guarded the chimney and prevented him from climbing up: called loudly on the turnkeys to cluster round the cell and save him from the fury of the rabble; or put him in some dungeon underground, no matter of what depth, how dark it was, or loathsome, or beset with rats and creeping things, so that it hid him and was hard to find.[6]

How much this scene, and the others I have quoted, reflect emotionally some part of Dickens himself, is a question outside the scope of this study. What we can, perhaps, suggest is that Dickens here seems able to commit himself imaginatively to what he is depicting in a way which it may be useful to remember when we consider his later pronouncements on two historical events involving insurrectionary movements and their victims. Dickens's fictional depictions of mobs are completely consistent with his attitudes both to the Indian Mutiny and to the Jamaican Insurrection of 1865 and its aftermath.

Rudge's scene is more of a piece with his novel than Bill Sikes's or Rigaud's with theirs. Nevertheless, we can distinguish two common features in these short extracts that seem to be present in all of them, and which may not be irrelevant to Dickens's emotional reactions to actual as well as to fictional mobs. Firstly, there is the feeling of being alone in face of a hostile world. To Bill Sykes, 'it seemed as though the whole city had poured its population to curse him'; Rudge is

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6. BR, 496 - 7.

'one man against the whole united concourse'. Secondly, there is the simple fear of being 'singled out, and torn to pieces'. Neither of these is particularly unusual by itself, and any novelist of Dickens's powers might be expected to be able to imagine these fears and attempt a description of them; most people, too, would react in both these ways if faced by a hostile crowd. But they do seem to occur to Dickens with what one might think more than usual readiness. Why is Bill Sykes hounded by a mob at all? Apart from an exiting scene, the crowd in Oliver Twist adds little to the novel. Even more curiously irrelevant is the short scene from Little Dorrit. And this preoccupation does not belong only to the early part of Dickens's career: Oliver Twist was published in book form in 1838, Barnaby Rudge in 1841, Little Dorrit in 1857; and, of course, the notion of being 'singled out and torn to pieces' is taken, in A Tale of Two Cities (1859) to its grisly logical conclusion, in its gruesome description of the massacre of Foulon. This episode, like many others, as I have shown, follows closely the text of Carlyle's French Revolution.[7] But Dickens could easily have omitted it, as he necessarily omitted most of the incidents of Carlyle's long history.

Barnaby Rudge enables us to make a few more broadly based conjectures on the mob's meaning for Dickens than these unrelated fragments from Oliver Twist, The Old Curiosity Shop, and Little Dorrit. All Dickens's reactions to mob violence can be summarised, in the last analysis, in terms of two complementary variants of one generic idea: on the one hand, the fear of violence, cruelty and anarchy, and on the other, the obverse love of stability and what we might vaguely call 'civilised values'. About halfway through Barnaby Rudge, Dickens leaves the scene

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7. See pp 208-9 above.

of the riots and takes us into the country, where Barnaby and his mother are living in a state of rustic peace. The chapter is introduced by an informative 'meanwhile' clause, which gives Dickens's quick assessment of the riots we have just been reading about: the scene describing Mrs Rudge's tranquil retreat, Dickens tells us, unfolds 'While the worst passions of the worst men were thus working in the dark, and the mantle of religion, assumed to cover the ugliest deformities, threatened to become the shroud of all that was good and peaceful in society...'[8]. The phrase 'all that was good and peaceful in society' is a vague but important one. What does it mean? The destructive forces in Barnaby Rudge are summed up, adequately to Dickens's intention perhaps, as 'the worst passions of the worst men'. What is it whose destruction Dickens fears? This, clearly is a much less precise theme of Barnaby Rudge, and less important to its effect than Dickens's fairly primitive evocation of the mob's destructive violence. But the idea is there for the unearthing, and although it may not add much to our literary awareness of the final effect, it is, I think, a helpful question to discuss, underlining the distinction I have already made, when discussing A Tale of Two Cities between Dickens's and Carlyle's reactions to insurrectionary violence. The 'Catholic gentry and tradesmen' of the tale who, after suffering the first few outrages of the mob still feel 'An honest confidence in the government under whose protection they had lived for many years, and a well-founded reliance on the good feeling and right thinking of the great mass of the community',[9] give us an interesting point of reference. At this point in the story, Dickens tells us, they are still convinced that 'they who were Protestants in anything but the name, were no more to be considered as abettors of these disgraceful occurrences, than they

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8. BR, 339.
9. BR, 387.

themselves were chargeable with the uses of the block, the rack, the gibbet, and the stake in cruel Mary's reign'. More or less consciously, an association is suggested between Mary's cruelty, and the violence and cruelty of the mob. The comparison is tenuously stated, but the train of thought it suggests is certainly worth pursuing. 'The block, the rack, the gibbet and the stake' reminds us of the series of false book titles in the Gad's Hill library, called 'The Wisdom of our Ancestors',[10] and of the doggerel verse Dickens contributed to The Examiner in the summer of 1841 (when Barnaby Rudge was appearing in Master Humphrey's Clock) entitled 'The Fine Old English Gentleman'. Part of it is interestingly reminiscent of the passage from Barnaby Rudge quoted above:

> The good old laws were garnished well with gibbets, whips, and chains,
> With fine old English penalties, and fine old English pains,
> With rebel heads and seas of blood once hot in rebel veins:
> For all these things were requisite to guard the rich old gains
> Of the fine old English Tory times;
> Soon may they come again![11]

Dickens's dislike of the 'good old laws' is made clear, too, in Barnaby Rudge: the inhabitants of the death cells in Newgate, while the prison burns around them, plead desperately to be freed. Any person 'no matter how good or just', says Dickens, would have saved them from 'this last dreadful and repulsive penalty'.[12] But Dennis, 'who had been bred and matured in the good old school, and had administered the good old laws on the good old plan, always once and sometimes twice every six weeks, for a long time, bore these appeals with

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10. See House, H., The Dickens World, London, Repr. 1960. 35.
11. Forster, 192.
12. BR, 500.

a deal of philosophy'.

Dickens's hatred of cruelty and intolerance, it cannot be emphasised too strongly, is generically related to his feeling for the possibilities of progress of his own age. Here, again, we can note a clear distinction with the philosophy of Carlyle, who is certainly more indifferent to the cruelties of both past and present and at times even seems to defend them. Dickens's recoil from mob violence, I shall suggest, stems partly from the same root as his hatred of injustice and oppression; the division of Dennis's loyalties between the mob and the 'good old school', is not a real one. When the oppressed are guilty of destructive violence they become the oppressors, the destroyers of the civilised values that guard against anarchy and cruelty. For Dickens, 'progress' partly means ever greater immunity from barbarism, whether on the part of authority ('seas of blood once hot in rebel veins') or of the mob's unleashed animality.

The fate of one 'fine old English Tory' at the depradations of one collection of 'rebel heads' is interestingly described in Barnaby Rudge, in the sacking of Lord Mansfield's house. Dickens shows one part of his attitude to the law in, among other places, Bleak House. Perhaps here, he shows the other side of the coin. Mansfield is attacked, of course, as one of the supporters of the Catholic Bill, but what seems to emerge from Dickens's account is the idea of the violation of certain ideals of accumulated civilisation, of solidity and slow growth. Dickens follows fairly closely his source for this episode, which is William Vincent's narrative of the riots.[13] But there is a slight difference of emphasis between the two accounts. Dickens has to be

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13. See Ulrich, A., Studien zu Dickens's Roman, Barnaby Rudge, Jena, 1931, 12 - 13.

much fuller, of course, as his kind of story-telling demands, but his variations on Vincent's bare bones are not simply literary padding:

Vincent	Dickens
...A fifth desperate and infernal gang went to the elegant house of Lord Mansfield in Bloomsbury Square, which they, with the most unrelenting fury, set fire to and consumed. The loss here was immense both to Lord Mansfield as an individual and to the public. A most valuable collection of pictures, some of the scarcest manuscripts said to be in the possession of any private person in the world, with all his Lordship's notes and on great law cases, and the constitution on England, were all sacrificed by madmen and villains...[14]	...they then began to demolish the house with great fury, and setting fire to it in several parts, involved in a common ruin the whole of the costly furniture, the plate and jewels, a beautiful gallery of pictures, the rarest collection of manuscripts ever possessed by any one private person in the world, and worse than all, because nothing could replace this loss, the Great Law Library, on almost every page of which were notes in the Judge's own hand, of inestimable value, - being the results of the study and experience of his whole life.[15]

Dickens's narrative is, by its nature, more emotionally stretched than Vincent's elegant but vivid factual account and this explains some of the inflation of emphasis: 'some of the scarcest manuscripts ever said to be in the possession of any private person in the world' becomes, without qualification, simply 'the rarest collection of manuscripts ever possessed by any one person in the world'. But of course, it is not the plate and jewels or even the manuscripts that Dickens singles out: 'worse than all,' he says, is the destruction of 'the results of the study and experience of his whole life.' Lord Mansfield was, of

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14. Vincent, W., A Plain and Succinct Account of the late Riots, London, 1780, 25.
15. BR, 510.

course, exactly the kind of Old Tory that Dickens detested, but here the burning young radical momentarily sounds like a Burkeian conservative. Dickens's horror at the implications of the sacking of Mansfield's house leads us to a closely related feeling: the fear of the destruction of the values of order and civilisation to be found in the home. For Dickens, of course, the home was one of the areas in which he could let his idealising instinct have full play with the complete support of his readers: as critics have not failed to notice, the Dickensian cult of hearth and home is of central importance to him. Perhaps, then, it is significant that the most intensely felt of all the riots in the novel, a scene far surpassing in Dantesque horror that describing the sacking sacking of Newgate, should be, not one of the novel's factually based episodes, but a fictional one, the gutting of Haredale's country house. The scene is described in highly personal terms: it is almost a kind of rape. The succession of brutal images, almost cinematic in their fragmentary technique and their vividness, give way at one point to a more personal and less visual statement, that is evidently no less intensely felt:

> The burning pile, revealing rooms and passages red hot, through gaps made in the crumbling walls; the tributary fires that licked the outer bricks and stones, with their long forked tongues, and ran up to meet the glowing mass within; the shining of the flames upon the villains who looked on and fed them; the roaring of the angry blaze, so bright and high that it seemed in its rapacity to have swallowed up the very smoke; the living flakes the wind bore rapidly away and hurried on with, like a storm of fiery snow; the noiseless breaking of great beams of wood, which fell like feathers on the heap of ashes, and crumbled in the very act to sparks and powder; the lurid tinge that overspread the sky, and the darkness, very deep by contrast, which prevailed around; the exposure to the coarse, common gaze, of every little nook which usages of home had made a sacred place, and the destruction by rude hands of every

> little household favourite which old associations made a dear and precious thing: all this taking place - not among pitying looks and friendly murmurs of compassion, but brutal shouts and exultations, which seemed to make the very rats who stood by the old house too long, creatures with some claim upon the pity and regard of those its roof had sheltered:- combined to form a scene never to be forgotten by those who saw it and were not actors in the work, so long as life endured.[16]

Perhaps the middle class radicals who were scared away from support of the Chartist movement by the heady utterances of the demagogues had somewhere at the back of their consciousness a nightmare vision not unlike this. 'Middle class' is a vague and unsatisfactory term (many of the wildest Chartist leaders were from the 'middle classes') but it was a term in common use among Chartists, sometimes as an epithet of abuse against the more cautious. This scene, representing the destruction of the safety and control of hearth and home, 'of every little nook which usages of home had made a sacred place', by the mob's unreasoning animality enacts, in a way, a kind of middle-class nightmare, an emblematic fantasy of the crumbling of what certainly seemed to many, at the time Barnaby Rudge was written, to be a highly unstable equilibrium. Dickens uses a variety of images to describe the mob, all of which underline this idea of the crowd as a phenomenon either simply not subject to or as actually destructive of, control and stability. The point may seem laboured; rioting mobs are like this, in actuality as well as in books about them. What is worth noticing perhaps, is that effectively this is the only point Dickens really makes about the mob in Barnaby Rudge.

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16. BR, 422-3.

He makes it in a number of ways; in terms of incident, he does it by describing the mob's destruction of concrete emblems of stability, like the home. The most common imagery by which Dickens explores this theme is that of water, especially of the sea. The crowd is a 'stream of life', which goes 'pouring along';[17] it makes a sound like 'the roaring of the sea';[18] it is a 'human tide',[19] it rises 'like a great sea'.[20] The comparison between the mob and the sea reminds us, perhaps, of Dickens's sea-imagery in A Tale of Two Cities; and prompts the obvious question of Carlylean influence. Professors Butt and Tillotson suggest The French Revolution as a possible source of 'general inspiration for descriptions of mob violence'.[21] There is nothing in Barnaby Rudge that enables us to establish any contact with the text of The French Revolution, let alone the closeness of contact that we can see in Dickens's second historical novel,[22] and, it might be thought, Dickens has quite enough imagination to think of the comparison between the mob and the sea for himself. Nevertheless, the similarity between the imagery Dickens uses to evoke the mob, in two novels published nearly twenty years apart, together with the intimate and very easily demonstrated debt of the two mobs in the Tale to their counterparts in The French Revolution, are, I think, suggestive, and can be seen to fit Froude's otherwise unsupported claim that Dickens was reading Carlyle's history soon after its first appearance in 1837.

The sea-image may or may not have been inspired by Carlyle. But the two

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17. BR, 362.
18. BR, 367.
19. BR, 505.
20. BR, 516.
21. Butt, J., and Tillotson, K., op. cit., 84.
22. See pp200ff above.

writers certainly use it in the same way, to suggest a phenomenon of unfathomable and independent life, whose danger lies in its unpredictability. Dickens propounds the image at one point, with a perhaps curious self-consciousness:

> A mob is usually a creature of very mysterious existence, particularly in a large city. Where it comes from or whither it goes, few men can tell. Assembling and dispersing with equal suddenness, it is as difficult to follow to its various sources as the sea itself; nor does the parallel stop here, for the ocean is not more fickle and uncertain, more terrible when roused, more unreasonable, or more cruel.[23]

The mob is like the sea, because it is uncertain and mysterious and hence uncontrollable, and because it is 'terrible', 'unreasonable', and 'cruel'. Hugh, the uncontrolled and uncontrollable savage, totally without education or reason (in opposition to Chester, who suffers from an excess of both) is the crowd's just epitome. And like the crowd, which is manipulated by Gashford for his own ends, Hugh is putty in the hands of Chester; their relationship is like that of Caliban and Prospero, showing the interaction of 'Nature' and 'Nurture' taken to their limit. The crowd is the natural antithesis of civilisation, epitomising a reversion to barbarism. Unlike Carlyle, who in The French Revolution sees the mob as the agent of a necessary historical process, Dickens sees it as the enemy of progress; for him, this key word inevitably includes order and stability, immunity from the primordial cruelties of the past. The crowd in Barnaby Rudge is described as being 'like a mad monster',[24] as 'wild and savage, like beasts at the

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23. BR, 396.
24. BR, 375.

sight of prey'.[25] In more human, but scarcely less bestial terms, its component members are 'the very scum and refuse of London',[26] more charitably, simply 'idle and profligate persons'.[27] The mob is a prey to its own appetites, barbarous and animal in its inability to see beyond the moment, incapable of rational thought: 'The great mass never reasoned or thought at all, but were stimulated by their own headlong passions, by poverty, by ignorance, by the love of mischief, and the hope of plunder'.[28] For Carlyle, even the butchers of the September Massacres have their own peculiar justification, their own special kind of order, which springs from the nature of their task. 'Fell Slaughter', says Carlyle, 'one of the most authentic products of the Pit you would say, once give it Customs, becomes War, with Laws of War; and is Customary and Moral enough; and red individuals carry the tools of it girt round their haunches, not without an air of pride, - which do thou nowise blame'.[29] Dickens's attitude to the mob, in marked contrast, is that of outraged middle-class decency. Barnaby may be insane, but he washes himself regularly, and is capable of receiving trust and in his own imagining of discharging it honourably. 'What weakness he's guilty of, with respect to his cleanliness', says Dennis, and the contrast is made more pointed at the end of the same paragraph. After washing, Barnaby walks to and fro in the sunshine, singing to himself, and 'keeping time to the music of some clear church bells'.

> To Hugh and his companion, who lay in a dark corner of the gloomy shed, he, and the sunlight, and the peaceful Sabbath sound to which he made response, seemed like a bright picture framed by the

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25. Ibid.,
26. BR, 374.
27. BR, 396.
28. BR, 402-3.
29. FR II, 200.

door, and set off by the stable's blackness. The whole formed such a contrast to themselves, as they lay wallowing, like some obscene animales, in their squalor and wickedness on the two heaps of straw, that for a few moments they looked on without speaking, and felt almost ashamed.[30]

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The background to the writing of Barnaby Rudge, and to the novel's meaning for its first readers, was, of course, the Chartist violence of the late thirties and early forties, and the general fear in the middle and upper classes that the Chartist movement evoked. It was Carlyle, more notably than anyone, who reflected, and to some extent, fostered, the general feeling. The French Revolution appeared in 1837, a year of serious economic recession, rising unemployment, and a bad harvest.[31] Bread was dear and scarce, and there was wide-spread distress in the industrial areas. April saw the strike of the Glasgow cotton spinners; a man was found murdered in the street, and eighteen of the strikers accused, at first of murder and incendiarism, then simply of conspiracy to intimidate their fellow workers.[32] The cry of the Paris mob for 'bread' that reverberates through the pages of The French Revolution must have had an uncomfortable ring for many readers of Carlyle's history. Two years later, Carlyle was making the parallel explicit: 'These Chartisms, Radicalisms, Reform Bill, Tithe Bill, and infinite other discrepancy, and acrid argument and jargon that there is yet to be', he wrote in Chartism, 'are our French Revolution: God grant that we, with our better methods, may be able to transact it by argument alone!'[33] But Chartism makes it plain what Carlyle really thought of 'our better

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30. BR, 398.
31. Briggs, A., The Age of Improvement, London, 1959, 295.
32. Halevy, op. cit., 293.
33. Ch, 66.

methods'; 'What Parliaments....have done, ', he wrote, 'is unhappily plain enough. Hitherto, on this most national of questions, the Collective Wisdom of the Nation has availed us as good as nothing whatever'.[34] The Chartist movement certainly gave good cause for anxiety. It was, as R.H. Tawney puts it, 'the entry into politics, not merely of a new party, but of a new class. The English counterpart of the continental revolutions of 1848, it was at once the last movement which drew its conceptions and phraseology from the inexhaustible armoury of the French Revolution, and the first political attack upon the social order which had emerged from the growth of capitalist industry'.[35]

In May 1838, the discontent of the poor, which had been widely focussed on the hardship caused by the operation of the New Poor Law began to rally with the publication of the People's Charter to a new cause, universal suffrage, though as James Raynor Stephens said later in the year, the movement that was gathering momentum, was really about 'bread, not ballot-boxes'.[36] In August, at a great public meeting in Birmingham, the National Petition was put forward. From this moment, unrest grew rapidly. There were mass-meetings all over the country, and during the winter these were often held by torchlight. The language at these gatherings was increasingly violent. Orators such as Stephens and Feargus O'Connor openly incited their hearers to insurrection. The mass meetings, on Kearsal Moor and elsewhere, were themselves peaceful; but the heady words of the demagogues had their effect. The same night, for instance, that Stephens delivered a violent speech against the tyranny of the factory system, a factory was set on fire at Ashton-under-Lyne. In December, Stephens was arrested, and the torchlight meetings

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34. Ch, 40.
35. Tawney, R.H., reprinted preface to Life and Struggles of William Lovett, London, 1967, xi.
36. Hovell, M., History of the Chartist Movement, 1925, 116, and Chartist Studies, Ed. Briggs, A., London, 1959, 44.

suppressed. Through the early months of 1839, unrest continued in the industrial areas. The harvest had failed again the previous year, and distress was acute in some part of the country. 'Crowded meetings applauded violent orations, threats and terrorism were abroad. Magistrates trembled, and peaceful citizens felt they were living on the edge of a volcano. The frail bonds of social sympathy were snapped and class stood over against class as if civil war were impending.'[37]

It was at about this time that Dickens visited Manchester. He had already visited this centre of Chartist activities in November of the previous year,[38] less than a month after the mammoth gathering on Kearsal Moor of September 24, and during a period of regular, highly excited torchlight meetings in the aread. 'One of those torches', proclaimed O'Connor to a gathering at Rochdale in November, dramatically pointing to a flaming brand, 'was worth a thousand speeches; it spoke a language so intelligible that no one could misunderstand.'[39] Dickens visited two mills in Manchester one supposedly the best, the other the worst: he found little difference between them.[40] On January 12, he went there again, with Forster and Ainsworth. The visit was probably not made on his own initiative; according to a letter to Bentley, it was 'in fulfilment of a rash promise and vow', made probably to Ainsworth; Ainsworth was a native of Manchester, and travelled there to attend a public dinner in his honour, and Dickens's letter only mentions Ainsworth as his travelling companion, and does not refer to Forster. The excitement in the area during both these visits was at a high pitch. Although in the end 'physical force''doctrines may have driven away

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37. Hovell, op. cit., 136-7.
38. Pilgrim Letters, I., to E.M. Fitzgerald, 29 Dec., 1838.
39. Chartist Studies, 45.
40. Pilgrim Letters, I., 483.

more operatives from Chartism than they attracted, middle class opinion in Manchester was extremely disturbed by the autumn meetings and the general unrest.[41] The atmosphere in Manchester must have been very alarming around this time, and someone of Dickens's journalistic training and acuteness could scarcely, one would have thought, avoid registering it.

Dickens stayed in Manchester for about a week, and returned to Devonshire terrace (where he had recently removed) around the middle of January.[42] In February, the 'General Convention of the Industrious Classes' met in London. There was fiery speech, and talk of refusing to recognise the authority of a 'rotten' parliament.[43] From all over the country, reports came in of working men arming themselves with pikes and guns, and of tumultuous meetings. The nearest to a direct reference to Chartist violence that Dickens made in his letters comes at about this time. Writing, probably about yet another discovery of his father's debts to Coutts's the bankers, incurred under his name, he writes: 'if Coutts's were to be broken open by a riotous mob tomorrow, I should be quite magnanimous and christian-like.'[44] This is not very informative, but it does at least establish that Dickens's mind was turning over the remote possibility of such a thing happening. The letter was written of April 7; two days later the Convention 'affirmed by a declaration of principle the right of every Englishman to carry arms.'[45] The government began to take measures to suppress the increasing violence in the country and the Convention, feeling itself threatened in London, so near to the seat of Government and to the surveillance of an already

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41. Chartist Studies, 45.
42. Pilgrim Letters, I, 483.
43. Halévy, op. cit., 312.
44. Pilgrim Letters, I, 540, to T. Mitton, 7 April, 1839.
45. Halevy, op. cit., 313.

efficient metropolitan police force, removed to Birmingham, where its followers were more in control. The magistrates began to arrest Chartists, who were often armed. In Wales, Newtown was full of armed rebels, and there were riots at Llandiloes. At Derby, one factory owner fortified his mills with cannon.[46] In July, the Commons refused to consider the petition. At Birmingham, there were riots in the Bull-Ring, suppressed by police imported from London, and Chartist leaders were arrested. These events produced intense feeling throughout the country. The Convention, now in London again, denounced the police, and proclaimed the right of the people to resist them by force of necessary. By this time, the authorities were in control, and the advocates of violence began to go underground. Secret meetings were held all over the country to plot sedition and insurrection. On November 4, 3,000 miners marched on Newport under John Frost, a local tradesman and former J.P. The rebellion was easily squashed and Frost and other leaders were arrested. Plots multiplied; to release Frost, to murder his judges on their way to try him, to 'kidnap the principal men of the state.'[47] At Sheffield, there was a small-scale revolt, which was easily suppressed. Frost was condemned to death by hanging, drawing and quartering, a sentence which was commuted to transportation, and there followed a series of arrests and trials of Chartists. Over the next few months, many of the principal Chartist leaders were imprisoned. The sentencing of Frost marks the end of the first and most violent of Chartism.[48]

What were Dickens's feeling about the Chartist upheavals, at the time?

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46. Hovell, op. cit., 145-52.
47. Ibid., 183.
48. Ibid., 193.

We seem to have remarkably little evidence on the point. His letters during this period have only one possible reference to rioting mobs; Bentley's Miscellany, which Dickens was editing until February 1839, has no reference at all, as we might expect; unlike Dickens's later periodicals, Bentley's shows relatively little concern with the 'Condition of England Question' and in any case his editorial control over this periodical was not as complete as it was to be over Household Words or All the Year Round. The paucity of evidence of any interest in any specifically Chartist activities is, of course, far from proving that Dickens had none. Around this period, he was taking a direct interest in such vitally related questions as the New Poor Law and the Factory System; the work-house chapters of Oliver Twist came out in the early months of 1837 when the general propaganda against the New Poor Law was in full swing,[49] and Dickens's letter to Edward FitzGerald of December 1838, telling him of his forthcoming visit to Manchester, shows the closeness of his interest in conditions in the factories. He had already seen two mills, he tells FitzGerald,

> But on the 11th of next month, I am going down again, only for three days, and then into the enemy's camp, and the very head-quarters of the factory system advocates.

FitzGerald had suggested on Lord Ashley's behalf that Dickens might like some introductions by which, presumably he would gather material for some attack on the system. Dickens thanks Ashley for any introduction from him 'which, in the course of an hour or so would enable me to make any fresh observations', and goes on;

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49. Halévy, 284-8.

> With that nobleman's most benevolent and excellent exertions, and with the evidence which he was the means of bringing forward, I am well acquainted. So far as seeing goes, I have seen enough for my purpose, and what I have seen has disgusted and astonished me beyond all measure. I mean to strike the heaviest blow in my power for these unfortunate creatures, but whether I shall do so in the "Nickleby", or wait some other opportunity, I have not yet determined.[50]

Whether by 'these unfortunate creatures', Dickens means children or operatives in general is not clear. Ashley had made a major speech on child labour in July 1838,[51] to which Dickens is perhaps referring here. Dickens struck no heavy blow against the 'factory system advocates' in Nicholas Nickleby, contenting himself with the general proposition that factory owners should all be like the Cheeryble brothers, whose firm is conveniently situated in Lancashire, in common with that of their prototypes, William and Daniel Grant, whom Dickens had met on one of his visits to Manchester. He did not lose sight of the condition in which many working people lived, and must have retained a vague intention to 'strike the heaviest blow in [his] power' for them in the foreseeable future. A long proof deletion from The Old Curiosity Shop gives us a good idea both of the fierceness of Dickens's feelings in the period on the subject of the urban poor, and of the kind of thing that might have been expected if he had carried out his intention. The passage echoes several of the themes of Carlyle's Chartism, which had appeared the previous year; though there is probably no question of direct Carlylean influence here (most of the points of correspondence were more or less common property), we can certainly

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50. Pilgrim Letters, I, 484, to FitzGerald, 29 Dec., 1838.
51. Ibid., n3.

observe some intersting common ground. There are three obvious parallels: Carlyle's uneasiness at the working man's 'discontent grown fierce and mad',[52] his contempt for the futility of parliaments, and his pleas for an understanding of the lower classes by the upper. The passage, like the whole novel, reflects too the general Romantic nostalgia for the simplicity and freshness of country life which is a theme of Chartism, and on which Carlyle was to draw again more strongly two years later in Past and Present. The deleted passage from Chapter 44, is worth quoting in full:

> They had been used to stop at cottage doors, and beg a drink of water; and though these cottages were poor and small, they were often shaded by green trees, always in the free air, open to the sun and wind, and gay with the song of birds. How different the styes, in which the working townsmen, women children, babies, - they all worked here - huddled together, and had their sickly homes! In courts so numerous, as to be marked in every street by numbers of their own, for names for them could not be found - in narrow, unpaved ways, exhaling foetid odours, steeped in filth and dirt, reeking with things offensive to sight, smell, hearing, thought; shutting out the light and air; breeding contagious diseases, big with fever, loathsome humours, madness, and a long ghastly train of ills - in places where, let men disguise as they please, no human beings can be clean or good, or sober, or contented - where no child can be born but it is infected and tainted from the hour it draws its miserable breath, and never has its chance of worth or happiness - in such noisome streets they, the tens of thousands, live and die and give birth to others, tens of thousands more, who live and die again, never growing better, but slowly and surely worse, and whose depraved condition, - whose irreligion, improvidence, drunkenness, degeneracy, and, most unaccountable of all, whose discontent, good gentlemen reprobate in Parliament time

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52. Ch, 37.

till they are hoarse; devising for their reformation Sabbath Bills without end..., and building up new churches with a zeal whose sacred fervour knows no limits.

"Misery!" said a portly gentleman standing in the best street of the town that very night as he went home from dinner, and looking round him. "Where is it? A splendid Town Hall - a copy from the antique - the finest organ in Europe, a museum of natural curiosities, a theatre, some capital inns, excellent shops where every luxury may be purchased at very little more than the London price; an elegant market-place, admirably supplied! What would they have? Misery! Pooh pooh! I don't believe a word of it."[53]

Although Dickens had other reasons for dissatisfaction with Parliament, his attack on it here is a piece of pamphleteering on behalf of a particular bee in the bonnet, which he had already aired in Sunday Under Three Heads (1836), rather than a more general statement of principle, like Carlyle's in Chartism; he is not concerned with the government's general failure to remedy the lot of the poor, with 'what Parliament ought to have done in this business, what they will, can or cannot do',[54] though his diatribe against Members of Parliament who 'reprobate' the 'discontent' of the lower classes rather than its cause has a Carlylean overtone. And his attack on the 'portly gentleman' may be just as much a simple satirical statement about the rich and the poor, about Dives and Lazarus, as a general social point, a suggestion that there are 'two nations'. But the whole passage seems to suggest an attitude to the conditions of the urban poor that coincides broadly with Carlyle's. Dickens's description here relies on the contrast between the greenness and freshness of his idealised countryside and the hellishness of his description of the urban worker's lot, a contrast pointed by many at

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53. Forster Collection, repr. Dickensian, L(1954), 21-2.
54. Ch, 40.

this time and earlier, and one which Carlyle evoked again in Chartism:

> Is it a green flowery world, with azure everlasting sky stretched over it, the work and government of a God; or a murky-simmering Tophet, of copperas-fumes, cotton-fuzz, gin-riot, wrath and toil, created by a Demon, governed by a Demon? The sum of their wretchedness merited and unmerited welters, huge, dark and baleful, like a Dantean Hell...[55]

'A green flowery world' it certainly was not. The cholera epidemic of 1832 had called general attention to the subject of sanitation and agitation of action on the sanitary conditions of English cities was growing.[56] Dickens himself pressed for it throughout his career, and articles on sanitary reform were to appear frequently in Household Words. The immense growth in the urban labouring population had been housed largely by speculative builders who crammed as many houses onto a small piece of land as they could. As the general report of 1842 on the sanitary condition of the labouring population puts it; 'They are built back to back; without ventilation or drainage; and, like a honeycomb, every particle of space is occupied. Double rows of these houses form courts, with, perhaps, a pump at one end and a privy at the other, common to the occupants of about twenty houses.'[57] The dwellings were dark, for two reasons; their proximity, and their lack of windows; there was a tax on all houses with more than eight. 'Things offensive to sight, smell, (and) thought', if not to hearing were everywhere; the inhabitants of these dim courts hoarded their own dung in heaps, to sell to neighbouring farmers as manure.[58]

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55. Ch, 60.
56. Hammond, J.L. and B., England in the Age of the Chartists, London, 1930 , 79 .
57. Ibid., 81.
58. Ibid., 87-8.

Dickens, then, was alive to the wrongs of the people early in his career, and wrote about them, even if what he wrote did not always become public. There may, too, be more examples of Dickens's writings about the poor at this time in the form of uncollected articles for The Morning Chronicle and The Examiner. In any case, the suffering caused by the New Poor Law, conditions in the factories and in the workers' homes, all received his indignant attention. Why then, since he made plain his attitude to the injustice suffered by working people, did he not say more about the manifestation of these wrongs in the widespread rioting and insurrection of 1839 and beyond? The crowd scenes in Barnaby Rudge may tell us something of his emotional reactions to mob violence, but, unlike Carlyle's French Revolution, Dickens's novel is not really concerned with looking for deeper causes of the unrest it describes, or with pointing contemporary parallels; the drama of the situation is enough for Dickens to cope with here. What were his reactions to contemporary mobs? Perhaps, in a short passage from The Old Curiosity Shop, which appeared in the same number from which the dèletion I have just quoted was excised, he does tell us something. Little Nell and her grandfather have left the peace of the countryside and wandered into the town. Night has fallen:

> - night,... when the people near them looked wilder and more savage; when bands of unemployed labourers paraded the roads, or clustered by torch-light round their leaders, who told them, in stern language, of their wrongs, and urged them on to frightful cries and threats; when maddened men, armed with sword and firebrand, spurning the tears and prayers of women who would restrain them, rushed forth on errands of terror and destruction, to work no ruin half so surely as their own - night, when carts came rumbling by, filled with rude coffins (for contagious disease and death had been busy with the living crops); when orphans cried,

> and distracted women shrieked and followed in their wake - night, when some called for bread, and some for drink to drown their cares, and some with tears, and some with staggering feet, and some with bloodshot eyes, went brooding home...[59]

The main purpose of this in the context of the novel is to suggest Nell's fears, the 'terrors of the night to the young wondering child'. But this description must have some relation to Dickens's idea of what Chartist discontent looked like in action. The reference to the labourers 'clustered by torchlight round their leaders', reminds us of the torchlight meetings of the winter of 1838, though the size of the gatherings Dickens is describing here seems much smaller than these often mammoth affairs. It reminds us, too, that one of Dickens's two visits to Manchester at around this time was in November 1838, a time of highly excited torchlight meetings. 'Their leaders, who told them in stern language of their wrongs, and urged them on to fearful cries and threats', might be more or less distantly related to extremist Chartist demagogues such as Bronterre O'Brien, Feargus O'Connor, and James Raynor Stephens. Stephens was arrested in December 1838; at his examination at the New Bailey in Manchester, a witness told the court of the kind of incitement he used. 'He condemned the practices in the factories, and advised the people to arm themselves. He told them to get their guns or pikes, and have them over their chimney-pieces.... When the grand attack was to be made, they were to go to the factories with a dagger in one hand and a torch in the other.'[60] This was the staple material of a certain kind of Chartist oratory, and Dickens must have heard something of such speeches; as a result of their leaders'

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59. OCS, 336.
60. Annual Register, 1838 Chronicle, 169.

urging, his bands of unemployed labourers rushed forth, 'armed with sword and firebrand...on errands of terror and destruction...' It seems a fair guess that this short description does represent something of Dickens's imagined idea of what Chartists got up to; perhaps we could also tentatively put the period of these impressions, although composed in 1840, as being more or less that of his visit to Manchester in November 1838: the torchlight meetings were suppressed not long after.

Before discussing this fragment further it may be as well to return to Carlyle. Both the deleted paragraph from The Old Curiosity Shop, and the one we are considering, show Dickens's sympathy for the 'wrongs' of the working man, which he sees as unsanitary, overcrowded and joyless living conditions, lack of bread, and lack of employment. So far, Dickens and Carlyle seem to be in agreement. But on two important points they radically differ. Dickens had already published, in the workhouse chapters of Oliver Twist a scathing attack on the New Poor Law. Dickens's first 'dark' novel was serialised in Bentley's Miscellany, the first number appearing in February 1837, when, as I have already said the widespread agitation against the New Poor Law was getting under way. Elie Halévy goes as far as to suggest that Dickens's descriptions of life in the workhouse 'introduced the Anti-Poor-Law propaganda into the homes of the middle class.'[61] The Poor Law was one ingredient, perhaps the most important, in the general broth of discontent that boiled up in the cauldron of Chartism, and Carlyle devoted a chapter in his essay on the subject to it. His view of the Poor Law is in marked contrast to Dickens's. Briefly, he attacks it for being based on the unproved assumption that there was enough work for the

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61. Halévy, 384-88.

unemployed if only they could be driven to it, but praises it for its encouragement of the idea that material rewards should go only to those who work for them. Both the New Poor Law commissioners and the Act are 'an indispensable element, harsh but salutary, in the progress of things.' But the problem of unemployment will not solve itself, and as an instrument of Laissez-Faire, the Poor Law is 'false, heretical and damnable.' To believe that the poor are simply a nuisance, to be swept out of sight, 'is not an amiable faith.' Nevertheless, the Old Poor Law encouraged idleness; 'He that will not work according to his faculty, let him perish according to his necessity: there is no law juster than that .' The New Poor Law is a protection of the thrifty from the thriftless. The working classes need, not outdoor relief, but '"just wages" - not in money alone!' Their need is for a wise and loving superior, for guidance and government; the Old Poor Law was simply 'a broken reed to lean on.'[62]

Carlyle is a 'thinker', and Dickens a novelist and some of their divergence can doubtless be attributed to this difference in their roles. Carlyle's sympathy with the poor is unmistakable. 'All his life,' says Froude, 'he had been meditating on the problems of the working-man's existence in this country at the present epoch.... He had heard his father talk of the poor masons, dining silently upon water and water-cresses. His letters are full of reflections on such things, sad or indignant, as the humour might be. He was himself a working-man's son.'[63] But as an historian, he can afford to take a broader view that puts at a distance the individual predicament. Carlyle's view is a relatively dispassionate, and, in Chartism, a coherently thought out

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62. Ch, 46 - 52.
63. Life in London, 1, 16D.-1.

position; Dickens's abnormal capacity for personal involvement, for total empathy in an imagined situation, rules out this kind of assessment; he feels, as he was to show Betty Higden feeling, what it is like to be in a workhouse.

On another issue related to Chartism we can see the same difference of focus. Chartism, like The French Revolution, sees the rebellion of the oppressed as part of a kind of process of regeneration, the truth blasting through a crust of unreality; it is something to be avoided if possible, but if not, rebellion is a necessity, almost a duty. Carlyle's opening chapter puts the fundamental question of the whole essay; 'Is the condition of the English working people wrong;' he asks, 'so wrong that rational working men cannot, will not, and even should not rest quiet under it?'[64] This is evidently a rhetorical question, demanding the answer 'yes'. Equally obvious is the answer to the converse of the same question: 'Or is the discontent itself mad, like the shape it took? Not the condition of the working people that is wrong; but their disposition, their own thoughts, beliefs and feelings that are wrong?' For Carlyle, in his earlier writings at least, the rebellious behaviour of the masses under oppression is not only the inevitable, but the right and just external sign of their lot. Dickens does not make this kind of connection, perhaps because his feelings are too strongly engaged, quite separately, on the two questions involved: the oppression of the poor, and the horrors of insurrection. For him, both the 'condition of the working people' and their 'disposition' are wrong. He sympathises with the poor, and at the same time fears them as 'wilder and more savage' than the better

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64. Ch, 38. My emphasis.

off, and uncompromisingly deplores their violence. Dickens, we might say, was temperamentally more in sympathy with 'Moral Force' Chartists like William Lovett, while Carlyle, the philosopher of 'Rights and Mights' shows himself more able to understand the forces that gave their influence to Chartist leaders of the 'Physical Force' party like Lovett's arch-enemy, O'Connor. The strongest indication of this part of Dickens's attitude, in the fragment of The Old Curiosity Shop that we are considering, is found in one clause: 'when maddened men, armed with sword and firebrand, spurning the tears and prayers of women who would restrain them, rushed forth on errands of terror and destruction, to work no ruin half so surely as their own...' It is very interesting that this short passage does not appear in the manuscript of the novel, and was added at the proof stage.[65] Dickens took some pains in its composition; there are so many alterations and deletions in this fragment of manuscript that he wrote out a fair copy of it on a separate proof sheet. Perhaps this, combined with the fact that he thought it worthwhile to add this clause at all, may indicate that the whole passage as it stood did not fairly represent his attitude to rebellious workers, and that he wished to add something that would strengthen the paragraph's already implicit condemnation of them; without this fragment Dickens's attitude is not as clear as, perhaps, he thought it might be. Perhaps it is also significant that the long paragraph expressing his sympathy with their lot was deleted in proof; of course, there could be other reasons for this: the passage has no relevance whatever to the novel, and Dickens may not have had the space to publish all he had written. Nevertheless, both the proof alterations I have noted have a complementary effect,

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65. OCS, proof sheets, V & A.

weakening Dickens's expression of sympathy with the lot of the urban labourer, and strengthening his condemnation of their violence. If this assessment of Dickens's attitude to the Chartist movement is correct, it would accord with the position of many middle class radicals. As Lovett complained ruefully, '...we were fast gathering up the favourable opinion of the Middle, as well as of the Working Classes, when the violent ravings about physical force, by O'Connor, Stephens, and Oastler, scared them from our ranks; they, doubtlessly conceiving that they had better put up with known evils, than trust to an unknown remedy purposed to be effected by such desperate means.'[66]

Lovett's complaint indicates the dilemma posed for Dickens by working class movements. Adult education was one thing, and was bound to make for stability; direct political action was another. Dickens was indignant about the injustice of working class conditions, but terrified by the violence that a remedy might lead to. Stephen Blackpool asks, not for revolution, but for just Carlylean authority. Dickens's radicalism, as Professor Peyrouton suggests, can perhaps be seen to spring as much from a fear of the consequences of failure to act as from his own hatred of the oppression of the working class. Dickens feared working class violence; but he also distrusted the more peaceful trades unions, which in the 'fifties were beginning to provide a new and effective focus for working class aspirations, almost as much as he had feared the Chartist Physical Force they were replacing. Slackbridge, in Hard Times, is modelled on Mortimer Grimshaw, an inflammatory rabble rouser in the tradition of Stephens and O'Connor, rather than on an articulate and sensible man

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66. Lovett, op. cit., 143 .

like George Cowell, who as Dickens must almost certainly have known, was the real leader of the Preston Strike. Dickens's ideal working man is probably a kind of white Uncle Tom, who should be justly treated, and therefore correspondingly faithful, who appreciates his betters, and is grateful for the means of quiet domesticity they provide, or would provide if Dickens had his way. In 1850, Dickens put into the mouth of a character in a Household Words story, the kind of sentiments he would have liked to be sure were typical of working class feeling:

> I am not a Chartist, and I never was. I don't mean to say but what I see a good many public points to complain of, still I don't think that's the way to set them right. If I did think so, I should be a Chartist. But I don't think so, and I am not a Chartist. I read the paper, and hear discussion, at what we call "a parlor" in Birmingham, and I know many good men and workmen who are Chartists. Note. Not Physical force.[67]

When did Dickens's concern for the poor begin to be expressed in a coherent and effective way? His determination to 'strike a blow' for them dates at least from 1840, and there are many unconnected early examples of a feeling for the conditions of working men, of which the attack on the New Poor Law in Oliver Twist, is the most famous. Nevertheless, we can see a deepening understanding of the injustice of working class life, and also a clearer personal engagement in its problems, taking place quite rapidly at a particular period. In 1840, he could address a Mechanics Institute, and give, as his main reason for supporting it, the increased recognition that would be given to men of letters by creating a wider and better educated public. The speech was intended half humorously perhaps, and he continued to make the point

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67. Dickens, C., "A Poor Man's Tale of a Patent.," Household Words, II(1850),73.

about the benefits to literature of a more educated public, but the comparison with later speeches to similar institutions is interesting. So too, we might think, is the distinctly double-edged image Dickens chose in his speech, at this time of civil strife, to discribe (whether ironically or not) the masses: the spirit behind such institutions, he thought, 'laid a moral foundation calculated to promote the best uses amongst what was styled the "many-headed", but which by the aid of such institutions would soon be designated the "many-thoughted, monster"'.[68] As some of the imagery Dickens uses in Barnaby Rudge indicates, perhaps, 'the people' were, for him, a kind of monster, a Caliban whose violence might be tempered by a little learning. Dickens here seems to reject the image of the 'many-headed monster', but he used it himself in 1859, interestingly, in a letter to Carlyle.

Until 1843, most of Dickens's public speeches were to literary bodies, or (in America) to dinners in his honour. In 1843 began the long series of addresses he gave to and for institutions for the under-privileged. In that year, he spoke for (a curious collection) The Printer's Pension Society, the Hospital for Consumption and Diseases of the Chest, the Charitable Society for the Deaf and Dumb, the Sanatorium, founded in 1840 by Dr Southwood Smith, and the Athenaeum, the Manchester adult education institution, which was then in difficulties. We can, perhaps, see these speeches as extending somewhat the period referred to by Forster as leading up to his departure for Italy in 1844. I have quoted Forster's remarks before, but they are certainly worth quoting again in this slightly different context. 'Several months before he left England', says Forster, 'I had noticed

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68. Speeches, 4.

in him the habit of more gravely regarding many things before passed lightly enough; the hopelessness of any true solution of either political or social problems by the ordinary Downing-street methods had been startlingly impressed on him in Carlyle's writings; and in the parliamentary talk of that day he had come to have as little faith for the putting down of any serious evil, as in a then notorious city alderman's gabble for the putting down of suicide.'[69] Dickens was certainly thinking about the short-comings of action by 'Downing-street methods' before 1844; speaking to a meeting in support of the Sanatorium in June the previous year, he had praised Lord Ashley, the chairman, 'who had sacrificed party spirit and politics that he might advance the cause and interest of the neglected and forlorn, - who had boldly stood forward among seven hundred legislators, and maintained that women should not be compelled to do the work of harnessed brutes.'[70] Ashley, indeed, was one of the few contemporary politicians Carlyle ever named as typifying the kind of real, and not sham, aristocracy that was needed to deal with the Condition of England Question; Dickens had his own reasons, of course, both for admiring Ashley, and for his disillusionment with parliamentary government, about the daily workings of which he knew in any case more at first hand than Carlyle. Nevertheless, we can probably date a fresh awareness of parliamentary refusal of responsibility from 1843; and we can certainly link this new understanding, at least partly, with Dickens's reading of Carlyle's works, certainly of Chartism. A passage from Carlyle's essay, which appears in the chapter entitled "Laissez-Faire", provides what we can see, I think, as fairly firm evidence for this, which confirms Forster's attribution to Carlyle of his loss of faith in

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69. Forster, 347.
70. Speeches, 43.

parliamentary methods, and which dates the birth, or modification of these views from 1843, and not, as Forster might perhaps be supposed to suggest, from 1844. 'Are these millions taught? Are these millions guided?'[71], asks Carlyle:

> This Church answers: Yes, the people are taught. This Aristocracy, astonishment in every feature, answers: Yes, surely the people are guided! Do we not pass what Acts of Parliament are needful; as many as thirty-nine for the shooting of the partridges alone? Are there not treadmills, gibbets; even hospitals, poor-rates, New Poor-Law?[72]

This passage must, surely, be behind one of Dickens's most well-known passages, from A Christmas Carol (1843):

> 'Are there no prisons?' asked Scrooge.
> 'Plenty of prisons', said the gentleman, laying down the pen again.
> 'And the Union workhouses?' demanded Scrooge. 'Are they still in operation?'
> 'They are. Still,' returned the gentleman, 'I wish I could say they were not.'
> 'The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then?' said Scrooge.
> 'Both very busy, sir.'
> 'Oh! I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course', said Scrooge. 'I'm very glad to hear it.'[73]

Scrooge's refusal of responsibility, this example of Laissez-Faire in action must, I think, be seen as Carlylean, despite the obvious way in which A Christmas Carol represents all the qualities which distinguish

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71. Ch, 71.
72. Ch, 72.
73. CC, 12.

Dickens from the Sage. The Carol was, of course, published for Christmas 1843. The same month, a passage I have already quoted from Martin Chuzzlewit (to illustrate Carlyle's stylistic influence on Dickens) was published in the novel's 12 th number; the writing of the Christmas book and this part of Martin Chuzzlewit very possibly went on together. What the passage represents, very clearly, is another demonstrably Carlylean example of Dickens's thinking, at exactly this point in time, about the refusal of responsibility for the working classes by the traditional ruling classes. It implies, too, the Carlylean notion of the necessity of arriving at the root cause of the discontent of working men, rather than attempting to deal merely with its symptoms. The whole passage[74] is relevant here, but the last sentence alone makes the point adequately enough:

> Oh magistrate, so rare a country gentleman and brave a squire, had you no duty to society, before the ricks were blazing and the mob were mad; or did it spring up, armed and booted from the earth, a corps of yeomanry, full-grown![75]

The context of the passage from the Carol which I have quoted, however, shows perhaps that Dickens had still not fully reached an understanding of one essential notion, so important that it can be said to distinguish the 'early' from the 'late' Dickens. In A Christmas Carol, Dickens puts this famous speech into Scrooge's mouth to underline an individual failure of charity: by the conversion to Benevolence of one person, the gloomy spectres of the Tale are quite banished. A year later, in The Chimes, the responsibility has become diffused throughout the whole of society, and the easy solution has disappeared altogether.

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74. Quoted in full on p.103 above.
75. MC, 497-8.

This new depth of understanding, as I shall suggest, was almost certainly due to Dickens's reading of Carlyle's work.

Dickens's second Christmas Story is written, very clearly I think, under Carlylean influence, though we face many of the same problems as in Hard Times or A Tale of Two Cities in establishing the fact; the understanding of his society that Dickens shows in The Chimes must be understood as drawing life from a general climate of feeling, to which Carlyle appealed strongly, but did not create. Dickens certainly wrote The Chimes when Carlyle was at the height of his fame, and this fact alone must emphasise the strong likelihood that what seems Carlylean in The Chimes probably is. Nevertheless, The Chimes poses a by now familiar cultural problem. Carlyle's fame depended in the first place on the peculiar disturbed ethos of the late 'thirties and early 'forties; and it is directly to this ethos that we can see Dickens responding, in The Chimes, with an immediacy and a strength of feeling that he could never have extended to any merely literary influence. In trying to distinguish what is Carlylean influence and what coincidence of view in The Chimes we are to some extent engaged in unravelling a kind of tautology.

Certainly, no one notion in The Chimes can be seen as peculiarly Carlylean. As in Hard Times, it is the combination of ideas that suggests Carlyle's influence. The most pervasive idea of The Chimes, and the most deeply held by Carlyle himself, for instance, was also the most widely held political truism of the decade: the idea of the two nations. Disraeli's famous phrase was not to become common property until the following year, but the nearness in time of the publication of two such different literary phenomena as Sybil and Dickens's second

Christmas story emphasises how widely the notion was being discussed, how little Dickens needed Carlyle for this idea. But Carlyle does, I think, nevertheless, lie behind Dickens's articulation of it in The Chimes. The weightiest indication of this, perhaps, lies in the biographical evidence, which I have already discussed, of Dickens's persistent efforts to ensure Carlyle's 'indispensable' presence at the private reading of his Christmas story. There is little doubt that Dickens, as later in Hard Times, expected Carlyle to recognise his own gospel reflected in his story. A comparison with the demonstrably Carlylean articulation of the 'Two Nations' theme in Hard Times helps to confirm that when Dickens thought about the division between rich and poor, Carlyle's warnings on the subject were likely to come to mind. Will Fern's set-piece of the wrongs of the poor, like Stephen's, is a heart-felt plea delivered to a cynical (though rather larger) upper and middle class audience; the poor who happen to be present are simply a back-drop. His central argument is clear:

> ...gentlemen, gentlemen, dealing with other men like me, begin at the right end. Give us, in mercy, better homes when we're a-lying in our cradles; give us better food when we're a-working for our lives; give us kinder laws to bring us back when we're a-going wrong; and don't set Jail, Jail, Jail, afore us, everywhere we turn. There an't a condescension you can show the Labourer then, that he won't take, as ready and as grateful as a man can be; for he has a patient, peaceful, willing heart. But you must put his rightful spirit in him first; for whether he's a wreck and ruin such as me, or is like one of them that stand here now, his spirit is divided from you at this time. Bring it back, gentlefolks, bring it back![76]

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76. Chimes, 133.

Like Stephen Blackpool, Will Fern asks, not for a radical change in the social structure, but for a change of heart in the ruling classes; like Stephen, too, he points out the impossibility of changing the relationship between the rich and the poor unless the root causes of discontent are removed. In both these demands, these two fictional workers are echoing Carlyle.[77] Alderman Cute, who believes the discontented poor, like Fern, should be put down, owes much, of course, to a real-life prototype, Sir Peter Laurie. But Dickens's understanding of his creed also owes much to Carlyle:

> To believe practically that the poor and luckless are here only as a nuisance to be abraded and abated, and in some permissible manner made away with, and swept out of sight, is not an amiable faith. That the arrangements of good and ill success in this perplexed scramble of a world... are in fact the work of a seeing goddess or god, and require only not to be meddled with: what stretch of heroic faculty or inspiration of genius was needed to teach one that? To button your pockets and stand still, is no complex recipe.[78]

This is very reminiscent of Alderman Cute's admonition to Meg:

> Now, I give you fair warning, that I have made up my mind to Put distressed wives Down. So, don't be brought before me. You'll have children - boys. Those boys will grow up bad, of course, and run wild in the streets, without shoes and stockings. Mind, my young friend! I'll convict 'em summarily, every one, for I am determined to Put boys without shoes and stockings Down. Perhaps your husband will die young (most likely) and leave you with a baby. Then you'll be turned out of doors, and wander up and down the streets. Now, don't wander near me,

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77. See pp125-9 above.
78. Ch, 48.

> my dear, for I am resolved to Put all wandering mothers Down.[79]

It is this refusal of understanding of the lower classes by the upper which Carlyle, more notably than any other literary figure of the decade, pointed out; The refusal of responsibility he attacked came, not simply from a failure to provide the right answers, but from an inability even to ask the right questions. For Carlyle, the questions were simple enough: '...Why are the Working Classes discontented; what is their condition, economical, moral, in their houses and their hearts, as it is in reality and as they figure it to themselves to be; what do they complain of; what ought they, and ought they not to complain of? - These are measurable questions; on some of these any common mortal, did he but turn his eyes to them, might throw some light.'[80] Will Fern's and Stephen Blackpool's outbursts are presented as unavailing attempts to resolve the impasse caused by a particular failing of understanding, a problem which Carlyle, like many others, helped to bring into general discussion:

> ...as is well said, all battle is misunderstanding; did the parties know one another, the battle would cease.[81]

And for Carlyle, it is above all this misunderstanding of 'what it is that the under classes intrinsically mean' that leads to their 'discontent grown fierce and mad.'[82] It is the misunderstanding by Cute and Bowley of Will Fern that drives him, in Trotty's dream, to the incendiary madness of the Rick-burner. 'There'll be a Fire tonight', he says to Meg, taking his last farewell of her;

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79. Chimes, 99.
80. Ch, 41.
81. Ch, 40.
82. Ch, 37, 40.

> 'There'll be Fires this winter-time, to light the dark nights, East, West, North, and South. When you see the distant sky red, they'll be blazing. When you see the distant sky red, think of me no more; or, if you do, remember what a Hell was lighted up inside of me, and think you see its flames reflected in the clouds....'.[83]

In some ways, we can see The Chimes as a first essay in themes Dickens was to explore more fully in the years to come, above all in Hard Times. Will Fern and Stephen Blackpool are similar, not only in their roles as misunderstood Carlylean Workers, mouth-pieces for the wrongs of the poor. They both end up on the wrong side of the law, as hunted men, and in a way their state is a kind of emblem for the dispossession of the working class from its rightful condition. Two other characters in Hard Times seem to have more or less obvious precursors in The Chimes. Gradgrind's reliance on statistical truth (if no other aspect of his characterisation) is forshadowed by Mr Filer, whose contribution I shall examine in the next chapter. And Sir Joseph Bowley has in common with Josiah Bounderby, not only his initials and his overblown pomposity, but his conviction that he knows and understands his employees, and his distrust of anyone showing discontent. Bowley, as Dr Slater points out, is closely related to Carlyle's Man of Business, and it is above all this relationship that provides his link with Bounderby.

It is difficult, with The Chimes as with other works of Dickens in which we can trace Carlylean influence, to identify the specific works to which the novelist was indebted, such is the continuity and self-plagiarism of Carlyle's oeuvre. But two works are more clearly

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83. Chimes, 147.

involved than others here. We can, I think, be fairly sure that Chartism, from which I have already made several relevant quotations, was (as it had been in the Carol) in Dickens's mind. The other work whose influence we can identify, through two similarities in incident, is Past and Present.

The first incident is that in which Trotty reads in a newspaper account, of a case of infanticide followed by suicide. Trotty takes this as underlining Bowley's remarks on the innate badness of the poor, which in his simplicity he has uncritically accepted:

> A crime so terrible, and so revolting to his soul, dilated with the love of Meg, that he let the journal drop, and fell back in his chair, appalled!
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> 'Unnatural and cruel!' Toby cried. 'Unnatural and cruel! None but people who were bad at heart, born bad, who had no business on the earth, could do such deeds. It's too true, all I've heard today; too just, too full of proof. We're Bad!'[84]

This appears to have as its source an incident reported by Carlyle to demonstrate how comfortable middle class people can distort such tragedies, and fail to grasp their meaning. Carlyle's incident is that in which, in 1841, a mother and father poisoned three of their children 'to defraud a "burial-society" of some £3 8s due on the death of each child...':

> "Brutal savages, degraded Irish", mutters the idle reader of Newspapers; hardly lingering on this incident.

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84. Chimes, 117.

But says Carlyle, no matter how brutal their actions, there is more to the case than this:

> Such instances are like the highest mountain apex emerged into view; under which lies a whole mountain region and land, not yet emerged. A human Mother and Father had said to themselves, What shall we do to escape starvation? We are deep sunk here, in our dark cellar; and help is far.[85]

It is almost certainly this Carlylean insistence on plumbing the causes of such desperate actions to their foundations that is behind the sequel to Trotty's derived middle class horror at the mother who kills herself and her child: his own daughter is later shown driven by the injustice and inescapability of her lot in a society controlled by the Bowleys and the Cutes, to the very edge of such a crime.

A fainter echo of Past and Present is to be found as Meg, on the last day of the old year, mingles

> with an abject crowd, who tarried in the snow, until it pleased some officer appointed to dispense the public charity...to call them in, and question them, and say to this one, 'Go to such a place', to that one, 'Come next week'; to make a football of another wretch, and pass him here and there, from hand to hand, from house to house, until he wearied and lay down to die; or started up and robbed, and so became a higher sort of criminal, whose claims allowed of no delay.[86]

Meg's experience here (seen in Trotty's vision) reminds us, perhaps, of that of Jo the crossing-sweeper in Bleak House, who is also passed

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85. PP, 6.
86. Chimes, 148.

about like a football. Jo, unlike Meg, is a carrier of infection, and refusal of charity to him is more costly, but this part of Trotty's dream about Meg is nevertheless reminiscent of Jo's plot, and the two stories may well have as their mutual source an anecdote from Past and Present:

> A poor Irish Widow, her husband having died in one of the Lanes of Edinburgh, went forth with her three children, bare of all resource, to solicit help from the Charitable Establishments of that City. At this Charitable Establishment and then at that she was refused; referred from one to the other, helped by none; till she had exhausted them all; till her strength and heart failed her: she sank down in typhus-fever; died, and infected her Lane with fever, so that "seventeen other persons" died of fever there in consequence.[87]

Other Carlylean echoes, apart from the condition of the working classes, reverberate through the pages of The Chimes; these are examined in other chapters. But it is this part of the Condition-of-England Question, seen here in an unmistakably Carlylean way, that Dickens is overwhelmingly concerned with in this brief but concentrated story. It is very obviously Carlyle's vision of the consequences of the refusal of responsibility of the Upper classes for the Lower that dominates Dickens's mind in The Chimes. And Trotty's vision of the incendiarism that Will Fern is driven to indicates, perhaps, one consequence that Dickens himself certainly feared, a fear which the pages of Past and Present and Chartism (clearly behind The Chimes), were not calculated to allay. Never far from the thoughts of thinking men during the forties were the causes, and the effects, of the first French Revolution. And for Dickens as for Carlyle, the

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87. PP, 145.

answer lay, not in allowing the masses to govern themselves, not in any change in the system, but, less tangibly, in a change of heart in the governing classes. Will Fern's cry, like Stephen Blackpool's after him, is 'give me a leader'. Carlyle's simple but powerful diagnosis of the Condition-of-England Question was certainly, by the time Dickens wrote The Chimes, broadly that of the novelist, too:

> "Laissez-faire, Leave them to do"? the thing they will do, if so left, is too frightful to think of! It has been done once, in sight of the whole earth, in these generations: can it need to be done a second time?[88]

88. Ch, 76.

Chapter Eight: MECHANISM

Like Carlyle, Dickens was horrified by machine-like thinking, but excited by machines. For both men, the symbolism of the machine was immensely powerful. Its fascination, perhaps, was partly due to its ambivalence: the machine was the agent of progress; at the same time, it was indifferent to human needs, and could even be destructive of human life. The railway in Dombey and Son certainly represents progress, but at the same time it embodies something less benign, which can destroy the warmth and spontaneity of Stagg's gardens,[1] which can even maim or kill human beings; we can see Carker's death, perhaps, as marginally representing (apart from retribution) the sense of the destructive capacity of the machine that was later to contribute to Dickens's campaign, in Household Words, for the protection of workers against dangerous machinery:

> He heard a shout - another - saw the face change from its vindictive passion to a faint sickness and terror - felt the earth tremble - knew in a moment that the rush was come - uttered a shriek - looked round - saw the red eyes, bleared and dim, in the daylight, close upon him - 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.[2]

This reminds us, perhaps, of some famous lines from the chapter of Sartor Resartus that I have already proposed as having direct relevance to Hard Times;[3] this supporting indication of Dickens's

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1. DS, 217-9 .
2. DS, 779.
3. See pp 158-9 above.

knowledge of it, together with similarities in wording, may suggest that this passage played its part in the inspiration of Carker's death, despite the apparent difference in character and purpose of the two extracts:

> To me the Universe was all void of Life, of Purpose, of Volition, even of Hostility: it was one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on, in its dead indifference, to grind me limb from limb. Oh, the vast, gloomy, solitary Golgotha, and Mill of Death![4]

For both writers, as the context of the passage from Sartor underlines, it was, perhaps, not so much the physical reality of machines that was dangerous, but their implications in terms of human behaviour. This passage is an indirect link, perhaps, through Harthouse, with Gradgrind; Carlyle's use of the word 'grind' may not be without significance. For both Carlyle and Dickens, it was people who thought like machines, and who behaved towards their fellows with the rigid indifference of the machine, who were the ultimate enemy: for Carlyle, of a society whose life-springs would be reverence for the Immensities; for Dickens, of simple human happiness. And without any doubt, it is Carlyle's critique of a particular human attitude, for which the limitations and the inadaptability of the machine provided the appropriate image, that explains much of Carlyle's relevance for Dickens, above all for the most Carlylean of all his novels, Hard Times.

"Signs of the Times" (1829) is Carlyle's earliest important statement on mechanistic thinking, and it lays down the general lines for his

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4. SR, 126. My emphasis.

incessantly repeated diatribes against it, most notably in Sartor Resartus, Chartism, Past and Present, and Latter-Day Pamphlets. It is an early example of his capacity for making the generalised analyses of the nature of his times that were to have such an audience a decade later, from the late 'thirties onwards. 'Were we required to characterise this age of ours by any single epithet', he wrote, 'we should be tempted to call it, not an Heroical, Devotional, Philosophical, or Moral Age, but, above all others, the Mechanical Age. It is the Age of Machinery, in every outward and inward sense of that word...' Everywhere, 'the living artisan is driven from his workshop, to make room for a speedier, inanimate one.'[5] Carlyle, like Dickens, and perhaps most Victorians, was very far from deploring this state of affairs: '...how much better fed, clothed, lodged and, in all outward respects, accommodated men now are, or might be, by a given quantity of labour, is a grateful reflection which forces itself on every one.'[6] But he was, perhaps, one of the first notable voices to point out its social consequences:

> What changes, too, this addition of power is introducing into the Social System; how wealth has more and more increased, and at the same time gathered itself more and more into masses, strangely altering the old relations, and increasing the distance between the rich and the poor, will be a question for Political Economists, and a much more complex and important one than any they have yet engaged with.

None of this is distinctively Carlylean, but the point he goes on to make was to constitute, in the years to come, the essence of

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5. "Sof T", 465.
6. Ibid., 466.

much of the Prophet's critique of his age. '...let us observe', he continues,'

> how the mechanical genius of our time has diffused itself into quite other provinces. Not the external and physical alone is now managed by machinery, but the internal and spiritual also. Here too nothing follows its spontaneous course, nothing is left to be accomplished by old natural methods. Everything has its cunningly devised implements, its pre-established apparatus; it is not done by hand, but by machinery. Thus we have machines for Education: Lancastrian machines; Hamiltonian machines; monitors, maps and emblems. Instruction, that mysterious communing of Wisdom with Ignorance, is no longer an indefinable tentative process, requiring a study of individual aptitudes, and a perpetual variation of means and methods, to attain the same end; but a secure, universal, straightforward business, to to conducted in the gross, by proper mechanism, with such intellect as comes to hand.[7]

The great promulgators of this new tendency are the Utilitarians:

> ...the wise men, who now appear as Political Philosophers, deal exclusively with the Mechanical province; and occupying themselves in counting up and estimating men's motives, strive by curious checking and balancing, and other adjustments of Profit and Loss, to guide them to their true advantage: while, unfortunately, those same "motives" are so innumerable, and so variable in every individual, that no really useful conclusion can ever be drawn from their enumeration.[8]

Carlyle's analysis of his age in "Signs of the Times" is, as can easily be seen, so reminiscent of Dickens's in Hard Times that we can easily understand why Mildred Christian should believe that in his novel,

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7. Ibid.
8. Ibid. 474.

Dickens 'shows very full acquaintanceship'[9] with this essay. It should be pointed out, nevertheless, that we have no textual indications to confirm Dickens's knowledge of "Signs of the Times", and its direct contribution to Hard Times, as I think we have for, say, Chartism,[10] and that Carlyle says nothing in this early essay that he did not say again and again later in his career. "Signs of the Times" does however provide a succinct and coherent summary of an attitude to society which we can see as converging in many points with that of Dickens in Hard Times. One Carlylean idea nevertheless, is missing from this essay, an idea which can be seen as an essential part of Carlyle's later pronouncements on the evils of a mechanistic society, and one which was certainly relevant to his influence on Dickens: the Cash Nexus.

Once a society has been established, says Carlyle, in which mere logic has replaced reverence for the unknowable, then the relations between men are altered accordingly. Mechanism and Mammonism are the twin pillars of such a society. The relations of the 'Under-Classes' to their rulers are now based, not on reverence and mutual respect, but on material self-interest alone. Laissez-faire, in both economics and government means internecine warfare, refusal of responsibility by the governors, hopelessness for the governed. 'The Gospel of Mammonism', as Carlyle puts it in Past and Present, has led to strange conclusions:

> We call it a Society; and go about professing openly the totalest separation, isolation. Our life is not a mutual helpfulness; but rather, cloaked under due laws-of-war, named

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9. Christian, M.,"Carlyle and Dickens", Trollopian, II(1947),21
10. See p 129 above.

> "fair competition" and so forth, it is a mutual hostility. We have profoundly forgotten everywhere that Cash-payment is not the sole relation of human beings; we think, nothing doubting, that it absolves and liquidates all engagements of man.[11]

Mammonism, the 'Cash-Nexus', is the direct consequence, in economic terms, of Mechanism. The corollary of this argument is clear; Rationality, if not confined to its proper sphere, destroys the possibility for the spontaneous human relationships on which society should be based, and reduces people to the level of mere statistical items. The Cash-Nexus represents man's reduction to the status of the machine. This aspect of Carlyle's critique of Mechanism clearly had a strong appeal for Dickens. Partly it may lie, I think, behind much of the characterisation of Mr Dombey, who obviously believes in the Cash-Nexus as a satisfactory basis for the relations between master and servant. The passage I have just quoted from Past and Present might almost be seen as a direct commentary on this scene from Dombey and Son:

> 'Oh, of course', said Mr Dombey. 'I desire to make it a question of wages, altogether. Now, Richards, if you nurse my bereaved child, I wish you to remember this always. You will receive a liberal stipend in return for the discharge of certain duties, in the performance of which, I wish you to see as little of your family as possible. When those duties cease to be required and rendered, and the stipend ceases to be paid, there is an end of all relations between us.... It is not at all in this bargain that you need become attached to my child, or that my child need become attached to you.... When you go away from here, you will have concluded what is a mere matter of bargain and sale, hiring and letting: and will stay away.[12]

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11. PP, 143.
12. DS, 16.

So intent is Mr. Dombey on ignoring Polly Toodle's human identity that he has even changed her name, to the safe monochrome of 'Richards'. Polly represents spontaneity, warmth, the human inter-reliance of lower-class life, and especially of family life. Her relationship with Dombey looks forward to that of Mr. Gradgrind and Sissy Jupe, and backwards perhaps, to the momentary contact between Mr. Filer and Meg in The Chimes. This scene, like the one I have quoted from Dombey and Son, depicts a particular confrontation of values, the imaginative importance of which, for Dickens, can scarcely be overestimated:

> '.... Married! Married!! The ignorance of the first principles of political economy on the part of these people; their improvidence ; their wickedness; is, by Heavens! enough to - Now look at that couple, will you!'....
> 'A man may live to be as old as Methuselah,' said Mr. Filer, 'and may labour all his life for the benefit of such people as those; and may heap up facts on figures, facts on figures, facts on figures, mountains high and dry; and he can no more hope to persuade 'em that they have no right or business to be married, than he can hope to persuade 'em that they have no earthly right or business to be born. And that we know they haven't. We reduced it to a mathematical certainty long ago!'[13]

This confrontation, it will be seen, establishes much the same tension of values as that between Dombey and Polly, or between Louisa Gradgrind and her father, in the famous scene from Hard Times we have already discussed. In both The Chimes and Hard Times this particular tension is expressed by Dickens in terms of an attack on a branch of knowledge whose growth had been rapid and recent: the science of Statistics. The sudden rise of Statistics and Statisticians was due, more perhaps

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13. Chimes, 97-8.

than to any other single cause, to the flowering of the statistical agencies necessary to the implementation of Benthamite legislation such as the New Poor Law. Another source of statistical information was supplied by statistical societies, which began to emerge everywhere during the 1830's. The Statistical Society of London (later chartered as the Royal Statistical Society) was formed in 1834. In 1853, the first attempt at international statistical co-operation was made, at the first meeting of the International Statistical Congress. An interesting point about the new approach to statistical enquiry that began to emerge from the statistical societies, was that it was centred far more on statistical information per se than in a specific problem; earlier work had tended to begin by studying an economic problem, and then go on to find statistics to help document it.[14] Carlyle's chapter on statistics, in Chartism, can be seen as one of the earliest assessments of this new flowering of the Benthamite spirit. His analysis has stood the test of time remarkably well; it is considered and constructive, and its targets are selected with a discrimination all too uncharacteristic of his later works. His main criticism, one which modern statisticians would accept, was that statistics as then constituted was not sufficiently developed as a science to provide useful conclusions on problems of any subtlety: 'Tables are abstractions, and the object a most concrete one, so difficult to read the essence of. There are innumerable circumstances; and one circumstance left out may be the one on which all turned.' 'Statistics Carlyle continues, 'is a science which ought to be honorable, the basis of many most importance sciences...'[15] Carlyle does not dismiss statistics, as, if we judge by Hard Times or by The Chimes, Dickens appears to; he dismisses the man without vision who 'stops your mouth

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14. See Schumpeter, J., History of Economic Analysis, London, 1954, 52.
15. Chartism, 42.

with a figure of arithmetic', to whom 'it seems he has there extracted the elixir of the matter, on which now nothing more can be said.' What has attracted Carlyle's anger against statistics is the way in which it claims authority to pronounce on such matters as the state of the working classes. The 'Condition-of-England Question' is 'a most complex matter; on which... Statistic Inquiry, with its limited means, with its short vision and headlong extensive dogmatism, as yet too often throws not light, but error worse than darkness.' Carlyle's remarks on the inadequacy of blue-book information to convey the labourer's human condition remind us strongly of Stephen Blackpool. Stephen is not a gin-drinker, but his wife is:

> How is he related to his employer; by bonds of friendliness and mutual help; or by hostility, opposition, and chains of mutual necessity alone? In a word, what degree of contentment can a human creature be supposed to enjoy in that position?.... The labourer's feelings, his notion of being justly dealt with or unjustly; his wholesome composure, frugality, prosperity in the one case, his acrid unrest, recklessness, gin-drinking, and gradual ruin in the other, - how shall figures of arithmetic represent all this?[16]

Dickens's views on statistics may have been more reasonable in reality than they appear in Hard Times. In a letter to Charles Knight, written the year after the publication of Hard Times, Dickens tried to explain them. His explanation has far more in common with the reasoning of Carlyle's chapter (part of which, incidentally, is an attack on a statistical pamphlet published by Knight in 1836) than with the novel, which is far less discriminating:

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16. Ibid., 44-5 .

> My satire is against those who see figures and averages, and nothing else - the representatives of the wickedest and most enormous vice of this time - the men, who, through long years to come, will do more to damage the real useful truths of political economy than I could (if I tried) in my whole life; the addled heads who would take the average of cold in the Crimea during twelve months as a reason for clothing a soldier in nankeens on a night when he would be frozen to death in fur, and who would comfort the labourer in travelling twelve miles a day to and from his work, by telling him that the average distance of one inhabited place from another in the whole area of England, is not more than four miles.[17]

The critique of statistics in Hard Times, it might be argued, represents (like much of the novel's social criticism) only part of Dickens's views on the subject, and we might think that the selectivity of Dickens's imagination in this novel has the effect of making them less Carlylean (if we are to take this letter at its face value), than they were in reality. How well does the argument of this letter fit other Dickensian statements on statistics? This question leads to another: how Carlylean, in fact, was Dickens's understanding of the implications of the science of statistics? These complementary questions include a wider one: how much of Dickens's revulsion against a certain kind of rationalism was his own, and for how much of it was he indebted to Carlyle? Dickens, it is easy to show, certainly had views on statistics before he could possibly have read Chartism. In 1837, he published a satirical description of an imaginary conference of statisticians. In the following extract, one of them delivers to the meeting

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17. Letters, II, 620, to Charles Knight, Jan 30, 1855.

"...the result of some calculations he had made with great difficulty and labour, regarding the state of infant education among the middle classes of London. He found that, within a circle of three miles from the Elephant and Castle, the following were the names and numbers of children's books principally in circulation:-

"Jack the Giant-killer	7,943
Ditto and Bean-stalk	8,621
Ditto and Eleven Brothers	2,845
Ditto and Jill	1,998
Total	21,407

"He found that the proportion of Robinson Crusoes to Phillip Quarlls was as four and a half to one... The ignorance that prevailed, was lamentable. .... a little boy of eight years old, was found to be firmly impressed with a belief in the existence of dragons....They had not the slightest conception of the commonest principles of mathematics, and considered Sinbad the Sailor the most enterprising voyager that the world had ever produced.[18]

Later, delivering his most telling point in a discussion of "Jack and Jill", Mr. Slug pronounced that 'the whole work had just one great fault, it was not true.' The assumptions of this satire remind us, perhaps, of the 'dry Ogre', dragging childhood into 'gloomy statistical dens by the hair'[19] of Hard Times, and indicates a vital distinction between Carlyle's and Dickens's reactions against rationality; for Dickens this applies not only to Hard Times, but to earlier writings as well. Rationality, for Dickens, partly represents a kind of child's nightmare imprisonment inside a rigid and inhuman world, just as the fantasy available to the child mind represents the antidote to it.

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18. Mudfog Papers, London, 1880,85-6.
19. HT, 7.

Mr. Slug's reference to "Sinbad the Sailor" reminds us of the escapist literature (including The Arabian Nights) in which David Copperfield loses himself, books which 'kept alive my fancy, and my hope of something beyond that place and time.'[20] Fantastic, non-rational behaviour is, of course, the most obvious hallmark of many of Dickens's comic characters, and one tendency of Dickens's humour is to implicitly represent logical behaviour as something greatly less endearing than illogical. The Garland's pony, in The Old Curiosity Shop, for example, pulls the family trap in an apparently random way, which constitutes a kind of attack on logical expectations, and which thus illustrates a principle of one kind of Dickensian humour: the humour in which private patterns of behaviour, freed from everyday criteria of usefulness and cause and effect, are presented as having their own special kind of justification:

> The pony ran off at a sharp angle to inspect a lamp-post on the opposite side of the way, and then went off at a tangent to another lamp-post on the other side. Having satisfied himself that they were of the same pattern and materials, he came to a stop apparently absorbed in meditation.
>
> 'Will you go on, sir', said the old gentleman, gravely, 'or are we to wait here for you 'till it's too late for our appointment?'
>
> The pony remained immoveable.
>
> 'Oh you naughty Whisker,' said the old lady. 'Fie upon you! I'm ashamed of such conduct.'
>
> The pony appeared to be touched by this appeal to his feelings for he trotted on directly, though in a sulky manner...[21]

Dickens's satire on Mr. Slug and his colleagues depends on a simple enough juxtaposition of values, those of fantasy untrammelled by logic,

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20. DC, 55.
21. OCS, 109.

and those of unimaginative rationality. As Hard Times demonstrates, this particular satirical idea was to remain an important part of his own critique of statistics in particular and of rationalism in general. As he wrote in Household Words in 1853, 'In an utilitarian age...it is a matter of grave importance that Fairy Tales should be respected.'[22] Three years after the publication of Hard Times, Dickens attacked the kind of school 'where the bright childish imagination is utterly discouraged, and ... where I have never seen among the pupils... anything but little parrots and small calculating machines.'[23] This substantially represents the burden of his satire on statistics in The Mudfog Papers. But though Dickens continued to stress this particular opposition, his understanding of the science of statistics itself was to become (though this was hardly difficult) rather more subtle than it appeared in this early sally. Mr. Filer's diatribe on the economics of eating tripe implies a critical understanding on Dickens's part, of the operations of a certain kind of mind, that is not present in the conception of Mr. Slug:

> 'But who eats tripe?' said Mr. Filer, looking round. 'Tripe is without an exception the least economical, and the most wasteful article of consumption that the markets of this country can by possibility produce. The loss upon a pound of tripe has been found to be, in the boiling, seven-eights of a fifth more than the loss upon a pound of any other animal substance whatever. Tripe is more expensive, properly understood, than the hothouse pineapple. Taking into account the number of animals slaughtered yearly within the bills of mortality alone; and forming a low estimate of the quantity of tripe which the carcasses of those animals, reasonably well butchered, would yield; I find that the waste on that amount of tripe, if boiled, would victual a

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22. Dickens, C., "Frauds on the Fairies", Household Words, VIII (1853), 97.
23. Speeches, 241.

garrison of five hundred men for five months of thirty-one days each, and a February over. The Waste, the Waste!'[24]

The most telling criticism of such thinking is not included in the familiar opposition Dickens presents, between human values and logic. This is, of course, important, but becomes effective through the way in which the falseness of Mr. Filer's premises is isolated: what he has failed to take into account, is the most important factor in the economics of tripe; that it is already a waste material, incidental to the production of beef, and that to eat it, far from being wasteful, is the very opposite. The point Dickens is making explicit here is present only incidentally in Mr. Slug's address, and seems, in its satirical way, very like Carlyle's central criticism of contemporary statistics in Chartism; that 'There are innumerable circumstances; and one circumstance left out may be the vital one on which all turned.'[25] This is the criticism implied, too, in the grim conversation between Louisa Gradgrind and her father, in which they discuss whether or not she should marry Bounderby: the 'one circumstance... on which all turned', omitted from Mr. Gradgrind's statistical survey, is the need of every human being for love. It is at least arguable that Dickens may have owed a fuller understanding of the notion of the 'one circumstance left out' to Carlyle, though it is implicit (if unrealised) in the conception of Mr. Slug.

Much of the ground of this chapter has, of necessity, already been covered in our discussion of Hard Times. But the opposition between fact and fancy, explored by the novel, concerned Dickens from the very beginning of his career, for obvious reasons. It is part of a common

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24. Chimes, 94-5.
25. Chartism, 42. My emphasis.

tradition of Romanticism, in which Carlyle was an important but not unique link. More importantly perhaps, Dickens's reaction against one kind of logic has affinities with his recoil against cruelty, expecially the cruelty of the adult against the child. Fantasy, for Dickens, is the antidote for both, above all perhaps, the fantasy and warmth of his eccentrics, especially his lower-class eccentrics. The respective attitudes of Carlyle and Dickens to 'logic-choppers', despite the parallels we have observed - above all in Hard Times - are distinguished most clearly by what the two writers oppose to them. Carlyle is not worried by rationalism because it interferes with human happiness; his objection to it is that it attempts to distort something that he takes to be altogether more important:

> A SOUL is not like wind... contained within a capsule; the ALMIGHTY MAKER is not like a Clock-maker that once, in old immemorial ages, having made his Horologe of a Universe, sits ever since and sees it go! .... For indeed, as no man ever saw the above-said wind-element enclosed within its capsule, and finds it at bottom more deniable than conceivable; so too he finds...your Clock-maker Almighty an entirely questionable affair, a deniable affair...[26]

For Carlyle, 'the gleam of... eternal Oceans, like the voice of old Eternities, far-sounding through thy heart of hearts.';[27] for Dickens, Sleary's circus.

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26. PP, 144.
27. Ibid., 142.

Chapter Nine: HISTORY AND SOCIETY

Both Carlyle and Dickens had strong views about the past, without which we cannot fully understand their feelings about the present: for both writers, a particular interpretation of history was a vital shaping force for their different attitudes to the Victorian age. The distinction between their feelings about the past is fundamental, and it can be seen, broadly, to underline the contrast in their personalities that I have already noted. Clearly, too, without pointing the distinction between their respective 'philosophies' of history, it becomes more difficult to isolate how very different were their attitudes to the present. Both men had mixed feelings about their own times; both were excited by technological change, and believed in progress. At the same time, they shared a general bewilderment about the age, and a horror of its materialism and injustice. All this, of course, is equally true of very many other Victorians, and might even be a necessary frame of mind in any rapidly evolving industrial civilisation. It is the differences - as much as the similarities - between their attitudes to society, that help us to identify them.

A convenient starting point is Carlyle's Past and Present (1843). This work, I have suggested, is certainly relevant to Dickens's understanding of his own age, and probably directly inspired parts of The Chimes. But though Dickens's Christmas Story undoubtedly shows how very similar in some respects were their views on modern society, it also demonstrates, equally obviously, how very different they were at the same time. 'I know', says Trotty Veck, in a moment of inspired vision,

> that our inheritance is held in store for us by Time. I know there is a sea of Time to rise one day, before which all who wrong us or oppress us will be swept away like leaves. I see it, on the flow![1]

This, on the face of it, seems Carlylean enough, with its notion of an inevitable and finally cataclysmic historical process; and yet, there is a vital difference of emphasis in Dickens's view of history here. What Dickens, in the passage, considers to be inevitable, is the abolition of 'oppression'; Carlyle throughout his oeuvre, sees the unavoidable and explosive disappearance of 'unreality'. The distinction is vital, and for the whole period of their literary relationship; I have already drawn it with particular reference to A Tale of Two Cities and The French Revolution. Past and Present compares the Victorian Age with the twelfth century, and finds the contemporary condition of the English working man inferior, materially and - most importantly - spiritually, to that of the feudal serf. When Dickens and Carlyle deplore the gulf separating masters and men in the industrial areas, they have a very different alternative ideal in mind, as Past and Present makes abundantly clear:

> Gurth with the brass collar round his neck, tending Cedric's pigs in the glades of the woods, is not what I call an exemplar of human felicity: but Gurth, with the sky above him, with the free air and tinted boscage and umbrage round him, and in him at least the certainty of supper and social lodging when he came home; Gurth seems to me happy, in comparison with many a Lancashire and

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1. Chimes, 151.

> Buckinghamshire man of these days, not born thrall of anybody! Gurth's brass collar did not gall him: Cedric deserved to be his master.... Liberty, I am told, is a divine thing. Liberty when it becomes the "Liberty to die by starvation" is not so divine![2]

The 'brass collar' round Gurth's neck is Carlyle's symbol of the just but inflexible authority that he believed in also as the true basis of industrial relations. All this, fairly obviously, is a long way from Dickens's beliefs as we see them in Hard Times and elsewhere: though Stephen Blackpool, as I have suggested, can certainly be seen to echo Carlyle's demand to 'give me a leader', a brass collar is not quite what he has in mind. Though The Chimes, for instance, reflects much of Carlyle's analysis in Past and Present and Chartism, this is one element in it that he did not accept. Indeed, it may well be, that in spite of his rapidly increasing respect for Carlyle at this period, that Dickens's original intention was consciously to mark his dissent, in The Chimes, from this part of his creed. Nothing could be better calculated, one would have thought, to confirm Dickens's distrust of the 'Good Old Times', than the spirit of much of the section of Past and Present dealing with the twelth century, and as Dr Slater has shown, there is an interesting deleted passage from the manuscript of The Chimes which may confirm this. The passage is part of a satire on Young England, but at one point at least, sounds rather more like an attack on parts of Past and Present. It was to have formed part of Trotty's vision at the beginning of the 'Third Quarter':

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2. PP, 205.

> Before one sofa where the youngish sort of gentleman...lay dozing, a small party were enjoying rustic sports, while another larger party were being hanged on trees in the background and a third were having brazen collars soldered round their necks as the born vassals of an undeniably picturesque Baron; singing at the same time "Oh the good old times, the grand old times, the glorious old Feudal times, the Genuine Genteel Millenium!"

The reference, here, to 'vassals in brazen collars' is very reminiscent of Past and Present, and this may explain the opposition from Forster that caused Dickens to delete this passage. One feasible explanation, I think, may be that Dickens, either consciously having intended this as an attack on Past and Present, or realising afterwards (with Forster's help) that it seemed very like one, erased the passage to avoid giving offence to Carlyle, to whom , of course, it was his ambition to read the story aloud. Of course, he could always have om itted it at the reading and published it afterwards; but this would have seemed rather like double dealing and in any case Carlyle (or one of his friends) might well have read the story himself.[3]

Whatever the truth of this, the comparison of these two passages underlines the vital distinction between the attitudes of both men to the past. Dickens's feelings about 'the good old times' are conveyed, adequately enough, by the titles of a series of false book backs in his library at Gad's Hill called 'The Wisdom of our Ancestors - I. Ignorance. II. Superstition. III. The Block. IV. The Stake. V. The Rack. VI. Dirt

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3. Slater, M., op cit., 80-1.

VII. Disease.'[4] Dickens believed in the present as necessarily better than the past, and the future as necessarily better than the present. This is, in a way, related to the idea of history of the Enlightenment, and Dickens's attitude to the past here has affinities not with Carlyle but with Bentham, who as Humphry House points out, 'had called "Our Wise Ancestors", "the Wisdom of Ages", and "the Wisdom of Old Times", mischievous and absurd fallacies springing from the grossest perversion of the meaning of words.'[5] Carlyle, for all his understanding of the distinctiveness of his own times and his dislike of inappropriate anachronisms, certainly believed in 'The Wisdom of our Ancestors':

> How have cunning workmen in all crafts, with their cunning head and right-hand, tamed the Four Elements to be their ministers; yoking the Winds to their Sea-chariot, making the very Stars their nautical Time-piece; - and written and collected a Bibliothèque du Roi; among whose Books is the Hebrew BOOK! a wondrous race of creatures: these have been realised, and what of Skill is in these: call not the Past Time, with all its confused wretchedness, a lost one.[6]

He believed too, not - like Dickens - in a constant, unbroken movement away from the barbarism of the past, but - not unlike the Saint-Simonians - in a series of cycles of growth and decay, of progress and regression:

> How...Ideals do realise themselves; and grow, wondrously, from

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4. See House, H, op. cit., 35.
5. Ibid.
6. FR, I, 10.

> amid the ever-fluctuating chaos of the Actual: this is what World-History, if it teach anything, has to teach us. How they grow; and, after long stormy growth, bloom out mature, supreme; then quickly (for the blossom is brief) fall into decay; sorrowfully dwindle; and crumble down, or rush down, noisily or noiselessly disappearing.[7]

The cruelty and oppression that Dickens saw when he looked to the past, was, without doubt, the factor that determined more than any other his historical philosophy. Carlyle's philosophy of history has fairly obvious affinities with a bewildering variety of sources: Walter Scott; German Romanticism; Scottish Calvinism; the Saint-Simonians.[8] Dickens's is more difficult to pin down in terms of an historical or literary background. He read history, I suspect, mainly for its incident, rather than its 'philosophy'. His view of history is simple enough in all conscience, and consists mainly of a dislike of the past and a belief in the progress of the present. It would not, I think, be a fruitful exercise to try to explain it in terms of his reading of Historians. The two main sources for The Child's History of England for instance, were the Pictorial History of England, published by Charles Knight, and Thomas Keightley's History of England.[9] Keightley, beyond any doubt, believed in 'the Wisdom of our Ancestors' and was hardly likely to have contributed to Dickens's view of the past. He concluded his final volume with the pious hope that his work might be found 'worthy to take a place among those judged to be efficacious in infusing a love and

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7. Ibid., 11-12.
8. See Shine, H., Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians, London, 1941.
9. Collins, P., Dickens and Education, op. cit., 60.

veneration for the institutions transmitted to us by our Saxon and Norman forefathers...'[10] The Pictorial History is certainly less enamoured of the past than this, but one cannot really imagine this dull but worthy work catching Dickens's imagination. A chapter on the condition of the people during the reign of George III, for example, is largely composed of such statistical discoveries as that 'by comparing the actual numbers of ... registered burials corrected by an allowance being made for unregistered deaths, it would appear that during the five years ending with 1805 the annual rate of mortality was 1 in every 45 of the population...':[11] the book's historical incident is obviously more riveting than this, but its tone is cool enough. Dickens's very emotional and simplified view of history is surely best explained by his own life, above all, perhaps, by the blacking warehouse: when Dickens looked to the past, he saw little but the cruelty and oppression he also hated in the present. His hatred of the oppression of the Victorian age, clearly enough, has its roots partly in the realities of his society, and partly in his own childhood experience; the past differed from the present for him perhaps, among other ways, in the greater scale of its injustice. The Child's History is a pamphlet against the viciousness and general unpleasantness of preceding ages, and an implied profession of belief in the greater enlightenment (despite their obvious and serious failings) of his own times.

This brief account of Dickens's and Carlyle's respective views of

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10. Keightley, T., History of England, London, 1839, III, 528.
11. Craik, G., and Mac Farland, C., Pictorial History of England, London, 1844, VIII, 729.

history forms, I think, a necessary prologue to a discussion of two general propositions that have been made about the Sage's influence on the novelist: firstly, that Dickens recoiled increasingly from his own times, and came to see his age overwhelmingly as a kind of diseased and nightmarish prison, and that this totally pessimistic view can be explained by Carlyle's influence; secondly, though Dickens began his career as a humanitarian and a liberal, that under Carlyle's shadow he became more and more reactionary with the years. Both these proposals can be and have been argued; and both of them, I think, if true, are only marginally so. I shall examine them with reference to three general areas of Carlyle's alleged influence on Dickens:

1. Carlyle's possible influence on Dickens's attitudes towards authoritarianism, particularly towards punishment, and the alleged influence, specifically, of Carlyle's "Model Prisons" pamphlet on David Copperfield and on Dickens's Household Words article "Pet Prisoners".

2. Carlyle's alleged influence on Dickens's increasing dislike of dark-skinned races which was manifested in articles such as "The Niger Expedition" and "The Noble Savage", in his attack on philanthropic help to African natives in Bleak House, and in his position over the Governor Eyre controversy.

3. Dickens's attacks, especially in Little Dorrit, on 'Downing-Street methods', and the associated view that the allegedly total despair of this novel represented the whole spectrum of Dickens's feelings about society, and that this increasing cynicism was the result of Carlyle's influence. Bleak House has also been held to provide evidence for this view.

1: Dickens and "Model Prisons"

Dickens's position relative to Carlyle's "Models Prisons" pamphlet is, I think, easy enough to estimate, despite the ease with which it has been misrepresented, most notably by Dr. Goldberg, who claims uncompromisingly that it 'led directly to Dickens's article "Pet Prisoners" and the satire on the milksop treatment of prisoners in David Copperfield'.[12] "Model Prisons", as I have already pointed out, probably horrified Carlyle's audience more than any other of the Latter-Day Pamphlets and whether or not Dickens can really be shown to have accepted its more reactionary elements is obviously a question of some importance. What shocked his contemporaries was only partly the matter of Carlyle's doctrines; mainly, it was the unchristian spirit, even the savagery, of his manner. Carlyle's pamphlet can be seen, broadly, to make three points. Firstly, that the conditions of the criminals inside the 'model prison' he visited were better than those of honest working class homes; secondly, that the purpose of a prison sentence is punishment, not reformation; and thirdly, that reformation is, in any case, impossible, and that society should simply put the criminal out of harm's way, and then return to its legitimate concerns:

> ... scoundrel is scoundrel: that remains forever a fact; and there exists not in the earth whitewash that can make the scoundrel a friend of this Universe; he remains an enemy if you spent your life in whitewashing him. He won't whitewash; this one won't. The one method clearly is, That, after fair trial, you dissolve partnership with him; send him, in the name of Heaven, whither he is striving all this while, and have done with him. And, in a time like this, I would advise you, see likewise that you be speedy about it! For there is immense work, and of a far hopeful^er sort, to be done elsewhere[13].

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12. Goldberg, M., op cit., 64.
13. LDP. 336.

It is difficult to avoid the impression, at times, that Carlyle's feelings about punishment betray a kind of grim satisfaction in the idea of its infliction. At one point, he recounts an ancient German practice, carried out on a man who had committed certain crimes:

> Him once convicted they laid hold of, nothing doubting; - bore him, after judgement, to the deepest convenient Peat-bog; plunged him in there, drove an oaken frame down over him, solemnly in the name of gods and men: "There, prince of scoundrels, that is what we have had to think of thee, on clear acquaintance; our grim good-night to thee is that! In the name of all the gods lie there, and be our partnership with thee dissolved henceforth. It will be better for us, we imagine!" [14]

The main evidence for or against Dickens's acceptance of this pamphlet is to be found in an article, published in Household Words (at the end of April 1850, about two months after the publication of "Model Prisons") entitled "Pet Prisoners" and in the chapter "I am shown two interesting penitents", from the final double number of David Copperfield. Both the article and the chapter are explicit attacks on the so-called 'separate' system, whereby, through solitary confinement, contact between prisoners was (or was supposed to be) prevented. [15] In both, Dickens attacks the system on two main grounds, that the condition of the prisoners are better than those endured by the poor outside the prison gates, and that the separate system encourages a hypocritical and self-important frame of mind in the prisoner: thus, Uriah Heep is perfectly equipped by nature to thrive under such a system. This, clearly, is no part of Carlyle's complaint, and in any case the jail he attacks in "Model Prisons" (which has been identified as Coldbath Fields [16]) followed the rival 'silent' system, of which Dickens approved. Nevertheless (like many others at this time), Dickens agrees with

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14. Ibid., 335-6.
15. See Collins, P., Dickens and Crime, op cit., 53.
16. Ibid., 64.

Carlyle in his complaint that the poor outside prison fare worse than the criminal inside, and in his view that prisons should punish the criminal; like Carlyle, he complains that under the silent system the treadmill has been almost abolished [17] and he goes on to recommend that work should be made as uncongenial to the prisoner as possible. Thus, Dickens agrees with two of the three ideas in "Model Prisons". Professor Collins has further pointed out that in an article on prisons by Henry Morley, published in Household Words in June 1850, "Model Prisons" is mentioned with approval, an approval which - given Dickens's known editorial habits - he probably shared, and that the parallel between the 'penitents' chapter of David Copperfield, and Carlyle's pamphlet was noticed by the public, Fraser's Magazine even reprinting passages from them, side by side, and concluding that Dickens 'follows as junior on the same side', with 'an entire condemnation of the whole system'[18]. As Professor Collins suggests, the Fraser's reviewer was wrong to claim that Carlyle and Dickens were normally opposed, and that this agreement was exceptional; and as Professor Collins further suggests, Dickens 'did not part company with him over Latter-Day Pamphlets, as did so many of his thoughtful and decent contemporaries' [19].

On the face of it, there may seem to be a fairly substantial accumulation of evidence in support of the suggestion that Carlyle's "Model Prisons" substantially influenced "Pet Prisoners" and David Copperfield. Nevertheless there is, I am sure, an even weightier case against this proposition. Briefly, it is that, on the two points in Carlyle's argument on which the two men agreed (the undesirability that the conditions of the criminal should be superior to those of the honest poor, and the necessity for the

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17. LDP, 310, and Dickens, C., "Pet Prisoners", Household Words, I (1850), 103.

18. See Collins, P., op cit., 155-6 and Fraser's Magazine, XLII (1850), 709.

19. Collins, P., op cit., 156.

criminal to be punished) both writers represented a sizeable section of public opinion; and that the manner and matter of the most widely attacked parts of "Model Prisons" are reflected, neither in "Pet Prisoners", in David Copperfield, or in Morley's article. "The Great Penal Experiments". Nor does Dickens's failure to break with Carlyle over Latter-Day Pamphlets imply that he agreed with everything in them. Though, certainly, many did turn against Carlyle over the Pamphlets perhaps a more remarkable feature of the furore over their publication was the number of people who disagreed with all or part of them, but who, nevertheless, continued to admire Carlyle. The dilemma of such readers was summarised by the North British Review. 'Even where one differs most strongly from Mr Carlyle', thought the writer,

> and feels almost constrained to fall out with him absolutely and finally as a teacher of what seems to be false, cruel and mischievous, there is still, we are well aware, one consideration that ought to operate in making one ponder the difference long before expressing it, and in inducing one, if one must express it, to do so as modestly as possible. This is the consideration of Mr Carlyle's real greatness of intellect, which renders it almost a matter of certainty that you cannot conceive or express any notion in connexion with any of the topics he has formally handled, that he has not himself conceived or expressed before you with far greater clearness and force, and a far more exact appreciation of its real significance and worth [20].

It was, of course, quite possible to accept much of Carlyle's argument in "Model Prisons", while whole-heartedly rejecting its barbaric tone. The Eclectic Review could quote with approval Carlyle's attacks on the

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20. "Latter-Day Pamphlets. Edited by THOMAS CARLYLE", North British Review, XIV (1850), 15.

soft treatment of 'The Devil's regiments of the line', and his contrast with the treatment by society of the poor, referred to by the reviewer as 'the Patient, quiet, unobtrusive strugglers, whose tale of difficulty is untold...heroes of the age, who battle, toil and die; - martyrs, for whom no epitaph is found! How little are these beings cared for!'[21] Nevertheless, the writer condemns the peat-bog passage, discussed above, as 'almost too barbarous to be quoted',[22] and concludes that Carlyle cherished 'too much honour for and faith in, mere arbitrary force'[23]. Similarly, The Dublin Review agreed with another of Carlyle's arguments, also accepted by Dickens, while rejecting firmly the pamphlet's unchristian tone: Carlyle was right, thought the reviewer, to attack the principle that the idea of punishment was the improvement of the criminal himself. 'Justice', he thought, 'is done by society as justice, and in virtue of an inherent or delegated right to visit crime with punishment...' And yet, pointed out the writer,

> ...even this principle, fundamentally true, is dealt with by him in a way to make it even falser and far more hateful than the system it opposes. According to him the scoundrel is unimproveable, irreclaimable, - if he be hastening to the gallows, clear the road for him; if he chooses to go to Hell, send him thither with all dispatch, extinguish him at least out of human society as a mutinous wild beast. How abhorrent the spirit of all this is to the teaching of our Lord, and of our Lord's Church, we need scarce observe[24].

To suggest that this passage from The Dublin Review might well be taken as a guide to Dickens's probable opinions (if he came to the point of forming any) on the worst excesses of "Model Prisons", would, I think, be more

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21. "A Pilgrimage to Utopia", Eclectic Review, LXVII (1850), 476.
22. Ibid, 477.
23. Ibid, 476.
24. "Carlyle's Works", Dublin Review, XXIX (1850), 201.

consistent with what we know of his personality, than to argue that he approved of everything in the pamphlet. Morley's reference in his own article on penal experiments, to Carlyle's 'graphic but eccentric pen' [25] though approving, is something short of idolatry perhaps, and Morley is in any case referring to Carlyle's physical description of the - to him - palatial Coldbath Fields prison. Morley, furthermore, refers to it to help point the contrast, not with inadequate working class conditions, but with those of another London prison. Though Dickens was more upset by the oppression of the innocent, Carlyle's description of an ancient German public execution is, surely, exactly the kind of thing the novelist was thinking of every time he lambasted 'The Good Old Times', and Carlyle's nostrum of 'A collar round the neck, and a cart-whip flourished over the back', reminds us, not only of the 'brass collar' of Past and Present, but the 'brazen collar' of the deleted passage in the manuscript of The Chimes, discussed above. Dickens's hatred of the barbarity of 'The Good Old Times' had not abated since 1844, and an article by Percival Leigh, published in the same issue of Household Words as "Pet Prisoners", makes this clear. Entitled "A Tale of The Good Old Times", the article is a long catalogue of the nastiness of past ages in which is necessarily included the barbarity of their punishments. At one point the article dismisses with horror all sentimental ideas about the Elizabethan age, 'whose emblems are cropped ears, pillory, stocks, thumb-screws, gibbet, axe, chopping-block, and scavenger's daughter'; elsewhere the inhumanity of prison conditions under the Georges is described:

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25. Morley, H., "The Great Penal Experiments", Household Words, I (1850), 250.

> Unfortunate debtors confined indiscrimately with felons, in the midst of filth, vice, and misery unspeakable. Criminals under sentence of death tippling in the condemned cell with the Ordinary for their pot companion. Flogging, a common punishment of women convicted of larceny [26].

Morley's article, "The Great Penal Experiments", shows a similar fierceness against unacceptable prison conditions in Dickens's own time. Dickens's views on the treatment of prisoners was certainly reactionary in comparison with the advanced opinion of the day [27]; but then, so were those of a large section of the public [28]. Above all, no matter how illiberal his opinions may seem to the modern reader, they never approach the fatalistic savagery of the most notorious parts of "Model Prisons".

2: Dickens's Racial Attitudes.

Carlyle's complaint that condemned criminals were the object of more philanthropic sympathy than honest, starving workers, brings us to another and larger section of humanity which both men thought attracted philanthropic attention that might have been better directed towards the English working man: the Negro in particular, and dark skinned races in general. And here, the admirer of Dickens must face the unpalatable fact that his views about black and brown people, though humanitarian at the beginning of his career, grew progressively more illiberal, and that his utterances on the subject on more than one occasion, reached depths

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26. Leigh, Percival, "A Tale of the Good Old Times", Household Words, I (1850), 104-5.
27. Collins, P., Dickens and Crime, op., cit., 70 ff.
28. Ibid., 17-20.

of savagery never plumbed by Carlyle even in Model Prisons. On his first visit to America, certainly, Dickens felt everything a young liberal should about slavery:'I don't think I could have borne it any longer', he wrote to Forster, after he had, with relief, left the slave states behind him.[29] He was duly shocked by the treatment of negroes in the South, and in his letters home to Forster, and afterwards in American Notes, gave an impassioned description of their plight. But years later, in the aftermath of the Jamaica insurrection, he could write about negroes in a far from liberal spirit:

> That platform-sympathy with the black - or the Native, or the Devil - afar off, and that platform indifference to our own countrymen at enormous odds in the midst of bloodshed and savagery, makes me stark wild. Only the other day, here was a meeting of jawbones of asses at Manchester, to censure the Jamaica Governor for his manner of putting down the insurrection! So we are badgered about New Zealanders and Hottentots, as if they were identical with men in clean shirts at Camberwell, and were to be bound by pen and ink accordingly.[30]

I have described his reaction to the Indian Mutiny in an earlier chapter, and there are other evidences of a hardening attitude to coloured races, which I shall discuss. The hysterical tone of Dickens's attitude to negroes later in his life has been ascribed to Carlyle's influence, among others by A.A. Adrian, who notes a 'compelling similarity in style and substance' between Dickens's letter to de Cerjat on the Eyre controversy, (quoted above)and Carlyle's remarks on emancipated slaves in Past and Present:

> O Anti-Slavery Convention, long-sounding long-eared Exeter-Hall - But in thee too is a kind of instinct towards justice, and I will complain of nothing. Only black Quashee over the seas being once

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29. Forster, 240.
30. Letters, III, 445.

> sufficiently attended to, wilt thou not perhaps open thy dull sodden eyes to the "sixty thousand valets in London itself who are yearly dismissed to the streets, to be what they can, when the season ends"; - or to the hunger-stricken, pallid, yellow-colored "Free Laborers" in Lancashire, Yorkshire, Buckinghamshire, and all other shires! These Yellow-colored, for the present, absorb all my sympathies .... Quashee has already victuals, clothing; Quashee is not dying of such despair as the yellow-coloured pale man's ...in one of those Lancashire Weavers, dying of hunger, there is more thought and heart, a greater arithmetical amount of misery and desperation, than in whole gangs of Quashees. [31]

Both Carlyle and Dickens attack here Exeter Hall's concern for natives 'at the expense of our own countrymen', as Mr Adrian points out, and he concludes that 'so alike in texture are the two that they might almost be taken for pieces of the same cloth. It is as though Dickens had woven the fabric of his argument on the loom of his master, Carlyle. With respect to the development of his ideas, about slavery at least, Dickens certainly fulfilled the promise which he had made in his letter to Carlyle in 1863: "I am always reading you carefully and trying to go your way". [32] Professor Ford underlines this judgement in his assertion that 'Dickens's response to the Eyre case is an indication of the overpowering influence which Carlyle had upon many of his contemporaries. Dickens could well say, as Ruskin once did: "I must follow my great father, Carlyle"' [33].

Both these conclusions, I think, illustrate the dangers of too easily discerning the influence of one mind over another. The effect here of completely ignoring the non-Carlylean background to Dickens's feelings about the Eyre controversy in particular and about coloured people in

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31. PP, 267.
32. Adrian, A.A., "Dickens on American Slavery: A Carlylean Slant", PMLA, LXVII (1952), 329.
33. Ford, G.H., "The Governor Eyre Case in England", UTQ, XVII (1948), 228.

general is, I am sure, to seriously over-emphasise Carlyle's influence on him. This was certainly, I think, a factor, and Mr Adrian is right to underline Dickens's suggestively Carlylean style in his letter about the Jamaican insurrection. But Dickens had other reasons for his support of the Eyre committee, one obvious explanation for which is provided by his attitude, some nine years previously, to the Indian Mutiny. Many people supported Governor Eyre because they felt that he had shown the kind of firmness that might have avoided tragedy in India. As Tennyson wrote to the Eyre committee, 'the outbreak of our Indian Mutiny remains as a warning to all but madmen against want of vigour and swift decisiveness'. Many supporters of Governor Eyre, including Tyndall, made the same point.[34] And though Carlyle certainly gave the Eyre committee a weight and effectiveness it might not otherwise have gained, his real function was not to create a climate of public opinion, but to provide it with an appropriate father figure. Dickens's view of the Eyre controversy was almost certainly influenced by the Indian Mutiny, which (as I have described) unleashed in him a torrent of vindictive fury. Some time later, he published a lovingly detailed descriptive article, by an eye witness, about the gruesome public execution of three of the mutineers. After the Mutiny, the British revived the old Indian method of execution by tying the condemned man over the end of a cannon and blasting him to pieces. The obvious relish of this description must have been felt by Dickens, too.[35] His views on firm treatment of natives by Europeans, however, go back even further than the Mutiny. Carlyle's influence, as I shall argue, may have been a significant factor in their evolution.

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34. Tennyson, H., Alfred, Lord Tennyson, A Memoir, London, 1897, II, 40-1, and Hume, H., The Life of Edward John Eyre, London, 1867, 283.

35. "Blown Away!", Household Words, XVII (1858), 348-50.

But at least as important, I think, was the simple but distinctive view of society and of history, that I have already discussed. Dickens's article "The Noble Savage" has been compared closely with Carlyle's "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question", and Dr. Goldberg considers that "it draws a good deal of its illiberal tincture from Carlyle's broadsides in the Latter-Day Pamphlets".[36] I disagree; Dickens's illiberality here is his own, I think, as one passage from his article demonstrates very suggestively. After a long and uncomfortably passionate diatribe on the dirty habits of the 'savage', Dickens arrives at the conclusion that he is 'a wild animal with the questionable gift of boasting; a conceited, tiresome, bloodthirsty, monotonous humbug'. He then comes to what we can see as the irritant activating this rather unpleasant bee-in-the-bonnet. In spite of all his obvious barbarity, says Dickens,

> ...it is extraordinary to observe how some people will talk about him, as they talk about the good old times; how they will regret his disappearance, in the course of this world's development, from such and such lands where his absence is a blessed relief and an indispensable preparation for the sowing of the very first seeds of any influence that can exalt humanity....[37]

For Dickens the savage represents, like the mob in Barnaby Rudge, the negation of civilisation and progress, and though the Indian Mutiny made Dickens's feelings against coloured people more vindictive, it only confirmed what he already thought about their alleged viciousness and brute stupidity. "The Noble Savage" was an attack on what he thought to be the sentimentality with which some people bewailed the fate of certain primitive races at the hands of 'civilisation'.

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36. Goldberg, 55.
37. Dickens, C., "The Noble Savage", Household Words, VII (1853), 337.

His wrath was aroused, among other things, by the activities of George Catlin, an ethnologist who attempted to bring the plight of the America Indian to the attention of the world. He did this by touring exhibitio which demonstrated the customs and activities of an actual group of Ojibbeway Indians, and by the publication of his Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs and Condition of the North American Indians (1841) Dickens's article opens with an attack on Red Indians:

> His calling rum fire-water, and me a pale face, wholly fail to reconcile me to him. I don't care what he calls me. I call him a savage, and I call a savage a something highly desirable to be civilised off the face of the earth.[38]

Dickens's contemptuous reference to Catlin's activities suggests an unpleasant interpretation of the phrase 'civilised off the face of the earth'. Catlin's tours were more or less explicit propaganda (as were the Letters and Notes, to which Dickens refers in his article) against the decimation of the Red Indian people, 'three fourths of whose country', as Catlin wrote in 1841,

> has fallen into the possession of civilised man within the short space of 250 years - twelve millions of whose bodies have fattened the soil in the meantime; who have fallen victims to whiskey, the small-pox and the bayonet; leaving at this time but a meagre proportion to live a short time longer, in the certain apprehension of soon sharing a similar fate.[39]

Carlyle, even in "The Nigger Question" appears much more benevolent

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38. Ibid.,
39. Catlin, G., Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs and Conditi of the North American Indians, London 1841, I, 4-5.

than Dickens about non-whites.[40] His main argument is that the West Indian negro is inferior to the white man, and that he should not be allowed to sit around eating pumpkins, but should be forced to work in obedience to his white superiors; at the same time, Carlyle suggests that the attention of Exeter Hall philanthropists should be given to the starving poor at home, rather than to the (allegedly) over-fed liberated slaves of Jamaica. Dickens certainly agreed with Carlyle about the inferiority of the blacks, and in 1857 he published in Household Words an article by Elizabeth Lynn, called "Why is the Negro Black", which gives a 'scientific' explanation for this. The hot climate in which most negroes have lived for centuries, claims the article, has disturbed the action of their blood and liver; an inactive liver has created a smaller, less energetic and 'more basely developed' brain than is found in temperate latitudes. At the same time, this disturbance of the liver was held to explain the negro's pigmentation. Miss Lynn nevertheless thought that, though 'Quashie' (a variant of Carlyle's contemptuous nickname) was stupid he should nevertheless be treated humanely. This was certainly Dickens's view too, though perhaps rather less fervently after he knew about the atrocities of the Indian Mutiny, and, despite the spirit of the earlier part of "The Noble Savage", Dickens concludes his article with this point:

> We have no greater justification for being cruel to the miserable object, than for being cruel to a WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE or an ISAAC NEWTON; but he passes away before an immeasurably better and higher power than ever ran wild in any earthly woods, and the world will be all the better when his place knows him no more.[41]

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40. Though Dickens's judgement (see page 349 below) on the possibilities ('under civilised direction') of the African Negro shows some discrimination between negroes and other 'savages', paralleled perhaps by Carlyle's remark in "The Nigger Question" that 'The black African, alone of wild men, can live among men civilised. While all manner of Caribs and others pine into annihilation in presence of the pale faces, he contrives to continue...' ("NQ", 302).
41. Lynn, E., "Why is the negro black", Household Words, XV (1857), 587, and Dickens C., op. cit. 339.

A. A. Adrian perceives a change in Dickens's view (which he attributes to Carlyle's influence) by comparing the humanity of his horrified attacks on the cruelty of American slavery in American Notes with his references (on his second American visit) to a freed negro slave as an "untidy, incapable, lounging, shambling black"; in fact, as the last paragraph of "The Noble Savage" shows, it was quite possible for Dickens to look down on what he saw as inferior races and still believe that they should be treated properly, though his apparently total lack of sympathy with Catlin's objectives may betray, even at this stage in his career, a curious ambivalence on this point.[42] Certainly, Dickens thought little of the intelligence of non-white races at the end of his career or before. He wrote to Forster from America in 1868 that the 'melancholy absurdity of giving these people votes ... would glare at one out of every roll of their eyes ... if one did not see ... that their enfranchisement is a mere party trick to get votes.[43] Dickens's views on the intrinsic inferiority of liberated slaves and of negroes in general were more respectable and widespread than they are now, and the year after Dickens sent this letter to Forster, Francis Galton, no reactionary, was classifying the negro as being inferior to the Caucasian by 'not less than two grades' in his own alphabetic calibration of human intelligence. Part of his evidence for this was supplied by the American negro:

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42. Dickens's attitude to Catlin suggests, even in the forties, a callousness about the plight of certain dark races which it may be as well to remember when we consider the suggestion that Dickens's attitude in the sixties, particularly to the Governor Eyre controversy, was largely determined by his respect for Carlyle, and went against his normal liberal and humanitarian feelings. Dickens's attitude during the forties to Catlin's activities in behalf of the North American Indians contrasts interestingly with that of the man who was later to become Governor Eyre of Jamaica, who strongly approved of Catlin's campaign, and wrote in a similar vein about the plight of the Australian Aborigine (also an object of Dickens's disgust). He considered their customs worthy of respect, and wrote feelingly (and perhaps ironically) on their behalf; the Aborigine, he wrote, might perhaps be considered barbarous; nevertheless, 'could blood answer blood perhaps for every drop of European's shed by natives, a torrent of their's by European hands would crimson the earth'. (Eyre,E., Journals of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia, London, 1845, II, 155)
43. Forster, 782 -3

> ...the number among the negroes of those whom we should call half-witted men is very large. Every book alluding to negro servants in America is full of instances. I was myself much impressed by this fact during my travels in Africa. The mistakes the negroes made in their own matters were so childish, stupid and simpleton-like, as frequently to make me ashamed of my own species. I do not think it any exaggeration to say, that their c is as low as our e, which would be a difference of two grades...[44]

Some thirty years before, when Dickens was editor of Bentley's Miscellany, he had published an article on American slaves which may be illuminating. Bentley's of course, was far less intimately under Dickens's control than his later periodicals, and is not a sure guide to his views. But the article represents what must have been a perfectly respectable view-point throughout the Victorian era, for 'liberals' as well as for reactionaries. 'I never met an Englishman', stated the writer, 'who, after being six months in the States did not agree that the plan of treating the blacks as natural inferiors was unavoidable...'[45] Like Carlyle, Dickens thought that negroes could only achieve anything under a white master, and though he could still feel comparatively benevolent about members of coloured races when he wrote "The Niger Expedition" (1848), he cannot be said to have regarded them as the equals of the white man, though they had not yet become imbued with the infernal qualities they were to assume for him later. At this stage, Dickens was prepared to accept favourable accounts of them as 'a faithful, cheerful, active, affectionate race', and thought, significantly, that it was 'clear that they, under civilised direction are the only hopeful human agents to whom recourse can ultimately be had for aid in working out the slow and gradual raising up of Africa.[46] Dickens's views about

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44. Galton, F., Hereditary Genius, London, repr. 1962, 395.
45. "American Niggers - Hudson River Steam-Boat Dialogues", Bentley's Miscellany, VI (1839), 262.
46. My italics, MP 111.

black people, though they are not unreminiscent of Carlyle's are, I think, his own. He looked down on them, probably throughout his career; but though his attacks on the cruelty of American slave-owners belong to the early part of his writing life, he never changed his mind about the institution of slavery. Though he switched his support from the North to the South in the American Civil War, it was not on the slavery issue, which -like many others - he had come to believe a Northern pretext. [47] In any case, we have I think, no need to go to Carlyle's writings to explain the essential elements in Dickens's feelings about coloured races. His low estimate of their intelligence probably represented the general concensus of middle class opinion, and his aggressiveness towards them in his later years can be better explained by his reaction to the great Victorian trauma of the Indian Mutiny, and to what he had learned over the years about their barbarous habits. [48]

Nevertheless, though Dickens's broad feelings about coloured races were his own, one important specific attitude to their treatment may well have been partly inspired by Carlyle's teachings: his contempt for Exeter Hall. 'It might be laid down as a very good general rule of social and political guidance', he begins "The Niger Expedition", 'that whatever Exeter Hall champions, is the thing by no means to be done'. [49] Dickens had probably never been over-enthusiastic about missionary activities, and as Dr Goldberg reminds us, he had satirised the the 'improving

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47. Waller, J., "Charles Dickens and the American Civil War", Studies in Philology, LVII (1960), 535-48.
48. See "His Sable Majesty's Customs", AYR, XII (1864), 414-20, on the savage's barbarous habits, and, on the Jamaican insurrection and the inferiority of the Jamaican negro, "Black is not quite white", AYR, XV (1866), 173-7.
49. MP, 108.

handkerchieves' sent (in Pickwick) by the Reverend Mr Stiggins to the West Indies. Given Dickens's feelings about negroes, about evangelical activities, and about Carlyle, it is certainly very likely that he would read Carlyle's diatribes on emancipated Jamaican slaves, and their philanthropic English allies, with attention.

Carlyle felt strongly on this subject, and wrote about it on no fewer than three occasions, in Past and Present, in Latter-Day Pamphlets, and in the Fraser's Magazine article published in 1849, the "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question". Carlyle's attitude to the negro, as to everything else, is shot through by his fatalistic idea of life as a burden to be born stoically, whose main purpose is the work we are set here to do, by 'The Gods', or 'The Immensities'. Since his emmancipation, says Carlyle, the West Indian negro has not worked, and the economy of the West Indies is deteriorating. Because he will not work, and recognise his just superiors, his spiritual condition is worse than it was under slavery. The Negro should be justly treated, but if he will not work, then just authority, the 'beneficent whip', must force him to it. It is, argues Carlyle, the worst possible violation of natural laws that a naturally fertile area should not reach its potential, and that those who should be doing the necessary work should sit around eating pumpkins, which for Carlyle symbolise here the enjoyment of unmerited abundance:

> No ; The gods wish besides pumpkins, that spices and valuable products be grown in their West Indies; thus much they have declared in so making the West Indies; - infinitely more they wish, that manful industrious men occupy their West Indies, not indolent two-legged cattle, however "happy" over their abundant pumpkins! both these things...though all terrestrial Parliaments and entities oppose it to the death, shall be done.

> Quashee, if he will not help in bringing out the spices, will get himself made a slave again...and with beneficent whip,...will be compelled to work. [50]

Carlyle's disapproval of slavery, though actually expressed at one point in the essay, is something less than passionate, though he spends some time dealing (no doubt sincerely) with the necessity for the just treatment of the American Slave. But if Carlyle does not believe in actual slavery, he certainly believes in what seems to us something very like it. The Negro should obey the white man, just as any inferior should obey his superiors. 'You are not "slaves" now', he apostrophises the West Indian negro, 'nor do I wish, if it can be avoided, to see you slaves again: but decidedly you will have to be servants to those that are born wiser than you, that are born lords of you; servants to the Whites, if they are (as what mortal can doubt that they are?) born wiser than you'. [51] The emancipated slave, too (like all servants) should be bound to his master by a contract for life, or for a very long period. Like most Victorians, as I have pointed out, Dickens agreed with Carlyle on the superiority of whites over negroes, and the acceptance of this idea certainly contributed towards the feelings of both men about the neglect of the white man at home by the Exeter Hall philanthropists who spent so much time thinking about the welfare of distant black people. Carlyle and Dickens were by no means the only people to notice the misplaced attention of some philanthropists, and Mrs Trollope had attacked them in Michael Armstrong (1840), some three years before Carlyle in Past and Present. Mrs. Trollope describes Mary Brotherton's father as

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50. "NQ" 318-9. 51 Ibid., 321.

> ...an anti-(black)-slavery man, who subscribed to the African society, and the Missionary fund; drank Mr Wilberforce's health after dinner whenever he had company at his table; and while his own mills daily sent millions of groans to be registered in heaven from joyless young hearts and aching infant limbs, he rarely failed to despatch with nearly equal regularity (all booked for the same region) a plentiful portion of benevolent lamentations over the sable sons of Africa all uttered comfortably from a soft armchair....[52]

Dickens attacked Exeter Hall on the same grounds, (as well as for their incompetence) in "The Niger Expedition" and the diction (as well as the sentiments) of his apostrophe to them indicates clearly, on whatever other information and on whatever private prejudices Dickens may also have based his own attitude to their activities, that Carlyle's views certainly played an important part in its formulation:

> Believe it, African Civilisation, Church of England Missionary, and all other Missionary Societies! The work at home must be completed thoroughly, or there is no hope abroad. To your tents, O Israel! But see they are your own tents! Set <u>them</u> in order ; Leave nothing to be done <u>there</u> ....[53]

Dickens's best known treatment of this theme is, of course, in the character of Mrs Jellyby in <u>Bleak House</u>. Mrs Jellyby, though she lets herself live in filth and confusion, and neglects her own family, spends all her time in philanthropic missionary activities. 'It <u>must</u> be very good of Mrs Jellyby to take such pains about a scheme for the benefit of Natives', says Esther Summerson mildly; 'and yet...the housekeeping!'[54]

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52. Trollope, F., <u>Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong</u>, London, 1840 67-8.
53. <u>The Examiner</u>, Aug. 19, 1848; MP, 123.
54. <u>BH</u>, 42.

Dickens's examination of this theme in Bleak House follows the broad argument of "The Niger Expedition", and the location of "Borrioboola-gha", on the left bank of the Niger, points clearly enough to The Niger Expedition as the most direct inspiration of this. Dickens's information about the expedition, of course, came from the narrative of it, written by two of its members, of which his article is partly a review. This work, as much as Carlyle's views, provided the direct inspiration for Mrs Jellyby. "The Niger Expedition" appeared before "The Nigger Question" or Latter-Day Pamphlets, but after Past and Present, and it certainly seems possible that this last work contributed to Dickens's awareness of the shortcomings of Exeter Hall: after complaining in Past and Present of the activities of 'loud-sounding long-eared Exeter-Hall', Carlyle reminds his leaders of the English unemployed, and asserts resoundingly that 'if I had a Twenty Millions, with Model-Farms and Niger expeditions, it is to these that I would give it!' [55]

3: 'The Whole Science of Government', and the Spirit of the Age.

Implicit in Carlyle's criticisms of Exeter Hall is the wider question of his views about the government, or non-government of the lower classes by the upper. The tale of Jo the crossing sweeper, and its moral, are probably partly inspired by a passage from Past and Present. [56] The context in which I have already quoted this passage, in tracing Carlyle's influence on The Chimes, indicates again, I think, the seminal nature of Dickens's second Christmas Story, and suggests, too, that the Carlylean roots of the social concern demonstrated by Dickens's novels of the 1850's are nourished as much (and probably more) by Past and Present and by

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55. PP, 267.
56. See p 310 above. One immediate source for Jo was a boy named George Ruby (see House, 32), but the passage from Past and Present clearly contributed his infectious illness and its results.

Chartism, as by Latter-Day Pamphlets. Dickens's imaginative insight into the plight of the helpless and illiterate Jo has a strong affinity with the following passage from Chartism, and Carlyle's reference in it to Chancery may be suggestive:

BLEAK HOUSE	CHARTISM
It must be a strange state to be like Jo! To shuffle through the streets, unfamiliar with the Shapes, and in utter darkness as to the meaning, of those mysterious symbols, so abundant over the shops, and at the corners of streets, and on the doors, and in the windows! To see people read, and to see people write, and to see the postman deliver letters, and not to have the least idea of all that language - to be, to every scrap of it, stone blind and dumb!.... To see the horses, dogs, and cattle, go by me, and to know that in ignorance I belong to them, and not to the superior beings in my shape, whose delicacy I offend! Jo's ideas of a Criminal Trial, or a Judge, or a Bishop, or a Government,... should be strange! (220-1)	... to this man it is all as if it had not been. The four-and-twenty letters of the Alphabet are still Runic enigmas to him. He passes by on the other side; and that great Spiritual Kingdom, the toil-won conquest of his own brothers...is a thing non-extant for him.... Baleful enchantment lies over him, from generation to generation; he knows not that such an empire is his... Oh, what are bills of rights, emancipations of black slaves into black apprentices, lawsuits in Chancery for some short usufruct of a bit of land? (106)

Bleak House brings us to the third general propostion that has been made about the nature of Carlyle's influence upon Dickens. Carlyle, it has been claimed, was responsible for Dickens's increasing adoption of a certain view of society, perhaps best summarised by George Bernard Shaw's reading of Hard Times. 'This', wrote Shaw, 'is Karl Marx, Carlyle,

Ruskin, Morris...rising up against civilisation itself as against a disease and declaring that it is not our disorder but our order that is horrible; that it is not our criminals but our magnates that are robbing and murdering us'[57]. Dickens's view of society is fairly obviously not Marx's, as his view of physical force Chartism, if nothing else, confirms. And Ruskin discourages comparison with himself(and by the same token with Morris) in his own interpretation of Hard Times.[58] Hard Times, of course, conveys only part of Dickens's views about his world, and so do Bleak House and Little Dorrit. It is tempting, though probably wrong, to think of the Court of Chancery, the Circumlocution Office, and the Marshalsea as emblems, for Dickens, of a whole society. The delay, stagnation and hoplessness of these institutions correspond, it cannot be overemphasised, with only part of Dickens's social vision. And though Dickens does not dilate on the hopeful elements in these novels, they are there: Arthur Clennam shakes off the lethargy of his youth, and breaks out of his own private imprisonment to a more useful and fulfilled existence. The point should not be overstressed, of course; nevertheless, when Dickens describes him, at the end of the book, walking into 'a modest life of usefulness and happiness' he is not providing a merely conventional ending, but hinting that the Marshalsea and the Circumlocution Office embody human tendencies which have their natural obverse, which is capable, by perseverance and hard work, of triumphing over the stagnation they represent. The various dilettantisms (the Carlylean term is appropriate here) of Richard Carstone, Skimpole, and Sir Leicester Dedlock and his guests,

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57. Shaw, G., Introduction to Hard Times, London, 1912 repr. in The Dickens Critics, ed. Ford G., and Lane L., New York, 1961, 127-8.

58. See pp150-1 above.

parallel the elaborate uselessness of the Court of Chancery, and are similarly shown as embodying social tendencies which have powerful enemies. Mr. Rouncewell is not a prominent character in Bleak House, but his type was responsible for many of the achievements of what this Dickensian ironmaster himself calls 'these busy times, when so many great undertakings are in progress...'[59] Dickens, without any doubt, accepted the spirit of this characterisation of his age, and there are many examples in the pages of Household Words of his excitement about 'great undertakings'. The late novels give a gloomier picture of his age than the journalism that Dickens closely supervised over the same period, perhaps most obviously because corruption, the law's delays, and the shortcomings of the ruling class were (and always have been) meatier subjects for fiction than achievement and progress. Carlyle too - though more obviously before the Latter Day Pamphlets - was excited by the pioneering spirit that was abroad, and Rouncewell fairly obviously represents an ideal that he himself propagated. The implied contrast of the direct practicality of Rouncewell with the useless lassitude of the Dedlock circle, and (though not directly) with the wordy and materialist hypocrisy of Mr Chadband, is also a Carlylean one:

> Looking at the kind of most noble Corn-Law Dukes...and also of right reverend Soul-Overseers, Christian Spiritual Duces "on a minimum of four thousand five hundred", one's hopes are a little chilled. Courage, nevertheless; there are many brave men in England! My indomitable Plugson, - nay is there not even in thee some hope? Thou art hitherto a Bucanier, as it was written and prescribed for thee by an evil world: but in that grim brow, in that indomitable heart which can conquer Cotton do there not perhaps lie other ten-times nobler conquests?[60].

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59. BH, 394
60. PP, 189

Rouncewell, of course, conquers iron and not cotton. Dicken's description of his factory radiates an excitement in its abundance, a sense of almost organic foison; to compare the luxuriant fantasy of this exuberant celebration of the raw materials of the iron age, with the mechanistic soul-destruction of the factories of Coketown, is surely to effectively destroy the notion that Dickens's target in Hard Times is industrial society as such. Industrialism, in this glimpse from Bleak House, is on the side of Life, of 'Fancy', rather than of merely statistical truth, of Hard Fact. Rouncewell's brother

> comes to a gateway in the brick wall, looks in, and sees a great perplexity of iron lying about, in every stage, and in a vast variety of shapes; in bars, in wedges, in sheets; in tanks, in boilers, in axles, in wheels, in cogs, in cranks, in rails; twisted and wrenched into eccentric and perverse forms, as separate parts of machinery; mountains of it broken up, and rusty in its age; distant furnaces of it glowing and bubbling in its youth; bright fireworks of it showering about, under the blows of the steam hammer; red-hot iron, white-hot iron, cold-black iron; an iron taste, an iron smell, and a Babel of iron sounds[61].

'It is impossible', as H.L.Sussman points out, 'for the modern mind, so accustomed to accelerating technological change, to recapture the wonder that the new technology created in the eighteen twenties, thirties and forties. This awe Carlyle could not help but share'[62]. The freshness and sense of almost terrified wonder of Dickens's description, in Dombey and Son, of Carker's last train-ride, conveys something of this feeling, and it compares interestingly with Carlyle's description of his own first railway journey in 1839. 'The whirl through the confused darkness, on those steam wings', he wrote to his brother John

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61. BH, 846
62. Sussman, H., Victorians and The Machine, London, 1968, 24

> was one of the strangest things I have experienced - hissing and dashing on, one knew not whither. We saw the gleam of towns in the distance - unknown towns. We went over the tops of houses - one town or village I saw clearly with its chimney heads vainly stretching up towards us - under the stars; not under the clouds, but among them. Out of one vehicle into another, snorting, roaring we flew: the likest thing to a Faust's flight on the Devil's mantle; or as if some huge steam night-bird had flung you on its back, and was sweeping through unknown space with you, most probably towards London[63].

Though Carlyle later became increasingly disenchanted with the implications of scientific and industrial progress, in the 'forties he still believed that it was to the Captain of Industry that society must look for its regeneration. Chartism and Past and Present are not entirely despairing documents; rather are they manifestoes for a new society, and only with Latter-Day Pamphlets does Carlyle's view of his age become predominantly pessimistic.

It is the coincidences of view between Latter-Day Pamphlets and certain of Dickens's writings of the 1850's that lead Dr Goldberg to portray a totally disillusioned Dickens, heavily influenced by the cynicism of Carlyle's bitter declining years. The Carlylean phrase Dr Goldberg gives to the chapter in which he propounds his view ("The Universal Social Gangrene") conveys this reading of Dickens clearly enough. As I have argued, on at least two subjects discussed in the Pamphlets - Prisons and Negroes - Dickens's views, though apparently rather like Carlyle's, were nevertheless firmly grounded in his own experience.

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63. Froude, J., Life in London, ed. cit., I, 167

The pessimism of Latter-Day Pamphlets does, nevertheless, correspond, in both its tone and its specific concerns, with one side of Dickens's attitude to society. Though Dickens did accept the broad tendency of his times, he observed at the same time the persistence in the age of progress of the increasingly obsolete practices of 'the good old times' (the Court of Chancery, the Circumlocution Office), and also the rise of a new breed, who could like Rouncewell, be agents of justice and progress, but might equally well be their enemies. Rouncewell, the captain of Industry, is an industrialist and a banker; but so is Bounderby. Though the New Man might represent energy and vitality, he might also, like the financier Merdle, symbolise his opposite, the paralysis and aimlessness that Dickens hated so much. The Circumlocution Office and the Marshalsea in different ways are the institutional embodiments of these tendencies, The Circumlocution Office, of course, elicited from Carlyle the one comment that has come down to us expressing his approval of the social criticism of one of Dickens's works, as well as of its entertainment value. Carlyle's comments on administrative inefficiency in Latter-Day Pamphlets, I have argued, may have been directly relevant to Dickens's attacks on the unheroic addiction to red tape of the Government of India during the Mutiny, and - given Dickens's views on Carlyle - it certainly seems highly likely that his attack on the combination of aristocratic dilettantism and red-tape embodied by the Circumlocution Office was, at least partly, inspired by Carlyle's "Downing-street" pamphlets. When Arthur Clennam visits Mr. Tite Barnacle's mews house, Dickens comments on 'the number of Barnacle families within the bills of mortality who lived in such hutches of their own free flunkey choice'[64]. The term 'flunkey' of course, is a distinctively Carlylean one, and the broad lines of Dickens's chapter on "The Whole Art of Government" coincide

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64. LD III

With Carlyle's attack in Latter-Day Pamphlets. Dickens's onslaught in Little Dorrit, like Carlyle's in the Pamphlets (and, of course, elsewhere) is on the institution of Parliament itself and not merely on bureaucracy, on what Carlyle calls 'our "red-tape" establishments, our Government Offices, Colonial Office, Foreign Office and the others, in Downing Street and the neighbourhood'.

Dickens's satire on the Circumlocution Office also includes an attack on the House of Commons. Since Dickens had more actual experience of the daily workings of the House, this was certainly based at least as much on personal experience as on Carlyle's teachings:

> It is true that How not to do it was the great study and object of all public departments and professional politicians all round the Circumlocution Office. It is true that every new premier and every new government, coming in because they had upheld a certain thing as necessary to be done, were no sooner come in than they applied their utmost faculties to discovering How not to do it.... It is true that the debates of both Houses of Parliament the whole session through, uniformly tended to the protracted deliberation, How not to do it.... All this is true, but the Circumlocution Office went beyond it[65].

The title of the Circumlocution Office, and its goal, 'HOW NOT TO DO IT', imply together a distinctively Carlylean criticism, and the virtues of practicality, inventiveness, and persistence of the firm of Clennam and Doyce, embody the appropriate Carlylean antithesis. What we need, says Carlyle, is 'Not a better Talking-Apparatus...but an infinitely better

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65. LD, 104-5

Acting Apparatus...'[66] The qualities needed for such an acting apparatus, he continues, are 'industry, energy [and] utmost expenditure of human ingenuity'.

These qualities were of course precisely those that Dickens admired most, and were the foundation of the colossal achievement of the Victorian age, the progress of which he found so exciting. The Circumlocution Office and the firm of Clennam and Doyce, set up a tension which represents in fact, the struggle between established and increasingly obsolete forms, and expansive new life, that characterise any rapidly evolving civilisation. And though it is usually interpreted symbolically, the Circumlocution Office constitutes almost as much a localised topical satire as, say, the 'Gradgrind School' of Hard Times.

Dickens was, in fact, isolating well-known administrative inadequacies that were, even as he wrote, being remedied. The civil service was, indeed, still based on the network of hereditary privilege of which the labyrinthine family structure of the Barnacles is a satire. In 1853, the report of Northcote and Trevelyan on the Civil Service was presented, and its most important suggestion, that recruitment should be by competitive examination, was later adopted throughout the civil service[67]. The question posed by the Circumlocution Office, as Dr. Holloway suggests, 'is in the end that of the whole transformation of English public life which became both possible and unavoidable, as England developed into an advanced industrial and commercial society'[68].

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66. L-DP, 345
67. See Holloway, J., Introduction to Little Dorrit, London,1967, 17-18
68. Ibid., 17.

Chapter Ten: CONCLUSION

The assertion that Dickens was influenced by Carlyle depends, for its credibility, entirely on what is claimed for the word 'influence', and on how we establish it. To compare - as, for instance, Miss Christian does - brief summaries of the 'social theory' of the two men, to point out the frequent points at which they overlap, to produce the biographical evidence of Dickens's admiration for the Sage of Chelsea, and then to arrive at the looked-for conclusion, is surely not helpful, As much as the existence of the phenomenon, we need to know its character. What, precisely, are we claiming, when we say that in certain of his works, and during a certain period of his life, Dickens was influenced by the works of Thomas Carlyle?

One thesis can, I think, be dismissed, despite what might be considered as evidence to the contrary: the notion that Dickens was a humble disciple of Carlyle, who sat at his master's feet, and carefully evolved his own view of society from a study of the Sage's social theory. Curiously enough, this is a view that Dickens himself can be seen to foster, and his own professions of faith to the master - 'No man knows your books better than I' (1854); 'I am always reading you and trying to go your way' (1863) - certainly seem to confirm it. But we should, I think, treat these professions with caution. Dickens certainly admired Carlyle, and was anxious for his approval. But reverence for the Sage of Chelsea did not always, for Dickens as for his age, imply the adoption, or even the approval of his views. Few people admired, and many disliked, the Latter-Day Pamphlets; but public respect for Carlyle, nevertheless, remained remarkably unshaken after their publication. The statement of Dickens's allegiance to 'your way', made in 1863,[1] comes between Great Expectations and Our

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1. Letters, III, 348.

Mutual Friend ; and neither of these novels, nor his final one, Edwin Drood, it seems to me, suggest any striking reason why Carlyle's influence should be evoked as a significant part of their ideological background.

If we can rule out the direct transference of ideas from one mind to another that is implied by the notion of a master-disciple relationship, how, then, can we identify the operation of Carlyle's influence over Dickens? The answer to this question, I think, is difficult to give in an organised way. Though we can produce a list of Carlylean headings that seem to contain much of Dickens's response to his world (the fear of Mechanism, distrust of Parliamentary Government, impatience with administrative inefficiency, distrust of Mammonism, concern with the Condition of England Question, hostility to negroes, awareness of the potential destructiveness of the mob), the primary sources in Dickens's topical reactions and emotional life of all these notions are, nevertheless, scattered and various; we form them into a coherent body of opinion at our peril. It is also important to note that, in establishing the various primary reasons why Dickens should respond to different areas of Carlyle's ideology, it has almost always been possible, even necessary, to do so without actually referring to Carlyle's works. What we can say, I think, is that Carlyle offered an imprecise but consistent structure of ideas and opinions that happened to overlap (given a little unconscious adaptation) with many of Dickens's disparate and disorganised feelings about particular issues and about life in general. Backed by a personality that Dickens found worthy of admiration and respect and by Carlyle's massive reputation, this structure of ideas presented him with a nucleas around which his own ideas could form and also, perhaps, with a mirror by which he could recognise their shape.

The influence of Carlyle over Dickens thus presents a microcosm of the Sage's influence over his times. Carlyle did not present new ideas; he articulated what many already felt, in 'a living form'. The wide range, and the lack of precise definition of his ideas, or of their relative importance, combined with his eminence and his personal magnetism, allowed his admirers (consciously or unconsciously) to seek and often to find their own feelings in his works, and as a result to embrace them once more with a new certainty; what Carlyle's admirers disagreed with in his writings could be, and frequently was, conveniently ignored. Hence, Kingsley could invoke Carlyle's name, in Alton Locke, in support of his own plea for a regeneration of the clergy:

> When will the clergy learn that their strength is in action, and not in argument? If they are to reconvert the masses, it must be by noble deeds, as Carlyle says; "not by noisy theoretic laudation of a Church, but by silent practical demonstration of the Church"[2].

This is hardly more than an incidental theme of Carlyle's works, but Kingsley calls explicitly on Carlyle's name at least twice in Alton Locke, - and implicitly throughout the novel - to strengthen his own articulation of it. Carlyle's religious position is discussed in this novel at one point in a way which supports Kingsley's purpose rather more neatly than the reality of Carlyle's doctrine; if the Sage's views were not quite convenient, they could always be bent slightly:

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2. Kingsley, C., Alton Locke, London, 1878, 322.

"Mr Carlyle", said Miss Staunton, in her abrupt way, "can see that the God of Nature is the God of man".
"Nobody denies that, my dear".
"Except in every word and action; else why do they not write about Nature as if it was the expression of a living, loving spirit, not merely a dead machine?"
It may be very easy, my dear, for a Deist like Mr Carlyle to see his God in Nature; but if he would accept the truths of Christianity, he would find that there were deeper mysteries in them than trees and animals can explain"....
"Mr Carlyle is no Deist", said Miss Staunton; "and I am sure, that unless the truths of Christianity contrive soon to get themselves justified by the laws of science, the higher orders will believe in them as little as Mr Locke informs us that the working classes do"[2].

Alton Locke proclaims an explicit debt to Carlyle, and the way in which it does so suggests two things about his influence, on Dickens and others, as well as on Kingsley. Firstly, despite Dickens's admiration for Carlyle, and the frequent similarity of his ideas with those of the Prophet, that nowhere in his fiction does he approach such a profession of allegiance as this novel constitutes. Kingsley actually mentions Carlyle's name in Alton Locke no fewer than twenty times, and either quotes or paraphrases him on at least thirteen of these occasions. Nowhere in Dickens's novels is Carlyle's name explicitly mentioned, and the nearest he comes to actually quoting him is in the rare and unacknowledged use of such standard items of Carlylean vocabulary as 'flunkey' or 'unreality'. Even in Hard Times dedicated to Carlyle as it is, and containing as it does a recognisably (and probably consciously) Carlylean structure of ideas, the Master's

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2. Ibid., 186-7

Voice is heard as a pervasive and potent, but nevertheless secondary resonance, rather than - as in Alton Locke - an openly presented pulpit voice.

The second general point to emerge from a comparison of Carlyle's influence over Kingsley with his effect on Dickens's thinking and writing is one I have made many times before: Carlyle's message was an essentially flexible one, a chameleon that tended to fit the colouring of an admirer's existing prejudice or insight. Dickens, for instance, saw in The French Revolution an intensely exciting narrative, and a sense of vitality and seething movement akin to his own; he did not (I think) see a philosophy of history - despite his own assertion in the Tale's preface - with which he could identify. And, as I have argued, though Carton himself eventually embodies a sense of duty and sacrifice, the way in which he does so does not appear to have any easily discernible roots in the ideology of Carlyle's French Revolution, though it has obvious affinities with it. More relevant to Carton's story was a wider current of imperialist and Christian sentiment, perhaps akin to that aroused by the Indian Mutiny: devotion and sacrifice were the appropriate weapons with which to overcome savagery and chaos. Carlyle's doctrine can be seen to parallel and to underpin this kind of sentiment, but it had little to do with its creation. Alton Locke's reaction to The French Revolution, in contrast with Dickens's, is that it embodies precisely the sense of history that the novelist never ceased to anathematise. 'I know no book,' he says,

> ...which at once so quickened and exalted my poetical view of man and his history, as that great prose poem, the single epic of modern days, Thomas Carlyle's "French Revolution". Of the

> general effect which his works had on me, I shall say nothing: it was the same as they have had, thank God, on thousands of my class and of every other. But that book above all first recalled me to the overwhelming and yet ennobling knowledge that there was such a thing as Duty; first taught me to see in history not the mere farce-tragedy of man's crimes and follies, but the dealings of a righteous Ruler of the universe, whose ways are in the great deep, and whom the sins and errors, as well as the virtues and discoveries of man, must obey and justify[3].

Dickens's reverence for Carlyle, then, is explained not by his acceptance of Carlyle's teachings as a body, but by his local response to certain sub-headings of Carlylean doctrine, taken separately and out of context. And his response to Carlyle was always preconditioned: Carlyle cannot be shown to have been a primary source for any of Dickens's feelings oroopinions. Thus, he responded to Carlyle's anti-mechanism, only partly because he accepted its natural corollary, that mechanism destroys the capacity for assent. This was, I think, important for Dickens, especially in Hard Times, and we miss a vital part of this novel's meaning if we ignore it. But Mechanism was always, for Dickens, a more deadly foe of laughter and human spontaneity, than of belief.

The question of 'belief' nevertheless, is not irrelevant, I am sure, to Carlyle's influence over Dickens at its height, during the late 'forties and 'fifties. Carlyle's influence, we have seen, began at a period when Dickens's uncertainty about himself and his world was increasing, an uncertainty, as Forster himself pointed out, that was at least partly 'religious' in character. Dickens's religious problem was that of many

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3. Ibid., 104. My emphasis.

of his contemporaries; he felt the need for some form of religious or quasi-religious expression, but could accept fully neither the social manifestation, nor the doctrine, of the Church herself. And Dickens's religious feelings, as Forster illuminatingly remarks, rested on 'depth of sentiment rather than clearness of faith'[4]. If Dickens's religious feelings cannot be seen as an explanation of Carlyle's appeal for him, they certainly form an important predisposing factor: when Dickens read Carlyle's writings about his age, he was not simply addressing himself to the works of a social critic, no matter how eminent, but to the almost magical pronouncements of a prophetic figure, 'whose kingdom is not of this world', who was seen by his contempories as the vehicle of a special kind of revelation. All the biographical evidence we have of their relationship supports this view. Dickens regarded Carlyle and his works, not simply with interest and respect, but with reverence, even awe.

When Dickens read the Sage's revelation, however, he was not discovering any new and unsuspected external truths; he was discovering himself. He responded to no part of Carlyle's doctrine that did not find an echo - sometimes slightly distorted - in his own heart. He followed Carlyle's lead over the Governor Eyre controversy, not reluctantly - as Professor Johnson would like to believe[5] - but because it corresponded with his own deepest convictions, both about mobs and about coloured people. He responded to Carlyle's hatred of mechanistic thinking, not simply because Mechanism destroyed belief, but because it destroyed colour and

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4. Forster, 348
5. Johnson, E., op. cit. II, 1065

human eccentricity too. He accepted Carlyle's attacks on Parliament and the law, because his own greater experience of them confirmed Carlyle's views. He accepted Carlyle's views on the condition of the working class and on Mammonism because he hated injustice, and on Exeter Hall because he hated humbug. Whether or not Dickens would have responded in the same way to all these separate questions without Carlyle's intervention is impossible to establish with complete certainty: what is almost certain, is that his view of society as a whole would have been less coherent. It is in the various social interconnections of his novels that we see Carlyle's essential contribution. He might still have distrusted Exeter Hall, despised a do-nothing aristocracy, felt pity for the plight of the under-privileged and the uneducated in a ruthless and competitive world, hated the cant and lack of charity of some ministers of the gospel, and admired the energy and initiative of the enlightened Captain of Industry; but he would almost certainly not have drawn the same connections of cause and effect, and established the same antitheses between them, as he did in Bleak House. He would still have distrusted Benthamite political economy, current trends in education, and the Department of Practical Art; he would still have felt compassion for the lot of the operative, and deplored his lack of contact with his master; he might even have connected the inhuman regularity of the machine, and the emotional sterility of some Benthamite thinking, with contemporary difficulties in embracing any satisfying and consistent philosophy of life. He might still have understood all these things, but we can say, with complete confidence, that without Carlyle, Hard Times would have been a very different novel, and probably a less successful one. In the chemistry of Dickens's development as a novelist, Carlyle's was not the contribution of the element that changes, qualitatively

the course of the reaction; rather, he was the catalyst, without which, if it comes into being at all, the new compound is formed only slowly and incompletely. Dickens partly misinterpreted Carlyle for his own ends; certainly, he ignored essential parts of his message. Nevertheless, Carlyle's personality and doctrine together provided a strategic contribution, both emotional and intellectual, to his growth as an artist. If Carlyle had not existed, it would have been necessary - both for Dickens and for his age - to invent him. Partly, perhaps, they did.

THE END.

APPENDIX: THE 'TWO CARTLOADS'.

At Dickens's request, Carlyle sent him a number of books from the London Library to help him with the historical background of A Tale of Two Cities. As I have described in Chapter Two, Dickens later told an American Hostess how he had worked through Carlyle's sources,and marvelled at the new imaginative fusion he had achieved. On this occasion, Dickens is reported as having said that Carlyle had sent his own books on the French Revolution, but this is fairly clearly a mistake. On March 24, 1859, Dickens wrote to Carlyle:

> I cannot tell you how much I thank you for your friendly trouble, or how specially interesting and valuable any help is to me that comes from you. I do not doubt that the books received from the London Library, and suggested by you, will give me all I want. (Letters,III,97)

The contents of the collection of books that might have been sent by the London Library is of obvious interest, if only to demonstrate the multiplicity of sources available. Fairly clearly, Carlyle did not get the Library to send all his own sources, firstly because it did not possess them all, secondly because of their number. Professor C.F.Harrold points out that Carlyle cites more than 850 sources in his footnotes, and assumes that these largely account for his factual knowledge; Dr. Hedva Ben-Israel, however, believes that 'Carlyle used twice as many books as he cited' (Harrold, "Carlyle's general method in The French Revolution", PMLA, XLIII (1928), 1150, and Ben-Israel, "Carlyle and The French Revolution", Historical Journal, II (1958), 126). Clearly, Carlyle could not rely on the resources of his own library for such a vast array, though we know that he possessed the Biographie Universelle, in which he invested after the destruction of the first draft of Volume I, We know, too, that Carlyle worked for some time on the book in the British Museum.

Unfortunately, the London Library's records of borrowings during this period have not survived. The following list is intended as a first step towards determining what books Dickens could have called on for the documentation of certain passages, and suggests that, in the writing of many passages in the Tale, for which The French Revolution seems the obvious source, Dickens could well have gone beyond Carlyle to the Sage's own source. The list is tentative, as it could only be. It has been compiled from the Catalogue of the London Library of 1842, with its supplements of 1852 and 1856, and from the new Catalogue of 1865. It has been possible, therefore, to arrive at a list of books about the French Revolution which were definitely possessed by the London Library in 1856, and were therefore available to Dickens, and a much shorter one, of books acquired by the Library between 1856 and 1865, and which may have been available in 1859; this list omits any book published after 1859. Themain basis of the List is the Subject Index of the 1865 Catalogue. I have included works whose authors are listed under three headings: 'Political Works on the causes of Revolution; '1789, The Revolution'; and 'Memoirs on the Revolution'. This Classified Index is incomplete, as a comparison with the sources cited in Carlyle's footnotes demonstrates; some fifteen works cited by Carlyle, and not referred to in the Classified Index, nevertheless appear in the main body of the Catalogue and have been included here. Works cited by Carlyle in The French Revolution are distinguished by an asterisk.

It is difficult to say which works Carlyle is more likely to have suggested to Dickens as source material without knowledge of all of them. We can say, perhaps, that works used by Carlyle as sources for his own work are more likely to have been included, though here we face the difficulty of determining what these were: if Dr. Ben-Israel is right, many works included below, but not actually cited by Carlyle, may, nevertheless have been used

by him. The following list attempts comprehensiveness in only one respect; it contains most, if not all, of Carlyle's avowed sources that were also in the possession of the London Library in 1859. Some of these are more obvious candidates than others for our attention, through the frequency with which Carlyle himself refers to them in his notes; the works on which he himself most heavily relies are surely those he might be expected to recommend to others. We can single out, for instance, the History of the Revolution of Kerverseau and Clavelin (referred to by Carlyle as the "Deux Amis" of their collective nom de plume), and the Histoire Parlementaire of Buchez and Roux. Another very obvious candidate is Arthur Young's Travels in France 1787-9. Nevertheless, though Carlyle's cited sources are of obvious interest in determining the material Dickens had available to him in writing the Tale, we should not confine our attention to them. Carlyle does not cite Thiers, and had a low opinion of him but he almost certainly contributed to Dickens's attitudes and knowledge about the Revolution. Another interesting possibility from the list, a study of which might be informative, is also not cited by Carlyle. Dickens dedicated A Tale of Two Cities to Lord John Russell, whose Causes of the French Revolution (1832) he may, or may not, have read.

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used for the titles of works by Carlyle and Dickens:

Carlyle

Ch	Chartism	PP	Past and Present
FR	The French Revolution	LDP	Latter-day Pamphlets
JS	The Life of John Sterling	"S of T"	"Signs of the Times"

References to these and other works by Carlyle, unless otherwise stated, are to the Cambridge University Press edition, Boston, 1884.

Dickens

AN	American Notes	LD	Little Dorrit
BH	Bleak House	MC	Martin Chuzzlewit
BR	Barnaby Rudge	OCS	The Old Curiosity Shop
Chimes	The Chimes	OT	Oliver Twist
DC	David Copperfield	RP	Reprinted Pieces
DS	Dombey and Son	TTC	A Tale of Two Cities
ED	The Mystery of Edwin Drood	UC	The Uncommercial Traveller
GE	Great Expectations		
HT	Hard Times		

All these works are cited in the New Oxford Illustrated Dickens edition, except for Hard Times, which is cited in the edition of Professors G.H. Ford and Sylvere Monod, New York, 1966. Abbreviations for Dickens's Letters, Journalism, and speeches are as follows:

AYR	All the Year Round
HW	Household Words
HN	The Household Narrative of Current Events
Letters	The Letters of Charles Dickens, ed. Dexter, W., Bloomsbury, 1938
Pilgrim Letters	The Letters of Charles Dickens, ed. House and Storey, Oxford, 1965.
MP	Miscellaneous Papers, London, 1914
Speeches	The Speeches of Charles Dickens, ed. Fielding, K., Oxford, 1960.

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