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A hermeneutic approach to the detective story in our mutual friend

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A HERMENEUTIC APPROACH TO THE DETECTIVE STORY

IN OUR MUTUAL FRIEND

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B.A. HONOURS (ENGLISH)

1993

USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

A HERMENEUTIC APPROACH TO THE DETECTIVE STORY

IN OUR MUTUAL FRIEND

BY

Peter Spriggins

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Award of**

**Bachelor of Arts (Honours) English
at the Faculty of Arts, Edith Cowan University
Perth, Western Australia**

Supervisor: Dr. Jill Durey

Date of Submission: 31.10.93

DECLARATION

"I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text."

Signature.

Date.....31/10-43.....

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Our Mutual Friend is a complex detective novel which contains the basic elements of a detective story. Crimes are committed, bodies are recovered, criminals are brought to justice and the mystery is solved by a detective figure. In contrast to the conventional detective stories of Poe and Conan Doyle which are usually less than 40 pages, Dickens is able to probe deeper into each aspect of the detective story over more than 800 pages. This study focuses on the complexity with which Dickens develops the the apparently simple themes of friendship, hunting and morality that are to be found in the conventional detective story. A hermeneutic approach is necessary for Dickens focuses on characters engaged in the detection and interpretation of other individuals. Hermeneutics as the science or art of interpretation provides an opportunity to focus more on detection than on the detective. Detection and interpretation are closely linked for Mueller-Vollmer points out that hermeneutics can be traced to Hermes, whose task as a Greek god was to:

interpret for himself what the gods wanted to convey before he could proceed to translate, articulate and explicate their intention to mortals (1985:1)

Detective Story as a Hermeneutic Problem

In recent decades the detective story has been examined from a variety of literary theories. Most and Stowe identify four general literary approaches which have been applied to detective fiction (1983:xi-xv). From a structuralist position, Eco has applied semiotics to many examples of detective fiction, including Ian Fleming's novels of James Bond . Lacan and Pederson-Krag are regarded as influential in shaping psychoanalytic approaches to the detective story. Representing a sociological approach to detective fiction are Jameson, Marcus, Miller and Knight. Most and Stowe regard their philosophical approaches, which embody hermeneutic theory, as a new and rewarding direction for literary theory concerned with the detective story (1983:xv).

Most believes that the classic detective stories of Conan Doyle construct a mystery that can be solved by a simple semiotic method, for Holmes merely has to "consider data of all kinds as potential signifiers and to link them" (1983:365-367). Most also observes a simple semiotic method in the detective stories of Poe, in which Dupin connects a series of "fact signs" that enable him to construct a definitive "solution to the mystery" (1983:372). Most uses the hermeneutic theories of Gadamer to focus upon a

philosophical understanding of mystery in the detective stories of Chandler, whose novels embody "philosophical introspection" (1983:374).

I propose to begin to develop a hermeneutic theory for detective fiction which complements the work of Most, but provides an alternative perspective from which to approach the detective story in Our Mutual Friend. Chapter Two explores the presentation of friendship within the detective story's game-like structure and speculates on the functioning of the literary text as an experiential simulator for the reader. Chapter Three examines hunting from an anthropological perspective and investigates its close links with detection and friendship. Chapter Four outlines a primitive basis for morality and friendship through exploration of existential insecurity and reciprocal altruism. Friendship is the principal theme throughout the study and is dealt with in all the chapters.

Our Mutual Friend has rarely been viewed as a detective story but shares many hermeneutic features with the detective stories of Chandler, which are identified by Most (1983:375). Most describes Chandler's detective hero, Philip Marlowe, as one who becomes personally "entangled" in the "complications" of a case, which has become "something more than puzzle solving" (1983:375). The novels of Dickens also feature a great deal more than puzzle solving, for Hillis Miller notes that "From novel to novel throughout his career Dickens sought an ever closer

approach to the truth hidden beneath the surface appearance of things" (1958:xvi). I believe that Dickens had a life-long interest in detection, which is present in all his novels, including those which have no prominent formal detective figure.

Three variations of hermeneutic theory will be used to approach the detective story in Our Mutual Friend. An eclectic blend of hermeneutic theory will be applied, for the three variations of hermeneutics share many common principles. A phenomenological approach will use some of Iser's earlier theories to explore how Our Mutual Friend, as "a text that "constitutes its own world, which can be entered directly through an imaginative experience of the text (Davis 1986:4). The particular type of phenomenological criticism I apply to Our Mutual Friend has been practised by the Geneva School of critics, including Georges Poulet, Jean Starobinski and the early work of J. Hillis Miller. Lodge observes that Iser's literary criticism has a close "affinity" with the Geneva School (1988:211). My study of Our Mutual Friend reflects the more philosophical and "interpretive" style of "Continental" literary criticism rather than the more "practical" type of criticism which Davis observes to dominate in the United States (1986:1-2). The dominance of practical criticism as an approach to the literary text may influence many critics to dismiss "interpretive" criticism as merely an imaginative re-telling of the text's story.

Davis describes the phenomenological technique as criticism that "attempts to discover literary form through the sympathetic and imaginative probing of a text, the intimate interrogation of its interior" (1986:4). The phenomenological approach used in this study provides a valuable supplement to Hillis Miller's (1958) phenomenological study of the world of Dickens' novels, which includes a chapter on Our Mutual Friend. It is important to note that phenomenological theory does not use the term "world" to describe the actual physical world of the earth and its inhabitants, but uses the term "world" to describe a text as a self-sufficient entity which has its own complete system.

A psychological approach will apply Dilthey's hermeneutic theories, contained in his essay on "The Understanding of Other Persons and Their Life Expressions" (1985:152). Psychology is a key concern of the Reader-Response approach and my use of Dilthey's theories represents an alternative to "transactive criticism" which Davis observes in the criticism of Norman Holland (1986:4). To the best of my knowledge, Dilthey's theories have not previously been applied to the detective story. In the field of hermeneutics, Dilthey is a primary theorist. Mueller-Vollmer points out that the theories of Heidegger and Gadamer owe much to the work of Dilthey (1985:148,256).

In addition to Dilthey, I include particular reference to the psychological theories of the Australian psychiatrist, Ainslie Meares, whose theories have not previously been applied to literature. Zwar observes that Meares accepted certain elements of Freudian psychoanalytic theory, but rejected its insistence on "the interminable search" for whatever was affecting the mental condition of a patient (1985:52). Meares discovered that mentally disturbed or cancer ridden patients could often be cured by a technique described as "atavistic regression" (Zwar 1985:74). Meares describes atavistic regression as:

the process by which the mind ceases to function at a logical and critical level, and reverts back to a biologically more primitive mode of functioning. It is atavistic because it is a mode of functioning characteristic of our remote ancestors (Zwar 1985:74).

Meares cured his patients by using touch and isolating them from verbal and written forms of logical communication, which allowed the mind to relax in a primitive mode of functioning "rather like the grazing habits of animals" (Zwar 1985:75). I believe that atavistic regression has important implications for literary theory and detective fiction in particular. Although literature is certainly a logical and linguistic medium, I believe that Dickens overcomes the limitations of language and manages to evoke primitive, emotional responses from the reader. Meares'

method of curing a patient's anxiety through use of atavistic regression has remarkable similarity with Dickens' talent for "healing" other people through the use of mesmerism which Ackroyd has documented (1990:245). It is beyond the scope of this study to explore extensively Dickens' use of mesmerism, although Dickens' technique, described by Ackroyd, includes the physical touch, "verbal free association" and methods of hypnosis that underpin Meares' theory of atavistic regression (1990:449-451).

Dickens' Public Reading of "Sikes and Nancy" affects the reader or listener on a profound emotional level. The opening page of Dickens' script for "Sikes and Nancy" is dominated by themes of friendship, hunting and eating (1975:472). The reactions of Dickens' audience, who attended the public reading of "Sikes and Nancy", demonstrates the technique of atavistic regression, for Ackroyd reprints Dickens' comments that those in attendance were "unmistakeably pale, and had horror stricken faces" (1990:1037). Dickens isolates his reader from the more complex and abstract forms of logic that the reader might encounter in the detective stories of Poe, which Murch believes are "argued out like a geometric theorem with no irrelevant detail" (1958:179). If the fiction of Dickens can be viewed as a less logical form of communication, the opposite extreme is the scientific article that embodies pure logical methods such as physics.

An approach which Iser describes as literary anthropology will be used to link theories of the literary text with recent anthropological theories, concerning primitive human behaviour. Iser's theoretical basis for literary anthropology is his belief that "If a literary text does something to its readers, it also simultaneously reveals something about them" (1989:vii). Although Iser does not mention hermeneutics, his theory of literary anthropology is certainly interpretive for it investigates how literature may be used as a "divining rod, locating our dispositions, desires, inclinations, and eventually our overall makeup" (1989:vii). To supplement Iser's theory, of literary anthropology I will refer to Campbell's authoritative study of human origins within the disciplines of "physical anthropology" and "paleoanthropology" (1985:v).

A brief, but profound anthropological observation by Humphrey demonstrates the merit of approaching the detective story from a hermeneutic perspective, as it proposes a primitive origin for detection, as interpreting a fellow human being. Humphrey says:

In evolutionary terms it must have been a major breakthrough...Imagine the biological benefits to the first of our ancestors who developed the ability to make realistic guesses about the inner life of his rivals, to be able to picture what another was thinking about and planning to do next;

to be able to read the minds of others by reading his own (in Leakey and Lewin 1992:297).

Humphrey's observation provides a basis for examining detection beyond its basic function of determining the identity of the criminal and solving the crime. A more profound application for detection is to interpret and explain the invisible "inner life" of a person. To detect and interpret correctly the inner life of a fellow human being was certainly characteristic of Dickens.

Dickens and Detection

Ackroyd documents Dickens' profound talent for detecting and interpreting the minds of people, noting that "It is the merest clichè to observe that he was very good at divining character, but he also had a habit of trying to guess what people were actually thinking even before they started talking to him" (1990:950). Ackroyd refers to several examples of Dickens' friends and acquaintances being astonished at having their inner-most thoughts correctly explained simply by having his or her face observed (1990:950-951).

Dickens' ability to divine correctly a person's character is a talent shared with the remarkable detective, Inspector Field, who Collins observes, is the source of Dickens' inspiration for Inspector Bucket, the fictional detective in Bleak House (1965:206). Collins reprints Dickens' favourable impressions of Inspector Field as a man of "horrible sharpness...knowledge and sagacity" (1965:207). Ackroyd's observations of Dickens' profound talent for divining character bear a remarkable similarity to the descriptions of Inspector Bucket which Collins derives from Bleak House :

Mr Bucket...seems to possess "an unlimited number of eyes" and to be omni-present. He "takes in everybody's look at him, all at once, individually and collectively, in a manner that stamps him a remarkable man". The "velocity and certainty of his observations are "little short of miraculous" (1965:207-208)

My belief is that Dickens had a life-long interest in detection as a means of interpreting a person's character for he displays a talent for detection which was as profound as Inspector Field's. Collins focuses much of his critical attention on Dickens' admiration for the Detective Police and close association with articles on the detective theme in "Household Words" during the 1850s (1965:201-209). Little attention has been focused on Dickens' personal

fascination with detection, and the prevalence of detection themes throughout his works of fiction.

Hutter observes a "detective function" present throughout Dickens' fiction from Oliver Twist (1837), to The Mystery of Edwin Drood (1870) (1983:136). Hutter's study of the detective function in Dickens can be seen to develop on Murch's observations of "Detective Themes" throughout the works of Dickens and Wilkie Collins (1958:92). The studies of Dickens by Hutter and Murch imply that a work of fiction may incorporate a detective / detection story without requiring a prominent official detective figure. I believe Our Mutual Friend has rarely been viewed as detective / detection story principally because the official detective figure, Mr Inspector, has a very minor role in the story.

Fisher-Solomon views the absence of a prominent official detective as a weakness of Our Mutual Friend, in what appears to be the only detailed study of the novel's detective story (1985:36). Our Mutual Friend has largely been ignored by critics who investigate Dickens' use of detective / detection themes. Murch's comprehensive study of the detective novel has only a brief reference to the character of Headstone in Our Mutual Friend (1958:100-101). Symons makes little comment on Our Mutual Friend in his recent study of the detective story and crime novel but does observe that the novel reflects Dickens' "deepening awareness of his own criminal instincts" (1985:46). Peterson also makes little reference

to Our Mutual Friend in her chapter on "Dickens and Detection", for she prefers to concentrate mainly on Bleak House and The Mystery of Edwin Drood which have prominent official detective figures (1984:97-98).

Despite the absence of a prominent detective figure, Our Mutual Friend features significant themes of crime and mystery. Lindsay notes the profound mystery element of "turbid confusion" in Our Mutual Friend, which he regards as "one of the greatest prose works ever written" (1950:380). Although Our Mutual Friend is acclaimed by many literary critics, it has certainly been neglected by Haycraft and Queen, who claimed to be expert in the field of detective / crime / mystery fiction and compiled a canonical list of the best examples of the genre. Our Mutual Friend, which was published in 1865, is omitted from Winn's reprinting of the "The Haycraft - Queen Definitive Library of Detective - Crime - Mystery Fiction", which includes other notable literary works such as Les Misérables (1862), Crime and Punishment (1866) and The Moonstone (1868) (1977:18). The only texts of Dickens which Queen and Haycraft regard as important examples of the detective / crime / mystery genre are Bleak House and The Mystery of Edwin Drood (Winn:1977:18).

Our Mutual Friend deserves to be recognized as a first-class example of the detective / detection genre. I believe the unique mode of detection to be found in Our

Mutual Friend can be traced from Dickens' life-long interest in detection. The script for Dickens' public reading of "Nancy and Sikes" embodies the type of detection to be found in Our Mutual Friend. Both texts were an integral part of Dickens' later life, for he proposed and postponed a public reading of "Nancy and Sikes" in 1863, published Our Mutual Friend in 1865 and finally performed "Nancy and Sikes" in 1868 (Collins 1975:465).

There is no official detective figure in Dickens' script for "Nancy and Sikes", but the language and themes embody detection, friendship, hunting and morality (1975:472-486). Friendships are strengthened between Fagin and Bolter, Nancy and Rose. Nancy is detected and spied upon by Bolter, then hunted and slain by Bill Sikes. The moral issue of a man killing a defenceless woman is also likely to have a powerful emotive effect on the reader of, or listener to, the script. As mentioned previously, I believe the powerful emotive themes of friendship, hunting and morality have a profound effect on the reader.

In anthropological terms, friendship, hunting and morality were closely linked. Ardrey's influential text, The Hunting Hypothesis, links friendship and cooperation closely with the activity of hunting which has long been a feature of the human species (1976:13). Modern humans may often believe that friendship and hunting are two types of behaviour which are incompatible. Ardrey refutes such a view by referring to the example of an army:

No human inventory can fail to include our propensity for premeditated, organized murder of our fellows yet fail to note that an army is a model of cooperation and self sacrifice, or that no other species so carefully, tenderly cares for its wounded, even for its enemies. Compassion and mercy lie deep in our nature, as deep perhaps as callousness and indifference (1976:7)

Although I intend to look closely at friendship, hunting and morality, my primary focus will be upon friendship as I believe it to be an important aspect of Our Mutual Friend , which critics have ignored since 1865. The term, "friend", appears to be a simple term, but has many dimensions which hermeneutics as a human science can explain. At its most basic level, the type of detection operating in Our Mutual Friend is that of an individual interpreting whether another person is likely to be a genuine friend or a false friend who may deceive them. In the process of investigating the role of friendship in Our Mutual Friend , I also wish to demonstrate how the conventional detective story makes use of friendship.

Friendship in the Detective Story

It is my belief that many of the innovations Dickens made have been borrowed by later writers of the standard detective story, and yet these devices are associated with later writers and not with Dickens. In particular, the innovative use of a friendship theme, demonstrated by Dickens in Our Mutual Friend, is also a feature of Dashiell Hammett's novel, The Glass Key (1931), which Symons regards as "the peak of the crime writers' art in the twentieth century" (1985:126). Sandoe describes The Glass Key as "not only a detective story but an exceptionally delicate scrutiny of friendship under curious conditions" (in Symons 1985:126). Our Mutual Friend also employs the technique, described by Symons with reference to The Glass Key, of using the detective-story puzzle as a basis to explore the intricacies of human relationships, amidst events which are often violent (1985:126-127).

Looking more to the conventional detective stories of Conan Doyle, the friendship between Holmes and Watson is regarded by Murch as an original innovation, partly responsible for their wide readership appeal (1958:179). In Conan Doyle's detective story, The Empty House, one of the opposing sides is a group of mutual friends, comprising Holmes,

Watson, Mrs. Hudson and Lestrade from Scotland Yard (1967:380-381). Opposing the group represented by Holmes is the villainous Moran, who no longer operates in cooperation with others, for his friend Moriarty is dead. As the text of The Empty House proceeds, the group of law-abiding mutual friends increases. Watson is alone at the beginning of The Empty House, is later accompanied by Holmes, and is then only joined by Inspector Lestrade when the text has nearly concluded (1967:378). Murch (1958:181) attributes Conan Doyle's success to his ability to present a balance of the sensational and intellectual, but Our Mutual Friend relies less on these elements, for it explores detection and the psychology of friendship on a more primitive emotional level.

Friendship in Our Mutual Friend : A Deconstructive Approach to the term, "Mutual"

A close examination of the title, Our Mutual Friend suggests that friends and friendship might be an important theme. From a review of the bibliography of Our Mutual Friend, compiled by Brattin and Hornback (1984), it appears, however, that the theme of friendship has received little or no critical attention. A suggestion of the importance of friendship to the study of Dickens is evident from a compilation by Kennethe (1941) of the dedication

page to each novel, revealing direct mention of the author's friendship in most instances. The dedication of Our Mutual Friend to "Sir James Emerson Tennet As A Memorial of Friendship" suggests particular emphasis on friendship, despite its being similar to the dedications made by Dickens in his other novels (OMF :vii). Although a broad study of friendship in the novels of Dickens would provide valuable insights, I wish to focus specifically on the enrichment it provides to the detective story in Our Mutual Friend .

A study by Greenstein is the first to focus specifically on mutuality, observing that it "pervades" the novel "excessively (1991:127). Greenstein notes the "theme of reciprocal relationship found in plot, character, setting and imagery", but confines his study to brief instances of the many examples of mutuality, making little reference to mutual friends (1991:127). The Oxford English Dictionary , based on historical principles, notes the grammatical incorrectness of "mutual friend", but observes that it was frequently used to avoid the ambiguity expressed by the term "common friend" (1978:803). Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable observes that Our Mutual Friend actually influenced people to object to use of the "correct term, common friends" (1981:767).

Dickens specifically implies that two people may share a common friend, when Mr Boffin talks to Mrs. Wilfer of Mr Rokesmith as "Our Mutual Friend" (OMF :118:IX:1). Although Dickens guides the reader into accepting the single interpretation of our mutual friend as our common friend, the word "mutual" has many other meanings which may easily be overlooked. An etymological approach to the term "mutual" is based on the deconstructive technique which Hillis Miller describes in "The Critic as Host" (1977:278). Deconstruction has particular merit, Hillis Miller argues, for it recognizes " the great complexity and equivocal richness of apparently obvious or univocal language" (1977:281).

The Oxford English Dictionary identifies some Spanish and Sicilian origins for "mutual", but it is its reference to the Latin words, "mutuus" and "mutare" that are of particular importance to Our Mutual Friend (1978:803). An Elementary Latin Dictionary , compiled by Lewis, reveals that "mutuus" and "mutare" both derive from the word "muto" (1956:524-525). Of particular relevance to the detective story are Lewis' division of "muto" into six distinct applications, "Of motion...of alteration...of style...of substitution...of place...and of exchange" (1956:524) (see Appendix).

Within each of the six applications are Latin phrases, which Lewis provides with English translations, all bearing remarkable relevance to the plot of Our Mutual Friend (1956:524). Although it may be difficult ever to confirm if Dickens made use of the Latin origins of "mutual" in his plot, his excellent knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary is well known. Ackroyd confirms that Dickens was conversant in Latin, for he was instructed in the subject by his mother (1990:27). Priestley also remarks that Dickens had selected the title, Our Mutual Friend, "four years before the novel finally appeared", so it is possible to speculate on a literary search for further inspiration during that period (OMF :ix:intro). Regardless of Dickens' possible resort to the Latin origins of "mutual", the derivatives of "muto", given by Lewis, provide the basis for an intriguing detective story.

Chapter 2: Friendship and the Detective Story as a Game

This chapter will concentrate on Dickens' development of the friendship theme beyond the limits of the conventional detective story. The chapter will also consider Our Mutual Friend as a friendship simulator for the reader, who is presented with and involved in all the aspects of friendship on a primitive emotional level. The many aspects of friendship can be appreciated by tracing the etymology of the word "mutual", to which we referred in the previous chapter. This chapter will focus on two of Lewis' applications for the Latin word "muto" (1956:524). Lewis' applications "Of Motion" and "Of Place" are suitable for the detective story as a game for they suggest movement between positions. A view of Our Mutual Friend as a friendship simulator will include reference to Iser, who observes a game or play-like structure in texts which emphasise "transformation" and involve the "recipient's imaginative participation in the games played" (1989:258). Friendship is used by the detective story to emphasise the differences between opposing sides within its game-like structure.

The multiple connotations of the word "mutual" provide Dickens with the raw materials for a detective story. An examination of the ways in which these materials are organized reveals how the text becomes intriguing to the reader. Two earlier studies of the detective novel confirm the significant attraction of the genre to many readers and provide direction for further exploration of the reader's involvement. Symons maintains that readers of the detective story sought "pleasurable excitement from the reality of their own lives"(1985:17). Murch believes that the reader enjoys the detective story as it has been "devised as a game of skill...a game played with remarkable enthusiasm (1958:256). Caillouis also refers to the reader's enjoyment in his essay "The Detective Novel as Game" (1983:12). Caillouis observes in the detective novels of Ellery Queen and other writers that a logical game-like structure is frequently combined with attempts to distort the reader's "thought processes" on an emotional level (1983:10).

Hermeneutic Approach to Detective Story as a Game and as an Experiential Simulator

(a) The Human Sciences / The Natural Sciences

I wish to develop further Caillois' game theory and Iser's theory of the reader's participation with the text as a game and propose that Our Mutual Friend is an experiential simulator structured around friendship and the human sciences. Karl-Otto Apel observes that hermeneutic theory has frequently been concerned with the fundamental differences between the human sciences and the natural sciences (1985:326). Apel refers to the hermeneutic theories of Abel who maintains that "understanding" is a mode of thought in the human or "cultural sciences", which contrasts with the "logical operation" of "explaining" used in the natural sciences (1985:326). Apel provides an example of what Abel describes as understanding:

If I see for example, that upon a sudden drop in temperature my neighbour rises from his desk, chops wood, and lights a fire in his fireplace, then I automatically interpolate that he has been feeling chilly and seeks to bring about a condition through which he will get warm (1985:326)

Abel implies that understanding as observation will always precede logic and reasoning which may seek to explain the observation (in Apel:1985:326). Our Mutual Friend, as an experiential simulator, seldom takes the reader beyond understanding as observation into the realm of logical explanation found in the conventional detective story. In contrast to the written text as an experiential simulator, the aircraft pilot training simulator emphasises acquisition of higher order skills associated with the logic of the natural sciences in subjects such as mathematics and physics. The detective stories of Poe, which Murch describes as "purely analytical discussions of the science of detection", operate more on the level of natural science logic (1958:179). Poe has his detective Auguste Dupin perform the act of logical explanation for the reader, but Dickens prefers to involve the reader personally in the act of understanding.

The game presented in the text can be likened to the spectator's view of a football match. Although the spectator does not physically participate, s/he is aware of the basic structure of defence and attack, takes an interest in the to-and-fro struggle and can interpret the eventual outcome. From a hermeneutic perspective, the reader of a text like Our Mutual Friend does not have

physical access to the contest and must interpret by using imagination. Our Mutual Friend enacts a game of friendship as an experiential simulator for the reader in much the same way as a football match is set for the spectator.

For the aircraft pilot, the simulator trains him or her to cope with a potential crash situation, whereas the reader of Our Mutual Friend is trained to interpret and recognize genuine and non-genuine mutual friends. Inside the artificial world of the training simulator, the pilot can learn flying techniques, while avoiding physical dangers in the real world. Although a pilot recognises the artificiality of the simulator, actual involvement with its fictional world is real. Dickens' presentation of a completely enacted world is similar to the flight simulator's world, which excludes all unnecessary details, yet includes all aspects relevant to its world.

(b) Detective Story / Literature as an Experiential Simulator

The simulator concept is applicable to literature, for Iser believes that the reader of a fictional text recognizes that "the textual world is to be viewed not as reality but as if it were reality" (1989:251). Hillis Miller observes that Dickens frequently used "as if" in his earlier works but rarely uses it in his last novels (1958:306). Dickens

may have sensed that the use of "as if" was no longer necessary, for it destroyed the illusion of a complete world. Iser notes that "play does not have to picture anything outside itself", so it is less inclined toward "representation as mimesis" (1989:249-250). As play functions by including all aspects relevant to its world, Iser regards texts with a play-like structure as "performative", rather than representational (1989:249). To use an analogy: a game of football does not concern itself with the nation's economy, but is most concerned with the movements and confrontations between the players.

From his perspective of literary anthropology, Iser regards all simulated activity as crucial to survival of the human species, for "would-be action, or a trial run...trains the animal to cope with the unforeseeable that is to come" (1989:260). Although Iser makes no reference to the detective story, his recent essay, "The Play of The Text" (1989:249-261), provides an interesting theoretical basis for exploring the detective story as a game to be played. Iser observes the movements of play to be enacted in three different ways:

1. On each level distinguishable positions are confronted with one another;
2. The confrontation triggers a to-and-fro movement that is basic to play, and the ensuing difference has to be eradicated in order to achieve a result;
3. The continual movements between the positions reveal their many different aspects, and as one encroaches on the other, so the various positions themselves are transformed. Every one of these differences open up space for play, and hence for transformation... (1989:251-252)

(c) The Dynamics of Friendship in The Conventional Detective Story as an Experiential Simulator

Looking briefly at Conan Doyle's detective story, The Empty House (1903), the central game is a to-and-fro battle between Holmes and Moriarty (1967:367). The battle does not end with Moriarty's death, for friendship is used to transform positions and open up what Iser regards as further "space for play, and hence for transformation" (1989: 252). A further to-and-fro battle occurs between Holmes and Moriarty's friend, Colonel Moran, where each gains ascendancy, until the game ends with the villain

being apprehended by Lestrade (1967:378). Lestrade and Watson are both close friends of Holmes, and assist the to-and-fro movement between distinct positions of good and evil. Character is Conan Doyle's main form of confrontation between two clear positions.

A Phenomenological Approach to Friendship in Our Mutual Friend as an Experiential Simulator and Game

In Our Mutual Friend, most of the possible movements within the text, as a game of friendship, are provided by the six applications of the Latin word "muto". The two applications of "muto" to be discussed in this chapter are "Of motion" and "Of place" (Lewis:1956:524). Lewis provides five phrases within the category, "Of Motion", which frequently overlap (1956:524). The first phrase to be examined is "to move, move away, remove" (1956:524). Iser maintains that movement is important for play, for it "sets the game in motion" (1989:251). Two aspects of movement help to set the game in motion. Iser regards confrontation and the "to-and-fro movement" between "distinguishable positions" as "basic to play" (1989:251).

(a) Opposing Positions in the Game Identified:
Confrontation and Movement

In Our Mutual Friend, Dickens presents confrontation between positions on many levels. The opening part of Our Mutual Friend is integrated symbolically and thematically, for confrontation is suggested in character, setting, and movement of the tide (OMF :1-2:I:1). Our Mutual Friend begins with a boat which moves to and fro with the tide, between the two distinct positions, of "Southwark Bridge which is of iron, and London Bridge which is of stone" (OMF :1:I:1). Robson observes that the bridges form a frame in which to view the boat between the two banks of the river, and observe the action to come in a "cinema conscious mode" (1974:201). The two figures in the boat are clearly distinguished, for Gaffer is a man who watches the river surface, and Lizzie is a girl who mostly watches his face (OMF :1-2:I:1).

In addition to the to-and-fro movement of the "strong tide", a similar tussle is taking place between "the bottom of the river" and its "surface" (OMF :2:I:1). Gaffer removes a body and its money from beneath the surface of the river (OMF :3:I:1). As the body is the third to manifest itself in the novel, it may be regarded, to some degree, as a mutual friend of Gaffer and Lizzie. Gaffer's removal of the body is the primary action on which the

entire novel as a game is enacted, for Iser observes that "confrontation triggers a to-and-fro movement that is basic to play" (1989:251). Beiderwell observes that the recovered body is an object to grasp in Gaffer's "dark, primitive world" of Chapter One, which becomes a topic for discussion in the "bright, new world" of the Veneerings in Chapter Two (1985:234).

Gaffer's confrontation with the body provokes confrontation between Lizzie and him, for she loathes the river and he regards it as their friend (OMF :3-4:I:1). The body continues to draw Gaffer into a to-and-fro confrontation, for he breaks a partnership with Riderhood who seeks to share in the money recovered (OMF :4-5:I:1). Iser maintains that "the continual movement between positions reveal their many aspects, for, as one encroaches on the other, so the various positions themselves are eventually transformed" (1989:251-252). Riderhood and Gaffer were once partners but the relationship has been transformed into one of mutual dislike. The elaborate to-and-fro confrontation between Gaffer and Riderhood provides us with many perspectives from which to judge their honesty. Riderhood seeks revenge on Gaffer by spreading false rumours, resulting in both being banned from the

"Fellowship-Porters" tavern (OMF :73:VI:1). Iser points out that games only achieve a result when differences are eradicated (1989:251). Thus the confrontation between Riderhood and Gaffer ends when Gaffer is found to have died accidentally (OMF :184:XIV:1).

Gaffer's death transforms the life of Lizzie , for she abandons the Hexam home which Charley has left and moves into lodgings with Jenny Wren, who describes her as "my particular friend" (OMF :239:I:2). Hillis Miller notes that "transformation" is a feature of most characters' lives in Our Mutual Friend (1958:281). Death is an agent of transformation, for Gaffer's and Lizzie's lives are changed by the discovery of the dead body. The transformations are cumulative, as Lizzie's life is transformed again when Gaffer is found dead.

Iser maintains that transformation only "comes to full fruition through the recipient's imaginative participation in the games played" (1989:258). The reader is assigned a hermeneutic role in discovering the place to which Lizzie has moved after Gaffer's death, for she is physically absent from the text for approximately fifty pages (OMF :184:XIV:1 - 239:II:2). It is possible for the reader to contemplate imaginatively what has become of Lizzie after her intensely emotional reaction to Gaffer's death (OMF :184:XIV:1). The reader's consideration of Lizzie's

plight is one instance of Iser's notion of a text being a "staged play enacted for the reader, who is given a role enabling him or her to act out the scenario presented" (1989:258).

The reader has another opportunity to speculate on Lizzie's disappearance when she rejects Headstone's crazed advances and is severely chastised by Charley, who asks "What have you done to my best friend?" (OME :427:XV:2). Lizzie is appalled by Headstone's threat to kill Eugene, who is his rival for Lizzie's love (OME :424:XV:2). The second and third phrases within the category "Of Motion", provided by Lewis, convey Lizzie's desire to escape from Headstone, for she feels she may "be forced to leave" and wonders "if I can only get away" (1956:524).

Friendship is an agent of transformation in this instance, for Lizzie leaves to begin a new life with new friends after being assisted to move away by Mr Riah, whom she describes as "A trustworthy friend" (OME :432:XV:2). Lizzie's life is transformed through friendship, for the severing of friendly relations with Bradley and Charley serves to generate a closer friendship between Mr Riah and herself (OME :432:XV:2). Another transformation taking place is Lizzie's tendency to accumulate mutual friends by acting in a friendly manner. Immediately after Lizzie meets her friend Mr Riah, Eugene also comes to share the task of

escorting Lizzie home (OMF :432:XV:2). Lizzie is a mutual friend of the two men, for Eugene specifically states that Mr Aaron Riah is "our friend" (OMF :433:XV:2). Charley's tendency is to lose friends, for he leaves Lizzie and eventually severs his friendship with Headstone (OMF :763:VII:4).

(b) Movements of Characters Conform To A Predictable Pattern: Larger Cooperative Groups or Solitary Persons

Sanders notes that John Harmon is the "mutual friend who links different groups of characters", but does not identify these particular characters or explore how they link as mutual friends (1978:134). I believe that Our Mutual Friend is principally a struggle between two opposing groups of friends, which conforms to Iser's view of the textual game which features distinct "positions...confronted with one another" (1989:251). One group can be described as genuine mutual friends who operate cohesively as a group and assist each other to find a good measure of happiness: John Harmon, the Boffins the Wilfers, Lizzie, Eugene, Mortimer, Betty and Jenny.

In contrast to genuine mutual friends is a small group of false mutual friends who profess to help each other, but frequently operate alone as no one will actually be their friend. Riderhood, Headstone, Radfoot and Wegg are these false mutual friends, whose deceptions only result in misery or death. Our Mutual Friend therefore demonstrates the advantages of being part of a group involved in genuine cooperation. Our Mutual Friend also demonstrates the disadvantages of coping alone. From an anthropological view, Campbell maintains that group cooperation greatly enhances the survival chances of each participant (1985:240). Campbell points out many advantages to cooperative living, including the provision of a consistent food supply, simply because a "greater variety of hunting methods is available to a group than to a lone animal" (1985:240).

Betty Higden's experiences on her solo journey demonstrate the danger of travelling alone, but also illustrate how a person can be re-integrated into a cooperative group, through the agency of friendship. Dickens invites comparison of the experiences of Lizzie and Betty, for both of them feel forced to leave and wish they can only get away. Betty suffers from an illness and departs her residence, for fear of dying in the workhouse (OMF :417:XIV:2). When Betty leaves on her journey, she also disappears from the direct view of the reader, and is

not seen until she is close to "The End Of A Long Journey" (OMF :538:VIII:3). Lizzie also appears to depart on a journey, for she vanishes from the direct view of the reader soon after Betty's departure (OMF :434:XV:2). Lizzie returns to the direct view of the reader when she is shown to be comforting Betty, who is very close to death (OMF :548:VIII:3).

The departures of Lizzie and Betty at a similar point in the text demonstrate Iser's view that "only play can make conceivable the absent otherness that lies on the reverse side of all positions" (1989:257-258). Betty's bad experiences on her journey bring to life the alternative scenario which Lizzie might have experienced on her escape from London, if she had not been re-integrated into a caring community by her mutual friend, Mr Riah. Lizzie extends the same kindness as a mutual friend to Betty, and later explains how she was helped by Mr Riah and his friends (OMF :552:IX:3).

One definition of "mutual", provided by the Oxford School Dictionary , relates to sentiment "felt or done by each to the other" (1960:313). Lizzie and Betty clearly feel strongly towards each other in their short mutual friendship, despite only Lizzie's being able to do

something physically for her friend's comfort (OMF :550:VIII:3). Dickens implies that the term, "our mutual friend", should be viewed in the context of the character's entire life, rather than in a single act of reciprocal friendship between two or three people.

Betty cannot reciprocate the physical comfort that Lizzie provides to her, but the dominant attitude of Betty's life has been to consider others in need, as our mutual friends who must be assisted. Despite poverty and the demands of her own children, Betty has single-handedly raised Johnny, who was the "child of my own last left daughter's daughter" who died, and Sloppy who was "A love-child...brought up in the...House" (OMF :210-211:XVI:1). Betty implies that Lizzie should also expect assistance from a mutual friend "As you must grow old in time, and come to your dying day" (OMF :549:VIII:3).

Barbour maintains that "Our Mutual Friend" is a " euphemism for death, the mutual friend of all mankind" (1982:64). In contrast to Barbour, my belief is that "our mutual friend " applies universally to the help we offer to, or receive from, our fellow human beings. Reverend Milvey therefore speaks of Betty as "OUR SISTER", when he addresses the people present at her funeral (OMF :550:IX:3). From his

narratorial perspective, Dickens implies that the caring words of religion do nothing to relieve the plight of our fellow human beings, as our mutual friends for "we sometimes read these words in an awful manner, over our Sister and our Brother too" (OMF :550:IX:3).

In Our Mutual Friend also, the size of the group of genuine mutual friends increases as the text progresses. Lizzie is indirectly introduced to the group of friends, comprising the Boffins, Sloppy, Reverend Milvey, Bella Wilfer, and John Rokesmith, after fulfilling Betty's last wishes (OMF :551:IX:3). The movements of characters in Our Mutual Friend follow a predictable pattern, for the genuine mutual friends come together and become opposed to the false mutual friends. Iser maintains that it is the difference between opposing positions that "triggers the to- and-fro movement, which opens up play spaces" (1989:253). Focusing again on movement, the fourth and fifth phrases within the category "Of motion", which Lewis derives from "muto", are to "quit her dress or her dwelling" and to be "transplanted" (1956:524). Until the meeting of the genuine mutual friends at Betty's funeral, the movements of quitting one's dwelling and transplanting elsewhere have occurred many times.

The movements often reflect the reciprocity inherent in the term "mutual". Wegg moves from his road-side stall and lodges at the Bower, after being invited by his friend, Mr Boffin, who previously resided there (OMF :199:XV:1). Mr Boffin moves from the Bower to the "Eminently Aristocratic Mansion" on the recommendation of his friend Mr Wegg, who has operated his road-side stall outside it for so long that he regards it as "Our House" (OMF :192:XV:1). Lizzie leaves her father's house and then the rooftop lodging with Jenny to move to the paper-mill in the countryside (OMF :553:IX:3). Like his sister, Charley Hexam also departs from the family dwelling (OMF :78:VI:1). Mr and Mrs. Boffin invite Bella to quit the Wilfer dwelling to accompany them into the mansion (OMF :115:IX:1). In addition to Mrs. Boffin's indulgence in new fashionable dress, Bella also provides new dresses for herself and "new clothes" for her father (OMF :221:XVII:1,339:VIII:2). Sloppy is also invited to transplant himself to the Boffin mansion and acquire a new set of clothes (OMF :357:X:2). John Harmon's life has been one of quitting dwellings and acquiring new clothes, for he is forced to attend school in Brussels from the age of seven, returns briefly to England when fourteen, but departs immediately to the land of the "Cape Wine" (OMF :15-16:II:1). John returns to England

again when his father dies but finds himself transplanted to the Wilfers and works at the Boffin mansion, rather than on the Harmon estate. The experiences of John and Lizzie are certainly represented by the phrase, "go into exile" which Lewis derives from the Latin word "muto", within the category "Of Place" (1956:524).

(c) Psychological Influence of Security, Insecurity and Leadership on the Movements of Characters

The movements of the genuine mutual friends who cooperate with each other may appear chaotic, but result in its actual enlargement. The Boffins represent the nucleus of the group, with Mr Boffin in particular being the group's benevolent leader. From a hermeneutic perspective, I contend that the reader strongly identifies on a primitive emotional level with the larger cooperative group. As the reading of a novel is a solitary activity, the reader comes to feel the security of being in a group, simply by identifying with the particular characters who feel secure as individuals because they are part of a cooperative group. The reader feels greater security because the act of identifying with a cooperative group is a deeply inscribed,

primitive reaction that has long assisted the survival of our species. Meares' description of the psychological reaction of identification might also be applied to the circumstances of the solitary reader who derives something of benefit from literature:

We are a little lost in ourself, we are on our own, in fact we experience the deprivation of being leaderless. Then we identify. The feeling of disquiet ebbs away, we have the feeling of being more secure, and a feeling of pleasure comes to us. We have evolved this system of being rewarded with pleasure when we complete some biologically useful reaction. (1978:2)

Sherlock Holmes is clearly the leadership figure of the group of friends which includes Watson, Lestrade and Mrs Hudson. Meares also contends that people gain security by identifying with a leader (1978:2). In addition to identifying with the large cooperative group from their solitary position, the reader feels greater security from the leadership qualities of Mr Boffin or Sherlock Holmes. Prominent leadership figures are present in Our Mutual Friend, for Barbour maintains that Mr Boffin is one of several "paternalistic" figures in Our Mutual Friend (1982:66). The popularity of the detective stories of Edgar Allan Poe might also depend on the reader identifying with the invincible leadership figure.

In Poe's story, The Purloined Letter (1844), the master detective is Auguste Dupin who demonstrates his superiority over the entire "Parisian Police" (1960:52). Two aspects of Dupin's attraction to the reader can be interpreted from a psychological perspective. The practice of including Dupin or Holmes in a succession of stories helps the reader to consolidate and strengthen his / her identification, with a leadership figure. In addition, the reader tends to identify and regard the leader as an expert in every aspect of life. Meares explains that when a leader expresses himself on a subject on which s/he is an expert, that leader often comes to be regarded as an expert in all aspects of life (1978:49-50). Meares cites the example of Nobel Prize winners whose opinions "are accepted in areas beyond their expert knowledge" (1978:50). It is demonstrated to the reader of Our Mutual Friend that the detective / leadership figure is not expert in all facets of his occupation.

In Our Mutual Friend each character, from Mr. Inspector to John Harmon, become aware at some point that his / her knowledge is only partial. Dickens therefore guides the reader's hermeneutic act of interpreting the real truth beneath the surface appearance of things. Dickens does not teach the reader through direct information but through psychological involvement and by informing him or her of errors toward the end of the novel (OMF :822:XIII:4).

Mundhenk points out in her essay, "The Education Of The Reader in Our Mutual Friend", that the reader's preoccupation with Mr Boffin's miserliness prevents the reader from considering the possibility of a Boffin / Harmon conspiracy (1979:41-42).

In addition to sensing that a benevolent leader would not deceive, the reader also identifies with Mr Boffin's protection of his wealth. Meares believes that our modern tendency to accumulate wealth originates from primitive times, when the tribal leader was highly respected for his ability to stockpile a reserve of food (1978:106). As the reader's body still possesses the primitive psychological capacity for identifying with a leader, the reader is likely to feel secure that Boffin is acting in the interests of the large group of mutual friends who depend on him. In Our Mutual Friend, those dependent on the Boffin wealth include John, Bella, Betty, Sloppy and Wegg.

If there are doubts that a reader can indeed identify with a leadership figure from a text, there is need only to refer to the medium of television. Meares points out that the leader who appears on television can be an object for identification, despite the viewer's inability to view the leader in flesh and blood (1978:5). Thus the solitary television viewer can be made to feel secure by viewing a national leader, and by feeling part of the nation as a large cooperative group in a time of war, even if he or she

never actually meets the leader. From Iser's perspective of literary anthropology, detective fiction satisfies the reader's need as a human being to feel secure, for Meares notes that security is essential for relaxing us so that we can rest, recover and "maintain our health" (1978:90).

It is possible to be too secure, for Meares notes that the "biological reaction" of insecurity is also crucial to the survival of the human species (1978:89). Meares maintains that insecurity "leads us to be on guard so that we are ready to protect ourselves" (1978:89-90). The detective story therefore satisfies the reader's need for both security and insecurity. Returning to the solitary figure of Colonel Moran in Doyle's story, The Empty House, the reader can depart from the security of identifying with the large cooperative group and engage with the insecure, yet thrilling realm, represented by the solitary villain. In terms of viewing the detective story as being based on a play-like structure, the ability of the reader to identify with the detective and with the villain conforms to Iser's view that "play can make conceivable the absent otherness that lies on the reverse side of positions" (1989:257-258).

In The Empty House there are indications that Holmes or Moran might easily have exchanged positions (1967:380-383). Holmes could have been captured had he not chosen to use a wax bust of his head to deceive Moran (1967:381). Moran might easily have been a good person, for he was an honourable soldier and a highly educated man, before he became a villain (1967:383).

Caillois correctly observes, therefore, that it is not merely the intellectual puzzle but the presence of primitive themes of "death...murder and violence which attracts readers to participate in the detective story as a game" (1983:12). Dickens' extensive use of friendship enriches the detective story significantly.

Chapter3: Hunting in Our Mutual Friend

Hunting is closely linked with friendship in Our Mutual Friend. In terms of hermeneutics, a battle of interpretations is fought between the good and evil characters. The task of the various characters is to interpret whether another person is a genuine mutual friend or a false mutual friend. Although there are quite a number of slayings in Our Mutual Friend, it is mainly the intellectual tactics of hunting that the characters use to interpret the authenticity of another, or gain an advantage over another without needing to use a physical weapon associated with hunting. I intend to examine the close link between friendship and the tactics of hunting in ambush, deception and extortion, which are all types of detection. Important studies by McMaster (1960) and Lanham (1963) focus on scavenging and predation in Our Mutual Friend so I do not intend to examine the aspects of hunting which they have adequately compiled. The phrase, "Of Substitution", which Lewis derives from the Latin word "muto" will be dealt with in this chapter, for substitution pervades every aspect of hunting (1956:524).

Ambush

(a) Psychological Hermeneutics: Enabling the Reader to Re-Live the Experience of Ambush as Hunting and Detection

Formal detective analysis is rare in Our Mutual Friend , but is presented alongside emotive writing in the chapter where Eugene, Mortimer, Rogue and Mr Inspector wait in ambush to apprehend Gaffer Hexam (OMF :XIV:1). The reader's psychological involvement, in the chapter concerning the attempted ambush of Gaffer, will be examined from Iser's view that "hermeneutic theory is concerned with the observer's understanding of himself when confronted with the work" (1989:219). The reader's response to ambush will be guided by Campbell's anthropological theories of ambush and persistence hunting (1985:312-313). Persistence-hunting involves pursuit of prey until it collapses from exhaustion. Pursuit places great demand on the hunter's energy reserves as s/he may need to follow prey for several days and nights. Ambush is an efficient form of persistence-hunting which enables less energy to be expended by the hunter (Campbell 1985:312-313).

Early in the Chapter, "The Bird of Prey Brought Down", the reader's role is analogous to that of the hunter (OMF :181:XIV:1). The reader encounters language which

emphasises observation rather than animation, for the "three watchers...who looked each at the blank faces of the other two", are tired and cold after waiting for the prey to appear (OMF :181:XIV:1). The language is simple, with such an absence of distraction that the activity of reading could be said to replicate the tedium of actually being out in the cold waiting for the prey. Dickens' use of language, which emphasises observation rather than animation, brings the reader closer to actual participation in the ambush. Dickens does not merely tell the reader about the ambush but incorporates the psychological experiences of ambush into the account, which make it seem more real.

Later in Chapter 14, the reader has only managed, along with the other characters, to grasp some of the significance of the dark trip on Riderhood's boat and Mr Inspector makes his logical but long-winded explanation which correctly accounts for Gaffer's death (OMF :184-185:XIV:1). Although the detective-style explanation offers the reader some relief from the confusing style of the river trip, the reader might be expected to be weary and anticipating the end of the chapter. The relief for the reader comes before the end of the chapter, in the form of very simple language when Mortimer Lightwood says "Can we get anything to drink?...We could and we did. In a public house kitchen with a large fire. We got hot brandy and water and it revived us wonderfully " (OMF :186:XIV:1).

The need of the reader to seek relief from wearisome interpretation becomes consistent with Mortimer's desire for relief from the energy-sapping demands of the hunt. From a hermeneutic point of view, reading as a demanding act of interpretation becomes consistent with hunting as an act of interpretation which requires endurance but saps one's energy. The reader's experience of mental and physical exhaustion, when approaching the conclusion of a chapter, is reflected by Mortimer who sits by the "blazing fire, conscious of drinking brandy and water then and there in his sleep, and yet at one and the same time drinking burnt sherry at the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters, and lying under the boat" (OMF :186:XIV:1). It is significant that Dickens takes advantage of the comical hallucinations of Mortimer, and the likelihood that the reader is also weary and in an uncritical state of mind, to divert the reader's attention from detecting and solving the puzzle of Eugene Wrayburn's disappearance.

(b) Hermeneutics as Phenomenology: The Reader's Experience of Gestalt and Indeterminacy in the Literary Text

The attempted ambush of Gaffer in return for a reward is one of many instances in which Riderhood pursues living people for money. Riderhood has been accused in the past of robbing "a live sailor" for money (OMF :5:I:1) and repeats the act of robbery in another form by accusing Gaffer of

the Harmon murder to gain the reward. Riderhood's use of Eugene, Mortimer and Mr Inspector in order to assist in the capture of Gaffer, whom they all know, can be viewed as a sinister version of preying on one's mutual friend. The many variations of the villain preying and ambushing others by exploiting friendship, is an important gestalt in Our Mutual Friend, for the reader perceives a consistent pattern which undergoes intriguing variations. Umberto Eco identifies similar use of an easily recognized pattern in the spy fiction of Fleming, which provides the reader with greater scope to focus on the subtle variations (1983:113).

Iser believes that a reader's continued progress through a fictional text relies on two opposing elements. The reader must find that some portion of the text constitutes an easily recognised and defined pattern in order to form what Iser regards as the "gestalt" of the text (1974:42). It is also essential that the reader finds many other portions of the text to be incapable of being linked into a coherent whole or gestalt. Iser maintains that the portions of the text that readily resist conforming to a pattern are examples of "indeterminacy", which provide freedom for the reader to become actively involved with the text, for s/he is able to formulate and determine many varied and personalised meanings from the incoherent portions (1989:10).

Iser observes that the reader would find a text overly tedious if it did not have an element of "indeterminacy" (1989:10). Iser points out that a balance of gestalt and indeterminacy is necessary, for if the text were dominated by indeterminacy then s/he "will put the text down" as they can find no consistency (1974:285). In the conventional detective stories of Conan Doyle it is the master-detective Holmes who creates a predictable gestalt for the reader by linking all the indeterminate and disordered elements of the mystery. The reader actively participates by speculating on the mystery while it remains unsolved.

In Our Mutual Friend, the true nature of Riderhood's villainous activities remains undiscovered and unsolved by Mr Inspector who is the formal detective figure in Our Mutual Friend. John Harmon is the master-detective figure who correctly interprets the sequence of events concerning his attempted murder by Radfoot, who was in turn killed by Riderhood before carrying out a plan to assume Harmon's identity. Although John Harmon is not a formal detective, he possesses some key attributes, identified by Symons, of the amateur detective who gets "involved by chance in criminal cases", is central to the "story's action...and generally a keen observer who notices things missed by others " (1985:62).

From the reader's perspective, the distinctions between the criminal and the detective are blurred, as Riderhood frequently refers to himself as an "honest man" and John

Harmon refers to himself as a mistreated son. The notion that Riderhood can be an honest man as well as a villain demonstrates the degree to which roles can be inverted. Although John Harmon was certainly the prey and Riderhood the predator in the Radfoot incident, the later return of the disguised Harmon to Riderhood's house demonstrates a complete reversal in the predatory relationship. An intriguing aspect for the reader is the constantly shifting relationship between the predator and its prey, which Ardrey describes as "reciprocal evolution: the one develops a better means of defense, while the other must develop a means of penetrating it" (1976:63).

The battle of wits between Wrayburn and Headstone illustrates for the reader that the villain and detective may easily exchange roles. From another perspective, Gribble notices the strangeness of Eugene being "as much prey as he is hunter" (1975:205). In the chapter entitled "Scouts Out", Headstone plays the role of detective with his partner Charley Hexam to maintain surveillance of Wrayburn's activities and look for signs of Lizzie who has disappeared (OMF :578-579:X:3). The relationship, in which Wrayburn is the mutual enemy of Headstone and Charley Hexam, represents a sinister inversion of the term, our mutual friend. Evil connotations from the phrase, our mutual friend, have also been identified by Jaffe, who observes that the words "mutual" and "friendly" become "downright sinister...when used to describe Wegg's and Venus's pact" (1987:98).

The reaction of Wrayburn to his pursuit by Headstone might normally be expected from a villain who takes delight in frustrating the police as he clearly enjoys the "pleasures of the chase" (OMF :582:X:3). Wrayburn's use of this defensive mechanism is successful, for Headstone wearies to the point of exhaustion, looking more "like the hunter than the hunted" (OMF :582:X:3). Applying persistence, Headstone finds a better means of penetrating the enemy's defences and attacks Wrayburn when the lawyer's defences are most vulnerable, using a method described by Campbell as the hunter looking carefully for potential weaknesses in his prey (1985:311).

Headstone attacks Wrayburn when the lawyer is deeply occupied with the emotion of love after a conference with Lizzie. (OMF :748:VI:4). Book Four of Our Mutual Friend , which commences with "Setting Traps" and concludes with "What was caught in the Traps that were set", has greater significance for the reader when Riderhood once again ambushes a friend in the same manner as he attempted on Gaffer. Riderhood takes advantage of Headstone's tiredness and uncritical trust in him as a supposed friend to send the schoolmaster to sleep with a drink (OMF :683:I:4). Riderhood has employed the same means to trap Harmon and Radfoot, but uses the drink in this instance to seek information in the manner of a detective and construct a trap which proves that Headstone is using a copy of Riderhood's clothing as a disguise, in order to lay the blame for the murder on Riderhood (OMF :685:I:4).

Riderhood does not use the information about Headstone's disguise until he is in a position to strip the schoolmaster and their "mutual friend", Miss Peecher, of all her wealth (OMF :855:XV:4). The trap, which Riderhood has set to capture Headstone, proves to be a trap which drowns both of them.

In terms of the gestalt in the text which features preying upon one's "friend", the deaths of Headstone and Riderhood represent the final variation of the ambushing theme. The other trap present in Book Four of Our Mutual Friend also features a reciprocal prey-predator relationship. Silas Wegg is ultimately trapped by Mr Boffin, although Wegg is certain that he has penetrated the Boffin defences. When Wegg goes to the Bower thinking that he can seize Boffin's wealth it becomes apparent that Boffin has deceived him, for the Golden Dustman now has a better means of defence, assisted by the spying of Rokesmith and Sloppy (OMF :839:XIV:4). The manner in which Wegg is lured into the trap set by Boffin has a gestalt similar to the attempted ambush of Gaffer. Boffin wisely makes use of his true friends for cooperative hunting, employing surprise ambush to defeat Wegg who masquerades as a mutual friend. The cooperative method of hunting, according to Campbell, is much more efficient than the individual hunting effort, which ultimately proves unsuccessful for the villains in Our Mutual Friend (1985:313).

Deception

(a) Hermeneutics as reader and characters being deceived by being emotionally involved

Deception is a key aspect of hunting which may conclude in an ambush, but may be used for less violent purposes, including the evasion or manipulation of people. Symons identifies deception as a key aspect of the detective story's plot, which contrasts with the crime novel's plot emphasis on the "psychology of characters" (1985:162). Our Mutual Friend seems to incorporate both of these elements successfully. Dickens appears to use the psychological aspects of characters like John Harmon as part of the deception practised on the reader. From the point of view of the detective plot, the reader may become less concerned with identifying John Harmon as the stranger wishing to view the body of Radfoot, for the reader becomes engrossed in the psychology of a desperate stranger who was "lost...panting, and could hardly speak" (OMF :24:III:1).

While the principal puzzle set for the reader is to conclude that Handford, Rokesmith and Harmon are the same person, the preoccupation of the reader with this particular deception distracts him / her from considering John Harmon's deception of Bella and the Boffins about his

true identity. John arrives back in England with a planned deception to disguise himself in order "to form some judgement of my allotted wife" (OMF :392:XIII:2). If such a deception can be regarded as hunting, once again in Our Mutual Friend the hunter becomes the hunted.

George Radfoot deceives John Harmon very gradually, by establishing a friendship between them which stresses their similar schooling in Brussels, their similar occupation as seamen and likenessess in "bulk and stature" (OMF :391:XIII:2). Once Radfoot gained a degree of trust from Harmon, he offered to help him out with the deception of Bella, as it is not unexpected for good friends to help the other to achieve goals. As good friendship had been established between them, John Harmon was less reluctant to leave the company of Radfoot, who had lured him to the trap at Riderhood's abode (OMF :392:XIII:2). John Harmon nearly dies after being lured into Riderhood's trap, but emerges from the river a much wiser man, who develops a hermeneutic ability to interpret whether a potential friend is genuine or false. Jaffe does not refer to hermeneutics in her discussion of omniscience in Our Mutual Friend , although she observes that an ability to distinguish between "deceitful surface and underlying truth" is required from the reader and characters (1987:95).

After narrowly escaping death, John Harmon avoids his previously high profile of a young man returning to England and inheriting great wealth. A less public occupation as Mr

Boffin's Secretary provides Harmon with the means of preserving his fortune and avoiding public scrutiny. Harmon also acts as the Boffins' mutual friend, in order to preserve the fortune from thieves and beggars who include Wegg (OMF :223:XVII:1). The relationship between John Harmon and Mr. Boffin is certainly mutual, for both demonstrate a willingness to provide what the other does not possess or cannot do. During his traumatic childhood, John Harmon was greatly assisted by Mr Boffin and his wife, who were "the poor boy's friend" (OMF :95:VIII:1). The reciprocal nature of a mutual friendship is apparent later when John Harmon is able to help Mr Boffin, who faces personal difficulties. Friedman observes that the educated John Harmon is able to conduct the business affairs of Mr Boffin who has great difficulties because of illiteracy (1974:52-53). Genuine mutual friends are therefore aware of the other's vulnerabilities and seek to prevent them from being a target for deception.

Harmon explains the plan of deception to "live the same quiet Secretary life, carefully avoiding chances of recognition, until they shall have become more accustomed to their altered state, and until the great swarm of swindlers under many names shall have found newer prey" (OMF :398:XIII:2). Harmon's occupation as a secretary has obvious connotations of secrecy and deception. Symons notes that the "ambiguous position" of secretary is most frequently the occupation of the murderer in detective and crime fiction (1985:95). The undercover manner, in which

Harmon surely and gradually implements his plan of deception and concealment to further the interests of himself and the Boffins, demonstrates subversive tactics similar to those the criminal Radfoot used to trick his friend. In terms of the prey-predator relationship, articulated by Ardrey in The Hunting Hypothesis, the defence of Harmon against predators is so sound that only the Boffins prove capable of penetrating his defences (1976:63).

The manner in which many of the characters, including Bella, are deceived is mirrored in the experience of the reader. Apart from John Harmon's soliloquy at the mid-point of Our Mutual Friend and the revelation about the Boffin/Harmon deception of Bella, the reader proves largely unable to penetrate the defences constructed by Harmon as a master of deception. Jaffe points out that "how well the deception is hidden matters less than the essential notion of using a character as a device to entrap, as Dickens does throughout the novel"(1987:97). The reader is, for example, entrapped into emotional identification with the Boffins, effectively denying him/her an opportunity to consider the detective story clues from a critical and logical perspective. Neares' theory of atavistic regression may be applied to the act of reading, concluding that an appeal to the reader's emotions will frequently dominate or overwhelm thought occurring on a critical, intellectual level (1978:3).

Arousal of reader emotion is an important aspect of Our Mutual Friend criticism, for Jaffe maintains that "critics in general have either evaded or admitted failure in accounting for their feeling of having been wronged by the text" in regard to Boffin's fraud (1987:98). Jaffe's explanation for the critics' frustration of being tricked by Boffin's fraud, corresponds with my view that security and insecurity are crucial elements in the detective story and in Our Mutual Friend (1987:97-98). Jaffe observes that the reader is made to feel very secure and omniscient of what is happening in the text, in order that their sudden knowledge of Boffin's fraud will be a surprise that is greater than normal (1987:97-98). Jaffe maintains that the emotional reaction of frustration of being tricked by Boffin is due to the critics being made suddenly to feel insecure and incapable as omniscient interpreters (1987:97-98). In the conventional Sherlock Holmes detective stories the reader's psychological feelings of security and insecurity are generally balanced. In Our Mutual Friend, Dickens explores the limit to which he can evoke a reaction of insecurity from the reader, without forcing him/her to cease reading. It is possible that the insecurity evoked in the reader at the exposure of the Boffin fraud is balanced by the security evoked by the happy ending of the Harmon and Hexam weddings.

Assuming that Dickens intends the reader of Our Mutual Friend to be controlled on an emotional level, is it possible to approach its detective story using a process of logical deduction from clues ? If the literary critic makes a deliberate and logical attempt to disrupt the normal practice of reading Our Mutual Friend in a sequential manner, it is possible to isolate clues which make Harmon's identification by the Boffins seem very likely. The technique of disrupting the order of the text is practised by Pierre Macherey. The Boffins' discovery of John's identity and subsequent deception of Bella comes as a great surprise to the reader but there are clues earlier in Our Mutual Friend which might not be deemed significant.

The first important clue is the manner in which Mr Boffin talks of the love which he and Mrs. Boffin had for young John Harmon when he was a "poor dear child" treated harshly by his father (OMF :95-96:VIII:1). Although Mr and Mrs Boffin have not seen John Harmon since his father sent him away to a foreign school at the age of seven, it is surprising that they do not recognize the true identity of Rokesmith much earlier, as they are so familiar with the young boy that they call him "our child" (OMF :95-96:VIII:1). Mr Boffin describes the manner in which Mrs. Boffin is emotionally affected by the banishment of young John Harmon, speaking:

"of a night, when it was very cold, or when the wind roared, or the rain dripped heavy, she would wake sobbing, and call out in a fluster, " Don't you see the poor child's face ? O shelter the poor child ! - till in course of years it gently wore out, as many things do" (OMF :96:VIII:1)

There is, perhaps, a tendency for the reader to regard Mrs Boffin's strong emotional attachment from an uncritical emotional perspective and not regard it intellectually as a key clue to the detective story of Our Mutual Friend . Iser notes that "emotions are aroused in order to create a premeditated relationship between the reader and the characters" in the fiction of Dickens (1974:116). As the reader is occupied with feeling sympathy for young Harmon and the Boffins, his / her approach to the detective story and its clues is less likely to be on a critical, intellectual level. The reader is also likely to overlook important clues, simply because of Our Mutual Friend's complexity. Kiely observes that the reader faces a difficult task in processing the text of Our Mutual Friend , for it "is a book crowded with authors of secondary designs", a complex "linear plot" and "a dense layering of fictional design" (1983:270).

The possibility of Rokesmith being revealed as John Harmon by the Boffins is a deduction which the reader might make if s/he were not distracted by the presentation of a character's emotional reactions. Symons notes that a reader

of the conventional detective story will complete the text and remember only the detective and the puzzle, as elements not directly relevant to the puzzle have been excluded (1985:164). In contrast, Symons traces the evolution of the detective story with its emphasis on puzzle into the crime novel, which features elaborate characterisation and setting, in addition to the puzzle (1985:162-164).

One particular instance of characterisation clouding a possible clue, which relates to the deception of Bella by Harmon and the Boffins, is the extended focus on Gruff and Glum the pensioner at the Harmon wedding. The reader and his / her deceived confidante, Bella, wonder at the "mysterious rustling and a stealthy movement somewhere in the remote neighbourhood of the organ, though it was gone directly and was heard no more " (OMF :712:IV:4). As Bella and Dickens, the omniscient narrator, appear to disregard its importance, the reader may also be persuaded to ignore it, while emotionally immersed in the wedding ceremony. The "mysterious rustling" is in fact the Boffins, who later inform Bella that "we hid up in the church organ by this husband of yours" at the wedding (OMF :828:XIII:4). If the reader were to notice and interpret critically the significance of the movement near the organ, s/he might logically conclude that, if it were not Mrs. Wilfer, it surely must be the Boffins, who have long been concerned for the welfare of John and Bella.

Although the conventions of the detective story allow Dickens to leave deductions to the reader, there are occasions when the reader's task is made easier if the detective explicitly demonstrates the method of making and confirming deductions. Apart from Mr. Inspector's accurate reconstruction of Gaffer's accidental death, the other key example of the detective at work is the manner used to gain an identification of Harmon, from Mr Kibble and Mr Potterson at the Fellowship Porters (OMF :816-819:XII:4). Mr. Inspector uses the detective's under-cover skills of deception to set the ideal conditions for the identification, by making an unobtrusive entry into the Fellowship Porters with the Harmons and relaxing the potential identifiers by gradually mixing "with 'em in a casual way" (OMF :817:XII:4). The successful identification and close working relationship with Miss Abbey Potterson, as a source of information, is reminiscent of the detective figure identified by Collins, who relaxes and gains the confidence of potential suspects in order to gain information, which they can extract from all manner of places (1965:208).

Extortion

Extortion resembles hunting, for it relies less on use of a weapon and more on use of intelligence to extort money from people. Extortion is a particularly human form of hunting which features tactics formulated on an intellectual level rather than on physical confrontation. It is possible for a hunter to exploit the vulnerabilities of the prey or threaten with force, rather than being directly involved in the hazardous task of killing.

Fledgeby is one key character in Our Mutual Friend who successfully and intelligently uses extortion on other people. Fledgeby does not appear well equipped for brute physical combat, being "an awkward, sandy-haired, small eyed youth, exceedingly slim...and prone to self-examination" (OMF :278:IV:2). The final physical confrontation between Riderhood and Headstone, which includes a "strong grapple, and a fierce struggle, arm and leg", is the type of contest Fledgeby avoids because he is unlikely to win (OMF :858:XV:4). Fledgeby places himself so far from physical confrontation that he appears to Mr Twemlow as a most trustworthy friend (OMF :606:XIII:3).

Fledgeby is able to be the friend of many by using Mr Riah as the overtly nasty front for his money-lending business. Fledgeby's extortion of Twemlow and the Lammles, by using Mr Riah, is so successful that even Jenny Wren is convinced for a time that the Jew is not a friend, but is the "Wolf of the Forest, the wicked wolf" (OMF :613:XIV:3). Mrs. Lamble successfully exposes the evil duplicity of Fledgeby, using an underhand detective manner, similar to that used by Harmon to expose the treachery of Riderhood (OMF :665:XVII:3). Mrs. Lamble has her husband administer the physical beating that Fledgeby has previously avoided (OMF :771:VIII:4). Jenny Wren also takes delight in seeing Fledgeby behave as the vulnerable prey, whose wounds are peppered, rather than the cunning predator who exploits friendship for profit (OMF :775:VIII:4).

The gestalt in Our Mutual Friend of exploiting friendship for profit, which is easily seen in the actions of Fledgeby, Riderhood and Wegg, allow the reader to find some level of consistency which Iser describes as the "building up of illusions" (1974:284). Iser believes that an effective literary text counters the reader's consistent illusion with "polysemantic" factors that provide some indeterminacy and allow personalised interpretations (1974:285). Iser points out that "the brasher forms of the detective story" deny the reader a chance to become really involved with the text, as the illusion is dominant (1974:284).

Put simply, the most satisfying detective story for the reader is one that involves the reader by providing something consistent in order to make headway through the text, yet is still open enough to allow exploration of the polysemantic possibilities. When Fledgeby interrogates Riah about his role in the exile of Lizzie Hexam to the countryside, the reader is therefore involved with the text in two ways. The reader is firstly presented with Fledgeby's definitive explanation that his mode of detection was to get at Riah "by degrees" (OMF :462:II:3). Having been presented with Fledgeby's method of gaining information in order "to squeeze a profit" from his employee and friends, the polysemantic possibilities of the text open up gradually to the reader (OMF :462:II:3). Although the reader is certain of Fledgeby's cunning duplicity, the text is vague enough to allow the reader's involvement in speculating on the identity of future victims. Fledgeby's future victims could be the lodgers in Queer Street but this remains shrouded in mystery as "the murky fog closed about him and shut him up in its sooty embrace" (OMF :462:II:3).

The reader's experience of reading Our Mutual Friend is rather like that of a detective who is in the midst of solving a case, for the reader understands the significance of certain clues but remains mystified by others. The reader's achievements as a detective are no more conclusive than those of Mr. Inspector, who is the formal detective in Our Mutual Friend . In his later novels and public

readings, Dickens' preoccupation with detection broadened to such an extent that every character's life was one of detection and interpretation, for this was considered to be the exclusive domain of the police detective.

Pleasant Riderhood is one character who applies detective-like skill to determine which seamen are vulnerable to extortion because of their wealth. An interesting gestalt emerges, for Pleasant engages in a degree of complicity with her father to extort wealth from living seamen, whereas Lizzie Hexam partners with her father to detect and scavenge wealth from dead seamen. When Pleasant encounters John Harmon, she detects him as potential prey, whereas he detects and interprets her response in order to gain information about Riderhood's activities.

(b) Hermeneutics of the Human Sciences: Wilhelm Dilthey

Two types of interpretation can be discerned from the encounter between Pleasant and Harmon. By applying one aspect of Dilthey's theory of the hermeneutics of the human sciences, it is evident that Harmon uses a higher form of understanding to outwit Pleasant, whose understanding is more on an elementary level (1985:156). Pleasant, however, is still a worthy opponent, for she possesses a formidable hermeneutic ability to interpret the actions of others. Marks notes that Pleasant has an "ability to read life metaphorically, and therefore interprets a wedding as

"two people taking out a regular license to quarrel and fight" (1988:25). Harmon, however, proves to be more capable as a hermeneutic interpreter than Pleasant.

For Dilthey, elementary understanding is closer to the comprehension practised by the child, who "learns to understand the gestures and facial expressions, movements and exclamations...because it encounters them always in the same form and in the same relation to what they mean and express" (1985:155). Pleasant's initial interpretation of Harmon is that he is a sailor whom she recognises from "the hand curved...as if it had just let go a rope" but she qualifies this by noting the smoothness of his hands which indicates that he has not been at sea recently (OMF :377:XII:2). Although Pleasant's deductions about Harmon are correct, this knowledge of him only provides her with partial understanding.

Harmon begins to construct his higher understanding using a practice described by Dilthey as taking "the normal context of a life-expression and the mental content expressed in it for its point of departure" (1985:156). In this manner, Harmon learns of Rogue Riderhood's connection with Radfoot by using the dead man's knife to open the bottle (OMF :381-382:XII:2). The opening of the bottle is Harmon's point of departure toward an eventual overall understanding of Riderhood's role in the murder of Radfoot and implication of Gaffer. Harmon's skill in eliciting proof of Riderhood's evil is to build upon each successive

expression obtained, until an overall understanding as a master-detective has been developed. Harmon's detective manner is consistent with Dilthey's view that the "common characteristic of the higher forms of understanding is that by means of an induction from the expressions given, they make the whole context comprehensible" (1985:158).

As a result of Harmon's complete knowledge, Riderhood is controlled and forced to sign "a statement that it was all utterly false" (OMF:388:XII:2). Harmon is therefore exercising a form of extortion over Riderhood, in which knowledge and understanding prove to be a more effective weapon than direct physical confrontation. Riderhood's rage at being controlled is evident when Harmon leaves, for he throws a "pair of sea-boots at Pleasant" (OMF:389:XII:2). It is likely that a reader will overlook the significance of clues like the statement, as s/he is involved with the emotional reactions of the characters, which constitutes most of the text.

A more subtle form of extortion practised in the interests of detection is the manner in which Eugene Wrayburn exploits the addiction which Mr. Dolls has for rum. The reader becomes even more distanced from perceiving the importance of Mr. Dolls as a scout supplying information of Lizzie's whereabouts, as it is likely their attention will centre on the comical aspects of the drunken man's behaviour, which include being seen as a bad child. A curious relationship, based on mutual extortion, exists

between Wrayburn and Dolls, which may distract a reader as much as it distorts each of the character's judgements. Wrayburn's love for Lizzie makes him partially dependent on Dolls for information and Dolls' addiction to rum makes him dependent on Wrayburn for money. Wrayburn's mind becomes most distorted with love just before being clubbed and Dolls' last moments before his death are distorted by a drunken convulsion (OMF:782:IX:4).

Lewis' phrases within the category "Of Substitution" that he derives from "muto" certainly describe the character of Mr Dolls (1956:524). The words within substitution which describe the experiences of Mr Dolls and Sloppy are to "assume squalid garb...put on mourning...to change, replace" (Lewis 1956:524) (OMF:782:IX:4, 212:XVI:1). Mundhenk points out that the reader is frequently given extensive access to characters whose detections are confused (1979:55). In terms of the detective story in Our Mutual Friend, the puzzle of John Harmon's identity is often over-shadowed by the puzzling behaviour of many characters to the extent that the text is a curious amalgam of the detective story and the crime novel. Despite the prevalence of hunting tactics in Our Mutual Friend, a moral dimension with primitive origins also provides an additional perspective to examine friendship and detection.

Chapter 4: Morality in Our Mutual Friend

Some of the best detective stories include a moral dimension. Murch makes particular reference to the Father Brown stories of G.K. Chesterton which represented "a completely new type of detective story, with a new kind of hero who owes nothing to the footrule, the microscope or the laboratory, and everything to a profound insight into human nature " (1958:200). John Harmon and Father Brown have much in common, for both undertake detective operations alone and neither is a formal detective figure. The detective methods of Harmon are also similar to those which Murch ascribes to Father Brown, who "is scarcely concerned with the police" and frequently discovers that "problems of crime are problems of character" (1958:200-201). The detective fiction of Chesterton contrasts significantly with that of Poe, whom Murch describes as "purely analytical discussions of the science of detection, argued out like a geometric theorem", to the extent that "action or normal conversation" is virtually excluded (1958:179).

Our Mutual Friend , which explores the psychological interactions of its characters from many perspectives, has a moral dimension which places it much closer to the detective fiction of Chesterton and Conan Doyle, rather than to that of Poe. The detective fiction of Conan Doyle

includes a moral element, for Murch refers to the enjoyment evoked for the reader when "men and women bring their personal problems to Holmes", who has the capacity for empathy, in addition to being a master of reasoned thought (1958:180). The theme of personal problems is also noticed by Symons, who observes that Conan Doyle's "stories often begin with the arrival of a client in trouble" (1985:69).

Our Mutual Friend commences with the personal troubles of its characters, though the nature of their difficulties is complex and takes the length of an 800 page novel to resolve, in contrast to the short-story format used by Conan Doyle, who "did not care to look too far into character", according to Symons (1985:68). Newman also regards Our Mutual Friend as a novel which is fundamentally about human problems which range from illiteracy to the oppressive treatment of destitute people by "The Poor Law" (1989:99). Our Mutual Friend therefore engages in a comprehensive examination of the troubles of many characters - troubles which can be examined from a moral perspective.

The Healing of Existential Insecurity: A Phenomenological Approach to Moral Behaviour as Atavistic Regression

John Harmon is the equivalent of Conan Doyle's troubled client, who is featured early in the detective story. Harmon's first words in Our Mutual Friend indicate trouble

for he simply says " I am lost " (OMF :24:III:1). In the context of the entire novel, the trouble which plagues Harmon after his near death experience in the Thames can be interpreted as existential insecurity. Meares defines existential insecurity from a psychological perspective, noting that it is strictly a modern problem of anxiety caused by our newly found " knowledge of what we are " and the minimal place we occupy in the universe and time (1978:15).

Meares believes that existential insecurity was not a problem for "...our primitive forebears... because our mind had not yet developed the ability for this kind of thought and feeling " (1978:15). For Meares, the effective solution to existential insecurity is the primitive and "...simple psychological reaction of identification in which we mentally become one with the other person " (1978:1,15). My study of existential insecurity, which, I believe, can be overcome by identification with another person, complements the essay of Kelly who believes that fantasy enables the characters of Our Mutual Friend to progress "From Nightmare to Reverie" (1986:45).

The act of mentally becoming one with the other person is an important aspect of intersubjectivity, which Hillis Miller identifies as the "true mode of existence" in a phenomenological study of Our Mutual Friend (1958:288). The nature of intersubjectivity and its relationship to the individual's experience of existence has been investigated

by the phenomenologist, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. In order to enlarge upon Hillis Miller's study of intersubjectivity in Our Mutual Friend, reference will be made to an aspect of Tymieniecka's theory described by Murphy, which views intersubjectivity as the:

...dynamic field in which we develop the subjective, or personal meaning of our existence...Through self-interpretation we break out of any strict opposition between ourselves and the lifeworld. Others enable us to expand our life meaningfulness and to constitute a common field, or social world, the existential arena in which our humanity unfolds " (1986:333)

John Harmon's re-integration into society, through the agency of others, is the most developed example in Our Mutual Friend of an individual overcoming existential insecurity. Applying the hermeneutic perspective of Dilthey, John Harmon's detection of Radfoot's and Riderhood's villainy provides an elementary understanding on which to form the higher understanding of self-interpretation, which will re-integrate him into society (1985:156). John Harmon transcends the normal boundaries of the detective story, going beyond solving the puzzle of a crime, toward resolving the riddle of his existence and place in the world.

(a) John Harmon's Suffering as Existential Insecurity

John Harmon's search for a meaningful identity is unfairly dismissed by Gribble as one of the "novel's most obvious weaknesses", noting that "Mr Boffin's change of heart is as sentimental, as John Harmon's change of identity is diagrammatic" (1975:197). Although John Harmon ultimately finds that his most meaningful existence is one shared with his wife and friends, the traumatic experiences of his early life are a complete contrast. The solitude, enforced on the youthful John Harmon by his miserly father, has an effect which Tymieniecka (in Murphy 1986:333) describes as "self enclosed individualizing", which effectively denies meaningful intersubjective relations. Apart from a close affinity with a mother and sister who have since died, the Boffins provide the only meaningful relationship experienced by Harmon, who is sent to Brussels on his own at the age of seven for the education his father deemed necessary (OMF : 15:II:1, 95:VIII:1).

John Harmon is again banished into exile by a ruthless father who "turns him out" for protesting against the unfair treatment of his sister, who is denied wealth if she does not marry the man allotted to her (OMF :16:III:1). On return to England after his father's death, John Harmon's principal memories of the country are of the "most miserable associations" (OMF :391:XIII:3). John Harmon anticipates the good-will of the Boffins but is naturally evasive about marrying someone chosen by his mercenary

father. At the point where John is close to overcoming existential insecurity, his traumatic experience in the Radfoot / Riderhood conspiracy once again makes him wary of any type of intersubjective relationship, for he confides his true identity to no one, prone once again to the "self-enclosed individualizing", as described by Tymieniecka (in Murphy 1986:333).

(b) John Harmon's Recovery Through Identification With Others

John Harmon's clandestine activities as Mr Boffin's secretary provide him with an opportunity to re-integrate gradually into society, for he forms meaningful relations by assisting Betty Higden and the orphan, and finds the Boffins to be morally virtuous, whether he be alive or dead (OMF :397:XIII:2). John Harmon therefore manages to improve the health and well-being of himself and those whom he assists. Of particular relevance to the activities of John Harmon are the phrases which Lewis derives from "muto" and places in the category "Of style" (1956:524). Lewis' phrases for "style" include "To change, make better, improve...To change for the worse, spoil turn" and "To vary, change, diversify" (1956:524).

John Harmon helps Bella, Lizzie and many others to improve for the better. Old John Harmon did not help others, for he concentrated solely on gathering wealth, rather than broadening his life to include the spiritual and emotional needs of others. John Harmon does not make wealth accumulation the sole focus of his life, since he offers spiritual and financial support to many people. John Harmon and Mr Boffin assist people from all backgrounds, for they even view Mr Venus as "our mutual friend", and help him to marry Pleasant Riderhood (OMF :837:XIV:4). Barbour notes that Dickens specifically used the phrase "our mutual friend" in his "private life..."when he was acting as go-between and matchmaker for a marriage" (1982:64). Of particular interest is Dickens' extensive development of the phrase, for each act of being friendly enlarges the network of genuine mutual friends. Pleasant is therefore admitted to the large network of friends and may believe together with Mr Venus, that John Harmon is "our mutual friend".

Being friendly and being amongst genuine mutual friends has great healing power and assists John Harmon to overcome existential insecurity. John Harmon's improved confidence in people is also evident in the amount of specific information given to the reader. Early in the text the reader is kept at a distance from Harmon, who supplies only vague and limited information, but is suddenly given a full

account of his true identity and situation. John Harmon's soliloquy, which suddenly explains all the events surrounding his near murder, usually provokes an emotional reaction of surprise from the reader.

The author's ability to evoke an emotional response is a powerful means of psychological manipulation, for Meares notes that " while we are actually experiencing this reaction, our mind loses much of its ability to function critically" (1978:27). The reader might, for instance, identify with Harmon's courage at surviving immersion in the Thames and re-visiting the place of his abduction. Harmon's soliloquy to the reader also confides a large amount of information, which establishes an emotional bond of trust and identification. The reader's trust in Harmon as friend is likely to be so complete that no critical consideration will be made of him as a deceiver, who will withhold information about his plan with the Boffins to educate Bella.

Dickens' choice to place John Harmon's reconstruction of the Radfoot / Riderhood conspiracy at the mid-point of Our Mutual Friend has been identified by Fisher-Solomon as an unusual deviation from detective story convention, for full revelation of the puzzle does not usually occur until the conclusion (1985:34). It is likely that a reader will

regard John Harmon's soliloquy, which explains the puzzle of his near murder at the mid-point of Our Mutual Friend, as the principal puzzle and fail to anticipate the Boffin/Harmon plan to deceive Bella.

John Harmon's soliloquy at the centrepiece of Our Mutual Friend also marks his recovery from existential insecurity, as he has progressed from one who is passively deceived to one who has the health and confidence to be an active deceiver. Harmon has found that the best cure for insecurity is to identify with true and trusted friends. Harmon's confidence is such that he identifies with Bella and asks for her hand immediately after re-visiting Limehouse Hole, but is rejected (OMF:400:XIII:2). The essence of Harmon's second plan of deception is to have Bella identify with him, rather than with money. From experience with his father, Harmon knows that the pursuit of money is ultimately unsatisfying, whereas meaningful identification with another, according to Meares, provides us with "a greater sense of inner security" (1978:15).

(c) Intersubjectivity: Bella Wilfer's Mercenary Habits Cured Through Identification with John Harmon

Dickens implies throughout Our Mutual Friend that a preoccupation with money and knowledge can lead to gloom and anxiety for a human being who does not have meaningful

identification with another person. The Harmon / Boffin plan, to transform Bella from being a dissatisfied mercenary woman into a loving wife who enjoys an inner security, is necessarily a long and gradual process. Many of the words which Lewis derives from "muto" and places in the category "Of Alteration" are applicable to the situations of John and Bella (1956:524).

Lewis' words for alteration, which include "to alter, change, transform, vary, modify", perfectly describe the activities of Harmon, who frequently modifies and remodels his plans concerning Bella (1956:524). Harmon's intention is clearly to modify and alter Bella's behaviour, but this is a long term plan which takes the length of the novel to achieve and requires ongoing modifications, such as the Boffin / Harmon deception. John Harmon also finds that his circumstances alter frequently, for he is at different times a farmer, sailor, intended murder victim, Secretary and eventually a loving husband. The detective story's concern for determining identity is certainly fulfilled in Our Mutual Friend, but the mystery has a deeper than usual human interest.

Murphy notes that Tymieniecka's view of intersubjectivity "emphasizes the evolutive process of self -interpretation" (1986:333). An early phase, in which Bella begins to establish a new self-interpretation based on intersubjectivity, is apparent when she meets Harmon at

Lizzie Hexam's dwelling in the countryside (OMF :554:IX:3). The significant aspect of the meeting between Harmon and Bella, in terms of Tymieniecka's theory, expounded by Murphy, is its establishment of a "foundational network of transaction ...marked by a mutual consent or agreement, that recognizes the interests of others" (1986:333). The respective subjectivities of John and Bella merge closer together, to the extent that their self-interpretations blend and interlock for common purposes. By including the interests of others in their self-interpretations of the world, Bella and John are less self-enclosed as individuals and are able to increase the "life meaningfulness", described by Murphy in her reference to Tymieniecka's theory (1986:333). The meeting of John and Bella not only brings them closer to the other, physically and mentally, but also enables them to assist Lizzie Hexam as their mutual friend (OMF :566-567:IX:3).

John and Bella's relationship progresses beyond merely recognizing the interests of the other, evolving toward fulfillment of a "collectively shared aim", where all interaction has "transactional relevance", which Murphy describes in her reference to Tymieniecka (1986:333). The ultimate instance of John and Bella's respective self-interpretations blending toward a common purpose is her acceptance of his marriage proposal (OMF :647:XVI:3). Bella's identification with the pain inflicted on Rokesmith by the miserly Boffin demonstrates her involvement in a dispute that has transactional relevance for her as a

supposed mutual friend of the two men. John correctly interprets that Bella's happiness is now intimately entwined with a concern for his welfare, meaning that a marriage proposal is very likely to be accepted (OMF :647:XVI:3). The strong mutual contentment that Bella and John experience in their marriage allows them to conquer existential insecurity, as the primitive reaction of identification, described by Meares, provides a "greater sense of inner security" (OMF :736,737:V:4) (1978:15).

(d) Identification Cures The Existential Insecurity of Lizzie Hexam and Eugene Wrayburn

The experiences of Lizzie Hexam and Eugene Wrayburn also demonstrate their vulnerability to existential insecurity. Lizzie reacts with morbid horror when she and her father discover and retrieve a dead body from the river (OMF :4:I:1). Lizzie's reaction could be interpreted as existential insecurity, for the body may prompt fears that can be traced to a knowledge and awareness of her own mortality. Gaffer, in contrast, confines his thought processes to a more primitive level, for the only meaning the body has for him is the money it supplies (OMF :3:I:1). Gaffer does have an interesting type of tribal-like awareness, for he views the river as their

mutual friend and chides Lizzie for being "so thankless to your best friend", who has provided them with food, warmth and shelter (OMF :4:I:1). Lizzie's insecurity deepens after the incident of the corpse retrieval and is evident when she meditates on the implication of her father being accused, for "she stood on the river's brink unable to see into the vast blank misery of a life suspected...but knowing that it lay there dim before her, stretching away to the great ocean, Death " (OMF :75:VI:1).

Lizzie eventually overcomes her existential insecurity, which was exacerbated by her father's death, by meaningfully identifying with Eugene, Mr Riah, and Jenny. The power of identification to heal existential insecurity is evident in Lizzie's remarkable retrieval of the severely injured Eugene from the river (OMF :749:VI:4). Lizzie reverses the horror of her past by retrieving a live mutual friend, rather than a dead " mutual friend". Patterson also observes that it is the "sinister aspects" of Lizzie's "old occupation", which actually serve to help her recover Eugene, and transform the river into "her best friend indeed" (1970:258).

Eugene Wrayburn makes a physical recovery from his injuries but also makes a mental recovery from earlier existential fears, due largely to the mutual identification and love which exists between Lizzie and him. Although there are many instances of Eugene's insecurity and dissatisfaction with the world, an interesting example of the lack of

pleasure afforded by knowledge of existence is his reluctance to be viewed as a bee "who works so much more than they need...till death comes upon them" (OMF :99:VIII:1).

(e) Evidence of Existential Insecurity in Mid-Nineteenth Century England

Dickens makes significant links between the individual's attempts to overcome existential insecurity and the corruptive influence of money, which Cotsell identifies in his study of Our Mutual Friend as "The Book of Insolvent Fates" (1984:127). Obsessive financial speculation and existential insecurity appear to have been particular problems during the 1860s in England. Cotsell observes that Our Mutual Friend (1865) was preceded by a stock-market boom in 1863, with share prices rising to unrealistic levels until a stock-market crash in 1866 (1984:126).

The insolvent Lammles are clearly represented by the words "to suffer change" and "by fermentation has turned", which Lewis derives from "muto" and places in the category "Of alteration" (1956:524) (OMF 120-135:X:1). The actual problems which underlie the Lammle marriage are conveyed by the words, "reciprocal, mutual, error on both sides"...to make any answer", which Lewis derives from "mutuus" that is

the specific Latin word for mutual which derives from "muto" (1956:524). Early in their marriage, the Lammles "make any answer" when speaking to each other, for each wishes to conceal that they bring no money to their union (OMF :130:X:1). Dickens specifically states that "the folly is committed on both sides" (OMF :134:X:1). The fact that the Lammles' knowledge of each other was false and caused suffering suggests that money and knowledge in Our Mutual Friend have the potential to be destructive to the individual.

I believe that Our Mutual Friend also displays symptoms of existential insecurity, which is partly a reaction to The Origin of Species , written by Charles Darwin in 1859. Darwin's theory meant that man was no longer seen in the secure role of divine ruler of the earth, but was made to feel insignificant, merely another animal in the evolutionary record. Campbell observes that people found it very hard to accept that "human beings were descended from a bunch of repulsive...monkeys" (1985:17-18).

Eugene therefore reacts angrily to Mr Boffin's suggestion that one should work like the bees, objecting "on principle, as a two footed creature, to being constantly referred to insects and to four-footed creatures" (OMF :99:VIII:1). In addition to the profound knowledge contained in The Origin of Species , Ackroyd observes extensive development in the knowledge of the physical and

natural sciences during the mid-nineteenth century (1990:663-664). Existential insecurity, as a result of the sudden influx of knowledge, is evident from Ackroyd's observation that, for Dickens, the "very sense of a system, of interconnectedness, also led to gloom, anxiety, a sense of closeness and suffocation" (1990:665).

Reciprocal Altruism: A Hermeneutic Approach to Moral Behaviour as Atavistic Regression

Meares' reference to the ability of identification, as a primitive psychological reaction to relieve the existential insecurities of Lizzie and Eugene, demonstrates that mutual benevolence toward the other person has its origins in its survival value to the human race (1978:15). Altruism, which Campbell describes as "the act of helping others at some cost to oneself", is also seen to have an origin in its survival value to early humans, rather than to be a religious or moral doctrine developed in the last few thousand years (1985:463-464). Campbell describes many examples of altruism in the animal world and regards the human version, "reciprocal altruism", as the most sophisticated form (1985:463-464).

The basis of reciprocal altruism, described by Campbell, is that "a group of individuals agree to help each other when at risk", even though the individual may see no immediate

benefit, other than being assisted themselves in the future (1985:463). Campbell maintains that reciprocal altruism is so deeply inscribed into human life that an individual will often risk his / her life to save a severely injured person, whom that individual might dislike in any other situation (1985:464). Altruism is also an important aspect of "Dust, or Ugliness Redeemed", by R. H. Horne, which Gibbon and many other critics view as one of Dickens' sources of inspiration for the writing of Our Mutual Friend (1985:140-141).

(a) Altruism as a Profound Detective Mystery

The most interesting example of altruism in Our Mutual Friend is the retrieval and resuscitation of the nearly drowned Rogue Riderhood at the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters (OMF :477:III:3). Swinburne regards the passage of text concerning Riderhood's resurrection "as one of the very greatest works of any creator who ever revealed himself as a master of fiction" (1902:35). I maintain that the incident of Riderhood's revival evokes a dramatic response from readers because its topic of altruism is a fundamental characteristic of the human species. In Our Mutual Friend the rescuers and doctor have little regard for Riderhood as a person, but they show no reluctance in doing all that is possible to revive him as a fellow human being. The notion that Riderhood is worthy of being saved as a

human is evident from the ironical reference to him as a "a respected friend" in the title of the two chapters concerned with his near drowning (OMF :II,III:3).

In terms of the elementary detective plot, the two chapters contain a written confession by the villain and the retrieval of another body from the river. As the identity of the respected friend, the villain and the body are not revealed immediately, the reader is invited to determine the identity of the man, later confirmed as Riderhood. In Chapter 2 (OMF :II:3), Riderhood is not revealed as the villain until eight pages have elapsed, and is not disclosed as the retrieved body until the last word of the twelve page chapter.

The reader discovers the identity of Riderhood by applying deductive reasoning, and by making the final conclusion after examining all the general elements. An example of deductive reasoning in operation is to be found immediately after Miss Potterson is informed that someone in a boat has been run down by a steamer (OMF :470,473:II,III:3). A general principle, which has been established in Our Mutual Friend, is that accidents occur on the water at night in boats. The mention of a man in a "wherry" leads the reader closer toward a deduction that the man is Riderhood (OMF :472:II:3). The reader's likely conclusion that Riderhood was the man in the wherry is confirmed by Miss Potterson, who can be viewed as the detective figure.

Allowing the reader to form a deduction, which is later confirmed by a detective figure, is a device identified by Symons as a key factor responsible for the widespread appeal of the Sherlock Holmes stories (1985:72).

In accordance with the hermeneutic theories of Dilthey, a "transition from elementary to higher forms of understanding" (1985:156) in the detective story, occurs immediately after Riderhood is identified by Miss Potterson as the victim of the steamer (OMF :473:III:3). The identification of Riderhood represents the solving of an elementary mystery, but this leads toward a greater mystery which is concerned with altruism. The reader and the rescuers of Riderhood are confronted with the topic of altruism, which cannot be probed by merely identifying him (OMF :474-477:III:3). As Riderhood is unconscious on his retrieval from the river, the rescuers are denied access to his "gestures and facial expressions, movements and exclamations", which Dilthey regards as the means of understanding on an elementary level (1985:155). Riderhood's inability to communicate by written, spoken or oral means, when he is unconscious, is consistent with McMaster's observation that language "in Our Mutual Friend ...crumbles and disintegrates (1989:303). The riddle of Riderhood's behaviour is paralinguistic and cannot be definitively explained within the realm of language.

In the absence of any expressions from the individual, Dilthey finds that understanding is often directed solely to the context of the person's life (1985:157). This can be explained further by the experience we undergo when a person, whom we have known, has died. As we are denied all access to any expressions from the deceased the principal mode for understanding is by considering the context of that person's entire life. For Dilthey, the process of induction, based on the detective's inferring of an overall context by assembling particular contextual details, provides a higher form of understanding (1985:158).

When the unconscious body of Riderhood lies prostrate at the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters, the rescuers formulate an overall essence of Riderhood's life, by merging all their previous experiences into one overall impression. The rescuers' common impression of Riderhood is unfavourable, for none of them "has the least regard for the man; with them all, he has been an object of avoidance, suspicion, and aversion" (OMF :474:III:3). A consideration of the context of Riderhood's life by his rescuers also leads them to a direct confrontation with the concept of altruism, which Campbell regards as normally well-hidden in society, because it pervades every aspect of human life (1985:464).

The reader also has access to the concept of altruism, because dialogue is suppressed and Riderhood is unable to speak throughout the time he is being resuscitated. Durey maintains that, when a writer suppresses the verbal

dimension, the text can give greater expression to a "non-verbal" or "ineffable mode" (1993:150). In the resuscitation incident Dickens concentrates exclusively on the body from his narratorial position, but suppresses the dialogue of Riderhood and severely limits the dialogue of the rescuers. Durey believes that the "paralinguistic" qualities of the "ineffable mode" allow the writer to refer the reader to:

non-verbal manifestations of a society's culture, most of which are subliminal, so that, to the indigenous person they often seem purely instinctual and may even be difficult to articulate consciously (1993:150)

Dickens, therefore, brings the reader and rescuers to a direct confrontation with the instinctual concept of altruism, which is generally never questioned, as it is perceived to be "natural" to help someone. The rescuers, however, are forced to question the mystery of their intense willingness to save the life of Riderhood, whom they normally despise (OME :474:III:3). The concept of altruism is one of the more profound human mysteries with which the detective story could possibly deal.

Although the rescuers have direct access to the concept of altruism, they cannot solve its mystery definitively by the deductive method. Certain questions about the mystery of altruism can be posed by commencing a process of inductive

reasoning, although conclusions are likely to prove elusive, as the process simply generates more questions. Bob Gliddery speculates on the mystery of why Miss Potterson allowed Riderhood into the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters, for she has long prohibited his entry to the tavern and knows him to be a criminal (OMF :478:III:3).

The notion that many questions are generated from the mystery of Riderhood's character is also suggested by the commencement of Chapter Three with the title of "The Same Respected Friend In More Aspects Than One" (OMF :III:3). A further mystery is the ungratefulness of Riderhood toward his rescuers, whom he even blames for the loss of his fur cap in the river (OMF :479:III:3). A likely explanation for Riderhood's behaviour is provided by the anthropological theories of Campbell, who maintains that "reciprocity is an important basis for much of human life, and there are are strong sanctions against cheating" (1985:463). Perhaps this accounts for Swinburne's observation that, in literature "Rogue Riderhood must always hold a chosen place among the choicest villains of our select acquaintance" (1902:35).

(b) Violating the Code of Reciprocal Altruism

Riderhood clearly violates the reciprocal code of friendship, for he expects others to help him, will not

help others, but always seeks to profit from others, even if it means murdering them or ruining their reputation. Each character in Our Mutual Friend who becomes a partner or friend of Riderhood is exploited, for Radfoot is murdered, Gaffer is slandered and Headstone is subjected to extortion. Apart from assisting Riderhood's return to consciousness, no man is willing to offer further help to one who does not reciprocate the favour. Dickens' presentation of Riderhood as a criminal is psychologically authentic, for Campbell notes that "society has developed sanctions against failure to act altruistically" (1985:464). Dickens proceeds beyond the detective story's concern to identify the criminal at the elementary level toward a higher form of understanding described by Dilthey, where the "secret of personality lures us on to new attempts at deeper understanding for its own sake" (1985:158).

The incident of Riderhood's revival has been examined by Schad from an alternative hermeneutic perspective, which also demonstrates Dickens' desire to move beyond the elementary level of the detective story (1992:175). Schad maintains that Riderhood is literally interpreted back to life by his rescuers in a hermeneutic manner (1992:175). The rescuers of Riderhood use inductive reasoning to combine their observations of his unconscious body and determine whether he is alive or dead. Inductive reasoning is also used in detective fiction, but usually only for the purpose of determining the identity of the criminal, in

contrast to probing the mystery of character, which occurs in Our Mutual Friend . Murch includes an example of the more elementary application of inductive reasoning used by Sherlock Holmes, who "was once seen beating the subjects in the dissecting room with a stick, to verify how far bruises may be produced after death" (1958:183). The type of inductive reasoning used in Our Mutual Friend appears closer to the deeper human insight applied by Father Brown in the later stories of Chesterton , where Murch finds the "detective arguments slight and overshadowed by moral or philosophical teachings" (1958:202).

After recovering from his near drowning, Riderhood continues to violate the moral code of reciprocal altruism. The words, "incapable of change", which Lewis derives from "muto" and places in the category "Of alteration", perfectly describe Riderhood who remains a villain until his death (1956:524). Riderhood has the opportunity to change his evil ways after his near drowning, but ignores the advice of the doctor who says "I don't mean to preach; but I hope...that this escape may have a good effect on you" (OMF :479:III:3). Bella also appears to be incapable of change but is gradually changed, over the length of the novel, into a loving wife who is not mercenary. In contrast to Bella, the characters of Wegg, Headstone, Charley and Riderhood prove to be incapable of being changed for the better and continue their vindictive ways until they die.

The weakened Betty Higden is discovered on the river-bank by Riderhood, who threatens to reveal her to the Parish authorities, if she does not hand over her meagre savings (OMF :544:VIII:3). The reciprocal interaction between the dying Betty and Riderhood is not mutually beneficial, for he profits by extorting her basic human right to freedom. The underlying basis for reciprocal altruism is equality, for Riderhood's rescuers in the steamer accident extend help to their fellow man in need, in expectation of being assisted when they are in need. Riderhood's body was recovered from the river and revived because his rescuers regarded him more as a representative of human "life", or the mutual friend of every man (OMF :474:III:3).

Betty Higden represents the next body to be recovered and revived, but has the misfortune to encounter Riderhood as her rescuer and supposed mutual friend (OMF :544:VIII:3). Betty's first task is to identify her rescuer and then to find out if Riderhood is truly an authentic mutual friend (OMF :544:VIII:3). As Betty is hallucinating and collapses with illness, the acts of detection and interpretation become as distorted for the reader as they are for her (OMF :544:VIII:3). Mundhenk has observed in Our Mutual Friend that Dickens often presents the text to the reader from the point of view of characters who are confused or restricted to partial understanding (1958:55). The acts of detection and interpretation, necessary to determine the authenticity of a potential friend, often prove to be hazardous, for Mundhenk notes that both reader and

characters are educated to learn the "error of easy judgements" (1979:49). The most obvious example was the deception of Harmon by his supposed friend Radfoot, but Harmon himself successfully deceives the reader from suspecting his plan with the Boffins to educate Bella.

(c) Complying with the Code of Reciprocal Altruism

Betty Higden possesses the ability to detect and interpret which friends will prove helpful, for she manages to escape from Riderhood and the "well-meaning bystander" who would consign her to the horrors of the Parish (OMF :543:VIII:3). Betty's avoidance of false friends and a desire to seek a good death is an act of interpretation, which McCarthy regards as Betty's use of knowledge to "protect her essential self" (1988:139). The process of understanding and interpreting, which people use to recognise authentic friends, is certainly hermeneutic and conforms with Hillis Miller's observation, that from "novel to novel throughout his career Dickens sought an ever closer approach to the truth hidden behind the surface appearance of things" (1958:xvi). Hillis Miller also notes that the "truth behind appearances is unavailable by any direct approach, which seems to suggest that inductive reasoning is the means of gaining access to the hidden truth (1958:xvi).

The process, by which Betty Higden and the reader jointly determine Riderhood's identity and evilness, can be explained by reference to Dilthey's observation that "understanding must try to link words into meaning and the meaning of the parts into the structure of the whole given in the sequence of the words" (1985:163). As we read, the lacuna between the meaning of a word and our accumulated contextual meaning of Riderhood closes to a point at which we identify him. The reader is first presented with the word "barge", then "ropes", "money" and finally "Alfred David", which firmly establishes Riderhood's identity. From Iser's phenomenological view-point, a reader's active involvement in the process of identifying Riderhood also helps the event to become more real to him / her (1974:278-279). Iser's concern with what the reader is experiencing in his/her mind clearly demonstrates the phenomenological approach to literature. According to Hammond, Howarth and Keat the primary concern of phenomenology is "description of ordinary conscious experience" (1991:3). Eagleton points out that Husserl's phenomenological method rejects anything which is beyond "our immediate experience" and regards the actual contents of consciousness as "the only absolute data" (1983:55).

Iser is therefore concerned with thought occurring in the reader's mind, including mental processes. In addition to mental involvement in the act of identification of Riderhood at the Lock, the reader is also encouraged to make use of memory. Iser observes:

Whatever we read sinks into our memory and is foreshortened. It may later be evoked again and set against a different background with the result the reader is enabled to develop hitherto unforeseeable connections (1974:278)

Riderhood's assistance to the weakened Betty Higden is one of many variations on the theme of mistreatment by strangers, which lodges by repetition into the reader's memory in the process of reading Chapter Eight (OMF :VIII:3). Towards the end of Chapter Eight, the caring approach of Lizzie Hexam represents a contrast to Riderhood's exploitative treatment of strangers (OMF :548-550:VIII:3). A comparison between Lizzie's and Riderhood's treatment of strangers generates some interesting connections to keep the reader involved. Riderhood proves unable to read Betty's letter of reference from the Boffins, whereas Lizzie is capable of interpreting its contents (OMF :545-549:VIII:3).

Lizzie has now acquired the hermeneutic ability to "read" people intuitively, and to read written language logically. Friedman points out that Lizzie was previously illiterate and has been educated with the assistance of the friendly Mr Riah and Eugene (1974:53). Lizzie has been illiterate for much of her life, but does possess a remarkable ability to interpret life intuitively, which comes to her "like pictures" as she gazes into the "dull glow" of the fire in the hearth (OMF :28:III:1). Lizzie's intuitive ability

balances well with Eugene's logical talents as a lawyer. Dickens uses sound psychological principles to present the successful union and marriage of Lizzie and Eugene. Meares observes that a woman's "greater intuitive capacity" complements "the logical critical faculties" which the man is more inclined to use (1978:101). Meares implies that when the separate minds of man and woman are simultaneously applied to a problem, a much more effective solution will be found that provides mutual benefits to both concerned (1978:101). The act of altruism is distinctly mutual, for, though we often appear to help others selflessly, which some partners may claim to do in marriage, we are in fact enhancing our own survival and well-being.

Dickens also uses psychological principles to present potential friends who interpret the authenticity of the other. With particular reference to introvert personalities, Meares has observed that, in the early stage of forming friendships, successful alliances depend on each participant sensing the "implied meaning of words and not their logical meaning" (1985:139). Lizzie's words, "I don't understand what you say. Let me wet your lips again", persuade the reader to listen and attend to Betty's needs, which culminate in the old woman's complete trust (OME :548:VIII:3). Riderhood's words, in contrast, are interrogative and far from conducive to establishing friendship for he quickly asks if she has any friends or money. Betty successfully interprets the implied meaning in Riderhood's statements, for she finds he is not the "honest

man" he claims to be and seeks to leave immediately (OME :546:VIII:3).

Betty's successful acts of detection and interpretation allow her to die with dignity. Detection and interpretation pervade every aspect of "life" which is presented within the "world" of Our Mutual Friend . In comparison, the conventional detective story is more monological, for it usually presents only the formal detective, who makes a successful interpretation of a crime or mystery. Dickens develops in a profound manner, the basic themes of friendship, hunting and morality that are to found in the conventional detective story. Dickens enriches the themes of friendship, hunting and morality with his own remarkable understanding of psychology. Alexander indicates a possible direction for further studies of Dickens, for she believes that Dickens had "grasped the dynamics of psychological forces" well before Freud "had so much as been born" (1991:3). In particular, Dickens grasped the psychological elements of friendship so well that his fictional characters were perceived by the reader as "living persons" (Alexander 1991:3). It is significant that Dickens regarded the statement of a reader who was passing by in the street as one of the high points of his career:

Mr Dickens, will you let me touch the hand that has filled my house with many friends (Alexander 1991:1)

Chapter 5: CONCLUSION

My study has shown how complex are the many dimensions of Dickens' exploration of the deceptively simple themes of friendship, hunting and morality in Our Mutual Friend. In my examination I have shown that Dickens' life-long interest in detection meant that, even in novels without a prominent official detective, the theme of detection became an important component in the narrative. From a hermeneutic perspective, the mode of detection in Our Mutual Friend is of people interpreting other people in every aspect of life. This study's exploration of detection and friendship, complements the work of Karl-Otto Apel, whose "Epistemological-Anthropological" theories represent the most recent development in hermeneutics (1985:321). I believe Our Mutual Friend to be the most important novel with respect to friendship being used in the process of detection and maintain that hermeneutics as a human science can provide other interesting studies of Dickens.

I believe a general exploration of other novels by Dickens, which emphasise friendship and detection, might also prove rewarding. Apart from Oliver Twist, which includes the Nancy and Sikes confrontation, other works by Dickens which combine friendship and detection and which are not viewed as detective novels, include Little Dorrit, Pickwick Papers, Great Expectations and The Old Curiosity Shop.

In Our Mutual Friend , the meaning of the word "friend" is invested with many more dimensions than the standard dictionary meaning of "one attached to another by acquaintance" (1960:138). By combining a hermeneutic exploration of friendship with a deconstructive approach to the word "mutual", the study has demonstrated the many connotations of "mutual friend" which have not previously been examined in this novel. The deconstructive approach is appropriate to the thesis, for Garrett observes that Our Mutual Friend has a "continuing play of perspectives that resists any monological meaning" (1980:94). Garrett also believes that criticism which attempts to enforce a monological interpretation tends "to conceal rather than resolve the problematic nature" of the Victorian multiplot novel. This thesis overcomes the limited perspectives of previous critics for it acknowledges the multiplicity of meanings to be derived from Our Mutual Friend .

Brattin and Hornback also maintain that many critical studies of Our Mutual Friend have treated "extraordinarily limited aspects", and that the "most significant studies of the novel will be those that come to

grips with the large, complex, and often elusive social and human realities that so engrossed Dickens' attention, sparked his creative imagination, and continue to shape our lives" (1984:xx-xxi). My study provides access to the significant human realities in Our Mutual Friend , by engaging in an interdisciplinary study of detection, that uses recent psychological and anthropological theories to demonstrate that friendship, hunting and morality are important aspects of primeval human life, inscribed deeply into the human psyche.

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Appendix

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1. MŪTŌ, āvī, ātus, āre, freq. [moveo].-Of motion, to move, move away remove: se Non habitu mutative loco, quit her dress or her dwelling. II.: coactus civitate mutari, be forced to leave: hinc dum muter, if I can only get away. O.: hacc mutata, transplanted. V.-Of alteration, to alter, change, transform, vary, modify: sententiam paucis mutatis rebus sequi, with trifling modifications. Cs.: consilium meum: consuetudinem dicendi: testamentum: tabulas, one's will. Iu.: cum illo ut mutet fidem, T.: natura nescia mutari, incapable of change. Iu.: Mutati fremunt venti, shifted. V.: faciem mutatus, transformed in appearance. V.: facies locorum cum ventis simul mutatur, S.: mutatis ad misericordiam animis, turned. L.: quantum mutatus ab illo Hectore, V.: acetum, Quod vitio mutaverit uvam, by fermentation has turned. H.: (lupum) marmore, into marble. O.- To suffer change, alter, change: de uxore nihil mutat, T.: quantum mores mutaverint, L.: annona ex ante convectā copiā nihil mutavit, L.-Of style, to vary, change diversify: an ego poetis concederem, ut crebro mutarent?: genus eloquendi...mutatum: mutata (verba), used figuratively.-To change in color, color, dye: aries iam croceo mutabit vellera luto, V.- To change, make better, improve: Placet tibi factum, Micio? Mi. non si queam mutare, T.- To change for the worse, spoil, turn: mutatum vinum, H.- Of substitution, to change, replace, make a change in: mutatis ad celeritatem iumentis, Cs.: calceos et vestimenta: arma ornatumque, S.: tegumenta capitis, L.: vestitum, put on mourning: mutata Veste (Fortuna), assuming a squalid garb. H- Of place, To change, shift, alter: mutari finibus, to be removed. L.: solum, i. e. go into exile: caelum, non animum, H.: calores (i. e. amores). Pr.-Of exchange, to interchange, exchange: cum amplificatione vectigalium nomen Hieronicae legis mutare: ut vestem cum eo mutem, T.: mutata secum fortuna, L.: incerta pro certis, S.: mutatos pro Macedonibus Romanos dominos, L.: pace bellum, S.: victoriae possessionem pace incerta, L.: mitibus Mutare tristia, H.- To exchange, barter, sell: Hic mutat merces surgente a sole, etc., H.: mutandi copia, S.: uvam Furtiva strigili, H.: quamvis Milesia magno Vellera mutantur, are sold dear. V.: eaque mutare cum mercatoribus vino advecticio, S.: res inter se, S- To forsake: principem Ta

2. MŪTŌ, ōnis, m. [1 M V-], the penis. H.

MUTTIŌ (MŪTIŌ), -ītus, īre [3 M V-], to mutter, mumble, speak low: nihil, T.: neque opus est Adeo muttito, nor must it even be whispered. T.

MŪTUĀTIŌ, ōnis, f. [mutuor], a borrowing.

MŪTUĀTUS, P. of mutuor.

MŪTUĒ, adv. [mutuus], mutually, in return: responderi.

MŪTUŌ, adv. [mutuus], mutually in return.

MŪTUOR, ātus, āri, dep. [mutuus], to borrow, obtain as a loan: a Caelio: mutuari cogor, am obliged to borrow: pecunias, Cs.- Fig., to borrow, take for use, derive, obtain, get, procure: subtilitatem ab Academia: ab amore consilium, L.

MŪTUS, adj. [3 M V], dumb, mute, speechless, without speech: pecudes: agna, H.: animalia, Lu.: satius est mutum esse quam dicere, etc.- Plur. as subst.: grex mutorum, brutes, Lu.- Not speaking, silent mute: mutum dices, i. e. I will not say a word, T.: Omnis pro nobis gratia muta fuit, has not spoken a word, O.: vox silent O.: artes, the arts of design (opp. eloquence): artes, silent arts (not famous), V.-Of place or time, silent, still: forum: tempus magis mutum a litteris, i. e. in which there was better reason for not writing: silentia noctis, deep O.

MŪTUUS, adj. [muto], borrowed, lent: argenti mille dare mutuom, T.: aes mutuum reddere, S.: a tribunis mutuas pecunias sumpsit, borrowed, Cs.: mutuum frumentum dare, lend. - As subst. n., a loan: (verbum) sumptum aliunde, ut mutuo.- In return, in exchange, reciprocal, mutual: tradunt operas mutuas, T.: officia.: error, on both sides, L.: inter se auxilium, L.: amores, H.: nec mutua nostris Dicta refero, make any answer, O.- As subst. n. reciprocity: in amicitia: pedibus per mutua nexis, with one another, V.