CHARLES DICKENS AND IDIOLECTS OF ALIENATION

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Jerry B. Coats, B.A.
Denton, Texas
December, 1993
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A part of Charles Dickens's genius with character is his deftness at creating an appropriate idiolect for each character. Through their discourse, characters reveal not only themselves, but also Dickens's comment on social features that shape their communication style.

Three specific idiolects are discussed in this study. First, Dickens demonstrates the pressures that an occupation exerts on Alfred Jingle from *Pickwick Papers*. Second, Mr. Gradgrind from *Hard Times* is robbed of his ability to communicate as Dickens highlights the errors of Utilitarianism. Finally, four characters from three novels demonstrate together the principle that social institutions can silence their defenseless constituents.

Linguistic evaluation of speech habits illuminates Dickens's message that social structures can injure individuals. In addition, this study reveals the consistent and intuitive narrative art of Dickens.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Charles Dickens wrote with a keen understanding of the topics that interested and even incited the popular audience. To claim, specifically, that his novels often became vehicles for reformist idealism is not a new critical position. Walter E. Houghton, among others, recognizes Dickens "as a major prophet of sympathetic feeling and benevolent action" (274). Demonstrating that this opinion is one of long standing, Houghton cites an article in the 1838 *Edinburgh Review*. The reviewer, minor novelist Thomas Henry Lister, praises Dickens for "his comprehensive spirit for humanity" and the "tendency of his writings . . . to make us practically benevolent--to excite our sympathy in behalf of the aggrieved and suffering in all classes" (Collins 73). Including such topics as education, wealth, prisons, poor laws, transportation, legislative processes, and the Court of Chancery, the list of issues with which Dickens concerned himself over his literary career could hardly be exhausted in this introduction. Houghton does not call to question Dickens's contribution to the social climate. The historian's summative appraisal of Dickens's role is to say that the novelist found his topics or issues in a rather
haphazard style; that is, Dickens "had no positive theory of reform" (275).

The extent to which Dickens can rightly be called a reformer has been challenged by literary critics. In The Dickens World, Humphry House writes that Detached now from his time he may seem more original and adventurous than he was; for then he was only giving wider publicity in "inimitable" form to a number of social facts and social abuses which had already been recognized if not explored before him. (41)

House adds that Dickens's gift rests in that author's ability to clarify and reinforce "the public's sense of right and wrong" and to flatter "its moral feeling" (42). Perhaps the best evaluation of Dickens's role in forming or furthering social opinions is found in Richard D. Altick's The Presence of the Present. Altick contends that "Dickens was as topical, using the word in its broadest application, as any other novelist of his day." Altick elaborates on this idea in writing, "By temperament he was primarily a journalist, and a reformer only sporadically" (52). In the conclusion of his study, Altick cites a number of contemporaneous critics who thought Dickens "a Johnny-come-lately reformist" (801-803), but this position does not affect the fact that Dickens displayed genuine interest, however late or unoriginal, in the shape of society.
How well Dickens depicted social issues and how those issues formed the discourse of his characters is the topic of this thesis. Writing in 1859 for *British Novelists and Their Styles*, David Masson describes the approach to developing theme and character that his more famous contemporary might take:

Having once caught a hint from actual fact, he [Dickens] generalizes it, runs away with his generalization into a corner, and develops it there into a character to match; which character he then transports . . . into a world of semi-fantastic conditions, where the laws need not be those of ordinary probability. (150)

Dickens's work with characterization is famous; his readers know just what each character would look like and how each would act. Noah Claypole's eyes are small in his large head while the crippled Jenny Wren's eyes are bright grey. Jesse "Gaffer" Hexam, who "bore a certain likeness to a roused bird of prey" (*Our Mutual Friend* 45), is probably lucky he never ran into the cat-like James Carker who wore a constant smile that showed "two unbroken lines of glistening teeth" (*Dombey* 239). Joe Gargery is as powerful as Jo of Tom-All-Alone's is pathetic. From Tulkinghorn to Turveydrop, Dickens clothes his characters in dress and manners carefully designed to delineate their individual qualities.
A part of his genius with character is Dickens's deftness at creating an appropriate idiolect, a private language or individual speech habit, for each character. The measure of Dickens's artistic ability to catch "a hint from actual fact" and develop a character's language has only been partially explored. This thesis follows the work of Robert Golding in his study, *Idiolects in Dickens*. That effort had as its stated purpose to represent the structure of Dickens's use of idiolect in general and to provide a chronological study of idiolecal development in Dickens. This present work is different from Golding's in that the purpose here is to treat not only idiolects, but also specific problems or obstructions that inhibit communication. In addition, I deal with characters whom Golding only briefly mentions or passes over entirely.

I want to demonstrate the ways that the very social issues that interested Dickens shaped the idiolects that his characters develop. M. A. K. Halliday is a pioneering linguist who suggests a social theory of language and takes a functional approach to linguistic inquiry. For Halliday, functional linguistics means investigating how language is used: trying to find out what are the purposes that language serves for us, and how we are able to achieve these purposes through speaking and listening, reading and writing . . . . It means seeking to explain . . . how the
form of language has been determined by the functions it has evolved to serve. (Explorations 7) This functional approach is a valuable tool for investigating the parameters of idiolect in Dickens's novels.

Halliday raises two questions that must be addressed in this study of Dickens's characters. First, and in inverse order to Halliday's statement above, what is the form of a particular idiolect? Second, what functions does that form serve? Roger Fowler develops two premises that validate applying these questions, originally developed to explain the oral discourse of live speakers, to literary works. Using Halliday's Language as Social Semiotic, Fowler concludes that there is a direct relationship between language and social structure:

the varieties of linguistic usage are both products of socioeconomic forces and institutions—reflexes of such factors as power relationships, occupational roles, social stratification, etc.—and practices which are instrumental in forming and legitimating these same social forces. (Social Discourse 21)

Moreover, Fowler rejects the notion that there is a special language of literature that does not serve "interpersonal and pragmatic functions of communication" (Social Discourse 180). Literature should not be regarded "as an object or a system which is structurally LIKE language, rather than as something which IS language" (Social Discourse 182). Therefore, a
literary text such as a Dickens novel contributes codes that can be pragmatically discussed in terms of form and function; "linguistic description leads to and involves interpretation, statements about the communicative function of the text in relation to its extra-textual coordinates" (Social Discourse 198).

Dickens was particularly cognizant of the role that language played in representing social ideas—the "extra-textual coordinates" of Fowler's description. If the novelist was writing to popular sentiments that centered on reform, the modern reader might expect to discover in his characters that Dickens ran to his corner—as Masson puts it—and created idiolects that reflect how individuals might be separated from or silenced by society. It is to the point in this thesis that Dickens represents characters who have difficulty communicating with the world about them. This inability to communicate has a variety of effects for both the individual character and those with whom communication is desired. The idiolect, far from being an unaccountable anomaly, always serves to demonstrate a cultural problem that Dickens castigates by demonstrating the manner in which the problem alienates and disempowers members of society.

Three types or strata of idiolects are discussed here through an investigation of the form and function of specific character discourse. To begin, I look at the speech habit of Alfred Jingle, the comic lothario from The Pickwick Papers.
In this work, which found itself a novel as much by the accident of popularity as by design, Dickens creates a character who discourses at length almost without interruption and often unconnected with the discourse of companion characters. Jingle is, in the jargon of the Russian Formalists, defamiliarized from the text and its other characters by his speech habit. The purpose of this alienation is complex and bound up in the character's occupation as an actor—a pre-occupation that attracted Dickens later in his career.

The second chapter examines a character who establishes one idiolect at the beginning of the novel but who is forced to attempt to shift to a new habit by the novel's conclusion. In Hard Times, a work that raised some criticism for its publication on the heels of industrial strikes in England, Dickens concerns himself with the competing realms of reason and emotion—with Utilitarianism and his own sense of reform through benevolence. The character who falls in the middle of this struggle is Mr. Gradgrind. This Benthamite educator begins the novel by demonstrating a broad command of rhetorical devices augmented by a considerable lexicon. By the end of Hard Times, Gradgrind's new revelations concerning moral calculus have strangled his ability to communicate.

Gradgrind is not exceptional in the world of Dickens. Indeed, extreme cases of the loss or attenuation of communicative ability are represented by minor characters
from a variety of Dickens's novels. The final chapter is concerned with these characters who, from the moment of their introduction in their respective novels, are unable to communicate with the social context about them. Dickens takes these minor characters and uses them to act out little morality plays (worlds where, as Masson writes, the laws of probability are suspended) in order to illuminate a variety of social ills. Four characters are discussed in this section: Tom Scott from The Old Curiosity Shop, Mr. F's Aunt from Little Dorrit, and Grandmother Smallweed and Mr. Jellyby from Bleak House. These people are mere caricatures stifled or marginalized by institutions or cultural practices Dickens finds abhorrent.

I admit to having selected the characters in this study with one criterion in mind. Each of their discourse styles is idiosyncratic for a purpose. Dickens uses them to highlight some flaw not within themselves, but within the social context in which they must communicate. The problems that they encounter, then, originate in society, and the characters' idiolects are only the results or symptoms of greater problems.
According to Thomas Hobbes, "The general use of speech, is to transfer our mental discourse, into verbal; or the train of our thoughts, into a train of words." (165). If Hobbes's analysis is correct, then Alfred Jingle, Esq., from Charles Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers* is a runaway train. In the literature surrounding Dickens's works, a good deal of critical effort has been spent evaluating the speech patterns of Mr. Sleary from *Hard Times* (recall the famous lisp that makes the character's own name virtually impossible for him to pronounce). Assuredly, studies of that character's slurred speech are valuable in establishing his uniqueness, but his impediment is just that and minimally affects the phonological, morphological, or syntactical structure of his discourse. On the other hand, very little notice has been given the disjointed, anomalous expression which passes for discourse in the characterization of Mr. Jingle. In a letter to Catherine Hogarth, Dickens himself expressed the hope that he had created "a very different character from any I have yet described, who I flatter myself will make a decided hit" (letters 133). Indeed, Jingle's discourse, its violation of Gricean maxims and unusual syntactic qualities, separates him
both from the other characters and from their manner and purpose of discourse.

As has been indicated, readers have not given close attention to Jingle's speech habits. Robert Golding included Jingle in his recent work *Idiolects in Dickens*, but does not attempt to discuss characterization as it is developed by Jingle's particular idiolect. Golding recalls that Jingle's discourse is much like that of the character named Goldfinch in Holcroft's play *The Road to Ruin* [1798]. The critic admits that Jingle's descriptions of life differ from Goldfinch's in that the former's discourse always includes some grotesque feature that causes humor. Nevertheless, Golding concludes that "this manner of delivery is limited in its application" (19). Discussion of Jingle in the study is ended without exploring the precise anomalies which make his speech so interesting—and without the accompanying insights to his character.

In his chapter on idiolect in *Speech in the English Novel*, Norman Page concludes that there is little apparent justification for Jingle's unusual discourse style:

Jingle's speech seems to have no interior reason beyond eccentricity for its own sake. Phonological qualities [Page suggests a lisp like that of Mr. Sleary] can be invoked for the same reason. (213)

This assertion includes no further discussion and, as such is the case, does not pursue the study that I propose here.
Jingle's discourse can not be dismissed merely as having "no interior reason." M. A. K. Halliday insists that "the particular form" taken by the grammar of a person's language "is closely related to the social and personal needs that language is required to serve" (*New Horizons* 141). What becomes necessary, then, to validate Jingle's unique discourse style is to understand what artistic purpose, social structure, and personal development is therein served.

First, then, this chapter will demonstrate the extent to which Jingle's discourse is a unique feature of Dickens's art. According to one theoretical approach to art, all texts which purport to be artistic endeavors engage in defamiliarization. The term was probably first associated with the Russian Formalists, Victor Shklovsky and Boris Tomashevsky. According to their understanding of art, the task of the artist is to depict the mundane elements of life in original expressions. Before defining defamiliarization, Shklovsky offers the initial explanation that "Habitualization devours works, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war—and art exists that one may recover the sensation of life" (11). The artist must represent objects through his innate artistic perception, not through the empiricism of his senses and his reason as they detect reality:

The technique of art is to make the objects "unfamiliar," to make the forms difficult, to
increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. (Shklovsky 11)

Shklovsky suggests that texts are characterized by a range of techniques which promote defamiliarization. The point of these techniques is to heighten reader awareness of the subject—even if the subject is a part of the reader’s daily experience. The reader’s natural propensity for linguistic habitualization becomes the enemy of the successful author. As Robert Fowler indicates, "symbols are transparent, automatic, and simplified. Accepting as natural a coding which is in fact arbitrary, we become acquiescent, uncritical, we acknowledge meanings without examining them" (Ling. Crit. 40). Tomashevsky agrees that within the well-devised text, "The old and habitual must be spoken of as if it were new and unusual" (85). The novel as an expression of art must be a defamiliarizing experience.

In The Pickwick Papers Dickens attempts to defamiliarize the adventures of four members of a society familiar to the early Victorian experience, a men’s social club. Through this social institution and its members, he satirizes various segments of the rest of society: politics, prisons, courts of law, the hunt, and even matrimony. This novel is a work of art, but it does not consist of a single technique in defamiliarization. The Pickwick Papers is a novel which runs nearly 900 pages in length, and in its pages Dickens the
artist engenders many defamiliar moments. Outside the realm of discourse analysis, for example, Dickens uses descriptive caricature to heighten reader awareness of specific topics. In addition—and closer to the purpose here—Dickens employs dialect, specifically in the case of Sam Weller, to make defamiliar a point about Pickwick's own dependence on a person of the lower classes. Though socially identified by his low speech, Sam demonstrates an uncanny ability to evaluate people and situations that utterly elude the Pickwickians. He is able, for example, immediately to identify a rather seamy solicitor by the latter's two-word greeting, "My friend" (203). Weller responds as only Weller can, "You're one o' the adwice gratis order . . . or you wouldn't be so werry fond o' me all at once." By dialectical defamiliarization, Dickens can use Sam to exemplify the value of experience over formal education.

Jingle's own speech habits are much more complex than Sam's dialectic variation. Indeed, one might have expected that there must be many defamiliarizing events or characters in such a novel. Although Shklovsky and Tomasevsky speak of art as a holistic construct, Cesare Segre modifies the Russian Formalist approach to the conclusion that in a long text many types of discourse effects may arise as separate examples of defamiliarization. Segre states that "The first operation to be carried out in discourse analysis is segmentation" (17). This entire discussion of
defamiliarization becomes important in order better to understand Jingle's position in the novel relative to the world and characters of the novel. Thus, in order to illustrate the process of intratextual defamiliarization as it applies to Jingle's character, I excise several examples of his discourse for investigation apart from the remainder of the text.

This approach is particularly applicable in Jingle's case. The character engages in syntactically anomalous discourse in order to defamiliarize his character both from the reader outside the text and from the other characters inside the text. Under unusual circumstances, then, defamiliarization can occur intratextually. Jingle's discourse can not be attributed merely to Dickensian caricature, rhetoric, and inconsistency. It is wholly unlike anything else in the text. In fact, the narrative style of the rest of the novel and Jingle's discourse style are a mixture of opposites. They are juxtaposed along the lines of Halliday's argument that language serves a social or personal purpose.

A part of that purpose is that Jingle's discourse, while in itself cohesive and progressive, is localized from the remainder of the text. Fowler identifies the term by stating that "Textual surface structure may be said to be localizing when it operates to hold up the reader's attention at a specific place in the total syntagm" (Lit. as Soc. Disc. 75).
Localization can be produced by syntactical variance, morphological or lexical departure, or unexpected phonological foregrounding. Jingle's discourse is localized by several factors—many of which also guarantee that the discourse is internally cohesive and progressive.

Dickens both defamiliarizes and localizes Jingle by having his character flout the conventions of conversation as established by H. P. Grice. Grice has delineated four characteristics of conversation that make discourse between speakers logical and understandable (45-50). Jingle manages to contravene all four at one time or another in the course of the novel. None of the other characters is so adroit at removing their discourse from the norm.

Violation of the first maxim, that of quantity, is vividly illustrated by the scene which introduces Jingle both to the reader and to the Pickwickians as they travel across England. In accordance with the maxim of quantity, Grice contends that most conversationalists will give only so much information as is necessary to convey a logically ordered message. In this particular passage from Pickwick, Jingle rides in a coach with Mr. Pickwick and his three companions, none of whom even knows their new companion's name. Jingle wishes to call their attention to a low, courtyard arch. From the simple warning, "Heads, heads!," he launches into a description of a woman's decapitation:
"Heads, heads!" cried the loquacious stranger, as they came out under the low archway, which in those days formed the entrance to the court-yard.

"Terrible place - dangerous work - other day - five children - mother - tall lady, eating sandwiches - forgot the arch - crash - knock - children look around - mother's head off - sandwich in her hand - no mouth to put it in - head of a family off - shocking, shocking!" (79)

Certainly, this is much more conversation than is required to warn of an overhang. Not only are his continuing remarks unsolicited, but they are also overly informative. The Pickwickians are surprised by this lengthy outburst, and, at the conclusion of this speech, even the narrator remarks that Jingle is a "loquacious stranger."

Grice's second maxim, quality, indicates that part of the principle of conversation requires a speaker not to say that which is false or that which is inadequately evidenced. Such a stricture has no hold over the creative Jingle. Even if the story of the decapitated woman is true (and Jingle's narrative verisimilitude here is slight), there are numerous examples in the text where he obviously flouts quality. Consider the following passage that tells of his presence at the French Revolution of 1830 during which he found time not only to trade shots with the enemy, but also to compose an epic poem:
"You were present at that glorious scene?" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Present! - think I was; fired a musket - fired with an idea, rushed into wine shop - wrote it down - back again - whiz, bang - another idea - another idea - wine shop again - pen and ink - back again - cut and slash - noble time, sir. Sportsman, sir?" abruptly turning to Mr. Winkle.

"A little, sir," replied that gentleman.

"Fine pursuit, sir, - fine pursuit. - Dogs, sir?"

"Not just now," said Mr. Winkle.

"Ah! you should keep dogs - fine animals - sagacious creatures . . ." (79)

He goes on to relate a tale about a hunting dog that was so perceptive that it was able to read posted notices from the game warden. Jingle concludes this long section by praising the dog in saying, "wonderful dog - valuable dog that - very."

There is not a speech by Jingle which does not call to question the quality of his discourse. At a party he narrates an account of his having scored 570 runs in a cricket match during the course of which an opponent literally bowled himself to death. Moreover, in the process of completing the game, which was supposed to have been played in the West Indies, Jingle represents himself as
having prevailed not only against the opponent but also against the oppressive heat: "Warm! - red hot - scorching - glowing . . . sun so hot, bat in blisters, ball burnt brown" (166). This and similar incidents are marvelled at by listeners within the text, but the reader understands (with a good deal of humor) that the stories simply are not true.

Grice's third maxim, relevance, is limited in its description. Grice writes that the rule of relevance charges the speaker with the responsibility to "be relevant" (47), but the linguist's definition seems more than a bit circular. Brown and Yule explain that that convention of conversational discourse "could be captured more succinctly in the expression speaking topically" (84). According to their idea, a character is speaking topically "when he makes his contribution fit closely to the most recent elements incorporated in the topic framework" (84). Jingle has an interesting discourse tactic associated with the issue of relevance. His comments are usually begun according to the "most recent elements" of conversation, but then he alters the topic radically. While the topic under discussion is the French Revolution of 1830, Jingle captures the floor by commenting that he was present at that conflagration, but he uses the opportunity to ingratiate himself to Mr. Snodgrass whom Jingle knows admires poetry. Then Jingle shifts the topic abruptly to hunting and tells the story of the
literate dog. His purpose is, once again, to create a rapport with one of the company of Mr. Pickwick—namely, Mr. Winkle. Jingle assumes from Winkle's clothing, a hunting jacket and sport pants, that the latter enjoys hunting. Both of these divergent courses in discourse ignore relevance and are calculations on Jingle's part to make himself more amicable towards his companions.

The final Gricean Maxim is that of manner. The speaker should be "perspicuous, brief, and orderly" (50). With regard to this maxim, Jingle is rather paradoxical—that is, he is brief at great length. The long narrative paragraph in describing the West Indies sports event, for instance, consists entirely of two, three, and four word phrases—mere bursts of discourse. Nevertheless, the whole of the passage creates an overly long statement which is anything but perspicuous. Jingle, of course, has a purpose. By stringing together short phrases, he can seem to adhere to implicatures of conversation while actually dominating the discourse.

Jingle's breach of every maxim serves a Shklovskyan purpose as well. By allowing his character to ignore normal avenues of discourse, Dickens creates an "artistic" language which is dissimilar from that which the reader usually experiences. As Shklovsky has indicated, the aim of the artist is "to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception." Flouting Gricean maxims accomplishes this goal and results, within The
Pickwick Papers, in the intratextual defamiliarization of Jingle.

Dickens employs several techniques other than flouting the maxims to augment Jingle's artistic value. Syntactical variance has already been mentioned as one means. Note, for example, the lack of verbs in the bridge warning speech. Jingle generates fourteen independent clauses in that selection, but only two verbs, "forgot" and "look," appear. The remainder of the clauses attain that status by ellipsis. A passage in which Mr. Tupman (a romantic) asks Jingle if the latter ever had a Spanish girlfriend displays a similar lack of verb use:

Conquests! Thousands. Don Bolaro Fizzgig - Grandee - only daughter - Donna Christina - splendid creature - loved me to distraction - jealous father - high-souled girl - handsome Englishman - Donna Christina in despair - prussic acid - stomach pump in portmanteau - operation performed - old Bolaro in ecstacies - consent to our union - join hands and flood of tears - romantic story - very. (81)

Only one complete verb, "loved," is present. The rest of the verbs, "performed," "consent," and "join," are either bereft of a necessary auxiliary or under-inflected. In some passages which follow this romantic tale, Jingle manages to communicate entirely without the use of verbs.
At the same time Jingle's discourse lacks verbs, his speech habit is remarkable for its under-use of nominative nouns. For instance, when considering the merits of wooing a wealthy widow away from a rival, Jingle says to himself in an aside, "Lots of money - old girl - pompous Doctor [a description of his rival] - not a bad idea - good fun" (89-90). This is simply a string of predicate nouns, their adjectives, and intensifiers. Or again, when greeting Pickwick and friends at a cricket match, Jingle invites them to his host's hospitality by saying:

This way - this way - capital fun - lots of beer - hogsheads; rounds of beef - bullocks; mustard - cart loads; glorious day - down with you - make yourselves at home - glad to see you - very. (162-62)

This passage constitutes a speech that requires or implies at least ten independent clauses, yet, again, the reader is hard-pressed to find a subject noun. Jingle employs four imperative statements, and the remaining sentences are objects and implied verbs. Even when Jingle narrates a story in the first person, as with the long description of the cricket match, he manages to do so while entirely eschewing the first person pronoun in long paragraphs.

These syntactically unusual turns aside, Jingle's discourse always manages to convey meaning and progression. The reason for its effectiveness lies in internal cohesion.
His narration establishes cohesion through co-referentiality. Although in the span of one of his discourse passages, subjects or verbs may be missing, clauses do share implied subjects or verbs. A brief sample of this phenomenon occurs when Jingle is identifying a man at a party for Mr. Tupman: "Commissioner - head of yard - great man - remarkably great man" (88). The string of discourse might be rewritten in the following fashion:

Jingle's Phrase - Elliptical Completion

 Commissioner - "He is the Commissioner."
 head of yard - "He is the head of the yard."
 great man - "He is a great man."
 remarkably great man - "He is a remarkably great man."

The four bits of seemingly disjoined discourse are, in fact, quite cohesive. They are co-referential in the implied use of the identical subject and verb in each case. Moreover, each phrase constitutes a predicate noun. Within these phrases there is a definite progression. Initially, Jingle uses a single noun; then he expounds and includes an adjective prepositional phrase. Elevating and defining the object of description as he goes, Jingle next includes an adjective, "great." Finally, he adds an intensifying adverb, "remarkably," while retaining the adjective.

This same passage illustrates another quality of Jingle's discourse, its paradoxical overlexicalization. Here and in other selections Jingle lists a series of phrases
which ordinarily would be condensed into a single sentence: "The Commissioner is a great man." The fact that the commissioner is also "head of the yard" is ex officio and unnecessary for Jingle to express. Similarly, the "great man" phrase is duplicated. Often, Jingle will string a series of synonymous phrases together. Yet his overlexicalization coexists paradoxically with his use of ellipsis which represents underlexicalization.

A final grammatic consideration of Jingle's speech which must be addressed is his use of extreme adjectives and intensifiers, especially the word "very." Little in Jingle's expressed world is ordinary. The courtyard is a "terrible place"; his dog is "sagacious," "wonderful," and "valuable"; his lover, Donna Christina, is the "only daughter," a "splendid creature," and a "high-souled girl." Notice, in addition, the closure of parts of several selections with the word "very." These help establish Jingle's mind-style or world-view of ever-widening sensationalism. For the purposes of the plot and characterization, this indicates Jingle's need to hold a stage and to dominate discourse. He neither solicits nor allows significant dialogue. This extremism heightens the extent to which Jingle is defamiliarized from the text itself.

Dickens tells the reader that Jingle is an unemployed actor, a revelation which is foregrounded in Jingle's discourse. Mukarovsky writes that,
In poetic language foregrounding achieves maximum intensity to the extent of pushing communication into the background as the objective of expression and of being used for its own sake; it is not used in the services of communication, but in order to place in the foreground the act of expression, the speech act itself. (24)

Using this analysis, I infer that what Jingle has to say, the import of the message, becomes less significant than his purpose in speaking, his pursuance of the act. As an actor, Jingle has an ego to satisfy and a talent for fulfilling this need through verbal expression. The flouting of maxims and his deviant syntax are not unplanned breaches of conversational etiquette.

Indeed, how far Dickens will allow Jingle to go in upstaging discourse rivals is represented in the dominant sign utilized throughout the character's speech. The dash is omnipresent in Jingle's discourse. In his carriage speech, the dash makes its appearance seventeen times. It becomes a foregrounding sign, palpable in its own right. The dash is a defamiliarizing pattern meant to be noticed independently of the semantics of discourse. It is a function of Dickens's orthography, applied solely to the character of Jingle. The character is thus enabled to extend his long narratives without fear of interruption.
Only once in the entire span of this long novel does Jingle generate an utterance which adheres to usual discourse norms. Mr. Jingle has come upon a wealthy old maid whom he wishes to seduce. She has already established some affection for another character, and Jingle's purpose is haltingly to defame his rival.

"Ha!" exclaimed Mr. Jingle, with another start - "removal! remove my unhappiness, and your love bestowed upon a man who is insensible to the blessing - who even now contemplates a design upon the affections of the niece of the creature who - but no; he is my friend; I will not expose his vices. Miss Wardle - farewell!" At the conclusion of this address, the most consecutive he was ever known to utter, Mr. Jingle applied to his eyes the remainder of a handkerchief, and turned towards the door. (182)

Even the narrator remarks that the consecutiveness of the speech is a departure for Jingle's character. Why this shift in discourse styles? Jingle is an actor, and he is plying his craft. The dramatic mock-exit explicates the scene. He holds a handkerchief to his eye and makes as if to leave. The implied expectation is that he awaits an instant recall by the lady (a recall not long in issuance). Only when he delivers an actor's line does Jingle deviate from his usual pattern.
Jingle remains true to his original discourse style throughout the novel. Mr. Pickwick comes upon the scoundrel in Fleet Prison where Jingle, ill without the expectation of improving health under such conditions, speculates about his final days:

Everything [pawned] - all shirts gone - never mind - saves washing. Nothing soon - lie in bed - starve - die - inquest - little-bone house - poor prisoner - common necessaries - hust it up - gentlemen of the jury - coroner's order - workhouse funeral - serve him right - all over - drop the curtain. (690)

This excerpt demonstrates that from his introduction in the first pages to his incarceration near the work's conclusion, Jingle uses his utterances to generate uninterrupted pathos. He imagines a sort of dramatic sub-plot in which the warden of the prison would hush up the circumstances of Jingle's death. The metaphor of the falling curtain reminds the reader that not only has Dickens created a character actor, but also that the character himself is aware of his role.

The function of an actor is to take on roles and enact other people's lives, not the actor's own life. Dickens wants to highlight the pathos inherent in the actor's life—the necessary distancing from the actor's own social personality which an actor endures when he captures the viewer's attention and lives out a fictional existence.
Undeniably, a great deal of humor evolves out of Jingle's discourse, but it is the humor associated with the sad-faced clown. In her book *Language and Decadence*, Linda Dowling suggests that in the nineteenth-century "the forces of language purity and cultural guardianship" were in deep disarray (93). This led to "the extension of an invisible franchise to every speaker of slang and pidgin" (94). Dowling states that a new "literary naturalism" arose and allowed authors greater range in dialogue development. She credits Dickens with the "brilliant recreation and representation in written language" of a variety of discourse styles. His first novel, *The Pickwick Papers*, represents this laudable quality. The spare, terse Mr. Jingle is a character characterizing himself through his discourse style.
CHAPTER III

THE FAILED PHILOSOPHY AND FALTERING RHETORIC
OF MR. GRADGRIND IN HARD TIMES

On April 18, 1854, Charles Dickens wrote to William Henry Wills, the sub-editor for Household Words, that "I am in a dreary state, planning and planning the story of 'Hard Times' (out of materials for I don't know how long a story), and consequently writing little" (Lehmann 124). Some readers contend that the work itself is inundated with this dreary demeanor. Although Forster claims that during the run of Hard Times in Household Words (April 1 through August 12, 1854), the periodical more than doubled its circulation (Ackroyd 407), few contemporary critics hailed the short novel as a success. The reviewer for Athenaeum typifies this reception by mildly chiding that the work was "a good idea--but . . . scarcely wrought out with Mr. Dickens's usual felicity" (Collins 300). This reader further complains that "the case of Fancy versus Fact is here stated in prose, but without the fairness which belongs to a prose argument. A purely ideal treatment was needed for such a purpose."

While it is certainly true that Hard Times does not begin with Dickens's usual mixture of serious drama, social awareness, and humor, the effort does offer a character whose discourse style artfully encompasses the theme. F. R.
Leavis's valuation that this is a masterpiece that demonstrates Dickens's mastery of style is well-known: "The final stress may fall on Dickens's command of word, phrase, rhythm and image: in ease and range there is surely no greater master of English except Shakespeare" (206-07). Perhaps less generally declarative, it to the purpose in this study to discuss concretely the ways that Mr. Gradgrind's speech habits constitute a new effort at creating artistic language. Specifically, the author alters Gradgrind's discourse from a self-assured, forensic style to a faltering inability to engage in normal conversation. The character's usually easy flow of speech is strangled in Book III by his rhetorical inability to re-order his shifted understanding of the universe.

Critical attention has traditionally been diverted from a direct consideration of the novelty of Gradgrind's character. Writing for the Examiner, Dickens's biographer, John Forster, was more concerned with defending the work from attacks such as those in the Athenaeum: "The story is not meant to do what fiction cannot do--prove a case; its utmost purpose is to express forcibly a righteous sentiment" (Collins 301). The "righteous sentiment" is, of course, the famous anti-Utilitarian theme that dominates the book. When considering character, contemporary readers tended to focus on characters more directly involved with the romantic sub-plot or characters related to the industrial strife. The
Westminster Review reader, for example, lists Stephen Blackpool, Rachel and Sissy, and Mr. Sleary and his troupe as "the most successful characters." This writer goes on to insist that this former group "is a most welcomed relief from the Gradgrinds, Bounderbys, Sparsits, &c., who are all odd characters portrayed in a quaint style" (Collins 306).

Complaints about lack of diversity and development of character among modern critics are not difficult to discover. David M. Hirsch, for example, refutes Levis's praise of Hard Times by claiming that the characters fail as symbols and cannot be taken seriously. Stephen J. Spector agrees by writing that "Dickens bestows hardly a single spark of his vitalizing genius" on the industrial characters (229); for this critic, "the great question is why Dickens failed" (230). In an historicist reading, John Holloway contends that not only does Dickens misrepresent the politics of the period, but the novelist also neglects probing characters and humanity to the "deepest levels" (167-74).

The character of Mr. Gradgrind is, at first, easy to discount as merely an extension of Dickens's polemic against a political ideology. Certainly, the extreme portrait, one might even say caricature, in the first two chapters does not portend any expansion of traits for this rigid instructor. In his biography of Dickens, Peter Ackroyd describes the author's approach to writing this particular novel. In January 1854 Dickens wrote "Mr Gradgrind/Mrs Gradgrind" on a
sheet of paper, turned the paper over and titled it "Stubborn Things" and proceeded to write "Fact" and then "Thomas Gradgrind's Facts" (688). In The Narrative Art of Charles Dickens, Harvey Peter Sucksmith is more specific in providing commentary on Dickens's notes which contain redundant phrases such as "Thomas (George) John Gradgrind's facts," "Mr. Grindstone's Facts," "Damaging Facts," and "Hard-headed Gradgrind" (223). It is obvious that from the novel's inception, Gradgrind was meant to be narrowed into what Monroe Engel would rightly call "the merest of straw men" (173). However, Dickens chooses not to dismantle the straw form of this character but to dismantle the power of speech.

The most impressive quality of Gradgrind's speech in the first two-thirds of Hard Times is its cohesion. Halliday and Hasan have established the idea that the primary determinant of whether a group of words or sentences constitute or fail to constitute a text depends on the cohesion between the words that generate texture: "A text has texture and this is what distinguishes it from something that is not a text. The texture is provided by the cohesive relation" (2). Roger Fowler simplifies the principle of cohesion by writing "each sentence after the first is linked to the content of one or more preceding sentences by at least one tie" (Ling. Crit. 61). The stronger and more numerous the cohesive elements, the more focused the resultant text becomes. Several specific cohesive qualities of Gradgrind's discourse are
immediately established in the speeches of the initial two chapters.

The novel begins with a quoted paragraph without identifying the speaker or the context. The reader is left simply to study the validity—the coherence—of the words on their own merit without the benefit of prior instruction into the occasion of the speech act. Normally, context is a primary element around which cohesion is constructed; Karl R. Wallace writes that the occasion for a speech act establishes "the Rhetor's purpose-image—the final cause of his rhetorical action" (83). Bereft of context, Gradgrind's initial words must discover other forceful methods to carry forth a cohesive message. In the first three sentences Dickens immediately establishes the internal cohesion of this speech through what linguists call lexical reiteration—simple redundancy: "Now, what I want is Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in Life" (1). The speaker, as yet unknown to the reader, becomes relative to the word facts.

This, of course, had been Dickens's intention—to create a relationship between the character and the word. The method is far more complex, however, than simple redundancy. Norman N. Holland writes that "Repetition creates a feeling that some kind of order, logic, purposefulness, plan, cause, or pattern is being imposed on content" (146). This is precisely the effect at which Dickens takes aim with the
character of Gradgrind. "Facts" appears five times in the opening paragraph, and four of the five times the word concludes a clause: the two cases cited above, "You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts," and "Stick to Facts, Sir!" Aside from being another cohesive element through syntactical reiteration, this structure allows Dickens to make the thematic point that, for this character, "Facts" is literally "the last word." In addition, the word is always capitalized; the reader grows by the end of even this brief passage to expect this convention. This punctuational anomaly may be explained as recalling the eighteenth-century penchant for typographically stressing key words; however, this particular cohesive facet may be more that simply archaic. Jeremy Bentham's Utilitarian manifesto containing his version of moral calculus, The Principles of Morals and Legislation, properly belongs to the eighteenth century, having been published in 1789. More than establishing a discourse style that relates the speaker to a philosophy, Dickens may be making a comment about the antique relevance of that philosophy to his time.

Lexical reiteration is not limited to the repetition of the word "facts." Gradgrind seems to enjoy constructing co-dependent parallel structures. In that first speech he states, "This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children." A logician might accuse the educator of circular
reasoning—that is, of trying to prove a premise simply be restating the premise. The validity and success of "the principle" is based solely on the idea that it has been applied more than once. It becomes apparent later in the novel that Utilitarian applications do not succeed in producing better humans with either group of children mentioned here.

Aside from its lexical reiteration, Gradgrind's speech habit is strongly cohesive based on its endophoric relations to the rest of the text. Endophora is defined in Halliday and Hassan as being the cohesive ties that the most recent part of the text establishes with another previous section of the text (18). In fact, the meaning of the former depends on the latter. Roger Fowler discusses this idea in terms of conjunction and states that "sequences of sentences cohere—and progress—by various semantic relationships between them" (Ling. Crit. 66). Fowler cites additive, adverative, and causal semantic relationships that contribute to cohesion. In the case of Gradgrind, Dickens adds imperative.

Gradgrind enjoys speaking through imperatives. The final sentence of the initial discourse sample is an imperative: "Stick to Facts, sir!" In the first conversational exchange of the novel, Gradgrind and Sissy Jupe become acquainted in the classroom:

"Girl number twenty," said Mr. Gradgrind . . .

"I don't know that girl. Who is that girl?"
"Sissy Jupe, sir. . . ."

"Sissy is not a name," said Mr. Gradgrind.

"Don't call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilia."

"It's my father as calls me Sissy, sir . . . ."

"Then he has no business to do it," said Mr. Gradgrind. "Tell him he mustn't. Cecilia Jupe."

(2)

The elder character begins the interaction with the command declarative "I don't know that girl." This, and other similar sentences, are declarations, but they carry the force of an imperative. J. R. Searle has pointed out that the indirect speech act of ordering does not always have to be phrased as a question (59-61). Searle suggests that the force of an illocutionary act should be judged in some cases by the response (an order to "Shut the door" may be initiated, for example, by a simple, descriptive statement like "The door is open"). Certainly, Sissy Jupe responds to Gradgrind's declarative as though she had been commanded to produce her name.

But this is only a launching point for Gradgrind's use of imperatives. Sissy is powerless before a visitor who is willing emphatically to deny her the use of her own name. Gradgrind clearly orders Sissy through a pair of imperative statements that she is not to use that name. Moreover, with a comic recursiveness he directs Sissy to direct her father not to use the nickname. In this first conversational
exchange, Gradgrind goes on to employ five indirect speech acts that elicit imperative responses and eleven direct imperatives.

An almost frantic reliance on this sentence structure occurs shortly after this brief exchange with Sissy Jupe. Gradgrind asks the class why it would be inappropriate to paper a room with pictures of horses. The expectation is that some bright young utilitarian mind will correctly deduce that a horse is just what Bitzer had previously defined it: "Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring. . . ." (3) Only a misguided thrall of Fancy would want such creatures depicted on a wall. Nonetheless, "one corpulent slow boy, with a wheezy manner of breathing" ventured to respond that "he wouldn't paper a room at all, but would paint it" (4). Gradgrind's flurry of imperatives indicates the error of this suggestion: "'You must paper it . . . whether you like it or not. Don't tell us you wouldn't paper it. What do you mean, boy?" In addition to being a coherent factor, then, Gradgrind's use of the imperative forms a shield that protects his personal philosophy. Any attack on that philosophy—even one as unintended as that of the corpulent boy—is beaten back with the self-assuring force of imperative sentences.

Mr. Gradgrind is not above using both discourse tactics discussed to silence those who oppose his will. Propelled by
the notion that Mr. Sleary's horse show might be corrupting the youths of the class, Gradgrind travels to the local site of the circus and surveys the crowd. To his surprise, he finds "Louisa [his daughter] peeping with all her might through a hole in a deal board and his own mathematical Thomas [his son] abasing himself on the ground to catch but a hoof of the graceful equestrian Tyrolean flower-act" (9). Gradgrind immediately recalls the word of power from the first chapter: "Thomas, though I have the fact before me, I find it difficult to believe that you, with your education and resources, should have brought your sister to a scene like this" [my emphasis] (10). On discovering that Louisa had been the instigator, Gradgrind seeks refuge in imperatives by commanding that she "Say not another word .... You are childish. I will hear no more."

A final aspect of Gradgrind's coherent discourse is his willingness to string together long series of questions and answers. In discourse analysis, the principal value of Speech Act theory is "that it provides an account of how some apparently formally unconnected utterances go together in conversational discourse to form a coherent sequence" (Brown & Yule 222-23). Interrogative sequences provide strong coherence, and it has already been demonstrated that Gradgrind uses this utterance style to elicit what he considers rational, controlled responses from conversants. What is more interesting is how he conducts interrogative
sequences in what amount to monologues that weigh factors of Utilitarian calculus against one another.

One particular incident foregrounds Gradgrind's long-winded interrogative sequence concerning the marriage of his daughter to Mr. Bounderby. According to the opening of Chapter Eight, Mr. Gradgrind had once overheard Louisa begin a conversation by saying, "'Tom, I wonder'" whereupon the elder Gradgrind "stepped forth into the light and said, 'Louisa, never wonder!'" (37). Dickens continues the point with a brief editorial aside on the nature of Utilitarian thinkers: "Never wonder. By means of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, settle everything somehow, and never wonder" (38). This passage prepares the reader for the arithmetic approach that Gradgrind suggests to Louisa in deciding whether or not the latter should accept Mr. Bounderby's offer of marriage. In one of his longest speeches of the book, Gradgrind demonstrates the way that a self-referential, interrogative sequence can close off any other would-be interlocutors—in effect, giving Gradgrind sole possession of the ability to make conversation.

The father broaches the subject of marriage to his daughter in Chapter Fifteen. He begins by congratulating Louisa for the firm ground that he assumes her rigid education has given her: "You are not impulsive, you are not romantic, you are accustomed to view everything from the strong dispassionate ground of reason and calculation" (74).
Again, his assumptions take the form of imperatives, but in this instance, he begins to doubt the force of this structure because Louisa "said never a word." When the entire subject of the discussion is finally revealed, Louisa interjects a new ingredient—emotion—into her father's assumed picture of the world. She seizes control of the discourse through the use of interrogatives. When finally given a chance to speak, Louisa asks, "Father, . . . do you think I love Mr. Bounderby?" (74)

This bit of conversation is the first moment in the text that another character poses a question to Mr. Gradgrind that stymies his ability to respond. Not only is Louisa usurping a discourse style, the interrogative, that is the familiar domain of her father, but she also imposes upon him the necessity to respond to a question about an emotion. The fact that his philosophy leaves him unable to assess the question is reflected in his confused discourse: "Mr. Gradgrind was extremely discomfited by this unexpected question. 'Well, my child," he returned, "I--really--cannot take upon myself to say" (74). Louisa, as her father had under like circumstances, presses the advantage she senses by phrasing more questions along similar lines. Next, she queries, "do you ask me to love Mr. Bounderby?" (74) and concludes with "does Mr. Bounderby ask me to love him?" (75)

Certainly, the methodical approach and discourse style
images that of her father, but the emotional realm of
Louisa's conversation leaves Gradgrind unable to respond.

Gradgrind's rhetorical impasse is a telling moment. In
his study on rules and norms governing discourse within a
community, Anthony Wootton admits that "people are socialized
into being competent norm users" (55). Nevertheless, Wootton
goes on to write that individuals, skilled in one system of
communication, may subvert or evade the norms in subtle ways
(55-58). Dickens demonstrates how the individual, Louisa,
might employ the norm of discourse, the interrogative, to
subvert her father's intentions. Gradgrind is left with the
necessity to discover (or recover) a mode of expression that
answers his daughter's terse,
forceful disruptions in his Utilitarian consciousness.

In this instance, Gradgrind returns to a formula that
has stood him in good stead throughout the novel: "Why, my
dear Louisa . . . I would advise you (since you ask me) to
consider this question, as you have been accustomed to
consider every other question, simply as one of tangible
Fact" (75). In effect, he refuses to answer her questions
and poses, instead, a series of questions of his own. These
interrogatives begin with the predictable "Now, what are the
Facts of this case?" In its entirety, this speech continues
for twenty-five lines in the Norton text and re-establishes
Gradgrind's pre-eminence as the autocrat of discourse in his
household.
Dickens crafts his paternal character's long speech so as to eliminate Louisa's question about love from the equation. Gradgrind centers his inquiry into the suitability of the marriage on the question of age:

You are, we will say in round numbers, twenty years of age; Mr. Bounderby is, we will say in round numbers, fifty. There is some disparity in your respective years, but in your means and positions, there is none; on the contrary, there is a great suitability.

Inherent in the humor of the passage is the underlying theme that Utilitarian mathematics progresses more by means of faulty rationalizations than by objective realities. Gradgrind is willing to reduce two lives to "round numbers" and then admits through understatement that there is "some disparity" in the ages. Even this equivocating admission is swept aside by the couple's relative "means and positions."

With his usual penchant for dealing in whole numbers, Gradgrind pursues this question further by insisting that a grander inspection of marriage facts is warranted: "In considering this question, it is not unimportant to take into account the statistics of marriage, so far as they have yet been obtained, in England and Wales." He remarks to Louisa that in three-fourths of such marriages "between parties of very unequal ages," the elder party is the bridegroom. The conversational implicature is that since Bounderby is the
elder party in their proposed union, Louisa should feel vindicated through the agency of statistics. Gradgrind augments this enumeration by adding that "among the natives of the British possessions in India, also in a considerable part of China, and among the Calmucks of Tartary, the best means of computation yet furnished us by travellers, yield similar results." Armed with this extended information, he assumes that the aforementioned disparity in ages "almost ceases to be a disparity, and (virtually) all but disappears."

This passage demonstrates Dickens's development of staging in the speeches of Gradgrind by blending the interrogative and imperative forms and lexical reiteration of the word "facts" to create cohesion. In his work, The Thread of Discourse, J. E. Grimes indicates that staging is a tool wielded by an author who intends to bring a character in concert with a thematic idea: "Every clause, sentence, paragraph, episode, and discourse is organized around a particular element that is taken as its point of departure. It is as though the speaker presents what he wants to say from a particular perspective" (323). According to Brown and Yule, a writer's or a speaker's "overall rhetorical strategy of presentation" may engage in staging "to convince his listener of the truth of what he is saying by adding credible supporting details, to persuade his listener to a course of action, or to shock of surprise" (148).
An important facet of Dickens's staging technique demonstrated in the marriage speech is the flouting of the Gricean maxims of quantity and relevance. Not unlike Alfred Jingle's overly extended speech habit in *The Pickwick Papers*, Gradgrind's effort provides too much information, and, as it turns out, information that is simply not relevant to the argument. Just how, for example, Louisa's questions about love and marriage logically precede a generalization about marriage habits among the Calmucks of Tartary is not clear. What is abundantly clear in this discourse is that Dickens stages conversation meant to persuade not only Louisa to marry Mr. Bounderby but also to persuade the reader that Utilitarian logic is nonsense. Nevertheless, Gradgrind's discourse aims are admirably accomplished through this speech. He silences Louisa's voice and substitutes his own Utilitarian rhetoric. The inexorable sum of his calculations here adds up to the marriage of Louisa to Mr. Bounderby.

Near the end of Book the Second, Dickens reveals the false logic of the Utilitarian position not only in the failure of Louisa's marriage, but also in the beginning of the failure of Gradgrind's own rhetoric. A critical plot event immediately testifies to the thematic idea of failure. Louisa flees an oppressive, loveless marriage and bitterly complains to her father that the training he offered throughout her youth has left her unable to cope with the world; in fact, she has come to "curse the hour in which I
was born to such a destiny" (164). In a series of paragraph-length statements, she upbraids Gradgrind for robbing her of emotion and leaving her "to the frost and blight that have hardened and spoiled me" (165). Louisa affirms that had she been allowed from birth to grope blindly through the world, "I should have been a million times wiser, happier, more loving, more contented, more innocent and human in all good respects, than I am with the eyes I have" (165).

The effect of this polemic against his efforts to raise the perfect model of new education is reflected in Gradgrind's discourse. Instead of initiating conversation, he is limited to brief responses to Louisa's questions. In two pages and through nearly 100 lines of accusations and confessions on Louisa's part, Gradgrind is limited to ten short lines. Some are very brief indeed: "Yes, Louisa" (164 & 165), "No. No, my poor child," and "O no, no. No, Louisa" (165), or "And you so young, Louisa!" and "Louisa!" (166). Even the longest of these is atypical of Gradgrind's normal discourse pattern: "What can I do, child? Ask me what you will" (166). Dickens initiates the destruction of Gradgrind's rhetorical style by segmenting the character's speech into information units that share three particular qualities: brevity, the use of a locative in each, and internal pause definition.

M. A. K. Halliday writes that speakers package discourse into information units and each speaker "is free to decide
where each information unit begins and ends, and how it is organized internally" ("Notes" 200). In the case of Gradgrind, Dickens may have intentionally shaped a context in which the character's information units are pre-determined in length and quality. With Louisa dominating the conversation and concluding most of her units in this passage with interrogatives, Gradgrind is limited to short responses that strictly follow his daughter's topic. In addition, these fragments of discourse are remarkable by the often exclamatory use of the direct address ("Louisa!"). When he does not use his daughter's name directly, Gradgrind employs the word "child" as a locative. The reason his information units are attenuated is obvious—Louisa won't let him dominate discourse as she had in the past. The effect of the constant use of the locative is more complex.

Gradgrind's redundant use of the direct address demonstrates an individual who seems to have to remind himself with whom he is speaking. He cries out "Louisa!" with incredulity as this member of his own family rants against his carefully planned existence. In his study Meaning and Discourse, John Henry Clippinger writes that "The lexicon of a speaker acts to match concepts and their role requirements with the definitions and grammatical features of words" (86). Until this point, Gradgrind had been satisfied with his lexicon in which, for example, "horse" was clearly defined by its concrete description or
use; no subjective emotional values were ever placed on a horse. Now, however, his own daughter suddenly becomes a puzzlement and a challenge to the neatness of his epistemic.

Now, the word Louisa no longer matches a "concept" or a "role requirement" in his lexicon. Perhaps this is why Dickens represents Gradgrind as finally resorting to the address "child"—the father infantilizes his daughter in order to begin a figurative learning process since he begins here to learn about the power of emotion.

A third feature of Gradgrind's discourse here is the use of internal pauses. A number of linguists have worked on pause identification usually in concert with research on intonation (Chaffe, 1979; Brown, Currie & Wentworthy, 1980; Deese, 1980). These researchers usually deal with pause-defined information units; that is, they attempt to use pause phenomena to discover ways that speakers establish the limits of an information unit or speech. It is impossible to time the length of pauses that occur before Gradgrind's speeches, but it is clear at least three times that there is no pause at the end of the speech—Louisa simply interrupts his discourse. Internally, the speeches are relatively filled with pauses given the few words per information unit.

Consider again two pleading outbursts: "No. No, my poor child" and "No no, no. No, Louisa" (165). Although no information as to the exact length of the pause is unavailable without the presence of the speaker himself, it
is clear that his discourse style is broken by pauses indicated by Dickens's punctuation.

If this paper were a study in poetry, the term caesura might be applicable in explicating Gradgrind's discourse with his daughter at the conclusion of book two. Usually a pause in a line of verse, caesura is described by C. Hugh Holman in his handbook of literary terms as being "an instrument of prose rhythm." Perhaps, then, the use of the literary term is profitable here. Indeed, the thesis of Roger Fowler's Linguistics as Social Discourse is that "insofar as poetics concerns itself with verbal art," linguistics and poetics should not be adversarial: "I think the two subjects ought to be experienced as in dialogue, in a state of mutual critique" (162). Thus, when Dickens structured Gradgrind's caesura-filled discourse for this section, the author may have had a manifold purpose in mind. Certainly, the breaks create a rhythm that stresses the negative reception the father has for his daughter's new attitudes. Additionally, the pauses demonstrate the hesitancy with which Gradgrind has newly been struck. He has completely lost the self-assuredness of the opening paragraph of Hard Times—a paragraph remarkable for its want of pauses. Dickens has given this character a faltering speech habit that reflects the loss of confidence the latter will endure throughout the remainder of the novel.

This change of character is immediately noticeable in the first chapter of Book the Third. Intent on extending
some comfort to his daughter, Gradgrind enters Louisa's bedroom the morning following the abandonment of her marriage. Dickens describes the altered manner of discourse that afflicts the father: "He spoke in a subdued and troubled voice, very different from his usual dictatorial manner; and was often at a loss for words" (168). As the two discuss the events of the past evening, Gradgrind speaks "slowly, and with hesitation" about his doubts (169). Finally, he explains his new understanding in a speech that will set the pattern for his discourse style as the novel concludes:

"Some persons hold," he pursued, still hesitating, "that there is a wisdom of the Head, and that there is a wisdom of the Heart. I have not supposed so; but, as I have said, I mistrust myself now. I have supposed the head to be all-sufficient. It may not be all-sufficient; how can I venture this morning to say it is! If that other kind of wisdom should be what I have neglected, and should be the instinct that is wanted Louisa--" (170)

As Gradgrind discovers his social context shifted from faith to doubt in "the system," Dickens shifts the character's style of speech. Halliday has written that "the form of language has been determined by the functions it has evolved to serve" (Explorations 7). Perhaps fulfilling a part of F. R. Leavis's laudatory remarks, Dickens recognizes
that if he would remove Gradgrind's Utilitarian context for language, then he must also remove Gradgrind's former style. The hesitation that Gradgrind experiences verbally is based on the fact that he must "mistrust myself now." The character is forced to operate on new ground; he is forced to deal with the emotions that precariously shape a human's passage through life. Indeed, he learns that he is not fully competent to converse with his daughter on this new footing. Note that the speech cited above comes to a fragmental pause with a subordinate clause. "If," says Mr. Gradgrind, he has neglected the "wisdom of the Heart"--but he cannot finish the thought. In this altered social context, Dickens represents Gradgrind as being unable either to solace Louisa or to regain his past confidence in his discourse style.

This problem is compounded as the book works towards its conclusion. In Chapter Three, Bounderby faces Gradgrind for the first time since the departure of Louisa. Gradgrind attempts to stall his friend with promises of reconciliation, but the effort is futile since the former's mistrust in his own ability to think and communicate is at question:

I think there are--Bounderby, you will be surprised to hear me say this--I think there are qualities in Louisa, which--which have been harshly neglected, and--and a little perverted. And--and I would suggest to you, that--that if you would
kindly meet me in a timely endeavor to leave her to her better nature for a while—and to encourage it to develop itself by tenderness and consideration—it—it would be better for the happiness of all of us. (183)

The dash, prominent in Jingle's speech habit as a means of controlling discourse, here only represents Gradgrind's indecisiveness. Jingle's dashes create ellipses that engage his listeners and the reader in supplying text, but Gradgrind merely strings out his discourse by stumbling over conjunctions and pronouns. Typographically and syntactically, Dickens represents the fact that Gradgrind's ability to generate cohesive speech, one of the character's primary discourse strengths, is faltering. These are indeed hard times for Gradgrind who, although he has seen the collapse of his former social context, must communicate with Bounderby who still expects Utilitarian epistemic behind discourse.

In addition to using the dash, Dickens toys with the device he employed to characterize Gradgrind in the novel's first chapter—namely, redundancy. In that first speech, Gradgrind's reiteration of the word facts is meant, so he believes, to demonstrate the immutability of his search for the perfect educational system. As Felix Martinez-Bonati suggests, the discourse of a fictional work "unresistingly unfolds as a vision of the world" (34). By Book the Third,
redundancy has lost its use as a literary device; here, Dickens employs it as a linguistic sign to underscore Gradgrind's vision of self-doubt. The character begins "I think there are" but breaks off only to begin again "I think there are." Rather than serving Gradgrind's rhetorical purpose (as did repeating the word facts) this redundancy serves Dickens's purpose in revealing a shift in perspective about his character. Gradgrind is plagued rather than aided by redundancy; connective words such as "and" and "that" and the reference pronoun "it" are repeated. Normally cohesive elements, these words ironically highlight the lack of internal cohesion. The string that constitutes a sentence becomes broken, as if the speaker himself mistrusts his next clause or phrase.

*Hard Times* reaches its conclusion as Gradgrind discovers the extent to which he is helpless to communicate in the context of a world governed not by statistics but by emotions. In Chapter Seven, Gradgrind prepares to meet with his criminally suspect son (called "the Whelp" in the chapter) at Sleary's circus. Dickens writes that "Mr. Gradgrind sat down forlorn, on the Clown's performing chair in the middle of the ring" (215). Such detail aptly represents Gradgrind's situation in the following chapter, titled "Philosophical." Finally, the archetypal proponent of Utilitarianism, Bitzer, comes face-to-face with his fallen master. The elder "philosopher" speaks first: "Bitzer,"
said Mr. Gradgrind, broken down, and miserably submissive to him, "have you a heart?" (217) Surely, Dickens means for the reader to recall the first meeting between these two in the opening book. As in Book One, Gradgrind here employs the discourse mode that had brought him success, the interrogative. But this Gradgrind is "broken down" and has yet to encounter fully the difficulties of communicating in this new idiom.

Moreover, the nature of the interrogative as a speech act changes from the first to the final meeting between the two characters. As noted very early, Gradgrind's initial use of the interrogative carried the impetus of an imperative and illuminated a facet of Gradgrind's domineering persona. His command to answer was shaped by Gradgrind's confidence in the unshakability of his philosophy. Now, the interrogative is a speech act that is more indicative of a plea. Rather than posing a question for an immediate and indicated response, Gradgrind is "miserably submissive" and plaintive.

The former educator might have expected the answer his question elicits from Bitzer:

"The circulation, Sir," returned Bitzer, smiling at the oddity of the question, "couldn't be carried on without one. No man, Sir, acquainted with the facts established by Harvey relating to the circulation of the blood, can doubt that I have a heart." (217-18)
Dickens's sense of matching character, theme, and language is at its best in this response. This speech holds a mirror up to the imperative directed at this same speaker in the second chapter when Gradgrind said, "Bitzer . . . your definition of a horse" (3). In that earlier incident, Sissy Jupe had been incapable of defining a horse; to her, the polyphonic word meant "love" and "father" and "life" and too many other ideas to capture in a simple denotation. Bitzer showed then and shows now that he is a man who absorbed Gradgrind's philosophy—a man "acquainted with the facts." He sardonically enjoys the power he feels through "the system," and the pupil assumes the position of master. Bitzer completely ignores the connotative intentions of his old teacher at the use of the word "heart" and smiles "at the oddity of the question."

Communication between Gradgrind and Bitzer is doomed to fail. Dickens shows the reader that the two characters are speaking the same language, but under differing contexts that make the transmission of meaning incomplete. In addition, Gradgrind is himself new at speaking the language of emotion; his want of a complete lexicon disables his attempts to appeal to Bitzer on that basis. Bitzer explains, in the idiom of reason, that he will pursue a felony prosecution against Gradgrind's son because it will generate increased influence at work. Using an air of confidence borrowed from Gradgrind's old habits, Bitzer assures his old mentor, "I
have gone over the calculations in my mind" (218). To this speech, Dickens represents Gradgrind as "stretching out his hands as though he would have said, See how miserable I am!", but he does not appeal to Bitzer on behalf of his emotions. Unable to confront his old philosophy and too inexperienced to speak from the position given him by Louisa, Gradgrind has lost the efficacy of his speech.

The summative voice that explains the moral of this final scene belongs neither to the narrator nor to either of the two primary antagonists discussed above. Dickens’s sense of irony is keen, and his choice of commentators is itself a condemnation of Gradgrind’s educated, philosophical voice of reason. Mr. Sleary steps forward at the end of Chapter Eight and offers to secret young Gradgrind out of the country. The powerless Mr. Gradgrind "overwhelmed him [Sleary] with thanks" (220), and Mr. Sleary was given this occasion to expound upon his own philosophy. In what seems at first an anti-climax to the clash of philosophies, Sleary remarks that the old dog belonging to Sissy Jupe’s father had recently returned from a great distance and unknown parts. Gradgrind shows that he still hasn’t mastered the emotive world by blandly stating that "[a dog's] instinct ... is surprising" and determining that the reason the dog could find the circus was clear: "His scent ... being so fine" (221). Sleary's reaction is filled with a sense of wonder that enables him to discourse at length on the dog's poor
condition: "he wath in very bad condition, he wath lame, and pretty well blind" (222). To Sleary, the motivating force was love, and the return of the dog signalled that in some distant place, Sissy Jupe's father had died.

Gradgrind has just enough understanding of the world's governing context to observe that Sissy "will believe in his affection to the last moment of her life." On her love for the rather shiftless individual, Sleary presents his own (and Dickens's) view of the world:

It theemth to prethent two thingth to a perthon, don't it Thquire? . . . one, that there ith a love in the world, not all Thelf-interetht after all, but thomething very different; t'other, that it hath a way of ith own of calculating or not calculating, whith thomehow or another ith at leathth ath hard to give a name to, ath the wayth of the dogth ith! (222)

This eloquent statement of theme is put into the mouth of the most idiosyncratic speaker of the novel. Dickens schools Gradgrind here that love and truth—not the facts—are felt and not calculated.

Robert Golding comments that Mr. Sleary's "interpolated jargon is so unintelligible that the forbidding Bounderby and Gradgrind have to be given translations" (40-41). Sleary's speech is "unintelligible" to Gradgrind because of more than the horseman's lisp. Dickens manipulates language to create
a paradox between form and theme. Gradgrind's rhetorical prowess dominates discourse early, but by the conclusion of *Hard Times*, it is clear that the comic, lisping Sleary speaks the reality of human nature more clearly. Gradgrind surrenders the right of the last word to his low companion: "Mr. Gradgrind looked out of the window, and made no reply" (222). Perhaps this is Dickens's most damning comment on Utilitarianism—that the philosophy is self-reflexive and internally cohesive, but it leaves its strongest proponent helpless and speechless in the face of common emotions.

Dickens's manipulation of Gradgrind's speech habit coincides with that character's loss of philosophy. In effect, the author devalues the context of Gradgrind's calculations by dissolving that character's discourse style. The world of emotion is left intact, but Bentham's disciple has no voice in that world. The irony of Gradgrind's name is fulfilled in his faltering discourse style. Armed with his catchword, "Facts," that represents his Utilitarian precepts and expected social ramifications, he strolled mightily into conversation with students, adherents and opponents alike. His expectation was that his long, self-reflexive speeches were delivered fully in a context that would conquer any objections; his speech habit was the very grindstone that would erode and reshape other's ideas. Instead, the inexorable world of emotion formed a context that itself ground down Mr. Gradgrind.
CHAPTER IV

RHETORICAL STOPPAGE: THE DICKENS MENAGERIE OF GROWLERS, SHOUTERS, TWITCHERS, AND MUTES

In Hamlet, Act II, scene ii, the title character has put on his "antic disposition" and refuses to communicate with Polonius except through puns, jests, and riddles. Suspecting that there is more to Hamlet's remarks than simple insanity, the Lord Chancellor utters his famous aside: "Though this be madness, yet there is method in't" (211). F. R. Leavis has not been shy in calling Dickens a Shakespeare of the nineteenth century, so perhaps a comparison between those authors' characters is not without some usefulness. What is true for Hamlet is also true for some of Dickens's most idiosyncratic characters. The Victorian has created stories whose characters of surpassing clarity deserve to be investigated for the method behind their hyperbolic customs. John Kucich discusses these persons of fantastic habits as a part of his work Excess and Restraint in the Novels of Charles Dickens. Kucich describes the Hamlet-like utility of Dickens's characters:

in Dickens there is a high level of nonsense. By nonsense, however, I do not mean that which is lacking in sense; I mean that which actively empties sense of its content, or that which reveals
the normal itself to be absurd. This war on sense is at the very heart of parody and caricature, which transforms the commonplace into the ridiculous. (7)

For Kucich, the world of Dickens takes on a deliberate form "rather than being merely capricious."

Thus far, this thesis has concentrated on discovering the ways in which the idiolects of specific Dickensian characters serve to transmit not only messages of immediate textual import, but also ideas that Dickens holds about the nature of society. This analysis validates Michel Foucault's hypothesis that

in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized, and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality. (221)

The present chapter, however, is concerned with those characters who do not or can not successfully communicate through ordinary means. If Foucault is correct, then these are characters who have failed to ward off some power or danger that Dickens believes society holds for its weaker members. Unlike Hamlet, whose discourse is arguably a matter of choice, these unfortunates are afforded only the narrowest of communication thresholds. Nevertheless, the failure of
their discourse communicates a greater understanding of Dickens's social comment.

Rhetorician Jim Corder has likened communication to a traffic intersection. As long as the rhetor in a given conversation is satisfied that the cross traffic allows for communication to progress, normal discourse takes place. However, Corder suggests that any one of a variety of social, economic, religious, linguistic, personal and other impediments may slow communication. In some rare cases (and Corder theorizes some mental diseases to be among these cases) a "rhetorical stoppage" may occur to thwart all discourse. The previous chapter discussed the manner in which Gradgrind's discourse became slowed, if not actually stopped, by just such an intersection where competing epistemics, reason and emotion, collided. More severe stoppages are evidenced elsewhere in Dickens's novels, and by investigating them we can see the "powers and dangers" that Dickens feared might threaten individuals.

Four specific characters from three novels serve to illustrate the idiolects that Dickens creates to manifest the ability of society to silence its own constituents. First, the tumbling waif from the docks in The Old Curiosity Shop, Tom Scott, offers the reader a human turned animal in search of a means of communication. Second, Mr. F's Aunt from Little Dorrit characterizes the idea that when words are nonsense, volume and interruption may carry meaning.
Finally, two characters from *Bleak House*, Grandmother Smallweed and Mr. Jellyby, are silenced by two major themes of that book, the search for money and the monomania of "missions." In their own ways, each of these characters is rhetorically stopped, but the nature of the stoppage tells a tale for them.

The *Old Curiosity Shop* introduces Dickens's readers to the idea of a rhetorically stopped character in the figure of Tom Scott. This child lives in the shadow (ironically so, given its probable size) of the man who describes himself as "a little hunchy villain and a monster" (85), Daniel Quilp. It is the latter character who attracts all of the critical discussion concerning idiolect. Quilp possesses the ability to speak with any class of people but is awed by none; along life's way, he delivers such deliciously cruel lines such as the one he utters on first meeting the mother and baby brother of Kit Nubbles: "Don't be frightened, mistress . . . . Your son knows me; I don't eat babies; I don't like 'em" (223). Golding underscores the importance of Quilp's speech patterns to *The Old Curiosity Shop* when he observes that "It is above all Quilp who, through the inhuman vitality of his parodic speech patterns, drives along with irresistible force the darker side of the novel" (95). Calling Quilp's satiric language "well oiled and versatile," Garrett Stewart contends that the Quilp--Nell polarization generates one of the pivotal themes of the novel (97).
Perhaps the reason Tom Scott is lost in this fascination with Quilp is that the former says very little throughout the course of the novel. Nevertheless, an important point concerning the origin of *The Old Curiosity Shop* and the role of children in it is made by Ackroyd. The biographer recounts that this novel began, as had *Oliver Twist*, as a short story about a little child. Dickens realized the potential popularity of this conventionally melodramatic plot and decided to expand the story into the serial: "It is as if the plight of a solitary child provoked Dickens into full-scale conceiving and scheming and designing, as if it would not let him rest until he had (in Little Nell's case, literally) laid it to rest" (310). Given Dickens's well-known proclivity for writing about the problems associated with children in England (he had, after all, only just finished *Nicholas Nickleby* with its messages concerning education and child labor), it seems all the more valid to investigate Tom's unique discourse style.

When we first see Tom, he is an unnamed waif whose manner of deportment is inverse to that of the rest of the world. Quilp journeys from his lodging on Tower Hill to his dockside rooms, "a small rat-infested dreary yard called 'Quilp's Wharf,' in which were a little wooden counting-house burrowing all awry in the dust" (73). The apparition that greets him there, familiar enough to the owner, is singular in the mind of the reader:
the first object that presented itself to his view was a pair of very imperfectly shod feet elevated in the air with the soles upwards, which remarkable appearance was referable to the boy, who being of an eccentric spirit and having a natural taste for tumbling was now standing on his head and contemplating the aspect of the river under those uncommon circumstances. (87)

Standing guard over Quilp's possessions in this unsavory realm, Tom is greeted without much warmth. He waits for "the sound of his master's voice" to bring him to his feet, whereupon "as soon as his head was in its right position, Mr Quilp, to speak expressively in the absence of a better verb, 'punched it' for him" (87).

Immediately, three elements of the relationship that the two share are brought to light. First, the boy resorts to unconventional display mechanisms, tumbling on his head, to gain the attentions of Quilp. Second, the child almost never initiates discourse--leaving it to his master to call him to action. Third, there is a sadistic side to this relationship that is augmented by the master-slave dynamic. The physical violence that is a facet of their interaction is carefully controlled and never reaches the point where permanent injury results. This initial encounter between the two concludes with a pugilistic flair. The boy parries Quilp's continuing blows while taunting, "Come, you let me alone . . . . You'll
get something you won't like if you don't, and so I tell you." Quilp's reply is unrelenting: "'You dog,' snarled Quilp, 'I'll beat you with an iron rod, I'll scratch you with a rusty nail, I'll pinch your eyes, if you talk to me--I will'" (87).

In this scene, and elsewhere in the novel, Quilp makes good on his promised punishments. Four times in this encounter, the boy is addressed by the epithet "you dog," an appellation that is maintained until the conclusion of the text. Their discourse exchange is often characterized as consisting mainly of "snarls" or "growls." Quilp always controls his protege's discourse; when the boy continues to mutter after his beating, he desisted "when he looked round and saw that Quilp was following him with a steady look" (88). Curiously enough, the association is not one that either might seek to discontinue:

And here it may be remarked, that between this boy and the dwarf there existed a strange kind of mutual liking. How born or bred, or how nourished upon blows and threats on one side, and retorts and defiances on the other, is not to the purpose. (88)

Although Dickens states clearly that the boy "had the power to run away at any time," Tom continues in the company of the dwarf. In spite of the fact that the latter threatens severe injury ["Stand upon your head again, and I'll cut one of your feet off" (88)], the boy waits until his master enters
the counting house and promptly walks sentry duty on his hands around three of the four walls.

Dickens had described a relationship similar to that of Quilp and Tom in Oliver Twist. In the first appearance of Bill Sikes, the house breaker stops at the threshold of Fagin's haunts and "growled out these words" to his animal: "Come in, you sneaking warmint; wot are you stopping outside for, as if you was ashamed of your master! Come in!" (136) In answer to this beckoning, "A white shaggy dog, with his face scratched and torn in twenty different places, skulked into the room." Bill commands the dog to sit, and punctuates the command "with a kick, which sent the animal to the other side of the room." Not unlike Tom, Sikes's dog "appeared well used to it [such blows], however; for he coiled himself up in a corner very silently, without uttering a sound" (136).

Why does Tom submit to an inhuman relationship in which the advantages of the association seem to be one-sided? The child does derive the essential elements of existence from Quilp. In light of Maslow's Hierarchy, it becomes apparent that Tom receives shelter and sustenance from his master. Chapter the Fiftieth specifically describes "a savory meal" of "substantial comfort" that consisted of "hot rolls, butter, sugar, Yarmouth bloaters, and other articles" shared by the two characters (465). Although this might seem to be a meager enough life, consider that Nell and Grandfather
Trent wander in search for just these necessities—and it is Nell's plight that historically lent such tension to the serialization of the novel. If it is true that Quilp mistreats the child, it is also a fact that the former provides for Tom's continuance in the harsh environs of nineteenth-century London.

In addition, another of Maslow's elements, recognition or companionship, is met in this relationship. When Kit and Nell arrive at Quilp's wharf early in the novel, Tom picks a fight with Kit and refuses to leave off his belligerency until he has Quilp's full attention. Quilp separates the boys with his cudgel and proclaims, "I'll beat you to a pulp, you dogs" (94). Tom takes up the challenge in his usual snarling manner: "'Come, you drop that stick or it'll be worse for you,' said his boy, dodging round him and watching an opportunity to rush in" (94). The child finally does find an opening and attempts to wrest the stick from his master's grasp, but his failure sends him "reeling backwards, so that he fell violently upon his head" (94). Dickens clearly reveals that this action is precisely what Quilp desires from the boy since "the manoeuvre tickled Mr Quilp beyond description, and he laughed and stamped upon the ground as at a most irresistible jest" (94). In addition, Tom has what he values most—Quilp's full attention.

Tumbling and violence are forms of communication that
are anticipated and understood by Tom and Quilp. Donald Preziosi delineates the widest parameters of communication:

Communication, in the broadest sense, involves the transmission of information regarding the perception of similarities and differences. Any semiotic system is a complexly-ordered device for the cuing of such perceptions in given sensory channels and in conventionally-determined media.

(44)

In his work Course in General Linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure sees language as a system of signs viewed synchronically, or at a specific moment in time. A given sign is composed of two elements, the "signifier" (the sound or letter) and the "signified" (the thing or idea itself). Preziosi and Saussure generally apply their ideas to spoken communication, but a system of non-verbal semiotics is more relevant to the case of Tom and Quilp.

The signifier in Tom's information transmission is his tumbling. Although he never initiates spoken discourse, nonetheless, Tom's tumbling begins and ends almost all of the interactions with the dwarf. Not only does Tom twirl on his head in order to greet his master in the early chapter, but the boy also tumbles as a farewell: "Then Mr Quilp departed with the child and Kit in the boat, and the boy [Tom] revenged himself by dancing on his head at intervals on the extreme verge of the wharf, during the whole time they
crossed the river" (95). The question to be addressed, then, is what is signified by this unorthodox communication.

Brown and Yule define the interactional function of language as being that quality which expresses "social relations and personal attitudes" (1). Tom's non-verbal communication is a speech act that offers more than the apparent challenge to Quilp's bullying instincts. The literal standing on one's head is a plea for attention of a comic and a pathetic sort. Other than their utility as a greeting or a farewell, the tumbling and violence is most likely to occur when work or other people consume Quilp's attention and threaten Tom's security. He falls to these antics when Quilp leaves him on the dock in favor of Kit and Nell. Later, he offers to fight Kit for Nell's bird in Chapter the Thirteenth. As always, Quilp is instantly captivated by this display, and encourages the conflict by saying "Fight for it [the bird], you dogs, or I'll wring its neck myself" (161). Kit hopes to preserve the bird that it might be returned to Nell, but Tom's only interest is to "Wring its neck" as Quilp has suggested. Tom's precarious existence depends on communicating, through whatever means possible, his social relationship with his master.

Tom's antics also communicate his love and need to be loved. This is a speech act differing from the simple call for attention and is best illustrated in Chapter the Last in which Dickens writes a comically touching farewell to Tom
Quilp's body has been discovered and an inquest is called to determine a cause of death. At the inquest Tom is seen "shedding tears" and, not to forget his old habits, manifests "besides, a strong desire to assault the jury" (666). Society at large, however, will not allow his expressions, and Tom is restrained and forced from the courtroom. He employs the only avenue of communication that remains to him when, once outside, he "darkened its [the courtroom's] only window by standing on his head upon the sill, until he was dexterously tilted upon his feet again by a cautious beadle" (666). Thus, he protests against the court and sends a final farewell in remembrance of his old mentor. Dickens writes that as a suicide Quilp is treated according to an old custom and "buried with a stake through his heart in the centre of four lonely roads" (665). Tom recovers the body and buries Quilp after conferring with the widow.

For Dickens's children there is seldom a clear path to a better life because English society allowed no such path. For every Oliver rescued by a loving Brownlow, there are two dozen boys turned out of Fagin's haunts into the unforgiving streets. In The Old Curiosity Shop Kit rises to prosperity, but Nell dies, and Tom is forced to live a voiceless existence. Tom finds himself, as do so many children in Dickens's fictive universe, without place or sustenance: "Being cast upon the world by his master's death, he
determined to go through it upon his head and hands, and accordingly began to tumble for his bread" (666). At first, Tom's efforts as an entertainer are unsuccessful. He discovers that although "his art was in high repute," nevertheless, "his English birth [was] an insurmountable obstacle to his advancement." In short, another English waif who tumbles is a too familiar sight on the streets. Finally, Tom takes the name "of an Italian image lad . . . and afterwards tumbled with extraordinary success, and to overflowing audiences." In Dickens's estimate, English society does not want to hear another starving child, but it is willing to witness the dumb tumbling of a foreigner.

In The Old Curiosity Shop the child signifies by tumbling, but in Little Dorrit an aged character communicates by rantings that often intimate violence. Mr. F's Aunt appears before the reader a scant five times in the span of Little Dorrit's pages, yet her grating presence makes her memorable. Just as Quilp and Tom are an inseparable pair, so Flora and Mr. F's Aunt are divided halves of one personality. Golding views the two women as "two sides of the same coin . . . in contrast to the kind, tender, cheerful half of Flora's nature, an aggressively unpleasant side finds expression throughout Mr. F's Aunt" (167). James Kincaid agrees that "Mr. F's Aunt is a double figure, a symbolic completion of Flora, adding the maliciousness that has been drained out of her protector" (219).
The sour nature that both Golding and Kincaid mention is manifested in Mr. F's Aunt's idiolect. Three specific aspects of that idiolect will be explored in order to show some of the reasons Dickens crafted her discourse in such a strange manner. First, Mr. F's Aunt flouts the Gricean maxim of relevance with her peculiar expostulations. Second, her speech style is dialectical, a feature not found elsewhere in her social circle. Third, as the novel progresses her comments move from the impersonal to the personal in hostile intent.

Aside from her grim aspect [Dickens describes her face as appearing to have been damaged "in two or three places with some blunt instrument" (198)], Mr. F's Aunt is given to outbursts that perplex other characters:

[she had] a propensity to offer remarks in a deep warning voice, which, being totally uncalled for by anything said by anybody, and traceable to no association of ideas, confounded and terrified the mind. Mr F's Aunt may have thrown in these observations on some system of her own, and it may have been ingenious, or even subtle: but the key to it was wanted. (199)

The first and most apparent aspect of her discourse, then, is that she violates the Gricean maxim of relevance—indeed, she may be the very antithesis of relevance. Examples of her lack of conversational relevance are evidenced with Mr. F's
Aunt's every appearance. Her first utterance in the novel comes as the guests at a dinner party have been discussing the receipt of rents. "With a malevolent gaze" Mr. F's Aunt suddenly interjects, "When we lived at Henley, Barnes's gander was stole by tinkers" (199). Next, as she is being offered a glass of port, the venerable lady is heard to proclaim, "The Monument near London Bridge . . . was put up after the Great Fire of London; and the Great Fire of London was not the fire in which your uncle George's workshops was burned down" (200). No utterance from the mouth of Mr. F's Aunt throughout the entire novel is relevant in its context to the topic of conversation at the time.

Lack of relevance in Mr. F's Aunt must serve some thematic or textual function other than the representation of fact. No known type of aphasia, an "acquired language disorder that follows a focal brain lesion caused by a stroke, a tumor, a gunshot wound, or an infection" (Fromkin and Rodman 402), could physiologically account for her speech habit. Although aphasiacs may substitute one or more words for others, suffer from word-finding pauses, or alter normal word order, they do not substitute entire sentences as does Mr. F's Aunt. Certainly, the effect of her discourse is humorous. No reader could long ignore the rampant playfulness of a character who, into a discussion between businessmen concerning credit, interjects statements like, "You can't make a head and brains out of a knob with nothing
in it. You couldn't do it when your Uncle George was living; much less when he's dead" (319).

A second quality of Mr. F's Aunt's speech is its use of a lower class dialect. While Flora puts on the strained manners of someone on the periphery of genteel society, her relation makes no such pretensions. Mr. F's Aunt not only uses improper grammar ("workshops . . . was burned down"), she also employs words such as "arter," "for'ard," and "winder." Dialect results from communicative isolation (Fromkin and Rodman 254) and the effect here is to underscore Mr. F's Aunt's isolation from her discourse community.

A third facet necessary to evaluate Mr. F's Aunt's character is the progression of her discourse. In the early moments of the book, her comments do not seem to be directed at any particular event or towards any single individual. By the middle of Little Dorrit, Arthur Clennam becomes the special focus of her ire. On one visit to Flora's, Clennam is greeted by Mr. F's Aunt, who shouts to Flora, "He has a proud stomach, this chap . . . . Give him a meal of chaff!" (592). Even when not confronting Clennam directly, the older lady seems to be full of an unfocused hatred for some person. When Flora and Little Dorrit stop in a pie-shop, Mr. F's Aunt "took the present opportunity of addressing the following Sibyllic apostrophe . . . 'Bring him for'ard, and I'll chuck him out o' winder'" (889).
Unquestionably, Mr. F's Aunt suffers from rhetorical stoppage, but she is not entirely unable to comprehend and communicate with her surroundings. Like Tom Scott, her method of conveying information is to employ signifiers unlike those used by her discourse community. The malevolence of her demeanor reveals her condemnation of a social system. The first three times that outbursts are drawn from her, the topic of conversation centers on finance, credit, or ownership. Mr. F's Aunt is a possession. Flora goes to "fetch the legacy" that had been left to her in his will as a "part of his worldly substance" (198-99). Moreover, she has no name. Dickens remarks on the difficulty even of addressing her; "No man could say, 'Mr F's Aunt, will you permit me?'") (199). In a book that thematically revolves around the value of things, Mr. F's Aunt is stripped of her ability to protest against the role of "legacy" to which she has been relegated. This dialectically defamiliarized character reacts with anger, if communicated imperfectly through nonsense, when Flora pursues Clennam and his wealth. Golding writes that "Mr F's Aunt, like everyone else in the book, is unable to communicate, is a prisoner in a grotesque world of her own imaginings" (167). Society works effectively to silence the signifiers of her communication, but through Mr. F's Aunt, Dickens signifies his readiness to seize the spirit of avariciousness and "chuck him out o' winder!"
Another character whose rhetoric is stopped by avarice is Grandmother Smallweed in Bleak House. In fact, the similarities between the discourse of Mr. P's Aunt and Grandmother Smallweed are striking. The world of Little Dorrit falls between poverty and wealth, inside the Marshalsea and out. Ian Ousby sees much the same structure for Bleak House: "From the beginning, the narrative of Bleak House presupposes a correspondence between the external appearance of things and their inner condition" (382). Ousby interprets the chaos of the fog in the opening chapter to be "the outward manifestation of a deeper, moral disorder: a loss of coherence, vitality and connection." The characters' "struggle to understand the disordered environment" becomes a primary function of theme (382). This is a struggle that Grandmother Smallweed has lost from the moment that the reader finds her in the company of her family.

In Chapter 27 Dickens introduces the family of four who serve the poorer community as money lenders. Dickens's attitude towards their calling is aptly expressed as he describes the deceased patriarch of the family as "a horn-skinned, two-legged, money-getting species of spider, who spun webs to catch unwary flies . . . . The name of this old pagan's God was Compound Interest" (257). Among its living members, the Smallweeds count Grandmother and Grandfather Smallweed and the twin grandchildren, Bart and Judy. Because she fell "into a childish state," Dickens calls Grandmother
Smallweed the "only . . . child in the Smallweed family for several generations" (257). She possesses "such infantine graces as a total want of observation, memory, understanding, and interest, and an eternal disposition to fall asleep over the fire and into it." Thus, Dickens considers that she "undoubtedly brightened the family." Her husband describes her with the epithet, "brimstone magpie" (338, 642).

As stated above, the Grandmother's discourse habit shares attributes with that of Mr. F's Aunt. The matriarch of the Smallweed family is given to outbursts that do not contribute substantively to the conversation topic at the time. She violates the Gricean maxim of relevance by inappropriately interjecting unsolicited remarks of a questionable content. The first experience with this style comes shortly after the introduction of the family members. Grandfather Smallweed inquires of Judy when Bart may be expected home, and she responds "Ten Minutes" (259). The elder man is somewhat hard of hearing, so the conversation is extended:

"Hey?" [asks Grandfather Smallweed]

"Ten Minutes."—(Loud on the part of Judy)

"Ho!" says Grandfather Smallweed. "Ten minutes."

Grandmother Smallweed, who has been occupied with mumbling over some trivets on the stove, "hearing figures mentioned, connects them with money, and screeches, like a horrible old parrot without any plumage, 'Ten ten-pound notes!'"
As with Mr. F's Aunt, whose violent or threatening orations convey messages more by the context and less by word choice, Grandmother Smallweed's input reflects the family's continual preoccupation with money. Not unlike Chaucer's choleric Reeve, the bodies of the Smallweeds have been consumed by greed to the point that they "have been observed to bear a likeness to old monkeys with something depressing on their minds" (258). Unfortunately for Grandmother Smallweed, she does not keep the sort of polite company that Mr. F's Aunt shared—the latter more genteel lady at least has an obliging Mr. Pancks to occasionally acknowledge her remarks. Grandmother Smallweed only attracts flying objects thrown at her head by her spouse.

The relationship between the espoused Smallweeds develops along consistent lines. Every time a number is mentioned by her mate, Grandmother Smallweed responds as if the topic concerns money. When Grandfather Smallweed mentions to George that a mutual acquaintance has been known to be hard on employees "twenty times," Grandmother Smallweed is instantly roused to say, "Twenty thousand pounds, twenty twenty-pound notes in a moneybox, twenty guineas, twenty million twenty percent, twenty--" (267). Her discourse is ended only by the cushion that the grandfather hurls. When Smallweed mentions that his son "died fifteen years ago," the grandmother pounces on the chance to discourse on the loss of her son by saying,
"Fifteen hundred pound. Fifteen hundred pound in a black box, fifteen hundred pound locked up, fifteen hundred pound put away and hid!" (261-62) At least on this occasion, she concludes her statement before the inevitable flung object finds her head.

Every utterance from Grandmother Smallweed gives voice to the obsession that preoccupies the rest of her family—money. Acquisitiveness consumes all of her relations. In the case of her brother, Krook, this last statement may be taken literally. J. Hillis Miller writes that many of the characters in Bleak House are "impotent victims" who are destroyed by a spiritual condition that "is able to get inside its victims, and inhabit them as a destructive force" (954). Grandmother Smallweed rouses from her torpor only enough to pay homage to the desire that compels her life. The rest of the time she toys with trivets "like a bird that is not to sing" (423).

In the world of Bleak House, rhetorical stoppage is not limited to a specific social stratum. The destructive spiritual conditions that Hillis Miller discusses silence a character other than Grandmother Smallweed—a character whose gentle nature makes him specially vulnerable. No person is more overwhelmed by the social elements that come under Dickens's scrutiny than Mr. Jellyby. On first glance, he may seem to be a mere ancillary figure necessary to people the Jellyby home with the correct number and sort of members.
But Mr. Jellyby becomes a silent reminder that beneath the crushing weight of society's expectations, some worthy, pathetic individuals lose their lives.

Mr. Jellyby makes his quiet way into the novel (along with his more outspoken wife) in Chapter 4, "Telescopic Philanthropy." The characters of Mrs. Jellyby with her penchant for distant missions and of Caddy Jellyby, who struggles to womanhood with Ester's help, draw the critics' attention. G. K. Chesterton lauds Dickens for both, finding that "the passages about Mrs. Jellyby and her philanthropic schemes show Dickens at his best in his old . . . satiric manner" and the sections describing Caddy relate "how a girl goes right" (156). In her own narration, Esther is only secondarily drawn to notice Mr. Jellyby long after the young woman has met the other members of the clan. Esther comments that while Mrs. Jellyby was discoursing on the natives of Borrioboola-Gha during dinner, "I was a little curious to know who a mild bald gentleman in spectacles was, who dropped into a vacant chair" (41). Miss Summerson recalls that "As he never spoke a word, he might have been a native [of Borrioboola-Gha], but for his complexion." True to Esther's initial impression, Mr. Jellyby never speaks a word except on the occasion of Caddy's impending wedding.

Two forces, the world of finance and his wife's interest in philanthropy, conspire to rob Mr. Jellyby of his ability to communicate. Dickens portrays the father of the chaotic
Jellyby household as being so unassuming that it is impossible to imagine him in business for himself. Indeed, early in the book Caddy tells Esther that his business is faltering, and by Chapter 23 "The name of poor Mr. Jellyby had appeared in the list of Bankrupts" (295). Esther tells the reader that Mr. Jellyby is sequestered in his dining room with two accountants and piles of paper, still unable to comprehend his affairs. On wandering into the dining room, Esther and Caddy see "Mr. Jellyby in his spectacles, forlornly fenced into a corner by the great dining-table and the two gentlemen, he seemed to have given up the whole thing, and to be speechless and insensible" (295).

During this crisis, Mrs. Jellyby remains equally insensible to anything that does not concern mission efforts in Africa. The irony, of course, is that she might have been more philanthropic at home. Far from being provided aid or comfort, Mr. Jellyby and his resources, both financial and personal, have been drained to the point that he is helpless. Esther notices the decline in his already low estate and writes, "Poor Mr. Jellyby . . . very seldom spoke, and almost always sat when he was at home with his head against the wall" (372). When she and Caddy attempt a house-wide cleaning project, "he came in regularly every evening, and sat without his coat, with his head against the wall; as though he would have helped us, if he had known how" (372). Dickens renders up a human who is bereft of all ability to
take action against a sea of troubles. The wall against
which Mr. Jellyby's head is perpetually laid communicates a
two-sided image to the reader. First, Jellyby is so weak
that his life has come to a point where his actions lack any
efficacy and he must simply lay his head down. Second, the
wall itself may indicate the irresolvable problems for which
Jellyby has no answer—to which he has nothing to say.

Mr. Jellyby does speak once in the course of this long
novel. On the night before she is to marry Prince Turveydrop
and leave Mr. Jellyby in the sole care of his wife, Caddy
worries aloud to Esther about what will become of her father
(who is shedding tears with his head against a wall). When
Caddy sobes aloud, "What a disappointed life," Mr. Jellyby
speaks: "'My dear Caddy!' said Mr. Jellyby, looking slowly
round from the wall. It was the first time, I think, I ever
heard him say three words together" (373). Mr. Jellyby
attempts to break his rhetorical stoppage before lapsing
into failure. He stands by his daughter and opens his mouth
"a great many times" and shakes "his head in a melancholy
manner" (374). Finally, coaxed by Caddy whose arms go around
his neck, Mr. Jellyby utters one complete sentence, "Never
have a Mission, my dear child!"

Of all the characters who are robbed of their facility
to communicate, Mr. Jellyby seems to have Dickens's greatest
sympathy. He is sustained by the happiness of his daughter's
marriage, and the place he wins in her home is secure. When
Esther visits Caddy and Prince at their residence, the narrator is assured that Mr. Jellyby visits every night. Esther further notices "the mark of Mr. Jellyby's head against the wall" in the corner of the room and writes, "It was consolatory to know that he had found such a resting-place for it" (473). Later, while Esther attends Caddy during a severe illness, Miss Suramerson describes Mr. Jellyby's daily visits. He would "ask Caddy in his meek voice how she was, and then sit down with his head against the wall, and make no attempt to say anything more, I liked him very much" (603).

In his chapter on "Character and Narration," W. J. Harvey calls Esther "a moral touchstone." Harvey notes that Esther's narration is devoid of irony, and he argues that she is "the known constant by which we judge all the other variables of character" (93). When Esther says, then, that she is happy for Mr. Jellyby and "I liked him very much," the reader should empathize and understand that the besieged, silent man is worthy of respect and well-wishes. Mr. Jellyby's bankruptcy indicates the symbolic bankruptcy of a family whose leading member silences all other voices except the monomaniacle drive for her Missions. Although he is unable in Foucault's words "to ward off" the "powers and dangers" of society, no fault is appointed by either Esther or Dickens to the mild, spectacled man.
Dickens is fairly kind to all four of the rhetorically stopped characters in this chapter. All that they wanted—and perhaps Dickens means to say, all that any of us need—is some secure place. Tom Scott does discover such a place, even though he cannot communicate successfully except through his tumbling. Mr. F's Aunt will keep company with Flora (and terrorize pie-shops) now that the threat of Mr. Clennam has been warded off. And Mr. Jellyby finally has a place to lay his head. The only character here to whom Dickens is less cordial is Grandmother Smallweed. She participated in her own destruction. Quite apart from the others, Grandmother Smallweed and her family are not redeemed because they do not want to be redeemed. One of our final pictures of the Smallweeds, the grandmother included, is as the entire menagerie is sifting through Krook's house. Mrs. Smallweed is seated on the floor "dirtily snowed up in a heap of paper fragments, print and manuscript, which would appear to be the accumulated compliments that have been sent flying at her in the course of the day" (492). They search for the rumored secret cache of Krook's wealth. The Jarndyce will that they eventually discover is worthless—as is their chosen lifestyle.

The seeming madness of these characters' discourse styles is Dickens's method for conveying ideas about society. More than a personal habit, idiolect can be deconstructed to discover the social forces that shaped the nature of
communication even before a specific context of utterance arises. Dickens would not have used these critical terms in describing his technique, but in *Household Words* he did once paraphrase *Macbeth* in a meaningful fashion: "A tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound instruction, / Signifying something" (Stone 499). Even the most disfluent idiolects Dickens crafts are just this--full of his sound instruction.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Writing with R. H. Horne in *Household Words*, Dickens expounds upon one of the tenents of his artistic career: "as a rest and relief from realities that are not and never can be all-sufficient for the mind,—sound rational public amusement is very much indeed to be desired" (Stone 337). The piling on of intensifiers—"very," "much," and "indeed"—testifies to the depth of this conviction. Dickens thought that such amusements "could do a giant's work" in reducing the depravity and violence he saw evidenced in society. An examination of idiolect is only one avenue for investigating the thought and form behind the creation of these amusements. Nevertheless, discourse analysis does confirm two qualities in Dickens's works that have been revealed elsewhere and by other critical means. First, Dickens feels that his readers need to know that there are social structures—-institutions, economies, occupations and the like—that injure individuals. Second, the narrative art of Dickens is consistent and keenly intuitive.

The social critic often walks a fine line between what is ideal and what is possible. Dickens faced this dilemma and added one more extenuating factor beside—what will sell. In his study on Dickens's novels in the market place, James
M. Brown confirms that Dickens felt "the tensions between the conservative and revolutionary responses to social change, and between moral optimism and social realism" (84). The damage caused by the weight of social injustice is manifested in the idiolects of Jingle, Gradgrind, or Mr. Jellyby. But Dickens also demonstrates the solutions, or at least some mitigation, in the way that the greater discourse community responds to these characters' speech habits.

There are two responses to solving the pain or confusion that results from idiolect. Dickens waives the revolutionary response proposed by some social scientists of his day; reform should begin on a personal level. Jingle is ill and imprisoned; Mr. Pickwick, though in the midst of his own problems, arranges for the actor's release. Gradgrind has treated Mr. Sleary like a social outcast, yet when the former respected member of society loses his verbal prowess, Sleary gives voice to a plan that delivers Gradgrind's son and solaces the father. Certainly, Dickens supported country-wide reform measures in the pages of his periodicals, but the most efficacious work in the novels is completed by individuals responding to individuals.

Dickens's second resolution to the problem of idiolectically bound characters is to discover place. Jingle is forever driven from more usual discourse because he lacks centricity of character; he is an actor perpetually searching for a sense of self that can not be provided by role-playing.
Gradgrind becomes dysfunctional because he is a little like the lost fisherman who had tethered his boat to the Leviathan—the fish is gone and Gradgrind is adrift in an sea of emotion. Tom Scott, Mr. F's Aunt, and Mr. Jellyby find a sense of place, and their communication becomes more productive if still disjointed. Lawrence Frank addresses the importance of "the function of a place within the grammar of society" (252). The idiolects discussed here have, in part, been shaped by the want of place.

This feature of place may have some interesting extended applications. The discourse analyses conducted in the third chapter reveal speech habits that differ along gender lines. The rhetorically stopped females mentioned in this study fall outside the scope of Michael Slater's landmark work, Dickens and Women, but their idiolects could provide some information concerning the place to which women were relegated by Victorian society. Indeed, modern feminist critical approaches might be used to mitigate the poor reputation that Dickens has among some feminist scholars. Far from being a condemnation of women themselves, Dickens's comment with the stifled discourse of Mr. F's Aunt and Grandmother Smallweed is that a social system bears the responsibility for transforming these women into the dysfunctional characters they are. Dickens could be said, then, to be subverting the traditional role of women and, within the limited example of this pair of females, calling
for a social awareness that shows greater caring for their ability to freely engage in social discourse.

To expand on this idea, it could be interesting to include Lady Dedlock in such a study. Of the many articles written about this pivotal character, none centers on Lady Dedlock's speech habit. Her level of discourse certainly decreases as the events of her life, Tulkinghorn, and Inspector Bucket all close in on her. The scene in which Tulkinghorn puts the matter of her indiscretion before the Lady (Chapter 47—titled "Closing In") is particularly revealing as he commands her silence, her attention, and her eventual absence from the estate. Dickens presents a male not only silencing a female, but also charging her with sexual misconduct. Although Golding does give Bleak House significant attention in his study of idiolects, only Chadband, Guppy, Skimpole and Bucket—all males—are investigated (148-56). This is not to imply that Golding's book is sexist in its approach, only that there is ample room to extend his application by combining it with other critical epistemics.

Aside from offering fresh questions about Dickens's role as a social critic, idiolectical analysis provides an additional perspective from which to view Dickens's narrative art. For example, Richard Fabrizio dispels the idea that Hard Times is "weak in drama and feeble in characterization" (61). Fabrizio contends that the cold family relations among
the Gradgrinds provide a warning about the degradation of family values (87). The fact that Mr. Gradgrind's discourse ability declines at the same time demonstrates the scope of Dickens's control of this theme. As another example, Robert M. McCarron uses Dick Swiveller, Barnaby Rudge, and Tom Pinch to establish a class of Dickensian character he calls the "wise fool." McCarron believes that the moral and psychological natures of these characters focus Dickens's advice on "the 'foolery' of greed and heartlessness reigning over Victorian society" (56). Discourse analysis might add characters such as Grandmother Smallweed or Mr. Jellyby to illuminate additional facets of McCarron's thesis.

The investigation of discourse here can not establish whether the development of dialogue in Dickens's novels is intentional or intuitive. What is abundantly clear, however, is that his control of discourse is balanced and consistent. Through hundreds of lines of discourse, Jingle and Gradgrind never lose the force of character that drives their speech habits. They alter speech acts or employ specific grammatic forms that continuously supplement their character. On the other hand, every utterance from the mouth of Grandmother Smallweed is unvarying because that character obsesses in both the manner of her language and the object for which she cries out. Mr. Jellyby utters only one complete sentence, but that sentence encapsulates the theme that has so imperfectly molded his discourse and his life.
Angus Wilson credits a "miraculous eye and ear" and "unity of symbolism" for creating "the atmospheric genius, the encircling magic of Dickens" (380). The ear and the unity of symbolism meet in the words given by an author to his characters. Dickens's characters are not larger than life; they are just as small and variegated as life. In his essay, "Of Custom and Education," Francis Bacon writes that "Men's thoughts are much according to their inclination, their discourse and speeches according to their learning and infused opinions." The idiolects that Dickens composes disclose the "learning and infused opinions" of both the author and the fictional speaker.
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