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THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING IN NARRATIVE: Dickens and the Stereotype.

BY

JOHN FRANCIS FITZSIMMONS
BA (HONS)

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Department of English Language and Literature
University of Adelaide
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Where now? Who now? When now? Unquestioning.
I, say I. Unbelieving. Questions, hypotheses, call them that.
Keep going, going on, call that going, call that on.

(Samuel Beckett)

A man with an hypothesis runs the risk
of finding confirmation for it everywhere.

(Henry James)

God is dead, Marxism is undergoing a crisis,
and I don't feel so hot myself.

(Umberto Eco)

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Abstract

Narratives are produced by particular cultures in that the significances they generate and the forms that they use are meaning-focused ensembles of the intentions, beliefs and desires of these cultures, ensembles which themselves embody and constitute a variety of ideologies. Subjects are interpellated by these ensembles. However, the Althusserian notion of interpellation is based on the stimuli-response model of perception, which sees the moment of perception as something immutable and external, rather than as the application and interpretation of a series of enabling hypotheses. This interpellative sleight-of-hand sees the perception as a consequence of "real" world sense data rather than as a consequence of the interpretative gestures through which this data is cognised. These gestures are the primary means through which texts realise their ethopoesis, their trope of character-making, which is itself a primary constituent in the way narratives construct meaning. These gestures are intrinsically stereotypical in that they leave remnants and residues which function both as matrices of the naive ideologies the stereotypes embody and as indices of the means through which these ideologies might be reinforced and/or subverted.

The Dickens-narrator's desire to know his "inscrutable" neighbours also takes him into stereotypical spaces where (un)speakable things are wrung, things which haunt memory, shadow dreams, usurp the power of plain speaking, and condemn those in search of themselves to roam the city spaces endlessly repeating the stories of their own hallucinatory selves. The Dickens-narrator's attempts to stare down his inscrutable neighbours thereby rendering these "roamers" legible and governable turn out not to be a subversion of bourgeois subjectivity but a gesture which reinforces it, for the Dickens-narrator's use of stereotypes and caricatures renders the Other as an extreme but knowable form of the bourgeois subject and, consequently, positions the Other as part of a larger cautionary tale through which this subject is affirmed. In being interpellated by these stories, the self embalms certain subjectivities through the stereotyping ideologies of the power elites. In short, it is at the everyday level of the psychologising of the self that ideology finds its most successful subject.

DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University, and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, no material previously published or written by any other person except where due reference has been made in the text or notes. I consent to the thesis being made available for photocopying and loan if accepted for the award of the degree.

John Fitzsimmons

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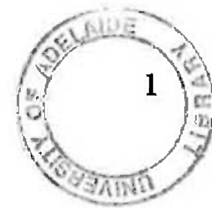
A NOTE ON REFERENCES

I have adopted the MLA style of minimal referencing where author and page number are included in the text and full referencing details are included alphabetically in the bibliography. I have only included the most relevant non-cited references in the bibliography. The following abbreviations have been used to refer to a number of works by Charles Dickens throughout the text, full details of which are provided in the bibliography:

- BH *Bleak House*
- DS *Dombey and Son*
- MC *Martin Chuzzlewit*
- TTC *A Tale of Two Cities*

I will refer to these texts as the "Dickens-texts" in order to avoid attributing any the analyses to the "intentions" of Dickens himself. Although I have made every effort to avoid sexist language myself, I have not changed or highlighted (with "sic") the sexist language used by those I have quoted in support of my argument. Any emphasis within quotations is in the original unless otherwise stated.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Introduction

I do not know which to prefer,
The beauty of inflections
Or the beauty of innuendoes
The blackbird whistling
Or just after.

(Wallace Stevens)

I

It has become a commonplace of contemporary criticism to argue that narratives are produced by particular cultures in that the significances they generate and the forms that they use are meaning-focused ensembles of the intentions, beliefs and desires of these cultures. It is also a critical commonplace to assume that these meaning-focused ensembles both constitute and embody a variety of ideologies. What is of interest for the following discussion is the way that subjects are interpellated in and through narratives by these meaning-focused ensembles (intentions, beliefs, desires and ideologies) and the way that these are inevitably stereotypes of the phenomena they claim to explain.

My thesis is that it is at the level of the everyday psychologising of the self that ideology finds its most successful subject, a psychologising which is ineluctably imbricated with folk-theoretical concepts of the self. These imbrications are the primary means through which texts realise their ethopoeesis, their trope of character-making, which is itself a primary constituent in the way narratives construct meaning. I also contend that, while these imbrications are intrinsically stereotypical, they leave remnants and residues which function both as matrices of the naive ideologies the stereotypes embody and as indices of the means through which these ideologies might be reinforced or subverted.

In the first six chapters of this dissertation, I attempt to defend this thesis. In chapter seven, I attempt to provide some concrete examples from Dickens' texts in order to support this defence. It is important to

note here that the main focus of the dissertation is not on the Dickens-text. I am not attempting to make an argument, unified or otherwise, about Dickens or his texts, or about what his critics might have to say. I am simply using some examples from the Dickens-text to support my thesis. I chose Dickens because his use of caricature provides some more obvious support for my argument in that it shows that the Dickensian world is full of gagged voices and gags, both of which function as stereotypical psychologisings of the self.

As many have noted, from the spaces the Dickensian characters inhabit, (un)speakable things are wrung, things which haunt memory, shadow dreams, usurp the power of plain speaking, and condemn those in search of themselves to roam the city spaces endlessly repeating the stories of their own hallucinatory selves. These stories show that the self is not an unmediated instance of some essence accessible through moments of perception but a constructed interpretation of those meaning-focused ensembles (intentions, beliefs, desires and ideologies) through which the bourgeois subject psychologises itself. In short, it is at the level of this everyday psychologising of the self that ideology finds its most successful subject.

Most narratives, once begun, have a way of taking on a life of their own, and mine is no exception. I have relied heavily on the work of others in order to construct and defend my thesis although none of the critics I use actually makes the argument for me. For reasons which I hope will become obvious, I have not attempted to provide in the main discussion an account of the current state of play in narratology or in theories of meaning. Although I have drawn on these theories where it has suited my argument, my dissertation should not be seen as an attempt to critique the current state of play or as an attempt to construct a coherent, unified theory which incorporates current theory

into one of my own. I would like to begin, nonetheless, with a very brief overview of the current state of play and to situate my own argument within this context.

II

There is no doubt that although the anti-narrative experiments of modernism and postmodernism have been going on for most of the century, little interest was taken in narrative per se until around thirty years ago when the work of Tzvetan Todorov, Roland Barthes and others began fashioning incipient theories of narrative into something resembling a theoretical discipline. This era of "classical narratology" refashioned, using the emerging tenets of structuralism, the New Critical aesthetic of a text's autonomy and the "concrete" critical responses this aesthetic demanded into a conceptual discipline where textual "structures," which required "theoretical" concepts to explain them, were seen as existing across textual and cultural boundaries.

This crossing of boundaries constitutes a move from literary to cultural studies, a move which establishes a relational matrix whose most striking features concern its imbricated reading practices. As Frank Lentricchia observes: "literary works are cultural practices that relate in complex ways to other cultural practices, and many of those other cultural practices can be read effectively through terms that derive from literary interpretation" (*Critical Terms* i). What this has meant for some analysts is that identifying the outcomes of particular reading practices has enabled them to predict the conventions and assumptions of these practices, predictions which in some cases have focused on the political and ideological gestures of the readers and interpreters, and which in others have resulted in the belief that truth is nothing more than the practice or simulation of a particular set of conventions and assumptions.

In a sense, this dissertation has an each-way bet with regard to these views. Although it argues that readers of literary and cultural practices are interpellated at the moment of perception, which is itself a moment of interpretation rather than a prelude to it, an interpretative gesture which positions an outcome as a function of assumptions and conventions, it also argues that the truths of these moments are "constructed" rather than "essential," an interpretative gesture which sees truth as nothing more than an entelechiac axiology, as the realisation of a particular set of values and beliefs. The irony of making such a "truth" claim about the impossibility of truth, a claim which is not itself new, is not lost on this narrator. As my analysis of the stereotype in chapter six clearly shows, such ironies are impossible to escape — all one can do is attempt to be rigorous about one's own assumptions and reading practices.

In any event, these developments and the emerging distrust of (meta)narratives they have in part encouraged, have brought us to what Donald Morton calls the "postnarratological" stage where questions are now being asked "concerning narrative's social and cultural connections and significance." This "turn to situation means giving increasing attention to the 'ideological' and 'political' dimensions of narrative" ("The Crisis of Narrative in the Postnarratological Era" 408). As one might expect, there is little agreement about what constitutes the ideological and political dimensions of text and/or situation. What this lack of agreement has produced is yet another binate crisis, in this case between, Morton says, the ludic (post)modernists and the resistance (post)modernists (408).

For Morton, ludic (post)modernists understand the material and historical dimensions of the political to be "opacities in culture," such as the signifier or the body, that dodge or interrupt the "easy trafficking

of meaning." These opacities are "inherent in and strictly internal to the process of signification (meaning-production) itself" which means that signification "is governed by the unstoppable 'play of the signifier' (hence the term *ludic*)." As a result, Morton believes that for the ludic (post)modernist, no cultural element is sufficiently stable to become the basis for a political project, which means that conceptuality, of the sort practised by the classic narratologists, is itself seen to be oppressive because of its presumptive and totalising gestures. Consequently, ludic theory "proposes politics as the 'unleashing' of these opacities for the sake of subverting and mitigating oppression," a politics that "works against concept-as-generalisation by focusing on anticonceptual and anti-general local, regional, and microlevel operations of culture." Politics becomes, therefore, "the deconstructive subversion of all cultural representations" rather than the promotion of new or better understandings of existing ones (Morton 408-409). Although I make no attempt in this dissertation to deal in any comprehensive way with the ludic dimensions of the postnarratological stage, I am aware that some of the arguments I make about the ludic dimensions of the Dickens-text, particularly the way that their potential for subversion is itself undermined by the stereotypes they seem to rely upon, could usefully be said to apply to ludic (post)modernism.

Not everyone agrees with this ludic view, however. Umberto Eco, for instance, believes that if reason can no longer explain the world and that this means that we have to have other instruments such as "Desire," "Need" and/or "Instinct" to do so, then we are in danger of producing a "new Cartesianism of the irrational" (*Travels* 129). He believes that recognising that meaning-postulates themselves can generate infinite conflicts is not sufficient reason for gratuitously throwing up our hands and claiming that play and simulation are a

new "eternal law," one which replaces the *modus ponens* (ie, if p then q) of conventional rationality (131). Using such an originary "rational" moment to legitimate a regime of irrationality is for Eco and others nothing more than yet another sleight-of-hand, a rhetorical trick which empowers one's own point of view.

Resistance (post)modernists might agree which such a view for, as Morton points out, they promote a politics that they believe goes beyond the discursive, the local and the irrational, a politics which takes the problems of signification into account but also "recognises that the laws and forces governing meaning-production in all cultural narratives are also *external* to the process of signification itself." Resistance (post)modernism, therefore, locates the material and the historical in conflicts of class, race and gender "fought out in ideological terms as determinants of cultural meaning." Resistance (post)modernists believe that following the ludic discourses too uncritically forces an abandonment of the possibility "of asserting differences as politically decisive and of understanding the politics of culture in a systematic, determinate, and global — that is, in an ideological — frame" (Morton 409-410). I would agree with this view because I would argue that the stereotypes utilised by the ludic dimensions of narrative constitute a disavowal rather than a celebration of difference.

The conflict between ludic and resistance postmodernism, then, which constitutes the "state of play" in today's narratology, is a conflict between those who see the critique of narrative in Barthes' terms — that is, that to criticise "means to call into crisis" ("Writers, Intellectuals, Teachers" 201) — and those who regard the "crisis" of representation to which the ludics subscribe as a sell-out of the ultimate goal of understanding the "politics of culture."

Whether one is a ludic or a resistance (post)modernist, one cannot escape the evidence that the forces of anti-narrative are legion. They include: Foucault's epistemes and genealogies, which encourage the view that narrative is one way in which the social construction of reality is effected by the diffuse web of hegemonic power-relations constitutive of a given regime of power and truth, and which produce injunctions to focus on the regional, the cellular, and the nomadic; Derrida's deconstruction, with its emphasis on fragmentation, destabilisation, bifurcated writing, multiplicity and the nonlinear nature of the trace, and its injunctions to textualise all cultural phenomena; radical feminist theory which suggests that traditional narrative is a prime example of patriarchal hierarchical oppression; writing through the body, a kind of writing which enacts a supposedly anarchic female economy — a plural, scattered, polymorphic, contradictory, non self-identical and radically anarchic being in the world; the neo-Marxist perspective, which sees traditional narrative as linear and bourgeois, and condemns it for its participation in capitalist domination; the constructivist view, which tends to acknowledge the power of narrative but sees its ideological work as demystification, as an attempt to unveil the oppressive codes functioning in all semiotic systems; cultural relativists, who tend to be sceptical concerning the value of any specific cultural practice; Baudrillard's injunctions to dissolve the subject-as-agent-of-change into just one more image in the simulacrum maelstrom of contemporary telematic culture; and, the injunctions of Lyotard to distrust metanarratives and to privilege the libidinal economy model of culture over the supposedly outmoded political economy model (Morton "The Crisis of Narrative in the Postnarratological Era" 409-420; Alex Argyros "Narrative and Chaos" 659-665; Martin Kreiswirth "Trusting the Tale" 629-645).

That some of these anti-narrative positions are delivered in strikingly traditional narrative forms might encourage us to believe, along with Argyros, that "narrative is highly resistant to eradication" and that if narrative "can encode oppressive epistemes" it can also "function as a means of individual, cultural, and political empowerment" (661). Reproducing and synthesising these positions and the ideas which generated them can occupy a lifetime's work, which is to say that nothing of the sort will be attempted here. However, I would like to point out that this thesis is avowedly resistance rather than ludic (post)modernist.

Although the thesis recognises the problems of representation highlighted by the ludic (post)modernists, it also recognises that conflicts of class, race and gender will not be resolved by subversive re-presentations alone, particularly as these subversive gestures exhibit a alarming tendency to undermine themselves. Nonetheless, it will attempt to remain cognisant of both ludic and resistance (post)modernist views whilst supporting Argyros' view that, whatever its difficulties and shortcomings, narrative and its concomitant theorising remain "a principal agent of cultural change" (659).

The following argument, then, draws a narrative thread of its own, one which draws on theories from both positions — one which recognises that from a ludic (post)modernist perspective, it is an instance of its own argument, and that from a resistance (post)modernist perspective, it represents an attempt to argue that it is through the "what" and the "how" of the act of reading, through those knowledge frames which enable the reader to "realise" the text, that subjects are interpellated at the moment of perception.

This becomes apparent if the "truth" claims of the "what" and the realisation claims of the "how" are seen as containing a disguised

description of their own reading processes. Reading texts as an allegory of their own reading processes assumes that the narrative, agents, setting and action are contrived so as to make coherent sense on the literal or primary level of signification, but that they are also able to be read on a second level of signification, one where clues and cues are evident as to "how" this primary level is to be read. Such a reading practice also assumes that global knowledge frames do not submit to reality and copy its features — Hamlet with his mirror. Rather, it assumes that in the act of reading we put propositions about the world, most of which have been given to us through language, to the test. If subjects are interpellated at the moment of perception, and perception is the moment where we get to try out propositions about the world, then one might well ask a question which is also an answer: why these propositions and not others? In other words, if we are interpellated at the moment of perception, and these interpellations are already interpretations which are themselves stereotypes of bourgeois subjectivity, then this realisation might encourage us to think of other ways to construct our subjectivities, ways which might produce fairer, more acceptable political outcomes. The fate of "political correctness" in contemporary culture might itself be a cautionary tale of how not to go about constructing alternate subjectivities, but it need not deter those committed to understanding the politics of culture from making the effort. This thesis does not itself attempt to provide alternate subjectivities. Rather, it attempts to render such questions more plausible by reworking the connections between interpellation and the subject.

In order to support my thesis, that it is at the level of the everyday psychologising of the self that ideology finds its most successful subject, I have divided the following discussion into two parts. In the

first part, chapters one through six, I argue that subjects are interpellated by ideology at the moment of perception. I explain this by arguing that the moment of perception is itself a moment of interpretation and not, as it is traditionally seen, an unmediated prelude to a further moment which becomes an interpretation. This interpellative sleight-of-hand sees the unmediated prelude as a consequence of "real" world sense data rather than as a consequence of the interpretative gestures through which this data is cognised. In short, as R. L. Gregory argues, perception is an hypothesis, *suggested* and tested by sense data. Without a pre-existing though modifiable hypothesis, perception simply does not occur.

Having established this position, I go on to argue that the everyday folk-psychologising of the self in and through which characters negotiate their meaning-focused ensembles — intentions, beliefs, desires and ideologies — are the idealised cognitive models through which texts construct their ethopoesis, their notion of the subject. Moreover, I argue that these constructions exhibit prototypical or essentialising effects which are the stereotypical embodiments of the ideologies of the dominant culture. In other words, I argue that subjects are interpellated by dominant ideologies in the very act of their everyday psychologising of themselves and others.

In chapter seven, I support this thesis by showing, using some examples from Dickens' texts, how such psychologising is exemplified via the caricatures and stereotypes which narrators and characters use to read and judge one another. Clearly there are interactions and imbrications which at first glance these notions might appear to exclude, and I deal with some of these in the course of the discussion.

In chapter one, I introduce some of the conceptual problems associated with the thesis and I attempt to indicate how these might be

dealt with. In chapter two, I expand the Althusserian notion of the interpellation of the subject to show that it is in the act of reading, which is a controlled perceptual hallucination, that the reader literalises ethopoesis, the trope of reading character. It is at this moment of literalising perceptual hypotheses that readers as subjects are interpellated by ideology, for reading character involves the psychologising of the self and others.

In chapter three, I deal with the traditional stimuli-response model of perception and show how it is unable to sustain its epistemic pretension. In chapter four, I propose an alternative model, one which argues that readers are interpellated at the moment of perception because hypotheses about the world exist prior to the moment of perception itself. In other words, perception is an hypothesis, suggested and tested by sense data. I show that these hypotheses or global knowledge frames are codes and conventions necessary for perception and argue that narrative is an instance of perception because it involves the application of various global knowledge frames in the act of reading. It is important to note here that although the chapter draws on a number of theories concerning perception, the neurophysiological answers to the way perception works are a long way from being "resolved" by science. As John Maddox argues, "a typical neuron makes hundreds of connections with other neurons in the brain," but at present, it is only possible to study a few connections of a single neuron. This means that scientists are a long way off knowing how a single neuron works, let alone the ten billion or so with their hundreds of connections in the average brain. Maddox concludes: "So how can we hope, in our present state of ignorance, to know what we mean by consciousness? To put it simply, this important field is one in which almost everything remains to be discovered" ("Missing Pieces in Life's

Complex Jigsaw Puzzle" 27). Therefore, where the discussion draws on biologism, it does so as a "manner of speaking," as an applied metaphor, and not as an instance of irrefutable "scientific fact."

In chapter five, I argue that the main global knowledge frame activated in the act of reading is ethopoesis. I show that, at the level of everyday perception, ethopoesis involves the (folk)psychologising of the self and others by matching the intentional states of the characters with their actions. This (folk)psychologising of the self is the "means" through which readers are interpellated. In chapter six, I deal with the notion of the stereotype and show how stereotypes embody the ideologies of the dominant culture, which means that the bourgeois subject is interpellated by these ideologies because its self-psychologising gestures are a function of these stereotypes. In chapter seven, I exemplify my argument by showing how caricatures, and the stereotypes upon which they are based, reinforce rather than subvert notions of the bourgeois subject.

Chapter One

Scenes of other days passed through his mind,
clouded by a veil, but with the
whispered intentness of hallucinations.
(Arthur Koestler)

In a letter to John Forster, Charles Dickens writes: "When I sit down to my book, some beneficent power shows it all to me and tempts me to be interested, and I don't invent it — really do not — but see it, and write it down" (*The Life of Charles Dickens* 305). Claiming that one's "hallucinations" are intuitions, those moments where the mind apparently apprehends things or generates insight without the intervention of reason, has a long history: prophets, visionaries and the odd lunatic have used these sorts of claims to good effect. In literature, which casts its epistemic shadow over an imaginary and symbolic rather than an empirical space, these sort of hallucinations are aesthetically sanitised into what Ken Ruthven calls the inspirationist view of literature, "the view that no matter how skilled the writer may become in verbal craftsmanship, his best work will always be in some sense involuntary because it is the expression of powerful forces beyond his control" (*Critical Assumptions* 51). These inspirationist intuitions are, according to this view, what separates the artful from the artless, and they carry with them the sort of power of naming which made Dickens famous. As Peter Ackroyd remarks:

> "What a thing it is to have power," Charles Dickens once told his wife Catherine; and indeed it was with *Nicholas Nickleby* and its effect upon schools, that for the first time Dickens realised the full force he had at his command. From this time forward he could make a person or place famous just by describing it. ("'No words can express my secret agony'" 1-2).

However, this power of naming does not always confer upon the namer (speaker or writer) the confidence one might expect, as the title of Ackroyd's article indicates with a few words from Dickens ("No words can express my secret agony"). There is always something left over,

something which remains as an index of the "hallucinatory states" the namer has literalised as "truth."

In a chapter headed "The Night Shadows" in *A Tale of Two Cities*, we see these remnants at work:

> A wonderful fact to reflect upon, that every human creature is constituted to be that profound secret and mystery to every other. A solemn consideration, when I enter a great city by night, that every one of those darkly clustered houses encloses its own secret; that every room in every one of them encloses its own secret; that every beating heart in the hundreds of thousands of breasts there is, in some of its imaginings, a secret to the heart nearest it! Something of the awfulness, even of Death itself, is referable to this. No more can I turn the leaves of this dear book that I loved, and vainly hope in time to read it all. No more can I look into the depths of this unfathomable water, wherein, as momentary lights glanced into it, I have had glimpses of buried treasure and other things submerged. It was appointed that the book should shut with a spring, for ever and ever, when I had read but a page. It was appointed that the water should be locked in an eternal frost, when the light was playing on its surface, and I stood in ignorance on the shore. My friend is dead, my neighbour is dead, my love, the darling of my soul, is dead; it is the inexorable consolidation and perpetuation of the secret that was always in that individuality, and which I shall carry in mine to my life's end. In any of the burial-places of this city through which I must pass, is there a sleeper more inscrutable than its busy inhabitants are, in their innermost personality, to me, or than I am to them? (TTC 21)

Apparently, the power of naming things does not extend to reading the character of one's friends and neighbours, who are as inscrutable as the dead. The narrator describes this powerlessness as Jerry's "natural and not to be alienated inheritance" as, indeed, a disinheritance of inscrutability which is reminiscent of Engels' "Dickensian" description of London: "this colossal centralisation, this heaping together of two and a half millions of human beings at one point . . . . The hundreds of thousands of all classes and ranks crowding past each other . . . . The brutal indifference, the unfeeling isolation of each in his private interest" (*The Condition of the Working Class in England* 31). The complicated relations of the classes, their (self-)alienation and the

conflicts of their private interests all render the unknowable individual a political as well as a metaphysical inscrutability.

Dick Hebdige speaks of this kind of inscrutability when he suggests that with the urbanisation of the early nineteenth century came a new phenomenon: "the unsupervised, heathen, working-class juvenile" combined with "haphazard urbanisation, child factory labour, and the physical and cultural separation of the classes into two separate nations" (*Hiding in the Light* 20). From this, he says,

> One image remains: the silent crowd, anonymous, unknowable, a stream of atomised individuals intent on minding their own business. One of the major threats which the urban crowd seems to have posed for literate bourgeois observers lay in the perception that the masses were illegible as well as ungovernable. Indeed, the two threats, the crowd's opacity and its potential for disorder, were inextricably connected. (20)

The Dickens-narrator's inscrutable neighbours are no doubt members of this silent, anonymous and unknowable crowd, and the narrator's attempts to unfathom their inscrutability can be seen as an attempt to render them legible and therefore governable for his bourgeois readers. As Peter Ackroyd suggests: "Dickens's loving accounts of the middle class actually brought those classes more vividly present to themselves and as a result rendered them more confident, more aware, more completely alive" ("Dickensian Fiction Tops the Class in the Real World" 4). In this sense, the Dickens-text becomes a form of surveillance and (self)control.

Hebdige makes a similar argument in relation to photography when he suggests that its increasing use, particularly photographs of criminals, "seemed to make the dream of complete surveillance realisable," a dream which was "by no means neutral, representing, rather, a particular point of view, particular interests, embodying a desire and a will to know the alien-in-our-midst, the other, the victim and the culprit" (21). The points of view, then, of both narrative and

photography, set up an "us-and-them" situation. As Hebdige remarks: "Us and them: us as the concerned and voyeuristic subjects; them as objects of our pity, fear, and fascination" (22). Even though they are often people we wouldn't stare at in the street (25), what we do with the "alien-in-our-midst" is to bring them out of hiding by stereotyping them. Hebdige supports this point by making an analogy between the nineteenth century anonymous crowd and present-day youth subcultures:

> The politics of youth culture is a politics of metaphor: it deals in the currency of signs and is, thus, always ambiguous. For the subcultural milieu has been constructed underneath the authorised discourses, in the face of the multiple disciplines of the family, the school and the workplace. Subculture forms up in the space between surveillance and the evasion of surveillance; it translates the fact of being under scrutiny into the pleasure of being watched. It is a hiding in the light. (35)

Looked at in this way, the Dickens-narrator's propensity to stare at the "aliens-in-our-midst," to place them under surveillance, is an admission, despite an intense and repeated application of caricatures and stereotypes, that these neighbours evade surveillance and control, that they remain in hiding no matter how much light is shone on them.

The act of naming, then, may well be an attempt to read others as a book, an attempt to "read it all," to know their "beating heart[s]" and their "imaginings," in short, to "read" their characters, to construct an endless prosopopoeia by which the dead, and paradoxically the living, are made to have a face. The desire to know one's friends and neighbours, to know what secrets are locked in their hearts, is equated with a search for some sort of truth, some sort of guarantee that their "intentional" states will be literalised and therefore known. Yet in the expression of this desire the narrator is restricted to reading but a page, to merely glimpsing a buried treasure before it is submerged and frozen from view.

Nonetheless, this desire represents a slide from wonder to acquisition, from a desire to know, to the possession of an essence, and this slide figuratively positions omniscience, as with Hebdige's photographs, as a desire to possess, to dominate and to control by shining a stereotypical light on the unknowable, inscrutable other. It is significant that the Dickens-narrator couches his scrutiny in terms of a reading practice, one in which goals and outcomes are intrinsically incompatible. The failure of this scrutiny is repeated again and again in the Dickens-texts, in everything from the characters' inability to read one another correctly to the narrator's resorting to stereotypes and caricatures which self-consciously leave the characters' inscrutability more-or-less untouched. I shall return to this point in chapter seven.

Whether this buried treasure contains the secrets he intuits as existing or whether it is a manifestation of the apparently overwhelming desire for language to reveal itself as something more than the page of a book already written and already read remains undecided. This reading of character, however, turns out to be no more than a desire to see beyond the "light playing on [the] surface" of the water, and in this sense, the characters remain, as Hebdige would have it, "hiding in the light." This desire only shows that, on the one hand, one's neighbours are unable to speak for themselves and require, therefore, to be "spoken for," and yet, on the other, that underneath each act of spokenness is a secret that is beyond the power of the speaker to reveal. In other words, the narrator seeks to reveal the secrets of character by speaking them, yet this act of speaking is already showing itself to be inadequate to the task at hand. The very act of speaking creates a remnant.

The narrator here also experiences an incompatibility between language and intuition because he implicitly privileges intuition and

regards language as a means of unmediated access to it. Rather than finding the effect of light on water an illumination, the narrator finds that "the effect of water/ on light is a distortion" (Margaret Atwood "This is a Photograph of Me"), that the objects of his experience distort the supposed illuminative qualities of language in ways it is impossible to know or to predict and which remind him of the awfulness of madness and death.

Nevertheless, the Dickens-narrator persists in his attempts to know the secret "individuality" of others. The narrator discovers himself in a similar predicament to Jorge Louis Borges' character "Shakespeare" who finds that he is, in "reading" others, either those he meets or those he creates as characters, "a dream dreamt by no one." "'I am not what I am'," he says. This is because he "plays at being another before a gathering of people who play at taking him for that other person." Borges' Shakespeare confesses to God after dying: "'I who have been so many men in vain want to be one and myself'." God replies: "'Neither am I anyone: I have dreamt the world as you dreamt your work, my Shakespeare, and among the forms in my dream are you, who like myself are many and no one'" ("Everything and Nothing" 533-534). In pursuing his desire to be one and himself "Shakespeare" finds that both his self and his desire are nothing more than a "controlled hallucination" (534), one which is apparently shared by God.

This desire to penetrate the inscrutability of others, which is shared by "Shakespeare" and the Dickens-narrator, reveals that self and other are "many and no one," a dream which is no more than an entelechy — an hallucinatory realisation of madness and desire. As Dickens says elsewhere: "Are not the sane and the insane equal at night as the sane lie dreaming? Are not all of us outside [the madhouse] who dream more or less in the condition of those inside it, every night of our lives?" (qtd

in Kaplan 30). This suggests that these "controlled hallucinations" are as good as it gets; and those moments when the hallucinations spin out-of-control are the remnants of the endless prosopopoeia through which we attempt to turn the inscrutable and the alienated into the known and possessed. Our best models of the world may provide us with understanding, but if we look too closely we are likely to find ourselves brutalised by the very inscrutability we thought these models had explained. As Samuel Delany says: "Models project shadows over the signification spaces we inhabit like half-formed ghosts, trapped in an epistemic labyrinth which lends to our path even as it restricts, labels and even brutalises our possibilities" ("Of Sex, Objects, Signs, Sales, SF and Other Things" 118). This brutalising does not, however, deter the Dickens-narrator from the desire to possess the inscrutable.

The desire to literalise one's hallucinations, then, even though the mechanisms of perception and narrative provide for its possibility, remains nothing more than the trope of prosopopoeia. As Hillis Miller points out, in speaking of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, prosopopoeia is itself a "form" of metamorphosis,

> a change of shape that in its most general form can be defined as the *literalising of a metaphor*. In this change justice is done, an account paid off, a case closed. But there is always a remnant, some residue of unassuaged guilt or responsibility that leads to the next story, the next metamorphosis literalising yet another figure, then to the next, and so on. (*Versions of Pygmalion* 1 emphasis added)

This description of *Metamorphoses* could also serve as a starting point for any discussion of the Dickens-text. What Borges' Shakespeare and the narrator of *A Tale of Two Cities* have in common is that they are engaged in ethopoesis, the trope of character making, the functional gesture of which is prosopopoeia.

Ethopoesis is not easy to pin down, however, for its practice flickers between two fundamentally different versions, one inspirationist (or

essentialist) and the other constructivist: *etho*poesis, the idea that character pre-exists its manifestations such that the essence of a character can be ascertained through a trait and attribution analyses of these manifestations; and etho*poesis*, the idea that character is always being made and will always bear the marks of its framing culture (as in *poesis*, "to make" or "making"). Borges' "God" is a constructivist who subscribes to etho*poesis* whereas the Dickens-narrator subscribes to *etho*poesis in that he still hopes, like Borges' "Shakespeare," that the inscrutable will give up their secrets, their essence. In other words, the flicker between *etho*poesis and etho*poesis* always produces a doubling effect, a "controlled hallucination," which hovers between knowing and inscrutability and which itself requires very little scrutiny to collapse into the world of nightmare and death. That the Dickens-narrator is finally a Platonist, someone who believes that some form of quintessence really does exist beyond the inscrutability of one's neighbours, encourages him to continue the hunt in ways which I shall later explore.

Passages like the one from *A Tale of Two Cities* quoted above draw attention to the impossibility of privileging intuition in order to escape the "horror" of the hallucination. This horror is both the absence of a presence, the misplaced and ultimately unknowable self, and the presence of an absence, the inscrutably dead and decidedly inadequate metaphors proffered by language as the means to literalise the experience by which the self might know itself. This horror is the horror of reading — reading character, judging intentional states, psychologising as a way of knowing, coping with the "madness" brought on by the apparent incompatibility between language and intuition, giving the dead, who may also be the living, a face. As Paul de Man says:

> To read is to understand, to question, to know, to forget, to erase, to deface, to repeat — that is to say, the endless prosopopoeia by which the dead are made to have a face and a voice which tells the allegory of their demise and allows us to apostrophise them in our turn. No degree of knowledge can ever stop this madness, for it is the madness of words. (*Blindness and Insight* 89)

It is this "madness of words," which is ultimately the madness of perception itself, that reduces both narrator and reader to nihilism and the stuttering tautologies of desire.

John Gilson in Nathanael West's "The Dream Life of Balso Snell" experiences a perceptual hallucination which captures this nihilism:

> You understand what I mean: like Rimbaud, I practised having hallucinations. Now, my imagination is a wild beast that cries always for freedom. I am continually tormented by the desire to indulge some strange thing, perceptible but indistinct, hidden in the swamps of my mind. This hidden thing is always crying out to me from its hiding-place: "Do as I tell you and you will find out my shape. There, quick! what is that thing in your brain? Indulge my commands and some day the great doors of your mind will swing open and allow you to enter and handle to your complete satisfaction the vague shapes and figures hidden there."
>
> I can know nothing; I can have nothing; I must devote my whole life to the pursuit of a shadow. It is as if I were attempting to trace with the point of a pencil the shadow of the tracing pencil. I am enchanted with the shadow's shape and want very much to outline it; but the shadow is attached to the pencil and moves with it, never allowing me to trace its tempting form. Because of some great need, I am continually forced to make the attempt. (*The Collected Works of Nathanael West* 168)

Beneath the shadow of the self lies the shadow of language, itself a simulacrum of desire which cannot escape that of which it is a shadow but which is not self-identical with that of which it is a trace. Whatever is, is not "here" and not "that," as the ludic (post)modernist might say, which means that the "here" and the "that" are self-reflexive but ultimately empty signifiers.

The urge to map the unknown, to outline the trace, to literalise the simulacrum seems inescapable. Yet this urge manifests itself not simply in narrative but as narrative. The self remains a "hidden thing" no matter how much Gilson practices having hallucinations, though what

drives him to pursue the shadows of his self, the "vague shapes and figures" hidden in his mind, is the promise of unbinarising the apparently incompatible realms of language and intuition so as to experience the unmediated self. The impossibility of unbinarising these incompatible realms is felt as desire and loss but produced as narrative. In other words, the pencil and the act of tracing produce not intuition and truth but the madness of perception itself. Whatever else its system of tropes produces, then, narrative manifests itself as a set of hypotheses about the horror of the incompatibility between the pen and its trace and an allegory of the narrator's attempts to escape it.

This is the "madness of words," the inscrutability of perception, the out-of-control hallucinations which readers also find when they brush away the webs of self-deception such literalising of hallucinatory states weave. These hallucinations show the raw flicker of an epistemic and ontological perception stripped of its comforting fairy-tales, its dead metaphors, its caricatures and stereotypes. If narrative is a self-organising perceptual system with which we make sense of the world, then, this sense is non-sense, a convenient fictive process which helps us get about (often very badly) but which in "no sense" can be held accountable for our pretensions to truth, stability, certainty.

Louis Althusser, however, offers us not a way out of this madness but a plausible description of why the incompatibility between language and intuition is felt as an inscrutability. In describing the reproduction of the means of production, he asserts the constructivist view of ethopoesis — that "*all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as subjects*, by the functioning of the category of the subject" ("Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" 94). According to this view, Dickens' "beneficent power" with its spontaneous if involuntary effusions is not so much an inspirationist muse who speaks directly to consciousness

but rather a process whereby the subject is spoken by the precepts of ideology in the act of speaking them. As Frederic Jameson argues: "the dynamics of the act of interpretation . . . presupposes as its organisational fiction, that we never really confront a text immediately, in all its freshness as a thing-in-itself. Rather, texts come before us as the always-already-read" (*The Political Unconscious* 9). If we are interpellated by the "already-read" of culture then some of the things we "sense" intuitively are not raw "stimuli" but the already-produced effects of certain values and ideas, effects which do their job so well that, although they "look" and "feel" like unmediated stimuli, they are really cultural constructions. We mistake our interpellation by ideology as inspiration and/or intuition rather than see it as a process whereby an ensemble of ventriloquistic voices and gestures speak and move us as we speak and mimic them. Consequently, interpellation encourages a confusion between process and product, a confusion that Dickens escapes by representing the latter as a text which has already been "written" by someone else and which only needs to be transcribed, a view which Ruthven rather aptly describes as "logorrhea" (54).

Despite an incompatible sense of "origin," both inspirationist and constructivist views of ethopoesis admit, then, that subjects are "moved" by forces beyond their control. Ruthven supports this view when he argues that "the poststructuralist evacuation of authors from texts merely recapitulates (with the benefit of structural linguistics) earlier constructions of the author in inspirationist doctrines of creativity as the passive vehicle of psychic intervention from an external Muse or the Holy Spirit or the god within" ("The Critic Without Qualities" 166). Such a view raises the possibility that inspirationist and constructivist theories are more-or-less two sides of the same coin, that psychic interventions are really interpellations by ideology.

Consequently, inspirationist and constructivist theories recuperate those common, self-organising perceptual mechanisms we use for controlling our "hallucinations." Whether we are bowing down before some beneficent power, some force for "good," perhaps, which speaks through the author, or being spoken by the precepts of ideology as we speak them, we are engaged in a moment of perception, one which involves suggesting and testing hypotheses. As R. L. Gregory puts it, "perception of an object *is* an hypothesis, suggested and tested by sensory data" (*The Eye, The Brain* 9). In other words, I take the constructivist view that we are interpellated by ideology through Ideological State Apparatuses, but I would go further and argue that interpellation occurs not just through the enveloping, perhaps even propagandising, voice of the teacher or politician, but also at the very moment of perception itself.

If ideology exists in "the behaviour of people acting according to their beliefs" (Belsey 57), then ideology necessarily involves analysing the (in)congruence between people's intentional states (beliefs, desires, intentions) and their actions. It is only by studying these moments of (in)congruence that we are able to answer John B. Thompson's question: "whether, and if so how, the meaning mobilised by symbolic forms serves, in specific contexts, to establish and sustain relations of domination" (*Ideology and Modern Culture* 7). These moments of (in)congruence are also sites of struggle for both meaning and power because, like meaning, intentional states are a cultural not an individual possession. As Barthes says: "it is language which speaks, not the author." In other words, whatever their latent form, intentional states manifest themselves as (a) language, because the mind, like the text (to borrow a line from Barthes), "is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a

multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text [mind] is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" ("The Death of the Author" 146). The struggle for domination is most evident in this "drawing" — in the case of the Dickens-text, in the "drawing" of caricatures and stereotypes.

This struggle may be a hoax played on an unsuspecting subculture or a false consciousness produced as an effect of ideology, but it is a struggle which occurs at the moment of perception itself. If perception requires a "drawing" from the "innumerable centres of culture," which means that there is no "real" centre at all, then this suggests that to perceive is to read. This proposition, if applied to narrative, sees reading as an act of perception that reproduces those "generative" acts of reading which "produced" the original narrative in the first place, though not necessarily with the same results. Splitting the perceptual process into a sort of raw stimuli/response model, a traditional approach to perception even for a-priorists, locates the "intelligence" of the resultant hypothesis in the objects of our experience rather than in the mentalism which produced it. Edward de Bono, for instance, suggests that "We have developed excellent second-stage thinking systems which can handle symbols once perception has *translated* the world into such symbols" (*Conflicts* 17 emphasis added). Gregory's point, however, is not that perception *results* in an hypothesis but rather that perception *is* an hypothesis; without hypotheses about the objects of our experience we simply would not "perceive" them in the first place. Narrative, as an act of reading, requires under this schema a set of ready-made hypotheses which exist before, during and after the reading act, and given that, as Jameson argues, narrative is "the central function or *instance* of the human mind" (*The Political Unconscious* 13),

this posits that narrative, as an act of reading, is itself an instance of perception.

It is important to note here that this thesis is not an attempt to legitimate the epistemic and ontological pretensions of realism nor is it a fall into what Robert Scholes calls the realism fallacy. "It is because reality cannot be recorded," he says, "that realism is dead. All writing, all composition, is construction. We do not imitate the world, we construct versions of it. There is no mimesis, only poesis. No recording. Only construction" (*Structural Fabulation* 7). What this thesis does argue is that if perception is a set of hypotheses suggested and tested by sense data, then perception both controls "those" hallucinations and produces "those" interpellations. For, as Vlad Godzich suggests, on the one hand, intuition "constitutes the foundational basis of cognition upon which perception, consciousness, experience, and the logic of understanding, not to mention the aesthetics that are attendant to them, are constructed," but on the other, "language, conceived as a double system of tropes and persuasion, that is, as a rhetorical entity, emerges as the unavoidable dimension of all cognition" ("The Tiger on the Paper Mat" xiii). If, as Barthes suggests, it is language which speaks and not the author or individual, then language speaks us as we speak it — language interpellates us at the moment of perception.

Godzich appears to disagree with this interpretation, however, for he argues that the act of reading itself "disrupts the continuity between the theoretical and the phenomenal and thus forces a recognition of the incompatibility of language and intuition" (x), an incompatibility, if you like, between what Dickens "writes down" and what he "sees." If "language speaks us as we speak it," however, if language is an intrinsic dimension of perception, then both intuition and interpellation are the effects of a perceptual process the constituents of which are the

already-read of culture — hypotheses which, although suggested and tested at the moment of perception, need to pre-exist that moment for perception to take place. Signs in their materiality represent the already-suggested-and-tested of perception: using a word or a phrase is the same as drawing on a previously confirmed hypothesis, trying it out again. Our entry into language, into Lacan's symbolic, provides us with access to a databank of ready-made hypotheses to be tried out at moments of perception. These hypotheses may be confirmed or denied or, given the "arbitrary" nature of the relation between the signifier and the signified, modified to suit the context.

Moreover, as I shall argue, some sort of hallucinatory flicker attends all moments of perception. As Samuel Delany says:

> Nothing we look at is ever seen without some shift and flicker — that constant flaking of vision which we take as imperfections of the eye or simply the instability of attention itself; and we ignore this illusory screen for the solid reality behind it. But the solid reality is the illusion; the shift and flicker is all there is. ("Of Sex, Objects, Signs, Sales, SF and Other Things" 51-52)

Perception, then, is the shift and flicker of "those" hallucinations with which we intersect and negotiate, via the self-organising hypotheses (of language and ideology), our understanding of the world. Although some of the things we say may feel like intuitions, we cannot escape the unavoidable — the way in which language prefigures cognition, the way in which hypotheses prefigure perception, the way in which we are interpellated as we speak.

If Dickens literalises as inspiration the relation between knowing and inscrutability, between the pen and its trace, then this literalising produces a remnant which, as John Gilson suggests, is not so much something left over as an index of the speculative nature of perception, a sign of its incompleteness, a trace of the hallucination which is its constituent gesture. Whether or not this remnant is, as Miller suggests, always "ethical, social, and political" (1) will be revealed by "reading"

the story this remnant produces both as an instance of the hallucinatory dimension of perception and as a moment of the formation of the subject. I shall deal with the latter first.

Chapter Two

I would like to think that I occupy the centre,
but nothing is less certain.
(Samuel Beckett)

I

Althusser's view of the subject is more-or-less based on Karl Marx's argument that "The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general," which means that "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness" (*Preface* to "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy" 202). However, Althusser only partially supports Marx's argument for he also believes that the relation between the social and the individual's consciousness is a "double constitution":

> I say: the category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology, but at the same time and immediately I add that *the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology insofar as ideology has the function (which defines it) of "constituting" concrete individuals as subjects*. In the interaction of this double constitution exists the functioning of all ideology, ideology being nothing but its functioning in the material forms of existence of that functioning. ("Ideology" 93)

This double constitution suggests that although ideology is "sourced" in the social it is "applied" by the individual subject, a reciprocal process which somewhat undermines Marx's certainty in arguing that social being "determines" consciousness. Ideology and consciousness exist in a double relation, a dynamism of constructing and constituting each other, for, as Althusser suggests, on the one hand, we "are *always already* subjects, and as such constantly practice the rituals of ideological recognition, which guarantee for us that we are indeed concrete, individual, distinguishable and (naturally) irreplaceable subjects," but on the other, "*all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects*" (95). This double relation is where

> the individual *is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, ie, in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection*, ie, in order that he shall make the gestures and actions of his subjection "all by himself." *There are no subjects except by and for their subjection.* That is why they "work all by themselves." (101-103)

Ideology hails us so well that its intrinsic processes of acculturation are quickly naturalised so that we seem to act all by ourselves and see ourselves as autonomous, free individuals. As Ken Ruthven puts it:

> Ideological apparatuses do their job so efficiently that we have no sense of having been produced by them; on the contrary, they inculcate in us a keen sense of being autonomous individuals capable of exercising freedom of choice and thus shaping our own lives. But what we experience as "natural" is in fact the product of processes of acculturation in the service of dominant ideologies. So it appears that I am not born unique but reproduced ideologically with a sense of being unique; and my precious self-identity, far from being my very own and the source of what I say, is in fact an "ideological effect." Whatever "freedom" I exercise subjectively is therefore an illusion, in so far as I can exercise it only within prescribed ideological limits. ("The Critic" 164)

Consequently, the ideologies we rely upon as individuals are not *sui generis* because they are sourced in the physical and material conditions of our existence, and this means that, for Althusser, "What is presented in ideology is therefore not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live" (89). For the ideologically aware, these imaginary versions are sites of negotiation and struggle whereas for the purblind they are "common sense" or an "illusion."

Catherine Belsey responds to Althusser's position by arguing that ideology is not simply a set of illusions; rather, ideology is imaginary "in that it discourages a full understanding of these conditions of existence and the ways in which people are socially constituted within them" (*Critical Practice* 57). Such a view shifts the focus to a critique of ideology which deals with the "everyday" for if, as Althusser argues,

ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as subjects, then ideology must be embedded in the "transactions of everyday life." As Henri Lefebvre argues: "everyday life is the supreme court where wisdom, knowledge and power are brought to judgement" (*Critique of Everyday Life* 6). John B. Thompson, who believes that ideology is "*meaning in the service of power,*" supports Lefebvre when he argues that "the study of ideology requires us to investigate the ways in which meaning is constructed and conveyed by symbolic forms of various kinds, from everyday linguistic utterances to complex images and texts" (*Ideology and Modern Culture* 7). I would argue that meaning, symbolic or otherwise, is constructed in the context of propositional, paradigmatic and exegetic truth claims. I shall deal with this point in some depth in chapter three.

For Thompson, any investigation of ideology should focus not only on institutions as sites of power but also on the places and spaces of everyday existence:

> For most people, the relations of power and domination which affect them most directly are those characteristic of the social contexts within which they live out their everyday lives: the home, the workplace, the classroom, the peer group. These are the contexts within which individuals spend the bulk of their time, acting and interacting, speaking and listening, pursuing their aims and following the aims of others. (8-9)

If ideology is, at the very least, an ensemble of everyday roles and activities, then, given the Dickens-texts' focus on "the home, the workplace, the classroom, the peer group," useful analogies can be drawn between the way subjects are interpellated in those moments of everyday "acting and interacting" and the way characters are interpellated in the Dickens-text. I shall return to this point in chapter seven.

For Belsey ideology also exists in these everyday practices and social relations, in the unstated dogma of commonsense, in truisms as well as

in religious and philosophical systems. The prime role of ideology is to conceal the "real conditions of existence." In this, ideology is not a system controlled by faceless men, or a system of "ideas in people's heads," but a material practice which refuses to name itself because ideology "exists in the behaviour of people acting according to their beliefs" (*Critical Practice* 56-57). For Belsey, this means that any claim to non-ideological practice is an illusion. Consequently, our beliefs cannot escape our ideologies even though we might be oblivious to the connection.

Althusser supports this notion when he argues that although we live, move and have our being in ideology, our apparent obliviousness to the fact that we are subjects, like our belief in the transparency of language, is "the elementary ideological effect":

> it is indeed a peculiarity of ideology that it imposes (without appearing to do so, since these are "obliviousnesses") obliviousnesses as obliviousnesses, which we cannot *fail to recognise* and before which we have the inevitable and natural reaction of crying out (aloud or in the "still, small voice of conscience"): "That's obvious! That's right! That's true!" (94).

Looked at in another way, this small voice of recognition suggests that the ideologies we have "in here" appear as if by magic as attributes of our experience "out there," attributes we recognise (because they are always already-read) and which "hail" us as we "hail" them. For Althusser, ideology does its job so well that the Ideological State Apparatuses, those institutionally "approved" social functions such as the family, religion, the law, politics and the education system without which no class can hold hegemony (72-75), interpellate subjects to see the "in here" as the "out there." What is produced "out there," however, are not the "real" conditions of existence, but imaginary versions of these conditions which serve the interests of the dominant class — its beliefs, desires and intentions and how these legitimate its actions — produced "in here" but projected as "naturalised" perceptions of what

the "out there" is like. This interpellation begins, more-or-less, from birth.

II

Jean-Paul Sartre provides a useful example of interpellation in recounting his early reading experiences:

> Even when alone, I was performing: Anne-Marie [his mother] and Karlemami had turned these pages long before I was born — it was their knowledge which was displayed before my eyes. In the evening I was asked: "What have you read? What did you make of it?" I was expecting this, I was in labour and I gave birth to a precocious remark; getting away from grown ups in reading was the best way of communication with them; when they were not there, their future gaze came in through the back of my head, came out again through my pupils and shot, at floor level, along those oft-read sentences which I was reading for the first time. *Seen, I saw myself reading as one hears oneself speak.* (*Words* 46 emphasis added)

Sartre is seen as he sees himself reading, which is another way of saying that he catches himself in the act of being interpellated — reading is interpellation and vice versa. He identifies some important Althusserian factors which attend the reading/interpellation process: the author, the text, and the reader as well as the social forces which support these — family, history and culture. In locating the reading voice, however, Sartre makes it clear that he is spoken by these social forces even as he speaks them. Inevitably, reading involves what Carol Feldman calls "ontic dumping" (qtd in Bruner 23) where the distinction between what is "outside" and what is "inside" the speaker become blurred. Ontic dumping could be seen as a defining gesture which links reading and perception.

For example, Sartre possesses a bi-focal view — the adult "biographer" reviewing the early formative experiences of the "child" — which enables him to see his interpellation as a subject as "the Comedy of Culture" (47), a comedy which is played out in the interplay between

his self and his culture (family, books, ideas). This interpellation is a relational affair: as he reads he is "seen," and through the adults' eyes, he sees himself reading, sees himself spoken by the culture his incipient gestures of reading are attempting to speak.

Although Sartre says that he lacks a "Super-Ego" (15), he remains a cultural possession, a site of negotiation and struggle:

> Was I Narcissus then? Not even that: too anxious to win others, I forgot myself. After all, it gave me little pleasure to make mud-pies or scribble, my natural needs: for them to have value in my eyes, at least one grown-up had to rhapsodise over my works. Fortunately, there was no lack of applause: whether they were listening to my gibberish or the Art of Fugue, adults wore the same smile of conspiratorial and mischievous relish. This shows what I really was: a cultural possession. I was impregnated with culture and I returned it to the family like a radiance, as pools in the evening give back the heat of the day. (27-28)

The child looks beyond what Dickens' "beneficent power" might show and sees himself speaking the mores of the culture of which he is a part. As we might expect, the precocious child, with a little help from the "existential" biographer he was to become, appears preternaturally aware of the exigencies of a process which, as the passage clearly indicates, positions the child as a dupe — he is impregnated with the hypotheses of his culture.

The distance between the reflection of the sun and the radiance of the heat allows the child to move away from iteration towards identification: the adults rhapsodise over that which enables them to recognise themselves in the child's performance, and in their enthusiasm they possess and are themselves possessed. What the adults are shown reaffirms what they already know, what they have "allowed" the child to learn:

> So I was a poodle of the future; I made prophecies. I said precocious things, and they were remembered and repeated to me: I learnt to make up others. I said grown-up things: I knew, effortlessly, how to say things "in advance of my age." These things were poems: the recipe was simple: you had to trust yourself to the devil, haphazardly in the void, *borrow whole*

> *sentences from adults, put them together and keep saying them without understanding them.* In short, I delivered genuine oracles and each person interpreted them to his own taste. Good was born in the depths of my heart, and Truth in the youthful darkness of my Understanding. I admired myself on trust: it so happened that my words and gestures had a quality which escaped me yet which *sprang* to the eyes of grown-ups; never mind! I would unfailingly offer them the delicate pleasure refused me. (22 emphasis added)

Although things "spring" to the adults' eyes, they misread both the things and the springing: they see the child's mastery of signifiers as the linguistic competence of the oracle, as intuitive prophesy, and interpret his utterances according to their own agendas, or so the biographer says; and they misunderstand the child's game of iteration where the child is aware that the significance of the signifiers escapes him and yet dutifully repeats the adults' words back to them. The "beneficent power" is thus revealed as being both language and culture, as well as the role adults play in their affirmation. Thus, the child is constantly creating itself ("I never stopped creating myself: I was both giver and gift" 23), in a performance which is a delicate pleasure of recognition for the child and the adults.

However, although this "rhapsody" is a gain for the child, it also has its opportunity cost:

> A Platonist by condition, I moved from knowledge to its object; I found ideas more real than things, because they were the first to give themselves to me and because they gave themselves like things. I met the universe in books: assimilated, classified, labelled and studied, but still impressive; and I confused the chaos of my experiences through books with the hazardous course of real events. Hence my idealism which it took me thirty years to undo. (34)

The child learns about the world through books, and confuses the ideas he finds there with his own experiences, though clearly the adult existentialist is speaking here. This sort of idealism is both the comedy of culture and the legacy of the self, and the interplay of the two is both confusing and hazardous. Given that the idea of the stable ego is

derogated in this comedy, what remains of the self? Sartre can no longer tell, though he later becomes convinced that existence precedes essence.

When his idealism collapses, he is uncertain whether it is possible to know anything at all, and he concludes: "Culture saves nothing and nobody, nor does it justify. But it is a product of man: *he projects himself through it and recognises himself in it.* For the real, this old ruined house, my imposture, is also my *character*: you can get rid of a neurosis but you are never cured of yourself" (157 emphasis added). In effect, his character is both a case of "I think, therefore I am" and an instance of interpellation.

Sartre is engaged in the process of retrospective ethopoesis common to the *Bildungsroman* from which he admits there is no escape. In reading his own character, Sartre finds himself flickering between *etho*poesis and etho*poesis*. *Etho*poesis is based on the notion of projecting one's self through culture and recognising one's self in it, and this is a humanist rather than an existentialist view. Humanism, as Ian Hunter points out, is based on the idea that "human attributes and dispositions, together with the forms of social and political life, have a single normative foundation," which is located "in the rational and moral capacities of the individual subject — capacities that are independent of technical determination and social purpose, and so give rise to the ultimate normative principles of thought and action" ("The Humanities without Humanism" 480). Hunter suggests that this normative foundation envisages "human attributes and forms of social organisation as *expressions or determinations of the capacities of the individual subject*" (481 emphasis added). The subject uses these attributes and forms of organisation in order to realise its rational and moral capacities in the world. Society, then, is seen as a manifestation

of those principles thought to be the origin and goal of the perfect individual. Society becomes a sort of realisation of these principles: "of free rational decision, of universal egalitarian self-realisation." If society fails in this entelechy, it is simply a sign of "society's non-ideal condition or moral illegitimacy" (481-483). Reading character, one's own and others, becomes, according to this view, the means by which we produce humanism's entelechiac axiologies: the origins of a character's essence are also its goal. The reader's role in reading is to realise his or her moral and rational capacities, despite the distracting noise of life, using the thoughts and experiences of others, especially those who have access to and are able to possess some sort of "higher life."

Moreover, as Julian Henriques suggests, the values of individualism associated with humanism have become the norm for they are "enshrined in child-centred progressive education, in 'objective and classless' job assessment and in studies of prejudice which advocate multi-culturalism and the interpersonal approach of social work" (*Changing the Subject* 11). Hence, the humanist subject is traditionally seen as an agent of all social phenomena and productions, including knowledge. The individual is seen as a unitary, essentially non-contradictory and above all rational entity (93).

Such a view of character reinforces the common sense notion that we read and judge characters as if they were recognisably linked to the "real" people of everyday existence and to the things that these people do. Texts create the illusion of the representation of life through what Ken Ruthven calls its apparent truth-of-correspondence, its assumption that "a book is true if it 'corresponds' to things in the world, past or present" (*Critical Assumptions* 166). What purpose can be served, one may ask, in "reading" characters in a text as if they were

real people? An orthodox response to this question might argue that regarding characters as people induces in the reader a sort of moral homoeopathy where minute doses of deviation (what the characters say and do which differs from the "acceptable norm") from the self-developing and self-determining bourgeois humanist subject are administered to other "naive" and potentially deviant bourgeois humanist subjects (the reader) so that the symptoms of the deviation (disease) are "reproduced" in the reader precisely in order that the disease can be cured because it is now known and can be resisted. In short, "real" people have and are characters, the traits and attributes of which can be fine-tuned if exposed to "suitable" readings.

Such a view of character is based on what Leo Bersani calls "the culture of redemption" which is itself based on the assumption that if we repeat certain "inherently damaged or valueless" experiences through art then they will be repaired. This assumption is founded on the notion "that the work of art has the authority to master the presumed raw material of experience in a manner that uniquely gives value to, perhaps even redeems, that material." This view of art, he suggests, devalues both experience and art because if personal and historical catastrophes are compensated for in art then "art itself gets reduced to a kind of superior, patching function" which means that art is constrained "to those very materials to which it presumably imparts value" (*The Culture of Redemption* 1). In other words, experience is privileged over anything which might be said about it except where what is said imparts value to the experience.

However, for Bersani this doubling effect turns out to be a sleight-of-hand because the culture of redemption creates a Nietzschean "theoretical man," one who believes that art has the power to correct life, whereas what he is really doing is predicated on a "misreading of

art as philosophy" (2). Paradoxically, such an aesthetic relies on the "negation of life," on a "nihilism that invents a 'true world' as an alternative to an inferior and depreciated world of mere appearance" (2). This "true world" takes the form of an increasingly "vivid exemplary illustration" of the laws of philosophy which means that art "decays" to a point where it becomes a series of examples in search of a "purer," timeless and universal truth, a search in which art ultimately longs to be free of its exemplifying function (2). Ideally, then, art would be "truth liberated from phenomena" where the novel has "nearly abstracted itself from its fables" (2).

What this means is that, for Bersani, the self, which is born as a "shattered totality," is nothing more than a convenient fiction which functions as a means of reducing the world "to a reflection of the desiring subject" (3-8). The search for "truth" remains a pseudo-philosophy committed to the culture of redemption, a kind of narcissistic pleasure at finding the comforting self-reflection we knew we would find if we looked in the right places. As Iris Murdoch puts it: "The whole of language is a machine for making falsehood" which means that "all stories are lies, consolation." Consequently, "Any story which we tell about ourselves consoles us since it imposes pattern upon something which might otherwise seem intolerably chancy or incomplete" (qtd in Gordon "Iris Murdoch's Comedies of Unselfing" 116-117).

In other words, the "culture of redemption," with its presumptive *ethopoesis*, its claim of a correspondence between the "real" world and that of fiction, permits both the totalising universals of the omniscient narrator and the administering bourgeois discipline necessary to return recalcitrant deviants to an accommodating and self-modifying norm. Like the characters, readers are "vaccinated" against further outbreaks

of disease by being allowed to experience (vicariously) its symptoms whilst at the same time being invited to see accommodated deviations as steps to their own (now remotivated and decidedly humanist) self-development and self-determination whilst regarding unaccommodated deviations as slides into the disciplinary abyss of poetic justice. Even in those fictions where characters live in bizarre worlds, the points of entry to the text are usually "recognisable" characters, and we judge these characters on the basis of some sort of congruity, or the lack of it, between what we can make out about their intentions and what we observe of their behaviour.

If Sartre is positioned by *etho*poesis and the humanism it espouses, he is also aware of etho*poesis*. He acknowledges, for instance, that he is a "cultural possession" and he is surprised at being caught unawares by his own idealism. He recognises that his knowledge is Platonic, that he confuses what he assimilates, classifies, labels and studies with his own experiences and with real events, that what is "outside" his mind easily becomes an "inside" experience. In projecting himself through culture, he also recognises that his attempts at psychologising himself are the already known, the already read of his culture. He concludes that the notion of character as an essence is nothing more than a neurosis, a non-organic disorder of a mind unable to take a rational view of life. Paradoxically, one can get rid of this neurosis, one can recognise that existence precedes essence, but one cannot be cured of etho*poesis*, a disease the symptoms of which are the narrativising and psychologising of this self. Sartre recognises that he is positioned by his culture to see himself as a precocious child, as a free, autonomous individual. However, characterisation, with its humanist assumptions, redemptive outlook, and psychologising of the self, is no more than a "neurosis," a bourgeois hallucination.

This means that the inspirationist view of literature is both a failure of *etho*poesis and an instance of being misled by one's hallucinations into looking in the wrong place for the means to explain them. The flicker between *etho*poesis and etho*poesis*, in other words, supports Althusser's notion of the double constitution of the subject — the flicker between consciousness and social determination, between subject and Subject. In short, it is through (self-)characterisation, through psychologising of the self, that subjects are interpellated.

Henriques notes that Althusser's anti-humanism produces something of a logical problem, however, for in privileging the structure of social formation in the determination of an individual's behaviour and make-up, we are left with the problem of the "nature of the entity that must already exist in some prior form in order to recognise her/himself in the interpellation" (93-97). Henriques solution is to suggest that individuals are a mixture of subjectivities which means that "significations are produced and lived in everyday practices and social relations and that subjects are constituted and located as part of these same practices" (98). For Henriques, the self is constructed "through internalisation of social interpretations of social conduct," a process which involves both the attribution of intentions and "a continuously unfolding process of 'negotiation' which contributes to the formation of 'shared understandings'." The subject learns via feedback the social significance of its actions which it internalises "in a way which somehow contributes to the formation of self-consciousness, rationality and a focus on individual responsibility" (16). The everyday practice which permits this feedback/internalisation process is language itself.

III

Belsey argues that "Ideology suppresses the role of language in the construction of the subject" (*Critical Practice* 61). At one level, this reflects a desire, as we saw with Dickens and Gilson, for unmediated access to the self. At another, as Anthony Easthope points out, it is part of the mistaken belief that the prime function of language is to communicate (*Poetry as Discourse* 10). Jacques Lacan agrees with Easthope when he describes the belief that language is a function of communication as an "elaborate idiocy" ("Sign, Symbol, Imaginary" 204). This "idiocy," Lacan suggests, is based on the notion that thought is communicated without words. In "Defence of English," for instance, George Orwell argues that language and dogma are afterthoughts tacked on for clarity and style:

> What is above all needed is to let the meaning choose the word, and not the other way about. In prose, the worst thing one can do with words is to surrender to them. When you think of a concrete object, you think wordlessly, and then, if you want to describe the thing you have been visualising, you probably hunt about till you find the exact words that seem to fit. ("Politics and the English Language" 84)

Orwell's argument is based on the notion that language is, or at least ought to be, transparent: a message is sent from an addresser to an addressee via the medium of language.

Jacques Derrida argues, however, that this belief is based on a mistaken notion which privileges speech over writing because speech is seen to be closer to thoughts and intentions. Rather, he suggests, as the graphematic feature of language shows, writing precedes speech:

> Every sign, linguistic, or non-linguistic, spoken or written . . . can be cited, put between quotation marks; but in so doing it can break with every given context, engendering an infinity of new contexts in a manner which is absolutely illimitable. This does not imply that the mark is valid outside of a context, but on the contrary that there are only contexts without any centre or absolute or absolute anchoring." ("Signature Event Context" 12)

The graphematic feature of language, the idea that the so-called original use or context of the sign is not the source of meaning, interposes between the writer's intention and the reception of the text. This means that "the category of intention will not disappear; it will have its place, but from that place it will no longer be able to govern the entire scene and system of utterance" (18). Language, then, denies us the full presence of meaning in two senses. First, the Saussurean *langue* sees language as a system of signs where meaning is a function of the relation between the elements (phonemes or morphemes) rather than anything inhering in the elements themselves. Second, the presence of full meaning is always deferred from one sign to another as illustrated by the need to explain one sign in terms of others (as in a dictionary). The gap between the speaker/writer's intention and the reader's reading, which this denial of the presence of meaning represents, is what he terms *différance* (6-7).

Interestingly, Christopher Norris notes that Derrida was not happy with the way his own term was being used, particularly by American critics, and that Derrida had warned specifically against lifting the word "*différance*" out of his work and treating it as a "key-word or master concept." Derrida's "intentions" were being "misread," for "*différance* is the upshot of a long and meticulous process of argument, such that it cannot (or should not) be wrenched out of context for the purpose of ad hoc definition" (*Derrida* 14-15). The use of the word "*différance*," then, perfectly illustrates Derrida's point that the graphematic feature of language ensures that intention is no longer able to govern the "entire scene and system of utterance." Apparently, however, this does not mean that the anxiety produced by "readers" flouting one's intentions will go away.

Language offers us the possibility of meaning, of communication, since it *differentiates* between concepts, but this offer is illusory because signs can only be defined by other signs, and so meaning is endlessly *deferred*. However, as Norris's account of Derrida's plea for his ideas to be used as intended shows, intentionality is not so easily dispensed with. The notion of the graphematic, whilst a theoretical possibility, only holds if the intentions of the speakers are discounted and language is seen as an abstract system of signs rather than a system of signs which create meaning. Add in the intentions of the users of language for whom meaning is a function of use rather than of origins, and Derrida's formulation of the graphematic could be rewritten as a warning to check the congruence between what the speaker (or text) says and what they mean rather than the sort of joyous aporia-spotting which, Christopher Norris says, explicates the tension between what a text (or speaker) manifestly means to say, and what they are nevertheless constrained to mean (*Derrida* 18).

John Searle refutes Derrida on precisely this point when he argues what he calls the "thesis of the background," by which he means that "The functioning of meaning in particular and intentionality in general is only possible given a set of background capacities, abilities, presuppositions, and general know-how" as well as a "complex network of knowledge, beliefs, desires." In other words, meaning and understanding are only possible "*within a network of intentionality and against a background of capacities that are not themselves part of the content that is meant or understood, but which is essential for the functioning of the content*" ("Literary Theory and Its Discontents" 640). Although this sort of argument would not impress the ludic (post)modernists, who insist on the "free play" of the signifier, it does suggest that the everyday practices of negotiated meaning require an

intense mentalism where the presumed intentional states of the participants are *used* to negotiate meaning. In this sense, every sign may well be cited in a context which differs from the original, or from the intentions of the author. However, without the attributions of intentional states, even if this intentionality presumes "free play," meaning simply does not exist. In this sense, context is itself a form of mentalism of which narrative is an exemplar. What this suggests is that the notion of the graphematic perhaps works well with dictionaries but not so well with the everyday practices of negotiated meaning.

Derrida's point does alert us, however, to the dangers of conceptual synecdoche, as Easthope points out: "To identify language and so discourse with communication operates a kind of synecdoche. It gives the part for the whole. Communication, *one* major effect of discourse, is generalised and made into a definition of discourse as a whole" (10). He argues that discourse, which refers not only to the way sentences are structured in a text, but also to the way, as in Eliot's "monuments," texts are ordered in relation to one another and as part of larger discourses, cannot be reduced to a single defining feature because discourse is "homogeneous as well as heterogeneous" (8). The study of discourse, then, isn't just "a careful description of different discourses on the general assumption that the production of discourse is a rule-governed activity and that these rules, like those of syntax or chess, generate specific examples" (9). Consequently, discourse "is linguistically determined, in that it follows the laws of its own material nature, its *materiality*" (10). As Terence Hawkes suggests:

> Speech cannot stand as the reality to writing's shadow for speech *itself* already appears to be a shadow of some *prior* act of signification of which it manifests a trace, and so on, in an infinite regression. In fact, nothing has the "purity" of *absolute* presence. Speech is as "impure," as "trace"-ridden, as "secondary" as any other sign system. (*Structuralism and Semiotics* 148)

This means that language is not transparent and that its use will not provide unmediated access to the self or to anything else. However, it could be argued that language is unlikely to be either completely free-play or simply an aid to communication but rather a "double constitution" of both positions. For example, language as communication has itself sufficient in-built strategies for "free play" (such as irony, ambiguity, hedges). Moreover, if language were nothing but the "free play" of the signifier then someone ought to have a chat to Derrida and the ludic (post)modernists about their strategy of constructing free-play outcomes in incredibly serious and tendentious discourse (perhaps Barthes is the exception).

Whether one's strategy is to "free play" or to communicate (or both), one cannot escape being interpellated by language. That speech is "a shadow of some prior act of signification" of which it manifests a trace ensures, as Mikhail Bakhtin suggests, that "Every member of a speech collective receives the word, from another context, saturated with alien meanings. His own thought finds the word already occupied" ("Genesis of the Subject" qtd in Ruthven 166). Or to borrow a line from Beckett: "I'm in words, made of words, another's words" ("The Unnamable" 280). The subject is spoken by language in the act of speaking: the moment of utterance is constituted by a multiplicity of contexts. If we are "in words, made of words, another's words," then the subject itself is as "impure," as "trace-ridden", as "secondary" as any other sign system, and the most effective reading practice will recognise this.

Barthes supports this view when he argues that "the whole of enunciation is an empty process, functioning perfectly without there being any need for it to be filled with the persons of the interlocutors" ("The Death of the Author" 145). This is because linguistics shows, he says, that

> **I** is nothing other than the instance of saying **I**: language knows a "subject," not a "person," and this subject is empty outside of the very enunciation which defines it. . . . This **I** which approaches the text is already itself a plurality of other texts, of codes which are infinite or, more precisely, lost (whose origin is lost). (*S/Z* 10)

Or as Belsey puts it, the notion that people are "unique, distinguishable, irreplaceable identities" is a myth because "it is language which provides the possibility of subjectivity because it is language which enables the subject to posit himself or herself as 'I,' as the subject of a sentence." This means, she suggests, borrowing the concept from Emile Benveniste, that "there is no other objective testimony to the identity of the subject except that which he himself thus gives about himself" (59).

Looked at in this way, we might be tempted to conclude along with Barthes that "Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing" ("The Death of the Author" 142). This view supports the notion that the subject is decentred and in process, an effect of discourse rather than a source of it, a notion which Ruthven suggest comes back to Saussurean linguistics:

> if it is true that what we say (*parole*) is determined by the linguistic system (*langue*) without which our utterances would be meaningless, we cannot claim that language is a mere function of the speaking subject; on the contrary, we shall be led to Derrida's conclusion that the subject is "a 'function' of the language," and consequently is "inscribed in the language." ("Critic" 163)

In other words, our reason, imagination, intentions, will and actions do not belong to us but are "already determined by language" (163-164). Perhaps we would all like to believe that the self is a-historical and therefore unified in its fresh encounters with the world: it doesn't feel as though we have been constituted by language, by education, by culture, by interpersonal relations and by desires.

However, as Jonathan Culler argues, the subject should be seen, not as the sort of characterisation where "everything in the novel exists in order to illustrate character and its development," but as "a space where forces and events meet," a matrix of "interpersonal and conventional systems" (*Structuralist Poetics* 230). Character, in other words, is constructed by conventions as "arbitrary as any other" (230), is no more than a manner of speaking. For Barthes, this space, this manner of speaking, has the familiarity of cultural cliches: "Subjectivity is a plenary image, with which I may be thought to encumber the text, but whose deceptive plenitude is merely the wake of all the codes which constitute me, so that my subjectivity has ultimately the generality of stereotypes" (10). Character and its modern counterpart, the subject, then, deal in the "generality of stereotypes," all of which have to be read by both the readers and by the characters, who are themselves "read," interpellated as subjects, in the act of reading. If language is the primary means through which a subject identifies itself then subjectivity is a process of occupying a space which is already there, already on offer. The subject, in the act of occupying the positions available to it (through language, gender, ideology, social conventions, literature, and so on), finds that these spaces are already occupied (because removed from another context saturated with alien meaning). In filling these positions, the subject is offered ready-made hypotheses which have already been feedback-sanctioned, ready-made practices for reading itself and others. The subject "forgets" that the origins of these positions come from a process of occupation and sees itself instead as the source and origin of meaning, sees itself as *etho*poesis rather than etho*poesis*. Recognising oneself as a subject-in-process rather than as a self-constituting entity comes from recognising the codes and conventions, the forces and events, through which one is constituted.

The reader's complicity in the process of reading character comes from being interpellated at the moment of perception itself.

I would now like explore this notion of being interpellated at the moment of perception in two ways, first, by examining, in chapter three, the traditional stimuli-response model of perception, and second, by counterpointing this traditional model, in chapter four, with one that argues that perception is a double constitution of sense data and hypotheses such that perception is alway a moment of, rather than simply a prelude to, interpretation.

Chapter Three

Either you must explain yourself
or there is no difference between you
and the man who tells me
that the Ace of Spades means death.
(Umberto Eco)

I

I would like to begin my discussion of the traditional stimuli-response model of perception with a brief discussion of some orthodox notions of perception and how they relate to notions of empiricism and a-priorism. I will then explore the propositional, paradigmatic and exegetic truth claims of this traditional model and show that these claims do not move beyond the application of global knowledge frames in particular contexts, applications which produce predictable outcomes. I conclude that the traditional stimuli/response model is inadequate in explaining the moment of perception itself, and that it constitutes little more than an attempt by particular interests to legitimate their truth claims. It is, as Thompson puts it, a question of placing meaning in the service of power (7), and therefore, the stimuli-response model is ineluctably ideological. I do not intend to rehearse the long and complex history of theories of perception but simply to provide enough background to contextualise the main point of chapter four — that is, Gregory's theory that perception is an hypothesis, suggested and tested by sense data. It is upon this theory that the notion that subjects are interpellated at the moment of perception will be based, a notion which will be the basis of the argument that it is at the level of the everyday psychologising of the self that ideology finds its most successful subject.

That the battle between the empiricists and the a-priorists continues unabated in some philosophical circles, and has been transferred in part to the so called "crisis" in literary/cultural studies in the form of a

conflict between humanism and contemporary critical theory, suggests not only a continuing political struggle for the right to label one's ideas as "truth" but also an enduring incompatibility in the terms and points of view upon which such debates rely. Empiricists insist in various ways that it is possible to know the objects of our experience, be they the ubiquitous stones of Dr Johnson or the social "facts" of our "material" existence, via propositional "truth" claims which can be made about such experiences. Empiricists believe that things are because they are, and that it is possible to know things with certainty. A-priorists insist in equally various ways that our knowledge is the product of "intellectual intuition," be it reason or revelation, which in some way mediates those things that we seek to know. A-priorists believe that things are, not because they are, but because we say they are, although often this view is expressed without the awareness of the problematics of language it might imply. The history of the notion of perception, in other words, revolves around two main questions: Do we know things through our senses (empiricism)? Or do we know things as effects of the mind's constructions (a-priorism)? Both these questions are matricised by further questions concerning essentialism and constructivism. What is clear about the answers provided by various thinkers over the years is that what passes for knowledge is very much a function of the social legitimation empiricists and a-priorists ascribe to their propositional, paradigmatic and exegetic "truth" claims.

Attempts to legitimate socially one's truth claims have a long history. Godzich points out, for instance, that the Greeks chose certain citizens, known individually as *Theoras* and collectively as *Theoria*, whose integrity and general standing in the community were beyond question, to serve as legates on certain formal occasions, or in matters of considerable political importance, or to act as witnesses to important

events. The *Theoria's* job was to certify what they had seen in "socially acceptable and reliable language," which could then "become the object of public discourse." Others could also view the "spectacle" and "tell" what they saw, "but their telling was no more than a *claim* that they had seen something." Without the authority of the *Theoria*, these claims were relegated to the realm of "aesthesis, that is, perception, but these perceptions had no social standing" ("The Tiger on the Mat" xiv).

What distinguishes the perceptions of the "spectators" from those of the *Theoria* is not some form of higher cognition but the social status of the perceivers, and the difference between "speculation" and "truth" is thus a function of a social contract and of the institutional power which legitimates it. What passes for "truth" is really a sort of speculation about which there is an agreement not to see it as such. Those who make claims to truth without the necessary power to have those claims socially inscribed cannot have those claims legitimated. In effect, the legitimation of the *Theoria* results in the "legalised" transparency of the language they use, which presupposes that the *Theoria* are not spoken by language — they merely speak through it.

This reliance on the so-called transparency of language is also common to those stimuli-response models of perception which are based on what Karl Popper terms naive empiricism, the idea that "before we can say anything about the world, we must first have had perceptions — sense experience" where "our knowledge, our experience, consists of . . . accumulated perceptions" ("The Bucket and the Searchlight" 340). Naive empiricism is based, he argues, on the Greek atomists' view that atoms break loose from the objects we perceive and, in penetrating our sense organs, become perceptions: "According to this view, then, our mind resembles a container — a kind of bucket — in which perceptions and knowledge accumulate." Popper calls this view

"*the bucket theory of the mind*" (340). Naive empiricists relocate the guarantee of legitimacy provided by the polity, as with the *Theoria*, to a knowledge based on the experience of an external reality, a view which argues that all concepts are derived from experience through our senses, and that utterances claiming to express knowledge depend for their justification on such experience. They do this by bracketing off from the discussion those prejudices and foibles with which we are liable to taint our perceptions.

Such a bracketing off may be a little hasty, however, for as Brian Rotman suggests, if empiricists believe that in our encounters with the world "we copy the patterns between the events we perceive into corresponding connections between our thoughts, and thus find order and sense in the world," then, given that our knowledge of things cannot be those things in themselves, the transfer from object of experience to knowledge must involve some form of cognition (*Jean Piaget: Psychologist of the Real* 24-25). One way empiricists get round this problem is to rely on what Jean Piaget calls a mirror theory of cognition where "The function of cognitive mechanisms is to submit to reality, copying its features as closely as possible, so that they may produce a reproduction which differs as little as possible from external reality" ("The Gaps in Empiricism" qtd in Rotman 26). In other words, one accepts that cognition occurs and may well influence the outcome of perception but we overcome this, like Hamlet, by holding up the mirror model as the ideal. As Piaget notes, however, this model "implies that reality can be reduced to its observable features and that knowledge must limit itself to transcribing these features." Therefore, this mirror model systematically neglects "the activity of the knowing agent" ("The Gaps in Empiricism" qtd in Rotman 27). Empiricists, then, with their mirror model of cognition, believe that reality can be known

through the propositions they make about it because these propositions transparently reveal, as it were, the content of the bucket.

Another way of getting round the problem of how cognition might influence perception is to allow the knowing agent some latitude but only when it does not count. Bertrand Russell, for instance, argues that "Nothing can be known to exist except by the help of experience" (*The Problems of Philosophy* 41), which means that all knowledge is inferred inductively from experience. His argument insists that our knowledge of generalities is inferred from particulars, from self-evident atomic facts. This inference allows us nevertheless to hold that "some knowledge is *a priori*" because some experience produces kinds of knowledge which might be seen as a sort of "truth" even though the experience which gave rise to it is insufficient to prove this "truth" empirically. In other words, a-priori knowledge can only ever be "hypothetical" (42), a sort of pretend "truth."

A-priorists would disagree, however, by arguing that the mind is endowed with kinds of knowledge which it has not derived from experience and which do not depend on experience for justification, and they do this from a variety of positions. For instance, a-priorists are sometimes seen as idealists, those who believe that nothing is real except the mind and its ideas, a connection which is often pejorative, as we have seen with Russell, because of an easy association with that notion of idealism where things are represented in ideal forms. Idealism, however, is a form of Platonism — the notion that things exist in a world beyond the senses, a world which is more "real" than the particulars we see about us, particulars about which we can only have opinions (Russell 53).

Some a-priorists prefer a cognitive model which flickers between empirical stimuli and apperceptive response. As Popper suggests, these

a-priorists "deny that our perceptions are ever pure, and assert that our experience is the result of a process of assimilation and transformation — the combined product of sense perceptions and of certain ingredients added by our own minds" (342). For example, William Empson proposes that there is a kind of flicker between what he calls dogma and sensibility:

> Normal sensibility is a tissue of what has been conscious theory made habitual and returned to the pre-conscious, and, therefore, conscious theory may make an addition to sensibility even though it draws no (or no true) conclusion, formulates no general theory, in the scientific sense, which reconciles and makes quickly available the results which it describes. (*Seven Types of Ambiguity* 254)

Empson appears to be suggesting that what is theoretical, that is, what results from the mind's own processes independently of stimuli, becomes habitual, a process which returns such theories to the pre-conscious where they may, in turn, affect subsequent thoughts and feelings. In other words, as Popper would put it, perceptions flow into the bucket where they are processed via "something akin to digestion" to produce "fermented wine" (342). What is perceived is passively and mysterious digested, systematically classified in some way according to what is already in the bucket — an interesting compost of metaphors. This "mind-as-stomach" (or, perhaps, perception-as-vomit) view permits the possibility that perceptions, which have been digested along with other "ingredients" in our minds, may affect the input of subsequent perceptions. In other words, just to compound the metaphor, the taste of the wine at any moment is a function of what is already in the bucket, a taste which must, in turn, influence anything that might be added.

Some a-priorists go a little further than their bucket-bound colleagues and ascribe to the mind powers of discovery of new knowledge unassisted by experience. Such powers come in two forms:

revelation and rationality. Revelationist-a-priorists sometimes use intuition or revelation as justification for their claims because, in pure intuition, the nature of the referents is known in advance of experience and not as a result of it (as Dickens' "beneficent power" might suggest). Mostly, however, a-priorists rely on some form of reason to justify their claims even if, as Umberto Eco suggests, this notion of rationality takes a variety of forms — everything from the ability to produce abstractions and to speak through them, to a special faculty for knowing the absolute by a direct view (*Hyper-Reality* 125-130). What all this suggests is that a-priorists differ in their views as to exactly what power and influence the mind has in discovering new forms of knowledge.

Eco argues that a more contemporary working definition of reason, which sees a-priorism as constructivism, is the notion that "rationality is exercised through the very fact that we are expressing propositions regarding the world," an argument which accepts that language is a mediating factor, for "even before making sure that these propositions are 'true,' we have to make sure that others can understand them" (Eco 129). We do this through "rules for common speech, logical rules which are also linguistic rules." This does not mean that the discourse of reason is univocal, however, for it is important to recognise that "there exist also discourses (in dreams, in poetry, in the expression of desires and passions) that mean several things at once, contradictory among themselves" (130). What this suggests, following Foucault, is that discourse does not simply translate struggles or systems of domination; it is itself the site of these struggles. The debate between the empiricists and the a-priorists, then, comes down to the integrity of their truth claims and the discursive struggle for legitimation these claims make on the dominant discourses of our culture.

I would now like to demonstrate this point by discussing the truth claims of the empiricists and a-priorists, and how these claims relate to narrative, along the following lines. Empiricists believe that it is possible to infer "true" propositions about the world based on experience, that truth is linear and cumulative, and that exegesis is a means of "revealing" the truth of experience (that is, "truth" is revealed here, in empiricist (secondary) discourse, but located there, in experience itself). A-priorists, however, incline to the view that no independent conditions exist with which empiricists can support their propositions, particularly given that these propositions are necessarily expressed in language, that knowledge is non-linear and paradigmatic, and that exegesis is a self-fulfilling sleight-of-hand, one which masks its real purpose which is to legitimate certain forms of knowledge at the expense of others. Empiricists, in other words, rely on the stimuli-response model of perception, whereas a-priorists acknowledge that the mind more-or-less creates what it perceives. This discussion will provide a firm foundation for Gregory's thesis.

II

Empiricists argue that it is possible to infer "true" propositions about the world based on experience, whereas a-priorists incline to the view that there are no independently existing conditions with which empiricists can support their propositions, particularly given that these propositions are necessarily expressed in language. Generally speaking, literature manages to bracket itself off from arguments concerning the "absolute" truths of existence by highlighting its status as fiction or by claiming, when all else fails, to be autotelic and ludic rather than mimetic and tendentious. For instance, Ken Ruthven sees the text as a kind of container and the act of reading as a process of sampling the

contents — a sort of aesthetic version of Popper's bucket theory. "Imaginative works," he says, "make public a private view of reality, and do it so compellingly that we want to share it." Although the work may be unfamiliar at first, we gradually become accustomed to it, and may even end up "feeling relatively at home there." We value the work "for sharpening our awareness," and, on returning to our own world, we may even notice things that we have "never noticed before." Ruthven concludes that "Whatever our reaction, we have made the common assumption that a book is some sort of container for a special kind of reality, which may or may not resemble that 'real' reality we experience outside books" (*Critical Assumptions* 1). What the phrase "may or may not resemble" does is support the notion that what the poet or artist makes "is a second world, a heterocosm distinct from the macrocosm of the universe and the microcosm of man" (2).

Books, then, are buckets in which we may immerse ourselves so as to enjoy the people and customs portrayed there if for no other reason than to attain the sharpened awareness such an immersion might bring. This book-as-container schema suggests that the bucket's content is its own reading, however, for it is recognised as a heterocosm, as a "reality" which "may or may not" be different from those other "realities" with which readers are expected to deal. Yet there is a similarity between these realities, a correspondence, if only in the sense that making public a private view of reality requires the imposition of a form through which readers can engage with such a view. The form itself is a sort of container, one which has recognisable characteristics and conventions and which, though it may give shape to the content, is regarded only as a transparently restraining outline. When all is said and done, this outline is usually ignored so that one

can get on with the business of enjoying the special kind of reality provided by what is inside the heterocosmic container.

However, this "book-as-container" theory does not escape the problems produced by the empiricism versus a-priorism debate. Catherine Belsey, for instance, begins *Critical Practice* with an example from David Lodge's novel, *Changing Places*, where a student, Wily Smith, discusses his desire to write a novel about "'a black kid growing up in the ghetto'" with Phillip Swallow, a visiting English professor. Phillip's unstated anxiety about the colour of Wily's skin implies that Wily could not have had the appropriate experience to write such a novel because he is white. In other words, our "common-sense" assumptions about literary texts, Belsey says, are that they are worth reading because they tell us "truths" "about the period which produced them, about the world in general or about human nature" which means that the "professor and student share an assumption that novels are about life, that they are written from personal experience, and that this is the source of their authenticity" (1-2). Although these truths are embedded rather than overt propositions, the assumption which sees them as being authenticated by personal experience renders fiction an ideal vehicle for the propagation of empiricist truth claims.

Looked at in terms of narrative, propositional truth claims presuppose an orthodox approach to reading, one which admits the possibility of a-priorism but which privileges empiricism. Denis Donoghue argues that this sort of orthodox reading practice is based on the following assumptions: first, "that in reading a reader will think of the words on the page as a transcription of a voice speaking, not necessarily that of the author, but that of a hypothetical person speaking in imagined circumstances sufficiently indicated by what he or she says"; second, "that in reading, the reader is interpreting what is

said, trying to understand the content, the speaker's sense of it and the cogency of that sense — the meaning is what the speaker means to say"; and, third, "that in reading, the reader's motivation for reading refers to imagined experiences he or she has not had so as to exercise sympathy and judgement on them and thus to take part in a richer communication" ("Deconstructing Deconstruction" 37). Clearly, this version of a reading orthodoxy sees the act of reading as an act of communication whereby one person, the writer or his or her "disembodied" personae, communicates ideas about the world which are based on experience, actual or imagined, to another. The writer shares his or her experience based on the assumption that others will want to read it and enjoy the richer communication, the "higher" life that such a sharing might encourage. The reader's role here is to assume that the "voice" of the text has something to say, and that uncovering the intentions, desires and beliefs of this voice is worthwhile for what it might reveal about the human condition, knowledge of one's self and others, and for the opportunity this provides for participation and collaboration with some sort of common humanity.

As with ontic dumping, the content of the story is rendered outside of itself by the act of interpretation which is reading, a process which simultaneously draws the reader inside of him- or her-self, if only, if we agree with Ruthven, for the duration of the reading act which, given that very few readers, one imagines, are able to finish a book at a single sitting, may extend for considerable periods of their lives. Shoshana Felman calls this kind of meshing of outside and inside a "lived experience, an 'impression,' a reading effect" ("Turning the Screw of Interpretation" 124), a meshing which is doubly paradoxical for, on the one hand, it is an effect of reading, of being exposed to a heterocosmic container of a special kind of reality, which, though separate from the

schematic notions of self as container, is part of the lived experience of this self *through reading*; and, on the other, it is a mark taken from something else, a representation which is already familiar, an impression which is, at the same time, both outside and separate from the self yet inside and already known by it. The reading orthodoxy blurs the distinction between "inside" and "outside" in much the same way as ideology. Paradoxically, we expect propositions about the world to be "true" even if the text only portrays the sorts of things which might have happened rather than those which have.

The paradox of fiction is that, on the one hand, fiction is an utterance which is fictional, which is to say that we give no commitment to take its truth claims seriously; but on the other, the responses we do make frequently bear the marks of the truth commitments of the "objectivist" paradigm. These responses take the form of propositions, as in exegesis, which can be subjected to some sort of verificationist criteria (I shall return to this point below), or the form of propositional attitudes — mental acts of believing, intending, hoping, wishing, desiring, and so on.

Speech act theorists take the view that although writers of fiction only "pretend" to make propositional truth claims, thereby suspending the normal illocutionary commitment of speaking or writing, the subjects of the story are themselves held responsible for their propositional attitudes and the propositions upon which these are based. Put another way, they are held responsible for some sort of congruence between their intentional states and their actions, both of which are subject to the laws of probabilistic rather than fantastic "truth." For example, M. H. Abrams argues that although the narrator makes a "'pretended' set of assertions" which are seen as "intended" by the author, within the narrative frame itself, "the utterances of the

fictional characters are held to be responsible to ordinary illocutionary commitments" (*A Glossary of Literary Terms* 241). Illocutionary commitment constitutes an implied promise that speech acts will be performed effectively having regard to the linguistic, social and institutional conventions and rules shared by competent speakers and interpreters of a language (Abrams 10).

This illocutionary commitment, then, constitutes a "promise" to be truthful (or at least to play by the rules) and a claim that the world can be known via the empiricist propositions fiction makes about it. Such a commitment forms part of the expectations of the reader and although fictional narratives may not pass a rigorous reality-testing procedure (if it were possible to devise one), they are usually seen as providing an explanation which is regarded as being helpful and, therefore, as not intending to deceive. Clearly there are genres of fiction which play with and challenge these conventions. However, the normative linguistic, social and institutional codes and conventions upon which these propositional "truth" claims depend are embodied in the cognitive models we use to make sense of experience. When applied to narrative, then, the illocutionary commitments of "normal" speech acts, and the propositions upon which they are based, produce a narrative which is seen as a force for (empirical) truth. What, then, gives these propositions this force for truth?

Edward Corbett argues that the supreme form of propositional truth is the syllogism, as in "All men are mortal; Socrates is a man; Therefore Socrates is mortal"; or All A are B, C is A, therefore C is B (*Classical Rhetoric* 40). It is upon the syllogism and its formal and informal off-shoots that reason, logic and mathematics are based. From the syllogism we also derive our notion of categories which, according to Corbett, involves a process of establishing an essential definition, "one

that designates that which makes a thing what it is and distinguishes that thing from all others" (40). The force for truth of empirical propositions comes from their claim that they establish this essential definition. For instance, in statements like "a person is a rational animal," the word "rational" excludes paradigmatically all the other features of a person ("a person is a biped mammal") which may help to define him or her but which he or she may share with other species. Nevertheless, propositions about these features are necessary to produce an empirical topology and teleology; for example, what makes a table a table despite its changing shape and size (ie, its topology) and its use or purpose (ie, its teleology)? The empiricist answer is to provide a series of propositions which add up to an essential definition: a table (thing) is a piece of furniture (class or genus) made by a carpenter (efficient cause) from wood (material cause) with a broad flat top resting horizontally on four legs (formal cause) on which one puts things, often dishes for a meal (final cause, the end or purpose of the thing — Corbett 46). Propositional truth, therefore, aims to name the object or experience, classify it, and place it in a (causal) relation with other entities. As George Lakoff argues, however, this sort of objectivist metaphysics is based on the notion that the mind simply categorises what it finds because entities allegedly exist independently of any human understanding (*Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things* 159).

Some a-priorists would argue, however, that there are no independently existing conditions upon which empiricists can base their claims because these claims are always made in language, and language is intrinsically metaphoric. This means that, on the one hand, propositions can never be the things they describe, even if these things are abstract ideas, but on the other, the things they describe may not exist outside of these descriptions. They will always have a "not here"

and "not that" quality. In other words, propositions are, like language, always "figurative" in that they are forced to resort to similitude (as in metaphor and simile), contiguity (as in metonymy), part/whole (as in synecdoche), and/or opposition (as in irony). In this way, the formation of propositions is a form of catachresis for, in its dependence on tropes, it always involves terms which are not the things being described, and which, therefore, do not "properly" denote the things to which they are applied.

Moreover, as William Ray argues, although the "paradigm of propositionality" has the advantage of enclosing meaning within a "single expression" where a proposition is meant to be a permanent structure in that its truth is not supposed to vary from individual to individual, the propositions themselves are always subject to invalidation "as new data or evidence call for better explanations of their designata." Consequently, propositional knowledge is a process rather than an event because it is always "knowledge to a point in time": that is, "like reading, it advances" (*Literary Meaning* 157-158). However much propositional knowledge presents itself as atemporal, the goal of its quest remains as establishing some sort of "congruence with an 'original' unchanging state of affairs: the object or phenomenon that provoked our need to explain in the first place." Thus propositional knowledge, like the form of *etho*poesis which sees character as an essence, produces an end which is also its origin. As Ray says: "Propositionality, with its focus on ultimate truth and its vulnerability to supersession and the reversals this implies, is an incarnation of the dialectics of meaning" (159). The reading orthodoxy, then, might be seen as propositional truth in the subjunctive mood.

III

Empiricists also argue that "truth" is linear and cumulative whereas a-priorists believe that knowledge is non-linear and paradigmatic. The empiricist view of truth supports humanism's belief that both epistemological and social-historical progress is linear, a belief which is based, suggests David Hoy, on the Kantian belief that both knowledge and history are cumulative and progressive because, despite "man's" propensity to evil, "history will see man progressing inevitably toward a 'perfect constitution,' a maximally free civil society," a sort of progressive Hegelian dialectic ("Jacques Derrida" 49). This "history-as-progress" view is based on the notion that if the boundaries of knowledge are not precise, then they ought to be. Such precision is the ultimate aim of both philosophy and art, as we saw with Bersani's notion of the "culture of redemption," with art posing as pseudo-philosophy. John Searle argues, however, that having imprecise boundaries is not really a valid objection to conceptional analysis. This means that, as in fuzzy logic, some theoretical concepts "admit the application more-or-less," that, in philosophy, "most concepts and distinctions are rough at the edges and do not have sharp boundaries" (John R. Searle "Literary Theory and Its Discontents" 18). Such a view holds that even conceptual analysis is not a means to propositional certainty but at most a series of matricised moments of negotiation, moments which legitimate certain world views.

Robert Holub supports Searle's challenges to the linear notion of history-as-progress when he argues that the study of literature is not a process which involves an accumulation of knowledge leading to a correct understanding of what literature is but a process which is characterised "by qualitative jumps, discontinuities, and original points of departure" (*Reception Theory* 1). In other words, as Searle suggests,

the boundaries of knowledge are always imprecise and fuzzy moments of negotiation.

Holub, who borrows the term from Thomas Kuhn's theory of science, calls these moments paradigms: "Each paradigm defines not only the accepted methodological procedures with which its critics approach literature — the 'normal' literary scholarship within the academic community — but also the accepted literary canon." This means that a given paradigm "creates both the techniques for interpretation and the objects to be interpreted" (1-3). A paradigm is produced and used until it, in turn, is replaced when it proves unable to cope with the questions asked of it.

For Andrzej Zgorzelski, genre itself is a sort of paradigm which means that each text is a realisation of a genre system even though no two texts will realise a genre in the same way: "In other words, each text builds an *individual paradigm* which was previously unknown to its readers. Hence, reading literature is not basically *a recognition* of the paradigm, but its *reconstruction* directly from the syntagmatic relationships of a given utterance" ("On Differentiating Fantastic Fiction" 300). This means that not only is it necessary that readers have a good grip on both the accepted methodological procedures necessary for reading as well as clues and cues on how to interpret the content but also that the paradigm is continually remade in the act of reading.

According to this view, a paradigm is an event-process (rather than a progressive accumulation). It begins, more-or-less, with a series of hypotheses about what constitutes the canon and how it ought to be read. Some of these hypotheses come from the previous paradigm, if one exists, and others will be new. A proportion of these hypotheses are narrativised as theories in that they seem to provide an explanation of

the phenomena with which they deal. Some of these theories may be "naturalised" as self-evident truths (including the possibility, as with Leavisitism, that theory is unnecessary and should be avoided at all costs). Those theories which can be objectified in some way (through naturalising or empirical testing) are accorded the status of knowledge. Those remaining are identified as having an incomplete burden of proof (theory, speculation), as having been accepted without complete proof (beliefs), as something of a guide in certain situations (principles, morals, ethics), or as idiosyncratic hypotheses which reveal more about the speakers than they do about their object (opinions, prejudices).

As with the *Theoria*, according status to an area of knowledge is an intrinsically social act the conventions of which influence the type and scope of hypotheses and theories it is possible to have. The mechanism through which it is possible both to maintain the status quo and to generate new states in the system is a feedback loop whereby processes in the system are modified and controlled by reference to outcomes produced by the system — the system is not linear but non-linear. When a paradigm shift occurs, theories which were regarded as knowledge are given a different status, either as generative of new theories or as redundant and passe: what was knowledge *then* may be regarded *now* as (failed) speculation. The criteria we have chosen for our paradigm will affect the form of the propositions we put in support of it and the outcomes produced by it, and this shows that both propositional and paradigmatic truth claims cross the boundaries of empiricism and a-priorism as well as the limits imposed by paradigm shifts.

This "cross-dressing" might encourage us to believe, along with Richard Rorty, that criteria are "temporary resting places constructed for specific utilitarian purposes" which means that a criterion is a

criterion "because some particular social practice needs to block the road of inquiry, halt the regress of interpretations, in order to get something done" (*Consequences of Pragmatism* 18). On this view, propositions and paradigms are always provisional and the criteria we might set to produce or judge their truth claims are epistemic sleights-of-hand.

Looked at in this way, narrative, like propositional truth, may be regarded as an effect of being "spun" out of what Hillis Miller calls a "cunning equivocation" where the figure or truth, which is a function of completeness and continuity, is made by a linear process where the equivocation, which is itself a sort of non-linear figure, arises because the temporal delay of the linear constitutes and yet is absent from the spatial figure it constructs ("The Figure in the Carpet" 107). Consequently, the figure or truth, Miller says, "may be described as spun out of its own impossibility":

> The narrative line, word following word, episode following episode, in a linear sequence, makes a configuration, but the latent possibilities of relation in the elements of the presupposed subject demand an indefinite number of repetitive variations on any embroidered figure which happens to come first. (110)

Miller supports this argument by suggesting that Henry James' figure of the "figure in the carpet" is itself based on such a cunning equivocation.

For James, the interest of the story comprises "the related state, to each other, of certain figures and things," and while the artist ought not neglect those relations "that directly minister to the interest," because "universally, relations stop nowhere," the "artist" also needs to draw a circle "within which they shall happily appear to do so" (*The House of Fiction* 1040). The artist's "charmed circle" is, therefore, a doubling figure: the infinite appears as the knowable, the lineal as the spatial, the possible as the propositional. The equivocation comes in

the sleight-of-hand whereby the linearity of the narrative represents its figures and things as present before the continuity of the narrative allows them to exist; figures and things exist as their relations with other figures and things, relations which cannot be fully articulated until the narrative is complete.

The linear form of narrative, which is at the mercy of the artist's "geometry," is, according to this view, the perfect device through which perception can be delayed, a kind of lingering both in space and in continuity which forces an awareness of the "related state, to each other, of certain figures and things." Or as Victor Shklovski argues: "The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make the objects 'unfamiliar,' to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception" ("Art as Technique" 12). The "cunning equivocation" of narrative, then, leads us, through a number of perceptual delays, to a point where we have been all along. What this means is that both propositional and paradigmatic truth claims can never reach beyond Searle's "more-or-less" because they are bound within a temporal/spatial equivocation, one which locates "truth" not in experience but in what we say about experience — in our a-priori constructions.

Moreover, embedded within the linear are devices which encourage a super-dimensional view: the narrative line operates in two dimensions whereas the figures in the carpet appear to flicker in three. The most obvious of these devices is the hierarchy of voices which are instrumental in configuring both the charmed circle and the related state of certain figures and things. The narrator's problem is one of how to present the narrative using his or her own particular geometry whilst at the same time giving the appearance of allowing the evidence to

speak for itself. In other words, as with the Theoria, certain voices are legitimated whilst others are constituted as superior/inferior, as telling the truth or not, as necessary, contingent or accidental, and so on.

David Bleich supports this view when he argues that notions of propositional and paradigmatic truth are an illusion because they are based on the assumption that if all observers have some perceptual response to a symbolic object, the object is real and meaning must reside in it. This is an illusion, however, because the collective similarity of response can only be determined by each individual's announcement of his or her response and subsequent communally motivated negotiated comparison ("Epistemological Assumptions in the Study of Response" 135). Meaning, therefore, depends entirely upon the process of symbolisation that takes place in the mind of the reader: there is an initial symbolisation which equates with a response, but there is also a re-symbolisation which equates with interpretation. Bleich distinguishes between an individual's response to literature, which he argues is purely subjective, and the process by which the response becomes a form of knowledge, which is determined by the community of interpreters to which the reader belongs. Consequently, knowledge is a product of negotiation among members of an interpretive community as the product of a collective decision about what it is desirable to know (135-140). Propositional and paradigmatic truth, then, are the formulation of interpretations adapted to current needs. Knowledge relies upon a shared mental structure, a set of beliefs about reality which, for all practical purposes, is invented rather than discovered. This might encourage the view that the figures produced by the cunning equivocation which is narrative are worse than useless because they are nothing more than beliefs. However, as Walter Michaels argues: "Our beliefs are not obstacles between us and

meaning, they are what makes meaning possible in the first place" ("Saving the Text" qtd in Rorty 4). This means, says Rorty, "that our beliefs, our theories, our languages, our concepts — everything which Kant located on the side of 'spontaneity' — are not to be seen as defences against the hardness of data, much less veils between us and objects, but as ways of putting the causal forces of the universe to work for us" (4).

In other words, "truth" is not a state of affairs in the "real" world, whatever that might mean, but the product of current linguistic responses. It has no permanence, but is constantly recreated in the face of new motivations by new uses of language. There is no such thing as a functionally autonomous object as objects are circumscribed and delimited by a subject's motives, curiosities and language. Validation marks a particular linguistic response as truth does not depend upon referential assessment. Instead, motivated negotiation between subjects determines what is true.

David Hoy supports this view when he argues that contemporary challenges to the notion of epistemological and historical progress follow the Nietzschean parable which sees God as dead and man as having placed himself in God's place. Put more simply, paradigms are built on parables and if we change the parable, we may not only change the paradigm but also the idea that a paradigm is a useful analytic tool ("Jacques Derrida" 48). For Hoy, the Nietzschean parable challenges faith both in the progressive character of history, and in its hero, rationality, even to the point of suggesting that there is no such thing as history or at least that history is yet another fiction (49). This means that the idea that philosophy and its cognate disciplines could generate "absolute and uncontestable explanations of mind, reason, experience or truth" is nothing more than a humanist idealism based on the

Kantian notion that man is at the centre of things. Hoy believes that the contemporary emphasis on "linguistic structures and social practices" challenges this idealism because humans are no longer seen as the centre and telos of all being, because humans are social and historical beings whose beliefs and practices are a function of social and historical conditions, and because the notion of a transcendental ego is nothing more than a weary, circular game of affirmation and denial (49-50). Hoy concludes that the idea of accumulation of knowledge is itself based on the notion of Whiggishness through which humanism "assumes that our superiority over the past is proof of the truth of our theories and the falsity of those of our predecessors," that "we know better than our predecessors did, even to the point of understanding them better than they understood themselves" (50).

Humanism's predilection for elitism, then, produces a possessive individualistic model of accumulation and progress which owes more to the dictates of capital than it does to the epistemological and historical problems it claims to be addressing. Paradoxically, the paradigm model itself is part of this model for although it recognises discontinuity, it is predicated on the notion that paradigm shifts function through absorption and overlap thereby implicitly asserting a progress even though it may be non-linear. Holub supports this view when he acknowledges that although the paradigm model is useful, it is somewhat simplistic because literary communities "are often embroiled in 'paradigm' controversies of a more complex nature" (4).

Paradigm controversies are the means through which received wisdom tries out hypotheses about what to do with deviations from received wisdom. Hypotheses which work are accorded some form of status (knowledge, theory, belief). Those that don't remain as speculation until it can be shown that they are wrong, or until they are

absorbed by other hypotheses, or are simply discarded. At best, both propositional and paradigmatic truth claims, then, are claims *in situ*: they only hold for a given situation within an overarching assumption that there is a correspondence between the real world and the world of fiction. That this correspondence might itself be regarded as a convenient fiction, as it is in metafiction, might encourage us to agree with Rorty's comment — that "the notion of reality as having a 'nature' to which it is our duty to correspond is simply one more variant of the notion that the gods can be placated by chanting the right words" ("Texts and Lumps" 3).

The paradigm model, then, and by implication the propositional truth claims upon which it is based, works to interpellate its participants as subjects by positioning them as a kind of brick-layer: this is the wall and here are the materials and this is the method to be used in constructing the wall and we all know the consequences of non-conformity — poor mortar or misaligned bricks are a disaster waiting to happen. Or perhaps we might even say, along with Pink Floyd, that "all in all, you're just another brick in the wall." What the paradigm model does do, however, is to recognise that the how and the what of reading are open to negotiation, and to acknowledge that subjects are interpellated both through the "literary" competence they bring to the act of reading and through what they find in what they read. In other words, meaning is negotiated in narrative according to the paradigm or genre which is activated by the chosen practice of reading. Nietzschean parables aside, then, the notion of the paradigm raises the question of whether narrative can be held as a force for truth at any level, and suggests that propositional and paradigmatic truth claims are a form of exegesis.

IV

Empiricists believe that exegesis is a means of "revealing" the truth of experience whereas a-priorists believe that exegesis is a self-fulfilling sleight-of-hand, one which masks its real purpose — to legitimate certain forms of knowledge at the expense of others. These sleights-of-hand take a variety of forms.

Harold Bloom, for instance, sees the urge to find truth via exegesis as a function of the authority we like to invest in certain figures. In reading, he says, a number of metaphoric transferences take place which "echo or repeat earlier transferences," where "what is transferred is our love for authority, our desire to be augmented by the authority we have invested in the Yahwist, Shakespeare, or Freud" (*Ruin the Sacred Truths* 5-7). An example of this transference occurs when the "uncanny J" writer, "who may have written three thousand years ago," literalises a trope by recounting that Yahweh breathed life into Adam, literally by breathing life into the "earth's dust" or "adamah" (red clay), an irony which results from "unresolved clashes of totally incommensurate realities" (10). For Bloom, danger lies in these "literalising ironies":

> Given some wet clay, he fashions an image, but the model alone would have been a fake, an idol, and not a fiction, except for the spirit blown into our nostrils. Adam is a fake until Yahweh's own breath makes Adam a living being. How many ironies are we to read into this vitalising fiction? (11)

This leads Bloom to conclude that meaning gets started by an overflow or an excess which takes place between "truth and meaning" (12). Our love of authority figures produces not Adam, the living embodiment of a supernatural truth, but "adamah" literalised as an irony which represses desire through its manifestation as a story. Looked at in this way, exegesis is always a sort of fake icon, one which literalises our own interpretative excesses.

Consequently, the impulse to narrate is not so much an ironising of our patricidal tendencies, although this cannot be ruled out, as a resolution of the problem of how to translate knowing into telling. What this translation produces is exegesis with its strained preference for a God's eye view of the world through explanation and description with all the connotations of power and influence that this carries. And what exegesis within and about a text produces is a hierarchy of discourses where certain voices are privileged over others, and the reader is interpellated by being encouraged to identify with the most powerful voice.

Colin MacCabe, for example, situates the classic realist text, "the dominant form of nineteenth century fiction," as a form of exegesis when he describes it "as one in which there is a hierarchy amongst the discourses which compose the text," a hierarchy which is "defined in terms of an empirical notion of truth" ("Realism and Cinema" 8). The easiest way to understand this concept, he suggests, is through reflection on the use of inverted commas. He argues that what is contained within inverted commas appears to be spoken whilst what surrounds it, the larger narrative, appears to be unspoken (or unwritten): "In the classical realist novel the narrative prose functions as a metalanguage that can state all the truths in the object language — those words held in inverted commas — and can also explain the relation of this object language to the real" and it does this whilst denying its own status as writing:

> What I have called an unwritten prose (or a metalanguage) is exactly that language which, while placing other languages between inverted commas and regarding them as certain material expressions which express certain meanings, regards those same meanings as finding transparent expression within the metalanguage itself. Transparent in the sense that the metalanguage is not regarded as material: it is dematerialised to achieve perfect representation — to let the identity of things shine through the window of words. (8)

What this constitutes is a "separation between what was said and the act of saying" (9), between the teller and the tale. Or, to refocus this comment in terms of propositional and paradigmatic truth claims, exegesis produces its own hierarchy of voices — of metalanguage and object language — one which, even in the context of an unreliable narrator, sets up the object language as yet another fake idol. The metalanguage appears to bow down before this idol whereas, like the priest or the "uncanny-J" writer, in reserving the power of exegesis to itself, it in effect usurps a *Theoria*-like power to itself in an attempt to legitimate its truth claims. At one level, these attempts at self-legitimation reflect the sort of meta-embedding endemic to narrative, and at another, they are the result of the relation between primary and secondary texts.

Penny Boumelha, however, thinks that the analysis brought to bear on so called classic realism by MacCabe does not "explain how such texts can continue ahistorically to enforce and guarantee" the kind of reading where "the reader is continually produced and addressed as a unified human subject through such means as the convergence at a single and uniform ideological position of a set of hierarchised discourses of which one is always a controlling 'truth voice'" ("George Eliot and the End of Realism" 19-20). She argues, for instance, that although the works of George Eliot are "realist," they "transgress" the limits of the classic realist text because they are interspersed with "discussions of the principles on which [they are] constructed and organised" and this "can only serve to undermine any pretension the work may have to that 'illusionism' held to be typical of realism" (20).

David Lodge also thinks that MacCabe misrepresents the art of George Eliot because the classic-realist novel mixes the two discourses of mimesis ("imitating another's speech") and diegesis ("narrating in

one's own voice") in a more problematic way than MacCabe's distinction between object language and metalanguage allows ("*Middlemarch* and the Idea of the Classic Realist Text" 222). Aside from reporting speech and "delivering judgements, opinions, and evaluations about the story and about life in general" (224), Eliot also uses "free indirect speech," a fusion of mimesis and diegesis, which enables the narrator, without absenting herself from the text, to present the thoughts and feelings of the characters (225).

Lodge believes that free indirect speech can "allow the sensibility of a character to dominate a discourse" by moving "very freely and fluently between the poles of mimesis and diegesis within a single paragraph, or even a single sentence." Hence, what characterises the realist novel is not so much the domination of the narrative by the narrator "but the extensive use of free indirect speech, which obscures and complicates the distinction between the two types of discourse" (226). What this does is to dissolve the boundaries between mimesis and diegesis, between MacCabe's object language and metalanguage, to produce a narrative which is emphatically written, something which is particularly noticeable in Eliot's "more ostentatiously diegetic passages, when she suspends the story to deliver herself of opinions, generalisations, judgements," because these passages are difficult and need to be read several times "before we can confidently construe their meaning," a process peculiar to reading which "cannot be applied to the spoken word" (230). Lodge concludes that far from placing readers in a position of dominance, Eliot's texts not only force them to think for themselves but they also implicate readers in "the moral judgements being formulated" (232).

What Lodge's argument comes down to is that he believes the inherent complications of Eliot's diegesis make it impossible for

MacCabe's schema — that narrative prose positions various voices by either literally or figuratively enclosing them in quotation marks so as to explain them — to work. On my reading of Lodge's arguments, however, he has added support to MacCabe's argument because, whether free indirect speech or mimesis, the diegesis holds itself out as exegesis — as capable of explaining or describing those voices it embeds within itself. A hierarchy remains however much its voices may be matricised as Mieke Bal's theory of narrative embedding shows.

Bal sees narrative as a hierarchy of discourses characterised by a process of meta-embedding which may be represented using set-theory notation ("Notes on Narrative Embedding" 41). Each discourse is really a metadiscourse — "a discourse in which a discourse is embedded." In this sense, metadiscourse can be used as a term which designates "a text's commentary on itself" (42-43). Bal's set theory notation takes MacCabe's notion of metalanguage a little further by arguing that narrative embedding occurs when some aspect of narrative becomes the subject of another level of narrative. The text, in other words,

> presents a narrative subject called the *narrator* who proffers sentences, the direct content of which is a vision. This vision or presentation is the act of another subject who is *contained* relative to the first subject (the narrator), and this second subject is the focaliser. The identity of the focaliser can coincide with that of the narrator, but does not necessarily do so. As subject of its vision, this focaliser presents a history or diegesis. This history is the act of another subject, usually plural, which is the agent of the events which compose the history and whom we call the *actor*. . . . What is important here is that the narrative text is considered as a triple message, in which each level is defined by a *subject*, its *activity* and the *result* of this activity, and in which each activity has an object, its content, which is the subject of the next level. In other words, the narrator speaks the text whose content is the narrative; the focaliser presents the narrative, whose content is the history; the history is acted out by the actors. (44)

Using set theory notation, this schema might be represented as follows:

[the text (the narrator { the focaliser <history « action /characters\»>})].

Each level is embedded within another level, and each level undertakes

to speak, more-or-less, on behalf of this embedded level, a process of continuous exegesis.

Such embedding cannot be done without establishing a relation which is also a power relation. Bal limits this notion of embedding to matters contained within the text when clearly this meta-embedding theory is itself a form of metadiscourse in which the text itself is embedded. This suggests that it is possible to enclose, literally or figuratively, any object or subject within quotation marks thereby saying something about it. If the subject-object relation is the basis of embedding, then embedding must be constitutive of discourse which means that its tentacles will reach beyond the narrative text and into the subject-object relation between primary and secondary texts. Exegesis, then, in its attempts to explain and describe, is an instance of meta-embedding which is itself an attempt to legitimate, via a hierarchy of discourses, certain forms of knowledge.

Wlad Godzich supports this view when he argues that interpretative methods are procedures designed to produce at will "a certain result through the adoption of specific steps, treating the text as a given that can be made to yield its inner configuration" ("Caution! Reader at Work" xxi). Godzich thinks that this kind of orthodoxy has as its basis a notion of expression based on concepts of the apparent and the hidden where readers are urged to continue reading a text even though they may be rebuffed by its initial "opacity and denseness" (ix). The materiality of the text, in other words, is both a barrier and the means of access to "the central core of meaning" (ix). What this orthodoxy looks towards is a second notion of expression which proposes a perfect congruence between expression and that which is expressed, a model "whose matrix is lightning" (ix). In other words, clarity, like lightning, cannot be said to be hidden before its manifestation which means,

Godzich suggests, that expression, "in the instant of its illumination, suspends the difference between manifest and manifesting producing in its instantaneity a moment of perfect presence: punctual brevity displaces its significance away from itself onto the surrounding darkness whose internal composition it reveals." Consequently, it is not the flash of lightning that needs to be seen but what this flash reveals: "The eye remains trained on the darkness knowing it to hold a secret that the flash will disclose. The flash is not the secret but the occasion of the moment when all is in the light; the reward for peering into the dark" (x).

Looked at in this way, the "apparent" is revealed by a thorough examination of the "hidden," a process which sets up a "complementary opposition" between primary and secondary texts. This model of expression sees the primary text as the repository of "truth" and yet positions it as somehow "burdened by its mode of representation." Nevertheless, the model is constructed in the belief "that truth can be attained and that indeed it can be given a better representation of which the secondary text would be the very instantiation." The model produces, then, an opposition "between a truth or a meaning to be disclosed and the means of that disclosure" (xx-xxiii).

In proposing primary texts as the location of truth, secondary texts reduce both themselves and primary texts to what Godzich calls a sort of "nullity" because the very existence of secondary texts implies that the primary text is "not itself a truth or that truth," whatever that truth might be. This means that secondary texts work on the assumption that although "truth" may not be at home in the language of representation used by primary texts, it is at home in the exegetic modalities of secondary discourse — that is, reason, description and explanation, and the propositional and paradigmatic truth claims upon

which these are based. However, despite the best attempts of exegesis to legitimate itself by foregrounding the alleged transparency of its own language — that is, in claiming, as MacCabe argues, to free up the meaning of the object language — these modalities are not exempt from the material problems of language which beset primary texts. If truth is located in the primary text but revealed in the secondary text, if secondary texts claim to be the apparent of the primary texts' hidden, then, as Godzich says, "the apparent reveals itself as the immediate trappings of truth but does not free up that truth." Consequently, the apparent "keeps on stating its inadequacy to hold [the truth] while holding it — a process of continuous cancellation" (xxiv). Under Godzich's view, then, it could be argued that secondary texts place primary texts within inverted commas in the same way that narrative does with spoken voice, either direct or indirect, within texts. Secondary texts are then able to regard primary texts as an object language which requires further explanation in what MacCabe calls unspoken prose.

What this means for Godzich is that although the primary text holds the status of "perfect presence," the secondary text proposes to substitute itself as the vehicle for transporting the truth: "Blindly it sees itself as a better representation of the truth, whereas it is in fact engaged in an allegorical relation of mapping one sign with another, of sublating one sign with another" (xxiii). In short, exegetic truth claims are nothing more than an allegorical mapping and sublation of signs, both of which attempt to restore the power of the *Theoria* to certain voices at the expense of others. Such an analogy applies to this narrative as well. Short of resorting to a self-conscious narrative style, such as Barthes' *The Pleasure of the Text* or *A Lover's Discourse*, and then

without certainty, this writer found it impossible to escape this sort of epistemic blindness in his own narrative.

Perhaps because it is impossible for "truth" claims to escape the allegorical relation and sublation of signs, to evade the materiality of language, that we are forced to produce models of that which we seek to know, models which are always reifications — we can stereotype and caricature our neighbours, but for all that they will remain inscrutable.

Samuel Delany, for instance, regards exegesis as a form of modelling. "The critic," he says,

> sits at a certain distance from the work, views it from a particular side, and builds a more or less schematic model of the work as it strikes him or her (just as I am making this model of what the critic does), emphasising certain elements, suppressing certain others, attaching little historical notes to his model here and there on where she thinks this or that form in the original work might have come from, all according to the particular critical use the model is intended for. ("Shadows" 52-53)

Or to put it another way, as Gerard Genette suggests, "What was a sign for the writer (the work) becomes meaning for the critic (since it is the object of critical discourse), and in another way, what was meaning for the writer (his view of the world) becomes a sign for the critic, as the theme and symbol of a certain literary nature" (*Figures* 6). Delany believes that the work is all surface which means that the critic "removes" nothing, least of all "truth," from the work: "Works of literature, painting and sculpture simply do not *have* informative insides. There is no skeleton to be removed. They are all surface" (53). What this means is that what both the critic and the author do is produce stereotypical models:

> there is *nothing* identical in the model and what it is a model of. Nothing, nothing at all! They share not one atom in common! They need not share one measurement! Only the perceptive context imposes commonality on them, for a variety of learned and physiological reasons. (65)

Consequently, about every fragment of "reality" an infinite number of different statements and/or models can be made, and about these

statements/models, an infinite number of other statements/models can be made, and so on. Moreover, as a statement doesn't look like the thing it models, the context alone allows the model to be called "true" or "false"; these are "qualities ascribable to a given thing when, in a particular context, it is functioning in a particular way, ie, modelling some situation truly (however we choose to interpret that) or modelling it falsely (however we choose, given a particular, modular context, to interpret that)" (68). As with language, the danger lies in mistaking the sign for the thing it represents. When a model is mistaken for the thing it models, when the model is reified, what is produced is not "truth" but caricatures and stereotypes.

Exegetic truth claims, then, are the result of an embedded hierarchy of voices where each voice in the hierarchy, in attempting to explain those voices embedded within itself, constructs non self-identical models about fragments of "reality" or of other models. Readers are encouraged to identify with the loudest voice — the one in which all others are embedded. The orthodox reading practice would regard this voice as belonging to the author whereas more contemporary reading practices might locate it in the critic. This practice places readers in a position of knowing subject because the reader expects to see what the narrator has seen, who has seen what the focaliser has seen, who has seen what the history has seen of what the characters have made of their actions. This position is available at the point of closure where, as Belsey puts it, "the events of the story become fully intelligible to the reader" (*Critical Practice* 70) which is itself an effect of the converging voices in the hierarchy.

Belsey calls this intelligibility "a privileged but literally unwritten discourse, the discourse of the reader" (80) which is an effect of watching a structure of voices, each of which is imbued with a different

degree of knowing relative to the others, struggle to resolve the enigma (quest, journey, conflict, and so on) which is the central concern of that particular text. She argues that classic realism performs "the work of ideology, not only in its representation of a world of consistent subjects who are the origin of meaning, knowledge and action, but also in offering the reader, as a position from which the text is most readily intelligible, the position of subject as the origin of both understanding and of action in accordance with that understanding" (*Critical Practice* 67). However, if knowledge is an effect of a stratification of degrees of knowing which manifests itself as a hierarchy of discourses then classic realism "limits the play of meaning for the reader by installing him or her in a single position from which the scene is intelligible" (76). We are back with the "uncanny-J" writer constructing fake icons to legitimate his own world view.

But this straining for the God's-eye view, this love of power, influence and positions of authority, is a feint, the result of an exegetic sleight-of-hand which legitimates this intelligible position which is no more than epistemic pretension. For Barthes, the feint is a function of lineal/spatial figuration: "Narratively, an enigma leads from a question to an answer, *through a certain number of delays.* Of these delays, the main one is unquestionably the feint, the misleading answer, the lie, what we will call the snare" (*S/Z* 32). For Michel Foucault, this feint means that exegesis's only role is to say at last what was silently articulated beyond in the text:

> By a paradox which it always displaces but never escapes, the commentary must say for the first time what had, nonetheless, already been said, and must tirelessly repeat what had, however, never been said. The infinite rippling of commentaries is worked from the inside by the dream of a repetition in disguise: at its horizon there is perhaps nothing but what was at its point of departure — mere recitation. ("The Order of Discourse" 57-58)

Consequently, commentary "allows us to say something other than the text itself, but on the condition that it is the text itself which is said, and in a sense completed. . . . The new thing here lies not in what is said but in the event of its return" (58).

The "uncanny J" writer's professions of faith are a function of his desire to literalise meaning as a function of experience, and this is why the "uncanny J" writer produces the story of Adam's infusion with life rather than Adam himself. As Dieter Freundlieb puts it, "Meaning is epistemologically prior to experience and truth and therefore a quasi-transcendental condition for the knowledge of real objects and their properties. (Quasi-transcendental because no meanings are necessarily true of anything in the world)" ("Explaining Interpretation" 84). The "uncanny J" writer's professions of faith are, as someone once said of Rousseau's own professions, a function of his desire for an earth fit for himself to live in, a heaven fit for himself to go to, and a god worthy of his love. For if God created heaven, earth and "man" he forgot to create writing, only adding it as an afterthought in the form of the ten commandments after repeated "misreadings" of his intentions, not to mention "organising" for the bible to begin with the meaningless but oft repeated nonsense ("In the beginning was the word, and the word was God"). Such is the fate of all exegesis, as Christopher Norris found out when he played "uncanny J" writer to Derrida's own commandments. Exegesis, like our love of authority figures, is a displacement, a legitimation of our own desires. In other words, meaning is a function of what we do with the material at hand, mediated as this is by desire and anxiety, rather than a revelation of truth. "Truth," then, whether propositional, paradigmatic or exegetic, is a function of how language users process signs cognitively. Or as Freundlieb suggests: "meanings are mind-dependent entities, if they can be said to be entities at all"

(85). As a result, interpretative statements have the logical status of recommendations rather than (empirically) "true" statements. Ruth Putnam agrees when she argues that "any idea upon which we can ride, so to speak; any idea that will carry us prosperously from one part of our experience to any other part, linking things satisfactorily, working securely, simplifying, saving labour; is true for just so much, [is] true *instrumentally*" ("Poets, Scientists, and Critics" 18).

The process of hierarchical embedding, then, extends beyond the immediate text in a gesture which encapsulates the empirical and a-prioral, text and reader, truth and falsity, narrative and narrated, and mimesis and diegesis. Speculation is dressed up as knowledge because, like the *Theoria*, narrative constructs its own guarantee which disguises its theoretical nature through a complex process of embedding. What this means is that the traditional stimuli-response model of perception in it various guises and permutations is nothing more that the application of various knowledge frames which attempt to legitimate the positions and truth claims of the "framers." The stimuli-response model is, therefore, inadequate to the task of explaining the moment of perception because this moment is always figured as a prelude to various empowering gestures. I now want to counterpoint this traditional model by arguing that subjects are interpellated at the moment of perception because this moment is itself an interpretation.

Chapter Four

I like to walk the flickering line
between images and things.
(Dick Hebdige)

I

As we have seen, in the struggle between the empiricists and the a-priorists for control of the perceptual model, the a-priorists appear to hold the upper hand for in arguing, more-or-less, that the mind creates what it perceives, they are implicitly accepting Althusser's position that the subject is interpellated by ideology to see itself as a subject. If there are no independently existing conditions with which empiricists can support their truth claims, if knowledge is non-linear and paradigmatic, and if exegesis is a sleight-of-hand which legitimates certain forms of knowledge, then knowledge itself is a form of positioning, an instance of interpellation. Although subjects are encouraged to see what they know as so many variegated interpretations of immutable and external stimuli, to see perception as an affirmation of their own autonomous selves, what they know constitutes sets of meaning-postulates serving the interests of the dominant classes, and the stimuli-response model provides a ready-made alibi for the hegemony of these classes.

I shall begin the discussion by "constructing" a constructivist view which counterpoints the stimuli-response model, and then I shall attempt to find some support for this constructivist view by taking a detour through the "empirical" world of biologism. I am fully aware of the precarious position in which this resorting to biologism places my argument. However, I re-theorise this biologistic "manner of speaking" by drawing on some recent constructivist theories from the discipline of artificial intelligence to affirm the view that subjects are interpellated at the moment of perception. Having established this view, I then move on in chapter five to argue that it is at the level of the everyday

psychologising of the self that ideology finds its most successful subject because this psychologising interpellates the subject with the already constituted and individualistic views of the dominant classes.

If the debate between the empiricists and the a-priorists comes down to not truth but a struggle to legitimate certain claims as "truth," then these claims are determined cognitively within a constructivist paradigm for, as Freundlieb argues, signs do not determine what they mean and their meanings are not observable properties ("Explaining Interpretation" 84). Or put simply, empiricists' claims to truth are dodgy to say the least because, in order to make an observation, as Popper argues, one must have some idea about what one is going to see before one sees it. Popper believes that an observation is a perception, but one which is planned and prepared. This means that perceptions do not just happen, we make them happen: "We do not 'have' an observation (as we may 'have' a sense of experience) but we 'make' an observation. An observation is always preceded by a particular interest, a question or a problem — in short, by something theoretical" (342). He calls this notion "the '*searchlight theory*'" of the mind (346).

Here, conscious theory is not simply returned to the preconscious where it mysteriously and somewhat passively affects subsequent responses. Rather, conscious theory actively shapes our responses through our expectations because, as Popper suggests, although organisms possess "a certain innate set of possible reactions, or a certain disposition to react in this way or that," all of which constitute an "inner state" (343), they also possess expectations which are preparations "for a reaction." That these expectations exist prior to the observations they inform means that observations are not merely responses to stimuli but constructions of them.

A given set of possible expectations might be compared to a set of more-or-less normative descriptions about the world, which means that observations carry within them a strongly normative force. As the paradigmatic theory of knowledge shows, it takes something with the force of a not inconsiderable nuclear explosion and with the intrigue and politics of a minor French Revolution to shift the normative sets of expectations so that new forms and patterns of observations evolve. Nonetheless, for Popper, expectations may be fulfilled, but if they are unfulfilled, the resulting disappointments "force us to *correct* our system of expectations," and this is how we learn. Looked at in this way, an observation is a perception in that it always presupposes "the existence of some system of expectations" (344).

Unlike the bucket theory, which presupposes that "observation always precedes every hypothesis," the searchlight theory posits that "the hypothesis (or expectation, or theory, or whatever we may call it) precedes the observation, even though an observation that refutes a certain hypothesis may stimulate a new (and therefore temporally later) hypothesis" (346). Popper concludes that "Science never starts from scratch; it can never be described as free from assumptions; for at every instant it presupposes a horizon of expectations — yesterday's horizon of expectations, as it were. Today's science is built upon yesterday's science (and so it is the result of yesterday's searchlight)" (346). In this way, hypotheses are the bases upon which perceptions are made. One important question remains to be answered in the empiricist versus a-priorist debate: Why do so many truth claims seem to possess the character of stories? The answer I will propose confirms Popper's searchlight theory.

The first possibility is that the structure of a story itself may be integral to its "truth" claim. Hayden White, for example, thinks that

propositions are only "true" if they possesses the character of narrativity, though possession of this character does not guarantee against falsehood: "the very distinction between real and imaginary events, basic to modern discussions of both history and fiction, presupposes a notion of reality in which 'the true' is identified with 'the real' only insofar as it can be shown to possess the character of narrativity" ("The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality" 10). In other words, we adopt a perspective that "feigns to make the world speak and speak itself *as a story*" (6-7). Or to put it in Popper's terms, we make an observation based on predetermined expectations, in this case, the attributes of the stories themselves.

What this suggests is that the attributes of a story themselves somehow embellish its truth claims. White lists the attributes of a story as a central subject or subjects, a well-marked beginning, middle and end, some form of peripeteia, an identifiable narrative voice if not narrator, a plot, a background social system, some form of closure, and a latent or manifest moral (11-23). Each attribute is a soft prosthetic device in the internalised competence of the reader which inveigles him or her into reading the world causally. Together, they constitute an horizon of expectations within which the observations of particular stories can be made. Looked at in this way, although these attributes facilitate the interaction of character and action, it is via the hypotactic structure of the plot where narrative imbues its events with a false sense of reality and truth. As White put it: "Common opinion has it that the plot of a narrative imposes a meaning on the events that comprise its story level by revealing at the end a structure that was immanent in the events *all along*" (13). Put simply, the observations cannot escape the expectations which construct them.

The case for the ineluctable consanguinity of observation and expectation is made powerfully by Argyros when he argues that narrative is a powerful "map" because it "allows for the constitution of a representational structure whose basic unit is the causal frame: actor — action — object." Narrative becomes, according to this view, "a collection of nested causal frames" organised by "an overall causal frame, the general plot, which is itself composed of a frequently tangled hierarchy of nested plots and subplots" (662). Consequently, causality makes observations dependent on expectations because verisimilitude is intrinsically normative.

David Carr wonders whether the events themselves contain narrative structures or whether, as White argues, these structures are imposed by the plot, by the tale. Carr believes that arguments like White's belong to the views of what he calls the "discontinuity theorists," those who think that "Real events simply do not hang together in a narrative way, and if we treat them as if they did we are being *un*true to life" ("Narrative and the Real World" 117). Discontinuity theorists think that there is sufficient evidence to prove that narrative "is a structure derived from the act of telling the story, not from the events themselves" (118). The story, in effect, *re*-describes the world (119-120). Narrative's relation to the real, then, constitutes what Lois Mink calls "an oxymoron": on the one hand, it claims to represent the complexity of the real, but on the other, it is the product of an imaginative construction which has difficulty in defending its truth claims ("Narrative Form as Cognitive Instrument" 145).

Carr believes, however, that, rather than failing to live up to its epistemic pretensions, the structures of narrative inhere in the events themselves: "Far from being a formal distortion of the events it relates, a narrative account is an extension of one of the primary features"

(117). Narratives and events do not exist independently of the community: "Rather, narration, as the unity of story, story-teller, audience, and protagonist, is what constitutes the community, its activities, and its coherence in the first place" (128). Narrative is the prime constituent of culture, and the "real as well as the intended consequences of the character's actions," as manifested in the story, are the already-read not only of narrative but also of the events themselves for even the most "passive" experience involves recollection and anticipation, the prime constituents of narrative. What this means is that we cannot experience anything "except against the background of what it succeeds and what we will anticipate will succeed it" (121). In other words, the figure/background schema is basic to perception, which means that sensations can only be grasped as a "configuration," as "highly abstract products of analysis." Carr concludes that "the means-end structure of action displays some of the features of the beginning-middle-end structure which the discontinuity view says is absent in real life" (122).

Although narrative may facilitate counterfactual speculation, Carr is suggesting that narratives also reflect the way in which events are structured because if they did not, we would not understand them. The accounts of events, therefore, are moments of perception which are topologically heuristic, a process whose teleology establishes an ineluctable link between hypotheses and sense data such that the perception of sense data without an informing hypothesis is improbable; that is, the perception of these events requires an informing hypothesis of some kind, the shape and texture of which is already prefigured in our understandings of the past and our projections for the future. In short, if we did not understand the brute

facts of existence as stories, we would not be able to make head-nor-tail of them — thus any distinction between them is no longer useful.

This does not mean that the events cannot be re-hypothesised in different ways, only that with different hypotheses and perhaps with the benefit of hindsight provided by the earlier accounts, we replace one story with another. Language and form provide the possibility of this understanding because they provide sets of ready-made hypotheses, set in a context of the past and the future, which we can try out. Or to reword Freundlieb's earlier comment, meaning is epistemologically prior to experience and comes to us in the form of stories, themselves elaborate sets of (already-read) hypotheses.

Such a view presupposes a constructivist view of culture which opposes the expressive view. As Jameson notes, the expressive causality which dominated Hegel's thought is the view that the whole is reducible to an "inner essence" of which the parts are a phenomenal form. In other words, the essence of the whole is present and expressive in each of its elements, which means that one can get a sense of the whole by correctly reading the parts. A constructivist causality, however, finds that the presence of a structure is nothing outside its effects, which in themselves do not exist outside or pre-exist the structure. This means that the whole is its effects, and any attempt to find an essence in the elements of the whole is nothing more than pure idealism. The stimuli-response model, then, upon which the expressive view is based, would support the notion that stories re-describe the world. The constructivist view, however, would support the view that any distinction between the world and its descriptions is meaningless — the world can only be known through its descriptions. Consequently, expressive causality has a lot to answer for, according to Jameson, because of its emphasis on allegory, the idea that history itself is part of some deeper, more

fundamental master narrative of which the empirical details are the allegorical key or figural content of a first sequence. For Jameson, Hegel's notion of a dialectical progression towards the "end" of history is a direct result of his reliance on expressive causality (*The Political Unconscious* 23-31)

Although not all constructivists would agree with Althusser's notion of interpellation, they are generally a-priorist in that they believe that things are, not because they are, but because we say they are. A constructivist view of culture accepts the notion of etho*poesis*, the idea that character (the subject) is always being made. Constructivism posits that if there is such a thing as an essence, it is an effect rather than an origin. Constructivism supports the view that culture forms mind and mind makes value judgements, and that meaning is the result of complex processes of interaction and negotiation. As Jerome Bruner argues: "in most human interaction, 'realities' are the result of prolonged and intricate processes of construction and negotiation deeply embedded in the culture" (*Acts of Meaning* 24).

Constructivists want to unpack the assumptions which underlie the traditions of culture rather than accept them as immutable truths for, as Bruner says, cloaking tradition with the mantle of reality (as the empiricists do) is the means for creating cultural stagnation (27). Constructivism recognises the importance of narrative as the prime means through which we construct and negotiate the cultural meaning from which we gain our perspective on the linguistic and physical realities of our world, whether this world is microcosmic or heterocosmic.

Constructivism also recognises the problems associated with representation and language because for constructivists, unlike empiricists, it is not possible to possess unmediated knowledge —

experience is always mediated by our concepts, by our intuitions of time and space, and by our intellectual categories of plurality, causality and the like. As Rotman says of Kant's a-priorism:

> we *construct* our knowledge, giving to the world its familiar appearance of determinate objects which persist in time and space and are subject to cause and effect, and giving to our thoughts their serial quality. The agency of this construction, the human mind common to each of us with its collection of categories and forms of intuition, was for Kant the fixed immutable essence of rational thought. (28)

It is possible to arrive at this more-or-less constructivist position by taking a detour through the world of biologism, a detour which ironically provides some "empirical" evidence for the notion towards which constructivism inexorably moves — that perception is itself a moment of interpretation, and therefore, of interpellation, and not simply a prelude to either. I do not propose that this detour be accepted as scientific fact because although science appears to have found the answer to a great many questions, it remains more-or-less in ignorance as to the intricacies of the brain. Therefore, I draw on this biologism as a manner of speaking which supports my constructivist position.

II

Norman Holland arrives at a view very similar to Popper's by suggesting that, from the perspective of neurophysiology, a "picture" has evolved of a brain which grows a massive number of neural circuits in early infancy, but which only allows those circuits which are used to survive in the adult brain. The rest more-or-less disappear (*The Brain of Robert Frost* 2-6). Consequently, Holland believes that "*childhood experience is the outside factor that shapes the final architecture of the individual brain.*" By architecture, Holland means the neural patterns themselves: "Brains are a genetic 'given,' but they change because of life experiences, which in turn depend upon how the individual chooses

among the various activities his or her life environment offers and demands" (8). This means that heredity, environment and personal activity combine to produce a set of neural circuits which did not exist at birth but which, in effect, become hard-wired in the adult brain. This view is supported by brain physiologists who are "finding that, in the course of development, any advanced mammal establishes connections among its brain cells that some other members of the same species do not" (40).

What this suggests is that hypotheses, which are regularly confirmed and "returned" to the preconscious, have a good chance of becoming "hard-wired" perceptual-response tracks, embedded as these would be with ideologies which literally shape one's view of the world and yet which feel like the stimuli-response at work; that is, hypotheses which are returned to the preconscious frequently enough literally become hard-wired ways of perceiving the world. Perception, then, is not an unmediated response to a stimuli but the result of an hypothesis.

R. L. Gregory, in his study *The Eye, The Brain*, provides support for this argument through his examination of sight. Gregory suggests that we are so familiar with seeing that we take sight for granted and that it takes a leap of imagination to realise that there are problems to be solved. One of these problems concerns the question of "How information from the eyes [is] coded into neural terms, into the language of the brain, and reconstituted into experience of surrounding objects." He rules out the Gestalt notion of pictures in the brain because "a picture in the brain would require some kind of internal eye to see which would need a further eye" and so on. "What the eyes do," he says, "is to feed the brain with information coded into neural activity — chains of electrical impulses — which, by their code and patterns of brain activity, represent objects." He concludes that "When

we look at something, the pattern of neural activity represents the object and, to the brain, is the object. No internal picture is involved" (9).

Gregory also maintains that words not only represent objects to the brain but are in themselves objects, patterns of neural activity. The problem for Gregory is that the transformation of object into neural pattern through sight is not as unmediated as the above description might appear. Like Holland, he argues that we are inherently "grasping towards organising sensory data into objects" and that this grasping is located in the brain. "The seeing of objects," he says, "involves many sources of information beyond those meeting the eye when we look at an object," and "objects have pasts and futures." He claims that "Perception is not determined simply by stimulus patterns; rather it is a dynamic searching for the best interpretation of the available data." This means that

> perception involves going beyond the immediately given evidence of the senses; this evidence is assessed on many grounds and in general we make the best bet, and see things more-or-less correctly. But the senses do not give a picture of the world directly; rather they provide evidence for checking hypotheses about what lies before us. Indeed, *we may say that perception of an object is an hypothesis, suggested and tested by sensory data.* (9 — emphasis added)

Gregory is not suggesting that what we see is affected by what is likely. Rather, like Popper, he is asserting that we have to know what is likely, to have an hypothesis about what we can see, before we can see, which is to say that we would see very little, perhaps nothing at all, unless we had some form of perceptual hypotheses about the objects of our gaze. In a long and complex argument, which draws on a wide range of abstract and practical (clinical) examples, Gregory claims that sight, a perceptual process which is usually taken for granted as an unmediated given, as unchallengeably material and in existence prior to thought processes which deal with the data it provides, is itself based on

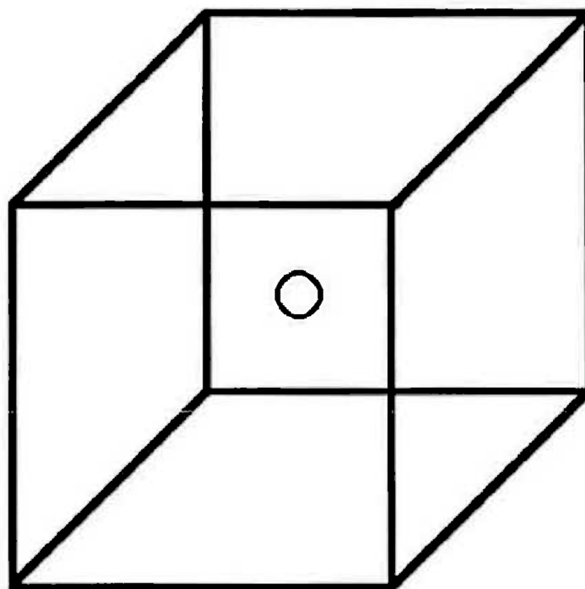
perceptual hypotheses which are suggested and tested by sensory data. Although Gregory provides many examples to support this hypothesis, only a few will be referred to here.

The most potent example Gregory provides of sight as a perceptual process based on hypotheses concerns the development of perspective in painting. He suggests that, according to Leonardo da Vinci, "Perspective is nothing else than seeing of a plane behind a sheet of glass, smooth and quite transparent, on the surface of which all the things approach the point of the eye in pyramids, and these pyramids are intersected on the glass plane" (163). Why, one might ask, did it take so long for someone to come up with this "simple" solution to the problems of pre-perspective distortion in the visual arts where, prior to da Vinci, so much of what was represented appeared out of proportion to other objects in the field? Gregory argues that this difficulty concerns a perceptual process known as constancy scaling, which might be explained as follows. There is a tendency for the perceptual system to compensate for changes in the retinal image which result from changes in the viewing distance. From a strict geometrical optics perspective (as, for example, with the optics of a camera), the image of an object doubles in size whenever its distance from the viewing point is halved. The visual cortex, however, adjusts the retinal image, that image which is projected onto the retina (the eyes' light receptors) by the lens of the eye, so that objects appear not according to the laws of geometrical optics but according to our expectations of their size. For instance, a semi-trailer which is four metres high and twenty metres from the viewing point should appear, by the laws of geometrical perspective, to be the same height as a person who is two metres high standing ten metres from the same viewing point. Inevitably, the semi-trailer appears

much higher. This effect is known as constancy scaling and was recognised as long ago, Gregory says, as 1637 by Descartes.

What the early Egyptian (and other) painters did was to paint what they saw (retinal image plus constancy scaling) rather than create the appropriate conditions, as da Vinci's pane of glass does by returning the scene to a geometric perspective, so that the brains of the spectators can do their own constancy scaling. Gregory maintains that the clues the painter will provide in order to create an appropriate retinal image from a flat, two-dimensional object will usually lie somewhere between a geometric perspective and full constancy scaling depending on the number and type of clues used (lighting, scumbling), the scale and depth of the scene, and the artistic effect desired (152-194).

Gregory also provides an abstract example in the form of the Necker cube which, he argues, plays with our hypothesis-testing processes:



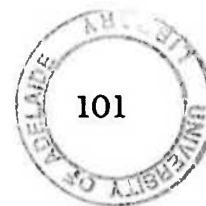
NECKER CUBE

"This figure," he says,

> alternates in depth: the face of the cube marked by the small circle sometimes appearing as the *front*, sometimes as the *back* face. We can think of these ways of seeing the figure as perceptual 'hypotheses.' The visual system entertains alternative hypotheses, and never settles for one solution. This process goes on throughout normal perception, but generally there is a unique solution. (12)

Where the brain expects to see a cube which faces one way or the other, the Necker Cube could face either. The Necker Cube highlights a kind of perceptual flicker which is not normally evident because the perceptual hypothesis is either confirmed or denied. When the cube does settle, even for a moment, it could be called, following Gilson and Borges, a "controlled hallucination."

Gregory also argues that we develop our ability to see after we are born. For example, if a child has a defect of the eye which, say, prohibits light from reaching the retina and/or stimulating that part of the cortex which controls visual perception, and this defect is not corrected very early (the age may vary depending on the type of problem, but in any event, no later than by two years of age), the child will be blind for the rest of its life, even if the physical problem is corrected. This parallels experiments conducted with kittens where, if they are deprived of light for several months after birth, they remain blind even though they have no obvious physical defects which might impair their vision (70-76). Gregory maintains that although not a great deal is known about what very young children see, it is known that their sight is relatively unsophisticated compared to the more mature child or the adult (76). Their confidence and competence literally grows with their brain, and in this, Gregory appears to be supporting Holland's assertion that *"childhood experience is the outside factor that shapes the final architecture of the individual brain."*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The importance of the proper functioning of the visual cortex is supported by Oliver Sacks's story based on his case notes of "The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat," which tells of how Dr. P., who suffered from visual agnosia, lost the ability to visually perceive objects though, as a musician, his musical abilities were not affected and neither was his power of speech. Although there was nothing wrong with his eyes, his visual perception, visual imagination and visual memory were damaged. He could "see" objects and people but he could not make the connections through the visual cortex so that he could recognise them (for example, when he arrived at Sacks' office, he introduced himself to a Grandfather clock). Once he had recognised the object he had no trouble in naming it, but because his visual cortex was damaged, the "hard-wired" neural circuits which constitute our perceptions of things and which the rest of us take for granted were destroyed. Hence his healthy eyes were increasingly useless. The title of the story was taken from an incident during a visit to Dr. Sacks. When the examination was over, Dr. P. "started to look round for his hat. He reached out his hand, and took hold of his wife's head, tried to lift it off, to put it on. He had apparently mistaken his wife for a hat! His wife looked as if she was used to such things" (*The Man Who Mistook His Wife For a Hat* 10-15).

That the visual cortex requires stimulation for its development might have encouraged a view of the primacy of sense data. However, it is important to recognise that Gregory's argument is that hypotheses exist not *instead* of sense data but *because* of it. The relation between them is dynamic, not mutually exclusive. We take sight for granted because our confidence in its sophistication is such that the hypothesis-testing/sense data process appears instantaneous. It is only when we come across examples like the Necker Cube, or when we are deprived of

confidence in our visual perception, a confidence which takes many years to acquire, or when the hallucination is no longer controlled (such as the mental condition of the schizophrenic or some of the mind states experienced under the influence of drugs) that we are forced back onto and become aware of this hypothesis-testing process.

Hypotheses which are confirmed, as Empson predicted, become habitual. They become so familiar that they begin to appear as facts of experience (givens) which are then regarded as unquestioningly real. It may be that we have simply forgotten how or that they were acquired in the first place. Gregory concludes that:

> The large brains of mammals, and particularly humans, allow past experience and anticipation of the future to play a large part in augmenting sensory information, so that we do not perceive the world merely from the sensory information available at any given time, but rather we use this information to test hypotheses of what lies before us. *Perception becomes a matter of suggesting and testing hypotheses.* (221 emphasis added)

Or as Holland says, "we actively *guess* our way through the interpretation of language by *proposing hypotheses*" (emphasis added — 86-87). These arguments strongly support both Carr and Popper's views — that is, that an observation or a story is only possible through the accretion of thousands of expectations. They also support a constructivist view of perception by showing the depth of what is necessary for perception to take place, a view which shows the inadequacy of the stimuli-response model.

Gregory's view, then, does not support an empiricist or essentialist view of perception. Rather, in suggesting that human biology constrains rather than directs human experience, that experience and biology combine to produce perceptions, Gregory is supporting a constructivist view of perception. As Jerome Bruner argues: "The biological substrate, the so-called universals of human nature, is not a cause of action but, at most, a *constraint* upon it or a condition for it" (*Acts of Meaning* 20-

21). In suggesting and testing hypotheses, the mind is able, as the a-priorists predicted, to exceed or redefine the limits set by biology.

Holland argues that, although various words such as frame, schema, definition and script are used to describe the fundamental problem of how we relate to the physical world, they all refer to "just one thing: the hypothesis a human being tests against some linguistic or physical reality 'out there'" (10). If we test hypotheses, we need to have some mechanism for deciding whether the test was successful, namely, the "well-known mechanism of feedback." Holland suggests that the senses have particular standards which are constantly checked against incoming stimuli as, say, with temperature where the skin monitors the temperature and provides hot or cold signals according to conditions. Higher levels of the system may control those which are lower as, for example, with reading, which is a combination of basic skills such as knowing the alphabet, recognising words, syntax and so on, applying hand/eye coordination skills, and attributing meaning to the whole process. Some of these perceptual loops are lower level and therefore common to many actions (hand/eye coordination). Others are peculiar to the reading process itself (attributing meaning to written signs rather than, say, spoken ones). Although the idea of a structure which appears to limit the possibilities of change may seem threatening, Holland suggests that there is a paradox in that "If control there be, it is a control one can never feel as control. The influence of heredity and earliest infancy on us cannot *feel* 'other,' because it is no longer 'other.' It cannot feel like a control because it is part of the outer world that has become the inner world" (40). Ontic dumping turns out to be a dialogic ontic imbibing. Interestingly, W. Daniel Hillis calls this feedback process a "controlled hallucination" ("The Next Leap in Computers" qtd in Holland 12).

Holland uses himself as an example of this hypothesis-testing process and suggests that there are three elements which are essential to this process of feedback: first, there is a "feeding back of the output [hypothesis] through its consequences to something I perceive, a sensory input" and there is a "*comparison* between what I perceive and the standard I set, between what I want to see and what I in fact see"; second, there is behaviour, which not only controls perception, it "serves to create the perception you desire," an idea which "corresponds quite closely to Freud's definition of a wish. . . the desire to re-create, either by means of an action on the world or by dreaming, a perception associated with a previous satisfaction"; and, third, there are emotions which "stem from one of the most ancient parts of the brain: the limbic system, and they affect all our ideas, even the most abstract and intellectual" (77-80). Put another way, hypothesis testing replaces the old ego-psychology which was purely a top-down (the higher and lower functions of the brain) outside-in (the stimuli moving from the body's outer boundaries such as the fingers and toes) approach with a complex outside-in, inside-out, bottom-up, top-down processing. "To understand language," Holland says, drawing on the work of Bryan Kolb and Ian Q. Whishaw,

> we have to bring to bear not only knowledge about language, but about other people, the world of objects, and ourselves. We test hypotheses, and not just hypotheses about words. We reach actively into a book from inside out and from top down, creating and shaping the text even as it acts on us from outside in and from bottom up. (10)

This kind of processing applies "not only to language but to any perception" (10-11).

Holland's arguments, then, support both Popper and Gregory in their view that one must have an hypothesis *before* one can make anything of sense data. Unless we have a set of hypotheses which we can test against the world, a set which has both a cognitive and an emotional

element, perception simply does not occur. Thus, not only do hypotheses precede perception but without them, observation cannot take place. The hypothesis-testing/feedback process focuses on a schema of best-fit, on truth as usefulness where realities are "constructed" using our cognitive and cultural tool-kits.

Holland suggests that this process is based on our ability to use language. Although we are born with some of our language hypotheses "wired in," we learn as we grow to speak according to the linguistic rules of our language. Speaking becomes a sort of modelling process based on what we know about the world. Alexsandr Luria's work with patients who have lost some of their speech faculties supports this view, Holland says, by showing that "The principle of feedback is universal in the operation of the central nervous system" (Luria 40 qtd in Holland 88). It is a looped process of "act, compare, act, cease" or "test, operate, test, exit," a loop which for language operates at thirteen cycles a second. And it is a process which requires, Luria says, the operation and cooperation of both sides of the brain:

> In reading there are two different levels: a level of analysis of sounds and letters [signifier], leading to an ability to read words, and a level of direct grasping of the appropriate meaning of words [signified], which is evidently connected with the integral perception of words and which can be dissociated from the act of reading words letter by letter.
>
> It is very interesting that whereas the first of these processes is connected with the dominant (left) hemisphere, the second can be a property of the non-dominant (right) hemisphere, so that in this case also a complex act such as reading is performed with the participation of both hemispheres, each of which makes its own specific contribution to the process. (qtd in Holland 87)

The "smooth" functioning of the synthesis of signifier (left hemisphere) and signified (right hemisphere), which we all take for granted much in the manner which Gregory argues we do with sight, easily encourages us in the view that narrative provides a transparent access to the kind of world which the empiricists argued was available

through the senses. The rapidity of its functioning feedback mechanisms between the left and right hemispheres of the brain no doubt feels instantaneous, but language is anything but transparent when it is seen in its neuro-physiological context. If reading is an active process of proposing and testing hypotheses, then the text itself by definition appears to be based on a similar process.

III

Wolfgang Iser partly acknowledges the doubling role of hypothesis-testing when he suggests that the literary work has two poles: the artistic and the aesthetic. The artistic refers to the text created by the author and the aesthetic to the realisation accomplished by the reader ("The Reading Process" 50). Although Iser suggests that the literary work cannot be completely identical with either the artistic or the aesthetic, he does acknowledge that the text only takes on life when it is realised in the act of reading. This means that, as the convergence of text and reader cannot be precisely pinpointed, this realisation "must always remain virtual" (51) — a sort of controlled hallucination. For Iser, what is virtual is also theoretical, a way of making sense of the world of the text, of attributing significance to it. The reader "uses the various perspectives offered him by the text in order to relate the patterns and schematised views to one another" (51). As the reader scumbles the text, and the text constricts the reader, the process is seen to be dynamic, a dialectic of dogma (the reader's intellectual and cultural baggage) and sense (the raw but unchanging sense data of the text).

Certain formulations will create expectations which will be fulfilled thereby causing the reader to modify the hypotheses held, but this will happen in unpredictable ways hence the need for the convergence of

text and reader to be labelled as virtual, as good enough for practical consideration but nevertheless a mystery because of the impossibility of predicting individual reader responses, themselves hypotheses, to various hypotheses in the text. The importance of Iser's schema lies in the notion that the reader's social, historical and cultural knowledge, what is familiar, is used as a basis for presenting something allegedly striking and unique, for bringing it into the light. The process is dynamic because it involves the reader in a continual positing and modification of what Roman Ingarden, upon whose work Iser draws, calls an horizon of expectations (as does Popper). These expectations include both the reader's knowledge, embodied as it must be in the language of the text, and those striking and unique hypotheses, which must inevitably rely upon such knowledge.

Iser draws also on the work of Ingarden to suggest that sentences link up in different ways to form more complex units of meaning: intentional sentence correlatives (hypotheses). These sentences are component parts which disclose subtle connections, points at which the reader climbs aboard the text. The interaction of these correlatives will not be a fulfilment of these expectations so much as a continual modification of them (feedback). Each intentional correlative opens up a particular horizon, which is modified if not completely changed by succeeding correlatives. They have an effect on what has been read and on what is to come (analepsis, prolepsis) (52-54). The Gestalt of the virtual dimension, relying on a process of anticipation and retrospection, may be realised in different ways, but most usually by an act of choice. Hence, this explains the apparent "inexhaustibility" of the text (55). The process of reading, therefore, runs first as the process of anticipation and retrospection, second, as the consequent unfolding

of the text as a living event, and third, as the resultant impression of lifelikeness (64).

What readers do is to construct their version of the text before them. Or as Inge Crosman says, drawing on Iser's work: "Reading is no longer a passive going over of what has already been composed, but rather an active process in which the reader participates" (192). Iser's theory shows "how texts anticipate the presence of their audience, and how a text's potential is realised during the reading process." The gaps in the text invite "the reader's projections" and "We encounter these vacancies in *what* is said (at the thematic level) and *how* it is said (at the level of textual strategies)." Consequently, the text offers various perspectives to the reader "not by copying reality but by presenting these aspects of reality in a unique and striking combination that will catch the reader's attention and invite him to scrutinise them" (193).

Dieter Freundlieb supports this view when he argues that, in reading, readers apply cognitive strategies which help them process information and constitute the global meaning necessary for comprehension. These strategies go "beyond grammatical rules and they include, as a major component, the general world knowledge of the reader" ("Explaining Interpretation" 86-87). In other words, the realisation of the text — the act of reading — deals with the relation between the heterocosmic world of the text and the general world knowledge of the reader; understanding narrative, therefore, depends upon the competence of the reader in the application of the various cognitive strategies. Such a view shifts the focus of the orthodox practice of reading so that it includes not only the truth claims and intentional states of the act of communication but also the process by which these occur, which is another way of putting Jameson's comment that "texts come before us as the always-already-read" (*The Political Unconscious* 9). This view

questions how things are always-already-read and not just what this reading might have to say. Indeed, we might say the perceptual hypotheses must include both a how and a what element.

Freundlieb believes that reading involves the application of what he terms "global knowledge frames." These are the frames or schemas about both the world and how to model this world that the reader brings to bear on the text and which enable him or her to construct "mental models" which establish the "causal nexus" necessary for "textual coherence":

> The construction of causal links always involves the reader's world knowledge, relevant parts of which must be brought to bear on the text in a complex process of inference making. . . . Cognitive psychologists working on discourse comprehension assume that virtually all texts mobilise certain parts of our general knowledge which they usually call "frames" or "schemata." Schema theories are theories of the organisation of knowledge in the human memory and the role it plays in information processing. (87-88 emphasis added)

These global knowledge frames, Freundlieb says, "render the fictional series of events more intelligible in terms of their causal or motivational structure" (89), although, as Holland says, "We frame hypotheses from all kinds of extra-linguistic knowledge, like spatial relations, contexts, social practice, probabilities, logic, motives, or causality" (8). This means that knowledge frames, as Freundlieb says, may "often contain, or even consist entirely of, ideological beliefs" (89). Or to put it in terms of Popper's argument, in order to make an observation we need to have sets of knowledge frames or hypotheses which may themselves be ideologies.

In effect, the reader is interpellated at the moment of perception because this moment is already an interpretation, one which becomes an interpellation in that the interpretation is ideological, is the Althusserian moment of irrepressible deferral, of people acting according to their beliefs, their notions of the imaginary relations to

the (un)traceable "real" conditions of existence. Consequently, the act of reading is intrinsically ideological because reading requires the application of knowledge frames (or ideologies), the "already-read" of culture.

David Rumelhart supports this view when he argues that "A reader of a text is presumably constantly evaluating hypotheses about the most plausible interpretation of the text. Readers are said to have understood the text when they are able to find a configuration of hypotheses (schemata) that offers a coherent account of the various aspects of the text" ("Schemata" qtd in Holland 85). What readers "take away" from the text is a function of the knowledge frames they apply to it. And these frames are the effects of ideology and themselves produce ideological effects.

Although these knowledge frames are suggested and tested by the text as part of this "process of knowledge-guided inference making," Freundlieb believes that "interpretations based on knowledge frames do not directly correspond to anything that could be said to inhere in the text itself. They have no independently existing truth conditions" (90). Even short texts can be understood in very different ways because understanding is a function of the knowledge frame applied to that text. Although we might expect a particular text to activate similar knowledge frames, the sheer bulk of such frames and the variety of readers renders prediction a difficult if not impossible task: "Once a knowledge frame has been activated, the meanings it allows the reader to construct are seen as internal. Other meanings, which can be constructed with the help of other knowledge frames, are then often not even perceived" (92). Or as Holland says:

> In general, we do not passively respond to stimuli. Rather, we have an expectation about our world or what psychologists and neuroscientists sometimes call a "set." The brain physiologists can literally observe its activity. . . . As we change our "set," we

> bring to bear on our world different expectations. We therefore change the hypotheses we test against our world. The general principle is: We prepare for stimuli and actively search our environment for them. (76)

Whilst these kinds of computational metaphors may seem a little dull to those who prefer epiphanic moments, they highlight the possibility that a functioning conceptual and modelling hierarchy is necessary for perception to occur.

The activation of a particular frame is dependent on the cognitive strategy readers choose to adopt, and these strategies are a function of what Jonathan Culler calls "literary competence," or the application of "a set of conventions for reading literary texts." These literary conventions are "the constituents of the institution of literature," and an utterance has meaning "only with respect to the conventions which the reader has assimilated. If other conventions were operative its range of potential meanings would be different." This means that "one must bring to [the text] an implicit understanding of the operations of literary discourse which tells one what to look for" (*Structuralist Poetics* 113-118). Culler concludes that rather than think our goal in reading is "to specify the properties of objects" we should "concentrate instead on the task of formulating the internalised competence which enables objects to have the properties they do for those who have mastered the system" (120).

Dieter Freundlieb agrees with Culler's focus on internalised competence when he argues that "we should concentrate our effort on the question of how, in fact, texts are understood, ie, what sense-making procedures and conventions are applied to them, and why certain texts are privileged as literary in our culture" (94). Theories of discourse, it would seem, are actualised in the act of reading, a process which in turn provides crucial information as to what to look for in the first place. There is a cycle of *mutually interdependent* activities: one

must carry in one's intellectual baggage a significant collection of preconceptions and conventions *in order to perceive* at all.

Embedded in the act of reading are the preconceptions and conventions which allow the activity to proceed, but the mind need not be aware of these processes for, as Gerard Genette says, literature, "like any other activity of the mind, is based on conventions of which, with some exceptions, it is not aware" (*Figures* 116). For Culler, the primary literary convention "is what might be called the rule of significance" where we assume that what we read expresses "a significant attitude to some problem concerning man and/or his relation to the universe" (115) even though it is a convention of literary interpretation to "say that to read a text as literature is to read it as fiction." Authors do not decide the contents of Popper's bucket, however, for, as Culler suggests, the author "is a reader of his own work" and "he cannot simply assign meaning but must make possible, for himself and others, the production of meaning" (116-117). Literary competence is both a set of ready-made answers to those questions posed by the human condition as well as a set of conventions for asking the questions and interpreting the answers.

Linguistic competence, then, like the what of the text, comes from an acculturation to the act of reading. How much of this process is open to negotiation given Thompson's dictum that ideology is meaning in the service of power? According to Holland, the only restraints placed on a particular reader are real physical impossibilities, limitations on motion or action: "matters of the physical placement of the text, what pages a normal eye can see simultaneously, what sequence the words occur in, how fast a text can be read, how much can be held in memory at once" (98). Literary restraint is itself conventionalised, however, and

says to the reader, in effect: "If you read it in that way, you will make a mess of the text and look very silly" (98).

This conventionalisation concerns what Holland calls codes and canons. Codes are those rules which make a message possible such as the letters of an alphabet or the grammar of a sentence. Codes refer to those matters where "no member of our culture would normally claim that the rule is otherwise than it is" (103). As such, codes are "cognitively impenetrable," impermeable capacities which are sort of "hard-wired" or "inscribed."

Canons, however, refer to rules or themes which are cognitively penetrable, something like software which "can be otherwise." Cognitively penetrable canons resemble "mental capacities that are routinely affected by an individual's symbolic processes, like wishes, beliefs, or values" in that they "change with what we know or believe," and might be described, loosely speaking, as a mental set (103-104). Holland further distinguishes between background canons, which reflect heritage, education, and life experiences, and view-point canons, which relate to opinions and beliefs, and "would be much easier to change than background canons" (104).

In order to read, then, one must have or develop hypotheses about what one expects to find. To put it in computational terms, the process might be described as follows. First, an hypothesis is formed or simply drawn in language, from culture, conventions of narrative, and other kinds of knowledge frames which might be useful in explaining the meaning-issue at hand. Second, the hypothesis is "tested" to see if it can account for the meaning-issue. Third, the feedback on the hypothesis is either positive or negative and this feedback might involve "hedges" such as "usually," "at least," "more-or-less," "strictly speaking," or "loosely speaking," any or all of which might encourage

further hypotheses, or the modification of existing hypotheses, or even the view that near enough is good enough. Fourth, if the feedback is positive, the hypothesis becomes a sort of theory in that it appears to provide a satisfactory explanation (this may be revised at any time). Fifth, if the feedback is negative, the reader will a) try a new hypothesis (theoretically, it is possible to stay in this loop until a satisfactory theory is found); b) not discount the hypothesis but not confirm it either, that is, treat it as a closure meaning-issue (one which will be resolved at some later point in the text) and consequently as one which does not immediately require a successful theory (although narrative closure is usually regarded as occurring somewhere near the end of the text, meaning-issues are being opened and closed constantly throughout the text); c) ignore the meaning-issue altogether as one that is of marginal significance to the reader's particular practice of reading (ie, texts can be read in different ways so that a meaning-issue that may be glossed over in a casual reading may need to be explained in, say, a reading that is to be used as the basis of an essay), and/or; d) stop reading.

Some critics argue that reality portrayed in texts is nothing more than what is discursively familiar. If it weren't, then it wouldn't be surprising to find readers opting to stop reading, because it is beyond the readers' competence or their willingness to persist in converting hypotheses to theories. A certain degree of difficulty in this conversion process is no doubt pleasurable for some readers and impossible for others (perhaps this pleasure is influenced by the purpose of reading and/or the reward for effort as even the most persistent reader will have a conversion threshold at which stopping reading becomes a serious option).

To read, then, is to perceive, and to perceive is to read, a doubling process, as Althusser predicted, of individual consciousness and social determination, and one which sees the individual/reader interpellated at the moment of perception. In reading a text (or in dealing with the exigencies of day to day existence), we rely upon thousands of ready-made hypotheses, the main set being provided by language. Some of these hypotheses come ready made by our culture, hypotheses which have to be learned before they can be tried out as the occasion demands. The perceptual process is so fast that it is difficult to imagine it as a process of testing hypotheses to see what kind of feedback each brings. If, as Gregory says, perception is hypotheses, suggested and tested by sense data, then knowledge can only ever be speculation where, as with the Theoria, there is an agreement not to see it as such. Knowledge is useful speculation, hypotheses which, for the time being, appear to have been confirmed or legitimated. Evidently, what we see isn't just sense data but hypotheses confirmed by sense data; what we see is already an act of interpretation before we are able to apply our conscious mind to it. Perception and apperception (perception with recognition or identification by association with previous ideas) are really part of the same process where the latter uses memory (confirmed hypotheses) as its sense data, and the former uses controlled hallucinations (hypotheses suggested and tested by sense data).

Perception is a normal/deviation dialectic where what we expect to see, our horizon of expectations, our understanding of what is normal, is a set of hypotheses which we try out on our physical and linguistic reality. Hypotheses which fit this reality confirm what is "normal" and become "habits"; hypotheses which do not are modified until they do, and in this way what deviates from the norm is appropriated to it. Direct experience of linguistic and physical reality is not a necessary

condition of this normal/deviation dialectic (empiricism) as the accounts of it (narratives) provided by legal, educational and family structures (culture) may be this reality — prolepsis and not empiricism is the major constituent of knowledge. In short, the subject is interpellated at the moment of perception because it is at this moment that the hypotheses of ideology are suggested and tested.

Chapter Five

Tell all the truth, but tell it slant,
Success in circuit lies;
Too bright for our infirm delight,
The truth's superb surprise.
(Emily Dickinson)

I

Thus far I have argued that if perception is an hypothesis suggested and tested by sense data then readers, and by implication, subjects, are interpellated at the moment of perception. In this chapter, I will extend this argument by addressing what Lefebvre calls the everyday. I am interested in establishing the relation between ideology and the everyday, not by imbricating them so as to produce a coherent or rigid topology of their materiality, but by teasing out the significance of the ways in which everyday practices position subjects in their "lived relation to the real" (Althusser's phrase). As I have indicated already, I find that this relation is a constructivist one such that it is at the level of the everyday psychologising of the self that ideology finds its most successful subject.

Henri Lefebvre, as noted in chapter one, argues that "everyday life is the supreme court where wisdom, knowledge and power are brought to judgement" (*Critique of Everyday Life* 6). Not everyone agrees with this view, however, for as Lefebvre notes, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are characterised by consistent attempts by both writers and critics to denigrate the everyday so as to service this or that notion of universal truth. Nonetheless, as John B. Thompson argues, ideology inevitably positions its subjects when meaning is in the service of power which means that the places and spaces of everyday existence are as likely to be sites of ideological struggle as those cultural matrices produced by the Repressive and Ideological State Apparatuses:

> For most people, the relations of power and domination which affect them most directly are those characteristic of the social

> contexts within which they live out their everyday lives: the home, the workplace, the classroom, the peer group. These are the contexts within which individuals spend the bulk of their time, acting and interacting, speaking and listening, pursuing their aims and following the aims of others. (*Ideology and Modern Culture* 7-9)

Ideology is, at the very least, this ensemble of everyday roles and activities, an ensemble which Pierre Bourdieu calls the habitus ("Social Space and Symbolic Power" 47). Bourdieu believes that the most influential gestures in the formation of the habitus are the "suggestions inscribed in the most apparently insignificant aspects of the things, situations and practices of everyday life." Consequently, "the modalities of practices," which include "ways of looking, sitting, standing, keeping silent, or even of speaking ('reproachful looks' or 'tones,' 'disapproving glances' and so on)," are "full of injunctions that are powerful and hard to resist precisely because they are silent and insidious, insistent and insinuating." Even the most insignificant words or gestures can function as "injunctions, intimidations, warnings, threats" and they do so because they operate through the power of suggestion which tells us not what to do but what we must be. This insidious connection between power and everyday gestures "is the condition for the effectiveness of all kinds of symbolic power that will subsequently be able to operate on a habitus predisposed to respond to them" (52).

The ensemble of everyday roles and activities which interpellate the subject, then, include acting and interacting, speaking and listening, pursuing one's aims and following the aims of others, keeping silent, reproachful looks, looking, standing and gesturing, all of which can be conscious or unconscious. This ensemble represents a sort of content-serving tool-kit through which subjects psychologise themselves and others. This ensemble embraces those constituents which make up the literalising gestures of ethopoesis — that set of formative, normative,

deviance-accounting-for and ready-made hypotheses which people use to match their intentional states with their actions.

In other words, in psychologising the self, we rely upon what Jerome Bruner calls folk psychology — that is, "culture's account of what makes human beings tick," an account which includes "a theory of mind, one's own and others', [and] a theory of motivation" (*Acts of Meaning* 13). Folk psychology includes notions of nature and of the causes and consequences of intentional states (that is, intentions, beliefs, desires, commitments, intuitions, and so on), and it "dominates the transactions of everyday life" (14). Bruner's argument echoes both Althusser and Lefebvre's because he believes that folk psychology partakes in "culture's way of valuing as well as its way of knowing. In fact, it *must* do so, for the culture's normatively oriented institutions — it laws, its educational institutions, its family structures — serve to enforce folk psychology. Indeed, folk psychology in its turn serves to justify such enforcement" (13-14). What this means is that the folk psychologising which is an intrinsic part of the ensemble of everyday roles and activities is a constituent gesture of interpellation and, consequently, the level at which ideology finds its most successful subject. This everyday psychologising is rooted in language, reflects culture and is a reflection of it, and is a major constituent of common sense.

Although Belsey argues that "common sense betrays its own inadequacy by its incoherencies, its contradictions and its silences," thereby presenting itself as "non-theoretical" and "obvious" (3), it is this "obliviousness," as Althusser calls it, that positions meaning in the service of power and which make common sense the perfect vehicle through which ideology interpellates subjects. Common sense and the folk-psychologising mentalism which underpins it inevitably appear in

the form of narratives which provide an account of how this "mentalism" is formed and shaped by the self, of how it may be constructed by others, and of how deviations from a "normal" view of it may be negotiated. In mimicking the everyday folk-psychologising gestures of the characters it seeks to situate and "explain," narrative, for all its propositional and exegetic "truth" claims, is merely an extension of folk psychology. In other words, although we may be acculturated in our role as subjects from a variety of sources, it is through the "common sense" of folk-psychology that we intersect and negotiate with our subjectivities.

Regarding perception as a set of hypotheses suggested and tested by sense data reinforces this "everyday" dimension because it suggests that the hypotheses which precede perception and make it possible are tested in a kind of "self-narrativising" everyday common sense. The effect of reinscribing intentional states into the perceptional equation is to rediscover the trope of reading character (ethopoesis) as a foundational rather than a secondary moment of perception. Despite Lodge's claim that modern fiction contains a great deal of summary in proportion to speech, narrators and characters of fictional texts still rely heavily on this ethopoesis/folk psychology connection, however much this might be represented in free indirect speech or summary form.

Looked at in another way, the relations between the participants of everyday experience oscillate between empiricism and a-priorism. Or as Pierre Bourdieu suggests, these relations oscillate between, on the one hand, the notion that we can treat social phenomena as things, thereby leaving out everything that these things "owe to the fact that they are objects of cognition — or miscognition," and, on the other, the notion that the social world can be reduced to the accounts that agents make

of it ("Social Space and Symbolic Power" 124). Lefebvre's insistence on the everyday favours agency over objectivism, and it does this by positioning critique, not as a means of producing yet another aesthetic realisation of the "universals" of existence, but as a way of producing an account of the accounts that people give of their existence with all the focus on the modalities of the "how" and the "what" that this necessitates.

At the very least, such an approach seems "justified" by the renewed interest some psychologists are taking in the everyday narrativising elements of their "talking cures" (as with Bruner), an interest which has grown out of the apparent failure of "scientism" and "behaviourism" to produce satisfactory "accounts" of "what makes human beings tick" by leaving out the accounts that people give about themselves. Of course, the danger with this approach is that one finishes up giving an account of the accounts that people use to account for their behaviour, a process which is frequently disparaged as a kind of Hollywood Freudianism, to borrow a term from Jonathan Ree ("Metaphor and Metaphysics" 30).

If these sort of characterisations seem impossible to kill off despite some serious attempts to vilify them, then perhaps we need to move beyond what Nathalie Sarraute calls the "age of suspicion," the notion that both critic and reader have become so wary of each other that character has "become the converging point of their mutual distrust, the devastated ground on which they confront each other" ("The Age of Suspicion" 85). The easiest way to cope with this distrust is to forget characterisation with its humanism, idealism and mentalism. Ree argues, however, that

> Although "deconstructionists" often express their doubts about the insistent and dogmatic monotony of Freudian interpretations, deconstructive "close-reading" is very similar to psychoanalytic approaches to neurotic symptoms, as it untangles the elaborate

> camouflages in which primary processes disguise themselves so as to hoodwink the censor and gain admission to the ordinary conscious world. (31).

In other words, playing Freud's latent/manifest game is another form of realism's game of intentionality: that is, realism's gestures of matching intentional states with actions, gestures which form the basis of characterisation, require the kind of exegetic psychologising endemic to narrative whose illocutionary commitment promises to free up the apparent from the hidden. This game allows one's neurotic character (Sartre's "ruined house," his "imposture") entry into the conscious world, except that where we expect reflection we find projection — as Sartre has said, culture is a product through and in which subjects project and recognise themselves.

The invention of the "unconscious," which provided an inexhaustible and somewhat unchallengeable alibi for critics' interpretations, is another example of the lengths to which critics will go to avoid dealing with the everyday elements of life and fiction. At one level, this avoidance is yet another example of the kind of elitism which has been around in one form or another since Plato thought philosophers were really earthly manifestations of the divine. Lefebvre believes that the "everyday" has been denigrated because artists and critics have sought to place life entirely in the service of the unconscious, thereby denouncing reality and its transposition into literary themes as secondary reality (116). For Lefebvre, this denunciation serves as a denial that relations of power and domination are a function of the matricised social contexts in which people live out their lives — their lived relation to the real. Lefebvre believes that this denunciation is an effect of an obsession, since Baudelaire, with the notion of a duality whereby in each "object" there is both a circumstantial and an eternal

element, the object of art being to establish when and where the eternal appears in the circumstantial.

Although Lefebvre acknowledges that Baudelaire wanted to confront the everyday, he finds that Baudelaire does this by assuming that even the most familiar object has a second nature, the mystery of which can be "traced like a watermark beneath the transparent surface of the familiar world" (104-107). Consequently, given that these watermarks are apparently only visible to the visionary, the power of critique is retained by an elite obsessed with "universal" truth. Whatever his obsession with the real, then, Baudelaire did not escape the apparent/hidden difficulties associated with exegetic truth claims and remained trapped in Bersani's culture of redemption.

For nineteenth-century fiction, Lefebvre argues that the concept of the "marvellous" provided the most useful means of denouncing realism:

> Under the banner of the marvellous, nineteenth-century literature mounted a sustained attack on everyday life which has continued unabated up to the present day. The aim was to demote it, to discredit it. Although the duality between the marvellous and the everyday is just as painful as the duality between action and dream, the real and the ideal — and although it is an underlying reason for the failures and defeats which so many works deplore — nineteenth-century man seemed to ignore this, and continued obstinately to belittle real life, the world "as it is." (105)

Lefebvre believes that this swerve into the marvellous and its cognate attacks on realism has failed to produce anything other than writers and critics who have commodified their alienated consciousness (104). What we find here is yet another paradox: on the one hand, realism, in its desperate attempts to pitch a tent in the world of universals and absolutes, denigrates the everyday whilst apparently claiming to be able to explain it; one the other, in order to destroy realism's transhistorical, transcendental epistemic pretensions, contemporary theory, of the sort practiced by the ludic (post)modernist, also

denigrates the everyday by arguing that there is no such thing as the real, or that those who claim to know it are merely constructing an alibi for their own interpretations of the world. Either way, the everyday loses out — it is regarded merely as a disposable means to some higher truth (as with Bersani's culture of redemption), or as an epistemic impossibility.

For Lefebvre, what this denunciation of the everyday produces, in the end, is a re-binarisation of propositional and exegetic truth claims into the traditional high-art/low-art distinctions which the twentieth century break with the real was supposed to abolish in the first place. So successfully has literature abstracted itself from its fables (as Bersani says of the novel) that these "truth" claims are reduced to nothing more than reifications and caricatures. Moreover, in "abolishing" the intentional states upon which everyday psychologising depends, those denouncing realism have appropriated to themselves not truth but performance anxiety. In articulating their anxieties about realism, then, they have merely demoted the ritual into the gestural and transposed both into ludic truths. Transposing the ritual into the gestural is the province of drama.

In our matching of intentional states and actions, the functional gestures of everyday psychologising, we are involved in a form of "playing." As R. D. Laing puts it: "We are acting parts in a play we have never read or seen, whose plot we don't know, whose existence we can only glimpse, and whose beginning and end are beyond our present imagination and conception" (*The Politics of the Family* 78). Bruner sees folk psychology as a similar process when he argues that "When we enter human life, it is as if we walk on stage into a play whose enactment is already in progress — a play whose somewhat open plot determines what parts we may play and toward what denouements we

may be heading. Others on stage already have a sense of what the play is about, enough of a sense to make negotiation with a newcomer possible" (*Acts of Meaning* 33-34). Aside from the obvious echoes of Shakespeare (and, indeed, Borges' "Shakespeare"), these views support the notion that whatever the "lived relation to the real" might be, the commonsense notion of character is that characters are recognisably linked to the "real" people of everyday existence.

Within this linking there is a distinction, however, which Lefebvre describes as that between the acting of the actor, a sort of role-playing which "an actor can give up when he is tired or when he feels he is acting badly," and the sort of "play-acting" the rest of us might be involved in where "We are dealing with people about whom it is impossible to say either what they are or what they are not; about whom we cannot say that they are not — that they only appear to be — what they are, nor that they are or appear to be what they are not" (17).

What this game of "knots" means for Lefebvre is that in "real" life, "characters really are characters" (16), a paradox which reduces the everyday to a sort of drama with all the conventions that this implies. Hence, when playing, which is also living, "There are only points of view, perspectives, masks and roles" about which we are forced to make judgements. Lefebvre thinks that these judgements coerce us into making decisions about actions, events, the perspectives of the players, the decisions themselves, and the outcomes produced by the actions and events. Consequently, "To play is to transform our point of view into a decision by confronting chance and determinism in the absence of adequate information about our opponent's game" (16). Truth claims, then, are rarely more than poses we adopt in order to get things done; or as Lefebvre says: "Truth is draped in veils; it can only be defined by an endless succession of points of view" (16-17). Put simply, Lefebvre

believes that part of the reason artists and critics have denounced the everyday is because they have elevated the notion of being and its attendant ideas of consciousness above the everyday actions and decisions which constitute our "lived relation to the real."

Lefebvre also believes that if life always resembles drama, then those who fail to recognise this fall into a trap "laid for simpletons":

> There he is among the onlookers, open-mouthed, a minor intellectual too awe struck to approach — on paper, that is — the great men of this world. Scenes were staged (with more than enough sincerity) with glory and prestige in view; the naive historian is taken in, just as his contemporaries were. He has no awareness, no irony, no craftsmanship. (136)

Everyday life, it seems, is always characterised by its playfulness in both senses of the word: that is, the everyday not only resembles a play, it is also intrinsically playful. Understanding the complexity of the play and the roles and norms it entails may be said to come from understanding the creative tension generated through the possession and use of basic narrative skills and the willingness to participate in a seemingly plotless (in the general rather than the particular sense) but by no means meaningless play. I would like now to support Lefebvre's view of the everyday by providing an everyday example and by critiquing it using notions of folk psychology.

II

Recently, there was a radio news report of a man who was shot by police during a "siege" at the man's home after he had appeared at a window "waving" a gun. The man died. The gun, it turns out, was a replica. The trouble started when the man, who was returning home by taxi from New Year celebrations, chased the taxi-driver with a "broadsword" after an argument over the fare. The man's neighbours and friends were horrified, they said, firstly because he was a kind, fun-loving fellow who enjoyed a drink and a bit of a lark but who was by no

means violent — he even enjoyed kidding about with their children; and secondly, because they had told the police that the gun was a replica *before* the police shot him. The police said that they had called on the man to "drop his weapon" three times before they had "dropped him with a volley of shots" (graphic sounds of police voices and gunshots). Although the police "apologised" to the man's relatives for the incident, they claimed in their defence that it was their duty to protect themselves and the public from any threats of this kind, and that the man had been given due warning. The report concluded with a three-second grab from a witness: "It's like something you'd see on television, not in your own street."

As one might expect, without the indisputable authority of the *Theoria*, the "stories" of the police and the friends and relatives do not agree. Nonetheless, both these "stories" concern the intentions of the man and how these intentions matched up with his actions or his potential for action. The friends and relatives saw his actions as incongruent with his intentions, with what they know of his character: he was not normally violent, he enjoyed a bit of a lark, and in any event the gun was a replica. Besides, anyone who chases taxi-drivers with a broadsword can't be taken too seriously. The police, however, judged the man to be dangerous, perhaps because they lacked the privileged access to his intentional states claimed by the friends and relatives and because anyone waving a gun is deemed capable of using it. If such a person refuses to respond to warnings, he or she is deemed as "intending" to use it. Safety in doubt is not action, however, and the police see their role as one of acting to protect the safety of themselves and public.

The final three-second grab likens the incident to the kind of dramatic representations of these sorts of incidents that one might see

any night of the week on television. This simile suggests that the significance of the story extends beyond the event itself to include the way in which it is reported or narrativised (turned into a drama), replete as this is with a variety of props (recordings of the police warnings, the laments of selected friends and relatives, and the sounds of fatal gunshots). The meaning of the incident is negotiated at the point of intersection of the two competing stories, a point which concerns the congruence of intentions and action. We have a narrative where meaning is constructed within a matrix of intentions, beliefs and desires and their congruence with the actions of the characters, a narrative which includes a commentary on the congruence between what people say and what they do (motive deals with normative congruence as well as deviation), a commentary which is also a meta-commentary, one which directly or indirectly refers to its own conditions of possibility.

The narrative is also an example of what happens to subjects when they refuse, for whatever reason, to be "hailed" as subjects — in this case by representatives of what Althusser calls the Repressive State Apparatuses (that is, the police). The narrative contains all the elements that Kenneth Burke attributes to well-formed stories. It has a "pentad" of an actor, an action, a goal, a scene, and an instrument — plus trouble, which consists of an imbalance between any of the other five elements (qtd in Bruner 50). Although the part taken by "trouble" is represented by "props" (the broadsword and the replica gun), it is really the (mis)reading of the man's intentions which generates the imbalance in the pentad: that is, even if the man knew his own intentions, and this might be doubtful, they were not clear to the police and only vaguely so to his relatives and friends.

Indeed, one could suggest that a (mis)reading of the intentions, beliefs and desires of characters on the one hand, and the (un)matching of these with actions on the other, is the basis of much film and fiction. If motive is what induces a person to act, and intentions, beliefs and desires are frequently the basis of this inducement, then one might say (for ease of reference) that a congruent motive is where intentions, beliefs and desires match action and an incongruent motive is where they don't. A congruent motive might be normative or deviant according to the accepted mores of a group or subculture, although whether this is judged "good" or "bad" will depend upon where one stands in relation to both the group and its mores. An incongruent motive is normative or deviant according to the intentions of the agent of the action. For example, the actions of the broadsword-waving man are perhaps not normative for his friends and family, who might have happily tried to "talk him round," but given what they know of his usual intentions, he is certainly not deviant, at least not enough to cost him his life. For the police, however, he has a congruent motive — he waves a gun about and refuses the opportunity they give him to show that his intentions and actions are incongruent.

Our three-second-grab witness to the death of the replica-waving man ("It's like something you'd see on television, not in your own street") seems concerned that one kind of experience, fictionalised accounts of police sieges, has suddenly become another kind of experience, the day-to-day happenings of her street. Common sense tells us that fiction is one thing, reality another, and that we should have no trouble flicking back and forth between the two although those who mix them up are sometimes seen as unwell. However, the witness's comment does support Lefebvre's notion that life is a sort of a play and that the conventions for reading the latter are frequently used to

decipher the former. It also tells us that the power of any story has little to do with whether the events actually happened or not, though we do not expect fiction to interrupt our daily lives by barging down our street. What the "characters" in this story relied upon is a process of narrativising (in)congruent motives, their own or others, a process which is intrinsic to folk psychology.

At one level, then, the psychologising of the self might be described as the common-sense view of characterisation. According to this view, nothing rankles like a character who is not true to life, even if this lifelikeness, as with our now dead replica-waving man, is impoverished as a stereotype. Even genres which eschew other aspects of realism, such as science fiction and metafiction, use the conventions of characterisation. For instance, although science fiction has its improbable sets and stick figures, it also has its fully developed and recognisable characters (as with Deckard in Ridley Scott's film *Blade Runner*). Even metafiction, in its subversion of conventions, plays with the familiar constituents of characterisation, a process which both adds to and reflects our (folk psychologising) reading capacities: that is, metafiction does not dispense with characterisation because folk psychology is itself already replete with categories of hypocrisy, ambiguity and irony. Saying this is not saying that these constituents remain the same from genre to genre, or from generation to generation. For instance, whereas one film might eulogise the folk psychologising of its characters (soap opera characters telling each other that there is someone for everyone, and to be happy one has to find oneself and do what one is good at, and so on), other films might explicitly criticise this sort of psychologising as psychobabble (as the Tom Cruise character does in Sydney Pollack's film *The Firm*).

In any event, the moral of the Bildungsroman, which in one form or another dominates the entire corpus of both fiction and film, is to prove again and again that "reading" character badly, one's own and others, is poor living. An inability to read the signs about oneself and others leads to peripeteia — a change of fortune. This misreading is always a reading in relation to intentional states — one's expectations, one's pride, one's context, one's family, one's friends, and even one's enemies. To misread a character is to misjudge that character; to misjudge a character is to fail to establish (in)congruent motive. The Bildungsroman "hails" the reader as subject (in Althusser's terms) because it is an object lesson in learning how to "properly" read the signs in the contexts in which the characters find themselves. Supposedly, this "harmless" injection of ignorance vaccinates the reader against his or her own potential misreadings in "real life." Readers receive a little of the disease so that, like good antibodies, they will know how to recognise it and deal with it the next time it comes along. (Interestingly, AIDS represents something of a paradigm shift here because the HIV virus attacks the immune system and outwits its defences by constantly changing its form.) To be minimally "convincing," then, the narrator of any story has to be at least a competent folk psychologist.

III

Jerome Bruner argues that "folk psychology" is a process whereby "people organise their experience in, knowledge about, and transactions with the social world": "We learn culture's folk psychology early, learn it as we learn to use the very language we acquire and to conduct the interpersonal transactions required in communal life" (35). Bruner argues that the central organising principle of this folk psychology is

narrative and he notes Jean Mandler's research findings which show that "What does not get structured narratively suffers loss in memory" (36). The important role Bruner gives to narrative might encourage us to agree with Louis Mink when he suggests that "narrative is a primary cognitive instrument — an instrument rivalled, in fact, only by theory and metaphor as irreducible ways of making the flux of experience comprehensible" ("Narrative Form as Cognitive Instrument" 131). This orthodox view, as Hayden White suggests, holds that narrative is "a solution to a problem of general human concern, namely, the problem of how to translate *knowing* into *telling*, the problem of fashioning human experience into a form assimilable to structures of meaning" ("The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality" 5).

The very gesture of translating knowing into telling is problematic, however, because, according to Gregory's thesis, things can only be known in the telling, and according to Thompson's thesis, approaches to structures of meaning are always submissive gestures to the interests of some (power) elite. Consequently, if narrative is the primary cognitive instrument through which we make sense of experience and this experience is "expressed" via folk psychologies, then neither this experience nor these psychologies can be thought of as something which can be unproblematically represented in and through language, whatever the urgings of common sense. In other words, an examination of narrative and of the folk psychologies upon which it relies reveals how subjects are interpellated through their "imaginary relations to the real conditions of existence" (Althusser's phrase). Understanding that this relation is imaginary is as good as it gets, however, for narrative is a site of negotiation and struggle where hypotheses are tested and re-tested in an attempt to make sense of experience, with all the sense of constructivism implied in the notion that hypotheses precede

perception and make it possible. These qualifications should be taken as implicit in the following discussion.

Andy Clark suggests that folk psychology is the use of a certain theory of the mental, one which appeals to combinations of intentions, beliefs and desires to explain action, to make sense of other people's behaviour ("From Folk Psychology to Naive Psychology" 139). Clark believes that although regarded as on a par with campfire speculations, and despite "true" science's constant rebuttal of its misguided if cherished prejudices, folk psychology has doggedly persisted through the ages, a persistence, he argues, which needs to be explained rather than explained away (139).

The problem for folk psychology is to define exactly what kind of psychological understanding it entails. Given that it involves common sense with its incoherencies and inconsistencies, this is easier said than done. Clark argues that folk psychology could entail a theory of the mental which includes "some well articulated set of laws and principles, together with some paradigmatic cases of their successful application" such as in the folk theories of alchemy and early cosmology which were often quite explicitly formulated (140-141). Alternatively, folk psychology could entail an implicit theory where "the laws and principles which constitute it have to be inferred from the *use* of the putative theory in generating predictions and explanations" (141). What this use generates is not only its own set of causal explanations but also a set of competencies: "It is the framework of general laws, said to be implicit in our ordinary explanations of each other's behaviour, which is meant to constitute the *theoretical* content of folk psychology" (142).

However, this theoretical content may not be susceptible to the kind of verificationist criteria used by the scientific community. Clark thinks

that one way critics have misjudged folk psychology is by imposing on it scientific testing conditions, such as the idea in scientific psychology that there should be some rich isomorphism between neurophysiological details and true psychological descriptions (142). Arguments such as this, he suggests, fail to understand the nature and role of folk psychology for although folk psychology may not take up the really "hard cases" of scientific psychology, this criticism can only be made if one sees folk psychology as a set of general principles which explain the phenomenon they address including any and all exceptions. Clark believes that this is a harsh condition to impose on any theory much less one which has no apparent pretentions about its status when compared to a scientific psychology (142-144).

Clark believes that we should accord our common sense ideas of the mental something of the same status that we accord our common sense ideas of the physical (that is, that body of commonsense knowledge of physical laws and concepts such as fluidity, solidity, support, above, below, inside, outside, beside and so on) which help us to get around our every day world. He believes that our understanding of these laws may be basic but by no means inaccurate, and that if the mobile need to know about basic physics, the socially mobile need to know about the mental states of their peers because such basic psychological understanding of others is as important to the survival and success of the social animal as is recognising food or predators (144-145).

Clark distinguishes two kinds of theorising which might be applicable to folk psychology: first, the sort of *speculative* theorising which accompanies alchemy, optics, quantum mechanics, Freudian psychology and so on. Here, folk theories, rather than just folk psychology, provide the basis for much scientific investigation — astronomy evolved from astrology, chemistry from alchemy, and

scientific psychology from folk psychology. Second, there is the sort of bedrock theorising which enables us to achieve our most basic goals, such as finding our way around the local environment and understanding the mental states of our fellow animals (145-146). Folk psychology has its roots in bedrock theorising, he suggests, and not in speculative theorising, though this is not to suggest that bedrock theorising is not itself speculative. A bedrock theory, he says, "is simply one which is learned or arrived at by the employment of exceptionally well-tested (probably dedicated) cognitive competencies" (146). I shall return to this point shortly.

Clark believes that this bedrock theory, or belief-desire psychology, is a powerful and pervasive mechanism trained on a world in which other agents have beliefs and desires and where it seems crucial for human agents to be able to predict the behaviour of other agents based on ideas about their mental states:

> If we therefore grant that *any* capacity to form judgements about the causal (action-governing) powers of others' mental states must involve some functional analogue of twin-factor belief/desire understanding, then it is not unreasonable to expect a proclivity towards such analysis to become a part of our natural response to a world full of other intentional systems. (148)

Clark thinks, for instance, that in order to ascribe semantic content to alien utterances we must "play off, in a global and systematic way, hypotheses about the *beliefs* and *desires* of the beings we seek to understand," a process which suggests that content cannot be ascribed through knowledge of either factor alone (148).

Bruner takes this argument a step further when he asks whether an intention, a belief or a desire can be the cause of anything in the world. His answer is that folk psychology is based not only on what people do but also on what they say they do, what they say caused them to do it, what they say others did and why, and what they say their worlds are like (*Acts of Meaning* 16). The earlier account of the "siege," for example,

contains all these elements. What this means is that, in order to ascertain our own intentions and those of others, we need to "to get some line on whether their mental state (as revealed by saying) and their deed (as revealed by doing)" are in agreement or not. For example, Bruner suggests that if someone does something we find offensive, we attempt to determine whether they intended it or not, mostly through what they say their intentions were. If they say they didn't intend it, and we believe them, we might be disposed to forgive them. If they say they did intend it, we might try to talk them out of such behaviour, or if that doesn't work, we might break off relations, or send them to a psychiatrist for a "talking cure." We may even respond in kind. In other words, meaning is negotiated according to how we perceive the intentional states of others and not just their actions: "The meaning of talk is powerfully determined by the train of action in which it occurs . . . just as the meaning of action is interpretable only by reference to what the actors say they are up to" (16-18).

What this means is that folk psychology takes statements people make about their intentional states seriously. As Bruner argues, folk psychology takes as central the notion that "the relationship between action and saying (or experiencing) is, *in the ordinary conduct of life,* interpretable" (19). Consequently, not only are meaning and interpretation central to folk psychology but also, given that action is the intention-based counterpart of behaviour, that folk psychology is concerned with situated action: that is, "action situated in a cultural setting, and in the mutually interacting intentional states of the participants" (19). This means, contrary to what one might expect, that intentional states are cultural rather than individual phenomena because they are themselves sites of negotiation which can only be realised, as Bruner says, "through participation in the symbolic systems

of culture" (33). In other words, although people believe that they are reacting to one another in terms of what they see as their own psychology, these beliefs are cultural constructions which reflect commonsense beliefs about human behaviour.

Through folk psychology, then, we psychologise the self and others, or to put it in John Gilson's terms, we practice having hallucinations about our subjectivities. Moreover, given that John Stephens argues that ideology involves an ensemble of points of view or ideas about the world, about how it is or should be organised, and about the place and role of people in it (14), which is a more particular version of Lefebvre's "playing," then folk psychology is intrinsically ideological and the prime means through which the subject is interpellated. According to this view, ideology is not a more-or-less coherent and rigid system of political ideas, usually one's opponent's, but a negotiated process of producing everyday meanings, signs and values, all of which may or may not serve the interests of the dominant subculture according to the "intentions" of the participants.

The problem of intentional states bedevils the history of philosophy, law, religion and literature, and has given rise to an inordinate amount of exegesis, much of it counterfactual and contradictory. For instance, as the debate surrounding the Mabo case shows, when the ultimate end-stop of the law — the constitution — comes into question because of some "interpretation" which appears to go beyond the "letter" of the law, protagonists and antagonists line up to debate the alleged intentions of the "framers" (useful pun). At one level, this is just an extension of the stock lawyer's defence which slides from "fact" to intentions — "I wasn't there! And if I was there, I didn't do it! And if I did do it, I didn't mean it! And if I did mean it, I'm now sorry that I did." At another, resorting to the intentions of the "framers" is an

extension of the everyday gestures of the psychologising of the self where intentional states are routinely matched with actions.

What this means is that knowledge of the self is intrinsically linked to the intentional states of the negotiated and negotiating self (a connection ludic (post)modernists acknowledge in their discussions of desire). For example, Sartre believes that knowledge itself is a function of intentional states. He argues that if we must learn to know the objects of our experience through the processes of perception then there must be two kinds of conscious knowledge, each informing and constituting the other. He calls this duality "imaging knowledge" (*L'Imaginaire* 21-22 qtd in Ray 8-9). William Ray glosses this notion as follows: knowledge ("*savoir*") is not an intention in itself, "but a system of rules underlying intention, the residue of prior experience upon which one draws when constituting new thoughts and images. The image itself can be defined from this perspective as full meaning constituted by an intention grounded in knowledge" (*Literary Meaning* 10). Hence, objects "intended" during the literary experience appear to be both things whose determinations, like those of perceived objects, are revealed to us gradually by narration, and images whose shapes are determined completely and uniquely. This means that "the fictional object is, at any given instant, determinate with our awareness of it, yet subject to change in time and according to the progressive apprehension of the text" (22-23). Here, we are back in the realm of Hillis Miller's cunning equivocation where the subject is constructed by both the action of the senses and the "residue of prior experience" which comprise both perception and knowledge. Fresh perceptions occur at a moment of apparent simultaneity: one must draw on the residue of prior experience when "constituting new thoughts and

experience." This means that the subject is at the same time both a site and a source of both knowledge and intentionality (8).

In the realm of the everyday, intentionality is both purposeful and purposive. As Lefebvre suggests: "Every word, every gesture constitutes an act, and acts must be understood according to their purpose, their results, and not merely in terms of the person speaking and acting" (135). Lefebvre calls this process, which resembles Sartre's imaging knowledge, "thought-action": "Since words and gestures produce direct results, they must be harnessed not to pure 'internal consciousness' but to consciousness in movement, active, directed towards specific goals" (135-136). What frequently establishes these purposes and goals and forms a backdrop to intentional states are the beliefs of the agents. Consequently, this means that thought-actions are based on or are themselves beliefs. In other words, if intentional states play an important role in the folk-psychologising of the self then beliefs are the means through which these states are judged.

As Bruner argues, people have beliefs and desires — we believe that the world is organised in certain ways, that we want certain things, and that some things matter more than others. We have beliefs about the past and the future as well as the present. We also have beliefs about beliefs; for instance, we believe that beliefs should cohere in some way, that people should not want irreconcilable things, that beliefs should be coherent enough to constitute commitments or ways of life or dispositions that characterise people (79-84). Glenn Langford suggests that words like "believe," "aware of," "see," and "think" are "all examples of the words we use to talk about a person's cognitive or epistemic relations with the world." Langford says that our vocabulary contains a family of words which help us ascertain the accuracy and reliability of a person's beliefs, words such as "justified," "evidence," "true" and

"know," which means that we recognise that beliefs might be mistaken and that we prepare for this possibility ("The Philosophical Basis of Cognition and Metacognition" 11).

What this means is that our epistemic relations with reality cannot be "a physical relation" (12) and that the notion of belief is "the central epistemic notion": "Beliefs are held by people. A belief, in so far as it exists at all, must be *somebody's* belief" (14). Beliefs are always about something, so that what makes a belief a belief is its content, not whatever it happens to be in itself (such as a mental state) (15). In this, beliefs are like assertions or propositions, and we rely on a "web" of beliefs about the world (15). Consequently, our behaviour in any situation is a function of our beliefs about that situation, not the situation as such. Our beliefs represent reality to us, and our reliance on them brings with it the possibility of being led astray (16). In short, the only way we can have access to "truth" is via our beliefs. What this means is that social knowing is a function of our beliefs and that social knowing is intrinsically reflexive because our theory of mind includes not only the things we know about people and the things we can guess about what they know, but also the possibility that we can guess that they know we know what they know and vice versa. Guessing at a another's state of knowledge, as Dickens attempted to do with his inscrutable neighbours, is an intrinsic part of folk psychology.

Folk psychology also deals with desire. The historical complications and convolutions of this notion make it impossible to deal comprehensively with here. Elizabeth Grosz notes, however, that there are at least two traditions. The first tradition, stemming from Plato, sees desire as a fundamental lack in being, an incompletion or absence which the subject experiences as a disquieting loss and which prompts it into the activity of seeking an appropriate object to fill the lack and

thus to satisfy itself. In the second tradition, which includes Hegel and Lacan, desire seeks an object which will both satisfy it and yet maintain its desire: "thus desire always desires another('s) desire, desire seeks to be desired by another" (*Sexual Subversions* xvi). Folk psychology subscribes to the first tradition and presupposes that language either permits the expression of desire or suppresses it in the interests of normal relations. However, if language is capable of expressing or representing desire, it can only do this indirectly. Language displaces desire and is itself displaced by it. This means that language will always be implicated in its attempts to reveal desire, which suggests that whatever its form, desire will either manifest itself in culturally determined ways or work fiercely to undermine this cultural determinism. Folk psychology does operate at the level of these manifestations and subversions but rarely moves into the complicated relations between language and desire.

Folk psychology, then, posits a world outside ourselves that modifies the expression of our intentions, beliefs and desires through its accounts of the normative or the deviant. What this means, Bruner suggests, is that the division between an inner world of experience and an outer one which is autonomous creates at least three domains of interpretation: first, the domain under the control of our own intentional states — a domain where self and agent operate with world knowledge and with desires that are expressed in a manner congruent with context and belief; third, the domain of the outside where events are produced which are not under our own control; and second, a domain which is a mix of the first and third, one which requires more elaborate interpretation to allocate proper shares to individual agency and to "nature" (41). This means that, contrary to received wisdom, folk psychologies contain complex notions of the agentive self, which grow

not only from an inner essence but also from experience of world meanings, images and social bonds and which produce a series of possible selves — ideas of what we might become, what we would like to become, and what we are afraid of becoming (35-37).

When we encounter an exception to the ordinary, and ask what is happening, we are inevitably told a story which contains reasons and a possible world in which the encountered exception is somehow made to make sense or to have meaning. Having established that folk psychology seeks to establish (in)congruent motives — that is, matching intentional states (intentions, beliefs and desires) with actions — the question remains as to the ways in which folk psychology determines these motives. George Lakoff believes that folk psychology relies upon cognitive models which are prone to what Elanora Rosch calls prototype effects — that is, the models have within them a reified "best" or "worst" example which, because they are the easiest to use, means that the application of these models has the force of caricatures or stereotypes.

V

For Lakoff, cognitive models are characterised by structures which are more than their composite parts and which work along a chain of inference from conjunction to categorisation to commonality so as to situate things on the basis of what they have in common. For example, a modifier like "cricket" refers to the common activity as a whole rather than to any common property or similarity shared by bats, balls, or umpires. What defines the category, then, is a structured understanding of the activity itself rather than the "shared" properties of the nouns that cricket can modify (*Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things* 21). Cognitive models are determined culturally and are the

means folk psychology uses to make judgements and decisions about establishing (in)congruent motive (matching intentional states with actions). For instance, the three-second-grab witness relies on cognitive models (such as plot, character, theme, police roles, media roles, and so on) in order to re-present the event she "witnessed" as a story. Her cognitive models are predetermined sets of hypotheses which, when tried out in a particular order, produce predictable results. She felt that the event she witnessed really *was* a drama which appeared to fit tv conventions (themselves a series of imbricated cognitive models): that is, different kinds of action produce a variety of results, of which only a portion will be active for any given event, and understanding the event requires a differential relation with other elements active in the event (such as actor, goal, scene, instrument plus trouble, as in Burke's pentad). Having got past the story conventions, she would need to be aware of the intensely complex array of cognitive models which deal with the situation's social and cultural conventions as well as with the permissible deviations from these conventions. Next, she would be concerned with cognitive models dealing with the specific motivations of the participants in the situation including those applying to her own role as a witness.

It is not surprising, given this incredibly complex process of imbrication, that the three-second-grab witness simply reached for the nearest matricised array of cognitive models — tv drama — to help her deal with the experience. Her response appears "instinctive," which is another way of saying that the hypotheses she tested on the event were suggested elsewhere, most probably by the tv dramas themselves. For a moment she usurps the role of the news-reader or journalist who nightly tell her similar stories in familiar terms with the same results. Her hypotheses, then, has a built-in feedback loop which requires no

effort to "see" that it works and whose use is nightly sanctioned in the dramas and news-bulletins whose own unthinking application of these cognitive models repeatedly ensures that meaning serves the interests of the power elites (in her case, the Repressive State Apparatuses). What the three-second-grab witness has utilised, and through which she in interpellated, are what Elanora Rosch calls prototype effects.

As a form of categorisation, cognitive models are meant to hold to the condition that categories are defined by properties that all category-members share, which means that no member should be a better example of the category than any other member. However, Rosch's research shows, Lakoff says, that categories do have "best examples," which she terms prototypes. Rosch uses basic categories to demonstrate her point. Within basic categories, such as "cats" and "dogs," there seems to be a hierarchy both upwards (to "animals") and downwards (to "German Shepherd" or "Siamese"). The basic or prototypical level (that is, animal or dog) is the highest level at which category members have similarly perceived overall shapes and at which mental images can reflect the entire category. It is also the level at which subjects are fastest at identifying category members, and which has the most commonly used labels for category members. It is the first level which is named and understood by children and the first to enter the lexicon of a language. Thus, suggests Lakoff, the prototypical level is the level at which most of our knowledge is organised (Lakoff 46-50). Prototypes, then, are a matter of an experience and understanding which oscillate between perception and culture and which cannot escape the constraints placed upon them by the figurative nature of language.

The prototypical level is a sort of "default" or "natural" level because this level regards things more "holistically" whereas, at other levels, more distinctive features need to be picked out. For example, Lakoff

says that folk categories of plants correspond very well to scientific categories at the level of genus, but not necessarily at other levels. For Rosch, it is at the level of genus that humans most easily perceive, agree on, learn, remember, and name. Lakoff suggests that prototypes are those cognitive reference points within cognitive models with which we make sense of the world (31-38).

Looked at in this way, one could argue that the three-second-grab witness reached for the prototypical or default level of the category/cognitive model, dramatic event — that is, simply tv. This reaching for the prototype not only reciprocally interpellates the witness — it provides the cognitive strategies and hypotheses which make sense of the event — but it also accounts for why stereotypes, which are precisely prototypes of more expansive cognitive models, persist even when they are in conflict with other cognitive models.

Rosch argues that prototypes possess maximum "cue validity," which is to say that the probability that their distinguishing features will be recognised is higher than at any other level of the category or model. The best cues are those that work all the time for categories at a given level (such as "gills=fish") (50-54). Language possesses cue validity according to its markedness. That is, some morphological categories have a mark (boy-**s**), and others do not (boy). Markedness is used to describe a kind of prototype effect, an asymmetry in a category where one member of a subcategory is taken as somehow more basic than an other. The unmarked member (boy) is the default value — the member of the category that occurs when only one member can occur and all other things are equal (58-61).

Cognitive models, then, exhibit markedness, and the unmarked member of the category is usually the prototype. Given that this prototype might be described as an ideal, Lakoff argues that "we

organise our knowledge by means of structures called idealised cognitive models, or ICMs," and that "category structures and prototype effects are by-products of that organisation" (68-69). As an example he uses Fillamore's concept of a frame:

> "Take the English word *Tuesday. Tuesday* can be defined only relative to an idealised model that includes the natural cycle defined by the movement of the sun, the standard means of characterising the end of one day and the beginning of the next, and a larger seven-day calendric cycle — the week. In the idealised model, the week is a whole with seven parts organised in a linear sequence; each part is called a *day*, and the third day is *Tuesday.* Similarly, the concept *weekend* requires a notion of a *work week* of five days followed by a break of two days, superimposed on the seven-day calendar. Our model of a week is idealised. Seven-day weeks do not exist objectively in nature. They are created by human beings. In fact, not all cultures have the same kinds of weeks." (qtd in Lakoff 68-69)

In other words, prototype effects arise from the interaction of the given cognitive model with other models in the system. Lakoff suggests that ICMs are irreducibly cognitive. Working with the cognitive model Tuesday depends on being able to compare two cognitive models, noting the ways in which they overlap and the ways in which they differ. It is a matter of fitting the ICMs to an understanding of a given situation, and keeping track of the respects in which the fit is imperfect. The worse the fit, the less appropriate it is to apply the ICM. The result is gradience, a simple kind of prototype effect (70).

For example, in the case of the ICM "lie," Lakoff argues that research has show that most people do not have "necessary and sufficient" conditions for defining the term. They rely instead on a prototype gradience which runs: falsity of belief (most important), intended deception (important) and factual falsity (least important). Informants, he says, fairly easily and reliably assign the word *lie* to reported speech acts in a "more-or-less" rather than "all-or-none" fashion: "If you steal something, and say you didn't, then this is a good example of a lie. Telling a hostess that you have enjoyed her party when you haven't is a

less representative example." However, informants were inconsistent in that although they said more often than not that a lie was a false statement, they consistently rated beliefs and intentions as more important than factual falsity itself (71).

Lakoff says that Eve Sweester accounts for this inconsistency by proposing it as an interaction of a number of ICMs. These are the maxim of helpfulness (that is, that people intend to help one another); the ICM of ordinary communication (that is, that if people say something they are intending to help if and only if they believe what they say and that people intend to deceive only if they do not intend to help), and the ICM of justified belief (that is, people usually have adequate reasons for their beliefs and what people have an adequate reason to believe is normally "true," at least for them). Lakoff concludes:

> Belief follows from a lack of intent to deceive and truth follows from belief. Truth is of the least concern since it is a consequence of the other conditions. Conversely, falsity is the most informative of the conditions in the idealised model, since falsity entails both intent to deceive and lack of beliefs. It is thus falsity that is the defining characteristic of a lie. (73)

In other words, the informants were rating the "falsity" of beliefs and intentions (that is, incongruent motive), which means that falsity entails lack of belief or deceptive intentions (72). Non-prototypical cases are accounted for by imperfect fits of the lying ICM and the situation at hand. For example, a white lie is a case where deceit is not harmful, and a social lie is where deceit is helpful. A social lie places one in a situation where being polite is more important than being truthful (73-74).

Lakoff suggests that ICMs are frequently based on metonymy as in "The White House isn't saying anything." Given an ICM with a background condition, there is a "stands for" relation that may hold between any two elements A and B such that one element, B, may

stand for another element, A. Hence, in metonymic models, a subcategory may stand for the whole category. Prototype effects, then, are surface phenomena, a major source of which is metonymy — "a situation in which some subcategory or member or submodel is used (often for some limited and immediate purpose) to comprehend the category as a whole" (79).

If ICMs are based on metonymy — that is, where the part stands for the whole — then they intrinsically exhibit prototypical effects, which accounts for how stereotypes themselves are frequently metonymic. As Lakoff argues, the social stereotype can be used to stand for a category as a whole, "usually for the purpose of making quick judgements about people" (79). The "housewife-mother" subcategory, for example, which defines cultural expectations about what a mother is supposed to be (that is, it exhibits prototype effects), is used as the means by which other subcategories, such as "working mothers," can be judged. Social stereotypes, however, are usually conscious and, since they define cultural expectations (hence their use in advertising and popular entertainment), are often the subject of public discussion (85).

Certain models are overtly idealised, as with paragons (for example, Esther Summerson in *Bleak House*). Lakoff believes that a great many of our actions are to do with paragons — we try to emulate them. There is also a folk theory which says that if people are paragons in one domain they are paragons as people (87-88). Lakoff concludes that:

> We use cognitive models in trying to understand the world. In particular, we use them in theorising about the world, in the construction of scientific theories as well as in theories of the sort we all make up. It is common for such theories not to be consistent with one another. The cognitive status of such models permits this. (121)

What this presupposes is a theory which suggests that if a number of ICMs are evoked then we tend to imbricate them on the basis of our background knowledge (147).

Lakoff's analysis of Rosch's work shows that ICMs and prototypes are the means though which folk psychology establishes its (in)congruent motives and that matching intentional states with actions relies on intrinsically stereotyping gestures. In other words, given that perceptions are hypotheses suggested and tested by "sense" data, that these hypotheses constitute ICMs which exhibit prototype effects, that these hypotheses are culturally determined and therefore ideological in that they serve the interests of power elites, then not only are these moments of perception instances of the folk-psychologising of the self, they are also everyday moments of interpellation. In short, it is at the level of the everyday psychologising of the self that ideology finds its most successful subject.

Prototypes enable perception to occur as a controlled hallucination; without prototypes, the intense complexity of the matricised array of cognitive models would produce not perception but uncontrollable hallucinations. This "control," then, comes at a price, for if narrative is always giving the dead and the living a face, a literalising of prosopopoeia as Miller suggests, then this control always leaves something behind. In other words, given that prototypes always leave a remnant — that is, a good portion of the cognitive model needs to be "left out" for the prototype effect to work — then (to return to the discussion in chapter one), literalising the relation between knowing and inscrutability, between the pen and its trace, as both Dickens and Gilson tried to do, produces not knowledge but prototype-effects which are stereotypes. Even the best attempts by the Dickens-narrator to tease out the secrets hidden in his neighbours' hearts produces stereotypes which leave remnants and which in turn generate more stereotypes, and so on. Given that these remnants are "ethical, social and political" as Miller suggested, the stereotype/remnant flicker not

only interpellates subjects but is also the condition of their possibility. Put simply, the stereotype/remnant flicker is a means of access to the self, but also an insurmountable obstacle to its realisation.

If telling stories is a way of asserting the ideologies of our culture, which the characters do by psychologising their intentional states, then these stories are both a means of access to the "truth" and a barrier to it ever being revealed because these states are a function of the culture in which we live and therefore an instance of our interpellation by this culture at the very moment we are psychologising our self and others. Intentional states always produce a remnant, something which remains to be explained and which generates "new" stories. As Miller's comment on *Metamorphoses* suggests, narrative always comprises both a figure and its deconstruction — that is, literalising a trope so that both protagonist and reader can learn from experience and then finding that the remnant indicates the impossibility of doing this once and for all. I will now like to examine some of the ways in which stereotypes and their remnants interpellate subjects before moving on to some examples from the Dickens-texts to exemplify this process.

Chapter Six

For good ye are and bad,
Some true, some light, but every one of you
Stamped with the image of the King.
(Tennyson, "Idylls of the King: The Holy Grail" 25).

I

If the hallucinatory flicker of the stereotype/remnant cognitive model both enables and subverts the conditions of the possible self, then the application of this cognitive model to the Dickens-texts reveals that the Dickens-narrator's desire to know his inscrutable neighbours is a case of "dreaming of freedom in a slave's embrace" (to borrow a phrase from *Bleak House*). If the self can only be known in its telling — can only ever be a stereotype, one whose remnant produces more stories, more iteration, more interpellation — then this telling both reinforces and subverts the aggregation of the power which lies in the embalming of certain subjectivities through the stereotyping ideologies of the power elites. Subversion requires a sort of Nietzschean "will to power" which enables readers to stare down that "blessed rage for order" which characterises bourgeois subjectivity, to look past the inscribed desire for controlled hallucinations, as John Gilson does, and to confront the hallucinatory figure of prosopopoeia face to face.

Confronting this figure is easier said than done, however, for there is a tendency, based on the stimuli-response model, to see the moment of perception as something immutable and external rather than as a moment of interpellation. It is only by attempting to interpret this moment as itself a series of enabling hypotheses and, therefore, as the application and interpretation of these hypotheses, that it is possible to stare down and subvert the *etho*poetic model of bourgeois subjectivity. There is no doubt that the Dickens-narrator's attempts to "stare down" his inscrutable neighbours is an example of just such a confrontation, and whether Dickens "intended" it or not, his texts are full of similar

confrontations — sometimes serious, sometimes ludic. It is difficult to decide, in the end, whether the Dicken's-text successfully subverts bourgeois subjectivity, or whether it simply reinforces it by highlighting and condemning its down side by appropriating the role of the secular priest.

That the Dickens-narrator frequently adopts this role is, I would argue, beyond dispute. That this role enables the Dickens-narrator to rail against cant, hypocrisy, false moralising and the like is also well known. I do not intend to rehearse these arguments here. What interests me is the way in which the Dickens-narrator's use of caricatures and the stereotypes upon which his role as secular priest is based subvert the potential these critical gestures have for subverting the bourgeois subject. Caricature stereotypes the Other as an extreme but knowable form of the bourgeois subject and, consequently, forms part of the larger cautionary tale through which this subject is affirmed. In other words, the Dickens-narrator's use of caricature splits this subject, provides a double prosopopoeia, thereby offering a sort of Dorian Gray mirror as a corrective for the emerging bourgeois subject. The paradigm case of this doubling is, as I shall explore, Sydney Carton.

Whether it is in the form of what Barbara Hardy calls moral homoeopathy (that is, infecting the patient with something that mimics the disease so that the patient is cured by building his or her own resistance), or whether it is in the form of furnishing characters with doubles of themselves, opposites or twins, from which they are expected to learn, or whether it is in the form of offering paragons to emulate, or whether it is in the form of characters creating imaginary versions of themselves, or whether it is in the form of generating repeatedly grotesque versions of the "good self," versions which are to be avoided

at all costs, the bourgeois subject is interpellated at its weakest and most vulnerable moment, the moment of perception itself, because all these models exhibit prototype effects which manifest themselves as caricatures and stereotypes. It is at this moment that the bourgeois subject, believing that it is psychologising itself based on immutable and external stimuli, is really imbibing the predetermined norms of bourgeois culture. Consequently, it is at this everyday level of the psychologising of the self that bourgeois ideology finds its most successful subject.

This psychologising is evident in the Dickens-text's focus on what Thompson calls "the home, the workplace, the classroom, the peer group," a focus which means that useful analogies can be drawn between the cognitive models which are used to make sense of these places and spaces, and the way subjects are interpellated in these moments of everyday "acting and interacting." In the Dickens-text, the everyday is examined through a variety of (idealised) cognitive models which concern caricatures (where the easily observable minutiae of behaviour are reified as prosopopoeia), social stereotypes (idealised mental representations of (ab)normal behaviour or sets of values with default and/or prototype effects), gestures of psychologising the self (those attempts to reconcile and rationalise the (in)congruence between intentional states and actions) and multiple points of view (those attempts to abstract "laws" of behaviour which go beyond the constraints of any individual instance). These sets of cognitive models intersect and overlap, suggest and test, confirm and deny; they form a kind of hierarchy where universals are valued over characterisations, stereotypes and caricatures, and yet these "lower" forms are the supposedly impoverished gestures of the universals of which they are allegedly "evidential" instances. Despite the prevalence of idealised

cognitive models in the Dickens-text — universals, glib solutions, moral homoeopathies and vicarial sermons — the remnants nevertheless remain inadequately explained.

The dominant idealised cognitive models in the Dickens text concern the telling of the self in a variety of contexts: in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, the self is seen as either true or base coin according to the shape and texture of the stamp it receives from those who provide the inheritance; in *Dombey and Son*, the self is over-valued and blind (with pride), and in receiving a lesson in humility (the fall), the self is reminded that without proper recognition of its relational side (hearth and home) it is an aberration; in *Bleak House*, the self can only be a "model" self when it submits to the dictates of the "heart" and not to its distorted and institutionalised symbols; and, in *A Tale of Two Cities*, the self is an uncanny double (Darnay/Carton) whose only hope for survival is for the dark side to be subsumed by the light, for the stereotype to shed one sort of prototype effect for another — to cease being an aberration and to become a paragon.

Running through these novels is a strong sense of an idealised cognitive model of "helpfulness" (as in Sweester's ICMs) through and against which the stereotypes, the characters and their actions, are evaluated: that is, establishing (in)congruent motive in usually done in the context of bourgeois individualism tempered with a Christian respect for the maxim that "the Lord helps those who help themselves." Nonetheless, there is a danger with these approaches to the self even though they appear to be attacking cant, vilifying incompetence and warning against bourgeois self-indulgence, all of which function as a call to the dead art of "noblesse oblige" to become "bourgeois oblige."

The danger is that this telling is conducted from within an obviously bourgeois framework which means that it may possibly produce not

subversion but a text replete with self-reinforcing illusions. This means that although the Dickens-text appears inherently subversive, it is also ladened with the ideological baggage of bourgeois culture, a baggage which frequently legitimates rather than subverts the bourgeois subject. In this chapter, I would like to explore some of the consequences of this sort of legitimation and subversion. I have chosen to focus on the Dickens-text because its use of caricature and of more obvious stereotypes makes it particularly suited to exemplify my argument. Consequently, as I said in the introduction, I do not intend to attempt any sort of unified or coherent critique of the Dickens-text. Even though I will be making some general comments, it is not my intention to go beyond addressing a few stereotypes and remnants in a number of Dickens' texts, particularly *Martin Chuzzlewit.* I shall begin the following discussion with the notion of the stereotype before moving on to the "change of heart" philosophy which is offered those to be redeemed in the Dickens-text. In chapter seven, I shall then look at the way those to be damned are both stereotyped and caricatured. Before discussing the stereotype, however, I want to make a few contextualising remarks.

II

According to Miller's paradigm model for narrative, dreaming of the freedom to explain and to know via narrative is, it turns out, nothing more than a desire to know via the endless prosopopoeia by which the dead and the living are made to have a face. This desire, itself a slave's embrace, is the assertion of a figure which is then deconstructed by placing it in an ethical, social or political context. Not only is this assertion the "madness of words" (Paul de Man's phrase) but it is also

the telling of the self, one which always seems to leave something out.

As Roy Schafer suggests:

> We are forever telling stories about ourselves. In telling these self-stories *to others* we may, for most purposes, be said to be performing straightforward narrative actions. In saying that we also tell them *to ourselves*, however, we are enclosing one story within another. This is the story that there is a self to tell something to, a someone else serving as audience who is one-self or one's self. When the stories we tell others about ourselves concern these other selves of ours, when we say for example "I am no master of myself," we are again enclosing one story within another. On this view, the self is a telling. (qtd in Bruner 112-113)

Because it always involves an enclosing or an embedding, the telling of the self necessarily produces a remnant from which more stories are produced, a remnant which shows that it is impossible to learn finally and completely from either the experience in question or from the experience of telling this experience. This telling of the self, then, because it always leaves something behind, is an interpellation which is also a reification. Consequently, the telling of the self can only ever stereotype that which it seeks to know, either its self or another. Put simply, subjects are interpellated at the moment of perception by the cognitive models they have been constructed to use, models which, because they are prone to prototype effects, can only ever stereotype the phenomena they seek to explain.

This does not mean that the telling of the self is beyond change, however. On the contrary, change is integral to this telling. But this change constitutes a sort of habeas corpus — a device which allows the subject to appear in its own character to justify both its actions and its "character," a justification which takes the form of explaining deviations from the norm. This is to say that attempts to know our inscrutable neighbours are little more than ensembles of ideological gestures which, on the one hand, seek to control these neighbours by legitimating our own notions of what constitutes the norm, and on the

other, render the "alien-in-our-midst" legible and therefore governable (as Hebdige would say).

This telling of the self and of others, this endless prosopopoeia, is a telling which is, paradoxically, both an affirmation of the self, and yet another instalment of the age-old business of settling-scores, a business which legitimates and controls group-norms whilst dealing harshly with deviants from these norms, and at the same time, renders the Other, those who exist outside the group, knowable and therefore less dangerous. As Miller says of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (in a passage cited earlier), prosopopoeia is itself a form of metamorphosis,

> a change of shape that in its most general form can be defined as the literalising of a metaphor. In this change justice is done, an account paid off, a case closed. But there is always a remnant, some residue of unassuaged guilt or responsibility that leads to the next story, the next metamorphosis literalising yet another figure, then to the next, and so on. (*Versions of Pygmalion* 1)

Looked at in this way, the self literalises the tale rather than the telling, which means that the stereotypes through and in which the self constructs this tale become the givens of subjectivity — the metaphor's tenor is literalised as truth over the dead remnants of vehicle and ground, remnants which leave traces, which in turn generate more scores to settle, more stories.

Moreover, this telling of the self involves both *etho*poesis and etho*poesis* — self as essence and self as construction — which means that the telling of the self can only ever be an iteration of its own interpellation where ideologies stereotype both phenomena and experience through the prototype-effects of those cognitive models which aggregate meaning in the service of the power elites. If subjects are interpellated at the moment of perception, and these interpellations depend heavily on the (folk)psychologisings of the self and others, then the desire to know the "alien-in-our-midst," the desire to know our inscrutable neighbours, is, as Mieke Bal's cognitive model suggests, a

process of endless embedding where one level of narrative becomes the subject of another, a process which produces an exegesis of primary and secondary relations where "truth" never quite coincides with the means of its disclosure, where the gap between them, the remnant, produces more exegesis, more "poetic justice," and where poetic justice itself involves notions of redemption and damnation.

Miller's account of *Metamorphoses*, then, seems particular apposite for any critique of the Dickens-text. Although the norms reflected in the poetic justice cognitive model themselves change, the model's purpose is to effect a change, a metamorphosis, in the subjects of the group who apply this model. The Dickens-narrator's attempts to penetrate the inscrutability of his neighbours, or as Hebdige puts it, to render the "silent crowd, anonymous and unknowable" both legible and governable to the bourgeois observer, takes two forms: first, the redeemable are invited, via what Barbara Hardy calls "moral homoeopathy," to effect a "change of heart"; and second, the damned are caricatured thereby rendering them legible, dismissible, laughable and therefore governable. As Belsey argues: "From the seventeenth century onwards the humanist subject has developed two main strategies for dealing with threatening alternative knowledges. The first is to denounce them." This involves "righteous indignation against those who perceive the world otherwise. Moral invective banishes the threatening alternative as wicked, so that it is not necessary to engage rationally with its disturbing propositions." The second "more sophisticated strategy" is "*caricature*": "You present as ludicrous the position you fear, so that once again there is no need to engage with the arguments. Thus the Enlightenment protected itself from the implications of its own commitment to reason" ("The Subject in Danger" 87-88). Again, Belsey's comments, like those of Miller, seem

particularly apposite to the Dickens-text. Before dealing in more detail with these two manifestations, the moral invective and the ludicrous dismissal, it is necessary to bring the stereotype itself into the light.

III

Conventionally, a stereotype may be one of a number of things, all of which demonstrate its propensity to produce prototype effects. The OED attributes its first use to Didot, the French painter, and a German named Herman (1798), whose new discovery in printing, which they termed the stereotype, is described as a method of printing "in which a solid plate of type-metal, cast from papier-maché or plaster mould taken from the surface of a forme of type, is used for printing from instead of the forme itself" (651). Put more simply, an impression is taken of an image from which a more durable second impression is formed which is itself used to form or make other images. This particularly Barthian description suggests that, as a textual trope, the stereotype may be described as a simulacrum of a simulacrum, as a shadowy likeness of a shadowy likeness. A stereotype may also mean a preconceived and oversimplified idea of the characteristics which typify a person or situation, or the attitude which is based on such a preconception. It may also mean a person who appears to conform closely to the idea of a particular "type," something which may be continually repeated without change (OED 651).

The notion of the stereotype, then, is replete with images of shadowy likenesses, preconceptions, simplifications, prototype effects and repetitions — the stereotype repeats what is already simplistically known, what is already a preconceived image though not necessarily in a way which draws attention to itself as a stereotype. At its simplest level, the mere repetition of what is already known elsewhere is to

repeat a preconceived image and therefore to stereotype. Consequently, given that the subject is interpellated by these stereotypes, its own self-psychologising constitutes a repetition of what is already known rather than a creation of something unique. Paradoxically, the notion of *etho*poesis (self as essence) supports this view for the essence is said to pre-exist anything which might be said about it.

Looked at in terms of the previous discussion, a stereotype might be described as an hypothesis which has already been confirmed and which we no longer want or need to examine, and so it takes on the character and status of something reassuringly given: someone's anxiety (hypothesis) becomes someone's truth (knowledge) which becomes someone's convention (stereotype). Occasionally, someone spots a weakness in the convention as a weakness in the original hypothesis, or as connotation dressed up as denotation, and the stereotype may be changed or even lost. Consequently, the stereotype is a unit of knowledge the origin of which has been forgotten, or suppressed — a discrete unit of knowledge struck from a continuum of possible hypotheses within discursive strategies which are familiar. The most extreme example of the stereotype in the Dickens-text may well be the stuttering tautologies of those caricatures endlessly repeating what it is already known they will repeat. I shall return to caricature in the next chapter.

Roland Barthes argues that the stereotype is a "sad affair" because it involves a "necrosis" of language, a sort of familiar stage prop brought on to "fill a hole in writing" ("Writers, Intellectuals, Teachers" 199). Because the stereotype seems to deny its status as language, because it sees itself as providing transparent access to some sort of "truth," Barthes believes that it is "at once corny and solemn," that it encourages laughter whilst at the same time forcing an awareness that

any attempts to deal with it politically are bound to falter because "political language is itself made up of stereotypes." Put simply, Barthes believes that to speak in stereotypes is to side with the power of language (199-200), or in Thompson's terms, to place meaning in the service of the power elites.

Consequently, Barthes believes that the only way to deal with the stereotype is to call its language into crisis, to force its users to recognise its language as language. Barthes believes that in order to do this, we must move away from the "conception of language as mere response to stimuli of situation or action," a gesture which will break the "opportunism" of bourgeois stereotypes whereby the necrosis of language seems to govern "a situation, a right, a struggle, an institution, a movement, a science, a theory." This is easier said than done, however, for having argued this, Barthes also acknowledges elsewhere the difficulty of attempting to escape or to transcend stereotypes. He suggests, for instance, that as in Freud's latent/manifest dream schema, the sign itself is a sort of stereotype because it lives by emptying the sign which is its apparent form, in order to make way for a second (mythical) sign which, in displacing the first, empties it of its significance (*Mythologies* 123). Put simply, this means that not only do signs fail to give unmediated access to the things to which they refer, they also fail to give unmediated access to themselves for reading signs is a process of forgetting, "of emptying what is full":

> To read is to find meanings, and to find meanings is to name them; but these named meanings are swept towards other names; names call to each other, reassemble, and their grouping calls for further naming: I name, I rename: so the text passes: it is a nomination in the course of becoming, a tireless approximation, a metonymic labour. With regard to the plural text, forgetting a meaning cannot therefore be seen as a fault. Forgetting in relation to what? What is the *sum* of the text? Meanings can indeed be forgotten, but only if we have chosen to bring to bear upon the text a singular scrutiny. Yet reading does not consist in

> stopping the chain of systems, in establishing a truth, a legality of the text, and consequently in leading its reader into "errors"; it consists in coupling these systems, not according to their finite quality, but according to their plurality (which is a being, not a discounting): I pass, I intersect, I articulate, I release, I do not count. Forgetting meanings is not a matter for excuses, an unfortunate defect in performance; it is an affirmative value, a way of asserting the irresponsibility of the text, the pluralism of systems (if I closed their list, I would inevitably reconstitute a singular, theological meaning): it is precisely because I forget that I read. (*S/Z* 11)

Reading signs can only ever be a "metonymic labour," a process where part stands for whole, where names are swept towards other names, where we find not truth or origins but a tireless approximation. Forgetting what the sign stands for is not a fault, but an enabling process where the self intersects and articulates itself in a performance of approximation. This emptying of what is full, this stereotyping of what is named, this knowing of the sign only through its prototype effects, inevitably leaves something out, something which the subject forgets thereby forcing it back to reading. If this chain of systems, these stereotypes and their remnants, were fixed, the reader would be in error because he or she would be mistaking approximation for truth.

Consequently, speaking itself produces a remnant, something left over, for speech is indelible in that our only response to it is to tack on more speech, to generate more remnants:

> Speech is irreversible: a word cannot be *retracted*, except precisely by saying that one retracts it. To cross out is here to add: if I want to erase what I have just said, I cannot do it without showing the eraser itself (I must say: "*or rather . . .*" "*I expressed myself badly . . .*"); paradoxically, it is ephemeral speech which is indelible, not monumental writing. All that one can do in the case of a spoken utterance is to tack on another utterance. The correcting movement of speech is the wavering of a flow of words, a weave which wears itself out catching itself up, a chain of argumentative corrections which constitutes the favoured abode of the unconscious part of our discourse. ("Writers, Intellectuals, Teachers" 190)

In other words, if language speaks us as we speak it, then its very use, as with signification generally, produces stereotypes and remnants that

themselves result from the prototype effects of those culturally produced and enacted cognitive models which are intrinsic to language. Our knowledge of ourselves and of others, therefore, is intrinsically stereotypical though not essentially so for, like Gilson, we recognise that what we know is nothing more than an hallucination and yet the very act of reading and/or speaking forces us to attempt to get beyond this hallucination.

Extending the idea of the indelibility of speech to notions of the self, then, means that subjectivity has what Barthes calls the "generality of stereotypes":

> Subjectivity is a plenary image, with which I may be thought to encumber the text, but whose deceptive plenitude is merely the wake of all the codes which constitute me, so that my subjectivity has ultimately the generality of stereotypes. (*S/Z* 10)

If subjectivity has the generality of stereotypes, then the bourgeois notion that the telling of the self results in some kind of autonomous whole is a myth. If subjectivity is a place where codes and conventions meet then notions of bourgeois character, that simulacrum of subjectivity, may itself be seen as little more than a collection of stereotypes. Consequently, given that the stereotype deprives subjects of information under the guise of giving it, what is left out, the unseen and the unsaid of the stereotype, is an index of the interpellative nature of perception, a sign of its incompleteness, a trace of the hallucination of which it is a constituent gesture.

Pierre Bourdieu's notion of the habitus extends the notion of the indelibility of stereotypes beyond language to other modalities of social practice, to "the most apparently insignificant aspects of the things, situations and practices of everyday life" such as "the ways of looking, sitting, standing, keeping silent, or even of speaking ('reproachful looks' or 'tones,' 'disapproving glances' and so on)." These modalities are difficult to resist, he says, "because they are silent and insidious,

insistent and insinuating," and function as "injunctions, intimidations, warnings, threats" (*The Logic of Practice* 47). Bourdieu could be describing much of what is explicit and implicit in the Dickens-text — the moral invective, the ludicrous dismissal.

Bringing Barthes and Bourdieu's arguments together suggests that the modalities of social practice, both verbal and non-verbal, constitute an assertion that the indelibility of stereotypes generates not a reassurance that any given ensemble of ideological practices will establish the certainty of an autonomous bourgeois self, but rather that this reassurance is itself an hallucinatory pretext to producing the Other as legible, a stereotyping gesture which functions as a prelude to attempts to control this Other.

For instance, Homi Bhabha believes that the stereotype reduces the Other to something marginal, something which allows the bourgeois subject to fetishise the Other as a less-than-perfect example of itself. This fetish permits "the disavowal of difference" because it constitutes a "fixation on an object that masks that difference and restores an original presence," which means that the stereotype "is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is already 'in place,' already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated" ("The Other Question" 18). What is "in place" does not need to be proved and yet its repetition produces an "ambivalence" which is "central to the stereotype," an ambivalence which

> ensures its repeatability in changing historical and discursive conjunctures; informs its strategies of individuation and marginalisation, produces that effect of probabilistic truth and predicability which, for the stereotype, must always be in excess of what can be empirically proved or logically construed. (18-19)

What this means is that the stereotype gives access and presence to the "identity" of the Other, first by likening the Other to itself. As Belsey argues: "The humanist subject finds its own mirror image wherever it

looks. The first imperative of bourgeois ideology is to proclaim itself natural and universal" ("The Subject in Danger" 88). This mirroring gesture ensures that both the Other and the anxiety it produces are controlled, if not in fact then in the bourgeois subject's own discourses. Hence, for Bhabha, the stereotype is both a "multiple and contradictory belief" for its recognition of difference is also "a disavowal of it" (26-27).

Looked at in this way, the bourgeois subject "doubles" what is frightening through the stereotype so as to be able to tame and control it — through words, its own words. The stereotype collapses images of the frightening Other into simplistic terms, a sort of fetish where one dispels the apparent otherness of the object in the very process of fixating it. But this doubling is always an excess despite its claims to probabilistic truth, an excess which is metonym, one where the "sharpening" of focus is a process of exclusion, of emptying what is full — the replacement of one signified by another which may or may not have been a part of the original. Or to put it in Barthes' terms, the doubling empties one sign, the characteristics of the bourgeois subject, to replace it with another, the stereotyped and fetishised Other. Paradoxically, this emptying not only removes the significance of the Other by stereotyping it, which is Bhabha's point, but it also empties the generative sign of the bourgeois subject itself, the sign which gave rise to the stereotype in the first place. Consequently, as the indelibility of speech suggests, the sign cannot be refilled but can only attract further speech which, given the anxiety the Other produces, functions as an affirmation of what is threatened, the bourgeois subject.

Bhabha says that there is a four term strategy in stereotypical discourse: "There is a tie-up between the metaphoric or masking function of the fetish and the narcissistic object-choice, and an opposing alliance between the metonymic figuring of lack and the

aggressive phase of the [Lacanian] Imaginary" (29). The stereotype, therefore, as Paul de Man notes of metaphor, "gives itself the totality which it then claims to define, but it is in fact the tautology of its own position" ("The Epistemology of Metaphor" 15).

For the bourgeois subject, then, the functioning of the stereotype resembles the Catholic church's doctrine of "double effect" where the liability for the result of an action is diminished if, despite the result being foreseeable, the outcome was not the primary aim of the action. In other words, although the use of stereotypes subverts the very bourgeois subjectivity it is meant to shore up, such use is acceptable because mistaking stereotypes as truths reduces anxiety and restores group-norms, both of which are necessary for the control of the individual subject. As Michael Goldberg argues, stereotypes undermine the "full-humanity" of the character making them appear as powerless creatures in the historical process, adumbrations that exemplify the general force of history (*Carlyle and Dickens* 116-122). However, although these adumbrations are excused because the focus is on the "general force" of the story, this force is itself a stereotype because it is based on exclusions and denigrations, on a disavowal of difference.

Stereotyping, then, is one of those practices which Foucault regards as immanent in the discourses which produce us as subjects:

> in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality. ("The Order of Discourse" 52)

This suggests that power should not only be viewed in terms of a legitimacy to be established, but also in terms of the method of subjugation that it instigates, methods which exist in cultural and discursive practices which are constitutive of our subjectivity. As one of these practices which gesture towards the mastery of chance events and

of the dangers of the Other, the stereotype functions as a way of silencing the primary sign in the very act of describing it.

As a textual practice, the stereotype not only encompasses the hundreds of caricatures which are readily found in the Dickens-text but it also delimits the narrator's own perspective — those frequent moments in the Dickens text when the narrator speaks over the heads and behind the backs of the characters. Recuperating what is already known through the stereotype is a discursive strategy which objectifies and legitimises the points of view it establishes of the status quo. The effect is to sharpen the focus of an existing point of view rather than to shift the perspective, to bring into the light what was threatening and yet already under surveillance, to confuse the pleasure of watching with that of being watched (as Hebdige might say). For in watching the recuperable heroes, the reader is watching the basis of his or her own constructed subjectivity form a sharpening moral focus on what is already known and articulated.

What this means is that the politics of the "change of heart" philosophy of the Dickens-narrator impoverishes rather than enriches the bourgeois subject because the possibility of mastering the chance events, of knowing the inscrutable neighbour, of rendering legible the alien-in-our-midst, is based on exclusions and denigrations, remnants whose stories remain to be told. The Dickens-text doubly denies the neighbours' voices, first, by placing them under surveillance thereby occupying the narrative space which they might have themselves occupied, an exegetic imperative which fails to live up to its epistemic pretensions; and second, by betraying the undertaking to speak on their behalf by turning their voices into inane and repetitive babble.

In this, the Dickens-text functions as an intermediary for the literate bourgeoisie, as Ackroyd predicted, because the lower-class subculture is

evoked, fetishised, stereotyped and dismissed, always in terms, despite persistent and vitriolic attacks on its own excesses, of bourgeois morality — in terms of the moral invective and the ludicrous dismissal. I shall begin with the moral invective.

IV

Nineteenth century fiction, aided and encouraged by Protestant morality and ethics, frequently aspires to the humanist notion that the redemption of the individual is the individual's responsibility, a bourgeois calculus which manifests itself in the idea that if individuals themselves were to change then society itself would improve according to the size of the differential. Although this view appears to be based on the assumption that anything concerning immediate human experience exists independently from any form of society, nevertheless it remains necessary to personify this society through the systems which constitute it, with all the implied stereotyping of those institutions which are meant, according to the humanist view, merely to be a development of the subjects' moral and rational capacities.

This is what we find in the Dickens-text — personifications of both the individual and the system with all the remnants and poetic justice these produce along with a generalised Carlylian notion that if only the individual would experienced a change of heart then the system's "face" would naturally tilt towards goodness. Carlyle's view is that in biography,

> one grand, invaluable secret there is . . . which includes all the rest, and what is comfortable, lies clearly in every man's power: *To have an open loving heart, and what follows from the possession of such.* Truly, it has been said, emphatically, and these days ought to be repeated: A loving Heart is the beginning of all knowledge, this it is that opens the whole mind, quickens every faculty of the intellect to do its fit work, that of knowing; and therefrom, by sure consequence, of *vividly uttering forth* . ("Biography" 57)

In the Dickens-text, this notion of the "change of heart," itself a stereotype and one that is difficult to shake, takes the form of a sort of vaccination. As Barbara Hardy argues, the narrative voice in the Dickens-text frequently resorts to a sort of moral homoeopathy — the treatment of disease by drugs, usually in small doses, that in a healthy person would produce symptoms like those of the disease thereby "immunising" them against this disease ("The Change of Heart in Dickens' Novels" 40-41). Put simply, readers are offered a small dose of the disease whilst being constantly reminded of both the symptoms and the cure by the narrator. These small doses ensure that readers will become morally resistant should they encounter the disease in "real life," without, that is, the protection of the all-seeing narrator. Characters themselves also experience this moral homoeopathy although not all take the hint: Young Martin Chuzzlewit's American experiences, for instance, "cure" him of his selfishness, whereas his cousin Jonas goes from bad to worst and is finally exposed as a murderer.

In *Dombey and Son*, the narrator literally bursts forth with his own view of the social ills and what he sees as their homoeopathic cure. He says:

> Look round upon the world of odious sights — millions of immortal creatures have no other world on earth — at the lightest mention of which humanity revolts, and the dainty delicacy living in the next street, stops her ears, and lisps "I don't believe it!" Breathe the polluted air, foul with every impurity that is poisonous to health and life; and have every sense, conferred upon our race for its delight and happiness, offended, sickened and disgusted, and made a channel by which misery and death alone can enter. Vainly attempt to think of any simple plant, or flower, or wholesome weed, that, set in this fetid bed, could have its natural growth, or put its little leaves off to the sun as God designed it. (DS 737)

The imperative mood of this passage clearly positions the Dickens-narrator in the role of the secular priest who is urging his parishioners

to wake up and look around them. The foul, fetid, disease-ridden presence of the Other is alive and well under their very noses. Like the "dainty delicacy," however, his parishioners only appear to believe what they what to believe. As Engels notes of the main thoroughfares of London, the poor areas are kept well out of sight so that they will not intrude on the sensibilities of the middle class (*The Condition of the Working Class in England* 32-33). The Dickens-narrator's moral invective is designed to force the middle class to recognise the disease-ridden presence for what it is, so that they will not be brought down, like the aristocrats in *A Tale of Two Cities*, by their own blindness. In other words, they need to "smell" a little of this disease for the moral homoeopathy to work. The Dickens-narrator seems aware of how this process of moral homoeopathy works, and describes it in blistering detail:

> Those who study the physical sciences, and bring them to bear upon the health of Man, tell us that if the noxious particles that rise from the vitiated air were palpable to the sight, we should see them lowering in a dense black cloud above such haunts, and rolling slowly on to corrupt the better portions of a town. But if the moral pestilence that rises with them, and in the eternal laws of outraged Nature, is inseparable from them, could be made discernible too, how terrible the revelation! Then should we see depravity, impiety, drunkenness, theft, murder, and a long train of nameless sins against the natural affections and repulsions of mankind, overhanging the devoted spots, and creeping on, to blight the innocent and spread contagion among the pure. Then should we see how the same poisoned fountains that flow into our hospitals and lazar-houses, inundate the jails, and make the convict-ships swim deep, and roll across the seas, and over-run vast continents with crime. Then should we stand appalled to know, that where we generate disease to strike our children down and entail itself on unborn generations, there also we breed, by the same certain process, infancy that knows no innocence, youth without modesty or shame, maturity that mature in nothing but in suffering and guilt, blasted old age that is a scandal on the form we bear. Unnatural humanity! When shall we gather grapes from thorns, and figs from thistles; when fields of grain shall spring up from the offal in the bye-ways of our wicked cities, and roses bloom in the fat churchyards that they cherish; then we may look for natural humanity, and find it growing from such a seed. (738)

The fear and anxiety produced by the Other, the alien-in-our-midst, is clearly discernible in this passage. The responsibility for the disgrace is sheeted home to the middle class through the repeatedly organic images of growth — whether we get flowers or weeds is a function of how we till and manage the soil.

These images culminate in the sort of threats of death without redemption which might have come from any pulpit:

> Oh for a good spirit who would take the house-tops off, with a more potent and benignant hand than the lame demon in the tale, and show a Christian people what dark shapes issue from amidst their homes, to swell the retinue of the Destroying Angel as he moves forth among them! For only one night's view of the pale phantoms rising from the scenes of our too-long neglect; and from the thick and sullen air where Vice and Fever propagate together, raining the tremendous social retributions which are ever pouring down, and ever coming thicker! Bright and blest the morning that should rise on such a night: for men, delayed no more by stumbling-blocks of their making, which are but specks of dust upon the path between them and eternity, would then apply themselves, like the creatures of one common origin, owing one duty to the Father of one family, and tending to one common end, to make the world a better place! (738-739)

I have quoted at length here to demonstrate that the Dickens-narrator is very aware not only of the purpose of the moral invective but also of its desirable outcomes. It is a case of the "good spirit" versus the destroying angel, and the path we choose will determine our fate, if not in this world then in the next. The good spirit may be regarded as the regenerated and converted heart of the inhabitants who, if they joined together, would render the Destroying Angel impotent. Here, the destroying angel is seen as a grotesque version of the "good" self, one which lurks within.

For the characters, this moral homoeopathy frequently takes the form of a double whose very presence reminds the redeemable character that conversion from the "dark side" is not only possible but desirable. As Barbara Hardy argues, the Victorian "conversion" largely depends

> on the moral double or opposite. The hero is changed by seeing his situation or his moral defect enacted for him in external coincidence; by his twin who forces a recognition of loathsome resemblance, or by his opposite, who forces reluctant admiration and comparison. He sees his defect enlarged, isolated unmistakably his own, but detached for inspection. And he acts on this recognition, and is irrevocably changed. (42)

Of course, the reader's presumed sympathy for the hero positions him or her in a similar position. The use of the double, which is itself a sort of extended stereotype of the self, endlessly urges a dual perspective by repeating what is already known, and although the double may act as an agent for change by revealing what is hidden or by highlighting what is denied, characters are meant to see themselves in their potential double, and the act of seeing is supposed to work the miracles.

Christian accounts of the world are replete with miracle-working doubles. As Michael Neve argues, the "literary study of doubles roots itself in Christian accounts of the world, describing how, by trick, by election or by sin, characters break open, split apart, see things that may be themselves, even meet the return of their true selves" ("Triples" 22). Neve believes that in Christian writings from Augustan onwards, reason and unreason themselves are seen as doubles, and the process of recognising God requires a journey from the first to the second and back. God sets the terms for a crisis which is deliberately orchestrated "since this crisis is a blueprint for new life," a crisis which "involves the necessary destruction of a false self," that is, the self which "is not yet close to God, not yet shepherded in." Consequently, the movement from presumptive reason to irrationality and back to God-given or at least authority-sanctioned reason is "purposive" and is "nothing less than a sign of the operation of God's grace." Young Martin Chuzzlewit's travels to America, and on to the "Valley of Eden" where both he and his helpful double, Mark Tapley, come face-to-face with their "selves" stripped of society's comforting structures and with the prospect of

dying unknown and unwanted in a swamp, is a paradigm case of Neve's argument.

Of course, the doubles are not alone for they are always accompanied by the intrepid narrator and his faithful reader. As Neve says:

> It takes three to make a double, to provide the environment where the double idea, the idea of recognition and of doubling, can take place. Someone, maybe something, has to hear the story of doubles, to see a difference and to make a difference. With doubles, the last tango takes three. (22)

Hardy's moral conversion, the "change of heart," can only come about via the destruction of the "old" self so as to make way for something new — the destroying angel has to be itself destroyed.

It is significant that in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, whilst Young Martin is finally "turned" from his selfishness through his experiences with his iconic opposite, the irrepressible Mark, Old Martin is "turned" through his experiences with his morally shocking twin, Seth Pecksniff. The novel is full of "twinnings," and I shall return to the most extraordinary of these, the relation between Sairey Gamp and Mrs Harris in the next chapter.

Dickens' most famous doubles are Sydney Carton and Charles Darnay in *A Tale of Two Cities*. Carton is a debauched and disaffected middle-class loser, and perhaps more frighteningly for the bourgeoisie who value thrift in all things, an instance of wasted potential. Charles Darnay provides him with a mirror image, a reversal which shows him what he might have been. Carton's redemption through sacrifice, though in a somewhat secular version of its Christian original, is both a model and a warning. In effect, he represents a double sacrifice for his blindness to the benefits and beauty of bourgeois morality also doubles as a warning to the bourgeoisie not only as to the effects of a debauched life but also as to the potential effects of a class so narcissistic and self-indulgent that it ignores the failure of French

noblesse oblige and the resultant revolution. It may be that laying down one's life is the greatest act of love, but redemption always comes with a price which is usually paid by a (dispensable) scapegoat as a warning to others of the dangers of non-conformity.

For instance, Carton, on the day that he saves Darnay from the charge of treason by confusing a witness for the prosecution with their striking resemblance, finishes his dinner with Darnay and ruminates on the nature of their similarity with the aid of a mirror:

> When he was left alone, this strange being took up a candle, went to the glass that hung against the wall, and surveyed himself minutely in it.
>
> "Do you particularly like the man?" he muttered, at his own image. "Why should you particularly like a man who resembles you? There is nothing in you to like; you know that. Ah, confound you! What a change you have made in yourself! A good reason for taking to a man, that he shows you what you have fallen away from, and what you might have been! Change places with him, and would you have been looked at by those blue eyes as he was, and commiserated by that agitated face as he was? Come on, and have it out in plain words! You hate the fellow."
>
> He resorted to his pint of wine for consolation, drank it all in a few minutes, and fell asleep on his arms, with his hair straggling over the table, and a long winding-sheet in the candle dripping down upon him. (TTC 91)

Darnay is Carton's "opposite" twin from whom he must learn, though we already know from the "winding-sheet" candle that things may not go well for him. Carton is redeemed but not saved, and his duet with the mirror shows us exactly what we are to do with, and how we are meant to learn from, our doubles — we look at them, and then at ourselves in the mirror. Carton dutifully repeats his lesson for our benefit — Darnay shows him what he had been and what he had fallen away from. In the end, as fate has dealt with Darnay rather harshly (as it does with Dr Manette), Carton, who is more "deserving" of punishment than his double, conveniently steps up to the guillotine in his place. Order is restored with Carton's conversion — the lesson learnt.

In being situated close to but detached from the focal point of a narrative, the reader is expected to "read" this sort of doubling, which stereotypes social mistrust and indifference as evil, and love and social responsibility as inherently good, as his or her cue for a similar kind of conversion, should the shoe fit. The moral invective, which is low-key but palpable, is left to Carton himself as he ruminates on his fate, or at least the narrator says it would have been his prophetic last utterance. Carton is talking, of course, about Lucy Manette:

> "I see that I hold a sanctuary in their hearts, and in the hearts of their descendants, generations hence. I see her, an old woman, weeping for me on the anniversary of this day. I see her and her husband, their course done, living side by side in their last earthly bed, and I know that each was not more honoured and held sacred in the other's soul, than I was in the souls of both. . . . It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known. (367)

The narrator has successfully managed to convert the death scene into an affirmation of the Christian notion of a (better) life after death for those who have been redeemed, as well as providing a prescription of the ideal family unit based on love, honour (and perhaps obedience), and all of this with not a dry eye in the house. It is significant that Carton's love for Lucy is non-sexual in that he has managed to produce a child, named after him, without consummating this love. The analogy with Christ is complete and the bourgeois notion of gain through self-sacrifice intact. It is also significant that life after death is seen as a "rest" from the travails of earthly existence. No priest could have been more eloquent or more persuasive.

The effect of the narrative rests on change, not within the clearly religious stereotypes, which are time-worn in that they repeat what is already known, in place, already there, but within Carton himself. The stereotypes produce, as with Carton's earlier encounter with the mirror, an image of a likeness, in this case, of Christ who is, according to Christianity, everyone's iconic double. The encounter is meant to

change our hearts, to suggest to us that if only we joined in with the good spirit, we, too, would experience such a change which is both an embodiment of and a desire for good.

The politics of a change of heart comes down to the discovery by the characters of their assumptions and fears in the *seelenspiegel* of the text, assumptions and fears which are anxiously repeated in order to mollify the fear the *seelenspiegel* engenders and to offer a sanitised, unproblematic and culturally acceptable finger-post of potential conversion. This is an appeal rather then an answer because, trapped in the intuition of the heart, in its sense of good and evil, the narrator finds the logic of an answer in the proposition that the predilection of the parts influences the tone of the whole, that the attitude of the individual adds up to a recognisable perspective of a people and its culture. The narrator presents to the Victorian eye the spectacle of its own blindness — the characters regarded as evil or as embodiments of negativity are consistently portrayed as suffering the blindness the narrator wishes his readers to lose. The incapacities of the heart are constantly explored in relation to the political, social and cultural institutions of society. Blindness is a form of selfishness, but it is also a kind of indolent unhelpfulness. Indifference is an evil which can be cured, but it seems to be persistently fatal for those whose power to overcome it is limited by their class. Commonsense articulates a sense of oughtness, templates of behaviour, the primary focus of which are the norms of the group. It is through story-telling that these norms are negotiated. And in telling stories, it is the teachable heart which is being portrayed as the desirable norm. For the collective heart to change, its individual instances must appear as themselves and not as the absurd manifestations of an ego drawn away from the good by an

uncaring self, an indifferent system, and an ultimately solipsistic religion.

Many of Dickens's characters are judged by the narrator and by other characters according to this sort of model. Either they are gifted with this sublime manifestation of the teachable and lovable heart, or they fall into a number of categories of selfishness. First, they may be seen as essentially selfish, and pilloried for everything they say or do before they either destroy themselves or are destroyed by the forces of good. Second, they may be seen as systematically selfish, as people who are unable to be helpful because they are locked into a class (Sir Lester Deadlock) or a position (Lord Chancellor). The institutions and/or class which these characters represent are imbued with a set of socio-cultural values which seem predisposed to be unhelpful but they are facades behind which the essentially and naively selfish shelter. It is possible to rise above this protecting and ensnaring facade. It is a feature of all unhelpful and selfish characters that they are unable or unwilling to conduct normal sexual and social relations; men seem to find it particularly difficult to relate to women. The teleology of the Dickens narrative, then, is usually based on some sort of moral invective. I would now like to move on to the more obvious form of the stereotype — caricature.

Chapter Seven

"It is good to know that we have no reserve before each other, but are appearing freely in our own characters."
(Seth Pecksniff MC)

I

One could be forgiven for thinking that many of the characters in the Dickens-texts suffer from Tourette's syndrome which, as Oliver Sacks notes, refers to neurophysiological condition where patients suffer from an inability to control tics, jerks, mannerisms, grimaces, noises, curses, involuntary imitations and compulsions of all sorts ("Witty Ticcy Ray" 87). It is in and through these ticks and jerks that we find the caricatures for which Dickens is famous. Perhaps it is simply a case, as E. D. Hirsch suggests, that we find in the past "a state of mind" so different from our own that it "seems to be populated by beings who might have come from Mars." Interestingly, he calls this state of mind the "fallacy of the inscrutable past" (*The Aims of Interpretation* 77). Whatever the case, it is in these tics, jerks and so on that the stereotypes and their remnants both enable and subvert the folk-psychologisings of the Dickens-text, psychologisings which, as we saw with the politics of the "change of heart," interpellate both characters and readers with bourgeois ideology. Caricatures can take the form of a moral invective or of the ludicrously dismissed. In this chapter, I want to examine several caricatures from a number of Dickens' texts. Although these caricatures may say something about the Dickens-text generally, I have selected them primarily for what they suggest about the interpellation of the subject. Before I look at these caricatures, I want to "cheat" a little by taking a look at one of the author's own caricatures.

On 3 May 1843, Dickens wrote to his friend Douglas Jerrod complaining, among other things, about those people who, rather than

look clearly at what is happening around them, prefer to extol the virtues of the "good old times." He refers to these people as "the Parrots of Society" and says that they "are more intolerable and mischievous" than Society's "Birds of Prey." By way of example, he gives his own perspective on one of his social outings:

> Oh Heaven, if you could have been with me at a Hospital Dinner last Monday! There were men there — your City Aristocracy — who made such speeches, and expressed such sentiments, as any moderately intelligent dustman would have blushed through his cindery bloom to have thought of. Sleek, slobbering, bow-paunched, overfed, apoplectic, snorting cattle — and the auditory leaping up in their delight. (*Letters* 3.481-482)

In a subsequent letter to the same friend he writes:

> There are hundreds of parrots, who will declaim to you in speech and print . . . on the degeneracy of the times in which a railroad is being built across the water in Venice. . . . Before God, I could almost turn bloody minded and shoot the parrots of our island with as little compunction as Robinson Crusoe shot the parrots in his. (*Letters* 4.611)

Parrots, it would seem, always expose their own folly, and no Monty Python in sight. There are two points worth noticing here: first, the Dickens-text itself is full of sentiments which might make any moderately intelligent dustman blush, as we saw with Carton's exit speech; and second, although the parrots are in this case the aristocracy, there is a certain fascist tendency here — that is, there is some sort of "natural" hierarchy in Dickens' mind, and those who "ought" to be first are in fact last and therefore dispensable. Obviously, Dickens, as is his fashion, is making a joke at the expense of others, in this case a tendentious joke he makes about any number of Pecksniff-like characters. This sort of caricaturing establishes a frame within which to "frame" its subjects — the "heartless" city aristocracy establish public forums, frequently lavish dinners, in which to convince fellow "aristocrats" just how committed they are to the physical and moral well-being of the poor they have just spent the day exploiting.

Of course, the middle-class no doubt enjoyed attacking the aristocracy, especially when such attacks show them as occupying positions for which they were utterly unfitted. In a *Tale of Two Cities*, for instance, Monseigneur comes to signify the indifference and decay of the aristocracy:

> Monseigneur, one of the great lords in power at the Court, held his fortnightly reception in his grand hotel in Paris. Monseigneur was in his inner room, his sanctuary of sanctuaries, the Holiest of Holiests to the crowd of worshippers in the suite of rooms without. Monseigneur could swallow a great many things with ease, and was by some few sullen minds supposed to be rather rapidly swallowing France; but, his morning's chocolate could not so much as get into the throat of Monseigneur without the aide of four strong men besides the cook. (109)

The scene describing Monseigneur takes a chapter on its own and, like the City Aristocracy, he is damned in narrative paraphrase by every word or gesture he makes. Those in the "suite without" hope to gain in some way from being noticed at this reception. Monseigneur sets the tone which is all the more insidious for its effects on those who should have known better but who are otherwise constrained by a system of influence and indifference:

> The leprosy of unreality disfigured every human creature in attendance upon the Monseigneur. In the outermost room were half a dozen exceptional people who had had, for a few years, some vague misgiving in them that things in general were going rather wrong. As a promising way of setting them right, half of the half-dozen had become members of a fantastic set of Convulsionists, and were even then considering within themselves whether they should foam, rage, roar, and turn cataleptic on the spot — thereby setting up a highly intelligible finger-post to the future, for monseigneur's guidance. (112)

By stereotyping indifference in this way, it is shown to be filtering through all levels of society.

Dickens no doubt liked to see himself as a champion of the poor, particularly if it gave him the opportunity to attack the stupidity of the wealthy. In a speech at a Conversazione in aid of funds for the Birmingham Polytechnic Institution, for instance, he says:

> There is, indeed, no difference in the main with respect to the dangers of ignorance and the advantages of knowledge between those who hold different opinions — for it is to be observed, that those who are most distrustful of the advantages of education, are always the first to exclaim against the results of ignorance. This fact was pleasantly illustrated on the railway, as I came here. In the same carriage with me there sat an ancient gentleman . . . who expressed himself most mournfully as to the ruinous effects and rapid spread of railways, and was most pathetic upon the virtues of the slow-going old stage coaches. Now I, entertaining some lingering kindness for the road, made shift to express my concurrence with the old gentleman's opinion without any great compromise on principle. . . . When he burst forth against such new-fangled notions, and said no good could come of them, I did not contest the point. But I found that when the speed of the engine abated, or there was a prolonged stay at any station, up the old gentleman was at arms, and his watch was instantly out of his pocket denouncing the slowness of our progress. Now I could not help comparing this old gentleman to that ingenious class of persons who are in the constant habit of declaiming against the vices and crimes of society, and at the same time are the first and foremost to assert that vice and crime have not their common origin in ignorance and discontent. (*Letters* 4.611)

Here, Dickens establishes a basic antithesis between learning and ignorance and, by associating vice and crime with ignorance, he implicitly demonstrates the value of learning. The old gentleman is easily situated in a "class" of persons who are constantly "declaiming" one thing and then denying its inevitable consequence; they claim on the one hand that vice and crime are intolerable but refuse to recognise that these social ills have their origins in the ignorance their "class" refuses to do anything about, perhaps because it costs money. In attempting to find the old gentleman's "logical" inconsistency, his aporia, Dickens is himself in danger of becoming one of those parrots who extol the virtues of the good old times whilst simultaneously enjoying the fruits of progress. His pleasure at cutting off the man's head whilst leaving it on his shoulders, which Pope says is the mark of good satire, overwhelms the point about the dangers of vice and ignorance and of the benefits of moral homoeopathy (so to speak) and education. Without wishing to make a generalisation about the

Dickens-text which I would then need to provide numerous examples to prove, it is certainly this reader's impression that the caricatures in the Dickens-text tend to overshadow the points which might be made from them. Even when the narrator intrudes with his "Dead, Ladies and Gentlemen" style moral invective, he appears to become a caricature of himself. As C. P. Snow argues, we find in Dickens' "Manic incantory rhetoric," those moments of direct address to the reader, that the narrator stereotypes himself as an observer of acute insight whose main function is accurate reportage but who, at moments of unbearable pathos, allows the border between reportage and didacticism, between objectivity and compassion, to become sufficiently blurred as to admit a direct appeal to the reader. This appeal, although an intrusion, is accepted because to refuse it would be to identify oneself with the evil or the indifference upon which the moment of pathos is based ("Dickens and the Public Service" 131-132). In stereotyping himself as an "observer of acute insight," however, the narrator rarely follows Carton's example by holding up a mirror to his own practice, either to the moral invective or to the ludicrous dismissible. Caricatures, like parrots, however, have a way of getting their own back. Their stuttering tautologies, tics, jerks and so on can be read as cognitive models which exhibit prototype effects, stereotypes which leave something behind, scores which remain to be settled. As we shall see, Sairey Gamp has the biggest score to settle of them all.

II

There is no doubt that Dickens had a sharp eye for the fraudulent hand-gesture. In *Nicholas Nickleby*, for instance, Kate Nickleby poses for a portrait by the miniaturist, Miss La Creevy, who, in the interchange with Kate, reveals some of the difficulties of the art of the miniaturist

and, one could argue, by implication, of the caricaturist. In painting Kate Nickleby's miniature, Miss La Creevy is intent on *infusing* a "particularly pink countenance" into Kate's portrait, an idea which she had hit upon while executing a portrait of an officer:

> On the second morning after the departure of Nicholas for Yorkshire, Kate Nickleby sat in a very faded chair raised upon a very dusty throne in Miss La Creevy's room, giving that lady a sitting for a portrait upon which she was engaged; and towards the full perfection of which, Miss La Creevy had had the street-door case brought upstairs, in order that she might be the better able to infuse into the counterfeit countenance of Miss Nickleby, a bright salmon flesh-tint which she had originally hit upon while executing the miniature of a young officer therein contained, and which was considered by Miss La Creevy's friends and patrons to be quite a novelty in art: as indeed it was.
>
> "I think I have caught it now," said Miss La Creevy. "The very shade! This will be the sweetest portrait I have ever done, certainly."
>
> "It will be your genius that makes it so, then, I am sure," replied Kate, smiling.
>
> "No, no, I won't allow that, my dear," rejoined Miss La Creevy. "It's a very nice subject — a very nice subject, indeed — though of course, something depends upon the mode of treatment."
>
> "And not a little," observed Kate.
>
> ""Why, my dear, you are right there," said Miss La Creevy, "in the main you are right there; though I don't allow that it is of such very great importance in the present case. Ah! The difficulties of Art, my dear, are great."
>
> "They must be, I have no doubt," said Kate, humouring her good natured little friend. (114)

This brings her to the difficulties of her art which, she suggests, "are great":

> "They are beyond anything you can form the faintest conception of. . . . What with bringing out eyes with all one's power, and keeping down noses with all one's force, and adding to heads, and taking away teeth altogether, you have no idea of the trouble one little miniature is." (114)

Having alerted us to the difficulties associated with her art, Miss La Creevy agrees with Kate that the remuneration is insufficient, and then complains that

> "people are so dissatisfied and unreasonable, that, nine times out of ten, there's no pleasure in painting them. Sometimes they say, 'Oh, how very serious you have made me look, Miss La Creevy!'

> and at others, 'La, Miss La Creevy, how very smirking!' when the very essence of a good portrait is, that it must be either serious or smirking, or it's no portrait at all." (115)

Miss La Creevy insists, in a confidential whisper, that "there are only two styles of portrait painting; the serious and the smirk" (the moral invective and the ludicrous dismissal): the serious she uses for "professional" people; and the smirk for "private ladies and gentleman who don't care so much about looking clever." Kate observes that Miss La Creevy paints a lot of officers. Miss La Creevy responds: "Character portraits, oh yes — they're not real military men, you know." She goes on:

> "only clerks and that, who hire a uniform coat to be painted in and send it here in a carpet bag. Some artists . . . keep a red coat, and charge seven-and-sixpence extra for hire and carmine; but I don't do that myself, for I don't consider it legitimate." (115)

This is, of course, all good fun which even Kate enjoys. Portrait painting was big business in Victorian England, and the caricature of Miss La Creevy not only satirises the pretensions of the portrait painters but also of the subjects themselves. Although it is difficult to tell with the Dickens-narrator, whose leg-pulling antics, multiple voices and shifting points of view are infamous, one nevertheless gets the impression that the narrator is not aware of the way in which his caricature of Miss La Creevy's "miniatures" subverts the integrity of the stereotypes upon which the narrator's caricaturing is based.

This becomes evident if Miss La Creevy's actions and comments are read as something of an analogy of the way in which the caricaturist works: the occupation is highly visual; the "artist" is obliged to infuse something from outside the subject into the work (she even brings up the "door case" to as to be able to infuse the image of the likeness with the right countenance); the mode of treatment influences the outcome; the primary problem for the "artist" is to exercise some form of control in relation to the desired outcome (controlling the noses, and so on);

the subjects rarely appeared satisfied with the outcome; the process involves depriving the real subjects of some of their features in order to produce an appropriately infused miniature; the artist must have a pre-conceived idea of the process before she can put it to work (portraits are either smirking or serious); the subjects themselves often appear as somebody other then themselves (this is observable with the clerks because of their hired coats, and there is a strong impression that others, who may not have any external indication of their difference, appear as somebody other than themselves, hence their dislike of the smirking or serious style which Miss La Creevy imposes upon them); although the "artist" seems aware that the subjects do not appear "freely in their own characters" (109), as Pecksniff might say, she is also aware that the difficulties of her art would make it impossible for her to "capture" these characters anyway; the artist, who knows that what she is seeing isn't the real subject, seems powerless to stop herself from injecting her own impression of them as either smug or self-important, or as possessing pink countenances, and so on.

Miss La Creevy even goes so far as to tell the subjects "what part [of them] [she] is upon, in order that, if there's any particular expression they want introduced they may throw it in, at any time, you know"(116). This might create the impression that she as "artist" is actually only reflecting the wishes of her subjects, that she includes whatever it is they want in their portraits. As an "artist" she obviously has to comply with their wishes so as to maintain her clientele. Her impositions nevertheless place her in the realm of the caricaturist. Looked at in this way, caricature may be provisionally defined as the attempt in narrative to distil the essence of a character by presenting a truncated version of it, as a narrative device where the narrator deprives the reader of information under the guise of giving it.

Without assuming that it is even possible to know a "character," characters who appear as caricatures are not accorded the same privileges as those who appear as characters. They are frequently deprived of dialogue with other characters, or, if they are allowed to speak, it is only after the narrator has carefully distorted their characteristics. Often they are only allowed utterance in narrative paraphrase. Caricatures which appear throughout the text as opposed to those who only make a cameo appearance are shown to be endlessly repeating themselves and/or the caricatured feature they display. The Dickens-narrator tells rather than shows the reader what to think about these caricatures, but he does so using a sleight-of-hand where an impression of showing rather than telling is maintained through a preponderance of visual imagery. Often the characters themselves use caricature as a way of seeing other characters, a practice of observation which the narrator is at pains to show as hopelessly inadequate, and this has the effect of undermining caricature as a method of observation. Caricature may also be regarded as a metonym of characterisation for what we see with caricature, as Miss La Creevy has shown us, is a part for the whole — the caricaturist only allows the spectator to see those aspects of the character which suit the impression the caricaturist is attempting to create. Again, we are back in the realm of the stereotype.

Paradoxically, caricature appeals to the implicit truth-of-correspondence assertion of realism, which is at the basis of the literary convention of character, more than fully developed characters do. For "real" people do not normally have an omniscient narrator sitting on their shoulder explaining in the least detail the eccentricities of the traits and behaviour of the people they meet. Like Miss la Creevy, they are forced to interpret a line of the nose, a warm or intimidating look or

gesture, a kind or a harsh word. In other words, the reader's mode of dealing with the "world" is likely to be similar to the way in which the caricaturist deals with caricatures as both rely on a complex assortment of visual and other stimuli in order to index and compartmentalise the people they know and meet. Omniscience is simply not an option in this process no matter how hard one tries.

In emptying one sign (we know that there is a "real" character there somewhere as our bourgeois notion of character has taught us) to replace it with another (the stick and improbable figures of caricature), the narrators, characters and readers are generating shadowy images of shadowy images, are producing stereotypes. Like the clash and synthesis of manifest and latent which Barthes highlights in Freud's dream schema, caricature lives by emptying the sign which is its apparent form (character), in order to make way for a second mythical sign which, in displacing the first, empties it of its significance. This displacement is never total because caricature's primary method of manifestation is to empty character of all significance save for the particular trait(s) it is attempting to highlight. This trait then becomes a sign not only of that particular character but also, and this depends upon the role the caricature/character is asked to play in the work, a sign of a theme or an aspect of a theme with which the narration is concerned. The displacement itself depends upon the codes and conventions of characterisation with which caricature plays and which are focused in the expectations of the reader. Displacement allows the narrator to make a variety of points without appearing to do so by simply allowing the second mythical sign to interact with other similarly constructed signs or with more developed characters in accordance with the limits of the manifested trait.

Significantly, caricatures themselves have their roots in folk psychologisings of the self. As Ann Gould argues, "The word 'caricature' derives from the Italian *caricare* , meaning 'to load' or 'to surcharge'" (*Masters of Caricature* 5). Caricature can mean "the distorted representation of particular people" or of general types. "Most themes in caricature," she says,

> can be traced back into archetype and folklore. . . . Old jokes never fail. Traditional personifications (wily fox, lustful goat) hold good. Devils, ogres, fools, and twerps are unchanging. Caricaturists harp on recognised routines, partly because this encourages the onlookers: the set up is no sooner seen than understood. And with understanding comes connivance. Caricature is always Us against Them. The joke is shared; so is the hate." (9)

Caricatures, then, are particularly suited as a means of knowing the "alien-in-our-midst," of disavowing difference under the guise of establishing it.

Gould believes that "true" caricature "is concerned with the comic or monstrous potential of real people" (10). Accordingly, the modalities of caricature are replete with "sign language" such that some sort of system of classification is implied: " noses . . . betoken personalities, just as the bumps on a man's head, interpreted by a phrenologist, spell out his true character" (10). This suggests that caricature extends the scope of "analysis" to all areas of the situations and practices of everyday life, to the verbal and non-verbal areas of Bourdieu's habitus, to what people say and to the "ways of looking, sitting, standing, keeping silent, or even of speaking ('reproachful looks' or 'tones,' 'disapproving glances' and so on)," all of which can function as function as "injunctions, intimidations, warnings, threats" (*The Logic of Practice* 47). Although caricatures settle scores, they are indelible because, like speech, they can only attract more commentary as their remnants generate more stories, more scores to settle. The caricaturist, like Miss La Creevy, enters a conspiracy with her audience — Kate's

smiles of pleasure not only reassure Miss La Creevy but they also show that Kate has entered a conspiracy with Miss La Creevy against those pretentious and foolish enough to want a miniature in the first place. Kate's warm if condescending tone also indicates that she is humouring Miss La Creevy, though it appears to have escaped her notice that she herself is posing for a miniature, a vainglorious gesture she finds amusing in others. What we have with the "Miss La Creevy" example is both the moral invective and the ludicrous dismissal at the same time. As Gould says of the earlier forms of character from which caricature derives, in a comment which echoes Miller's paradigm model: "Characters were concocted from allegory, nicknames, Old Testament similes and sheer prejudice. In the perpetual struggles everybody conformed to type: haloes for some, or laurels; for the rest, squints, hunchbacks, obesity, gout — outward manifestations of their moral deformities" (17-18). In this, no doubt with the city's aristocratic parrots in the back of his mind, the Dickens-narrator, like Miss La Creevy and the portrait-artists she parodies, is squirreling for some sort of truth beneath the appearances of things. Unlike Miss La Creevy, however, who believes that these truths ought to be limited to the seriously inclined or to the smirking, the Dickens-narrator, who is at heart committed to *etho*poesis, the seeing character as essence, strives to find the perfect caricature, one which will reveal this essence. As Gould says, the caricaturist works "to grasp the perfect deformity, and thus reveal the very essence of a personality. A good caricature, like every work of art, is more true to life than reality itself," a scenario which runs "observation — remark — reaction — laughter" (22-23). Or to put it more bluntly, "one foot on the sidewalk ready to trip the victim, the other in the gutter" (34). Like Belsey, who sees the defence the humanist subject makes of itself, as has been said, vacillating

between moral invective and ludicrous dismissal, Gould sees caricature flickering between "the vicious attack" and "the cunning likeness," a flickering which is a means of "focusing of attention, a means of peering at a man, scrutinising him with a fortune-teller's deliberation, noting every crease and wrinkle" (84). Young Martin's American experiences in *Martin Chuzzlewit* perfectly exemplify this sort of scrutiny, especially his experiences with the "journalists" from the Watertoast Gazette.

III

Young Martin is introduced to the story when he meets Tom Pinch in the parlour of the tavern at Salisbury. His propensity for careless selfishness is immediately established in a scene which is repeated later in the story in Pecksniff's house and which is accompanied by a drawing (149). Young Martin moves a leather chair "to the very centre of the hearth" where he sits down "with a foot on each side of the hob"(127). This act is not of itself significant given that he has been travelling all day on the outside of a coach. However, although he has an appointment to meet "a gentleman" at six-thirty, he fails to ask Tom if he may be that gentleman, and given Tom's timidity, this is not surprising. The particular attention each is giving the clock finally forces Young Martin to speak. When he realises that Tom is after all the gentleman he seeks, he jumps up and says, "'And I have been keeping the fire from you all the while'." The act of excluding Tom from the fire has now been combined with an explicit admission by Young Martin that he knew what he was doing or, at least, now realises what he had done. So far the impression is of nothing more than a cold and somewhat careless stranger. Tom, in his simplicity and his desire to please, says: "'I am very glad indeed that you turned out to be the party

I expected. I was thinking, but a minute ago, that I could wish him to be like you'." Young Martin accepts the compliment and returns it, but with a slightly different emphasis: "'for I assure you'," he says, "'I was thinking there could be no such luck as Mr Pinch turning out like *you*'."

Although the "you" is emphasised, any conception of exactly what he means by luck is left unexplained. A few moments later, however, he says to Tom: "'Do me the favour to ring the bell, will you'?" The narrator makes no comment other than to point out parenthetically that the bell handle "hung just over Martin's head, as he warmed himself." Young Martin's "character" has been clearly established. He is not just the cold and careless stranger but someone who is knowingly selfish. Much more could be said about this scene, and the breakfast scene which follows shortly afterwards at Pecksniff's house where Tom's amazement at Young Martin's temerity at indulging in the best fare along with Pecksniff becomes not only an indication of Pecksniff's selfishness but also of Young Martin's preoccupation with himself because he either fails to notice or is deliberately unconcerned at how Tom is treated.

Young Martin is to be redeemed later in the story, however, and it is worthwhile noting that, unlike those selfish characters who will not be redeemed, Young Martin's treatment by the narrator allows for this. Compare, for instance, Pecksniff's introduction to the story. The narrator is at pains to ensure that his disposition is *clearly* known: "It has been remarked," he says, "that Mr Pecksniff was a moral man. So he was. Perhaps there was never a more moral man than Pecksniff: especially in his conversation and his correspondence. . . . Some people likened him to a direction-post, which is always telling the way to a place, and never goes there: but these were his enemies; the shadows cast by his brightness; that was all. His very throat was moral" (63).

There is very little doubt by the end of Pecksniff's introduction that he is to become some kind of villain in the story: the shadow cast by his brightness is as long and as empty as the morality he uses to manipulate others. Interestingly, Pecksniff functions as a sort of caricature of the kind of moral invective the Dickens-narrator himself enjoys.

This entire section relies on understatement. Unlike the introduction of Young Martin, however, the narrator is at pains to tell the reader what he or she should think about Pecksniff whereas with Young Martin, he or she is simply shown, either through the conflict of dialogue and action or through the mediating awareness of another character — in Young Martin's case we are given some information upon which we are encouraged to make our own judgement. For instance, when Young Martin is about to leave for America, he meets Mary Graham for a fleeting farewell. Almost his entire conversation concerns what lies ahead for him and the difficulties he must face. He barely gives a thought to Mary's plight. Mary, however, almost encourages him in this selfishness through her own selflessness. When she gives him a diamond ring through the agency of Mark Tapley, he immediately assumes that his grandfather must have given it to her. Mark suspects that, on the contrary, she has probably spent "her whole stock of hoarded money" on the ring, and wonders at Young Martin's obtuseness: Mark gains, "from that moment . . . a clear and perfect insight into the one absorbing principle of Martin's character." The narrator fails to explain exactly what this principle might be, but he allows Young Martin to speak for himself: "'She is worthy of the sacrifices I have made. . . . No riches . . . could have compensated for the loss of such a nature'"(230). He might have added that his good fortune in life consisted in being surrounded by such selfless creatures

as Tom, Mary, and Mark. No further narrative comment is necessary, however, when Mark, who is Young Martin's auditor, simply adds, "Jolly." We already know from Mark's earlier meeting with Tom Pinch on the road to Salisbury that Mark's idea of being jolly consists in bearing up to the best of his ability in adverse circumstances. "'I don't believe'," he says, "'there was ever a man as could come out so strong under circumstances that would make other men miserable as I could, if I could only get a chance'" (121).

Incidentally, the irony of Mark's situation is that even though he is seen to bear up under the most appalling circumstances, he invariably either misses out on the credit he longs for, or, when he does get it, he leaves that situation in order to find something more challenging. Mark doesn't understand that he influences the behaviour of others to the extent that very often their difficulties are either reduced or removed because of his actions. Consequently, he is constantly doing himself out of a job. It is Mark's activity, however, and not Mary's passivity, which ultimately works to redeem Young Martin. Accordingly, it is appropriate that we should see Young Martin through Mark's eyes rather than through the relentless caricature of the narrator. The contrast between Young Martin on the one hand, and Mark, Mary and Tom on the other, would suggest that selfishness survives not only because it is an active trait in seemingly large numbers of people (there are many selfish people in the novel), but also because of the selflessness of others which unconsciously allows it to bear fruit.

The comedy here is slight but telling. Young Martin cannot properly read the signs around him. He is rescued from complete tragedy because he learns through Mark's inherent optimism in the face of adverse circumstances to read signs for what they are rather than for what his selfishness dictates they should be. The progress of Martin's lesson

provides a critique of the problems of the observation process of the kind raised by Miss La Creevy: Martin must learn that to infuse signs with a particular countenance is to construct a third-order sign, that to read signs according to his own needs is to construct a miniature which is of limited use because it is a studied pose based on signs which are already a representation of something else — Miss La Creevy's miniatures are always of people pretending to be somebody else. He must also learn that he cannot escape the effort required to read signs by withdrawing into himself thereby relying on others, such as Mark, Mary or Tom, to interpret these signs for him, an interpretation which acts as a protection from the potential effects of these signs. Young Martin has to shake his "dainty delicacy" and take responsibility for himself and for his relations with those about him. In this, he serves both as a caricature and as a paradigm case for the Dickens-narrator's moral invective.

His nadir comes when he travels to "The Valley of Eden" where, in effect, he is removed from the protective womb of civilisation. His companion, Mark, is sick with the fever and he has to rely on his wits for survival. All potential and actual sign filters are removed and, for the first time, Martin is forced to read the signs around him himself. He learns that the significance he attributes to signs must relate to the dynamic of the signs and the things they represent rather than to his own selfish self-importance. Martin's progress towards his nadir is marked by characters whose situations mirror his own in that their "success" in life is a function of their attempts to read and manipulate the signs around them.

The comedy of the observation process which leads to this kind of implicit assertion, and which has caricature as its basis, is travestied widely in the novel. Having finally arrived in America, for instance, after

a journey by ship which can be best described as one which gave Mark due cause for being "jolly," Young Martin and Mark are confronted by a "legion" of newsboys crying their wares. The narrator refrains from comment and allows the newsboys to give an indication of the type of journalism their employers practice:

> "Here's this morning's New York Stabber! Here's the New York Family Spy! Here's the New York Private Listener! Here's the New York Peeper! . . . Here's the Sewer's experience of the Wall Street Gang, and the Sewer's exposure of the Washington Gang, and the Sewer's exclusive account of a flagrant act of dishonesty committed by the Secretary of State when he was eight years old; now communicated, at great expense, by his own nurse." (318)

The majority of Americans appearing in the story appear to be obsessed, like Colonel Driver, with the "'Palladium of liberty at home . . . and the dread of Foreign Oppression abroad.'" Colonel Driver, who is the editor of "the New York Rowdy Journal," finds in public journalism the manifestations of the freedom of speech which is an integral part of the liberty from foreign oppression the Americans allegedly cherish. Journalists like Jefferson Brick, however, who is employed by Colonel Driver, spend their time "in the van [sic] of human civilisation and moral purity" (325) striking terror into the hearts and minds of all those who deviate from the editor's perceived notion of norms (another "unconscious" parody of the Dickens-narrator's predilections). Young Martin's American experiences are, in essence, a lesson in American group norms, a lesson which includes the norms themselves, and the absurd attempts by sundry "remarkable men" to set the agenda through which these norms are established.

The irony for the reader who looks at the text in this way is that he or she becomes a sort of Young Martin who is exposed to the narrator's "norms" through the caricature he reserves for those who would deviate from his own norms. Like the "remarkable men," who seemed prepared to denounce each other on the slightest pretext, the issue for the

narrator is control through explication — the articulation of certain beliefs and the coding of acceptable behaviours is often enough, if not for the establishment of these beliefs and behaviours as group norms, then for the creation of an air of oughtness about them. It's to this air of oughtness that the concept of the change of heart applies. Young Martin changes his heart by decentring his (selfish) self and re-situating it in the larger "human" family. His American experiences provide the catalyst for this change because he is exposed to a procession of caricatures, the last of which (his trip to Eden) literally threatens his life. Violence appears to be a way of life in America.

Colonel Driver, for instance, observes that, "'the aristocratic circles of [Young Martin's] country quail before the name of Jefferson Brick,'" and asks of Young Martin, "'which of [Brick's] sentiments has struck the deadliest blow . . .'" a question finished by Brick himself (giving the impression, perhaps, that Brick and Driver are of one mind) with, "'At the hundred heads of the Hydra of Corruption now grovelling in the dust beneath the lance of Reason.'" Young Martin's continued bewilderment gives the impression that Brick and Driver are deluded as to the extent of their notoriety in foreign parts. They finish their outburst, however, again in tandem, with the ominous suggestion that "'The libation of freedom . . . Must sometimes be quaffed in blood.'" The Colonel's earlier observation to Young Martin as they both observed the crying newsboys may be regarded, it would appear, as an ironic understatement of the violence of American journalism. "'It is in such enlightened means,'" he says, "'that the bubbling passions of my country find a vent'"(318).

Young Martin finds himself the victim of such "bubbling passions" as he waits at the National Hotel for the steamboat which will take himself and Mark to the Valley of Eden. The landlord, Captain Kedgick,

suggests to Young Martin that the town's citizens want to "'pay their respects'" to him and that he will have to "'hold a sort of le-vee.'" Young Martin declines, but the Captain insists with the imperative "must":

> "Must is not a pleasant word, Captain," urged Martin.
>
> "Well! I didn't fix the mother language, and I can't unfix it," said the Captain, coolly: "else I'd make it pleasant. You must receive. That's all." (430)

The Captain, who has taken the liberty of announcing the "le-vee" in the form of a "muniment" hung in the bar of the Hotel prior to speaking to Young Martin, takes over the position of American journalism by threatening public exposure in the event that Young Martin refuses his request: "'Our citizens ain't long of riling up,'" he says, "'and our Gazette could flay you like a wild cat'" (430). Two "gentlemen" of letters connected with the Watertoast Gazette attend the levee along with the other citizens, and they proceed to devour rather than flay Young Martin. The Dickens-narrator, however, seems to be unaware of the similarities between the worst excesses of this kind of journalism and his own practice of caricature. The ensuing description of their attentions represents a brilliant travesty of the Dickens-narrator's method of caricature:

> One of them took him below the waistcoat; one above. Each stood directly in front of his subject with his head a little on one side, intent on his deportment. If Martin put one boot before the other, the lower gentleman was down upon him; he rubbed a pimple on his nose, and the upper gentleman booked it. He opened his mouth to speak, and the same gentleman was on one knee before him, looking in at his teeth, with the nice scrutiny of a dentist.

Undoubtedly, Miss La Creevy would have approved of their attention to his teeth. As caricaturists, however, journalists and citizens alike study Mark's head for tell-tale signs of his affections and mental faculties, and they observe his face in order to judge his character:

> Amateurs in the physiognomical and phrenological sciences roved about him with watchful eyes and itching fingers, and sometimes one, more daring than the rest, made a mad grasp at the back of his head, and vanished in the crowd. They had him in all points

> of view: in front, in profile, three-quarter face, and behind. (431-432)

They have Young Martin "in all points of view," it would seem, without any one of them seeing anything of his "real" character. Like the men of American letters, who deprive him of any opportunity to assert his integrity as an individual, the Dickens-narrator in caricaturing them, deprives them of any such opportunity.

Despite the very tangible sense of manipulation such a deprivation would appear to involve, the Americans are shown to be revering their most able caricaturists (such as Jefferson Brick) as "the most remarkable" men in the country. This epithet, like Mark Tapley's appeal for there to be "an end to the breed" and his antithetical "jolly," becomes a metonym for something approaching its literal opposite: these "remarkable men" are loud-mouthed, self-opinionated, narrow-minded and without human sympathy or intellectual insight. Moreover, although they are blind to all these faults, they are perfectly willing to attribute them, without the least quibble, to anyone who fails to agree with them or who appears to be different. As caricaturists, these remarkable men throw a different light not only on the narrator's caricature of them but also on caricature itself.

IV

Caricature allows readers to enjoy the play on the familiar knowing that their response can be immediately defended by simply identifying the caricature as a caricature. This act of recognition exonerates the reader (or character) from being accused of complicity with the narrow-mindedness caricatures are thought to engender. Everyone remembers Dickens' caricatures as caricatures but would baulk if someone were to accuse them of seeing the world in this way or of taking such stereotypes seriously. Watching caricatures with their tics, jerks,

mannerisms and compulsions is like watching exaggerated doubles of ourselves whose antics produce a pleasure similar to that derived from jokes.

Anthony Easthope argues that jokes let us be childish without censure, allow us to play with words in a way which will withstand the scrutiny of criticism (*Poetry as Discourse* 33). Easthope establishes a fourfold schema for jokes (33-34) which could equally apply to caricatures. Like jokes, caricatures work through pleasure in nonsense — for example, many of the tics, jerks and mannerisms of caricatures in their encounters with the objects and rituals of daily life are nonsensical in that the comedy refers only to itself. Caricatures also function through the jest where one signifier governs two signifieds, as in many of the names of those caricatured — for example, Chevy Slyme's maudlin self-pity oozes from the very pores of his skin. Caricatures also work through the non-tendentious joke, which is like the jest except that it hangs together in a sentence that makes coherent sense — for example, "Monseigneur" cannot drink his chocolate without the aid of "four strong men besides the cook" (TTC 109). Finally, caricatures also work through the tendentious joke, the joke with a purpose or point because the play with words releases meanings which would be otherwise inhibited or repressed. For example, whenever Pecksniff is moralising, it is not only his mis-appropriation of morality which is on display, it is also morality itself which is being questioned. For instance, when Pecksniff concludes that even "eggs" have their "moral," he justifies his position by arguing that "There is nothing personal in morality" (MC 65). This is, of course, a joke, but it is one which has significant consequences given the text's larger concern with the notion that morality without regard for the

individual is a form of abuse, one which Pecksniff himself exemplifies in his dealings with both Tom Pinch and Young Martin.

Montague Tigg, for instance, relies on all four forms in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. At the gathering of Old Martin's family at the Blue Dragon, Pecksniff, who is attempting to inveigle himself into Old Martin's affections under the guise of taking a paternal interest in Young Martin, Old Martin's grandson, bumps his head against another whilst attempting to look through the keyhole of Old Martin's room. The other head belongs to Montague Tigg, who it turns out is no relation to anyone. Pecksniff, however, has mistaken Tigg for the appropriately named Slyme, a distant relation of Old Martin, because he is presented by Tigg with a letter addressed to Slyme.

Tigg, however, immediately assures Pecksniff that he has "not the vanity to attempt to pass for Slyme." The irony of Tigg's denial becomes apparent when he describes for Pecksniff the outstanding trait which clearly separates him from Slyme:

> "The whole thing resolves itself into an instance of the peculiarities of genius. Every man of true genius has his peculiarity. Sir, the peculiarity of my friend Slyme is, that he is always waiting round the corner. He is perpetually round the corner, sir. He is round the corner at this instant. Now, . . . that is a remarkably curious and interesting trait in Mr Slyme's character; and whenever Slyme's life comes to be written, that trait must be thoroughly worked out by his biographer, or society will not be satisfied. Observe me, society will not be satisfied." (99)

Like Miss La Creevy, Tigg has managed to implicitly encapsulate a workable notion of caricature which, in his over-inflated way, he identifies as describing someone's peculiarity of genius, a trait which must be worked out or society (and presumably the readers of the text) will not be satisfied. Given that Slyme is anything but a genius, Tigg's non-tendentious joke, not to mention the jest implicit in Slyme's name, shows that Tigg himself is a caricaturist.

Despite Tigg's eloquent description of Slyme, his peculiarity of genius, his propensity for waiting round corners, is basically all we are allowed to discover about him. Tigg, who figuratively waits round corners trying to take advantage of gullible Anglo-Bengalee Company investors, describes Slyme in terms which themselves represent the kind of travesty that caricature plays on characterisation: "'For he is,'" Tigg says, playing both the daubster and the fool,

> "without an exception, the highest minded, the most independent spirited, most original, spiritual, classical, talented, the most thoroughly Shakespearian, if not Miltonic, and at the same time the most disgustingly unappreciated dog I know." (99)

How Tigg comes to these impressions of Slyme we can only guess. We later discover, however, when Tigg "borrows" a half-sovereign from Tom Pinch to pay for his and Slyme's tavern bill, that the kind of things Slyme says about himself accord with Tigg's synopsis. For instance, "'I swear'," says Slyme,

> "that I am the wretchedest creature on record. Society is in a conspiracy against me. I'm the most literary man alive. I'm full of scholarship; I'm full of genius; I'm full of information; I'm full of novel views on every subject; yet look at my condition! I'm at this moment obliged to two strangers for a tavern bill!" (164)

Although the reader is left in no doubt as to what Slyme might be full of, it is left to the narrator to provide a description of Slyme which best fits his name:

> of too haughty a stomach to work, to beg, to borrow, or to steal; yet mean enough to be worked or borrowed, begged or stolen for, by any catspaw that would serve his turn; too insolent to lick the hand that fed him in his need, yet cur enough to bite and tear it in the dark; with these apt closing words Mr Slyme fell forward with his head upon the table, and so declined into a sodden sleep. (165)

Again, we have the moral invective combined with the ludicrous dismissal. How very different this description from that of Sydney Carton, himself a "slimy" character whose head also has a propensity to fall to the table in "sodden sleep." Tigg clearly takes pleasure in nonsense, jest and the non-tendentious joke. The narrator himself

finishes Slyme off with a tendentious joke which depends on dramatic irony. Slyme's peculiarity of genius, his propensity for waiting around corners, is so effective that he more-or-less disappears out of the story altogether.

If caricature functions by isolating the peculiarities of genius and passing these off as "character" then its own peculiarity lies here: the reader is rarely in a position to dispute the assessment of the peculiarity simply because he or she is never provided with the means to do so — the character is never sufficiently on stage to be able to give an adequate account of him or her-self, an insufficiency which is integral to the stereotype. For example, the relations of Old Martin are deprived of an adequate presence on stage when they meet at Pecksniff's house in order to decide what to do about Old Martin's "obduracy," his refusal to accept them as members of his family with all the claims on his time and his fortune that this might imply.

Old Martin sees his problem with his avaricious relatives in terms of the self. Having been taken ill on the road, Old Martin seeks refuge in the Blue Dragon. When he wakes from his slumbers, he finds not his companion, Mary, sitting next to him but Pecksniff, his cousin. Pecksniff, who spends a good deal of his time posing and feigning surprise, is "genuinely" surprised to find that the sick stranger is none other than Old Martin. A change comes over Pecksniff

> which could hardly have been surpassed by the most marvellous of natural phenomena. Gradually his hands became tightly clasped upon the elbows of the chair, his eyes dilated with surprise, his mouth opened, his hair stood more erect upon his forehead than its custom was, until, at length, when the old man rose in bed with scarcely less emotion than he showed himself, the Pecksniff doubts were all resolved, and he exclaimed aloud:
>
> "You are Martin Chuzzlewit!"
>
> His consternation of surprise was so genuine, that the old man, with all the disposition that he clearly entertained to believe it assumed, was convinced of its reality.

> "I *am* Martin Chuzzlewit," he said bitterly,: "and Martin Chuzzlewit wishes you had been hanged, before you had come here to disturb him in his sleep. Why, I dreamed of this fellow!" he said, lying down again, and turning away his face, "before I knew that he was near me!"
>
> "My good cousin — " said Mr Pecksniff.
>
> "There! His very first words!" cried the old man, shaking his grey head to and fro upon the pillow, and throwing up his hands. "In his very first words he asserts his relationship! I knew he would: they all do it! Near or distant, blood or water, it's all one. Ugh! What a calendar of deceit, and lying, and false-witnessing, the sound of any word of kindred opens before me!" (88)

Pecksniff denies this charge, and with "his hand in his waistcoat as though he were ready, on the shortest notice, to produce his heart for Martin Chuzzlewit's inspection," says:

> "I came here to offer my services to a stranger. I make no offer of them to you, because I know you would distrust me if I did. But lying on that bed, sir, I regard you as a stranger, and I have just that amount of interest in you which I hope I should feel in any stranger, circumstanced as you are. Beyond that, I am quite as indifferent to you, Mr Chuzzlewit, as you are to me."

Old Martin plays along with Pecksniff's "ingenuous" wish to be treated as a total stranger rather than as one of the false kindred who pursue him around the country trying to secure a portion of his fortune, and states his case against those who would assert their relationship:

> "Sir, I am a rich man. Not so rich as some suppose, perhaps, but wealthy. I am not a miser, sir, though even that charge is made against me, as I hear, and currently believed. I have no pleasure in hoarding. I have no pleasure in the possession of money. The devil that we call by that name can give me nothing but unhappiness. . . . It is a spectre walking before me through the world, and making every social pleasure hideous." (90-91)

Old Martin sees himself as a victim of the materialism of others and of his desire to leave his fortune to some "worthy, honest, incorruptible creature":

> "The curse of my existence, and the realisation of my own mad desire, is that by the golden standard which I bear about me, I am doomed to try the metal of all other men, and find it false and hollow." (91)

Although it is unclear what he means by the golden standard, and why he should bear it about him, Martin is an old man who must resolve before he dies the question of who is to inherit his fortune.

His attack brings this question to the foreground along with all the problems associated with the possession of money. The reader might be attempted to accuse Martin of projecting his own weakness on to his relatives until s/he meets these relatives at a later assemblage at Pecksniff's house, where they are shown to be as rapacious and as false as Martin predicts.

Although Pecksniff and Martin are less than certain of each other's intentions, and are forced to pretend that they are total strangers before they can deal with each other, they are forced to recognise and deal with the social nature, causes and consequences of their intentions. They are forced to make judgements about each other's intentions as a means of predicting each other's actions or potential for action. As the plot develops, Martin actually gives Pecksniff a chance to be genuine, tries his metal, and then rejects him as more than hollow. Martin finds that his relations are interested in his wealth, and fawn over him and fight with each other as they jockey for advantage. He is so distressed by Pecksniff's assertion that he is himself ("You are Martin Chuzzlewit"), by his recognition that character is as much an assertion of others as it is of the self, that he responds in the third person. He likens an assertion of relatedness to an extreme incongruence between intentions and action as manifested in deceit and lying and false-witnessing. Money brings him no satisfaction nor does the prospect of giving it away. Aside from being a useful narrative device of disclosure, interacting with each other as strangers allows Pecksniff and Martin to "give" each other the sort of courtesy that social manners dictate one should give all strangers; and this gesture of

estrangement is one against which all the members of the Chuzzlewit family are measured.

Old Martin provides us with a dominant metaphor of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, that of the self as base or true coin. It is a tale of two inheritances, one true, one false. It is a tale of Young Martin Chuzzlewit assuming his rightful place as the legitimate heir to Old Martin's fortune and his rightful self as a socially legitimate and unselfish individual; and of his cousin, Jonas Chuzzlewit, who remains the individual if misguided manifestation of the self as illegitimate and selfish, as Dickens alerts us in his preface:

> I conceive that the sordid coarseness and brutality of Jonas would be unnatural, if there had been nothing in his early education, and in the precept and example always before him, to engender and develop the vices that make him odious. But so born and so bred; admired for that which made him hateful, and justified from his cradle in cunning, treachery, and avarice; I claim him as the legitimate issue of the father upon whom these vices are seen to recoil. And I submit that their recoil upon that old man, in his unhonoured age, is not a mere piece of poetical justice, but is the extreme exposition of a direct truth. (41)

This comment reinforces Miller's paradigm case of narrative as the figure of prosopopoeia and its deconstruction, a process which produces poetic justice. In other words, Jonas is interpellated by his father's values (a favourite theme of Dickens) although, in this case, the interpellation ensures that the sins rebound on the father and destroy the son. Jonas does not have the benefit of the (re)interpellation afforded young Martin through his descent into hell (the valley of Eden) and through the good work of the irrepressible Mark Tapley. Young Martin is redeemed. Jonas, however, remains an illegitimate heir (his father takes his own life after discovering that Jonas has procured the means to murder him) and a selfish character (he "tortures" his wife and murders Tigg) until he takes his own life after being discovered as a murderer. He is acculturated in cunning, treachery and avarice, the

"legitimate" issue of his father, and where, as Pecksniff says, "'Use is [becomes] second nature'" (378).

Jonas is an emblem of the dark side of character, a "base coin," and society ought to be aware that evil is indiscriminate and not be surprised, like Anthony Chuzzlewit, that its "legitimate" issue has procured the means to poison it. The destroying angel within has finally done its work — evil is capable of anything, even parricide: "'Your own son, Mr Chuzzlewit; you own son'," as Chuffy keeps reminding us. Jonas's death is seen as a fitting retribution for his (in)congruent motive; and, Pecksniff eventually receives his come-uppance even though it is long after even simple Tom Pinch has discovered that he has feet of clay.

We are also invited to judge other characters via (in)congruent motive; for instance, Richard Carstone's death (*Bleak House*), is seen as a tragedy because although he is something of a romantic fool and every bit as blindly selfish as Jonas, he means well; his intentions do not match his actions, but his intentions are seen to be good (he wants to rescue Claire and himself from poverty and live happily ever after) even though all those around him, including his lawyer Vholes, can see the stupidity of deliberately being drawn into the Jarndyce and Jarndyce suit. *Bleak House* concerns social and ideological contradictions. The law of property is set up in the interests of society but it only benefits lawyers and it destroys those members of society who invoke it in their defence. The dual narrative provides the reader with the deficiencies in each form of narrative. The third person narrator confines itself largely to behaviour, is strongly enigmatic, but provides enough clues for the reader to guess the story before the story reveals it. Esther's narrative frequently invites ironic reading in that we are encouraged to trust her account of the facts but not necessarily her

judgment. Hence a third but literally unwritten discourse begins to emerge: the discourse of a reader who grasps a history and judges soundly. *Bleak House* constructs a reality which seems to be many sided, too complex to be contained within a single point of view but is contained nevertheless within the discourse of the reader. Esther and the ironic narrator come to share with the reader a recognition of the "true" complexity of things.

Characters, narrators and readers, then, depend for survival and/or the attribution of meaning to the utterances of others upon their ability to make judgements about intentional states — intentions, beliefs, desires, and values. Both young and old Martin see themselves to be victims of each others' selfishness, but come to see the self as an inheritance of properly indicative and worthwhile beliefs, desires and values. Misconceptions about what these ought to be, how differences of opinion should be negotiated, and the resolution of those differences form the dominant features of the plot. Characters live or die, prosper of decline according to their ability to read and judge character, which is another way of describing the match between intentional states and action. The narrator inevitably undertakes to make sufficient connections so that this match will be apparent.

This is not to suggest that the characters or the narrator make accurate judgements all of the time. In fact, accounting for misguided judgements of one form or another occupies the bulk of the narrative. Jonas sees his actions as perfectly natural, though his role as the grieving son on the death of his father (a contrived show for others) and as the snivelling coward when he is discovered as a murderer, suggest that he was probably aware of an incongruence between what he knew of himself and what he knew was expected of him socially. Jonas, like

all those who play with Old Martin's "golden standard," is a "base coin" and therefore not to be trusted.

For example, the description of the meeting of Old Martin's "family" at Pecksniff's house, provides ample evidence of this 'baseness" through caricature. For example, Mr Spottletoe "was so bald and had such big whiskers, that he seemed to have stopped his hair, by the sudden application of some powerful remedy, in the very act of falling off his head, and to have fastened it irrevocably on his face" (107). When Pecksniff rises to thank the gathering for conferring such a "blessed distinction" on his house by meeting there, Mr Spottletoe's whiskers become an indicator of his "portentous" interruption of Pecksniff when he accuses him of "assuming too much" (108). Even Mrs Spottletoe is fond of telling her more intimate friends that these whiskers "were 'the lodestar of her existence'" (107), whatever that might mean.

Moreover, the widow of Old Martin's brother had "a dreary face and a bony figure and a masculine voice" and was commonly called "a strong minded woman," whose only desire was to shut Old Martin "in a private mad-house, until he proved his complete sanity by loving her very much"(107). Each trait identified in the various relations becomes an indicator of their behaviour in the ensuing chaos. And this chaos derives from their inability to overcome their personal antipathies in favour of the common goal of the group, which is ostensibly to achieve some sort of recognition from the rich and eccentric Old Martin. They are forced together because he refuses to recognise them as relatives or to allow them to pay court. Their grotesque selfishness manifests itself as a caricature of selfish traits which deprives the relatives of any vestiges of humanity, reason and excuse.

The dramatic irony of the gathering is expressed by the eldest of the strong-minded woman's daughters who, in response to Pecksniff's

comment ("'It is good to know that we have no reserve before each other, but are appearing freely in our own characters'"), "rose a little way from her seat, and trembling violently from head to foot, more as it seemed with passion than timidity, expressed a general hope that some people *would* appear in their own characters, if it were only for such a proceeding having the attraction of novelty to recommend it" (109). There is difference between saying that one is freely appearing in character and actually doing so, between "true' and "base" coin.

The desire for congruent motive, for characters' intentions to match their actions, is strong, as is the cognisance that this desire constitutes an ideal the realisation of which requires a variety of speculative and practical skills, all of which the narrator undertakes to show us, one way or another. Dealing with people who behave like direction-posts and who have moral throats, whose motives are incongruent and therefore deceptive, is precisely what the daughter of the strong-minded woman hopes to avoid by appealing for people to appear in their own characters so that they will be easier to read and judge.

On the one hand, then, Miss La Creevy, as caricaturist, is busily infusing something into her subject. On the other, the eldest daughter, as one such subject, is desperately appealing to these subjects to appear in their own characters. The narrator, however, seems oblivious to this cry for help for he characterises this daughter and her two sisters as being of "gentlemanly deportment, who had so manifested themselves with tight stays, that their tempers were reduced to something less than their waists, and sharp lacing was expressed in their very noses" (107). The eldest daughter, however, goes on to complain that "she had yet to learn that a red nose was any disgrace, in as much as people neither made nor coloured their own noses" (109). In this, as a caricature, she fights back.

Like Tigg's defence of his friend Slyme, the eldest daughter's outburst represents an overdrawing of her case, for her pathetic plea for people to appear in their own characters is the very thing that caricature denies whilst holding itself out as an equivalent intelligence to a full characterisation. Caricature, by encouraging the reader to mistake one or two physical, psychological or behavioural characteristics for character, allows the narrator to manipulate the scene of this family meeting so that the only possible impression available is that Old Martin's relatives are grotesque and rapacious. We are only allowed to see what suits the narrator's somewhat narrow case. Furthermore, the process of association is so important that the narrator's move from the particular to the general is shown to be the metonymic basis of caricature: whiskers come to signify self-importance; red noses, frustration and temper; gentlemanly deportment in woman, selfish assertiveness; and so on. Caricature invites the reader to see selfishness in every manifestation the relations are allowed: in their physical appearance, manner, behaviour and speech.

Caricature, in gagging characterisation in favour of a more visible but less complete shadow, restricts the free flow of discourse within a text to a point where one discourse, that of the narrator, is valorised over another, the individual but gagged discourses of the various characters. Caricature presents character as purblind, as easily penetrated by sight and intellect. Caricature relies on the process of observation where, on the one hand, the codes and conventions of character provide an implicit base, but on the other, these codes and conventions are emptied out to make way for an uncontested and apparently incontestable second-order sign. In showing characters as caricaturists, the narrator unintentionally reveals the limitations of caricature as a way of seeing the world. Consequently, the stance of the

Watertoast journalists, which shows caricature as a travesty, shows that caricature as a method of assessing others is hopelessly inadequate thereby undermining its subversive potential. Moreover, the apparently endless streams of people who want to meet Young Martin, the "letters and messages" which "poured in like hail" threatening his "public denouncement if he didn't see the senders," illustrate in microcosm the enormous pressures exerted on the individual to conform to group norms whilst at the same time daring that individual not to conform so as to provide that group with an excuse to exercise its wrath, here manifested in the excesses of American journalism and letters. Caricature acts in this way and, like characterisation, functions as a device for analysing and rendering more predictable the behaviour of others, and for ensuring the stability of group norms. This or that sort of behaviour, caricature seems to be saying, is unacceptable to the group, and manifestations of such "peculiarities of genius" will result in the narrator not hesitating to apply that most powerful remedy, ridicule.

Like Mrs Hominy, a lady whose letters "were regularly printed in a public journal, with all the indignation in capitals, and all the sarcasm in italics," something similar could be said of the narrator in that he presents all his indignation in middle-class sentimentality (for example, his treatment of Tom Pinch and his sister), and all his sarcasm, as we have seen, in caricature. Like Jefferson Brick, the narrator strikes terror into the hearts of all those who would deviate from group norms. He does this, as we have seen, by filling the space the reader expects to be occupied by a fully developed "person/character" with an empty but fully emphasised sign based on caricature. This process exactly replicates that described by MacCabe when he suggests that a hierarchy exists in prose because of the subordination of the objective language

contained within the inverted commas to the metalanguage which attempts to explain it. Caricature empties character as a sign whilst at the same time holding itself out as a vehicle for the expressed truths character is thought to represent. The application of the model of helpfulness differs in its approach to character and caricature. Caricatures at either end of the spectrum simply repeat their allotted roles, with minor variations, as the plot demands, and this applies to both "good" and "bad" caricatures.

Young Martin's dream of freedom is thwarted by the patriarch's power to decide to whom he shall bequeath his fortune. In order to occupy this space, to be a young man possessed of a fortune over which he has full control, Young Martin is obliged to conform to the patriarch's will. His refusal results in his banishment from the protection of the family. His journey to America travesties not only the traditional quest for identity (as in, say, a Bildung) but also a subject's quest for his subjectivity, for a space which can be occupied and called his own. Young Martin fails in his search for his own space and is ultimately forced to rejoin his grandfather on his terms. This failure of the subject to occupy a space of its own is in fact the major theme of the novel.

Notions of good and evil represent simple categories of the spaces various subjects choose or are forced to occupy. Categories of good and evil are frequently determined in the novel through the recognition by one subject of the right of another to occupy a legitimate space, whether this space is determined by the patriarch's will or by social convention. Pecksniff, for instance, attempts to occupy the space reserved for Young Martin by appropriating another space, the morality of the "good" category, in order to convince the patriarch and society of his worthiness. Tom Pinch, whose timidity prevents him occupying the

space he deserves, appropriates that space by idolising the subject (Pecksniff) who quite surreptitiously already occupies (has stolen) it. Looked at in this way, evil in the novel may be seen in terms of subjects who either attempt to occupy a space to which they have no legitimate claim (Pecksniff), or who fail to see that the space they are attempting to occupy is already saturated with the condemnation of society (Jonas Chuzzlewit and Montague Tigg). Young Martin is redeemed because he ultimately recognizes the futility of the attempt to occupy a space of his own on his terms. Consequently, he returns to the "larger human family" on its terms.

Sweester's ICM of helpfulness can be seen as a model which provides characters like Pecksniff with a position from which to speak. Pecksniff metonymically represents the bourgeoisie in that he is described as a sign-post, as always pointing the way but never going there himself. This suggests that the variations allowed by Sweester's model mean that it is possible to be all intentionality and no action, which is what Pecksniff's moralising implies, and which is what the call to a change of heart seeks to address.

V

If judging character is a question of estimating the congruence between intentions and action, between what one says and what one does, then this often necessitates that characters have workable models of what such a congruence might be like in normal situations as well as a means of dealing with abnormal situations. For instance, Esther Summerson, who is Pecksniff's antithesis, creates her own model of character, which is also a model character. After having been told on her birthday by her godmother that her mother is her disgrace and that

she is her mother's, she creeps into her bed and lays, with a prayer, her doll's cheek against her own "wet with tears":

> I repeated to the doll the story of my birthday, and confided to her that I would try, as hard as ever I could, to repair the fault I had been born with (of which I felt confessedly guilty and yet innocent), and would strive as I grew up to be industrious, contented, and kind hearted, and to do some good to some one, and win some love to myself if I could. (BH 65)

Esther's model (Lakoff would call her a paragon) "strives" for a congruence between her intentions and her actions, and with the exception of a few momentary lapses, she succeeds in becoming the model she has outlined for herself. Although Esther apologises from time to time for concentrating too much on herself in her narrative, we find that most of the positive feedback she gets for being a model character comes in her reports of what others say about her.

When she is beginning to recover from her attack of smallpox, for instance, she notes:

> The old conspiracy to make me happy! Everybody seemed to be in it. . . . The childish prayer of that old birthday [comes] back into my mind with a reproachful sense of all the happiness I had since enjoyed, and all the affectionate hearts that had been turned towards me. If I were weak now, what had I profited by those mercies? (550)

Her reward for being a model character is the love and affection which are the model's major constituents. Other characters know and respect the perfect congruence between her intentions and her actions: she is industrious, contented and kind-hearted; and she is always doing someone some good. To judge her character is to judge what her actions mean — that is, how they relate to her intentions. A perfect congruence between intentions and action denotes a model character. While this simplistic model plays a more complex role in the novel proper, it is one which Esther "lives" in the everyday indexed by her constant key-janglings and self-admonitions.

It is significant that Esther buries her doll, her imaginary friend, the deaf receiver of all her childhood stories, unlike Sairey Gamp who allows her imaginary friend, Mrs Harris, to boost her ego as a living embodiment of an adult consciousness. As an adult, she is so alienated that she is unable to let go of the solace such imaginary friends provide. In effect, she divides herself into two and forces her "other" to mollify the effects of her alienation by affirming her sense of herself. As a caricature, she both reflects and undermines the Dickens-narrator's attempts to affirm the bourgeois subject by rendering the "Other" as an extreme but knowable version of itself. The irony is that Sairey rather than Mrs Harris represents this extreme.

Gamp is first introduced as "a female functionary, a nurse, and watcher, and performer of nameless offices about the persons of the dead" (374). In representing things which are unspeakable, she is surrounded with an air of mis-recognition and unreality. For example, her lodgings are inaccessible from the street and the door-knocker wakes up the street rather than her. The birds in the bird-fancier's shop underneath are kept in cages where each bird is seen to be "twittering and hopping his little ballet of despair" (374). Pecksniff, who has sent to fetch Gamp to perform her "nameless offices" about the dead Anthony Chuzzlewit, notes these incongruities and quickly becomes one himself: the "female heads" of the street think he has come on a mission of "life" (Gamp also works as a mid-wife) and are disappointed when they discover that his visit concerns death. Gamp, we are told, "has a face for all occasions," and quickly adapts to her new client's needs. The process of mis-recognition continues as Mrs Gamp, who appears to labour "under the most erroneous views of cabriolets,"(376) attempts "for the first half mile to force her luggage through the little front window," and clamours "to the driver to 'put it in the boot'." She

is further described as "a fat old woman . . . with a husky voice and a moist eye, which she had a remarkable power of turning up, and only showing the white of it. Having very little neck, it cost her some trouble to look over herself, if one may say so, at those to whom she talked." She wears "dilapidated articles of dress" in the hope, it would appear, that her casual employers, the next of kin, will "present her with a fresher set of weeds: an appeal so frequently successful, that the very fetch and ghost of Mrs Gamp, bonnet and all, might be seen hanging up, any hour in the day, in at least a dozen of the second-hand clothes shops about Holborn." Her face was "somewhat red and swollen, and it was difficult to enjoy her society without becoming conscious of the smell of spirits" (378).

The picture which the narrator paints of Gamp is anything but flattering. It seems that she is herself some kind of "fetch and ghost" of the dead she tends. She introduces her fictional friend, Mrs Harris, into the conversation at the earliest opportunity. Having assured Pecksniff that she had learned to bear up with the death of Mr Gamp (she fails to mention that she disposed of his body for the benefit of science), Pecksniff opines that "'Use is second nature'." Gamp's response reveals Mrs Harris and the role she plays in her life:

> You may well say second natur, sir. . . . One's first ways is to find sich things a trial to the feelings, and so is one's lasting custom. If it wasn't for the nerve a little sip of liquor gives me (I never was able to do more than taste it), I could never go through with what I sometimes has to do. "Mrs Harris," I says, at the very last case as ever I acted in, which was but a young person, "Mrs Harris," I says, "leave the bottle on the chimley-piece, and don't ask me to take none, but let me put my lips to it when I am so dispoged, and then I will do what I'm engaged to do, according to the best of my ability." "Mrs Gamp," she says, in answer, "if ever there was a sober creetur to be got at eighteen pence a day for working people, and three and six for gentlefolks — night watching . . . being a extra charge — you are that inwallable person." "Mrs Harris," I says to her, "don't name the charge, for if I could afford to lay all my feller creeturs out for nothink, I would gladly do it, sich is the love I bears 'em. But what I always says to them as has the management of matters, Mrs Harris . . . be they gents or be they

> ladies, is, don't ask me whether I won't take none, or whether I will, but leave the bottle on the chimley-piece, and let me put my lips to it when I so dispoged." (379)

The easy impression one might get from this passage is that Gamp is encouraging Pecksniff not to object to her indulging in her spirits during her employment. No doubt this is her intention. But this impression can easily overshadow the other impression of Gamp as a desperate old woman who finds in alcohol the strength to continue her profession.

Mrs Harris's role, it would appear, is to reinforce her sense of herself as a worthwhile person, a sort of useful second-nature. The passage is skilfully introduced with a allusion to "second-nature," and as the story subsequently reveals, Mrs Harris turns out to be nothing more than Gamp's second nature: one she has created for her own benefit as a means of relieving the burden of her alienated existence.

The appearance of Gamp and Mrs Harris challenges the status of the subject or character in a strikingly original way. Gamp sets herself up as her own idol as a means of displaying a different and more palatable self to the world. As the narrator later suggests,

> a fearful mystery surrounded this lady of the name of Harris, whom no one in the circle of Mrs Gamp's acquaintance had ever seen; neither did any human being know her place of residence, though Mrs Gamp appeared on her own showing to be in constant communication with her. There were conflicting rumours on the subject; but the prevalent opinion was that she was a phantom of Mrs Gamp's brain — as Messrs Doe and Roe are fictions of the law — created for the express purpose of holding visionary dialogues with her on all manner of subjects, and invariably winding up with a compliment to the excellence of her nature. (472)

In this, Gamp might be described as a subject in search of itself. The division of the self into two subjectivities represents something of an answer to the problem of the split between the unconscious and the conscious which Lacan argues occurs when the subject enters into language. Lacan argues that, as Freud's reordering of the unconscious

shows, the subject is not the one who knows what he or she is saying. Moreover, the word always says something which the subject cannot remember. Therefore, if language is a condition of the unconscious then what ought to be examined is what the subject represses not what is expressed ("Sign, Symbol, Imaginary" 205-209). Or as Ruthven suggests: "Only the child's conscious self is capable of articulating its desires, which it does by taking the subject-position grammatically in its enunciations. The desires of the other self — the unconscious one, the never fully articulated subject which is not being represented in such enunciation — end up repressed, although ... they are never fully eradicated" ("Critic" 165). Lacan's theory suggests that the entry of the subject into language causes a split where only one of the two selves is given a position in discourse. As Anthony Easthope suggests, the "I" as represented in discourse is always sliding away from the "I" doing the speaking (42). Mrs Harris represents Gamp's desperate attempt to stop this sliding, to bridge the gap between the image of the self in its discourses and the self which speaks that image. Mrs Harris represents Gamp's inability to live with the knowledge that, as Ruthven puts it, the "inarticulate self keeps being wooed and betrayed by the discursive formations which claim to represent it"("Critic" 165). Mrs Harris allows Gamp to explore what is repressed, the desires of the other, with perfect equanimity by valorising the space occupied by another as her own. In effect, she makes an idol of herself in much the same way that the narrator does with bourgeois subjectivity, except that everyone save Mrs Harris sees her as grotesque. Gamp's dialogues with Mrs Harris show that telling of the self, for all its so-called power to reveal "truth," functions primarily as a consolation to the ego.

Gamp is not the only one who makes idols out of others. For example, idolising other characters reaches absurd proportions in the

relation between Poll Sweedlepipe and Mr Baily. Mr Baily, who at one point in the novel is working for Tigg, bumps into Poll in Holborn Street. After they exchange some pleasantries, Baily says, "Wot are you up to, old feller?" The narrator observes that "[Baily] was quite the man-about-town of the conversation, while the easy-shaver [Poll] was the child." Poll is on his way to fetch his lodger (Gamp) home from Jonas Chuzzlewit's house and Baily tells Poll that Jonas and Mrs Chuzzlewit "first kept company" through him. He goes on to inform Poll that "she ain't bad-looking, mind you. But her sister was the best. *She* was the merry one. I often used to have a bit of fun with her, in the old times." Baily is mistaken, of course, because Jonas has in fact married the "merry one." The narrator goes on to suggest that

> Mr Baily spoke as if he already had a leg and three-quarters in the grave, and this had happened twenty or thirty years ago. Paul Sweedlepipe, the meek, was so perfectly confounded by his precocious self-possession, and his patronising manner, as well as by his boots, cockade, and livery, that a mist swam before his eyes, and he saw — not the Baily of acknowledged juvenility, from Todger's Commercial Boarding House, who had made his acquaintance within a twelve-month, by purchasing, at sundry times, small birds a two-pence each — but a highly condensed embodiment of all the sporting grooms in London; an abstract of all the stable-knowledge of the time; a something at a high-pressure that must have had existence many years, and was fraught with terrible experiences. (488-89)

In making an idol of Baily, Poll is caught up in a process which mirrors caricature — the idoliser only sees a limited perspective of those being idolised as do those who caricature others. Here, idolising and caricature are at opposite ends of the same spectrum. As Furbank remarks:

> it is striking how many instances there are in *Martin Chuzzlewit* of one character making a cult of another and turning him into an idol. Chuffy makes a cult of old Anthony, Poll Sweedlepipe of Young Bailey, Moddle of Mercy Pecksniff; the Moulds make a kind of cult of Mrs Gamp, and Mrs Gamp herself arranges that Mrs Harris shall make one of *her*; and then there is . . . the cynical cult which Tigg makes of his friend Chevy Slyme. (20)

The notion of the idol brings us back to Gilson and his tracing pen where characters appear to be tracing their own shadow and those of the people around them. Attempts to trace the self can only ever be a case of practicing hallucinations however much this practice might be legitimated by mirrors and doubles or by stereotypes and caricatures. Literalising as inspiration the relation between knowing and inscrutability, between the pen and its trace, produces, as Gilson and Miller predicted, a remnant which is an index of the speculative nature of perception, a sign of its incompleteness, a trace of the hallucination which is its constituent gesture. The exemplar of this kind of hallucinatory remnant is Mrs Gamp's imaginary friend, Mrs Harris.

This remnant is not only an index of the interpellative gestures of the Idealised Cognitive Models which both caricatures and stereotypes represent, it is also an ethical, social, and political affirmation of the bourgeois subject. As the operation of caricatures clearly shows, subjects are interpellated not as a consequence of perception but at its very instantiation. This moment represents the everyday psychologising of the self and others. It also requires for its very existence the psychologising of self and other in the form of the hundreds of hypotheses of bourgeois subjectivity. Consequently, my reading of the stereotypes and caricatures of the Dickens-text shows both the stories and the remnants they produce as instances of the hallucinatory dimension of perception and as formative moments of the bourgeois subject.

These moments are the hallucinatory gestures smoothed over yet evident in the tics, jerks, mannerisms, grimaces, noises, curses, involuntary imitations and compulsions of the bourgeois subject, all of which both enable and subvert the folk-psychologisings of the Dickens-text, psychologisings that interpellate both characters and readers with

bourgeois ideology. Caricatures, however, have a way of getting their own back. Their stuttering tautologies can be read as cognitive models which exhibit prototype effects, stereotypes which leave something behind, scores which remain to be settled. Consequently, moral invective and ludicrous dismissal differ only in the degree of approval afforded by the narrator and not in their method of operation.

Conclusion

I have been here, ever since I began to be,
my appearances elsewhere having been put in,
by other parties.

(Samuel Beckett)

I began this dissertation by suggesting that it is a commonplace of contemporary critical practice to see narratives as being produced by particular cultures in that the significances they generate and the forms that they use are meaning-focused ensembles of the intentions, beliefs and desires of these cultures, ensembles which themselves embody and constitute a variety of ideologies. What I have tried to explore in the dissertation is the way in which subjects are interpellated by these ensembles.

I have argued that it is at the level of the everyday psychologising of the self that ideology finds its most successful subject, a psychologising which is ineluctably imbricated with folk-theoretical concepts of the self, and that these imbrications are the primary means through which texts realise their ethopoesis, their trope of character-making, which is itself a primary constituent in the way narratives construct meaning. I have contended that, while these imbrications are intrinsically stereotypical, they leave remnants and residues which function both as matrices of the naive ideologies the stereotypes embody and as indices of the means through which these ideologies might be reinforced and/or subverted. I have not attempted to construct a critique of the current state of play in contemporary critical practice, nor have I explored some of the more obvious connections between the moral invectives and the ludicrous dismissals of the Dickens-text, and the positions and posturings of the resistance and ludic (post)modernists.

I have defended this thesis by reworking Althusser's notion of interpellation. I have argued that readers of literary and cultural

practices are interpellated at the moment of perception, which is itself a moment of interpretation rather than a prelude to it, an interpretative gesture which positions an outcome as a function of assumptions and conventions. There is tendency to see perception in terms of the stimuli-response model, to see the moment of perception as something immutable and external rather than as a moment of interpellation, rather than as the application and interpretation of a series of enabling hypotheses.

This interpellative sleight-of-hand sees the unmediated prelude as a consequence of "real" world sense data rather than as a consequence of the interpretative gestures through which these data are cognised. I have also argued that the truths of these moments are "constructed" rather than "essential," an interpretative gesture which sees truth as nothing more than an entelechiac axiology, as the realisation of a particular set of values and beliefs.

I have also argued that the everyday folk-psychologising of the self in and through which characters negotiate their meaning-focused ensembles — intentions, beliefs, desires and ideologies — are the idealised cognitive models through which texts construct their ethopoesis. Moreover, these constructions exhibit prototypical or essentialising effects which are the stereotypical embodiments of the ideologies of the dominant culture. In other words, I have argued that subjects are interpellated by dominant ideologies in the very act of their everyday psychologising of themselves and others.

In attempting to follow Barthes' suggestion that the only way to resist the stereotype is to call its language into crisis, I have attempted to read some of the caricatures of the Dickens-text against the grain thereby exposing the way they subvert their subversive potential and function as the means through which the bourgeois subject is

reinforced. Subversion requires a sort of Nietzschean "will to power" which enables readers to stare down that "blessed rage for order" which characterises bourgeois subjectivity, to look past the inscribed desire for controlled hallucinations, as John Gilson does, and to confront the hallucinatory figure of prosopopoeia face to face. What this hallucinatory figure produces is a stereotype/remnant cognitive model which both enables and subverts the conditions of the possible self. The Dickens-narrator's desire to know his inscrutable neighbours takes him into spaces where (un)speakable things are wrung, things which haunt memory, shadow dreams, usurp the power of plain speaking, and condemn those in search of themselves to roam the city spaces endlessly repeating the stories of their own hallucinatory selves. These stories show that the self is not an unmediated instance of some essence accessible through moments of perception but a constructed interpretation of those meaning-focused ensembles (intentions, beliefs, desires and ideologies) through which the self psychologises itself. The Dickens-narrator's attempts to stare down his inscrutable neighbours thereby rendering them legible and governable turns out not to be a subversion of bourgeois subjectivity but a gesture which reinforces it, for the Dickens-narrator's use of stereotypes and caricatures renders the Other as an extreme but knowable form of the bourgeois subject and, consequently, positions the Other as part of a larger cautionary tale through which this subject is affirmed.

What I have argued, then, using some examples from the Dickens-text to exemplify my point, is that the self psychologises itself by telling itself everyday stories which, it turns out, are based on bourgeois stereotypes. This means that in being interpellated by these stories, the self embalms certain subjectivities through the stereotyping ideologies of the power elites. In short, it is at the level of this everyday

psychologising of the self that ideology finds its most successful subject.

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