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The Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1976
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DICKENS'S AMERICA: A STUDY OF THE BACKGROUNDS AND OF DICKENS'S USE OF AMERICA IN AMERICAN NOTES AND MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Lewis Bogaty, B.A., M.A.

The Ohio State University
1976

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For My Parents
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INTRODUCTION

"How can I give you the faintest notion of my reception here," wrote Charles Dickens from America in 1842, of the crowds that pour in and out the whole day; of the people that line the streets when I go out.... What can I tell you about any of these things which will give you the slightest notion of the enthusiastic greetings they give me.... "It is no nonsense, and no common feeling," wrote Dr. Channing to me yesterday. "It is all heart. There never was, and never will be, such a triumph."¹

At the height of his fame, in the idealism of his thirtieth year, Charles Dickens went to America in 1842 with a boundless enthusiasm, certain that he would love the country. Within a month of his arrival, though, he wrote, "I tremble for a radical coming here, unless he is a radical on principle ... I fear that if he were anything else, he would return home a tory."² As John S. Whitley and Arnold Goldman note in their recent introduction to American Notes, "The significance of Dickens's American journey in his career is quite possibly greater than is commonly thought."³ Dickens's intense disappointment was many-faceted, and, according to some critics, profoundly altered his attitudes toward both social reform⁴ and human nature itself.⁵ At the very least, it was a culmination of attitudes present in earlier novels. This dissertation attempts to trace the development of Dickens's
America-induced attitudes through the three products of his trip: the letters written from the United States, the 1842 travel book, American Notes, and the 1843 novel, Martin Chuzzlewit. Such an analysis reveals a progressive symbolization of the American experience, a transformation of the specifics of his personal experience in the United States into a symbolic vision of the dangers implicit in human society.

Dickens travelled to America in the face of long-established English beliefs about the United States and in the wake of a number of previous travellers. His American Notes is one of many American travelogues written during the period. Indeed, his trip, public and controversial as it was, was a high point of the English exploration of America that had been under way for decades, as both Dickens and his English readers were aware. It seems somewhat arbitrary, then, for Donald Hawes, discussing a previous traveller, Captain Marryat, to write that

It is unlikely that Dickens was influenced by Marryat's book, or by anybody else's for that matter, as the freshness, occasional naïveté, and sense of excitement that are conveyed on many pages of American Notes arise from his own direct observation of the American scene.6

No one would deny that Dickens directly observed, but it is not accurate to say he was viewing America independently of all he had heard and read for a decade. He refers in his letters to other travellers and is very much aware of their reports. More to the point, the lack of freshness in American Notes is due in large measure to Dickens's failure to find a different
country from the America his predecessors had discovered. The attitudes that will govern the symbolism Dickens develops are the same attitudes that Mrs. Trollope brought with her to America over a decade earlier. Moreover, Dickens, in some of the exaggerations of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, clearly violates the truth of his own experience as recorded in the letters in order to fulfill his readers' expectations. It is necessary, then, to understand the context of Dickens's trip.

In Chapter One, I examine both previous travellers and the attitudes toward America that their writings sustained and provoked in the English people. There has been no real attempt to view Dickens's trip within this context. Allan Nevins and Jane Louise Mesick offer useful, comprehensive surveys of the travel literature of the period, but Nevins, who deals briefly with *American Notes*, misjudges the reasons for its non-belligerent tone, a tone which does not, as he suggests, represent accurately Dickens's feelings toward America at the time. Helen Heineman's *Three Victorians in the New World* explores the travels and works of Frances Trollope, Anthony Trollope, and Dickens. While I am indebted to her work for insights into Frances Trollope's literary technique in *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, neither her work nor any other examines the milieux in which Dickens's attitudes toward America were shaped.

Chapters Two, Three and Four deal with Dickens's trip and letters, *American Notes*, and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. There has been no attempt to explore the three as part of a coherent
process of symbolization. Certainly the letters have not been examined in that light. As Richard D. Altick writes in his review of the recently published Pilgrim Edition of the Dickens letters dealing with the American period, "The entire subject of the role the letters played in Dickens's total creative life has yet to receive adequate attention."\(^{10}\) Indeed, the Pilgrim editors themselves note that "the American visit has never been thoroughly examined."\(^{11}\) By exploring Dickens's trip itself we can trace his disillusionments with America and the way those disillusionments fed the development of the symbolism that would govern *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. His specific grievances focused for him what he came to see as the underlying character of America, a character which he saw more clearly defined at each stage of his journey. The letters, written in the heat of the moment, offer us a unique opportunity to examine the evolution of his attitude. Each specific incident further exposed the profound moral deficiency in the culture that in the end defined the country for Dickens.

In *American Notes*, Dickens proscribed the use of most of his specific adventures in America. He thus forced himself into the capsulization, even symbolization, of his experience. Whitley and Goldman note this tendency\(^{12}\) and to my knowledge are the only critics to do so. In his descriptions of the charitable institutions and jails, his distaste for the newness of the country and expansive sameness of the land, Dickens seems to be abstracting, clarifying, and setting out
symbolically the national character that he had come by the end of his trip to define as anti-social.

*Martin Chuzzlewit*, the artistic culmination of the trip, uses that American symbol not only in the American scenes but in the novel as a whole. Even before Dickens decided to add the American scenes, his American experience was involved in the shape of the fiction. When he did add the scenes, they became a coherent part of the story, paralleling and parodying the processes at work in the England of the novel. Critics have not, until recently, seen any important connection between the American and English scenes of the novel. Since Forster made clear that the American scenes had been added as a device to increase lagging sales, critics have seen them as a brilliant but unconnected insert.

G. K. Chesterton sees the American scenes as "the blazing jewel and the sudden redemption of the book," but he does not for a moment believe they belong in that book; indeed they are composed of "everything that belongs to the pure art of controversy as distinct...from the pure art of fiction."\(^{13}\)

George Orwell also sees them as an outburst of authorial distaste at odds with the fiction.\(^ {14}\) More recently, Harry Stone,\(^ {15}\) while making token references to the possibility of fictional reasons for particular transformations from Dickens's letters from America, sees a steady movement toward distortion of fact based essentially on personal and political disappointment. Barbara Hardy\(^ {16}\) finds the American scenes to be a major plot weakness. Their reason for existence is, apparently,
to allow young Martin to be regenerated. But according to Hardy, this regeneration takes place too suddenly to sustain the weight placed on it.

Other recent critics, however, have increasingly come to view the American scenes as in some way integrated with the rest of the story. Steven Marcus', whose thesis is that one of the central themes of the novel is the attempt to find the proper role for self in the social world, sees the American scenes serving as a contrast to the English scenes. In rejecting America, the reader is forced back to the society of England, to the heart of the labyrinth, to find the proper role for self.\(^{17}\) James Kincaid also sees the American scenes as a contrast to the English scenes. The unrestrained ego, savagery, and "naturalness" of America compel us to accept the values of the comic society of the novel: restraint, civility, and creative accommodation.\(^{18}\) H. M. Daleski, while attacking the American scenes as implausibly motivated on the plot level, thematically irrelevant, and "too patent... too crude... burlesque that falls a little flat,"\(^{19}\) at the same time mentions in passing a view of the two worlds as potentially homogeneous. This I think comes closest to the truth. The symbolic America that is developed through the letters and American Notes is clearly at work, both in the England and the America of the novel. The consistent parallels between the two worlds are a warning that America is very much an "attitude" to be reckoned with in England.
What I try to demonstrate, then, is that Dickens's American experience was much more coherent than is generally believed. The letters, the travelogue, and the novel detail a progression in Dickens's thought, through which the specific disappointments of his journey are transformed into a vision of human relationship that goes well beyond the confines of the United States of America.
Notes


2. Ibid., p. 90.


4. Ibid.


6. Donald Hawes, "Marryat and Dickens, A Personal and Literary Relationship," Dickens Studies Annual, 2 (1972), 44.


12 Whitley and Goldman, p. 34.


17 Steven Marcus, Dickens: From Pickwick to Dombey (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965).


If spittle could wait at table we should be nobly attended, but as that property has not been imparted to it in the present state of mechanical science, we are rather lonely and orphan-like, in respect of "being looked after."
Charles Dickens's political and social attitudes were always ambivalent. In early childhood, when he was forced to toil in the blacking warehouse, his humiliation was unspeakable, but he never, as George Orwell notes, expressed the feeling that the boys with whom he worked, Bob Fagin and Paul Green, should not have to work there either. Such work was only wrong for a "young gentleman," like himself. In later life, at the same time that in his novels he championed and idealized the lower classes, he, in his personal life, strove for the recognition of those at the top of the system and became something of a dandy. But he seems to have enjoyed thinking of himself as a radical, even as an escapee from society. His friend Forster tells us:

"By Jove, how radical I am getting!" he wrote to me (13th August). "I wax stronger and stronger in the true principles every day...." He would at times even talk, in moments of sudden indignation at the political outlook, of carrying off himself and his household gods, like Coriolanus, to a world elsewhere!.... "Now, I wonder if I should make a good settler! I wonder, if I went to a new colony with my head, hands, legs, and health, I should force myself to the top of the social milk-pot and live upon the cream! What do you think? Upon my word I believe I should."

This passage suggests that he idealized the colonist who begins over again in a land without the bounds of social structure and makes his own way. He can even see himself as a rough and ready colonist. But while the prospect fascinated him, it was at odds with his craving for structure and relish of tradition, elements
of his personality that were reinforced by what his biographer, Edgar Johnson, calls his "European ways of looking on things."4 As Steven Marcus says, "he became increasingly conscious of how deeply and irrevocably English he was."5

Recognizing the ambivalence in his personality, we can examine the context within which his views were shaped, to see the forces shaping those views. This chapter, then, will examine those English attitudes that were so much a part of him that they shaped his view of the United States. Dickens was very much aware of current English opinion on America. He knew he was journeying to the United States in a tradition of longstanding English interest in the former colony. He had read Mrs. Trollope’s Domestic Manners of the Americans (II, 402) and a great number of other travel books6 including those of Harriet Martineau, Captain Marryat, James Silk Buckingham (viii), and Basil Hall.7

He consciously tried, however, to divorce himself from the cultural assumptions that were a part of him. In an 1841 letter to Andrew Bell,8 a traveller who had sent him a copy of his book on America, Dickens says, "I think you are rather hard on the Americans and that your dedication like Mrs Trollope’s [sic] preface seems to denote a foregone conclusion." Dickens felt that he could be objective:

My notion is that in going to a New World one must for the time utterly forget, and put out of sight the Old one and bring none of its customs or observances into the
comparison - Or if you do compare remember how much brutality you may see (if you choose) in the common streets and public places of London (II, 402).

As we will see in Chapter Two, Dickens could not divorce himself from his culture, and his radical ideals gave way to concurrence in the view of America that was so prominent in the minds of his countrymen.

In this chapter, I will discuss the development of that English view of America that was current at the time Dickens left on his journey. In the first section I will trace the growth of attitudes toward America, from the attacks by the Tory press in the late teens and early twenties (which came in response to a wave of positive literature) to the travel literature that reinforced them in the late twenties and early thirties, culminating at the time of the Reform Bill in Mrs. Trollope's *Domestic Manners of the Americans*.

In my second section I will assess the impact of *Domestic Manners* on both English and American attitudes that were to influence Dickens. By 1832 and with *Domestic Manners*, a view of America had crystalized and was popularized. All that followed would be predicated on that established view.

In my third section, dealing with the ten years immediately prior to Dickens's departure, I will examine five elements that refined the English attitude: the continuing response of travellers, the impact of American writings and American tourists in England, the growing English anger over American slavery, and the growing war sentiment on both sides of the Atlantic.
Not only does this chapter serve to establish the context in which Dickens formed his views of America, but it also provides the context in which to examine American Notes, which was one in a long series of American travel books, and therefore was influenced by other travel books, and was subject to reader expectations of the genre. Dickens's fictionalization of his experiences in Martin Chuzzlewit incorporates the tradition, indeed shares many of Mrs. Trollope's assumptions.

In 1841, at the end of a decade and more of feverish tourism, the Quarterly Review bemoaned the fact that "we have had of late no scarcity of books on the United States. Soldiers, sailors, divines, dandies, apothecaries, attorneys, methodists, infidels, quakers, actors and ambassadors, projectors and bankrupts - wives, widows, and spinsters: - we thought we had had something from almost every possible class and calling." The Quarterly was none too happy to find that it had not yet heard from everyone, and was, in fact, currently engaged in soundly thrashing the latest two entries, a phrenologist and a teetotaler.

The Quarterly could of course not know that within a year another "type" would be added to the list, in the person of the novelist Charles Dickens, or that this traveller's experience would be more a triumphal march than a tour, indeed would top the extravagant triumph of LaFayette before him, and would not be surpassed in its excesses for over a hundred years until the rock and roll singers from Liverpool stormed America in the
1960s. In a real sense, the Dickens journey was the crest of the wave that had been rolling westward for two decades. Because of the extremely public nature of Dickens's trip, as well as his intense popularity at home, that trip solidified a set of attitudes on both sides of the Atlantic which were probably not to change until a very different America was opened to travellers after its wrenching Civil War. It is, then, in the context of that widespread transatlantic interest of which it was a substantial part that Dickens's complex and confusing reaction to America can best be examined.

Though the intertwining of American and English fortunes, and with it ambivalent feelings, can be traced to colonial days, nonetheless, for all practical purposes, the New World Dickens discovered in 1842 was the growth of a culture that had its roots in the War of 1812. Symbolically, at least, that war shifted the power in America from the Eastern patrician giants of the first great days - Washington, Jefferson, Monroe, and Madison - to the undistinguished, indistinguishable common man and his quite uncommon embodiment, Andrew Jackson. Jackson burst upon the popular fancy with his smashing defeat of the English at New Orleans, at the end of a war that had "threatened to destroy the young nation's pride." That pride was to swell ten times over at New Orleans. Based on the values that had triumphed there, it rejected an England which was "the
culmination of the process of civilization, which was inextricably involved in the American mind with tyranny and decadence. The American frontiersmen had defeated "civilization" at New Orleans. In its place, the American people established the frontier hero Andrew Jackson as a mirror in whose image, or rather in what they saw as his image, they groomed themselves, cultivating roughness and crudeness as virtues, and glorifying commonness. When Jackson left the presidency in 1837, the common man indeed prevailed, personified at the top by such undistinguished presidents as Van Buren, Harrison, and a Tyler whom Dickens was to find "so jaded, that it stuck in my throat like Macbeth's amen" (111). Thus, after the War of 1812 America was a country turning its back on what it considered the over-civilized ways of Europe and finding its soul in its half-conquered, rude West. The influence of literary figures such as Irving on the attitudes of the mass of the newspaper-reading populace which had no time for literature ("We air a busy people," Martin Chuzzlewit is often told) was limited.

This fundamental American vision of "civilization" virtually dictated the tone of most of the English travel literature and was at the heart of Dickens's reaction to America. For Dickens, as for his fellow travellers, not tyranny and decadence, but morality and humanity were absolutely bound up with "civilization," with manners and gentility. Dickens, seeing two English soldiers in Canada after months of the Americans, exclaimed, "Ah! what gentlemen, what noblemen of
nature they seemed" (210). In rejecting what they thought of as superficialities, the Americans were manifesting a profound lack of humaneness, of morality. More and more, the English were being led to that conclusion about their former colony. Sentiment crystalized with the Quarterly Review's attacks in the late teens and early twenties, and became established with Mrs. Trollope's Domestic Manners of the Americans in the thirties.

But in these early years, as America was turning inward and consciously developing a character in opposition to England's, as much positive as negative interest was being expressed by the English. The positive interest was turning to America on two curiously divergent levels, those of the abstract philosopher and the very practical traveller. America had been controversial from the beginning, and reactions to it were never all positive or all negative in England. However, for our purposes, the early positive reactions are significant because they provoked the specific negative attack that was to crystalize sentiment in England.

In the early 1800s, Jeremy Bentham was postulating a utilitarian philosophy in England. Bentham found his first axiom, the greatest good for the greatest numbers, highly accommodated by the democratic form of government, in which, he believed, the rulers' interests were intimately entwined with those of the people. In striving for the greatest happiness for themselves, the governors would be forced to serve the people who held the power to keep them in or put them out
of office. Since America was one of the few living democracies, he studied its institutions in some detail, and by 1817 had come to feel that the survival and apparent success of the democratic system in America confirmed his radical theories. America became a symbol for liberal politics in general, and particularly for the Utilitarian propagandists, to use in pamphlets and speeches. The important things to note here is that this wave of directed, calculated pro-Americanism was not based on detailed observation of the quality of life in a democracy, on actual manners, customs, and daily experience, but on broad philosophical ideas which could easily gloss over concrete realities. The Benthamites, then, were popularizing a theoretical America, an America that was more a symbolic catchword than a real country.

During the same period, a very dubious genre of travel literature was creating an equally positive feeling about America. This literature exploited an English appetite for the distant and strange. The English of the time were an easy prey for books which built an image of an exotic America. As Jane Louise Mesick says, "How great that curiosity was is difficult to comprehend." Many of the travellers, Mesick reports, "let their imaginations run riot, and the result was often a tale worthy of the Arabian Nights." Thomas Ashe, in 1806, and John Davis, somewhat earlier, in 1798, were among the most notorious, according to Mesick. Such books, feeding on English curiosity, appear to have found a ready market.
Edouard Montule's *A Voyage to North America and the West Indies in 1817* illustrates the type. Published by Richard Phillips, who is well-known for his stable of hacks, the book highlights the exotic. Phillips, never known for his dedication to veracity or literary merit, here packages the exotic in a short, affordable hundred pages that contrasts with the two and three-volume travelogues of recognized authors. Montule, a Frenchman who previously wrote *Travels in Egypt*, so we are told, takes us from New York only as far as Philadelphia before he hoists anchor for St. Thomas's, Santo Domingo, and Kingston, eventually to return to the wilder sections of frontier America. Apparently the author's original intention was even grander, as the running titles for a number of pages read "Voyage to North America, the West Indies, and the Mediterranean." Be that as it may, while in the United States itself, the author highlights the unfamiliar. "My first excursion was to inspect the steamboats," the author tells us — an invention not yet found widely in Europe, and a rather picturesque one with its shooting flames and exploding boilers. The book contains two fold-out pictures, one of a mammoth in a Philadelphia museum, and the other of a rattlesnake about to spring at a woodsman in the dangerous wilds of Ohio.

The author provides a generally favorable, and certainly exaggerated, impression of America: "I have already examined this beautiful city... and have seen Broadway, the principal street of New York, and perhaps the most magnificent in the world." Indeed, the country was a kind of romantic
wonderland: "The Government of this country is the most lenient possible; the honest man is scarcely susceptible of it, living happy and tranquil, all opinions being tolerated, and every religion sanctioned."17

A Tour in Virginia, Tennessee, &c. &c. &c. by the Rev. Elias Cornelius, a twenty-page geological travelogue tacked onto the end of Sansom’s Travels in Lower Canada by Phillips, surely qualifies for Mesick’s category of "imagination run riot." Cornelius includes a noteworthy section on "A destructive Insect." If such an insect ever existed, it has since suffered the misfortune of extinction. Justice can be done to this section only in a lengthy quotation:

In the Choctaw country, one hundred and thirty miles north-east of Natchez, a part of the public road is rendered famous on account of the periodical return of a poisonous and destructive fly. Contrary to the custom of other insects, it always appears when the cold weather commences in December, and as invariably disappears on the approach of warm weather, which is about the 1st of April. It is said to have been remarked first in the winter of 1807, during a snowstorm; when its effects upon cattle and horses were observed to be similar to those of the gnat and mosquito, in summer, except that they were more severe. It continues to return at the same season of the year, without producing extensive mischief, until the winter of 1816, when it began to be generally fatal to the horses of travellers.... I am unable to describe it from my own observation. I passed over the same road in April last, only two weeks after it disappeared, and was obliged to take the description from others.... It is singular, that from the time of its first appearance, it has never extended for a greater distance than forty miles in one
direction, and, usually, it is confined to fifteen miles. In no other part of the country has it ever been seen.18

That books like these were having an effect on the curious English, and that, indeed, the Benthamites were using them to gather pro-American evidence is demonstrated by the fact that the Tory Quarterly found it necessary to lash out angrily at books such as these, written, it claimed, by "those wretched hirelings who, under the assumed names of 'travellers,' 'residents in France,' 'Italy,' &c. supply the radical press with the means of mischief."19

If then, while creating very different images of America, the Benthamites and the travelogues were collaborating in showing America to advantage, a third force was also working in that direction, though on a level much more grounded in concrete reality. That force was the serious travel book, generally written by people with some political point to make, and tending to make it by praising America.

If the amount of discussion in the journals is a measure, emigration was a topic of much concern to Englishmen, and no doubt writers were playing to a lucratively eager audience. William Cobbett's A Year's Residence in the United States of America was already in its third edition in 1822. In his preface, Cobbett makes the same claim travellers would be making for two decades:

Amongst all the publications, which I have yet seen, on the subject of the United States, as a country to live in, and especially to farm in, I have never
yet observed one that conveyed to Englishmen any thing like a correct notion of the matter.... The account, which I shall give, shall be that of actual experience.  

Nonetheless, Cobbett's account is little less than glowing. It is completely directed to prospective farmers, with chapters on "Cabbages," "Swedish turnips," "Cows," and so forth, and his journal of his travels presents a picture of bucolic bliss. Nor is Cobbett afraid to add an occasional dig at England:

Saw a Mr. Johnstone and his wife reaping wheat.... They had a fine flock of little children, and pigs and poultry, and were cheerful and happy, being confident that their industry and economy would not be frustrated by visits for tithes or taxes.

When Cobbett is critical, it is only mildly:

One of the storekeepers told me he does not sell more than ten thousand dollars value per annum: he ought, then, to manufacture something and not spend nine tenths of his time in lolling with a sear in his mouth.

In short, Cobbett leaves little question of what he thinks would be a proper course for those contemplating emigration (though no doubt anticipating a Tory tongue lashing, he couches it in a humorously unsubtle disclaimer):

I wish it to be observed, that, in any thing which I may say, during the course of this work, though truth will compel me to state facts, which will, doubtless, tend to induce farmers to leave England for America, I advise no one so to do.... I myself am bound to England for life. My notions of allegiance to country...bind me to England; but, I shall leave others to judge and to act for themselves.

While the Quarterly would lash out at the cheap travelogues, its real fear and anger were directed toward the more seriously intended travel books like Cobbett's ("The 'celebrated' Cobbett
fled from his creditors. - That he should do this is perfectly natural; the thing to be admired is - that such a man should have creditors to flee from!". 24 Opinions on America, of course, had been as varied as the personalities and politics of the travellers. Cobbett himself tells us he has read information both pro and con. But because, at this stage, the Quarterly Review perceived the positive books, particularly that of Cobbett, as a political threat, the issue seems to have become polarized at this time. The books spurred a series of articles in the Quarterly which popularized the negative view of America that was to persist and grow for two decades. 25 While these articles were clearly politically motivated, their result was to transcend politics to produce a non-partisan popular view of America. The articles appeared in 1819, 1822, and 1823. Their tone was rabidly patriotic:

None but the servile flatterer, or the sour and discontented sectary, in whose bosoms no spark of genuine patriotism ever gloved, would think of placing the people of the United States in competition with those of England...Let it be recollected that, with all our drawbacks,...there is no country in the world...where real and rational liberty, the Englishman's birthright, is so fully and so effectually enjoyed. 26

Their direct purpose appears to have been to discourage emigration, at least on the part of the well-to-do. The common people, who were increasingly a burden, embarrassment, and potential source of political mischief, were of course another matter. The Quarterly's worry was a real one. As Henry Fearon, who was the subject of a Quarterly attack, wrote:
Emigration had, at the time of my appointment assumed a totally new character; it was no longer merely the poor, the idle, the profligate, or the wildly speculative, who were proposing to quit their native country; but men also of capital, of industry, of sober habits and regular pursuits...27

So, the Quarterly attacks:

There is a numerous set of people in this country who, having grown inordinately rich under its protecting shield, while the rest of the civilized world lay exposed to the ravages of war, are become feverish and discontented.... Too selfish to endure any reduction of their extravagant profits...they leave their country to support its burdens as it can, and are already on the wing, with their multitudinous acquisitions, for a foreign shore. 28

But in the end, the articles stand out not for their attacks on Englishmen but for the breadth of their attacks on the United States, or as the Westminster Review, the Quarterly's radical antagonist, put it, for holding "up the Americans and their government to hatred and contempt."29

The first of these articles, nearly fifty pages long, is a discussion of a travel book by Henry Fearon, who, like Cobbett, was politically motivated, was directly concerned with emigration, and initially was favorably disposed toward America. Fearon was commissioned by a group of prospective emigrants ("cold-blooded, calculating men, who, in their own language, deemed it prudent to look before they leaped")30 to search out a favorable spot for settlement. In Fearon, the Quarterly had found the perfect place to commence its attack. As the Quarterly tells it, he went to America highly biased
toward that country, only to find "his violent prejudices in favour of America...shaken or removed."\(^{31}\) Or as the Westminster Review preferred to put it, "Mr. Fearon,...apparently [an enthusiast] for liberty, saw things...with the peevishness of disappointment, because he did not find everything so good as a heated imagination had led him to expect."\(^{32}\) In either case, the Quarterly used Mr. Fearon's disappointment, whether warranted or not, to validate its attack, pointing out that any clear-headed individual (and here was one - Fearon "is a lover of truth, and, so far as he discerns it, is ready to set it forth\(^{33}\)) who looked at the evidence must ultimately find America dismal. And so the Quarterly highlights the flaws found by Fearon.

"Every thing he says that can be turned to account for making the people of the United States appear either odious or ridiculous, is embraced as text of holy writ," says the Westminster Review.\(^{34}\) The list encompasses both manners and institutions, and will become standard before very long: a people sallow and slovenly, wary of outsiders, rude and inquisitive, calculating, ungenerous, and always spitting tobacco juice; a country where politics are vulgar and corrupt, Negroes are not given equality even in the free states, religious feeling is rampant, the land is poor and disease ridden, the roads are bad, the boarding houses worse, the children forward and impudent, and those who have any sense are emigrating north to Canada!
The second of these *Quarterly* articles dealt with the books of four travellers who were not displeased with America - Mr. Tell Harris, Mr. Welby, Mr. Richard Flower, and "An Englishwoman" who the *Quarterly* suggested was a phony (a year later it regretfully announced that "we then flattered ourselves that nothing so base and degenerate in the shape of an Englishwoman would be found; but the sad reality has since appeared; a Miss Wright, an adopted daughter (as she says) of Jeremy Bentham, having prefixed her name to it."). Unlike Fearon (who could not tell an untruth), these authors were held up to ridicule at the same time that their veracity was questioned. The review made generally the same case against America, but what strikes the reader is how deeply - despite the reviewer's political pretensions - unmanners is at the root of his anger. Clearly, for the reviewer, manners and morals are inseparable. A small incident in Fearon's adventure, treated early and at great length in the *Quarterly*'s first review, was now brought up again, and the words suggest the extent of the *Quarterly*'s concern with manners. In the original account, we were told that Fearon offered a shilling to a boy who called a hackney-coach for him. The shilling was refused "for as how...I guess, it is not of value." The boy accepted fifty cents without even a thank you: "Our traveller...is disposed to think that a simple 'I thank you, Sir,' would not derogate from a freeman's dignity; yet, 'after all,' he concludes, 'even cold independence is preferable to warm servility...'. He is the dupe of words: the question, with
his leave, is not between cold independence and warm servility, but between downright impudence and courtesy: for, surely, 'I thank you' has nothing servile in it." A minor incident, duly reported and attacked - but for the Quarterly, this was precisely the kind of incident that said most about American society, and so it was not forgotten three years later in discussing Mr. Welby's travels:

Nor was his predecessor Fearon much more fortunate: he found 'common civility,' in fact, so rare a commodity, that he could not purchase the chance of one of those cheap thank-yo's, from a little ragged republican, for less than half a dollar - and went without it after all.

W. Faux, "an English Farmer," wrote a travel book discussing the prospects for emigrants, and was duly subjected to the third Quarterly article. Like Fearon, he was somewhat disillusioned: "That Mr. Faux is an honest man, and tells the truth to the best of his knowledge and belief, we cannot for a moment permit ourselves to doubt...." What is most striking in this article is the rising shrillness of the anti-American attack. The Quarterly is now focusing on outright violence. Brutality to slaves, lynchings, dueling, thievery of sheep by Mississippi River navigators, a man mugged in Boston and left with broken legs in one hundred degree heat until a soldier offered a dollar to have him removed as a nuisance are all stressed as representative of the land of liberty: quite a different world from the 'wonderland' travel books! The article closes with an earnest entreaty to those "in a state of
hesitation whether to embark their all on a speculation to the back-woods of America, and become the subjects of that government...to pause."^{39}

The *Westminster Review* was spurred to the defense in 1824. In an article which sets out the conflicting views, it accuses the *Quarterly* of hatred, bias, and the abuse of its power base. What the article does not do is disprove the facts of the *Quarterly*'s case against America.^{41} And it was that case which would take hold in the British mind and grow stronger as more and more travellers left England and returned to report similar things, and as the year 1832 drew nearer, bringing with it a new surge of political momentum for dissection of America.

Whereas in the early 20s, the interest in emigration on the one hand and its implied lack of patriotism on the other were the political issues of greatest concern in the American question, by the late 20s, the concern with America was associated with the very structure of society at home. Reform was in the air, and the old Benthamite interest in America as the laboratory of democracy became dominant. On both sides of the reform issue, Englishmen looked to America, the assumed end of the road England would be travelling with reform, to gather evidence for or against that movement. English memories of the French Revolution, which were revived by the three-day July Revolution in 1830, could only be intensified by the information arriving from America. We can see this new emphasis on American democracy clearly in the *Quarterly*'s change of approach. Where it had formerly centered its articles on
unpatriotic emigrants and uncivilized Americans, it now directed its articles toward "the actual effects of the system of government adopted in the United States." Thus, when Captain Basil Hall published his report on America in 1829, he emphasized the government, and his judgments were scrutinized with great interest. The Captain tells us that when he began his trip "there seldom was a traveller who visited a foreign land in a more kindly spirit." Nonetheless, his ultimate judgment, in spite of his ardent desire to the contrary, was sweepingly negative:

I have been somewhat disappointed; and my opinion now is, that while each of our governments retains its present character, any closer intimacy between us is not likely to spring up.... Our views and wishes are so diametrically opposed, not merely in name but in substance, and in all that we respectively consider valuable in life.

Hall's judgment does not rest on a dislike of the people. He takes great pains to say that he was everywhere "received with... uniform kindness and hospitality" and that he has "had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with many persons in America, whose good-will and good opinion I hope I shall never lose." Indeed his book is noticeably lacking in the complaints about crudeness of the natives and the discomfort of travel so often voiced by other travellers. Perhaps as a sea captain, Hall was used to a harder life.

It is rather the government of the country that evokes his dismay. Having watched debates in various of the state legislatures, he found them "rather juvenile. The matter was in the
highest degree commonplace, and the manner of treating it still more so."47 The blame for this, he places on the very fundamentals of republican government. American legislators, he discovered, were farmers, shopkeepers, and country lawyers. The naivete of the majority of these legislators left them easily manipulable by shrewd and "intriguing" men. And then, "just as the members begin to get a slight degree of useful familiarity with the routine of affairs, a fresh election comes on, and out they all go."48

Hall's uneasiness extended not only to the state and national legislatures ("I defy any imagination, however active, to form a just conception of the rambling and irritating nature of a debate in congress, without actually attending the House of Representatives"),49 but to all the other elements of democratic government - the excitement and "perpetual" uproar of electioneering, the weakness of the executive, the deficiencies of the judiciary. In short, in his quiet, well-mannered way, Captain Hall placed a valuable piece of evidence in the hands of the Tories at an opportune time. The Quarterly, of course, was quick to acknowledge the debt:

We have read [Hall's work] with pleasure....
We see nothing in that country to excite envy or jealousy, and little to excite our serious regret.50

Basil Hall had an impact, but he and all previous travellers paled next to the "old woman" whose anecdotes created a sensation three years later. The political milieu of the year 1832 helped make Frances Trollope's Domestic Manners of the Americans
the best known and most influential travel book of the period. Like a notable poet before her, Mrs. Trollope, after the publication of the book on March 19, 1832, woke up and found herself famous. In England, her name became synonymous with American travel. In America, her name became synonymous with English traveller. Hated as no traveller before her had been, she was shortly granted the dubious distinction of the title role in an American version of the Dunciad, entitled The Trolloniad.

There is little question that Mrs. Trollope's rise to fame was political, that it was for all intents and purposes engineered by the Tory press. As John William Ward says:

The Reform Bills were before Parliament and there were many in England only too glad to attend to any criticism of the culture of democracy.... Mrs. Trollope's criticism of democracy...found a quick and appreciative [audience] in England.51

Quick the audience was. In the month her book was published, it was reviewed in a forty-page orgy of ecstasy by the Quarterly: "This is exactly the title-page we have long wished to see, and we rejoice to say that, now the subject has been taken up, it is handled by an English lady of sense and acuteness, who possesses very considerable power of expression...."52 Fraser's echoed the Quarterly the next month: "Her work, we repeat, is singularly acute and amusing."53 And clearly, everyone was reading Mrs. Trollope. By the end of the year 1832, Domestic Manners of the Americans had gone through four editions.54 The Whig press, then, could not ignore it; during the summer, the Edinburgh Review lashed out.
Throughout two volumes, she has not made a single sensible observation on any important subject. There is such a total want about her book of that refinement of mind...that we would not hang a cat on her opinion for a breach of manners... She has...opened a quarrelsome account with a growing nation, for not corresponding to unreasonable expectations sentimentalized into republican romance.53

Opinion on the book was unequivocally political. The Tories praised; the Whigs condemned. Mrs. Trollope had not written the book for political reasons; she wrote it because she was desperately in need of money and American travel books sold well.56 The book was nearly written when she returned to England. But she did not publish it for seven months, and not for want of a publisher. She tells us that she went to America a Whig and came home a Tory ("I had a little leaning towards sedition myself when I set out, but before I had half completed my tour I was quite cured").57 During the time after she came home a Tory, Mrs. Trollope revised the book. According to the Stebbinses, "Sensing a commercial opportunity and enthusiastically willing to abet the opponents of Reform, she strengthened the political passages in her book and wrote a scathing preface on the evils of democracy."58 Says Mrs. Trollope of herself in that preface:

The chief object she has had in view is to encourage her countrymen to hold fast by a constitution that ensures all the blessings which flow from established habits and solid principles.59

Mrs. Trollope's emphasis on the solidity of tradition should be kept in mind, for it will be echoed in both of Dickens's works
on America. Moreover the fear that directed the Tories of 1832, the fear that the reform bills would send England down the road leading to America, is the same fear that Dickens would bring home ten years later. In *Martin Chuzzlewit* we see Dickens suggesting how much of the American danger is already to be found in England.

Mrs. Trollope would meet her object by showing her countrymen the daily lives of people in a democracy. While many would attack her book as trivial for that very reason, one point should not be missed. Her book had so strong an effect precisely because it was a more detailed, circumstantial, and vivid picture of American society than the preceding ones. Helen Heineman's *Three Victorians in the New World* is especially good in delineating the uniqueness of Mrs. Trollope's picture of America. Mrs. Trollope's technique is largely anecdotal. With her storyteller's eye for detail, her expansive sketches of individual incidents give the book a fullness and particularity that enable the reader to see her Americans more vividly and dramatically than do those of other travellers. Her ear for speech, and the use she makes of it in providing dialogues, give the book a vitality other books lacked. As she wrote to her son Thomas Adolphus, objecting to a travel book he was planning, "First, your not speaking the language...would rob you of that sort of racy originality which the remarks, and even the phrases, of the people among whom you travel, can alone give to such a work."
The first half of *Domestic Manners* deals with Cincinnati, where Mrs. Trollope lived for twenty-five months. Her view, as she continually reminds us, was based on a more intimate examination than those of travellers who spent a day or a month in a particular place. From her vast array of experiences she was able to select stories that not only illustrated the point she wished to make, but she did it in a memorable fashion. As Heineman demonstrates, the particularity of a story - moving from a depiction of a scene to a closer view of a group of people within that scene to a still closer examination of one character - strengthens the generalization which follows the anecdote, since the generalization is built on something the reader finds substantial. Her presentation of fully developed anecdotes in series makes the reader more willing to accept them as representative of the society at large. Always stressing her personal knowledge, Mrs. Trollope is careful to separate those actions that she has actually witnessed from those that she has only heard from others. Her work achieves then, not only a vividness, but the appearance of authority.

With *Domestic Manners*, the political exploitation of America came to a head. Mrs. Trollope had arrived at the precisely right historical moment to bring her book to center stage. Within a year the political excitement of 1832 declined. Trying to duplicate her *Domestic Manners* success a year later, Mrs. Trollope wrote a novel, *The Refugee in America*, and the sales were disappointing. Things had quieted down so far that even the *Quarterly* was willing to give the book a devastatingly
bad review. But in 1832, America was politically potent material, and Mrs. Trollope had written an entertaining, eminently readable book that made a powerful political point. The significance of the unique character and the political inspiration, for our purposes, is that they caused her version of America to be popularized above all others. We are told that the newest rage in England was quoting queer Americanisms. As with the Quarterly's negative depiction of America ten years earlier, Mrs. Trollope's view transcended its immediate political purposes. It entrenched itself as the "truth" about America. It dictated the people's image of America to such an extent that for thirty years and more, travellers would find it necessary to contend with Mrs. Trollope, either to confirm or refute. Hers became a kind of seminal view of America.

What then did Mrs. Trollope say about America? In large measure, she echoed the Quarterly's earlier catalogue, but with much deeper and more graphic illustrations, and with the persuasiveness of someone who had lived and worked among the Americans for three long years.

Americans spoke a language that seemed to limit rather than enrich the possibility of communication. Notable for its nasal tones and its barbarisms - expressions like "I expect," "I calculate," "I reckon," and "I guess," the catch-all exclamation "Possible!" and the all-purpose word "fix" - American speech seemed to make expansive conversation unnecessary. One thinks of Dickens's description in American Notes of a dialogue in which "Yes Sir" ably handled all contingencies of speech.
When they were not speaking their crude jargon, the Americans were manifesting a physical crudeness most visible in the spitting of tobacco juice into omnipresent spitoons and more often on the floor, carpet, or clothing of a neighbor.

They had very peculiar habits, such as living in boarding-houses with no privacy, calling each other to meals with the aid of a dinner gong, and wolfing down the meals with few amenities, no conversation, great haste, and little joy. Indeed, joy was not an American quality. Social activity was rare. When an occasion necessitated a social gathering, women and men were almost always separated, and no one really had very much fun.

Americans were concerned, really, with only two things, making money and talking politics. Money was the root of their evil practice of "smart dealing," or cheating whomever they could, however they could. Incessant political activity was rooted in their form of government, republicanism. Their duty as free men was to electioneer for the full four years between elections. Republicanism led to a great many other faults. No one wanted to be a servant; indeed, in asking for a servant one had to use the word "help." Further, since everyone was equal, everyone considered everyone else's business his own, so the Americans were highly inquisitive. They were also rather forward, and trained their children in that "republican" tenet very early.

For all their superficial hospitality, which had been remarked especially by Hall, Americans were a violent and lawless
people, keeping slaves and cherishing a fondness for lynchings, dueling, and political rowdyism. They were also extraordinarily proud, vain, and thin-skinned. Thus they criticized England constantly, asked everyone "How do you like America," and were unable to take any criticism in answer.

As for the country, it was wide open and often beautiful, but swampy and fever-ridden. The roads were bad, the stage coach drivers surly, the canal boats and railroads uncomfortable, and the Mississippi steamers downright dangerous. In the cities, scavenging pigs roamed the streets, and when it rained the main streets flooded.

The Americans were unreligious, though in the absence of an established religion, and with their aggressive individualism, they were prone to such quirks as Shakerism and revival meetings. In general, Mrs. Trollope informs us, "Jonathan is a very dull boy.... Compared with Americans, we are whirligigs and tototums...." Moreover, "I heard an Englishman...declare that...he had never overheard Americans conversing without the word DOLLAR being pronounced between them." In the final analysis, Americans were just plain uncivil. There was, she informs us, quoting a letter from her husband:

Not a hulking boy from a keel-boat who was not introduced to the President, unless, indeed,...they introduced themselves: for instance, I was at his elbow when a greasy fellow accosted him thus:

"General Jackson, I guess?"
The General bowed ascent.
"Why they told me you was dead."
"No! Providence has hitherto preserved my life."
"And is your wife alive too?"
Tho General...signified the contrary....
"Aye, I thought it was the one or the t’other of ye."67

For Mrs. Trollope, and for the Tory reviewers, this uncivil behavior was directly related to the democratic form of government, a form that led inevitably to a levelling of society. There might be a "small patrician band in the States who dwell apart" and who it was hoped would begin to assert leadership. Fraser’s called out for "some tourist...to give us a sketch of this particular class of men...."68 But overall, democracy could not be separated from the crudeness Mrs. Trollope catalogued.

2

How accurate, then, was this picture of America that was to catch the popular imagination of the English? There is little doubt that what Mrs. Trollope saw in America existed, even if some of her generalizations tended toward hyperbole. A veritable wave of travellers after her would confirm that indeed Americans spat and said those strange words and wore "smart" dealers. Almost nothing Mrs. Trollope said had not been said before by someone. And later testimony on both sides of the Atlantic tended to accept her view. Mark Twain wrote, Mrs. Trollope "was merely telling the truth, and this indignant nation knew it. She was painting a state of things which... lasted to well along in my youth, and I remember it...."69
The modern critic John William Ward writes of Domestic Manners, "It was an unbalanced book, but it was not a false book, although it took some years before Americans could bring themselves to say so."70

Years later, Anthony Trollope wrote of his mother:

She saw with a woman's keen eye, and described with a woman's light but graphic pen, the social defects and absurdities which our near relatives had adopted into their domestic life. All that she told was worth the telling.... But she did not regard it as part of her work to dilate on the nature and operation of those political arrangements which had produced the social absurdities which she saw, or to explain that though such absurdities were the natural result of those arrangements in their newness, the defects would certainly pass away, while the political arrangements, if good, would remain.71

Perhaps so when Anthony wrote, but the verdict was not yet in when Mrs. Trollope wrote. Mrs. Trollope recorded what she saw, and for her, that was crucial. She saw not a defect of newness that would pass away, but a defect that would dictate the shape of the culture developing around her. For Mrs. Trollope, manners and morals were profoundly related:

The "simple" manner of living in Western America was more distasteful to me from its levelling effects on the manners of the people, than from the personal privations that it rendered necessary.... There were many circumstances, too trifling even for my gossiping pages, which pressed themselves daily and hourly upon us, and which forced us to remember painfully that we were not at home. It requires an abler pen than mine to trace the connection which I am persuaded exists between these deficiencies and the minds and manners of the people.72
Like hers, Dickens’s artistic vision worked with the particular; like her, he was a sketcher of the details of life; and like her, he saw the character defined by those details of daily life, what she called "all that constitutes the external of society,...the study of manners...and the minutiae of which it is composed...." Mrs. Trollope tells us, "Till I was without them, I was in no degree aware of the many pleasurable sensations derived from the little elegancies and refinements enjoyed by the middle classes in Europe." We go a long way toward understanding Dickens’s reaction to America when we recognize how much he shared with Mrs. Trollope. Unaware until he was in a place that did not evidence them how important manners were, he had gone to America expecting to take into account the unique circumstances of the country. Once he had experienced America, he, like Mrs. Trollope, realized that what the Americans had sacrificed was fundamental. Lionel Trilling, in a notable essay, draws the connection between manners and morals. Even at the time he was writing, Trilling says, America did not share the English belief in that connection. What Mrs. Trollope, and Dickens after her, found in American ill-manneredness was a profound lack of morality. Manners, says Trilling, are "the indication of the direction of man’s soul." One could easily enough say — and many did — that Mrs. Trollope recorded well, but had little sense of proportion. Cincinnati, where she spent most of her time, had been a wilderness just a few years before. What had been accomplished
in those few years, creating a thriving city in a wilderness, was truly worthy of respect, and if the main road still flooded when it rained, in a few more years it wouldn't. If the men who inhabited this unfinished west did not have the refinement of those who stayed behind in Boston - or London - that was to be expected. Dickens in American Notes makes a similar kind of seemingly peevish irrational criticism, when he attacks the very newness of the country. As we shall see in our discussion of American Notes, what underlies the criticism is a profound sense of the cost of that passion for newness. So with Mrs. Trollope, her sense of the cost of complacently accepting uncivilized conditions - indeed glorifying and institutionalizing them - is at the heart of her seeming peevishness.

The question of the ties between crudeness and institutions was still alive five years later, when the Westminster Review sought to dissociate the governmental form from the nature of the people in words which speak to Mrs. Trollope:

The unpleasant peculiarities which are complained of by travellers, in the manners of the most numerous class in America...would be manifested by the English peasantry if they were in the same circumstances - satisfied with their condition, and therefore... freed from the necessity of servility for bread, and, consequently, at liberty to treat their superiors exactly as they treat one another.

The point for Dickens, surely, and Mrs. Trollope, no doubt, is that the people should treat one another better.

Mrs. Trollope, of course, was an angry woman. She had gone to Cincinnati to start a business and after three years
all her speculations had failed utterly. She resented the people who had not patronized her bazaar. She resented them for snubbing her personally. And aggravating matters further, she had constant trouble getting and keeping "help." As the Westminster Review chose to say, "Home she came at last, and poured forth her experiences in a book...avenging herself upon the indifference which had cut her to the quick, and the slights which she had endured in a strange, busy land...." Captain Marryat, a future traveller, was given this explanation of Mrs. Trollope's treatment:

When Mrs. Trollope came here, she was quite unknown, except inasmuch as that she was a married woman, travelling without her husband. In a small society, as ours was, it was not surprising, therefore, that we should be cautious about receiving a lady who, in our opinion, was offending against les bionséances.... I have now told you all that we know about her, and the reason why she did not receive those attentions, the omission of which caused her indignation.

While Mrs. Trollope was certainly not free of all hypocrisy this comment, at least, makes clear the pomposity with which she was forced to deal. And in a country claiming its "independence" from English manners, it is a rather amusing parody of the forms of English social decorum.

Influential as Domestic Manners was on the English conception of America, it had another crucial effect. It hardened the American attitude toward English travellers. That in turn influenced the kinds of reports future travellers would bring home to England.
Mrs. Trollope knew that the Americans were thin-skinned. She wrote a chapter in *Domestic Manners* on the negative reception of Basil Hall's less critical book. Yet it seems she went out of her way to exacerbate those feelings. The response in America was immediate and violent. E. T. Coke, an Englishman in New York, reported that:

The Tariff and Bank Bill were alike forgotten, and the tug of war was hard, whether the "Domestic Manners," or the cholera, which burst upon them simultaneously, should be the more engrossing topic of conversation.... In all societies, the first question was, "Have you read Mrs. Trollope?" 81

The *Quarterly* reported with much glee that "If it be true, which we do not affirm, that the individual who places his feet on the front of a box in the theatre of New York is now rebuked by a cry of 'Trollope!' from the pit, that lady already deserves a civic crown." 82 It was true. Indeed, the Americans enjoyed their antagonism with Mrs. Trollope. On July 9, 1832, William Cullen Bryant, writing in the *New York Evening Post*, satirized *Domestic Manners*:

New York is rather a charming little city, containing from 100,000 to 150,000 inhabitants, mostly black. The streets are altogether monopolized by these sons and daughters of Africa.... and it would be... extremely dangerous, to notice any insult... as they all carry long daggers concealed in their bosoms.... The Park Theater was originally an old barn.... It has been burnt down fourteen times, probably by the religious party, which... have now elected Jackson to the Presidency.... I am indebted to my kind friend for many of these particulars. He knows that I am writing a book of travels, and although himself only an American, has
kindly volunteered his services to collect materials for me.... Mrs. Keppel, as Juliet, was not sufficiently poetic, but was nevertheless pretty well. This was, however, afterwards accounted for by the discovery that she was an English lady.... All their ladies...betray the most incontrovertible evidences of vulgarity, sitting on the banisters with their backs to the stage, between the acts, eating Carolina potatoes, and drinking ginger pop.

In 1837, when The Trollopian: or, Travelling Gentlemen in America came out, the Americans were still mocking. The five-year time lag illustrates how lasting the resentment was:

Fools - vagrants - British scribblers, be my theme, Assist me, TROLLOPE, in the worthy scheme.... Poor is my muse, yet good enough for you. With arrant knaves the homeliest strains may pass, Who ever sings an ANTHEM to an ASS?... Yes, thou shalt roam - "DOMESTIC MANNERS" see, Gaze on the folk, and they shall gaze on thee. For thee, old dame, the gen'rous earth shall grant Her richest off'ring of tobacco-plant.

With a scholarly footnote, the editor of the work outdoes himself:

Some very plausible opinions have been broached in the preface to the American edition of Mrs. Trollope, with regard to the identity of that personage with Capt. Bazil Hall; and the writer thinks that he proves to the satisfaction of every one, that either "the captain is Mrs. Trollope in breeches, or that Mrs. Trollope is Capt. Hall in petticoats," and which is which, it matters not.

What had begun with Fearon and the Quarterly came to its climax with Mrs. Trollope. Politics had been the precipitant, but when after 1832 the political tempers had quieted, the view of America was fixed, as was the American view of England. Charles Dickens grew to adulthood with the Trollopian view of America in the air. He was a working reporter when the
Reform Bills were up and would continue to be an obscure writer during the time that Mrs. Trollope's view of America was becoming entrenched. It was this seminal view of America that Dickens knew in his young adulthood. When he wrote his first novel, he had Tony Weller suggest that Mr. Pickwick go to America and write a book about the "Merrikins" that would pay his expenses. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of his American trip is the ease with which he came to accept this view that he had expected to decimate. The ambivalence in his personality that was noted earlier is here in evidence. Though he thought of himself as a radical, he was profoundly of Mrs. Trollope's school.

The middle of the decade, in addition to marking the rise to fame of Dickens, provides a convenient breaking point in the discussion for two reasons. In America, Andrew Jackson ended his term as President in March 1837. The Harrison campaign of 1840 was notable for extending Democratic campaign techniques to the Whigs. The "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" campaign was specifically planned to stir emotions with its promotional stunts and catch phrases. Techniques that had largely been the province of the Loco-focos and other Democrats were now being used by the Whigs. There was no longer an "aristocratic" opposition. Thus the propensities earlier travellers had noted toward lack of decorum and turbulent mass involvement in
government accelerated as later travellers were arriving. Mrs. Trollope's association of crudeness with the American national character was, seemingly, being validated.

At the same time, America was used less (and less effectively) to support theories of government at home. This development is traceable directly to the translation into English in 1835 of Alexis DeTocqueville's *Democracy in America*. This work was so widely acclaimed and its treatment of American democracy viewed as so judicious that it took away the punch of future travellers' discussions. Impressionism had given way to scholarship; not that travellers stopped discussing democracy, but DeTocqueville had said it more objectively and astutely than any of them would. The Westminster Review was of course favorably impressed. "Not a trace of a prejudice," they report, and they find his conclusions valid: "This irresistible current, which cannot be stemmed, may be guided...to a happy termination." Even the Tory Blackwood's praised the work, finding "his statements...fair, luminous, and most eminently instructive." Blackwood's, however, made their "stand against him" in asserting that American democracy is rooted in the "terra firma" of America.

Even in the earlier stages (where we have seen the political importance of American debate), to read the British view of America as largely political is misleading. Politics, as I have noted, was unquestionably an impetus for the viewing of America in certain ways, but for those who criticized America,
the resentment went far deeper than politics, resting on their fundamental association of manners and morals.

Mrs. Basil Hall, whose letters were not published until 1931, could not have had a political motive in writing them. Her distaste for America was as real as her aristocratic refinement, and as unpatriotic as her husband's was political. Everything from the urban planning ("It looks as if a box of houses had been sent from New York, the lid opened, and the houses tumbled down in the midst of the blackened stumps") to the cuisine ("'God sends meat and the Devil sends Cooks,' is a saying which applies with full force to this country") jarred Mrs. Hall's sensibilities:

Our want of patience with this country increases daily. So long as we were going from home we did not allow ourselves to confess the feeling of weariness and disgust that we felt. But now the spring after being wound up to the greatest possible tightness has suddenly been let go and rattles down with prodigious velocity.

James Fenimore Cooper came to England and in 1828 wrote a book entitled *Notions of the Americans*. In it, he defended his country against English accusations of incivility. But once Cooper had been anglicized, he could not go home again as a contented American. When in 1838 he wrote *The American Democrat*, he was viewing his country as an English traveller might, and he found "democracy" intolerable.

Charles Dickens's case is somewhat analogous. Dickens considered himself a radical and was offered a seat in Parliament in 1841. Yet when he came to America, he saw what
other English travellers had seen, and he could only condemn. In short, the English view of America went beyond political theories.

After DeTocqueville, then, what were the dominant impressions the term "America" brought to an Englishman's mind, and what conditioned that view? At least five elements appear to have been involved during this time. Travellers were still flocking westward. Despite temperamental differences among them and despite the improvements in America over ten years, they returned with reports that generally confirmed the Trollopean view. Conditions may have improved, but the crudeness of the people remained. That view was also confirmed by a second and a third source - the specimens of American writing which were circulating in England and the specimens of American republicans who were circulating in England. A fourth influential element was the philosophical discussion in England that was turning more and more on slavery, as agitation against it grew in the United States. Finally, all discussion was colored somewhat by a growing war sentiment in both countries.

During the five years just preceding Dickens's journey, travellers continued to exert an influence on the English image of America. Said the Westminster Review, in discussing Harriet Martineau's Retrospect of Western Travel, "It would be a useless task to furnish an abstract of a book which is sure to be read by almost all our readers."95 The English in the late 30s were a people intensely curious about the world around them.
A quick glance through any of the major periodicals reveals a veritable glut of articles on the history, manners, and culture of foreign lands. Indeed in many periodical numbers, nearly half the articles relate to travel in foreign parts. This is manifested also in the popularity of London exhibitions on exotic subjects. Not surprisingly the English had an ever-growing interest in the two North American giants they had spawned. Canada was a comforting sight to travellers and a comforting thought to their readers at home, a welcome confirmation of the strength and durability of their culture. Not so the United States, which was a country equally English, but somehow transformed. The nature of this transformation and whether it ought to be praised or damned continued to preoccupy the English travellers.

By this time, the travellers were following a fairly regularized itinerary, and, in general, commenting on the same set of phenomena. Most of these late travellers, (Captain Marryat, Charles Latrobe, Harriet Martineau, George Combe, for example) in sharp contrast to most of the earlier ones, were tourists. Not concerned with making a living or finding sites for emigrants, they came as English people explicitly to see the sights of a strange land. And they did not expect the experience to have any deeper bearing on their future lives than that. Thus on the one hand they would have fewer axes to grind, but on the other they would be more superficial in their observations, and more prone to view the country in terms of
their expectations. They would be looking to see whether the people spat or not, for example.

The travellers generally began in Boston or New York, were impressed with the society of the former and the pigs and flames of the latter. From New York, the travellers went to Philadelphia. In all three of these cities they inspected prisons and institutions. Baltimore and Washington occasioned the first comments on slavery and discussions of government. At that point, the travellers either continued south or turned west, over the mountains from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh and then down the Ohio River. Comments on canal boats, smoky trains, overturning stage coaches, uncomfortable inns, swampy terrain, and the corduroy road in Ohio (a road, each informs us, made by laying logs in a swamp until no more logs sink, which makes for a rather bumpy stage coach ride) were standard fare. After reaching their western destinations, generally somewhere along the dangerous Mississippi, the travellers headed north, in steamers prone to boiler explosions. Once back in the east, the travellers took side excursions to Canada, to West Point, or to a Shaker village. The climax of the trip was inevitably the magnificent Niagara Falls.

Through these later travel books, there emerges a coherent pattern of response to the American culture. Mrs. Trollope was still a presence to be reckoned with. Her book was very much in the minds of the travellers, and the elements of American life she had enumerated were still the ones that they felt compelled to deal with - either to confirm or deny - to set
the record straight for the people at home. While each traveller was of course influenced by his own biases and quirks of personality, and by the specific individuals he met, the picture they paint as a group is surprisingly consistent. And when we make allowances for their generally fastidious tastes and the fact that most of them did not stay long in one place, there is little reason that we ought to disbelieve that picture.

The travellers of the late 30s were very conscious that travel books had become repetitive about the manners of the Americans. They felt a need to justify another book of the same. Charles Latrobe, in The Rambler in North America, published in 1835, wrote, "It is not my intention in a general way to give you descriptions of places and scenes described a thousand times." Thus the travellers, with DeTocqueville in mind, generally assert that their books will talk of larger issues. Typically, all seeing the same social problems, those travellers with a Tory bias blamed the problems on the form of government. Captain Marryat, whose Diary in America was published in 1839, states:

I did not sail across the Atlantic to ascertain whether the Americans eat their dinners with two-prong iron, or three-prong silver forks, with chopsticks, or their fingers.... My object was, to examine and ascertain what were the effects of a democratic form of government and climate upon a people which, with all its foreign admixture, may still be considered as English.

He would conclude, the democratic "experiment had been made and it has failed." On the other hand, Harriet Martineau, in
Society in America, published two years earlier, proposes to establish a fairer means than previous travellers had used to judge the Americans. She would "compare the existing state of society in America with the principles on which it is professedly founded; thus testing Institutions, Morals, and Manners by an indisputable, instead of an arbitrary standard."\(^{101}\)

For all their efforts, their conclusions on the large issues of democracy are all predictable, and most of them echo Mrs. Trollope and the debate of 1832.

Despite their pretensions they persist in being social observers rather than political scientists. It is to the daily lives of the Americans that their real attention is directed and in which their value lies. George Combe, in Notes on the United States of North America, published in 1841, justifies giving the public another book on America by saying that it is merely as "another witness in the great investigation that I present these notes."\(^{103}\) The inductive method is the Victorians' chosen system. In their characters as witnesses, the travellers of the late 30s faced a number of new challenges. The most serious was the hostility of the Americans. Virtually all travellers had spoken of the American inability to take criticism. Quite early, Mrs. Basil Hall had noted their inordinate pride and defensiveness:

There has been, as they say, an unusually rainy autumn this year, which has vexed them all, man, woman, and child, to the very heart, because they are particularly desirous of making their best appearance to us.... In the bitterness of their spirit they are constantly casting up to us how like this is to English weather!\(^{104}\)
But after Mrs. Trollope, the Americans became not merely sensitive but angrily defensive. That complicated the task of future travellers. The Americans came to expect that travellers would write books about them. So, for fun and revenge for past slights, they often went out of their way to dupe the travellers. Captain Marryat tells us that:

There is no country perhaps, in which the habit of deceiving for amusement, or what is termed hoaxing, is so common.... If they have the slightest suspicion that a foreigner is about to write a book, nothing appears to give them so much pleasure as to try to mislead him.... When I was at Boston, a gentleman of my acquaintance brought me Miss Martineau's work, and was excessively delighted when he pointed out to me two pages of fallacies, which he had told her with a grave face, and which she had duly recorded and printed. 105

Ironically, two years later, George Combe wrote that a man in Philadelphia told him that he "'crammed' Captain Marryat with... jokes and fictions which the Captain embodied into his books as facts illustrative of American manners." 106 Even the American idea of a joke reflects a lack of morality. It is a humor based on deceit.

Two other elements the travellers had to contend with were a growing war spirit on the part of the Americans and an intense defensiveness about slavery, resulting from increased domestic pressure by the abolitionists. Harriet Martineau, whose abolitionist views had been published before she arrived in America, was subjected to frequent vilification and occasional danger during her trip.
The war spirit had old roots and new provocations. It was tied very much to that pride the travellers had all noted. Ever since the days of Jackson's victory, the Americans had felt a crude pride in their power. They had won independence in a war; they have proven their prowess at New Orleans; and it was only a matter of time, they felt, before they would rout the effete Europeans a third time. In the view of many, the occasion for that event was fast approaching. The diplomats had been wrangling over a disputed boundary with Canada, and there seemed to be no solution. With each succeeding meeting, the talk of war increased. While the travellers were not treated as enemies, they were often informed of the results of that future war.

Taking all these things into consideration, what was the America that the travellers saw and reported? A quality of all tourists seems to be an infinite capacity to view what many others have seen before as if it were completely new; so with our travellers, in spite of their certain knowledge that others have seen the same sights, they report them at length, as if no one had reported such sights before. Almost to a man (or woman) the travellers were newly impressed at the start with, as Charles Lyell reports, "the deference paid universally to the female sex, without regard to station," and the fact that "we have met with no beggars, witnessed no signs of want...." These, indeed, would be among Dickens's first reactions. As the tourists began roaming, their impressions highlighted the things that stood out as strange to them, of
course. The sight of people rocking back and forth in rocking chairs they found comical. This especially disturbed Miss Martineau:

The disagreeable practice of rocking in the chair is seen in its excess. In the inn parlour are three or four rocking-chairs, in which sit ladies who are vibrating in different directions, and at various velocities, so as to try the head of a stranger.109

But the rocker was only one of many American peculiarities and crudities that the travellers had to put up with. The Englishmen found the boarding houses a subject of endless curiosity. The gong which summoned the Americans to their meals was only slightly stranger than the speed and silence with which those meals were consumed. The American central heating was a discomfort to the English, and the habit of chewing tobacco and spitting out the juice was found universally disgusting by them.

Before long, though, these curiosities became symptomatic, as they would for Dickens, of deep ills. The rocking chair became a symbol of the lethargic Yankee who would rather swindle someone than do a hard day's work. The boarding house became a symbol of a republican society, where everyone claimed the right to know everyone else's business and where privacy was allowed to no one. The speed of meals demonstrated a lack of any real social instinct and the spitting a deep and abiding insensitivity.

The travellers began to notice elements of the society that had not stood out at first, but which, when discovered,
came to control and color their view of the country. The Americans were constantly concerned with making money. The talk of it, as in the past, dominated their conversation. If Trollope had exaggerated with those dollar signs in every sentence, she certainly had pinpointed a phenomenon that was pervasive. Already the Quarterly had called the Americans "emphatically the 'universal Yankee nation'... As a driving, penetrating, indefatigable, business people, the Americans have a name literally all over the world." And they provided anecdotal evidence:

Not many years ago the commander of a Russian exploring ship in the Antarctic seas, coming on the coast of a remote and solitary island, was proceeding, as a matter of course, to take possession in the name of the Czar, when lo! a sharp-built little Connecticut sloop, of some sixty tons, made her appearance round a point of the island, and hailed him to ask if he wished for a pilot.

This singlemindedness allowed the Americans no time for interest in social activities. Thomas Colley Grattan, who was not a tourist, but a British consul living among the Americans, asserts:

"To the Americans, visiting is... a duty - entertaining their neighbours a task - hospitality in its true sense a fiction. They have no convivial instincts.... The Americans are certainly far from being a happy people, as we understand the term."

But the dollar had a far more unpleasant effect than "making Jonathan dull." Americans had no scruples in dealing with strangers or friends. The Yankee reputation as a calculating,
cunning people was confirmed by travellers. What an Englishman called cheating, an American referred to as "smart dealing." The generally friendly Lyell reported that a coach driver refused one of his dollar bills, saying it was merely a personal note. He then explained that phenomenon:

He told me that he had issued such notes himself. "A friend of mine at Baltimore," he said, "who kept an oyster store, once proposed to me to sign twenty-five such notes, promising that if I would eat out their value in oysters, he would circulate them. They all passed, and we never heard of them again." I asked how he reconciled this transaction to his conscience? He replied, that their currency was in a very unsound state...and their only hope was that matters would soon become so bad that they must begin to mend.112

Probing deeper still, the travellers painted a picture of a society in which the people were so obsessed with their freedom that they wanted no responsibility for anyone else. This manifested itself in an almost absolute insensitivity. Smart dealing was taking advantage of another person, getting the better of him. Humor for an American centered on methods of outwitting someone and making him look foolish. The tales of Sam Slick and Davey Crockett abound in that kind of humor. Underlying the business transactions and the tales, the travellers discovered a profound lack of sympathy for human feelings. Captain Marryat was somewhat unsettled when, while he was confined to bed with a cold, his landlady informed him that she was going to have his room whitewashed. "'But I am not able to leave my room.' - 'Well, then, I'll speak to the painter?; I dare say he won't mind your being in bed while
The Captain was no less astonished to find the train on which he was riding one day pass through a graveyard. "Consecrated earth is desecrated by the iron wheels, loaded with Mammon-seeking mortals." Grattan tells of a more gruesome experience he had on a railroad trip:

We had made about two-thirds of our journey, when, at one of the 'crossings' a violent jolt, accompanied by a loud crash, made all the passengers start.... The continued rapidity of our movement, however, satisfied all that no accident had occurred to the carriages; and in a quarter of an hour the train stopped.... As we stepped out, I went up to the conductor and engineer... and inquired the cause of the sudden shock we had experienced.

"Well, it was in going over a chaise and horse," replied one of them, very coolly.
"There was no one in the chaise?" asked I, anxiously.
"Oh, yes, there were two ladies."
"Were they thrown out?"
"I guess they were, and pretty well smashed, too."
"Good God! and why didn't you stop the train? Can't you send back to know what state they're in?"
"Well, mister, I reckon they're in the State of Delaware; but you'd better jump into the steamer there, or you're like to lose your passage."

Grattan ran for the steamer, and once inside discussed the event with the other passengers. Some thought the driver should have stopped, but "others remarked that that wouldn't have done any good, and that the train was obliged to be up to time, or have delayed the steamer for ten minutes or more.... A few days afterwards I saw in a Baltimore paper a paragraph, stating that one of the ladies had been killed, the other badly wounded...."
This kind of insensitivity, the travellers found institutionalized in slavery, lynch law, mob activity in electioneering, the overriding power of public opinion, dueling, and general lawlessness. For Grattan, the insecurity of the law was "the most glaring and most dangerous evil in the United States." Even in the capital, Miss Martineau informs us wittily, "one fancies one can tell a New-England member in the open air by his deprecatory walk. He seems to bear in mind perpetually that he cannot fight a duel, while other people can."

Perhaps the travellers agreed on nothing so much as the dismal quality of the newspapers in America. In a very real sense the newspapers symbolized all that was wrong with the society. The lies they told were another smart deal for the purpose of making money; their willingness to slander anyone for any reason another manifestation of an insensitive people and an insecure system of lawful protection; and the influence of their lies in swaying public opinion another example of the inferiority of democratic government. The newspapers epitomized rampant individualism in America. Said Marryat, "the press in the United States is licentious to the highest possible degree." Miss Martineau stated that "of all newspaper presses, I never heard any one deny that the American is the worst.... It is hard to tell which is worst; the wide diffusion of things that are not true, or the suppression of things that are true." The power of the press was the greatest of all powers in the country, because it shaped public opinion,
and as Miss Martineau says, "the worship of Opinion is, at this day, the established religion of the United States."¹²⁰

And so the travellers of the late 30s brought back to England a picture that in large measure confirmed the Trollopean America, if not in every detail, certainly in broad outline. That negative image created by the travellers was bolstered and confirmed by the evidence available to the English people at home from other sources.

Americans travelling in England did not always acquit themselves well. Fenimore Cooper was attacked violently for his views of England. In reviewing his *Sketches of Society*, the Quarterly said, "So ill-written - ill-informed - ill-bred - ill-tempered - and ill-mannered a production it has never yet been our misfortune to meet."¹²¹ When N. P. Willis's *Pencillings by the Way* was published, violating the sacred confidentiality of the dinner table, Fraser's wrote, "There is not a single idea in it, from the first page to the last, beyond what might germinate in the brain of a washerwoman."¹²² Willis, an American journalist, had created a sensation by gaining admittance to various parlors and proceeding to use the details of conversation he overheard to write a book. His book of social gossip reflected on the civility of Americans in general and led Fraser's to write:

> As he has done the good work of making people in docent society shy of admitting "talented" young Americans among them, at least for some time, he has conferred on us such a compliment that we cannot part
with him in anger. 'Thanks to him, we shall not be again speedily pestered with fresh Pencillings by the Way!'\textsuperscript{123}

The Willis incident also provided a sample on English soil of American smart dealing, as Fraser's proceeded to explain:

The American government allows what may be termed spurious attaches; that is, the permission to their countrymen so to call themselves, for the "convenience of travelling...." This system is unfair. The old world is left to suppose that Mr. Willis, who presents his flourishing card, is a person selected by the American government for his abilities or consequence in their country, who is receiving their pay, and is intrusted with diplomatic secrets, when, in fact, he is only a traveller, paying his own way....\textsuperscript{124}

The English view of Americans by this time was sustained by so much past weight that it was very much a self-fulfilling prophecy. When evidence didn't fit the image, it was explained away. Cooper and Willis fitted it, but Washington Irving did not. So the English dismissed Irving as not really American at all. The Westminster Review, in discussing the state of American literature in 1838, dismissed Irving from their discussion "because he is not a fair instance, being a mixture of the American of the present day and of the Englishman of the last century."\textsuperscript{125} Fraser's, in reviewing a work by Irving, said rather bluntly:

We thought it then a matter marvellous that a gentleman who had passed so much of his time in England should even dream of living amongst Yankees.... So we must read the volume, a task to which we shall resign ourselves with no dissatisfaction, unless the Yankees have quite barbarised our gentle friend of the Sketch-Book.\textsuperscript{126}
In addition to travelling Americans, the English notion of the Americans was influenced by books from across the Atlantic. In the late 30s, none of those books were more popular than two which had just reached the market, both providing specimens of American humor: Sam Slick and Davey Crockett.

The *Westminster Review* wrote in 1839, "The extensive circulation and notice which American humour has of late obtained in England have impressed its general features on almost all minds." Indeed by 1840, *Bentley's Miscellany* was publishing a series of letters from "The Letter-Bag of the Great Western" by Sam Slick. Halliburton's *Sam Slick* was written in Nova Scotia, but it caricatured the typical Yankee peddler, the clockmaker, presenting a host of Yankee opinions on life and the world, as well as samples of American smart dealing and aggressiveness exactly meeting the expectations of the English.

The journals were pleased. *Blackwood's* wrote, "We say, let the writer of Slick's aphorisms try his powers on a subject adequate to their capacity. Let him leave Nova Scotia and come to England." *Fraser's* said of Colonel Crockett's memoir, "We hope we shall have some more equally genuine Americanisms as this of Crockett, ere long."

Perhaps, as much as anything, the journals wanted evidence of natives about the character of America. The American howls of rage over traveller's reports had received much notice. *Fraser's* complained that:

> If any stranger go among them, and cannot find every thing bright and golden...an outcry is raised from New
England to Florida.... But when we have
the testimony of one born and constantly
living among the scenes which he describes,
prejudiced in favour of his country, and
attached to her institutions...the impu­
tation of national dislikes or anti­
republican tendencies cannot hold.131

In Crockett's humorous anecdotes, the English found confirma­
tion of their image of the American manners and institutions.

Again Fraser's:

In elections, particularly, they are said
to surpass us.... Let us hear Colonel
Crockett, however, on this point, and
we may find that things are not so well
regulated in practice as they appear in
theory.132

Even the friendly Westminster Review agreed that these works
were, if exaggerations (and that too was an American character­
istic), still reflective of the reality of America:

The humour of a people is their institu­
tions, laws, customs, manners, habits,
characters, convictions.... Democracy
and the 'far-west' made Colonel Crockett....
The Puritans and the American revolution,
joined to the influence of the soil and
the social manners of the time, have all
contributed to the production of the char­
acter of Sam Slick.133

Fraser's agreed. After quoting Crockett on how he duped some
constituents into thinking he had shot two bullets through one
hole simply by inserting a second bullet in the whole when no
one was looking, Fraser's then commented, "The phraseology of
this strikes us to be infinitely droll; and the sly roguery is
perfectly characteristic of American manners." Nor could they
resist saying, see we've been right all along: "What a tumult
the whole Union would be in, if Mrs. Trollope, or Basil Hall,
had ventured on describing such a scene!"134
A lot less lighthearted was the discussion of slavery in the journals. Fraser’s said in an angry moment, "With all his notions of equality, brother Jonathan cannot bring himself to look upon a black man as a being of the same species with himself." Slavery was, without doubt, the damning and inexcusable flaw in a land of supposed liberty, and was used in those articles, still frequent, in which democracy was the issue. An allied question in the English mind was that of the Indian. The destruction of that race was scarcely consistent with the aims of democracy; it was as tragic an example of oppression as one could imagine. As the Quarterly dramatizes it:

The white man's face along both the continents which are bordered by the Pacific is directed towards those of his own race, who, as we have seen, are rapidly advancing towards him from the regions of the Atlantic; and whenever the triumphant moment of their collision shall arrive - whether the hands of the white men meet in friendship or in war - WHERE, WE ASK, WILL BE THE INDIAN RACE? - echo alone will answer "WHERE?".

One has the feeling, though, that the passion is overstated, for while the Quarterly attempted, in its 1840 article, to show that the Indians were intelligent and kind-hearted by nature, to the travellers they were savages, scarcely human and quite ridiculous in their costumes and strange ways. To the people at home they were merely an element of the exotic in America. Thus Fraser's ran a series in 1836 of "Sketches of Savage Life" and included "Kondiaronk, Chief of the Hurons" in number one and "Tecumseh, Chief Warrior of the Shawanees" in number three.
The final element of the milieu of the late 30s was the war sentiment. While it remained an undercurrent, it was very much a presence. By 1840, in the midst of favorable talk of emigration and American humour, the boundary question was drawing to such a boiling point that few commentators were sure war was avoidable. All the periodicals concluded that England was in the right. The Quarterly did not mention war, feeling an amicable solution should be possible. Blackwood's "anxiously hope that this question will now be brought to a speedy determination." Nonetheless, it "cannot escape from the conviction, that our own claim is now placed on such grounds as render it quite incontrovertible. Whatever we may yield to liberality or love of peace, justice requires from us not the least concession." The dispute had the Westminster Review so worried that it began an article, "A war between the United States and Great Britain would be, without any exception, the most calamitous event that could affect the interests, not merely of these two great nations, but of human freedom and civilization." But it was forced to concede that "on the verge of such a war we seem to be now standing, in consequence of the dispute respecting the north-eastern boundary of the United States."142

Fraser's in 1840 was the most vociferous in its antagonism, invoking in the process many of the established images of the Americans. Claiming that "the right of Great Britain...is established beyond the shadow of a doubt," it asserted that "painful as it would be to engage in hostilities...there must
not be a moment's hesitation on the subject... The smallest concession, would be certainly misconstrued by the 'majority' who tyrannise over the American government...." Fearing that American ingenuity would pervert any settlement that could be reached, it proposed that:

if...they do succeed in jockeying us this last time, we presume a leaf must be taken out of their own book of practice, where law is found incapable of procuring justice, and that, in one word, we must Lynch them.144

By 1841, Fraser's was arguing for war. In an article entitled "War With America A Blessing To Mankind" it proposed a method "to bring America to her senses." The article became in reality an angry condemnation of slavery and suggested attacking America through the South to instigate a slave uprising.145

It was, then, at a moment of some tension, and after years in which a particular notion of America had pervasively saturated British society, that Charles Dickens left England on a voyage to the New World. Dickens went with the tenets of Philosophical Radicalism in his mind, but he also took with him twenty years of that saturation with reports and evidence of the cruelty and institutional failings of the Americans. His participation in that English view of America he did not realize, and so he found America to be not the republic of his imagination. As John S. Whitley and Arnold Goldman say in their introduction to American Notes, "He left England as one kind of reformer and he returned another."146
Notes


4 Johnson, I, 357.


6 Johnson, I, 360.

7 Ibid.

8 Under the pseudonym A. Thomason, Bell wrote Men and Things in America: Being the Experience of a Year's Residence in the United States, in a Series of Letters to a Friend, 1838.

9 Quarterly Review (QR), 68 (1841), 281.


11 Ibid., p. 40.


14 Ibid.


16 Ibid., p. 1.

17 Ibid., p. 100.


19 *QR*, 27 (1822), 73.


21 Ibid., p. 268.

22 Ibid., p. 269.

23 Ibid., p. vi.

24 *QR*, 21 (1819), 135.

25 That the Quarterly's leading role in the attack was well known by succeeding generations we have the evidence of a Mrs. Duncan who published a travel book in 1852. Said Mrs. Duncan, "About thirty years ago, articles appeared 'Quarterly'
in a London Review, which filled the surrounding atmosphere with their evil odors, and whose venom was unhappily not spent when it had crossed three thousand miles of 'blue water'.... It is probable all the articles dropped from one pen, filled with gall. The pen, one may suppose, of some ancient Tory, whose ancestors had suffered in the War of Independence.... These sullen articles originated or prolonged animosities in their day...." The Mother of Mary Lundie Duncan, America As I Found It (New York: Carter, 1852), p. v.

26 OR, 27 (1822), 98-99.


28 OR, 21 (1819), 125.

29 Westminster Review (WR), 2 (1824), 484.

30 OR, 21 (1819), 125.

31 Ibid., p. 167.

32 WR, 2 (1824), 489.

33 OR, 21 (1819), 166.

34 WR, 2 (1824), 487.

35 OR, 29 (1823), 339. Fanny Wright was ardent for America, and it was she, who, during a stay in England, convinced Mrs. Trollope to return with her to the New World.

36 OR, 21 (1819), 127.

37 OR, 27 (1822), 76.
It seems to me that the Westminster Review does not demolish the Quarterly's arguments despite David Paul Crook's assertion (pp. 100-101) that it does. Nor is there anything especially conclusive in the fact that the Quarterly's evidence comes from unfavorable sources, which indeed the Westminster Review does not show. Fearon and Faux certainly started with favorable views of America. The other four travellers held favorable views throughout.

Captain Basil Hall, Travels in North America, in the Years 1827 and 1828 (Edinburgh: Cadell, 1829), I, 4.

Hall, III, 434-35.

Hall, I, 16.

Hall, III, 436.

Hall, II, 35.

Hall, II, 36.

Hall, III, 57.

Hall, IV (1829), 445.

52 *ER*, 47 (1832), 39.

53 *Fraser's Magazine* (*Fras*), 5 (1832), 337.


55 *Edinburgh Review* (*ER*), 55 (1832), 517, 521, 482.


58 Stebbins, p. 48.


61 Quoted in Heineman, p. 31.

62 Mrs. Trollope's view was bolstered by Hamilton's, *Men and Manners in America*, which was published shortly afterwards and presented another attack on the American governmental form.

63 Smalley, p. viii.
Curiously, Mrs. Trollope had a rather mild reaction to slavery. See DMA, pp. 9, 248, 249.

Brother Jonathan was a term used for the Americans before Uncle Sam replaced it in popularity. The term supposedly originated with George Washington's reliance on his friend Jonathan Trumbull, but the attribution is doubtful.

This particular generalization, along with her statement that she never saw an American stand up straight, is often used to criticize Mrs. Trollope for grotesque exaggeration. One might consider the metaphoric truth of such statements, but in any case, Allan Nevins, who makes such criticism - America Through British Eyes (New York: Oxford, 1948), p. 83 - also says, "Much that was exceedingly offensive in Mrs. Trollope's book had at the time a large degree of truth in it..." p. 83.

F. Trollope, DMA, pp. 305, 301, 145.

Fras, 5 (1832), 343.

Mark Twain, quoted in F. Trollope, DMA, p. v.

Ward, "Introduction" to A. Trollope, p. 7.


F. Trollope, DMA, pp. 44-45.

Ibid., p. 46 (text and note 3).

Ibid., p. 44.

See Dickens's letter to Andrew Bell (402).

77 Mrs. Trollope does modify her general comments, but with little enthusiasm. She admits that "in this phrase, 'Americans,' I may be too general. The United States form a continent of almost distinct nations, and I must now, and always, be understood to speak only of that portion of them which I have seen" (DMA, p. 16). That injunction, however, is little more than perfunctory, and in the end Mrs. Trollope generalizes "considerable," and, in turn, her readers (and the Quarterly) forgot the qualification.

78 WR, 2 (1835-36), 372.
79 WR, 6 & 28 (1838), 113.
81 Quoted in Smalley, p. ix.
83 Ibid., pp. 83-84.
84 Nil Admirari (F. W. Shelton), The Trollopiad: or, Travelling Gentlemen in America (New York: Shepard, 1837), pp. 34, 89.
85 Ibid., p. 108.

86 See Crook, Chapter 5, for a detailed analysis of the effect of this work on British intellectuals.

87 *WR*, 2 (1835-36), 93.

88 *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (Black), 48 (1840), 463.

89 Ibid., pp. 468-69.

90 Here I would quarrel with David Paul Crook's political reading of the situation.


92 Ibid., p. 55.

93 Ibid., p. 286.

94 Johnson, I, 317.

95 *WR*, 6 & 28 (1838), 478.

96 *The Picturesque Tourist: Being A Guide Through The Northern and Eastern States and Canada*, edited by O. L. Holley (New York: Disturnell, 1844) tells us that in 1841 there were an astounding 1639 firemen in the city, (p. 33) while Phelps' *New York City Guide: Being A Pocket Directory For Strangers and Citizens To the Prominant Objects of Interest in the Great Commercial Metropolis, and Conductor to its Environs* (New York:
Ensign, Bridgman, and Fanning, 1854) lists fully 64 Fire Insurance Companies. Captain Marryat, "after minute inquiry," discovered the causes of these fires to be four: the carelessness of black servants and the smoking of cigars; the inferior construction techniques which allowed beams of houses to come in contact with the flues of the chimneys; "the knavery of men without capital" who insure their property and then "realize an honest penny" by setting it ablaze; and the business methods of fire-insurance agents who set fire to uninsured properties as "punishment to some, and a warning to others" who do not have policies (Marryat, I, 25).

97 Allan Nevins, in America Through British Eyes, calls this period "The Age of Tory Condescension," following an age of "Utilitarian Inquiry."


99 Marryat, I, 10.

100 Ibid., II, 202.

101 Harriet Martineau, Society in America (Paris: Baudry, 1842), I, x.

102 Martineau, though finding that the existing society did not match its professed principles, and though strenuously condemning slavery, is nonetheless the most moderate of the critics of this period. She found American hospitality and manners to be excellent, and saw great promise for the future of the republic.

104 Pope-Hennessy, p. 141.

105 Marryat, I, 3–4. Miss Martineau's work is certainly flawed in that much of what she tells us, she received second-hand.

106 Combe, I, x.


108 Ibid., I, 59.

109 Harriet Martineau, Retrospect of Western Travel (London: Saunders and Otley, 1838), I, 72.

110 QR, 62 (1838), 194.

111 Thomas Colley Grattan, Civilized America (London: Bradbury, 1859), II, 100, 314.

112 Lyell, II, 6–7.

113 Marryat, I, 128.

114 Ibid., I, 30.


116 Ibid., I, 270.
It should be noted that, as with the *Quarterly*’s attack on Mrs. Trollope’s *Refugee*, the journals attack vulgarity, whether American or English.

*Fraser’s* writes, in an article entitled "Anecdotes of Actors."

George Frederick Cooke in London, America, and Scotland," 24 (1841), 477-78:

Mr. Cooke had made an extraordinary impression on the American stage, and his society was anxiously sought in private. Early after his arrival he was invited to dine with a large party, and during the first portion of the time he delighted every body present with his urbanity, politeness, and the marked intelligence of his mind. "Then he got drunk. He became altogether so rude and offensive that those present...were now disgusted with his coarseness, and one by one fell off in their notice of him, and entering upon local themes, conversed with each other.... It appeared from the conversation that a robbery had recently taken place in the house of a gentleman present—a very uncommon event in an American city.... At this crisis the gentleman observed...that the only serious part of his regret...arose from the irreparable loss of the family jewels. Here Cooke’s malice found an opening.... "Your what, sir?... A Yankee Doodle’s family jewels!—what are they, sir?... I can tell you, — the handcuffs and fetters!" With a mildness which speaks honourably of their forbearance, the party suffered the temporary madman to depart at the close of this outrageous attack without any indication of resentment....
123  *Fras*, 13 (1836), 202.
124  Ibid., p. 195.
125  *WR*, 6 & 28 (1838), 42.
126  *Fras*, 12 (1835), 409.
127  *WR*, 32 (1839), 140.
128  *Bentley's Miscellany* (Bent), 7 (1840), 11.
129  *Black*, 42 (1837), 677.
130  *Fras*, 16 (1837), 627.
131  Ibid., p. 620.
132  Ibid., p. 621.
133  *WR*, 32 (1839), 138-39.
134  *Fras*, 16 (1837), 616.
135  *Fras*, 11 (1835), 656.
136  Notably, *WR*, 2 (1835-36), 85; *OR*, 61 (1838), 326; *Black*, 39 (1836), 99; 40 (1836), 293; 41 (1837), 71; 48 (1840), 463.
137  *OR*, 65 (1839-40), 418-19.
138  *Fras*, 16 (1837), 562.
139  *OR*, 67 (1840-41), 501-41.
140  *Black*, 48 (1840), 337.
141  Ibid., p. 331.
142  *WR*, 34 (1840), 202-203.
143 *Fras*, 22 (1840), 357.

144 Ibid., p. 347.

145 *Fras*, 23 (1841), 494.

"What's the matter? What is it all about, say, John, what is it?"

"Why," answered the man, looking over his shoulder, "they've got Boz here!"

"Got Boz!" said she; "what's Boz? What do you mean?"

"Why," said the man, "it's Dickens. They've got him in hero!"

"Well, what has he been doing?" said she.

"He ain't been doing nothing," answered the man. "He writes books."

"O," said the woman, indignantly, "is that all? what do they make such a row about that for, I should like to know!"

CHAPTER TWO

Such A Row:

Dickens In America
Dickens's letters from America reveal the embryo of the metaphoric patterns of both *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. A traceable relationship exists between Dickens's first impressions and his two successive uses of those impressions. In writing *American Notes* Dickens proscribed the use of most of his specific adventures in America, which forced him to capsulize, even symbolize, his experience. In doing so he depicted the isolation of individuals in a life-denying social system. In *Martin Chuzzlewit* that vision is used to define both English and American societies - in both of which individuals are isolated and dehumanized by their own community-denying individualism. What becomes clear in examining Dickens's experience itself is that the ultimate coalescence of the vision in the two later works is implicit to his immediate reactions to America. We can trace his disillusionments with America and more specifically the way those disillusionments fed the development of the symbolism that would govern *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. His specific grievances focused for him what he came to see as the underlying character of America, a character which he saw more clearly defined at each stage of his journey.

Both Dickens and the Americans saw his trip occurring in the context of previous travellers' experiences and works. A passage from a song sung by Joseph M. Field at the Boston dinner
held in Dickens's honor demonstrates the level of awareness on the part of the Americans:

Remember vot I says, Boz—
You're going to cross the sea;
A blessed way away, Boz,
To vild Amerikey;
A blessed set of savages,
As books of travels tells;
No guv'nor's eye to watch you, Boz,
Nor ev'n Samivel's....

They'll eat you, Boz, in Boston! and
They'll eat you in New York!
Wherever caught, they'll play a bles­
sed game of knife and fork!
There's prayers in Boston now that Cu­
nard's bilor may not burst;
Because their savage hope it is,
Dear Boz, to eat you first....

I'll tell you what you does, Boz,
Since go it seems you vill;
If you would not expose, Boz,
Yourself their maws to fill;
Just "Marryatt" [sic] or "Trollope," Boz,
Within your pocket hem;
For blow me if I ever thinks
They'll ever swallow them!

Dickens's equal awareness of previous travellers is evidenced numerous times by his references to them by name in the letters he wrote during his trip. In his first letter to Forster, he catalogues those unpleasant experiences previous travellers have led him to expect, that in fact had not yet occurred:

We have never yet been required to dine at a table d'hôte...thus far, our rooms are as much our own here, as they would be at the Clarendon...but for an odd phrase now and then...I should have marked, so far, no difference whatever between the parties here and those I have left behind.

On both sides, then, the awareness was tempered by a belief that this traveller was different. The humorous song implies
a camaraderie with Dickens and Dickens's letter makes clear his willingness to defend America from what others had said. This chapter attempts to trace the breakdown of that camaraderie. Not only would Dickens dislike America, but he would return home with attitudes closer to those of Mrs. Trollope's than to those of later travellers like Harriet Martineau. In fact, in a pointed reference to Martineau in a letter to Macready, Dickens suggests that only someone who is so confirmed a Radical that he would not waver under any circumstances could leave America with his philosophy intact (159). I will attempt to demonstrate that for Dickens, as for Mrs. Trollope, the day-to-day actions of the people, their manners and customs, and not theories of government, were the definers of the culture of a democracy. Before his trip, Dickens had written to Andrew Bell that one must not impose the expectation of particular customs upon a new country, but he found that the lack of those customs was the telling deficiency in this New World. That deficiency implied a profound lack of a fundamental sense of morality.

Unbeknownst to American Notes which was written from the vantage point of the completed experience, Dickens's letters from America provide us with his day-by-day view of the country. They therefore offer us a unique opportunity to examine the evolution of his attitude. In each stage of the trip, specific incidents added to the weight of earlier ones, providing a coherent pattern of development. Each incident further exposed
that profound moral deficiency in the culture that in the end
defined the country for Dickens.

I shall begin by examining the circumstances peculiar to
this traveller which affected his ultimate view, and then dis­
cuss the specific elements of his American experience that led
him to his conclusions. Those elements are the copyright con­
troversy, slavery, anti-English feeling, the newspapers, and
the manners of the Americans.

Charles Dickens arrived in America in January of 1842 in
the footsteps of those indigestible Trollopes and Karryats.
He had long wished to see the great land of liberty and had
dismissed their disparaging comments with the belief that they
had not been open-minded enough. Arriving finally, after a
violently stormy Atlantic voyage, he was bubbling over with
excitement to be standing in Boston in the United States.
James T. Fields, a youngster at the time, recalled trailing
after the enraptured Dickens at midnight of the day he arrived:

It was a stinging night and the moon was
at its full. Every object stood out
sharp and glittering, and "Boz," muffled
up in a shaggy fur coat, ran over the
shining frozen snow.... Dickens kept up
one continual shout of uproarious laughter
as he went rapidly forward, reading the
signs on the shops and observing the
architecture of the new country into
which he had dropped as if from the clouds.
A week later, his euphoria had reached even greater heights as the people of Boston gave him a reception unparalleled for its warmth and intensity. To Forster Dickens writes:

How can I give you the faintest notion of my reception here; of the crowds that pour in and out the whole day; of the people that line the streets when I go out; of the cheering when I went to the theater.... But what can I tell you about any of these things which will give you the slightest notion of the enthusiastic greeting they give me.... "It is no nonsense, and no common feeling," wrote Dr. Channing to me yesterday. "It is all heart. There never was, and never will be, such a triumph" (34-35).

Indeed the Dickens frenzy was so frenzied that at least some Americans felt embarrassed by it. Charles Lyell, who was still in America when Dickens arrived, tells us, "I find that several of my American friends are less disposed than I am to sympathise with the movement, regarding it as more akin to lion-hunting than hero-worship." New Yorker George Templeton Strong wrote in his diary, "February 4.... The Bostonians are making horrid asses of themselves with Mr. Charles Dickens, poor man." But Strong then concedes, "we shall be fully as bad, with our Boz ball."6

Throughout that first week in Boston - the last week in January - Dickens was exuberant and flattered by the reception. Writing to his brother, Fred, he enthusiastically lists his planned itinerary: public reception in Springfield, public dinner in Hartford, public reception in New Haven, ball in New York, "the Committee for which, alone, is 150 strong...."
With evident excitement he concludes, "I believe this is to go on all through the States" (37). To Thomas Mitton, he writes, "There never was a King or Emperor upon the Earth, so cheered.... If I go to the Theatre, the whole house (crowded to the roof) rises as one man, and the timbers ring again.... I have 5 Great Public Dinners on hand at this moment, and Invitations from every town..." (43). His room in Boston was a constant swirl of activity. His American secretary, G. W. Putnam, tells us that while the Dickenses ate breakfast and he took dictation, Francis Alexander painted Dickens's portrait in one corner of the room while the sculptor Dexter "would come to Dickens with a solemn, business-like air, stoop down and look at him sideways,...come again with his callipers and measure Dickens's nose" as he worked on a bust of the author. Breakfast was often a literary event, as the hotel clerk remarked in awe to Putnam: "Good Heaven! to think what the four walls of that room now contain! Washington Irving, William C. Bryant, Fitz-Greene Halleck, and Charles Dickens!"

In his state of euphoria, Dickens sees the Americans in a very positive light. To Macready he reports that the Americans are "as delicate, as considerate, as careful of giving the least offence, as the best Englishmen I ever saw. — I like their behavior to Ladies infinitely better than that of my own countrymen" (44). To Forster he raves over the absence of beggars and the hearty meals eaten by all the people every day (51). The public institutions of Boston confirmed for him the
character of the country he had hoped America to be, and he declared that he loved those institutions (44).

Within a week, however, as the euphoria of his lionization wore off, his attitude changed also. While the bulk of this chapter will deal with the specific causes of his disillusionment, it is well at the start to note that Dickens's own state of mind could not but enforce his ultimate negative reactions to America. He was at best a fair traveller. In the previous year he had toured Scotland and though gone for only three weeks he "sighed for Devonshire-terrace and Broadstairs" (II, 317). The accommodations he found ridiculous: "There isn't a basin in the Highlands which will hold my face; not a drawer which will open after you have put your clothes in it; not a water-bottle capacious enough to wet your toothbrush" (II, 322-23). In America he found fewer comforts than in Scotland. For someone as fastidious as Dickens - "I can bear anything but filth" (119), - he wrote to Forster - the conditions of American travel were difficult.

There were other things. Dickens had had a serious and very painful operation for the removal of a fistula shortly before he left for America. While this is rarely mentioned by him or by others, his stamina and energy levels could not have been as great as they might otherwise have been. Putnam tells us that even when he first arrived, Dickens "having suffered much from severe illness, and, after a rough voyage in mid-winter, was in great need of rest." The roughness of that ocean voyage cannot be overemphasized. It was from all accounts
one of the worst passages in years, and could only have left
the Dickenses sapped of their energy. Through the entire
American visit, Dickens was almost always tired to the point
of exhaustion. Writing to Francis Alexander as early as
January 27, he signed his letter, "Affectionately (and pro. tem.
knocked up)" (28). The editors of the *Pilgrim Letters*, noting
that "pro. tem." is written after "temporalily" [sic] crossed-
out, suggest that Dickens "plainly...in his exhausted state
could not trust himself to spell" the word (28N2). To Forster
on January 29, Dickens writes, "We are already weary, at times,
past all expression" (35). Dickens's exhaustion is evident in
the prose of the letters. That recognizable light, playful
humor of his is generally absent. Only when he reaches
Niagara Falls, with home in sight, with hours to walk alone
surrounded by the splendor of the scenery, "with no tobacco
spittle, or eternal prosy conversation about dollars and poli­
tics...to bore us" (206), suddenly the spirit returns and we
are given a whole series of light, often funny flashes:

By the bye, if you could only have seen
the Prince at Harrisburgh, crushing a
friendly Quaker in the Parlour Door! —
It was the greatest sight I ever saw....
When I came upon them...Hamlet was
administering the final squeeze. The
Quaker was still rubbing his waistcoat
with an expression of acute inward suf­
fering, when I left the town. I have
been looking for his Death in the News­
papers, almost daily (217).

Or simply, "My Bostonian factotum will come on to New York...
with the baggage — I mean the trunks; not Kate" (242).
Not only fatigue, but actual illness plagued the Dickenses for fully the first two months of the trip. From the beginning Kate suffered a severe toothache. In Halifax on January 20, she was "laid up with a hideously swoln face" (15). The condition continues to be worthy of note in the letters. Then, as late as March 22, Dickens writes to Fred that "Kate's face swells every other day" (149). In mid-February in New York, Dickens himself was sick in bed with a sore throat that "confined me to the house four whole days; and...I was unable to write, or indeed to do anything but doze and drink lemonade..." (81). By the 24th, he is still suffering with a lingering cold, and now Kate had the sore throat. On March 1, Dickens writes to Putnam, who had gone ahead, that he would have to postpone his departure. Not until the 4th was Kate well enough to travel.

Kate indeed is an aspect of the trip which needs to be considered. Putnam, who was not the most perception of observers and had no inside information was nonetheless still able to notice how different the husband and wife were:

She had a quiet dignity mingled with great sweetness of manner; her calm quietness differing much from the quick, earnest, always cheerful but keen and nervous temperament of her husband.¹⁰

For a restless Dickens, she was surely a restraint. From Niagara Falls Dickens writes, with levity to be sure, but with exasperation too, "In landing and going aboard, and getting in and out of coaches, Kate has fallen down (per register) seven hundred and forty three times" (231). When in Canada Dickens
took part in a play, he was truly astounded that his wife had acted with him. "Only think of Kate playing! and playing devilish well, I assure you!" (247). After the name of Kate's character on the program he sent to Forster, Dickens wrote her name with eight exclamation points. This woman who was his only constant companion in America, he had not been able to take to fashionable gatherings in England because, as Edgar Johnson says, "she hardly sparkled." She no doubt had a further damping influence on Dickens's spirits in an otherwise uncomfortable situation.

Perhaps the most crucial factor affecting Dickens during his stay in America was the longing he and Kate both felt for their children. Putnam tells us that they talked constantly about them. Wherever they went, the first item to be unpacked was a sketch of the children done by their friend Maclise. In letter after letter, Dickens mentions the children prominently. When, late in February, a ship from England, the Caledonia, did not arrive, Dickens realized with new intensity how far from home and family he was. His belief that the ship had sunk focused his attention much more on the place he was not than on the place he was. For weeks his letters show an almost total preoccupation with the missing ship and his distant children:

Oh for news from home! I think of your letters so full of heart and friendship, with perhaps a little scrawl of Charley's or Mamey's, lying at the bottom of the deep sea; and am as full of sorrow as if they had once been living creatures. - Well! they may come, yet (96).
He planned to remain an extra day in New York, in hopes of hearing word of the ship (93). Fully half of his letter to Forster on February 28 concerns his fears of the Caledonia's loss (95). Two weeks later he writes to Charles Sumner that the loss of the Caledonia "has filled us with weary longings for news of home" (126) and he again imagines his children's scrawls on the ocean floor. The joyful news the next day that the ship was safe "diminished the distance between ourselves and home, by one half at least" (129). When he received word that his letters had arrived he was speaking at a dinner party, his presence at which he had explained to Forster by saying he could not always avoid such parties. Excusing himself from the dinner so he could go home to read his letters, he concluded his speech with the words, "This has been the most pleasant evening I have passed in the United States (132). By this time, though the ship was safe, Dickens's mind had already been set on home. His constant yearning for home thus commenced early in his journey. Its expression becomes only more frequent, and offers an interesting contrast to a traveller who left America with a much warmer feeling than Dickens. Where Harriet Martineau "sighed to think how soon our wonderful voyage would be over, and at every settlement we reached repined at being there so soon," he constantly did "count the days; and long, and yearn, for Home" (190). Where the great bulk of his letters are taken up with the trials he endured in travel, she smilingly assures us that "the worse the roads were, the more I was amused at the variety of devices by which we got
on, through difficulties which appeared insurmountable, and the more I was edified at the gentleness with which our drivers treated female fears...."16 Obviously then the mental and emotional state of the traveller counted for something. It is important to keep in mind these elements that affected Dickens's mental state in examining the waning of his initial enthusiasm.

It was of course America itself that was at the heart of the disillusionment. The beginning of that disillusionment can clearly be dated February 1, the day Dickens spoke about International Copyright in Boston. The copyright controversy is generally seen to be the cause of his disillusionment, but that wrongly emphasizes the issue itself. In and of itself it did chill his relationship with America, but more important, the copyright controversy was the first chance Dickens had to see the America beneath the cheers. At the end of his trip, when at Niagara Falls Dickens had a chance, finally, to rest and reflect, he wrote to Forster:

I'll tell you what the two obstacles to the passing of an international copyright law with England, are: firstly, the national love of "doing" a man in any bargain or matter of business; secondly, the national vanity. Both these characteristics prevail to an extent which no stranger can possibly estimate (231).

By the time he had left Washington, Dickens was hopeful that he had made progress on the copyright issue, but what the controversy had bared in the American character he would see over and over in its different manifestations in each phase of his journey. Copyright was merely the first stage in revelation.
International Copyright became an issue in the very midst of the enthusiastic Boston reception. Dickens had long been upset that his works could be printed at will by American publishers without their offering him any share in the profits or any control over their emendations. As early as 1837 he had refused £50 from an American publisher who had offered him the money in recognition of the profits made on his pirated work. He refused, because to accept would imply acquiescence in the activity he condemned. Despite the common belief, however, that Dickens came to America to fight for the International Copyright, there is no evidence to substantiate this. Forster tells us it is not true, as does Dickens himself. Writing to the editor of The Times on January 16, 1843, Dickens flatly denies it:

> Upon my honour, the assertion is destitute of any futile aspect or colouring of truth. It occurred to me to speak...of the existing laws - or want of laws - on the subject of international copyright, when I found myself in America.\(^\text{18}\)

That puts Dickens's "innocence" perhaps too strongly. What is clear is that he chose to speak of it when he did and as he did because of an event that occurred in Boston. During his first week there Dickens went to the Tremont Theater where he watched the skit, Boz: A Masque Phrenologic. The author, J. M. Field, has the character, Dickens, mention the copyright issue:

> "Besides, I'm told they'd rather read me there. For nothing, too! yet not for that I care."\(^\text{19}\) Since there was no adverse reaction to the skit, Dickens took Field's cue and spoke out on an issue
that had long concerned him. It was a week after seeing the skit that he first broached the subject in his speech to the guests at the climactic Boston Dinner on February 1:

I hope the time is not far distant when American writers...will receive of right some substantial profit and return in England from their labours; and when we, in England, shall receive some substantial profit and return in America from ours.... Securing to myself from day to day the means of an honourable subsistence, I would rather have the affectionate regard of my fellow-men than I would have heaps and mines of gold. But the two things do not seem to me incompatible. They cannot be, for nothing good is incompatible with justice.20

None of the speakers who followed Dickens mentioned the subject, but the newspapers did the next day. For what he considered a mild statement, Dickens was attacked. This only increased his steadfastness in broaching the subject. As he would write from New York three weeks later, "it has had the one good effect of making me iron upon this theme; and iron I will be, here and at home, by word of mouth and in writing, as long as I can articulate a syllable, or hold a pen" (77). In Hartford, he spoke again of copyright:

Gentlemen,...as I have made a kind of compact with myself that I never will while I remain in America omit an opportunity of referring to a topic in which I and all others of my class on both sides of the great water are equally interested - equally interested - there is no difference between us - I would beg leave to whisper in your ear two words - International Copyright.21

He drew a picture of Walter Scott "faint, wan, dying, crushed both in mind and body" and told the audience "if there had
existed any law in this respect, Scott might not have sunk beneath the mighty pressure on his brain." 22 The next day the Hartford Times wrote:

Mr. Dickens alluded in his remarks to an International Copyright Law. In Boston he also alluded to the same subject.... It happens that we want no advice on the subject, and it will be better for Mr. Dickens if he refrains from introducing the subject hereafter. 23

Dickens might have expected the newspapers, which were making the large profits from pirating English works, to rise against him. He clearly did not, and was deeply hurt. Once the battle was on, he rallied his troops. He wrote to Forster to obtain a letter in support of his action from English authors. The letter was obtained, signed by Bulwer Lytton, Campbell, Tennyson, Talfourd, Hood, Leigh Hunt, Hallam, Sydney Smith, Milman, Rogers, Forster, and Cornwall. Carlyle sent a separate letter. In America, Dickens had the support of Henry Clay in Congress, and Horace Greeley, whose New York Tribune wrote on February 14:

He ought to speak out on this matter, for who shall protest against robbery if those who are robbed may not?... We of this country greedily devour his writings...yet refuse to protect his rights as an author that he may realize a single dollar from all their vast American sale and popularity. Is this right? 24

At the public dinner in New York, Washington Irving, who was presiding, proposed the toast:

International Copyright - It is but fair that those who have laurels for their brows should be permitted to browse on their laurels. 25
By February 27, Dickens could report to Forster that he had a petition signed by twenty-five American authors to give to Henry Clay to present to Congress (92). Once in Washington he writes to Forster and to Lord Brougham (135, 145) of his growing hope that they will be successful in procuring a bill.

The effect of the copyright controversy went well beyond the issue itself. Dickens, even with his expressed hope of success, knew that the question would not be finally resolved in his day ("God knows that I have little hope of its ever being changed in my time," 76). The real importance of the controversy is the glimpse it gave him of the American character at precisely the same moment that he was being most lauded and lionized. Copyright suggested a fundamental lack in the American concept of community - a denial of obligation of one man to another for his just dues, what he later condemned as, "the paltry republicanism which recoils from honest service to an honest man..." (197).

The issue involved complexities that Dickens did not see. For example, Bancroft felt there could be no rights to the creations of the mind, and for many other Democrats international copyright represented an infringement on free trade. But Dickens saw the issue as clear-cut: Scott had died in poverty while American publishers got rich on his works. Dickens's letters show how deeply the issue affected his view of American society. The attacks on him, he felt, showed an absence of "all Generosity, Honor, or Truth" (79). He saw that
In America no freedom of opinion in fact existed. "My friends," he writes, "were paralysed with wonder" (82) that he would dare to speak out. It was a state of affairs that an "Englishman can form no notion of" (83). To Forster he writes, "I believe there is no country, on the face of the earth, where there is less freedom of opinion on any subject in reference to which there is a broad difference of opinion, than in this" (81).

He began to see the colossal egotism that others had written about: "Some of the vagabonds take great credit to themselves (grant us patience!) for having made me popular by publishing my books in newspapers" (85). Copyright, then, gave Dickens his first disillusioning insight into the American character. He began to see a mean-spirited and self-centered people who felt no obligation to justice or to their fellowmen.

Copyright was in the forefront during his stay in Boston and New York. After Washington, the issue was essentially behind him. Washington, however, brought into focus the second great issue that was to affect his concept of America, slavery. A fundamental flaw in a supposed democracy, slavery demonstrated that one element of the relationship between human beings in America was ownership, and that exposed the same community-denying inflation of self over all else which copyright had revealed. The cry of "self, self, self" by Old Martin in Martin Chuzzlewit has clear parallels in America.

Dickens's notion of slavery was fairly well-conceived before he ever reached the South. While still in New York, he wrote that "a dull gloomy cloud" is said to hover over the
places in which slavery exists, and he, with feelings of guilt for even venturing into the South, writes that "I shall be able to say, one of these days, that I accepted no public mark of respect in any place where slavery was" (90). Once he had been to Richmond, he confirmed what he expected to find, "an aspect of decay and gloom which to an unaccustomed eye is most distressing" (140). He writes to Forster vividly of the cruelties of the system in human terms - the children on a train crying as they accompanied their mother who had been sold while the father was kept by the original owner; the constables tracking down runaways; the penalties of fifteen lashes for blacks driving too fast over a bridge. He writes with great relief, "My heart is lightened as if a great load had been taken from it, when I think that we are turning our backs on this accursed and detested system. I really don't think I could have borne it any longer" (140-41). The extent of the depression slavery produced in Dickens is evident in a letter Kate wrote to Fred. It would appear that the very sight of a black face became an oppressive reminder of the system they so detested. After writing that "as you may imagine the sight of the slavery was most painful to us," she writes of the servants in the hotel in which they are presently resting, "Thank God, they are all white, we are quite tired of black faces" (150ff).

Beyond even his depression over the existence of the institution of slavery, the persistence of the Americans in praising it as a humanitarian institution made clearer to him exactly what "humanitarian" meant to an American, and deepened his
sense of the moral void in the American consciousness. He was again amid slaves in St. Louis and he raged to Forster, "They won't let me alone about slavery" (196). Putnam gives a graphic description of Dickens's hatred for the people who demanded that he praise their institution:

After conversing for some time the guest began to speak of the condition of society in America, and at last in a most bland and conciliating manner asked: "Mr. Dickens, how do you like our domestic institution, sir?" "Like what, sir?" said Mr. Dickens, rousing up and looking sharply at his visitor. "Our domestic institution, sir, - slavery!" said the gentleman. Dickens's eyes blazed as he answered promptly, "Not at all, sir! I don't like it at all, sir!" "Ah!" said his visitor, considerably abashed by the prompt and manly answer he had received, "you probably have not seen it in its true character, and are prejudiced against it." "Yes, sir!" was the answer, "I have seen it, sir! all I ever wish to see of it, and I detest it, sir!"

The gentleman looked mortified, abashed, and offended, and, taking his hat, bade Mr. Dickens "Good morning," which greeting was returned with promptness, and he left the room. Mr. Dickens then, in a towering passion, turned to me. "Damn their impudence, Mr. P.!
If they will not thrust their accursed 'domestic institution' in my face, I will not attack it, for I did not come here for that purpose. But to tell me that a man is better off as a slave than as a freeman is an insult, and I will not endure it from any one! I will not bear it!"

Slavery was, furthermore, the catalyst for his exposure to the intense hostility toward England that bordered on war-mongering in parts of America. We saw, in the previous chapter, that rising war sentiment was one of the aspects of Anglo-American consciousness in the years just preceding Dickens's
voyage. Dickens had written to John Hudson in October of 1841 that he was going to America "if no wars or rumours of wars, occur to prevent me" (II, 415). Lord Ashburton, the English Commissioner to settle the boundary dispute, was sailing for America as Dickens reached the slave states. One infuriated slaver screamed at Dickens, "The British had better not stand out on that point when Lord Ashburton comes over, for I never felt so warlike as I do now, - and that's a fact" (141). Indeed we can imagine slavery, the war feeling, and Dickens's longing for home all merging in his depression over the missing Caledonia, for in the days on end that Dickens waited for word of the ship, he knew that Lord Ashburton, on another ship, the Warsuite, was long overdue and feared lost (93).

More than the boundary dispute, the Creole incident confronted Dickens with American hatred of England. In November of 1841, slaves aboard that American ship had taken control, killed a white man, and sailed to Nassau, where the British refused to return any of the slaves but the murderers. To Forster Dickens writes that the Creole incident has made the Southerners "frantic" in their wrath against England (121). In a later letter he writes that he "saw plainly enough, there, that the hatred which these Southern States bear to us as a nation has been fanned up and revived again by this Creole business, and can scarcely be exaggerated" (142).

Again we can see Dickens making symbolic connections, seeing in this hatred the deepest evils of the American sense of morality. In a visit to Washington's House of Representatives,
he asked to have Henry Alexander Wise pointed out to him, for he "lives in my mind, from the circumstance of his having made a very violent speech about England t'other day, which he emphasized (with great gentlemanly feeling and good taste) by pointing, as he spoke, at Lord Morpeth who happend to be present" (118). The parenthetical phrase suggests the connection Dickens is seeing between Americans' actions and their sense of gentility, which his next comment makes clear:

They pointed out a wild looking, evil-visaged man, something like Roebuck, but much more savage, with a great ball of tobacco in his left cheek. I was quite satisfied (118).

The wild savageness and the tobacco are the elements of an America that Dickens more and more cannot see as a community of civilized people. The sentiments expressed, the unmannerly attack on Lord Morpeth, and the outward countenance are all of a piece. As we shall see, when he turns west, manners will be his greatest complaint, but he is already seeing them as representative of a deeper "savageness."

Perhaps no one element of America was so constant a reminder of that savageness or its pervasiveness as the press, which in every sense belonged to and was the expression of the people. In the press Dickens recognized not only the immorality copyright and slavery had exposed, but the power of that immorality in a country where public opinion carried so much force. So when he writes *Martin Chuzzlewit* the newspapers come in for the most savage satire. In Dickens's actual experience in America the papers were always in the forefront. Dickens's
first sight of America showed him at least a superficial lack of decorum in the press:

Suddenly, long before we were moored to the wharf, a dozen men came leaping on board at the peril of their lives, with great bundles of newspapers under their arms... But what do you think of their being EDITORS? And what do you think of their tearing violently up to me and beginning to shake hands like madmen?...

If you could but know how I hated one man in very dirty gaiters, and with very protruding upper teeth, who said to all comers after him, "So you've been introduced to our friend Dickens - eh?" (33).

What Dickens discovered before long was that there was nothing superficial about the crudeness of the press. The following editorial in the Lowell Advertiser appeared after he had visited the factories in Lowell:

Boz was in this city last week. The reason we did not mention it was because he passed our office without calling. He didn't call on the Courier or the people either. How in the name of reason can he expect puffs and popular applause?

To a printed sketch of his life, Dickens felt compelled to reply, in a light and gently chiding letter:

It is so wildly imaginative, and so perfectly new to me...that it is the most remarkable invention I ever met with.

If I enter my protest...it is only because I may one of these days be induced to lay violent hands upon myself - in other words attempt my own life - in which case, the gentleman unknown, would be quoted as authority against me (61).

His letter was in turn printed in The New World with the indignant prefatory statement: "It would appear that our hospitable citizens, not content with making Mr. Dickens ill by their civilities, have attempted his life" (61N3).
In New York Dickens could still laugh at the newspapers, which followed his every move and printed such statements as the one that his father was a haberdasher (73N5). He read the following in the New York *Aurora* on February 15:

*To-day (Tuesday) he will also dine out, and, if we are not misinformed, with Daniel C. Colden, Esq., of 28, Laight Street. It will doubtless be an elegant affair, and the quiet family party, which Mr. Dickens insists upon, will be made up of the *élite* of the ancient régime. Indeed, it is probable that Mr. Dickens was never, in England, admitted into such really good society as since he landed in this country. He has seen and will see more aristocracy in Boston and New York than he has ever seen, and probably ever will see, in his native land.*

He wrote to Forster with amusement:

*I can do nothing but in some shape or other it gets into the newspapers. All manner of lies get there...: But with this ball to come off, the newspapers were if possible unusually loquacious.... One paper winds up by gravely expressing its conviction, that Dickens was never in such society...and that its high and striking tone cannot fail to make an indelible impression on his mind! For the same reason I am always represented, whenever I appear in public, as being "very pale;" "apparently thunderstruck;" and utterly confounded by all I see.... I have plenty of stories in connection with it to amuse you with when I return (72-73).*

In the end though, he stopped being amused. The newspapers lashed out at him over copyright; the newspapers quarrelled with him over slavery: *"There fall upon me scores of your newspapers; imputing motives to me, the very suggestion of which turns my blood to gall; and attacking me in such terms of vagabond scurrility as they would denounce no murderer with"*
(76-77). And that anger was accompanied by a sense of their power. "The landlord [who had overcharged him] knew perfectly well that my disputing an item of his bill would draw down upon me the sacred wrath of the newspapers..." (123).29

The press dogged Dickens throughout his trip. From St. Louis he writes to Forster in mid-April, "Of course the paper had an account.... If I were to drop a letter in the street, it would be in the newspaper next day, and nobody would think its publication an outrage. The editor objected to my hair, as not curling sufficiently" (195). That nothing could remain private from the papers and that they manifested a complete absence of self-control boded ill for a country so dependent upon and fond of its newspapers. Those slovenly editors who had accosted him on the boat were, he saw, the voice of the American people. Other travellers had condemned the American press. A month in America and Dickens could scarcely help agreeing with a native, James Fenimore Cooper, who said that "it becomes a serious matter of doubt, whether a community derives most good or evil, from the institution."30

It seems clear that by the end of his journey, American manners became the prime indicator for Dickens of what was worst in the American character. It seems strange then that in the early days of his journey he insisted so vehemently that American manners were excellent, despite a number of incidents, including the Wise episode, to the contrary. It took time for him to admit the connection that he uses so effectively in Martin Chuzzlewit, but we can trace the process even if Dickens did not see it very quickly.
From the opening moment of his American trip, when those impudent editors accosted him, Dickens was subjected to unmannerly behavior:

I take my seat in a railroad car, and the very conductor won't leave me alone. I get out at a station, and can't drink a glass of water, without having a hundred people looking down my throat when I open my mouth to swallow.... Then by every post, letters on letters arrive, all about nothing, and all demanding an immediate answer. This man is offended because I won't live in his house; and that man is thoroughly disgusted because I won't go out more than four times in one evening (87).

After writing a good-humored refusal to women who had requested a lock of his hair (47), he found that when he did have his hair cut, the barber gave away locks to his female friends (80N7). Dickens was accosted by a woman with an expose on the Mormons, who wanted Dickens to go home and lecture on the subject to keep people from "jining" and by a writer who had paraphrased the Book of Job and wanted Dickens's opinion. Constantly pressured by the people's desire to see him, Dickens on one occasion faced a barrage of Yale students so great that

the landlord found it necessary to post two stout porters on the main staircase, who locked their hands across the stairs and kept the throng somewhat at bay.31

By mid-February Dickens had apparently become so wary of public opinion that he thought it necessary, when forced to cancel a public engagement in New York because he was ill, to supply proof of his illness in the form of a letter from his doctor (65).
Perhaps more annoying was the refusal of a Philadelphia journalist to respect his wishes for privacy. Dickens was forced to write to him twice (74-75, 81) stating that he would not like to have a public reception in Philadelphia, despite which the journalist published the statement that Dickens would "be gratified to shake hands with his friends between the hours of half-past ten and half-past eleven o'clock" (75N1) and Dickens was required to do so. To Forster he writes that he had refused invitations from six cities, but "Heaven knows whether this will be effectual" (88).

Dickens was angered when a bookseller "demanded - not be­sought - demanded" financial aid on the grounds that he had supported Dickens by selling his books. The man's "manner was extremely offensive and bullying" (79). Kate found herself equally infuriated by a request from N. P. Willis, the American whose gaucheries in England were discussed in the last chapter. Willis, it seems, asked Kate for Maclise's sketch of the children that the Dickenses so highly prized. "Imagine such impudence! and audacity!" she wrote to Maclise (155N1).

Despite the prominence of incidents such as these throughout the first phase of his journey, Dickens continues to maintain that Americans are polite and civil. It seems clear that his dominant impression of previous travellers, whose Tory dis­approval of America he had come expecting to dismiss, was their attack on American manners. From the start, as in a January 29 letter to Forster, while not yet ready to discuss the American character, he is ready to rebut the travellers with
praise of American manners. For the next two months, as he is led from one disillusionment to the next, he continues to hold firm in his defense of American manners. As late as March 22 he writes to Lady Holland, "I am bound to say that travellers have grossly exaggerated American rudeness and obtrusion.... The people are naturally courteous, good-tempered, generous, warmhearted, and obliging. That is a matter of fact, and not of opinion" (151). His Radical reflex latches onto the travellers' most well-known criticism. It is the last ground on which he thinks he can stand firm against Mrs. Trollope. As he is progressively disillusioned by copyright, slavery, the press, and the anti-English feeling, as he is less and less able to sustain his enthusiasm for America, he employs this one positive element to prevent rejecting his imaginary America entirely. The effort falls hollow here, for the praise of manners is always followed by the deeper dissatisfaction. In the letter to Lady Holland, this "matter of fact" is coupled with the statement that his impressions "are not all favorable, for I love England better than I did when I left her" (151). Most of his professions of pleasure at American manners are similarly linked with his most angry outbursts on the subject of the American character. In mid-March he writes to Macready a long string of positive adjectives indicating that the people "are affectionate,... frank and cordial" (158). He continues, "I have seen none of that greediness and indecorum on which travellers have laid so much emphasis." In the same letter he gives voice to some of his most bitter disappointments:
I am disappointed. This is not the Republic I came to see. This is not the Republic of my imagination. I would not condemn you to a year's residence on this side of the Atlantic, for any money. Freedom of opinion! Where is it? I see a press more mean and paltry and silly and disgraceful than any country ever knew. I speak of International copyright, and am implored not to ruin myself outright. I speak of Miss Martineau, and all parties—slave upholders and abolitionists; Whigs, Tyler Whigs, and Democrats, shower down upon her a perfect cataract of abuse. "But what has she done? Surely she praised America enough!"

...The sight of Slavery in Virginia; the hatred of British feeling upon that subject... have pained me very much. "America" goes against the grain with me, and...I don't like it (157-58).

To Forster he writes that the people are "chivalrous in their universal politeness to women, courteous, obliging, disinterested..." (134), but having made that gesture he admits, "I don't like the country. I would not live here, on any consideration. It goes against the grain with me. It would with you. I think it impossible, utterly impossible, for any Englishman to live here, and be happy" (135).

By the time he has seen all of the East Coast that he is going to see, he begins to make connections between the things that have disillusioned him and the manners of the people. In Baltimore as he is ready to turn westward, he writes for the first time of an earlier "lack of decorum" which we assume, since he first mentions it now, has taken on a new significance in the light of later events: "Imagine...some twenty or thirty people, screwing small dabs of fur out of the back of that costly great coat I bought in Regent Street!" (154). In the
same letter he writes of "a républican boy, of surpassing and
indescribable free and easiness" who "keeping his cap upon
his head, inspects me at his leisure," taking "no other refresh­
ment during the whole time than an occasional pick at his nose"
(154). Like the Quarterly Review raging against Fearon's
difficulty in procuring a thank-you from an American youth
two decades earlier, Dickens chooses to refer to the child as
a "republican boy," implicitly linking the bearing of the child
to something broadly representative of the culture itself.

Most graphically revealing for Dickens was the American
habit of spitting tobacco juice. Spitting becomes for him the
clearest indicator of the immorality of the society. Symboli­
cally it comes to represent, in its most disgusting form, the
American denial of community and the insensitive disregard for
other people. From Washington Dickens writes to his friend
Felton, "If spittle could wait at table we should be nobly
attended, but as that property has not been imparted to it in
the present state of mechanical science, we are rather lonely
and orphan-like, in respect of 'being looked arter'" (129).

At risk of imputing too much significance to a casual sentence
in a letter, I would suggest that this comment goes to the heart
of Dickens's sense of America. To have spittle performing
the stately and for Dickens profoundly significant ritual of
serving a meal is suggestive of what "nobility" means in
America. "Lonely and orphan-like" sums up the isolation that
Dickens sees to be the result of the society in which indivi­
duals manifest no concern for each other. Spittle most sharply
reveals that lack of concern, for not only is the habit itself disgusting, but Americans are utterly regardless of where they spit, and whose property they deface:

The marble stairs and passages of every handsome public building are polluted with these abominable stains; they are squirted about the base of every column that supports the roof; and they make the floors brown, despite the printed entreaty that visitors will not disfigure them with "tobacco spittle". It is the most sickening, beastly, and abominable custom that ever civilization saw (119).

Even in the White House, "there is no denying that they did expectorate considerably. They wrought a complete change in the pattern of the carpet, even while I was there" (111). Why, Dickens wonders, bother with spittoons or sand boxes "when everybody uses the carpet" (127). After he had turned west, Dickens writes to Forster of a levee he was forced to hold for a group of legislators:

Pretty nearly every man spat upon the carpet, as usual; and one blew his nose with his fingers - also on the carpet, which was a very neat one, the room given up to us being the private parlor of the landlord's wife. This has become so common since, however, that it scarcely seems worth mentioning. Please to observe that the gentleman in question was a member of the senate... (169).

The fact that this disgusting disregard for others is so prevalent among the country's spokesmen (that is, Dickens notes it in the White House, in the Capitol, and among legislators) helps clarify the relationship between manners and the morality of the country.
The further into America Dickens progresses, the more crudeness he sees. From a canal boat he writes:

You never can conceive what the hawking and spitting is, the whole night through....

Upon my honor and word I was obliged, this morning, to lay my fur-coat on the deck, and wipe the half dried flakes of spittle from it with my handkerchief....

When I turned in last night, I put it on a stool beside me, and there it lay, under a cross fire from five men... (170).

When Dickens writes facetiously to Sumner, "We are now in the regions of slavery, spittoons, and senators - all three are evils in all countries, but the spittoon is the worst" (127), he is not entirely jesting. Spitting has become for him representative of the regardless society that will even enslave human beings. Having just spent a paragraph describing spitting to Albany Fonblanque, Dickens concludes his letter:

...I would not live here two years - no, not for any gift they could bestow upon me....

I have a yearning after our English Customs and [sic] manners, such as you cannot conceive.... Between you and me - privately and confidentially - I shall be truly glad to leave... (120).

In the East, the influence of the crudeness of the many had at least been checked by the presence of those whom Dickens referred to as "the first gentlemen in America" (83), among whom were the few close friends he made in Boston - C. C. Felton, the Harvard professor whose enthusiastic companionship and love of oysters Dickens enjoyed most, Macready's friend David Colden, Washington Irving, and Charles Sumner. Once he had turned west, Dickens's social activity and intimacy with a number of people stopped short. A certain emptiness must have
come into the days as he met only nameless people for a distant handshake, sometimes 500 handshakes at a levee. Few intimacies were established. Indeed, leaving his new American friends must have been almost as much of an emotionally isolating experience as leaving London had been. But in this case, there was no new society to replace the old. Dickens had begun with the best America had to offer. If he had started his tour in New Orleans and ended with the Boston notables, his impressions may have been different, but having begun with the finest, he was now left to the mercies of travellers in the wilderness, petty politicians in the towns, and the vulgar masses at every train stop. Embittered by early events, with time alone now to reflect upon them, and surrounded by the crudeness of the American West, it was not long before Dickens abandoned his defense of American manners, and saw them defining the worst in the character of the nation. From Montreal, at the very end of his trip, he writes to Forster that "English kindness is very different from American. People send their horses and carriages for your use, but they don't exact as payment the right of being always under your nose" (236).

In the American West, he was disgusted by "seven and twenty out of the eight and twenty men on board the canal boat with him, in foul linen, with yellow streams from half-chewed tobacco trickling down their chins" (170). He was appalled by the common hair brush used on canal boats and by the single cotton shirt a week which it was the practice to wear in the
country: "Americans when they are travelling, as Miss Martineau seems disposed to admit, are exceedingly negligent: not to say dirty" (179). If their disregard of their personal appearance was an example of their lack of concern for the sensibilities of those with whom they came in contact, their lack of respect for Dickens's privacy only confirmed this.

In the East he had complained of men sending their slaves with messages in the middle of the night and having them wait for replies. Also in the East, he had asked Felton, "What do you think of this incendiary card being left at my door last night?" The card was from a General G. who wished to introduce two literary ladies to Dickens. Says Dickens, "I draw a veil over my sufferings" (130). Now, in the West, privacy is an even scarcer commodity. Dickens complains of a New Englander who "will sit down beside me, though I am writing, and talk incessantly, in my very ear, to Kate" (177), and the next day:

My friend the New Englander...is perhaps the most intolerable bore on this vast continent. He drones, and snuffles... and never will be quiet, under any circumstances.... Whenever I appear on deck, I see them—the New Englander and a doctor—bearing down upon me—and fly (179).

The L. L.'s General, who turns up on the canal boat with Dickens, is also "the most horrible bore in this country." Upon reflection Dickens decides that "I do not believe there are, on the whole earth besides, so many intensified bores as in these United States. No man can form an adequate idea of the real meaning of the word, without coming here" (180).
The further west Dickens' travels, the more firmly he is convinced of the relationship of the lack of polite decorum to the national character. In Harrisburg he finds politics three and one half years before the Presidential election to be composed of "denunciations, invectives, threats, and quarrels" (172). In St. Louis he is impressed with the commonness of dueling, perhaps the epitome of crude self-assertion. Indeed, not only is the society "pretty rough;" it is "intolerably conceited" (202), the individual conceit blending into a national conceit. On a smoky day in Pittsburgh, a man was quite offended when Dickens, answering his query, replied that the smoke did not make him feel particularly at home. London was not all that dark (178). When a newspaper patronized British sailors as being "for John Bulls, quite refined," Dickens's "face, like Haji Baba's, turns upside down, and my liver is changed to water" (196). The conceit was reflected in the war-sentiment. Dickens was so incensed by a newspaper article in a Cleveland paper "saying that Britain must be 'whipped again,' and promising all true Americans that within two years they should sing Yankee-doodle in Hyde-park and Hail Columbia in the courts of Westminster" that when the mayor of Cleveland tried to see him he refused to admit him. That inestimable public servant then sat outside Dickens's door whittling on a stick and sulking (209).

These then are the elements that led Dickens to his vision of America. When the judgment on the American character, which
Dickens had been postponing, finally comes, it is based on what he has seen, especially in the West. The people are:

- morose, sullen, clownish, and repulsive.
- I should think there is not, on the face of the earth, a people so entirely destitute of humour, vivacity, or the capacity of enjoyment.... I am quite serious when I say that I have not heard a hearty laugh these six weeks....
- Lounging listlessly about; idling in bar-rooms; smoking; spitting; and lolling on the pavement in rocking-chairs, outside the shop doors; are the only recreations.... (The Westerners) are heavy, dull, and ignorant (207-8).

Ultimately, then, the manners of the sullen, spitting Americans demonstrate an essentially anti-social, self-centeredness which becomes more and more apparent to Dickens at each stage of his journey. When, in April, he defines the American character, that is clearly his understanding of it:

- Miserable, wretched independence in small things; the paltry republicanism which recoils from honest service to an honest man, but does not shrink from every trick, artifice, and knavery in business... (197).

Dickens's ultimate quarrel with America is that it is not a community, but a group of individuals each holding his own interests paramount, and willing to hurt others to achieve his ends:

- The Nation is a body without a head; and the arms and legs, are occupied in quarrelling with the trunk and each other, and exchanging bruises at random (176).

The American trip was, then, in the end, a confirmation of what previous travellers had told him of America. Mrs. Trollope,
as we have seen, said and felt that the manners and the morals of America were one. Dickens too saw that beneath the uncouthness of the American manners was a selfishness of spirit that the copyright controversy, the system of slavery, and the pettiness of the newspapers only confirmed. America was not a community; it was a land of selfish individuals isolated one from the next. The public institutions of the country, which in his first ecstatic days in Boston he had claimed to love as representative of the American hope for the future of mankind, would become instead in his mind, as we shall see with American Notes, the symbolic refuge from the society that was no society at all.
Notes

1 G. W. Putnam, "Four Months With Charles Dickens," Atlantic Monthly, 26 (1870), 591. Paragraph indentations are mine.


4 Wilkins, p. 13.


7 Putnam, 478.

8 Ibid., p. 480.

9 Ibid., p. 476.
The Pilgrim editors suggest that Kate in fact made a good impression on the Americans and that Dickens in his letters seems pleased with her (xi-xii). While his comments are clearly affectionate, nonetheless they show her to be at best an added burden in a trying journey.
27 Wilkins, p. 18.

28 Ibid., p. 117.

29 It should be noted that Dickens was very much able and willing to see distinctions among American newspapers. He never condemned them all. In fact, at one point he made a list of the "good" papers.


31 Putnam, 479.

32 It is interesting to hear a similar encounter told from the other side, by Henry C. Robinson who was later to become a leading New England lawyer:

I was then between eleven and twelve years of age.... I went to the hotel, determined to stand in front of it until I had caught a glimpse of Charles Dickens.... Looking up at one of the windows...I saw Charles Dickens standing there.... He put his hands in his pockets and stood looking across the street, not noticing me at first. At last his eyes became fixed on me. He looked at me steadily for I do not know how many minutes. I stared at him steadily in return.... At last Dickens spoke, and the words have been treasured in my memory ever since. This is what he said, and I heard him distinctly, though he spoke through the window: "Go away, little boy, go away." Then he waved his hand gently, smiled upon me, and with that benediction I departed (Wilkins, pp. 97-98).
What do you think of this incendiary card being left at my door last night? "General G. sends compliments to Mr. Dickens, and called with two literary ladies. As the two L. L.'s are ambitious of the honor of a personal introduction to Mr. D., General G. requests the honor of an appointment for to-morrow." I draw a veil over my sufferings. They are sacred.

CHAPTER THREE

A Veil Over My Sufferings:

American Notes
American Notes is significant for the insights it provides into Dickens's creative process and his vision of society, but it is certainly not one of his most successful works. As an illustration of the genre of travel literature, it is repetitious and overburdened by the extensive treatment of public institutions that in one case includes ten pages of word-for-word quotation from a clinical report. In terms of Dickens's experience in America, it is also inadequate, weakened by his unwillingness to write about what was most interesting in his trip—his lionization, his controversies, his meetings with the famous, and his encounters with the general population. Restricted as he was by the uncongenial travelogue form and his own proscriptions, Dickens seems to have allowed his feelings toward America a symbolic expression in American Notes. Therein lies the real interest of the work. The national character that he came to define by the end of his trip as anti-social and isolating here is abstracted, refined, clarified, and set out metaphorically.

I will begin this chapter by delineating the nature of the work's failure and the biographic and generic causes of that failure. It seems clear that Dickens was torn between the desire to be candid and the pressures he felt to show restraint. The resulting ambiguity of his purpose led to a book lacking sharp focus. Moreover, he tended to rely, in order to avoid those problem areas, upon the tritest, safest
elements of the travel genre. Those causes of the work's failure give us some sense of the effect of the American experience on Dickens, but it is the attempt at symbolization, unsuccessful though it is in unifying the travel book, that is most significant, for it shows us how the American experience is shaping Dickens's ideas about "society." Specifically, the vision of *American Notes* is the vision of a society in which the passion for freedom from restraint and tradition, represented in the wide open land and the newness of the country, destroys the sense of community. Dickens sees even the family - the basic unit of community - under attack. In this virtual anarchy, he sees the people losing their very individuality. The jails and asylums of the country mirror in miniature this world of isolation, while the charitable institutions of Boston become the pattern for the values, based on strong sense of family, that can restore community and govern a true "society."

It has often been noted that Dickens's attitudes toward society in the novels from *Dombey and Son* on are different from those in the earlier novels, but no real attention is paid to the fact that the American experience comes between those early and later novels. The ideas we will see being refined in the patterns of *American Notes* are the ideas that Dickens will apply to English society in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, the novel that bridges the earlier and later periods.

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American Notes For General Circulation was an immediate success. Three thousand copies were sold in the first week after its publication on November 6, 1842. By the end of the year the book had gone through four large editions. There could scarcely have been any other result. Since Pickwick had catapulted him to fame, Dickens had published four more novels. For four years the public had had one, or more often, two Dickens novels appearing serially at any given moment. Fearing that he would over-expose himself, Dickens made a well-calculated move in 1841. He decided to refrain from publishing for a year, in order to avoid the risk of saturating his market.

So after a long year of nothing new from Boz, the public was eager for anything by him. Indeed they had every right to great expectations of American Notes. After twenty years of travelogues by less luminous observers, here was a book by Boz, the brilliant sketcher. Surely he would bring the Americans alive as never before. The title boded well. Following such varied and exciting titles as Travels in America, Travels in North America, and Travels in the United States of North America, Dickens's witty title promised new life for an old subject. Playful, yet with an edge, the title commented on the American practice of circulating valueless forged notes in payment of debts. Dickens's expectation was that his book would be pirated and circulated without his receiving the fair value of his notes. The promise of the title, however, went unfulfilled. The people bought the book, but they found it, like Jonathan, very dull.
The critical verdict was swift, and negative, cutting across traditional party lines. "So very flimsy a performance," lamented Blackwood's. "It seems to us an entire failure," wrote the Quarterly Review, while the Edinburgh Review could not "help feeling that we should have respected Mr. Dickens more if he had kept his book to himself." Fraser's asked what could be learned from Dickens's book and answered, "Nothing — positively, nothing!" Thackeray refused to review the book at all, calling it "at once frivolous and dull." Macaulay, at the Edinburgh Review, sent his copy back, saying, "It is impossible for me to review it, I cannot praise it, and I will not cut it up." Dickens's friend Macready, who had been to America, did not like it either. The book, in short, once it had been read, was no success at all.

Dickens had not gone to America primarily to write a book. Rather he wished to go to America to see the sights. Remembering how Walter Scott had travelled in old age and what a torture it had been, he wanted to travel while he was still young. The book was simply the means of financing the trip. When he left England, writing a book hardly seemed a burden. Confident that he would find previous travellers wrong in their negative judgments, he expected to rise to the defense of the Americans in his book. This he writes in the original introductory chapter of American Notes, which was suppressed because Forster felt it would cause people to think Dickens feared hostile criticism. A defense of America would be a stimulating, challenging book to write. But when he found himself so sorely disillusioned, when he arrived home with a sense of utter
relief to be away from the Americans, his book became a tedious burden. It was a beautiful summer during which he was trying to bring himself back to spit­­ing Americans in cold winter: "To­day," he wrote Forster, "I had not written twenty lines before I rushed out (the weather being gorgeous) to bathe. And when I have done that, it is all up with me in the way of authorship until to­mor­row" (325). But the book had to be done and so Dickens plowed along.

The energy he had expected to put into his defense of America might just as easily have gone into a condemnatory book, as it later would in Martin Chuzzlewit's American scenes. At this point, however, Dickens felt restrained, for a combination of reasons. The impulse to condemn and the urge to be restrained were in a conflict that deprived the book of both drive and focus, and forced Dickens into the most boring generic triteness.

In one sense, Dickens's restraint grew out of his very anger. Everyone knew he would write a book. George Templeton Strong, after noting that the Bostonians had gone overboard in their reception for Dickens, says:

"He'll have his revenge, though, when he gets home and takes up his pen again. How people will study his next productions to see if they can find any portraits!"

Dickens was aware of this universal expectation and went out of his way to deny the truth of it, even lying outright in a letter to Charles Davis: "I have not made up my mind yet, even, to write anything about America, and my wanderings in it" (185). Dickens tells us in American Notes of a conversation he heard on board a steamer:
"Boz is on board still, my dear"....
A long interval having elapsed, during which I imagine him to have been turning restlessly from side to side, and trying to go to sleep; he broke out again, with "I suppose that Boz will be writing a book by-and-by, and putting all our names in it!" at which imaginary consequence of being on board a boat with Boz, he groaned, and became silent.12

American egotism, as we have seen, sorely afflicted Dickens. Rather than gratify that egotism, he would forego mentioning individuals, even to condemn them.

Dickens's impulse to condemn is restrained more directly by his feeling of obligation to his friends in America. They had done much for him and he had a strong affection for a number of them. He did not wish to cause them pain or embarrassment. It is this that leads to his toning down or leaving out comments on the issues he had been most concerned with on the trip. Only the subject of slavery, which tortured him beyond endurance, did he allow to enter his book in an impassioned chapter of its own, a chapter which in terms of the integrity of the travel book, is both tacked on, and largely verbatim quotation from other sources.

While Dickens was writing the book, his friend Chapman, as well as others, were asking him to be moderate in what he wrote, fearing the outcry any condemnation of their country would evoke from the Americans.13 In the suppressed introduction, Dickens expresses his knowledge of the likely result of any condemnation:
I can scarcely be supposed to be ignorant of the hazard I run in writing of America at all. I know perfectly well that there is, in that country, a numerous class of well-intentioned persons prone to be dissatisfied with all accounts of the Republic whose citizens they are, which are not couched in terms of exalted and extravagant praise. 14

A graphic demonstration of the truth of that statement was not long in coming. A furor arose over the publication of a letter in America, purportedly written by Dickens, which attacked America unmercifully. Appearing in the New York Evening Tattler it was supposedly a letter written by Dickens to the Morning Chronicle. It was however a forgery, invented by the Tattler. Writing to Forster in August, Dickens notes the letter:

In America they have forged a letter with my signature.... The felon who invented it is a "smart man" of course. You are to understand that it is not done as a joke, and is scurrilously reviewed (311-312).

The furor made utterly clear how America would respond to strong criticism from the man they "had welcomed as no one since Lafayette." While that might otherwise have urged him into the fray, the other consideration - of his friends who had written him their concern - held him back. The extent of their concern was impressed upon him by the forged letter, which provoked a strong response from them. Very soon they were writing to him demanding to know if he had written the letter. Said Philip Hone, "he must stand or fall in my estimation by his answer, if he chooses to make one." 15 Dickens responded promptly that "the letter to which you refer, is, from beginning to end,...a most wicked and nefarious Forgery" (327).
The desire to be moderate in order not to embarrass his friends confronted both Dickens's obstinate stubbornness when he felt he was right and his feeling of guilt for his own attacks on Mrs. Trollope and other travellers.

Dickens, rightly, could not understand why the Americans should demand that he not write as truthfully about their country as he had about his own. Wherever he saw wrong, he would condemn it. He wrote to Chapman, "if we yielded to such reasons or such men as these; in five year's time there would be no such thing as Truth in the world" (345). He put these sentiments in the suppressed chapter. In any case, he truly felt that not a line of his modest criticism in the book was untrue, and he would at least leave that much in (346). And so he dedicated the book to his American friends "who, loving their country, can bear the truth, when it is told good humouredly, and in a kind spirit" (AN dedication). Philip Hone, for one, when he saw extracts of the book in the newspaper, concurred: "It is true, every word of it," he wrote in his diary. The *North American Review* disagreed with some statements and agreed with others, but was generally pleased: "The tone of the book, throughout, is frank, honest, and manly." American response in general, I might add, was not to be so measured.

Beyond his earnestness to express the truth as he saw it, Dickens experienced a sense of guilt over his earlier attacks on previous travellers. In *American Notes* he wrote:
The stranger, who follows in the track
I took myself, will find it spitting
in its full bloom.... And let him not
persuade himself (as I once did, to my
shame) that previous tourists have
exaggerated its extent (AN8).

He wrote to Mrs. Trollope that, "I am convinced that there is
no Writer who has so well and accurately (I need not add, so
entertainingly) described it America, in many of its
aspects, as you have done" (395). Both to admit to past
writers that he has been wrong and they right, and to empha-
size the facts for sceptics like himself, he needed to condemn,
even if the same condemnations had been made before. The de-
sire to be moderate and the desire to be honest worked at
cross-purposes, and so the book's integrity suffered. As
Dickens's American friend Philip Hone wrote in his diary:

> Not very creditable, I think, to its
> author as a literary production and not
> by any means so amusing as might have
> been expected.18

It seems clear that the dilemma in which Dickens found
himself led him to avoid discussing, for the most part, those
things that would excite him and stir controversy. In order
to do that, he fell back upon the safest elements of the
travelogue tradition. American Notes is therefore a generic
regression. The English readers, as we have seen, had been
subjected to a number of repetitious travel books. Dickens was
well aware of that fact. In his original, suppressed intro-
ductive chapter he wrote:
Very many works having just the same scope and range, have been already published, but I think that these two volumes stand in need of no apology on that account. The interest of such productions, if they have any, lies in the varying impressions made by the same novel things on different minds. 

In fact though, Dickens's impressions were not much at variance with what had come before.

The English people knew what had gone on in America. They knew of his triumph and of his disenchantment, and expected to hear about them. His personal experiences Dickens refused outright to discuss, in part for reasons of modesty, he said. None of the copyright controversy and none of his tumultuous reception are recorded. Indeed the tone of the book is so steady and cool that it becomes bland, tiresome, and oddly neutral. For one who has read Dickens's letters from America, these Notes seem largely devoid of the emotion of his immediate reactions. For one who has read previous travel books, American Notes seems not to offer much that is new. Dickens's thirty-page chapter entitled "Boston" gives only a one-page description of that city, a description meaningless in its vague language: "The city is a beautiful one," the houses "large and elegant," the shops "good," the public buildings "handsome," the view "panoramic" and "charming" (AN3). None of the things which had made his stay in Boston unique and had made Boston the high point of his trip are even mentioned. Instead, the case histories at the institutions of the city are described in great detail. Later in the book, the President of the United
States, the famous senators and literary personalities, all of whom Dickens met, are dismissed in a cursory sentence or two. Moreover, Dickens's telling, as if it were something new—and with little new detail—that Americans rocked in chairs and spat and spat and spat was tedious to readers who had heard that for years. Not only were his impressions trite, but his method was not particularly novel. Dickens would not have had to search far for an approach with vitality. Mrs. Trollope's success was based on the same talents Dickens possessed in far greater abundance. His gifts were the ideal ones for such a book. Just think what Boz could have done with this scene that Harriet Martineau merely records without even so much as the flicker of a smile:

While I was reading on the morning of the 12th, the report of a rifle from the lower deck summoned me to look out. There were frequent rifle-shots, and they always betokened our being near shore; generally under the bank, where the eye of the sportsman was in the way of temptation from some object in the forest.

Indeed, his readers expected no less than the full use of Dickens's talents. The Blackwood's reviewer, greatly disappointed with Dickens's production, writes: "We expected from Boz great amusement." Moreover, "Sketches by so spirited and faithful a pencil as that of Boz, would have been delightful and invaluable!" But Dickens did not write such a book. Instead he rewrote the superficial travelogue, seemingly doing little more than rephrasing what had been written and written. His route had been a fairly standard tourist route: from Boston to New...
York by way of Worcester, Hartford, and New Haven; on to Philadelphia and Washington; into the South as far as Richmond; then west from Baltimore, through Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, and Cincinnati, to St. Louis; and then east through Cairo, Columbus, Sandusky, and Cleveland to Buffalo and Niagara Falls; into Canada; and then back to New York. Dickens is content merely to retread that same route in his book, imposing no shape of his own on the order in which the reader views the country. Thus an inordinate amount of space is given to details of the transportation between points. We follow Dickens from boat to train to coach, from east to west to east, having land described that we have had described many times before, having boat dimensions described that we have had described many times before, and having whole cities dismissed in a sentence or paragraph. Dickens can safely discuss the countryside, and so he talks of it often. Unfortunately it has been described many times before. In his letters Dickens had expressed his unending awe at the immensity of America. He wrote to Thomas Mitton: The Ohio River "is 900 Miles in length (think of that!) and we have travelled about 550 miles upon it.... Since we left [Baltimore, we have] travelled upwards of a hundred miles by railroads and [stage-coach], and 250 miles by canal, besides" (190). To Miss Coutts he wrote, "I am going there [St. Louis] to dinner - it's only two thousand miles from here -" (146). And again to Thomas Mitton: "Think of my going so far towards the setting Sun, to dinner!" (161). So in American Notes he describes in detail
such things as tree stumps which "were often as entertaining to me as so many glasses in a magic lantern" (AN14) and the majestic Niagara Falls: I "looked - Great Heaven, on what a fall of bright-green water! - ...Then, when I felt how near to my Creator I was standing, the first effect, and the enduring one - instant and lasting - of the tremendous spectacle, was Peace" (AN14).

He could also talk about the wonderful work being done by the Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind; and he could talk about the concept of solitary confinement being tried in a Philadelphia prison. These were neutral topics. He spent an inordinately great amount of time describing his tours of institutions and prisons.

These lengthy descriptions of institutions, especially coming so early in the book, were an encumbrance, bogging the travelogue down before the reader could experience the sights and sounds of the new world he had opened the book to find. The descriptions were too exhaustive and exhausting for an ostensible book of travels that was as short as American Notes was. Harriet Martineau and others had shown an interest in institutions, but their books were long enough to accommodate such discussions. Proportionately, Dickens spent too much time on jails and poor houses for the book to carry the weight.

American Notes then was not very impressive as a travel book and it gave the readers little sense of Dickens's experience of America. Perhaps though, the most interesting aspect
of this travel book is not the view Dickens gives of America, but the view American Notes gives us of Dickens at the beginning of what has come to be called his middle period. As Whitley and Goldman suggest in their introduction to American Notes, "That he was... a different man, as an emotional and political being, after his first American trip, seems certain." This difference contributed to the movement from the early novels to those of the middle period. In the undertones of American Notes we can detect the elements that Dickens will shape in Martin Chuzzlewit. That novel is centrally concerned with the roots of social structure: with tradition, with the family, with the freedom to be found in ties and the isolation imposed by freedom from ties. Those are the very elements that dominate the travel book.

As we have seen, Dickens excluded most of the specifics of his trip, certainly most of the personal experiences he had in America. All that composes the bulk of the letters is stripped away. What remains is the cumulative effect of those specifics on his mind. We see not so much the landscape of America, but the landscape of Dickens's mind, post-America.

Thus while Dickens's obsessive interest in the prisons and other institutions of America overwhelms the travel book, and his descriptions of landscape have all been heard before, they are clear indications of Dickens's vision of American society. Whitley and Goldman note this tendency, and are the only critics to do so: "It is impossible," they say, "to shake off the feeling that the episodes... are successive attempts to
encapsulate the nature of his experience in America...."24

The impulse is not sufficiently under control to work in any
consistent way throughout the book, nor does it vitiate the
tediousness of the oft-heard detail of much of the book.
Dickens's slavish chronological organization forces him to
deal with his metaphors as they come instead of using them in
relationship to each other in such a way as to forge a coherent
symbolic structure. Whitley and Goldman seem to suggest a
clarity for the arrangement that the text will not sustain.
At this stage Dickens is more controlled by what he has ex-
perienced than controlling it. But therein lies the signifi-
cance of American Notes. America cost Dickens much. In the
travel book we are given a fascinating glimpse of the author
coming to terms with that cost; we view the process of his
reshaping his vision of society. That vision, once brought
under artistic control, would become the focus of the English
as well as the American society of Martin Chuzzlewit. It is,
then, worthwhile to examine those thematic concerns that
Dickens brought home with him from America, as they brood over
American Notes.

In the course of Dickens's tour of the institutions of
Boston, he visited that city's House of Reformation for Juvenile
Offenders, where he watched the boys do their work and then
attend classes. He was struck particularly by one bit of
 irony, which he comments upon in American Notes. As a part of
their classroom activity these youthful prisoners sang a chorus
in praise of liberty. Dickens mentions their "odd" theme only
briefly, but in a sense the irony he sees in that situation typifies his sense of America. The Americans, singing with fervor the praises of liberty, were very much imprisoned by that freedom that isolated them as much as any solitary confinement prison from each other and from any sense of larger community.

For the Americans, one of the most positive aspects of their country was the lack of a stifling past. Their country was future. All around them, they could point to projects in the works. They were a country building anew. Moreover, the limitless frontier offered the freedom for this work of building to go on indefinitely. For Dickens, both of these elements—the lack of past and the freedom of the land—contributed to that irony of America. Both were traps denying the Americans their essential humanity even as they robbed them of community.

One of Dickens's most constant laments in *American Notes* involves the unfinished state of the country. In Worcester, Massachusetts, he complains that "there was the usual aspect of newness on every object.... All the buildings looked as if they had been built and painted that morning, and could be taken down on Monday with very little trouble" (AN5). Of the three sentences allotted to the capital of Ohio, one is concerned with mentioning a "very large unfinished hotel called the Heill House" (AN14), just as in Philadelphia, Dickens expresses his displeasure at the state of the future Girard College:
So that like many other great undertakings in America, even this is rather going to be done one of these days, than doing now (AN7).

Certainly in themselves these are petty, even irrational, complaints. To expect a country as young as the United States and as vast to rise up fully formed is unfair, at the least.

What underlies these continual attacks is Dickens's profound sense, more felt than verbalized, that this newness is symptomatic of an essential lack of community in America. The country lacks the substantiality, the richness of a sense of the past that holds people together. The streets of Boston he found to be so unsubstantial that they appeared to be the sets of a pantomime, while the city's suburbs were "even more unsubstantial-looking than the city" (AN5). In his comment regarding the buildings of Worcester quoted above, Dickens complains not only that the buildings are new, but that they seem to have no permanence. This sense he has of impermanence as an aspect of newness is only increased later in his travels when, to his amazement, he "met a full-sized dwelling-house coming down-hill at a round trot" (AN13).

Dwelling-houses imply home and hearth, the warmth of family, perhaps the central source of value in the Dickens world, the building or restoring of which supplies the hope of community in most of his fiction. Here homes roam the streets. Even when they are stationary, their newness robs them of that homely warmth:
Even where a blazing fire shone through the uncurtained windows of some distant house, it had the air of being newly lighted, and of lacking warmth; and instead of awakening thoughts of a snug chamber, bright with faces that first saw the light round that same hearth, and ruddy with warm hangings, it came upon one suggestive of the smell of new mortar and damp walls" (AN5).

The old French section of St. Louis sends Dickens into ecstasy. He revels in his description of the old buildings, which seem to him to share his disapproval of the newness all around them. He writes that they appeared:

- to hold their heads askew, besides, as if they were grimacing in astonishment at the American Improvements.
- It is hardly necessary to say, that these consist of wharfs and warehouses, and new buildings in all directions; and of a great many vast plans which are still "progressing" (AN12).

Beyond its implications for the institution of the family, the attack on unfinished newness leads right to the government of the country itself. Dickens's most prolonged description of newness is, significantly, directed at the governmental center, the capital of the nation, Washington, D.C. Lacking the substantiality of age, the seat of government is composed of:

- spacious avenues, that begin in nothing, and lead nowhere; streets, mile-long, that only want houses, roads and inhabitants;
- public buildings that need but a public to be complete; and ornaments of great thoroughfares, which only lack great thoroughfares to ornament... (AN8).
The home of the President, the White House, is laid out with gardens which have an "uncomfortable air of having been made yesterday, which is far from favourable to the display of such beauties" (AN8). Remembering that Dickens has excluded discussions of political America from American Notes and knowing the great expectations with which he came to America as well as the disillusionment his trip produced, it is not difficult to see the full implications of the metaphor we have been pursuing when he refers to Washington as "the City of Magnificent Intentions" (AN8). In short, the attack on newness is an attack on the lack of cohesiveness in the social fabric of the country. When Dickens does mention the governmental apparatus of the country, while he refrains from political discussions he inevitably describes whatever it is that he is viewing in language that suggests a denial of community. President Tyler, alone in his inner office in that White House with the too new gardens is described as "worn and anxious, and well he might; being at war with everybody" (AN8). The courts of the country parody communication between people. Leaving a courtroom, Dickens comments on the babble of gibberish to which he had been listening and of which he understood not a word. Furthermore, the law, he tells us, is impotent in any time of popular unrest. It cannot hold the fabric of society together. The Congress of the United States is described as a battleground, rending that fabric with strife "so fierce and brutal, and so destructive of all self-respect in worthy men" (AN8) that worthy men stay away, while in the legislatures of the various states
Dickens found dull and repetitious orators "drowsily holding forth" (AN9). The Bank of the United States is another institution which Dickens describes metaphorically. It "had a mournful ghost-like aspect, dreary to behold." Upon being told the name of the building, Dickens finds the description apt for the "Tomb of many fortunes; the Great Catacomb of investment" (AN7). When he describes the Bank of the United States as a tomb, we ought to recall that he chose, in entitling this entire book American Notes For General Circulation to make a comment on the money system of the nation, which served not as a valid link between members of a unified society, but was, as he here describes it, a destroyer of individual investors.

In the same sense that Dickens sees the newness of America fostering isolation and denying community, he finds the land itself alienating. Of the easternmost part of the country, far from the frontier, he writes:

Mile after mile of stunted trees: some hewn down by the axe, some blown down by the wind, some half fallen and resting on their neighbors, many more logs half hidden in the swamp, others mouldering away to spongy chips.... Each pool of stagnant water has its crust of vegetable rottenness.... Now you emerge for a few brief minutes on open country...now catch hasty glimpses of a distant town...when whir-r-r-r-r! almost before you have seen them, comes the same dark screen: the stunted trees, the stumps, the logs, the stagnant water (AN4).

The further west he goes, the more gloomy he finds the landscape. As night fell on the Mississippi, "the scene became a thousand times more lonesome and more dreary than before" (AN12). And
near the hated Cairo, Illinois, the river became "a slimy monster hideous to behold" and the land a "dismal swamp...teeming...with rank unwholesome vegetation" (AN12). Here again, the amount of space given to the complaint seems excessive until we recognize that what is troubling Dickens is that the immensity of the country, the very freedom of space, is not "at all inspiriting in its influence" (AN12). He sees again the irony of America. The very forces that ought to be promoting freedom are in fact prisons. The Looking-Glass Prairie surprised Dickens. He "felt little of that sense of freedom and exhilaration which a Scottish heath inspires." On the contrary, it was "oppressive in its barren monotony" (AN13). In America, freedom can be delusive.

More than once Dickens describes the oppressive landscape as an aggressor. In the Ohio River near Cincinnati the drowning trees "seem to try to grasp the boat, and drag it under water" (AN11). On the coach ride to Sandusky, Dickens finds the stumps of trees taking shapes and seeming "to force themselves upon me, whether I would or no" (AN14). The oppressiveness of the land is also seen in less fanciful ways. The wild land, "whose growth of green is dank and noxious" encroaches on the city of Columbus, Ohio. Even "in the midst of cultivation and improvement," there it is, "like ground accursed" (AN14). The freedom offered by the land here is the very cause of its encroachment; the people, ever free to travel further, buy land and then leave the land behind. In this case, the city was unable to deal with the blighted plot of land because the
owner could not be found. In a slave state, Dickens sees the condition of the land as almost allegorically related to the institution of slavery, which is the archetype of the denial of freedom. "There is," Dickens says, "an air of ruin and decay abroad, which is inseparable from the system." The land "is now little better than a sandy desert overgrown with trees" (AN9).

The illusion of freedom the land provides is best seen in the utter isolation depicted in the following description of settlers leaving the steamboat on which Dickens is travelling and being rowed ashore to their new homes:

The oldest woman of the party sits down in the old chair, close to the water's edge, without speaking a word. None of the others sit down.... They all stand where they landed, as if stricken into stone; and look after the boat.... There they stand yet, without the motion of a hand.... In the distance and increasing darkness, they are mere specks to the eye: lingering there still (AN11).

This attitude toward the land, as expressed in American Notes, was not Dickens's first reaction. He began his trip in awe of the expanse of America. He wrote with enthusiasm to his friends at home, in not one but seven letters, so taken was he with the drama of the statement, that he was travelling 2000 miles to dinner. In his first burst of enthusiasm he "had a design of going from Charleston to Columbia in South Carolina, and there engaging a carriage...and a saddle-horse for myself -- with which caravan I intended going 'right away,' as they say here, into the west, through the wilds of Kentucky
and Tennessee." Told of the naivete of such a scheme, he was "staggered, but not deterred. If I find it possible to be done in the time, I mean to do it" (88). But by the time he came to write American Notes the land had come to represent not freedom, but the imprisoning force of isolation. At the end of American Notes, Dickens describes with relish his trainride homeward through the English countryside. "The exquisite delights of that one journey," he informs us, "...no tongue can tell, or pen of mine describe." The key point is the language with which he attempts to describe that exquisiteness. It is the language of bounded smallness. The country seemed "like a luxuriant garden. The beauty of the fields (so small they looked!), the hedge-rows, and the trees; the pretty cottages, the beds of flowers... (AN16).

Dickens's preoccupation with the land and with the newness of the country, then, reflects his deeper sense of the limitations on humanity imposed by the combination of elements which make up the American experience.

In much the same way, something that does not seem to preoccupy him, or even occupy him, points toward the same limitations. Dickens appears, almost obsessively, to neglect individuals in American Notes. Even recognizing that he has consciously prohibited himself from discussing friends, people in power, and the like, nonetheless that does not explain the virtually complete absence of vignettes of anonymous but representative Americans who could remain nameless (if he wished to refrain from increasing their egotism). That, as I noted previously,
would have been the book on America that only Boz could have written. Not only did he not write it, but he discusses individuals in only a handful of cases. Dickens's impulse is to refrain from differentiating the Americans. Instead he speaks of "the people" on a boat or "the loungers" in the White House outer office. In many cases, the effect is dehumanization. In the Five Points slum of New York City, Dickens describes a dirty, dark room covered with "great mounds of dusty rags upon the ground." The rags however turn out to be an undifferentiated mass of humanity. The rags stir, "and rise slowly up, and the floor is covered with heaps of negro women...like the countless repetition of one astonished African face in some strange mirror" (AN6).

Indeed, rather than differentiate the Americans, Dickens spends his time on a number of occasions trailing off with a reverie that individualizes and even humanizes the pigs in the street. Their society is a parody of the pretensions to society of an essentially society-denying people. The Americans who spit are in fact little more than pigs. In the first case, a fairly lengthy imaginative flight, Dickens stresses the community, the society, as it were, of the pigs. "Two portly sows are trotting up behind this carriage," Dickens begins, "and a select party of half-a-dozen gentlemen hogs have just now turned the corner." The discussion follows a one-eared pig in his "gentlemanly, vagabond kind of life, somewhat answering to that of our club-men at home" (AN6). In a second reverie, Dickens treats of family life in the pig community:
"One young gentleman...was walking deliberately on, profoundly thinking, when suddenly his brother, who was lying in a miry hole unseen by him, rose up immediately before his startled eyes." The young gentleman, after much thoughtful reasoning, returned "at a round trot, pounced upon him, and summarily took off a piece of his tail; as a caution to him...never to play tricks with his family any more" (AN12).

In a third case, pig and human have exchanged places. Writing humorously, Dickens explains how his secretary, having been bitten by mosquitoes in his bedroom, retreated to the coach to sleep. As Dickens tells us, "this was not a very politic step," for the neighborhood pigs looked "upon the coach as a kind of pie with some manner of meat inside," and had Putnam trapped (AN14).

While the pigs seem human in America, apparently the people do not. In the few cases where individual Americans are discussed, they are—in a deadly serious sense—in Putnam's humorous predicament. They are isolated and trapped and de-humanized. In Five Points, Dickens, without humor now, graphically paints the picture of man alone:

What lies beyond this tottering flight of steps, that creak beneath our tread?—a miserable room, lighted by one dim candle, and destitute of all comfort, save that which may be hidden in a wretched bed. Beside it, sits a man: his elbows on his knees: his forehead hidden in his hands. "What ails that man?" asks the foremost officer. "Fever," he sullenly replies, without looking up (AN6).
In the streets of New York, Dickens sketches two Irishmen, strangers, lost in the city, searching for an address written "in strange characters truly" (AN6). Not only are they alone and lost, but their ability to communicate is faulty. The same problem of communication is found in the free schools of Cincinnati where the girls who read for Dickens had no idea what the words they read meant (AN11). When Dickens gives us a sample of a dialogue between two anonymous Americans (they are differentiated only as far as a quality of their hats, one designated "Brown Hat" and the other "Straw Hat"), communication is reduced to virtually one phrase, "Yes sir," adapted to every circumstance (AN14).

Further evidence of isolation is provided on the coach to Harrisburg where Dickens finds a complete separation of the driver from the activity within his coach, and a total absence of a sense of community among the passengers. A new passenger seeking admittance to the already full coach refuses to allow the coach to proceed until another passenger gives up his place. He achieves his goal and none of his fellow travellers shows the least concern for the passenger left behind. To the driver especially it is of no consequence. "Of all things in the world," Dickens says, "the coach would seem to be the very last upon his mind" (AN9). Later, on another coach ride, Dickens speaks of this lack of a sense of community as a general phenomenon, among coach drivers and landlords as well: "The landlord...seems...to be the least connected with the business of the house. Indeed he is with reference to the tavern, what
the driver is in relation to the coach and passengers: whatever happens in his sphere of action, he is quite indifferent" (AN14).

In the face of this horror of isolation in America, Dickens's constant desire to remove himself from the crowd might puzzle us, but the psychology is consistent. In a country without individuals, the oppressive force of contact with nameless repetitive blurs is essentially isolating. The privacy of family, not the publicness of the crowd, is the basis of maintaining individuality. Alone with his wife, Dickens can be a thinking traveller, not merely a hand to be shaken. It is another of the ironies he finds in America.

So far we have examined the three elements which seem to pervade a rather diffuse book, providing the emotional underpinnings of a series of random discussions of towns and hotels described vaguely - usually as "clean," "filthy," "roomy," or "cramped" - and modes of travel described in boring detail. What remains to be discussed is the element that dominates the book, indeed, overwhelms the travelogue. That is the discussion of institutions, which usurps fully the first half of this short book. I have suggested that this overburdening is one of the chief causes of the book's poor reception. At this point, I think we are in a position to understand the reasons that these institutions so obsessed Dickens's thoughts of America.

I have attempted to demonstrate so far that having placed great restrictions on the scope of American Notes Dickens
consciously or not distilled the essence of what he saw America to be. Forced to omit the specific, concrete experiences that shaped his reaction, what he provides in *American Notes* is the deeper residue of attitude behind those experiences: a sense of the human spirit ironically isolated and imprisoned in a quest for freedom.

In *American Notes* he is drawn to focus on those institutions which symbolically present that reality. In the prisons and asylums of America he finds the reality of the bounded isolation that in the larger society masquerades as freedom. All but the first two pages of his chapter on Philadelphia, home of the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, are devoted to a detailed discussion of that city's solitary confinement prison. Nothing, Dickens asserts, can be worse than the isolation of a human being from his fellow creatures: "Few men are capable of estimating the immense amount of torture and agony which this dreadful punishment, prolonged for years, inflicts upon the sufferers.... I hold this slow and daily tampering with the mysteries of the brain, to be immeasurably worse than any torture of the body" (AN7).

In a lunatic asylum in New York Dickens comes upon "a woman...locked up alone. She was bent, they told me, on committing suicide. If anything could have strengthened her in her resolution, it would certainly have been the insupportable monotony of such an existence" (AN6). Indeed death haunts Dickens's vision of isolated America. Just outside St. Louis, he has a long talk with a landlord, an archetypal free American, a
"dry, tough, hard faced" old wanderer, "...one of the very many descendants of Cain" who leave "home after home behind them." Dickens ends his vignette by focusing on family, on the wife, who has "seen her children, one by one, die here of fever, in the full prime and beauty of their youth." Death and isolation mingle, the memory of death festering in the solitude: "Her heart was sore, she said, to think of them," and even the companionship of a stranger breaking the solitude eases the pain of the deaths. "To talk on this theme, even to strangers, in that blighted place, so far from her old home, eased it somewhat, and became a melancholy pleasure" (AN14).

Dickens's preoccupation with death in solitude becomes most sustained in the Tombs prison of New York, the very name triggering his thoughts. In this "dismal-fronted pile," he sees the prisoners entombed in cells with doors that "look like furnace-doors, but are cold and black, as though the fires within had all gone out" (AN6). His mind on lonely death, he tells us that the common name of the prison derives from the fact that a number of suicides occurred there when it was first built. And he informs us that the prisoners are allowed no hooks in their cells for fear that they might hang themselves. With these thoughts foremost, Dickens views "a narrow, grave-like place" where prisoners were hanged. The focus of the reverie this sight produces is upon the isolation of the death. "From the community it is hidden." The prison wall that separates the condemned man and the community serves as a gloomy veil, "the curtain to his bed of death, his winding-sheet,
and grave.... There are no bold eyes to make him bold; no ruffians to uphold a ruffian's name before" (AN6). This extended reverie is one of the clearest indicators that Dickens is indeed working symbolically. By changing the emphasis of his discussion of the execution yard from that in his letter to Forster, Dickens shapes the material to his isolation motif. The letter, representing his immediate reactions, does not even suggest the loneliness of the death, but stresses the technique of the hanging procedure. Dickens merely mentions that the yard is dismal; indeed he tells Forster that he thinks the hanging ritual "infinitely superior to ours: much more solemn, and far less degrading and indecent" (104). In contrast, in American Notes he reduces technical description of the act to a passing sentence and stresses the separation of the criminal from both the community and the "dissolute and bad," in no way indicating that he approves of the practice. The passage in the letter is fairly free of adjectives and the criminal is referred to as a "culprit," while the American Notes passage is colored by such adjectives as "terrible," "grave-like," "frightful," "gloomy," and "pitiless," and the criminal is referred to as a "wretched creature" (AN6).

I stated earlier that Dickens eschews sketches of individuals in American Notes. This is true of the society at large, but it is not true within the walls of institutions. There his detailed pictures of individuals are profuse. In the Tombs, these sketches imply the same sense of death inter-related with isolation. The family is the basis of community.
In the Tombs Dickens sketches a man who has allegedly murdered his wife. From viewing this husband, Dickens moves to a view of a young boy behind bars, who happens to be the son of that unhappy marriage. The child is locked away as a mere witness and Dickens questions this isolation of a child who has done nothing wrong. Again in a Hartford prison, Dickens chooses, of all his possibilities, to mention another family murder, this time of a husband by his wife. The woman's isolation is given an additional dimension. Her friends could petition and get her released. But she has been there sixteen years and they have not done so. Once more, in Baltimore, Dickens chooses to describe the case of murder within the family. He uses the word "remarkable" more than once in this case. What so intrigues him is that the man was murdered either by his son or his brother. The evidence against the son is provided by the brother, and it is virtually impossible to decide between the two "equally unnatural" sets of possibilities (AN9).

What then is Dickens's purpose in emphasizing institutions? Clearly in those we have discussed, he sees the forces of the society mimicked - people isolated, trapped; the roots of community chopped away; the institution of the family perverted; the society a kind of death itself. It is a picture of what Dickens saw in the rest of America, going by the name of freedom. Dickens does not fail to connect that external world with the world of the prisons and asylums. He deplores the political appointment of officers of the Long Island Asylum. It is another example of "that narrow-minded and injurious Party Spirit,"
which is the Simoom of America, sickening and blighting every­thing of wholesome life within its reach" (AN6).

For Dickens, then, these institutions are a barren and stark metaphor for the failings of America. His most lengthy emphasis, however, is on other institutions, those which he sees fulfilling the essential need that America fails to meet. Those are the jails and charities of Boston, by no coincidence the city that he found most civilized, most English, and most comfortably like home. The great bulk of his discussion of Boston is a discussion of its institutions. Each is bounded, cut off from that limitless landscape of America. Each, in its own way, fosters a sense of community. The House of Correction is operated on a silent system, but, in Dickens's words, "the prisoners have the comfort and mental relief of seeing each other, and of working together" (AN3). More to the point, perhaps, are the State Hospital for the insane, the House of Industry, and the Perkins Institute for the blind. These institutions are predicated on the establishment of community.

The State Hospital for the insane has as its subjects the beings who are most truly isolated, locked within the prisons of distorted minds. Working within the limited, bounded walls of the institution, the physician - and his wife - seek to establish a community spirit as a means of helping the inmates. Dickens first shows us the doctor with his wife and children in the midst of the patients and tells us that "their presence there, had a highly beneficial influence on the patients who were grouped about them" (AN3). The family is used as the core
of the community. The community is established through the moral tone of the behavior. Dickens is introduced to a patient with the greatest politeness: "We exchanged the most dignified salutations with profound gravity and respect" (AN3). This tone extends to the meals, which are dignified and graceful, in contrast to the meals of the general populace described in the letters. At these meals, each patient uses a knife and fork and yet there is "an absolute certainty" that the meals will not degenerate into violence. That certainty arises from "moral influence alone," the influence of the polite society exemplified by the physician. Here again we see Dickens absolutely equating the externals of polite behavior and the profoundest inner morality. Once a week the patients have a ball: "Immense politeness and good breeding are observed throughout" (AN3). In short, the hospital is a model community in which the most isolated souls are given a sense of belonging and, as Dickens says, "a decent self-respect" (AN3).

The House of Industry provides a place for the paupers and the orphans. What Dickens stresses here is the sense of home that is provided. Rather than isolating the patients along "rambling wards, where a certain amount of weazen life may mope, and pine,...the building is divided into separate rooms" (AN3). Thus the men have a pride in their rooms which they care for as homes and share a sense of community with their fellows. The section which contains the orphans also impresses Dickens. He points out the mottoes on the wall; the first example he gives is "Love one another" (AN3).
The Perkins Institute treats people who are without full sensory contact with the rest of the world. Some are blind. Some are also deaf and dumb. Dickens describes "a fair young creature with every human faculty, and hope, and power of goodness and affection, inclosed within her delicate frame... built up, as it were, in a marble cell" (AN3). She lives in "darkness and stillness, as profound as that of a closed tomb at midnight" (AN3). The job of the institute is to bring her out of the tomb, out of the death of isolation. The girl is Laura Bridgman and Dickens quotes her history for pages on end, so fascinated is he with her progress at communicating with those around her. We should recall the "yes sir" dialogue with which Dickens exemplified American communications, in order to understand the implications of his interest in Laura's slow, painful, and intense progress at "seizing upon language as a new link of union with other spirits" (AN3). Perkins, indeed, is noteworthy, like the other Boston institutions, for fostering that sense of union, of community. A requirement there is that each patient be a participating member of the community. The phrases "bees in the hive" and "industrious community" are used.

Once again in Laura's case, Dickens is concerned with family. The last two pages of her story, clearly for Dickens the most emotional part, deal with her reunion with her mother. For Dickens the family should be the root of community, and community is in a sense just an extended family. So when he concludes his discussion of the institutions of Boston he tells us that in these institutions the people "are surrounded by all
reasonable means of comfort and happiness" and "are appealed to, as members of the great human family" (AN3). He concludes, "I have described them at some length; firstly, because their worth demanded it; and secondly, because I mean to take them for a model" (AN3). He means specifically a model for institutions he will later visit, but he could just as easily mean a model for his ideal society.

Perhaps a community in the outside world of America best sums up the attitudes these institutions of Boston oppose. The Shaker community, for Dickens the archetype of all the evil inherent in America, is the American image with which Dickens leaves us. His visit to the Shaker village is virtually the last thing discussed before the passage home. The Shakers codify what he has seen throughout America. They have legislated isolation of the individual and destruction of the family, for they separate the sexes and deny their members the right to marital union. At the time of Dickens's visit they had gone so far as to isolate themselves from external human contact, running an ad in the newspapers to the effect that their chapel would be closed to the public for a year. The Shakers he met were uncommunicative. Indeed he found them completely dehumanized, the men so wooden that he "felt about as much sympathy for them, and as much interest in them, as if they had been so many figure-heads of ships" (AN15). The woman who waited upon him, he describes as "something alive in a russet case, which the elder said was a woman" (AN15). Only the final tacked-on chapter about slavery, that ultimate American crime of dehumanization,
is more angry than the section on the Shakers. Dickens deals with the Shakers bitterly, even savagely, for:

I so abhor, and from my soul detest that bad spirit...which would strip life of its healthful graces, rob youth of its innocent pleasures, pluck from maturity and age their pleasant ornaments, and make existence but a narrow path towards the grave (AN15).

Dickens does not have to make explicit the connection to the country in which "the church, the chapel, and the lecture-room, are the only means of excitement" (AN3) allowed. The Shakers neatly sum up America for Dickens.

As we will see in Martin Chuzzlewit, Dickens's great fear is that the worst impulses of America are also threats to England. Dickens expresses the germ of that fear in American Notes. In the Canadian chapter just preceding his visit to the Shaker village, he suggests briefly the contagiousness of America. That lack of restraint and piggishness which so typified American freedom seemed to have invaded Canada. On the English side of Niagara Falls he examined a guest book and instead of finding the rhymes he expected, he "found them scrawled all over with the vilest and the filthiest ribaldry that ever human hogs delighted in." This was "a reproach to the English side, on which they are preserved" (AN15). Clearly, proximity is having its influence, just as proximity is causing desertion from the ranks of the soldiers: "Where the line of demarcation between one country and another is so very narrow as at Niagara, desertion from the ranks can scarcely fail to be of frequent occurrence." America tempts the soldiers with "the
wildest and maddest hopes of the fortune and independence that await them on the other side" (AN15). The evil is contagious, a fact that will haunt Martin Chuzzlewit.

In a curious way, Dickens's few encounters with the Indians seem to sum up for him the ideal of America he had left England with, the one that the "Shaker aspects" of America had all but destroyed. Dickens tells us of a settlement of Wyandot Indians which had just agreed in a treaty to move west. Where Dickens found the geographic freedom and the lack of a past to be negative factors in the American experience, he describes the Indians as very reluctant to move westward, having a "strong attachment to the familiar scenes of their infancy." Indeed the movement west is anything but an act of freedom. Moreover their strongest attachment is to "the burial-places of their kindred," to a sense of past and of community. This concern of theirs recalls Dickens crying out for an old graveyard in one of the too new towns he had visited in white America. Unlike the Americans', the Indians' sense of community is strong, and is manifest in a kind of total democracy that the American strife-torn party politics merely parodies. The question of moving had been put to a vote, Dickens tells us:

When the speaking was done, the ayes and noes were ranged on opposite sides, and every male adult voted in his turn. The moment the result was known, the minority (a large one) cheerfully yielded to the rest, and withdrew all kind of opposition (AN14).
Dickens's earlier meeting with Pitchlynn, a chief of the Choctaw, is described as highly congenial. Pitchlynn's politeness, civilization, and culture are in sharp contrast to the Americans' lack of those qualities (AN12). What I find most fascinating about Dickens's attitudes toward the Indians is his attempt to retain his romantic view of innocence in the face of his loss of the Americans as its champions. While his experiences push him back to the solid ground of English society, yet his impulse is still to look hopefully to what America had represented, and to see it in the Indians.

The passage out and the passage home offer a neat frame to the American experience, suggesting the effect of the trip on Dickens's attitudes. The passage out is interesting in that we see Dickens almost entirely alone, isolated in his sea-sick misery. References to a hearse and coffin are among the images Dickens uses to paint the picture of his stateroom. The return passage from America is distinctly different. Dickens pictures himself in company with the other travellers, forming an association of the passengers at his end of the dinner table, of which he was the president, and which was "a very hilarious and jovial institution" (AN16). Furthermore, he shows himself interested in the "little world of poverty" below deck. His discovery of these people leads to over two pages of social sermonizing. The passage home, in short, shows a Dickens who, having experienced the isolating influences of America, returns home with a new sense of community.
No doubt many of the currents of *American Notes* are not created consciously by Dickens. Certainly they are not formed with a coherence that would give a viable unity to *American Notes* as a work of art. But they are there and they are significant. They make clear the impressions Dickens carried home from America, the impressions that remain when we peel away the heat of the moment, the copyright controversy, the newspapers' lies, the political strife. They help us to see how America formed his sense of society, the society of England as well as that of America. They will be visible again in the novel which followed *American Notes*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*. In that novel, these currents gain their coherence as they shape the England of Seth and Sairey, Mrs. Lupin and Mrs. Todgers. At the same time, the specific complaints about America are allowed the free rein they were denied in *American Notes*. Dickens, more comfortable and less naked in his fictional mode, felt himself released from the constraints he had imposed on himself in the travel book. *Martin Chuzzlewit*'s American scenes let loose a direct frontal attack on America. When Philip Hone read that novel, he wrote in his diary, "*Dickens, Boz - For Shame.*"
Notes


4 Even the American Treasury was bankrupt. In January, 1842, the Treasury Note bill had authorized the printing of $5 million in notes, but by April they too had lost much of their value (175N6).

5 Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 52 (1842), 799.

6 Quarterly Review, 71 (1842-43), 505.

7 Edinburgh Review, 76 (1842-43), 503.

8 Fraser's Magazine, 26 (1842), 618.


Charles Dickens, American Notes and Pictures From Italy, The Oxford Illustrated Dickens (London: Oxford, 1957), Chapter 14. All subsequent references to American Notes will be cited parenthetically by the initials "AN" and chapter number.

Johnson, I, 433.

Whitley and Goldman, "Appendix I."

The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828 - 1851, ed. Allan Nevins (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1927), II, 616.

Ibid., p. 631.


Hone, II, 632.

Whitley and Goldman, "Appendix I."

Harriet Martineau, Retrospect of Western Travel (London: Saunders and Otley, 1838), II, 20.

Black, 52 (1842), 784, 787.

Whitley and Goldman in their introduction to the Penguin edition of American Notes suggest that the order serves the purpose of projecting Dickens's vision of America. I do not think so. The order, it seems to me, is one of the chief weaknesses of the book, forcing Dickens into extended discussion of such oft-repeated trivia as descriptions of road conditions.
23 Whitley and Goldman, p. 36.

24 Ibid., p. 34.

25 See Pilgrim Letters, pp. 120, 145, 146, 148, 150, 161, 162.

26 Whitley and Goldman see Dickens's focusing on these institutions as demonstrating the positive values of America. In Laura Bridgman's treatment they see American democracy, equality, and optimism rescuing an outcast that others would abandon. Obviously, I disagree. Dickens sees the Perkins Institute as antithetical to the America he has viewed.

27 Hone, II, 666.
My dear Macready, I desire to be so honest and just to those who have so enthusiastically and earnestly welcomed me, that I burned the last letter I wrote to you - even to you to whom I would speak as to myself - rather than let it come with anything that might seem like an ill-considered word of disappointment.... Still it is of no use. I am disappointed. This is not the Republic I came to see. This is not the Republic of my imagination.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Republic of My Imagination:

Martin Chuzzlewit
Martin Chuzzlewit was the artistic culmination of Dickens's trip to America and was to be his last major statement on the America he had seen in 1842. That statement is made in the American scenes, of course, but is also made in the novel as a whole. Since Forster said that the American scenes had been added to increase interest when the novel's sales lagged, critics have found it difficult to allow those scenes an artistic purpose in the novel. It is true that the scenes are, at their simplest, a venting of Dickens's spleen at a country and a people who had disappointed him. As such they are blatant, even crude. More than once Dickens speaks himself, abandoning any semblance of his fiction, to lecture on the failure of American democracy:

...by reducing their own country to the ebb of honest men's contempt, they put in hazard the rights of nations yet unborn, and...in their every word, avow themselves to be as senseless to the high principles on which America sprang, a nation, into life, as any Orson in her legislative halls.2

G. K. Chesterton wrote of Dickens that "nothing was ever so unmistakable as his good-will, except his ill-will; and they were never far apart."3 Chesterton himself, while praising the wit of the American scenes, does not believe they belong in Martin Chuzzlewit at all.4 However, despite their being added to increase sales and their often argumentative tone, the American scenes are an integral part of the novel.
Chesterton called them "the blazing jewel and the sudden redemption of the book;" they are, in fact, a brilliant, polished jewel, which reflects, as a slightly distorted mirror, the impulses and direction of the novel they focus. Thematically, as well as literally, the American scenes are at the center of the novel, an attack on America and in the context of the rest of the novel, a warning for England.

The very fact that Dickens so disliked America affected the shape of the fiction even before he thought to add the American scenes. Edgar Johnson makes clear that Dickens "had returned from America with a grimmer gaze for human short-comings than he had taken there." The poverty of family life he observed in America, the anti-social chaos he saw implicit in public life there, the institutionalization of that chaos in such entities as "the public," "the press," and "lynch law" ("This morbid hatred of our Institutions...is quite a study..." says Elijah Pogram MC34) caused Dickens in this novel to reevaluate his ideas about social interrelationships in general. America had struck at the heart of his belief. He had thought himself a Radical. While his attempts in all his early fiction to create communities had tended away from the Radical stress on individuality, it was in America that he saw with a new clarity how dangerously isolating that rampant individualism could be and how it could rend the ties of community. This perception colored Dickens's way of seeing. Thus, for example, where Harriet Martineau praised Philadelphia's solitary confinement prison because it preserved the men's dignity by
not herding them together as did other prison systems, Dickens found the isolation of solitary confinement a hell no man should be asked to face. The failure, as Dickens saw it, of America, that laboratory for the correcting of abuses, led him in this first novel after the American experience to explore with new concentration the roots of social structure at home. The more elaborate structures of a modern society, the court system, the industrial system, the bureaucracy, will be left for later novels (although Chevy Slyme as policeman points the way). In this novel, which we can see as a culmination of the early period, Dickens examines in greater detail than ever before the fundamentals of social relationships: family and community.

When he adds the American scenes, he uses them to parallel and exaggerate what he is depicting in the English scenes. America becomes a metaphor for the end result of the destructive processes now underway in the England of the novel— a warning to England to attend to the values of Mrs. Lupin, the efforts of Mrs. Todgers. Keeping America across the ocean is the necessity.

In the first section of this chapter, I will show how the American scenes fill in the symbolic outline of American Notes. The Americans, in quest of freedom, abandon the bases of civilization, producing a country of self-centered individuals who have ironically lost all semblance of individuality. Governed by their press, they have become nothing but public figures, dehumanized elements of that only reality, public opinion. This vision of America is not one England can ignore.
Throughout *Martin Chuzzlewit* Dickens suggests the connection between the two worlds by casting the American scenes as a dreamlike distorted world that parallels England itself.

In the second section I begin to explore the relationship between the two worlds. The attitude toward family, which Dickens perceived to be a primary weakness in America, becomes the focus of the novel as a whole. The family is depicted under serious strain in the English scenes, and that strain is reflected and exaggerated in the almost complete denial of the institution in the American scenes. The chaos within the family leaves people isolated in a dehumanizing world. In order to survive they are often required, like Nodgett and Fips, to abandon themselves to the dehumanization. This process is seen completed in the America in which virtually all men are sham surfaces, empty beneath.

In section three I examine the means of survival in such a world. The ideal values, represented by Tom Pinch, Mrs. Lupin, and in America, Mr. Bevan, are at a serious disadvantage in a world so far along the road to dehumanization. Those characters who survive with most vitality, Mould, and particularly Pecksniff and Gamp, do so by asserting the kind of selfish vitality that dehumanizes others. Thus Dickens links those characters most closely to the American scenes, in which that process of mutual dehumanization by self-centered individuals has run its course. Dickens also provides a more comprehensive example of the destruction of individuals in Montegue Tigg's Anglo-Bengalee, whose roots are the same
instinct for survival that governed Gamp’s and Pecksniff’s machinations. The Anglo-Bengalee too has its counterpart in America, in the Eden Land Corporation.

In section four, I discuss the most dangerous manifestation of America, the Hannibal Chollop unrestrained ego that not only dehumanizes but literally kills, as it is represented in England by Jonas Chuzzlewit.

In section five, I show how homogeneous the two worlds actually are and, by discussing Mrs. Todgers, show how little hope of regeneration is offered in an England shadowed by "American" ways of feeling and thinking. I close with Bailey, who lives, and, perhaps, triumphs. With the comic energy and awareness of Mrs. Gamp, combined with the values of Mrs. Lupin, Bailey offers hope that America can yet be kept across the ocean.

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The society Dickens describes in the American chapters of Martin Chuzzlewit fills in the symbolic outline of American Notes. Where in the travel book, the land, the newness of the country, and the institutions had suggested the nature of the people, in the novel the characters themselves are used to develop the vision of society that the earlier work only sketched. Edgar Johnson says that the harsh criticism American
Notes received was the major cause of Dickens's decision to abandon restraint: "If the filthily slanderous American press resented the polite criticisms to which he had previously restrained himself, let them see what a mauling he could inflict when he really set his mind to it!" Whatever the reason, Dickens lashes out openly and purposefully in these chapters.

He sees the Americans, in the quest of their illusive freedom, abandoning the very bases of civilized society. A discussion between Elijah Pogram and Martin goes to the heart of Dickens's vision of the American failure. Chided by Pogram at dinner for shying away from a dish of butter that has just been violated by a knife juicy with tobacco spittle, Martin exclaims:

"This is the most wonderful community that ever existed. A man deliberately makes a hog of himself, and that's an Institution!" "We have no time to acquire forms..." "Acquire!" cried Martin. "But it's not a question of acquiring anything. It's a question of losing the natural politeness of a savage, and that instinctive good breeding which admonishes one man not to offend and disgust another" (MC34).

That loss, the loss of the natural culture that so impressed Dickens in Pitchlynn, the Indian chief, is symptomatic of a people who have no regard for anyone but themselves. It is "a part of one great growth, which is rotten at the root" (MC34). In that rotten society, the heart of which Martin journeys to and reaches in the festering swamp of Eden, people are, as Dickens suggested in American Notes, ultimately
dehumanized in their disregard of each other, in their denial that they are part of a community. It was, we remember, the loving community of the Perkins Institute that enabled the animal Laura Bridgman to become a human being.

The independence - the assertive individuality - which led that friend of Pogram to stick his juicy knife in the butter is symptomatic of American selfishness. No one cares about anyone else. That disregard is shown in the Americans' personal habits. Dickens describes the Americans as sallow, dirty, poorly groomed, and spitting tobacco juice heedlessly. Moreover, the quest for independence has led to a mirror-image sameness. While every man is described as the most remarkable in the country, they are all carbon copies of each other. They have no private selves or inner humanity. We do not see, nor does Dickens intend them to have, any substance beneath the public facade. They are all merely particles of that dehumanizing force, public opinion.

Lacking the sensitivity to appreciate literature, the Americans are great readers of newspapers and their press is the embodiment of their lack of individuality. The press is public opinion, and public opinion is the collective ruler of America. It is no accident that Dickens begins the American scenes by emphasizing the press, exemplified by the Sewer, the Stabber, and the Rowdy Journal. The private life, the domestic life that is so central in Dickens for nurturing community, is denied in press-ruled public America. The Family Spy, the Private Listener, the Peeper, and the Keyhole
Reporter define a world in which Lafayette Kettle butts into
Martin's private conversation with Mark, and Hannibal Chollop
has no compunction about intruding in Martin's home, sitting
by his sickbed spitting tobacco juice. The erosion of privacy
has led to a world in which every man is a public figure all
the time and has only a public face. Americans do not converse
with each other. Instead, they make speeches and public
addresses, splashing words in all directions.

If we may, in republican fashion, allow a member of Con-
gress to represent the American people, we can see in Elijah
Pogram the typical, public American. We meet him sitting in
such a position that his ankles appear to be viewing the pros-
pect. One of the most remarkable men in the country, he is
dirty, unkempt, tobacco-chewing, and "not singular, to be
sure, in these respects" (MC34). This highly regarded American
is consistently presented as inhuman, a mechanical thing.
Martin thinks "Elijahpogram" is one word and the name of a
building. Pogram shakes hands "like a clock-work figure"
just running down and chews tobacco like one just wound up.
Moreover, in Martin's opinion, Pogram could just as well tour
the country by staying home and sending his shoes on tour.
Like those of all the Americans, whose humanity and indivi-
duality are gone, his actions deny any sense of community
with his fellows. Instead of conversing, Pogram gives violent
speeches: he is most famous for his speech entitled "The
Defiance." When he begins to talk to Martin - a conversation
that is in fact oratory - the listeners (for there is always
a public audience) rub their hands with glee thinking, "Pogram will smash him into sky-blue fits" (MC34). Ironically enough, Pogram also does not distinguish among his countrymen: his moving tribute to Hannibal Chollop refers only in part to Chollop; the rest is taken from Pogram's tribute to a western postmaster who had voted for him.

The America of the American scenes, then, is certainly consistent with the America of Dickens's letters and American Notes. Dickens's disillusion was profound. He had seen the country foremost in political terms, as the reformer's dream-land. What was, in his eyes, its utter failure clearly altered his ideas about political solutions to problems, not only in America, but in England as well. To Forster he writes, "I do fear that the heaviest blow ever dealt at liberty will be dealt by this country, in the failure of its example to the earth" (90). While superficially the America of the American scenes appears to be as different from the England of the novel as two places could be, there is a continual linking of the two worlds, an insistence upon the parallels beneath the seeming differences. As Martin says after leaving the Norris house, "I needn't have travelled three thousand miles from home to find such a character as that" (MC17). The intensity of Dickens's anger suggests his instinctive awareness of the closeness to home of what he sees in America. His anger would not have been so strong if he had been going to a "foreign" country, despite his theoretic disappointment in the "failure of democracy." The deep pain he feels is rooted in the common
heritage, as is implied in the fiction. When Lafayette Kettle refers to England as "the unnat'ral old parent" (MC21) he strikes a double chord. He reminds us of the closeness of the two countries, as well as of the family relationship involved. When America goes awry, it is part and parcel of the family gone awry in England. Indeed Martin is emigrating to escape an "unnat'ral" grandparent, just as on the societal level, England disgorges its unwanted sons on America. Colonel Diver says to Martin, referring to his fellow passengers on the Screw, "You have brought...the usual amount of misery and poverty and ignorance and crime, to be located in the bosom of the great Republic" (MC16). America can be only as good as the England of which it is a product. At the start of the American journey, we are reminded that most Americans are ex-Englishmen.

It is then as much to comment on the England of this novel as on America that Dickens adds the American scenes. They provide a view of the ultimate danger to England. Martin's journey is not geographic as much as symbolic. Mark Spilka provides the clue to the nature of the symbolism when he writes about Martin and Mark going on a journey, in the "unfathomable depths" below deck, on a trip that is really a spiritual quest. It seems to me the imagery suggests that we ought to see America as a nightmare vision, a dreamlike distorted parallel to England. When we go to America we are in fact going on a journey into a surrealistic realm, not to another country in the same fictive geographic world. The warning that the American dream
offers to the England of the novel will be explored in this chapter. That America is in fact presented in the image of a dream is indicated in many ways. The trip on the packet ship, the Screw (and screws turn inward), prepares this sense of a surrealistic dream world by removing the logical props of reality. Nothing is as it should be. The waves in the ocean become mountains and caves, and as quickly the caves become mountains, and then everything becomes boiling water. Somehow foam is able to whiten the black night. Instead of mariners yelling, "A storm," the storm cries wildly, "A ship." With the world turned topsy-turvy, Mark spends the night sleeping on his head. The steamer that finally takes Mark and Martin ashore appears to be a kind of "antediluvian monster." While the Screw itself is an "unwholesome ark," the final destination of Martin and Mark is a fallen Eden, more like hell than paradise (MC15).

Upon reaching the shore, Mark asks, "And this...is the Land of Liberty, is it? Very well" (MC15). It is indeed the land of liberty - liberty from the shackles of reality. Like images in a dream the cardboard, one-dimensional Americans float by. Military officers, as Martin says, "spring up in every field" (MC21), and the full-blown Watertoast Society in a matter of moments dissolves into nothingness. It is a world that stands firm only in its Alice in Wonderland irrationality. "When you say, sir," said General Choke, "that your Queen does not reside in the Tower of London,...sir, you air wrong" (MC21).
The last words of the final Eden chapter are "how often they [the images of Eden] returned in dreams! How often it was happiness to wake and find them Shadows that had vanished!" (MC33).

2

That dream-like America may vanish for Martin, but it lingers in the novel, a continual comment, in its flat exaggeration, on conditions at home. The American scenes show a world in which the values of family are distorted, and that is the central problem in the England of the novel. A world in which families break down is a world in which individuals are isolated and dehumanized. Throughout his early fiction Dickens is concerned with creating families, building communities. In America, his adherence to the bourgeois concept of the family was never more clear than in his violent denunciation of the Shakers. The firmness of his commitment to his concept of family led him, in American Notes, to draw an essentially inaccurate picture of the Shakers, who were generally seen as among the foremost advocates of communal values. Indeed the Shakers went so far in their attempt to broaden the links between people as to call each other "brother" and "sister." Their ranks were filled with orphans; they took those who had no family and gave them one. Dickens, as we have seen, did not admit that aspect of Shakerism. His commitment to nuclear family all but blinded him. He saw the Shakers summing up an America that denied
the nuclear family and in so doing denied community, creating a terrible isolation. The intensity of his attack on the Shakers is symptomatic of the effect America had on him. He came home all but obsessed with the idea of family. In *Martin Chuzzlewit*, family dominates as in no novel before. In the England of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, the community is the family, and that community is in the midst of a civil war.

As we have seen in *American Notes*, Dickens felt the family to be at the heart of community. It was the doctor and his family working together who had such a profound influence on the patients; it was the denial of family that made the Shakers so objectionable. So when Dickens begins *Martin Chuzzlewit*, he shows his concern with the family as a social unit, in the deliberately pedantic, funny pedigree of the Chuzzlewits, the family seen as historic institution, as tradition. The tone of the chapter, a parody of scholarship, suggests that the family which dominates this novel offers a false support on which to build what we might, with Pecksniff, call domestic architecture. For in this case, "antiquity" tells us that the family, that most basic unit of relationship between people, is predicated on faulty assumptions and untenable relationships. "When the son of that individual...," we are told of one of the ancestors,

lay upon his deathbed, this question was put to him in a distinct, solemn, and formal way: "Toby Chuzzlewit, who was your grandfather?" To which he...replied: ...,"The Lord No Zoo" (MCI).
This was seen as clear indication of high noble connections for
the family. Of the closeness of the family in ancient days
we are given the evidence of a member who made
constant reference to an uncle, in respect
of whom he would seem to have entertained
great expectations, as he was in the habit
of seeking to propitiate his favour by
presents of plate, jewels, books, watches,
and other valuable articles (MCI).

This closeness is further documented by this "nephew's" state­
ment that "with the exception of the suit of clothes I carry
about with me, the whole of my wearing apparel is at present at
my uncle's" and "'His interest is too high' - 'It is too much' -
'It is tremendous' - and the like" (MCI). Thus the solidity
of the institution is here represented by business relation­ships with pawnbrokers and by a total lack of knowledge of
one's grandfather. The ancient Chuzzlewits were further known
for their "violence and vagabondism" (MCI). They were "actively
connected with divers slaughterous conspiracies and bloody
frays" (MCI).

With this background we are introduced in the first two
installments of the novel to the current family, which is in­
deed depicted in terms of violence, vagabondism, and war, the
family members related only by their hatred, distrust, envy,
and fear of each other. As Tigg says to Pecksniff, it would
be unnatural for Pecksniff and Slyme to be on good terms since
they are related (MC4). In Martin Chuzzlewit, the most basic
social institution has run amuck. Ironically, the only person
old Martin can trust is the orphan Mary: "She is bound to me
in life by ties of interest, I he tells Pecksniff J and losing by my death, and having no expectation disappointed, will mourn it, perhaps" (MC3).

The Pecksniff branch of the family is a case in point. The opening scenes of the novel paint a picture of charming domestic bliss as the two daughters run to the rescue of their wind-blown father (though it is nicely ironic that Miss Pecksniff's first reaction upon opening the door to her father, whom she does not see, is one of violence - "You'll catch it, sir!" (MC2), and her second reaction, "You're round the corner now," which Dickens dwells on for a paragraph, is the phrase later associated with Chevy Slyme's obnoxious presence). The ensuing scene shows Mercy sitting upon her father's knee kissing him, while the happy family party laughs joyously. We soon see that the closeness of this family is illusory. Pecksniff, waking irritably on a coach ride, with his legs cramped, "had an irresistible inclination to visit them upon his daughters... in the shape of divers random kicks" (MC8). Indeed Pecksniff is all too willing to give his daughter, Charity, to Jonas, and when Jonas chooses Mercy instead, Pecksniff is indifferent to Charity's pain. He is thrilled to bestow Mercy on Jonas, even as old Martin tries to keep her from making such a dreadful mistake. Mercy herself, with a complete lack of kindness, "probed and lanced the rankling disappointment of her sister" (MC24). In the end Pecksniff and Charity go their separate ways, and Pecksniff, in a slip of the tongue, states accurately
the nature of his family: "I have ever...sacrificed my children's happiness to my own - I mean my own happiness to my children's..." (MC30).

The concern of this novel is to restore the values of family, to revive that prime social institution, to practice domestic architecture. Unfortunately, family building is decidedly unsuccessful. Pecksniff's family is destroyed, and both his daughters' attempts at marriage fail; Anthony's son murders him; and old Martin rejects his grandson, and stands in the way of his plans to marry Mary. Young Martin, rejected by old Martin, goes to America where he fails in his attempt to support himself as a domestic architect. Returning home with a new awareness of the importance of family, he attempts a reconciliation with his grandfather. The weakness of his sudden regeneration has been commented upon by numerous critics. More important, the new family structure defined and enforced by old Martin after his awakening to the need for family reconciliation is equally unconvincing. The imagery of the beginning of the story suggests that old Martin, presumptive head of family, is in fact a dragon, undomesticated by the influence of a Mrs. Lupin; therefore an inappropriate patriarch for a reconstructed family. Chapter three begins with a discourse on dragons, which have gone domestic, running inns, with behavior both "courteous and considerate," having made "a great advance in civilization and refinement," and "no longer demand[ing] a beautiful virgin for breakfast every morning." We have seen in the Chuzzlewit history that
Chuzzlewits have not made any advance in civilization, and no sooner is this discourse on dragons completed when "an old gentleman and a young lady" in a "rusty old chariot...coming nobody knew whence" arrive at the inn. The young virgin, Mary, is indeed sacrificed to old Martin's stern morality, and he, spewing oaths and contorted in spasms, "wouldn't, in a word, do anything but terrify the landlady out of her five wits" (Mc3). The burden of the novel is to domesticate this dragon as Mrs. Lupin has domesticated the Blue Dragon. While old Martin is reconciled with his grandson and attempts to reconstruct family ties, there are indications that his success is limited. Martin's expulsion of Mrs. Gamp and Pecksniff at the end is dubious. Their exuberant life force ought to be transformed, not excluded. But if they are dangers, Martin's method of building a society is not adequate. Mrs. Gamp, we can be sure, will, with the help of the bottle on the chimney piece, quickly recover from her rap on the knuckles. Pecksniff, who blows so easily with the wind throughout, is as little likely as Mrs. Gamp to be destroyed by that rap, in his case, on the head. But if we must accept the unlikely story that Pecksniff turned ragged beggar, it scarcely seems a success of old Martin's domestic art that the man continues to "haunt" Tom Pinch and entertain "the alehouse company with tales of thine ingratitude and his munificence towards thee" (MC54).

While indeed the less than central young Martin does marry Mary, and the stick-figure Westlock does marry Ruth, the incompleteness, at the least, of the restored family structure
is emphasized by the fact that Mercy Pecksniff is left to live with old Martin; and more important, Tom Pinch is denied domestic fulfillment because of the very fulfillment of young Martin. Dickens's unwillingness to allow for an unambiguous regeneration of family causes us to see the world of England in terms of the America in which family is shunted aside, and suggests how pervasive and serious is the American "attitude" already present in England.

The American scenes suggest the outcome of the war within the family. It is neatly symbolic that Martin, on seeing Jefferson Brick at work in the Rowdy Journal office for the first time, "was not long in determining within himself that this must be Colonel Diver's son; the hope of the family" (MC16). He is quickly disabused of this notion when Colonel Diver announces, "My War Correspondent" (MC16, my italics).

Martin links his hopes of success in America with domestic architecture, but Mr. Bevan makes clear that there are no great prospects for such a profession in America. His "face grew infinitely longer as the domestic-architecture project was developed. Nor...could he prevent his head from shaking once involuntarily, as if it said in the vulgar tongue, upon its own account, 'No go!'" (MCl?). Americans systematically deny the family unit: "Half the town, married folks as well as single, resided at the National Hotel" (MC21). In America, the extended society has completely subsumed the primary family, and the bedroom has shrunk to
a very little narrow room, with half a window in it; a bedstead like a chest without a lid; two chairs; a piece of carpet, such as shoes are commonly tried upon at a ready-made establishment in England (MC17).

There is no need for a larger bedroom because the Americans spend their entire time travelling from bar-room to stores "and counting-houses; thence to the bar-room again...and thence each man to snore in the bosom of his own family" (MC16).

Family in America is more a burden than anything. After dinner as the women leave the room, the men acknowledge "the departure of their other halves by a nod; and there was an end of them." The men relax "as if a great weight had been taken off their minds by the withdrawal of the other sex" (MC16). As Martin suggests, the Americans "had an ineptitude for social and domestic pleasure" (MC16). Even the wives deny family: "Strangely devoid of individual traits of character" (MC16) as they are, they consider themselves above the domestic activity of a wife: "Domestic drudgery was far beneath the exalted range of these Philosophers, and...the chances were a hundred to one that not one...could perform the easiest woman's work for herself, or make the simplest article of dress for any of her children" (MC17).

The Americans attempt to make the domain of the family the domain of society, to make private business the public's business, to replace the primary family with the entire society. Martin's private correspondence (specifically marked
"private") is published in the Watertoast Gazette (MC22). The levee is a public ceremony held for an ordinary private man. It matters not that Martin has no claim to public recognition. All private people are inherently public. Mrs. Hominy is the mother of the modern Gracchi. Not only does she pluralize her one daughter, but she also makes her into a public phenomenon, like the two heroic public statesmen in the Roman republic (MC22). In dream fashion, the entire phenomenon is turned upside down by Captain Kedgick who grumbles to the just returned Martin who never wanted to be made a public figure, "A man ain't got no right to be a public man, unless he meets the public views" (MC34). To meet this particular public demand, Martin would have been required to become an object, to die, for the good citizens had held a levee for Martin, knowing that a trip to Eden meant death.

Just as in America the family's expansion to public society is dehumanizing, so in England the state of the family produces the same kind of social pressure. The Mould family makes explicit the connection between family and social dehumanization. The family of Mr. Mould survives admirably, which is unusual in this novel. Mould is "a placid man," who, "surrounded by his household gods" enjoys "the sweets of domestic repose." His round, chubby wife and plump daughters thrive "deep in the City" (MC25). The picture painted is of family intact and thriving. The irony in this domestic picture is extreme. The home is in the back of the funeral parlor; the daughters have sported "behind the scenes of death and burial from
cradlehood"; and the thriving unity of this family is made possible by death. Mould sees living people as future clients, not as human beings. As Sairey tends her patient Lewsome in the coach that will take him to the country, Mould says to his wife:

"You can stand upon the door-step...and take a look at him.... Upon my life.... This is the sort of thing, my dear, I wouldn't have missed on any account. It tickles one.... Looks poorly, Mrs. M., don't he??... He's coming our way, perhaps, after all.... There can be no kind of objection to your kissing your hand to him, my dear" (MC29).

Mould, in short, can thrive only by dehumanizing others; his thriving family becomes a parody of the desirable domestic virtues family ought to radiate outward to society as a whole. Mould is in possession of the mystery of death and can at least survive and protect his family unit, but his prosperity becomes an indictment of society itself.

It is not accidental that Dorothy Van Ghent chose this novel on which to center her article on the Dickens world with its reification of people and animation of objects. With the basic social unit either dissolving, or itself dehumanizing, people are unable to connect. Tom Pinch passes Nadgett in the street and both are unaware of any relationship: "There are a multitude who shooting arrows over houses as their daily business, never know on whom they fall. Mr. Nadgett might have passed Tom Pinch ten thousand times...yet never once have dreamed that Tom had any interest in any act or mystery of his.
Tom might have done the like by him, of course" (MC38).

Earlier, as Tom scanned the newspaper in search of employment, he found "all kinds of employers wanting all sorts of servants, and all sorts of servants wanting all kinds of employers, and they never seem to come together" (MC36).

The world is not only mysterious and isolating, it is also aggressively dehumanizing. When Tom Pinch visits his sister at the mansion in which she is a servant, the footman denigrates him by asking, "Hany neem?" (MC36).

It was a good thought: because without providing the stranger, in case he should happen to be of a warm temper, with a sufficient excuse for knocking him down, it implied this young man's estimate of his quality, and relieved his breast of the oppressive burden of rating him in secret as a nameless and obscure individual (MC36).

The nameless footman, like society itself, attempts to deny people their identity. He, further, denies Tom's family relationship with Ruth. Tom asks him, "Say her brother, if you please," and the footman answers, "Mother?" (MC36).

That same Nadgett who passed Tom Pinch on the street, detective par excellence and discoverer of secrets, is possessed by the mystery of the city, all but abandoning himself to it, in a sense, surviving by surrendering to and becoming a part of the anonymity of the city. He is all of the city wrapped into one - "he carried contradictory cards, in some of which he called himself a coal-merchant, in others a wine-merchant, in others a commission-agent, in others a collector, in others an accountant" (MC27) (it is noteworthy that all these
occupations deal directly with money, that most objectifying and dehumanizing element of society) - at the same time that his true identity, like the city's, remains a mystery known but to a few:

Some people said he had been a bankrupt, others that he had gone an infant into an ancient Chancery suit... but it was all a secret (MC27).

Nadgett is the natural child of the city, "born to be a secret," a "withered old man, who seemed to have secreted his very blood.... How he lived was a secret; where he lived was a secret; and even what he was, was a secret" (MC27).

He survives by accommodating himself to the isolation of the society, and to its denial of the possibility of communication between people: "I don't like word of mouth," he tells Tigg gravely (MC38). And his apparent attempts at relating are always cut short before fulfillment. When he is not posting letters to nobody and "delivering them to himself weeks afterwards" (MC27), he is "always keeping appointments in the City, and the other man never seemed to come" (MC27), while he sits "looking wistfully up at the clock - as if the man who never appeared were a little behind his time" (MC29). The process is so complete that the necessity of communicating, of revealing his secrets, is painful to him. Says Nadgett to Tigg, "Nothing has an interest to me that's not a secret" and "it almost takes away any pleasure I may have had in this inquiry even to make it known to you" (MC38). Nadgett, in short, has taken on the characteristics of the city.
Mr. Fips of Austin Friars, old Martin's representative in the hiring of Tom Pinch, is another who is in possession of a secret known but to a few. Tom Pinch, who goes to Fips hoping for the solution to the mystery of his employment, is left as puzzled as when he arrived. Fips, like Nadgett, toils in the depths of the labyrinth. His office "in a very dark passage on the first floor" (MC39), is in that world so prone to the animation of hostile objects, a sure sign that we are in the heart of the dehumanizing society:

A wicked old sideboard hiding in the gloom hard by, meditated designs upon the ribs of visitors; and an old mat...which, being useless as a mat...had for many years directed its industry into another channel, and regularly tripped up every one of Mr. Fips's clients (MC39).

Indeed, the equally tell-tale lack of human animation is suggested by the "yellow-jaundiced" office in which a "great, black sprawling splash upon the floor" made it appear that "some old clerk had cut his throat there, years ago, and had let out ink instead of blood" (MC39).

Surviving in this world, Fips displays "an entire freedom from any such expression as could be reasonably construed into an unusual display of interest" (MC39). At one point he "made up his face as if he were going to whistle. But he didn't" (MC39). In his working life, Fips denies his animation and human feeling as best he can. His contact with self is tenuously but stubbornly maintained by the symbolic stamping with a rubber stamp of the capital letter "F" for Fips upon his leg. Like Wemmick, in Great Expectations, Fips
divides himself to survive in the social world. So when Tom Pinch meets Fips at the private dinner with old Martin, Ruth, and John, he finds Fips to be an entirely different person than he was in his working life. He was now "the jolliest old dog that ever did violence to his convivial sentiments by shutting himself up in a dark office" (MC53). Approaching Tom, he:

- told him that he wanted to relieve himself of all his old constraint: and in the first place shook him by one hand, and in the second place shook him by the other....
- And he sang songs, did Fips; and made speeches, did Fips; and knocked off his wine pretty handsomely, did Fips; and in short, he showed himself a perfect Trump, did Fips, in all respects (MC53).

These characters in effect deny themselves in differing degrees in order to accommodate themselves to the demands of the hostile environment. They are on the way to the America in which self-destruction is complete.

That America is a world of empty surfaces, sham selves which are no more than outward appearance. General Fladdock, who falls down the stairs in full dress uniform, does not seem to exist separately from his uniform:

- His uniform was so fearfully and wonderfully made, that he came up stiff and without a bend in him, like a dead clown, and had no command whatever of himself until he was put quite flat upon the soles of his feet, when he became animated as by a miracle (MC17).

Martin solves the mystery of a fellow-traveller's sparse packing when he discovers "what a very few shirts there are, and what a many fronts" (MC17). Later Martin comments on the fact
that nearly everyone is titled in America, and Mark replies that military officers are "as thick as scarecrows in England, sir...being entirely coat and wescoat, with a stick inside" (MC21). Riding on a train, the travellers are surprised to find as they view the National Hotel "a great many pairs of boots and shoes, and the smoke of a great many cigars, but no other evidences of human habitation" (MC21). Elijah Pogram is described as "a clock-work figure that was just running down" (MC34). The most appreciated toast given him is, "May you ever be as firm, sir, as your marble statter!" (MC34).

Americans don't communicate with each other, but build edifices of words to represent them. True poetry, harangues a youth, can never stoop to details (MC21); words do not represent anything solid beneath. Dr. Ginery Dunkle's introductions, the Watertoast letters, Pogram's speeches are all elaborate nothings. Pogram models his whole being on his words, posing in the attitude of his statue "so that any one with half an eye might cry out, 'There he is! as he delivered the Defiance!"' (MC34). The transcendental literary ladies act the last scene from Coriolanus and splash "up words in all directions" (MC34). In the final analysis we see a society in which all these surfaces are cast as "the most remarkable man in the country" and none of them is anything but "as flat, as dull, and stagnant, as the vegetation" (MC23): "In their looks, dress, morals, manners, habits, intellect, and conversation, [they] were Mr. Jefferson Brick, Colonel Diver, Major Pawkins...over, and over, and over again" (MC21).
The ideal this novel postulates is of course quite different. As Dickens states explicitly in Martin's conversation with Pogram, the best community would arise from human beings who, being whole, are moral and loving individuals who exhibit natural gentility. The Pinches and Mrs. Lupin, sentimentalized though the Pinches may be, represent that ideal. Before examining their embodiment of such an ideal, we should note that Dickens associates their virtue with the force of tradition, that which in the Chuzzlewit family is a sham, and in America is rejected outright.

Tradition associates Ruth Pinch's singing with ancient bards, while Tom Pinch, at work in his office with books, is at home with a sense of the past (MC40). On the other hand the lack of any solid heritage within the Chuzzlewit family is pointed out in the opening chapter of the novel. Throughout, the ancient family retainer of Anthony's branch of the family, Chuffy, is pushed into a corner by Jonas, manhandled by the "nuss," and left to mumble alone, "I know I'm in the way" (MC46). The Chuzzlewits are indifferent to the fact that tradition is a part of family stability. It is Chuffy whose constant worry is the relationship between father and son: "Oh, Chuzzlewit and Son - Your own son, Mr. Chuzzlewit; your own son, sir!" (MC19). For the Americans, who say "Darn your books" (MC16), the concern to destroy tradition is seen best
in the words of Major Pawkins, whose motto is, "Run a moist pen slick through everything, and start fresh" (MC16).

It is no accident that the only two people Martin and Mark long for in their despair in America are Mrs. Lupin and Tom Pinch. Early in their expedition, Mark laments, "Oh, Dragon, Dragon!" and Martin says, "Oh, Tom Pinch, Tom Pinch!...what would I give to be again beside you" (MC17). Later, when the worst of their fears is realized in Eden, their thoughts again move in the same direction. Mark, in his feverish wanderings, sees himself "making love-remonstrances to Mrs. Lupin" and "travelling with old Tom Pinch on English roads" (MC33). Martin, as he begins to see the evil of his ways by remembering how Mark had helped the ill on board the Screw, "coupled Tom Pinch with this train of reflection" (MC38). It is Tom Pinch, not his love, Mary, that Martin recalls in both cases.

Tom Pinch is a curious character. The embodiment of domesticity and tradition, he is seen either eating almost embarrassingly glorious, cozy meals with Ruth or working happily with the books that represent history and tradition in his employer's office. His goodness is beyond question. We are told that Tom's smile "might have purified the air, though Temple Bar had been, as in the golden days gone by, embellished with a row of rotting human heads" (MC45), a line incidentally which reminds us both of the history of the violent Chuzzlewit family and also that England was even more violent and gruesome than America is shown to be.
Critics have tended not to take Tom seriously. Clearly, the early Tom, knowing infinitely more about unicorns than horses (MC36), the complete dupe of Pecksniff, is not a character of much weight. But once Tom's delusions magically drop away, he becomes, in the final third of the novel, a major voice speaking for the kind of society Dickens would like to see. In speaking to Ruth's employer, he makes clear that money is not an acceptable system of value. Love and trust are the true values (MC36). In the world of this novel, though, even the true values do not assure fulfillment. Tom is left unmarried in the end, playing the organ.

Mrs. Lupin, however, is more successful because she is less exposed to the society at large. She more than anyone in this novel defines the ideal. Her inn is a world of domesticity unto itself. Only once do we see Mrs. Lupin outside this private world. The proprietor of the Blue Dragon, the domesticator of myths, the earth mother who makes dragons hospitable, Mrs. Lupin offers a glimpse of the proper kind of wholeness and humanity to be striven for. She is depicted as possessing the heritage of womanhood (MC3). Indeed her sexuality is exuberant. She has been married, is now a widow, and is described as having, years ago, "passed through her state of weeds, and burst into flower again; and in full bloom she had continued ever since" (MC3). The language, imaging forth a sense of nature at one with itself, is significant. In her, nature is hospitable. She is described as having "roses in her cheeks, - aye, and roses, worth the gathering too, on her lips" (MC3) and as being "tight as a gooseberry"
Nature and art do not violate to each other in Mrs. Lupin, for outward appearance and inward being are a unity. We are told that "the mistress of the Blue Dragon was in outward appearance just what a landlady should be" (MC3), and indeed once we know her, we never have cause to believe that outward appearance has misled us.

The unity of her being seems to have brought to rest the malevolence of the inanimate objects that elsewhere are so hostile. Her inn is a "drowsy place, where every article of furniture reminded you that you came there to sleep" (MC3). Even "the chairs and tables, provoked sleep" and were "disposed to snore" (MC3). There are "no round-eyed birds upon the curtains...insufferably prying"; the walls are covered with "thick neutral hangings," and "even the old stuffed fox...slumbered as he stood...for his glass eye the artificial part of him had fallen out" (MC3).

Mark Tapley is enamored of Mrs. Lupin, but refuses to marry her because to do so would produce too much joy. Mark is, in a sense, the other side of the old Martin coin. Puritanical morality and "self self self" in old Martin become in Mark a preposterous selflessness based on the same puritanically harsh morality which calls for the chastening of life and the refusal of joy. There is no credit to be had unless one endures the worst of rigors. This dragon too Mrs. Lupin domesticates as in marrying Mark she changes the Blue Dragon to the Jolly Tapley, once again restoring wholeness, bringing word and meaning, appearance and reality together, as for the
first time jolly comes to truly mean jolly. In a sense, the 
marrige of Mark and Mrs. Lupin presents one of the most 
positive forces in the book.

And yet even here the clouds are not far. The forces of 
unity represented by Mrs. Lupin are not able to distinguish 
the disparity between appearance and substance in others.

Mrs. Lupin is completely taken in by the art of Pecksniff:

Mrs. Lupin was, comforted by the mere voice 
and presence of such a man; and, though he 
had merely said "a verb must agree with its 
nominitive case in number and person, my 
good friend," or "eight times eight are 
sixty-four, my worthy soul," must have felt 
deeply grateful to him for his humanity and 
wisdom (MC3).

Even as late as chapter forty-three, when everyone else has 
realized the truth about Pecksniff, Mrs. Lupin says, "I cannot 
believe that such a noble-spoken gentleman would go and do 
wrong of his own accord" (MC43). She is integrated and inte-
gration is blind to the dangers of division in others.

The American scenes parallel the English ones in their 
representation of the true values of the novel. Here those 
values are represented in Mr. Bevan. He had "something very 
engaging and honest in the expression of his features" (MC16). 
Just as we discover with Mrs. Lupin that her surface is abso-
lutely at one with her inner being, so we discover that Bevan 
is equally whole. He, like her, lives somewhere outside the 
main stream of the society, and rarely comes to the city. He, 
like both Tom and Mrs. Lupin who are taken in by Pecksniff, 
is not able to deal with the forces of artifice in the society.
He leads Martin into the debacle at the Norris's, and worse, he gives Martin the letter of introduction to General Choke that leads Martin to Eden (MC21). As he himself later laments, "I reproach myself with having been, unwittingly, the original cause of your misfortunes" (MC34). In both worlds, therefore, wholeness is at the same dangerous disadvantage.

Many of the same forces that are at work in England are also at work in America. The second American installment, in which Martin and Mark are on a train moving westward, opens as follows:

The knocking at Mr. Pecksniff's door, though loud enough, bore no resemblance whatever to the noise of an American railway train at full speed. It may be well to begin the present chapter with this frank admission, lest the reader should imagine that the sounds now deafening this history's ears have any connexion with the knocker on Mr. Pecksniff's door (MC21).

Pecksniff however is very much linked to America. One of the final scenes of the novel connects the Pecksniff family with the American destruction of family. At the moment when we have just witnessed the final collapse of Pecksniff's family, his loss of both his daughters, Mark meets his friends from America, just returned from their trials, having lost all their children (MC54). In addition, those winds that meet and mingle in mid-ocean, we remember, are just like the winds that knocked Pecksniff down and then blew out to sea (MC2). Martin, just back from America, sees Pecksniff float across his vision as he sits drinking in an inn, "gently travelling
across the disc, as if he were a figure in a magic lantern... pondering on the beauties of his art with a mild abstraction from all sordid thoughts" (MC35). This vision of Pecksniff comes directly on the heels of the transcending abstractness of the literary ladies. Pecksniff is proceeding to dedicate the school the plans for which he stole from Martin. This is the Pecksniff who, like Jefferson Brick, is "in the van of human civilisation and moral purity" (MC16). Pecksniff's theft of the plans differs little from Brick's method of obtaining letters for his newspaper, forgery. As the crowd greets Pecksniff "with vociferous cheering" (MC35), so Brick's "popular instructed" greet his handiwork by "buy 'em by hundreds of thousands" (MC16). Pecksniff speaks concisely and to the point:

My duty is to build, not speak; to act, not talk; to deal with marble, stone, and brick: not language (MC35).

So the Americans who are all language and are never seen doing any work say, "We are a busy people, sir" (MC16). Pawkins, for one, "proceeded on the principle of putting all the goods he had (and more) into his window; and that went a great way with his constituency of admirers" (MC16). It is surely no accident that Pecksniff asks his daughters the one question Martin and Mark have come to despise more than any in their dealings with the Americans, "How do you like our country?" When Pecksniff has brought his daughters to London, he questions them: "I won't ask you yet, my dears...how you like London," but in the
next breath proceeds to do so, "Shall I?" Mercy's response is the same as Martin's: "We haven't seen much of it" (MC8).

Pecksniff is further linked to America because he is completely artificial. In New York, the artificial crudity of the Divers and Bricks, on the one hand, and the artificial pretensions to delicacy of the Norrises on the other, represent that same impulse of which Pecksniff is the epitome. Pecksniff's surface is in no way related to natural virtue. At one point, he reasons that if Jonas wanted anything from him, he "would be polite and deferential" (MC44). In Pecksniff's mind, politeness is deceit for a purpose. It has nothing to do with that natural gentility of a savage, which as Martin noted, is one single growth with moral behavior.

Pecksniff, like his horse, "in his moral character...was full of promise, but of no performance" (MC5). Weaving words into edifices, he is all words, brilliant but ultimately illusory. With Pecksniff bemoaning the fact that old Martin does not "listen to the promptings of nature, instead of the siren-like delusions of art" (MC4), we see that his whole existence is a delusion. Indeed he is so incapable of integrating his nature and his art that, as Anthony tells him, he fools himself:

You would deceive everybody, even those who practise the same art; and have a way with you, as if you — he, he, he! — as if you really believed yourself (MC8).

Even with his daughters, Pecksniff acts, and with those who see through him, like Jonas, he is incapable of ceasing to act:
"'What, you're at it again, are you?' replied his son-in-law. 'Even with me?'" (MC44). Tom Pinch finally realizes (when he becomes something other than a half-witted fool), "There was no Pecksniff; there never had been a Pecksniff" (MC31). Pecksniff is all air. From the first time we meet him, when he is blown down by the wind, to our final meeting when he is knocked down by an old man and then further buffeted by another man entering the room, he has the lightness of air.

Pecksniff uses his artifice to turn others into objects. The same impulse which led him to keep Tom Pinch a mindless child and led him to use each of his students for profit and ideas while giving each nothing but the appearance of an education, also governs the Pecksniff family's interest in Ruth Pinch. As Merry puts it, "The notion of a Miss Pinch presuming to exist at all is sufficient to kill one, but to see her - oh my stars!" (MC9).

Sairey Gamp is another artificer who most assuredly does prosper. She stands for the force of selfish vitality necessary for survival in the dehumanizing world. She doesn't offer hope; she lives in isolation and her powers are not regenerative, but she shows us what we must do to survive.

Like Mrs. Todgers, whose home is so isolated that people within sight of it cannot reach it, Mrs. Gamp lives in the solitude of the city, a fact symbolized by the knocker on her front door, which echoes loudly down the street but is useless as a device for communicating with Mrs. Gamp within. Her world is like Nadgett's, peopled by that "race peculiar to the
City; who are secrets as profound to one another, as they are to the rest of mankind" (MC27). She too is in possession of the mysteries of the city, the priestess who must set "aside her natural predilections as a woman" (MC19) to preside at those mysteries of life - birth and death.

Mrs. Gamp's life in the labyrinth is a hard one. She dwells in "a wale of tears." Family is no source of support. Her husband, perennially drunk and not beyond selling his wooden leg for drinking money (MC25), beat her and on one occasion knocked out her teeth: "Gamp himself...at one blow, being in liquor, struck out four" (MC46). She has lost all three of her children (MC40). In her world, one is considered to have an "ev'nly disposition" if he "know'd not wot it was to form a wish to pizon them as had good looks" (MC46).

But Sairey does not attempt to escape the world. Where Charity Pecksniff says of Chuffy, "if my sister had not been so precipitate, and had not united herself to a Wretch, there would have been no Mr. Chuffy in the house" (MC46), Mrs. Gamp deals with the reality, shaking Chuffy into a tolerable state. Sairey's triumph is in her maintenance of her will under the most trying conditions, with a fierce determination. "Don't try no impostician with the Nuss," we are warned, "for she will not abear it!...I maintains my indepency.... I will not be impoged upon" (MC40).

Sairey's will is used to subjugate all around her. It is not a pleasant task. As she says, with more truth than she perhaps realizes, "If it wasn't for the nerve a little sip of
liquor gives me...I never could go through with what I sometimes has to do" (MC19). What she must do is turn others to objects. Her fingers "itched" to form the gaunt, feverish, restless Lewsome into something better than that "doubtful work of art" (MC25) she considers him to be. She cannot resist pinning his wandering arms against his sides and forming him into the "last marble attitude" (MC25) of a corpse. She would fix him, put him into a more perfect, more easily dealt-with state. Indeed, by treating her patients as objects, she can exert control over them. Thus when Lewsome must have his medicine, she clutches his windpipe to make him gasp and pours the medicine down (MC25). The scene in which she and Betsey Prig dress Lewsome manifests an utter disregard of any humanity he may have:

When his hair was smoothed down comfortably into his eyes, Mrs. Prig and Mrs. Gamp put on his neckerchief: adjusting his shirt-collar with great nicety, so that the starched points should also invade those organs, and afflict them with an artificial ophthalmia. His waistcoat and coat were next arranged: and as every button was wrenched into a wrong button-hole, and the order of his boots was reversed, he presented on the whole rather a melancholy appearance (MC29).

His very coat Sairey has converted into a cupboard for tea, sugar, and her bottle. As Lewsome tells her, miserably, "You've made one of my legs shorter than the other" (MC29). In point of fact, the object of least concern to Sairey on entering the sickroom for the first time is the patient. Dickens uses a full page to have her examine the various other objects in
the room before she bothers to take notice of the sick man. When, later in the novel, she shakes Chuffy until he is "so giddy and addle-headed, that he could say nothing more," this she "regarded as the triumph of her art" (MC46).

In like manner, the human Mr. Gamp is transformed into no more nor less than a walking talking wooden leg. "As to husbands," says Mrs. Gamp, "there's a wooden leg gone likeways home to its account, which in its constancy of walkin' into wine vaults, and never comin' out again 'till fetched by force, was quite as weak as flesh, if not weaker" (MC40). Moreover, the profiles that stand on the mantel in Mrs. Gamp's room are of faces - except Mr. Gamp's. His wooden leg is so necessary to define "Gamp" in her mind that he must be shown in a full-length profile.

Sairey uses even her own emotions as objects to be manipulated: "Mrs. Gamp...can be ecstatic without any other stimulating cause than a general desire to establish a large and profitable connexion" (MC46).

The ultimate triumph of dehumanization, though, is Mrs. Harris, for in that lady, Mrs. Gamp has succeeded in making her own mind an object, providing herself with a concrete, dependable means of support, a voice she can always count on to tell her, "You are that inwallable person" (MC19). This ultimate success of the impulse is the support that holds together the rest of the tenuous web of created world; the support that is the basis of her control. In other words, Sairey creates a society of objects because objects can be controlled and dealt
with by the one remaining subjective force, her mind. That mind, needing an external confirmation of the world it creates, creates a Mrs. Harris so that it needn't even leave its protected realm to find its external confirmation. In a sense Sairey creates a family in her mind. It is worth noting that even at this level of the art, Sairey is no escapist from harsh reality. She tells us that Mrs. Harris has the countenance of an angel, "but for Pimples" (MC46). Mrs. Gamp's force is almost capable of reuniting the harmony of surface and inner self that she is forced to violate. Claiming that "Gamp is my name, and Gamp my nater" (MC26), she comes close to blending magically the false surface with the reality beneath. Her "row of bald old curls...could scarcely be called false, they were so very innocent of anything approaching to deception" (MC25). Indeed unnecessary deception is no part of Sairey's personality. As she says to Ruth Pinch, "I will not deceive you, my sweet. Why should I?" (MC40). There is no reason for her to deceive Ruth about the "Ankworks package." But more often than not, deception is absolutely necessary for Sairey's survival and thus when she says to Mercy, "I knows a lady, which her name, I'll not deceive you, Mrs. Chuzzlewit, is Harris" (MC46), she lies blatantly. The world does not allow Sairey that integration, and so she "had a face for all occasions" (MC19), she "performed swoons of different sorts, upon a moderate notice" (MC51), and like Mrs. Todgers has a calculating pair of eyes, "one eye on the future, one on the bride...a leer of mingled sweetness and slyness" (MC26).
Dickens specifically mentions Mrs. Gamp in the midst of an American chapter. The Gamp allusions, like the Pecksniff allusions, remind us of the closeness of the two worlds, as well as demonstrating the results of artifice. For no very obvious reason, Dickens, in stating that Martin had no idea why he was being lionized at a levee, refers to Mrs. Gamp: 

"Why this should be, or how it had come to pass, Martin no more knew than Mrs. Gamp, of Kingsgate Street, High Holborn, did" (MC22). Why bring Mrs. Gamp into our minds at this particular time? The reason is obviously that she has some relationship to what is going on. Indeed the levee ought to remind us of Mrs. Gamp. It is a ritual of death, and Mrs. Gamp is the high priestess of that ritual in England. The levee makes Martin a dead object in the minds of the Americans who come to view him. In the same way Mrs. Gamp, one of whose occupations is as a watcher at funerals, turns Lewsome who is still alive into marble in her mind. We are reminded of Mrs. Gamp more than this once. The assertion of self that is evident in Lafayette Kettle's eyes, which say, "Now you won't overreach me: you want to, but you won't" (MC21), recalls Mrs. Gamp's protestations about impogicians with the nuss. Later on, her umbrella is parodied by General Choke's, which, like hers, is alive:

"Here am I, sir," said the General, setting up his umbrella to represent himself; and a villainous-looking [sic] umbrella it was (MC21).
The subtleties of real life disappear in this American dream world. The brilliance of Mrs. Gamp's umbrella pales General Choke's, even as the brilliance of Pecksniff pales the verbal artifice of the American orators. The dream is a mere sketch of the reality. More important, the disparity demonstrates the end result of the activities of Pecksniff and Gamp, a society in which all individuals assert self and all are flattened. Perhaps the most sobering reminder of Mrs. Gamp occurs in Eden when Martin becomes ill with a fever and then gives it to Mark. We see here, first-hand, the result of the Gamp philosophy, which she expressed to Betsy Prig as the hope that they would both obtain jobs in large families where each member caught the disease from the other.

The Anglo-Bengalee is a much more comprehensive deception than those practiced by Pecksniff and the "nuss;" its ill-effects ring through the society in a manner that foreshadows the Merdle swindle of Little Dorrit. Yet its original impulse is no different from the instinct for survival that governed the machinations of Seth and Sairey. The Anglo-Bengalee is merely an extension of one man's efforts at deception. Montegue Tigg, in providing himself a false and glittering surface, cannot in fact alter his reality. He succeeds only in deceiving himself, destroying others, and dying. His change of name is both self-deluding ("You've acted the gentleman so seriously since, that you've taken in yourself," Jonas tells him MC4l) and illusory:
And yet, though changed his name, and changed his outward surface, it was Tigg. Though turned and twisted upside down, and inside out, as great men have been sometimes known to be; though no longer Montegue Tigg, but Tigg Montegue; still it was Tigg; the same Satanic, gallant, military Tigg. The brass was burnished, lacquered, newly-stamped; yet it was the true Tigg metal notwithstanding (MC27).

Tigg destroys others. Fastening, like a barnacle, on Slyme early in the novel, Tigg later brings down numerous innocent people when his Anglo-Bengalee, all surface, collapses. While it is true that we do not see the details of any but Peggotty's and Jonas's ruins, and those do not distress us much, nonetheless Jonas's ruin, leaves Mercy helpless. We are told that many other innocent people are ruined. The effect, while sketchy in this novel, is clearly enough the forerunner of the fully developed devastation of the Merdle swindle in Little Dorrit.

Dr. Jobling, the Anglo-Bengalee's "medical officer" whose success is based on the false surface he displays, has a reputation as a doctor dependent upon his appearance of benevolence and gentility, an appearance that he assiduously cultivates:

He had a portentously sagacious chin, and a pompous voice, with a rich huskiness in some of its tones that went directly to the heart.... Perhaps he could shake his head, rub his hands, or warm himself before a fire, better than any man alive; and he had a peculiar way of smacking his lips and saying, "Ah!" at intervals while patients detailed their symptoms, which inspired great confidence (MC27).
Jobling uses his artifice to entice people into the Anglo-Bengalee swindle. He says to prospective investors, "'I am the medical officer, in consideration of a certain monthly payment. The labourer is worthy of his hire; *Bis dat qui citò dat* - ('Classical scholar, Jobling!' thinks the patient, 'well-read man!...and upon my word and honour, I'll consider of it!')" (MC27). Jobling is of course not really paid a monthly fee but a commission for each investor he brings to the company: "Commission to you, doctor," says Crimple, "on four new policies, and a loan this morning" (MC27). The danger of the glib surface, the deceitful form, is in the end the danger of death. Jobling tells Jonas with great relish about "a case of murder, committed by a member of our profession; it was so artistically done.... It would have reflected credit on any medical man" (MC41). In the end, the glossy surface is dangerous and indeed murderous. Just as the American parallels of Gamp and Pecksniff parody their lustrous English originals, so the American parallels of the Anglo-Bengalee parody the impulses of the Life Assurance Company.

The middle American installment describes the Eden Land Corporation and the Watertoast Society. The Land Corporation is little different from the Anglo-Bengalee Distinterested Loan and Life Assurance Society the description of which occupies the middle third of the English chapters. Neither exists except as surface. Scadder shows Martin "a flourishing city... banks, churches, cathedrals, market-places, factories" (MC21), and so forth, all of which are as illusory as the Anglo-Bengalee.
Just as all Americans seem to be titled — generals, colonels, and the like — and as they are all "one of the most remarkable men in the country," so at the Anglo-Bengalee, titles mean everything:

As the cabriolet drove up to the door, this officer appeared bareheaded on the pavement, crying aloud "Room for the chairman, room for the chairman, if you please!... The Chairman of the Board, Gentlemen!... The Chairman of the Board wishes to see the Medical Officer (MC27).

As Mark calls the American military officers scarecrows, "being entirely coat and waistcoat" (MC21) so the Anglo-Bengalee's porter, Bullamy's "whole charm was in his waistcoat" (MC27). He is a "mysterious being, relying solely on his figure," a "wonderful creature, in a vast red waistcoat and a short-tailed pepper-and-salt coat" and he "carried more conviction to the minds of sceptics than the whole establishment" (MC27). Furthermore, the Watertoast Society, in its sudden dissolution and utter disregard for the object of its sympathy, is reminiscent of the sudden dissolution of the Anglo-Bengalee and its utter disregard for the lives it supposedly assures.

By the final third of the novel, the false civility of Pecksniff and the surface gloss of Tigg are replaced by Jonas. Similarly, in the third American installment, false and empty surfaces give way to the utter barrenness of Eden and the elemental evil of Hannibal Chollop, "native raw material,"
who has calculated spitting to an inch, and who "jobs out" eyes with Tickler, his sword, and Ripper, his knife (MC33).

Jonas is the blackest character in the novel. None of the humor that tempers our reaction to other characters does so with Jonas. G. K. Chesterton said aptly of Pecksniff that he must be amusing all the time, for the moment he ceases to be funny he becomes detestable. In Chesterton's terms, Jonas is the most horrible character because we have stopped laughing. Jonas is the deepest threat, the threat of death, as he dominates the later sections of the novel. Jonas lacks both the artifice to survive and the goodness to prosper. He is the chief violator of family in the English section of the novel, a violation that is synonymous with death. From wishing his father dead and cursing him for exceeding the biblical command to live three score and ten years, to actively attempting to kill him, Jonas aggressively denies family. His movement to kill Tigg, a result of his violation of family, parallels Martin's movement through America, in which he comes to see the value of family. The one who does not see, dies. The one who does is ritually reborn.

Both begin their journeys isolated from their families, Jonas in the extra room in his house. Both travel with the eyes of nature upon them. The wind and waves watch the ship on which Martin travels, while "the solemn night was watching" Jonas, "when it never winked, when its darkness watched no less than its light" (MC47).
When Jonas reaches his journey's end he travels into dark, silent depths:

He went down, down, down, into the dell. It brought him to the wood; a close, thick, shadowy wood, through which the path went winding on, dwindling away into a slender sheep-track... Vistas of silence opened everywhere, into the heart and innermost recesses of the wood...tangling off into a deep green rustling mystery, through which gnarled trunks, and twisted boughs, and ivy-covered stems...were faintly seen (MC47).

The end of Martin's journey is the heart of America, "the grim domains of Giant Despair," a silent "morass, bestrewn with fallen timber":

On they toiled through great solitudes, where the trees upon the banks grew thick and close; and floated in the stream; and held up shrivelled arms from out the river's depths (MC23).

Jonas and Martin are the two characters most closely associated with dreams. Martin dreams six different times while in America. When he penetrates to the swampiest depths of the dream-world America, the region of Eden and the Jonas-like Hannibal Chollop, he himself dreams "that he had murdered a particular friend, and couldn't get rid of the body" (MC22).

He later dreams that "I am destined to die in this place" (MC23), while Jonas dreams that he is dead and Chuffey, the ancient family retainer, is leading him to the judgment. Martin's death dream occurs at the very end of installment nine. The next installment opens with Jonas immediately being referred to by Dickens as "the orphan" (MC24). Both these points are significant, for Martin awakes from the
American dream to a new awareness of the importance of family, and returns home, reborn from his ritual death, to attempt to rebuild his family. Jonas, on the other hand, has made himself an orphan. He cannot be reborn—his journey leads to his death—and he returns from his expedition not to rebuild family ties, but with dread at the thought of meeting members of his family.

Martin can reverse the Screw and leave America behind. It is a vision. The real terror is in the real world, the inescapable London. Thus though Jonas has committed his murder in the country, "his fears were now diverted, strangely, to the dark room he had left shut up at home. He had a greater horror, infinitely greater, of that room than of the wood" (MC4-7). The terror is in the real world, not in the deep woods of the countryside, or the visions of Eden. So America is not across the ocean; Hannibal Chollop is in that room in London. The city streets contain General Fladdock, Major Pawkins, and Congressman Elijah Pogram.

When we retrace our course from Eden back to New York, we glimpse the further institutionalization of all we have seen on our voyage to Eden. We meet Congressman Elijah Pogram, our first official personage, whose appearance parallels Chevy Slyme's late appearance as policeman. Chevy Slyme, member of the Chuzzlewit family, provides a symbolic link between the family and the society, as well as between England and America. In more than one sense, in this world, Slyme, as Tigg says to Pecksniff, "is always waiting round the corner. He is
perpetually round the corner, sir. He is round the corner at this instant" (MC4). Metaphorically, that describes the world of Martin Chuzzlewit. Not only does Slyme's name bring to mind the American marshes of slime with the chaos implicit in them, but in him we can see the germ of the institutionalization of the slime that will be developed in the judicial system of Bleak House and the bureaucracy of Little Dorrit. Already part of the family in chaos, Chevy Slyme becomes a functionary of a wider social institution when at the end of the novel he appears as a policeman: a nicely ironic statement that unformed slime and chaos lead to enforced rigid order. Old Martin finds that acceptable: "You are living honestly, I hope, and that's something" (MC51). But of course honesty is no part of the social order and we immediately see Slyme take a bribe to acquiesce in the suicide of Jonas. Cowardly and greedy, he aptly represents Dickens's attitude toward the institutional structure of England. In this novel, the legal structure is not yet a source either of real or false moral direction. Authority must come from the family. Slyme, popping up at this late stage of the novel, scattering his nutshells about, reminds us of the ubiquitousness of the slime, still oozing around the next corner, waiting, as in America, to swallow up people and even families whole, as it swallows up the family of Mark's friends from the boat.

It is Chevy Slyme whom we last see controlling Jonas. What controls Jonas is not goodness—his confrontations with Tom Pinch leave him unregenerated. Their violent confrontation
early in the novel only increases Jonas's rage; the later confrontation, which could have saved him from committing a senseless murder, has no effect upon him. What control Jonas are the very things most to be feared, the things that lead most readily to the flatness of America. Nadgett, representing the anonymity of the city, is responsible for capturing Jonas, and the dregs of the family, Slyme, institutionalized as the police, provides him the opportunity to kill himself. In short, the worst aspects of the "American" danger are kept under control, but the price of that control is the very de-humanization that America has come to represent for Dickens.

5

There is then a consistent relationship between the world of England and the world of America, throughout the novel. Every time that we are reminded of England in the grotesque world of America, the implicit warning is clear: America is at home, beware.

Much of what the Americans say about England is true in its own absurd way. When Martin asks Colonel Diver, "Is smartness American for forgery?" the colonel replies, "I expect it's American for a good many things that you call by other names" (MC16). We need only think of Tigg's swindle and Pecksniff's various activities to see that the colonel is correct that smartness "was not invented here" (MC16). We are asked to recall what we have been reading.
When General Choke asserts the unalterable opinion that the Queen of England lives in the Tower of London, he implies at least a metaphoric truth: the symbolic center of the society is the repression of people. Hannibal Chollop, in insisting on the differences between the two worlds, merely points out their sameness. "No stakes, no dungeons, no blocks, no racks, no scaffolds, no thumbscrews, no pikes, no pillories" (MC33), he says. Mark replies, "Nothing but revolvers and bowie-knives" (MC33). There is little to choose between the two.

Throughout the American scenes, the connection between the two worlds is quietly insisted upon. Mr. Bevan reminds us, after Martin's expulsion from the Norris house, that "you might have such a scene as that in an English comedy, and not detect any gross improbability or anomaly in the matter of it" (MC17).

The dehumanization of people epitomized in the watchmen around Todgers who are no different from the dead they guard is realized in more literal form in the Eden in which Martin cannot sell his goods because "there's nobody but corpses to buy 'em" (MC33). The Negro (as an ex-slave, the ultimate in a dehumanized being) carving his name in wood reminds us of Fips stamping his initial on himself to fight his dehumanization. Directly after Martin's outburst against slavery, he says in all seriousness, "Having come to that conclusion, Mark, perhaps you'll attend to me. The place to which the luggage is to go is printed on this card" (MC17). The use of
other people can take many forms. A few paragraphs on, the reference to the Irishman who opens the door of Pawkins's reminds us that England too can keep a people in bondage. The man had

such a thoroughly Irish face, that it seemed as if he ought, as a matter of right and principle, to be in rags, and could have no sort of business to be looking cheerfully at anybody out of a whole suit of clothes (MCL7).

In the very midst of the Americans he so objects to, at the height of his proud swaggering chauvinism, Martin is seen doing what we have seen that the society of England does so well, reifying. Mark, recognizing his position in Martin's eyes, refers to himself as "Mr. Co." (MC21), an object, most appropriately a commercial one.

In England the commercial impulse, the greed for money, is the root of many evils - the dehumanization of people, the Angle-Bengalee swindle, the designs of Pecksniff, the murder of Tigg, and the chaos within the Chuzzlewit family. So too in America:

The greater part of it [the conversation] may be summed up in one word. Dollars. All their cares, hopes, joys, affections, virtues, and associations, seemed to be melted down into dollars (MCL6).

The aristocracy of America is composed "of intelligence and virtue. And of their necessary consequence in this republic. Dollars, sir" (MCL6). Martin, we are told, "was very glad to hear this" (MCL6). Believing that he has the required intelligence and virtue, he expects to "speedily become a great capitalist" (MCL6). That the American aristocracy does fit him
better than he knows is demonstrated by the airs of wealth he proceeds to put on, the false cover in which he wraps himself. The ultimate irony is that in such a world only dollars can save. There is no happier moment for Martin than when he stands on the bank of the river in Eden, opens a letter, and "a little roll of dollar-notes fell out upon the ground." (MC33).

Where then is the center of this novel? Its clearly strong comic impulses confront a very real blackness, and Dickens provides no unambiguous alternatives. The dynamic comic characters survive (despite the ending, as Edgar Johnson says), but survival is not regenerative. Sairey has lost her whole family; Pecksniff loses his. An innocent who goes to America has his whole family wiped out. Tom Pinch is left as a third wheel to Ruth and a Westlock who is so much a stick figure that we, like Martin, might call him Northkey by mistake. Mrs. Lupin, to be sure, prospers, but only on her own territory. Comparing her with Mrs. Todgers, we see the difficulty of more than bare survival once one enters the world at-large. The boarding house keeper, Mrs. Todgers, as much as any character, makes clear the dilemma of the novel.

Like Mrs. Lupin, Mrs. Todgers is taken in by the art of Pecksniff. "Your pa," she tells Mercy and Charity, "was once a little particular in his attentions, my dears...but to be your ma was too much happiness denied me" (MC9). She greets Pecksniff as a warm friend when he arrives in London. Mrs. Lupin, though those forces represented by Pecksniff surround
her and demonstrate the perils of too pure a goodness, is essentially safe within her own ground, where she can keep her furniture under control. We see her outside the inn only once. Mrs. Todgers, however, lives at the heart of the labyrinth of the city. She represents and demonstrates the more likely alternative of existence within the world on the terms it dictates. If Mrs. Lupin represents the kind of societal values to be striven for, then Mrs. Todgers represents the more realistic possibilities in society as it is.

Through a maze, "up the queerest courts, and down the strangest alleys and under the blindest archways...now thinking he had lost his way, now thinking he had found it" (MC8), Pecksniff leads his daughters to the heart of the city where the Monument stands, hidden from view, as all is hidden in the depths of the city. "Todgers's," Dickens tells us, was in "a labyrinth, whereof the mystery was known but to a chosen few" (MC9). In this labyrinth, one can see no distinction between those who are alive and those who are dead:

...paralysed old watchmen guarded the bodies of the dead at night, year after year, until at last they joined that solemn brotherhood; and, saving that they slept below the ground a sounder sleep than even they had ever known above it, and were shut up in another kind of box, their condition can hardly be said to have undergone any material change when they in turn were watched themselves (MC9).

Further, the all-pervasive odor of the area is that of "damaged oranges, with blue and green bruises on them, festering in boxes [even as the watchmen have just been described as being in boxes] or mouldering away in cellars."
In this malevolent world, objects have taken the humanity from people, and as Dorothy Van Ghent has pointed out, they have a malevolence of their own: on the roof of Todgers's, the crowded objects of the city "sprung out" and "took hold of the attention whether the spectator would or no" (MC9).

Within Todgers's there is no sanctuary from either the oppressive city or the animation of objects. Dark and gloomy, communicating a "consciousness of rats and mice," not "papered or painted...within the memory of man," "very black, begrimed, and mouldy" (MC8), Todgers's houses such objects as "a gruff old giant of a clock," "who seemed to continue his heavy tick for no other reason than to warn heedless people from running into him accidentally" (MC8). Todgers's is ever at war with its environment, which "hemmed Todgers's round, and hustled it, and crushed it, and stuck its brick-and-mortar elbows into it, and kept the air from it, and stood perpetually between it and the light" (MC9).

What Dickens makes clear to us is that this place, while singular, is representative. It epitomizes the city of London and by implication the entire society: "London, to judge from that part of it which hemmed Todgers's round...was worthy of Todgers's, and qualified to be on terms of close relationship and alliance with hundreds and thousands of the odd family to which Todgers's belonged." It is noteworthy that Dickens uses the word "family," for this reminds us that as the city is at war, so is the institution of the family. The society, the
city, is merely a large-scale family, and the extended family, like the primary family, is a hostile one.

And so we enter Todgers's with Pecksniff. The sign over the door on which Pecksniff knocks does not project anything as mythic as "The Blue Dragon." We are now in the world of practical reality, of the necessity of survival above all else, and the sign says simply, "Commercial Boarding-House. M. Todgers" (MC8).

Indeed, where in the Dragon, visitors find themselves all but diving in ("strangers, despite the most elaborate cautioning, usually dived in head first, as into a plunging-bath" MC3) at Todgers's, visitors are thought to be "the paper" and Bailey wonders "why you didn't shove yourself through the grating as usual" (MC8). The expectation is of the intrusion of objects, not people. Where Mrs. Lupin, representing the norms of an ideal regenerative world, is warm, soft, and sexual, Mrs. Todgers is "rather a bony and hard-featured lady, with a row of curls in front of her head, shaped like barrels of beer" (MC8). Her head is covered with what appears to be a black cobweb. Mrs. Todgers could not survive and keep the innocent exuberance of Mrs. Lupin. She was once quite pretty, as she suggests in showing the Pecksniff girls her miniature. Mrs. Lupin never lost her attractiveness, but as Mrs. Todgers says, "Presiding over an establishment like this, makes sad havoc with the features" (MC9). The world takes more than its toll, for living in the world, Mrs. Todgers must be a creature of her world. Forced from the wholeness of a Mrs. Lupin, in whom
appearance and reality were one, she must use artifice, separating appearance from reality. In Mrs. Todgers, affection beams in one eye while calculation shines out of the other (MC8). What appears to be a simple affectionate embrace is not: "The truth was that, the house being full with the exception of one bed, which would now be occupied by Mr. Pecksniff, she wanted time for consideration" (MC8), and the extra embrace provides her with time to think.

She is however a good person. What we have known throughout, Dickens states explicitly in the final chapter: "She had a lean lank body, Mrs. Todgers, but a well-conditioned soul within. Perhaps the Good Samaritan was lean and lank, and found it hard to live" (MC54).

The sexlessness enforced by the city, apparent in Mrs. Todgers's person, is further seen in the fact that her boarding house has strict rules allowing only gentlemen boarders (MC8). Most significantly, love that "blossoms" under the auspices of Mrs. Todgers is poison love. Where the marriage of Mrs. Lupin and Mark changes the Dragon to the Jolly Tapley, the marriage of Jonas and Mercy, the courting for which began at Todgers's, is an unmitigated disaster for Mercy, as well as radiating gloom in all directions: for example, to the youngest boarder "sitting over his pie at dinner, with his spoon a perfect fixture in his mouth...in such a lonely, melancholy state, that he was more like a Pump than a man" (MC32). When the marriage actually takes place, "the frightful opinions he expressed upon the subject of self-destruction...the clenching
way in which he bit his bread and butter...all combined to form a picture never to be forgotten" (MC32). Even before Jonas's arrival, the conflict between Muddle and Jinkins over Mercy strains the relationships within the walls of Todgers's.

The relationship which is born at Todgers's and is to be sanctified by marriage at Todgers's is equally poisoned. Muddle, with his heart blighted by Mercy, finds Charity willing to accept a "blighted heart," so he "plighted his dismal troth, which was accepted and returned" (MC32). He then spends the day crying.

This marriage, which is to take place in the final chapter of the book, is of course aborted when Muddle runs away. The failure of both marriages generated by Todgers's implies the diminished hope of regeneration in the world of this novel.

Mrs. Todgers, in the gloom of her surroundings, and looking "a little worn by cares of gravy and other such solicitudes" (MC32) maintains her "usual earnestness and warmth of manner" (MC32). Not only does she maintain herself, but she accomplishes that wonder, making gravy, filling the "passion for gravy among commercial gentlemen" (MC9), from joints that yield nowhere near enough to satisfy the need. Her meals can be rituals of love and warmth. Even when the introductory feast for the Pecksniff girls seems to be winding down, as Bailey stands, enjoying the conversation, there is still dessert to come:

The dessert was splendid.... Quarts of almonds; dozens of oranges; pounds of raisins; stacks of biffins; soup-plates full of nuts. Oh, Todgers's could do it when it chose! (MC9).
Mrs. Todgers cannot alter the world. Charity comes to her to escape and is hurt. Moddle is forced to flee. But she can make the world bearable for her boarders. Commercial gentlemen are involved in the most dehumanizing aspect of the society, and their passionate craving for something other brings them to Mrs. Todgers for that gravy she can make. Despite Mrs. Todgers's best efforts, her boards are perennially griping (MC9). Indeed, the feast we witness is not an every-day occurrence. The narrator feels compelled to point out that in fact Todgers can do it when it chooses. The effort is enormous.

When the boarders go up to get the ladies, in order to propose a toast towards the end of the meal, they find Mrs. Todgers asleep (MC9). We are shown Mrs. Todgers struggling at great cost to herself to provide comfort, unable to provide anything regenerative, in a world in which the family is in chaos, the society hostile, alien, and not amenable to regeneration.

Young Bailey perhaps best represents the hopeful possibilities in such a world. Unlike the artificers of England and the surfaces of America, he is both whole and good. Unlike Pinch and Lupin, he is aware. Unlike Mrs. Todgers, he is, symbolically, a regenerative force. Not only is he resurrected from the dead, but his qualities create community, and that is the expressed need of this novel. Bailey, the all-wise child, offers us a moment of unmitigated joy. That he finds a niche in the world is perhaps the true source of optimism to be found in the novel.
Unlike Mrs. Lupin and Tom Pinch, Bailey is taken in by nothing. "There's nothin' he don't know," says Mrs. Gamp. "All the wickedness of the world is Print to him." Taking this as a compliment, Bailey replies modestly, "reether so" (MC26). In fact, Bailey is shadowed symbolically by all the evil this novel is concerned with, but none of those evils can repress him. He is an orphan, a child with no connection, in a novel about the loss of family ties. He is named for Old Bailey, the symbol of an individuality-denying society. He is shadowed by the nonexistence implicit in the Americans, for like the equally precocious Jefferson Brick, Bailey is also "a remarkable boy." But Bailey somehow manages to be unaffected by it all. Eschewing the verbal surface of a Pecksniff, he merely announces dinner by saying, "The wittles is up." Nor can a name limit his individuality. His internal life and vitality give the shape to whatever name he has at the time. (Bailey is only the last in a series of names the Todgers's boarders have given him.) It is that same vitality that allows the triumphant shaving scene. Bailey does not need the manifestation of a beard to be shaved. His maturity is from within, and so he can be successfully shaved without the need for any beard at all.

He is not, like that American child, Jefferson Brick, at the center of a dehumanizing society. He is forever on the sidelines, and when he leaves a place he takes humanity with him. The life of Todgers's is not found in the withered, struggling Mrs. Todgers but in the irrepressible Bailey.
When he leaves (a circumstance that makes Mrs. Todgers very happy) he is replaced by a tomb-like woman, Tamaroo. When Bailey leaves Tigg, it means for Tigg very literally the loss of his life.

Bailey has not only the vitality of life within him, but an innate goodness that such vital characters as Mrs. Gamp lack. Poll Sweedlepipe enjoyed immensely the sight of Lewsome's "bony hands and haggard face... and he informed Mr. Bailey, in confidence, that he wouldn't have missed seeing him for a pound." Bailey, on the other hand, is distressed by the sight: "Mr. Bailey, who was of a different constitution, remarked that he would have stayed away for five shillings" (MC29). Bailey's reaction on seeing Jonas mistreating Mercy is distress and a desire to protect her, in a situation where he can have no possible selfish interest.

The news of Bailey's demise brings Poll to tears, for Bailey is worth more than all Tigg's artifice. "What's a Life Assurance Office to a Life! And what a Life Young Bailey's was!" (MC49). Life is what Bailey truly represents. It is a sure sign of Mrs. Gamp's failing that she does not share Poll's reaction. Her philosophically cool response is merely, "He was born into a wale... and he lived in a wale; and he must take the consequences of such a situation" (MC49). As we know, she too lives in a wale, and the death of Bailey is merely used by her to further exalt herself, reminding Poll that she can survive in the same situation in which another cannot.
But Bailey does not die. Like Jonas, like Tigg, like Young Martin, he goes on journey to death. Jonas and Tigg truly die. Martin must be ritually reborn. Bailey is resurrected. He need not change and he cannot die. Despite the fact that he is an orphan, his close relationship with Poll suggests that family can be generated from life itself. The inner force and goodness of Bailey can perhaps create family ties, reshape community. But that is a long way off and America is close. In this novel, Bailey simply lives, and that is a small triumph.
Notes


2 Charles Dickens, The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit, The Oxford Illustrated Dickens (London: Oxford, 1951), Chapter 22. All subsequent references to Martin Chuzzlewit will be cited parenthetically by the initials "MC" and chapter number.


4 Ibid., p. 94.

5 Ibid., p. 91.


7 Ibid., I, 471.


9 Dombey and Son, which is of course the first novel after Martin Chuzzlewit, continues Dickens's exploration of family. The failure of the firm of Dombey and Son is the failure of Mr. Dombey to understand the nature of his family
ties. Indeed it is the world of commerce that Dickens chooses to explore in his second post-American novel.


13 Chesterton, pp. 101-2.

14 Johnson, I, 483.
CONCLUSION

The American journey provides a sharply focused insight into the nature of the Dickens world. In the course of his trip, Dickens reaffirmed and clarified for himself the primary importance of the values of community. He saw the great land of liberty as a place in which each individual's selfish interest divided one man from another. In American Notes, depicting that world of terrible isolation, he is led to dwell on the institutions that within bounded walls provide structure, warmth, and community, creating surrogate families in the face of a divisive society.

In Martin Chuzzlewit too, he is concerned with the isolation of individuals in a world in which the links of family have broken, and community does not exist. The novel shaped by the American experience is, in that sense, a culmination of Dickens's early period. His impulse to foster community in spite of a society that, as early as Pickwick Papers, is not really amenable to regeneration can be seen in Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby, The Old Curiosity Shop, and Barnaby Rudge. In Martin Chuzzlewit, with the picture of America before him, all but obsessing him, Dickens brings that concern to center stage. The family becomes the pervasive force that controls the characters. The chaos and warfare within that family and all its component branches focus the novel, while the American
scenes serve as a warning – that the dangers of isolation and social breakdown are very much to be reckoned with, and the domestic values of Mrs. Lupin and the efforts of Mrs. Todgers had better be taken to heart.
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