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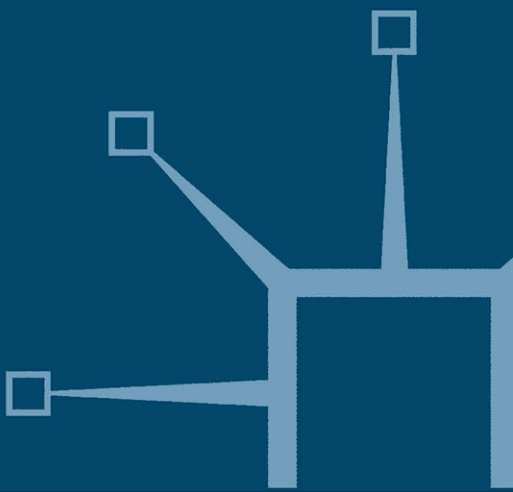
Advertising, Subjectivity and the Nineteenth-Century Novel

Dickens, Balzac and the Language of the Walls

Sara Thornton



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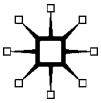

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To Doug Thornton, RAF, BOAC

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Introduction

The expression 'The Language of the Walls' comes from an obscure book written in 1855 by a man named James Dawson Burn, who walks his reader past the advertising on the walls of London, which he describes as the new book of the world – a vast library for mankind containing both philosophy and quackery. If the expression is taken from Burn, it is not exclusive to his philosophy of the walls but was spoken about in other terms by many writers and social commentators at the time in France and Britain who were all referring to the same notion of a newly visible form of representation which was changing social structures and public and private behaviour. If advertising was already as old as the hills (there was a *History of Advertising* as early as 1874 in Britain and assertions in 1855 that advertising was jaded and even 'dead'), it was not yet a mere backdrop, so familiar as to be invisible. At this moment of transition from novelty to banality, advertising was a looking-glass in which the reader, like Alice, might discover the world and the self in changed form.

One of the catalysts in writing this book was a conjunction of two seemingly incongruous worlds as I travelled to work on public transport: on the one hand the nineteenth-century novel I held in my hand and, on the other, the many advertisements moving past me (as they did past Burn), sometimes amusing (with their miniature narratives), sometimes aggressive, often defaced or rewritten with graffiti. The novel I was reading seemed in comparison a canonical text, safely contained between covers, while all the twenty-first century text around (not only in adverts but in newspapers, text messages on mobile phones, internet ads on laptops) was a promiscuous and porous writing of uncertain origin and destination. Visits to the British Library and *Bibliothèque Nationale*, however, provided me with evidence that something radical had happened to the subject's relationship to text much earlier than the often-posited late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It had already been noticed by Burn and it had to do with the new textuality and imagery which was advertising. My own understanding of the 'language of the walls' came as I leafed through the original monthly

numbers of Dickens's novels with their overwhelming number of pages of advertisements (sometimes up to seventy pages) sandwiching the serial part of the novel and often appearing interleaved into those very chapters. These monthly numbers are strange beyond belief yet also uncannily familiar to us today. The novels of Balzac in their original parts in the Parisian press, or the caricatures of Grandville, likewise reveal that our own experience of textuality today as moving, transiting and transient writing would not be entirely alien to a city dweller of the 1850s in London or Paris.

In Chapter 1 I demonstrate that from the 1830s to the 1870s increased spaces for display (from the hoarding to the human body) seemed to bring in their wake a new understanding of how the subject read and how language operated – its lack of predictability, vicissitudes and violence. Urban, walking readers at that time were capable of theorizing their engagement with the advert, bearing witness to and commenting upon the creative and destructive labour of advertising through diverse mediums within the novel and without. They practised advertising and wrote descriptions of it, recognizing its violent impact without being silenced by it. Novelists, editors, and copywriters absorbed and reflected in their productions the random collage of advertising posters, producing seventy years before T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* the startling juxtapositions which we associate today with an aesthetics of modernism. This backdrop or *habitus* was a feeding ground for the subject, who was in part constituted by the world of text around, hailed by it and relying on it to be *in* the world. It 'maketh man' rather than breaking him.

Chapters 2 and 3 concern Charles Dickens and Honoré de Balzac, chosen as two vital figures in the redrawing of the boundaries of literature and advertising in France and England, both acting within different geographical, political and economic contingencies but with equal force. Balzac's career began slightly earlier than Dickens's, in a less industrially advanced country but with a powerful media created by the political energies of the revolution. Each created his own universe – a vast nexus or web of fictional characters but also a network of publishing and diffusion of which his novels were the centre. Both worked as advertisers and publishers, Dickens a performer and Balzac a printer; each was able to work 'hands on' at every level of the production of their works. In these chapters, I try to gauge the exact nature of the textual exchange between novel and advert, how each acknowledged and modified the other. The *réclame* – the most available and ubiquitous text in the nineteenth century – claimed the gaze, clamoured and aggressively 're-claimed' new territory; it also seemed to promise an engagement with the objective world, with solid things as they increasingly melted into air. The virtual was already, at this time, a thinkable phenomenon – perceived by both Dickens and Balzac as a vital force.

I will be building on the work begun by Jennifer Wicke's *Advertising Fictions*: *Literature, Advertisement and Social Reading* (1988), which establishes

that literature and advertising were born together in the 'avertissement' which appeared at the beginning of mediaeval scribal manuscripts and that literature, far from being the 'other' of the demonized low culture of the advertisement, is its intimate bedfellow. Wicke does not examine any advertisements, a task which will be central to my own enquiry. Thomas Richards's *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle 1851–1914* (1990) shows in its extraordinary first chapter how the Great Exhibition opened up advertising as a legitimate field of activity, but concentrates his study of advertising on the late nineteenth century. I will shift the study back in time.

I have chosen a critical method which combines a historicized approach to materials with a choice of relevant theoretical perspectives; my research on how the literary canon evolves within wider contexts of production and consumption also generates its own theories of language and of reading. Finally, this book comes at a time of great interest in modern media and the making of humanity. I hope it will contribute to that debate. One of its aims is to widen our understanding of media interpellation in the nineteenth century and show how 'the language of the walls' forms the basis of our own structures and networks of representation.

1
The Language of the Walls: Spaces, Practices, Subjectivities

Thoroughfares for inscription

In his discussion of the importance of perspective in eighteenth-century art and literature, Murray Roston speaks of a change in the perceptual standpoint of the human subject which involved a shift of the gaze away from the heavens back down to the human panorama.[1] What I would like to imagine in mid-Victorian times is another shift away from the objective view of a social panorama to an immersion at street level in man's productions of signs. The observer now no longer gazes at the social scene directly – the interactions of his fellow men viewed from a vantage point – but sees these only through a world of text, the world not created by God but by himself, in the form of writing on the walls. Thomas Richards, also concerned with the modern gaze, describes the Great Exhibition of 1851 as the inauguration of a new way of seeing which created our modern day mythology of consumerism; this seeing 'was the product of a new kind of place in which things could be seen'.[2] It was also, as I will argue, the product of a new kind of space in which things could be read, the topographical and the discursive generating each other mutually.

The printed matter that an average citizen might see on the streets of London and Paris grew vertiginously in the mid-nineteenth century, helped by improved printing technologies, cheaper paper and the thrust given to the advertising of commodities by the Great Exhibition of 1851, as well as the lifting of taxes on advertising, newspapers and paper itself.[3] This expansion was reliant on physical changes in the city space encouraging the increased production and movement of goods. Printed matter, like the goods it helped circulate, could get around more easily. Surfaces became increasingly numerous as the cities of London and Paris underwent 'improvement' and rationalization. New roads and boulevards meant easier circulation for traffic and smoother, more streamlined walls on which to paste adverts as well as clearer thoroughfares down which advertising vans might be driven and omnibuses might display their advertisements.

Movement, light and space were the central aesthetics of Baron Haussmann and Joseph Bazalgette's schemes, which were both concerned with display – the display of the power of a modern capital – and with civil engineering projects which were in themselves massive architectural advertisements. One of these was the Thames Embankment, which, Dale Porter tells us, was 'designed to parallel the river – to channel its flow, carry sewage along its gradual decline toward the sea, move carriage and omnibus traffic east and west, and redefine its architecture as befit an imperial capital'.[4] Movement was a question of efficiency but also a sign of the might of a country for which travel of all sorts was its power – to move around the Empire and move its wealth from place to place.

Porter explains that, although pollution was the driving force behind plans for the London Main Drainage, as well as better river navigation, it soon attracted a host of other discourses and interests: 'It crystallized the aspirations of a whole metropolis as if they had been suspended in some conceptual solution, a happy analogue to the "fuliginous matter" in London's atmosphere.'[5] This 'conceptual solution' involved for the most part plans for clearance and the installation of commercial sites. Lynda Nead, who takes as her field of study the period from 1855 (when the Metropolitan Board of Works directed by Bazalgette was founded) to 1870, focuses on how this era of improvement and modernization reshaped the space of London, and on how that space was experienced. Like Porter she takes the Thames Embankment as vital to the re-creation of London and describes the changes and demolitions as being aimed at producing movement in a congested city. Strongly supported by Joseph Paxton, 'the embankment would put an end to rotting waste on the mud banks of the Thames and would unblock the traffic congestion in the nearby main streets' by constructing a new roadway along the Thames.[6] She comments on paintings and engravings at the time which attempt to convey that sense of flow, such as William Haywood's *Holborn Viaduct from Farringdon Street* of 1869 with its open sky and optimism or John O'Connor's *The Embankment* of 1874, with its 'Canaletto-style' vision of movement and progress. She comments that the closest Victorian London came to Baron Haussmann's miles of straight, wide boulevards were the eighty or so miles of Bazalgette's main drainage system.[7] And it is to the many examples of cross-section drawings of the embankment which appeared in the illustrated press that she turns for a sense of the new desire for dynamism in the city. One article in the *Penny Illustrated Paper* describes a city of perpetual movement: omnibuses over bridges, steamers, ferries and barges on the Thames, trains in underground tunnels, gas, water and sewage in pipes under the earth, showing the modern city as 'a world devoted to the production of constant motion'.[8] Another article in *The Times* of 14 October 1850, entitled 'The Cities of London and Paris Compared', describes the findings of a researcher sent to study the effect of macadamized roads in London on the movement of traffic. The statistics given describe the numbers of

carriages moving over major bridges and roads per hour in the two metropolises and describes how much space is given over to thoroughfares in each city. The conclusion is of course that London has over twice as much traffic as Paris and that this traffic moves faster. The report also contains data on how much space each citizen can enjoy: 'in London every inhabitant corresponds to a surface of 100 metres; at Paris to 34 metres.' The article presents its data in such a way as to suggest that the city is now a question of potential space exploitable by the individual (who can enjoy so many square metres of the city), an exploitation which is reliant on producing flow.

The notions of flow and of clearance were embedded in many discourses on the changing urban world. If Bazalgette speaks of London as a sick body in need of treatment, its lungs and arteries in need of scouring, plagued by blockage and breakdown and accumulated refuse, Haussmann speaks of the problems of Paris as of a social body afflicted with aneurism.[9] Revolution and the attenuating of the nobility's property rights meant Haussmann could set to work to rid Paris of its *carrefours,* its *impasses,* and *ruelles* and to create straight, wide boulevards in their place or glass-covered passages allowing communication and exchange between different districts and social classes. These new spaces were, of course, easier to police. Ancient slums meant topological disarray, which blocked movement, and, in particular, movement of information. Ignorance was seen to be a by-product of undeveloped space or at least a plausible excuse for the destruction and redevelopment of that space: in France the authorities were not able to penetrate with their own ideologies areas of potential dissidence and so needed Haussman to create the scopically and gnostically encompassable boulevards. One only need read Eugène Sue's *Mystères de Paris* of 1842–43 or Hugo's *Les Misérables* of 1862 for a sense of the impenetrability of certain districts of Paris and of their resistance to the penetrating eye of the Law.[10] Although advertising is often represented as a moribund congestion and overcrowding of posters, it was first seen as part of a new social flow in society – in terms of information, commerce, and class. In London as in Paris, the metaphors of light and air used by urban planners to convey the idea of movement also suggested free movement of information and the penetration of that information into the minds of the population. The latter could only happen if there was architectural encouragement or indeed coercion to participate in commerce.

The call for proposals issued by The Royal Commission in 1861 concerning use of the new Thames-side space elicited many commercial ventures such as one plan for a 'Crystal Arcade': 'an iron-and-glass pavilion spanning a solid quay…filled with shops and galleries like the Crystal Palace itself', a Paris Arcade on the river.[11] The First Commissioner of Works wrote in 1853 that the embankment, rather than being devoted to parks and esplanades, a space of 'urban beauty or recreation', should be 'a giant warehouse and business office'.[12] In the 1860s the desire was for beauty as well as commercial utility with 'wide thoroughfares on the Parisian model' to attract the idler and

visitor.[13] The spatial aesthetic of the time is crystallized by Joseph Paxton's design for a 'Great Victorian Way' – a huge shopping arcade with indoor trains which was to go all around central London. It was never built but the plans stand as a monument to the desires and tendencies of the age; a totally artificial environment with ventilation, filtering impurities of air and impurities of class (having separate working-class and upper-class districts), it was a space of social control and 'protected openness',[14] rather like the present day concept of the 'Center Parcs' company, which combines visibility with isolation from the outside world – the latter only seen through glass or over a perimeter fence. What we are seeing here is very much an aesthetics of capital in which architecture becomes a backdrop for, or symbol of, the commodity; not only goods but ideals such as pride in Empire were sold to the public in such spaces.[15]

Advertising also relied on artificial light. Gas light, which had begun at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was in great demand by the 1850s and turned London night into day, making a theatrical display case of its streets. Gas light extended the surfaces available for display, helping to colonize previously unusable darkness. The street became a stage set not only for the goods of butcher or tailor but also for advertisements, which would now have double viewing time. The street had thus taken on some of the traits of the domestic interior since it was lit and arranged for display. The domestic interior had, as Walter Benjamin once noted, 'moved outside': 'The street becomes room and the room becomes street.'[16] It was now a new space in which to dream, a space of fantasy: 'All collective architecture of the nineteenth-century constitutes the house of the dreaming collective' consisting of 'Arcades, winter gardens, panoramas, factories, wax museums, casinos, railroad stations', and also department stores and apartment interiors.[17] These new exhibition spaces imply a transiting crowd which viewed the displays as they passed by, or, as with the panorama, a static crowd past which moves the scene. The thoroughfares were now open to the public and lined with matter to view. Cities were saturated with images 'a complex of representations and the place of circulation of representations; the effects of one always articulating into and reworking the other'.[18]

The notion of new physical spaces allowing the movement of representations is an important one in our understanding of the gestation of the urban world of modernity: through the wider circulation of text and image the city was increasingly to be viewed as a virtual space. This virtual quality is apparent when we consider the first Ordnance Survey Map of London, which was produced in 1851, and which was on sale at time of the Great Exhibition. Nead points out that this heralded the death of one city and the birth of another since the 'connecting, structural links' of London were emphasized rather than the aesthetics of the City, and London was represented as potential process: 'the surveyor and capitalist were the two creative forces of the modern map' which was the child of entrepreneurial, capitalist expansion.[19] The representation of the city was now 'entirely accurate and

utterly unrecognisable', ready for the building of a new social order.[20] Once London was newly mapped in this way, all sorts of special interest maps could be manufactured (railway, gas, temperance, shopping), which had the effect of making a city space in which different layers were discernible; in the minds of the population, one layer could be peeled off, like a sheet of paper, to reveal another. The City was becoming a space for whatever dream the population wished to project upon it. One could thus travel along mapped paths in a virtual journey through the city but also travel from one type of map to another, from one 'layer' or surface to another depending on which world one wished to pursue. Similarly, advertising which literally layered the city street became a tangible perpendicular representation of this new virtuality and of the new simultaneity of existence of different (textual) worlds in the same space.

Moving text/motion pictures

Text was thus, literally, on the move. This movement was a matter not only of the textual superposition just mentioned of virtual space on the space of the city, but of the spaces emerging within these precincts of movement and light. The hoardings veiling demolition sites as well as the new walls themselves provided extra space on which to stick bills. The hoardings had the added advantage of being ephemeral and mobile. New roads meant new vehicles such as advertisement vans passing the passer-by, and each new cut in the city (boulevard, embankment or railway) had its crop of new advertisement spaces. The railway system provided a captive audience to read ads planted along the tracks, while railway timetables and tourist guidebooks, magazines and monthly novels also provided pages on which to print more advertisements.

The experience of reading was becoming a matter of having text drift or rush past the eye: the flicking of pages under the thumb, or the passing of ads as one gazed from a train or bus, or the leaflets shoved into the hand as one walked. The latter were often abandoned a few streets later, to lie on a pavement for someone else to read – perhaps during their perusal of a magazine in hand, so that one text might overlay and influence another. These experiences were a result of the quantity of text flying about street, home and public building. In 1853 Max Schlesinger took his readers on a series of walks or 'saunterings' through London; he commented on the ubiquity and motion of the sandwich board or advertising bill (distributed 'by the hundred'), and on the fact that 'the Advertisement is omnipresent'.[21] Commentators in France describe a similar plethora of handbills and posters which led to the anti-bill-posting law of 1881: *'Défense d'afficher, loi de 1881'*. As well as hoardings, Paris introduced the *colonnes Morris* in mid-century; these were circular cylinders in which adverts could be posted behind glass and which had the passer-by walk around them and which were later able

to turn. William Smith, acting manager of the Adelphi theatre and writer of a handbook, *Advertise! How? When? Where?*, emphasizes the importance of advertising which *moves*: in 1859, in order to publicize the French Revolution drama *Dead Heart*, he devised a campaign in which five million handbills, one million cards and ten million adhesive labels were sent out. Touts hurled armfuls of fliers through carriage and omnibus windows. The handbills and adhesive labels were found in omnibuses, steamers, railway carriages, upon glassware in London pubs and restaurants and even at Windsor Castle and the Old Bailey. Illustrations in Smith's book show a rain of bills terrorizing passengers at a station as well as marching armies of sandwich men.[22] Advertising was best done if it could move past the public or if the population could move by it.

There are several consequences of such an environment for the way a text or image is read: small frames pass in front of the eye in quick succession, which has the effect of reducing text to contiguous units. Such reading is associated with older reading practices – the perusal of the almanac or the reading of the Bible – but now becomes a universalized process available to the urban walker. One begins to see the world not in linear sequence but in self-contained pieces of text and image which can then be linked up to subsequent pieces. We might say that the act of reading itself becomes serialized. This is not the same as a turning of the pages of a book in which the sentences run on; it implies a taking in by the eye of a whole framed space in one go or gulp before moving on to another. Our eye drifts across a page of ads from frame to frame, one frame remaining in our vision as the other is taken in, creating a palimpsestuous merging or superposition of one frame onto another.[23] The effect here is of fragmentation and yet also sequence and flow. Grandville's 1844 cartoon 'Literature being reeled off ready made', which shows a roll of print being cut up for sale by a pastry chef (*La littérature sort toute faite d'un dévidoir*) [Fig. 1],[24] picks up on this bite-size aspect of new reading practices, as well as on the flow of text past the eye. Baudelaire describes his own text *Le spleen de Paris* as a series of infinitely modulable fragments or slices which can be mixed, matched and moved about like the vertebrae of a snake. Addressing his publisher he says:

> My dear friend, I am sending you a little work of which one cannot say, without injustice, that it has neither head nor tail, since on the contrary it is all heads and tails, alternatively and reciprocally. Consider, I pray, what advantages this combination offers to all of us – to you and I and the reader. We can make cuts wherever we like – I in my daydream, you in the manuscript, the reader in his reading. Take away one vertebra, and the two parts of this tortuous fantasy will join up again easily. Chop it into many fragments, and you will see that each part can exist alone. In the hope that some of these slices will be lively enough to please and amuse you, I take the liberty of dedicating to you the whole serpent.[25]

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« La pensée n'est plus qu'une machine.

« Les hommes ne sont plus que des automates.

« On écrit à la mécanique.

« La littérature sort toute faite d'un dévidoir, comme une étoffe de soie ou de coton.

« Le roman et le feuilleton se débitent dans les officines littéraires comme la galette sur le comptoir du pâtissier.

« Les idées s'écoulent goutte à goutte d'un alambic d'où elles sortent toutes cornues.

Figure 1 *'La littérature sort toute faite d'un dévidoir'*, Grandville, 1844
Source: Bibliothéque nationale de France.

Both Grandville and Baudelaire are describing in different ways a new experience of reading in which the sentence has been replaced by the independent unit of writing (both imagine slicing up text into chunks). Each unit can be part of a sequence, but the sequence can be modulated. Text moves at us and into us, and teaches us to receive it in this fragmented way. We must as readers be able to organize the units as they come to us.

Moving from frame to frame

We thus find ourselves somewhere between the speeding up of modern vision as suggested by Jean Clay and the demise of the contemplation of a static object that Jonathan Crary notices in the early nineteenth century.[26] If Baudelaire speaks of the independent existence of his units of text, he also perceives them as being part of a series, part of the 'whole snake', which is an ongoing phenomenon (it *goes on* from vertebra to vertebra). Objects are often described as being in transition, or rather the object of the gaze appears to be transitory. The reader at this time captures the existence of a discourse or image only in so far as it implies the yielding to a successive image or text – this visual object existing both as an end in itself and as a preliminary or as a consequence. The part is both an independent part and the preparation or following on from the previous or future part, pointing to the advent of what we might call the serialization of perception. It is therefore not surprising that we find the birth and growing popularity of the comic strip at this time. David Kunzle remarks that the comic strip became popular as a genre in response to the needs of the growing lower-middle class, whose precarious status in society sought expression in a medium in which its members might recognize their situation. Rodolphe Töpffer drafted the first picture story in 1827 and the genre would eventually contribute to the birth of the cinema 'whose form, aims, and to a degree language were foreshadowed by the comic strip – as public entertainment'.[27] It found its home in the magazine, the latter containing a heterogeneous mix of texts and which invited the reader to flick through from page to page or to scan each page from frame to frame. Kunzle remarks on the reaction of the eye scanning the page, which he describes as 'rapid, intense nervous stimuli, like the flickering of the cinema screen or the view from a train window'.[28] We might find a parallel in Friedrich Nietzsche's idea of seeing the world from a train: 'With the tremendous acceleration of life, mind and eye have become accustomed to seeing and judging partially or inaccurately, and everyone is like the traveller who gets to know a land and its people from a railway carriage.'[29] J. M. W. Turner's *Rain, Steam and Speed* (1844) depicts in an image the acceleration of the gaze as it attempts to capture the speed of the train and the blur of the passing landscape. The spectator is moving at great speed in a train (Turner was in the train to experience speed and light at first hand), and is moving at the same rate as the oncoming train; there is no static point from which to

contemplate either passing train or landscape. This lack of a still point of perception helps us to imagine how the passer-by or passenger in London or Paris might travel past advertising text which was itself often moving; the gazer loses the authority and purchase that stillness confers and must read the transiting sandwich board or omnibus advert from a position of transience. Relativity takes precedence over hierarchy in terms of both subject and object.

The increasingly perpendicular nature of text also had an influence in creating a rapid scanning eye in the city dweller. Writing was displayed on walls and other surfaces and the habit of reading this matter affected all areas of reading behaviour. The magazine illustration or comic strip would often be cut out and pasted on the wall (as Mr Weevle's room in Dickens's *Bleak House* shows, decorated with prints of 'beauties' from penny magazines), thus showing the increasing habit of reading, not in books, but from the walls. Illustrations with their explanatory titles or short texts were prized and destined to be kept and collected and more often than not pinned up on the wall or framed.[30] Thus if the streets were becoming interiors – rooms to decorate – then interiors were aping the writing and image on the walls in the street outside. An advertisement for Charles Philipon's '*Papier Peint Comique*' (Comic Wallpaper) of the 1860s entitled 'Family Reading' shows a family in their salon admiring a screen covered in text and image. Gustave Doré mocked this fashion in wallpapers printed with reading matter in a series of topical pastiches of modern manners called 'Prophecies for the People of France' which ran from 1848 to the 1860s. His cartoon is accompanied by the legend '*Les papiers peints comiques d'Aubert continueront à égayer les enfants de tout âge*' (Aubert comic wallpapers will continue to delight children of all ages).[31] It shows an adult standing up on his bed while his wife sleeps and reading the walls of his bedroom. Here, the pleasure of reading has moved from the novel or magazine up onto the wall. In *Le Charivari* of 1845 there are many such comments on reading practices; concerning the change in format of the *Journal des Débats* we find complaints about outsize newspapers which must now be read like posters. One cartoon shows a man obliged to lie down on his newspaper to read it while another pins it to a wall. There are also complaints from wives whose husbands can take up to nine hours to read this huge journal. These adverts reveal a habit of reading linked with the scanning of posters with their highly visual appeal.

Text becomes pictorial

Nead tells us that the advertisement is the 'ultimate synthesis of the central themes of the modern metropolis: movement, exchange and the image'.[32] We might take these last two terms 'exchange' and 'image' and ask how the reader interacts with the perpendicular text and how the image makes that exchange both powerful and immediate. A look through any magazine or

newspaper in either France or Great Britain between 1830 and 1850 offers us ample evidence that the image was gaining in popularity as a means of communication.[33] Advertising pages have more image and less text in the Dickens Advertisers as time goes on. One article designed as an advertisement for, and published in 1851 in, the *Illustrated London News,* called 'Speaking to the Eye', describes the image as the medium *par excellence* of modernity and makes the following claim:

> Our great authors are now artists. They speak to the eye, and their language is fascinating and impressive. The events of the day or week are illustrated or described by the pencil ... The result is a facility of illustrating passing events truly and graphically ...[34]

The article boasts that image had become a universal language and that we were now living in the age of the image. Technical improvements in engraving and printing and the cheapness of production were part of the reason for the explosion in reproduced images but so was the public's sensitivity to the graphic line. This universal language was dependent on the way in which the drawn line constituted a powerful part of education in the nineteenth century in both France and Britain. Gerard Curtis, in his work on 'visual words', notices how important the line became in Victorian Britain, whether drawn or written, constituting 'a point of meeting for visual and textual systems', a form, he says, of today's 'multimedia "blending" '.[35] The training in the making of lines was seen as a vital part of a child's education as the many adverts for 'drawing copybooks' in the '*Our Mutual Friend* Advertiser' reveal. Commerce relied on people who could write: shorthand clerks and copyists (we might think of Nemo in *Bleak House* who earns his living as a law copyist and Dickens's own career as a shorthand clerk). Curtis underlines that the shared materiality of text and image was inherited from mediaeval times and reinforced in the nineteenth century in the production of Frakturs, embroidery work, valentines and also monument and tombstone epigrams, ornate trade-union certificates, the illustrated press and the new genre of comic strips, which all contributed to what Curtis calls the 'suturing process' which reinforced 'the links between the content of writing and its material practice'.[36] In the chapter titled 'The Hieroglyphic Image' he looks at the new relationship between text and graphic media in which 'reading and beholding coalesced'.[37] If text becomes in some measure pictorial, then image also becomes textual. He notices how text is integrated into panoramic paintings of modern life such as in Ford Madox Brown's *Work* (1852–65) and notices that advertisements 'capitalized upon the design potential of both eye-catching imagery and dynamic typography, becoming one of the eventual resting grounds (along with the comic strip) of the united arts'.[38]

This uniting of the arts is often described in terms of its powerful impact and is often imagined as becoming coercitive and imperialistic. Walter Benjamin has described the new verticality of text which showed a graphic 'eccentric figurativeness'. He saw the shift to the advertising era as making the book 'archaic' and releasing 'locust swarms of print ... [that] grow thicker with each succeeding year'. When he describes 'a blizzard of changing, colourful, conflicting letters' we understand how the written word has been invested with or taken over by image.[39] In *Le Charivari* of 1845 an article entitled '*Les murs illustrés*' (The Illustrated Walls) complains of the invasion of posters and how they control the reader. The cartoon shows a passer-by mesmerized by images on a wall which might, the caption says, 'kill' writing.

If advertising was quick to exploit this impact of the visual, then journalists were quick to notice the many ways in which copywriters used the image. We find an excellent example of this in an article in *Punch* entitled 'Pictorial Advertisements' of 1864 [Fig. 2] which mocks not only the advertisements themselves but also the many pamphlets and books on the subject of better advertising which should 'appeal to the Eye':

> A Great Classic has told us ... that there is nothing like appealing to the Eye, if you wish to secure attention. ... With this *exordium* ..., we beg to call attention to the following specimen of a new style of advertising. In these days of hurry and scramble no appeal can be too emphatic, and we consider this new means of attracting attention decidedly worthy of notice.[40]

Here the journalist parodies those advertisers who (with spurious classical references) advocate extreme measures to attract attention amidst the flurry of city life, especially their increasing interest in other areas of visual data – phrenology, the portrait and the Lamarckian identification of species. The pleasure for the spectator was that of having quickly identifiable stereotypes or moulds placed before him or her, for immediate consumption. The article presents a series of Lamarckian-type portraits to embellish personal advertisements. One criminal mug-shot of a thief bears the following caption: 'MR. LIFTER begs to inform his friends, that his present Address is Portland, Hampshire, Care of the Governor'. A burglar complete with black mask 'WANTS Evening Employment after 6 o'clock – Active, Energetic and Obliging. For Testimonials, apply to Scotland Yard', while a large horsewhip bears the legend 'THE ABOVE REWARD will be given to the Two Gents (who insulted the lady in the Railway Carriage), if they will kindly send their address – Distance not the least object'. This sending up of advertising's obsession with visual tricks shows an awareness of the increasing use of the image in both commercial and personal adverts and targets the irritating repetitions concerning the image of those who give advice on how to advertise.

AUGUST 27, 1864.] PUNCH, OR THE LO

PICTORIAL ADVERTISEMENTS.

A GREAT Classic has told us (and as we knew it without him we are noways obliged), that there is nothing like appealing to the Eye, if you wish to secure attention. The remark has not the least bearing on what we are going to say, inasmuch as printing appeals to the eye, as well as engraving; but the man who neglects to show that he has been classically educated, is unworthy the name of a scholar and a gentleman. With this *exordium* (another scholastic expression), we beg to call attention to the following specimen of a new style of advertising. In these days of hurry and scramble no appeal can be too emphatic, and we consider this new means of attracting attention decidedly worthy of notice.

WANTS Evening Employment after 6 o'clock.—Active, Energetic, and Obliging. For Testimonials, apply to Scotland Yard.

THE ADVERTISER will receive into the bosom of his family, a few young Gentlemen to Educate.—No Holidays.—No Pocket Money.—The finer feelings of the Pupils always considered and acted on.—A great number of the pupils have passed their examination at Hanwell and Colney Hatch, thereby securing Government Appointments for life.

WANTED the Next-of-Kin to the Above.

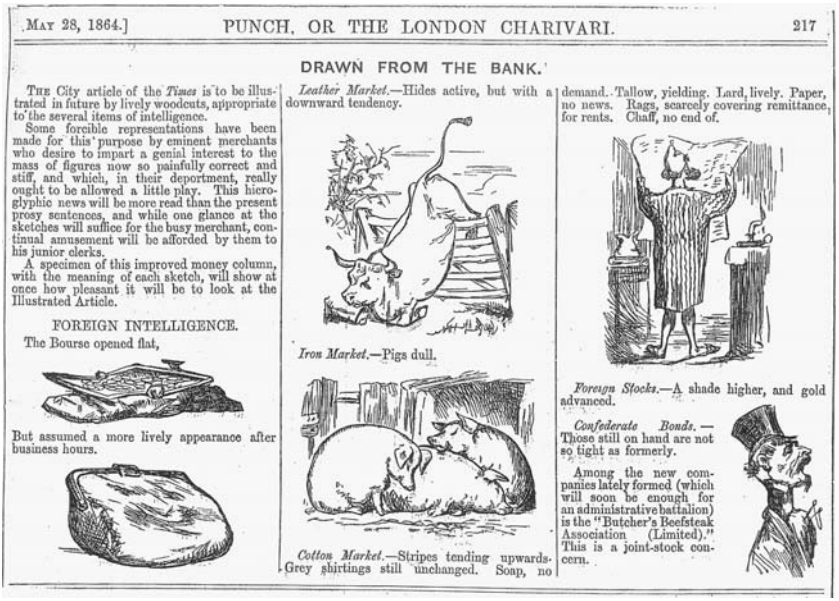
MR. LIFTER begs to inform his friends, that his present Address is Portland, Hampshire, Care of the Governor.

THE ABOVE REWARD will be given to the Two Gents (who insulted the lady in the Railway Carriage), if they will kindly send their address.—Distance not the least object.

Figure 2 'Pictorial Advertisements', *Punch*, 1864

Source: British Library.

In a similar vein, but functioning more in the fashion of a rebus, we have a piece entitled 'Drawn from the Bank' [Fig. 3] which plays on financial news on the price of City shares and on typical and oft repeated expressions such as 'Pigs dull' (meaning that the price of pig iron is low). For speedier reading, 'Pigs dull' is illustrated by some lethargic-looking swine, while 'Hides active' shows a bull jumping a gate. Each illustration and sentence is laid out as an advertisement might be, and is described by *Punch* as 'hieroglyphic news': the signifier is given a new signified in the enunciation 'Pigs dull', which turns the price of pig iron to a bored and lazy animal. Similarly, mockery is made of old stockbrokers who have seen better days; a dishevelled, unwashed and portly man in his night shirt stands in for the vagaries of products on the stock market: 'Grey shirtings still unchanged. Soap, no demand. Lard lively'. The journalist here seems to be playing out Marx's maxim that historical events tend to be repeated as farce, a farce which is shown to be both linguistic and pictorial. An explication of the usefulness of such advertising practice is given: 'This hieroglyphic news will be more read than the present prosy sentences, and while one glance at the sketches will suffice for the busy merchant, continual amusement will be afforded by them to his junior clerks.' Whereas text and numbers remain 'painfully correct and stiff', an illustration affords 'a little play'. The irony of the tone


MAY 28, 1864.] PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI. 217

DRAWN FROM THE BANK.

THE City article of the *Times* is to be illustrated in future by lively woodcuts, appropriate to the several items of intelligence.

Some forcible representations have been made for this purpose by eminent merchants who desire to impart a genial interest to the mass of figures now so painfully correct and stiff, and which, in their department, really ought to be allowed a little play. This hieroglyphic news will be more read than the present prosy sentences, and while one glance at the sketches will suffice for the busy merchant, continual amusement will be afforded by them to his junior clerks.

A specimen of this improved money column, with the meaning of each sketch, will show at once how pleasant it will be to look at the Illustrated Article.

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE.

The Bourse opened flat,

But assumed a more lively appearance after business hours.

Leather Market.—Hides active, but with a downward tendency.

Iron Market.—Pigs dull.

Cotton Market.—Stripes tending upwards. Grey shirtings still unchanged. Soap, no demand. Tallow, yielding. Lard, lively. Paper, no news. Rags, scarcely covering remittance, for rents. Chaff, no end of.

Foreign Stocks.—A shade higher, and gold advanced.

Confederate Bonds.—Those still on hand are not so tight as formerly.

Among the new companies lately formed (which will soon be enough for an administrative battalion) is the "Butcher's Beefsteak Association (Limited)." This is a joint-stock concern.

Figure 3 'Drawn form the Bank', *Punch*, 1864

Source: British Library.

targets the keenness of advertisers to render reading a rapid and amusing act, one of instant and effortless comprehension mixed with pleasure. It shows that 'taking in' information, all at once, in passing, so to speak, is a strong desire at mid-century emerging in many forms of representation and practice.[41] Interestingly all of the caricatures (severe schoolmaster, thief and thug), as well as the image of a whip and a Python, contain a certain violence and threat, as if the cartoonist wished to show that the visual in advertising is often an imposition of some kind.

The *Punch* 'Pictorial Advertisement' brings us back to the notion mentioned earlier in the 'Speaking to the Eye' article of image being a 'universal language'. It might be useful to consider a theory of iconic literature offered by Anthony Easthope which will allow us to understand how iconicity makes writing so consumable. In his discussion of 'Visual Melodrama', Easthope shows that popular culture is doing something different from high culture, and that in melodrama physical action translates a polar Manichean morality, part of the 'repetitive event-centred narrative' in which all interiority is evacuated to leave only 'externalised dramatisation' – the 'psychological absolutes' and 'will-to-transparency' favoured by popular culture.[42] The body is iconically represented in popular culture because non-verbal signs such as gesture are considered more expressive than words. Easthope says that the novel *Tarzan* is iconic in the Peircean sense because, although it consists of language and therefore is symbolic rather than iconic, 'its discourse effaces the level of the signifier while its signified concentrates on physical action and external event'. It encourages visualization and 'gives an effect like that of the iconic'. Popular culture is dominated by this iconic effect, which is to do with pleasure and phantasy rather than conscious thought (in Freud's terms it is about 'thing-presentation' as in the unconscious rather than 'word-presentation'). Easthope goes on to say that 'as in dreams, visual representation withdraws from criticism and allows desire to elide contradictions', and so popular cultural discourse is dependent on visualization and the expressivity of the body and thus linked with wish-fulfilment rather than duty.[43] Wish-fulfilment is the basis of the utopian drive in popular culture and emerges in the images of power in the 'Pictorial Advertisements' which imagine the possibility of vengeance (the whip), unchallenged authority (the schoolmaster), or unlicensed theft as being unchallenged by any reprimanding law.

The author of the *Punch* parody reveals to the reader the extent to which city dwellers were growing accustomed to consuming what we might call ideological units of text and image which have a *prêt-à-lire* or *prêt-à-penser* quality to them, involving pre-packaged and expected meanings. Just as now the makers of advertising and film select from a gamut of off-the-peg scenarios (text/speech and image) carrying certain messages which trigger specific emotional responses, so in the nineteenth century advertisers were building up a repertoire of codes with which to communicate. The *Punch*

spoof illustrates the fact that the image was used in advertising along with text to express what Grize, referring to oral dialogue, refers to as 'cultural pre-construction' and what Jean-Jacques Lecercle has called the 'postulate of the encyclopedia': '[the] encyclopedia is a shared and common knowledge ... the participants must not only master this common knowledge, they must also be aware of the other participants' mastery of it'.[44] Such knowledge was sufficiently disseminated in the 1840s to 1860s for advertising to be able to cash in on its power. Advertising can only function once urban society reaches a certain stage of cultural sharing – already dependent on its technological ability to disseminate that pool of common knowledge. Print culture in general and advertising in particular therefore seems to reinforce that 'encyclopedia'.

Easthope describes his own form of this 'encyclopedia' in stressing that the iconic helps us to think about what might be called 'the *narrateme*, little scenic and narrative epitomes such as Clark Gable turning at the door'.[45] Popular cultural discourse, says Easthope, can operate 'collectively rather than merely individually' and opens onto a 'shared collectivity' which appears unitary and universal.[46] He goes on to say that it is via such *narratemes* that popular culture can sometimes speak what Beckett calls '"the voice of us all on all sides", arising from and articulating as little else the intersubjective everydayness of life under late capitalism'. Easthope sums up the significance of this iconicity, and then brings us back to the notion of 'motion pictures' in our title: 'The Victorians tried for fifty years to invent the cinema – with their "Zoobiographs" and so on – but without success. As their preference for melodrama and theatrical spectacle evidences ... they felt the pressure of popular culture impelling them towards iconic representation'. He stresses that discourses of popular culture were *already* iconic and so predisposed for visual representation. Thus the photograph and cinema picked up the audience already primed for them by the text and image of popular culture.[47]

We are seeing the emergence of certain new practices which are in fact rituals of reading which the journalists of various publications are beginning to describe and parody. Reading has become a practice in which physical movement and visual effect are paramount. We begin to see an awareness of these new rituals, as well as an awareness of what these rituals might imply for the subject. These are commentaries – tentative and experimental – on the new languages on the walls; they are an attempt, through mockery and parody, to take account of a phenomenon which was just beginning to attract the awareness and the critiques of a public which was waking up to a new communications network.

Montage, mirage and the (mis)behaviour of language

We will now attempt to show that the incongruous juxtapositions and superpositions of moving text and image within a confused city space, and

the mirages or hallucinations which are created as a result, alter the subject's relationship to language. The subject sees language's maverick and wayward qualities and comments on these, answering the coercions of advertising with play.

Promiscuous juxtapositions: New ways of seeing

The problem of seeing the city space and clearly deciphering it is one that has been explored in both the eighteenth and the early nineteenth-century novel. But it is in mid-century that this sense of the complexity of the urban scene intensifies.[48] The journalism and literature of the 1860s in particular offers many discourses concerning the rebuilding of London and Paris when mud and dust disguised and obscured the most familiar districts, and old and new were mixed together to often startling effect. One article in the *Illustrated Times* of 1866 emphasises the 'state of transition' in which London found itself and asserts that 'a week's absence from town is enough to make the oldest inhabitant a stranger in his own parish'.[49] This experience of the incongruous is remarked upon by Dickens in *Dombey and Son* nearly twenty years before: 'There were a hundred thousand shapes and substances of incompleteness, wildly mingled out of their places, upside down, burrowing in the earth, mouldering in the water, and unintelligible as any dream.'[50] This unintelligible and unsettling quality of the city in transition brings us back to our earlier assertion that the city becomes a modulable space in which the surfaces – the very walls – are moveable. The vision of the uninterrupted disturbance (or undisturbed interruptions) of the bourgeois epoch in which, Marx says, 'all that is solid melts into air' and 'all relations become antiquated before they can ossify' helps us to imagine the unrecognizable quality of an environment which was constantly changing.[51] In 'The Eyes of the Poor', Baudelaire recognizes this flux and the mixing of old and new: 'a new boulevard, still littered with rubble ... displayed its unfinished splendours', while in 'Loss of a Halo' he speaks of crossing a boulevard hindered by mud 'in the midst of a moving chaos, with death galloping at me from every side'.[52] Baudelaire often speaks of the simultaneity of modern life, of many worlds in the same space, of heterogeneous classes and architectures pushed together, of superposition, and transition. These are all features of the dissolving view, the stereoscope and early forms of photographic montage. One stereoscope picture of Oliver Wendell Holmes of the 1850s shows a London of juxtaposed old and new – a wall of advertisements crowned with a hazy dome of Saint Paul's – while the paintings of Logsdail much later in the century show a similar structure inspired by modern technology, for example, *St Paul's and Ludgate Hill* with a faded Saint Paul's in the background and a train cutting through the cityscape in the foreground.[53] Mirage as an obscured seeing is the logical result of this violent clashing of realities and is part of a daily experience: it is expressed here in an article of 1852 which offers a lyrical

view of the montage of modern seeing:

> the *pavé*... is our main look-out. How the parasols gleam, and flash, and glitter in the sunshine! How the eye goes rambling and wandering and is filled with a confused mirage of forms and colours.[54]

A surrealist merging of disparate worlds is expressed here and suggests an aleatory and random gaze which consumes passively since it is 'filled' by the 'mirage'.

The confused urban scene is the subject of Dickens's 'An Unsettled Neighbourhood' (1854). In this essay, Dickens describes the changes wrought in the neighbourhood of Camden by the arrival of the railway. Before its arrival, this neighbourhood was a poor, semi-rural enclave; the only texts which reached the inhabitants were 'summonses for rates and taxes' which arrived 'as if they were circulars'.[55] Already the advertising circular was the sign of the commercial health of an area, the absence of them a sign of stagnation. In response to the railway, the houses change their façades as they transform themselves into hotels and shops and start to advertise for custom in an attempt to get into the 'Bradshaw' railway guide, itself a repository of many advertisements. Dickens comments on the attempts to turn all shops into 'Railway' shops such as the 'Railway Bakery', but points out that it is not this rash of signs which bothers him but another form of disturbance which he describes as the deteriorating 'state of mind' or 'moral condition' of the neighbourhood: 'It is unsettled, dissipated, wandering (I believe nomadic is the crack word for that sort of thing just at present), and don't know its own mind for an hour' (48). Dickens comments here upon a state which might be described as an ontological disturbance, and which involves less the loss of any fixed identity than the advent of a newly mobile world of signs. The shops change their signs from toy-shop to milliner, to stationer and back and ruin the state of mind of each owner, all of whom are affected by the movement of 'Luggage' constantly hauled along the streets and inducing the inhabitants to move with it 'down the line'. This restlessness and transience is also described by Dickens in connection with Jo the crossing sweeper in *Bleak House*, whose position at places of transition (crossings and intersections), from which he must always 'move on', makes of him an empty, anxious creature. Likewise, the unsettled neighbourhood cannot be 'less collected in its intellects'; it needs to produce another form of intellect; one which allows for superposition, transfer, rapid turnover. Linguistic habits are already shown to be evolving to fit the new spirit of the times: the advent of the railway encourages children to speak like the Bradshaw railway guide and say 'Eleven forty' instead of 'twenty minutes to twelve' (49). The texture of speech is thus altering to admit new precisions in the passing of time, new ways of expressing units of measurement which will allow for ever faster and minuter transitions in time and space.

Language allows for new slots of time, while the ever-changing bill boards outside the shops create new areas of space on which varying messages can be placed. The landscape is a reflection 'of our moral state', and Dickens uses the words 'confused', 'dissipated' and 'giddy'. Walls are built as another building is erected and are pulled down just as rapidly. All this gives rise to a series of transient surfaces on which bills can be posted: 'a wilderness of houses, pulled down, shored up, broken-headed, crippled, on crutches, knocked about and mangled in all sorts of ways, and billed with fragments of all kinds of ideas' (50). Here we see a clear connection in the mind of the narrator between an urban scape in various states of demolition and the colonization of that space by 'fragments' of ideas, of pieces of text and random messaging akin to Baudelaire's textual vertebra – not whole and entire systems of thought. The movement of persons and luggage in imitation of the trains is accompanied by the locomotion of units of speech and text as they inhabit the successive spaces of a city in flux. In the preface to *Le Spleen de Paris* Baudelaire declares that the city environment will create the need for a new language, a new kind of writing:

> Who has not dreamt in ambitious moments of the miracle of a poetic prose which is musical without rhythm and without rhyme, flexible enough and rugged enough to adapt to the lyrical movements of the soul, to the undulations of reverie, or to the leaps and jolts of consciousness? It is from the frequenting of our huge cities with their endless contrasts and interconnections that this obsessive ideal is born.[56]

We imagine a strange music here of sudden jumps followed by swelling waves of sound, of stops and starts, blockage and flow akin to the movements of people and signboards in Dickens's 'unsettled neighbourhood'. We see that both Baudelaire and Dickens are describing a modern self whose only means of survival is to adapt to the ebb and flow of data.

John Orlando Parry's *A London Street Scene* of 1835 [Fig. 4] is a painting which gives an immediate sense of the experience of montage in the modern city. Parry, Gerard Curtis tells us, chose 'the overwhelming graphic presence of advertising text to discourse on contemporary life and its problems'. Here, text is 'deliberately placed and layered within the work to give an effect both narratively temporal and graphically static – one not dissimilar to the later Cubists' attempts to take the advertised graphic word and make it a token of fragmented modernity'. Parry makes a panorama of modern life in which the panorama is 'created conceptually through the simulacra of the advertising text'.[57] We become aware that a similar aesthetic is being used by both Dickens and Parry, namely that text seems to invade and unbalance static integrity and create dynamism in a still picture, making it an ongoing sentence rather than a frozen image. To see the urban space was to integrate the movements of text and image which overlay it, thus altering our reading of that space. Visions of

Figure 4 John Orlando Parry's *A London Street Scene* of 1835
Source: Dunhill Museum.

everyday life were not free from text, which, if not present in actuality, would be floating on the cornea of the eye of the seer as an after-image. Curtis notices the way in which St. Paul's in the background of the painting 'is hoarded up and forgotten' in the consumer metropolis: 'Advertising hawks instead the pleasures of theatrical entertainment and spectacle, in a new street literacy.' He then points out that Jerusalem has become a 'Panorama', and Pompeii suggests the 'imminent fall of London itself'.[58] London has become a confusing montage of times, ideologies and matter. The overlapping of one poster on another creates sentences such as 'Vote for…King Arthur' in which the banality of democratic suffrage in modern industrial society is humorously juxtaposed with feudal law and Kingly rights. This overlapping also speaks of the vanity of both objects and texts as they are pasted over.[59]

We must ask ourselves here if this new way of reading the world was also part of a wider issue of seeing and consider for a moment Crary's influential thesis on vision and modernity and the place of the observer. Crary seeks to situate the break with the notion of an unproblematic seeing embodied in the *camera obscura*, in which the eye was considered an enabling lens, an 'infallible, metaphysical eye'. He challenges the idea that the break with Renaissance or perspectival seeing occurred in the late nineteenth century in a rarefied space of modernist representation, and situates the event much earlier around the 1820s and 1830s in the 'most dominant and pervasive

modes of seeing'[60] – that is, in popular technology and scientific experiment. Crary goes so far as to say that 'Modernist painting in the 1870s and 1880s and the development of photography after 1839 can be seen as later symptoms or consequences of this crucial systematic shift, which was well under way by 1820.'[61] He posits an observer who stops being a lens and starts being productive, since he must deal with disjunct and defamiliarized urban spaces of the sort we have been looking at in our present study. The eye, as Adorno has said, had to adapt to the order of bourgeois rationality which was one of manufactured things. The scientific community's recognition of the part played by physiology in vision complicated matters; vision came to be seen as a process involving both mind and body in which retinal after-images, peripheral vision, binocular vision, and thresholds of attention played their part. Misperception now became possible: seeing might be prey to illusion, and the senses unreliable. If all of this were so, then manipulation and derangement were now possible: experience could be produced for the subject, who was now merely a surface of inscription on which a whole range of effects could be made. This new observer would now be competent to consume the vast amount of visual data increasingly on offer.[62]

The study of after-images brought in its wake the invention of optical devices. Initially these were for scientific experiment, but they soon became popular toys. Crary tells us that they were all based on the notion that perception was not an instantaneous thing but a blending or fusion of images, especially if these were perceived in quick succession as in the case of the 'Thaumatrope', a spinning disc (uniting bald man and hair, horse and rider or cage and bird).[63] Crary speaks of the fabricated and hallucinatory nature of the image produced as well as of the rupture produced between perception and its object.[64] The panorama and diorama are mentioned and joked about by the *pensionnaires* in the Vauqueur boarding house in Balzac's *Le père Goriot* (1834) well before the revolutions in street spectacle which the Haussmann project would bring. I would suggest that the pedestrian, the omnibus passenger, the reader of pages of advertisements were subject to optical effects in their daily round in the city similar to the ones we have just described. Their eye was already accustomed to these complexities since London and Paris were full of moving text and image. Crary describes Baudelaire's reaction to the kaleidoscope invented in 1815: he saw it as 'a machine for the disintegration of a unitary subjectivity and for the scattering of desire into new shifting and labile arrangements, by fragmenting any point of iconicity and disrupting stasis'.[65]

This blending or fusion of images perceived in quick succession was something experienced every day by the city dweller in London and Paris. We find traces of this kaleidoscopic seeing in Baudelaire's as well as in Dickens's writing, and in the comic strip, which functions on the running together of successive images into a global effect. Text and image on the walls and

in magazines often mirrored in their disjunctive and conglomerate quality both the city space and the layered seeing created by this daily diet.[66] We also find that what the pasted-up adverts did accidentally, the makers of adverts started doing on purpose. Advertisers absorbed these new ways of seeing and translated them into the production of advertisements which were optical effects.

Many articles show sensitivity to the absurd results of this modern 'afterimaging', which lays, for example, indigestion pills over quotations from Shakespeare. We discover an awareness of this phenomenon in the satirical press, especially in *Punch* of the 1840s to 1860s where there is a regular taking of the temperature of the advertising world and its fusions of disparate material. In 'Curiosities of (advertising) Literature' [*sic*], 'Atrocities of Advertising Literature' and 'A Nation of Advertisers' the word 'literature' is used in its neutral meaning of 'writing' or 'printed matter' but at the same time can also mean great and canonical literature.[67] The articles show great sensitivity to the grotesque effects of advertising in terms of levels of language, which is why the titles just quoted all have an oxymoronic feel to them; advertising being a subversive bedfellow for literature *proper*. Notice that in the first title 'advertising' is in brackets so as to mark it out from the more serious 'literature'.[68] This is especially true in 1864, the 300th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, in which the bard was used to advertise everything from soap to writing paper and became the subject of many of the critiques of such advertising in the pages of the press. One article is called 'Shakespeare and his Assailants'; it mocks the often ludicrous suggestions for Shakespeare memorials which were also commercial ventures to promote British design.[69] One article in *Punch* called 'Another Shakespearian' deplores what it calls 'Shakespearianity' (playing perhaps on 'inanity') and presents an advertising circular written by a hairdresser who discourses on the nature of poetry being of two kinds: 'Descriptive and Real'. Speaking of the descriptive kind, the advertiser tells us: 'In this kind of beautiful Poetry SHAKESPEARE, from his indescribable sublimity and charming expression stands unrivalled.' The writer then goes onto say that the 'real Poet' contributes to the 'Embellishment of the Human Frame', and after much prosy panegyric on the art of cutting hair the advertiser announces that 'This poetry of the person can be cultivated in every department by visiting "PETER PINDAR'S HAIR-CUTTING AND CURLING ESTABLISHMENT" '. The Punch journalist quoting this advert ends his piece by saying: 'Surely, surely, MR. PINDAR ought to have been placed on the National Shakespeare Committee.'[70]

Literary quotations are thus shown to serve the commodity, bringing together the sublime and the ridiculous. It is nowhere better done than in an article entitled 'The Puff Poetical' of the 1860s which appears on the same page as 'Another Shakespearian' and invents its own series of advertisements which play on the same absurdities of juxtaposition. Puffery as the art of

puffing up a product by means of inflated language is here used to create a spoof advertisement to mock the use of high culture in advertising. It opens thus:

> Compassionating the exceeding dullness of the authors who are kept by tradesmen to draw up the Puff advertisements and paragraphs by which the newspapers are vulgarised, Mr. Punch has prepared a few of these articles in the style of the day, but of a more literary and graceful texture.[71]

The expression 'the style of the day' shows how widespread and even banal the practice had become. Some fourteen quotes from English literature are taken and used as the opening lines of advertisements. The first one begins with the sentence 'THE IMMMORTAL SHAKESPEARE has remarked…' and ends with what Shakespeare 'might have added', namely that writing would be made easier with the new 'ELECTRIFIED ALBATA SELFCROSSING TEA AND EYEDOTTING PEN'. Typography and lay out imitate the framed announcements which were found in many newspapers and posters of the day. The initial quotation is in capitals, as is the name of the product at the end of each piece, which heightens the collision (and collusion) of sublime literature and low commerce. Thus 'IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF LOVE…' is followed by the announcement that the 'SLAP-BANGERY REFRESHMENT ROOMS has secured three Italian organs to perform while dinners are going on'. Other examples include the following:

> WE MET TWAS IN A CROWD, and I had no time to ask his address or tell him mine, and how foolish in us both not to have gone to COPPERPLATE AND BITE'S establishment, and had our names and addresses engraved on a hundred enamelled CARDS for one-and-ninepence.
>
> LOVE ME IF I LIVE, but if I don't, by reason of any accident to the railway on which I travel, you will find the ticket of the Accidental Insurance Company in the empty cold cream pot in left-hand drawer of the washing-stand in my dressing-room, and you will receive the money without any botheration to add to the natural tears you'll drop, but wipe them soon.
>
> OLD MAN, 'TIS NOT SO DIFFICULT TO DIE, says *Manfred* in LORD BYRON's drama. … His respected Lordship would have said that it was not only not difficult to dye, whether you are an old man or a young one, if he had visited SCRATCHUM AND SCIZZORS' celebrated Hair Cutting and Dyeing Rooms, Low Holborn.

In a tradition which now continues in publications such as the British *Private Eye* with its 'Pseuds Corner', this form of parody (with its puns on words such as 'die' and 'dye') holds up a contemporary style of discourse to our scrutiny and critical faculties. For such a parody to appear it is clear

that this type of ad is part of a daily experience of reading, a widespread, shared phenomenon which will be easily recognized by readers. This in itself is interesting since it suggests that by 1864 there was a sufficient circulation of advertisements on walls and in magazines to create a 'habitus' (to use Bourdieu's expression), a background of shared knowledge (slogans, brand names, images) which circulated among the population and could be used as collective points of reference. These parodies have a subtext which declares that this 'habitus' is what we all *know*, is part of our daily textual bread. Notice that literature is still part of that daily bread but now 'brought to us', mediated so to speak (as sporting events and television programmes are *brought to us* by different manufacturers and companies) by the products and places it helps advertise. At this time, then, high culture was beginning to reach the population via the walls rather than via the library or the book. This situation heralds the beginning of the commercial sponsorship of. high culture. Literature lives – is alive – here in this spoof and might act as an education in literature for the less educated readers; see how the sources of certain quotations are provided, such as the reference to Byron above.

Punch's joke and 'crocodile' lamentation is that advertising takes up the Bard in this the anniversary of his birth and 'does him to death' by selling all manner of product and event, and by pillaging his writing (as it later would and in some ways already had taken up Dickens and Hugo). The irreverence of *Punch* extends here to 'our great national literature', now profane and fallen and flaunting itself on the walls. This breaking open of literature and the sharing around of its treasures in order to create advertising text and sell goods is obviously now sufficiently widespread, even banal, in 1864 to warrant such a satiric article.

Misbehaving with language:
'Families Supplied in Casks and Bottles'

The accidental collage created by one poster partially obscuring another is something we have already seen in Parry's painting with the incongruous enjoinment 'Vote for – King Arthur', which shows how chance can bring suffrage and serfdom into an intimate bond – a false bond of course which is the joke. Bill posting in this light becomes a form of writing, a game of '*cadavre exquis*' on the part of players who are ignorant of their involvement in the game. For the reader of advertising there is much game-playing and pleasure to be experienced in this activity as one journalist in Punch remarks about the hoardings of advertising posters: 'there is something picturesque and quaint in their cross-readings'.[72] Writing will go its own way independently of the volition of writer, advertiser and bill poster. The walls also offer the palimpsest – a bleeding of one discourse into another, literally, since one poster made wet with rain would allow the one underneath to show through. In the newspaper or magazine the cheap acidic paper would

allow ink to appear on the other side which often blurred meanings or created new ones. Kunzle finds a perfect example from a cartoon of 1858:

> In our reproduction from Mr. *Wilderspin* we make no attempt to mask out an otherwise unrelated cartoon showing a distraught gambler, 'his last card played,' which has bled through from the other side of the page. He not only reminds us of the cheapness of the paper the magazines used in their effort to cut expenses to the bone but also stands as a symbol of the reader's own sense that life itself was a gamble in which, like Wilderspin, one invariably got cheated.[73]

There were constant 'bleedings' of this type from one text to another – either literally like this one or through juxtaposition, quotation, and other forms of intertextuality. A story was being written on the walls which no one had begun and no one could end and which delivered up its message intermittently to those who wished to see it and were able to decipher it.

Many Victorians joked about hoardings on which posters had been put over others to produce amusing messages. E. S. Turner gives examples of the oddities of fly-posting remarked upon by Victorians: 'Mr. J. L. Toole will – PUNCH every Wednesday – the Rev. Dr. Parker.'[74] What we find is that the advertisers themselves picked up on the unpredictable fate of the physical medium of language – paper and ink and their vulnerability to weather or to defacement or to the whimsical readings and inattentions of passers-by – and from this formed an understanding of language's sliding, shifting nature and used it to effect in their own copy. Thus we find an advertisement for Moses the tailors which announces in alarmist fashion, 'The Duke of Wellington Shot' only to continue the sentence by adding 'a glance of admiration at our hats'.[75] This example reveals an appreciation of the power of chance manipulations, such jokes often providing an *échappatoire* for unacceptable feelings such as violence or sexual desire. Apart from the montage of sentences, and the fragmentation which this suggests, certain sentences were left to stand out alone and offer themselves up for scrutiny. Some advertisers used the technique of fixing high flown intellectual quotations cut up into separate words and left on trees or engraved on rocks which formed mysterious messages once collected and rearranged. These interpretations of the language of the walls, the accidental witticisms of advertising language, as well as the latter's propensity for punning, is a regular subject of comment in the writings of journalists.[76]

In *Punch* on 2 July 1864 there is a cartoon entitled 'Suggestive Advertisement – Families Supplied in Casks and Bottles', which takes a slogan – one of the thousands printed or painted all over the city – and makes a joke of it [Fig. 5].[77] The cartoon shows mothers, fathers and children all disguised as, or trapped in, casks and bottles. Some are being bludgeoned on the head to knock them into bottles; others are being carried off in barrels for delivery.

Figure 5 'Families Supplied in Casks and Bottles', *Punch*, 1864
Source: British Library.

All social types are brought together but men and women, children and adults are separated. The play on the expression 'supplied in' is obvious here. The first meaning (casks and bottles are supplied by us to families who need them) is replaced by an alternative meaning (families themselves can be supplied to you placed in casks and bottles). The cartoon demonstrates a voluntary 'misunderstanding' or 'misinterpretation' of the sentence in order to produce a joke in the form of an absurd vision of families packaged and sold as items.

The first thing we might say here is that this translates a particular urban experience of language in which the subject is met with written statements all around, which, because of the way they are gratuitously arranged – often isolated from a context, or read fleetingly (they are moving or the reader is) – have become semantically labile or 'suggestive' as the journalist intimates in the title 'Suggestive Advertisements'. The use of the word 'suggestive' to describe the advert points to an awareness of the elasticity of interpretation and its ability to suggest meanings other than the one intended by the writer. When an advertiser puts his copy out there on a wall or in a page of advertisements, his language will 'do its own thing' and create meanings never dreamt of by the seller of casks and bottles. Here the joke is based

on syllepsis or the play on identity, phonic or graphic. Syllepsis is close to antanaclasis, which is a pun in which a word is repeated with a different meaning, or rather whose meaning alters upon repetition. An example is 'If you aren't fired with enthusiasm, you'll be fired with enthusiasm'. In syllepsis the word only appears once and must be read twice; in our example the repetition of 'supplied in' comes by means of the illustration which obliges the reader to reread the sentence in a different way.[78] We thus see that language has become more visible with advertising – that is, language's functionings are suddenly more obvious since they are pasted up, paraded before us as if they were chalked up on a blackboard by a teacher. At the same time, our daily language which we 'inhabit' and take for granted becomes suddenly strange to us. In the reactions to advertising in *Punch*, we see how dead metaphors come alive to us once they are on the walls – a concern of much of the journalism on advertising which suggests that the new 'perpendicular' writing had done something to our relationship to the written word. Language is less a purveyor of truth and more a game of endless proliferating half-truths, disseminating way beyond the word of God or the seriousness of the literary canon – a free-for-all in which linguistic play rather than exegesis is *de rigueur*.

Secondly, the illustration provides a vision of enslavement. The family is both a consuming entity (already at this time advertising uses the family as a 'sell' – one of the key units of commerce) and here a 'consumed' or 'consumable' one since the family is shown to be 'goods' supplied like so many bottles to those who would buy. People, it tells us, can be bought and sold and indeed consumed – even eaten, since the cartoon has cannibalistic overtones (the casks and bottles are containers for food and drink such as salted hams or beer). The strangeness of the cartoon, its dreamlike quality (a perfect example of a rebus which might be interpreted back into a coherent sentence), is perhaps less arbitrary than one might at first think. The way the cartoonist has chosen to interpret the advertising slogan is to give it a violent twist. The people figured here are prisoners of their receptacles, some crying and lamenting, others being squashed and reduced so that they will fit into the bottles. The woman waving goodbye is to be separated from her husband or father. These are confined people, powerless commodities to be sold on the market. In the last analysis it is, of course, just a joke. But the act of joking tells us certain things. The joke of course is in the sudden absurdity of the vision that a quite ordinary sentence can throw up if read outside the intentions of the author (who merely wishes to sell casks and bottles to families), and not in the political reading of that absurdity; Punch readers were obviously not meant to receive a political message from the cartoon. What is interesting here, however, is that, in sabotaging the sentence, the speaker/writer reveals not a hidden agenda of the advertising slogan itself but an effect of language, which is to capture the reader at a certain ideological place. Given *Punch*'s

editorial line of social satire we can imagine that the slogan and its interpretation via the cartoon reveal a desire to show us our own imprisonment *not* within the confines of society as slaves to capitalism but within the confines of the sentence – our inevitable capture by it and involvement in its coercions. This sense of being hailed by advertising and coerced is expressed in the cartoon. The slogan directs us to the recognition that we are part of a family and families have the habit of buying casks and bottles which are 'supplied' to them regularly and always (this is the way of the world and you to whom we address this slogan are part of that 'family'). To read the slogan is to be bottled or casked yourself in a certain place in the sentence, ready for sale.

The joke is a means by which the unthinkable is thought, by which new realities might come into being: we need only consider E. S. Turner's comment on the fact that *Punch* made a sarcastic joke about advertising on umbrellas and that 'the suggestion was gratefully put into practice'.[79] Thus does the virtual, the written, allow the advent of new social mechanisms: in this case that people are to be packaged henceforth like goods, to be marshalled, to be separated from their loved ones, to lose their identity, and be placed in groupings according to age and sex, branded and dispatched. There is an insidious and sinister subtext to the cartoon which foresees or uncovers the industrialized processing of human beings – the cartoon thus speaks a truth about society as it is and offers a nightmarish vision of what it might be.

Thus we see that advertising text can be made to speak against itself, can be made to come up with values and truths which differ vastly from those intended. It is a self-subverting system and needs only a certain type of reader to produce or unravel through interpretation its possible meanings. There is no act of defacing here or physical sabotage, only an act of reading. The city dweller becomes aware that his reading is paramount in the transmission of the text and that any act of reading may well amount to a sabotage or enrichment of the message. What is necessary is an initial irreverence on the part of a reader who understands and exploits (as the journalists of *Punch* so often do) the dependence of the speaker/writer on the good will of the hearer/reader to 'understand' the text. There is little cooperation on the part of *Punch* with the writers they lampoon and this is what made them so entertaining to the public. What they were very good at – part of the image of the group of fatuous (public) schoolboys which they cultivated – was answering back. We see the addressee misbehaving and the reader writing back.[80]

In his *Interpretation as Pragmatics*, Lecercle describes in Lacanian terms the situation of communication which we are studying: 'the addressee is convoked, ascribed a place in dialogue, from which he will have to answer, even if the object of his answer is to deny that he occupies such a place'.[81] This path of ascription and denial is the one which the *Punch* cartoonist has followed and which allows him to write back by recontextualizing the slogan.

In a series of maxims which accompany his 'ALTER' model[82] of interpretation, Lecercle brings together a number of concepts which are useful in our understanding of how advertising slogans are read. The first is 'indirection', which underlines the fact that the speaker has no mastery over her own discourse and therefore a perfect reconstruction by the hearer is impossible. The second, close to the first, is 'vagueness', while the third, 'recontextualisation', is borrowed from Ricoeur and could be given the Derridean name of 'iterability': 'the text must be capable of de-contextualisation, in order to be re-contextualised in a new situation, for that is what the act of reading is about'.[83] Punning is an example of this recontextualization; what the utterer would like to mean is entirely different from what his or her utterance means, since the readers who come after recontextualize it with each new reading. Derrida's notion of '*différance*' comes next;[84] this concept says that there is no iteration without alteration, as in the case of the 'Families supplied', which shows us that author and reader are separated by a temporal gap so that meaning is always deferred. The act of reading involves an agonistic relationship which is 'made up of verbal struggles and games rather than cooperative and irenic'.[85] Reading and interpreting are thus acts more akin to translation and intervention than a direct 'riddle-solving' to discover the truth. We see clearly how the Punch journalist intervenes in the sentence he reads and reinscribes it. He does not cooperate with the utterance but retranslates it, shouldering intention aside. The last and eighth maxim involves the way in which 'L' (Language) and 'E' (Encyclopaedia) form the conjuncture of each successive act of interpretation influencing the way the reader will take up a slogan and recontextualize it. It is not by chance that the cartoonist chose to interpret the sentence as he did, since history is seeing the universalizing of the notion of the family and its status as the basic unit of commerce and production – and this notion had manifestly already passed into the 'encyclopedia'.[86]

Finally, we need to return to the primary motivation of this piece, which is the making of a joke. Answering back or 'recontextualising' is one of the pleasures and powers involved in the joke. Freud's study of the 'Witz' and Lacan's rereading of this text stress the pleasure involved in bringing together signifiers from very distinct semantic fields and thus being able to make connections which 'serious' thought would carefully avoid.[87] The joke allows these pleasurable links to be made in the face of the inhibiting criticism of logical thought and moral judgement. It is a defence mechanism which deflects the force of an utterance and allows room for manoeuvre on the part of the hearer, who thereby transforms her or himself into speaker. It becomes a factor in the empowerment of the subject and allows recognition of desire which is normally suppressed by the signifier. It is in the failure of the logic of speech, in the halts and stumbles of its structures that desire appears (in the case of the 'Families supplied' cartoon, the desire of the cartoonist to flout the presuppositions which

the slogan implies). That advertising needs to be answered, to be warded off, so to speak, brings us on to the problem of its constraining violence. The consequences of not being able to make a joke or to use a joke in the defence of one's person are grave and have been demonstrated in many psychoanalytic studies.[88] Thus the discourse of advertising seems to afford an opportunity of manipulating language so that it affords new energies, escape routes and a form of insurrection within language. It is not only language which is seen to misbehave but also a subject who must misbehave within language in order to wrest back some autonomy in the face of an overwhelming force.[89]

Forms of subjection

We must now consider how the human subject is talked about and imagined in its relations with advertising and by extension 'the language of the walls'. This is a complex relationship since, if we find constant complaints from individuals who feel they are being violently coerced, we can also read accounts of how 'the writing on the walls' nourishes and indeed builds the reader of them. To understand the important connection between these two stances we will first explore the sense of being force-fed which is expressed by those writing of advertising.

Adverts choose us and pursue us

In the mid-nineteenth century, text was no longer something which had to be sought out and paid for dearly; it now sought out the subject, moved into the line of his or her gaze, and asked to be read. This active nature of text is described by the hero of a recent French detective novel who suddenly realizes how the serial killer he is tracking (who is not a literary man) must have come across the poem which was to become the structuring logic behind his crimes: 'All he had to do was take the metro, all he had to do was to sit down and look around. And have the text fall into his lap, as if destiny were sending him a personal message ... No, it was the poem that chose *him*.'[90] Victorian commentators express just this sense of being chosen by the text around them. Chosen as a target, pursued and even physically assaulted. This constant calling to the individual, this persistent getting of his attention takes on different degrees of force and violence. Louis Althusser's description of the functioning of ideology imagines a policeman calling out to a passer-by: 'Hey, you there!' Althusser suggests that ideology acts or functions in such a way that it ' "recruits" subjects among the individuals ...'. This notion of recruiting helps us imagine the work of a text or image as it inveigles or embraces the reader, drawing him into a certain ideological net. At some level, the articles we will be examining show an awareness of this. Althusser stresses that ideology recruits all those it touches: '(it recruits them all) ... by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation*

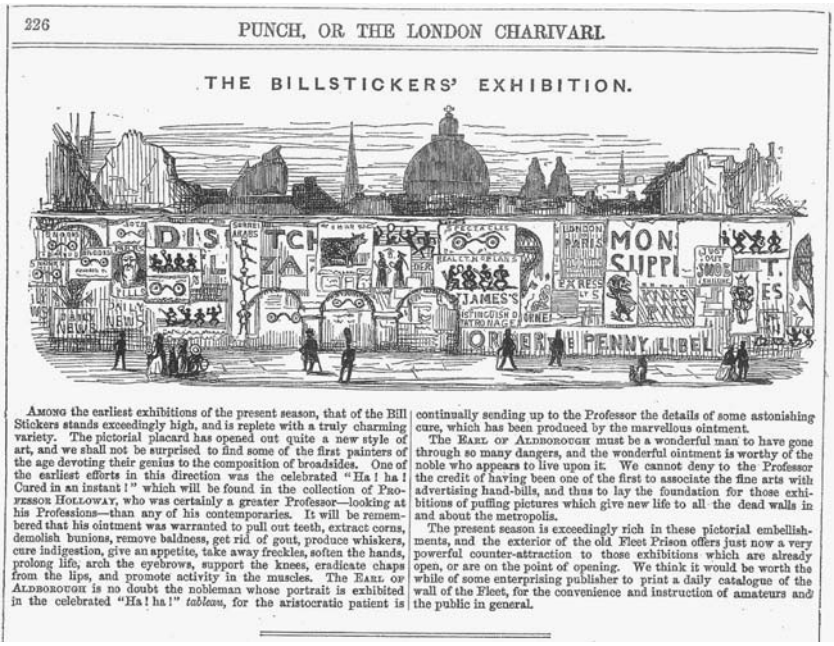
or hailing'.[91] This hailing takes many forms: *Punch* in the late 1840s complains of the adverts which 'lined and stuffed' omnibuses which were often ads for medicines accompanied by gory testimonials. The journalist sees himself and others as being obliged to submit to an aggression of words:

> How will you like sitting for an hour opposite to a pleasant list of the wonderful cures by some Professor's Ointment? Or how will ladies like being stared in the face, all the way from Brentford to the Bank, with an elaborate detail of all the diseases which Old Methusaleh's Pill professes to be a specific for? The testimonials of these gifted gentleman are as little noted for their delicacy as for their truth, and do not form the kind of reading we should exactly prescribe to the fairer portion of the public who patronize the omnibuses ... Do in mercy allow us to ride for a day's pleasure to the Bank to receive our dividends without compelling us to sit vis-à-vis to Moses and Son, or having Rowland's Kalydor perpetually thrown in our faces. Let us be a nation of shopkeepers as much as we please but there is no necessity we should become a nation of advertisers.[92]

The advert is given active and intelligent status here. It is an aggressor which 'throws' information in the face, which corrupts the fair sex and which threatens to transform those who are obliged to consume it into advertisers themselves. The vampiric nature of the adverts is hinted at in the last line in that once bitten the ordinary shopkeeper becomes advertiser. A distinction is being made between a 'nation of shopkeepers' (the affectionate adoption by the British of Napoleon's famous insult with its connotations of dull, down-to-earth commercial practice), and the implied decadence and excess of advertising.[93]

It is the advert which gazes at the passer-by and encourages the return of that gaze; ladies are described as being 'stared in the face' by the adverts rather than staring themselves. There are many such descriptions of advertising as having the capacity to 'catch' the eye. Adverts often contain eyes – especially those for spectacles and telescopes. One cartoon of the time depicts advertising as an 'Exhibition' of eyes. It is called 'The Billstickers' Exhibition' and makes the joke that advertising is the new cultural event, and should print a daily catalogue for the instruction of passers-by [Fig. 6].[94] We are shown a huge hoarding covered with text and eyes with a group of enthralled onlookers; we are reminded here of the Aleph in Borges' story and the image of all-seeing eyes locked into other eyes in never-ending circuits of reflection and refraction.[95] Billsticking is described as a 'powerful counter-attraction' to exhibitions of art in official galleries and capable of seducing artists into joining the ranks of those who draw and write for advertising.

Advertisements which block our vision or our paths and force the gaze to confront them are shown in cartoons such as one concerning 'street



226 PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

THE BILLSTICKERS' EXHIBITION.

DIS / TCH / ZA / JAMES'S / MON / SUPPI / PENNY / LIBEL

AMONG the earliest exhibitions of the present season, that of the Bill Stickers stands exceedingly high, and is replete with a truly charming variety. The pictorial placard has opened out quite a new style of art, and we shall not be surprised to find some of the first painters of the age devoting their genius to the composition of broadsides. One of the earliest efforts in this direction was the celebrated "Ha! ha! Cured in an instant!" which will be found in the collection of PROFESSOR HOLLOWAY, who was certainly a greater Professor—looking at his Professions—than any of his contemporaries. It will be remembered that his ointment was warranted to pull out teeth, extract corns, demolish bunions, remove baldness, get rid of gout, produce whiskers, cure indigestion, give an appetite, take away freckles, soften the hands, prolong life, arch the eyebrows, support the knees, eradicate chaps from the lips, and promote activity in the muscles. The EARL OF ALDBOROUGH is no doubt the nobleman whose portrait is exhibited in the celebrated "Ha! ha!" *tableau*, for the aristocratic patient is continually sending up to the Professor the details of some astonishing cure, which has been produced by the marvellous ointment.

The EARL OF ALDBOROUGH must be a wonderful man to have gone through so many dangers, and the wonderful ointment is worthy of the noble who appears to live upon it. We cannot deny to the Professor the credit of having been one of the first to associate the fine arts with advertising hand-bills, and thus to lay the foundation for those exhibitions of puffing pictures which give new life to all the dead walls in and about the metropolis.

The present season is exceedingly rich in these pictorial embellishments, and the exterior of the old Fleet Prison offers just now a very powerful counter-attraction to those exhibitions which are already open, or are on the point of opening. We think it would be worth the while of some enterprising publisher to print a daily catalogue of the wall of the Fleet, for the convenience and instruction of amateurs and the public in general.

Figure 6 'The Billstickers' Exhibition', *Punch*, 1847
Source: British Library.

nuisances', in which a politician attempts to fight a series of monstrous personified texts blocking the thoroughfare.[96] Another article speaks of 'letters six feet long' and being hemmed in with 'bold black letter assertion'.[97] This formulation is akin to the expression 'dictatorial perpendicular' used by Benjamin in his study of the printed text in the city, in which he speaks of the plight of the printed word: 'Printing, having found in the book a refuge in which to lead an autonomous existence, is pitilessly dragged out onto the street by advertisements [that] force the printed word entirely into the dictatorial perpendicular.'[98] Boldness and violence are seen as a feature of the image, especially in illustrations on the covers of magazines, which acted as advertisements for the magazine itself. One commentator in 1859 made the following comment: 'The art employed upon these pictures is proper to the subject. The effects are broad, bold, and unscrupulous. There is an appropriate fierceness in the wild cutting and slashing of the block; and the letter press always falls short of the haggard and ferocious expression of the engraving.'[99] The terms used show an appreciation of the violence of the act of appeal exercised by the image on the public.

There is a sense in which, wherever the eye roved, a space for inscription might be found. Edward Lloyd, the owner of Lloyd's Newspapers

whose advertisements for Lloyd's were regularly featured in the Dickens's Advertisers, at one time stamped ads onto already minted coins (mutilating official coinage) and even paid his workers with them so that they might circulate all the faster. He was finally asked to desist from this practice by the government.[100] This example shows us something important concerning the relationship of advertising to the state: Jennifer Wicke explains that advertising was born alongside literature, as a complement to its needs, advertising growing as printers had to establish and announce themselves and so 'articulate a new mode of social production not yet controlled by Church or State'.[101] Yet at the same time the official spaces of inscription of Church and State were undergoing colonization. If coins could become adverts, so a butcher's wife used her husband's gravestone to advertise the fact that she was still in the butchering business: the engraved inscription even included the address of the shop.[102] Other sacred surfaces invaded by advertising included church steeples and public monuments, and in one article titled 'A Nation of Advertisers' there is a lament that all areas of national pride or religious awe were being colonized and that there was no wilderness left where advertising could not reach – even the North Pole had fallen victim to it; an illustration is provided of a group of polar bears watching the posting of bills on a 'Polar Advertising Station'. The word 'invasion' is used in the accompanying text to describe the activity of advertisements which have '*crept* under bridges – have *planted* themselves right in the middle of the Thames – have *usurped* the greatest thoroughfares'. These are all terms suggesting an unhealthy and rampant plant which is against nature.[103]

The fear of the invasion of the public space and of the last wildernesses on earth is perhaps less acute than that surrounding the invasion of the private space of the home. The trespass on areas of intimacy – the drawing room for example – is greatly spoken of in the journalism of the time. The author of *Puffs and Mysteries* of 1855 (a commentary on advertising practices in *The Times*) describes the appearance of advertising 'on a dead wall' but also in 'a lively conversation'. He remarks in his preface that advertising follows us wherever we go and appears in the most intimate places '... even our drawing-rooms are not always free from their intrusion'.[104] Advertising implants itself in our very conversations. In Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1855), protagonist Margaret Hale notices that the discourse of ladies around her is charged with the descriptions of commodities:

> Why, they took nouns that were signs of things which gave evidence of wealth – housekeepers, under-gardeners, extent of glass, valuable lace, diamonds, and all such things; and each one formed her speech so as to bring them all in, in the prettiest accidental manner possible.[105]

These are miniature self-advertisements in which words are 'signs of things' and designate a world of goods and practices beyond them. The ladies

transform their speech into billboards, recreating themselves as verbal advertising hoardings. In turn, Margaret experiences the words of these society women as an imposition in which she herself becomes a surface to receive their imprint. This is the Victorian version of William Blake's 'mind-forged manacles' in his poem of 1794, 'London': the dictating voices within print have become restraints on freedom of thought, a form of brainwashing.[106] The intrusion into the home via telegraphs (which were normally received only in emergencies) can be found as early as 1864 in the form of an angry letter to *The Times* denouncing this practice and which is recognizable to us as an early protest against junk mail.[107] Thus remaining barricaded in one's home did not prevent the city and its advertising coming in. The very preserves of privacy and leisure were sometimes shown to be less safe havens than places of indoctrination and coercion. This violent hailing takes many forms and elicits a variety of reactions, yet it is when the body of the individual is at stake that we see some of the most powerful responses.

Written on the body

I would like to continue to quote Blake's 'London' and consider for a moment the poet's encounter with the faces of the urban crowd on which he sees 'marks of weakness marks of woe'. These marks – of misery, disease, age – are carried by the passers-by as emblems of their suffering. The clean and unsullied faces depicted in text and image elsewhere by Blake (in his image *Albion* for example and in the 'Songs of Innocence'), are here written upon, engraved and etched. Were Blake to perform the same perambulation through London in the mid-nineteenth century it is certain he would encounter similarly damaged faces, yet he would also notice new 'marks' in the form of writing on the bodies of those he passed. We are familiar in the twenty-first century, thanks in great part to the graffiti of anti-advertising groups, to the notions of being 'branded' by 'brands'. A recent defacing of a trainers advertisement in the Paris Metro played on the word *marque* (or brand) and *marqué comme un veau* (to be branded like a calf/like cattle). This notion of imprinting was felt as early as the 1840s (described in many articles in *Punch* and in *Le Charivari* in Paris). The self-turned-ad is a source of humour in *Punch*, but the keenness of the degradation of such practices is registered nonetheless. A cartoon of 1864 shows a new form of advertising: a man carrying a paper lamp on his head on which advertisements are printed. The cartoon is entitled 'The Lowest Depth' [Fig. 7]. An old acquaintance asks the humiliated man how he came 'to this'? It is a comment on the ease with which the passer-by could be inveigled into advertising, but also a sign of the way in which the human body was increasingly becoming a prosthesis to advertising. There is the suggestion that our relationship to advertising does not leave us untouched but enters us and damages us – it sucks out something and leaves us with less of our humanity: cartoons in Punch constantly depict human beings become commodity or commodities become human as the cartoons of Grandville were doing

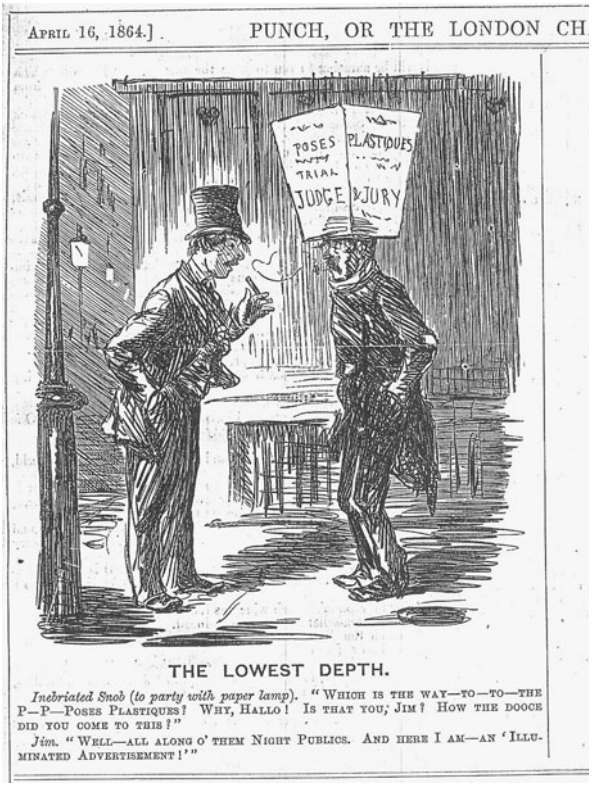


Figure 7 'The Lowest Depth', *Punch*, 1864
Source: British Library.

in France.[108] Men's backs and children's clothes are seen as so many sites for exhibition. One cartoon shows a broad-backed man on whose back is written 'Billstickers Beware'. The caption is simply 'Wise precaution'[109] – the idea being that if you stand still long enough you will be used as an advertising space [Fig. 8]. Another article headed 'Juvenile Advertisers' suggests 'turning our juveniles to account, by putting them into pictorial pinafores' with slogans which will be all the more efficient 'being conveyed to us through the agency of unconscious innocence'.[110] The tone of the article is to ridicule the excesses of advertising and its readiness to exploit sections of the population one might expect to be exempt from such attentions. The violent occupation of space and the need to preserve areas of unmarked space is explored in articles such as one entitled 'Advertising' accompanied by a cartoon depicting a mass of umbrellas imprinted with brand names and slogans [Fig. 9].[111] The writer, having complained of the invasion of advertising in omnibuses, under

Figure 8 'Wise precaution', *Punch*, 1864
Source: British Library.

Figure 9 'Advertising Ingenuity', *Punch*, 1847
Source: British Library.

bridges, and on perambulating vans, then exclaims that 'our umbrellas are still left blank', and thus are a terrain to be exploited. He facetiously suggests a system in which passers-by will be remunerated if they agree to walk through London carrying an advertising umbrella. The figures in the cartoons are reduced to legs scurrying under the umbrellas. There are no faces. If this suggests the dehumanizing aspects of text carried on the body, it is also a prediction of a commercial practice which is now quite common.

If every area of the human body is colonized as a place of exhibition – backs, chests, hats and, later in the century, even the tongue[112] – then it is the sandwich man who best exemplifies this sense of the human body enslaved to advertising and whose plight provokes the most responses. William Smith comments that sandwich men and their texts were not efficient as advertising because they appeared abused, down-trodden and 'seedy-looking', mere moveable hoardings or walls.[113] Yet, worse than this, their status was that of the most abject of human figures: the one who carries a message he cannot read, which is not of his own making and which has been imposed upon him. There is a certain humiliation in being sandwiched between text which is interpellating others, which subjugates your person in the eyes of others but to which you cannot respond. This plight is recorded with humour by *Punch* in various poems by and about sandwich men.[114] One *Punch* cartoon depicts the revenge of the sandwich man: he is following a customer out of a tailor's shop and is carrying a board describing the cloth, cut and cost of the item worn by the customer walking ahead of him. He is enjoying the hilarity of passers-by as they laugh at the customer who is unaware he is being followed by an advertisement for the very clothes he is wearing. The humiliation (for once) involves another party. We can also find a poem written in the style of an ill-educated Sandwich or Board-Man entitled 'The Sandwiches Petition'.[115] It speaks of the 700 board-men who lost their jobs after an order of the 'Police Commissioners' who were against 'perambulating advertisers'. The ill-spelt poem is a plea to retain their employment, however demeaning it may be. It is a send-up of the situation but also a strangely poignant description of the low status of the men. It starts off with 'Pity the sorrows of an animated Sandwich' and continues with a series of puns concerning the weight of letters and the pain of carrying text:

> The Crushers they are down on us, the pavement 'cos we cumbers,
> The world – wus luck, 'as always found men o'letters in the the way:
> And though we're bound in boards, and keep coming out in numbers,
> We're hanything but pop'lar periodickles of the day…
>
> With a letter of the Halfabet above your shoulders braced,
> Just parade the Great Metropolis in Capitals, like we,
> Or try a pair of posters a pulling round your waist,
> As we do, for a bob, all day, and a deal bored you would be!

The men 'keep coming out in numbers' which is a pun on the serial production of sandwich men who are as easily produced as serial publications, but who are anything but popular since 'coming out' in numbers carries connotations of disease, of coming out in a rash – so that the text they carry is associated with an infection which breaks out over the whole body. This brings us back to Blake's 'marks' (suggesting the scars of syphilis or smallpox as well as those of melancholy and misery). The sandwich men are distinctly fallen 'men o'letters' whose only contact with letters is being 'bound in boards' like a book – the word 'bound' bringing together the act of reading with chains and imprisonment. The burdensome 'letters of the Halfabet' are carried painfully 'above your shoulders braced' and the general sense of being purveyors of writing is one of constriction and discomfort. By showing a sandwich man being active in his role or by allowing him to write a poem – to be a speaker instead of the mute support of text – is a way of wresting back some autonomy in the face of the text which writes him, of detaching text from the body in order to rewrite the self.

All of these responses imply that the marking of advertisements on the human body is not skin deep but is part of a powerful process of the incorporation of certain norms. The individual does not remain untouched by the words he carries on himself. Like the placards carried by victims of the *auto-da-fé* on which their sins were listed for the eyes of all, these writings are shown to weigh upon the bearer who must *bear* the names. Text appended to a human figure without consent is an age-old form of humiliation and subjugation and persisted in the punitive practices of Victorian educational establishments: Jane in *Jane Eyre* and David in *David Copperfield* are both forced to wear placards as punishment in their schools. The 'A' for 'adultery' worn by Hester Prynne in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* is evidence of an earlier form of social curse or condemnation operated through writing on the human body – there to be read by others and to silence the wearer.[116]

Yet in the articles and cartoons we have considered, response is made not with angry remonstrance but with humour. There are ways of neutralizing the ubiquity and force of slogans by imagining excesses above and beyond those already at work in society. The rejoinder is important as a form of insurrection: 'Recontextualisation breaks the chain of authority, it allows the interpellated subject to be displaced, if ever so slightly, from the place ascribed by interpellation: such is the content of imposture.'[117] The body thus colonized must react, and does react in producing the very cartoons and writings on the state of the body under capitalism which we have just seen. These are visions of bodies which are '*assujettis*' in Althusser's terms – that is, captured at a place. Both Jean-Jacques Lecercle and Judith Butler take the material nature of hailing, the physical power of the hailing voice on the body seriously: they treat 'the interpellating speech act as a bodily act exerting force, in a direct causal relationship, on the bodies of both addressor and addressee'.[118] If the lament as a response to advertising is common,

then so too are the jokes we have just considered, which redirect or rather refract the energies of advertising.

Injury and guilt

If the urban dweller of the mid-nineteenth century was not actually in the public place looking at advertisements, he or she could read about them. Dickens's little-known essay on the posting of bills in London is called quite simply 'Bill-Sticking' and was published in 1851 in his *Household Words*. It is a description of an encounter with the man responsible for much of the billsticking in London (quite literally the gluing of adverts to walls) and of his attempt to protect himself from the very bills he is responsible for sticking by creating for himself a secret bower, a cocoon quite shut off from the assault of advertising.

Dickens creates a narrator who is a *flâneur* and self-styled 'collector of facts' who starts the piece by examining the surfaces of the city as he perambulates through it. The interesting element for us in our understanding of how advertising is seen to subjugate the subject is Dickens's immediate association of advertising with guilt. He opens the piece by saying: 'If I had an enemy whom I hated – which God Forbid! – and if I knew of something which sat heavy on his conscience, I think I would introduce that something into a Posting-Bill.' He then says that he would have the posters stuck all over the city and that he cannot imagine a more terrible revenge: 'I should haunt him, by this means, night and day.'[119] The narrator comments upon the fact that adverts are infinitely replaceable, that their message is powerful since, although not written indelibly in stone in one place, their message can be read everywhere again and again. Advertising would make a wonderful instrument of torture for the guilty man; posters could be made with tacit references to his crime and placed all over the city. A vision of what we would now call urban paranoia is built up in an enumeration of all the places those posters might be stuck:

> Thus if my enemy passed an uninhabited house, he would see his conscience glaring down on him from the parapets, and peeping up at him from the cellars. If he took a dead wall in his walk, it would be alive with reproaches. If he sought refuge in an omnibus, the panels thereof would become Belshazzar's palace to him. If he took boat, in a wild endeavour to escape, he would see the fatal words lurking under the arches of the bridges of the Thames. If he walked the streets with downcast eyes, he would recoil from the very stones of the pavement, made eloquent by black-lamp lithograph. If he drove or rode, his way would be blocked up by enormous vans, each proclaiming the same words over and over again from its whole extent of surface. Until, having gradually grown thinner and paler, and having at last totally rejected food, would miserably perish, and I should be revenged. (283)

We discover in this quotation several phenomena which we encountered earlier: the active gaze of the advertisement which follows our movements and seeks us out ('glaring', 'peeping', 'lurking', 'proclaiming'), as well as the idea of adverts covering all available surfaces, obstructing the passage of passers-by and reiterating their message. But the thinking behind these phenomena goes further or at least makes explicit what remains tacit in the commentaries we have seen latterly: Dickens ironically suggests that advertising is fatal and can lead to death by interpellation. We cannot turn away from the Medusa-like gaze of these texts, and even downcast eyes will only encounter other advertisements. There is an understanding here of the effect of iteration as a form of brainwashing, but more importantly a sense of the 'bad news' which the walls bring us. The writing on the wall of Belshazzar's palace brings news of death during a feast, a divine message of doom in the middle of a banquet; Dickens's reference to this episode in the Bible hints at a sense of death in plenty – or rather that excessive plenty brings with it its own form of death knell.

Dickens then describes the famous names which appeared regularly in the advertisement pages of magazines or on walls: Holloway's Pills, Carburn's hair oil, Moses and son gentleman's suits, Mechi fancy goods, Dakin's tea, Du Barry's constipation medicine and the makers of wigs or hair restorer; he mentions them in the same random torrent as one sees them in magazines or on walls but imagines all of them as potential persecutors whose names follow one in a sinister fashion as if one had slighted them personally in some way and they were seeking revenge:

> Has any man a self-reproachful thought associated with pills, or ointment? What an avenging spirit to that man is PROFESSOR HOLLOWAY! Have I sinned in oil? CARBURN pursues me. Have I a Dark remembrance associated with any gentlemanly garments, bespoke or ready made? MOSES AND SON are on my track. Did I ever aim a blow at a defenceless fellow-creature's head? That head eternally being measured for a wig... undoes me. Have I no sore places in my mind which MECHI touches – which NICOLL probes – which no registered article whatever lacerates? Does no discordant note within me thrill responsive to mysterious watchwords, as 'Revalenta Arabica'. (284)

The eye is literally forced to consume the proper name. These names are emblems for things which are desirable (a veritable banquet of goods), yet the repetition of the brand names is presented as a mental assault which is described in terms of a physical attack – a probing and lacerating, a surgical intervention, a literal branding of the brand name upon the brain. We might evoke Baudelaire's dream recorded by Benjamin for the *Arcades Project* in which things are portrayed as fatal, vicious, violent: Baudelaire is falling down a shaft (as Alice does in *Alice in Wonderland*) and goods,

saleable items are falling with him: idols in wood, iron, and gold cut and bruise him as he falls, the scar on the body echoing a scar on the retina.[120] The proper name described by Dickens becomes a violence, both a weapon which hits out and a door which sucks in, the proper name leading to a registered article. What he unfolds here is the way in which advertising lives out a fantasy of naming which is part of the fallen nature of human language. Benjamin's essay 'On Language as Such and on the Language of Man' (1916) talks of the melancholy of post-Babel naming in which names are 'wilting': 'In divine language things have their proper names, but in human languages they are overnamed – which is the linguistic essence of guilt and melancholy.'[121] What we see here is the proliferation and repetition of names which have lost their contact with things. The proper name constitutes a deadliness of repetition: in the Parry painting studied earlier the poster for 'The Destruction of Pompeii every evening' suggests a modern form of repletion and of simulacra associated with the end of a civilization in which terrible events are made banal by repetition.[122] But, more important, what Dickens's text is suggesting is a link between being hailed in the street by posters and the sense of doom which ensues.

Butler's rereading of Althusser's text on interpellation builds on the moment of hailing that we have been considering. Her idea, following Althusser, is that the formation of the subject is dependent on power, on being '*assujetti*'. And indeed she posits that there is no subject without a passionate attachment to subjection.[123] In her chapter entitled 'Circuits of Bad Conscience' she imagines, through a reading of Nietzsche and Freud, that prohibition of all kinds (such as that imagined by Dickens in the accusations of the advertising slogans) creates the space of the formation of the subject. It creates recoil or redoubling, which is a turning back on oneself in which one becomes conscious of oneself as a subject. In Nietzsche the will turns back on itself (the '*instinct for freedom* forcibly made latent'[124]), while in Freud conscience is formed through this same reflexivity – in relation to paranoia and narcissism. Nietzsche's account of 'Bad Conscience' in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887) also involves a sense of violence: 'If something is to stay in the memory, it must be burned in; only that which never ceases to *hurt* stays in the memory.'[125] Butler also evokes the discussions of the relation between debt and guilt and the way in which the punishment of the debtor presupposes the 'model of the promising animal' which cannot come into being without the terror produced by punishment. She formulates from her reading of Nietzsche the idea that 'the pressure exerted by the walls of society forces an internalization which culminates in the production of the soul'.[126] Her use of the word 'walls' to express the pressures and confinement exerted by society on the individual helps us to formulate a definition of the walls of advertising: 'the language of the walls' is a form of dictatorial power. The prohibitions of the walls (in our case the walls are the inscribed walls of advertising) are thus seen in terms of laws which repress and direct. Yet

these walls also constitute us and procure pleasure, as when the Freudian libido comes under the censor of the law to emerge as the sustaining affect of that law, as an attachment to this thwarting of gratification.

Although the constraints of the written walls in some way threaten us, as Dickens shows, there is a compulsive need to follow them. It is Butler who attempts to explain such phenomena in her chapter 'Conscience doth make Subjects of us All' in which she goes back to Althusser's hailing policeman who is an officer of 'the Law'. The officer imagined by Althusser makes a call to which the individual responds by saying 'Here I am.' In a similar way the persecuting adverts of Dickens seem to call out 'You are guilty' or, more generally, 'You are the one concerned with this hair oil/coat/tea.' And to this the individual responds 'Yes, it is me.' This pattern Butler calls the 'appropriation of guilt'. But she asks herself why anyone should turn round in the first place and that there must already be inscribed in that individual a desire to turn round. To turn around, as we have already seen, is a turning back on oneself, which is the movement of conscience. The individual is a consenting subject already guilty before the reprimand, desiring to be looked at, to receive the recognition of the name, of any name, false though it may be. Butler tells us that '[i]n "Ideology" guilt and conscience operate implicitly in relation to an ideological demand, an animating reprimand, in the account of subject formation'.[127] She underlines the way in which interpellation is figured through the religious example in which subject formation depends on 'a passionate pursuit of a recognition which ... is inseparable from a condemnation'.[128] Thus the command of the law becomes a condemnation which also procures gratification in terms of a response: one is 'driven by a love of the law which can only be satisfied by ritual punishment' and leading to 'the passionate pursuit of the reprimanding recognition of the state'.[129]

This passionate pursuit described by Butler is shown by Dickens to be both wearing and wearying. Thus the writing on the wall (like that in Belshazzar's palace) tells us of our own doom. The piece ends appropriately enough with the narrator sitting upon a doorstep, feeling the worse for drink but jokingly laying the blame on the advertising bills to which he has been so close: 'I refer these unpleasant effects, either to the paste with which the posters were affixed to the van: which may have contained some small portion of arsenic; or to the printer's ink, which may have contained some equally deleterious ingredient' (293). The author is drunk with the experience of proximity to this machine of interpellation. This equating of text with poison might be placed within the ancient debate on the noxious nature of writing itself and all its accoutrements. Such 'poisoned' ink is deleterious to the subject, who must protect himself from it.

Zones of anaesthesia

Dickens's article also addresses the need to find shelter or respite from such a situation, to find what Crary has called a 'zone of anaesthesia'.[130] His

reverie on the viciousness of the advert prepares us for his encounter with the advertising van, inside which the advert-sticking King reclines. The van that Dickens describes is a version of today's ad vans but more cumbersome and drawn by small horses unequal to the task of pulling the two advertisement panels along and regularly causing traffic jams. The sides of the panels formed a tent-like shape and created an empty centre and it is in this space that Dickens meets the 'King of the Bill-Stickers'. He depicts a convoy of three such vans moving in 'solemn procession', the indifference of their yawning and scratching drivers contrasting with the posters stuck to the outsides of the 'awful cars' which scream 'Robbery, fire, murder, ruin', (285) to sell newspapers. The King of the Bill-stickers is lying stretched upon the floor and the narrator at first assumes he is a member of the public taken ill by the violence of the messages displayed by the vans. Then he sees that he is contentedly idling his time away smoking a pipe or ordering a pint of beer or rum-and-water at the public house outside which the 'cavalcade' stops. The man introduces himself as the inventor of the advertising van and as having worked his way up through the billsticking industry. He invites the narrator into the car and proceeds to give him a history of bills and advertisement space in London and to explain his presence in the very vans he himself designed. Having reached the top and had to stop, so to speak, the King can now relax and enjoy a journey through the city without having to see the products of his labour (the endless rows of advertising posters stuck to walls), rather like a successful manufacturer who takes a house in the country or in the suburbs, to avoid the ugliness of his place of industry:

> [I]t was a new sensation to be jolting through the tumult of the city in that secluded Temple, partly open to the sky, surrounded by the roar without, and seeing nothing but the clouds. Occasionally, blows from whips fell heavily on the Temple's walls, when by stopping up the road longer than usual, we irritated carters and coachmen to madness; but they fell harmless upon us within and disturbed not the serenity of our peaceful retreat. As I looked upward, I felt, I should imagine, like the Astronomer Royal. I was enchanted by the contrast between the freezing nature of our external mission on the blood of the populace, and the perfect composure reigning within those sacred precincts: where His Majesty, reclining easily on his left arm, smoked his pipe and drank his rum-and-water from his own side of the tumbler, which stood impartially between us. As I looked down from the clouds and caught his royal eye, he understood my reflections. 'I have an idea,' he observed with an upward glance, 'of training scarlet runners across in the season, – making an arbour of it, – and sometimes taking tea in the same according to the song.' (287–288)

What sort of a sanctuary is being described here? We are in a shelter with blank walls, an inner sanctum, a holy place or Temple which worships

the sky and its emptiness. There is a sense of magical protection from the aggressive environment outside. The narrator evokes a sense of privileged and peaceful contact with the heavens, quite in contrast to 'the gigantic admonitions we were then displaying to the multitude' (289). Once again Dickens equates the writing on the walls with the reprimand to which the urban dweller is prey as he reads the slogans. The van ambles at human pace, drawn by a horse; there is none of the speed of the train but only the steady jolt of the stage coach. This adds to the anachronistic time and space warp which the interior of the advertisement van represents. In the heart of the storm lies peace. It is a pared-down space, like a domestic interior, removed from the roar of the signifying city. The space is one of leisure and not of work, and it has bucolic overtones with its scarlet runners and handmade objects suggesting what Baudrillard calls the warm zones of the antique and exotic with their proximity to childhood being quite remote from the cold abstractions of the market.[131]

In many ways, the King of the Bills' retreat fits Susan Stewart's definition of the miniature described as 'a metaphor for the interior space and time of the bourgeois subject'. It is narrative's 'longing for its place of origin': a doll's house which enables the subject to construct a safe and controllable world and involves a nostalgia for 'what has never existed except in narrative.'[132] When we are absorbed in the miniature world, which can be model, painting or text, the outside world is 'lost to us', Stewart tells us. She also evokes the notion of the closed-off space open to the sky which is part of the Victorian love of 'transformed relics of nature', some often under glass, and stresses that the function of the miniature is closely linked to a nostalgia for pre-industrial labour, 'a nostalgia for craft'.[133] Stewart points out that the Victorians were great miniature makers because it was the time of 'the height of a transformation of nature into culture', of 'repetition over skill and part over whole'.[134] The 'Gigantic', by contrast, is the public space of the collective and of authority. It is a world of the poster admonishing us, as Dickens says, from above. It is the world that the King of Bill Posters has attempted to shut out. Thus we discover the need for an anaesthetic of some kind, however momentary, to provide a position from which to recover from such a 'plague of fantasies', a base from which either to deflect or to refract speech – or simply to put the textual world on pause.[135]

Yet as King Bill shelters, he cannot bear to abandon his mission to create yet more injunctions. The reference to the scarlet runners is of course ironic, a jibe at the world which the scarlet flowers really evoke. They are runner beans of course, whose natural habitat is not arcadia or an exotic island but the allotment, the suburban garden at best. It is here that the seeming escape from the world of exchange outside is turned on its head – for the Sunday gardener with his beans is one who speaks of a respite from the working week and not a life of primordial contact with the land. This is an excursion, not a journey. The return to simplicity, to a space of the remaking

of the self after the pollution of commerce, shows itself to be just another prelude to inscription: the scarlet runners are to be trained over the space at the top of the van which is empty sky, and might be seen as the beginning of a sentence, the start of a new captioning of space. The King of Bills is sheltering in a space which is already in the process of commodification: it is already telling us stories and selling us things. It is selling us the dream of pre-commodified space distant from us in time: a three-legged stool is its only furniture, the distant cousin of the milking stool and part of nostalgia for use-value, the artisanal and unique. It is also selling us the *Arabian Nights* (used in many adverts at the time) since the Arabian Prince is lying on the ground, and the reader can imagine a hookah, not a rum-and-water, shared by the two men. Social climbing is present in the reference to the tea in the arbour – a bourgeois dream of gentility to which King Bill might aspire – a reference already sold to the lower orders in the shape of a popular song 'Come and Take Tea in the Arbour'.

That King Bill is a mere tourist of emptiness, desirous of getting back to his mission, is amply illustrated in the King's further retort:

> 'And this is where you repose and think?' said I. 'And think,' said he, 'of posters – walls – and hoardings'. We were both silent, contemplating the vastness of the subject ... and [I] wondered whether this monarch ever sighed to repair to the great wall of China, and stick bills all over it.[136]

When one considers that much of King Bill's tale of advertisement sticking has been about the struggle for space among the billstickers, this reference constitutes a Bill Poster's dream. The Great Wall of China is the wall to end all walls and evokes the unlimited possibility of filling space, part of the imperialism of advertising and the vision of a world become one huge hoarding.

We might conclude here with a reference to Alain Corbin's study of the sea coast in nineteenth-century France and England called *The Territory of Emptiness* (*Le territoire du vide*) but translated as *The Lure of the Sea*. It traces the fantasies projected onto the space of the sea coast in France and Britain, and the build-up of inscription on the coast, showing how the wilderness or '*territoire du vide*' finally becomes a '*territoire du plein*', the gaze saturated by buildings, shops, people, writing. Even the ocean is full of pleasure boats (often surfaces for advertising) by the mid-nineteenth century. The last wilderness is written upon, the last hope of finding a place of emptiness gone. We have seen how desert and polar waste, monument and fortification were already being imagined as advertising space as early as the 1840s.

Dickens offers us a solution to this problem of saturation: the only place of respite available to the modern urban dweller is in the eye of the storm, in the centre of London, on the 'inside' of advertisement space – where one is literally sandwiched between two adverts. His text offers certain images of

the way the subject might protect him or herself from advertising and even live and thrive within advertising. If Dickens's text here involves a certain insurrection, a reaction against the advertising message, and a revelation of the power of guilt within the scene of interpellation, then it also suggests the way in which a subject might elude the worst excesses of advertising by being comfortable in the middle of it. Dickens himself was quite comfortable as one of the great advertisers of his time. This situation implies that an empty space, a space of respite from advertising text, is only the reverse side of advertising, only a temporary cessation of the language of the walls. That is, any zone of anaesthesia is merely an effect of the language of the walls. Only through the language of the walls can a space which is empty of it exist. Our fantasy of a zone without advertising, our dream of a pre-advertisement space, is already, at this time, understood to be merely an effect of the text we read; in other words, our reality is an always-already represented space. Advertising is shown to structure the space we live in, to create our experiences, and indeed to create us. This is a notion which appears to be expressed, understood, and accepted by the mid-century and is the subject of my next section.

The making of the subject

'The Language of the Walls': Being in the world through reading

While understanding the nefarious aspects of advertising, the writings we will now be considering see the language of the walls as necessary to our existence: they recognize that writing of all kinds is our means of access to the world, that our senses, our selves are awakened through acts of reading. The *Quarterly Review* of June 1855 says that advertisements are

> the very daguerreotypes cast by the age which they exhibit, not done for effect, but faithful reflections of those insignificant items of life and things, too small it would seem for the generalizing eye of the historian, however necessary to clothe and fill in the dry bones of his history.[137]

Here, advertising is seen to 'clothe' and flesh out the skeleton of history. We might see in the action of the reader who passes along the walls, taking in the objective world as it presents itself, a Hegelian pattern of incorporation of what is strange and alien and a transformation of it into the matter of the self.

James Dawson Burn wrote *The Language of the Walls* (1855) as an indictment of the sharp practices of advertisers. The full title reads thus: '*The Language of the Walls and A Voice from the Shop Windows, or, The Mirror of Commercial Roguery by One Who Thinks Aloud*'.[138] The subtitle 'by one who thinks aloud' is an echo of the fact that Burn gives us his thoughts as he walks through

the city looking about him at the advertising. His text is in some way a stream of consciousness as he reacts to the passing world; his 'thinking out loud' is triggered by his haphazard encounters with writing. It is a politically engaged text which speaks of the ways in which all sections of society, but particularly the labouring poor, are put upon by advertisement. His other publication of the same year was *The Autobiography of a Beggar Boy*, which describes his itinerant life of poverty as a child with a drunken father. It is a text which aligns its author with the underdog and has socialist and reformist tones.[139] In this publication he describes himself as a 'wandering vagrant' who picked up an education from chance encounters with persons and places but also with dialects (quotations are phonetically spelt in the text) and any reading matter which he chanced upon. In his preface to the autobiography, David Vincent insists on the fact that Burn uses many literary quotations (as he does in *The Walls*) and was able to transmit a tradition of oral reminiscence learnt as a child. In a note Vincent remarks that Burn makes frequent minor errors in his literary quotations and suggests that this is a sign that 'he was genuinely quoting from memory and not from the results of specific literary research'.[140] Thus we see that Burn was one who read the walls, or who read text which passed through his hands in an ephemeral way, since as a child and a young man buying books would have been out of the question. He was a student of the walls, and like Dickens during the deprived years of his childhood in the blacking factory his only education came from what was available through advertising.

For all its careful uncovering of the vices and roguery behind advertising which take up most of the book (loan sharks, adulteration of food, medical quackery and the like), *The Language of the Walls* also stands as a document which places advertising at the heart of modern society as its core and structure. It concerns the recognition of a fundamental shift in the subject's engagement with the world in which contact with the world, one's sense of being in the world, is seen to pass through the medium of what is written up and displayed. Burn also wrote advertisements to earn his living, so he was intimate with the mechanisms of writing *for* the walls as well as writing against them. It is worth making a careful reading of Burn's introduction in order to appreciate how far his thinking goes on this subject. The introductory chapter is entitled 'Modern Reputation – Roguery Electrotyped with Honesty!' The title and the chapter posit that, to have any reputation at all in the world, be you rogue or religious leader (or both), your existence in the eyes of others depends on electrotyping and other modern printing technologies which allow you a space on the walls. This site is a vital one if one hopes to be heard, or rather seen and read, among the tumult of conflicting voices already clamouring for attention. Thomas Richards, in the paragraphs he devotes to Burn, describes his attitude to the walls as an interpreter faced with the Rosetta stone. It is a key to a whole civilization.[141]

Burn's writing is unremittingly ironic concerning the dishonesty of most advertising: he uses Biblical language borrowed from Ecclesiastes in order to transform our vision of the walls into a giant Vanity painting in which there is nothing new under the sun:

> There is nothing in heaven above, in the earth beneath, in the water, or in the air we breathe, but will be found in the universal Language of the Walls. If you are in the enjoyment of health and riches, the walls will inform you where to fly for pleasure, and the names of the persons who will minister to your enjoyments. If you are a lover of *fun*, the walls will lead you to the temple of Momus, and if you wish to be delighted with the soft strains of music, the walls will direct you to the halls of Apollo. (2)

For those who have indulged too much in pleasure, the walls will furnish the gazer with elixirs from quack doctors. He treats the cures of these doctors with cynicism as well as humour by underlining the 'sacrifices' these 'benefactors of mankind' (2) make and providing tales of their treacherous treatment of clients. He stresses the coercitive nature of advertising:

> The Language of the Walls is silent, but often powerful and eloquent – arresting our attention whether we will or not. There is frequently deep philosophy in their mute appeals, and they contain upon their surfaces circulating libraries for the million, with the thoughts and sentiments of men on every conceivable subject. Now, beacons to apprise us of approaching danger; now, sirens to allure and destroy. (4)

The walls are active in their hailing of the passer-by: they 'arrest' attention, 'allure' and make 'appeals'. The author also notices the way in which social distinctions of all kinds are neutralized in the great mixing of names and faces on the walls, reminding us of the humorous juxtapositions in Parry's painting. Again, Burn's irony is clear, for he stresses that this fraternity is only a virtual one: 'There is frequently a delightful sociality on the walls. All party distinctions are cast to the winds, and the little and great fraternize in the most agreeable harmony'. Bishops find themselves 'stuck up alongside of the flaming announcement of a Love Feast' or next to 'Kaffirs or the Crowfeet Indians' (5).[142] Sometimes the juxtaposition is intimate indeed: the manager of the Adelphi Theatre advertising his autobiography 'Ups and Downs of the Life of a Showman' is seen 'quietly covering a Noble Lord who was about to preside at a grand Protection Meeting' (5). The word 'covering' has several meanings: the covering of one poster by another or the 'covering' of a cow by a bull with its aggressive sexual connotations. Thus does one poster or one social class (here the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie) dominate another (the nobility).

If social classes find themselves mixed on the walls, then so too do species of animals: 'Here you have Scotch Kye, and Irish Bulls, Durham Oxen, and

Clydesdale Horses, Welsh Mutton and Cumberland Bacon, both animate and inanimate' (5). Shoved together on the walls, they lose their meaning as animals and became exchangeable commodities made available to the buyer. The walls suggest a vanishing of barriers between conflicting social groups or animals but this is shown to be a sham: the 'lion and the lamb' may seem to lie down together on the walls but Burn shows that they too are fighting for position; they are smiling down upon rival billstickers as they fight each other for space in a world that is a social jungle and not a harmonious mixing of the disparate.

Despite these visions of a fiercely competitive and exploitative world, Burn is quick to tell us that these walls are 'us', and therefore a faithful representation of our dealings with one another:

> The Language of the Walls presents us with an *epitome* of the history of civilisation – the progress of commerce – a chronicle of passing events – and a *multum in parvo* of all things. In it we have the voiceless echo of the Press, with its attendant genii of good and evil. It enunciates to the gaping crowd the revolutions of kingdoms, and the swearing in of a special constable! The issues of battles, and the market price of bacon! ... the consequence of the potato blight, and the stability of the income tax! Napoleon's veracity and *Punch*'s influence on the joke market! (12)

These claims are not minor ones: the historical sweep or world-picture which is evoked here, the notion of everything being contained upon one surface which enunciates its truths, has the flavour of Ludwig Wittgenstein's notion of an 'inherited background', 'against which I distinguish between true and false'.[143] Burn describes a system in which all arguments (or battles) have their life, in which all questions and answers are anchored. It is a type of scaffolding or substratum to all belief but consists only of language. Yet, however groundless our believing is, we rely on this system of language with its attendant games for our lifeblood.[144] The notion of *multum in parvo* suggests a constraining element in the discourses of the walls. It frames our world and obliges us to seek information within its confines, to get 'much' within 'little'. Burn is able to capture the sense of closure that is present in such a vast panorama, the sense in which displayed text controls and directs discourse, that is, it obliges us to enter a matrix of sayings or aphorisms rather than to follow a flow of language.[145] He helps his reader understand the power of 'much in little' by showing how the Walls are vital mouthpieces of the organs of politics and commerce, and that the press itself needs the walls to advertise its presence. The press is intimately linked and reliant on the posters up on the walls, which evokes Carlyle's observation concerning the self-reflecting and self-devouring aspect of all popular literature in 'Characteristics'. More urgently perhaps, dependency on the Walls for basic

survival is suggested:

> There is frequently high hope and deep expectation in the Language of the Walls, when a company of poor players have to depend upon the impression their little demy 8 vo. Sheet will make upon the public for the realisation of to-morrow's dinner! (12)

Here Burn suggests that the clever management of print and paper is a key to survival (advertising and 'dinner' are inseparable here) and the Walls become a sort of motherly matrix offering the possibility of food for her young. The Walls are also described as a battle field for the polemics of religion or of politicians, an arena for their interactions much like a present-day 'chat-room' on the web. He observes that water companies and gas companies, Magistrates and Town Councillors 'betake themselves to the Walls in order to settle their civic disputes' (13). The immediacy of the appearance of information is suggested in descriptions of a Wig-maker arriving back from a trip to Paris, to immediately advertise the new styles he has just encountered: 'the walls are instantly inspired with the secrets of his mission'. Burn rather facetiously adds in Biblical tones: 'and with trumpet tongues proclaim the vastness of his capillary emporium' (14). The mixture of lightness, humour, irony and cynicism mean that his serious, socially critical intent never becomes a tirade against advertising but an acceptance of the perennial nature of the Walls as a nexus of human communication and imagination. Tales told by objects sold in auction as well as family dramas are linked to the 'fatal auctioneer's hammer' attesting to the fact that the Walls reflect the volatility of life under the aegis of capital, of its economic vagaries and the speed of change.

Burn offers the reader a vision of the alienation involved in the texts on the wall (the fact that for many they can never provide the goods that are needed and that they are an enduring symbol of man's alienation from the fruits of his labour). At the same time, he offers the vision of displayed printed matter as the gateway to the world: without it we are as vulnerable as the poor who are fleeced by its claims. Not to read, not to engage in some way with advertisement is to perish. Even the poorest person can satisfy his thirst for knowledge by reading the Walls and can even search them for a way of satisfying his hunger. Today questions of the same order are being debated concerning the internet and digitalization in general: they are both levellers (theoretically everyone has access to everything) and at the same time a vehicle of exclusion. This recognition of the exclusion of certain sections of the population from this utopia of print are voiced by Burn in his description of the hungry and dispossessed who look to the walls for help but rarely receive any succour from this giant web of information. The food and drink it describes are adulterated, the information often erroneous or misleading. To return once again to Parry's painting, *A London Street Scene*, we might remember that the people milling about and moving past

the advertisements at the bottom of the picture are of the poorer classes or the dispossessed, just as they are in Augustus Leopold Egg's *Despair* of 1858 or Arthur Boyd Houghton's disturbing urban scenes, as if there is a connection between the two (poverty and advertising) which is never fully elucidated.[146] Burn mentions at the end of his expository chapter that the Walls (with their mention of the auctioneer's hammer) 'teach us of the instability of all sublunary things, and the uncertainty of man's happiness here below' (15). Thus does Burn discover a philosophy in the walls, a stoic acceptance of man's fate. The Walls themselves are the means by which we learn of this truth of the world which is 'an abode of unchanging and unmitigated sorrow to millions' (15). The walls then become a wailing or weeping wall, a catalogue of suffering, but also the means by which one might change that fate.

Interestingly, Burn begins his book by intimating that advertising is nothing new but as old as Methuselah:

> Solomon affirmed that there was nothing new under the sun; it is very probable he was quite right, and that passing events quietly glide into oblivion, again to re-appear like objects on Banvard's Panorama, to amuse the duplicate generations of mankind. Much in the same way theatrical managers resuscitate old dramas, and serve them up to the hungry *gods* as new.
>
> We are not aware whether the ancients were in the habit of advertising their Lucifer Matches, Steel Pens, Parr's Pills, and 'the Secret Infirmities of Youth,' through the medium of the town's bell-man, by making libraries of their walls, or publishing them in the Damascus Herald, or the Babylon Morning Advertiser. Puffing appears to have graced the earliest efforts at commercial literature so far back as the days of Tubal Cain ... It is, therefore, evident that commercial puffing is no new invention, however much it may have been improved by modern ingenuity, or re-constructed upon scientific principles. Whether passing events be like the dissolving views on the disk of time, that proceed in an infinite series, or merely nature repeating herself, it matters little to the present inquiry. We believe the Language of the Walls to be modern, both in character, and applicability, and in the following pages it will be our duty to prove its importance, both in a literary, moral, and commercial point of view. (2)[147]

In this extract, the idea of an eternal return is brought out with images taken from modern visual and commercial technology: the panorama and the dissolving view (a magic lantern disk that could project advertisements onto walls in London). A sense of the ephemeral nature of the advertisement, its duplicate quality, its ability to multiply and reproduce itself is created in this writing. The duplication and duplicity of advertising in their turn 'duplicate' mankind. The suggestion seems to be that advertising creates its own public and then feeds it – that is, it calls up new subjects (subjects which have already been called up, or are always-already interpellated, as

the reference to Tubal-Cain implies), and which then continue to be interpellated. Burn describes to us the never-ending hailing of the subject, who is brought forth anew and in slightly changed form with each new textual or technological encounter.[148] He evokes these minute and endless forms of interpellation through 'puffing' as being ancient and beyond history, as well as a part of an unforeseeable future. As each technological change alters the mode of reception of advertising (from town crier to posters on walls or in magazines), so the population is altered slightly, that is, it is adapted to new forms of textual intake. Regenia Gagnier suggests as much when she says of working-class subjectivity: 'in the arc of reciprocity the world made by the metropolitan workers returned to remake their consciousness'.[149]

Burn is aware of the labour which makes the walls – the printing, the pasting, and the posting – and the way in which the walls remake those same workers. Susan Stewart might also help us to understand Gagnier's 'arc of reciprocity': 'We continually project the body into the world in order that its image might return to us: onto the other, the mirror, the animal, and the machine, and onto the artistic image.' She suggests that the head, the bust, the eye, the body, all that we cannot see of ourselves must be displayed so that we might encounter ourselves.[150] We encounter ourselves in the images in advertisements and gather there the things we do not possess, the fetishized things which stand for parts of the body. Burn's sense of the utter acceptance and implication of the human body and psyche in advertising is expressed in his chapter entitled 'A New System of Personal Advertising' in which he looks forward to the logos which are proudly displayed on clothing today instead of being concealed (the perennial Gap or Nike labels, for example). His idea runs thus: 'We therefore propose that the *consumers of merchandise shall become personal advertisers*, and thereby give publicity to the name and fame of those people they may honour with their patronage' (386).[151] He suggests that the tradesman affix a label 'say between the shoulders' with the name of the establishment and the price and even including – this is a facetious addition on the author's part – an advertisement for more workmen: 'Bought of B. Moses, 98, New Cut, £2. 18s. 6d. West of England. – N. B. Wanted 100 good workmen'. He also suggests that if the article of dress is a hat 'the label could be fixed upon the front side crown like a man's nose on his face, it would be both ornament and useful' (386). The idea of the advert likened to a natural human feature suggests that this form of advertising might quickly become accepted and seemingly natural – as indeed, in many ways, it now has. Burn's joke is both a protest and a recognition of the path which advertising leads us down: we make it and then it makes us. We might add that if history is repeated as farce, then farce helps the Victorians imagine their future – which is our present.

Although the author claims a timeless quality to advertising, on the one hand, he postulates a 'modern' and very particular application of it which has a particular effect on the consumer, on the other hand. In other words,

he is witnessing a very new and historically determined structure which is sufficiently new not to have elicited much critical response as yet. His job is to comment upon this phenomenon as it emerges, at the point at which the Victorian reader is becoming aware of what it is doing to him or her, and what it is he or she might be losing as a result of this passage into a new episteme or historical moment. Or indeed what the subject might be gaining in terms of an awareness of his or her position in history. It is at moments such as these that the past is invented: a pastoral pre-advertised world surges into view in novel, magazine and advertisement to be collectively imagined as a lost point of origin.[152]

Burn recognizes that he is spoken by the language of the walls; that the subject is in dialogue with the walls, even to the extent that the walls come and print themselves upon him or her, that the human body is part of the walls. The human psyche itself is on the walls and part of the walls and a place is ascribed *for* every reader *by* every advert. Despite this there is a certain room for manoeuvre: the reader can speak back from that place and inscribe him or herself differently. One of Burn's chapters is entitled 'The Cup that Enervates and Destroys: Adulteration of Ale, etc.' (307): this is a twisting of the slogan 'The Cup that Cheers' typically used to sell tea. Thus we see that he too sends slogans back in changed form in order to counteract their force. The whole of Burn's book is a giant counter-interpellation in which he speaks back to the Walls. At the same time, he accepts his indebtedness to their coercive power which allows him to take up a position of resistance.

'Whose Luggage?': A strange case of interpellation

Paradoxically, one of the most explicit descriptions of a scene of interpellation which I have come across appears not in a work like Burn's which is a critique of advertising, attempting to see behind its façade to the coercions and tricks it hides, but in a book published eight years later which celebrates and promotes advertising and gives advice on how to do it. *Advertise! How? Where? When?* by William Smith is an unashamedly self-promoting book with colourful wrappers and many illustrations: After the page of 'Contents', the reader finds an illustration of the earth and the moon chasing thousands of leaflets which are being thrown by an angel sporting a sandwich board with the name of the book written on it and blasting 'Advertise! Advertise!' from a trumpet. [Fig. 10] Then come eight pages of adverts for various household products and then the opening chapter, 'How to Advertise'. He, like Burn, uses *Ecclesiastes* but to contradict it and emphasize the perennial nature of novel objects as being the 'order of the day'; for him *everything* is new under the sun. He also emphasizes the oldness of advertising and uses Shakespeare to illustrate this, making a burlesque claim that the three *Macbeth* witches were in fact canny advertisers.[153] He advocates the exploitation of any available surface, including the human frame, as a potential area for advertising, covering with serious intent the very practices lampooned, as we saw earlier, by *Punch*.[154]

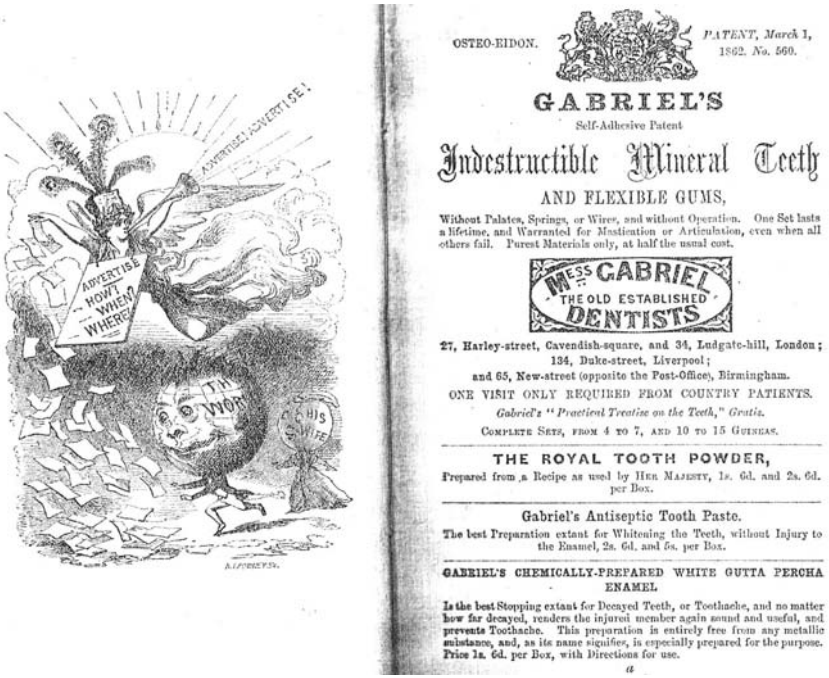


Figure 10 Frontispiece to William Smith, *Advertise!*, 1863
Source: British Library.

Within this unpromising territory for a critical approach to advertising, we find a lucid account of a new phenomenon. Smith describes the power of the mysterious messages which were being pasted up around London at the time and provides an illustration of them [Fig. 11]. He then takes an article from the *Telegraph* as his source, quoting it at length. This eloquent article talks of the '*graffiti*' on the walls at Pompeii and then describes how the civilization of the nineteenth century has improved on the 'wall-scrawlings of the ancients':[155]

> But our age has one gigantic advantage over its predecessors; WE ARE A PEOPLE OF ADVERTISERS. A few *graffiti* may defy the effacing fingers of Time, whereas millions of such legends are washed away, rubbed out, or perish with the walls that bear them. A similar fate may await the monstrous placards, posters and slips which are plastered on the hoardings and the corner houses of this immense metropolis; but their indefinite multiplication by means of the printing press prevents their being involved in a common ruin. Malicious bill-stickers may paste over the advertisement placard in one district, but it reappears in another.

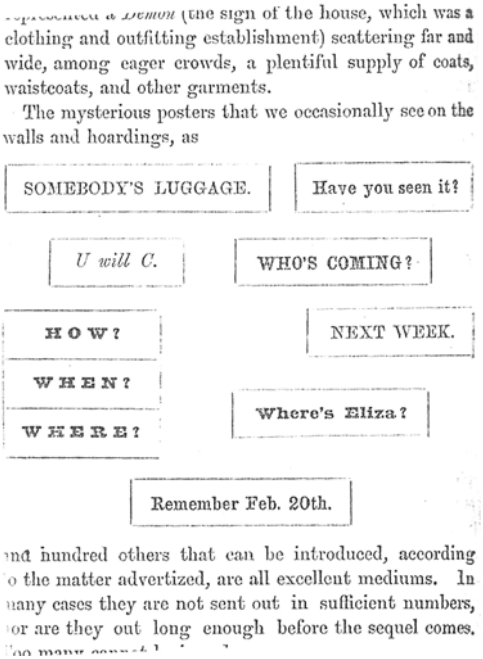


Figure 11 'Mysterious posters', William Smith, *Advertise!*, 1863
Source: British Library.

Moreover, in the advertisement columns of the newspapers it is always safe from outrage, and defies concealment.... But the modern appetite for 'sensation' is manifest even in advertisements. Brief sentences containing either abstract propositions of an alarming nature, such as 'Where's Eliza?' have been in latter days succeeded by simple word-bolts, disjected members of phrases, without context or sequence, verbal flies in amber, which, enshrined among business information and unpretending common sense, make us wonder 'how the dickens they get there.' Take for example the perplexing line, 'Somebody's Luggage' which for so many days has been a standing enigma to the readers of our advertisement columns as well as to the peripatetic students who learn Latin from the mottoes to the undertakers' hatchments, belles-lettres from the shop windows, fine arts from the professors who depict mackerel and the rule of three in coloured chalk on the pavement, philosophy and ethics from the hoardings and dead walls. Somebody's luggage. Who's luggage? (*sic*) [whose] Who was somebody? If anybody, and why should the attention of everybody who can read have been called to his *impedimenta*? The announcement was as artful as it was embarrassing...

> From the highest to the lowest, we can't get along without luggage; we must see to it, think of it, attend to it. The line 'Somebody's Luggage' fell like a warning knell from an anonymous tocsin on the public ear. Somebody's luggage might be our luggage. We might be somebody. We decline to enter the statistics of the letters we have received requesting enlightenment as to the mysterious advertisement to which we have eluded; but we may cursorily remark that one provincial correspondent was firmly convinced that the luggage advertised was his...[156]

As the article explains, 'Somebody's Luggage' turns out to be only the title of a Christmas number of Dickens's *All the Year Round* but the fragment was powerful enough to elicit responses from many readers of it. The 'provincial correspondent' even wrote in to claim personal belongings which had not been mentioned on the walls but that he felt he must have lost. The guilt triggered by the question made him fearful of other lapses and forgotten ownerships on his part. Let us first consider some of the language used in this article. The first lines of the piece offers a vision of writing which has become eternal: 'Wall scrawlings' are now infinitely reproducible since the advent of mechanical reproduction and can no longer 'perish'. Their 'monstrous' nature is therefore more than a question of size or inconvenience, but resides in their immortality; like the heads of the hydra, if one is destroyed another grows in its place and even multiplies elsewhere. There is therefore no 'ruin' for these adverts, no hope of extinction, only further life.

In such a context of ubiquity, special tactics must be used to draw attention to advertising, hence the choice of these 'abstract propositions' which titillate and 'alarm'. The language used to describe them gives us much material for an appreciation of their power of solicitation. They are 'word-bolts', 'disjected members of phrases', and 'verbal flies in amber'. These offer a sense of the rapid ingestion or rapid construction of meaning in the word 'bolt' (to bolt down food, or indeed a bolt as a unit of construction as in 'nuts and bolts'). We also find the notion of text become a truncated body or severed limb (disjected members) which call us to complete them. There is a sense in which penance must be paid for the error of the uncompleted or unelucidated utterance, or for the notion of an utterance caught for an instant, unawares, trapped in a context not its own – a living creature put to death and preserved in amber and which the new reader, like a palaeontologist, must work to recontextualize. To recreate a context or habitat is to make it whole and thus make sense of it. There is a direct relationship between the way the inscription hails and the bodily implications of that hailing: we associate the words around us with ourselves, with our own bodies and with the need to make those *disjecta membra* into a whole, to sew together the ragged pieces of language left lying about. Should we ignore them, then they will continue to threaten us with

our own dissolution, both linguistic and physical. We place ourselves within the 'bolts' of words and seek to find our place in a whole sentence.

Thus does the journalist describe the reactions of the readers of these fragments: we are all 'peripatetic students' who learn our '*belles lettres*' and philosophy from the truncated messages around us (as the pages devoted to English literature in *Punch* have shown us in this study). In order to glean knowledge from what we read, we must retrace and reconnect the language round us, and therefore find the answers to the oracular enigmas about us. But the primary task in dealing with such fragments is to discover where we are in the sentence. From 'Somebody' the reader moves on to 'Whose?' and finally to a sense that it must be 'My Luggage', which I am guilty of losing/possessing/never having possessed. The slogan here is an 'impedimenta', a problem or error, a fatal flaw exposed to us. It is important to note that the writer of the article first offers a study of the emotional implications of the word *luggage* for the common person, a sort of 'encyclopedia' of common associations and references surrounding it. He tries to show why it is a word guaranteed to catch us and implicate us:

> There may be hope and bliss, there may be misery and despair, associated with 'Somebody's Luggage' ... The contemplation of a yawning luggage-van is a survey of life from the cradle to the grave. There is the trunk that holds the bride's *trousseau*, and next to it a box of baby-linen, and next to that a bale of paupers clothing. Such thoughts as these may have passed through the minds of thousands who read the strange advertisement ...[157]

The word 'yawning' has implications of a yawning chasm or the open mouth of an animal, both implying the threat of being engulfed. The youth and hope of bride and baby give way to ill luck and the despair of the pauper. Man's destiny and his inevitable descent to death are contained in his personal effects, his luggage, as well as his mental 'baggage' as the modern expression goes. The writer brings out the morbid and accusatory undertone beautifully with the sentence 'a warning knell from an anonymous tocsin on the public ear'. The *tocsin* not only echoes the notion of guilt and injury which we have seen at work in Dickens's essay on Bill-posting (as well as the death knell of our own mortality as Burn suggests in his discussion of the walls), but brings to mind the emphasis Althusser lays on the religious patterns of ideology. The anonymous figure of the law calls us to prayer: we must kneel down and pray in order to believe. And more particularly, we are called from behind (which is anonymous), as Judith Butler has commented. Once again, the writing on the wall in Belshazzar's palace predicting the destruction of a kingdom comes to mind, and the aura of doom that any printed bill carries: bills (and all *avis à la population*) told traditionally of war, plague, famine, taxes and all manner of ills to come. The attentive reader will place himself within the grammar in

the place of one who will undergo the consequences of the event or the lack (here 'Somebody's luggage' is both an event and a warning of a lack).

We see here how the subject is an effect of the structure of the sentence. Here the provincial reader takes up a position, gives himself a role as a result of his encounter with the expression 'Somebody's Luggage'. In the interpretative dance that follows, we move metonymically from 'Who was Somebody?' to 'Whose luggage?' to 'anybody' to 'everybody' to 'our luggage' to 'we might be somebody'. 'Somebody' gradually transforms itself into 'we' and 'me' (as the one who acted and indeed failed, the one who acted wrongly). We cannot but be aware in reading this piece of the theories concerning the subject as an effect of language, not a source. In psychoanalysis the subject is said to find its site of emergence in a dialogue between two signs, between two links in the chain of signifiers, occurring, as linguistics tells us, in a 'semiotic *entre-deux*'.[158] Meaning emerges in a dialogue between 'interpreted text and the interpretation that reads it' and the subjects involved, the author and the reader, 'are not free but *assujettis* in Althusserian parlance... they are effects of the structure'.[159] It is interesting, following this, to see that the author of the piece mistakenly writes 'Who's' for 'Whose', thus introducing the verb 'to be' (Who is luggage?). This suggests that on an unconscious level an identification is formed with the luggage itself, that the reader becomes the luggage ('is' the luggage) or that the luggage takes on an identity as human.[160] The reader's identity becomes intimately linked with the object he or she is accused of having lost. This problematic linguistic encounter, obliges the reader to situate him-or herself in some way vis-à-vis the luggage, to take up a position, however fanciful or imagined. We are in the world of the 'enabling constraint' as formulated by Butler, in which the subject takes its bearings and is thus inaugurated – quite paradoxically – as both instrument of agency and effect of subordination.[161]

The Importance of an Atlas of the World

To conclude this chapter I would like to look at an advertisement called 'The Importance of an Atlas of the World' which appeared in the 'Dombey and Son Advertiser' (1848). Dickens's *Dombey and Son* is a novel in which goods from foreign shores are much talked about and this advert is very much concerned with such commodities. In this full page advertisement of closely written text, the 'Atlas of the World' is firstly described as a vital family requisite 'on a Scale sufficiently large for displaying the great distinguishing points of every country'. Thus the Atlas, which consists of maps and written description, is to be shown and displayed and enjoyed by a group rather than perused alone. It is described as a 'catalogue' and an 'exhibition' which seduces and tempts us. The Atlas opens the door to a possession of the goods that the Empire and the world beyond can offer. But the claims of the advert go much further, for it posits that access to the 'world' – particularly to its sensual pleasures via the commodities of different countries – can only be

achieved via the act of reading:

> Such is the importance of studying correctly a good Atlas of the World, that, independently of the characters of the earth itself, no one is capable of duly appreciating the value of history, enjoying a book of travels, or of talking like a rational being about any of those countless foreign substances which are now met with as the materials of articles of use or ornament in almost every house within these kingdoms, without consulting an Atlas with Geographical, Historical, Commercial and Descriptive Letter-press.
>
> If all persons could once be led to this, it is incalculable to conceive how much more delightful it would make the world we live in; because it would enable us to live mentally, and in our mental life consists our real enjoyment of all the world at once.

Thus the 'letter-press' gives access to 'foreign substances', to the substance of the world, for it is our 'mental life' which allows us to enjoy the world. Thanks to the descriptions of the Atlas, each time we taste a substance we will have the whole experience of its place of origin. These substances are then described in sensual and poetic detail for some fifteen lines: we might drink coffee with turbaned Arabs in the groves of the Yemen looking across to the Red Sea where 'the waters are literally encumbered with living creatures', or drink tea with a Chinese mandarin 'in some fantastic alcove', or taste cinnamon and immediately be 'borne in thought to Ceylon, with its rich fields of rice; its beautiful copses which furnish this exhilarating spice; its tangled and swampy woods' or forests where thousands of apes 'make the early morn hideous with their cries'. Thus does the taste of a food, once mediated by text, offer up another gamut of experiences, all textual in nature. So seductive is this experience of the world through the Atlas that the writer brings himself to a halt: 'But we must stop, for there is no end to the catalogue, and it is an exhibition of which we must not see too much at a passing glance, lest it should wile us from our purpose.' So we see that 'our real enjoyment' is procured through a virtual world of text and not through the goods themselves, or, rather, it is text (of a very literary sort in this instance) which allows the *release* of pleasures from these items. The author then suggests the superiority of the 'Atlas' over the experience of commodities themselves, since the enjoyment is instantaneous and simultaneous:

> Now, as we have said, not only might, but *should*, every commodity of every region transport us to that region, and make it render up to our enjoyment all that it possesses; but an Atlas of the World, which has been duly studied, brings the whole before us the moment we glance at it ...

The author stresses here the immediacy and fullness of the act of reading, which brings forth the pleasures of goods much faster than any real

encounter might do. Such text is described as a 'powerful talisman' and as 'magic'. Fearing that these assertions make his product sound close to witchcraft, the advertiser back-pedals a little at this point and effusively assures the reader that it is but 'magic of nature's exhibiting; the effect of infinite wisdom and goodness, without deception, without anything to mislead…' When the author describes access to the world as being as easy as placing a finger on a page to read, an act in which desire is satisfied as soon as it is declared, we think of today's click of the mouse or touch of a finger which offers up a service or object even before desire for them has been properly formulated. The finger of the reader becomes a magic wand in the next extract:

> Let, for instance, the conversation be directed to the varieties of the human race, in appearance and character, and let any one lay his finger successively upon lands strongly contrasted in this respect; and in whatever order he takes them, he will find that the people stand up, as it were, the instant that his finger touches that country, as if that country were touched by the hand of a magician.

The expression 'stand up' adds to the sense of an obedient people attending to the desires of an all-powerful reader in a relationship of colonizer to colonized. The copywriter describes this network or matrix of information as an 'artificial memory': a rhyzomic formation of facts stretching away to the horizons of knowledge. He declares that although it might not contain the 'jewels of knowledge' the Atlas constitutes a perfect 'casket' for information of all kinds *'especially when accompanied by descriptive letter-press, like "Gilbert's Modern Atlas"'*. It is a system or network which is being sold. Any piece of information is 'found the very instant we require it', which echoes the critique that Burn makes of advertising as the *'multum in parvo* of all things' – offering everything all at once and in the same space instead of in succession.

Chapter 1 has explored one of the basic mechanisms of subject formation in print culture: the taking of an 'outside' (the language of the walls) into an inside, that is the introjection of the world to make the self. The 'Atlas' advertisement crystallizes two things related to this 'taking in' of the world: the public was used to the idea that the world was experienced through the mediums of text and image rather than at first hand, or rather that there was no possibility of experience without mediation of some sort, and secondly that navigation through text was closer to the reading of an encyclopaedia (one of referencing and moving from level to level rather than linear reading). This pattern in the structuring of subjectivity will be explored in the next chapter as we look at the rituals and practices attendant on a new form of text which combines both advertisement and novel.

2
Reading the Dickens Advertiser: Merging Paratext and Novel

The floating gaze: The monthly number as *cadavre exquis*

To open one of the Dickens monthly numbers for the first time is a surprising experience. One's first reaction is to compare the novel in the traditional book form with this more flimsy object which is framed by many pages of advertisements. The form of the hard-backed volume (the leather or cloth-bound edition or the sober paperbacks of today with their often 'highbrow' classical covers) has been entirely dismantled and, in a gesture similar to that of postmodernist architecture which places the inner workings of a building, its pipes and evacuations, on the outside, the structure has been turned inside out. The green covers (often now blue in appearance) have the frontispiece on the outside as well as an advertisement on the outside back cover so that the essence of what lies within is produced for the reader or passer-by on the outside to be taken in at a glance. The text of the novel has been reduced to a constant thirty-two pages (some three or four chapters) sandwiched between numerous pages of advertising. These chapters seem to be eclipsed amidst the other forms of text which surround them, and appear almost as an afterthought in the carnival of fonts and images which outweigh in volume the pages reserved for the Dickens text. How can this be? How can it be that the serious novels we studied at school were once presented to the public in this commercial form – so modern to our eyes?

Let us first describe the contents of some of these numbers and the growing space allocated to advertisements as the months go by. The first monthly number of *Bleak House* published between 1852 and 1853 in twenty monthly parts has a collection of adverts at the beginning which are sewn together and called 'The Bleak House Advertiser' consisting of twenty-four pages, and then a further four pages of advertising added in at the back. No. 2 has sixteen pages in the Advertiser at the front and eighteen at the back, while No. 10 has eighteen at the front before the chapter and eighteen after the chapters at the back. The double number (19 and 20), being the last in the series, has over forty pages of advertisements shared between the front

and back. The first monthly number of *Our Mutual Friend* of 1864, eleven years on, has thirty-two pages of advertisements in the Advertiser at the front and forty pages after, making a surprising seventy pages of advertisements compared with the mere thirty-two pages of the chapters of the novel itself. It is the overfull, saturated quality as well as the heterogeneity of this object which strike the reader most. The overcharged covers depicting crowds, objects, buildings in a patchwork of scenes from the novel give way in No. 1 of *Bleak House* to adverts in the form of a page of small frames in which spectacles, wigs, face cream, perfume are all advertised along with Burke's Peerage, 'Mudie's Select Library', 'Gowland's Lotion' for the skin, 'Sir James Murray's Fluid Magnesia' for all ills, hair oil, 'Rowland's Macassar Oil', 'Holloway's Ointment', 'Rodger's Improved Shirts', 'Children's Frocks, Coats and Pelisses' and 'Parr's Life-Pills'. These products are very insistent on how to differentiate the genuine product from copies – often giving the customer a sign to recognize – words in coloured ink, for example, and a list of stockists of the genuine article. On page 20 of N° 1 of the Bleak House Advertiser we find advertisements for opera glasses, race glasses, cough lozenges, insurance, loans, 'Rimmel's Toilet Vinegar (as exhibited in the Fountain at Crystal Palace)' which is 'far superior to Eau-de-Cologne', 'Binyon's Patent Chest Expander' to cure 'stooping of the shoulders' – all displayed together. There are smaller page inserts such as the flyers for *Household Words* which are placed between the illustrations at the start of the Dickens chapters and the first page of the chapters – so within the space of the novel. A small brilliant orange flyer is even stuck within the pages of the novel itself in the first chapter of N° 8 of *Our Mutual Friend* (between the second and third pages) which constitutes an intrusion into the world of fiction – ironically by more fiction. The flyer advertises Mrs Henry Wood's latest sensation novel and it is stuck over a page of the novel which describes Wegg's serial reading of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* to an illiterate dustman.[1] The full page adverts are often in colour, sometimes very decorative, like the advert for 'Glenfield Patent Starch', appearing in the *Our Mutual Friend* numbers, which has three colours, or the brilliant yellow 'Dr. De Jongh's Cod Liver Oil'. There are also detachable booklets such as that for the photographer Mayall (the photographer with whom the painter Turner worked), or a cartoon-like advertisement for Thorley's cattle feed consisting of four pages. In 19 and 20 of *Bleak House* there is an advertisement for Ransome's patent stone filters, a sewn-in booklet of sixteen pages, including six pages of testimonials which themselves constitute a series of miniature narratives. In the same number there is a sixteen-page catalogue for the publishers Cassell with illustrations on the front and back of the booklet to take out and keep. Although the 'Advertiser' itself is made of standardized pages, the inserts and colour advertisements as well as the booklets are all on different sizes and textures of paper, using different typefaces and occasionally colours. Textures are added to the numbers by the inclusion of a sheet of

cork to advertise a hatter, a crochet pattern, a free gift of real wax seals. Each turn of a page solicits the reader with a new demand on his attention and his senses.

The complexity of perceptual skills demanded of the reader of such an architecture is worth dwelling upon. Such demands were being placed on city dwellers in other scenarios (in the street, for example, as we saw in Chapter 1), so these were not unique to the monthly number. Yet the monthly number is a particularly intense and complex version of this new way of consuming data. The form of attention needed to function in certain new urban environments has been explored by several critics, one of whom is Thomas Richards. His discussion of the organization of the space of Paxton's Crystal Palace for the Great Exhibition of 1851 (which constituted 'the first outburst of the phantasmagoria of commodity culture') stresses the birth of a new way of seeing things: human traffic was driven through the glass house and kept going at 'a good clip' which meant that visitors were 'forced to acquire a limited attention span' rather akin to flipping a TV channel.[2] Commodities were turned into 'focal points of aesthetic and linguistic contemplation' and the Crystal Palace was able to produce a space that 'drove consumers to distraction'.[3] Richards stresses the idea that 'Regardless of what you ultimately fixed your gaze upon, the Crystal Palace turned you into a dilettante, loitering your way through a phantasmagoria of commodities.'[4] The notion of the dilettante is important especially if we bring it into closer association with the fixing of the gaze upon something. The reader of the monthly number can only develop a gaze which grazes or loiters through the adverts, and indeed, as we shall see later, the chapters themselves. Bernard Darwin describes an advert in N° 16 of the '*Martin Chuzzlewit* Advertiser' – a yellow leaflet called 'the Temple of Fashion' – which suggests just the form of loitering which the reader of the number himself or herself is practising: the Moses and Son's Aldgate shop declares in its advert that 'customers can be conducted through the length and breadth of the Establishment by a person who has strict injunctions to make no allusion to the purchasing of articles, unless first questioned by the parties themselves'.[5] Thus the focus of a purchase, of having a particular aim in sight in the act of reading or walking through a display, cedes the way to the beginning of a gratuitous viewing and scanning – of browsing or touring with the eye and being channelled through a space.

Walter Benjamin's comments on the stream of customers surging around the commodity in the work of Charles Baudelaire or his descriptions of the movement through the '*Passages*' in Paris also help us to imagine the way the reader of the monthly number is conditioned to read: the *flâneur* is greeted at the entrance of the *passage* or arcade by certain signs which dictate the style of the trip into the precinct – just as the covers of the monthly number display scenes from the novel randomly juxtaposed like the advertisements themselves. At the entrance to the *passages*, as at the entrance to

the monthly number, one must abandon the idea of a specific, practical aim (the purchase of an object/the reading of a single narrative sequence) and give oneself up to loitering *without* intent – a loitering which is at the same time a particular movement forward through space (one can dwell upon an object but only as a preliminary to looking at something else). The customer or reader is not forced into a particular purchase but is being trained to become a creature whose eye takes in the commodity quite 'naturally', as a reflex, so to speak; one who is constantly seeking, browsing, gazing. The operation of such a radar is a way of being, and not a response to specific needs. We might consider the monthly number as a sort of arcade in itself, an architecture for the 'dreaming collective' passing through.[6] Lynda Nead notices the phenomenon of the crowd's movement past spectacle in her study of the Cremorne Gardens in London at its most commercially successful (under the management of Edward Tyrell Smith in the 1860s), which was a 'mini-metropolis' and a 'complex multi-purpose space': 'Cremorne had to orchestrate a broad and occasionally incompatible public, through a sequence of distinct temporal zones', making sure that they loitered around certain attractions but also kept moving.[7] Commercial space, be it the display of advertising in a magazine, a park, or exhibition space, must encourage a modulable trajectory along which the perceiving public must be moved. There is, it seems, a pedagogic element in these circuits.

But what exactly is being learnt by the reader? What mechanisms or reactions does he or she absorb as a result of the architecture of the text? Althusser, having established the notion that what is represented in ideology are not the real relations of individuals to their conditions of existence but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live, goes on to say that this imaginary relation has a material existence since the individual 'participates in certain regular practices'.[8] It is through participation in ritual that ideas and belief eventually come – a scandalous inversion offered to us by Pascal: 'Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe.'[9] Ritual may govern our belief, our ideas and indeed our language. I wish to consider the reading practices which the Dickens monthly number might teach the reading subject and what kind of 'belief', what idea of the world or relationship to it, might be instilled as the pages are turned, scanned, or pulled out. What sort of reading subject emerges from what has been called 'the external ritual which materialises ideology'?[10]

First, we might consider the idea of attention and the formation of a particular gaze. Jonathan Crary's study of attention sees the emergence of a new way of attending to the world in the late 1860s. He considers the very recent pathology of 'attention deficit disorder' less as a pathology and more as an integral part of a society 'founded on the short attention span, the logic of the non-sequitur, perceptual overload, getting ahead and aggressiveness'.[11] He recognizes the 'overwhelming field of perceptual data' and an

undifferentiated mass of information as being part of a 'modern paradigm of sensory overload'. In his view, selective attention became necessary as part of a self-protecting inhibition and anaesthesia in the 1870s and 1880s.[12] He also discusses schizophrenia, which might be seen as a damaged capacity for selective attentiveness. Crary's work on subjectivity in the 1870s is also relevant to our period of 1840–70, when the subject was beginning to learn to select and marshal the data which was arriving in ever greater swathes. We have already seen how cartoons and parodies concerning advertising show an awareness of the capacity to deal with this flow of information. What is implied by this attentiveness (its reverse side, so to speak) is distraction and reverie, seen by Crary as being central to modernity. For Adorno it is associated with a certain decay and cultural degeneration since the newly mechanized subject is incapable of the artisan's 'real' attention. Benjamin, of course, sees modern reception of the world's data as being enacted in a state of distraction, while Crary says that attention and distraction are a continuum. Attention to newspapers or machines involves a modern man who is no longer asked to absorb a code but only attend to new messages, which brings with it what Hannah Arendt has called the 'destruction of contemplation'.[13]

Taking these notions into account, it seems that what is taught to the reader as he or she engages with the monthly number is the ability not to be drawn by one object in an act of contemplation, or even, I would suggest, to alternate between extreme forms of absolute attention followed by distraction, but to practice an amalgamation of attention and distraction. The reader operates an even or undifferentiated gazing. As a page of ads is scanned the eye flickers from frame to frame, locus to locus, and settles on particular features or words; this is quite unlike the oriented and organized linear reading associated with the novel. From the first monthly issues, this seepage of the advert into the novel space becomes more and more apparent, as if the increasing numbers of adverts are breaking loose from their moorings in the advertisement section and infesting the relatively free space which the pages of the novel constitute. Advertisements and other messages interrupt the reading of the narrative (such as the message on a thin slip of paper added onto the first page of the chapter in N° 9 of *Bleak House*, which apologizes for a missing illustration – there being two for every number).[14] These are a form of multi-messaging like the pop-ups which interrupt our reading on the net, or the lines of text which run along the bottom of our television screens.

Reading paths in the monthly number

These considerations prompt the question of how the number was read. Was it from back to front, were the chapters or the advertisements read first? There are accounts of how novels and newspapers were read at the time, often involving a criticism of the absorption and passion of many readers,

their flitting reading of magazines or the degrading and lowering effect of newspapers on good literature. But these discourses do not take as their target a structure as complex as the monthly number. Here we can only make conjectures as to how the reader would tackle the monthly number, and how the layout would have influenced that reading. Whereas, in newspapers, advertisements and stories were often clearly separated from news items (for example the black line in the *Journal des Débats* in Paris), in the monthly number the ads which come after the chapters run on immediately on the facing page so that there is no pause or 'no-man's land' between the end of the chapter and the beginning of the adverts. Proximity becomes a form of endorsement. No title or black line designates the change from one discourse to another. In N° 15 of *Bleak House*, for example, we find at the end of the last page of the chapters a booklet which is in fact an advertisement disguised as a miniature novel: 'A DESCRIPTIVE SKETCH by Mrs. S. C. Hall of the engraving of the Village Pastor from a Picture by W. P. Frith, Esq. RA'. It consists of eight pages of lyrical, sometimes melodramatic, description of the engraving for sale:

> It is a great and delightful privilege to be able to introduce into our homes so delicious an episode in genuine English life; to feel, when we look upon Mr. Frith's charming picture, that it is no fiction, – and that although the dresses appertain to a past century, the characters – the love, and faith, and innocence – are with us still. We pray they may continue to be so as long as England exists.

Here we see that novel-writing often continues within the advertisements themselves; like the Dickens novel itself the advert also presents itself as an 'episode' in 'genuine' English life and suggests that it is not 'fiction' but a true portrait. When one opens out the booklet, the Dickens chapter is still visible below it along with the other adverts on the facing page. The effect is of a patchwork of texts laid out before the eye of the reader as well as a layering of writing of different sorts which echo each other in typeface and in writing style. In the same way, there are very fluid transitions between 'Advertiser' and the illustrations which begin each number and the chapters themselves. There is no frontispiece, no announcement or title page to herald the commencement of the chapters – just the illustrations and text of the novel seemingly beginning in *medias res*. There is a sense that the division between ads and text is undergoing a process of attenuation.

There is a first possibility that the reader would start at the beginning and move through in linear fashion to the end – flicking through the adverts in the Advertiser at the beginning and then tackling the thirty-two pages of the chapters. In such a configuration N° 1 of *Our Mutual Friend* offers the following visual diet: the intertwined drawings of scenes from the novel on the front cover would be followed on the inside cover by a page

of adverts for 'New Silks', the promise of a free gift (an authentic portrait of the Princess of Wales 'exquisitely engraved on steel' if the reader buys the 'London and Paris Magazine of Fashion'), then 'pure arrowroot as imported', followed by an advert with an image of three crinolines. These give way to the pages of the 'Our Mutual Friend Advertiser' which would be read before arriving at the text itself. On arrival at the first page of the novel in which Lizzie and her father are trawling for bodies in the Thames, readers have already trawled through thirty-two pages of advertising; goods float just below the mind's surface while bodies are searched for in the river. Fishing for bodies, which is a recurrent theme in the novel, is a fishing associated with financial gain and later with the *nouveau riche* Veneering family, their social climbing effected both through fishing for well-connected persons and through the acquisition of commodities.

The presence of free gifts usually placed after the chapters at the end of the number might suggest a second possible 'route' taken by the reader; the latter would go to the back of the number first to pull out a free crochet pattern (Marsland's coloured patterns on cotton paper which feels like material appeared regularly in the advertisement section at the back of the monthly number) or a set of wax seals.[15] In this case there would be no working through from the beginning but a dipping into the adverts in an anarchic fashion according to the desires of the reader or the powers of attraction of each advert or gift. Occasionally the crochet patterns are found within the chapters, so that the movement through the text might take the reader into the centre of the chapters first – not in the desire to read the chapters but to discover the gift. The third possible trajectory is that the reader, avidly following the Dickens serial, would go first to the first pages of the chapter to read the instalment and only then begin to discover the other advertising texts. Even if this were the case, the reader would often encounter an advert within the chapters which would interrupt and colour the reading of the narrative.

Turning the monthly number over in one's hands, one is also struck by a fourth circuit which the reader might take, and that is to start with the advert on the inside back cover, which was a prime site for advertisers and was given over to particularly attractive adverts such as the series of serial adverts in *Bleak House* (changing each month) by Moses and Son's tailors with their different jokes and allusions to the chapters within that month's number. These adverts, which we will be looking at in detail in the next section, constitute a real space of entertainment and may well have built up their own clientele of admirers who would have turned to them as a newspaper reader turns to a favourite column or feature. Whichever reading path was chosen, the novel chapters would necessarily be overlaid in the mind of the reader with discourses and images gleaned from the paratext.

The numbers seem destined to have been read in small parts or sections which were contiguous and successive but also separate. Browsing is

a familiar form of consumption to us now, and it is clear that, however dedicated the reader might have been to the Dickens chapters and keen to read the next sequence in the tale, he or she was getting used to reading in parts, in a trail of interrupted pieces. The monthly number would create an expectation that it was normal to move around, to intersperse novel reading with the reading of advertisements, to read eclectic discourses, one beside the other. One was no longer expected to read fifty pages of one 'genre' at a sitting but to move about in a gesture which television has perfected in us: that of zapping or channel changing.[16] Even if the reader read the chapters all the way through, he or she could at any time be waylaid on their journey by the need to move back to the two illustrations which were always included at the start of the chapters to check on them for more information about an event or the appearance of a character. These two illustrations gave elucidation to key moments of the novel and were prized as objects in their own right, to pull out and keep or put on the wall, souvenirs of the reading experience. Reading was becoming an act of processing since it meant a constant building of one's own personalized reading experience in which one selects and rejects.

If much contemporary film is geared towards an audience used to changing channels, so the Dickens chapters are geared towards a public used to the 'language of the walls'. Paradoxically, the text simultaneously *creates* such reading habits and evolves to *adapt* to an audience already used to being solicited by other discourses or images while reading. Dickens recognized and encouraged this habit of seeing by allowing and often actively choosing ads to be placed within his monthly part. He also included adverts within the narrative of his own novel (as Thackeray did), for example reproducing the advert of Jenny Wren, the doll's dressmaker, and Wegg's advertisement in *Our Mutual Friend*.[17] The illustrations, which were of prime importance in selling the monthly number (as the apology for a missing illustration shows), flow on from the adverts, providing a form of interface between 'Advertiser' and novel, since the illustrations resembled the adverts and were always captioned with a line of text, and sometimes contained small adverts themselves.[18] The illustrations were often drawn by illustrators either also working in advertising or using styles similar to those used in advertising. The illustrations in advertisements aped the famous illustrations of novels, as the drawings for the Lloyd's Newspaper advertisements show; these appeared in *Bleak House*, and are very similar to Thackeray's illustrations of his novels.[19] Thus there is a form of homogenization which would allow the reader to recognize similar features in novel and advert and so move seamlessly from one form to another.

As this was a relatively new form of publication demanding new reading behaviours, the author periodically felt obliged to elucidate some of its structures for his readers. During the publication of *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens encountered the problem of keeping secret yet also hinting at John

Rokesmith's identity. Thus he left a message for his readers in the form of an added slip in the first number: *'The Reader will understand the use of the popular phrase* Our Mutual Friend, *as the title of this book, on arriving at the Ninth Chapter* (*page* 84)'. Notice that Dickens can provide the exact page in the ninth number, so tightly planned was each publication. This notice, as well as the 'POSTSCRIPT in lieu of preface' (also appearing in the first number), gives us a sense of the awareness that what was clear to publisher and author might seem fragmented and occult to the reader. At once revealing and concealing, Dickens gives the following explanation:

> Its difficulty was much enhanced by the mode of publication; for, it would be very unreasonable to expect that many readers, pursuing the story in portions month by month through nineteen months, will, until they have it before them complete, perceive the relations of its finer threads to the whole pattern which is always before the eyes of the story-weaver at his loom.

The 'story-weaver' is selling his story in parts or threads (we are reminded here of the vertebrae of Baudelaire's textual serpent); he is using added slips, appended notes and other annexes to explain his serial publication, thereby using the techniques of advertising which surround the chapters of the novel to annotate an already piecemeal structure.

Speed, the supplement, and the multiple occupation of space

Speed is one of the salient features of the reading experience of the monthly number which is quite unlike the savouring of poetry or the rereading of cherished texts.[20] The reader is being encouraged to pass swiftly through a space which can potentially produce what Richards has called hallucinatory experiences. In exhibition space, he tells us, static objects were made to seem active through lighting, display and the manner in which the public was channelled past them, producing 'a kinetic environment for inert objects'.[21] In the monthly number that 'kinetic' environment is created by the flicking of pages, the need to open or pull out booklets, look under adverts, seek for free gifts or by the multiple stimulants of competing texts and images. Such a textual environment, like the comic strip, involves the eye in 'rapid, intense nervous stimuli, like the flickering of the cinema screen or the view from a train window'.[22] Likewise, Curtis tells us that Ford Madox Brown's *Work* of 1852–65 is akin to the new comic strip which 'causes the eye to flicker over the surface, as an extension of a desire to observe life as it actually "presents itself", as part of a Victorian culture of observation'.[23] Certain paintings of Memling – those depicting the life of Christ for example – show us that this visual complexity was nothing new and that hundreds of years earlier viewers of such pictures had been asked to take in the sequences in front of them by allowing their eye to shuttle between groups of figures and scenes.

This flickering of the eye is akin to the movement of the modern eye over the page of advertisements: present-day advertisers know that the reader of a magazine rests the eye on an advert for approximately three seconds before deciding whether to continue to read or to move on. The Western eye travels the page in a sweeping movement which goes from top right-hand corner to top left hand corner then sweeps down diagonally when faced with a page of heterogeneous framed ads; the eye must work quickly to take in the entirety of the structure. The Dickens adverts also school the reader in how to look and how to react. In N° 1 of *Bleak House* of March 1852, there are seventeen pages of offers of new books whose copy expresses the idea that time is of the essence. No dinosaur advertising this, but responsive and quick: publishers' lists of titles carry the eye-catching captions 'Nearly Ready', 'Now Ready' and 'In Preparation'. New publications offered for sale by Chapman and Hall – notably by Dickens or Bulwer Lytton – are described as *already* available in one volume 'handsomely bound in cloth'. The adverts for the tailors Moses and Son flaunt their capacity to respond quickly to death by placing the capitalized word 'MOURNING' next to the promise 'Ready made at Five Minutes Notice'; the whole suit 'made to measure' can be collected a mere five hours later. There is a cartoon-like sense of objects being offered up for consumption immediately – but not forever – since the objects will soon be sold out. The reader must be quick to catch them, active in choices, reacting to possible fakes and ersatz which the adverts constantly warn against: the legend 'Observe the Name' appears at the bottom of many adverts as well as the word 'Caution' followed by alerts against 'imposition' and 'falsehood'.[24]

Many of the adverts placed at the back of the monthly number use different qualities, thicknesses and sizes of paper. These adverts were often added at the last minute as extras or supplements, a habit which attests to the flexibility of the advertising machine and the idea that a text can be improved on and embellished. Copies of the same monthly number sometimes differ from each other since certain adverts are sewn into one copy and not into another; this was a response-tactic to sudden growth in sales allowing expansion of the advertising space. Thus, though the numbers were preplanned, they were not a finite thing but a 'monthly' object in which author and editor responded to outside pressure in terms of commercial space and sometimes plot.[25] The advertiser could mould his adverts to the context in which they appeared to the public and could add new adverts swiftly. Supplementation and flexibility are part of this effect of rapid evolution in the monthly number – since the smaller coloured flyers were often added at the last minute as a form of rogue advertising. This expandable, mouldable vehicle of communication altered the reader's reception of the novel.

The *modulable* aspect of the advertising apparatus is also present in the structure of the novel itself, which is now capable of absorbing new scenes as the story is built month by month.[26] The most obvious manner in which

the text is able to accommodate change is seen in *Bleak House*, which alternates the darkly ironic chapters narrated by an unknown narrator and the lighter 'summery' chapters narrated by Esther Summerson, which are more easily accessible to the reader than the twisting and twisted descriptive passages with which they are juxtaposed. This alternation allows a pendulum swing from one view of the world to another and the introduction of persons and events from very different spheres – spheres which do not at first meet but which will later be brought together. The juxtaposition of Lady Dedlock's life at Chesney Wold with Krook's cluttered, filthy shop, or Esther's optimism and joy with Tulkinghorn's death-like grip echo in some measure the juxtapositions of incongruous advertisements; the placing of adverts for great works of literature next to adverts for lowly household goods. Both systems allow the addition of material without destruction of the global armature. In Dickens's novels lighter subnarratives can be, and often are, introduced without deforming the whole.[27] It is interesting to note that the characters within the novels are often shown to practise just this form of modular reading and reciting. In *Our Mutual Friend*, for example, the Golden Dustman is illiterate but desirous of collecting and understanding works of literature which he receives 'in parts': 'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' is read to him in instalments by the unscrupulous Wegg, who takes advantage of his serial readings to add his own inventions and to compose his own poetic comments upon history. Wegg is able to create a serial form which allows him to take as many liberties as he wishes with the main narrative.

Our journey back and forth as readers of the monthly number on a horizontal plane is also accompanied by a vertical descent into other worlds as advertising booklets are opened and read. On entering booklets such as those selling Ransome's Patent Stone Filters, Thorley's food for Cattle, Mayall's Daguerrotype portrait, or Norton's Camomile Pills, we find many miniature narratives. The booklets can be detached so that they are worlds within worlds – at once part of the number but also contiguous to it.[28] Some are folded in concertina fashion, like the tiny booklet in N° 6 of *Bleak House* from 'The Oak Mutual Life Assurance and Loan Company', which can be opened out into a long strip (still attached to the main text) and then folded back. This adds to the multidimensional aspect of the number and to the variety of movements both manual and visual which the reader has to perform to read all its parts fully. We also discover adverts stuck over other ads – fixed to the 'host' advertisement with a little glue in the centre so that the advert placed below is still readable. Such multiple occupancy of space invites comparison with more modern practices such as the Cubist montage which used textual fragments to express the palimpsestuous nature of urban living, or the 'peel-back' information found on many products today. In the Victorian period the cross-section in drawings of the city was used to account for the way in which the city was occupied by many

worlds in a single space – either the cross-sections of buildings with their floors inhabited by different social classes (the sweated workers in the cellar, the bourgeois in his comfortable apartments above), or the sections of the underground world of London and Paris with its drainage, transportation and gas pipes. These graphic representations of simultaneous happenings were a popular medium for critics seeking to spatially represent either social progress *or* social injustice. Such a fashion also translates a modern desire to see all, all at once: a world of the condensed and the conglomerate. That such a desire is dependent on habits of seeing is confirmed by Benjamin, who conjectures that the urban dweller sought artistic outlet for this new capacity to see: 'Perhaps the daily sight of a moving crowd once presented the eye with a spectacle to which it first had to adapt. ... Then the assumption is not impossible that, having mastered this task, the eye welcomed opportunities to confirm its possession of its new ability.'[29] The pages of *Edwin Drood* provided just such an opportunity.

Edwin Drood: The lay and the liturgical

Albeit a carefully planned commercial enterprise (the fruit of decisions on the part of Dickens and his editors), the monthly number has some of the characteristics of surrealist art. We are reminded of the Cabinet of Curiosities as it was reinterpreted by surrealist artists with its contiguous miniature displays or of the *atelier* of André Breton with its collection of fetishes and masks, photographs and Victorian birds under glass, and of course of Max Ernst's collages made from late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century magazine illustrations. There are also elements of the *cadavre exquis*, a patchwork of scenarios made from heterogeneous parts created independently of each other but forming nonetheless a single body or entity. To consume the whole one must first consume the parts, and to do this is to be aware of the humour and irony inherent in such strange juxtapositions. There is promiscuity in the newly perceived proximity of these spaces and a sense in which the words and images offered to us might overlap and create a hallucination, a liberating one in which the pressures of logic and reason are no longer felt. One image or text remembered might overlay and imprint upon another. This possibility is illustrated in *Edwin Drood* in its opening paragraph:

> An ancient English Cathedral town? How can the ancient English Cathedral town be here! The well-known massive grey square tower of its Cathedral? How can that be here! There is no spike of rusty iron in the air, between the eye and it, from any point of the real prospect. What is the spike that intervenes, and who has set it up? Maybe it is set up by the Sultan's orders for the impaling of a horde of Turkish robbers, one by one. It is so, for cymbals clash, and the Sultan goes by to his palace in long procession. Ten thousand scimitars flash in the sunlight, and thrice

> ten thousand dancing-girls strew flowers. Then, follow white elephants caparisoned in countless gorgeous flowers, and infinite in number and attendants. Still, the Cathedral tower rises in the background, where it cannot be, and still no writhing figure is on the grim spike. Stay! Is the spike so low a thing as the rusty spike on the top of an old bedstead that has tumbled all awry? Some vague period of drowsy laughter must be devoted to the consideration of this possibility.[30]

Mr John Jasper, Lay Precentor at Cloisterham Cathedral, is lying in an opium den in London and slowly emerging from an opium dream.[31] The dream state allows him to have an impossible vision in which the rusty iron spike of the sordid bed on which he lies is superimposed on the old cathedral tower of his home town. This distorted seeing illustrates De Quincey's idea of the mind as a 'dread book of account' which records all data for eternity and can display conflicting worlds side by side.[32] Here we find on the one hand Jasper's dull but respectable life in the Church – an ancient and rural existence based on mediaeval habits of life – and on the other the dissolute existence he leads in his other life in an urban world of commodification and change. The former is represented by the noble matter of stone and the latter by iron – not the noble iron described by Ruskin in his essay 'The Work of Iron', which is a pre-industrial matter, but iron which is fallen, a now rusty household object, a product of the 'storm-cloud' of his vision of the industrial nineteenth century. One world is described as 'well-known' while the other is alien. The iron spike is seen as 'intervening' in Jasper's vision of the stone tower, thus marring and defacing it. The defacing or un-facing of the tower, the taking away of its old face and all it represents, is further exacerbated by an association with an exotic world of fantasy and excess. Such a world translates a most unchristian desire to consume figured by the rapacious Sultan and his countless numbers of dancing-girls and soldiers – an ostentation more in keeping with a fantasy of the riches of overseas markets. And indeed there are similarities between the ironic and excessive style in the writing here and that of the style of advertising copy appearing in the descriptions of goods in the Dickens 'Advertiser'.

The narrator then informs us that 'the man whose scattered consciousness has thus fantastically pieced itself together, at length rises' (37). What was double or indeed triple has now settled into a single object – a lowly and laughable bedstead which is 'all awry', as was Jasper's seeing. This moment of disenchantment leaves the hallucinating subject aware that he is in 'a miserable court' in London which offers no view of a Cathedral, or of anything for that matter, being a dark and closed-off yard. Yet, ironically, this dingy urban *impasse* is a passport, an 'open sesame' to a plural, exotic, constantly mutating world which *saves* Jasper from Cathedral life, the 'cramped monotony' of which 'grinds [him] away by the grain' (48). The expression 'to grind away by the grain' translates the repetitive relentlessness of labour,

the dullness of which needs an antidote. Gail Houston sees these disjunctive perceptions that are Jasper's skewed seeing as a means of escape: Jasper's solution for his boredom is to return again and again to the opium den 'where he experiences – in a drug-induced, magnified form – the fragmentary, hallucinatory state that is modern life'.[33] Convertibility and exchangeability seem to me to be at the root of this modern experience of seeing. We have before us a space occupied simultaneously by several images or objects as in the case of Jasper's multiple perceptions. De Quincey's vision of the human brain as a 'natural and mighty palimpsest' is revealing here: 'Everlasting layers of ideas, images, feelings, have fallen upon your brain softly as light. Each succession has seemed to bury all that went before. And yet in reality not one has been extinguished.'[34] Freud also sought a form of representation which would adequately describe the superpositions of time and of space in the human psyche. He took the city of Rome as an example of the way different architectures survive in the same place but then found it inadequate since what he was trying to figure was 'unimaginable and even absurd':

> If we want to represent historical sequence in spatial terms we can only do it by juxtaposition in space: the same space cannot have two different contents. ... It shows us how far we are from mastering the characteristics of mental life by representing them in pictorial terms.[35]

He also rejects the developmental stages of the human or animal body as an adequate model for mental life, since the early glands, tissue and bone of infancy change beyond all recognition in adulthood. He says that 'only in the mind is such a preservation of all the earlier stages alongside the final form possible', and that 'we are not in a position to represent this phenomenon in pictorial terms'.[36] But if Freud considers it impossible to represent the phenomenon, Dickens seems to succeed, by offering us a moving image of Jasper's mind in which two conflicting spaces and times are present in the same hallucination. What Freud was looking for in his quest for a model was the special effects we are now familiar with in film in which several moving images coexist on the same screen, one over another, blending and merging but still distinguishable.

The loading of one space with vestiges of past, present, and imagined found in the extract from *Drood* is also a feature of the advertising paratext framing the novel. There is a sense of connection between the different objects advertised and the text of the chapters itself. The first page of the '*Edwin Drood* Advertiser' consists of an advertisement for a 'Mourning Clothes Warehouse' which appears in each of the six monthly numbers. Its sober appearance and lack of flowery prose are in harmony with the advert on the inside of the front cover for Chappel's Pianoforte, and indeed with the front cover, which depicts rather lugubrious scenes from *Drood* as opposed

to the light or comic scenes on the cover of *David Copperfield*. However, there then follow some of the brightest and most surprising adverts of the monthly numbers, probably due to the fact that in 1870 a new era in advertising was beginning in which there were increased means to make advertising spectacular. One advert cries 'Great Sale of Ladies' Underclothes!' while electroplate, sea salt and anchovy paste jostle with wedding presents and croquet sets. We find some of the most luxurious and sensual adverts at the back of the number, such as one for 'Eau de Vie: Pure Pale Brandy by Henry Brett and Co.' appearing in brilliant red, blue and yellow, while next to it the reader can touch a silky smooth specimen of cork – a small sheet which has its advert for 'Cork Hats' printed upon it. These are followed by a brilliant yellow booklet of eight pages and another advert in pink and violet.

As we have seen, 'mourning' (the word 'Mourning' in bold black type fills the thick black frame of the 'Jay's London General Mourning Warehouse' advert) starts each of the *Drood* advertisers. The association of 'mourning', private grief translated into a spiritual and communal grief, with the word 'warehouse' with its connotations of mass-produced 'wares' and their storage is a surprising one for modern eyes. Before ever the novel begins 'mourning' is drawn into the world of capital, associated with industry[37] Likewise, within the novel mourning for the dead takes on outlandish forms and is constantly pulled into the world of commerce and greed. In chapter 19, 'Shadow on the Sun-dial', Jasper is wearing mourning clothes when he threatens Rosa in the garden of the girls' school. He strikes a restrained pose, leaning on the sun-dial as if he were a respectable man in mourning, but his words are in wild contrast to this. He calls Rosa 'sweet witch' and talks of her 'enchanting scorn' which he wishes to possess. He utters in the same breath 'I love you, love you, love you!' and 'I would pursue you to the death.' (231). If advertising for a mourning warehouse – sober in black lettering on a white ground – begins the advertiser, it is superseded by an array of tantalizing announcements, colours and motifs which must have exerted a powerful force at a time when colour and image were so little available. On the reverse side of 'mourning' we find an advert for parquet floors with the legend 'cost less than Turkey carpets' written across it and which shows an oriental floor design which fills the page. In the first five numbers we move from a piano forte business, to the 'mourning Warehouse', then to the oriental parquet advert (and in N° 3 there is a Mappin and Webb electroplate advertisement showing eastern-looking lamps and amphora). Just as the first chapters of *Edwin Drood* slip between an oriental opium den and the Turkish hallucinations of Jasper, back to the Christian rituals of the Church, so the adverts take us from formal 'mourning' to the twists and turns of oriental design. In N° 1 on the page facing the 'Parquet Floors' we find an advert for a photographer – 'Pompeian Studio – Private Portraits – Stereoscopic company' – with various testimonials, prices, and mentions of Royal patronage. This notion of having oneself represented, of possessing

an image of oneself, is part of an ethic of showing and parading which we find in both the mourning clothes advert and the showing of the parquet floor. The secular subject thus exists through the ways he or she appears to a myriad of others. Jasper is caught between a vocation of exclusivity, revealing the soul to God alone, and a 'lay' desire to relate himself intimately to others.

In the second monthly number of May 1870 there is a strange and startling advert which literally 'cashes in' on Dickens's use of the girls' school at Rochester in the story of *Edwin Drood*. The advert reads thus:

> The Nuns' House, Seminary for young Ladies at Cloisterham (see 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood').

The Principal of the school then lists her fees and invites potential clients to write to her. She appears to have no qualms concerning her use of a work of fiction to promote her establishment and Dickens appears to have had no objection. This advertisement coming early in the Advertiser creates an extraordinary breach in the fictional fabric of the story of *Drood*. One might even say a tear or a cut, since this is a radical suspension of the suspension of disbelief. Did Dickens want his fictional worlds to be turned inside out, to stand forth as pure inventions carried, disseminated and exploited by the vehicle of advertising – advertising which he as author would also exploit in his turn? To open up his fictions so that they flowed into the social fabric and were part of it, is perhaps less the destruction of fiction by commercial reality and more an expression of the possibility that all worlds, all of the world, are fictions, and that there is a mutual engendering between a school as it is written about in a novel and a school as it exists in a building. A school is not merely the building in which it is housed but the collective fantasy constructed in order for the institution to exist. The fictional text, rather than preserving itself from the realities of the world beyond, both opens itself out and pulls that world into itself, displaying the cords which attach it to it and feed it; the virtual and the real are bound up with and inseparable from each other. Might there also be a hubristic desire that the world should become fictional and be created by the virtual – the virtual of Dickens's making?

The pages of the novel also seem to point to such imagined worlds. The cathedral seems to have no more reality for Jasper than a hoard of Turkish robbers or an iron spike. And this sense of the replacement of a central reality by a series of contiguous fantasies continues throughout the narrative. The slowness and discomfort of the old world of Cloisterham is contrasted with the relative speed of forays into the city, which become a drug-like respite from the crawl of cathedral life. Such respite sometimes colours the scenes back at Cloisterham with its haze of fog, dim crypt or shadowy cathedral so that the reader experiences this world as if under the influence of

opium. The two illustrations which are placed just before the opening passage of the first page of *Edwin Drood* and after the advertisements also provide a sense of an oscillation between worlds, a double seeing. The first is an image entitled 'In the Court' [Fig. 12] in which we see bodies lying on the bed in the opium den reminiscent of a Gustave Doré scene of urban decadence and degradation. The image is almost entirely black. There are two old iron bedposts sticking up like spikes on the right of the picture and leaning together so that their tips nearly meet and forming what might appear to a hazy eye a spire or pinnacle. The second illustration depicts a couple (Edwin Drood and his betrothed) seated on a bench; it is entitled 'Under the Trees' [Fig. 13] and light and order appear to reign. The harsh leaning lines of the spikes in the first illustration are partially echoed in 'Under the Trees' by a straight young sapling on the left of the picture – a strangely corrected and tidied mirror image of 'In the Court'. In place of the sagging curves of the broken bed of the opium den is the straight horizontal line of a wooden bench, while behind the decorously seated couple appear the windows of the cathedral. A chair lies fallen with clothes strewn across it in the bottom left-hand corner of 'In the Court', while in 'Under the trees' the eye is drawn down to the utterly straight parasol of the young girl. This latter illustration looks like an advertisement for a novel of sentiment which one might well find in the advertising pages accompanying any Dickens novel – or could be an engraving for sale like 'Village Pastor' which we saw earlier. This image

IN THE COURT.

Figure 12 'In the Court' from *Edwin Drood*, 1870
Source: Personal source.

Figure 13 'Under the Trees', *Edwin Drood*, 1870
Source: Personal source.

of a couple in a rural setting contrasts violently with the grotesque image of entwined bodies in the first image. In one image, the bodies are in a state of abandonment, merging into yet lost to each other and to themselves, while in the other the bodies observe distance and suggest social structure and the law; the couple are separated on the bench and are formally dressed wearing hats and gloves. 'In the Court' suggests a world in which these considerations no longer have meaning; the faces of those slumped on the bed or writhing in ecstasy can hardly be seen, offering the anonymous and fragmented bodies of pornography.

Yet the two illustrations are placed side by side in the first number of *Edwin Drood*, lying one on another, and are carefully linked in the narrative. They are events which succeed each other in the plot and which mutually define each other. The encounter between Edwin and Rosa symbolizes Jasper's frustration; their slightly cloying childish attachment represents the world from which Jasper is cast out. It is this alienation which lies behind the reverse side of the rural idyll – the tortured, Gothic and murderous inner world of Jasper represented here by the opium den.[38] In chapter 19, 'Shadow on the Sun-Dial', there is an illustration entitled 'Jasper's Sacrifices' showing another bench in a rural setting by a sun-dial, but this time more enclosed and overgrown with a menacing Jasper standing and remonstrating with a cowering Rosa. The figures are leaning, off-balanced and off-centre as if Jasper cannot fully inhabit such a scene without tipping it into the destabilized world of the opium den with its excess and despair. Dickens describes his dark outline

which sets 'his black mark on the very face of day' (228).[39] In the description of the opium scene, Jasper is sharing the bed with a Chinaman, a Lascar and a haggard woman and he twice says 'Unintelligible!' as if the languages he hears as well as the mixing of images he sees are too disparate to have meaning. The closeness, even simultaneity, of the two worlds he inhabits is reinforced when at the end of the chapter we find the following lines:

> That same afternoon, the massive grey square tower of an old Cathedral rises before the sight of the jaded traveller. The bells are going for daily service, and he must needs attend it, one would say, from his haste to reach the open cathedral door. The choir are getting on their sullied white robes, in a hurry, when he arrives among them, gets on his own robe, and falls into the procession filing in to service. Then the Sacristan locks the iron-barred gates that divide the sanctuary from the chancel, and all of the procession having scuttled into their places, hide their faces; and then the intoned words, 'WHEN THE WICKED MAN' rise among groins of arches and beams of roof, awakening muttered thunder. (39)[40]

The 'massive' tower rises in front of Jasper, a phallic reminder of the sensual world he has just left and reminiscent of the sexual associations of ecclesiastical architecture (found later in William Golding's *The Spire*). 'Groins of arches' continue this network of metaphors and hark back to the groins of the opium takers, which we see clearly in the illustration since the opium-eaters are lying across the bed, their legs splayed towards the reader. That the white robes of the choir should be 'sullied' suggests both a physical and a moral staining, while the 'iron-barred gates' act as a reference to the iron spikes of the opium bed as if the opium dream were still exerting its effect on the perception of the returning Jasper. The animalistic 'scuttled' sits strangely within the pomp of a church service and conjures visions of the animal abandonment seen at the opium den. The 'muttered thunder' of the intonation echoes the groans of the opium-eaters and is likewise 'Unintelligible!' to Jasper. The idea of the ritual is carried from one world to another; the taking of opium presided over by a grotesque high priestess leaves its trace in the Evening Prayer of the Anglican Church Liturgy (and, although this is not a communion service, the administering of wine and wafer is not far from the reader's mind). The profane and the sacred are mixed in the two extracts as they are in the advertisements around them which echo the Bible: the capitals of the 'WICKED MAN' echo the capitalized bold type of 'MOURNING' in the advert which the reader may have just glanced at. The intoned 'WHEN THE WICKED MAN', from Ezekiel 18.27, is repeated at the start of the Morning Prayer and the Evening Prayer services and asks the wicked man to turn away from sin and save his soul. We see that Church liturgy has something in common with advertising: it functions by means of repetition and the constant hailing of the individual. Jasper feels he is being called to here concerning his own wickedness.

Thus we see that in *Edwin Drood* the passages from one world to another are rapid and seamless, be they geographical or mental, be they from London to Cloisterham or the schizophrenic oscillations of Jasper between upright man of the Church, affable uncle and tortured and lascivious predator. These rapid shifts are reflected in the advertisements in each monthly number which boast a range of technological goods which do not yet appear in *Our Mutual Friend* and *Bleak House*. There is a preoccupation with technology as an agent of change unprecedented in earlier advertising in Dickens's novels, as well as a sense of the speeding up of daily life. We find the first references to 'fast' food in an advert for 'A cup of coffee in One Minute' or fast acquisition with 'The Duplex Refrigerator', a company which also sells ice safes, washing machines and sewing machines, all of which can be paid for in 'monthly instalments', sometimes with a free 'month's trial'. Being mobile is of central importance especially in terms of social ascension. 'Wilcox and Gibbs', whose slogan is 'A New World at Home for Busy People', sells sewing machines with the promise of the speedy production of clothes for one's family who will then rise socially, allow opportunities to 'multiply' and therefore not have to emigrate. This multiplication heralds, the copy tells us, the dawning of a new era: 'When machinery enters into industrial and domestic life, as it ought, there will be no need to go abroad for a New World for Working People.' Thus the machine (delivered to customers by train) brings opportunities normally far away in space and time directly into the home. The advertisements, like *Drood* itself, suggest the very modern desire of having all our fantasies provided in one place at one time.

Attention and the *cadavre exquis*

The ability to take in these influences and counter-influences on our perception relies on a particular form of 'floating gaze' or 'floating attention'. The term is inspired by the expression '*attention flottante*', the French translation of the psychoanalytic term '*gleichscwebende Aufmerksamkeit*' or 'evenly poised attention'. It was used by Freud in his recommendations on analytic technique in which the analyst is asked to suspend traditional ways of attending to a discourse (based on logical sequence, presupposition and the desire to organize the material one hears):

> For as soon as anyone deliberately concentrates his attention to a certain degree, he begins to select from the material before him; one point will be fixed in his mind with particular clearness and some other will be correspondingly disregarded, and in making this selection he will be following his expectations or inclinations. This, however, is precisely what must not be done. In making the selection, if he follows his expectations he is in danger of never finding anything but what he already knows...[41]

Freud says that what is unconnected and in chaotic disorder seems at first to be submerged 'but rises steadily into recollection as soon as the patient brings up something new to which it can be related and by which it can be continued'.[42] This system of recording without discrimination and the use of this pool of data to make connections with subsequent information is what we have been seeing in action in the Dickens monthly number. We have imagined a reader who has moved through the textual architecture before him or her and has produced meanings by making connections between what he or she had read earlier and what he or she is now reading. As Freud says: 'It must not be forgotten that the things one hears are for the most part things whose meaning is only recognized later on.'[43] This retrospective assigning of meaning through connections made on an unconscious level is the work which the monthly number encourages us, as readers, to carry out. In a letter to Fliess, Freud describes the stratification of the psyche as it deals with memory traces: each new circumstance elicits a 'rearrangement' or 'retranscription' of the old trace, thus creating new translations or registrations of old material. He also points out that 'Every later transcript inhibits its predecessor and drains the excitatory process from it.'[44] Attenuating the effect of one memory trace by another might be extrapolated out to the weakening effect of one discourse in the monthly number (be it advertisement or novel) by a subsequent one. As the reader comes across new solicitations on his attention the power of capitalized words such as 'WICKED MAN' in the narrative might overlay the word 'MOURNING' in an advertisement.

Readers were not necessarily aware of the effects of forms of attention on the meanings they assigned to a text like *Edwin Drood*, yet these paths of attention and attribution of meaning were increasingly becoming the norm. If Nietzsche, as we saw earlier, describes modern perception in terms of a traveller viewing the passing world from a train, a view which is both partial and inaccurate, Freud suggests that a patient must behave like a train traveller, recounting the passing landscape of his or her mind however partial and inaccurate it may be:

> So say whatever goes through your mind. Act as though, for instance, you were a traveller sitting next to the window of a railway carriage and describing to someone inside the carriage the changing views which you see outside.[45]

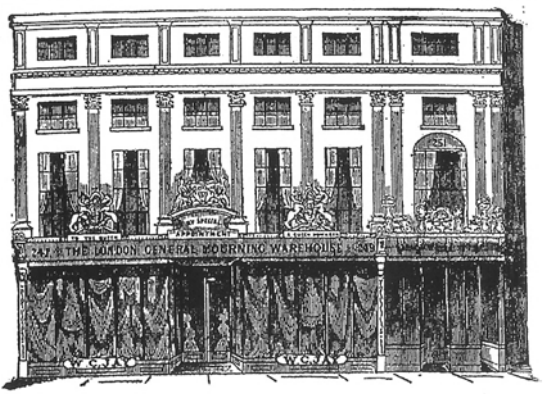
We see that in describing the analytic technique Freud has recourse to metaphors of modern technology. Here he uses the train but he also used microphones, telephones and electric oscillations as if his description of attention were somehow aping a mechanism or mechanical system which was not quite human, or rather, went beyond the human.[46]

The unnatural or inhuman scape created by advertising was often the object of attempts to 'humanize' and 'tame' it by imposing order. Regulation

of the effect of the montage and mess of advertising hoardings and pages is discussed by William Smith in 1863 and illustrated by a mesmerizing collage: 'Wall-Posting as it is' – next to a new neatly arranged hoarding – 'Wall-Posting as it Ought to be'.[47] Another attempt to regulate the Babel of language and image can be seen in *The Graphic* of 20 February 1875: illustrations have gone and have been replaced with the name of the product in bold type, repeated up to eight times at the beginning of a number of descriptive sentences. A notice 'TO OUR READERS' announces that the adverts have also been placed in categories: 'The Advertisements will be found arranged in the following order:- Amusements, Perfumery and Toilet, Furniture, Drapers, Milliners and Tailors, Miscellaneous articles, Books, Comestibles, Music'. The effect is strangely austere and does not continue in subsequent numbers, which suggests that part of the power of advertising is its haphazard, anarchic quality mixed with the force of iconic representation. Advertising takes its seductive power from being unintelligible – a series of random offerings on which we might alight seemingly by chance. This is part of its magical and unschooled quality, mirroring the tantalizing world of objects before they are placed within the logic of a grammar.

If advertising is marshalled and made to 'mean', it loses appeal. We might think here of Benjamin's study of collections of objects in the arcades, thrust together as if out of the most incoherent dreams, or of the Dickens Advertiser offering seemingly severed heads and shoulders selling wigs, adverts selling crinolines in which the model is flanked by the cages of the crinolines giving an impression of the female body as a series of detached parts, or human hearts posted up to sell medicines [Figs. 14, 15, 16]. In other pages there are adverts for spectacles which depict eyes attached to nothing staring through floating spectacles. Advertising pages thus display fragments of the human frame lying in their separate enclosures – an arrangement which would later be taken up by the Dada artists who created new human forms from the text and images of advertising. Consider Raoul Hausmann's self-portrait of 1920, *Selbstportrait des Dadasophen* (part of a series of 'Dolls, Bodies and Automatons') in which the formally dressed human figure has a diagram of a heart stuck over one half of the torso – and a machine-like clock in place of a face. Max Ernst's collages of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century text and image suggest an understanding of these new forms of arrangement and attention: his pictures put into practice the unconscious drive of the nineteenth century to collage. The Dada movement and Surrealism find an aesthetics of modernity in their re-readings of the nineteenth century: elements which are intelligible when read separately become ambivalent when perceived compositely and simultaneously.[48]

We will conclude this section by bringing together Jasper's reaction to the montage of his opium dream – the ejaculation 'Unintelligible!' – with advertising's superposition of fantasies. What we have been seeing here is in



MOURNING:—COURT, FAMILY, & COMPLIMENTARY.

THE PROPRIETOR OF

THE LONDON GENERAL MOURNING WAREHOUSE

Begs respectfully to remind Families whose bereavements compel them to adopt Mourning attire, that every article, of the very best description, requisite for a complete outfit of Mourning, may be had at this Establishment at a moment's notice.

ESTIMATES FOR SERVANTS' MOURNING

Affording a great saving to Families, are furnished; whilst the habitual attendance of experienced assistants (including dressmakers and milliners) enables them to suggest or supply every necessary for the occasion, and suited to any grade or condition of the community.

WIDOWS' AND FAMILY MOURNING

Is always kept made up, and a note, descriptive of the Mourning required, will insure its being sent forthwith either in Town or into the Country, and on the most Reasonable Terms.

W. C. JAY, 247—249, REGENT STREET.

NOVELTY IN SMOKING.

INDERWICK'S NEW SELF-ACTING PIPE TUBE,

By which excellent invention the Pipe may be kept burning during conversation without applying it to the lips, superseding the annoyance of frequent lighting; and it is also recommended to persons afflicted with Asthma or other respiratory disorders, as the irritation produced by inhaling the smoke is entirely avoided, it being conveyed to the lips without drawing the breath. Price Four Shillings, sent free to any part of the Kingdom, on receipt of Postage Stamps to that amount.

Wholesale and Retail at J. INDERWICK'S Meerschaum Pipe Warehouse, 88, Princes-street, Leicester-square, London.

THE GENTLEMEN'S REAL HEAD OF HAIR, OR INVISIBLE PERUKE.—The principle upon which this Peruke is made is so superior to everything yet produced, that the Manufacturer invites the honour of a visit from the Sceptic and the Connoisseur, that one may be convinced, and the other gratified, by inspecting this and other novel and beautiful specimens of the Perruquean Art, at the Establishment of the Sole Inventor, F. BROWNE, 47, FENCHURCH-STREET.

F. BROWNE'S INFALLIBLE MODE OF MEASURING THE HEAD.

		Inches.	Eighths.
Round the Head in manner of a fillet, leaving the Ears loose	As dotted 1 to 1.		
From the Forehead over to the poll, as deep each way as required	As dotted 2 to 2.		
From one Temple to the other, across the rise or Crown of the Head to where the Hair grows	As marked 3 to 3.		

THE CHARGE FOR THIS UNIQUE HEAD OF HAIR,

ONLY £1 10s.

Figure 14 Mourning, wig and pipe adverts, *Our Mutual Friend*, 1864

Source: British Library.

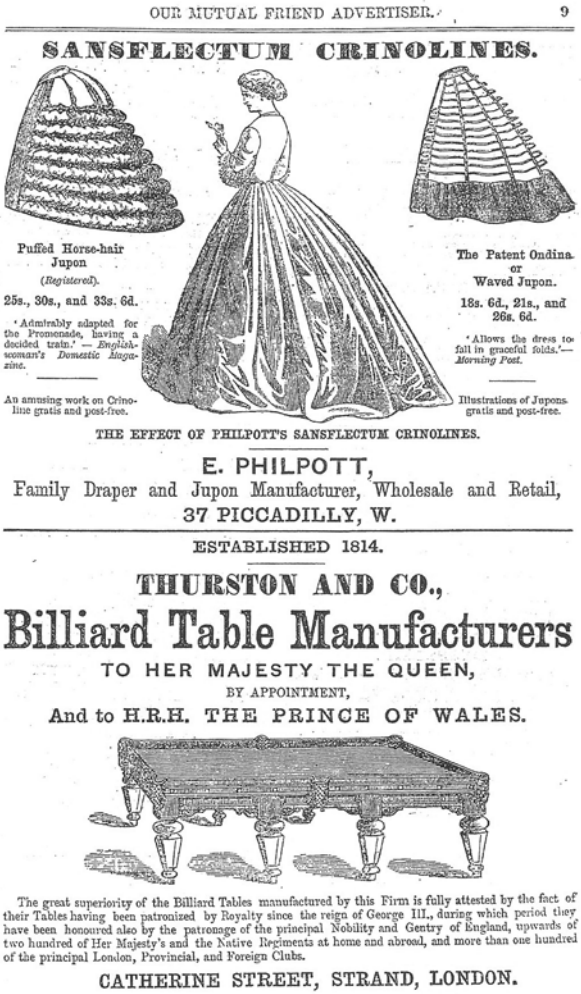


Figure 15 Crinoline and billiard table adverts, *Our Mutual Friend*, 1864
Source: British Library.

some sense a blind creation of a new object formed from the juxtapositions of the advertising page and the chapters of a novel; it implies a ritual, a habit of consumption and production in which meaning is created from random assemblage just as in the sentence: 'Le cadavre – exquis – boira – le vin – nouveau.' We see that what is 'unintelligible!' is not necessarily meaningless and that the reader weaves a different and deferred tale alongside

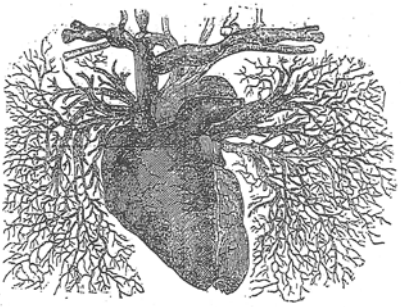
NOW FIRST OFFERED TO THE PUBLIC.

DR. WILLIAMS'S PHTHISAN,

FOR THE CURE OF

CONSUMPTION, DISEASE of the HEART, and SCROFULA.

The annexed diagram exhibits at a glance the intimate connection between the Lungs and Heart. The cavity of the chest (or thorax,) is entirely filled by these Vital Organs, the Heart lying in the centre, the Lungs on either side. The Pulmonary Vessels are seen issuing from the HEART, and dividing into innumerable branches, forming the Blood Vessels of the Lungs. These Blood Vessels, of exquisite minuteness, myriads in number, expand and



ramify upon the Air Vessels, and by means of the air taken into the Lungs by Respiration, the sanguineous current in the Blood Vessels is every moment purified. Hence the sympathy between these Vital Organs during health, and the importance of directing remedial agents to correct the disorders of BOTH during disease. (See the Treatise on Consumption and Heart Disease, presented with each bottle of the Phthisan.)

Dr. WILLIAMS'S PHTHISAN has now been administered for upwards of three years with unexampled success, not only in private practice, but at the principal Institutions for diseases of the chest in London and on the Continent. The name of the Medicine the "PHTHISAN," is derived from its peculiar virtues in the treatment of Phthisis. Its action is to destroy the Scrofulous taint in the system, thus rendering Phthisis (or Consumptive disease of the Lungs), Disease of the Heart, Scrofulous Diseases of the Glands and Joints, &c., easily curable.

It is a vulgar error to suppose that because the Lungs are always *in motion*, wounds and ulcerations of their substance can never be healed. Very many cases are on record, in which the *whole substance* of the Lung has been lacerated by gun-shot wounds; ribs have been fractured and driven into the same Vital Organs, *breaking numberless blood-vessels*, and yet perfect recovery has ensued.

CONSUMPTION exists in the constitution, in the system, *in the blood* of the patient; it may be hereditary, or it may be excited in any system by long continued constitutional derangements. The ulcerated Lungs are the CONSEQUENCE of the Scrofulous taint in the system. And if the Scrofulous or Consumptive taint be driven out of the blood, the Lungs *will heal*, just as any other injured organs would in favourable circumstances recover.

Dr. WILLIAMS'S PHTHISAN depends for its efficacy upon the invigorating qualities which it imparts to the whole animal system. IT DESTROYS SCROFULA. It establishes a condition of vital energy antagonistic to the Scrofulous habit; hence whether there be Scrofulous disease in the Lungs, in the shape of tubercles; in the joints, or glands of the body, the action of the PHTHISAN is equally beneficial.

It is an infallible PREVENTIVE of Consumption, if used when suspicious symptoms, as debility, cough, palpitation of the heart, or shortness of breath make their appearance. It has effected thousands of cures even when the disease has been decidedly established. The patient to whom it is administered, rapidly gains flesh—loses the cough and distressing night sweats, regains appetite and strength, and even in the last stages the symptoms are invariably relieved, the progress of the disease arrested, and life prolonged for an indefinite period.

DISEASES OF THE HEART set in very insidiously, and all undue palpitations, irregularity of action, and pains in the left side, are threatenings of approaching internal disease. Affections of the Heart and Lungs necessarily accompany each other. An increased action of the heart and a quickened pulse are distinguishing symptoms of each. Dr. WILLIAMS'S PHTHISAN moderates the action of the heart, and removes palpitation entirely. Organic disease of the heart is arrested. If administered to young persons at the critical period of life, when symptoms of Consumption are developed, it will infallibly restore to perfect health.

All children of Consumptive families should have recourse to the medicine. All consumptive Mothers who would spare their children a fatal inheritance, should take it.

In ½ pint bottles, 2s. 9d., and pint bottles 4s. 6d., each with full directions for general treatment.

OBSERVE the Signature THOS. GRAHAM on the Government Stamp; to imitate which is Felony.

Sold Wholesale by Thos. rout, 229, Strand, London. Retail by Johnston, 68, Cornhill; French, 307, High Holborn; Sanger, 150, Oxford-street; Hargrave, *York*; Smeeton, *Leeds*; Wagstaff, *Liverpool*; Reinhart, *Hull*; Holdsworth, *New Street, Birmingham*; Tomlinson & Battle, *Lincoln*; Allen & Co., *Boston*; Millns & Hare, *Spalding*; Jacksons, *Louth*; Ridge, *Newark*; Thompson & Son, *Leicester*; Whitwell, *Peterborough*; Thew & Son, *Lynn*; Brook & Son, *Doncaster*; Provost, *Huntingdon*; and all respectable Druggists and Medicine Vendors.

Figure 16 Heart medication advertisement, *Our Mutual Friend*, 1864

Source: British Library.

the logic of traditional narrative. The architecture of the monthly number encourages suspension of the presuppositions and prejudices which normally guide attention, allowing data to blend and flow together. Thus do seemingly insignificant paratextual items reveal the monthly number's unofficial or unintended messages.

Anti-Bleak House: The advertisement uses the novel

We need to determine how much of the placement of advertisements was fortuitous and how much the juxtaposition of advert with novel was planned and prepared. To what extent was Dickens active in making the monthly number and what ideology if any might underlie such a structure? The monthly number begins to appear to us as an activity or a ritual rather than a mere text; it is what Zizek calls 'the external ritual which materialises ideology' and whose effects are far-reaching.[49]

There are certain advertisements which from their subject matter and position beg the question of their function in relation to the chapters of the novel as well as of the role Dickens, author-architect of the whole structure of the monthly number, played in their placement. We must also ask what this might mean in terms of his relationship to what Adorno has called the culture industry. We will concentrate on a series of adverts for the merchant tailors Moses and Son in the *Bleak House* monthly numbers of 1852–53. They were closely linked to the text of the novel of *Bleak House*, and indeed use the Dickens text as an inspiration. They were always on the back inside cover and consisted of a paragraph of writing on a subject from the novel or sometimes simply a piece in the style of the novel. This was followed by a list of stock and prices. There were no images. Their titles often speak of their affinity with the motifs and events of the novel and always to the passing seasons according to the months in which each number appeared. Here are the titles as they appeared month by month:

Moses advertisements in the *Bleak House* Numbers

1. 'Anti-Bleak House'	March 1852	11. 'The Story of the Season'	January 1853
2. 'April Showers'	April	12. 'A Few Claims'	February
3. 'May Flowers'	May	13. 'March Gales'	March
4. 'A Suit in Chancery'	June	14. 'Prologue to many Changes'	April
5. 'New Empire'	July	15. 'Spring and Summer Dress'	May
6. 'A Bold Stroke'	August	16. 'Description'	June
7. 'What a Stir'	September	17. 'Table-Moving'	July
8. 'A Change'	October	18. 'A Sporting Party'	August
9. 'Legal Expectations'	November	19. and 20. 'The Closing of the Story'	September
10. 'Christmas'	December		

Moses and Son read *Bleak House*

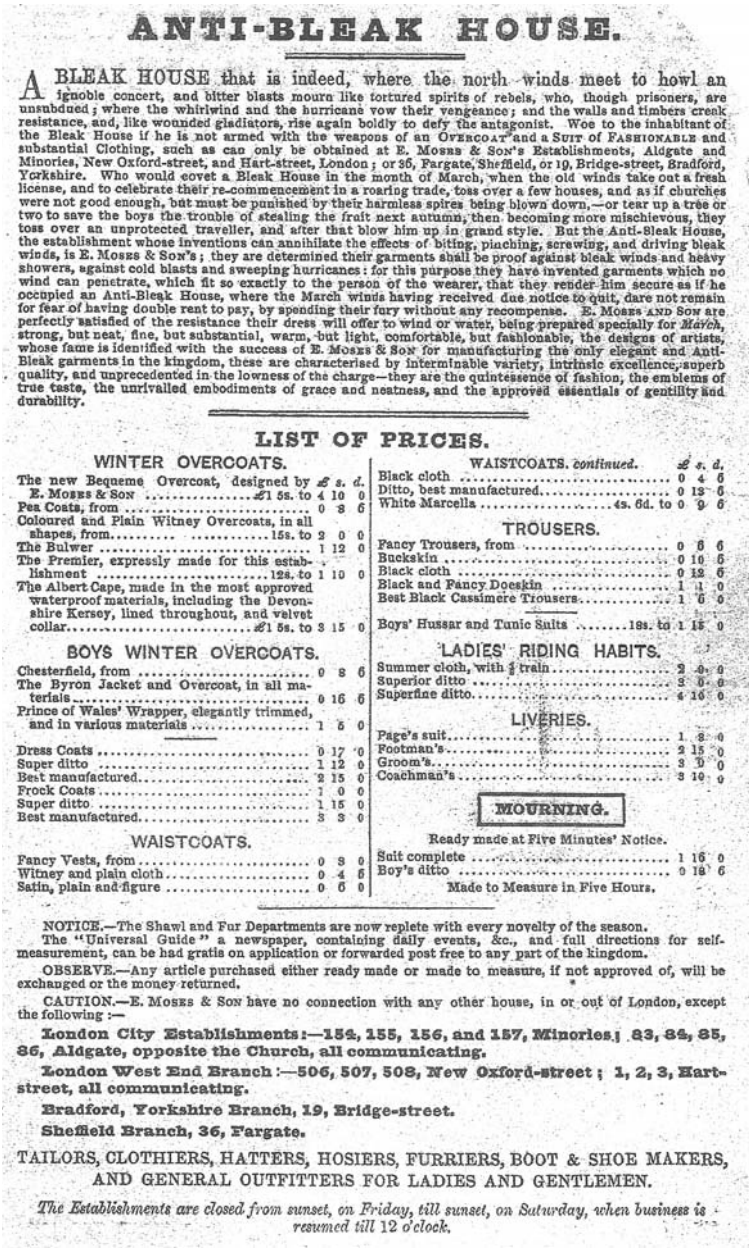
Although other advertisers used Dickens's novels to sell their products, such as Bett's French Brandy, who address themselves 'to the readers of Martin Chuzzlewit', or Dakins Tea, whose advert echoes the cover of *Bleak House*, Moses and Son started a much more sustained relationship with their 'host' novel. There is a serial aspect to these advertisements, since their copy is inspired by the months of the year. This linear linking is reinforced in numbers 2 and 3 by the rhyming of 'showers' and 'flowers' which encourages anticipation of the 'flowers' of May after the 'showers' of April. The titles sound like the chapter titles of the novel itself and thus add to the idea of a serialized advertisement: 'A Suit in Chancery and a Suit out of Chancery' echoes the title of the first chapter 'In Chancery', while 'A Change' imitates titles such as that of chapter 3, 'A Progress', or chapter 61, 'A Discovery'. 'A Few Claims' has affinities with chapter 24, 'An Appeal Case', and the final 'The Closing of the Story' is a direct borrowing from chapter 67 'The Close of Esther's Narrative'. The adverts which most closely mirror the language and concerns of the novel itself are 'Anti-Bleak House', 'A Suit in Chancery', 'Legal Expectations', 'A Few Claims' and 'The Closing of the Story'. The others often take emigration as their theme and the need to stock up on new attire for a new world. The advert entitled 'Description' has a literary turn lamenting the passing of the distinction between highbrow and lowbrow in literary style but praising the fact that in the world of clothes the distinction still exists. This comes as an interesting comment on the monthly number itself and its espousing of popular culture; both the novel and the adverts use high and low literary styles, neither being afraid of the hybrid. The other paragraphs mostly focus on word play, such as the idea of 'table-moving' in July in which the image of lovers holding hands under the table is set against table-turning and the tables of prices which are turned upside down.

This sort of *badinage* is typical of the Moses style, which was as garish as its shops. George Augustus Sala describes the ornate, lavish and openly vulgar and eye-catching Whitechapel establishment of Moses and Son as a spectacle in itself: 'Countless stories of immeasurable show-rooms, laden to repletion with rich garments. Gas everywhere. Seven hundred burners ... Corinthian columns, enriched cornices, sculptured panels, arabesque ceilings ...'[50] Bernard Darwin notices similar ostentation in his appraisal of the adverts and he declares that Moses needs a chapter all for himself. In the 'Dombey and Son Advertiser' Moses has pride of place on the back cover where, according to Darwin, eyes would first turn after a perusal of the front. Here we find poems such as 'Moses to A. Bull' or 'A Gentleman'. However, as Darwin points out, when we discover Moses again in *Bleak House*, he is no longer on the prized back cover but 'usurped by Mr. Heal and his lordly beds, and poor Moses has to put up with a beggarly inside'. Instead of writing poetry the copywriter has become 'a mere prose labourer'.[51] In the '*Martin Chuzzlewit* Advertiser', Moses uses the title 'The Eighth Wonder of

the World'; the seven wonders are enumerated and then candidates for the eighth are suggested (among them the Great Wall of China, the Railways and the Thames Tunnel). It is the Moses Aldgate establishment which wins, of course, being compared to the Minories with its gilded columns and marbled pillars.[52] There is much punning of poor quality in the adverts but the texts sometimes rise to literary allusion: in one Moses advert a Mr White gives up the old-fashioned habit of powdering his hair for fear that it would spoil his Moses suit: 'He thought and thought till on that very day / His powder pride and prejudice gave way.' The allusion to Jane Austen might have flattered the reader. All levels of literature and allusion were grist for their mill, their main concern being the attraction of readers to their texts. 'Anti-Bleak House' does not fail to do this by choosing a title which immediately creates a link with its 'host' novel and proposes an antidote to the ills described in the first pages of *Bleak House*:

> No. 1 ANTI-BLEAK HOUSE
>
> A BLEAK HOUSE that is indeed, where the north winds meet to howl an ignoble concert, and bitter blasts mourn like tortured spirits of rebels, who, though prisoners, are unsubdued; where the whirlwind and the hurricane vow their vengeance; and the walls and timbers creak resistance, and, like wounded gladiators, rise again boldly to defy the antagonist. Woe to the inhabitant of the Bleak House if he is not armed with the weapons of an OVERCOAT and a SUIT of FASHIONABLE and substantial Clothing such as only can be obtained at E. MOSES and SON's Establishments ... Who would covet a Bleak House in the month of March, when the old winds take out a fresh license, and to celebrate their re-commencement in a roaring trade. ... But the Anti-Bleak House, the establishment whose inventions can annihilate the effects of biting, pinching, screwing, and driving bleak winds, is E. MOSES & SON'S; ... garments which no winds can penetrate, which fit so exactly the person of the wearer, that they render him secure as if he occupied an Anti-Bleak House, where March winds having received due notice to quit, dare not remain for fear of having double rent to pay, by spending their fury without any recompense. ... being prepared specially for *March*, strong, but neat, fine, but substantial. ... unprecedented by the lowness of the charge ... the approved essentials of gentility and durability.[53] [Fig. 17]

The fact that the advert refers explicitly to the content of the novel implies that the copy writer had access to the chapters as they were being written or that Dickens provided notes which gave an idea of how the chapters would proceed. Note the way in which the writer takes up the very powerful Gothic influence in *Bleak House* and uses it to provide images of a hostile environment which need an antidote. The bitter blasts of weather



ANTI-BLEAK HOUSE.

A BLEAK HOUSE that is indeed, where the north winds meet to howl an ignoble concert, and bitter blasts mourn like tortured spirits of rebels, who, though prisoners, are unsubdued; where the whirlwind and the hurricane vow their vengeance; and the walls and timbers creak resistance, and, like wounded gladiators, rise again boldly to defy the antagonist. Woe to the inhabitant of the Bleak House if he is not armed with the weapons of an OVERCOAT and a SUIT of FASHIONABLE and substantial Clothing, such as can only be obtained at E. MOSES & SON'S Establishments, Aldgate and Minories, New Oxford-street, and Hart-street, London; or 36, Fargate, Sheffield, or 19, Bridge-street, Bradford, Yorkshire. Who would covet a Bleak House in the month of March, when the old winds take out a fresh license, and to celebrate their re-commencement in a roaring trade, toss over a few houses, and as if churches were not good enough, but must be punished by their harmless spires being blown down,—or tear up a tree or two to save the boys the trouble of stealing the fruit next autumn, then becoming more mischievous, they toss over an unprotected traveller, and after that blow him up in grand style. But the Anti-Bleak House, the establishment whose inventions can annihilate the effects of biting, pinching, screwing, and driving bleak winds, is E. MOSES & SON'S; they are determined their garments shall be proof against bleak winds and heavy showers, against cold blasts and sweeping hurricanes: for this purpose they have invented garments which no wind can penetrate, which fit so exactly to the person of the wearer, that they render him secure as if he occupied an Anti-Bleak House, where the March winds having received due notice to quit, dare not remain for fear of having double rent to pay, by spending their fury without any recompense. E. MOSES AND SON are perfectly satisfied of the resistance their dress will offer to wind or water, being prepared specially for *March*, strong, but neat, fine, but substantial, warm, but light, comfortable, but fashionable, the designs of artists, whose fame is identified with the success of E. MOSES & SON for manufacturing the only elegant and Anti-Bleak garments in the kingdom, these are characterised by interminable variety, intrinsic excellence, superb quality, and unprecedented in the lowness of the charge—they are the quintessence of fashion, the emblems of true taste, the unrivalled embodiments of grace and neatness, and the approved essentials of gentility and durability.

LIST OF PRICES.

WINTER OVERCOATS.

	£ s. d.
The new Bequeme Overcoat, designed by E. MOSES & SON	£1 5s. to 4 10 0
Pea Coats, from	0 8 6
Coloured and Plain Witney Overcoats, in all shapes, from	15s. to 2 0 0
The Bulwer	1 12 0
The Premier, expressly made for this establishment	12s. to 1 10 0
The Albert Cape, made in the most approved waterproof materials, including the Devonshire Kersey, lined throughout, and velvet collar	£1 5s. to 3 15 0

BOYS WINTER OVERCOATS.

Chesterfield, from	0 8 6
The Byron Jacket and Overcoat, in all materials	0 16 6
Prince of Wales' Wrapper, elegantly trimmed, and in various materials	1 5 0
Dress Coats	0 17 0
Super ditto	1 12 0
Best manufactured	2 15 0
Frock Coats	1 0 0
Super ditto	1 15 0
Best manufactured	3 3 0

WAISTCOATS.

Fancy Vests, from	0 3 0
Witney and plain cloth	0 4 6
Satin, plain and figure	0 6 0

WAISTCOATS. *continued.*

	£ s. d.
Black cloth	0 4 6
Ditto, best manufactured	0 13 6
White Marcella	4s. 6d. to 0 9 6

TROUSERS.

Fancy Trousers, from	0 6 6
Buckskin	0 10 6
Black cloth	0 12 6
Black and Fancy Doeskin	1 1 0
Best Black Cassimere Trousers	1 6 0
Boys' Hussar and Tunic Suits	18s. to 1 15 0

LADIES' RIDING HABITS.

Summer cloth, with ¾ train	2 0 0
Superior ditto	3 0 0
Superfine ditto	4 10 0

LIVERIES.

Page's suit	1 8 0
Footman's	2 15 0
Groom's	3 0 0
Coachman's	3 10 0

MOURNING.

Ready made at Five Minutes' Notice.

Suit complete	1 16 0
Boy's ditto	0 18 6

Made to Measure in Five Hours.

NOTICE.—The Shawl and Fur Departments are now replete with every novelty of the season.

The "Universal Guide" a newspaper, containing daily events, &c., and full directions for self-measurement, can be had gratis on application or forwarded post free to any part of the kingdom.

OBSERVE.—Any article purchased either ready made or made to measure, if not approved of, will be exchanged or the money returned.

CAUTION.—E. MOSES & SON have no connection with any other house, in or out of London, except the following:—

London City Establishments:—154, 155, 156, and 157, Minories; 83, 84, 85, 86, Aldgate, opposite the Church, all communicating.

London West End Branch:—506, 507, 508, New Oxford-street; 1, 2, 3, Hart-street, all communicating.

Bradford, Yorkshire Branch, 19, Bridge-street.

Sheffield Branch, 36, Fargate.

TAILORS, CLOTHIERS, HATTERS, HOSIERS, FURRIERS, BOOT & SHOE MAKERS, AND GENERAL OUTFITTERS FOR LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

The Establishments are closed from sunset, on Friday, till sunset, on Saturday, when business is resumed till 12 o'clock.

Figure 17 'Anti-Bleak House', *Bleak House*, 1852

Source: British Library.

and a deathly struggle against the elements as well as the evocation of a contrasting world of security and steadiness are all reflections of concerns found in the four chapters which accompany the first monthly number. Chapters 1 and 2, 'In Chancery' and 'In Fashion', evoke stagnant and threatening environments, the legal world of Chancery being a dead world of fog and mud from which its victims have no escape. The fashionable world is described as stifling and static, 'a world wrapped up in too much jewellers cotton and fine wool'.[54] These are the heavy clothes of the old world and are used by Moses and Son to form a contrast to their own light and cheering suits. In chapter 3, 'A Progress', Esther Summerson will lead us out of the tomb-like sites of the first two chapters towards the light of a new world of movement and change – one in which in later chapters Rouncewell and private capital will solve, in a partial way, the evils of these sick worlds. And lastly, chapter 4, 'Telescopic Philanthropy', underlines the need to look to the poor at home in London before seeking those of other nations. The advert pushes these considerations to their limit and asks the reader–customer to look very close to home indeed, that is to himself, since to exercise his philanthropic tendencies he must 'arm' himself with a coat if he is to survive the urban battlefield of 'Bleak House'. It is important to notice that in 'Anti-Bleak House' every aspect of the natural world is commodified, including the wind, which does (presumably, like Moses and Son's) 'a roaring trade'.

The ironic humour, the joke if you will, of this piece hinges on the way in which one lexical field gives way to another: a hero, a rebel, at one with the elements, knowing no limits to his action (unsubdued, vengeful, resisting, rising, defying), cedes the way to a chilly ordinary gent, perhaps a clerk, walking to work down a London street. The desire to be a warrior–gladiator is exchanged for a snug, well-tailored coat. The advert is 'anti' the bleakness of the system of England (the system called 'Bleak House'), it is 'anti' the Gothic excesses which the text of *Bleak House* contains but it also needs them in order to posit its own offer of salvation to those caught in the system. The word 'overcoat' signals a change in the writing, which until this point has been literary and romantic; the author starts to enjoin us to be 'secure', to seek 'gentility' and 'durability' and to return to a world ruled by the economic concerns of supply and demand, by the petty economies of a modest life. Even the wind is given 'notice to quit' and fears paying 'double rent'. To 'spend' without 'recompense' becomes a great fear rather than a great attraction and replaces the glorious and unchecked 'spending' of the elements in the first half of the text. The figure of the clerk or the city gent evoked in the text is a castrated creature indeed, since the price he must pay for the protection of the 'Anti-Bleak House' is to confine action to the bourgeois domestic scene; he must exchange thrust for thrift and leave defiance to figures in story books. Spending, with its sexual connotations, has been reduced to purchase.

This reflects some of the main structures of the novel of *Bleak House*, in which only 'gentility and durability' remain after struggles of sublime proportions. The gladiatorial struggles of those caught in the jaws of Chancery, or of those who are prisoners of the aristocratic system as they fight against what oppresses them, are silenced at the end of the novel, first by a marriage and secondly by a removal from the urban gothic castle of London.[55] Domestic durability obscures any revolutionary change. Desire is evoked and then silenced. The Gothic is used to evoke another world, the world of the other (such as the horrors of the slum Tom-all-Alone's, or the sacrificial passion of sublime proportions evoked by Lady Dedlock's secret), but then stops short of allowing an encounter with that alterity. The advert offers the reader a grotesque and knowing parody of the mechanisms of the novel but also of the mechanisms of advertising. It performs the work of the advert before our eyes, showing how the subject is attracted by the full heat-blast of images of power and action but offering, in the place of the pleasure and self-fulfilment that such a space might offer, an ersatz: a good coat is the best one can expect and the reader must accordingly give up dreams of heroism and power. In the novel, a good marriage and Jarndyce's private capital are the salve or stop-gap which in the end replaces action on a grander scale. In advertising the object must come in to 'plug' a need created by the advert, but to do this the advertisement (and indeed the novel) must first create desire beyond that which its 'goods' might satisfy.[56]

The next advert displays similar concerns:

No. 4 A SUIT IN CHANCERY AND A SUIT OUT OF CHANCERY

It is not necessary to talk of frightful monsters – nor of spirits, once very disturbing to good people's rest and quiet; a Chancery Suit is justly enough considered as one of the most frightful apparitions which can haunt any domicile. We can generally manage pretty well with natural affairs, and can show courage like Britons at broad daylight; but it is these shadows and this darkness which renders us so timid, because they are supernatural: this must be the case with heavy – *gloomy* – *dusty* – *mouldy* – *heartbreaking* – *brainkilling Chancery Suits*. Now the difference between a Suit in Chancery and a Suit out of Chancery is just this: in the former a man is every moment *tormented, worried, plagued, twisted, sharpened* and *threatened*, until his very visage becomes like a Chancery Suit – quite a supernatural affair. But a Suit out of Chancery, especially a Suit of Summer Dress from the Establishments of E. MOSES & SON is *light, brilliant, heartcheering,* and *brainreviving*; brushing up one's spirits with the most gratifying assurances of *comfort* and *pleasure*. But a suit in Chancery is a very different matter, with this precious portion if a gentleman has property he is in a fair way of losing it; if he has a good suit he may wear it out in expectation, and possibly may find it difficult to get

> another. On the other hand, a Suit out of Chancery, from E. MOSES & SON's, is the best portion of a Gentleman's estate, maintained at the least expense, exceeding the most sanguine expectations – the very essence of all novel and fascinating styles.

Here, Chancery has become a monster and an apparition and even 'supernatural'. It is a space in which Gothic gloom, dust and mould terrify and torment the suitor. The pun on 'suit' allows the creation of two contrasting worlds: one in which a legal suit torments and destroys the suitor and wears out the only suit he or she might possess, and another 'out of Chancery' (which means outside of the confines of the old Legal system and in the 'free' market), in which all markets are free to offer 'suits' of 'good' quality which are good for, that is, beneficial to, the wearer, being 'light' 'brilliant' and reviving – the opposite of the 'gloomy' and 'mouldy' legal *suits*. This contrast mirrors the alternation between the darkness of the omniscient narrator's pieces and the lightness of Esther's narrative, which, like the Moses suits, are 'heartcheering' and 'brain-reviving' (Esther is always 'cheerful' or endeavours to be, becoming a good housekeeper who jingles her keys). The two worlds also mirror the contrast in *Bleak House* between the lack of substance of the Chancery world which leaves no substantial goods behind and the world of Esther and Jarndyce in which objects, houses – wealth of all sorts – are tangible and stable. The chapters accompanying this number are chapters 11, 12 and 13 – 'Our Dear Brother', 'On the Watch' (both recounted by the omniscient narrator) and 'Esther's narrative'. Chapter 11, 'Our Dear Brother', describes the finding of the corpse of the law writer in the dingy room over Krook's overcrowded shop. The law writer signed himself 'Nemo', which means no-one and signifies in the novel the loss of the character's place in the symbolic order. He has pawned his clothes, lost his 'suit' and through it his identity. Among his effects are found 'some worthless articles of clothing', and various fragments of text: 'a bundle of pawnbroker's duplicates, those turnpike tickets on the road to poverty', some scrawled memoranda and 'a few dirty scraps of newspaper' (94). These truncated and disparate writings are the signs of what the advertisement calls the loss of property and the wearing out of one's 'suit' in the sense of the wearing out of one's life – if one imagines that one's life is a form of legal 'suit' in which one presents disparate texts in the hope of making a complete narrative, making sense of it and getting 'a judgement' and thus a position. Nemo's narrative remains scattered, his messages unfinished: in this light the face of the dead law writer seen in the glow of Krook's candle is indeed beyond the pale, a 'supernatural affair'.

Chapter 12, 'On the Watch', also mentions clothes but this time concerning fashionable society:

> These are the ladies and gentlemen of fashion, not so new, but very elegant, who have agreed to put a smooth glaze on the world, and to keep

> down its realities. For whom everything must be languid and pretty. Who have found out the perpetual stoppage. Who are to rejoice at nothing, and be sorry for nothing. Who are not to be disturbed by ideas. On whom even the Fine Arts, attending in powder and walking backward like the Lord Chamberlain, must array themselves in the milliners' and tailors' patterns of past generations, and be particularly careful not to be in earnest, or to receive any impress from the moving age. (211)

This reference to the clothes of the past with their connotations of regression, antiquated custom (walking backward) and to the refusal to move onwards and accept change are echoed in the words 'heavy', 'dusty' and 'mouldy' in the advertisement. We also see in the word 'brainkilling' a reference to the refusal to be disturbed by ideas, the mental petrification which is described in the chapter. The advertisement holds up for admiration the modern, light clothes of Moses and Son which offer revival for the mind as an alternative to the quagmire of dull tradition described in chapter 12. The opening up of the closed space described here is performed by means of the commodity: the suit of clothes as opposed to that of the state, the law and the establishment. After the dark, slow prose of chapter 12, chapter 13 'Esther's Narrative' brings light and movement to the bleakness of the two preceding chapters; she attempts to ease the path for Richard's and Ada's engagement, she moves the narrative forward in a first-person narrative which seeks to elucidate rather than obfuscate.

These three chapters are sandwiched between the Moses advert just quoted (at the back of the number) and another advert for an overcoat at the front. The 'Edmiston's Pocket Syphonia' advert which is on the front inside cover of the first six numbers of *Bleak House* has a vocabulary reminiscent of that used both in the novel and in the advertisement by Moses. This Syphonia or 'waterproof overcoat' is described as being able to resist 'the powerful heat of the sun and the most violent rains, also obviating the stickiness and unpleasant smell peculiar to all other waterproofs'. It can deal with 'very changeable weather' and is quite different from the 'cumbersome greatcoat or the troublesome umbrella'. The illustration offers a vision of the perfect prosthesis which frees man from all that is heavy and unwieldy, from what is troublesome, sticking and sliding like the mud and mire: there are two illustrations, side by side, one showing a man struggling with an umbrella, the other showing a man standing serenely and unhampered with 'No Umbrella Required' written above his head in the shape of a protective arc. Thus is the customer freed from the heavy and cumbersome effects of his environment – the very environment described in the pages of *Bleak House*.

Irony and meaning

If we look at the first paragraphs of the novel and compare them with the Moses texts, certain similarities of style and of strategy become apparent

such as the ironic twists of meaning:

> LONDON. Michaelmas term lately over, and the Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn Hall. Implacable November weather. As much mud in the streets, as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and would it not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long, or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill. Smoke lowering down from chimney-pots, making a soft, black drizzle with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snowflakes – gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun. Dogs indistinguishable in the mire. Horses scarcely better; splashed to their very blinkers. Foot passengers jostling one another's umbrellas, in a general infection of ill temper, and losing their foot-hold at street-corners, where tens of thousands of other foot passengers have been slipping and sliding since the day broke (if this day ever broke), adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud, sticking at those points tenaciously to the pavement, and accumulating at compound interest.
>
> Fog everywhere. Fog up the river ... fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping, and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex Marshes, fog on the Kentish heights ...; fog in the stem and bowl of the wrathful skipper, down in his close cabin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of his shivering little 'prentice boy on deck'. (49)

The reader finds himself *in* London in a circular and insular world from which there is little chance of escape. The full stop after the word 'London' keeps us securely within its confines and the fog allows no view of the countryside or of France across the channel. Mud covers dogs, horses and people alike who are associated with an 'infection' and with poor visibility 'adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud, sticking at those points tenaciously to the pavement, and accumulating at compound interest' (49). Thus mud can multiply like money in the form of geological deposits, just as the wind in the Moses advert does a 'roaring trade' like a business. As in the caricatures of Grandville in France, the natural world is borrowed to express the movements and transformations of commerce and technology. The Moses adverts, like the Dickens text, load words with several meanings: the foot passengers like the reader slip and slide and can gain no purchase on their environment, which proliferates as fast as the mud and fog. The vertiginous slippage from one meaning to another translates the speed and ubiquity of modern capital as it seeps into every area of human existence.

The burlesque tone which we have already seen in the Moses adverts is also present here. Biblical rhythm and syntax link the first paragraph of *Bleak House* to both Genesis and the book of Revelations, suggesting both

an end and a beginning. 'London' with its capital letters and full stop is an impossible sentence but strikes a note like a bell toll. It is *the* place, the only place, both heaven and earth. Yet this is not 'In the beginning...' for the autumn term is 'over', it is winter and something has come to an end; flakes of soot are like snowflakes 'gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun'. Thus a sartorial element (mourning clothes) overlays the description of the weather, while 'infection of ill temper' suggests the disease and plague of the apocalypse. The accumulation of people, things and laws which is part of the cataloguing of the world carried out in the King James Bible is evoked by the use of 'and' in 'and, would it not be wonderful...' (49). This reminds us of the ubiquitous Biblical 'and' which starts every verse of Genesis except the last and is the most frequent beginning of all verses in the Old and New Testaments. The Lord Chancellor is in his place at the centre of things and the present continuous of 'sitting' tells us that this is how it was, is, and forever shall be. Amen. This is a state of affairs which is so perennial that it needs no qualifying tense, as indeed is true of the next statement which is a metaphor: 'Implacable November weather.' The weather, like the Lord Chancellor is implacable, and, like the Old Testament God, refuses to be placated or pacified, remaining unappeasable, intractable.

Bad weather is associated with the muddy streets of London but is then renewed as a metaphor by the addition of the first mud of Genesis when God asked for the dry land to appear. A joke is then made at the expense of the Oxford movement or Tractarianism by introducing the dinosaur and theories of evolution in the form of the Megalosaurus, which clashes with traditional exegesis. Ruskin's complaint that at the end of every Bible verse he heard the clink of the geologist's hammer is dramatized here. The joke continues since those hubristic geologists who would glorify the 'Giants' of the earth are ridiculed through the prosaic clumsiness of the 'waddling' and 'elephantine lizard' startled to find itself on Holborn Hill. The bad weather and mud do not constitute a primal slime in which new organisms will be born, but veer towards oppression, depression and death. The smoke 'lowering down' cancels the 'up' movement of the dinosaur and simultaneously means 'overcast and menacing weather' and 'to scowl'. The 'soft black drizzle' is, once again, the mourning attire of snowflakes. 'Let there be light' can only lurk behind 'the death of the sun'. This writing brings together Genesis and Revelations, popular literature and the Bible; literary texts come together with more profane fare causing a Babel-like confusion of languages and therefore a porosity or dialogue between texts. The sacred divide is no longer a divide but a permeable membrane through which words pass and re-pass. Thus the oscillations between bleakness and beatitude practised in the advertisements of *Bleak House* are discovered not only in the changes from one chapter to another but within Dickens's ironic prose itself.

The real thing

We must not lose sight of the fact that the irony used in the advertisements is there for a very practical reason: to sell goods. The ironic inference we see in the adverts is geared towards the demonstration that only the house of Moses can offer 'real' goods, things with substance which give a 'return'. The following advertisement, while still playing on the punning of words (as does the advertisement 'A Few Claims' which appears in the previous number), adds to this sense of the evanescence of the world of Chancery:

> LEGAL EXPECTATIONS
>
> IN some cases these are perplexing as any emotions a person can endure, fraught with a thousand casualties, and subject to numberless caprices, which seem to make everybody the sport of chance, very frequently the whole struggles, expenses, journeys, &c. of a series of years, with loads of rusty documents and piles of papers neatly tied with red tape, are in one moment, for some unlucky word, swept into oblivion for a whole term, and hope deferred sickens the heart of client and advocate. Happily, no such circumstance can occur in the LEGAL EXPECTATIONS of the PUBLIC, as they refer to E. MOSES &SON'S settlement of every SUIT for the SEASON. In this respect everyone may *legally expect* the best, the most novel, and the most substantial DRESS for AUTUMN and WINTER, their New Styles being the essence of ART, TASTE, and FASHION; comprehending a vast array of New Materials, a magnificent exposition of the Manufacture of every Country in the World – but a triumphant display of skill in designs for DRESS, which alone can render these materials available for the season.
>
> WHEREAS, E. MOSES & SON have LEGALLY bought, prior to any advances in the markets, and for readymoney [*sic*], the largest, choicest, and most valuable stock of fabrics specially designed for this season, and comprising every kind of material, which, from its strength, elegance and beauty, is worth calling a Novelty; and have liberally remunerated the best Artistes and workmen for making these into the most fashionable kinds of AUTUMN and WINTER OVERCOATS, PALETÔTS, WRAPPERS, CAPES, &c. &c. Prodigious transactions rendering small profits remunerative, and amazing advantages in purchase on the most gigantic scale, warrant every patron of E. MOSES & SON's Establishment, and its Branches, LEGALLY to expect the most fashionable, the best, and the cheapest Dress ever presented. OUTFITS to all parts of the World cheaper, better, and more suitable than can be had elsewhere.[57]

The title 'Legal Expectations' makes the present-day reader of Dickens's novels think of *Great Expectations* and the way in which the expression is used by Pip in his confessional autobiography with hubris at first, then with

increasing irony and bitterness and finally with a wistful stoicism marking his acceptance of the emptiness of 'expectations'. In *Bleak House*, eight years before the publication of *Great Expectations*, we find a similar lassitude concerning the fruitless 'expecting' associated with the legal world. The Moses text also insists on empty expectation: if the latter speaks of 'loads of rusty documents and piles of papers', it is in response to similar images in the pages of *Bleak House*. The narrator sees 'heavy charges of paper' issuing forth from Chancery and being 'burnt away in a great funeral pyre' while Esther describes coming across Richard 'poring over a table covered with dusty bundles of paper which seemed to me like dusty mirrors reflecting his own mind' (750).[58] This sense of futility and circularity is also associated with the yellowing papers in Miss Flite's reticule; nothing good or 'real' can ever come of them – only more papers, illusions and empty expectations of a judgment 'on the day of Judgement'. In the advertisement, the chance of 'chancery' is seen to sweep all hope 'into oblivion'. Yet Moses counters this with an offer to 'settle every suit', to give satisfaction as the law never can by providing the client with a tangible suit of clothes. Moses offers us a detailed apology of capitalism and mass production in the form of a utopia of well-paid workers, satisfied customers and profit: Moses '*have* LEGALLY *bought, prior to any advances in the markets, and for readymoney*' a huge stock of cloth and have then '*liberally remunerated the best Artistes and workmen*'. From this they create their own proverb or theorem: '*Prodigious transactions rendering small profits remunerative* ...' means that if you bring prices down and sell enough coats, you can make a profit *and* pay your workers well. Moses wishes to share this utopia with his customers; the magical commodity can satisfy all frustrated suitors by giving them substance – substance linked to novelty and expansion. Newness and novelty run counter to the antiquated 'stoppage' and eternal return of Chancery which harks back to the dinosaur age with its 'struggles' found in the first page of *Bleak House* and to the battles for survival found in the first two Moses advertisements. If everything melts into air in the Chancery system, in the world of Moses, there is a counter-fantasy of *getting* something.

Change and movement are present in *Bleak House* in the pioneering work of science (symbolized by Doctor Woodcourt) and in the force of technology and capitalism (symbolized by the railway entrepreneur Rouncewell). The ills of society come not from exploitation at the hands of a Rouncewell or a even a Moses – Dickens does not show work of this type – but from the ill effects of social injustice going much further back. The sickness of England – its unhealthy closed form made of self-perpetuating systems such as the aristocracy and the legal system – needs the spark of change brought from abroad. The French maid, Hortense, provides the spark by killing Tulkinghorn, the latter being a repository of the secrets and therefore of the power of the aristocracy. The murder opens the path to a new era. Overseas markets producing foreign substances and goods such as those enumerated

in the commodities in the advert for Gilbert's Atlas, discussed in the previous chapter, and in many other advertisements besides, supplied Moses with many of his raw materials and allows him to sell to 'all parts of the World'. These influences, it is implied, are the gateways to satisfaction.

Emptying of political and moral content

The Moses adverts seem to question the existence of a serious social message in Dickens; they imitate and thereby strangely unfold a lack of political commitment in the Dickens novel. In the following advert entitled 'What a Stir', all political and social stir is telescoped down to the purchasing of clothes. Moses and Son proclaim themselves to be activists, not political but commercial. They are like Rouncewell, the entrepreneur in *Bleak House*, a force of change which no 'philanthropy' can equal. It is Rouncewell and his business which will change the course of society in *Bleak House* and not Mrs. Jellyby and her philanthropic endeavours. We might ask if Dickens was aware that his reformist writing might do less to change the world than his activity as a publishing and advertising entrepreneur which boosted the circulation of text and goods. Moses and Son hi-jack the discourse of philanthropy in their constant references to paying their workers well. They become revolutionary heroes who describe themselves as 'thorough opponents of wet and damp', which is an ironic wink at the reformist tendencies of Dickens's text. When perusing the text below one might easily imagine them describing themselves as 'the freedom fighters of GAIN and PROFIT'.

WHAT A STIR

WHAT A STIR, on the hustings when opposition Candidates are haranguing Electors, and hundreds are shouting 'Hear!' 'Hear!' because nobody can hear at all. *What a stir* at the door of a popular Newspaper Office when a bill has been posted relative to a Revolution at the Antipodes! News by electric telegraph in almost less than no time, and printed in far less time still; but *what a stir* when some important discovery is made which turns out to everybody's advantage, and thousands are pushing to the spot where Gold is abundant, and where industry is well remunerated. No matter how many are going to the land of wealth, E. MOSES & SON can supply everyone with the best OUTFIT and the CHEAPEST CLOTHING in the world; their extensive business, their unequalled exertions, and the massive capital they employ for buying in the best markets when the tide is most favourable for purchasing on their usual large scale, these and other advantages have given them the highest position in the world, and these facilities are distributed amongst their patrons in the superior quality of the goods they sell, and their exceedingly low charges. *What a stir* when Sportsmen are moving off to the scene of their sport,

> with a thorough preparation for every event for wet or dry, for rough or smooth, for sunshine or storm, but when can they be said to have made such preparation, except when they have purchased all the necessary DRESS at E. MOSES & SON's? A SHOOTING COAT, on a principle entirely new, giving free exercise to the arms when using the gun; a VEST and TROUSERS of stylish and waterproof material, displaying the skill of the first merchant-tailors in the world, in selecting materials the best and the most suitable, and securing strength and neatness of workmanship; a PAIR of the celebrated GROUSE BOOTS, made by E. MOSES and SON, thorough opponents of wet and damp, and the best CAP for sportsmen, selected from the HAT Department of E. MOSES and SON's GIGANTIC ESTABLISHMENT. (my emphasis)

Political, even revolutionary activity, is evoked here by means of the hustings and the news of far-off revolution, and is then used to lead into a discourse on sales via a reference to gold digging. The 'stir' in society is not that of social unrest but a stir in business. See how the advert leads from a seeming preoccupation with human activity of potentially cataclysmic force like that seen in 'Anti-Bleak House' only to peter out in a lame reference to sportsmen moving off to the 'scene of their sport'. The areas of energy in the text (elections, revolution, gold digging) are in fact props which allow Moses to upstage them. Moses and Son are the real actors in the paragraph and usurp the forces of all the others: they have the highest position, the greatest energy ('unequalled exertions') and the broadest influence ('extensive business' and 'massive capital'). The forces of nature are used to evoke commercial strength harnessed to the 'tide'. There is a sense of 'sending up' the excesses of Dickens's rhetoric concerning social ills, the implication being that it is the business *around* the Dickens text rather than the social message of the text itself which creates a 'stir'. This sits strangely with Dickens's acceptation of these adverts. The adverts function as a check on the darker aspects of Dickens's writing: it implies that there is no upheaval that a good coat won't put right. This is very similar to present-day advertising which kidnaps and reuses political or civic language to commercial ends.[59] Moses uses Dickens's text playfully, and that play brings out certain tensions in the novel, its hidden paradoxes. The chapters of the novel are thus framed with matter which appears to contrast violently with the damp, dark world of injustice, but is in fact its implied other side. We might say that the adverts constitute a counter-interpellation in which the copywriter responds to the Dickens chapters by recontextualizing them through punning and sending them back to Dickens as a playful comment on his novels. In the last Moses advert accompanying the last two numbers of the novel, the copywriter felt daring enough – no doubt as a result of so much proximity to the great writer's text – to allow himself the pleasure of making his implications explicit. Dickens, like Moses, is, he implies, first and

foremost a salesman:

> THE CLOSING OF THE STORY
>
> WHEN an Author has nearly spun out the thread of his narrative, his descriptions have connected him and the public so long that they have arrived at a *pretty good understanding*, and possibly the Author thinks it is time to look out for some fresh subject to keep up the communication.
>
> The *good understanding* between E. MOSES & SON and the world's public, is the best basis on which Business communications can be established. The interest excited by their NOVEL Styles of ATTIRE cannot be excelled, and the comfort enjoyed in the *choicest* ARTICLES OF DRESS has originated and long continued an intimate Business acquaintance with them, their friends, and the public.
>
> Though SEPTEMBER may be considered neither SUMMER nor WINTER, there is no paucity of seasonable inventions and novel introductions in articles of ATTIRE, manufactured by E. MOSES & SON. '*Remaining Stock*' is a phrase they never need employ. Various as the months in the year and the days in the week are the elegancies and utility of their productions. A vast amount of BUSINESS prevents the possibility of '*unsold stock*,' and immense transactions render small profits remunerative.
>
> DURING the month of SEPTEMBER everyone should inspect an assemblage of new Designs and new Articles of ATTIRE, HATS, CAPS, HOSIERY, BOOTS and SHOES, &c. &c ...

Here novel-writing and coat selling are placed on the same plane. The Author like the tailor spins a yarn or 'thread' (Dickens himself would speak later of the 'threads' of his narrative in his address to the readers of *Our Mutual Friend*). The links with their customers are 'intimate': the author has an 'understanding' with his reader–customer, mirroring the 'business communication' between tailor and client, and both must come up with 'novel' things to keep that transaction open. Novels and articles, narrative and yarn are intertwined in this writing, in which Dickens's novels are no different from coats, since both are quality items for sale. At the same time, the tailor brings his productions up to the level of acclaimed novels. The tailor must be just as 'inventive' as the author. The emptying out of political force is paramount here – and constitutes the last (playful) nail in the coffin of the reformer–writer: the author is a liquidator of stock rather than the gladiator–warrior of social justice.

The uses of punning which these advertisements depend upon for their effect have consequences beyond mere entertainment. However lighthearted and humorous they are (the joke Freud tells us is the site of serious communication), a powerful effect is produced. In his work on language and

interpellation Lecercle turns to Althusser's *Pour Marx* and *Lire le capital* to find confirmation of the linguistic nature of ideology, or rather its linguistic workings and the fact that ideology works through extensive punning:

> The plight of post-Babel language is not that it offers too many words for too few ideas, but that it develops too many senses for too few words. Hence the ideological practice of playing with words: exploitation is clothed in consent by a punning use of the word 'freedom' – the worker is free to be exploited.[60]

And of course we think here of Orwell's essay 'Politics and the English Language' in which war is waged in the name of peace, or more recently of a spate of books and documentaries which show how war and commerce are waged in the language of human rights. The punning on 'expectations' 'suits', 'claims' we have seen in the Moses texts all lead the reader, as befits good advertising, back to the commodity as a salve and a salvation. We could say that the puns make explicit what is buried in the Dickens text, that is, a reluctance to take action against the dysfunctional system of England, and only provide a screen for it through capital and the commodity, a commodity which rights all wrongs, expunges all ills for the individual rather than the collective. The monthly numbers of *Bleak House* are also, suggests the Moses advert, a good 'return', a substantial thing in the face of the evanescent text of the law suit. Dickens's creation was a living three-dimensional object with gifts inside. It was not only a piece of writing, but an object and a practice and was projected as such to the readers. Thus *Bleak House* as a publishing venture is in fact an 'Anti-Bleak-House'. Like a good suit of clothes, it is an answer, in the form of a commodity, to the bleakness of the condition of England.

Dickens as advertiser

Evidence of Dickens's role in the construction of his monthly numbers can be found in his letters and in Robert L. Patten's archive of the correspondence and accounts exchanged between Dickens and his publishers Chapman and Hall and Bradbury and Evans. The first novel to be published in monthly numbers was *The Pickwick Papers* with Chapman and Hall, for which Dickens wrote his own advertisements 'as detailed, explicit and enticing as Dickens could make them'.[61] By the third number general advertisements were added and this constituted a revolution in publishing in which Dickens was partner in copyright. Not all his novels were published thereafter in this monthly-number format (*Oliver Twist* appeared in the magazine *Bentley's Miscellany*, *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge* in *Master Humphrey's Clock*), but from there on his other major novels favoured the monthly format.[62] There is an experimental feel to much of the negotiation that passed between Dickens and his publisher and to their decisions

concerning the inclusion of adverts which shows how new and uncharted these publishing territories were. Dickens and his publishers knew the value of serial publication but were constantly looking for new ways of enhancing appeal and increasing circulation.[63] This was a time when publishing had become what Patten describes as 'a dynamic, high-pressure, increasingly mechanized, quickly responsive commercial enterprise' which was trying to cater for the rapidly expanding reading and book-buying public.[64] During the publication of *Little Dorrit* in monthly parts, Bradbury and Evans only wrappered (put covers on) the number of monthly parts they thought they could sell. The rest were kept unwrappered in case the demand rose or they were saved to be made into a hardback volume. The 'Advertiser' was stitched in to all the copies of the first print-run, but if the demand was heavy a certain number of copies might be published without the advertisements in order to save time. These are examples of the innovations which sought to make the number a modulable and reactive structure.

What becomes evident in reading much of Dickens's correspondence is his involvement at every stage of the making of the number and his sense of how and when to advertise. There was a huge publicity campaign for *Dombey and Son*: 160,000 hand bills and 5,000 posting bills and two more printings of these which doubled the total. There were 300 cards which explained terms for advertising, and adverts were put into journals and magazines. As advance orders from advertisers began to come in Dickens wrote to his friend Thomas Mitton, telling him that the firm of E. Moses and Son, whose publicity was noted for its 'delightful' verses, 'has taken one page of the wrapper, all through'.[65] This helps us understand the relationship Dickens had to his advertisers. He was glad to welcome their patronage and even flattered by their attention. Similarly, having written a preface for the new 'Cheap Edition' of *Oliver Twist*, Dickens decided to use that preface as an advertisement to be placed in the following number of *David Copperfield* (N° 12, April 1850). Consulting Bradbury and Evans, he asked them where they thought the advert should go: 'Facing the last page? We ought to keep the place between the illustrations and the first page, for [advertising] *Household Words*.' Two days later he concluded that 'the Oliver Preface ought decidedly to be a Bill at the end'.[66] Looking at the number today in the British Library, we find the advert in exactly this place as a separate two-page insertion along with an eight-page Cassell's insert, and an advertisement for Kaye's Wordsell's and an announcement for the 'Exhibition of Industry of all Nations'.[67]

Dickens was a writer who was keenly aware of sales and who exulted in success: 'The Dombey sale is BRILLIANT!',[68] he wrote to Forster in 1846. He kept very detailed accounts of all numbers sold and was knowledgeable about where to advertise to get maximum publicity for his novels. He was also aware of the connection between the emotion produced by his texts, readings or speeches and the sales they generated. In a letter to Collins of

6 June 1856 describing a charity speech at the London Tavern he notes: 'all the company sat holding their napkins to their eyes with one hand, and putting the other into their pockets. A hundred or so contributed nine hundred pounds then and there.'[69] Extreme sadness, joy or fear creates, it is suggested, an urge to spend. Dickens was sometimes criticized for the way his novels exploited the death of children such as little Nell, and Robert Patten mentions the way in which sales reacted to the death of Paul in *Dombey and Son*: 'After Paul's death in Number V, the press run was increased 1,000 to 33,000; it dropped back to 32,000 five months later, but rose again to 33,000 following Edith's flight...'[70] Patten then adds in note 14 'Paul's death was planned months before the first number appeared, and though the event was subsequently transferred from the fourth to the fifth number, it was neither conceived nor executed with any eye towards sales.' This comment is an interesting one in that it attempts to disculpate Dickens from any manipulative intention and it also implies a clear boundary between the art of a writer and any sales that his writing may give rise to. Yet considering Dickens's involvement in the sale of his monthly numbers, it is a comment which strangely misses its mark: Dickens created the monthly numbers as a whole, not simply as a novel surrounded by adverts and a few illustrations, but as an amalgamation of those three elements, all of which fed into and helped create each other. We might conjecture that Dickens had no 'eye' *on* sales because he was totally *within* sales. His text was so utterly part of a venture which was based on what we might call a 'performative' utterance, one in which speech and writing constitute and must produce physical actions, that to separate his writing or speech (and for Dickens his writing became his speeches and his performances) from his sales becomes very difficult. Though no text of Dickens produced the rioting of Hugo's *Hernani*, his writings can nevertheless be seen as an incitation to various sorts of action such as the buying of novels, coats and other goods, the production of tears, donation to Charity, or campaigning for reforms in parliament. Changing the world or changing one's retail habits was already intimately linked to an ability to manipulate media. This performative writing spurred by faster technologies of printing, publishing and dissemination was reliant on a paratext which was far from a mere adjunct to the novels: the monthly number was a venture rather than a novel surrounded by advertising.

If sales went up according to the events in the story, this meant that adverts gained more circulation and made more profits. One can surmise that more coats or worm tablets were sold at the moment of Paul Dombey's death or Edith's flight than at a duller or more prosaic episode. Writing is done here with the idea of a reaction from a public who in buying the serial also *buy into* all the ideologies and the products with which it is sold. No wonder that Moses and Son started to mention Dickens's novels in their own advertisements, writing poems to tell the public to buy the novel. The serialization of the Victorian novel, as Michael Lund tells us (drawing on Hans Robert Jauss,

Wolgang Iser), left gaps in time which were filled in by the reader's conjectures or rehashings of past episodes. Here we see that acts of purchase and investment would also have been carried out during the intervals between episodes as a result of the experience of reading the Advertiser with the novel and of the affective links made, not merely between instalments, but between the chapters of the instalment and all manner of consumer choices and actions.

The 'Cheap Edition' of his novels, which targeted a lower social class than the monthly numbers, shows us in exaggerated form how Dickens imagined the involvement of his readers in mental and physical action. Beginning in April 1847 with *Pickwick* and ending in September 1852 with the *Christmas Books*, it consisted of a sixteen-page booklet, in a format double the size of the monthly number and with green wrappers. There were no advertisements. What is particularly striking is the fact that several novels shared each number and overlapped (*Pickwick* with *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Nickleby* with *The Old Curiosity Shop* and so on), and more surprisingly that the text of each novel stopped abruptly, sometimes in mid-sentence and even mid-word. It was then continued in the next number. As Patten says: 'these so-called "numbers" and "parts" bear no relation to the self-contained units in which his monthly novels first appeared'.[71] They came out in both weekly and monthly numbers to suit different pockets and cash-flows (weekly numbers cost 1½ d and monthly numbers 7 d as opposed to the one shilling of the official monthly numbers) and were collected by the readers. The lack of ceremony with which each chapter breaks off – *in medias res* – suggests that Dickens did not see his text as a sacred and homogeneous unit but a structure that could, like Baudelaire's textual serpent, withstand an unceremonious cutting up. That his readers should be suspended on a 'that' or a 'with' for a month or a week until discovering how the sentence ended did not seem to pose a problem for him or them. This is text which just flows and stops willy-nilly independently of grammar or meaning and is dependent solely on units of commerce (one gets this much text for seven pence). We are in the presence of writing sold by the yard, of literature being reeled off as in the Grandville caricature which we looked at in Chapter 1. While one man writes words onto a roll of paper marked with the word '*feuilleton*' or 'serial', another cuts it up with a knife.

Dickens does not seem to consider his writing as in any way diminished by such a publishing adventure; he deemed his words precious and his influence morally uplifting, and associates his work when published in this form with the words 'pride', 'honour' and 'passion'. The motivations behind the Cheap Edition are revealed in Dickens's 'Address' issued in the Prospectus or 'advertisement' for the edition and reprinted with minor alterations inside the front wrapper of the first monthly part:

> It is not for an Author to describe his own books. If they cannot speak for themselves, he is likely to be of little service by speaking for them. It is enough to observe of these, that ... their reproduction in a shape which

> shall render them easily accessible as a possession by all classes of society, is at least consistent with the spirit in which they have been written, and is the fulfilment of a desire long entertained.
>
> It had been intended that this CHEAP EDITION, now announced, should not be undertaken until the books were much older, or the Author was dead. But the favour with which they have been received, and the extent to which they have circulated, and continue to circulate, at five times the proposed price, justify the belief that the living Author may enjoy the pride and honour of their widest diffusion, and may couple it with increased personal emolument ...
>
> To become, in his new guise, a permanent inmate of many English homes, where, in his old shape, he was only known as a guest, or hardly known at all: to be well thumbed and soiled in a plain suit that will bear a great deal, by children and grown people, at the fireside and on the journey: to be hoarded on the humble shelf where there are few books, and to lie about in libraries like any familiar piece of household stuff that is of easy replacement: and to see and feel this – not to die first, or grow old and passionless: must obviously be among the hopes of a living author, venturing on such an enterprise ...[72]

The format in which the novels are reproduced is directly linked here with their accessibility for all classes. Interestingly, Dickens imagines his novels being dressed in a 'plain suit', thus anticipating the puns of Moses and Son concerning both tailored and written legal suits. He is sensitive to the way in which the form of a text allows it to move around easily or indeed painfully. Notice how he equates the content of the novels ('the spirit in which they have been written') with their wide diffusion, and their manner of consumption with their layout. The words 'circulation' (mentioned twice) and 'diffusion' show an interest in the relationship between movement and price – the lower the price the faster the circulation (an equation again worthy of Moses and Son). This is then linked to his own pecuniary gain in the word 'emolument', which is a word originally associated with the payment one makes to a miller for grinding corn. Dickens's grinding – the hard grind – is made beneficial to himself and others by means of the dissemination of the product. Homage is not being paid to a dead author, but to a live and productive one who dreams of entering the homes of English people, of being part of the rush of text into the intimacy of the home. There is a desire to be a familiar household object that is 'of easy replacement'. He dreams, as Thackeray did, of fast turnover and quick substitution – text not writ in stone or imprisoned behind hard covers but writing to be consumed regularly by a sensual and hungry public – to be kicked about and mistreated but to be present and indispensable. The capital letters of 'CHEAP EDITION', used twice, are a tactic of advertising and fitting to this discourse.

Dickens's dream of being a household word in the mouths of all, and of being present everywhere, all of the time, is finally best expressed by Moses and Son themselves, who espoused and paid homage to this underlying desire in Dickens. They produced a poem for the '*David Copperfield* Advertiser' called 'The Proper Field of Copperfield' enjoining customers to buy the book in order to give it a 'wondrous circulation':

> It should bedeck the poor man's board
> And swell the volumes of my lord.
> This novel merits to be read
> Wherever Moses' fame has spread,
> Which like a banner is unfurled
> Throughout the habitable world.[73]

Here we see the patronage of art by industry and the idea of the propagation of the 'M' of Moses as a symbol throughout the world which cannot but conjure up for us today the ubiquitous 'M' of McDonald's 'throughout the habitable world'. The poem also suggests a linkage between the success of the novel and their own commercial success – as if Moses would create the necessary climate in which the novel might be received and read – the commercial air for it to breathe, as it were. This last notion was confirmed by Dickens himself in a speech in which he linked the dissemination of literature with the vehicle of industry and commerce:

> To the great compact phalanx of the people, by whose industry, perseverance, and intelligence, and their result in money-wealth such places as Birmingham and many others like it have arisen – to that great centre of support, that comprehensive experience, and that beating heart – Literature has turned happily from the individual patrons, sometimes munificent, often sordid, always few, and has found there at once its highest purpose, its natural range of action, and its best reward. ... From the shame of purchased dedication ..., from the dependent seat on sufferance at my Lord Duke's table today, and from the sponging-house and Marshalsea tomorrow ... from all such evils the people have set Literature free.[74]

We find admiration for the energy and power of industry with its 'beating heart' and delight in the replacement of the old dusty ways of aristocratic patronage ('sordid', 'on sufferance at my Lord Duke's table') with the speed of technological change – a notion expressed in the pages of *Bleak House* and in many of the Moses and Son advertisements. According to Bill Bell, Dickens is 'crediting the rise of capitalism with having liberated the professional writer from the tyranny of patronage' (even though other constraints fall on the writer once at the mercy of the laws of supply and demand). The changes alluded to by Dickens are less, Bell says, the result of the 'faithfulness of

a benevolent readership' than 'the increased means by which Literature was more easily transformed from imaginative creation into mechanically reproducible mass product'.[75] For Dickens it seems clear that the creative imagination and the reproducible mass product were mutually dependent and that, if antiquated bureaucratic and aristocratic institutions were the guilty party, Capital and its coats and novels were the saving grace.

Solutions in parts: An aesthetics of the serial?

Many critics have evoked the unsatisfying or partial nature of the solutions Dickens offers to the bleak condition of England which his novel evokes. The social and the collective are often telescoped down to the personal, to the individual and to the specific need (emotional or pecuniary). Any individual solution in novel and Advertiser is the spectre of a social system gone wrong.[76] The adverts we have studied tell us that to survive in these wastelands of mud and fog and spiritual destitution an ersatz is needed, a replacement object. Thus, the cloying material hardship of the world must be answered with the notion of the 'part'; the body must be broken down into parts, all of which demand a servicing with particular local applications (a coat, a pill, a pen, an ointment or, in the case of *Bleak House*, a house in which to live). The front cover of the monthly parts of *Bleak House* also reflects this breaking into parts of the represented world (here, a series of framed images showing particular episodes in the serial). Consumption of framed parts reminiscent of the comic strip is an integral part of the series which deals with specific lacks (of the body, or of the mind). Partial, in part, serial and incomplete, the publications we have been considering teach a lesson which is also the lesson of advertising in general: the only way of moving forward is through a metonymic displacement from part to part.

The monthly number seems to transform the idea of a nation of shopkeepers into that of a nation of shoppers. These individual consumers, imagined as separate bodies or persons, are simultaneously asked to see themselves as belonging to a community – a community of readers all consuming the monthly part at the same time, all beneficiaries of the same misprints or missing illustrations, or advertising offers. Such is the 'imagined community' of print culture described by Benedict Anderson within which the bourgeoisie brought itself into being by writing of its solidarities and communal values.[77] Dickens seems to have been able to produce that very modern and paradoxical idea of a community of separate individuals consuming individually yet also simultaneously and collectively.

Gothic mechanisms of advertisement and novel: Hysteria, paranoia and the testimonials

The notion of solutions *in* parts and *by* the part is a feature of the Gothic tale whose influence is felt both in Dickens's novels and in his advertising.

The monthly number is a haunted house or haunted arcade in which Gothic motif and commerce are closely and incongruously linked. The Gothic constitutes a dark, cobwebby place, stagnant and cut off from human intercourse, while advertising is imagined as shiny, new, and colourful, the oil in the machinery of commerce. Capital, Marshall Bermann tells us in connection with Goethe's Faust, was the very force which blew into the Gothic house, dealing it a deathblow.[78] Yet, perhaps rather than destroying the Gothic, the forces of change and of capital redevelop it and sell it on in changed form. Advertising recognizes the Gothic for what it has often been – a money-spinner – for it helps evoke the fear and destabilization which sell products. But it also recognizes Gothic as being akin to it since it is often 'a standardized, absolutely formulaic system'.[79] While a similarity of mechanism exists, the Gothic also contains something entirely alien to advertising and which must be suppressed by it. The advertising which we will turn to now accompanies *Bleak House* and *Our Mutual Friend*.

Some topographical and thematic similarities

London in *Bleak House* is described by Allan Pritchard in his article 'The Urban Gothic of *Bleak House*' as being 'gloomy, ruinous and labyrinthine' and as being 'the ultimate Gothic castle'.[80] This labyrinthine quality is also stressed by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, who sees the Gothic as pervasively conventional (that is, faithful to its conventions): 'discontinuous and involuted, perhaps incorporating tales within tales, changes of narrators, and such framing devices as found manuscripts or interpolated histories'.[81] As readers entering the space of the 'Advertiser' we find a similar structure. Movement around the space of the advertiser is a movement through a three-dimensional space; it offers both a linear trajectory as pages are turned and a physical depth, since there are pages folded over or stuck onto other pages which need to be peeled back to gain access to the text beneath.[82] It has books within books, a *within-ness*, an interiority and an exteriority, and can be viewed as a whole (a thing to hold) or entered into as a space. The reader's path can be rhizomic and random, leading to secret passages where one can find 'things', either represented in the form of images and text or in the form of real objects to take out and keep. Esther describes Bleak House as being like an organic growth, delightfully irregular and displaying 'quaint variety'; it is an example of picturesque gothic, 'a place of exploration and pleasant surprise for Esther, representing an ideal balance between freedom and order'.[83] This is a haunted house but as regulated as at a funfair in which surprises are programmed and expected.

Secrets and surprises are also part of what Robert Platzner has called the 'generic instability' of Gothic.[84] Elizabeth Napier, in similar fashion, makes the following comment:

> In its reliance upon a mixture of genres (fairy tale, romance, Jacobean drama, and novel of manners), the Gothic novel often contains unintentionally

> humorous instances of collision, in which the demands of one mode are brought up – sometimes startlingly – against the exigencies of another.[85]

Thus sentiment rubs shoulders with adventure in *Manfroné*, and comedy with terror in Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*. This structurally miscellaneous 'tonally disjunctive' aspect displays congruities with Gothic architecture as described by John Evelyn in 1697:

> Gaudy *Sculpture*, trite and busy Carvings; tis such as rather Gluts the Eye, than Gratifies and Pleases it with any reasonable Satisfaction ... *Cut work* and *Crinkle-Crankle*. ... Non-sense Insertions of various Marbles impertinently plac'd; Turrets and Pinnacles thick set with *Munkies* and *Chimaeras* (and abundance of buisy Work and other Incongruities) dissipate, and break the Angels of the Sight, and so Confound it, that one cannot consider it with any Steadiness, where to begin or end ...[86]

In the pages of adverts accompanying Dickens's narratives unexpected things turn up quite as 'glutting of the eye' as the *munkies* and *chimeras* of Gothic architecture. We have already seen the severed heads and human hearts lying in their separate frames as in so many hidden trunks. There are also the delights of picturesque gothic – an engraving of a valley, a colour print of a nymph advertising starch – all waiting to be discovered and collected. But a great majority of the advertisements accompanying the Dickens monthly numbers concern potential horrors: contaminated water and its threat to health, the body suffering from unknown diseases. As in the pages of *Our Mutual Friend* where 'bodies in rivers', bodies in water, figure both as events in the narrative and in a network of sinister metaphors, the pages of the advertiser offer a vision of a threatening world for a fragile body, be it underwater where microorganisms multiply or in hidden corners where insects swarm. Things under a microscope, microbes in water, were offered to a reader already trained in the Gothification of microscope images: magazines such as Punch often drew organisms in the form of coffins, skeletons and monstrous creatures.[87]

Hysteria and paranoia in the 'Testimonials'

The relationship of Gothic and advertising can be explored in a specific area of medical advertising. Accompanying many adverts there are a great number of 'Testimonials', which were a vital part of the advertising technique in Victorian Britain and were an integral part of the advert. They constitute many pages of text which were manifestly read as miniature narratives, often perhaps more compulsively than the numbers of the novels with which they were sold. They were in fact examples of 'cures' in which an illness and sometimes its treatment were recounted by satisfied customers. Some were real, many probably invented. These testimonials offer the reader of the

Dickens novel miniature narratives which contain certain characteristics of the hysterical and paranoid discourses found in the Gothic.

A typical set of Testimonials for 'Du Barry's Delicious Health-Restoring Revalenta Arabica Food' from the '*Our Mutual Friend* Advertiser' in November 1864 begins with the statement 'NO MORE PILLS OR ANY OTHER MEDICINE'. Capital letters and bold type signal to the reader the importance of the illocution, as do the framing of the advert and use of darker ink than that used in the monthly number. A fanfare of lines and sometimes colours in certain of the adverts suggest to the reader that this is where attention must be focused – this is where affect must be invested. 'Du Barry's Delicious Health-Restoring Revalenta Arabica Food' offers the reader an 'Extract from 60,000 Cures', each cure numbered to give it authenticity. Each cured sufferer has a name and an address on which we can pin their lists of pain.

> Cure No. 58,216, of the Marchioness of Bréhan, Paris, of a fearful liver complaint, wasting away, with nervous palpitation all over, bad digestion, constant sleeplessness, low spirits, and the most intolerable nervous agitation, which prevented even her sitting down for hours together, and which for seven years resisted the careful treatment of the best French and English medical men. Cure No. 1771: Lord Stuart Decies, Lord-Lieutenant of the County of Watford of many years dyspepsia. Cure No. 49,842: 'Fifty fears' indescribable agony from dyspepsia, nervousness, asthma, cough, constipation, flatulency, spasms, sickness, and vomiting. – Maria Joly. Cure No. 47,121: Miss Elizabeth Jacobs, Nazing Vicarage, Waltham Cross, Herts, of extreme nervousness, indigestion, gatherings, low spirits, and nervous fancies ...

Although these invalids have now been relieved of their suffering, their accounts of it offer no glimpse of hope or indeed of any acknowledgement of a world beyond that of the body in pain. The interesting part for today's reader, used to the precision of modern diagnosis, is that the whole body and mind of the sufferer, and not just one isolated part of the body, are involved in this all-encompassing *mal-être*. This is a discourse which does not tend to resolution but can only repeat and accumulate. The body becomes a series of functions acting and signifying independently of one another, unruly and disobedient. The subject is no longer the ruler of these defiant parts.

Be it advertising copy or memoir, we are obviously in the presence of a performance based on a series of declensions in which, in the first cure for example, 'nervous agitation' is followed by 'nervous palpitation'. Time is given giddy proportions starting with 'hours' and 'seven years' and moving to a gargantuan 'fifty years' to insist on the torture. Adjectives such as 'fearful', 'indescribable' or 'intolerable' place us at the same pitch of linguistic tension as that found in the Gothic novel. Mysterious and ominous-sounding

ailments such as a 'gathering' or 'nervous fancies' – all echo the unspecific mental unrest of the romantic heroine. The speech of the body here becomes the text of Gothic romance replete with characters such as the benighted Marchioness of Bréhan, the ancient Lord Stuart of Decies (whose name might be (mis)pronounced variously 'decease' or 'disease', adding a vampiric touch) and the vulnerable Miss Elizabeth Jacobs of the Vicarage. The use of the first-person narrative in which the self exposes its relation to the world is a feature of both the testimonial and the Gothic tale.

Hysterical language both in the 'Testimonial' and the Gothic text relies on a body which speaks of monstrous things. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* has underlined how the 'self' becomes monstrous in the Gothic, how bodily disarray expresses itself textually. Textual or linguistic disarray also expresses itself *bodily* since we seem to be in the presence of hysteria, in which the flesh begins to tell the story which cannot be told in words. These testimonials seem to suggest two forms of hysteria as formulated by Freud: on the one hand 'conversion hysteria', in which a psychic conflict symbolizes itself in bodily symptoms but does not necessarily include anxiety, and on the other 'anxiety hysteria', a neurosis whose main symptom is phobia, anxiety being fixed upon an exterior object, or roving from object to object.[88] The bodies described here are bursting to alleviate themselves of something. Although no specific phobic object is mentioned, the outside objective world seems to be an aggressive one which attacks the body; the body then turns against itself, becoming alien to the subject.

The Gothic, Sedgwick tells us, often stages an individual blocked off from something it ought to have: 'the self and whatever it is that is outside have a proper, natural, necessary connection to each other, but one that the self is suddenly incapable of making ... [there is] a doubleness where singleness should be' and so a constant effort on the part of the subject to 'reintegrate the sundered elements'. She goes on to say that the 'barrier between the self and what should belong to it can be caused by anything and nothing; but only violence or magic, and both of a singularly threatening kind, can ever succeed in joining them again'.[89] Both advert and Gothic narrative play on a longed-for reconciliation of subject and object which can only come about through the agencies of either a supernatural event or the 'magical' commodity for sale. Until these occur there can only be a repetition of symptoms. David Punter has suggested that 'Gothic fiction deals with those moments when we find it impossible, with any degree of hope, for our "case to be put." ' Our 'Case', he says, is an insurance against contamination and against haunting – and in *Frankenstein* a letter is often the only recourse.[90] Yet the testimonials, which are also letters, contain no reasoned plea as in *Frankenstein*, but only an excess of distress from the frustrated self. If the case cannot be heard 'then it must continue, perhaps endlessly, to utter itself in private, in the personal spaces, under the cover of crypt, vault, castle, suburban home ...'[91] and in our case in the advertisement. Here we find the

clamouring of those who cannot, but who wish to, be heard. The body in testimonial, as in Gothic tale, seems to be under pressure; events are withstood by many Gothic heroines, fears remaining unvoiced, yet this attempt to balance in fact leads to lack of control – obsession, fixation. Denial of the self, and the repression of drives, are often expressed in the phobia of live burial. In Sedgwick's chapter on 'Language as Live Burial', which focuses on Thomas De Quincey, she stresses the ego's sense of being imprisoned *under* the world as if underground or underwater. Immobilization and terrible weight are often evoked as in the 'twenty Atlantics' which bury De Quincey in his dreams: 'Thousands of years I lived and was buried in stone coffins, with mummies and sphinxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids.'[92] Thus the Gothic offers up a buried body but also a narrative buried in a body which is ready to explode; what is held within must burst out.

Bradley Headstone in *Our Mutual Friend* provides just such an example of the intolerable pressure of buried narrative, with his foaming mouth and body wracked with spasms. The schoolmaster prepares for his first interview with his rival and social superior, Eugene Wrayburn, by insisting that he will have his say: 'I WILL be heard, sir.' He describes how being a good schoolmaster means 'watching and repressing himself daily', but his 'red and white heats of rage' are barely controlled.[93] Headstone, whose name speaks of the death drive inherent in his monomania (a gravestone as well as a head hitting stone), is described as 'a bent head hammering at one fixed idea'. He smoulders and broods and sweats 'with a curious tight-screwing movement of his right hand in the clenching palm of his left, like the action of one who was being physically hurt, and was unwilling to cry out'.[94] Finally, what is kept down in terms of words surfaces in the form of violent bleeding from the nose: Headstone describes how his bodily fluids (here blood) burst from him unbidden: ' "I can't keep it back. It has happened twice – three times – four times – I don't know how many times – since last night. I taste it, smell it, see it, it chokes me, and then it breaks out like this." '[95]

In *Bleak House* too, cases are rarely heard, and, like the voices in the 'testimonials', only a terrible repetition and accumulation results: Lady Dedlock's case must be spoken, as must Jo the sweeper's and others – but instead, the result of what is unspoken is displaced onto descriptions of the environment. The streets of London or the landscape at Chesney Wold exhibit the symptoms of sick bodies – leaking, blocked or terrifyingly overproductive: mud, fog and accumulated papers congest the streets around Chancery, while the Dedlock country seat is awash with water or stagnant leaves, which, like the mud in the London streets, can never be swept away. It is a journey into the body become a geological scape – even stone 'breaks out into a cold sweat'. We shall take just such a journey in the next testimonial, which is an advert for Morison's Pills which appeared in the '*Bleak House* Advertiser' of 1853.[96] It consists of one long testimonial. The advert starts

with the mention of 'BRITISH COLLEGE OF HEALTH, New Road, London'. The title of the advert is 'CURE OF FISTULA AND OTHER COMPLAINTS, WITHOUT CUTTING, BY MORISON'S PILLS'.

> To Messrs. Morison, January 12th, 1853.
>
> GENTLEMEN, – I feel great pleasure in making a public acknowledgment of the good I have received from your valuable medicines. I have been afflicted from childhood with severe attacks of bilious complaint every five or six weeks; I have suffered dreadfully from spasms, scarce ever free from them little or much; I have suffered from bad legs these last twenty years, I have dreaded the approach of winter for they would be then covered with scaly, bleeding running sores from the knees to the ankles: I have been afflicted for these last ten years with rheumatism with repeated attacks of lumbago; I have been troubled from a child with great quantities of worms, and for these last five years I have suffered from a fistula, which gradually increasing caused great pain and lowness of spirits, as I continued to September 1851; when my afflictions increased – I was seized with severe griping pains in the bowels ... Worms made their way through the wound of the fistula in abundance. Four months I endured dreadful pains in the chest, I felt as if I were bound round with an iron bar, I felt dreadful pains across the back and shoulders, my neck became stiff, my eyes bloodshot, their [*sic*] appeared a heavy weight on my head, with a hissing noise like a steam engine, my arms seemed filled with streams of boiling water. I had every advice within my reach, I had blisters and mustard plasters to my chest in abundance; I had Doctors and medicines of every description, but all to no use, I gave myself up for lost ... there was no hope but the hospital, but I dreaded the knife.

Then, on the advice of a friend, the writer starts to take increasing doses of Morison's Pills, which have a violently purgative effect – the cure seeming worse than the ill:

> ... they made me very bad at first but I persevered ... I found relief, they stopped the violence of the fistula, they relieved the pains in my chest, and brought from me frightful quantities of worms ... they were the cause of my passing five pieces of thick skinny substance the size of the palms of the hand ... In May the lumbago attacked me violently, in June my legs broke out worse; I increased the doses 16 each night, they soon got well, but there was a pain under the ribs of the right side – something appeared to be gathering there, it got bigger and heavier, till it appeared to be as big as a pint basin. I increased the doses to 18, it got worse; I increased the doses to 20 ... I took 10 more, something gave a sudden snap, I was sick for the first time since the commencement, upwards and downwards

> from me came several pints of slime, blood and corruption, &c – the pills had done their work ... I am restored to health and strength. I feel ten years younger, and I thank the Almighty God in putting within my reach your most valuable medicine; since I began to take your pills I have been exposed to all weathers, working in a market garden, and I have been laid up for illness but one day through the whole time.
>
> I remain yours most gratefully, George Holden, aged 45, 14, Devon's-road, Bromley, Middlesex.

This testimonial is a frenzy of effects, or rather a frenzy of *affects* grafted onto the body of the sufferer. The writing is dense and saturated, a reiteration or listing of ailments which seems less to be an act of communication than a relief for the speaker in which repetition mesmerizes the reader rather than informing him. We also find narrative sequence in the form of a movement from inside to outside. George Holden speaks to us of a gathering, a pressure, an ominous accumulation, followed by a violent 'snap' and a torrent of language to describe the 'slime and corruption' which issues forth. A containment is followed by a purging, an exteriorization. In Poe's depiction of the fall of the family home in *The Fall of the House of Usher*, a slit or crack or fissure in the wall of the house betrays where pressure has been building up and where the final collapse will occur. Here, the breaks and lumps in the skin, the fistula and the swelling serve the same purpose. In Gothic narrative, something has to give, to give way. The reference to the 'hissing noise like a steam-engine' suggests an imminent release of pressure, even an explosion, and offers a mirroring of the contents of the monthly numbers themselves in which bodies are often described as dysfunctional machines. In *Bleak House*, Mr. Krook falls victim to 'spontaneous combustion' – a controversial 'scientific' phenomenon at the time in which the body was supposed literally to explode and catch fire. Krook is illiterate and cannot understand or express the secret messages which haunt him and which he writes in fragments on the wall of his shop; he finally ignites and 'writes' himself all over the district he lives in. His body is converted into slime, which becomes the only 'writing' he can manage. As Sedgwick says of the Gothic, the negotiation between within and without is always violent. This testimonial provides a vision of the struggle of the subject to express what is within, and in the 'case' of George Holden his entire body involves itself in this endeavour.

If hysteria and paranoia tend to be kept apart in carefully labelled gender categories – the female hysteric, the male paranoiac – here we see elements of both forms:

> It is as versions of a heroics of embodiment, too, that hysteria and paranoia can appear most similar to one another. Call, for convenience's sake, the heroine of the Gothic a classic hysteric, its hero a classic paranoid.

> The immobilizing and costly struggle, in the hysteric, to express graphically through her bodily hieroglyphic what cannot come into existence as narrative, resembles in this the labour of the paranoid subject to forestall being overtaken by the feared/desired other, by himself mimetically reproducing the perceived or projected desire/threat of the other in temporally paralyzed form.[97]

The body in our testimonial seems to lose its rigid gender marking and to navigate or melt between the sexes. See for example the 'something', gathering and growing under George Holden's ribs, something alien, a pregnancy – both the phantom pregnancy of the hysteric and the imagined invasion by the other of the paranoid subject. This is part of a making-strange of the self which is evident in Gothic constructions of character.

David Punter has spoken of strangeness from self and the self as shell in his work on Gothic pathologies: '[we are] filled to the brim with something that looks like ourselves but is irremediably *other*... we ourselves are cast as the ghost, the revenant... who can only watch this mysterious body performing actions below'.[98] The narrator of the testimonial also watches amazed as his body produces ever more elaborate forms of torture – a self inhabited by what is alien. Freud's analysis of the text of the President Schreber also reveals a self who feels he is the victim of an 'other', persecuted by a God who is changing him into a woman, thus denying his very existence. Gender, as in the Gothic, bends itself in Schreber's narrative. Schreber describes a process of *Entmannung* or *éviration* in French, in English 'unmanning', which suggests not only the denial of virility, but, according to Lacan in his commentary on Schreber's case, the death of the subject.[99] Schreber describes himself as the object of the *jouissance* of an alien presence, his body possessed by a force which is changing it and slowly killing him; he gives detailed descriptions of the way in which each of his organs is subverted in some way and how he is forced to relinquish the control of his nerves. Something of a similar order is happening in our testimonial since the 'other' is active and industrious; it is gradually annihilating the subject, as the predications show: 'I was seized with... Worms made their way... umbago attacked me violently...'

If paranoia is the paradigm of psychosis, then we might consider the possible cause of such delirious speech in these testimonials. What has been unhinged or displaced to produce such textual excess? This testimonial (and many like it) evinces a fear of a castrating authority, as the references to the 'knife' (I dreaded the knife) and to 'cutting' show. In the advertisement, the law of the knife, of surgery, is avoided in favour of the pill, which is a magical remedy even though its effects are quite as violent as the illnesses themselves. The pill affords the transformation which purges the subject of this alienating illness as if by magic – 'without cutting'. In this testimonial (and many like it) vengeful Doctors are represented as wishing to cut the

speaker, to put him or her 'under the knife'. They are testimony of the desire to avoid surgery, of a latent denial of the hegemony of the recognized medical profession in favour of the quack remedies such as Morison's or Kaye's Pills.[100] This might be seen as a form of foreclosure of castrating authority (the Victorian surgeon and his knife) and a retreat into a magical world in which excessive suffering is banished by miracle cures. No authority brings measure or scale to these texts. A delocalized pleasure of a deathly nature seems to be in action – there where no law exists to police and organize the experience of the body. Speech lacking an organizing principle moves into delirium. Geneviève Morel has stressed the importance for the subject of being able to subordinate the pains and pleasures of the body to a signifier, in order to allow interpretation: 'When the subject is unable to do this, *jouissance* is fragmented throughout the whole body and the organs "speak". It is what Freud called in schizophrenia the language of organs.'[101] This language of organs also appears in *Bleak House*, in which bodies which cannot speak their pain or tell their tale either perform some explosive act – as Hortense does in killing Tulkinghorn – or expire from the 'deadlock' or the vice of silence they are forced to accept. Chancery, a sick and superabundant body, houses many other ailing figures. It is only through the attempts to re-establish authority, to replace the 'hoary sinner' of the Lord Chancellor (obscene whore-father) with a father such as Jarndyce that an escape from the persecutions of a legal system without law is possible.

In the light of these extremes it is not difficult to see why Lowenthal suggests that Advertising is psychoanalysis in reverse.[102] It encourages massive repression and heightens neurosis to extraordinary pitches. But what is the relationship between the Gothic content of advertising and the products it sells? How is this excessive (hysterical, paranoid) Gothic, unchecked by closure and restraint and 'away from right reason and the rule of law', articulated onto the injunction to buy a product?[103] Gothic energies are used as bait promising the giddy pleasures of danger, an antechamber of possibilities, yet we are brought back to world of limits via the gratification of particular needs. Gothic strategies both horrify and attract as they spell out the disarray from which the bourgeois subject is always trying to emerge – and it is here we might ask with David Punter what a bourgeoisie can ever be 'but emergent, prone always to states of emergency'.[104] That emergency (of the sick body, of the unclothed body) is then covered over for us, death is neatly side-stepped, and we leave the haunted castle for the shopping mall.

3

Balzac's Revolution of Signs: Advertisement as Textual Practice

The language of the Paris walls

Aux réclames citoyens![1]

Our transition to the walls of Paris involves a shift in focus: the community of shoppers imagined by Dickens must give way to one which had its roots in another tradition entirely, in which display and consumption of the written word were a political rather than a commercial activity. Some of the irony in the *Moses and Son* adverts in the Dickens Advertiser is based on a disparity between meaningful announcement with political intent involving a desire to change existing social structures and the bathos or relative paltriness of buying consumer goods. The 'Anti-Bleak House' advert offers the purchase of a coat as an ersatz of emancipated action (the latter represented by a vocabulary of defiance, rebellion, rising, defying). Similarly, the humour of the political reference in 'What a Stir' mentions 'Revolution at the Antipodes!' to conjure up a world outside Britain of movement and social change only to telescope such a vision back down to clothes retailing. The humour functions on a juxtaposition of the sublime and the ridiculous, the desired perverse effect being the ridiculing of sublime action and the endorsement of retail and purchase as the only proper activity.

These references are part of a widespread critique of social upheaval on the continent, often opposed to a more stable mercantile world in Britain; they also acknowledge the power of the press and bill-posting in the organization of unrest. Effecting change, fighting against what oppresses one, was seen as a textual as well as a physical activity; the composing, printing and posting of material being part of the physical activity of politics. Thomas Carlyle's *The French Revolution*, published in 1837 (the same year as *César Birotteau* and the first part of *Lost Illusions*), consists of three books, of which Book II is called 'The Paper Age'. Carlyle argues that the revolution was based on the effects of paper and print, which created a society without substance, a paper society which paraded itself behind false appearances (and behind false value such as that generated by the revolutionary

paper money or *assignats* printed in the 1790s). Similarly, in France, Louis Sébastien Mercier in *Le Nouveau Paris: 1789–94* saw the circulation of print and paper as one of the great generative forces behind the revolution.[2]

Advertising was thus seen as having its origins in political activity with its highly performative aspect; it was taken seriously and much power was attributed to it. Marc Martin, in tracing the history of the word *publicité* in French, helps us understand how the revolution created the first mass distribution networks in the form of posters, flyers, newspapers and periodicals and how advertising was revolutionary before ever being designated as a commercial activity:

> The revolution, by bringing in a parliamentary regime and by transforming subjects into citizens [*citoyens*], and thus men to whom the decisions and debates of assemblies must be made known, founded the word '*publicité*', which meant the act of making public: it was used in both political and legal vocabulary.[3]

The idea of such *publicité* was institutionalized in 1806 when all civil procedures had to be published. The word *publicité* had a much broader meaning than *réclame* in that it designated the whole campaign of making something public, rather than the idea of one-off claims on the attention from a particular product.[4] It took on commercial connotations only in the 1830s.

The force of advertising during the three revolutions can be gauged by the number of laws restricting its use, each of which was a reaction to a massive mobilization of paper and print. The aftermath of the first revolution of 1789 allowed unprecedented freedom for writers and bill-posters of all kinds and was a hiatus of freedom and potential which boosted the circulation of print and ideas in a way which would change the face of print culture. If the decrees of 22 May and 28 June 1791 gave complete freedom to post any bill without prior declaration and only prohibited anonymous posters, this was abolished in 1810 under Napoleon. In 1814 a decree made prior submission of all bills to Police headquarters obligatory and such restrictions continued into the next decade.[5] Despite this, in 1825 Charles Colnet remembers posters 'carpeting monuments' and in a law of 1829 the reactionary political regime of Charles X regulated the 'great number of bills' that 'confusingly cover the walls of the capital' and which threatened 'the safety of public passage, causing assemblies of the curious in narrow streets, difficulties of traffic circulation and possible accidents'.[6] These posters also posed the problem of affronts to public decency or tranquillity. The job of bill-posting was given dignity and status, and while in London bill-posters were mostly illiterate – the only requirement being an ability to use their fists to ward off rival bill-posters – in France they had to be literate, needed proof of domicile, a certificate of good conduct from three witnesses and a reference from a police superintendent, and had to wear a numbered leather badge.[7]

The July Monarchy, coming to power with the 1830 revolution, outlawed political posters but encouraged commercial ones, which was part of Louis-Philippe's desire to repress political dissent. In 1830 a distinction was established in Parliament between advertising in the press and on the poster in the street, since the liberty of political advertising implied a recognition of the right to assemble – to stand in a group around a poster. Haejeong Hazel Hahn says in this regard that 'the difference between the right to publish one's ideas and the right to post was analogous to that between the right of speech and action'.[8] Thus the poster was considered to be a direct hailing or incitement of the people and gave rise to laws such as that of 10 December 1830, which prohibited political posters and made a clear distinction between political and non-political posters. It also added restrictions to what criers might cry, limiting them to apolitical statements, aiming as Hahn notes 'to suppress aural, as well as visual subversion'.[9] This shows the already acute awareness of the performative powers of the advert: the fact that adverting people by means of text and image was tantamount to asking of them some radical physical action.[10] The bourgeois monarchy thus kept the street under surveillance, which caused riots in 1834; they also clamped down on caricatures in the press with the 'September laws' in 1835, and by 1841 there were strict limitations of when and where bills could be posted and the need for a stamp on each poster.

After the uprising or 'June Days' of 1848 during which several thousand workers were killed, there was a landslide victory for Louis Napoléon in the Presidential election of 1848. His election campaign used newspaper articles, posters, badges, pictures and Napoleonic mementoes to emphasize the fact that he was nephew to the first Emperor.[11] This was a huge publicity campaign to build an image using, as Marx has pointed out, the austere traditions of the Roman republic, which provided 'the ideals and the art forms, the self-deceptions that they needed in order to conceal from themselves the bourgeois limitations of the content of their struggles'.[12] Marx picks up on the 'gladiator' as a figure of heroism and ridicules it much as the Dickens 'Anti-Bleak House' advert does a few years later. After the *coup d'état* of December 1851 and the establishment of the Second Empire all forms of advertising were again restricted (putting a stop to the counter-movement in the media) and registration of the advertisers' names and addresses was used for political purposes, thus controlling public space by recording bill-posting activities.

Yet it was earlier in the 1830s, when Balzac began his writing career, that the interface between politics (in its broadest sense of the organization of the *polis*) and commerce was consolidated to bring about, through advertising, the metamorphosis of the citizen into citizen–consumer. One of the earliest forms of the word *publicité* used in both the sense of making public and making commercial can be found in an 1830 advert for soap, which was packaged with accounts of great events in French history and destined

for sale in France and abroad. The following sentence is used in the advert: 'Stories of our great national events come with the soap and produce prodigious publicity' [*Notice de nos grands événements accompagne et produit une prodigieuse publicité*].[13] Hahn points out that the word '*publicité*' refers to publicizing the nation's history, rather than the product. If it is still associated with the conveying of ideas – political and historical – here the promotion of France as a nation, as a political and ideological entity, is also reliant on a commercial product. France needs to sell soap to sell itself.

The next step in this transformation – the edging out of the citizen and the consolidation of the subject as consumer – is crystallized in the following caricature. To get around advertising restrictions advertisers had to be ingenious, an ingenuity which often made the poster into an instrument of oppression in which the political citizen was obliterated rather than hailed into existence. A caricature from *Le Charivari* entitled '*Affichomanie*' ['*Postermania*'] in 1836 shows a building covered by a huge insurance poster and the bill-posters cutting out the paper and print covering the windows so that the inhabitants might see out [Fig. 18]. We see the literal

Figure 18 *'Affichomanie'* ['*Postermania*'], Le Charivari, 1836
Source: Bibliothéque nationale de France.

covering of a building in an advertisement in which the city has become a surface for print, for public imagining. What had been a means of expression is being shown – albeit humorously – as a means of coercion. The poster is no longer an object to be contemplated on a wall but a covering, a partition which creates an inside and which can envelop the viewer. It is all around and more and more difficult to see 'through' or see beyond. While some must pierce the surface to breathe, other folk stare up and take in the great screen. In this image the political drive to cover the city in posters has been transformed into a more pervasive drive which speaks of a new media era.

Media revolution: Time, space and the daily press

The media blueprint for commercial advertising was produced in the context of a powerful ideological and aesthetic potential created by the revolution of 1789 – the fundamental reimagining of time and space. Innovations in the representation of time and space helped alter perceptions. The way time was measured and the names given to these measurements were all changed, notably the months of the Gregorian calendar, which were renamed. This was part of the 'empire of images' imagined by Fabre d'Eglantine (the poet friend of Danton) and designed to create a new Jacobin culture and republican cosmology. The map of France was divided into *départements* and spatially recreated, this spatial and temporal redistribution designed to break up the power of the Church and aristocracy.[14] All official documents used the new time and space systems, which impinged upon people's lives as they came up against bureaucracy. If certain of these systems were revoked (the new revolutionary calendar, for example, was withdrawn some ten years after its inception, although the metric system of measurement still exists today and has been transported across the globe), the effect of that audacity, and the reinvention of the world it made possible, were not to be forgotten. Its residue was the possibility of questioning age-old conventions concerning the structuring of reality that has remained in certain currents of French thought to this day. This left the door open for many other changes, and would accelerate changes in communications, creating a wider media revolution of which Balzac was part. He was caught up in the experiments which were made during the July Monarchy (1830–48) when the bourgeoisie held sway and had the heady task of creating their spaces of representation after the *tabula rasa* of the revolutions.

Emile de Girardin was the great founding father of French newspaper advertising; his meteoric rise through the creation of newspapers is often likened to that of Rupert Murdoch or Silvio Berlusconi though his aims were less exclusively profit-driven.[15] He was an international figure who was viewed from abroad and within France as an architect of the new media created by political change. France was the arena for the orchestrating of a brave new world of print culture and was perhaps more open to innovations than

the more stable constitutional monarchy of Britain; though less industrially advanced, it attracted the interest of many writers and journalists, including Thackeray and Dickens. Dickens came to Paris to meet Girardin and dined with him as well as with the great serial writers of the day such as Alexandre Dumas and Eugène Sue although there is no evidence that he met Balzac.[16]

Using advertising, Emile de Girardin was able to reconfigure the time and space of the newspaper and open up new routes for writers such as Balzac. For Girardin advertising was not merely a commercial tool but the symptom of a truly public space in which all voices might be heard. He used the word *publicité* in 1835 in a pamphlet on the regeneration of the periodical press and the necessity of broadening the use of advertising: Marc Martin points out that, although the word as used by Girardin retains its older meaning of making public, his usage takes on the added connotations of diffusion to a wide audience. This was confirmed in 1837 when Balzac used the term in his novel *César Birotteau*, in which the young Popinot launches the new hair product 'Huile Céphalique' thanks to a lively advertising campaign [*une vive publicité*]. Here, and as it appears in the title of a newspaper *La Publicité* in 1840, it contains both a commercial and an informational sense and goes beyond the narrower word *réclame*.[17] The term *publicité* used in France today, which corresponds to the word 'advertising', triumphed at the end of the nineteenth century.[18]

Girardin increased the sway of advertising by using it to revolutionize the financing of newspapers; advertising, rather than the subscriber, paid for the production of newspapers, which immediately increased the number of readers. His paper, *La Presse*, launched in 1836, reduced the price of subscription by half (from 80 to 40 francs). This produced a radical change in the status of the newspaper and the status of advertising. The influence on other newspapers was great and Martin shows that already established papers such as *Le Journal des Débats* and *Le Constitutionnel* took their lead from *La Presse* and augmented their income from advertising.

While many writers and journalists were horrified by the idea that the press – which once served public opinion in a purely governmental or political way – was now to become the mouthpiece of commercial speculation,[19] Girardin was quick to draw a direct correlation between advertising space and distribution; getting the paper to more people, moving it around the country, was a direct result of advertising and could only be beneficial to the reading population. In the following quotation from his manifesto, Girardin sweeps both the *Ancien Régime* and the world of politics aside to make way for a new ideological space:

> ... the newspaper should be popular in all senses of the word, that is to say, it should represent and defend not the biased opinion of one party, the dynastic cause of a family or the impracticable theories of a school, but the true interests of the Nation ...[20]

The implication is that debate should leave the arena of the political speech and turn to more concrete forms of expression. Debate and parliamentarianism seemed in some way worn out in the July Monarchy and Girardin's editorial asks for less talk and more action. If during the Restoration of 1815–30 there was still faith in speeches, be they written or spoken, that faith had now gone, along with faith in the power of words, which were often locked into ministry circulars and therefore impotent. Girardin wanted to see *La Presse* as an organ of reform, of politics in action, of a social institution in the making. It was to be a 'power', literally a 'means of government' which was independent because financed by advertising. Words should have a materiality, a physical might to fight the material realities of economics, politics, society.[21]

The space of *La Presse* needed therefore to be one of mobility. One of Girardin's earlier papers, *Le Voleur* (The Thief), is a perfect example of this new conception since it was literally 'constructed with a pair of scissors', that is, made of already published articles, cut out and fitted into a new layout.[22] Balzac not only helped to wield the scissors but in 1830 contributed nineteen previously unpublished pieces, his *Lettres de Paris*. In their extraordinary study *1836. L'An 1 de l'ère médiatique* (the fruit of a collective research project carried out on the first year of the life of Girardin's *La Presse*) Marie-Eve Thérenty and Alain Vaillant map out an aesthetics of journalism and journalistic space and insist upon the lack of constraints which the later *La Presse* offered to its writers.[23] The latter were not confined by set areas of text, obliged to write to a certain number of words to fill a column whose size and shape never varied as was the case later and earlier in the nineteenth century. The space for each rubric – apart from confines of the four-page sheet – was free to expand or contract as the news or serial dictated. It was, as Vaillant says, a mouthpiece for Girardin, who needed to be able to give his opinion as and when he wished:

> *La Presse*, is *grosso modo* four pages *in folio*, where it is possible and acceptable to write what one wants, where one wants, with no constraint in terms of length or layout – 'one' being of course Girardin himself. This is the most vital and unexpected element for this paper of 1836 which is entirely modulable and polymorphous and is an extraordinary space of invention and scriptural freedom ...[24]

The newspaper contrasts with the book, whose aesthetic and semiotic boundaries were so much more fixed. Space in *La Presse* was also less constrained than in the *Journal des Débats* and was a sign of the times reminding us of the newly modulable space of the wall of advertisements; like today's internet, the openness of the space seemed to expand access to knowledge and open up the possibility of thought. The newspaper *Le Tintamarre* – also from Balzac's early writing days – had a new format in which advertisements

were placed in the margins of the texts rather than on the fourth and last page as was the case with the *Journal des Débats*; it resembles in this the advertising on the margins of our screens on the net. Unlike journalists today, who seek a freedom in the book which writing for a newspaper no longer affords, the writer in the July Monarchy turned to the newspaper for a space in which to find a freedom of expression.

Girardin wanted *La Presse* to be a space of 'mediation' and the word is used in the advert to launch it. These adverts were defaced and torn down in the street – the rearrangement of financial and spatial expectations being so radical that there was a violent opposition and defence.[25] The idea was to organize the public space liberated by the revolution of 1830 for material and moral progress – wealth and knowledge for all – the two being indissociable for Girardin. The writer and intellectual had a role to play in the new arena: to comment upon the present and reflect upon the future. The notion of speech shared was important, as was the move away from personal conviction: the activity of writers must aim not only to express a personal sentiment or intimate conviction but 'to seek through participation in the collective debate the common interest or cause, inventing for this newly shared speech new rules dictating the very form of writing'.[26] This is what Balzac did by inveigling his reader into a collective memory or system of morality, by suggesting the ubiquity of sentiments and the power of common experience. This is particularly clear in *César Birotteau* and *Illusions perdues*, which are very much concerned with new organizations of language and space: the space of the city, as well as the space of printed texts. *The Human Comedy* itself might be seen as another example of this newly modular space.

Girardin's prospectus also contains a citation from Victor Hugo which calls for a change from the narrowly party political to the broadly social. On the first page of the first number of *La Presse* Girardin writes a declaration of intent in which he imagines his paper as a large collective of voices, in which poets and writers of all kinds come together to make their thoughts heard by a majority of people. There is a utopian feel to his speech reminiscent of the Saint-Simonians and the Fourierists, yet based on a collection of writers from an intellectual elite who would help the people rise – an edification of the masses by the writer. This still carries the weight of a Romantic ideal which will be shipwrecked later with Flaubert and Baudelaire.

If until this time the newspaper had been a political tool to spread opinion and rally to a cause, Girardin made it into a communications network which put the members of the public and their consuming passions at centre stage. Papers were party political and interested for the most part in the corridors of power and in recent debate.[27] Yet around them change was afoot: literary revues and satirical papers as well as *magasins* – inspired by the British magazine – were changing this scene. The presence of advertisements made explicit the movement away from pure ideology towards a whole cultural and economic nexus; the classical ideal of the tribunal in which a single

orator personally addresses the people in his own name is succeeded by a modern logic of mediation organizing and regulating a different public space of human exchange. We might say that the configuration of the social space had moved from the hierarchical organizations of space of the *Ancien Régime*, passing through the forum of political debate of the tribunes (an oral arena of a successive voicing of opinion) to a space of contiguity in which 'voices' (now textual) have been placed side by side on the page. Their disparity can be viewed like a patchwork and the eye of the reader can rove from space to space very much as James Dawson Burn gazes at the walls of London. There is a dramatic democratizing of space involved in this new forum of the press since all voices share the same space and are placed on the same plane: history next to politics, literature next to advertising. There is no longer a hierarchy of discourses, since all discourses are accepted as knowledge.

La Presse appears to be both an encyclopaedic cabinet of curiosities and a work in progress. The articles are not meant to be read as if each new article erased that of yesterday but as a following-on and development, as if a giant work were being woven before our eyes. It must read, say Thérenty and Vaillant, both synchronically as a four-page paper – a whole in which the different articles interact – and also diachronically as if each number were a chapter in an ongoing work built serially over time. The newspaper is a collective enterprise and has a public feel to it since articles in *La Presse* are not signed (excepting the serial). This is a media space in which there is a 'complex and polyphonic system of interlocution', an 'information industry' before its time.[28]

'Flow culture', periodicity, literature as news

We thus see political persuasion being subsumed by communicational ideals as well as the expansion of the more politically neutral aspects of the paper, notably, as Martin points out, the *feuilleton* or literary serial, which would catch and keep a wider audience. The start of the 40 franc newspaper (*La Presse* but also *Le Siècle*) is the very first example of an editorial policy and content dictated to by advertising policy.[29]

One of the major changes in postrevolutionary writing culture was the way the slower evolutions of nature, religion or family dynasties – allowing the writer a long period of gestation for his work – were replaced with another temporal matrix: time is seen as a succession of moments, a 'superposition of rhythms' or stretch of different fragmented times.[30] These cycles were brought in by the new economic and social organizations: politics and parliament, industry, transport and media. Speech and writing changed to follow these new rhythms (just as the advent of the railway changed speech patterns in Britain, as we have seen), and literature began to favour short forms both in prose and poetry. The periodical dominated the French media during the July Monarchy and in particular the daily newspaper. This 'new culture of periodicity' or 'flow culture' [*culture de flot*], as Vaillant and Thérenty call it, means that the newspaper inverted the old order of

literary creation in which the writer writes and then seeks a place to publish: the necessity of publication now came before the inspiration to write and authors were transformed into providers of text [*fournisseurs de texte*].[31] The writer was now at the service of a continuous flow of text which must not be interrupted – an image cleverly rendered by Grandville's image of a pastry chef cutting up a roll of literature shown in Chapter 1 of this book.

Girardin accordingly strove for an attentive and faithful audience who would read day after day and follow the news as if it were a serial to be understood over time, cumulatively rather than successively. There was an aesthetics of writing which created events – built up daily reportage into political incident. This use of speculation – of transforming incident into premonition to pad out a piece of news and create a story – is also the technique of novel-writing, especially of serial novel-writing which must create an event each day. The daily newspaper was the *milieu* and breeding ground of the *feuilleton* and thus akin to it. If the different newspapers at the time reflected the aspirations of the bourgeoisie, the presence of the serial brought other less elevated readers to the paper. These new readers influenced the paper and it is at this moment of serialized literature that we enter what Lise Queffelec has also called *l'ère des médias*.[32]

The day by day swiftness of the unfolding of events in the serial is close to modern televised serials which occur each evening and must produce a story which can be given in small and closely following slots. During the year 1836–37 Balzac's story *La Vieille fille* was published in *La Presse* in twelve daily instalments between 23 October and 4 November and is said to be the first 'roman-feuilleton'. The novel had already been split up and published in parts – *Le Père Goriot*, for example, in the *Revue de Paris* – but what distinguishes *La Vieille fille* from these is the rapidity of the daily publications. Never before had a work of fiction been published in this way. In Britain there were no such daily serials in the newspaper and the rapidity of the reader's experience of the unfolding of the narrative was unknown. Graham Law uses the expression 'newspaper novels' to describe the genre which began to people the newspapers only in the 1870s and 1880s.[33] These present many of the characteristics of Balzac's fiction but were never daily. It is interesting to see that circumstances in France allowed the creation of a far more politically and commercially powerful form of communication earlier than in Britain. The effect of such daily serialization meant that public reaction was intensified and the novelist's desire to perform stimulated – this being one of Delphine de Girardin's arguments in her defence of the daily serial. The moment of publication becomes a performance rather like bringing a play to the stage each night. Thus was the daily paper considered more dangerous politically by authorities (the most dangerous being the cheapest), keeping up attention and speaking daily to its readers.[34]

The daily serial or *feuilleton* was not always literary and could concern science, industry or travel – rather like a special feature in a British Sunday

paper but without images. There was much talk of its mission and an insistence that the newspaper should build a community outside of governmental concerns, produce a cacophony of voices but all following particular forms of eloquence which were well known already. These were argumentation, conversation, a form of journalistic dialectics, epistolary eloquence, the anecdote or tale.[35] Politics and philosophy also used the serial form: the Saint-Simonians were able to further their cause by using the press and *feuilleton* to capture an audience and recruit new members to their cause, disseminating their ideas by means of this early culture industry.[36] Philippe Régnier has called the Saint-Simonian project 'a model of collective enterprise in the conquest of an ideological hegemony through the press', a periodical press which matched the periodical nature of new politics in the first decades after the 1789 revolution.[37] Thus, instead of preferring a perfect, finished text which might prefigure the system to come (as did other utopians such as Charles Fourier), Saint-Simon favoured ephemeral and illocutionary modes of publication to match the state of 'definitive incompleteness' [*inachèvement définitif*] of public opinion.[38] It was his use of small consecutive doses which matched the fluctuating tempo of public attention and opinion that brought him success. The publications of his spiritual followers were also keen to create a pedagogy of gradual and progressive assimilation of ideas in a 'process of immanent progress'.[39] Advertising also captures attention immanently, over time and intermittently.

The most powerful way of capturing an audience through incompleteness was of course the daily literary serial in the public domain of the newspaper. This was the place of news which meant that the writer was speaking to a public interested in the present with its social and economic pressures. The serial is seductive yet unsettling since fictive and not 'true' – yet to gain readers even documentary pieces had to be romanced.[40] Also the story must seem true, that is, it must be true-seeming. Girardin insisted on authenticity and the non-fictional status of the writing in his newspaper; yet, rather than it being a question of truth or untruth, the serial constituted a particular poetic form designed for the explaining or rendering of reality. It was not there to misinform but to inform better, and Thérenty and Vaillant call this 'news fiction' [*fiction d'actualité*] and see it as being born under the July Monarchy.[41]

So must the *feuilleton* and the *Variété* section be spatially segregated from the rest to designate the importance of this space as a workshop for the explicating of the real. What *La Presse* introduces are fictions of the present, fictions which give us news – the latest – about what's happening in our society. This participation in news, in what is happening now, is done by means of the insertion of dates of real events, real people, of newspaper articles and advertisements (as in many Balzac novels).[42] The placement of the serial at the bottom of the page – the *rez-de-chaussée* or ground floor of fiction – has connotations of an unconscious; the place where the collective can dream

their situation, relive the news in other ways. It is as if fiction is the working through of events into ideologies, and the possibility of a playground or arena in which facts and events (news) are replayed and made intelligible. Once it is intelligible it can be offered to all and sundry and can constitute an appeal to act in some way. The bourgeois realist novel is thus a question of *actualité* which is also *publicité* – alerting the population but also interpellating them.

Queffelec describes the *feuilleton* as being influenced by the novel of present-day manners, making it 'a history of the present', and insists that from the beginning of the July Monarchy the ideological mould was being set up to receive it: 'the novelistic form was by far the best for giving an epic shape to the constitution of the social fabric ...'[43] Thus is the serial embedded – both literally, by its placement, and metaphorically, in the idea of current affairs. It is inspired by it and sends back a reflection of the news in changed form. Like the anecdote, says Queffelec, the serial 'transfigures meaningless daily banality into full, meaningful, particular [*insolite*] time'.[44] The news feature and the serial share the same interest in crime, and passion, within the social and the political. The novelistic serial also gradually pushes out all other types of serial – for the serial was not fictional at the start but semi-fictional since it consisted of history, travel, tittle-tattle of high society – all of them comments on the present.

Literature with advertising: A combined event

Literature was also made democratically available by Girardin in *Le Musée des Familles* in 1833 – a cheap paper, says Girardin in his opening article – in which 'la publicité rendît la littérature populaire'.[45] Here *publicité* is both 'publicity' and 'advertising' and the message is very similar to Dickens's idea that literature was fuelled by new industry and commerce. The romantic overtones of Girardin's profession of faith in the first number of *La Presse* show how he hoped to save the poet from obscurity: he wished to bring together and harmonize these 'men of heady poetry' who were 'individualities powerful in themselves' so that they might be heard regularly and so that their works would not remain fragments or ruins but be made living.[46] There was a sense in which Girardin wished to create an event – a daily event of literature and advertising – and make daily the work that had already been done by other periodicals, including his own *La Mode* as well as the new satirical magazines founded between 1829 and 1836.[47] Louis Véron, founder of the *Revue de Paris* in 1829, wanted to give literature the advertisement it needed to allow it to exist in more varied forms and lengths:

> ... to open wide the doors of publicity to all the young talent which is still in the shadow, as we do to those who are already well known, and at the same time to guarantee remuneration for literary pieces which need more than the space of a newspaper article yet do not constitute sufficient matter for a book.[48]

It is thus clear that even the nascent culture industry's fiercest detractors – Baudelaire in particular – were nonetheless thoroughly compromised by it: Vaillant points out that *Les Fleurs du mal* was first published in parts in daily newspapers, making of Baudelaire 'a newspaper poet'.[49] This vision of the collusion of literature and journalism is what Sainte-Beuve would increasingly attack in the 1830s and 1840s by calling it *littérature industrielle*. There is a sense in which the writing has moved away from the personal production, the intimate and particular work of an author to a collective state. An editor such as Girardin allowed his opinion to pervade *La Presse* by producing a house style from his own style and inculcating his writers with it. The anonymous 'we' used throughout the articles helps produce a style which is a like a seal of workmanship or manufacture.[50]

Alexandre Dumas employed teams of ghost writers to produce his daily serials on time; this serial-factory or literary assembly line would produce text which he would then reread and adjust, placing his 'signature' in the writing. Writers were thus given the credentials to create their own brand, yet assert the individuality of their writings following a romantic sensibility. Balzac was his own team of ghost writers; once he had learned to fit in with a house style as a journalist, so his own works bore some of the imprint of this. He harmonized his own output, making his own *griffe* or brand of writing, and then marketed it as his own special product. He created a sense of serialization within his serials and within the structures of *The Human Comedy* using a singular style but also a media style of integration in which each novel was a space in which to try out new forms of style and thought and then make them recur.

The daily event of literature within the press was also increasingly matched by events around the appearance of each *feuilleton*. The incredible success of *Les mystères de Paris* by Eugène Sue in 1842 was unstintingly admired by Hugo, Sand, and Dumas while Théophile Gautier said that the dying waited for the last instalment before quitting the world. Sue (like Dickens) received letters begging for the salvation of characters, and was even sent money. As the novel progressed Sue added social tirades in defence of the poor and became a sort of writer–saviour. Politics tried to appropriate *Les mystères* (the conservatives identifying with the moral aspect of the book, the parliamentary left endorsing its vision of the poor but at the same time embarrassed by its imaginative excess). The socialist Fourier group applauded it while Marx denounced its paternalism and mystification. Lithographs, caricatures, plates, fans and other objects were sold: a paraphernalia which we also see in Britain with Dickens. Paul Féval, author of *Les mystères de Londres*, went as far as to publicize his *Le fils du diable*, published in 1846 in *L'Epoque*, with a carnival procession.[51]

The impetus given to literature in the press by advertising meant that by the 1840s advertising was part of literature's life blood. The processions and paraphernalia were part of the experience of the daily *feuilleton*. So too

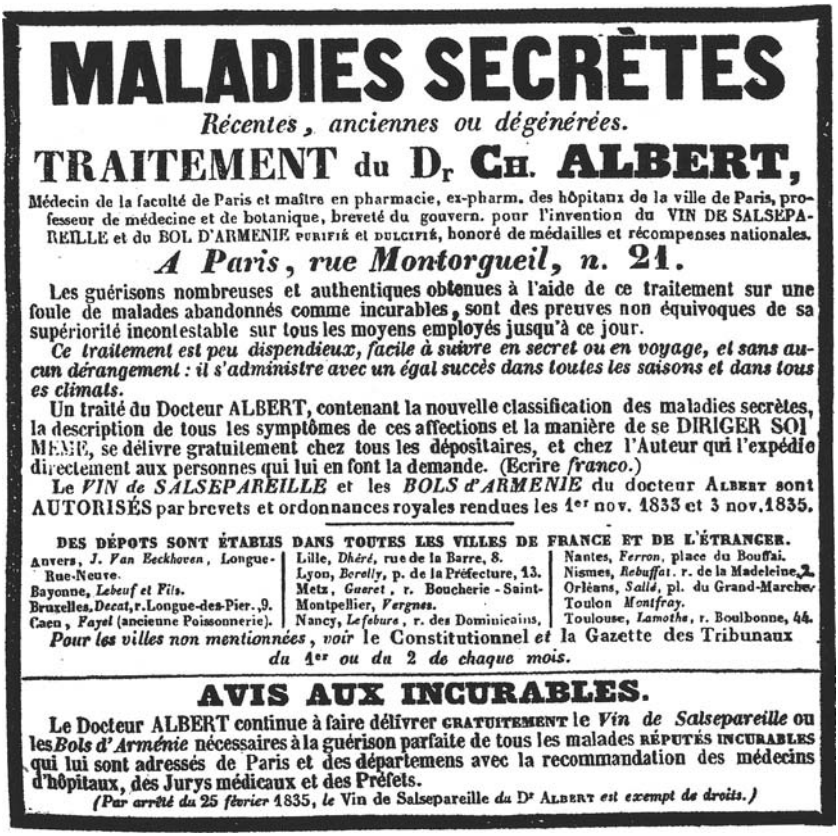
were the advertisements printed which appeared with it in the newspaper. It is the *Journal des Débats* of 1844 to which I turn – revamped thanks to the influence of Girardin's revolution and largely financed by advertising – to consider the effect on the reader of the co-presence of serial, news and adverts.[52] Balzac's stories appeared daily in graphic, visual and ideologically charged environments; in the case of the *Journal des Débats* (a simple folded sheet with four sides in which the first three sides are given up to parliamentary debate and news), the last side or back cover was reserved for adverts. The serial was on the bottom part of the first page of the paper – the famous *rez-de-chaussée* or ground floor – often running on to the bottom of the second page as well.

On the first page at the bottom is the title of *Modeste Mignon*, then comes the mention '*Scènes de la vie Privée*', then 'H. de Balzac' and in brackets '(*La suite à demain*)': the story is 'to be continued' just like the accounts of parliamentary debates printed above it. The drama of Modeste's existence suggested in the title 'Scenes of private life' acts as a contrast to the 'public life' which takes up most of the newspaper. The reader is invited into a world signed by 'Balzac', a proper name designating a private individual and whose fictional world is that of a woman named 'Modeste'. The reader surmises that she is a creature of privacy, or perhaps deprived of a certain public quality she craves. The title suggests a virginal and demure figure whose prettiness (she is associated with the word *mignon*) signals a certain innocence and vulnerability which might be violated by the intrusion of public into private space.

When we turn to the fourth and last page we are indeed struck by the extremely private nature of many of the adverts. The largest and most noticeable ads concern what are called private parts in English and 'intimate parts' [*parties intimes*] in French. The reporting of public life (the news and debate on the second and third pages) is thus sandwiched between 'Scenes of Private Life' on the first page and the very private remedies advertised on the last, such as '*Maladies secrètes*' (Secret maladies) offering treatment for venereal disease. [Fig. 19] There are also medicines for constipation and vaginal douches. In the same vein, the advert below appears regularly in the July issues:

> Doctor Eguisier's IRRIGATOR for feminine maladies, FUNCTIONS ON ITS OWN. Replaces the Clyso-Pump and is indispensable for washing, injections of fluid, ascending douches, irrigations which one can take alone in one's bed without getting wet or having to move.[53] [Fig. 20]

There is a picture of a reclining lady (of the romantic sort one might imagine Modeste to be) alone on her bed with little machinery visible. Yet beneath this innocent picture we find the legend *Injections à double courant* (Two-way fluid injections). On the right there is a drawing of an intimidating urn with a rubber tube and siphon. Turning from the serial on the front to



MALADIES SECRÈTES

Récentes, anciennes ou dégénérées.

TRAITEMENT du Dr Ch. ALBERT,

Médecin de la faculté de Paris et maître en pharmacie, ex-pharm. des hôpitaux de la ville de Paris, professeur de médecine et de botanique, breveté du gouvern. pour l'invention du VIN DE SALSEPAREILLE et du BOL D'ARMENIE PURIFIÉ et DULCIFIÉ, honoré de médailles et récompenses nationales.

A Paris, rue Montorgueil, n. 21.

Les guérisons nombreuses et authentiques obtenues à l'aide de ce traitement sur une foule de malades abandonnés comme incurables, sont des preuves non équivoques de sa supériorité incontestable sur tous les moyens employés jusqu'à ce jour.

Ce traitement est peu dispendieux, facile à suivre en secret ou en voyage, et sans aucun dérangement : il s'administre avec un égal succès dans toutes les saisons et dans tous es climats.

Un traité du Docteur ALBERT, contenant la nouvelle classification des maladies secrètes, la description de tous les symptômes de ces affections et la manière de se DIRIGER SOI MÊME, se délivre gratuitement chez tous les dépositaires, et chez l'Auteur qui l'expédie directement aux personnes qui lui en font la demande. (Ecrire *franco.*)

Le *VIN de SALSEPAREILLE* et les *BOLS d'ARMENIE* du docteur ALBERT sont AUTORISÉS par brevets et ordonnances royales rendues les 1er nov. 1833 et 3 nov. 1835.

DES DÉPOTS SONT ÉTABLIS DANS TOUTES LES VILLES DE FRANCE ET DE L'ÉTRANGER.

Anvers, *J. Van Eeckhoven*, Longue-Rue-Neuve.
Bayonne, *Lebeuf et Fils.*
Bruxelles, *Decat*, r. Longue-des-Pier., 9.
Caen, *Fayel* (ancienne Poissonnerie).
Lille, *Dhéré*, rue de la Barre, 8.
Lyon, *Borelly*, p. de la Préfecture, 13.
Metz, *Gueret*, r. Boucherie-Saint-Montpellier, *Vergnes.*
Nancy, *Lefebure*, r. des Dominicains,
Nantes, *Ferron*, place du Bouffai.
Nismes, *Rebuffat*, r. de la Madeleine, 2.
Orléans, *Sallé*, pl. du Grand-Marché.
Toulon *Montfray.*
Toulouse, *Lamothe*, r. Boulbonne, 44.

Pour les villes non mentionnées, voir le Constitutionnel *et* la Gazette des Tribunaux *du 1er ou du 2 de chaque mois.*

AVIS AUX INCURABLES.

Le Docteur ALBERT continue à faire délivrer GRATUITEMENT le *Vin de Salsepareille* ou les *Bols d'Arménie* nécessaires à la guérison parfaite de tous les malades RÉPUTÉS INCURABLES qui lui sont adressés de Paris et des départemens avec la recommandation des médecins d'hôpitaux, des Jurys médicaux et des Préfets.

(Par arrêté du 25 février 1835, le Vin de Salsepareille *du* Dr ALBERT *est exempt de droits.)*

Figure 19 'Maladies secrètes', *Journal des Débats*, 1844
Source: Bibliothéque nationale de France.

these adverts on the back page one is aware of the doubleness of existence – the idealized romantic heroine and the prosaically bourgeois technology which sustains her are set side by side. We find ourselves in the presence of a Balzacian exposition of the underside of appearances of gentility. Here the vaginal douche seems to underscore the folly of Modeste's Bovary-like delusions about herself and her entourage based on her literary reading. The adverts seem to graphically unveil the bourgeois dream of the romantic heroine, revealing the lie on which the social circus or comedy – but also the serial itself – is based. The serial during the July Monarchy often features seductive or fallen heroes and heroines, mostly of noble extraction, while the bourgeois figure is mostly ridiculous. Balzac often *undoes* or *unpacks* the romantic heroine in a manner which we associate with later novelists

Figure 20 'L'irrigateur',. *Journal des Débats*, 1844
Source: Bibliothéque nationale de France.

such as Flaubert. The advertising here suggests, along with Balzac's text, that romantic heroines are ordinary ladies in disguise.[54]

If we have no evidence (as we do with Dickens) that these adverts were in any way chosen or placed by Balzac, a look at a typical 'fourth page' of the *Journal des Débats* offers aesthetic links with the serial. We find a patchwork of contrasting spaces, often juxtaposing literature with physical ailments. On 18 July 1844 we find a page with an advert for the great romantic poet Lamartine, 'New Edition of the Complete Works of LAMARTINE', placed close to an advert promising the treatment of constipation 'without irrigation, medicines or baths': '*LA CONSTIPATION DETRUITE – SANS LAVEMENS [sic], SANS MEDECINE ET SANS BAINS*'. Further down the page is a picture of false teeth next to an advert for hair removal powder. At the bottom of the page an editor is offering a serialized work 'LES ETRANGERS A PARIS' or 'Foreigners in Paris' with '400 drawings in 50 parts at 30 centimes each. Number 30 already on sale.'[55] This collection of a series of types (here strangers in Paris) is akin to Balzac's strategy of offering to the reader all the characters of his time to be collected in parts. As in the Dickens Advertiser we find the idea of the gathering of parts, be they bodily or literary, to counter disarray and produce coherence [Fig. 21].

Yet disarray always threatens. Works of fiction (the novels of Walter Scott) or erudite books such as that on last page of 16 July 1844 ('*MUSEE DE VERSAILLES*', a book with engravings by Balzac's publishers Furne), are placed alongside *Maladies secretes* and *MARIAGE* in bold type, which advertises a marriage bureau.[56] Fiction, marriage (marrying of girls into genteel households) and venereal disease are all placed together so that respectable marriages and the fairy-tale weddings in fiction are dogged by the reminder of the illicit sexuality which produces venereal disease. What is upfront, so to speak, also has an area of hidden shadow. Marrying one's daughter through a marriage bureau may be seen as a transaction when it is placed by

Figure 21 Half page of advertisements, *Le Journal des Débats*, 1844

Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

chance next to an advert selling tracts of land in Greece: '*TERRAINS à vendre ou à louer en GRECE*'.

This page of adverts works like the serial itself: the work was planned beforehand but written to time. Similarly the ads were prewritten but the layout done as each edition of the newspaper came out. There are signs of certain changes in the composition of adverts day by day – presumably a response both to reader reactions and to the effects of sales and the need to place new ads. The global effect is of course subliminal in that the juxtapositions which I have mentioned work on the level of the unconscious and were not designed as a strategy of awakening or awareness. Queffelec points out that what interested the surrealists in the daily serial of the nineteenth century was 'a liberation of phantasms, an explosion of images and scenes which seem to speak the language of the unconscious'.[57] This is also the case with advertising, which was also favoured by the surrealists.

Yet regularity and familiarity are also of the essence: the reader must see the same adverts again and again to be affected by them. The press becomes a sort of political church service or mass [*messe politique*] which according to the Saint-Simonian, Chevalier, was held by journalism, a liturgy open to all and adapted to the events of the day.[58] We might consider extrapolating this idea out to the idea of an 'advertising mass' in which there is a catechism of the reader by the adverts he reads, much as Henri Mitterrand has considered the catechism of the reader by conventions of the nineteenth-century novel. This mechanism is also inscribed within the pages, images, layout and styles of the cultural object of the newspaper. It was Chevalier who proposed making journalists into media figures and advertising their presence – giving them an identity, a name. Régnier sees the Saint-Simonian vision of the press as being close to Althusser's theory of Ideological State Apparatuses.[59] The French press was a particularly powerful apparatus and, like the Dickens monthly number, it encouraged certain rituals of reading, a shuttling between discourses as well as scope for genuflection before the objects of consumerism. This regular communion is what creates a mental landscape designed for more consumption.

Repetitions and hyperbole are part of the stylistic requirements of the serial as they are of the advertisement: the appearance of both narrative and advert is only intermittent, and novelist and copywriter must therefore constantly give reminders and pointers. Capturing the attention of the public is a work of seduction, the need to gain custom and allegiance, to retain and make faithful the flow of attention of the reader.[60]

The Human Comedy's publishing history and capturing attention

Balzac knew how to capture the flows of attention of his readers and his whole publishing venture was designed to do this. Not only did each part of his serials promise a sequel 'to be continued', but each novel would always have a follow-on and constitute in itself an episode in the larger pattern of

the *Comedy*. He was constantly responding to innovation and innovating himself, drawing on his skills in layout, typography and the placement of illustrations.[61]

Balzac started a number of his own newspapers and revues during his career (all short-lived, as many were at this time) and was sometimes the sole contributor furnishing the pages with news, literature and political commentary. These early years show how printing, journalism and a career as a man of letters were begun simultaneously – his journalistic writing for revues and papers informing his literary pieces, which themselves were written for the periodical press. His writing was thus never divorced from the material text which would embody it nor the means of diffusion which would carry it to his readers. Let us take, for example, *La Peau de chagrin* [*The Wild Ass's Skin* or *The Magic Skin*], subtitled *roman philosophique*, which was published in August 1831 by Urbain Canel and Charles Gosselin in two volumes and launched with a very clever advertising campaign. Balzac himself wrote an article full of praise for it in *La Caricature* on 11 August under the pseudonym 'Alexandre de B'. Yet, before this, parts of the story had already appeared as 'preoriginal fragments' [*fragments préoriginaux*] in *La Caricature* in December 1830, in the *Revue de Paris* and *Revue des Deux Mondes* in May 1831. These were 'Le dernier Napoléon' (very different from the published text), 'Le suicide d'un poète' (with some variations) and 'Une débauche' (no changes). In September there was a second edition with an introduction by Philarète Chasles and followed by twelve short stories with the new title *Romans et contes philosophiques* (three volumes). In between times the story was read aloud in literary salons as a form of advertising.[62] There was a third edition in March 1833 and a fourth in 1835. In 1838 an illustrated edition was published by Delloye and Lecou with 114 illustrations by the best known illustrators of the day, and these illustrations, unlike those of the later Furne edition, were half page and inserted into the text so that a sense of continuum is felt – the illustrations presented as an integral part of the text. As an ex-printer he worked with the printers and correctors at Gosselin and Canel, placing the text above and below illustrations – using his skills as a maker of posters and advertisements. Already we can see that Balzac's output was fast and furious and that his works were often repackaged and relabelled and sold on in another form.

In 1839 Charpentier brought out another edition, which was followed by the Furne edition, placing it in *The Human Comedy* at the start of Tome 1 of the *Etudes philosophiques*. All the way through Balzac made corrections, trying to integrate the novel better into the global scheme of *The Human Comedy* by improving dialogues (as his knowledge of French high society grew) or changing names to make more links with other works he had written in the meantime and so making the *Comedy* a more coherent web of recurring characters (particularly for the Furne edition). As he republished,

Balzac reworked the writing itself using each edition as a laboratory. Thus the names of real persons such as Lamartine or Hugo or Scribe which first appeared in *La Peau de chagrin* are replaced by fictitious names, while anonymous speeches at the orgy are given particular attributions to fixed characters. For the last Furne edition Balzac writes '*Peau*' with a capital 'P' to accentuate its supernatural character and talismanic quality. From these details we gain a strong sense of Balzac publishing parts of novels as small pieces in newspapers and magazines and then gradually forming them into a whole – to be sold to publishers or newspapers who would then publish them in volume form. A huge edifice was slowly built from all sorts of fragments, written, published, rewritten and published differently. Interestingly, the existence of his work in volume form did not prevent periodic republishing in fragments or serial form in the periodical press as a form of advertising for the next edition in volume format.

In 1833 Balzac conceived of the vast plan which would become *The Human Comedy* and decided to stop most of his journalistic writing, giving to the newspapers only the 'prepublications of his works'.[63] The word *prépublication* used by Roger Pierrot is a fascinating one since it translates a writing habit of Balzac and also a marketing strategy which involved constant decompositions and rearrangements, fragmentation followed by integration. In 1841 Balzac signed with Furne, Hetzel, Dubochet and Paulin for his *Oeuvres completes*, and in July 1844 he composed a catalogue for *The Human Comedy* (125 works, of which he still had forty to write). In 1847 Balzac sold the rights to many of his novels to the newspapers *Le Siècle* and *Le Constitutionnel*. In 1849 Furne launched *The Human Comedy* again with 340 *livraisons* (parts or pieces) at 25 centimes available from February of that year. This meant that it was sold in relatively cheap parts which could then be collected up into volumes, thus keeping its *feuilleton* quality even in its complete version and therefore reaching a wider audience.

Later the serials were taken up and reprinted in provincial newspapers, or in weekly newspapers which abridged the serials and replayed them, so to speak. Many serialized novels also became theatre performances which reached a more mixed public (*cabinets de lectures* only had the outer fringes of the popular classes – those in direct contact with upper echelons such as domestics and artisans). Nearly all the good *feuilletons* were played in *théâtres de mélodrame* and in vaudeville theatres and even went to the provinces.[64] Thus did the serial touch a larger number of people than we can at first determine from sales, and literature had literally become an act of making public.

Balzac's writing was born of its embeddedness within the new media world; the patterns of serialization (production in parts and through repetition) and of multiplicity (media takes on many different forms) are to be found not only in his marketing strategies but in the construction of his sentences, his characters and their subjectivity.

The becoming virtual of César Birotteau: Slogan, catch-phrase, recurrence, return

Balzac's novel *César Birotteau* – the story of a perfumer who launches himself into the world of speculation and advertising – is an extraordinary description of what happens to the subject once projected into the very media world which we have been describing. It is the world of Girardin and Balzac and the new spaces they helped create on the walls and within the press. *César Birotteau* is also an example of what happens to speech and writing within these new spaces: Balzac shows how his characters' language is modified but he also betrays the capture of his own writing within the new systems of representation.

César Birotteau was originally a free gift in the newspaper *Le Figaro*, which needed a gimmick to sell its subscription. *Le Figaro* offered Balzac 20,000 Francs to publish the novel in 5,000 copies in two volumes; volume I dealing neatly with César's triumph and volume II with his fall or ill luck (*César à son apogée* and *César aux prises avec le malheur*), both to be offered free to newspaper subscribers. The technique of offering a novel as a gift is a form of what we call 'bundling' today in marketing – selling one product by putting it with another. A prospectus of 17 December 1837 announced the appearance of the novel and showed that *César Birotteau* was also an advert for *La Maison Nucingen* (as Balzac's novels often were – one novel announcing the next or referring back to others). It was thus a most modern phenomenon: a novel published by a newspaper, recounting the world of advertising, acting as an advert for the newspaper and for the other works of Balzac.

The story was originally divided into sixteen chapters. The titles had a Hogarthian resonance, since they suggested a *Rake's Progress*, or the idea of the peripeteia of Marivaux's *Le Paysan parvenu* [*The Upstart Peasant*]. The titles followed a narrative progression which ended in a form of redemption, thus suggesting a 'Pilgrim's' as well as a rake's progress.[65] What one retains today is the splendour of the first volume followed by the misery of the second, of an Icarus flying too near the sun of speculation.

César's 'Second Life' or the dying art of being singular

We considered in Chapter 2 of this book the opening scene of Dickens's *Edwin Drood* in which Mr. John Jasper is having an opium dream. This sequence, written in 1870, is considered a very modern opening for a Victorian novel, eschewing a more traditional setting up of spatial and temporal landmarks. The opening sequence of *César Birotteau*, written in the early 1830s and first published in 1837, is also a dream sequence in which Madame Birotteau's unconscious is offered to us, just as Jasper's was. Rather than the geographical superposition of cathedral spire and opium den bed post, Madame Birotteau's dream brings together conflicting times and selves: herself as

she is now, serving in her husband's thriving perfumery shop, and a premonitory ragged self who begs at her own door. Like Jasper's dream, it is an impossible vision which offers a simultaneity of perception which is also a splitting of the self (Jasper between two conflicting geographical areas and lives, Madame Birotteau between present and future).

The first lines provide a powerful induction into the world of commerce. The 'great symphony of Parisian noise' [*grande symphonie du tapage parisien*] suggests the grandeur and bathos, the *mixité* and heterogeneity of the city space. The background to the oneiric scene is the incessant night-time hubbub on the rue Saint-Honoré as market gardeners and cabs clatter back from balls and theatres over the cobbles. Madame Birotteau sees herself double [*s'était vu double*], a double self which horrifies her and crystallizes her fears concerning her husband's desire to rise socially. She not only sees a future self as Scrooge does in *A Christmas Carol* but sees her present self at the same time as another self. Thus, she sees herself as *more than one*, as if through César's activities she will have lost the art of being a stable and singular entity.

Waking from the dream and not finding her husband beside her, Madame Birotteau laments his present agitated state, which makes him leave his bed in the night. She blames this on his recent entry into public life as deputy Mayor of the district, which has meant that he is beside himself with excitement, in a state [*tout je ne sais comment*] (37). He is *not himself* and *beside* himself so *more* than himself. Madame Birotteau sees business, the making of profits from perfumery, as the only necessity and fears the change brought about by symbolic roles, by 'public functions'; the conferring of titles alters not only the name but the very nature of a man. Birotteau is a Royalist who goes to mass and fears God, who represents the stability of the *Ancien Régime*, yet he is also a beneficiary of his times, of the Napoleonic reconstruction of society and also of the Restoration in which César now lives and works, which seeks to empower the *petite bourgeoisie*, offering the possibility of social mobility. In this context, César sees his wife as limited and unable to see beyond the possession of static objects. Her fear is that of losing tomorrow what she holds in her hand today; hers is an 'unquiet happiness' [*le bonheur inquiet*] (49).

César's scheme is to speculate with a group of others by buying land cheap without capital and by reselling it at a profit (which will cover initial loans). It is a venture to make money out of nothing. At the same time he dreams of launching a new product on the market to cover any losses and to make their fortune even greater. But his wife persists in seeing the danger of thus multiplying one's activities and of the abstraction implied in his commercial ventures: 'Why triumph over others? Isn't our fortune enough? When you are a millionaire will you eat two dinners instead of one? Will you need more than one wife?' (50). She thus expresses anxiety over an inflated consumption, a desire to surpass oneself – indeed to surpass one's own *self* – to consume more than the body can and to be more than one is *in name* and in

flesh. Such concerns tie her to an image of the material body which cannot 'dine twice' and does not need two wives; this not only reflects her dream of seeing herself double – that is, doubled or multiplied by her husband's conception of his industry – it also imagines César as becoming (or producing) a strange other self. It is as if César is beginning to abstract himself from his concrete existence, to become other, something beyond man, an *Übermensch* whose appetites go beyond the biological; this metamorphosis is suggested in the title of the novel.

The full title of César Birotteau is 'Histoire de la grandeur et de la décadence de César Birotteau, marchand parfumeur, adjoint au maire du deuxième arrondissement de Paris, Chevalier de la légion d'honneur etc.' It already situates the reader in a world of historical change and the instabilities of rises and falls (a theme favoured by Balzac and clearly present in the title of his later novel *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*). César is a merchant, the title tells us, but also part of the administration put in place in postrevolutionary France (the system of mairies and arrondissements, Napoleon the First's 'légion d'honneur' which was brought in to fix society, to give it a strong administrative base). If we read the title as a sentence or utterance, César (whose name carries the reader to the decline and fall of the Roman Empire) will pass through the world of merchant and administrator from grandeur to fall. These titles – part of the 'mass of granite' with which Napoleon hoped to guy down the heady potential of postrevolutionary society – cannot fix the trajectory of César, whose destiny is linked with speculation rather than systems of governance. His rise is written in his titles, and in his name but also in the abbreviation 'etc.' – which implies other glories not mentioned or perhaps even thought of. Therefore, before ever the novel begins, César is no longer a singular entity but a succession of new identities and possibilities; he is an inscription, a book title, an advertisement but also an epitaph which plots out the magnificence of possibility as well as the potential wreck of such pseudonyms.

From the outset, names refuse to stay put, refuse to know their station in life. His daughter, we discover, is named 'Césarine', suggesting the doubling of César himself, who projects himself into the future through her, placing her at the centre of his plans for betterment. Names begin to promise the promotion of the self. This is clearly stated in César's first intentions: 'I will burn our shop sign *La Reine des Roses*, paint over *César Birotteau, merchant perfumer, successor of Ragon*, and put quite simply *Parfumeries* in big gold letters' (42). Thus does César in this imaginary gesture take his business from the particular name – the family concern patronized by merchants and nobles known personally to Birotteau – to the general. 'Perfumes' are for the mass, for all – to be readable and consumable on the market. The substitution of the wooden sign for the big gold letters – for one word – is more readable to the eye: it involves a form of standardization which

effaces the personal title with its family connotations (the 'Queen of Roses' is fondly imagined to be Césarine herself). Other effacements are also in preparation, since César tells his wife that the shop will no longer show to passers-by the work of the preparation of bottles, labels and corks; signs of work will be hidden away and the goods of the perfumer produced as commodities (magical objects springing all created and ready into the world). This heralds the advent of his factory, painted with great letters 'FABRIQUE DE CESAR BIROTTEAU', making production in series away from the eye of the consumer possible.

The symbolism of burning in César's speech – a gesture of *tabula rasa* learnt from the radical gestures of the revolution to which César as a small merchant owes his bourgeois ascension – is keenly felt and feared by Madame Birotteau. She warns him and says '*Les grandeurs seraient ta perte*' which might be translated as 'Greatness will be the undoing of you' or 'Your rise will be your fall'. She takes up the liberating fire used by Birotteau to designate the sweeping away of all old 'signs' and the bringing in of the new and says that he who puts his hand to a fire gets only flame in return and that 'today politics burns' (43). She thus shows a talent for an aphoristic form of speech, for slogans which take up common sayings. Her linguistic innovations are paradoxically linked to what she abhors in her husband: the creation of new styles of speech and spaces of inscription. Her message, nevertheless, remains attached to tangible, material wealth and not to the chimera created by speculation. She advocates the buying of *rentes* as in 1793 when investment was in real estate – lands and dividends – and when the income from them was guaranteed. Her dream is to buy the farm near Chinon which they have always dreamed of rather than entering a scheme based on the buying of land with borrowed money.

César speculates, however, that loans will not be necessary, since he has discovered an oil to make hair grow: 'une *Huile Comagène*!'. He centres his hopes on an advertising poster designed to crush his rivals:

> I'm planning a poster which will start thus: *Down with Wigs*! It will have prodigious effect. Have you not seen how I am always up half the night! For three months the success of *Macassar Oil* has stopped me sleeping. I want to put *Macassar* out of business! (47)

This is a fixation on another brand name, the English 'Macassar Oil' – a real oil imported by Balzac into his fictional world as was his wont – which figures in so many of the Dickens advertisers. César's brand of oil must triumph and must replace the name of the rival brand. The battle is to be played out there on the walls and is a question of the substitution of one word or name by another; it is no longer a question of substituting a King with a Republic, or with an Emperor – the true battle is now one of brand names.

Madame Birotteau is sensitive to this truth and all the more suspicious and mistrustful of this new battle. Her greatest fear is of him losing his name as anchor (that inscribed over the shop):

> To place yourself higher in society, you no longer wish to trade in your name [*être en nom*]; you want to get rid of the sign *La Reine des Roses*, and you want to go on with your poster and prospectus palaver which will have César Birotteau on every street corner and on every hoarding on every building site. (48)

Thus will Birotteau no longer be in one place and no longer trade under one name. Nor will he continue to use his name – by placing it above his door – to designate one business, one shop; the name will become associated with a product, not a place of business. It will thus multiply and appear everywhere. He will be the victim of a name which he no longer controls, for it will now be out there on the walls. This is the *réclame* which once called modestly for attention but has become monstrous in Madame Birotteau's eyes since it has taken on the breadth and scope of *publicité* or the advertising campaign. Birotteau says he will protect himself by creating a filial company bearing the name of Popinot, his young associate. But for Madame Birotteau this is again a bewitchment of the idea of business since it has gone beyond the person and the name.

To calm his wife César returns for a moment to a conception of the name that he knows his wife will approve of, that is, the name as family name and part of a familial lineage of honour and respect. He calls her by all her Christian names and promises that his affairs will be perfectly respectable:

> Rest assured, Constance-Barbe-Joséphine Pillerault, that you will never see César Birotteau do anything that is not within the strictest probity, or go against the law, against moral conscience or delicacy. Why it is terrible that a man established in business for eighteen years should be suspected of impropriety in his own home! (53)

Ritual is set against reproduction here and family names in business are of the order of a respectable repetition. César's wife continues, however, to see the advertising name as belonging to a subversive re-productivity. She evokes his original products – *Pâte des Sultanes* or *Eau Carminative* – which were tried and tested inventions, and then proceeds to lament the way he now puts his hopes on 'a cut of the cards'. You are a perfumer, she says, so be what you are 'be a perfumer and not a real estate promoter' (54). Madame Birotteau goes back at this point to her nightmare and says: 'Oh my horrid dream! My God! To see one's own self! [*Se voir soi-même*!]' (54). The strange reflexivity of this statement following on from her injunction to her husband

to *be himself* creates a connection for the reader between the proliferation of the name on walls and the horror of seeing oneself 'double' or reproduced. The self can now be seen projected out into the pages and walls around and Constance Birotteau declares herself dizzy with his doubleness.

Yet commerce is not the only means by which César projects a 'second self' into the world around him. The expiring *Ancien Régime* was losing its tried and tested proper names as the Republic swept them away to replace them with successive names (a reality which inhabits Balzac's writing in the form of recurring characters throughout *The Human Comedy*). The Napoleonic era was a time of the erasure of the old and the inscription of new names (new administrative titles, new nobility). These names needed to be given authenticity, that is, those who wished to place or position themselves needed to do so by using promotional tactics which we might normally associate with product placement. César gains in the estimation of his peers by using phrases and expressions in his talk which lend him an air of authenticity:

> [H]is speech was carefully stuffed with commonplaces, sprinkled with axioms and calculations; all of them put together into rounded sentences. Gently churned out they sounded to superficial folk like eloquence. (76)

César's speech is based on iteration; it involves regular production – reminding us of Chadband in Dickens's *Bleak House*, who is a veritable oil mill or factory of words. Like Chadband, César uses the commonplace [*le lieu commun*] to create a feeling of familiarity and to allow recognition.

The best example of such linguistic marketing of self involves a heroic incident in which César was wounded as a royalist fighting for the restoration of the king on the steps of Saint-Roch church in the revolutionary month of *Vendémiare*.[66] He builds the incident into a catch-phrase which he duly trots out whenever circumstances allow, gradually transforming it into a sort of slogan which is repeated over ten times during the novel. Going from the simplest statement of fact – César first tells his wife that the King was awarding him the *Légion d'honneur* because he was 'wounded at Saint-Roch in *Vendémiare*' – it is embroidered upon and slightly transformed each time. He embellishes the account later by saying that he was fighting 'for the Bourbons on the steps of Saint-Roch on the 13th of *Vendémiare*, where I was wounded by Napoleon' (158). The contact with Napoleon becomes more direct each time the story is told, as when he is condescending to his apprentice Popinot: 'at your age I was on the steps of Saint-Roch on the 13th of *Vendémiaire*; and, upon my life, Napoleon the Emperor, wounded me!' (165).[67] From the passive 'I was wounded' we have moved to a vision of Napoleon in full action aiming directly at the apprentice. After César's fall and final redemption the *Procureur Général* makes a solemn speech which tells of César's life, insisting on the story of his skirmish on the steps of

Saint-Roch; thus, sent out onto the airways as self-promotion, the story efficiently returns as a form of character reference when the bearer can no longer defend or speak for himself.

The anecdote with its core of unchanging information helps César create an image of himself in the eyes of others, affirming his status as a player in the revolutionary years, a selling point, so to speak, on the new social stage of the 1815–30 Restoration. It is also more than this, since his 'good name' thus marketed becomes an avatar or second self which gives him currency and allows him to circulate within the nexus of names which make up the society of the Restoration. This trademark or linguistic brand places César within a legitimate hierarchy, and also allows him to promote himself, to project himself into a sphere of pure gain and movement – to be in motion commercially since these early royalist leanings give him the position of provider of the King's powder.[68] Thus is César's apogee caught up in this potent but dangerous potential, which takes him far beyond the 'arithmetics of bourgeois feeling' (162) which the narrator tells us is all he knows. The narrator warns that the humble simplicity of Birotteau (his shopkeepers' calculations) will not survive the complex virtuality and multiplication of modernity into which he is about to step: 'commercial accidents easily overcome by the strong minded, become irreparable catastrophes for smaller minds' (57).

Loss of self: ***Que suis-je au milieu de cette machine?***

This story of a bankruptcy is also a bankruptcy of the self which prompts Birotteau to ask 'What am I in this machine?' (263). The projection of self and product into a sphere beyond the material world involves an act of abstraction (the abstraction of language) and a replacement of self by an avatar. When this happens control over one's fate diminishes. Although multiplicity of self and word (seeing double, multiplying the name) can bring about success – advertising brings Birotteau the means to pay his debts and to clear his 'name' – it is also a form of failure; the family name is annihilated beneath the name of a product and the new names of competitors. The 'cost' of rising, of becoming other than one is, is underlined in the last paragraph of the first part in which César's follies and extravagancies (his Ball for example) are shown to be the 'price' of 'the fatal red ribbon placed by the King in the buttonhole of a perfumer' (225). Madame Birotteau's evocation of a solid and singular self may only be a fantasy but it stands as a powerful image of what César loses when he enters his 'Second Life' and thus moves from one form of subjectivity to another.

Karine Taveaux-Grandpierre's study of the production of virtual experience in the second half of the nineteenth century in France – in which she borrows the concept of the 'culture industry' from Adorno and Horkheimer – shows that its aesthetic traits are serialization and standardization, which produce a certain number of cultural norms. Creation is superseded by

production, and taste by consumption, and the most important effect is 'the direct creation of mental states by the production and diffusion of virtual experiences'. Most importantly, uniformity of thought, the serialization or standardization of individuals is brought about by the 'normalisation of cultural products bringing in the reign of pseudo-individuality'.[69] The problem of this 'pseudo-individuality' is evoked in Balzac's novel when César asks himself what he is in this machine. César feels he has been definitively cast out of the reality described by his wife in the first pages: a world of the tangible and the empirical. He and others of his kind cannot bear very much *virtuality* – an interesting counterpoint to T. S. Eliot's 'human kind cannot bear very much reality'.[70] He is alarmed by the 'the multiplicity of ideas' in advertising and the sense that he now has in his hand 'more threads than it was possible for one hand to hold' (228).

César is described as losing his grip, his hold on his life, in the wave of writing which hits him. If the bills start rolling in and he has 60,000 Francs of *mémoires* (notes from his creditors), he is simultaneously struck by his own existence on the walls. As César's shop plummets so does his sister company, run by A. Popinot, rise 'radiantly in the oriental flames of success' (257). Although this should be a cause for celebration, the description is marked with a menacing exotic excess (bringing in the flames feared by Madame Birotteau). The 2,000 posters which have been placed all over Paris at strategic points are described as huge and red and strike César's gaze with the enormous words (reproduced in capitals in the text) 'CEPHALIC OIL' [HUILE CEPHALIQUE]. The narrator insists that no one in Paris could now avoid finding himself face to face with one of the posters.

Birotteau admires this machine of advertising yet cannot fathom it, for it is new and alien to him. He knows it is part of an *immense révolution* but is baffled by the power and speed of it. In tandem with this growth in advertising, his own factories have speeded up the rhythm of production; this speed is detrimental to his health, his whole system weakened by contact with the system of the walls. Popinot tries to explain the workings of the system, the huge investment in advertising in newspapers and in posters which is necessary, but cannot explain its wider effect on the subject. César's friends, the Ragon family, on the other hand, represent another, slower time and another relationship with space, since they are still living with the values of the *Ancien Régime*; they distrust the new way of doing business but, like Popinot, cannot elucidate its dangers.[71] It is the banker Claperon who first tries to explain to the wondering Birotteau the world which he has entered; he calls it 'abstract commerce ... in which profit is creamed off before it is made ... a new Kabal' (308). This cabalistic element perplexes César, as does Claparon's composite phraseology. How can he fathom a world in which posters come before the product, in which expectations are founded on nothing yet can produce wealth? Molineux, the money lender, is a better explicator; he simply tells César that there are

no human relations in commerce: 'Money knows no one; money has no ears and no heart' (312). There are no bodies and no souls in the calculation, says he, and like Madame Birotteau sees it all as wind and emptiness; he pinpoints a metaphysical trouble here, an ontological disturbance close to Eliot's apocalyptic vision of 'Men and bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind'.[72] When César is apprised of his definitive ruin he recites the Lord's Prayer, which, printed upon the page, looks strangely like an advert, with the most important sentence in capitals like a slogan: 'GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD' (323). Balzac shows that César's malaise is also the realization that there is no 'outside' to this commercial text.

César looks wistfully at other business folk in the novel who refuse abstraction and yet survive commercially: Madame Madou the nut retailer, who supplies the nuts for the making of César's hair oil, refuses all exchange based on the promissory note. Her business is conducted without writing and with very few spoken words, her dealings with others being based on a brutal immediacy. Indeed, congress with customers is limited to the imprint of her fists on the faces of those who do not pay, or the imprint of coinage in her palm from those who do. These are the only forms of writing she engages in. Pillerault's commerce is similarly concrete – his deals depend on the simple spoken word with immediate gain or loss and no deferral. There is no surplus and 'profit was not indexed on labour', that is, he refuses the idea of increasing labour to make more money; in his ironmongery trade objects have a fixed value and that value is always gained but never increased, since he trades with a regular and steady zeal.[73] For him, the desire to create capital does not triumph over the value of work.[74]

César, on the other hand, is spending himself too much or spending too much of himself, pushing his business to its limits and beyond; his own system is a machine which is on overload. Here we find some of Balzac's own theories on the human constitution: César is using up 'more nervous fluid, more will, than should be daily emitted, thus eating into the capital of existence' (284). Balzac sees life as a diminishing 'capital' into which one delves, the reduction of César's life capital being presented to us like a *peau de chagrin* which shrinks as he walks and reads.[75] Rather than having the alchemical and gothic overtones of the skin in the novel *La Peau de chagrin* which measures Raphaël de Valentin's life, César Birotteau's diminishing existence might be seen as part of a change in subjectivity brought about by the abstraction of values in print culture. However, the philosophical and magical element of that novel is still present in *César Birotteau* in the form of the new magic of commodities (the transmutation implied in the shape of bottles, the sound and look of words); this is the fetishistic creation of value through a system of written signs. César is no longer a man but a name, 'a well-publicized label'; rhetoric replaces substance and self-display becomes paramount.

Pierre Citron describes *La Peau de chagrin* as a novel of the 'dissolution of a being'.[76] As in *Melmoth réconcilié* (1835), in which Balzac shows Melmoth

aged in a second, Raphaël de Valentin, horrifying to look upon like the picture of Dorian Gray, expires at the end of the novel. Likewise, when the magic of capital wears off, the face of death surges in and reveals in César the wear and tear of so much exposure to signs. Paradoxically, César dies from the emotion of seeing his world re-established after the humiliations and privations of bankruptcy – a happiness which is too much for his organism to bear. Yet his death is also the result of a longer-term transmutation from a simple craftsman and merchant into a businessman and advertiser. This is the plight of the unhappy bourgeois, which Balzac, André Wurmser tells us, knew better than he knew music or art. Birotteau is a bourgeois who is an exemplary victim of the *vicissitudes bourgeoises* of his time.[77]

Balzac, Gaudissart, Finot:
The demise of the writer and birth of the media worker

If César is worn away by the vicissitudes of his time, made ghostly by the ghostliness of the walls, he is also responsible for adding to that world. His work, once it moves beyond the making of cosmetic products, is one of production of text and the writing of his own advertisements, aided later by the advertisers and promoters Gaudissart and Finot. If Balzac shows the death-like contact of the individual in the matrix of communication, he also illustrates the life-giving aspect of it – the opening up of the public space of expression through the press and through advertising. *César Birotteau* shows the way in which image and text become available to ordinary folk – available in a fundamental sense of being reachable and sharable. Balzac as writer shows himself working with his materials, reaching out for the printed matter around him and integrating it into his novels, surfing the walls (walls of advertising, walls of museums and art galleries, surfaces of newspapers) and plucking material from them.

There is a true sharing of the sensible world, a *partage du sensible* to use Rancière's term, an aesthetics which is also a democratic process.[78] Rancière insists on the fact that the nineteenth-century novel places what is ordinary and common to all at the centre of its aesthetic world. He claims that an era or a society might read itself in the features, clothes and gestures of a common person in the novels of Balzac, that a sewer may reveal a whole civilization in Hugo, that a farmer's daughter or a banker's wife may offer vision and understanding of social and economic systems. And indeed Balzac's use of the ordinary social type is one of the ways in which he makes the society of his time intelligible; these are often conveyed with the use of the general statement, the present tense of universal truth, and often combined with an article as in *le bourgeois* in order to designate a particular type whose traits are known to all. When describing, for example, the difference between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie Balzac speaks of the 'heavy solid clothes ... which give to the bourgeois masses a common

aspect' (216). He also refers to other popular published texts that help create a network of references which become an 'encyclopaedia', to use Lecercle's expression already discussed in Chapter 1. Molineux, for example, is likened to a grotesque landlord from Mercier's *Tableaux de Paris* of 1781, a well-known catalogue of all aspects of Paris, its human flora and fauna in particular. Molineux is described as a sort of plant specimen like those drawn by Grandville.

Balzac's text is thus a workshop of cultural processing revealing the mechanisms that transform the lowly matter of everyday life into fiction. It shows how the raw materials of the walls of Paris offer inspiration not only to Balzac as writer but also to César Birotteau, Popinot, Finot and Gaudissart. Through them Balzac speaks of his own productions and aligns himself with these new media workers as he creates a virtual world through citation. To embellish Aragon's saying that the novelist 'tells lies so truthfully', Balzac firstly uses the truth to tell his lies.

We will first consider César's reading and writing habits. As a member of the petite bourgeoisie it is not via the *belles-lettres* that he gains access to culture, and the reader quickly learns that his vision of the world is not the fruit of the perusal of books in libraries. We first get to know César by learning of the works he has *failed* to read, such as the library of books which his daughter buys him to mark his social ascension: 'Bossuet, Racine, Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Montesquieu, Molière, Buffon, Fénélon, Delille, Bernadin de Saint-Pierre, La Fontaine, Corneille, Pascal, La Harpe' are the works which, Balzac tells us, make up the standard bourgeois library – often purchased but rarely read and which César indeed 'would never read' (206). This is the high literature from which César is barred, which he will only ever encounter in vulgarized forms through newspapers like Girardin's or indeed through the novel, which brought literary culture to the wider merchant classes. Birotteau has no education and relies on hearsay to form his opinions: 'He necessarily took on the language, the errors and the opinions of the Parisian bourgeoisie who admire Molière, Voltaire and Rousseau because they are told they should and who buy their works without ever reading them' (78).

When César tells Popinot of his idea for 'Huile Comagène' hair oil, he tells him that 'comagène' is a word found in the tragedy of *Bérénice* by Racine (which he has never read) where a 'roi de Comagène' figures. This information was given to him, he says, by Monsieur Alibert, the King's own Doctor. Culture is thus circulated independently of the texts in which it figures. César also conceives of his 'Sultan's Paste' by browsing through an oriental book, while his hair oil is the result of an encounter with an engraving of *Héro et Léandre* – a woman pouring oil on her lover's head – by Laugier, inspired by Girodet's pupil, Delourme. This classical reference provided by the popular image market also inspires a 'line' or *gamme* of oil bottles. César says that, although he admires the engraving of the *Vierge*

de Dresde, it is the original of *Héro et Léandre* he would wish to buy since the oil bottle in it played such an influential role (149). César also turns for inspiration to Boileau's writings on the Ancients as communicated to him in conversation. It is with the aid of these references from a culture of print and popular opinion that César projects himself out of his boutique and onto the walls.

César is a typical example of the bourgeois mind (*ces intelligences bourgeoises*) since he 'reads' the ambient hearsay, absorbs the public opinion which circulates orally, the *idées reçues* which are the fruit of rumour and legend. He subscribes for example to the notion that writers and artists regularly died in hospital 'from the sequels of their originality' [*par suite de leurs originalités*] and were all atheists and should never be invited into one's home (149). Similarly he believes the Emperor Napoleon had leather pockets in his waistcoat to be able to take his tobacco by the fistful and regularly galloped on his horse up the steps of the Versailles *Orangerie*.

He also has chance encounters with texts, scanning the walls and newspapers of his city, much as James Dawson Burn does in London. As he walks along the banks of the Seine past the booksellers (he is described as a *flâneur parisien*) he chances upon a book, that is, 'his eyes were struck' by a dusty yellow cover. It is '*Abdeker* or the art of conserving beauty' (a real work published in 1742) and he finds as he flicks through it inspiration for lotions and perfumes. From this he makes his *Double Pâte* and *Eau Carminative*. César picks up the fashion for oriental words and his *Pâte des Sultanes* has an immediate and 'magical' effect on the customers. He then imitates the posters he sees for theatre performances to promote his products: 'he was the first amongst the perfumers to deploy that luxury of posters, advertisements and other publications which we call, perhaps unjustly, charlatanism' (71). Once they are projected onto yellow, red and blue posters, these products are described as having a life of their own like actors on a stage: they are said to 'perform' on the stage of advertising. César then passes for a most superior man, commercially speaking, since 'he wrote his own prospectus whose main element of success was the ridiculous phraseology' (72). Despite the inflated and ridiculous style, Balzac offers the reader the prospectus as a piece of evidence [*pièces justificatives*] and reproduces it in the text of the novel – not only the title in capitals but the whole text as written by César. As readers we discover a complete process of reading: ingestion of the language of the walls followed by a production of text made from that raw matter.

Thanks to this adventure in reading, and the writing it engenders, César is launched. His products sell in perfumery shops all over France. He has gone from being a taciturn, tranquil shopkeeper to a man in whose mind different words and expressions jostle for precedence.

Birotteau's techniques, though often ridiculed throughout the novel, act as a blueprint for the writing processes at work in Balzac's own texts. Not

only do adverts feature in the novel, but the reader finds a form of brevity associated with short advertising texts, the 'many ideas in a few words' much admired by Balzac's journalists in *Lost Illusions*.[79] If Balzac is writing before the telegraph linked London and Paris in 1851 creating a telegraphic style, we already find forms of succinctness linked to the need for swift circulation of information in the press and on the walls. Literature and art are cited by choosing emblematic moments which are easily remembered and become images or scenes rather than citations. This is succinctness which relies on a knowledge of other texts and images, on a reading public which will not necessarily have read or seen them but will know *of* them from hearsay and rumour. These are linked, of course, to the commonplace which we have already seen at work in César's self-promotion, to the notion of collectively accessible concepts.[80] These are also akin to the 'narratemes' mentioned in Chapter 1 of this book.

In Balzac's text we can see commonplaces in the making, the forging of images which will then be repeatable in other contexts. In some way, as each simile or analogy is made it already seems as old as the hills and enters a pantheon of common sayings. Birotteau imagines a campaign against *Macassar Oil* 'standing on one foot like one of Plutarch's heroes' and asking his apprentice if he feels strong enough to 'kill Macassar'; Popinot, 'fire in his eyes', says that he will 'bring it down!' (111). Here, the idea of the warlike businessman is set in place with the use of an image from a classical text. Balzac later describes Birotteau making an Eastern gesture to convey the magic of his commercial ventures 'worthy of *A Thousand and One Nights*' (120). The heroic and the exotic are drummed into service to create Birotteau and his narrative; literature (the extraordinary) is used to explicate the ordinary, which thus becomes intelligible. Popinot the crippled apprentice is made readable to Balzac's readers (and conceivable as a lover) by means of the information that Lord Byron, Walter Scott and Monsieur de Talleyrand were all club-footed. The prosaic apprentice gains status from his association with romantic literature (and becomes an acceptable and thinkable entity for more literary readers), but at the same time the figure of the romantic poet becomes readable to the newly literate through that of the humble apprentice. One might say that this is a workshop of the social and that Balzac's text is carrying out a mulching down of social and educational strata into a more homogeneous form in which the more highly educated can embrace lower culture and the uneducated can assimilate traditionally higher arts. No reader therefore remains unchanged by his or her engagement with the novel. The resultant texture of writing is what Sainte-Beuve was perhaps most afraid of when he used the image of distended threads and loose weave in discussing style.

Irony is part of such work since it brings into collision conflicting discourses – often the grandiose and the bathetic – and asks us to make links between the grand sweep of history and the local micro-events which were

not considered worthy of note. Thus does Balzac's writing, instead of being based on rhetorical sequence – an oral rhetoric of argument – become a matter of chains of images. The grand discourse of decline and fall is used to talk of the peripeteia of the perfumer's life. His prime or 'noon of existence' [*midi de la vie*] is likened to that of great cities, nations, institutions or businesses 'which like noble races and dynasties are born, rise and fall' (92). Expressions such as 'similar to' [*semblables aux*] or 'like' create the central simile and offer a Hegelian image of the cycles and processes of civilizations; the grandness of the design is reinforced by references to the world [*notre globe*], and its trajectory. Romantic images of the fall of proud civilizations (Troy, the pyramids and the Napoleonic empire are evoked) conjure up for readers the crumbling monument of romantic poetry such as the ruin in Keats's poem *Ozymandias*. Yet all of this is then reduced to a bourgeois scale:

> Let this story be the poem of bourgeois vicissitudes which none have yet thought to give voice to, so denuded of grandeur do they seem. Yet they are just as immense; we are not talking of a single man here, but of a whole people and its pain. (93)

Balzac's novel, like the whole *Human Comedy*, is a bourgeois tragedy. Plutarch, Racine, and the great texts of history are deployed in easily assimilable form in the telling of the humble story of a small merchant. Traditional or classical sources are shown to be a vast pool of references into which any reader or writer may dip. Balzac, writing at the beginning of the *prêt-à-porter* clothes industry of the bourgeoisie, seems to weave together from his own references a *prêt-à-parler* (a ready-to-speak) which is also a *prêt-à-lire* (a ready-to-read for novice readers) or *prêt-à-écrire* (ready-to-write) for other writers to reuse.

These chains of images also rely on *preassimilated* references to painting and the fine arts, making up an 'encyclopaedia' of visual references. Paintings and engravings that could be seen at the time in museums and collections, particularly the Dutch and Flemish painters, are used by Balzac to bring out what has been described by André Wurmser in his introduction to the novel as 'the quality of reverie' (38) which any object might inspire in him. We might say that access to experience is granted through the prerepresented world which makes up the texture of *The Human Comedy*; César's daughter Césarine is described in terms of a Rubens painting with her ivory skin and blue veins, while Constance Birotteau at the age of 37 is described as resembling the Venus de Milo discovered in 1820 and sent to Paris by the duc de Rivière in 1821. L'abbé Loraux declares César's death to be the death of the just and points to the expired perfumer as resembling a Rembrandt painting in which Christ calls Lazarus back from the dead. The painting is used to create a 'type' which is also an ideological unit – here the merchant–martyr or martyr of commerce.[81]

The description of Pillerault, friend and fellow merchant of Birotteau, also relies on the medium of paint:

> His thin face and hollowed cheeks, severe in tone, in which ochre and bister were harmoniously mixed, offered a striking resemblance to the heads given by painters to the figure of Time, but somewhat vulgarized, since the habits of a life of commerce had lessened the monumental and forbidding character often exaggerated by painters, sculptors and clock-makers. (141)

The description relies on the filter of painterly techniques, the work of the mixing and melting of colour and nuance (ochre and bistre); as a writer Balzac is working not from life, so to speak, but from art, that is, from Pillerault's resemblance to already known images. This is a demonstration not only that life imitates art but that life is always already a question of representation and even precommodification. Commerce is shown to act on human flesh, vulgarizing the work of artists and modifying codes of painterly representation. The extract also shows that 'art' – the habits of painters, statuette and clock-makers – is already a question of vulgarization since they 'exaggerate' the monumental aspect of features and transform a classical image into a motif. This Baudelairean bringing together of the classical motif or image and the commercial creates an irony (often insisted upon by Walter Benjamin) which shows that both novelist and painter are engaged in creating a vernacular so that figures in novels and paintings are recognizable and saleable. If painters tend to exaggerate and make monumental, Balzac's text is engaged in the de-monumentalizing of emblematic figures, part of a process of *embourgeoisement* (becoming bourgeois) which makes the image local and therefore readable by another type of audience created by newspaper culture. Balzac is also showing that this work of putting certain types before the public is not only the product of recent print culture but of other much older forms of representation.

Within his own painting of the Parisian scene Balzac engages in other forms of vulgarization. The reader receives an induction into a world made familiar with the texts and images seen daily in the streets – the representations already accepted by the reader as part of a natural decor of print culture. Pillerault, for example, is introduced as a working man of the left and a republican, incorporated or assimilated into the bourgeoisie by the revolution [*agrégé à la bourgeoisie*] (144). This assimilation, it seems, is not only due to political event but to the regular interpellations of the newspapers he reads and the engravings he puts up on his walls; his opinions are also habits of consumption in which his admiration of Manuel, General Foy, Casimir Perier and Lafayette comes from his reading of papers such as *Victoires et Conquêtes* and *Soldat Laboureur*. In his house the walls are decorated with engravings such as the *Serment des Américains*, the portrait

of Bonaparte as *Premier Consul*, and the *Bataille d'Austerlitz*.[82] Balzac's text thus offers what Wurmser describes as 'collages of the true' [*collages du vrai*] (10), in which names of well-known cosmetic products of the time (*la pâte Regnauld, la Mixture bréslienne, la pâte des Sultanes*) and names of dignitaries (Vauquelin, a leading chemist, le baron Thibon, *sous-gouverneur* of the Bank of France) are used. Documents are reproduced as 'proof' and 'evidence' [*pieces justificatives*] with typographical detail – be it Du Tillet's treacherous letter to Nucingen or the two adverts for César's hair oil. It is fiction which not only advertises its link with the real but sucks the real world into itself.

One of the most striking examples of this are indeed the two adverts reproduced for the reader in the text, the first written by Birotteau and the second composed by the professional copywriter Finot ten years later. The second advertisement, which closes the first part or 'apogee' of Birotteau's existence, is more elaborate than the first and is offered to the reader as if it were a real advert 'as it is received by thousands today' with the mention in brackets 'Another piece of written evidence' (192). The two sides of the medal are shown beneath the mention 'Gold Medal of the 1824 exhibition' with 'HUILE CEPHALIQUE' written in capital letters at the start and throughout the text. The advert says that no oil can make hair grow and that this new oil simply follows the habits of the Greeks, Romans and Northern peoples in keeping the hair protected from outside influences and at a constant temperature. The protective aspects are enumerated and the language becomes flowery as it describes 'that shine, that finesse, that lustre which makes the heads of children so charming' (194). Instructions are given concerning how to use the oil and then the address and price, which clearly reproduces advertising practices of the time.

Balzac is using familiar layout practices and emblems quite different from the duller first advertisement written by Birotteau himself. The advert is also shown to be the collective work of Gaudissart and Finot, who together create the new prospectus and its visual and textual impact. According to Véronique Bui, the advert is quite literally 'a materialisation of the progress made in advertising poetics'.[83] If the first ad looks like an *annonce-anglaise* with minimal typographical play, the second looks more like an *annonce-affiches* and Balzac's instructions to the printer concerning the second ad show he had prior knowledge of how to make them and where to find the *polytypages* to make the medals.[84] The eye is given more scope in the second, especially with the use of vignettes, which only appeared in 1828. This also brings out the anachronism on which the novel is based, since it covers the years 1818 to 1823, when advertising had not reached the stage which Balzac describes.[85] We can thus note that, rather than produce a historically viable image of advertising, Balzac preferred, or was perhaps obliged, to offer readers the evidence of their own time. The imperative of modern advertising – its aesthetic and ideological impact – means that as each new

technique surges into view it tends to wipe out memories of older, cruder and less visual forms – and Balzac could therefore only speak of advertising as his readers received it at the time of writing the book. The novel is shown once again to be a purveyor of 'news' as we have seen, of the newest and the latest.

There is as a consequence a blurring of boundaries between the advertising inside the novel and that without. The advert which originally launched *César Birotteau* in *Le Figaro*, for example, seems to be written in the same style as those written by César and Finot within. There is a deliberate similarity in style between the two and between other adverts written by or for Balzac.[86] This further complicates the relationship between advertising and literature, since advertising *for* literature is written in the same style as the literature itself. Balzac imitates in the language he uses the very prospectuses he himself wrote and printed, thus blending fiction and advertising and creating adverts which function as 'trailers' for his fiction. If at the time adverts were still relegated to the fourth back page of newspapers, Balzac drags them into the novel itself but also puts the novel back into them; he thus becomes a practician of *publicité* in its modern form.

The effect of this borrowing from the world of fine literature, painting and commerce is to produce a *colmatage*, to use the expression of Lucien Dällenbach, for whom the Balzac text is an assemblage or gluing together of data.[87] Alain Vaillant has commented upon this assemblage as being evidence not so much of the 'bad style' of Balzac but of his genius in producing a dialectical movement in which the joins, cracks and halts are more vital than the 'false smoothness of the Word'.[88] His argument is that this 'monstrously proliferating style', which has been said to create an entire civil state in a work of literature, is less concerned with aesthetics than with work and production, substituting a *valeur-esthétique* with a *valeur-travail*. We might develop this idea and consider Balzac and his writing as hailing from new media work, producing a text which is always in a state of becoming, of being continually churned out. His writing is a question of movement and is part of a powerful desire to speak out or blurt out in writing what is clamouring for attention in press and on hoardings.

The activities of Finot and Gaudissart in *César Birotteau* are in a sense the symbol of this form of circulation and productivity – this textual blurting out. As characters in the novel they perform or act out what Balzac is doing as he writes: moving text and image around, that is, taking it off the walls and out of books and papers and into the sights and minds of new readers. It is both production and circulation. They are go-betweens, pimps, procurers [*proxenètes*], enabling congress, producing intercourse, makers of 'useful literature', that is, literature which speaks to people.[89] Finot writes the adverts while Gaudissart is the advertising agent – a placer and marketer of the adverts which men such as Finot write. Gaudissart at 22 years old is already known for his 'commercial magnetism' (167). He praises Finot's capacity to

enter the minds of merchants and to find the appropriate words to sell their products but insists upon the reliance of Finot's work on the advertising campaign of which he is master. He insists on the idea of the name being everywhere – on every wall and as a consequence in every mind. If Finot produces the text, Gaudissart must circulate it:

> I'll go to Italy, Germany, England. I'll carry with me posters in every language, have them stuck everywhere, in villages, on church doors, in all the best places I know in provincial cities! This oil will shine, will glow, will be on every head. (169)

He quotes *Le Cid* to underline the idea of the triumphant oil and, like Finot, can produce a fund of noble literary and classical references to convince others. Popinot becomes drunk on Gaudissart's words and sees in a sort of hallucination the streets of Paris running with oil, his own hair growing madly and two angels like those painted on the screen at the melodrama holding a band on which is written the name of the oil. This is a dream of abundance and prolixity, but also of wild growth, of which Birotteau knows the value. The latter declares that if they have the illustrious Gaudissart they will be millionaires, and, as if in homage to Gaudissart's capacity to dynamize advertising and to lead an offensive campaign, he strikes a pose like 'Louis XIV welcoming the Maréchal de Villars back from Denain' (171).

André Wurmser has noticed that, like Gaudissart, Balzac was his own advertising agent and that he promoted his own person, be it in marriage or business, with incredible talent: he was his own agent or *placier* and resembled Gaudissart more than any other character in his novels.[90] Likewise, Finot is called a 'literary pimp' [*proxénète littéraire*] when he first appears in *La Peau de chagrin*, a writer who sells his writing and his name: 'he's a chemist, a historian, a novelist, an advertiser ... not so much a man as a name, a well-known label'.[91] Finot is known in the various roles he plays in *The Human Comedy* as being the maker of writing which gets everywhere, of ubiquitous text. In *La Femme supérieure*, serialized in *La Presse* in July 1837, we find him writing riddles, rebuses and charades for sweet wrappers to make ends meet, and thus his writing is like the writing which gets into every home and becomes a household item, like that imagined by Dickens when he spoke of his 'Cheap Edition'. He assails any free space – the bottoms of the columns of print in the papers where last-minute advertisement articles could be placed – bribing the print workers with dinners and drinks to reserve the space for his own text. He also runs a regular campaign of heady letters of ingratiation to secure other free space in the press. He is the representative of the centrality of advertising in the daily press during the July Monarchy. He is also a dream of textual

productivity, an avatar in a second life who succeeds financially where Balzac himself failed.[92]

There is a sense in which Balzac's writing is a cleansing process, a getting rid of excess – as if the fact of being forced to take in so much matter necessarily implies some form of evacuation. We are given a vision of a mechanical productivity involving a surge of energy which moves writing about, almost a physical force of nature, a flow like water in a river. Grandville's caricatures in his *Un autre Monde* (*Another World*) of 1844 accompanied by the text of Taxile Delord provide just such an image and it is worth considering the prevalence and force of such representations at the time. Balzac collaborated on several projects with Grandville on the strangeness of the modern urban world – its 'otherworldliness' so to speak – and both men shared a desire to understand the forces at work in this increasingly invasive system of communication. *Un autre Monde* relates the marriage of Dr Puff and Lady Réclame in which media procreates with media to produce yet more media. Grandville's interest in the mechanical aspect of society, its output and input, its excesses and penuries, has already been seen in Chapter 1 of this book in the image of 'Literature rolled off ready made'. This image appeared on the page with the following statements: 'Thought is now only a machine', 'Men are only automatons', 'We write mechanically.'[93] The idea is taken to extremes in his drawing in the same book of an advertising pump which sucks in text and image then blows it out in the form of prospectuses. [Fig. 22] We see a blizzard of adverts spraying over a crowd – an idea we have already encountered in British text and image in Chapter 1 and which is a familiar idea in other Balzac novels.[94] We read that it is a suction pump which vacuums in and then pushes out printed matter, a machine which can 'flood the largest capital in less than a second'. It is a literary house or company [*entreprise littéraire*] which has the pump built so that 'nothing goes to waste, everything is transformed'. Grandville pursues this idea of transformation by saying that writing of all kinds is recycled by this extraordinary machine since other people's ideas are 'refreshed' or, rather, stolen. The theft of ideas, the narrator tells us with great irony, is thus 'universally tolerated and protected'.[95]

Writing is now taken from several sources and made into a sort of floating pulp. There is a sense in which writing has become a collective effort which produced fears of an invasion of a literary democracy, part of a widening of the pool of writers. For Sainte-Beuve this went hand in hand with a lowering of standards and a certain dull sameness.[96] Whatever the criticism aimed at this machine, Grandville's image translates both the fear and excitement of an overproductive machine of literature which is insatiable in its feeding and procreating. *César Birotteau* as a novel also explores this 'other world', that is, the virtual world. Both works touch on a problem of their own time yet simultaneously offer us the background and beginning of our own strange encounter with media today. We now rely on jobs which

une pompe aspirante et refoulante qui devait en moins d'une seconde inonder de prospectus la capitale la plus

étendue. Cette machine m'avait été commandée par une entreprise littéraire qui désirait frapper un grand coup : invention qui fera l'admiration des générations à venir; car, ainsi que nous l'avons dit au début de ce livre, rien ne périt, tout se transforme.

« Grâces à cet axiôme on dérobe sans scrupule les idées d'autrui ; on appelle cela les rajeunir.

Figure 22 Sketch of an advertising pump, Grandville, 1844
Source: Bibliothéque nationale de France.

involve the seeking, bringing together, collaging or collating of already existing images and texts, on the creation of data banks, image banks, the manipulation of pre-existing graphics, on writing which is the result of cut and paste. It is a context in which school and university students find it increasingly difficult to understand the concept of plagiarism or what the phrase 'in your own words' might mean; if all words are out there in sentences and pre-packaged for all to use, what does authorship now mean? *César Birotteau* might be said to begin to formulate such questions. We will now consider how *Lost Illusions* begins to answer them.

Dissolving literature: Lost illusions or great expectations?

The word 'literature' is used in this subtitle in its modern English sense of a canonical literary writing free from the taint of commercial concerns. This Leavisite sense stands in contrast to the use of the word *littérature* in nineteenth-century France, which designates a writing associated with newspapers and journalism: Gaudissart describes Finot as being 'in literature' (as a trade, as you might be 'in' television or publishing) and his adverts are described as 'useful literature'. Several sources inspired the use of the word dissolving: the dissolving book mentioned in *Lost Illusions* by David Séchard to describe the poor quality of cotton paper and also the 'dissolving view' which was mentioned in Chapter 1, a device for the projection of a succession of advertisements, each fading out to allow the next to appear.[97] Both offer up the idea of the ephemeral nature of textuality and even of its disposable nature, but more importantly its status as projection or *re*-presentation – therefore as constantly dissolving. Writing takes on the status of dream or fantasy rather than being enshrined in the solid object which is the book.

There is a dissolution of a certain form of high literature, of the notion of 'Letters', at the moment of Romanticism. Jacques Rancière uses the word 'literature' to mean a new writing which is no longer that of the formal *belles-lettres*. In his book *La parole muette. Essai sur les contradictions en littérature* he describes the printed word as a 'mute' or 'dead' painting of speech [*peinture muette, une peinture morte de la parole*] and gives the following description of its action:

> ... this muteness makes the written word too talkative. No longer guided by a father who, according to a legitimate protocol, guides it to the place where it will bear fruit, the written word goes off on its own willy-nilly, as it pleases. It goes off to speak in its own mute way to whomsoever it encounters without knowing who is a suitable recipient/interlocutor and who is not.[98]

It is this quality of writing which triumphs within the framework of what Rancière calls the emergence of literature in opposition to the classical and

normative definition of the *belles-lettres*. He sees this moment as coinciding with romanticism, which does away with the hierarchy of genres to replace it with the equal status of all subjects: the model of speech is replaced with the model of writing whose only realm, Rancière tells us, is 'the infinite flow of ink onto the flat surface of the page, the un-bodied body of the errant letter which goes off to speak to the faceless multitude of readers of books'. Romanticism is thus not a new poetics but 'the entry of poetry and art into the age of their dissolution'.[99]

This dissolution is a redistribution of cultural capital and a redefinition of what it means to have access to a common experience. Be it narrative or advertising or both, writing is released from the confines of a particular paper support and is able to move from one to another, to become media. To reach this stage there is a work of burial of an old world and a construction of a new one which is the work of Balzac's *Lost Illusions*, its first two parts published in 1837 and 1839 in volume form, the last in 1843 as a daily serial before becoming a volume in 1844.

Our work in this section will be to understand the nature of the dissolution at work, to understand the nature of the illusions lost but also what sort of 'expectations' might have been gained; we will therefore be referring to Dickens's great novel of illusion and expectation as the most akin in tone to Balzac's work. To understand this link we might turn briefly to the ending of *Lost Illusions*, which has been seen as a new beginning. Gaëton Picon sees Lucien's pact with the diabolical Vautrin, who saves the former from suicide, as much more than a simple dramatic effect – typical of Dumas or Horace de Saint-Aubin – rather, as a change in Balzac's own relationship to his writing. It is a commentary on the act of writing: Carlos *alias* Vautrin drags Lucien away from death but does not offer him life in exchange, only a form of survival, not in the world as such but in a *surmonde*, a super- or 'beyond-world'. The end of illusion is in fact a passage from reality to dream, to a form of *fantastique rêverie*.[100] For Picon *Lost Illusions* marks the passage from Balzac's realism to a world of the imaginary in which each object or character must undergo the first condition for any participation in the imaginary: to cease to live. I would interpret this as the illusion of reality giving way to the reality of illusion. The loss of illusions, be they political or personal, leaves the way clear for the main business of the novel, which is to create illusory spaces which are also spaces of illusion in print. Lucien, like Pip in *Great Expectations*, allows us access to this new world. Vautrin's promise to Lucien is very like Magwitch's to Pip – Pip becomes his avatar through whom he can live vicariously and triumph in a second life. Vautrin *alias* Carlos says:

> You will shine, you will strut and preen, while I remain grubbing in the muddy foundations on which the brilliant edifice of your future will rise ... I will always rejoice at the pleasures you enjoy and which are denied to me. Why, I will *be* you![101]

We can easily hear the voice of Balzac speaking to his character Lucien, who will live for him, an avatar in a dream world, but we also hear the reader's hopes of being somebody else through a Lucien, a Julien Sorel, a Pip. This emotional and imaginative liberation is akin to that felt on entering today's online spaces which offer alternative existences. Balzac helps map a new social frontier which today is situated in cyberspace.

'Les deux poètes': Literary burials, technological births[102]

The movement of writing and walking often evoked by Balzac, for whom thought and philosophy followed the rhythm of walking, are two activities which give cadence to the novel. There is creativity in moving from place to place but also in the production of writing, and the two are often linked and are progressive forces unleashed as we traverse the novel with Lucien. The way in which this movement is operated is through the centrality given to the means of production of writing: print runs across the page, pages are turned, words stamped onto paper. The rhythm of the printing press is the constant 'noise' one hears as one reads the novel. It sets the rhythm – a movement of shuttling back and forth, a music which Pierre Citron in describing the three parts of the novel (the first and third part in the provinces and the second part in Paris) has termed 'an *allegro* framed by two *andante*' (29). The movement from dull province to exciting Paris (the most scintillating depiction of Paris since Diderot's *Le Neveu de Rameau*, says Citron), a journey done partly on foot, partly in carriages, is shadowed by a movement of ink onto paper and paper through the presses. There is motility to the narrative – sometimes linear and progressive but also cyclic, immanent – a printing press which turns on itself and produces ever more of itself.

The novel begins with the backward printing machines used in the provinces in the early 1800s. The Stanhope press, Balzac tells us, was not yet in use in France and letters were still pressed down upon the paper rather than being rolled onto it. He evokes the 'devouring' mechanical presses of modern times. This image of speedy production of text acts as an emblem of change which guides Lucien's story: the end of the novel also evokes the new paper which had been made in France and was feeding the faster, more efficient presses. The novel, therefore, begins and ends with the insistence on print and particularly the productivity of print associated with Lucien's friend David. Illusions are tied up with it. David's father Jérôme-Nicholas Séchard, we are told, was an *ours* or 'bear', a worker who fed the old presses with ink and whose movement back and forth in front of the press is likened to the movement of a dancing bear. The human body still imposes its rhythms on the machine in this description or, rather, machine and man work together. The narrator tells us that, when other men were sent off to the wars in 1793, the illiterate Séchard was named *Représantant du Peuple* and was helped to open up the press and to print out the decrees of the

'Convention'. He was helped by an aristocrat (in hiding from the Terror) to compose, read and correct the decrees which, paradoxically, threatened those who hid nobles with the death sentence. These decrees – the advertisements of the Terror – were duly posted up and the two men remained safe, the aristocrat returning later to his land.

The closed-minded Séchard – given the status of printer because of the vagaries of history – does not take on the culture of his aristocratic worker but remains with his old ways, and when his son returns from Paris, where he has been studying typography, the latter looks with dismay at the old wooden presses. Old Séchard sets them going and proudly polishes them like artefacts or relics of another age. He says that the new English presses are the 'death of the character', that the old-fashioned presses on which manual force is needed to make sheets which are 'cleanly printed off' (47) are superior and adapted to the needs of the provinces. The notion of stamping and imprinting meant to last is at stake here. Séchard has no vision of the importance of the words he might be printing but only of their material existence as signs.[103] Here the presses have a use-value which the new machines have lost.

The printing presses are not the only obsolete items at the start of the novel. When the noble but impecunious Lucien de Rubempré is employed by David, the two form a friendship based on the love of poetry; the description of the two poets in the midst of the printing materials in 1821 is very like a vanity painting with the light at each end of the room fading into a penumbra in the centre, the many browned posters on the wall, the piles of yellowing papers and prospectuses. The description is romantic and painterly of the two young poets – one strong, dark, vigorous, the other blonde, angelic. The two are still under the sway of the *belles illusions de jeunesse* (and by implication the *belles-lettres* and romantic literature which since the end of the Napoleonic wars had become available to them): the two men read Schiller, Goethe, Byron, Scott, Jean-Paul, de Cuvier, Lamartine, and André de Chénier. Yet the 'two poets' are already marked with their aesthetic and ideological obsolescence; poets are 'out' and prose-writers are to be hailed in. Grandville and Delord in their parody *Un autre Monde* say clearly that poetry is no longer *de mise* and that only prose 'pays'.[104] These two poets will be swallowed by the culture of print and will later even become actors in the furthering of that very culture.

The start of the novel also lays out the movement or shifting back and forth (often on foot) induced by the geographical space of Angoulême. A paper manufacturing town for three centuries, it also offers a map of French society at the time, with the nobility in the upper town with the Church and the Courts while below in the *faubourg* (L'Houmeau, where Lucien lives) lies the humbler world of merchants and industry. Though the commerce and money of the lower town creates more riches than the upper, the segregation is utter and Lucien's movement from one space to another

is termed *une petite revolution* (65). The immobility of the upper echelons is underlined by Balzac, who sees it as a closed and locked community living through repetition, firmly Royalist and pious in ritual if not in belief, and 'as immobile as their town and their rock' (66). This stagnation of the nobility during the Restoration, clinging to the rock on which their town is built, is what will be upset by the growth of print and the press. Down in the *faubourg* Lucien and David are busy reading and both will contribute to the change in regime, this social and geographical tension being the base of narrative tension. The passage into the modern world of print culture will break down these spatial divisions.

The narrator insists that the Restoration had made the rivalry between the two parts of the town worse – and that relations had been calmer and less acute during the Empire of Napoleon. It is at this moment of segregation that the noble Madame de Bargeton, marooned in the upper town, reads poetry avidly but also the news and imitates the language she reads, the *tartines* in the newspapers, the grandiloquent speech and hyperbole of the press. She yearns for a twin soul to share her passion for romantic poetry but also for the literary press to which the society around her – uncultivated and philistine – is indifferent. Lucien, of noble extraction though son of an apothecary and working as a printer, offers this outlet. He is invited to a *soirée* and recites an ode to Sardanapalus, the *chef d'oeuvre* of the moment.[105] He writes a love letter to Madame de Bargeton in which he talks of the 'dashed expectations' [*espérances perdues*] of his young life, which furthers Madame de Bargeton's vision of the poet gained from romantic images of suffering, isolation, alienation as well as victory and plenitude. Yet the audience who listen to Lucien (or rather do not) are not versed in the art of poetry and his readings are misunderstood by a new nobility untrained in the art of rhetoric. Vaillant has described the disillusionment felt by poets who had been given expectations during the years of the Jacobin *Convention* of an all-powerful speech capable of changing reality: 'The romantic poet – and even the most reactionary – saw himself as the inheritor of the orators of 1793, the printed book replacing the political Tribune, the audience having been widened to the whole nation.'[106] There was thus huge disappointment when the limitations of the new nobility and bourgeoisie, the latter promoted from the richer *paysannerie* thanks to the revolution, was finally understood: most had never set foot in the salons of the aristocracy and had no knowledge of literature and its rhetorical basis. We discover in *Lost Illusions* the extent of the effect of the revolution on literature (Vaillant calls it a *séisme*) since it destroyed much of the aristocratic network of the *Ancien Régime*. Attempts at restoration under the Empire and particularly after 1815 failed to rebuild the social fabric of literary communication in the private salon and this left the way clear for the public world of print to take over.

Lucien cannot breach the gap between lower and upper town and must submit to being looked down upon by those he considers his intellectual

inferiors: like Pip in *Great Expectations*, he learns to despise himself by seeing himself through the eyes of more socially elevated women. Just as Estella makes remarks about Pip's rough hands and boots and vocabulary and forces him to hate these traits in himself, so Lucien sees his own failings in the matter of dress, particularly once in Paris where, like Pip, he fragments his own person and sees himself through the withering gaze of Mme de Bargeton: 'I look like the son of an apothecary, a real shop boy.' He becomes, under his own gaze, a series of indifferent parts – badly cut hair, ugly collar, foul boots, a jacket cut like a sack, gloves like a gendarme's – and he realizes with some sadness that one needs a huge capital to play the part of a fashionable young man. Back home, he looks at the inscription above the pharmacy now run by his father's successor and feels shame. The inscription is set out on its own on the page as if to underline its impact, a sign painted in yellow letters on a green background: '*Pharmacie de* POSTEL, *successeur de* CHARDON'. The name of his father thus posted up for all to see exacerbates his sense of being associated with trade. Similarly does Pip apprehend his father from the inscription of his name on his tombstone: the father is reduced to a name, a sign – in Lucien's case a commercial sign – anchoring him within a particular lineage and class. In both novels the inscription, in the absence of the father, takes on a physical almost *corporeal* reality which each protagonist must resist in order to exist independently: the sign is a limb which must be seen as separate and removable.

David urges Lucien to consider himself a free agent and to ignore the ties that no longer need bind him. The inscription above the pharmacy is not like the inscription which binds David himself. The latter gives the following advice to Lucien as he tells him to go to the *soirée* given by Madame de Bargeton while he himself remains at home: 'My own life has stopped, Lucien. I am David Séchard, printer to the King at Angoulême, and whose name can be read on every wall at the bottom of every poster' (96). David seems to consider himself firmly set within a class and a tradition. Lucien, however, is placed by David in a different world; he is a movable item, an element which can still change, not yet permanently inscribed on a sign or a poster like Lucien's father or David. He can take on a new status in Law or diplomacy or administration: 'You have been neither counted nor listed. Take advantage of your social virginity' (96). This virginity is also a virginity of print. He can rewrite himself and can appear, as yet, anywhere. We might remember that César Birotteau's first act is to change the sign of the family business in order to become part of a mobile world of signs. David, on the other hand, sees himself as stamped indelibly in his position by the old presses of his father – hand-printed so to speak. Lucien, like Birotteau, lives under the sign of the Stanhope press, which can reprint and produce as fast as society changes. It will shake up the old hierarchies and allow for the fast renewal and turnover of the self.

David, like Vautrin, will live through Lucien's triumph, a desire he expresses in explicit terms: 'I will have pleasure from all your successes, you will be a second me' (96). Once again we find the notion of vicarious living, of a second self in a second life, allowing David to move, however fleetingly, beyond the pursuit of regular labour within a sober and slow-changing provincial world and to live the excitement of vertiginous change. We as readers are also invited to follow Lucien to Paris so that we might explore a world normally denied to us.

Yet, despite the passive role David allots himself, he is produced for the reader – far more than Lucien is – as an agent of change, and this through his own work on the technology of print. He modestly explains that it is his knowledge of chemistry combined with an observation of commercial matters which has put him on the road to a 'lucrative discovery' and that he still has some years of work on the industrial procedures. He explains the problem of paper to Lucien's sister, Eve: the end of the Napoleonic Empire has brought in the cheaper ingredient of cotton rather than *chanvre* or hemp mixed with linen flax; but this is still too expensive and the great cost of paper 'is slowing down the momentum which the French press is necessarily picking up' (127). There must, therefore, be another ingredient in paper to replace rags. David thus apprehends and advises the reader of the devouring Leviathan of print production and its presses which is asking for more and must be fed. Before ever Lucien loses his illusions, David has already moved into another era and shifts the focus from poetry to print. The narrator tells us that, as David spoke, the idea of a continuous sheet of paper was still a dream in France, that just as language needed centuries to change and develop so typography and paper manufacture changed in minute steps.

Yet David's thought processes often seem like giant leaps, especially those concerning the durability of paper. Just as cotton shirts are less durable than linen, so cotton gives inferior paper that is too absorbent. In England, says David, paper is only made with cotton, with the result that 'solidity is a thing of the past'. Well before Lucien's loss of illusion in Paris publishing, David shows that the world they are entering is not one of durability; if the very matter of paper is of short life then the printed word upon it will also be. Why publish works that last if the material medium cannot? Poetry is for the world of ancient books, built to last, while prose is churned out by the kilometre and can be reproduced quickly to replace old texts. David gives the superb example of a cotton paper book which, when left in water, will simply dissolve and be reduced to a pulp, whereas linen rag-based paper means an old book might stay two hours in water and still not be unreadable. He warns that an alternative to paper based on linen must be found, for in ten years linen rags will no longer be a viable ingredient; if cotton is relied upon the world will be a shameful one in which shirts and books will not last.[107] What is needed is an ingredient which will replace the rags and will also make paper lighter, finer and more compact. David continues his

story by saying that if the great fortunes of France are gradually being split up and shared out, however unequally, among the population, people will want smaller paintings to go in smaller apartments, smaller books to go in smaller rooms. If a vegetable ingredient is used, as it is in the making of Chinese paper, then books will be lighter by more than a half: Voltaire will be 50 pounds instead of 250. This sweeping vision of social and economic change involves an extraordinary vision of shrinking literature compacting itself to suit the new spaces available to it. Its shrinkage, however, will enable its circulation and the medium of paper will be made less unwieldy and obtrusive, a more versatile surface for print.

For this to happen, however, production costs must be cut and David points out that Chinese labour is cheaper, one day being paid only three *sous*. If the reeds of French streams and rivers might replace the bamboo used in Chinese paper, a machine will be needed to replace the cheap labour of that country. This discourse stands in sharp contrast to Lucien's tale of the *soirée* of Madame de Bargeton, which has both disappointed him and fuelled his romantic dreams: his mistress and mentor wishes him to be as great as, and even triumph over, Lamartine, Scott and Byron and to accompany her to Paris to 'communicate at once with the great men who will represent the nineteenth century' (158). The irony of the proximity of these two discourses is powerful: the paper David dreams of will not further the cause of poetry to rival that of Byron but bring only its dissolution, or rather its mutation into industrialized forms.[108] It will nurture another form of writing which is plethoric and ephemeral enough to cover the new surfaces.

New writing for new paper surfaces: 'le roman continuel' or novels without end

Lucien, like Rastignac in *Père Goriot*, throws down his challenge to Paris and, having received a 'cut' from Madame de Bargeton and her fashionable friends (like the blade of a guillotine, says the narrator), declares 'but I will triumph!' (199) and vows to ride one day up the Champs-Elysées in the best of carriages. This the equivalent of Rastignac's famous words 'A nous deux maintenant!' addressed to the city of Paris from *Père Lachaise* cemetery at the end of *Le Père Goriot*. Yet, although Lucien vows to triumph through hard work and the noblest forms of writing, when he goes to work at the Sainte-Geneviève library he is often seduced away from his day's study by the colourful theatre posters. When he goes to get his works published he is similarly mesmerized by all the adverts for books that 'cover' the walls. It is advertising text rather than literature which he encounters most often, particularly the newly launched 'Ladvocat' poster – a piece of advertising history given by Balzac to his readers – 'which was then flowering on the walls for the first time' (212) and would soon be a source of public revenue. This is the soon-to-be-world, not quite yet here, which overlays Lucien's

experiences in Paris. Through the use of such structures as 'would soon be' or 'was about to be' Balzac creates a strange palimpsest of times in which Lucien in his experience of text and communications is always on the brink of another historical conjuncture – that which is about to be born. Through Lucien, both the reader of that time and the present-day reader might experience the coming into being of the virtual world that each knows.

It is the perpendicular, theatrical nature of text – such as the sign of the booksellers 'VIDAL ET PORCHON' reproduced in capital letters in the text – which helps Lucien understand the commodification of writing. Books, he discovers, are like cotton caps for hatters, 'goods to be bought cheap and sold expensively' (214). When Lucien meets the writer Daniel d'Arthez from the Cénacle group of poets the 'seal of special genius' that Lucien sees on his forehead and on those of his fellow poets and that which D'Arthez says he sees on Lucien's is an imaginary inscription which cannot rival the more insistent '*sceaux*' which clamour from the Paris walls. The use of the word '*sceau*', which suggests a sealing off from further inscription and has a static quality, might be contrasted with the extraordinary flow of writing from journalism – what d'Arthez calls 'a hell, a bottomless pit of iniquities, of lies, of betrayals, which one cannot cross with impunity nor remain pure after leaving it' (237). The flowing list helps render the saturation of space. Writing is also described like a plant needing water – d'Arthez telling Lucien that his tears must 'water his genius'. Yet the growth such a conjunction of talent and weeping might produce cannot rival the effect of what is often described in the text as the sun and rain of advertising on the literary work. Images of the fecundity of textual production based on images of plants and growth contrast greatly with the austerity and restraint of the Cénacle. Thus when Lousteau listens to Lucien read his sonnets (*Les Marguerites*) he takes on the fatigued and blasé air of a journalist who has heard it all before:

> You know nobody, you have no entry into any newspaper: your *Marguerites* will remain chastely folded up just as they are in your hands now: they will never open out in the sun of advertising, in the meadow of wide margins, decorated with the flowers produced by the illustrious Dauriat, publisher of the famous ... My poor child, I came like you, my heart full of illusions, driven by the love of Art. ... I found only the harsh realities of the profession ... (251)

In this extract, the literary text is a flower which in order to bloom needs to be heated up in the false sun of advertising. This very much echoes the aesthetic of Grandville for whom manufacture was linked to nature or, rather, became a 'second nature': commodities given wings or shown growing on trees or swimming in streams. It also uses the phraseology found in

Grandville's *Un autre Monde*, which speaks of the effect of *l'ondée fécondante des prospectus* on all forms of art:

> The talent of actors, the voices of singers, paintings, sculptures, books, reviews, illustrations, music, dance ... can only open up and be seen if warmed by the sun of flattery and can only flower in the fertile rain of advertising leaflets.[109]

This rain or flow of text is not the romantic flow that is associated with an outpouring of feeling (Wordsworth's 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling' or Lamartine's flow of emotion to the natural world) but is the fruit of a mechanism and the result of an arithmetic. There is a harsh mechanics in this flow which transforms journalists into 'convicts condemned to success for life' (353) [*forçats condamnés au succèss à perpétuité*]. The metaphor of the natural world is uncannily yoked to images of manufacture. When Lousteau describes how he makes a living with Finot, writing articles in praise or condemnation of different cosmetic products on the market – those in fact which appear in *César Birotteau* – he describes the mechanics of flow thus: 'When the Prospectus comes out in an eruption of thousands, money flows [*entre à flots*] into my pockets' (252). As if to reinforce the truth of this economics, Lousteau explains the link between literature and prostitution in his famous speech given as they walk in the *grande allée de l'Observatoire* in the Luxembourg Gardens: writing and different types of prostitute are compared firstly through the figure of the starving girl who refuses the trade (as is the case with d'Arthez) to the high-class whore like Lousteau himself who reaps the benefits of her position. Lousteau speaks of the 'fermentation' at work, the mud and the swamp created by journalism and the alarming rank growth that is its consequence.

Dauriat's book-selling establishment in the *Galeries de Bois* is the place where Lucien receives his last instruction concerning this arithmetics of production: Dauriat describes himself as one who makes 'speculations in literature' and whose vocation is not to further the cause of great literature but to make money and give it to already famous men. He hates poetry and verse of all kinds which 'devours' – that is, ruins – the book-selling trade. This circulation of text might be likened to what Vaillant calls an *arithmétique de la jouissance* inspired by Baudelaire's assertion in 1846 that writers must distract the bourgeois after his work and make him satisfied, quiet and benevolent.[110] Baudelaire speaks of the exact quantity of pleasure necessary [*quantité de jouissances nécessaires*] with no surplus since this could perturb the pleasure of consumption: thus are mediocre works deemed better adapted while superior and surprising works lack the necessary smoothness.[111] The writer does not seem to be emancipated by the industry of print (and by freedom from aristocratic protection), but, as Louis Blanc complained in 1839, to be its slave.

When we move back to the provinces in *Les souffrances de l'inventeur*, Balzac sets the destinies of Lucien and David, poet and printer, side by side, as being both contiguous and simultaneous:

> Thus, what a strange thing! Just as Lucien was being fed into the great machine of Journalism, at the risk of finding his honour and his intelligence in shreds, David Séchard, down in his printing workshop, was working with developments in the periodical Press and considering their material implications. He wanted to give the spirit of the age the means of fulfilling itself. (461)

Lucien represents the new forces of journalism, politics and publishing that were increasing the demand for paper, yet Lucien's debts bring about David's ruin, making him into an even more driven inventor. Thus does paper take centre stage – as a brute matter with brutal consequences yet also as a symbol of new hope. Paper must be cheaper and flexible enough to be made into long rolls, as in England, where the machines for making long paper had begun to function. Yet David lacks the capital to become a paper magnate and must accept the yoke placed on him by the rival printer Cointet and the lawyer Petit-Claud. As David is further coerced by his father and by Cérizet, the imperative to discover a new formula for paper becomes more pressing and he must prove to his father that he can do it. Old Séchard locks him in an old distillery with Kolb, his assistant, for the night and brings the ingredients they ask for. David says delightedly that it is just like a factory and proceeds to reconfigure the age-old equipment within the crumbling old house of the father to create an entirely modern product. From this ancient old ruin of a much older regime and from products of the land (the artichokes, reeds and nettles gathered by the father) emerges, after a night of toil, the smooth clean paper of a new era.

The old man folds it, crumples it, licks it, and chews it, making of his own palate 'a tester of paper' (527). This physical engagement with paper is typical of the many scenes devoted to reflections upon and experiments with pulp and paper. As paper becomes more perfect so the incredulous touching, smoothing and tasting of human beings intensifies. The trace of the human interaction banished from the appearance of the paper calls upon a desire to verify. When Eve and David receive Lucien's letter telling of Coralie's death and asking for money to bury her, Eve notices that the letter is still wet with tears: both see the inferior quality and texture of the paper, the effect of water upon it. By contrast, when David writes to Eve from his exile on his first sheets of paper the beauty of the paper is described in terms of its lack of permeability and strength, but also flexibility:

> ... some were of metallic purity, others soft as Chinese paper, and offering all possible nuances of white. Old Séchard and Cointet's eyes glittered to rival those of Jews examining diamonds. (531)

Paper is both venerated and fetishized and, as with all fetishized objects, the imprint of the human is erased. For economic reasons the process of fabrication must reduce costly manual labour to a minimum. Thus does paper move symbolically beyond the material presence of labour – eschewing the imprint of the human (we think here of Marx's loaf of bread) – and in the process becoming *other-worldly*. Interestingly, even ink – the very print for which the paper is designed – is shown to be a sullying product which 'blackens' the white paper, as Lousteau says and which according to David somehow spoils its purity. This purity is that of the commodity.

Once this alchemical transformation has taken place and the paper is smooth and light, the narration allows Lucien to make an entrance once again – not as a poet but transmuted into the embodiment of prose writing. When the folk of Angoulême hear that Lucien had not killed himself but was riding in a *calèche* to Paris, Petit-Claud the lawyer says: 'What did I tell you? ... That boy isn't a poet, he's a never-ending novel'[*un roman continuel*] (610). Lucien, then is not a person, nor indeed, it might be argued, is he a character. He is a locus of production, a machine of productivity onto which the machine of paper-making represented by David might be linked up. The two desiring machines – to use Deleuze and Guattari's expression – function together at the end of the novel. Lucien represents a form of desiring associated with the unfolding sentence, an endless novel, one which recurs, and reoccurs. He is the creature not of the romantic poem but of the novel sold in parts – either as a feuilleton or in instalments. He always comes back since he represents the invention of text produced by the kilometre, and will always have a following-on, will always be associated with the mention 'to be continued' [*à suivre*] written after the serial in the *Journal des Débats*. Lucien is the very matter which will live on the new paper.

Just as David is teetering on the brink of disaster, and the narrative on the brink of closure, Lucien offers a perfect *retournement de situation*, the twist of *Oliver Twist* typical of the serial: his gift of 15,000 francs arrives magically in fairytale sacks. With it, Eve buys a property and sets up an annuity, while David happily renounces any stake in the paper industry and lives happily ever after. Cointet plans to get a monopoly on supplying paper to the major Parisian papers and is soon sending off thousands of rolls of paper to Paris. Thus the story is saved from extinction and rolls forward, becoming in the mind of the reader a continuous roll or, as Petit-Claud says, 'un roman continuel'. Balzac can be seen to be engaging in what we might call chain-writing – lighting a new narrative, like a cigar, with the one he is still telling and thus assuring the fidelity of his audience. The last line of the novel tells us of the next episode of Lucien's adventures and constitutes an advertisement: 'As for Lucien, his return to Paris will be told in *Scènes de la vie parisienne*' (625). To Wilkie Collins's list of 'Make 'em laugh, make 'em cry, make 'em wait' we might add the notion of making a readership 'expect'.

We might conclude by examining once again the possible relationship in Balzac between loss and expectation, of the end of the romantic poet and the start of the 'newspaper poet'. The energy of *Lost Illusions* is in the slam and clatter of newspaper production and not the more dismal scratch of a poet's pen in a garret or in the provinces (we may think here of the detumescent effect of too great a devotion to high arts imagined by Baudelaire) and it is this transfer of affect which is at stake in the novel.[112] New expectations in print involve in some measure the evacuation of the ideological hopes associated with the revolution and the Napoleonic wars. The yoke of the past which haunts Balzac's writing is suggested in the story of Colonel Chabert (hero of the Napoleonic wars), who describes being buried in a mass grave amongst corpses – a literalization of Marx's 'weight of the dead generations' pressing upon him. Chabert, a ghost who cannot be integrated into the project of *The Human Comedy*, will be replaced by the petit bourgeois hero. Pierre Gascar says as much when he describes the story as 'an enterprise of historical liquidation' which will allow Balzac to pay homage to the moral inheritance of the revolution while clearing the ground for a new fictional world centred on bourgeois concerns.[113] Balzac performs this burial of illusions quite clearly in the prefaces to the different parts of *Lost Illusions*. If the June 1839 preface to the second part of the novel *Un grand homme de province à Paris* laments the stifling of poetry and poetic writing under the 'depraved influence of the newspaper' which buries them without a trace and in silence, four years later in 1844, in the preface to the third part, then called 'David Séchard', Balzac says that the newspaper writer has become the new voice of the century (the new Tacitus, Luther, Voltaire) and has replaced governments, history and the book.

The advent of the 'endless novel' thus needs as its precondition the end of the panoramic sweep of history and the birth of the ordinary and personal. If, as Vaillant points out, the word 'illusion' as used by Balzac in 1837 is a political word meaning an adhesion to collective convictions which create a cohesive national community (rather than being a question of individual belief disappearing with the lucidity of age), then the illusions which are lost are the hope of a true restoration – not of a king but of law and morality. What is shown to be dissolving is the illusion of history as linear time in which failure might be rectified. Therefore lost illusions, that is, collective historical illusions, are swapped for illusory losses (Vaillant's expression *pertes illusoires*) which are individual illusions of personal loss in love, literature, society.[114] We might say that history has ended and media has begun, that illusory losses rather than lost illusions are the stuff of fiction. Illusions have to be buried for expectations to be found; absolute value dissolved to leave the personal and the prosaic of print.

Conclusion

My conclusion is an image. It is the image of a wedding party – the bride and groom and wedding guests all dressed in clothes made from advertisements and serial novels. Jean-Jacques Grandville is showing us the marriage of *Puff* and *Réclame* – two forms of advertising, one literary, the other commercial – united with a view to procreation. [Fig. 23] The cartoon is part of his critique of commercial writing, yet also offers a vision of the human condition in which subjectivity is shown to be bound up with imprinting which is also clothing. Writers such as Carlyle and Dickens always insisted upon the closeness of cloth and print; stories are clothes, says Balzac, when he describes the serial novel as the flounce at the bottom of the skirt of the newspaper. Advertising fictions – the language of the walls – are the material we weave and which clothes us: it forms the texture of our daily lives and imprints itself upon our selves. Grandville shows that it has usurped the power of the institutions surrounding marriage (Church and state) and that it has even taken the place of the persons it clothes. Indeed, the image gestures towards a posthuman world where the subject is a prosthesis or indeed mere effect of the ambient text and image.

Secondly, Grandville's wedding party is moving; the text and image are in motion though the dresses worn by the women are cumbersome – the paper stiff and heavy. Might we not see in this visual oxymoron a longing which is also a dream dear to Dickens and Balzac of the disappearance of the medium, the birth of pure diaphanous projection which needs no matter to bear it? The smoothness and versatility of the paper described at the end of *Lost Illusions*, and the speed of the endless roll of paper, suggest the gradual superfluity of the idea of medium. Both writers suggest the possibility of a paperless world in which stories and illustrations, text and image, float and travel, materialize in one place and then evaporate. What might such a world mean for the subject who inherits it? What are the politics of this dismantling of the book and dispersal of writing, of this potentially surface-less and ubiquitous representation? This new language of the walls suggests the advent of the tyranny of spectacles envisioned by Guy Debord

Figure 23 'Les noces du Puff et de la Réclame', Grandville, 1844
Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

or Giorgio Agamben, but at the same time the democratization of knowledge spoken of by Rancière.[1] Perhaps we are witnessing an amalgamation or sublation of these two stances, a paradoxical third term which, if familiar to us today, was only just starting to be imaginable in the 1840s.

Notes

1 The Language of the Walls: Spaces, Practices, Subjectivities

1. See Murray Roston, Changing Perspectives in Literature and the Visual Arts, 1650–1820, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990. During Roston's discussion of the importance of perspective in the emergence of the novel, he contrasts Milton's use of the telescope in Paradise Lost, which was designed to convey a sense of the vastness of the cosmos, with Swift's use of the telescope in Gulliver's Travels:

   > For it is not only Swift's preference for applying the opposite end of the telescope to his eye, his use of it for purposes of diminution, that distinguishes him from his Puritan predecessor but also the direction in which he points the instrument. In his hands the telescope is turned away from the heavens towards the earth, focussing there upon a new scene, a panorama not of the cosmos but of the human social fabric (155).

   A similarity is found with the viewpoint suggested in Canaletto's *Regatta on the Grand Canal*, which focuses on 'the city as human habitation, the location of social activity...': the scene is presented from a distant, raised vantage point, as if scanned through a telescope by an uninvolved spectator. The result is an overview of a crowded city singularly reminiscent of Gulliver's first visit to the Lilliputians' metropolis (159). Roston goes on in the following way: 'The similarity lies not merely in the new viewpoint for examining mankind from above, but in the suggestion in both instances of artist or narrator as an objective investigator examining with curiosity the conduct of the human species in its variegated communal rites' (159).
2. Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England*: *Advertising and Spectacle 1851–1914*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990, 18.
3. Fuelled by the Great Exhibition whose catalogue boasted 53 pages of tax-free ads, the duties on advertising began to be lifted (see E. S. Turner, *The Shocking History of Advertising*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965, 78). In 1853 advertising duty was abolished, then in 1855 the end of newspaper stamp duty, which resulted in a tremendous expansion of the press and in advertising in general, creating an increase in the volume of advertising space (see T. R. Nevett, *Advertising in Britain: A History*, London: Heinemann, 1982, 67). The last 'tax upon knowledge', a duty on paper, was lifted in 1861. The expression was used in a letter Dickens wrote to Macready on stamp duty, paper duty and advertising duty. It was the latter that Dickens found to be 'a preposterous anomaly' (Mamie Dickens and Georgina Hogarth (eds), *Letters of Charles Dickens*, vol. I, 1833–1856, London: Chapman and Hall, 1880, 274). See also the change from rag-based paper to the more cheaply and efficiently produced wood-pulp paper in the 1840s.
4. Dale Porter, *The Thames Embankment: Environment, Technology, and Society in Victorian London*, Ohio: The University of Akron Press, 1998, 38.
5. Porter, *Thames Embankment*, 108.
6. Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in 19thc London*, New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2000, 53.
7. Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 56.

8. *Penny Illustrated Paper*, 22 September 1856, 182. Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 54.
9. A look at the numerous reports, pamphlets and small publications from the 1830s onwards concerning the drainage and remodelling of Paris and London reveals a vocabulary of sweeping away the congestion of cities whose structures had become unmanageable. French reports on the state of the London sewer in 1839 lament the antiquated systems of street and sewer and the lack of a single system both physically and administratively and the need for a new design (see M. Mongey, '*Notice sur les Egouts de Londres*', written in 1839 by an 'Aspirant-Ingénieur des Ponts et des Chaussées', 1839, 47). The artist John Martin (*The Day Of Judgment* or *Pandemonium*, *Satan's City in the Underworld*) created a plan for a new sewage system for London designed like a Greek Temple with airy walkways for the working classes to take healthy exercise during their moments of leisure (see also Richard Trench and Ellis Hillman, *London Under London*, London: John Murray, 1984, 68–69 and Stephen Halliday, *The Great Stink of London*, London: Sutton, 1999, 46–47). One report of 1851 imagines a spontaneous flow, not only of fresh water but of the lower classes, out of London towards 'vast barracks of model houses, rising on healthier soil' (J. Simon, 'Medical Officer of Health to the City of London', *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the City of London for the year 1850–51*, London: C. Dawson, 1851, 38). Bazalgette in 1864 speaks of the main drainage system as one concerning flows, velocities, pumping stations, intercepting sewers which carry off the excess productions of the city, to leave the surface streets free of encumbrance (J. W. Bazalgette, *On the Main Drainage of London and the Interception of the Sewage from the River Thames*, Minutes of Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers, 1864–65, 10). In a report written in 1878, Haussmann is quoted as describing the city as a human body whose fluids must circulate freely in order to promote life and health, and without troubling 'la bonne ordonnance de la ville' on the surface (Charles Terrier in *Etude sur Les Egouts de Londres, de Bruxelles et de Paris*, Paris: Delahaye, 1878). In the same paper the large collector sewer of Asnière is described as a miniature Venice below the ground, on which boats glide through the tunnels with the same effortlessness as traffic through the streets above. Surplus matter (rubbish and sewage) channelled out of the city by means of urban improvement was to leave space free for commerce and leisure.
10. See chapter 1 of *Les Mystères de Paris*, 'Le tapis-franc', which describes the district of the 'Palais de Justice' which paradoxically harboured the worst criminals of Paris
11. Porter, *Thames Embankment*, 121. Porter describes the many previous attempts to 'embank' the river from mediaeval times onwards but underlines the fact that the Victorian project differed from them in terms of the breadth of vision of metropolitan improvement (107–134), especially movement of traffic. The first Commons Committee on the Thames Embankment (1860) was charged with providing for the 'Increased Traffic of the Metropolis' (118). Cabs, omnibuses, underground railways would share the space, and links to the Strand and other commercial streets would be made.
12. Porter, *Thames Embankment*, 115.
13. Porter, *Thames Embankment*, 131.
14. See Richard Sennet, *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities*, London: Faber and Faber, 1991, 108.
15. See Porter, *Thames Embankment*, 115 and Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England*.
16. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999, 406.

17. Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 844 and 405 respectively.
18. John Tagg, 'The Discontinuous City: Picturing and the Discursive Field' in Norman Bryson (ed.), *Visual Culture: Images and Interpretations*, Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1994, 85.
19. Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 21–22. See also Louis Marin's account of spatial power in his *Utopiques* and his discussion of the panoramic versus the geometric map – the latter involving both free space and constructed space.
20. Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 22.
21. Max Schlesinger, *Saunterings in and about London*, London: Nathaniel Cooke, 1853, 20 and 23.
22. See William Smith, *Advertise! How? When? Where?* London: Routledge Warne, and Routledge, 1863, 72. Thousands of sheets of 'note-paper', 'envelopes', illustrations of scenes from the play and '1,000,000 cards the shape of a heart' were also used. Smith estimates that 150 million handbills were distributed in London in an average year in mid-Victorian times.
23. See Gérard Genette's theory of the palimpseste and coining of the term 'palimpsestuous' in his *Palimpsestes*, Paris: Seuil, 1982.
24. Jean-Jacques (or Jean-Ignace-Isidore Gérard) Grandville, *Un autre Monde*, Paris: H. Fournier, 1844, 272.
25. My translation of Charles Baudelaire, *Le spleen de Paris* [1869], *Œuvres complètes*, Paris: La Pléiade, 1973, vol. 1, 520. French text:

    > Mon cher ami, je vous envoie un petit ouvrage dont on ne pourrait pas dire, sans injustice, qu'il n'a ni queue, ni tête, puisque tout, au contraire y est à la fois tête et queue, alternativement et réciproquement. Considérez, je vous prie, quelles admirables commodités cette combinaison nous offre à tous, à vous, à moi et au lecteur. Nous pouvons couper où nous voulons, moi ma rêverie vous le manuscrit, le lecteur sa lecture. Enlevez une vertèbre, et les deux morceaux de cette tortueuse fantaisie se rejoindront sans peine. Hachez-la en nombreux fragments, et vous verrez que chacun peut exister à part. Dans l'espérance que quelques-uns de ces tronçons seront assez vivants pour vous plaire et vous amuser, j'ose vous dédier l'ensemble du serpent.

    Certain pieces in *Le spleen de Paris* were written in 1850, others in 1860–65.
26. Jean Clay, *Le Romantisme*, Paris: Hachette, 1980 and Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer. On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century,* Cambridge, MA and London: October Books, MIT Press, 1992. Jean Clay speaks of the acceleration of the modern gaze as it appears in Romantic painting. The latter reflects this speeding up by the use of blurring, of the instantaneous capture of a moment and the abandonment of the stillness of neoclassical forms. Jonathan Crary looks at the ways in which seeing was understood to be manipulable, fragmented and unreliable as early as the 1820s.
27. David Kunzle, *The History of the Comic Strip: The Nineteenth-Century*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990, 1.
28. Kunzle, *History of the Comic Strip*, 378.
29. In Nietzsche's *Human, All Too Human* [1878], trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, 132.
30. This is clear when we find small inserted notices in the Dickens monthly numbers apologizing to the reader for a missing illustration and promising its appearance in the following number (see Chapter 2).
31. Both references, Kunzle, *History of the Comic Strip*, 2.
32. Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 58.

33. See Patricia Anderson, *The Printed Image, and the Transformation of Popular Culture 1790–1860*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1991, 157, 193, 194.
34. *ILN*, 24 May 1851, 451–452 (reprinted from the *Economist*). Also quoted in Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 57.
35. Gerard Curtis, *Visual Words: Art and the Material Book in Victorian England*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002, 9.
36. Curtis, *Visual Words*, 14, 16.
37. Curtis, *Visual Words*, 57.
38. Many paintings of the time have themselves a 'written' style. William Powell Frith's *Derby Day* (1858) is a good example: people become letters in a sentence that is woven across the canvas; shadows and dogs are punctuation. Frith had been inspired by panoramas in the popular press such as 'Epsom Downs on the Derby Day' of 1848 in the *Illustrated London News*.
39. Walter Benjamin, *One Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. E. Jephcott and K. Shorter, London: Verso, 1985, 62.
40. *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 27 August 1864, 83.
41. See John Urry's work on modern leisure and travel as being based on a particular gaze in which places are consumed as visual experiences in a 'new mode of urban perception'. *Consuming Places*, London and New York: Routledge, 1995, 132–133.
42. Anthony Easthope, *Literary into Cultural Studies*, London and New York: Routledge, 1991, 92–93. Easthope is drawing on the work of Peter Brooks and Mary Anne Doane here.
43. All three quotations: Easthope, *Literary into Cultural Studies*, 93.
44. Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Interpretation as Pragmatics*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999, 58.
45. Murray Roston's work on the Victorian period has yielded the image of the fallen supplicating woman, which might also be seen as just such a *narrateme* of popular culture. *Victorian Contexts: Literature and the Visual Arts*, Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1996.
46. Easthope, *Literary into Cultural Studies*, 94. Easthope sets popular culture against the 'ironic, written plurality' of high culture which he sees exemplified in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and which asks us to find our own path of interpretation. E. R. Burroughs' *Tarzan* on the other hand 'seeks to compel a single reading, literal and denotative' (95). This produces 'connotations everyone accedes to differently at the level of phantasy'. So the unconscious can then provide many different responses to the 'popular cultural *narrateme*' and is thus 'being colonised for commodity production' (95).
47. Last two quotations: Easthope, *Literary into Cultural Studies*, 95. Jonathan Crary in his *Techniques of the Observer* also comments upon the existence of cinema in embryonic form in technological forms in the nineteenth century.
48. See Sara Thornton, 'The Impotent Eye: Seeing the City in the Nineteenth-Century', *Etudes anglaises*, T. 55, 1, janvier-mars 2002, which studies the opacity of the urban space in Thomas de Quincey and Dickens.
49. 'Metropolitan Improvements', *Illustrated Times*, 2 June 1866, 339. Quoted in Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 29.
50. Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son* [1848], Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970, 120–121.
51. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* [1848], Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985.

52. Baudelaire's 'Les yeux des pauvres' and 'Perte d'auréole' from *Le spleen de Paris*. Translated this time by Marshall Bermann, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988, 152 and 156.
53. William Logsdail, *St Paul's and Ludgate Hill*, Oil on canvas, 1887, Private collection. There is a similar phenomenon in many illustrations of the cityscape in the illustrated press of the 1860s. See *Railway Works at Blackfriars* in *Illustrated London News*, 23 April 1864, 385.
54. 'May in Town', *Illustrated London News*, 1 May 1852, 346. Quoted in Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 57.
55. Charles Dickens, 'An Unsettled Neighbourhood', *Household Words*, 11 November 1854, in *Selected Journalism, 1850–1870*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997, 46. Further references appear in the text.
56. My translation. Baudelaire, *Le spleen de Paris*, 445. Original French:
    > Quel est celui de nous qui n'a pas, dans ses jours d'ambition, rêvé le miracle d'une prose poétique, musicale sans rythme et sans rime, assez souple et assez heurtée pour s'adapter aux mouvements lyriques de l'âme, aux ondulations de la rêverie, aux soubresauts de la conscience? C'est surtout de la fréquentation des villes énormes, c'est du croisement de leurs innombrables rapports que naît cet idéal obsédant.
57. Curtis, *Visual Words*, 63, 65, 66 respectively.
58. Curtis, *Visual Words*, 65.
59. In 1854 John Orlando Parry produced the cartoon *Ridiculous Things*. The genre of the comic strip in penny magazines would take up the structures initiated by Parry which show 'the appeal of the comic strip's proto-modernist framing and timing sequences, social criticism and conglomeration of visual events'. Curtis, *Visual Words*, 34, 35.
60. Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 48, 4.
61. Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 5.
62. Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 96.
63. Dr John A. Paris, writing in London in 1827, says: 'the impression made on the retina by the image, which is delineated on one side of the card, is not erased before that which is painted on the opposite side is presented to the eye; and the consequence is that you see both sides at once'. Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 106.
64. Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 106. In France in the 1830s Joseph Plateau constructed the 'phenakistiscope' (or 'deceptive view') which allowed the eye by means of turning discs to see a figure go through a sequence of movements. Models were soon being sold in London as well as similar devices such as the 'zootrope'. The Diorama (developed by Louis Daguerre) involved a static observer and a moving platform which moved past a scape so that the observer was subjected 'to a predesigned temporal unfolding of optical experience', while the panorama was walked past by the observer.
65. Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 113–114. See Charles Baudelaire, 'Morale du joujou' (1853), *Œuvres complètes*, Paris: Gallimard, 1975, vol. I, 581. See also an article by Georges Didi-Huberman, 'Connaissance par le kaleidoscope: 'Morale du joujou et dialectique de l'image selon Walter Benjamin', *Etudes photographiques*, N°7, mai, 2000.
66. See David Kunzle on the urban context for the comic strip 'predicated on variety and disjointedness', *History of the Comic Strip*, 6.
67. *Punch*, 1847 (January–June, vol. 12), 200, 239 and 31 respectively.

68. The incongruity of modernity's mixing of high and low culture is constantly celebrated in articles such as 'The Fine Arts at Every Station' (*Punch,* January–June 1847, vol. 12, 55) which ironically suggests the use of great masters to soothe the commuters.
69. *Punch*, 5 March 1864, 93.
70. *Punch*, 6 February 1864, 53.
71. *Punch*, 6 February 1864, 53. We see here that, already, books, exhibitions, paintings – our cultural output – were passing into the domain of advertising. Soon Holloway would quote Dante for his Pills ('And Time shall see thee cured of every ill!') while Turner tells us that in adverts for Eno's salts the step from 'the cloudless peaks of the intellect to the mucous walls of the intestinal canal was achieved almost in one sentence' (Turner, *Shocking History*, 6, 89).
72. *Punch*, 'Paint-Pot Advertisements', 9 January 1864, 19.
73. Kunzle, *History of the Comic Strip*, 314. In *Town Talk*, *Mr. Wilderspin* ran for 23 issues from 1858 to 1859 with 184 drawings: the hero is a railway clerk with 'ideas above his station'. His career includes an interlude in parliament 'to repeal the so-called Taxes on Knowledge' – the very taxes that raised the costs of Town Talk – and a period in prison. It contains very Trollopian touches, since the hero marries a creditor, which is 'very much consonant with the "downwardly-upwardly" mobile lower-middle class type, the quintessential reader of the comic strip' (314).
74. Turner, *Shocking History*, 97. Turner notes that in the 'latter part of the nineteenth century' the Victorians had a taste for jokes about fly-posting (the sticking of new adverts on top of old): They
    > took an innocent delight in the production of satirical prints showing enormous hoardings on which posters had been pasted, one partly over the other, in such a way as to produce 'messages'...: 'Funerals Conducted with Dignity and Decorum by FUNNY FOLKS EVERY WEDNESDAY with a Band and Chorus of 700 Performers in A. LYNES AND SONS 13s TROUSERS.'

    Turner remarks that 'the joke was played for all it was worth; sometimes no doubt juxtapositions little less farcical did appear on unregulated poster stations' (97). This is a good example of the surrealist 'cadavre exquis' in action.
75. Turner, *Shocking History*, 60.
76. Turner, *Shocking History*, 89. There is a recognition that the constant montage of text created by advertising produced absurd mirages. It is less a question of nothing making sense but more frighteningly that everything 'makes' sense, and that there can never be a message which has a single coherent meaning. See Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *The Philosophy of Nonsense*, London and New York: Routledge, 1994, 180. Did the genre of nonsense come about at the time it did stimulated in part by the juxtapositions of incongruous language on the walls, its constant punning?
77. *Punch*, 2 July 1964, 10.
78. Antanaclasis has its origins in oratory performance in which a word is repeated back to an adversary so as to deform its meaning. Syllepsis is associated with the witticism. I thank Jean-Jacques Lecercle for these precisions.
79. Turner, *Shocking History*, 76.
80. See Lecercle in *The Violence of Language* (Routledge, 1990, 8) on perfect homophony (antanaclasis) or near homophony (paronomasia): in the first, 'language speaks: the paths are well traced', the second 'does violence to language instead of meekly following its call', 'I force my way through words'.

81. Lecercle, *Interpretation as Pragmatics*, 65.
82. In the 'ALTER' model the 'T' or text is the centre of the structure and is the most important actant. 'A' or Author and 'R' 'Reader' are effects of the text, and 'L' 'Language' and 'E' 'Encyclopedia' always filter the relationship between 'Reader' and 'Text'. Lecercle also states that both 'Reader' and 'Author' are imaginary spaces: 'The reader is interpellated by the representation she constructs in the place of the author; the author is interpellated by the representation of the readers she fantasises' (75). Lecercle then accompanies this diagram with a number of maxims which are the rules of the 'ALTER' game.
83. P. Ricoeur, *Du texte à l'action. Essais d'herméneutique*, II, Paris: Seuil, 1986, 111.
84. Jacques Derrida, *Marges de la philosophie*, Paris: Minuit, 1972, 1–30.
85. Lecercle, *Interpretation as Pragmatics*, 78.
86. Lecercle, *Interpretation as Pragmatics*, 76–82. Lecercle shows how every act of interpretation recontextualizes and how within this process the text gradually becomes a cliché and enters the encyclopaedia ready for reuse.
87. Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire, Livre V. Les formations de l'inconscient*, Paris: Seuil, 1999 and Sigmund Freud 'Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten' in *Studienausgabe*, T. IV, S., Francfort: Fischer, 1970.
88. See Franz Kaltenbeck's study of the joke or witticism in Kafka's *The Verdict*, in which the young Georg tries four times to defend himself against a father who has become monstrously powerful. *The Verdict* is the log-book of the failure of the joke and as a consequence of the failure or loss of the subject. 'Quand Freud répond à Kafka' in *Ces enfants qui ne parlent pas: parole et écriture*, Bulletin N°6, ALEPH, octobre 2001.
89. For David Kunzle the nineteenth-century cartoon has just this political aspect in that it affords the carving out of a space for the underdog who can thereby playfully fight the system of which he is a victim. Judith Butler examines hate speech and how it might be countered by the subject; if the addressor of hate speech (like the advertiser, as we have seen) is not fully in control of any meaning, then the hearer can take advantage of this gap, this uncertainty, to reappropriate, to assign another meaning and then to return it to the addressor: 'one always risks meaning something other than one thinks one utters, then one is ... vulnerable in a specifically linguistic sense to a social life of language that exceeds the purview of the subject who speaks' (*Excitable Speech. A Politics of the Performative*, London and New York, 1997, 87).
90. My translation. Fred Vargas, *Sans feu ni lieu*, Paris: J'ai Lu, 1997, 243, 245.
91. Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)', *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979, 174.
92. *Punch* of 1847, January–June, vol. 12, 31.
93. Napoleon Ist who was familiar with the writings of Adam Smith was using an expression from *Wealth of Nations* (1776). Though Smith was the author, it was Napoleon who popularized the term and brought it to the attention of a general British public via the French language.
94. 'The Billstickers' Exhibition', *Punch*, Saturday 29 May 1847.
95. Jorge Luis Borges, *The Aleph and Other Stories*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 2004.
96. 'Sibthorpe's Gallant Attack on Street Nuisances', *Punch*, 20, 1851, 189.
97. 'The Real Street Obstructions', *Punch*, 19, 1850, 30. Also cited by Curtis, *Visual Words*, 105.
98. Benjamin, *One Way Street*, 62.

99. 'Cheap Literature', *British Quarterly Review*, 29: 58 (1 April 1859), 316.
100. See also J. Barrat of Pears soap, who stamped French pennies (accepted as tender in Britain at the end of the nineteenth century) with the Pears advertisement: he issued a quarter of a million ten centime coins all over Britain until the Government had them melted down (Turner, *Shocking History*, 76 and 115).
101. Jennifer Wicke, *Advertising Fictions:Literature, Advertisement and Social Reading,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1988, 4.
102. In his chapter on 'Handbills and Inscriptions', a sketch is provided of an 'advertising tombstone': 'Here Lies Jeremy Robbins, An Affectionate Husband and tender Parent. His Disconsolate Widow in the Hope of a better Meating [*sic*] continues to carry on the Long Established TRIPE and TROTTER BUSINESS at the same place as before her lamented bereavement. Reader pause and notice the address.' This was sent to the author from a person living in the North and saying that it was a stone from a neighbouring Churchyard. Sampson says that it is 'an improvement of the opportunity to combine business, not with pleasure, but with mourning'. Henry Sampson, *The History of Advertising from the Earliest Times*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1874, 530–532.
103. 'A Nation of Advertisers', *Punch* of 1847 (January–June, vol. 12), 31. My italics. See also 'Paint-Pot Advertisements', 9 January 1864, 19, which laments the idea of 'church-towers disfigured like the Pyramids with the names of snobbish Englishmen' and imagines St. Paul's, the Houses of Parliament, the Monument, Duke of York's and Nelson's columns all covered in advertising. At the end of the century advertisements invaded the white cliffs of Dover, the Norwegian fjords, the Arctic Circle, boulders in Switzerland and the hills of the Sudan. By the end of the century we find a sensitivity to the mixing of high and low culture: 'At the Royal Academy banquet Lord Rosebery invited his listeners to consider how the illustrious Turner, if he returned to life, would feel on seeing the luggers and the coasting ships which he had made so glorious in his paintings converted into media for the advertisement of pills' (Turner, *Shocking History*, 109–114). It was at this time that governments began to create regulatory bodies and France created the 'Société pour la protection des paysages'.
104. Anonymous, *Puffs and Mysteries, or the Romance of Advertising*, London: W. Kent and Co., Paternoster Row, 1855, iv and vi.
105. Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, first published 1854–55, Oxford: World's Classics, 1982, 167.
106. William Blake, 'Songs of Experience', *The Complete Poems*, London: Penguin Classics, 1978.
107. *The Times*, 3 June 1864, 13; and *The Times*, 1 June 1864, 11. Quoted in Sweet, *Inventing the Victorians*, London: Faber and Faber, 2002, 38.
108. One cartoon in *Punch* of Saturday 27 March 1847, titled 'Protection for British Quackery', imagines Parr (of Parr's Life Pills) as an old man with a beard rather like an Old Testament prophet speaking to a group of pill jars and boxes all with legs and arms and all bearing the names and slogans of each product. The text mentions the terrible truth that 'The poor people not only consume the patent medicines but the patent medicines consume the poor people.'
109. *Punch*, 17 December 1864, 245.
110. *Punch*, 1847, 129.
111. *Punch*, Saturday, 6 February 1847, 62.
112. Turner speaks of New Zealand stamps in 1893 on which slogans were printed onto the gum in mirror writing and would come off onto the tongue the right way round when they were licked (Unilever House Magazine, March

1953, Turner, *Shocking History*, 115). For a history of brands see Turner's overview: 1850 saw the start of condensing of beef into paste and in 1867 Liebig began advertising it as parent company of OXO. Milk was condensed in Switzerland by Nestlé, and 'Margarine' launched in France in 1869, Singer in 1851, Remington 1874 and in 1880 Kodak, mentioned in *Dracula*. The multinationals of today were coming into being, with Beechams starting the first pharmaceuticals company in 1859 in Merseyside; Campbell canned soup in 1869 at the same time as Heinz went into pickles. By 1900 Heinz could declare 'Our field is the world'.

113. Smith, *Advertise!*, 137.
114. See William Smith's idea for an improvement of the lot and efficiency of the abject sandwich man. His illustration shows a sandwich man who carries a smaller sign which he himself can look down at and read and who is handing out bills to passers-by, which gives him an active role.
115. *Punch*, 31 December 1864, 267.
116. Hester is silenced by the embroidered 'A' but also in some measure created by it. She continues to wear it later in life voluntarily as it has become the symbol of her emancipation from its tyranny and of her acceptance by the community who once shunned her.
117. Lecercle, *Interpretation as Pragmatics*, 167. See also the following comment: 'The ALTER structure is a structure not of communication, but of ascription. Interpellation is what circulates in the structure; and imposture is the action through which interpellated subjects segment or invert the flow of interpellation ...' (151).
118. Lecercle, *Interpretation as Pragmatics*, 165. Lecercle asks us to consider the psychoanalysis of bodily inscription in the work of Serge Leclaire.
119. Charles Dickens, 'Bill-Sticking', *Household Words*, 2 March 1851, in *Selected Journalism* 1850–1870, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997, 283. Further references appear in text.
120. Charles Baudelaire, 'L'Ecole païenne', *Œuvres complètes*, Paris: Pléiade, 1973, vol. 2, 420–421. Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 313–314.
121. Jean-Jacques Lecercle's description of Benjamin's thought in *Interpretation as Pragmatics*, 20.
122. The making banal of the horrific through repetition is an artistic activity familiar to us today through the use of video, photography and graphic art. Warhol's *Jackie* is a case in point.
123. Judith Butler, *Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997, 67 and 105.
124. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufman, New York: Random House, 1967, 87; *Zur Genealogie der Moral* in Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 5, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988, 325.
125. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 61; *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, 295. Quoted in Butler, *Psychic Life*, 73.
126. Butler, *Psychic Life*, 74 (both quotations).
127. Butler, *Psychic Life*, 113.
128. Butler, *Psychic Life*, 113.
129. Butler, *Psychic Life*, 129.
130. Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (October Books), 2001, 39.
131. Jean Baudrillard, *Le système des objets*, Paris: Gallimard, 1978, 106.

132. Stewart describes this as a 'return to the utopia of biology and symbol united within the walled city of the maternal'. Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993, 23.
133. Stewart, *On Longing*, 67–68.
134. Stewart, *On Longing*, 67–68.
135. *The Plague of Fantasies* is the title of Slavoj Zizek's book which considers how digitalization affects the status of subjectivity, and how the virtual is what now creates the real (London: Verso, 1997). The '*Défense d'afficher, loi 1881*' still seen today in France, and the 'Bill Posters will be prosecuted' sign in Britain, were early attempts to regulate this 'plague'.
136. Dickens, 'Bill Stickers', 288.
137. Quoted in Curtis, *Visual Words*, 105. Advertising is, as Wicke says, a vital metadiscourse on the world. Jennifer Wicke, *Advertising Fictions*, 53.
138. James Dawson Burn, *The Language of the Walls*, Manchester: Abel Heywood, 1855. All further references appear in text.
139. Burn trained as a hatter and became politically active in the unions in the 1830s in Glasgow. He worked also as a publican, although without success. His other publications were *Commercial Enterprise and Social Progress* (1858) on the changes in social and industrial life during the first half of the century, *Three years among the Working classes of the United States, during the War* (1865) on the materialist and aggressive society he found there, and *A Glimpse at the Social Condition of the Working Classes of the United Kingdom during the early part of the present century* (1868), which laments the wrecks and revolutions in the labour market which destroyed so many lives. The book also both lauds and attacks the trade unions with an ambiguity which is similar to his ambivalent approach to advertising (seen as both redemption and a scourge). David Vincent in his introduction to *The Autobiography of a Beggar Boy* (London: Europa Publications Limited, 1978) describes *The Language of the Walls* as containing 'a genuinely perceptive and prophetic onslaught on the subject of the book's title, brand-name advertising, then in its infancy, which he rightly saw as the new "circulating library for the million"' (26). Burn dedicates his autobiography to Dickens 'for the services you have rendered in the cause of Humanity'. The second edition of 1856 is dedicated to the Queen that she might understand the 'struggles and difficulties which beset' those of her subjects who live 'on the outskirts of civilisation' (36).
140. David Vincent (ed.), *The Autobiography of a Beggar Boy*, 27.
141. Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England*, 47.
142. This is very similar to Hugo's description in *Les Misérables* of 1862 of the Paris sewers in which all grandness and social distinction fall away and a Judge's hat nestles against the sequined frock of an opera dancer.
143. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty* [1969], Blackwell Publishing: Oxford, 1975, § 94, 15e.
144. See *On Certainty*, § 103, 105, 162, 166, 211, 16e–29e. Wittgenstein undermines G.E. Moore's particular sense of truth by saying that 'It is the truth only inasmuch as it is an unmoving foundation of his language-games' (§403, 52e). He says that the language-game is neither reasonable nor unreasonable but it is just there 'like our life'. He then says: 'And the concept of knowing is coupled with that of the language-game' (§559 and 560, 73–74e).
145. See Carl Zigrosser, *Multum in parvo: An Essay in Poetic Imagination*, New York: George Braziller, 1965 for a study of the ideological systems at work in pastoral

and religious poetry and of the closed systems of cultural meaning from which the notion of *multum in parvo* is constructed. Susan Stewart's own discussion of the term underlines the notions of absolute closure and the setting of bounds which aphoristic language suggests. She also underlines the importance of vastness and display:

> Like visual *multum in parvo*, linguistic *multum in parvo* is best shown in display mode; hence its place upon home samplers has now been taken over by posters, cards, bumper stickers, and T-shirts. Within the frame and without a physical form, the *multum in parvo* becomes monumental, transcending any limited context of origin and at the same time neatly containing a universe. (Stewart, *On Longing*, 53)

146. See Arthur Boyd Houghton's *Itinerant Singers* of 1860, his *Holborn in 1861* or *London in 1865*.
147. My underlining.
148. In 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' Althusser is quick to suppress the idea that the individual becomes a subject by a particular or even a series of acts of hailing; he wishes to suppress the 'temporal form' in which he has presented ideology and says: 'ideology has always-already interpellated individual subjects'(175). Jean-Jacques Lecercle makes the following comment:

> ...we shall adopt following Butler, a Humean concept of the subject as a bundle of interpellations. A sedimentation of texts – this is what the subject is. A process which has always-already begun (the texts that interpellate a subject begin before her birth), and which never ends (there is always another text)... (Interpretation as Pragmatics, 179).

He goes on to say that 'Language' and the 'Encyclopedia' produce the sedimented reality from which the subject derives her social being.

149. Regenia Gagnier, *Subjectivities: A History of Self-Representation in Britain, 1832–1920*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 10–11, 93.
150. Stewart, *On Longing*, 125.
151. Burn's italics.
152. Zizek is interesting on this point. He sees the shift as being from precapitalist to capitalist modes of perception: '...the paradox to be fully accepted is that when a certain historical moment is (mis)perceived as the moment of loss of some quality, upon closer inspection it becomes clear that the lost quality emerged only at this very moment of its alleged loss'. He draws on Lacan (the *objet petit a*) and Hegel (for whom the object 'only *comes to be* through being *left behind*') to conclude that 'a true historical break does not simply designate the 'regressive loss' (or 'progressive' gain) of something, but *the shift in the very grid which enables us to measure losses and gains*'. He concludes by saying that '...*emergence and loss coincide*: the properly 'historical' is only a moment, even if this moment is properly unending and goes on for centuries – the moment of *passage* from pre-capitalist societies to a capitalist order' (Zizek, *Plague of Fantasies*, 12–13; Zizek's emphasis).
153. Shakespeare was perfectly correct when he said, 'the eye must be fed.' In fact, that gentleman thoroughly understood the art of publicity; for he made the witches in *Macbeth* do the bill-sticking business. In the third scene, Act I., they exclaim – 'The weird sisters, hand in hand, / *Posters* of the sea and land, / Thus do go about, about.' Who shall say, viewing these supernatural beings by the light thus afforded us, that the so-called birch-brooms that witches are supposed to carry, may not be more properly regarded as

billstickers' brushes, while the mysterious ceremonies around the witches' caldron, in order to 'Make the gruel thick and slab,' may not be after all, connected with the process of mixing the paste?.

An illustration shows the three witches brandishing placards. William Smith, *Advertise!*, 9.

154. In Smith's section 'Where to Advertise?', the following answer is given: 'Wherever the Advertiser chooses. He pays his money, he takes his choice' (114). The illustrations show clothes with adverts on the back, a coffin painted on the pavement advertising for an undertaker and a horrified passer-by (135). Umbrellas, cows, and hats are shown to be good vehicles for advertising.
155. Smith, *Advertise!*, 121.
156. Smith, *Advertise!*, 123. No references given for *The Times* article. The italics are the authors, the underlining my own. After this section comes a plug for Mr. Dickens of at least ten lines. He is described as 'the practised hand', 'appreciated by the readers and admirers' (125). The journalist suggests that this 'puffery' is rather a cheap trick to play but says that although rather sensational 'the luggage' which Dickens provides in his Christmas number is full of 'treasures' from 'the genial magician' (126).
157. Smith, *Advertise!*, 124.
158. Lecercle, *Interpretation as Pragmatics*, 79. Lecercle's fifth maxim relating to his ALTER model helps us to negotiate and synthesize the work of Lacan on the signifier and Peirce's triadic theory of signs and concept of *interpretant*. The pragmatic conception (illustrated in the concept of the indirect speech-act) shows that meaning is indirect, that author and reader are not in fact subjects in full control of their utterances, but simply 'places where actors are interpellated.' (54).
159. Lecercle, *Interpretation as Pragmatics*, 80.
160. The rather chilling brand name for the toy barn 'TOYS "R" US' might illustrate part of the problem of hailing we are looking at here. The company plays out in its name the consumer's need to be positioned, to be told who he or she is through his or her consumer affiliations: we are the people who buy toys, we and our children identify entirely with the toys sold here. We are indistinguishable from these items we wish to purchase. The hailed person is asked to imagine that he or she 'is' luggage, just as we are asked to imagine that 'toys are us'. The 'R' which faces the other way in the brand name changes the status of the verb 'to be' (the 'are') and seems to suggest that in the world of goods and consumption the very particular status of being needs a new verb to express it which resembles the old but appears in a mutant form. Victorian writers describing advertising also examine the new language which is needed to describe it and seek to create new vocabularies.
161. See Butler, *Psychic Life of Power*, 10 and *Excitable Speech*, 30.

2 Reading the Dickens Advertiser: Merging Paratext and Novel

1. See N°8 of *Our Mutual Friend*. 'New Novel by the author of "East Lynne" ... Oswald Crary ... by Mrs. Henry Wood' (226, 228). Mr. Wegg's reads to Mr. Boffin in parts. The reader reads of the sensational serial reading of *The Decline and Fall*, then finds his own serial reading interrupted by an advert for a sensation novel in three volumes.
2. Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England*, 18 and 35.

3. Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England*, 31.
4. Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England*, 35.
5. Advertisement reproduced in Bernard Darwin, *The Dickens Advertiser*, London: Elkin, Mathews and Marrot, 1930, 150.
6. All quotations from Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 389. Benjamin imagines the consumer as part of 'the dreaming collective, which through the arcades, communes with its own insides' or in Buck-Morss's translation '... which in the arcades sinks into its own innards'. (*The Dialectics of Seeing*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991, 272). The gazer is now part of what he gazes at and consumes his own unconscious (innards).
7. Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 110. The Sedleys' trip to Vauxhall Gardens in *Vanity Fair* offers a good example of the way the public was asked to consume the experience. As soon as the four characters settle to one activity they are seduced away to another.
8. Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', 165 and 167.
9. Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', 168.
10. Zizek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, 6.
11. Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*, 36.
12. Crary links attention to a Nietzschean forgetting. *Suspensions of Perception*, 41 and 42.
13. Arendt quoted by Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*, 54.
14. We find it on top of the green *Household Words* advert after the illustrations and just before the first page of chapter 26, 'Sharpshooters'. The slip reads: 'An accident having happened to the Plate, it has been necessary to cancel one of the Illustrations to the present Number. It will be supplied in the next monthly part.' And sure enough there is an extra illustration added in N°10.
15. The Marsland crochet patterns are placed next to the Moses and Son merchant tailor advertisements on the back inside cover. They are one-third of the size of the pages of the 'Advertiser' and are printed in red, blue or black on a white or yellow ground, functioning both as a pattern and as an advertisement for Marsland cottons. The wax seals appear in numbers 19 and 20 of *Nicholas Nickleby*.
16. Such reading behaviour is mentioned by Wilkie Collins, who describes reading from

    > ... five sample copies of five separate journals, all, I repeat, bought accidentally, just as they happened to catch my attention in the shop windows ... I have impartially taken my chance. And now, just as impartially, dip into one journal after another, on the Correspondents' page, exactly as the five happen to lie on my desk.

    See 'The Unknown Public', *Household Words*, Saturday, 21 August 1858.
17. Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985, 497 and 88.
18. See how in *Our Mutual Friend* N°12 the illustration 'The Bibliomania of the Golden Dustman' shows the characters looking at stalls and at an advert for 'Books Bought'. This illustration is followed by an advertisement for Dickens's 'People's Pickwick'. Many of the illustrations in *Pickwick* also contain advertisements.
19. Four illustrations for Lloyd's adverts bear a striking similarity to Thackeray's own illustrations for *Vanity Fair* of 1848. See Darwin's comments on these adverts: 'The date is too late; otherwise I should like to think that the picture represented Amelia and Becky Sharp going out for a drive in Mr. Sedley's carriage, under the escort of Black Sambo' (*The Dickens Advertiser*, 117).

20. See Lee Erickson, *The Economy of the Literary Form: English Literature and the Industrialisation of Publishing 1800–1850*, Baltimore, MD and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, 10.
21. Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England*, 30–31.
22. Kunzle, *History of the Comic Strip*, 378.
23. Curtis, *Visual Words*, 94.
24. See, for example, the adverts for Moses and Son in the *David Copperfield* monthly numbers.
25. See N. N. Feltes's thesis around the 'commodity text' as a reactive text which became a 'two-way information highway'. Both Michael Lund (referring to Thackeray) and Feltes (referring to Dickens) suggest that events in the novel could be modified at the last minute, sometimes in response to reader criticism. (N. N. Feltes, *Modes of Production of Victorian Novels*, Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986, 13–14; Michael Lund, *Reading Thackeray*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988.)
26. Many publications at the time were experimenting with different publication frequencies: *Punch* was published in monthly parts as well as weekly. The monthly parts of the 1860s have 'Published every Saturday in Numbers, price3d. – Stamped 4d. – and Monthly in Parts' written across the top as an advertisement to attract the largest variety of readers.
27. Like the advertiser, Dickens's writing must use techniques which trigger the work of interpretation. See J. Hillis Miller's introduction to *Bleak House*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971 for a study of the lateral movement of cross-referencing which leads the reader through the text.
28. Ransome's Stone Filters advertisements tell of the infections one might fall victim to even if one lives in a green and pleasant village. It traces the water supply back to the infected city downriver and provides illustrations of magnified bacteria in a drop of water. Thorley's cattle feed offers a cartoon on the cover of its booklet in which a farmer listens to the complaints of the milkmaid. The advertisements on the wall of the shed behind milkmaid and cow all advertise other products, but in the second scene the Thorley advert has pride of place. This is an advert within an advert within an advert, so a perfect *mise en abyme*.
29. Walter Benjamin, 'Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire' quoted in Susan Buck-Morss, *Dialectics of Seeing*, 269.
30. *Edwin Drood*, first published 1870, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985, 37. Further references appear in text.
31. Lay Precentor: a cleric who leads a congregation or choir in the sung parts of the church service.
32. See Thomas De Quincey, 'Suspiria de Profundis', first published 1845, in Grevel Lindop (ed.), *Confessions of an English Opium Eater and Other Writings*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, 140.
33. Gail Houston, 'Dickens's Construction of the Hallucinatory subject in *Edwin Drood*', paper given at the 'Ways of Seeing' conference, University of Nanterre, Paris, 2000.
34. De Quincey, 'Suspiria de Profundis', 140.
35. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, first published 1930, trans. and ed. James Strachey, with a biographical introduction by Peter Gay, London and New York, Norton, 1989, 19.
36. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 20.

37. See George Nash, 'Pomp and Circumstance. Archaeology, Modernity and the Corporatisation of Death' in P. M. Graves-Brown, *Matter, Materiality and Modern Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 2000. Nash describes how the new Victorian bourgeois elite resented old feudal power and reflected this in a change within the burial system. Cemeteries were starting to be run without the control of the Church of England; and death became visibly commercial. There was an 'enculturation' of death in which death was not allowed to be the great leveller but on the contrary was to confirm social status: the secular monumentality of Highgate cemetery is an example of this with its neoclassical (as well as pagan, Eastern and Egyptian) imagery. Getting rid of the dead out of central London was part of Bazalgette's sanitation reforms and it was at this time that the mourning industry took off: jewellery, accessories, clothes (using new purple dyes), and the use of new technologies of interment (the London Necropolis at Brookwood had its own railway to transport corpses).
38. The interrupted narrative of *Drood* has of course been the subject of much controversy. There is a suggestion that, during one of his dark phases, Jasper turned from protective uncle to enraged rival and killed his own nephew.
39. The opium scene of the opening pages of the novel exerts its influence on the scene with Rosa at the Cathedral depicted in the illustration 'Jasper's Sacrifices'. Rosa is drawn to Jasper as if she were under the influence of a powerful drug: '... the old horrible feeling of being compelled by him asserts its hold upon her. She feels that she would even then go back, but that he draws her feet towards him. She cannot resist ...' (*Drood*, 226).
40. My underlining.
41. Sigmund Freud, 'Recommendations to Physicians Practising Psycho-Analysis' [1912], *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey, vol. XII, London: The Hogarth Press, 1958, 112.
42. Freud, 'Recommendations', 112.
43. Freud, 'Recommendations', 112.
44. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (trans. and ed.), 'Periodicity and Self-Analysis', The *Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess 1887–1904*, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985, letter of December 6, 1896, 207–208.
45. Freud, 'Recommendations', 135.
46. In describing the 'fundamental rule of psychoanalysis' in which the patient must relate 'everything that his self-observation offers up' and 'keep back all the logical and affective objections that seek to induce him to make a selection', Freud says that the analyst too must give up any censorship of his own:

    > ... he must turn his own unconscious like a receptive organ towards the transmitting unconscious of the patient. He must adjust himself to the patient as a telephone receiver is adjusted to the transmitting microphone. Just as the receiver converts back into sound-waves the electric oscillations in the telephone line which were set up by sound-waves, so the doctor's unconscious is able, from the derivations of the unconscious which are communicated to him, to reconstruct that unconscious, which has determined the patient's free associations. ('Recommendations', 115–116)

    The analyst, one could add, must also be a reader and maker of 'cadavres exquis'; he or she connects elements in the discourse of the patient which the latter is incapable of connecting. Hence the floating attention of the analyst and the acquisition by the analysand, during analysis, of strategies of avoidance or anaesthesia.

47. See Smith, *Advertise!*
48. See Werner Spies's comments on collage in *Max Ernst: A Retrospective*, London and Hanover: Te Neues, 1991.
49. Zizek goes on to say that even the subject who maintains a distance from the ritual does not know that 'the ritual already dominates him from within' (*The Plague of Fantasies*, 6).
50. George Augustus Sala, *Gaslight and Daylight: With Some London Scenes They Shine Upon*, London: Chapman and Hall, 1859, 259–260.
51. Darwin, *The Dickens Advertiser*, 144. Both quotations. Each firm kept its own writers at this time, the first copy writers as we know them only appearing at the end of the century.
52. Broad windows glazed with costly glass
    And sashed with rods of solid brass.
    And higher still the vision marches,
    The eye is met with spreading arches,
    Whose lofty height and wide expansion
    Might well adorn a regal mansion.
53. The underlining is my own. The ellipses are in the advertisement and do not signify a cut.
54. *Bleak House*, 55. Further references appear in text.
55. John Kucich has noticed the use of the fairy-tale ending in the Dickens novel which anchors the narrative but does not close it, offering a 'soothing metaphysics of union' but with an absence of ideological and social content: 'exceeding significance by dissolving itself into the pure mechanism of narrative convention'. (*Excess and Restraint in the Novels of Charles Dickens*, Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1981, 247, 253–254.)
56. See Doris-Louise Haineault and Jean-Yves Roy, *L'Inconscient qu'on affiche: un essai psychanalytique sur la fascination publicitaire*, Paris: Aubier, 1984. Doris-Louise Haineault and Jean-Yves Roy seek to understand the mechanisms of advertising by using psychoanalytic concepts. Their thesis is that advertising exploits our need to resemble others and to be in accordance with – that is to fit in with – the world. We wish to produce sameness, *'produire du même'*. A product, a commodity, is used to paper over the gap, to attenuate a threatening otherness which refuses to be tamed. We are all alike, says advertising, since aristocrat and worker, man and woman all consume the same pills and drink the same tea. Advertising can tolerate neither lack nor difference but only solicits desire with the intention of negating it with an 'objet-réponse-désaveu' – an 'object-answer-denial' (208). It replaces lack and difference with a quasi-delirious image of non-lack – 'une image quasi-délirante d'un non-manque ... une cache-béance' – which is a fetish object. This is the mechanism of perversion in which all otherness is denied – a refusal to recognize what is different and unknown – a system of answers which silences all questions.
57. Author's italics. My underlining.
58. There is also an illustration showing Richard's paper-strewn desk entitled 'Light' in N°16 of *Bleak House*.
59. One recent French TV advertisement for a credit card seemed to be evoking the civic rights of young people and showed all manner of pedestrians helping a young man in the street, much to the latter's surprise and pleasure.
60. Lecercle, *Interpretation as Pragmatics*, 157.
61. Robert L. Patten, *Charles Dickens and His Publishers*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975, 65.

62. When Dickens fell out with Chapman and Hall after their collaboration on *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, there ensued a complicated sharing of publishing between Bradbury and Evans and Chapman and Hall. One company might appear on the covers but the other would have taken over the advertising or circulation: 'Chapman and Hall, using Bradbury and Evans as their printer, would publish the books they controlled and Bradbury and Evans would do likewise for theirs. Thus the series appears under the imprint of both firms, and their varying methods of keeping records add further confusion.' (Patten, *Charles Dickens and His Publishers*, 255.)
63. Patten tells us:

    > Over a century of experience with serials of various kinds had taught English publishers many lessons. Cheapening books enlarged the potential audience and pool of customers. Serial issue could substantially lower the costs even of expensive, illustrated works. Periodical issuance of books in progress recirculated a publisher's cash flow: each part financed the next. Advertising was a key to success, and regularity of publication a key to establishing the customer's all important habit of coming back to his bookseller every week or month ... Illustrations often more than recouped their cost by inducing readers to buy. ... Magazine fiction became a staple in many households and could establish the habit of reading early in life. ... Cheap series persuaded many middle-class households to buy the complete works of the author, even copies of otherwise uncommercial books. But though these and other lessons had been learned in specific circumstances, no one had put all of them together in a form of writing, publishing and distributing that would take full advantage of the potential mass market. (*Charles Dickens and His Publishers*, 54)

    John Carter tells us that 'The first thirty-five years of the nineteenth-century introduced more radical changes in book production than the preceding 350.' See John Carter, *Books and Book-Collectors*, Cleveland, OH and New York, World Publishing Co., 1957, 158.
64. Patten, *Charles Dickens and His Publishers*, 57.
65. *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, Walter Dexter (ed.), 3 vols, Bloomsbury: Nonesuch Press, 1938, I, 783. Patten tells us that the sales of *Dombey and Son* were immediately good; the archives show that the first print run was 25,000. Bradbury and Evans started selling on 1 October 1846: 'Within hours, the total stock had sold out ... Hastily, ten more reams of double demy were bought, machined, prepared, and printed; 5,000 more wrappers were readied; the plates were reprinted; 2,000 more advertising inserts were run off. The whole was stitched together and issued before the tenth.' By 7 November 2000 more were printed, and another batch of the same size before the 21st. 'The pace was frantic: charges for "Night and Sunday work" on Part 1 alone suggest that the printers billed at least ninety hours of overtime.' (*Dickens and His Publishers*, 185)
66. Dexter, *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, II, 211. See also Patten, *Charles Dickens and His Publishers*, 212.
67. See N°12 of *David Copperfield*.
68. John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, in J. W. T. Ley (ed.), New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1928, VI, 477. *Bleak House* sold more than any of Dickens's novels before. The first printing of 25,000 copies sold out and 5,000 more had to be printed; the charges for extra night work show that staff stayed well into the night to assemble the texts, wrappers, plates (illustrations) and 'Advertiser' (which needed machining in). This was the first number with the

'Anti-Bleak House' Moses and Son advertisement in it. They started N°3 with a print-run of 34,000 and needed an extra 15,000. On 4 March Dickens replied to his father-in-law's praise of his success by saying: 'It has been a great success and is blazing away merrily.' In a letter to de Cerjat on 8 May he writes 'It is a most enormous success, all the prestige of Copperfield (which was very great) falling upon it, and raising its circulation above all my other books.' This shows Dickens's awareness of the preceding serial's role as an advertisement for the next. See Dexter, *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, 382, 394. See Patten, *Charles Dickens and His Publishers*, 255.

69. Dickens and Hogarth (eds), *Letters of Charles Dickens*, 439.
70. Patten, *Charles Dickens and His Publishers*, 188.
71. Patten, *Charles Dickens and His Publishers*, 190. I am indebted to Marie-Françoise Cachin, who first showed me a copy of a Cheap Edition.
72. Introduction to the Cheap Edition reprinted by Patten, *Charles Dickens and His Publishers*, 192.
73. Found in the Advertiser for *David Copperfield*. Reproduced in Darwin, *The Dickens Advertiser*, 155.
74. From Charles Dickens, *Speeches*, K. J. Fielding (ed.), Brighton: Harvester Press, 1988, 156–157. Quoted by Bill Bell, 'Fiction in the Marketplace: Towards a Study of the Victorian Serial' in *Serials and Their Readers 1620–1914*, Winchester and New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 1993, 126–127.
75. All quotes from Bell, 'Fiction in the Marketplace', 127.
76. Easthope claims that

    > ... the bourgeoisie arrives as a class aiming to disguise its class interests as universal, in particular by replacing social and historical meanings with a dramatisation of the 'individual' ... The term 'ideology' may best be reserved to describe this strategy for reworking social and 'objective' modes as personal and 'subjective'. (*Literary into Cultural Studies*, 132)

77. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London and New York: Verso, 1991, 77.
78. Bermann, *All that Is Solid Melts into Air*, 68.
79. Elizabeth R. Napier, *The Failure of Gothic: Problems of Disjunction in an Eighteenth-Century Literary Form*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1987, 29.
80. Allan Pritchard, 'The Urban Gothic of *Bleak House*', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, March 1991, vol. 45, 435.
81. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, London and New York: Methuen, 1980, 9.
82. The expression 'palimpsestuous', 'palimpsestueux' in French, is a coinage by Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes*.
83. Pritchard, 'The Urban Gothic of *Bleak House*', 451.
84. R. L. Platzner and R. D. Hume, '"Gothic Versus Romantic": A Rejoinder', PMLA lxxxvi (1971), 266–274, 267.
85. Napier, *The Failure of Gothic*, 67.
86. From his 'Account of Architects and Architecture', in R. Fréart, *A Parallel of the Ancient Architecture with the Modern*, 2nd edn (London 1707), 9–10, cited by Napier, *The Failure of the Gothic*, 71. Evelyn's emphases.
87. 'A Drop of LondonWater' in *Punch*, 18, 1850, 188.
88. 'There is a pure conversion hysteria without any anxiety, just as there is a simple anxiety hysteria which manifests itself in sensations of anxiety and in phobia without the addition of conversion'. Freud, *The Standard Edition*, vol. X, 116.

See the pages on hysteria in J. Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis, *Vocabulaire de la Psychanalyse*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967.

89. Sedgwick, *Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, 13.
90. David Punter, *Gothic Pathologies: The Text, the Body, the Law*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998, 5–6.
91. Punter, *Gothic Pathologies*, 11.
92. Thomas De Quincey, *The Collected Writings of Thomas de Quincey*, 14 vols, David Masson (ed.), London: A & C. Black, 1896–97, 3, 446, 442 and 443. See Sedgwick, *Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, 38–39.
93. Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, 345 and 347.
94. Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, 396 and 400.
95. Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, 704. This speaking on the part of the body with the materials it possesses is one of the central patterns of hysteria.
96. Serial edition N°13, 14 of the 'Advertiser'.
97. Sedgwick, *Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, iv.
98. Punter, *Gothic Pathologies*, 16.
99. Jacques Lacan, 'D'une question préliminaire à tout traitement possible de la psychose', *Ecrits*, Paris: Seuil, 1966, 567.
100. Andy Williams in a paper entitled 'Class Relations in the Frame: *Bleak House* and Bourgeois Self-Fashioning' (paper given at the Third International Marx Congress, University of Nanterre, 26–29 September 2001), used this advert for Morison's pills among other advertisements to demonstrate the parergonal status of the adverts in deconstructing the utopian vision of the novel's closure. I am indebted to him for introducing me to this advert.
101. Geneviève Morel, *Ambiguïtés sexuelles: sexuation et psychose*, Paris: Anthropos, 2000, 112.
102. Quoted by Don Slater (without reference) in *Consumer Culture and Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997, 127.
103. Punter, *Gothic Pathologies*, 9.
104. Punter, *Gothic Pathologies*, 13.

3 Balzac's Revolution of Signs: Advertisement as Textual Practice

1. The Marseillaise was a powerful piece of oral advertisement, a series of injunctions to take up arms for the republican cause: 'Aux armes citoyens!'
2. Thomas Carlyle, *The French Revolution. A History*, London: Chapman and Hall, 1837, and Louis Sébastien Mercier, *Le Nouveau Paris* [1799], Paris: Mercure de France, 1994.
3. Marc Martin, *Trois siècles de publicité en France*, Paris: Odile Jacob, 1992, 13. All translations of French texts in this chapter (novels and criticism) are my own.
4. The word *réclame* designated advertising for particular products in the nineteenth century, now replaced in French by the word *publicité* ('La nuit des publivores' is an all-night cinema showing of old cinema and television adverts for enthusiasts and shows how advertising is still a national passion). From the verb *réclamer* – to implore help, ask for the indulgence of someone or to ask insistently like a child calling out for its mother as in *réclamer sa mère* – it was used to describe a particular advertisement for a product.
5. See Paul Bernelle, *Des Restrictions apportés depuis 1881 à la liberté de l'affichage* (Dissertation, Université de Paris, Faculté du Droit, 1912, 10–12. Archives de la Préfecture de Paris, Police Ordinances *Usuel*).

6. Charles Colnet, *L'Hermite du Faubourg Saint Germain*, Paris: Pillet, 1825, vol. 2, 191–193. Law of 28 November 1829, Police Ordinances, Archives de la Préfecture de Police *Usuel*. Quoted in Haejeong Hazel Hahn, 'Street Picturesque: Advertising in Paris, 1830–1914', Berkeley, CA: University of California, PhD, submitted 1997, 12.
7. Hahn, 'Street Picturesque', 12.
8. Hahn, 'Street Picturesque', 12.
9. Hahn, 'Street Picturesque', 12. Hahn's source is *La Grande Encyclopédie, inventaire raisonné des sciences, des lettres et des arts* sous la direction de Berthelot, 'Affiche', Paris, 1885–1902, 685.
10. See Alain Vaillant's study of the way each revolution in France reactivated an ideal of literature as discourse and the dream of 'an absolute performativity' or efficiency of speech and writing. The violence of 'off with their heads!' is not forgotten but lives on as eloquence still present in various forms of media. *La Crise de la littérature. Romantisme et modernité*, Grenoble: ELLUG Université Stendahl, 2005, 28–31.
11. Keith Randall, *France, Monarchy, Republic and Empire 1814–70*, London: Edward Arnold, 1986, 66–70.
12. *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, David McLellan (ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 330.
13. From *La Nouveauté, journal pratique des modes* (1830), vol. 4, 94. Cited in Hahn, 'Street Picturesque', 204.
14. See M. Bouloiseau, *La République jacobine (10 août 1792–9 Thermidor an II*), Paris: Points Seuils, 2004. Simon Schama describes the special commission set up to reconstruct time in this way as being a mix of literary men (Fabre, Romme, Chénier) and scientists (Monge and Fourcroy, for example). See *Citizens*, New York: Vintage Books, 1989.
15. Girardin was monarchist but rallied to the republican cause in 1848 to support Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte. He was mainly concerned with the vulgarization of knowledge for the *petite bourgeoisie* and created amongst others *Le journal des connaissances utiles* (*The Paper for Useful Knowledge*) in 1832.
16. See Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*. See in particular Book Fifth, Part VII 'Three months in Paris (1846–7)' and Book Seventh 'Residence in Paris (1855–6)'. See also A. Jardin and A. J. Tudesq, *Nouvelle histoire de la France contemporaine. La France des notables 1815–1848*, Paris: Seuil, 1973, 222–232.
17. As Martin points out *les annonces* (personal ads) and *la réclame* can constitute *publicité* but the key element for them to do so is the mass communication network created by the French press in the nineteenth century. He insists also on the fact that advertising was born with the press: 'la première gazette est publié en France en 1631, et la publicité apparaît presque simultanément en 1633'. Martin tells us that under the *Ancien Régime* there was little advertising within papers – merely *annonces* for everyday objects such as books, clothes, harnesses for horses – but with the revolution newspapers begin to publish announcements concerning political events as well as real estate concerns. *Trois siècles*, 15.
18. The word 'publicité' entered the Academy in 1878.
19. Marc Martin describes the fear of revolutionaries like Louis Blanc: 'le journalisme, en un mot, allait devenir le porte-voix de la speculation.' *Trois siècles*, 59.
20. Martin, *Trois siècles*, 60.
21. See Girardin's editorial in Thérenty and Vaillant (eds), *1836: L'An I de l'ère médiatique: analyse littéraire et historique de* La Presse *de Girardin*, Paris: Nouveau Monde Editions, 2001, 133.

22. Thérenty and Vaillant, *1836*, 34.
23. Thérenty and Vaillant are literary scholars who envisage a poetics of the commercial. In his preface, Alain Vaillant defends their approach, which is to analyse a newspaper as if it were a literary text. His desire is to bring out the aesthetics and ethics behind the writing, layout and general conception of *La Presse* and in so doing show that literary movements of the nineteenth century labelled 'romanticism' or 'modernity' were dependent on new forms of media. *1836*, 9.
24. Thérenty and Vaillant, *1836*, 19.
25. Giradin was ready to fight his critics and did so physically – killing an adversary in a duel; the modern press was signed, say Thérenty and Vaillant, by the death of a journalist.
26. Thérenty and Vaillant, *1836*, 41.
27. Subscription was 80 francs (or 421 hours of manual work in the provinces) to cover heavy overheads imposed on newspapers. The daily press was essentially for electors at the *Chambres des Deputés* – bourgeois or aristocratic.
28. Thérenty and Vaillant, *1836*, 11–13.
29. Martin, *Trois siècles*, 60.
30. Thérenty and Vaillant, *1836*, 19.
31. Thérenty and Vaillant, *1836*, 19.
32. Lise Queffelec, *Le Roman-feuilleton français au XIXe siècle*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989, 32.
33. See Graham Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000, 4–31, 86. See his discussion of high taxation during political unrest, taxes on advertisements in the 1830s making London dailies expensive, the restrictions on publishing fiction at the same time as news in the same newspaper, especially those aimed at working-class audiences.
34. Thérenty and Vaillant, *1836*, 27. Their first chapter 'An Analysis of a Media Revolution' tells us that within six months of its launch on 1 July 1836 *La Presse* had a circulation which outstripped *Le Constitutionnel* and was third behind *Le Journal des Débats* and *Le Siècle*, the largest papers of the Restoration years (1815–30). Girardin went against the rather staid French political press, which was hampered by paralysing legislation brought in by the government after an attempt on the life of the king in 1835; there were constant court cases and closures, fines for drawings and draconian measures taken against workers' magazines such as A. Blanqui's *Le Libérateur*, many of which had to close or become weeklies instead of dailies.
35. See Thérenty and Vaillant, *1836*, 93–108.
36. Prophets of a form of socialist industrialism, the Saint-Simonians believed that post-*Ancien Régime* industrial society would naturally harmonize the interests of workers and the owners of industry.
37. Philippe Régnier, 'Pratique et théorie saint-simonienne de la presse' in *Presse et plumes. Journalisme et littérature au XIXe siècle*, Paris: Nouveau Monde éditions, 2005, 224.
38. Régnier, *Presse et plumes*, 224. See also the discussion of how *Le Globe* became the mouthpiece of the movement and editor Michel Chevalier's statement that the press was the new government and had replaced other forms of power since the revolution.
39. Régnier, *Presse et plumes*, 225. He uses Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau, *Saint-Simon ou la raison en actes*, Paris: Payot, 2001, 487–491.
40. Graham Law notices the very elastic sense of the word 'news' in most British newspapers – in that it often strays very far from the notion of a factual account of

events ('information concerning recent public occurrences') and often becomes fictionalized. See Law, *Serializing Fiction*, xv.

41. Thérenty and Vaillant, *1836*, 233, 239.
42. In her discussion of news-fiction, Thérenty shows the '*perméabilité*' of the frontier between news and fiction – between the upper page and 'ground floor' of fiction. See 'L'Invention de la fiction d'actualité' in *Presse et plumes*, 417–419.
43. Queffelec, *Roman-feuilleton,* 10. Queffelec points out that throughout the nineteenth century in France serial publication was a rite of passage for all great novelists. The 'romantic age of the serial novel' is seen to go from 1836 to 1866. Queffelec traces the preparation for this success to Mme de Staël in her *Essai sur les fictions*. From the first revolution and into the Restoration, novelists like Pigault-Lebrun (Miss Crawley's favourite novelist in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*) and Ducray-Duminil had great success and were already sold in cheap popular editions. The Romantics were then inspired by the historical novels of Scott and Cooper.
44. Queffelec, *Roman-feuilleton,* 29. Dumas invented in Monte-Cristo a romantic hero who wished to dominate but also be free of bourgeois society.
45. Thérenty and Vaillant, *1836*, 37.
46. Thérenty and Vaillant, *1836*, 45.
47. These were *La Caricature*, *Le Charivari*, *Revue de Paris* and *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Balzac, Soulier and Dumas all wrote for them: these came out every two to three months and contained signed pieces to give literature a firmer position, to consolidate the idea of intellectual property.
48. Louis Véron, *Mémoires d'un bourgeois de Paris*, Paris: Gabriel de Gonet éditeur, 1853, 14.
49. Vaillant, *La Crise*, 10.
50. Thérenty and Vaillant call it a '*marque de fabrique*', *1836*, 54.
51. See Queffelec, *Roman-feuilleton*, 15–16 and 21–24. Alexandre Dumas published *Les trois mousquétaires* daily in *Le Siècle* from March 14 to July 14. At this time Balzac could not compete with these writers in terms of popularity; he came into his own with *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes* in 1844 in *l'Epoque*. This success continued with *La cousine Bette*, *Le cousin Pons* and *La dernière incarnation de Vautrin* in *La Presse*.
52. Balzac's daily serial *Modeste Mignon* was published in the *Journal des Débats* in 1844 from 4 to 18 April then from 17 May to 1 June, and finally from 5 to 21 July. It went into its first volume form in 1845, coming out in four volumes from November to January 1845 with a combined group of publishers: Souverain, Chlendowski et Roux et Cassenet.
53. See, for example, the *Journal des Débats* of 8 July 1844.
54. See also Queffelec on the *bourgeois* in the serial: '*ils sont la froide, la plate réalité en face de l'idéal …*', *Roman-feuilleton*, 28.
55. 'Les Etrangers à Paris – 400 dessins – 50 livraisons à 30 centimes – La 30 § est en vente.'
56. 'Les personnes qui désirent SE MARIER peuvent, en toute confiance, s'adr. À Mme DE SAINT-MARC; ses relations dans la haute société la mettent à même de renseigner sur des Dames et Demoiselles ayant dots et fortunes jusqu'à deux millions: (Affr.) (3384)'. Each advert had a number.
57. Queffelec, *Roman-feuilleton*, 30.
58. Régnier, *Presses et plumes*, 229.

59. The Saint-Simonian, Enfantin, said 'le verbe a pris sa forme multiple'. This undoes the notion of a single ruling book. The Press is seen to be polyphonic, the book monovocal. Régnier, *Presses et plumes*, 232.
60. I am borrowing Taveaux Grandpierre's superb expression '*fidéliser les flux d'attention du public*' in 'La presse au XIXème siècle: les modes de diffusion d'une industrie culturelle' in *Presse et plumes*, 206.
61. Giving up his early studies in a lawyer's firm, Balzac was firstly trained as a printer. He bought his own printer's business in 1826 and worked to gain his licence. His business failed in 1828 but he continued to use his skills acquired in the trade throughout his career.
62. See Pierre Citron's publishing history in Honoré de Balzac, *La Peau de chagrin*, Paris: Gallimard – Bibliothèque de La Pléiade, 1979, 1226–1230.
63. Roger Pierrot, 'Chronologie de Balzac', *La comédie humaine*, Paris: Gallimard – Bibliothèque de La Pléiade, 1979, XCIV.
64. See Queffelec, *Roman-feuilleton*, 33.
65. These were 'Une altercation de ménage', 'Antécédents de César Birotteau', 'Les germes du malheur', 'Dépenses excessives', 'Un vrai philosophe, un grand chimiste', 'Les deux astres', 'Le bal', 'Quelques éclairs', 'Le coup de foudre', 'La Haute Banque', 'Un ami', 'Le dernier jour d'un failli', 'Le dépôt d'un bilan', 'Histoire générale des faillites', 'Le plus beau spectacle que l'homme puisse offrir à son semblable' and 'Au ciel'. In 1839 Balzac got rid of the chapters and left only two parts for the publishers, Charpentier. Then Furne took up these changes in 1844 for their edition. It appeared as the second volume of 'Scènes de la vie parisienne'. See appendix in *César Birotteau*, Paris: Folio, 1975, reprinted 2005, 420. All future references will be to this edition and will appear in the text. All translations are my own.
66. César is describing the royalist insurrection of the 13 *Vendémiare* in the year IV of the revolutionary calendar (corresponding to 5 October 1795). It was directed against the expiring *Convention* and energetically suppressed by Bonaparte, who seized the occasion to reaffirm his own compromised position. The incident ended with a skirmish on the steps of Saint-Roch church where César played his part. It is this event, often recounted by Birotteau, that helps create his reputation and helps him in 1810 to become 'juge au Tribunal de Commerce' and thus become a '*notable*'.
67. Later César invites Roguin to his ball and explains how he got his *Légion d'honneur* 'en combatant pour les Bourbons sur les marches…de Saint Roch, au 13 Vendémiare, où je fus blessé par Napoléon' (199).
68. We learn that he got his Royalist leanings from his employer, who hated the revolution for having made the 'Titus' hairdo (Napoleon's cut) fashionable and thus having 'suppressed powder' (62) for wigs. It is commercial resentment rather than ideological conviction which fuels the politics here.
69. Both quotations from Taveaux-Grandpierre, *Presses et plumes*, 206. Mass culture can also be seen as a guarantee of democracy, as A. Mattelart and Jacques Rancière suggest.
70. T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* [1944], London: Faber and Faber, 2001, 4.
71. See the description of the objects, furniture, materials of the Ragon household which speak of another relation to time and space respectful of nobility and Church (287–288).
72. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, 6.
73. 'Il n'avait jamais surfait, ni jamais couru après les affaires' (143).

74. See André Wurmser's introduction to this edition of *César Birotteau* for an understanding of how the great bourgeois fortunes of the Human Comedy owe themselves to the first revolution, to speculation and the fleecing of the public (Goriot, Grandet, Malin de Gondreville, Birotteau). See also the formation of the great banks of Europe and the 'dictatorship of money'. Balzac was described by Hugo as a 'revolutionary writer', and was admired by Marx and Lukàcs.
75. Balzac's *La Peau de chagrin*, which has as its central symbol a shrinking wild ass's skin, explores the idea that the *idée fixe* can bring about death and that thought itself can kill.
76. Introduction, *La Peau de chagrin*: Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1974, 33.
77. André Wurmser, Introduction to *César Birotteau*, 31.
78. See Jacques Rancière, *Le partage du sensible: esthétique et politique*, Paris: La Fabrique-éditions, 2000.
79. Succinctness is also at play in the opening lines of *César Birotteau*: we are plunged into the novel via Madame Birotteau's dream and not via a long spatio-temporal description as is often the case in the nineteenth-century novel.
80. Corinne Pelta discusses this problem in 'La presse libérale sous la Restauration: émergence d'une écriture collective' in *Presse et plumes*, 371–378. She sees a growing understanding of the idea of the collective within the newspaper with its insistence on commonplace ('lieu commun'). The society of the time of the Restoration needed the press in order to create a collective writing and thus create a collective image of themselves. This is similar to Benedict Anderson's vision of the bourgeoisie in Britain and its invention of its self in an 'imagined community'.
81. 'un martyr de la probité commerciale à décorer de la palme éternelle' (401).
82. See also the beliefs and reading habits of the bourgeoisie as described during César's ball.
83. See Véronique Bui, 'Comment l'huile céphalique vint à Balzac. Poétique de la publicité dans le quotidien' in *Presse et plumes*, 463.
84. See Bui's study of Balzac's instructions to his printers: 'Mettez en tête les deux faces de médailles de manière à placer Huile entre les deux polytypages et céphalique en-dessous' (464).
85. Balzac recognized early that the 'civilisation du texte' would have to engage with the seduction of the image. The advertisement smith or 'réclamiste' is, says Bui, 'son semblable, son frère' (465). Bui insists on the fact that the *Pâte Regnault* and *Mixture brésilienne* were not yet household names in the way the novel describes. The prospectus printed in full compares the oil with other products, which, although illegal later, was quite current in the July Monarchy and before.
86. See André Wurmser, *La comédie inhumaine*, Paris: Gallimard, 'Bibliothèque des Idées', 1970. To shed light on these shifting boundaries Stéphane Vachon has focused on an advert for the complete works of Horace de Saint-Aubin which occurred in *La Presse* on Tuesday 5 October 1836 and which contained typically Balzacian expressions and an analogy which he uses in the first part of *Lost Illusions* written just after June 1836. Vachon, 'Précisions bibliographiques', *L'Année balzacienne* 1991, 297–299.
87. Lucien Dällenbach, 'Le Tout en morceaux', *Poétique*, 1980, no. 42, 160. 'Coller' is to glue, 'colmater' to stick together.
88. Vaillant, *La Crise*, 265–267. My translation.
89. Gaudissart compliments Finot on his work: 'voilà de la littérature utile' (194).
90. Gaudissart first appeared in *Scènes de la vie de province*, which contained *Eugénie Grandet* et *L'Illustre Gaudissart*, first sold in December 1833.

91. *La Peau de chagrin*, *La Comédie humaine*, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, t. X, 1979, 165.
92. Finot's social ascension is meteoric. Thanks to Birotteau's prospectus he earns a thousand francs, with which he launches himself in the newspaper trade. Twelve years later in the time of the *Human Comedy* he owns several newspapers and mixes with Bankers. He becomes *Conseiller d'Etat* in 1831 and has made a fortune.
93. Grandville, *Un autre Monde*, 272.
94. In *Lost Illusions* Lousteau talks of the literary world as of a collection of modes of writing fluttering down to the Seine like paper fledglings.
95. All three quotations: Grandville, *Un autre Monde*, 276–278.
96. '... les journaux s'élargissant, les feuilletons s'essaiment, l'élasticité des phrases a dû se prêter indéfiniment, ... le style s'est étiré dans tous ses fils comme des étoffes trop tendues.' Text is equated with textiles and clothing. Charles Augustin de Sainte-Beuve, *Pour la critique*, Paris: Gallimard – Folio, 1999. In his article 'De la littérature industrielle', which first appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* on 1 September 1839, Sainte-Beuve attacks Balzac and indirectly Girardin as well as criticizing the cheaper subscription.
97. Kevin McLaughlin dwells on the notion of dissolving paper in his excellent introduction to *Paperwork: Fiction and Mass Mediacy in the Paper Age*, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005.
98. Jacques Rancière, *La parole muette: Essai sur les contradictions en littérature*, Paris: Hachette, 1998, 82. French text: 'ce mutisme même rend la lettre écrite trop bavarde. N'étant pas guidée par un père qui la porte, selon un protocole légitime, vers le lieu où elle peut fructifier, la parole écrite s'en va rouler au hasard, de droite et de gauche. Elle s'en va parler à sa manière muette à n'importe qui sans pouvoir distinguer ceux auxquels il convient de parler et ceux à qui cela ne convient pas'.
99. Both quotations: Rancière, *La parole*, 71: 'que la coulée infinie de l'encre sur l'aplat des pages, que le corps incorporel de la lettre errante qui s'en va parler à la multitude sans visage des lecteurs de livres'.
100. Gaëtan Picon's preface to *Illusions perdues* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996, 8) is entitled 'Les *Illusions perdues* ou l'espérance retrouvée', that is, 'Lost Illusions or Hope regained' or 'Lost Illusions or Expectation Regained' (the translation of *Great Expectations* is 'De Grandes espérances').
101. *Illusions perdues*, Paris: Garnier Flammarion, Introd. Pierre Citron, 1985, 597–598. Further page references will appear in text. My own translations. French text: 'Vous brillerez, vous paraderez, pendant que courbé dans la boue des fondations, j'assurerai le brillant edifice de votre fortune ... Je serai toujours heureux de vos jouissances qui me sont interdites. Enfin, je me ferai vous !'.
102. The three parts of *Illusions perdues* are 'Les deux poètes', 'Un grand home de province à Paris' and 'Les souffrances de l'inventeur'.
103. Printers and booksellers of the *Ancien Régime* were repressed and replaced by manual workers, such as the old Séchard, who offered political allegiance to the revolutionary power but had no intellectual competence. The profession was highly regulated after 1810 during the Empire and bogged down in routine and administration. Vaillant shows that the book-form failed because of these problems since it could not keep up with the demand of the newly cultivated bourgeoisie of the 1820s. The printers' crisis around 1830 meant that book production stagnated through the July Monarchy and provoked criticism from Balzac, who tried to save the book with his *Human Comedy*. The newspaper takes over and prints the roman-feuilleton and poetry. See *La Crise*, 92–118.

104. Grandville, *Un autre Monde*, 276.
105. Byron's poem came out in 1821 and was translated in 1822 (Eugène Delacroix's painting of 1827 *La Mort de Sardanapale* is often said to be inspired by Byron's poem).
106. Vaillant, *La Crise*, 18.
107. 'Quelle honte pour notre époque de fabriquer des livres sans durée!' (132).
108. Jean-Pierre Bertrand says that the *Petits poèmes en prose* of Baudelaire would not be what they are without the formatting (*formatage*) they underwent in the space of the newspaper. The fifty poems were published in fifteen different periodicals at different times before becoming a book. They appeared, for example, on the ground floor of *La Presse* as well as the more noble *Revue de Paris* and *Revue des Deux Mondes* made venerable during the Restoration. Baudelaire invented 'la poésie industrielle', to use Sainte-Beuve's expression applied to literature. Jean-Pierre Bertrand, 'Une lecture médiatique du *Spleen de Paris*', in *Presse et plumes*, 329–330.
109. Grandville, *Un autre Monde*, 276.
110. Vaillant, *La crise,* 62.
111. See *Salon de 1846* quoted in *La crise*, 62.
112. Publication meant prostitution for Baudelaire, who talks of the 'imprimerie' as a brothel in which a writer might get a first dose of the clap. Yet this prostitution is considered more acceptable than the introspective and solitary poet who loses his virility: 'Plus l'homme cultive les arts, moins il bande' (see *Mon Coeur mise à nu* quoted in Vaillant, *La crise*, 73).
113. *Le Colonel Chabert*, Paris: Gallimard, 1999, 7. My translation. Chabert says that if he was once buried under the dead, he is now buried under the living, under the whole of a society 'qui veut me faire rentrer sous terre' (49).
114. See Vaillant, *La Crise*, 275–280.

Conclusion

1. Guy Debord, *La société de spéctacle* [1967], Paris: Gallimard, 1996. Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, trans. Michael Hardt, Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

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