

1982

Tracing The Thread: The Image Of The Labyrinth In Selected Novels By Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens And Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu

David Philip Gates

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/digitizedtheses>

Recommended Citation

Gates, David Philip, "Tracing The Thread: The Image Of The Labyrinth In Selected Novels By Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens And Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu" (1982). *Digitized Theses*. 1179.
<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/digitizedtheses/1179>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Digitized Special Collections at Scholarship@Western. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digitized Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarship@Western. For more information, please contact tadam@uwo.ca, wlsadmin@uwo.ca.

The author of this thesis has granted The University of Western Ontario a non-exclusive license to reproduce and distribute copies of this thesis to users of Western Libraries. Copyright remains with the author.

Electronic theses and dissertations available in The University of Western Ontario's institutional repository (Scholarship@Western) are solely for the purpose of private study and research. They may not be copied or reproduced, except as permitted by copyright laws, without written authority of the copyright owner. Any commercial use or publication is strictly prohibited.

The original copyright license attesting to these terms and signed by the author of this thesis may be found in the original print version of the thesis, held by Western Libraries.

The thesis approval page signed by the examining committee may also be found in the original print version of the thesis held in Western Libraries.

Please contact Western Libraries for further information:

E-mail: libadmin@uwo.ca

Telephone: (519) 661-2111 Ext. 84796

Web site: <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/>

THESES CANADIENNES SUR MICROFICHE



National Library of Canada
Collections Development Branch

Canadian Theses on
Microfiche Service

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Direction du développement des collections

Service des thèses canadiennes
sur microfiche

NOTICE

The quality of this microfiche is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us a poor photocopy.

Previously copyrighted materials (journal articles, published tests, etc.) are not filmed.

Reproduction in full or in part of this film is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30. Please read the authorization forms which accompany this thesis.

THIS DISSERTATION
HAS BEEN MICROFILMED
EXACTLY AS RECEIVED

AVIS

La qualité de cette microfiche dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de mauvaise qualité.

Les documents qui font déjà l'objet d'un droit d'auteur (articles de revue, examens publiés, etc.) ne sont pas microfilmés.

La reproduction, même partielle, de ce microfilm est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30. Veuillez prendre connaissance des formules d'autorisation qui accompagnent cette thèse.

LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE
NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE

TRACING THE THREAD:
THE IMAGE OF THE LABYRINTH
IN SELECTED NOVELS BY
WILKIE COLLINS, CHARLES DICKENS
AND JOSEPH SHERIDAN LE FANU

by
David Philip Gates

Department of English

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Graduate Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario
July, 1982

© David Philip Gates 1982.

Abstract

This thesis will explore the image of the labyrinth and its use as a metaphor for the theme of ritual initiation in selected novels by Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens, and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. In terms of its mythic interpretation, an aspect which as yet has not been examined at length by critics of Victorian fiction, the labyrinth or maze has significance beyond its Gothic and urban associations. Chapter One looks at the use of the image in the settings of several novels, the London of Oliver Twist, The Old Curiosity Shop, Barnaby Rudge, and Bleak House, and the labyrinthine houses and lunatic asylums of Collins and Le Fanu. Chapter Two considers some variations of the image and its evolution as an emblem of moral dilemma and psychological entrapment. It also examines the figure of the false guide or "ironic Ariadne" in the characters of Seth Pecksniff of Martin Chuzzlewit and Mr. Wholes of Bleak House. All three writers use the image of the labyrinth to describe a condition of alienation from the rest of the world. In so doing, they pave the way for later writers in the attempt to convey psychological states in imaginative terms. Through the characters of Ezra Jennings in The Moonstone and Dillon in The House by

the Churchyard, Collins and Le Fanu experimented with the use of the psychological detective who solves problems by attempting to probe the workings of the mind. Similarly concerned with psychological issues, Le Fanu believes that successful negotiation of the maze is achieved only with a recognition of the power of God. The final chapter studies the maze-like form of Victorian mystery novels and investigates how this structure informs the plots of The Moonstone, The Woman in White, Armada, and The House by the Churchyard. In these works, the form mirrors the content and the mysteries in the narratives find their counterparts in the labyrinthine technique of the novels.

For my parents

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Professors Richard M. Stingle and James Reaney for their help and guidance throughout the writing of this thesis. I also wish to thank Joanne Buckley and Michael DuBroy for all their support and assistance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE OF EXAMINATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
INTRODUCTION	1
Notes	17
CHAPTER I - THE MAZE AS PHYSICAL SETTING	21
Notes	117
CHAPTER II - VARIATIONS ON AN IMAGE	124
1. The False Guide	124
2. The Maze as Asylum: The Madhouse Education	138
3. The Labyrinth of the Mind	154
Notes	187
CHAPTER III - THE NOVEL AS LABYRINTH: THE STRATEGIES OF MYSTERY	190
1. Collins	194
2. Le Fanu	210
Notes	224
CONCLUSION	227
Notes	232
BIBLIOGRAPHY	233
VITA	245

Introduction

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,
Untill the blustering storme is overblowne;
When weening to returne, whence they did stray,
They cannot finde that path, which first was showne,
But wander too and fro in wayes unknowne,
Furthest from end then, when they neerest weene,
That makes them doubt, their wits be not their owne;
So many paths, so many turnings seene,
That which of them to take, in diverse doubt they been.
The Faerie Queene (I.i.10)

This thesis will explore the image of the labyrinth and its use as an expression of the theme of ritual initiation in selected novels by Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens, and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. It is a critical commonplace to describe lengthy Victorian novels, especially those which involve mysteries and complicated plots, as "labyrinthine,"¹ and this term is usually employed as a euphemism for "confusing" or "obscure." In the case of certain novels, however, "labyrinthine" is an accurate rather than pejorative description. The novel of mystery or "sensation novel"² of the mid-nineteenth century is maze-like in both style and plot. The mainsprings of the plots of this type of fiction are concealed crimes and secrets, usually concerning the identity and status of the leading characters. The protagonists follow a series of clues in order to unravel the complications which surround

them and to reveal the secrets which the villains have attempted to hide. This narrative pattern can be seen in the fiction of Collins, Dickens, and Le Fanu. To dramatize mystery in their novels, these authors frequently make use of the image of the maze or labyrinth, a structure which figures significantly in Classical mythology.

During the nineteenth century, there was a continued interest in Classical and other mythologies, both in the field of academic study and in popular literature.³ Scholars of the age speculated about the origins of myths, their meaning, and what they revealed about earlier civilizations.⁴ This activity would result ultimately in The Golden Bough, a work which, according to John Vickery, "sums up so many strands of nineteenth-century thought and feeling,"⁵ especially in the realm of mythology. In The Rise of Modern Mythology: 1680-1860, Burton Feldman and Robert Richardson comment,

As a body of knowledge, myth increased during the early nineteenth century by the expanded knowledge of Indian, Egyptian, and Polynesian mythology and by the expansion of philology, while the study of myth became increasingly sophisticated and increasingly central to the study of history, language, and culture. 6

They add further, "Allied to myth as literature as well as to myth as religion, the new interest in symbolism and symbolic communication developed strongly in this period."⁷ Interest in the subject ranged from the historical, in such works as William Mitford's The History of Greece (1835), M. Rollin's Ancient History (1837), and George Grote's twelve

volume History of Greece (1884), to the ~~mythographic~~
in George Faber's The Origin of Pagan Idolatry (1816) and
G. W. Cox's The Mythology of the Aryan People (1870).. All
of these works deal in one way or another with the myth of
Theseus and the Minotaur.

From what is known about the libraries and the reading
of Dickens, Le Fanu, and Collins, there is some indication
of where they might have found this particular myth.
According to the inventory of the library of Devonshire
Terrace in 1844, Dickens could have found the labyrinth in
several places.⁸ The inventory lists Rollin's Ancient
History, which describes the labyrinth of Egypt and refers
to the myth in quoting Virgil's description of the labyrinth
of Crete.⁹ The list also includes Ovid's Metamorphoses¹⁰
and Scott's Waverley novels, one of which, Woodstock,
features the labyrinth prominently. Sources of a similar
nature were available to Le Fanu. When the library of the
Dean of Emly, Le Fanu's father, was offered for sale in
1845, a catalogue of its contents was printed. Many of the
works listed could have been familiar to Le Fanu when he
was growing up. The catalogue cites the works of Scott
and the Ancient History of Rollin, along with Mitford's
History of Greece, Virgil's Aeneid, and The Mythology and
Fables of the Ancients explain'd from history (1739-40) by
Antoine Banier.¹¹ As its title would indicate, this latter
work attempts a rational explanation of the supernatural
or extraordinary aspects of myth. Although Banier argues
that the Minotaur was, in reality, a human adversary, rather

than a monster, he maintains that there actually was a labyrinth, created by Daedalus, on the island of Crete.¹²

Both libraries held copies of the fifth edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, published in 1817, which contains entries on all the elements of the legend and its characters.

While it is much more difficult to discover what Wilkie Collins read, because of the absence of detailed biographical records, it is certain that he studied the standard Classical writers, including Virgil, at school.¹³

It might be useful, before turning to the nineteenth-century views of the myth, to review briefly the main features of the story. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica of 1817, the Minotaur was

the fruit of Pasiphae's amour with a bull. Minos refused to sacrifice a white bull to Neptune, an animal which he had received from the god for that purpose. This offended Neptune, and he made Pasiphae the wife of Minos enamoured of this fine bull, which had been refused to his altars. Daedalus prostituted his talents in being subservient to the queen's unnatural desires; and by his means, Pasiphae's horrible passions were gratified and the Minotaur came into the world. Minos confined in the labyrinth this monster which convinced the world of his wife's lasciviousness, and reflected disgrace upon his family. 14

According to the myth, some years later the city of Athens was compelled to send a periodic tribute of seven youths and seven maidens to Crete, in order to make restitution for a crime against Minos. This tribute was sent into the labyrinth to be slain and devoured by the Minotaur. Theseus, the heir to the Athenian throne, was

determined to end the practice and, to this end, went to Crete as part of the third tribute. There, Ariadne, the daughter of Minos and Pasiphae,

was so taken with him, that, as a testimony of her love, she gave Theseus a clue of thread to guide him out of the labyrinth. Theseus, having killed the Minotaur, carried off the Athenians he had relieved, together with Ariadne; whom, however, he afterwards foresook. 15

The Encyclopedia gives the following information about the labyrinth itself :

LABYRINTH, among the ancients, was a large intricate edifice cut out into various aisles and meanders running into each other, so as to render it difficult to get out of it. There is mention made of several of these edifices among the ancients; but the most celebrated are the Egyptian and Cretan labyrinths. . . . The word LABYRINTH, taken in the literal sense, signifies a circumscribed space, intersected by a number of passages, some of which cross each other in every direction like those in quarries and mines, and others make larger or smaller circuits round the place from which they depart like the spiral lines we see on certain shells. In the figurative sense, it was applied to obscure and captious questions, to indirect and ambiguous answers, and to those discussions which, after long digressions, bring us back to the point from which we set out.

The Cretan labyrinth is the most famed in history or fable; having been rendered particularly remarkable by the story of the Minotaur, and of Theseus who found his way through all its windings by means of Ariadne's clue. 16

The primary functions of the labyrinth in the legend are as a place for concealment and as a prison first for the Athenians and later for Daedalus himself. Critics and mythographers, particularly those of the nineteenth century, found other meanings for the structure.

In The Origin of Pagan Mythology, Faber postulates a connection between the form of the labyrinth and those places where religious mysteries were performed:

Since the Mysteries were celebrated in caverns either natural or artificial, when temples came to be built for that purpose . . . they were contrived with dark chambers which bore a close resemblance to caves, and were often furnished with numerous intricate aisles and passages for the purpose of duly initiating the aspirants. 17

Faber makes further hypotheses about the "labyrinthine" temples which are described in the commentaries of Herodotus and Pliny:

They were all, I believe, constructed for the celebration of the same gloomy funeral rites. That of Crete was ascribed to Daedalus, who is said to have lived in the time of Minos; and it is fabled to have been the prison of the Minotaur. Such a legend amply shews the real end of its construction; for the Minotaur was the semi-bovine symbol of the great father and the Ark was esteemed his prison. Eustathius accordingly represents it, as a deep subterraneous cavern, branching out into many intricate windings: that is to say, it was precisely of the same nature as those in which we know that the Mysteries were ordinarily celebrated. 18

The process of ritual initiation is, according to Faber's interpretation, comparable with the journey of Theseus through the Cretan labyrinth. He maintains:

It is evident, that the temple, built for the celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries, was a structure of much the same sort as the Labyrinths. The aspirants, as we have seen, were conducted through many dark winding passages, ere they emerged into the splendid inner apartment, which, like the consecrated grotto, was brilliantly illuminated to represent Elysium. 19

Later in the century, greater emphasis would be placed upon an interpretation of the opposition of Theseus and the Minotaur as the symbolic struggle of a "solar hero" with the forces of darkness. This application of the "solar myth" is developed by G. W. Cox in The Mythology of the Aryan Nations (1870). The birth of the Minotaur from Pasiphae is seen as "but a translation of the fact that the night follows or is born from the day."²⁰ Theseus, therefore, becomes a variant of the sun god: "Like Indra and Krishna, like Phoibos and Alpheios and Paris, he is the lover of maidens, the hot and fiery sun greeting the moon and the dew."²¹ Despite his powers, however, the hero requires guidance; in describing the function of Ariadne, Cox finds a parallel with Indian mythology and the figures of Indra and Saramâ:

In this lovely being [Saramâ], who peering about the sky in search of the stolen cattle, guides Indra to the den of the throttling serpent, we see the not less beautiful Ariadne who points out to Theseus the clue which is to guide him to the abode of the Minotaur; and thus the myth resolves itself into a few phrases which spoke of the night as sprung from the day, as stealing the treasures of the day and devouring its victims through the hours of darkness, and as discovered by the early morning who brings up its destined conqueror, the sun. 22

The dwelling-place of the Minotaur, like that of its Indian counterpart Vritra or Pani, the throttling snake, is another version of the archetypal lair of the powers of evil:

But all these fearful monster's lurk in secret places; each has his cave or mountain fastnesses, where he gorges himself on his prey. The road to it is gloomy and bewildering; and in the expression put in the mouth of the Panis, who tell Saramâ that 'the way is far and leads tortuously away,' we have something more than the germ of the twisting and hazy labyrinth-- we have the labyrinth itself. 23

While it is difficult to prove a direct influence or relation between these theoretical works on mythology and the fiction of the period, it is important to understand the contemporary ideas about the convention of the labyrinth, and it is useful to see the works of Collins, Dickens, and Le Fanu, as well as other Victorian writers, in the light of the well-known myth.

Perhaps the most encyclopedic approach to the figure of the labyrinth during this period was taken by Edward Trollope in a lengthy article for the Archaeological Journal of 1858. Trollope provides a survey of those mazes which existed at the time in England and the Continent, as well as giving a short history of the structure. The labyrinth served various purposes: "as catacombs for the burial of the dead, as prisons, as a means of performing penance, and as portions of pleasure-grounds."²⁴ Trollope points out that the symbolic value of the labyrinth for religious purposes was not realized only by the early Greeks and Egyptians. As with many other "pagan" customs and forms, the early Church took over the device and Christianized it. In Christian iconography, the maze "was deemed to be indicative of the complicated folds of sin by which man is surrounded, and how impossible it would

be to extricate himself from them except through the assisting hand of Providence."²⁵ Again, in this Christian interpretation, the theme of ritual initiation is emphasized with man as the hero being guided through danger to a successful conclusion. The figure was employed in another fashion by the Church:

Then labyrinths became, as it is stated, instruments of performing penance for non-fulfillment of vows of pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and were called "Chemins de Jérusalem", as being emblematical of the difficulties attending a journey to the real Jerusalem, or of those encountered by the Christian before he can reach the heavenly Jerusalem; whence the centre of these curious designs was not infrequently termed "Ciel." ²⁶

As a further development of this idea about the labyrinth as a symbolic progress through life and death to rebirth, the image, in Renaissance iconography, came to represent the infernal garden, a type of Hell and a demonic parody of the true pastoral or hortus conclusus.²⁷ This aspect of the maze is also noticed by John Ruskin in Fors Clavigera (No. 23). In the course of his essay, Ruskin suggests the possibility of a link between the maze in the cathedral at Lucca with its inscription Hic quem Cretcus edit Dedalus est Laberinthus with the rhyme "This is the house that Jack built." Perhaps more important is his discussion of the maze in connection with Dante's Inferno. Ruskin shows that the form of Hell in The Divine Comedy is that of a labyrinth; it consists of a series of diminishing circles in a spiral structure.²⁸

The labyrinth becomes a central metaphor for the

ritual of initiation, the "Mystery" which historians and mythographers believe took place within the labyrinthine temples. This mystery of initiation becomes an important subject in the nineteenth century. E. S. Shaffer, in her "Kubla Khan" and The Fall of Jerusalem, raises this point in connection with her study of Romantic poetry. She discusses Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" as

a ritual of baptism, that baptism that characterized a multiplicity of pre-Christian and non-Christian sects, but which, adopted by Christianity, became one of its characteristic celebrations of birth into vision. Nevertheless, it is equally a system of images belonging to a newly forming ritual of Mystery which will dominate nineteenth-century poetry. 29

In this "Mystery," Shaffer writes, "The soul of the initiate encounters itself,"³⁰ undergoing a process of education which leads to self-awareness. As this thesis will demonstrate, ritual initiation, as embodied by the metaphor of the maze, becomes a significant pattern in the fiction of the period as well. While this idea is not entirely original to the nineteenth century, implicit as it is in much earlier literature, it is handled in a different manner. Collins, Dickens, and Le Fanu link the theme of ritual initiation and the symbol of the labyrinth to the particular interests and concerns of their time. Social issues, questions of morality, the developing science of psychology, and the capabilities of the rational faculty are their focus at various times. These subjects furnish the lessons which the characters created by the three writers

learn through their "rites of passage."

Because of its mystic associations with ritual initiation, conflict, entrapment, and secrecy, the maze is an important archetype of romance. While the fiction of the mid-nineteenth century is not "romance" in its purest form, certain novels, like those of Collins, Dickens, and Le Fanu, utilize romance conventions and themes. In The Secular Scripture, Northrop Frye describes the "landscape" of romance as two opposing worlds, "one above the level of ordinary experience, the other below it."³¹ This latter sphere is "the demonic or night world"³² into which the hero descends as a redeemer. In several versions of this pattern, the "night world" is the belly of a monster, as Frye points out:

In the folk-tale versions of dragon-killing stories we notice how frequently the previous victims of the dragon come out of him alive after he is killed. Again, if we are inside the dragon, and the hero comes to help us, the image is suggested of the hero going down the monster's open throat, like Jonah (whom Jesus accepted as a prototype of himself), and returning with his redeemed behind him. Hence the symbolism of the Harrowing of Hell, hell being regularly represented by the "toothed gullet of an aged shark," to quote a modern reference to it. . . . The image of the dark winding labyrinth for the monster's belly is a natural one, and one that frequently appears in heroic quests, notably that of Theseus. A less displaced version of the story of Theseus would have shown him emerging from the labyrinth at the head of a procession of the Athenian youths and maidens previously sacrificed to the Minotaur. 33

Many of the protagonists of Victorian fiction, especially those in novels of mystery, perform a similar heroic role,

uncovering the secrets of the past and present, as they progress through a dark "labyrinth."

One popular source of the labyrinth image for the Victorians is the Gothic romance. The underground vaults and passageways of the castle of Otranto in Horace Walpole's novel would appear to serve as the prototype of the Gothic maze.³⁴ Isabella enters the cellars of the castle in an attempt to escape from Manfred:

The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloisters; and it was not easy for one, under so much anxiety, to find the door that opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions, except now and then, some blasts of wind that shook the doors she had passed, and which, grating on the rusty hinges, were re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness.³⁵

Isabella is pursued into the maze by Manfred and his retainers, but she escapes when a providential ray of moonlight reveals the trapdoor which opens on the passage to the Church of St. Nicholas. Although she finally achieves safety, she is badly frightened by someone lurking in the darkness. This person turns out to be Theodore, the young hero and the rightful master of Otranto, who has been trapped in the cellars. While Walpole rapidly dispels the terror of the princess's plight, he manages to suggest effectively, if only momentarily, that the maze of Otranto harbours unseen horrors.

In his treatment of Isabella and her predicament, Walpole created a pattern to which later writers resorted

in order to create suspense and terror. Redecorated with varied trappings as prison, crypt, or secret passage, the labyrinth became a standard Gothic setting. Variations of the structure are to be found in The Recess by Sophia Lee (1786); The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne (1789), A Sicilian Romance (1790), and The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794) by Mrs. Radcliffe; The Monk by Matthew Lewis (1797); The Abbess by William Henry Ireland (1799); Confessions of the Nun of St. Omer (1805), and Zofloya; or, The Moor (1806) by Charlotte Dacre ("Rosa Matilda"); The Nocturnal Minstrel by Eleanor Sleath (1810); The Fatal Revenge; or, The Family of Montario (1807) and Melmoth the Wanderer (1820) by Charles Robert Maturin; "Marmion" (1808) and Woodstock (1826) by Sir Walter Scott; and Manfroné; or, The One-Handed Monk by Mary-Anne Radcliffe (1826).³⁶

While the external guise of the maze alters in accordance with the designs of each novelist, its essential function as a place of confusion and entrapment and its association with the traditionally Gothic themes of flight, pursuit, and persecution are unchanged.

The maze remains a popular and useful setting in the "sensation novel" because it implies that danger or the potentially horrific is lurking around the next bend or twist. In addition, the labyrinth is a figure which has appropriate symbolic meaning. With its turns and devious routes, the maze is an apt representation of the circuitous workings of evil, as the quotations from Cox and Frye would indicate and as an examination of specific novels will

reveal.

It is not the influence of the Gothic romance alone, however, which is responsible for the appearance of the labyrinth in Victorian fiction. Another significant factor which should be taken into consideration is the experience of nineteenth-century urban life. During the period, it became possible to regard the large metropolitan areas, especially London, as maze-like. The lack of an organized plan of development, rapid population growth, and swift expansion created confusion and a sense of constriction in some areas as nineteenth-century London rose on and around the remains of the eighteenth century.³⁷ The Medical Officer of Health for the Strand in 1859 wrote:

There is one circumstance of general prevalence throughout the district which, so to speak, almost paralyses these efforts of sanitary improvements--overcrowding--the overcrowding of parts of it with courts and alleys, the overcrowding of these courts and alleys with houses, the overcrowding of these houses with human beings. ³⁸

This aspect of the city was made apparent to Henry Mayhew, the noted social historian, when he went up in a balloon. From the vantage point of the air, Mayhew was able to survey "the leviathan Metropolis":³⁹

It was impossible to tell where the monster city began or ended, for the buildings stretched not only to the horizon on either side, but far away into the distance, where, owing to the coming shades of evening and the dense fumes from the million chimneys, the town seemed to blend into the sky, so that there was no distinguishing earth from heaven. . . . Here and there we could distinguish little bare green patches of parks and occasionally make out the

tiny circular enclosures of the principal squares, though, from the height, these appeared scarcely bigger than wafers. 40

Like the labyrinth which it had come to resemble, at least from the air, London concealed menace in certain dark pockets. Instead of the "family skeletons" of the Gothic, the urban "secrets" were more apt to be disease, poverty, and crime, less "romantic" than the former, but far more dangerous.

Several novelists, among them Collins, Dickens, and G. M. Reynolds in his Mysteries of London series, drew upon the labyrinthine quality of London for their fiction.⁴¹

George Gissing has written:

London as a place of squalid mystery and terror, of the grimly grotesque, of labyrinthine obscurity and lurid fascination, is Dickens's own; he taught people a certain way of regarding the huge city, and to this day how common it is to see London with Dickens's eyes. 42

It would seem that the use of the image of the labyrinth grows, to some extent, out of the response of the Victorian novelist to the urban experience. The maze, therefore, becomes an emblem of the sense of insecurity and claustrophobia which the quickly-spreading city engendered.

In Victorian Cities, Asa Briggs comments:

The fear of the city, like other kinds of fear, was often a fear of the unknown. It was because the 'crowded lives' were mysterious as well as crowded that cities provoked alarm even on the part of some of the people who lived in them. 43

F. S. Schwarzbach states that the "classic experience in the nineteenth-century city was that of alienation, the perception of the city as a threatening and undomesticated otherness."⁴⁴

In terms of its mythic interpretation, an aspect which as yet has not been examined at length by critics of Victorian fiction, the labyrinth has significance beyond its Gothic and urban associations. The following chapters will explore the various ways in which the motif of the maze, embodying the theme of ritual initiation, is treated and developed by Collins, Dickens, and Le Fanu. Chapter One looks at the use of the maze in the settings which appear in the novels, the labyrinthine house, asylum, and city. Chapter Two will consider some variations of the labyrinth image and its evolution as metaphor for moral dilemma and for psychological entrapment, as shown particularly in the fiction of Collins and Le Fanu. The final chapter investigates the "labyrinthine" form of Victorian mystery novels and how this structure informs the plots of such novels as Armada and The House by the Churchyard.

Notes: Introduction

¹ See Unsigned review of Armada, Saturday Review (16 June, 1866), as quoted in Wilkie Collins: The Critical Heritage (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), pp. 151-55; Percy Lubbock, The Craft of Fiction (New York: Smith, 1945), pp. 214-15; R. C. Maxwell, Jr., "G. M. Reynolds, Dickens, and the Mysteries of London," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 32 (1977), 188-213; Winifred Hughes, The Maniac in the Cellar (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980), p. 137.

² For discussion of the "sensation novel," see Walter M. Kendrick, "The Sensationalism of The Woman in White," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 32 (1977), 18-35; and Hughes, pp. 7, 15-16, 18-19.

³ Walter Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind (1957; rpt. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 305-10.

⁴ See James Kissane, "Victorian Mythography," Victorian Studies, 6 (1962-63), 5-28; and Janet Burstein, "Victorian Mythography and the Progress of the Intellect," Victorian Studies, 18 (1974-75), 309-24.

⁵ John B. Vickery, The Literary Impact of the Golden Bough (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), p. 4.

⁶ Burton Feldman and Robert D. Richardson, The Rise of Modern Mythology: 1680-1860 (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1972), p. 297.

⁷ Feldman and Richardson, p. 298.

⁸ "Inventory of Contents of 1 Devonshire Terrace," in The Letters of Charles Dickens (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), IV, 711-26.

⁹ M. Rollin, Ancient History (London: Thomas Tegg and Son, 1837), I, pp. 7-8.

¹⁰ Ovid, Metamorphoses, trans. Mary M. Innes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), pp. 183-85.

- 11 "Catalogue of the Library of the Very Reverend Thomas P. Le Fanu, L.L.D. . . . to be sold by auction by Charles Sharpe . . . 22nd Nov. 1845."
- 12 Antoine Banier, The Mythology and Fables of the ancients explain'd from history (London, 1739-40; rpt. New York: Garland Press, 1976), III, 496-503.
- 13 Kenneth Robinson, Wilkie Collins: A Biography (London, 1951), p. 29.
- 14 "Minotaur," Encyclopedia Britannica. 1817 ed.
- 15 "Ariadne," Encyclopedia Britannica. 1817 ed.
- 16 "Labyrinth," Encyclopedia Britannica. 1817 ed.
- 17 George Stanley Faber, The Origin of Pagan Idolatry (London: Rivingtons; 1816), III, 267.
- 18 Faber, III, 269.
- 19 Faber, III, 270.
- 20 George W. Cox, The Mythology of the Aryan Nations (London: Longmans and Greene, 1870), II, 349.
- 21 Cox, II, 88.
- 22 Cox, II, 350.
- 23 Cox, II, 349.
- 24 Edward Trollope, "Notices of Ancient and Medieval Labyrinths," Archaeological Journal, 15 (1858), 218.
- 25 Trollope, 219.
- 26 Trollope, 221; see also M. E. C. Walcott, Sacred Archaeology (London: Reeve, 1868), p. 341.
- 27 Frances Yates, The Rosicrucian Enlightenment (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 14.
- 28 John Ruskin, Fors Clavigera (New York: Lovell and Coryell, n.d.), II, 310-20.
- 29 E. S. Shaffer, "Kubla Khan" and the Fall of Jerusalem (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1975), p. 188.
- 30 Shaffer, p. 188.

31 Northrop Frye, The Secular Scripture (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978), p. 53.

32 Frye, p. 53.

33 Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (1957; rpt. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), p. 190.

34 Several studies have discussed the wide influence of Walpole's work, among them Edith Birkhead, The Tale of Terror (London: Constable, 1921), pp. 16-20, 40; Eino Railo, The Haunted Castle (London: Geo. Routledge and Sons, 1927), pp. 7-9, 27, 146-47; Montague Summers, The Gothic Quest (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964); D. P. Varma, The Gothic Flame (London, 1957; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966).

35 Horace Walpole, The Castle of Otranto, in Three Gothic Novels, ed. Peter Fairclough (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 61.

36 Sophia Lee, The Recess (London, 1786), I, 3, 24, 44-46; Ann Radcliffe, The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne (rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1974), pp. 727, 730-31, 747; A Sicilian Romance (rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1974), pp. 27, 67; The Mysteries of Udolpho (rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1974), pp. 339, 378-79; Matthew Lewis, The Monk (New York: Grove Press, 1959), pp. 269-70, 346-47, 355; William Henry Ireland, The Abbess (London, 1799; rpt. 4 vols. New York: Arno Press, 1974), II, 224-37; Charlotte Dacre, Confessions of the Nun of St. Omer (London, 1805; rpt. 2 vols. New York: Arno Press, 1972), I, 33, 80-81; II, 69; Zofloya; or, The Moor (London, 1806; rpt. 3 vols. New York: Arno Press, 1974), I, 107, 171-73; III, 135-37; Eleanor Sleath, The Nocturnal Minstrel (London, 1810; rpt. New York: Arno Press, 1972), pp. 18-30, 100; Charles Robert Maturin, The Fatal Revenge; or, The Family of Montario (London, 1807; rpt. 4 vols. New York: Arno Press, 1974), II, 360-63, 376-88; III, 221-27, 374, 453-54; Melmoth the Wanderer (London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1968), pp. 190-95; Sir Walter Scott, "Marmion," in The Lady of the Lake, and Other Poems (Toronto: New American Library, 1962), Cantó II, xviii, pp. 196-97; Woodstock, (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1863), pp. xxix-xxx, 317-19; Mary Anne Radcliffe, Manfroné; or, The One-Handed Monk (London, 1828; rpt. 2 vols. New York: Arno Press, 1974), I, 8, 12, 33, 70-75.

37 See Francis Sheppard, London, 1808-1870: The Infernal Wen (London: Secker and Warburg, 1971), pp. xv-xx; and Alexander Welsh, The City of Dickens (London: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 19-20.

³⁸ Quoted by Henry Jephson, in The Sanitary Evolution of London (1907; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1972), p. 119.

³⁹ Henry Mayhew, The Criminal Prisons and Scenes of Prison Life (London: Griffin and Bohn, 1862), p. 9.

⁴⁰ Mayhew, p. 9.

⁴¹ See Maxwell, cited above.

⁴² George Gissing, Critical Studies of the Works of Charles Dickens (New York: Greenburg, 1924), p. 53.

⁴³ Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities (London: Odhams Press, 1963), p. 59.

⁴⁴ F. S. Schwarzbach, Dickens and the City (London: Athlone Press, 1979), p. 220. See also Peter Conrad, The Victorian Treasure-House (London: Wm. Collins and Sons, 1973).

Chapter 1:

The Maze as Physical Setting

Signor Hortensio, thus it stands with me,
Antonio my father is deceased,
And I have thrust myself into this maze,
Haply to wive and thrive as best I may.
Crowns in my purse I have and goods at home,
And so am come abroad to see the world.

The Taming of the Shrew (I.ii.50-6)

Collins, Dickens, and Le Fanu evoke the image of the maze in the physical settings of their fiction. Labyrinthine structures figure in the works of all three writers; specific examples include the Warren in Barnaby Rudge, Todgers's Commercial Boarding House in Martin Chuzzlewit, and the first Bleak House; Porthgenna Tower in Collins's The Dead Secret and Blackwater Park in The Woman in White; and Morley Court in The Cock and Anchor and Bartram-Haugh in Uncle Silas by Le Fanu. Behind each of these houses lurks the influence of Walpole's Otranto, the model of the maze-like Gothic house.¹ Although it was probably most accessible to the Victorians as the maze-like settings of castle and cloister of the earlier romances, the labyrinth, as I stated in the Introduction, is not simply a Gothic image. Dickens extended and refined the image as a means of describing London and as a metaphor for city-life,² This elaboration of the figure is evident in Oliver Twist,

Barnaby Rudge, The Old Curiosity Shop, and Bleak House.

In the novels of Collins, Dickens, and Le Fanu, the motif of the maze does more than create a suitable atmosphere of mystery. The characters who enter Dickens's London, for example, do not enter just another version of the labyrinthine Gothic castle. The maze is a symbolically relevant structure for the fiction, involving as it does the theme of ritual initiation with its stages of education, growth, and rebirth. Dickens's emphasis on the labyrinthine nature of the world expresses his belief, one that is shared by Collins and Le Fanu, that the world is a place of ordeal and trial. His protagonists are frequently innocents who must discover their true identity and their place in society by means of a journey through the world. The danger is increased for these characters because of their youth and inexperience, and there are sometimes malevolent influences which conspire to harm or to degrade the protagonists. It is not just the heroic figure, like Theseus, who must combat darkness, but everyone: children, young people, and the feeble-minded. Oliver Twist, Nell, Esther Summerson, Barnaby Rudge, Collins's Rosamund Treverton, and Le Fanu's Maud Ruthyn become Victorian types of Everyman, showing the potentiality for either good or evil.

In The Secular Scripture, Northrop Frye speaks of the archetypal pattern of romance as "a cyclical movement of descent into a night world and a return to the idyllic world, or to some symbol of it like a marriage."³ The

"night world" is usually expressed in a structure which signifies confusion and misdirection.⁴ The effect of the "night world" upon those who travel through it is described in the following passage:

The general theme of descent, we saw, was that of a growing confusion of identity and of restrictions on action. There is a break in consciousness at the beginning, with analogies to falling asleep, followed by a descent to a lower world which is sometimes a world of cruelty and imprisonment, sometimes an oracular cave. In the descent there is a growing isolation and immobility: charms and spells hold one motionless; human beings are turned into subhuman creatures, and made more mechanical in behaviour; hero or heroine are trapped in labyrinths or prisons. 5

In Victorian fiction, the descent into the "night world" is suggested through a symbolic journey either into or in darkness and through the exploration of a room, a house, or a city. The labyrinthine nature of these settings emphasizes the theme of the ritual initiation or the "rites of passage" of the protagonist.⁶

In Dickens's work, the romance pattern of the initiation and the rebirth is combined with consideration of contemporary problems. The image of "the house as maze" recurs, but the image which dominates the fiction is that of the "city as maze." Henry Mayhew's vision of London from his balloon complements the Dickensian view of the city as a maze hiding many secrets:

it was a most wonderful sight . . . to contemplate from afar that strange conglomeration of vice, avarice, and low cunning, of noble aspirations and humble heroism, and to grasp it in the eye, in all

of its incongruous integrity, at one single glance--to take, as it were, an angel's view of that huge town where, perhaps, there is more virtue and more iniquity, more wealth and more want, brought together into one dense focus than in any other part of the earth. 7

The novels of Dickens trace the expansion of the urban maze at the same time that they illustrate the corruption and breakdown of urban life. As Dickens's characters travel through the labyrinth of London, they become aware of the true state of their world: They, and the reader, realize the failure of the social structure. It is because of this process of enlightenment on the part of Dickens as well as on the part of his characters that the novels become increasingly concerned with directly meeting the problems of the city. Perhaps more than any other novelist of the period, Dickens defined the motif of the urban labyrinth.

In his Imagery and Theme in the Novels of Dickens, Robert Barnard makes this statement,

Dickens was a town-boy. . . . Like most Londoners he takes pleasure in his expertise in coping with the complexities of the place. Right from the beginning of his career the London streets are a "labyrinth"--thus allied with the "wilderness" above them--and he takes a positively young-Baileyish delight in being able to find his way through them. 8

Other critics, including J. Hillis Miller and F. S. Schwarzbach, would agree with Steven Marcus that the labyrinth is "one of Dickens's favourite symbols of the modern city"⁹ and must be "the most typically Dickensian

image."¹⁰ Dickens's applications of the image, which indicate his responses to the nineteenth-century urban experience, are illustrated in his early fiction. Certain novels up to and including Bleak House set the patterns upon which the later fiction is built. Oliver Twist, Barnaby Rudge, and Bleak House show the movement into the city; while there are gestures of retreat and escape, the central event of these novels is a confrontation of forces within the urban maze. The protagonists are drawn into the city to undergo trials which will reveal identity and status. The Old Curiosity Shop shows the movement away from the city and the attempt to escape into an ideal pastoral world. However, this attempt brings only death, which is a sure escape for Nell from the terrors of the urban maze but not a viable alternative for the rest of the characters.

In all of these novels, the city-labyrinth is the home of evil. Fagin and Monks, Daniel Quilp, and Sir John Chester all dwell in London and spin their plots from that location. In the later novels the human villains are abstracted into corrupt social systems, the Court of Chancery and the Circumlocution Office. These institutions are centred in London, but, like their human counterparts, are able to reach out into the country. The attempts to escape their control are therefore futile.

As Robert Barnard points out, the image of the city-maze suggests confusion and loss:

The minute and frequent descriptions of mazes of streets are supplemented by metaphorical descriptions of characters who are lost in

mazes, people to whom life presents itself as an inescapable labyrinth. What was a matter of observation has become part of his personal outlook on the world. 11

Barnard is referring to Little Dorrit in this passage, but the statement is relevant to the earlier novels: In fact, the image as part of Dickens's "personal outlook on the world" is established well before Little Dorrit. In order to demonstrate this point, this part of the chapter will examine the use of the labyrinth as a setting and the theme of ritual initiation in Oliver Twist, Barnaby Rudge, The Old Curiosity Shop, and Bleak House.

Oliver Twist marks Dickens's first full-length attempt in fiction to deal with the confusion and alienation of the city. Mr. Pickwick, confronted with misery in the prison, retreats from it:

"I have seen enough," said Mr. Pickwick, as he threw himself into a chair in his little apartment. "My head aches with these scenes, and my heart too. Henceforth, I will be a prisoner in my own room." 12

Oliver, in contrast, is thrown bodily by his creator into the heart of the city and sees, at close range, its attendant ills. Oliver is placed in far greater danger because of his situation. Corruption is never a real threat to Pickwick; he is merely discomfited and shaken by his stay in prison, but he has the buffer of his money to protect him. The danger which looms over Oliver is intensified because he is a child and therefore unaccustomed to the ways of the world.

At least one critic has commented on the apparently invincible purity of Oliver's grammar and morality: "Oliver can no more be contaminated by the surrounding filth than the Lady in Comus. If he got even physically smudged, we are not told."¹³ Those who argue that Dickens was unaware of what he was doing with Oliver ignore the patently allegorical significance that Dickens places on his titular character. In the preface to the third edition, Dickens states that he "wished to show in Oliver the principle of Good surviving through every adverse circumstance and triumphing at last."¹⁴ Although Oliver remains morally intact, his awareness of good and evil is sharpened by initiation in the urban maze. While he loses his direction, he is not confused about the nature of the city itself. Entering London with the Artful Dodger, Oliver is conscious that a "dirtier or more wretched place he had never seen" (p. 49). He even considers running away from his guide when he is abruptly brought into Fagin's lair. Fagin's benevolence and his own curiosity blind Oliver to the true nature of the "work" which Fagin and his boys do. The meaning of Fagin's playful rituals becomes clear only when Oliver sees them practised in reality:

In an instant the whole mystery of the handkerchiefs, and the watches, and the jewels, and the Jew, rushed upon the boy's mind. He stood, for a moment, with the blood so tingling through all his veins from terror that he felt as if he were in a burning fire; then confused and frightened, he took to his heels; and, not knowing what he did, made off as fast as he could lay his feet to the ground. (p. 58)

The horror of Oliver's situation lies in his helplessness and in the fact that he recognizes this condition himself. Through his experience in the labyrinthine city, Oliver learns at first hand how corruption can threaten the individual. One of his major fears when he has recovered his health at Mr. Brownlow's house is that he will be turned "out of doors to wander in the streets again" (p. 85). He realizes how vulnerable the innocent and the unprotected are within the confines of the urban maze. Oliver discovers, as well, how easy it is to be contaminated without a hope of redemption. The thought that Brownlow believes him to be a thief, however mistaken the belief, is "almost more than he could bear" (p. 209). Oliver manages to survive his initiation into evil because, as a result of his quasi-allegorical status, he has qualities of almost heroic proportions. Rose Maylie describes him: "He is a child of a noble nature and a warm heart . . . and that Power which has thought fit to try him, beyond his years, has planted in his breast affections and feelings which would do honour to many who have numbered his days six times over" (p. 278). Just as essential to his survival are such characters as Nancy and Mr. Brownlow, who do their best to protect him from the worst aspects of life.

Two critics, Miller and Schwarzbach, have written, if not comprehensively, then at least significantly, on the image of the labyrinth in Oliver Twist. Both men investigate the function of the maze as a symbolic setting. Miller writes in Charles Dickens: The World of his Novels:

"At the deepest imaginative level the London of Oliver Twist is no longer realistic description of the insanitary London of the thirties but is the dream or poetic symbol of an infernal labyrinth, inhabited by the devil himself . . ." ¹⁵ Miller's consideration of the image stresses the psychological impact upon the characters of life within the maze. He comments,

Until the very end of the novel all the characters are living in the midst of experiences which have the total opacity of the present and cannot yet be seen in retrospect as having the logical structure of a destiny . . . The exterior scene is exactly matched by the state of mind of the inhabitants of this world of bewildering uncertainty and unpredictable change. ¹⁶

Schwarzbach examines the thematic importance of London and provides a more detailed supplement to Miller's argument. At one point he states, "This word, 'labyrinth,' occurs with almost obsessive frequency in the novel, along with related words like 'maze.' It is used like a talisman to evoke the labyrinthine London throughout Oliver Twist." ¹⁷ There seems to be some discrepancy here. Hornback's "Concordance for Dickens's Mythology" cites only two uses of the word "maze" in the novel and none of "labyrinth." As well, one of the two references is attributed to the wrong character. ¹⁸ The two words do, in fact, appear more often than Hornback's list shows, but hardly with the "obsessive frequency" that Schwarzbach claims.

His impression was probably caused by the descriptions of London in consistently labyrinthine terms. Nancy, after

she has been to the police office, returns "by the most devious and complicated route she could think of, to the domicile of the Jew" (p. 81). The progress of Fagin through the city is presented in this same way:

He kept on his course, through many winding and narrow ways, until he reached Bethnal Green; then, turning suddenly off to the left, he soon became involved in a maze of the mean and dirty streets which abound in that close and densely populated quarter. (p. 121)

Seeking the Inn of the Three Cripples, Noah Claypole is "soon deep in the obscurity of the intricate and dirty ways which, lying between Gray's Inn Lane and Smithfield, render that part of the town one of the lowest and worst that improvement has left in the midst of London" (p. 286). Noah is later taken by Charley Bates to see the Artful Dodger in Bow Street and they travel "through dark and winding ways" (p. 297). Many of the locales mirror the labyrinthine nature of the streets. The place where the Bumbles meet Monks is depicted in the following passage:

It was a collection of mere hovels--some hastily built with loose bricks, others, of old worm-eaten ship timber--jumbled together without any attempt at order or arrangement, and planted, for the most part, within a few feet of the river's bank . . . In the heart of this cluster of huts, and skirting the river, which its upper stories overhung, stood a large building formerly used as a manufactory of some kind. . . . (p. 249)

It is within the inner room of this structure that the proofs of Oliver's identity are revealed and then destroyed. As these examples indicate, the novel is

permeated by language and imagery which evoke the twisting paths of the maze.

The interpretation of Miller and Schwarzbach harmonizes well with my view of the use of the maze in nineteenth-century fiction; however, their analyses can be usefully extended. Both Schwarzbach and Miller discuss the passage in which Oliver, under the guidance of the Artful Dodger, enters London and is trapped in the urban maze.¹⁹ If it is the Artful Dodger who gets him into the city, it is Nancy who helps to get him out. Neither critic, however, gives sufficient weight to Nancy's role as rescuer. It is she who, in mythic terms, must act the role of Ariadne and provide the means of escape from the labyrinth. In this role, Nancy becomes the forerunner of such characters as Gabriel Varden and Esther Summerson who, through their active virtue, attempt to oppose the evil of the urban maze and to rescue those trapped inside it.

Right from the beginning of their relationship, Dickens develops a sense of kinship between Oliver and Nancy. She defends him bodily from ill treatment by Fagin and Sikes and repents of her part in bringing him back to the gang. Their closeness is emphasized by a kind of mutual comprehension. On his return to Fagin, Oliver thinks of escape and of whether Nancy will help him:

Neither his brief consideration, nor its purport, was lost on his companion. She eyed him narrowly, while he spoke; and cast upon him a look of intelligence which sufficiently showed that she guessed what had been passing in his thoughts.

"Hush," said the girl, stooping over him, and pointing to the door as she looked cautiously around. "You can't help yourself. I have tried hard for you, but all to no purpose. You are hedged round and round. If ever you are to get loose from here, this is not the time." (p. 131)

Clearly there is something in Oliver which troubles Nancy deeply. She later tells Fagin, "I can't bear to have him [Oliver] about me. The sight of him turns me against myself, and all of you" (p. 166). She realizes the danger, both physical and moral, which threatens Oliver if he stays with Fagin. While Oliver is virtuous, he is also largely passive and requires an agent like Nancy to help him.

Although fully aware of the world of evil in which she dwells, Nancy cannot divorce herself from it or from Sikes. Both Rose Maylie and Mr. Brownlow promise Nancy shelter away from reprisals, but she cannot accept their offer, though she confesses that "it would be something not to die in the same hell in which I have lived" (p. 275). While she believes that it is too late to reform herself, Nancy decides to save Oliver from a similar life. There is a group of characters, including Mr. Brownlow, the Maylies, Dr. Losberne, and Grimwig, dedicated to solving the mystery of Oliver's birth, but they need the "inside help" of Nancy to bring their search to a successful conclusion. It is she who, in effect, becomes a detective in order to aid Oliver. She follows various characters, listens in on the conversations of Monks and Fagin and of Monks and the Bumbles, and collects the evidence. It is significant that

it is Nancy who, by coming to Rose Maylie with the information about Oliver, initiates the process which unravels the mystery. The presence of Rose Maylie's handkerchief in Nancy's hand when she is struck down by Sikes suggests symbolically that her heroism on behalf of Oliver has redeemed her. Mr. Brownlow implies this idea himself when, confronting Monks with the truth, he speaks of Nancy's efforts. He says, "Shadows on the wall have caught your whispers and brought them to my ear; the sight of the persecuted child has turned vice itself, and given it the courage and almost the attributes of virtue" (p. 336).


Nancy can negotiate the pathways of the maze and make sense of the mystery because she belongs to the corrupt group which inhabits it. By her own admission she is a degraded product of the city. She tells Rose Maylie, "I am the infamous creature you have heard of, that lives among the thieves, and that never from the first moment I can recollect my eyes and senses opening on London streets have known any better life or kinder words than they have given me, so help me God" (p. 271). Evil characters like Sikes, Fagin, and Monks, and corrupt ones like Nancy, the Bumbles, and the boys, travel easily through the labyrinth because it is their element. In this connection, the city is a moral landscape, reflecting the devious nature of its occupants. Here Fagin is seen on a typical prowl through the streets:

The Jew was evidently too familiar with the ground he traversed, to be at all bewildered,

either by the darkness of the night, or the intricacies of the way. He hurried through several alleys and streets; and at length turned into one lighted only by a single lamp at the further end. (p. 121)

Nancy herself, until her last journey to London Bridge, is able to elude those who would follow her. She explains to Rose about her eavesdropping on Monks and Fagin:

"He [Monks] caught sight of my shadow on the wall as I listened, in the hope of finding out," said the girl; "and there are not many people besides me that could have got out of their way in time to escape discovery. But I did, and I saw him no more till last night." (p. 272)



Oliver, in contrast, becomes a prisoner in the maze because he is unable to find his own way out. When he is out on his first "job" with the Dodger and Charley Bates, Oliver is mistaken for a thief, chased, and captured by the mob. Charley and the Artful Dodger, as regular inhabitants of the labyrinth, know its ways and are able to escape: "It was not until the two boys had scoured with great rapidity through a most intricate maze of narrow streets and courts, that they ventured to halt beneath a low and dark archway" (p. 74). Later, Oliver is recaptured for Fagin by Nancy and Sikes when he is sent to the bookseller by Mr. Brownlow. Oliver is vulnerable because he has taken a wrong turning in the maze:

When he got into Clerkenwell, he accidentally turned down a by-street which was not exactly in his way; but not discovering his mistake until he had got half-way down it, and knowing it must lead in the right direction, he did not think it worth his while to turn back; and

so marched on, as quickly as he could, with the books under his arm. (p. 95)

Unfortunately for Oliver, this street does not lead "in the right direction"; it brings him directly to Nancy and Bill. Evil comes out of the darkness and engulfs him: "In another moment he was dragged into a labyrinth of dark, narrow courts and was forced along them at a pace which rendered the few cries he dared to give utterance to, unintelligible" (p. 97). As Miller says, it is fatally easy for virtuous characters to go astray in London.²⁰

Monks, the true force behind the conspiracy, uses the urban maze and its denizens to his advantage in much the same way that the earlier villains of the Gothic novels, some of whom were monks, used their castles to frighten and to destroy virtue. Nancy overhears Monks swear that he will follow Oliver and that he will "be upon the watch to meet him at every turn in life" (p. 272). The urban maze furnishes the resources through which Oliver can be corrupted and lose his inheritance.⁴ Mr. Brownlow speaks humorously of Oliver's possible worry about "some dark conspiracy to thrust him forth upon the world" (p. 283), but his words are exactly apposite to what Oliver's half-brother intends. In this novel, the maze of London "belongs" to the evil and the corrupt, but no one is credited with its creation. Later, as Dickens becomes more interested in social questions, he investigates the maze-makers and tries to discover who is responsible for the labyrinthine nature of the city.

The focus in Oliver Twist is on the immediate danger which the urban maze poses to characters like Oliver who, all unaware, wander into it. Writing in one of the prefaces, Dickens emphasizes the need to clean up Jacob's Island, a principal setting in the novel, and his conviction that

nothing effectual can be done for the elevation of the poor in England, until their dwelling-places are made decent and wholesome. I have always been convinced that this reform must precede all other Social Reforms; that it must prepare the way for Education, even for Religion; and that, without it, those classes of the people which increase the fastest, must become so desperate, and be made so miserable, as to bear within themselves the certain seeds of ruin to the whole community. (p. 382)

For Dickens, these "certain seeds of ruin" are the menace which is waiting inside the urban labyrinth, like the Minotaur in the Theseus legend. In several subsequent novels, Dickens will develop this idea and will demonstrate what transpires when this evil spreads out to affect a larger area. While the point is not followed up in Oliver Twist, there are embryonic hints of the capability of evil to spill out of the city and into the surrounding countryside. It is Sikes, after all, who takes Oliver to the Maylie cottage in order to rob it. Later, as well, when Oliver is convalescing with the Maylies, he wakes up from a nap to find Fagin and Monks staring in at him. Evil, while at home in the city-maze, is, unlike virtue, not trapped there; it has the power to travel wherever it wants.

In The Old Curiosity Shop, Dickens explores in more

detail the implications and influence of the urban maze. Unlike Oliver Twist, which illustrates a progress into the city, this novel begins inside the labyrinth where it is simple, not just for strangers, but also for inhabitants to become confused about direction. When Master Humphréy first meets Nell, it is night and she has lost her way. Wishing to detain her and to find out more about her, he guides her back by "the most intricate" way and therefore, as he tells us, "it was not until we arrived in the street itself that she knew where we were."²¹ Writing about Oliver Twist, Miller says, "Movement in the Dickensian labyrinth is always inward and downward toward the center, and never outward toward freedom."²² The story of Nell, however, reverses the pattern of Oliver Twist and charts an attempt, albeit an unsuccessful one, to achieve freedom by fleeing from the city. Nell and her grandfather retreat into the countryside from a place inside the urban labyrinth in an effort to escape its baleful influence.

The primary motive for the Trents' disappearance from London is the dwarf Quilp. In an introduction to the novel, Malcolm Andrews equates Quilp with the city: "Quilp, for example, is in many ways a microcosm of Dickens's London, the city whose ferocious and destructive energy is at once repulsive and fascinating, and whose individual features become grotesquely disproportionate when assembled to make a whole entity."²³ The dwarf operates like the city itself and, like the labyrinthine institutions of the later fiction, he has connections everywhere:

Mr. Quilp could scarcely be said to be of any particular trade or calling, though his pursuits were diversified and his occupations numerous. He collected the rents of whole colonies of filthy streets and alleys by the waterside, advanced money to the seamen and petty officers of merchant vessels, had a share in the ventures of divers mates of East Indiamen, smoked his smuggled cigars under the very nose of the Custom House, and made appointments on 'Change with men in glazed hats and round jackets pretty well every day. (p. 73)

Like Monks in Oliver Twist, Quilp is a powerful manipulator who can utilize the corrupt forces of the city for his own profit. Mr. Chuckster may have "a conviction of the mental superiority of those who dwelt in town" (p. 385), but the novel shows, through the machinations of Quilp, that this intelligence is being used in the city for morally suspect purposes. This perversion of intelligence to serve self-interest is emphasized symbolically by the repulsive and inhuman nature of those in positions of power. The central mysteries of The Old Curiosity Shop, the plot against the Trents, that against Kit, and the identity of the Marchioness, are presided over by the metaphorical "monsters," Quilp and the Brasses. The dwarf is, in fact, called a "little monster" by Kit Nubbles (p. 455), while Sally Brass is variously referred to as "a dragon," "something in the mermaid way" (p. 349), and "a griffin or other fabulous monster" (p. 546). Through the Brasses, Quilp is able to subvert justice temporarily in order to dispose of Kit. He and the other good characters are easily misled and thwarted by the "monstrous" intriguers until the truth comes "providentially" to light through

the Marchioness who, like a comic version of Ariadne, presents the clue which releases Kit from prison.

For those who live in the city, there is little comfort provided through social agencies or organized religion. Little Bethel, the only religious establishment in London that is described, is hidden away in the maze and difficult to find:

Little Bethel might have been nearer, and might have been in a straighter road, though in that case the reverend gentlemen who presided over its congregation, would have lost his favourite allusion to the crooked ways by which it was reached, and which enabled him to liken it to Paradise, in contradistinction to the parish church and the broad thoroughfare leading thereunto. (p. 389)

This is a fairly unlikely version of Paradise, seeing that the preacher is confused about the true nature of good and evil. When Kit goes there to collect his mother and the family, he is called "Satan" and "a wolf in the night season" (p. 392); although Quilp, for whom the terms are more appropriate, is sitting in the chapel. In its concealed location and confusion of spiritual and material values, Little Bethel becomes a parody of the traditional church maze, or Chemin de Jérusalem, which symbolized the true way to salvation. Little Bethel is another example of how the institutions of the city become perverted from their original nature. It seems only appropriate that Quilp should be found here as well and be accepted without reservation as a member of the congregation.

Where Monks in Oliver Twist recalls the villain of stage melodrama of Gothic romance, Quilp is defined in terms.

of the satanic; he is a comic and vital devil, perhaps, but he is a devil nonetheless. To more people than Mrs. Nubbles, he represents the "Evil Power" (p. 454); Dick Swiveller calls him "an evil spirit" (p. 239) and Samson Brass imagines Quilp drinking and "making himself more fiery and furious, and heating his malice and mischievousness till they boil" (pp. 562-3). The dwarf is able to move with almost supernatural ease quickly and suddenly through the city and, as a result, has "an amazing power of taking people by surprise" (p. 460). When his body is found, after his death, he is "buried with a stake through his heart in the centre of four lonely roads" (p. 665), which is the traditional burial of the suicide and the vampire. With associative imagery and his characteristic boast, "I hate your virtuous people" (p. 453), Quilp is clearly the "evil genius" (p. 619), not just of the Trents, but of the city itself. He is the monster in the maze which destroys, or attempts to destroy, all who venture near it.

As a landlord and a businessman, Quilp is one of those responsible for the state of urban life and thus for the "condition of England." The journey of the Trents reveals how little difference there is ultimately between life inside the urban labyrinth and life "outside" it. The corrupt values of the city, self-interest and greed, which are fostered by men of business like Quilp, are present everywhere. The call for reform, directed at "those who rule the destinies of nations," is necessary because of

Quilp and those like him:

If they would but think how hard it is for the very poor to have engendered in their hearts that love of home from which all domestic virtues spring, when they live in dense and squalid masses where social decency is lost, or rather never found,--if they would but turn aside from the wide thoroughfares and great houses, and strive to improve the wretched dwellings in bye-ways where only Poverty may walk,--many low roofs would point more truly to the sky, than the loftiest steeple that now rears proudly up from the midst of guilt, and crime, and horrible disease, to mock them by its contrast. (p. 363)

Seen in this light, Quilp becomes the enemy, not simply of Nell, but of the moral health of the entire country.

Although the labyrinthine city is his particular habitat, Quilp finally becomes a victim of its confusion himself. When his villainy is uncovered, the dwarf believes that he is safe in his riverside retreat. It is a foggy night and, as he says, "A man need know his road well, to find it in this lovely place to-night" (p. 618). The fog offers an illusory protection to Quilp at the same time that it proves to be his undoing. Despite his confidence that he knows the way, Quilp loses his direction because of the fog, falls into the river, and drowns. By disposing of Quilp in this manner, Dickens suggests that even the evil characters, who have used the city-maze to bewilder their enemies, are eventually trapped and destroyed by it themselves.

To run from Quilp is to run from the sinister side of urban life.²⁴ The city, even more than in Oliver Twist, is overtly identified as a source of insecurity and apprehension:

He [Grandfather Trent] pressed his finger to his lip, and drew the child along by narrow courts and winding ways, nor did he seem at ease until they had left it far behind, often casting a backward look towards it, murmuring that ruin and self-murder were crouching in every street, and would follow if they scented them; and that they could not fly too fast. (p. 172)

Many of the characters, including Nell, believe the city-maze to be a storehouse of crimes and secrets. When Nell tries to find a motive for her grandfather's nightly absence from home, she thinks of "all the strange tales" that she knows of "dark and secret deeds committed in great towns and escaping detection for a long series of years" (p. 55). Dick Swiveller notes that there are "Nothing but mysteries in connexion with Brass's house" (p. 371).

Through his characters, Dickens begins to consider the psychological damage which urban men suffer because of the insecurity and uncertainty of city life. He shows that a prolonged contemplation of life in the maze brings on thoughts of loneliness and death. This point is made at the very beginning of the novel during Master Humphrey's opening discussion as he takes his night walk. His description of the sounds of the city creates a sense of entrapment within a confined space: "That constant pacing to and fro, that never-ending restlessness, that incessant tread of feet wearing the rough stones smooth and glossy-- is it not a wonder how the dwellers in narrow ways can bear to hear it!" (p. 43). He goes on to imagine an invalid forced to listen to the "stream of life that will not stop, pouring on, on, on, through all his restless dreams, as if

he were condemned to lie dead but conscious, in a noisy churchyard, and had no hope of rest for centuries to come" (p. 43). Similar thoughts come to Nell during her evening meditation at the window of the shop. As Dickens says, "None are so anxious as those who watch and wait, and at these times, mournful fancies came flocking on her mind, in crowds" (p. 120). Her watching of the city forces Nell to think about her own situation and starts up "a new train of fears and speculations" (p. 120). These pressures build up in Nell until she is willing to go anywhere and do anything, except stay in the city. She tells her grandfather, "Let us never set foot in dark rooms or melancholy houses any more, but wander up and down wherever we like to go, and when you are tired, you shall stop to rest in the pleasantest place that we can find and I will go and beg for both" (p. 124).

The flight from "the labyrinth of men's abodes" (p. 171) is ultimately a failure because Nell and Trent never really get away from the influence of the labyrinth. The mistake that Nell and her grandfather make is to assume that the vices which Quilp represents are to be found only in the city. All of the elements from which they try to escape return to intimidate them on their journey. There are continual reminders of the corrupt and mercenary city. Codlin and Short, who are encountered in a graveyard, help Nell and her grandfather, but are guided by the idea of a reward for betraying them to their pursuers. The other showpeople, Mr. Vuffin, Jerry and his "four very dismal

dogs" (p. 200), seem to be absorbed in the business aspect of their profession and get remarkably little pleasure out of it. At the racecourse, Nell, selling bunches of flowers, meets with no success and little kindness except from one woman whose "status" is readily apparent:

She motioned away a gipsy-woman urgent to tell her fortune, saying that it was told already and had been for some years, but called the child towards her, and taking her flowers put money into her trembling hand, and bade her go home and keep at home for God's sake. (p. 214)

The lack of compassion in the rest of the people at the races is mirrored later in the intolerant Miss Monflathers and in the waxwork figures of Mrs. Jarley which have a "constantly unchanging air of coldness and gentility" that is "so like life" (p. 272). One of the figures, "Jasper Packlemerton of atrocious memory" (p. 283) who was a wife-murderer, would seem to be a deliberate reminder of Quilp in his role as a perverse sexual tyrant. While she works for Mrs. Jarley, Nell sleeps in the room with the figures which frighten her; she "would often lie watching their dusky figures until she was obliged to rise and light a candle, or go and sit at the open window and feel a companionship in the bright stars" (p. 289). This experience repeats Nell's life at the shop, her sitting at the window, and her fears at night there.

Whatever her surroundings, Nell confronts reflections and parodies of the life in the urban labyrinth which she has tried to put behind her. Her grandfather, instead of

being revived by the "purer" countryside, is transformed by his greed into another man entirely and steals from her. He becomes "a monstrous distortion of his image, a something to recoil from, and be the more afraid of, because it bore a likeness to him, and kept close about her, as he did" (p. 303). Quilp himself reappears when he is least expected by Nell. Until she reaches the country village, she is never free from her fears of the dwarf; he is "a perpetual nightmare to the child, who was constantly haunted by a vision of his ugly face and stunted figure" (p. 288).

The nadir of the journey is reached when, in the company of the violent and drunken bargees, the Trents come to the manufacturing town. They are conducted through "dark and narrow ways" (p. 417) into the shelter of a factory. The landscape of the town is suggestive of Hell:

On mounds of ashes by the wayside, sheltered only by a few rough boards, or rotten pent-house roofs, strange machines spun and writhed like tortured creatures; clanking their iron chains, shrieking in their rapid whirl from time to time as though in torment unendurable, and making the ground tremble with their agonies. (p. 424)

A further description of this setting, like Master Humphrey's account of the noises of London, instills in the reader a sense of labyrinthine entrapment:

and still, before, behind, and to the right and left, was the same interminable perspective of brick towers, never ceasing in their black

vomit, blasting all things living or inanimate, shutting out the face of day, and closing in on all these horrors with a dense dark cloud. (p. 424)

The manufacturing town is an even more threatening and horrific reflection of the city from which the Trents have fled. Instead of reaching a safe haven in the country, the Trents, through their directionless wandering, have, in a sense, wound up where they started, except that the urban maze is now unmistakably Hell. When Nell inquires about the road out of this place, she is told that it "lies too, through miles and miles, all lighted up by fires like ours--a strange black road, and one that would frighten you by night" (p. 421). Because this episode has the symbolic overtones of a passage through Hell to another world, it is not surprising that it is shortly after their departure from the industrial town that they come to the village where Nell dies.

That Nell's death is inevitable is indicated by her recreation of the pattern of her mother's life. Mother and daughter are linked by a devotion to their family, an uncomplaining spirit, and an early death brought on by hard work and suffering. The pattern extends back in time to include Nell's grandmother whose life was repeated by her daughter, Nell's mother. Nell, according to the narrator, "seems to exist in a kind of allegory" (p. 56). This statement is true in that Nell as a character represents a kind of innocence, "the only pure, fresh, youthful object in the throng" (p. 56), that is short-lived in the Victorian

maze-world. Nell's virtue is like that of Oliver Twist, causing the schoolmaster to ask, "Has this child heroically persevered under all doubts and dangers, struggled with poverty and suffering, upheld and sustained by strong affection and the consciousness of rectitude alone!" (p. 435). Early in the novel, Master Humphrey laments "the initiation of children into the ways of life, when they are scarcely more than infants" (p. 48). Nell, unlike the characters who remain in the city, is unable to survive the initiatory experience which her passage through the "dark and troubled ways" of the world entails (p. 493). Dickens's response to what Nell represents is ambiguous; she is idealized at the same time that she is destroyed. Nell's innocence is too good for this world, yet Kit and his family, the Garlands, Dick Swiveller, and the Marchioness all manage to survive without compromising themselves or going to the bad. They also undergo trials and adversity but they triumph in the end. The forces of corruption must be faced down and overcome directly on their own ground, not avoided. To run away is ultimately an inadequate response to the urban labyrinth.²⁵

Although goodness succeeds and the villains are routed at the end of the novel, the city is not entirely purged of evil. After Brass is released from prison, he and Sally take refuge in the urban maze as beggars:

These forms were never beheld but in those nights of cold and gloom, when the terrible spectres, who lie at all other times in the obscene hiding-places of London, in archways,

dark vaults and cellars, venture to creep into the streets; the embodied spirits of Disease, and Vice, and Famine. (p. 665)

This comment, which depicts the Brasses and the poor like a nineteenth-century version of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, indicates that certain problems remain. The premature "initiation of children into the ways of life" remains a persistent, though regrettable, condition of the urban experience. Nell, Kit, and the Marchioness are all examples of this circumstance in the novel, as are Fagin's boys in Oliver Twist, Charley and Bart and Judy Smallweed in Bleak House, Amy Dorrit, and Jenny Wren in Our Mutual Friend. While most of these children are redeemed, either through their own efforts or the work of others, not all are so fortunate; some, like Nell and Jo, die and others, like the Smallweeds, become hardened and mercenary before they even become adults. Nell, on her way through the industrial town, is a witness to the indifference of the authorities to the plight of a woman whose son was transported for theft. The woman exclaims against the lack of proper teaching which keeps many in a state of ignorance about the basic difference between right and wrong:

How many of the girls and boys--ah, men and women too--that are brought before you, and you don't pity, are deaf and dumb in their minds, and go wrong in that state, and are punished in that state, body and soul, while you gentlemen are quarrelling among yourselves whether they ought to learn this or that.
(p. 428)

By destroying the innocence of the young without providing

the proper moral guidance, the authorities only guarantee the perpetuation of current crimes and abuses. The "seeds of ruin" are clearly growing within the urban labyrinth, but the story of Nell's journey reveals that even outside the city their influence has begun to be felt.

The association that Dickens makes in The Old Curiosity Shop between the urban labyrinth and a presiding satanic force, exemplified by Quilp, is elaborated in Barnaby Rudge. The maze of London does not simply contain a devil; it becomes a form of Hell itself. The suggestions of an infernal world which underscore the descriptions of the manufacturing town in The Old Curiosity Shop are now transferred to London and developed in more detail. The maze has always been interpreted as a type for Hell, but in Barnaby Rudge this connection is made overt by the imagery with which Dickens describes the Gordon Riots.

The city is first described when Gabriel Varden rides home from the Maypole:

And, now, he approached the great city, which lay outstretched before him like a dark shadow on the ground, reddening the sluggish air with a deep dull light, that told of labyrinths of public ways and shops, and swarms of busy people. 26

As the locksmith comes closer, the various elements of the city become clearer:

Then, sounds arose--the striking of church clocks, the distant bark of dogs, the hum of traffic in the streets; then outlines might be traced--tall steeples looming in the air, and piles of unequal roofs oppressed by chimneys; then, the noise swelled into a

louder sound, and forms grew more distinct and numerous still, and London--visible in the darkness by its own faint light, and not by that of Heaven--was at hand. (p. 26)

The ominous undertones of this passage, the sinister nature of the city and its separation from Heaven, will be intensified as the novel advances until London is fully revealed as the infernal labyrinth. A feature which contributes to the forbidding aura of the city is, because the novel is set in the eighteenth century, the lack of proper street-lamps. The streets are "one and all, from the broadest and best to the narrowest and least frequented, very dark" (p. 122). As a result, they are predictably dangerous:

Thus, in the lightest thoroughfares, there was at every turn some obscure and dangerous spot whither a thief might fly or shelter, and few would care to follow, and the city being belted round by fields, green lanes, waste grounds, and lonely roads, dividing it at that time from the suburbs, that have joined it since, escape, even when the pursuit was hot, was rendered easy: (p. 122)

The fugitive murderer Rudge makes use of the city-maze as a place of concealment. He goes "into the backways, lanes, and courts, between Cornhill and Smithfield; with no more fixedness of purpose than to lose himself among their windings, and baffle pursuit, if anyone were dogging his steps" (p. 138): Like the devious characters of Oliver Twist and The Old Curiosity Shop, Rudge betrays his corrupt nature by the dexterity with which he negotiates the ways of the labyrinth. Dickens illustrates Rudge's

venality with his account of Rudge riding into London: "At every turn and angle, even where a deviation from the direct course might have been least expected, and could not possibly be seen until he was close upon it, he guided the bridle with an unerring hand, and kept the middle of the road" (p. 17). While it is in the latter half of the novel that Dickens charts the progress of the riots, the earlier half has prepared the way by these early indications of crime hidden in the labyrinthine city.

Unlike Oliver Twist in which the urban maze is the domain of vice and the good live on its outskirts, Barnaby Rudge shows that the city can contain pockets of goodness.²⁷ In this respect, the London of Barnaby Rudge reflects Mayhew's view of the city as a combination of many different qualities rather than as completely corrupt. Dickens emphasizes this point by the introduction of two characters, Gabriel Varden and Sir John Chester, who both reside in the city.

Towards the conclusion of the novel, there is a passage which reveals the symbolic function of the locksmith: "there sat the locksmith among all and every these delights, the sun that shone upon them all: the centre of the system: the source of light, heat, life, and frank enjoyment in the bright household world" (p. 612). Varden represents the Dickensian virtues of benevolence and good will; he is the moral and ethical heart of the novel's world. Earlier he has been described in similar terms, in relieving the doubts of Haredale about the honesty of Mrs. Rudge: "If

the dark little parlour had been filled with a dense fog, which, clearing away in an instant, left it all radiance and brightness, it could not have been more suddenly cheered than by this outbreak on the part of the hearty locksmith" (p. 199). This emblematic role is supported by the fact that Varden's shop and home are located in a clean and well-kept part of the city, in close proximity to the countryside. The name of the shop, the Golden Key, is symbolically apt because Varden acts, along with Haredale, as a detective and attempts to solve the mysteries of the plot. He becomes another version of Ariadne as he metaphorically "unlocks" the secrets of the past in much the same fashion as do Nancy, the Marchioness, and Esther, who in Bleak House is similarly equipped with a symbolic bunch of keys. He searches for Mrs. Rudge and Barnaby when they disappear and he reveals the relationship of Chester and Hugh in a bid to save Hugh from the gallows.

Varden's power to work for good is nevertheless severely restricted. Dickens seems to suggest that, although good and evil may co-exist in the city, it is difficult, if not impossible, for one or two virtuous men to influence a corrupt majority. Varden, for example, is unable to establish a proper relationship with either Sim Tappertit or Miggs. In a comparable manner, his appeal to Chester for Hugh is powerful, but finally unsuccessful. While he defies the rioters and will not help them open Newgate, he also cannot stop them. In outlining the impotence of virtue in the face of large-scale corruption,

Dickens presents a theme upon which he will expand in his "social novels" where the individual is confronted by a powerful, but perverse corporation or social structure.

If Gabriel Varden is characterized as bluff and honest, then Sir John Chester is the embodiment of guile and hypocrisy. Chester is the "smooth man of the world" (p. 91) whose calm and gentlemanly façade cloaks selfishness. As the character who most fully opposes the altruistic locksmith, Chester refuses to admit that anyone has a claim upon him. His "creed" is flatly unsentimental, as he tells his son Edward, when that young man wishes to speak to him "from the heart": "Don't you know that the heart is an ingenious part of our formation--the centre of the blood-vessels and all that sort of thing--which has no more to do with what you say or think than your knees have?" (p. 243). The cold brutality of this image is paralleled by that which describes the city of London, "this iron-hearted town" (p. 141). Although London contains the goodness of Gabriel Varden, the self-interest and intolerance that spark the riots reveal that it has more in common with the opinions of Chester.

Through his charm and art of accommodation, Chester is able to gain control over the various people he needs for his schemes. Hugh, Sim, and Mrs. Varden are made his accomplices in his design to stop the love-affair of his son and Emma Haredale. Only certain people, primarily Haredale and Varden, are ultimately able to discern the surreptitious course of his intrigue. Chester's viciousness

in his final encounter with Haredale reveals him to be the central fabricator of mischief. Haredale tells him,

To you I traced the insinuation that I alone reaped any harvest from my brother's death; and all the foul attacks and whispered calumnies that followed in its train. In every action of my life, from that first hope which you converted into grief and desolation, you have stood, like an adverse fate, between me and peace. In all you have ever been the same cold-blooded, hollow, false, unworthy villain. (p. 626)

If Gabriel Varden is a type of Ariadne or redemptive guide figure, then Chester is a perverse kind of Daedalus who uses his intelligence and craft for untoward purposes.

It is said significantly of Chester that he has "the head and heart of an evil spirit in all matters of deception" (p. 94). This image illustrates the connection between Chester and the powers of destruction and chaos because in the novel evil is consistently figured in terms of the demonic. Rudge invokes the devil when he warns his wife against betraying him to the law. He says, "I will not hurt you. But I will not be taken alive; and so surely as you threaten me above your breath, I fall a dead man on this floor. The blood with which I sprinkle it, be on you and yours, in the name of the Evil Spirit that tempts men to their ruin!" (p. 129). The riots are also seen as satanic work. Looking at the guarantee of protection from Lord Gordon, Gabriel Varden wonders, "What devil is abroad?" (p. 392). The sergeant at the jail where Barnaby is taken, speaking of the riots, echoes this idea when he says, "The devil's loose in London somewhere" (pp. 445-6). The

burning of the prison-doors, after Varden refuses to open Newgate to the rioters, becomes an "infernal christening" (p. 491). When the mob attacks and sets fire to the Warren, the demonic association is plainly manifested: "The more the fire crackled and raged, the wilder and more cruel the men grew; as though moving in that element they became fiends, and changed their earthly nature for the qualities that give delight in hell" (p. 422). The linking of Chester with the rioters through the imagery is pertinent because in at least one instance, the destruction of the Warren, the mob acts as an extension of the man. Chester uses Gashford who, in turn, controls Hugh and Dennis who, likewise in turn, command the rioters. Although he remains "behind the scenes" and directs the mob through his agents from a safe distance, Chester is the presiding genius. Like Monks and Quilp, he is a manipulator and, like the latter, is associated with the satanic. While Chester may be a more elegant and civilized devil than the dwarf, he remains nonetheless a devil who uses people and circumstances for his own advantage.

In his article "The Doer and the Deed: Theme and Pattern in Barnaby Rudge," Harold F. Folland discusses the dynamic connections, which at first may appear only coincidental, between different characters and social groups. He writes, "From Barnaby Rudge on, society as seen in Dickens's novels is like a neatly zoned city of apparently separated houses, under which lies a subterranean labyrinth of catacombs through which anyone may touch upon

the life of everyone else."²⁸ Through Dickens's highlighting of various discontented characters, like Sim Tappertit's apprentice-group and Hugh, he shows in the opening of the novel that the mob already exists within the urban maze and requires only the organization of Gashford to integrate its disparate parts. The rioters are later able to use their knowledge of London for protection. Dickens writes, "A mob is usually a creature of very mysterious existence, particularly in a large city. Where it comes from or whither it goes, few men can tell. Assembling and dispersing with equal suddenness, it is as difficult to follow to its various sources as the sea itself . . ." (p. 386). The city, Dickens will continually argue, is an unfortunately advantageous breeding ground for the moral plague which the riots typify. The inhabitants of the city are inevitably drawn to destruction:

The noise, and hurry, and excitement, had for hundreds and hundreds an attraction that they had no firmness to resist. The contagion spread like a dread fever: an infectious madness, as yet not near its height, seized on new victims every hour, and society began to tremble at their ravings. (p. 403)

The impulse to anarchy, plainly, lies close to the surface. The violence of the mob, once stirred up, cannot be held in the city, but seeks further outlets. It spills out into the countryside, invading the "sanctuary, the mystery, the hallowed ground" (p. 414), the bar of the Maypole, and burning down the Warren.

57

It is ironic that the burning of the Warren becomes an almost necessary act of purgation. The fire destroys the symbol of the past which has ruined Haredale's life and quite literally reveals the criminal who is responsible for his brother's death:

Again the ashes slipped and crumbled; some stones rolled down, and fell with a dull, heavy sound upon the ground below. He kept his eyes upon the piece of moonlight. The figure was coming on, for its shadow was already thrown upon the wall. Now it appeared-- and now looked round at him--and now-- (p. 431)

In contrast to the Golden Key and the Maypole, the Warren is left unrestored after the riots because it is beyond redemption. Both Haredale and his house have been tainted by crime and death. He comes to realize that to take to violence in order to enforce "justice," as the rioters think they do, is wrong. Haredale warns, "Let no man turn aside, ever so slightly, from the broad path of honour, on the plausible pretence that he is justified by the goodness of his end. All good ends can be worked out by good means. Those that cannot, are bad; and may be counted so at once, and left alone" (p. 607). His comments serve as a final condemnation of the methods of Chester and Gashford.

The experience of the riots comprises a form of ordeal or ritual initiation. The city during the insurrection becomes an underworld through which Barnaby and the others must pass. It is to this episode that Dickens's increasingly intense use of demonic imagery has been leading. Like Oliver Twist, the Rudgets are drawn back

into the labyrinth by its promise of shelter and money: Barnaby is lured on by Stagg's talk of the gold that is "to be found where people crowded" (p. 360). Similarly, the real consequences of entering the maze are contrary to the anticipated ones. No sooner do they come into the city than they encounter Gashford and Lord Gordon and, in spite of his mother's protests, Barnaby is taken away from her to become a leading figure in the riots. Again like Oliver in Fagin's gang, Barnaby is an innocent in the midst of vice; he is described as "the only light-hearted, undesigning creature, in the whole assembly" (p. 372).

For the moment, Barnaby remains unaware of the true nature of the mob around him. It is only when he returns to London after his imprisonment in Newgate, that he is made to confront the reality of the situation in all its horror. He is forced to think about what is going on: "This flight and pursuit, this cruel burning and destroying, these dreadful cries and stunning noises, were they the good lord's noble cause!" (p. 524). What he sees is an apocalyptic vision of the city "peopled by a legion of devils" (p. 524). The final scene which is presented to Barnaby reinforces the parallel between his journey through the city and the motif of the descent into the nether world. The mob has broken into a vintner's house and, among the flames, is greedily consuming the liquor:

From the burning cellars, where they drank out of hats, pails, buckets, tubs, and shoes, some men were drawn, alive, but all alight from head to foot; who, in their unendurable

anguish and suffering, making for anything that had the look of water, rolled, hissing, in this hideous lake, and splashed up liquid fire which lapped in all it met with as it ran along the surface, and neither spared the living nor the dead. (p. 526)

The total impression of this nightmare is "such a sum of dreariness and ruin, that it seemed as if the face of Heaven were blotted out, and night, in its rest and quiet, and softened light never could look upon the earth again" (p. 585). Barnaby discovers that the city is a labyrinthine Hell.

Because of his mental condition, one cannot say that he is cured by this shock, but it does make him think more carefully:

He had no consciousness, God help him, of having done wrong . . . but he was full of cares now, and regrets, and dismal recollections, and wishes (quite unknown to him before) that this or that event had never happened, and that the sorrow and suffering of so many people had been spared. (pp. 528-29)

From this experience, Barnaby undergoes a form of death and rebirth, in his second imprisonment, near-execution, and release. In prison, Barnaby, unlike the rioters, is as close to God as "the freest and most favoured man in all the spacious city" (p. 563). Because of this, he is not afraid of death; he realizes that "the jail was a dull, sad, miserable place, and looked forward to to-morrow, as to a passage from it to something bright and beautiful" (p. 584). Barnaby's passage through the underworld has a therapeutic effect; he has "a better memory and a greater

steadiness of purpose" (p. 633). The city, however, remains associated in his mind with his dark experience and he refuses to return there ever again. As with Mr. Pickwick and Oliver Twist, so too with Barnaby, London inspires fear and the desire to avoid it at all costs. Schwarzbach argues that in Barnaby Rudge Dickens shows that it is possible to live in the city.²⁹ While this is true, I do not think the conclusion is as unclouded as he insists it is. Barnaby's adamant refusal to return to London is a reminder of what has gone on and shows his fear that it could happen again. While the riots do not recur, oppression and violence take other forms and subsequently illustrate that it is increasingly difficult to survive in the urban maze.

The theme of rebirth through a ritual testing within the urban labyrinth is mirrored in the development of other characters, besides Barnaby. Dolly Varden and Emma Haredale are abducted by Hugh and Sim Tappertit and are taken into the maze. They approach London "by ways which were quite unknown to them" (p. 453) and enter the city "by a suburb with which they were wholly unacquainted" (p. 453). From her imprisonment and the fear of molestation by Hugh, Dolly learns the dangers of indiscriminate coquetry; she has been "playing with fire" and now it threatens to burn her: "Unmindful of all her provoking caprices, forgetful of all her conquests and inconstancy, with all her winning little vanities quite gone, she nestled all the livelong day in Emma Haredale's bosom . . ." (p. 544). This

harrowing incident, coupled with her final acknowledgement of her love for Joe Willet, is a form of purgation for Dolly. These experiences teach her, she says, "to be something better than I was" (p. 602). Her mother makes a comparable discovery about herself and reforms, discarding those attributes of her former vain and selfish persona, Miggs and the Protestant Manual. Hugh, whose life is little distinguished from that of the animals, reaches through his relationship with Barnaby during the riots, a moment "of dawning humanity"³⁰ before his execution. A character ruled for the most part by his appetites, Hugh learns and matures enough that he is finally able to feel compassion for another person:

"I'll say this," he cried, looking firmly round, "that if I had ten lives to lose, and the loss of each would give me ten times the agony of the hardest death, I'd lay them all down--ay, I would, though you gentlemen may not believe it--to save this one. This one," he added, wringing his hands again, "that will be lost through me." (p. 595)

The journey through the symbolic Hell of London purges the central characters and reveals their essential humanity.

The existence of the forces of anarchy and riot within the urban labyrinth and the ease with which they are summoned and unleashed re-affirms Dickens's argument about the failure of the social system. There is nothing in the way of a deeply-felt morality to stop the mob: "The great mass never reasoned or thought at all, but were stimulated by their own headlong passions, by poverty, by

ignorance, by the love of mischief, and the hope of plunder" (pp. 402-3). The reaction of the authorities to the Riots, first doing nothing and then punishing too harshly, indicates their incapacity to deal correctly with the situation. The fact of the Riots reveals a deep disturbance within the social framework.

In Bleak House, Dickens uses the image of the maze to express the state of the world to a far greater degree than in previously examined novels.³¹ The image is so pervasive that its recurrence produces the impression of a labyrinthine world of confusion. Dickens employs it to characterize individual houses, the city of London, the law in general, and the case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce in particular. These last two aspects of the image in the work will be examined in the next chapter. At the same time, the progress of the novel itself can be considered as a metaphorical journey through a maze, with its focus upon various characters who search for and interpret clues to the mysteries of birth and death. In terms of the presence of the physical labyrinth, Bleak House operates as a summation of Dickens's development of the image.

The house-maze appears in several guises in the course of the novel, primarily as Chesney Wold, the family home of the Dedlocks, and Bleak House. The former is described as

A labyrinth of grandeur, less the property of an old family of human beings and their ghostly likenesses, than of an old family of echoings and thunderings which start out of their hundred graves at every sound, and go resounding through the building. A waste of unused passages and staircases, in which to drop a

comb upon a bedroom floor at night is to
send a stealthy footfall on an errand through
the house. 33

63

Like the Warren in Barnaby Rudge, Chesney Wold is a house in which life is inactive and sterile. It is a microcosm of that fashionable world where Lady Dedlock shines, but it is also "a deadened world, and its growth is sometimes unhealthy for want of air" (p. 11). Chesney Wold functions as a symbol of the "condition of England" and as such it is significant allegorically. However, in terms of the Esther Summerson-Lady Dedlock plot, it is relatively unimportant. Unlike the Warren which, as it burns down, reveals its secret, Chesney Wold harbours no mysteries. The evidence which betrays Lady Dedlock's secret, her letters to Captain Hawdon, is hidden, not in the house, but in the urban maze.

The threatening aspect of the house-maze which many Gothic writers utilized for atmospheric effects and suspense is undercut as well. After her talk with Lady Dedlock and the revelation of her true identity, Esther visits Chesney Wold. Walking on the terrace, she becomes frightened, but not because of the house; Esther realizes

that it was I, who was to bring calamity upon the stately house; and that my warning feet were haunting it even then. Seized with an augmented terror of myself that turned me cold, I ran from myself and everything, retraced the way by which I had come, and never paused until I had gained the lodge-gate, and the park lay sullen and black behind me. (p. 454)

Esther is clearly acting in the correct manner of a Gothic

heroine, fleeing in dread from some terrible spectre; except that Esther is frightening herself, and the house, which would normally have created the fear, is a neutral element. Dickens shows that the Gothic house-maze which at the conclusion of the novel is abandoned and lapses into "dull repose" (p. 767) is far less of a danger than the urban landscape.

As a labyrinthine structure, Chesney Wold reflects the central problem of "Wiglomeration" or unnecessary complication which has a fatal stranglehold on the English social system. Bleak House, "one of those delightfully irregular houses" (p. 62) according to Esther, is another mirror of this destructive tangle. At first glance, it is a symbol of benevolence with its neatness and comfort; however, as Schwarzbach has observed, the paintings of the house, of military couples and the process of preparing tea in China, are "disquieting echoes" of the hold of the past³⁴ which alter the initial impression. Because of the lawsuit, the house has been plagued by neglect and despair and Schwarzbach argues that because the power of John Jarndyce to do good is limited, Bleak House "remains implicated in its tainted past."³⁵ The maze-like quality of the house, delightful or not, indicates that its inhabitants are still vulnerable to the events of the present. While John Jarndyce has redeemed the house from ruin, and separated himself from the crippling lawcase, he cannot prevent its reaching out to Richard and Ada. Even the illness which destroys Esther's beauty is an indirect consequence of the lawsuit.

because it is engendered in the Jarndyce property in London, Tom-all-Alone's. Bleak House becomes the safe refuge it originally appeared to be only after the suit ends; it is then that Ada and her son go to live there with Jarndyce.

While the house in Yorkshire where Esther and Allan finally live has the same name as the original house, it is not the same. J. Hillis Miller is one critic who has mistaken the character of this Bleak House; he says that it is an "exact duplicate of the old."³⁶ While the furnishings of the house and the gardens follow Esther's tastes and ideas, the structure of the house is unlike her former home. This Bleak House is "a cottage, quite a rustic cottage of doll's rooms; but such a lovely place, so tranquil and beautiful, with such a rich and smiling country spread around it" (p. 751). This setting, unlike either Chesney Wold or the old Bleak House, has no history and is an outward expression of the values of its residents. The fact that the house is decidedly not labyrinthine suggests that the new Bleak House is free of those complications which devitalize society. Such complications still exist in the larger context, but they are kept out of the new Bleak House by the work of the Woodcourts.

The opening of the novel draws the reader closer and closer to the apparent centre of the cityscape, Temple Bar, where the "raw afternoon is rawest, and the dense fog is densest, and the muddy streets are muddiest" (p. 5), and to the court of Chancery "at the very heart of the fog" (p. 6).

While this is the centre of the Chancery knot, the true heart of the urban maze is Tom-all-Alone's and its graveyard: "a hemmed-in churchyard, pestiferous and obscene, whence malignant diseases are communicated to the bodies of our dear brothers and sisters who have not departed . . ." (p. 137). This description is not simply a Gothic-inspired sensation scene; it is based on fact. Trevor Blount in his articles on Tom-all-Alone's proves that this is a fair picture of conditions in some parts of Victorian London.³⁷ Quite literally, death waits at the centre of the maze. Jo says, "They dies in their lodgings--she knows where; I showed her--and they dies down in Tom-all-Alone's in heaps. They dies more than they lives, according to what I see" (p. 383). In Bleak House, all roads, and all strands of the plot, it would appear, lead to the churchyard.

The evil which now emerges from the urban labyrinth is a far more insidious threat than the mob of Barnaby Rudge. The revenge of Tom-all-Alone's takes the less tangible form of disease:

There is not a drop of Tom's corrupted blood but propagates infection and contagion somewhere. It shall pollute, this very night, the choice stream (in which chemists on analysis would find it genuine nobility) of a Norman house, and his Grace shall not be able to say Nay to the infamous alliance.
(p. 553)

The mob in Barnaby Rudge was directed to the Warren by Chester and Gashford; the fact that Tom-all-Alone's works its revenge on Esther indicates the completely random path

of its destructive work. The "seeds of ruin" hidden in the urban maze about which Dickens warned his readers in Oliver Twist have come to fruition.

Many of the characters, for one reason or another, enter the maze of Tom-all-Alone's and discover a world that they had not thought existed. Mr. Snagsby, for example, is taken by Bucket into Tom-all-Alone's to search for Jo: "Branching from this street and its heaps of ruins, are other streets and courts so infamous that Mr. Snagsby sickens in body and mind, and feels as if he were going, every moment deeper down, into the infernal gulf" (p. 277).

Similarly, in the recurring pattern of the novel, Lady Dedlock, Allan Woodcourt, and Esther and Bucket are drawn to the core of this realm. Jo acts as a guide to the labyrinth for a disguised Lady Dedlock: "By many devious ways, reeking with offence of many kinds, they come to the little tunnel of a court, and to the gas-lamp (lighted now), and to the iron gate" (p. 202). As in Barnaby Rudge, the maze is equated with Hell. The passage which describes the return of Bucket and Snagsby after their tour of Tom-all-Alone's illustrates this aspect in Bleak House:

By the noisome ways through which they descended into that pit, they gradually emerge from it; the crowd flitting, and whistling, and skulking about them, until they came to the verge, where restoration of the bull's-eyes is made to Darby. Here the crowd, like a concourse of imprisoned demons, turns back, yelling, and is seen no more. (p. 281).

One gains the impression from the novel that all the

urban settings are in close proximity to each other within the maze, and that only a few turnings separate Chancery from Krook's shop or the office of Kenge and Carboy or Tom-all-Alone's. Richard makes a telling comment when, on their second day in London, the cousins are out walking with Esther and Caddy Jellyby. He says to Ada, "We are never to get out of Chancery! We have come by another way to our place of meeting yesterday, and--by the Great Seal, here's the old lady again!" (p. 47). Unfortunately, Richard is unaware of the symbolic aptness of his remark, both in terms of the lawsuit and in terms of the geography of London.

The labyrinth of the city is of more importance and is more powerfully evoked by Dickens in Bleak House than are the individual house-mazes. The urban version of the maze, not the Gothic house, provides the substantial menace here; it is Tom-all-Alone's, not Chesney Wold or Bleak House, which is the threat to health and life. Nevertheless, because these houses are maze-like in structure and because both are connected to Tom-all-Alone's through the lawsuit, they serve as extensions of the city and so create the effect of a labyrinthine world. We have seen in Oliver Twist, The Old Curiosity Shop, and Barnaby Rudge how readily evil can travel within the maze and outside it without being lost. In the enclosed world of Bleak House several characters, chiefly Tulkinghorn, Bucket, Lady Dedlock, and Jo, not just those with malicious intentions, are able to move freely from one location to

another both within the city and between the city and the country. Tulkinghorn, in particular, is a master of the labyrinth:

His manner of coming and going between the two places, is one of his impenetrabilities. He walks into Chesney Wold as if it were next door to his chambers, and returns to his chambers as if he had never been out of Lincoln's Inn Fields . . . He melted out of his turret-room this morning, just as now, in the late twilight, he melts into his own square. (p. 514)

As a manipulator, Tulkinghorn is a more subtle version of Sir John Chester in Barnaby Rudge. Tulkinghorn is similarly devoted to self and to his calling: "the acquisition of secrets, and the holding possession of such power as they give him, with no sharer or opponent in it" (p. 451). He also uses the inhabitants of the maze, the Smallweeds, Trooper George, and Jo, as his instruments in order to extend and to exert his power. The detective Bucket shares the lawyer's ability to move with dispatch through the maze:

Time and place cannot bind Mr. Bucket. Like man in the abstract, he is here today and gone tomorrow--but, very unlike man indeed, he is here today again the next day. This evening he will be casually looking into the iron extinguishers at the doors of Sir Leicester Dedlock's house in town; and tomorrow morning he will be walking on the leads at Chesney Wold . . . (p. 626)

Lady Dedlock continually travels between Chesney Wold, London, and Paris, but wherever she is, she is unable to free herself from the curse of boredom. This restless and empty flight back and forth within the confines of the

"world of fashion" accentuates Lady Dedlock's captivity within the maze. She says to Esther, "I must travel my dark road alone, and it will lead me where it will. From day to day, sometimes from hour to hour, I do not see the way before my guilty feet. This is the earthly punishment I have brought upon myself" (p. 450). She can free herself, as she eventually realizes, only by penetrating to the heart of the maze and confronting what is hidden there. Here, familiarity with the labyrinth is less an indication of evil than an illustration of the compromised nature of the occupants of the maze-world.

Jo the crossing sweeper is Dickens's foremost example of this fallen nature. He has been formed completely by the urban experience. Like Lady Dedlock, he is condemned to pointless perpetual motion within the maze; he tells Snagsby, "I've always been a-moving and a-moving on, ever since I was born. Where can I possibly move to, Sir, more nor I do move" (p. 238). Unlike Oliver or Nell, who know that there is something better outside the city, Jo is without that consolation. He even remains ignorant of the meaning of the world through which he progresses:

It must be a strange state to be like Jo!
To shuffle through the streets, unfamiliar with
the shapes and in utter darkness as to the
meaning, of those mysterious symbols, so
abundant over the shops, and the corner of
streets, and on the doors, and in the
windows! (p. 198)

Jo, as one of those who are "dying thus around us every day" (p. 572), provides the object lesson which points up

the failure of the city. Since Jo cannot save himself, others like Esther and Woodcourt must learn from his example and deal with the problems of ignorance which destroy him.

When Esther, the heroine of order, arrives from Greenleaf, she becomes instantly aware of the strangeness of the urban landscape. She travels in a fog through "the dirtiest and darkest streets that ever were seen in the world (I thought), and in such a distracting state of confusion that I wondered how people kept their senses . . ." (p. 29). In a world ruled by "Wiglomeration," it is not unaccountable that the keynote should be muddle and complexity. Esther is a central force among those characters who try to counteract the life of the maze. She has vowed to overcome her own fallen nature by self-sacrifice and duty. Michael Steig calls Esther, appropriately enough, "the moral and literal cleaning woman of the book."³⁸ Although she is optimistic about the power of good to alleviate problems, she is also realistic. She is aware, she says,

That I had much to learn, myself, before I could teach others, and that I could not confide in my good intentions alone. For these reasons, I thought it best to be as useful as I could, and to render what kind services I could, to those immediately about me; and to try to let that circle of duty gradually and naturally expand itself. (p. 96)

Like Gabriel Varden, Esther represents the principle of active virtue which deals directly and simply with those things which require correction. She is, therefore, the

natural opponent of "Wiglomeration"; consulting her about Richard's career, Jarndyce says, "We are sure to come at the heart of the matter by your means, little woman" (p. 91).³⁹

Because of her capabilities, Esther can successfully manage the domestic maze of Bleak House. However, the problems which exist in the city, typified by Jo and his illness, are too powerful and are beyond her control.

Esther is brought close to death as if to make her stronger and better able to cope with the corruption of the world.

Symbolically, her illness and subsequent events take the form of a ritual death and rebirth. Esther is first thrust

into darkness by her temporary blindness and undergoes a type of death in her fevered dreams: "In falling ill, I seemed to have crossed a dark lake, and to have left all my experiences, mingled together by the great distance, on the healthy shore" (p. 431). Her dream of the burning

necklace and her fear of being a part of it reflect her death wish because she had previously described her plan of good work as an expanding circle. She gradually regains her health, and is once again able to see "the glorious light coming every day more fully and brightly" (p. 432).

Closely following her recovery, Esther learns her true identity as the daughter of Lady Dedlock. Although she is shaken by this revelation, Esther has symbolically been freed from the destructive hold of the past by her illness which has cancelled the tell-tale resemblance between mother and daughter. The final stage in Esther's rebirth occurs on

her receipt of letters from Jarndyce and Ada. These effectively instill in Esther a sense of her own worth as an individual by showing that she is valued for herself despite her birth. The affection which Ada and Jarndyce reveal finally silences self-doubts which had been planted in Esther by her aunt, and she feels restored:

I renewed my resolutions, and prayed to be strengthened in them; pouring out my heart for myself, and for my unhappy mother, and feeling that the darkness of the morning was passing away. It was not upon my sleep; and when the next day's light awoke me, it was gone. (p. 455)

Esther's active virtue is reflected in other characters who are inhabitants of the urban maze. Caddy Jellyby, "educated" by Esther, proves an apt pupil and becomes another of those who straighten out the entanglements of life. Esther says of Caddy: "For I conscientiously believed, dancing-master's wife though she was, and dancing-mistress though in her limited ambition she aspired to be, she had struck out a natural, wholesome, loving course of industry and perseverance that was quite as good as a Mission" (p. 474). Although Mrs. Baghet's world is as restricted as that of Caddy, she functions in the same way. Her advice to Trooper George is "to do nothing in the dark and to be a party to nothing underhanded or mysterious, and never to put his foot where he cannot see the ground" (p. 345). This comment makes clear her opposition to the confusion of the maze and places her on the side of orderliness.

Allan Woodcourt demonstrates his suitability as a husband for Esther by his vocation and his compassion for others. It is noteworthy that he, like Esther, enters the labyrinth of Tom-all-Alone's in order to bring help:

Attracted by curiosity, he often pauses and looks about him, up and down the miserable by-ways. Nor is he merely curious, for in his bright dark eye there is compassionate interest; and as he looks here and there, he seems to understand such wretchedness, and to have studied it before. (p. 553)

It is there that he is called to attend Nemo, and it is there that he finds the dying Jo. Furthermore, he accompanies Esther and Bucket on the final section of their quest for Lady Dedlock. Esther speaks of encountering him within the alien landscape of the urban maze:

It was so unexpected, and so--I don't know what to call it, whether pleasant or painful--to come upon it after my feverish wandering journey, and in the midst of the night, that I could not keep back the tears from my eyes. It was like hearing his voice in a strange country. (p. 859)

Like Esther, Woodcourt tries to comfort those trapped within the city. Bucket operates in a style comparable with that of these characters, but in a professional capacity. It is he who puts the clues together for Sir Leicester which prove the relationship between Lady Dedlock and Esther and those which reveal Hortense as the murderess of Tulkinghorn. Because of his expertise in these affairs, he is the appropriate one to undertake the search for Lady Dedlock. Before he proceeds with Esther, the detective

imagines the world-maze and tries to discover where her mother is:

There, he mounts a high tower in his mind, and looks out far and wide. Many solitary figures he perceives, creeping through the streets; many solitary figures out on heaths, and roads, and lying under haystacks. But the figure that he seeks is not among them. Other solitaires he perceives in nooks of bridges, looking over; and in shadowed places down by the river's level; and a dark, dark, shapeless object drifting with the tide more solitary than all, clings with a drowning hold on his attention. (p. 673)

The journey of Esther and Bucket indicates once again the extent of the labyrinth. All of the superior skill of Bucket is required to track the route of Lady Dedlock:

Passed through here on foot, this evening, about eight or nine. I heard of her first at the archway toll, over at Highgate, but couldn't make quite sure. Traced her all along, on and off. Picked her up at one place, and dropped her at another; but she's before us now, safe. (p. 679)

It is during this journey that Bucket demonstrates again his knowledge of the maze because Esther is unable to make sense of the city: "I was far from sure that I was not in a dream. We rattled with great rapidity through such a labyrinth of streets; that I soon lost all idea where we were . . ." (p. 676). Although she does not know the way in the labyrinth, Esther does not become lost because she is with Bucket, but also because she has a clear sense of purpose and of her own identity. She is safe from the turmoil through which they pass. In metaphorical terms, she is "Theseus" to Bucket's "Ariadne" providing love and

spiritual guidance as complements to his practicality. Esther's role in this relationship is informed by Caddy Jellyby's "superstition" that Esther does her good whenever Esther is near her (p. 599). In contrast to Tulkinghorn and Guppy who also "hunt down" Lady Dedlock, Bucket and Esther are on a mission of forgiveness. As the emblem of their quest, Bucket brings Esther's handkerchief, the symbolic "thread" which links mother to daughter.

After following Lady Dedlock to St. Albans and the disguised Jenny farther still, Bucket realizes his error and he turns the quest back towards the city. Their progress becomes a descent through "the narrowest and worst streets of London" (p. 704) until they too reach the heart of the labyrinth. At the end of the journey, they discover Lady Dedlock lying dead at the entrance to the graveyard "with one arm creeping round a bar of the iron gate, and seeming to embrace it" (p. 713). While it is too late for Esther to save Lady Dedlock, she performs her final duty to her mother by publicly recognizing their relationship: "I even heard it said between them: "'Shall she go?' 'She had better go. Her hands should be the first to touch her. They have a higher right than ours'" (pp. 713-4). Esther acts "to bless and receive" (p. 450) her mother even in death, rather than denying the relationship as other parents and children do in the novel. In this, as in her relationships with Caddy, Charley, Ada and Richard, and the Jellyby children, Esther resolves confusion through love and compassion. The city-maze remains in existence in spite

of Esther, Allan, and Jarndyce; it requires more than their efforts to clear it away. Only Apocalyptic fires, like those which Dickens calls down upon the maze of the lawsuit, will purify the city (p. 10).

From these novels, it can be seen how Dickens develops the image of the labyrinth. From Oliver Twist, where it is used to describe a certain section of London, the maze expands until in Bleak House it appears to incorporate a substantial portion of the country. Dickens's "daedalean London" with its demonic associations becomes the hiding-place of evil either in the form of debased individuals or corrupt systems. The labyrinth is an archetype which is used to inform the quest of the protagonists and the passage through it symbolizes the process of their education. The ritual initiation generates a new awareness, so that characters like Nancy and Oliver Twist, Barnaby Rudge, Dolly and Mrs. Varden, and Dick Swiveller and the Marchioness can be purified and redeemed. This purgation also causes some characters like Nancy, Gabriel Varden, and Esther to confront and combat the evil which surrounds them in an attempt to end the cycle of corruption and crime. Whether in the guise of scheming villains or of social ills, the evil which resides in the maze tests the mettle of the characters and thereby forces them to establish identity and affirm relationship with others in the social hierarchy.

II: Collins: Hide and Seek

In an article about the novels of Mrs. Braddon in The Nation of November 9, 1865, Henry James makes the following observation:

To Mr. Collins belongs the credit of having introduced into fiction those most mysterious of mysteries, the mysteries which are at our own doors. The innovation gave a new impetus to the literature of horrors. It was fatal to the authority of Mrs. Radcliffe and her ever-lasting castle in the Apennines. What are the Apennines to us, or we to the Apennines? Instead of the terrors of Udolpho, we are treated to the terrors of the cheerful country-house and the busy London lodgings. And there is no doubt that these were infinitely the more terrible. Mrs. Radcliffe's mysteries were romances pure and simple; while those of Mr. Wilkie Collins were stern reality. 40

"Reality" and the truthful recreation of it in fiction were central concerns to Wilkie Collins. He first refers to these issues in the prefatory remarks to his novel Basil⁴¹ and they remain important throughout his career as a novelist. In spite of this realistic bias, James is accurate to link Collins with Mrs. Radcliffe. Collins may be dealing with "reality" in his subject matter, but he draws on the same archetypes that Mrs. Radcliffe used for symbolic and structural purposes. The Dead Secret, the first of his novels to be serialized, in Charles Dickens's Household Words, illustrates this point.⁴²

The secret of the title concerns the birth and parentage of the heroine, Rosamond. Raised as the daughter of Captain and Mrs. Treverton at Porthgenna Tower, she is,

in fact, the daughter of Mrs. Treverton's maid, Sarah Leeson, and Hugh Polwheal, Sarah's fiancé, who is killed in a mining accident. In order to shield her companion from disgrace and to ensure the love of her husband which was clouded by the lack of children, Mrs. Treverton secretly adopts Sarah's baby when the Captain is away on a long sea voyage, and, on his return, the child is presented to him as his own. Five years later, when Mrs. Treverton is struck by a fatal illness, she decides that she must reveal the deception to her husband and dictates a confession which she makes Sarah witness and sign as her accomplice. Afraid that Sarah will suppress the document, Mrs. Treverton makes her swear that she will neither destroy the confession nor remove it from the house. Unable to bring herself to disillusion the Captain about his daughter while in the midst of his grief, Sarah decides to hide the confession and remain true to the letter of her promises to her dying mistress.

Like Le Fanu, Collins uses the labyrinth as an image to symbolize the thought patterns of the maze-makers.

Sarah is described walking through the wasted garden on the north side of the house, trying to decide what to do:

Lost in the labyrinth of her own thoughts, she moved slowly past flower-beds, long since rooted up, and along gravel walks overgrown by weeds; her eyes wandering mechanically over the prospect, her feet mechanically carrying her on wherever there was a trace of a foot-path, lead where it might. 43.

The major difference between Sarah and the other "maze-

architects" is that her motivation is benevolent, not malignant. She creates a mystery in order to protect her daughter; as her covering note on the document explains:

my purpose is to conceal it in the place, of all others, where I think there is least chance of its ever being found again. Any hardship or misfortune which may follow as a consequence of this deceitful proceeding on my part, will fall on myself. Others, I believe, in my conscience, will be the happier for the hiding of the dreadful Secret which the letter contains. (p. 30)

Then Sarah proceeds to hide the document in the Myrtle Room in the abandoned north wing of the house. In effect, she creates a "labyrinth" to conceal the secret by destroying all clues to its whereabouts. She notices that the key to the Myrtle Room has an identifying tag:

She took her housewife from its usual place in the pocket of her apron, and, with the scissors which it contained, cut the label from the key. Was it enough to destroy that one only? She lost herself in a maze of useless conjecture; and ended by cutting off the other labels, from no other motive than instinctive suspicion of them. (p. 31)

A smaller key with which she has locked a drawer within the room, in which the document is hidden, is dropped down the well. The labels for the keys are scattered over the moor as she slips away from the house, like Daedalus fleeing from the labyrinth of Crete, leaving no clues to her whereabouts behind her.

The narrative then skips over fifteen years to focus upon Rosamond, Sarah's daughter, although that fact has not yet been discovered. She marries Leonard Frankland who is

blind and whose father had purchased Porthgenna Tower from Captain Treverton when it had been put up for sale shortly after Mrs. Treverton's death. In his dissertation on Wilkie Collins, Keith Reierstad has this to say about the hero:

Nothing of the plot hinges upon Frankland's blindness; rather, its fault is its very gratuitousness. It is present out of a kind of self-indulgence on Collins's part, for he did like to study the influence of handicaps on character; as such it adds interest, but not depth, in quite another quarter of the book.⁴⁴

However, there is a point to this handicap. Leonard's blindness is both a physical disability and a symbol of the flaw in his character; he is "a little given to overrate the advantages of birth and the importance of rank" (p. 60). Leonard's false sense of status will be purged by the experience at Porthgenna Tower. The "ritual initiation" which the two characters undergo there will test their love and humanity.

Some time after their marriage, the young couple are travelling to the house when they are forced to stay in a country village by the impending birth of their child. When a nurse is required to look after Rosamond, the doctor brings in Mrs. Jazeph who turns out to be Sarah Leeson. Sarah is unnerved by the appearance of her daughter after all these years and particularly by Rosamond's talk of exploring and renovating the north wing of the house. Sarah, in her agitation, makes the mistake of warning Rosamond to stay away from the Myrtle Room. Ironically,

this action has the opposite effect and only serves to pique the girl's curiosity.⁴⁵ Like Maud in Uncle Silas, who is fascinated by the story of Mr. Clarke, Rosamond wishes to know what lies behind the mystery. If the Myrtle Room is found, she asks her husband:

how can you doubt what will happen next?
Am I not a woman? And have I not been forbidden to enter the Myrtle Room? Lenny!
Lenny! Do you know so little of my half of humanity as to doubt what I should do the moment the room was discovered? My darling, as a matter of course, I should walk into it immediately. (p. 135)

Realizing what she has done, Sarah attempts to remove the document from the Myrtle Room, but, at its threshold, she is terrified by what she takes to be the ghost of Mrs. Treverton.

Rosamond and Leonard, meanwhile, have connected Mrs. Jazeph and her warning with the disappearance of her mother's maid and the story of the undisclosed secret several years before. The site of the Myrtle Room is eventually found and the young couple learn the secret. The iconography of the Myrtle Room and its furnishings suggest the secrets of the past even before the confession is read. Throughout the room there are symbolic hints of the relationships which have been hidden. Since the myrtle plant is associated with Venus,⁴⁶ the Myrtle Room is an appropriate place to hide a secret which concerns the consequences of love and passion. An even closer association of the symbolic nature of the flower with the secret is indicated by the fact that

myrtle is also an attribute of Adonis, the young lover of Venus who, like Sarah's lover, Hugh Polwheal, the real father of Rosamond, is killed in an accident. The labyrinthine nature of the quest to find the Myrtle Room and the secret is reinforced by the description of a mounted stag's head over the fireplace which has "a perfect maze of cobwebs" stretched between the antlers (p. 262). The young people are, in essence, tracing the path of Sarah's labyrinth in order to discover what lies hidden at its heart. The weather indicates an unseen menace as the couple come closer, as Rosamond comments, "There are no clouds; there is no blue sky. The mist quenches the brightness of the sunlight, and lets nothing but the fire of it through. There is something threatening in the sky, and the earth seems to know it!" (pp. 260-1). The threat, of course, is embodied by the as yet undiscovered confession of Mrs. Treverton which could possibly ruin their lives. The presence of Sarah in the room is symbolically conveyed by a marble bas-relief of Niobe whose children were slain by Apollo and Artemis. The image of the bereft mother is suitable for Sarah whose child, though not dead, is taken from her and her relationship to it denied.

In a corner of the room, Rosamond finds "a narrow, rickety little table, made of the commonest mahogany--the frailest, poorest, least conspicuous piece of furniture in the whole room" (p. 268). It is in this table, whose nature reflects that of the timid and unprepossessing Sarah, that the secret is concealed. When Rosamond pushes the table.

away in frustration, it falls to the floor with a loud crash and a locked drawer breaks open. In the drawer, she finds specimens of copper ore and a small portrait of a woman. The copper, unknown to Rosamond, is a reminder of Hugh Polwheal, the Cornish miner, whose relationship to her has been suppressed just as the ore has been locked away in the drawer. The portrait is of the woman reputed to haunt the north rooms, who bore a striking resemblance to Mrs. Treverton. Although she was ordered to destroy the picture by her mistress, Sarah hid it away in the Myrtle Room and later used it to conceal the confession. Just as Rosamond's identity was hidden under a false name, so too the proofs of that identity were hidden behind a likeness of her false mother. Rosamond symbolically proves herself to be Sarah's daughter by finding the two things which no one else was able to find; she alone is able to unravel the mystery created by her mother.

The telling of the secret becomes a rite of initiation for the young couple. Like her mother, Sarah has the opportunity to destroy the confession, but cannot. However, whereas Sarah's resolution had been formed by fear, Rosamond's decision to reveal the truth stems from her integrity and her determination not to deceive the man she loves, whatever the consequences. Because of Leonard's blindness, Rosamond must guide him wherever they go: "All her attention while they were returning to the west front seemed to be absorbed in the one act of jealously watching every inch of ground that Leonard walked over, to make sure

that it was safe and smooth before she suffered him to set his foot on it" (p. 274). Both literally and symbolically, Rosamond becomes "Ariadne"; she must direct his steps when walking and, because of that same blindness, she must read the confession herself and lead him to the truth. Having chosen to disclose what she has found, she says to Leonard, "I would give all I have in the world if only I could know how much you love me" (p. 274). Her words are prophetic because in telling her husband whose daughter she is in reality, Rosamond is venturing all she has to test Leonard's love. Her virtue receives its true reward; Leonard realizes that she is more important to him than his pride or class consciousness:

From the hour you first devoted your life to your blind husband--from the hour when you won all his gratitude, as you had already won all his love, you took a place in his heart, Rosamond, from which nothing, not even such a shock as has now assailed us, can move you!
(p. 287)

Because Rosamond is not the Trevertons' child, the young people decide that they must restore the estate to the rightful owner, Captain Treverton's brother. Although the old man has been a recluse and a misanthrope, he recognizes their honesty in making the offer and refuses to accept. Their example makes him question his attitude about humanity and sends him on a journey "to find out the good that there might be in people as well as the bad" (p. 356). The ritual initiation of Rosamond and Leonard therefore has an important effect on others as well. The

material reward becomes a symbolic confirmation of their survival of the trial which sounded the depth of their love.

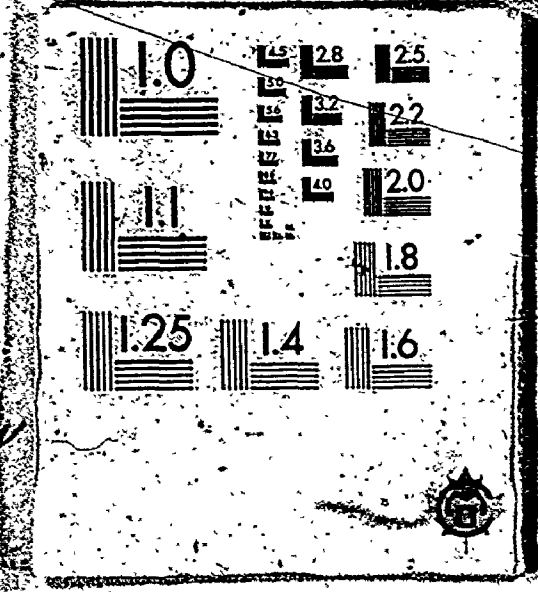
Leonard comes to believe that there is a special Providence which is helping them to trace out the tangle of past events and to bring mother and daughter back together again. He says, "It must be something more than mere chance that puts the clew into our hands, at the moment when we least expected to find it" (p. 291). When reunited at last with Rosamond, Sarah believes that she is haunted by the ghost of Mrs. Treverton for betraying the secret: "Mistress! Mistress! Oh, rest at last! the Secret is ours no longer! Rest at last! my child is my own again! Rest, at last; and come between us no more!" (p. 347). Rosamond "exorcises the ghost" by calling Sarah "mother," confirming Sarah's true identity and their relationship. Sarah's fears are removed by this action and, transfigured by her happiness, she dies: "For one awful moment her eyes shone in the gray twilight with a radiant, unearthly beauty, as they fastened their last look of fondness on her daughter's face. 'Oh my love! my angel!' she murmured, 'how happy we shall be together now!'" (p. 347). This reunion of mother and daughter, after the revelation of a long-concealed secret, recalls a corresponding pattern in Bleak House. There too, a "labyrinth" hid the identity of the heroine. For Rosamond as for Esther, there is no question of not accepting her mother once the mystery of the past has been disclosed. In both cases, filial devotion outweighs the stigma of illegitimacy or the fear of scandal.

The other significant relationship in Sarah's life is re-affirmed when she is buried with Hugh in the Cornish churchyard: "The miner's grave from which she had twice plucked in secret her few memorial fragments of grass had given her the home, in death, which in life she had never known" (p. 357). Again, the symbolic details of the description of the grave reveal the underlying meaning of the scene. The graveyard is surrounded by a circular myrtle hedge; the myrtle reflects the nature of the relationship between Hugh and Sarah while the symbolic image of the circle suggests a new wholeness and the purification of the erotic.⁴⁷ The sexual passion of Sarah and Hugh is elevated to a spiritual level in this final image and in the relationship of Rosamond and Leonard. The novel concludes on a day which, as Rosamond remarks, is the antithesis to that on which the secret was found; it is a further symbol of "the beginning of a new life" (p. 359). Leonard's final words show that he has come to a new understanding of what matters in life. The lesson, he says, is one "which some of us can never learn too often. The highest honours, Rosamond, are those which no accident can take away--the honours that are conferred by LOVE and TRUTH" (p. 359).

The conclusion of the novel and the secret itself have been criticized as weak and conventional. Kenneth Robinson writes dismissively, "For a Collins novel it is strangely deficient in plot; the 'secret' does not remain for long a secret from the reader, and there is scarcely enough intrinsic interest in the rest of the story to carry it

2

14



through."⁴⁸ Robert Ashley, in his book on Wilkie Collins, says, "The secret, as so often in Victorian fiction, has to do with legitimacy, but its discovery has absolutely no effect on the characters involved."⁴⁹ If this is true, then what are we to make of Rosamond's alleviation of Sarah's fears through her "exorcism" of the ghost, which could not have taken place if the secret had remained suppressed, or of Leonard's acceptance of his wife's new identity? This latter development is condemned by Keith Reierstad who sees Leonard's final statement as "a noble gesture made spurious by its sentimentality."⁵⁰ Reierstad writes, "The propagandistic 'conversion' of Leonard Frankland has just the opposite effect to that which was intended: the democratic ideal becomes a bit of copy-book morality, and again by Collins's hedging in the serious matter of identity."⁵¹ He seems to be taking a wrong-headed view of The Dead Secret; one of the last things it seems to me that Collins is doing here is propagandizing for the lower classes. If anything, Rosamond is made a free agent by her illegitimacy; she is liberated from the constricting bonds of the class system. Like Esther in Bleak House, Rosamond is valued and loved for herself, no matter what the circumstances of her birth and status are. The flaw in the hero which must be overcome through trial and suffering, like the revelation of the heroine's true identity, is a motif of romance. Where these critics err is in treating The Dead Secret solely according to the canons of realism, when the novel owes much to the patterns and

archetypes of romance. The conquest of the maze means a reordering of love and awareness through proper perception; love and truth in Rosamond and Leonard have overcome and redeemed the confusion and deceit of the past.³

The Woman in White, which first appeared in 1860, centres upon a conspiracy which is engendered and carried out by characters who come out of "the dark byways of villainy and deceit."⁵² The novel will be considered in greater detail in later chapters, but Collins's use of the physical maze in the work will be treated here. He makes use of the labyrinth image in many different ways in The Woman in White; its appearances as the house and the city are but two variations. In The Dead Secret, Collins shows that he could effectively evoke the Gothic house when he required it. Blackwater Park, the home of Sir Percival Glyde in The Woman in White, is a further development of the metaphor of house as maze.

The Park is described by Marian Halcombe, the heroine's resourceful half-sister, on her arrival. There are several ominous undercurrents. Marian says, "The house is situated on a dead flat, and seems to be shut in--almost suffocated, to my north country notions, by trees" (p. 177). The house is a "wonderful architectural jumble" (p. 183) consisting of wings which date from the fourteenth century, the Elizabethan period, and the reign of George the Second. Marian describes the layout of the Park:

On the ground floor there are two hugely long galleries, with low ceilings lying

parallel with each other, and rendered additionally dark and dismal, by hideous family portraits--every one of which I should like to burn. The rooms on the floor above the two galleries are kept in tolerable repair, but are seldom used. (p. 182)

Marian is the complete antithesis of the exploring heroines of Radcliffe and Le Fanu; she is uninterested in visiting the older wings:

My respect for the integrity of my own petticoats and stockings infinitely exceeds my respect for all the Elizabethan bedrooms in the kingdom, so I positively declined exploring the upper regions of dust and dirt at the risk of soiling my nice clean clothes. (p. 182)

The result of this decision is that the housekeeper regards Marian as "the most sensible woman she had met with for a long time past" (p. 182). The house has been fitted up in the contemporary style, a surprise to Marian who had been afraid of finding Gothic furnishings to match the exterior. The modernity of the furnishings is no guarantee, however, against the "Gothic" nature of the conspiracy which unfolds there.

The name of the house comes from the lake which is on the property. The shore of the lake is "damp and marshy, overgrown with rank grass and dismal willows," while the water itself looks "black and poisonous" (p. 184).

Marian and the reader both begin to feel the atmosphere close in at this point. Marian also finds "a snake basking in the midst of the spot, fantastically coiled and treacherously still" (p. 184), an emblem of the evil

which will soon be apparent in the novel. The final discovery Marian makes on her first day at Blackwater Park is of a dog which has been shot by the gamekeeper and which dies shortly after it is found. Marian interprets this as an omen: "I wish my first day at Blackwater Park had not been associated with death, though it is only the death of a stray animal" (p. 188).

At first glance, Blackwater Park seems to be an ordinary country-house; Marian comments, "It is an inexpressible relief to find that the nineteenth century has invaded this strange future home of mine, and has swept the dirty 'good old times' out of the way of our daily life" (p. 183). Despite her relief, the house does function in a fashion similar to the way in which the Gothic house-maze does. There is danger hiding in the house, for all its aura of conventionality. The plot against Laura, and her fortune begins to develop in the house, and Marian is forced to eavesdrop on Glyde and Fosco in order to protect her half-sister. She hides outside on the roof of the verandah under which the conspirators sit. Marian, while listening, is caught in the rain and is taken ill as a result. Ironically, her illness, which comes about because of her desire to help, is instrumental in the isolation of Laura and the success of the plot. While ill, Marian is hidden away from Laura by Fosco, Glyde, and the others in the older part of the house. Laura and the housekeeper are told that she has gone to London with the Foscos. Mrs. Michelson, the housekeeper, is the narrator

of this part of the novel and she records her sense of the atmosphere in the house: "There was something so strange and dreadful in the loneliness and emptiness of the house, that I was glad, on my side, to have a companion near me" (p. 355). Only after Laura is taken to London does Mrs. Michelson learn that Marian is still at Blackwater Park (pp. 358-9). The house clearly suggests a maze into which people can disappear and remain invisible, while actually staying close at hand. The manipulation of reality by the conspirators is representative of the entire plot; characters are led to believe in an illusory appearance of the facts.

Marian's temporary disappearance into the maze of Blackwater Park suggests a ritual death which foreshadows those deaths, real and feigned, of Anne and Laura. When Marian recovers from her illness, she becomes determined to find the answer to the mystery in which she and her sister have been involved. Walter, the other "detective" in the novel, is similarly reborn through his several narrow escapes from death which Marian witnesses by means of a dream. He recognizes this fact himself when he swears his devotion to Laura:

From thousands on thousands of miles away;
 through forest and wilderness, where companions
 stronger than I had fallen by my side; through
 peril of death thrice renewed, and thrice
 escaped, the Hand that leads men on the dark
 road to the future, had led me to meet that
 time. . . . In the right of her calamity, in
 the right of her friendlessness, she was mine
 at last! Mine to support, to protect, to
 cherish, to restore. (p. 381)

This experience of death and rebirth is clearly meant to

prepare both Marian and Walter for the ordeal of redeeming Laura which lies before them.

Collins, like Dickens, uses the image of the maze to depict the city of London. After Walter Hartright is reunited with Laura and Marian, they take refuge in "a poor and populous neighbourhood" (p. 379) to escape notice. Unlike the London of Dickens, the city here provides a measure of security and refuge:

As early as the end of October the daily course of our lives had assumed its settled direction, and we three were as completely isolated in our place of concealment as if the house we lived in had been a desert island, and the great network of streets and the thousands of our fellow-creatures all round us the waters of an illimitable sea. (p. 399)

There is little sense of London as a particular locale; it remains a large anonymous hiding-place, a "house-forest" (p. 379). The labyrinthine nature of London is developed to a greater extent as we have seen in the fiction of Charles Dickens. Collins, at least in The Dead Secret and The Woman in White, was more interested in exploiting the possibilities of the maze-like house for purposes of concealment. In both of these novels, secrets are kept out of sight in rooms at fairly close range and yet largely undetected. The theme of "hide and seek" which one critic⁵³ says runs through much of Collins's fiction is surely borne out by his use of the maze as a setting in these novels.

III: Le Fanu: The Return to Otranto

Of the three authors under consideration here, it is Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu who is the most conspicuous perpetuator of the Gothic style.⁵⁴ His novels revolve around the same themes of entrapment, disguise, pursuit, and conspiracy which generated the earlier romances. Uncle Silas is in many ways a revival of The Mysteries of Udolpho, focussing, as it does, upon an evil uncle and a persecuted heiress-niece. The melancholy strain which colours his work recalls the finely-tuned sensibility of Mrs. Radcliffe. Le Fanu's characters respond emotionally to their surroundings in the traditional manner. The landscape, in turn, becomes a "psychic barometer," providing indications of states of mind and feeling. As one commentator says, "the mise en scène in Le Fanu's fiction was imaginative rather than realistic and therefore was not always translated into plausible terms."⁵⁵ In the Saturday Review of February 4, 1865, the writer suggests a similar idea in his notice of Uncle Silas: "Mr. Le Fanu depicts a state of society utterly at variance with the prosaic experience of every-day life. The English country-house becomes a veritable Castle of Otranto."⁵⁶ The critic is not being complimentary in this instance and is in fact condemning the novel for its lack of realism. Ironically, however, his connection of Le Fanu to Walpole only serves to emphasize the romance quality of Uncle Silas and undercuts his own argument.

It is scarcely surprising then to find Le Fanu making use of a predominantly Gothic house-maze. The Cock and Anchor, Le Fanu's first novel, published in 1845, is an historical romance set in eighteenth-century Ireland and mixes real people, Swift and Addison among them, with fictional ones. As with many first novels, The Cock and Anchor suggests in embryo the directions in which the novelist is going to develop. In a preface to The Cock and Anchor, Herbert van Thal writes about the first appearance of characteristic Le Fanu themes and motifs:

Another indication of the mature Le Fanu is to be found in his evocations of those old country houses he loved to describe. So vivid is his prose that you can hear every creak of the door, every flutter in the chimney, every moaning of the wind around crumbling eaves and ancient buttresses. 57

In "Joseph Sheridan, Le Fanu and His Houses," Montague Summers also writes about the significance of setting in Le Fanu's novels and notices something of the labyrinthine quality which characterizes them:

I would suggest that there are few, if any, other writers of supernatural fiction who have been imbued with so keen a sense of place who are able to create so vividly, and so realistically to convey the haunted house. Le Fanu's houses are full of horror, of impending doom, of a personal terror which is lurking very near, which is able to, and may reveal itself most fearfully and most cruelly under some frightful guise that well nigh bids to shake fair reason on its throne. 58

While The Cock and Anchor is primarily concerned with conflicts in Irish history, its roots are firmly planted

in the Gothic romance. The influence of Sir Walter Scott is strongly felt both in the treatment of history and in the ill-fated love-affair of Mary Ashwoode and Edmund O'Connor. This "love plot" is, in fact, an Irish revision of Scott's The Bride of Lammermoor. Like the Master of Ravenswood, Edmund O'Connor is a surviving member of a ruined aristocratic family and has "a character of resolution and melancholy which seemed to tell of more griefs and perils overpast than men so young in the world can generally count."⁵⁹ Mary Ashwoode, like her Scott counterpart, is a frail blossom who declines into delirium when separated from her lover. In a review of the novel in the Dublin University Magazine, the writer makes a significant mistake in this regard. Describing the plight of Mary, he states, "The death of her father releases poor Lucy from one persecution, to encounter one still more terrible."⁶⁰ The presence of Scott is obviously at the back of someone else's mind as well.

The maze is suggested by the form of Morley Court, the home of the Ashwoodes. The nature of the house should be familiar to readers of the earlier romances. It is

very large and very irregular. The main part of the dwelling, and what appeared to be the original nucleus, upon which afteradditions had grown like fantastic incrustations, was built of deep-red brick, with many recesses and projections and gables, and tall and grotesquely-shaped chimneys, and having broad, jutting, heavily-sashed windows, such as belonged to Henry the Eighth's time, to which period the origin of the building was, with sufficient probability referred . . . To the rearward extended the rambling additions which necessity

or caprice had from time to time suggested, as the place, in the lapse of years, passed into the hands of different masters. (I, 238)

The Court is approached through grounds which are also suggestive of a maze. The paths to the house are described as "winding their green and sequestered ways through many a varied scene of rural beauty" (I, 36). We later discover that the gardens around the house contain symbolic hedges, "these rustic labyrinths" as Lord Aspenly, the old fop, calls them (I, 309). This web of labyrinthine imagery which surrounds the house becomes significant and ominous in the light of the deception practised upon the heroine and her lover by her family.

Virtuous and trusting themselves, Mary and Edmond are unaware of the lengths to which Henry Ashwoode and Sir Richard will go to prevent their being together. Edmond states that he will not accommodate himself to the "cramp and crooked habits of thought and feeling" (I, 164) of Sir Richard, but he is unable to see through the circumstantial evidence which the Ashwoodes present as proof that Mary is unfaithful. Sir Richard, in turn, cynically comments that Edmond is "what they call a frank honest sort of fellow, and is, of course, very easily led; and, in short--made a fool of" (I, 160). In contrast to the "straightforwardness" of the heroes, the thought processes of many Victorian villains are represented as devious and circuitous, which is appropriate since, in their roles as intriguers and schemers, the villains function as perverse versions of

Daedalus, entangling the hero and heroine in duplicity and illusion. In order to divide the lovers, Henry Ashwoode pretends to friendship with O'Connor and tells him of Mary's "infatuation" with Lord Aspenly. The letters between Mary and Edmond are intercepted and she is held a virtual prisoner in the house. The motif of the isolation of the heroine, threatened with death, incarceration in a madhouse, or an unwelcome marriage, familiar from Mrs. Radcliffe's novels, is a favourite with Le Fanu and recurs in several later novels.

Mary is separated from all means of assistance in order to overcome her refusal to marry Nicholas Blarden who is blackmailing Henry. Morley Court becomes a labyrinthine trap in which evil is liberated to roam at will, spying on, yet for the most part invisible to, the heroine. Having been told that Nicholas Blarden is far away, Mary wanders through the garden:

She now approached what had been a favourite spot with her. In a gentle slope, and almost enclosed by wooded banks, was a small clear well, an ancient lichen-covered arch enclosed it; and all around in untended wildness grew the rugged thorn and dwarf oak, crowding around it with a friendly pressure, and empowering its dark clear waters with their ivy-clothed limbs . . . (III, 95)

Even in this sanctuary, she is vulnerable:

she looked quickly in the direction of the noise, and though the light had now almost entirely failed, she yet discovered, too clearly to be mistaken, the head and shoulders of Nicholas Blarden, as he pushed his way among the bushes toward the very spot where she stood.

With an involuntary cry of terror she turned, and running at her utmost speed, retraced her steps toward the old mansion. . . . (III, 96)

The house provides no refuge either; the fear of Blarden makes Mary retreat to her own room. She eventually escapes with the help of a resourceful servant-girl, Flora Guy, but the effort is too great for her and she rapidly becomes ill and dies.

In the course of the novel, the hero and heroine undergo a ritual initiation, "a brief but sorrowful trial" (III, 340), into the ways of the world. This motif is indicated by the use of maze imagery which is used by Le Fanu, not only to characterize Morley Court where Mary is imprisoned, but also to evoke the city of Dublin and its surroundings, the background for most of Edmond's adventures. Le Fanu repeatedly emphasizes the labyrinthine quality of the Irish capital city. The inn of the novel's title is situated in "one of those sinuous and narrow streets which lay in the immediate vicinity of the Castle". (I, 1). Larry O'Toole, the comic servant, walking through the city, begins "to thread the narrow and complicated lanes and streets which lay between the haunt of profligacy which we have just described, and the eastern extremity of the city" (I, 106). At another point, the hero loses his way in Phoenix Park:

he became at length so entirely involved in the pitchy gloom, that he dismounted, and taking his horse by the head, led him forward through the tangled brake, and under the knotted branches of the old hoary thorns,

stumbling among the briars and the crooked roots, and every moment encountering the sudden destruction, either of some stooping branch, or the trunk of one of the old trees; so that, altogether his progress was as tedious and unpleasant as it well could be. His annoyance became the greater as he proceeded; for he was so often compelled to turn aside, and change his course, to avoid these interruptions, that in the utter darkness he began to grow entirely uncertain whether or not he was moving in the right direction. The more he paused, and the oftener he reflected, the more entirely puzzled and bewildered did he become. (II, 304-5)

The consequence of becoming lost in the maze of Phoenix Park is that Edmond is brought close to death. He stops at a house to ask directions and discovers that he has run into a group of rebels who are plotting to restore James Stuart to the throne. Edmond is accused of being a spy and is sentenced to death. In a situation which is paralleled in the later Uncle Silas, O'Connor hears noises outside his cell and realizes that the sounds are made by those digging his grave:

As he lay in this strong agony, he heard, or thought he heard, the clank of the spade upon the stony soil without. The work was begun--the grave was opened. Madly he strained at the cords--he tugged with more than human might--but all in vain. Still with horrible monotony he heard the clank of the iron mattock tinkling and clanking in the gravelly soil. Oh! that he could have stopped his ears to exclude the maddening sound. (II, 325)

He is rescued from execution by O'Hanlon, an old companion of O'Connor's father, who informs him of the treachery of the Ashwoodes and the truth about Mary's supposed lack of faith. Confronting the possibility of imminent death brings

knowledge to the hero as he becomes cognizant of the reality of evil in the world.

In the inability of the lovers to cope with the dark forces which threaten them, Le Fanu suggests that innocence and nobility of soul are ultimately insufficient for survival in this world. Mary needs the clever, though lower-class, Flora Guy to help her escape from Blarden. Edmond is so high-minded that he cannot even suspect that he is being duped by Henry:

The notions of a systematic plot, embracing so many agents, and conducted with such deep and hellish hypocrisy, with the sole purpose of destroying affections the most beautiful, and of alienating hearts the truest, was a thought so monstrous and unnatural that it never for a second flashed upon his mind; still his heart struggled strongly against despair. (I, 236)

Mary and Edmond encounter various forms of evil in the brutish tyranny of Blarden, the self-serving egotism of Sir Richard, and the cold arrogance of Henry Ashwoode, and their love is blighted by the experience. Riding to meet Mary, after all the plots have been revealed, Edmond twice meets an unknown woman:

the face [was] white as the foam of the river, and the eyes preternaturally large and wild, were raised fixedly toward the broad bright moon; this phantom, for such it was, for a moment occupied his gaze, and in the next, with a scream so piercing and appalling that his very marrow seemed to freeze at the sound, she threw herself forward as though she would cast herself upon the horse and rider--and, was gone. (III, 334-5)

The figure is that of a Banshee whose cry signifies that Mary is dead. The lovers are denied even a death-bed farewell; the conclusion of their relationship is thus one of Le Fanu's bleakest: "'Twere vain to tell of a frantic grief--words cannot tell, nor imagination conceive, the depth--the wildness--the desolation of that woe" (III, 340). The only consolation offered is the implicit reunion of the lovers after death, although this possibility is not strongly pressed. That the love-affair is doomed is suggested, not only by the metaphorical wanderings of the lovers through the "mazes," but also by an elegiac note which is struck early in the work. O'Connor walks to Morley Court through a landscape coloured by an autumnal sunset:

In the transition from the bustle of a town to the lonely quiet of the country at eventide, and especially at that season of the year when decay begins to sadden the beauties of nature, there is something at once soothing and unutterably melancholy. (I, 33)

It also takes on the quality of a memento mori, an association which becomes a Le Fanu trademark:

The saddened beauty of sea autumn, enhanced by the rich and subdued light of gorgeous sunset--the filmy mist--the stretching shadows--the serene quiet, broken only by rural sounds, more soothing even than silence--all these, contrasted with the sounds and sights of the close restless city, speak tenderly and solemnly to the heart of man of the beauty of creation, of the goodness of God, and, along with these, of the mournful condition of all nature--change, decay, and death. (I, 33-4)

The world which Le Fanu presents in his first novel is a "fallen" autumnal one in which it seems inevitable that young love is thwarted and evil survives, if not happily, then at least wealthily.

A contemporary reviewer noted the sombre quality of the conclusion as well and asked for "a little more cheerful view of human affairs--a little more restraint upon the morbid gloominess with which the waywardness of genius is too apt to colour a world in which, after all, there is sunshine enough to give many bright pictures."⁶¹ The critic of The Athenaeum (21 June, 1845) was of a similar mind, looking forward to the time when the author "shall see fit to exchange the spasms and wailings of melodrama, for the humours of men and women."⁶² In The Cock and Anchor, Le Fanu outlines what will become a favourite pattern of imprisonment within a labyrinthine structure, persecution, and escape, but stops short of completing the pattern by failing to provide the expected "happy ending." In other novels, like Uncle Silas and The Rose and the Key, this final development is usually indicated, even if only in a sketchy manner.

Uncle Silas is the novel which has generally been accorded the title of Le Fanu's masterpiece.⁶³ It develops the themes of the quest into the labyrinth and the ritual initiation which are only partially developed in The Cock and Anchor. The central action of Uncle Silas, the imprisonment of the heroine in a Gothic house and her

gradual realization of her situation, is an elaboration of Mary's plight in the previous novel. The motif of the house as maze is treated in greater detail. Bartram-Haugh, the home of her Uncle Silas, is the estate to which Maud Ruthyn, the heroine, is sent by the wishes of her dead father's will. Because of Silas's disgrace and subsequent withdrawal from the world, Bartram-Haugh has fallen into a state of neglect and disrepair. Maud describes her impression of the house:

Long corridors and galleries stretched away in dust and silence, and were crossed by others, whose dark arches inspired me in the distance with an awful sort of sadness. It was plainly one of those great structures in which you might easily lose yourself, and with a pleasing terror it reminded me of that delightful old abbey in Mrs. Radcliffe's romance, among whose silent staircases, dim passages, and long suites of lordly, but forsaken chambers, begirt without by the sombre forest, the family of La Mote secured a gloomy asylum. 64

Ironically, in light of Maud's comments, a "Radcliffean" situation will be re-enacted at Bartram-Haugh, but the emotions it will inspire in Maud will be far from "pleasing terror."

Maud is brought up at Knowl, another country-house, with few companions and under the care of her reclusive father, Austin Ruthyn, who is a Swedenborgian. For many years, he has been troubled by the scandal which is attached to his brother Silas. Some time before, Silas was implicated in the violent death at Bartram-Haugh of Tom Charke, to whom he owed money. Charke was found by his servant, lying in

blood with his throat cut. The evidence pointed to Silas as the murderer, but the windows and the door to Charke's room were locked from the inside, so murder was clearly impossible. The situation is the classic "locked-room mystery" of detective fiction. Despite his vindication, Silas's reputation was damaged and he retired completely from public life. Convinced that he can prove to the world that Silas has been wronged, Austin decides to show his faith and trust in his brother by making him the guardian of Maud after his own death, until she reaches the age of twenty-one. His will also provides that Silas will inherit everything if Maud dies before she reaches the age of majority.

Maud's romantic temperament and fascination with mysteries make her disregard the anxiety of her cousin Lady Knollys about the prospect of Silas's guardianship. Monica Knollys senses that there is something wrong with Silas, but she cannot define what it is:

Perhaps other souls than human are sometimes born into the world, and clothed in flesh. It is not only about that dreadful occurrence, but nearly always throughout his life; early and late he has puzzled me. I have tried in vain to understand him . . . He has always bewildered me, like a shifting face, sometimes smiling, but always sinister, in an unpleasant dream. (p. 156)

Maud herself will come to a similar conclusion about her uncle after she has known him for a time. Despite Austin's hopes and Maud's illusions about Silas as a wronged man, the uncle is evil and does merit the reputation which

suspicion fixed upon him. Austin's obsession with his brother's "injuries" only serves to place his daughter in deadly peril.⁶⁵

While Maud's adventures at Bartram-Haugh are overtly cast in the Gothic mold, her early life at Knowl is far from idyllic or untroubled. The primary menace at Knowl is furnished by Madame de la Rougierre, the sinister French governess. She first appears as an apparition in the moonlight and with her arrives the scent of evil. Madame both bewilders and frightens Maud. One day when Maud is out walking with the governess, an attempt is made to abduct her, an attempt in which Madame seems implicated. The event gives Maud a sudden presentiment of the nearness of malignity:

Through the smallest aperture, for a moment, I had a peep into Pandemonium. Were not peculiarities of Madame's demeanour and advice during the adventure partly accounted for by the suggestion? Could the proposed excursion to Church Scarsdale have had any purpose of the same sort? . . . Were such immeasurable treason and hypocrisy possible? (p. 89)

For most of the novel, Maud is in darkness, either literal or metaphorical. She questions events and motives but because she is, in symbolic terms, traversing the pathways of a maze, she is unable to see clearly or completely. Early in the novel, Maud describes Madame looking at her "with the peculiar smile I have mentioned, and a great finger upon her lip, like the Eleusinian priestess on the vase" (p. 19). Maud's simile is an unconsciously apt one

because Madame will become her guide to the "mysteries" of Bartram-Haugh.

Both Lady Knollys and Dr. Bryerly, a friend of Austin and a fellow-Swedenborgian, try in different ways to tell Maud about the dangers of the world and of the differences between the material world and that of the spirit. The words of Lady Knollys, who is the voice of common sense and practicality, cannot check the romantic tendency in Maud. Bryerly gives Maud advice which will have application to her experiences at Bartram-Haugh:

There are other troubles than debt and privation. Who can tell how long health may last, or when an accident may happen to the brain; what mortifications may await you in your own sphere; what unknown enemies may rise up in your path; or what slanders may asperse your name--ha, ha! . . . But what money can't do, prayer can--bear that in mind, Miss Ruthyn. We can all pray; and though thorns and snares, and stones of fire lie strewn in our way, we need not fear them. He will give his angels charge over us, and in their hands they will bear us up, for He hears and sees everywhere, and His angels are innumerable. (p. 126)

Maud, however, is an innocent who, by her own admission, does not yet have the "direful knowledge of good and evil that comes with years" (p. 41). Maud's attitude towards life seems to have been formed, like that of Jane Austen's Catherine Morland in Northanger Abbey, by her reading. When Lady Knollys asks if she really wishes to hear about Uncle Silas, since there is nothing pleasant in his story, Maud replies: "That is just the reason I wish it. If it were at all pleasant, it would be quite commonplace. I like to

hear of adventures, dangers, and misfortune; and above all, I love a mystery". (p. 55). Maud's experience at Bartram-Haugh, her symbolic progress through the labyrinth, becomes an education in the ways of evil.

While travelling to Bartram-Haugh, Maud meets some gypsies and has her palm read. Maud is told,

That I had some enemies, who should be sometimes so near as to be in the same room with me, and yet they should not be able to hurt me. That I should see blood spilt and yet not my own, and finally be very happy and splendid, like the heroine of a fairy tale. (p. 180)

Fortunately for Maud, the prophecy turns out to be an accurate forecast of ensuing events. While she is initially optimistic about her new life at Bartram-Haugh, Maud soon feels the strength of her uncle's power. Gradually she is separated from her friends and restricted in her movements until they are limited to the house and its grounds. In a moment of perception, Maud says that "it seemed to me that Bartram-Haugh was to be to me a vale of tears; or rather, in my sad pilgrimage, that valley of the shadow of death through which poor Christian fared alone and in the dark" (p. 319). Under the illusion that she is safe, Maud decides to explore a previously deserted section of the house. Rather facetiously, she tells her companion,

I am going to have a ramble up-stairs and down-stairs, like goosey-goosey-gander, and if I do light upon his [Charke's] chamber, it is all the more interesting. I feel so like Adelaide, in the Romance of the Forest, the book I was reading to you last night, when she commenced her delightful rambles

through the interminable ruined abbey in the forest. (p. 350).

Maud promptly enters a labyrinth of confusing passageways, but chooses to condense the description of her travels:

"I shall not recount with the particularity of the conscientious heroine of Mrs. Ann Radcliffe, all the suites of apartments, corridors, and lobbies, which I threaded in my ramble" (p. 351). Eventually Maud finds herself

at the entrance of a gallery, which diverged at right angles from that through which I had just passed; it was imperfectly lighted, and ended in total darkness.

I began to think how far I had already come, and to consider whether I could retrace my steps with accuracy in case of a panic, and I had serious thoughts of returning.

The idea of Mr. Charke was growing unpleasantly sharp and menacing; and as I looked down the long space before me, losing itself among ambiguous shadows, lulled in a sinister silence, and as it were inviting my entrance like a trap, I was very near yielding to the cowardly impulse. (p. 351)

Despite her fears of the "trap-like" corridors, Maud perseveres and, like Theseus, discovers a monster in the very last room, the heart of the maze, in the person of Madame. The re-appearance of the Frenchwoman is an unpleasant surprise: "The traveller who opens his sheets to slip into bed, and sees a scorpion coiled between them, may have experienced a shock the same in kind, but immeasurably less in degree" (p. 352). Maud's descriptions of Madame at this point emphasize the demonic power hidden away in the house. When Maud enters the room, Madame looks

at her "for a few seconds with a shrinking scowl, dismal and grim, as of an evil spirit detected" (p. 352). Almost immediately, however, she recovers "her old Walpurgis gaiety" (p. 352) and bursts into "a loud screeching laugh" (p. 352). The labyrinthine nature of Bartram-Haugh, illustrated by this episode, indicates that symbolically the house is an abode of evil and a version of Hell.⁶⁶

The maze-like confusion of the house is suggested again by Maud's instruction to her maid as to how to find Madame:

"What direction is her room in, Miss?"
asked Mary.

"Somewhere in that direction, Mary," I answered, pointing. "I cannot describe the turns; but I think you will find it if you go along the great passage to your left, on getting to the top of the stairs, till you come to the cross-galleries, and then turn to your left; and when you have passed four or perhaps five doors, you must be very near it, and I am sure she will hear if you call."
(p. 383)

The pattern of the "journey into darkness" represented by Maud's initially light-hearted search for the murder room will be repeated in the trip to Dover. The serio-comic discovery of Madame functions as a foreshadowing of the revelation which will occur when Maud is forced to return to the centre of the maze a second time.

The real monster in the maze is Silas, who had planned all long to get his hands on Maud's fortune in one way or another. Although Maud is forced to realize that he is a malign presence, she cannot comprehend his nature. He remains undefinable, but there are hints of the demonic

Lie down on your bed there, and suffer quietly" (p. 407).

Maud realizes that there is no one to help her but God, and she must face the prospect of death alone. Her descent into despair will ultimately have a refining effect upon her nature as the conclusion to the novel reveals. As the gypsy foretold, death passes by Maud closely, but she herself is safe. Like Persephone, she is warned not to eat or drink any of that food which is sent into her room (p. 415).

However, Maud, unlike Persephone, heeds this advice and is able to escape from the "underworld." Madame drinks the wine that is meant for Maud and falls into a drugged sleep on her bed. As a result, the murderers, entering through the window which is specially hinged to give access to the room, mistake Madame for Maud and kill her instead. Under the cover of darkness, Maud leaves the room. Providentially she manages to retrace her steps successfully and to escape from the maze. She must rely on the help of Tom Brice who had previously betrayed her to Silas. However, in this crisis, goodness prevails:

Suddenly he said, in a wild, fierce whisper--
"Never say another word" (I had not uttered
one). "They shan't hurt ye, Miss; git ye in;
I don't care a damn!"

It was an uncouth speech. To me it was
the voice of an angel. With a burst of
gratitude that sounded in my own ears like a
laugh, I thanked God for those blessed words.
(p. 419)

Tom brings her to the house of Lady Knollys and safety.

In the attempt on Maud, the pattern of Charke's murder is re-enacted and the truth about that previous crime becomes

Lie down on your bed there, and suffer quietly" (p. 407).

Maud realizes that there is no one to help her but God, and she must face the prospect of death alone. Her descent into despair will ultimately have a refining effect upon her nature as the conclusion to the novel reveals. As the gypsy foretold, death passes by Maud closely, but she herself is safe. Like Persephone, she is warned not to eat or drink any of that food which is sent into her room (p. 415).

However, Maud, unlike Persephone, heeds this advice and is able to escape from the "underworld." Madame drinks the wine that is meant for Maud and falls into a drugged sleep on her bed. As a result, the murderers, entering through the window which is specially hinged to give access to the room, mistake Madame for Maud and kill her instead. Under the cover of darkness, Maud leaves the room. Providentially she manages to retrace her steps successfully and to escape from the maze. She must rely on the help of Tom Brice who had previously betrayed her to Silas. However, in this crisis, goodness prevails:

Suddenly he said, in a wild, fierce whisper--
"Never say another word" (I had not uttered
one). "They shan't hurt ye, Miss; git ye in;
I don't care a damn!"

It was an uncouth speech. To me it was
the voice of an angel. With a burst of
gratitude that sounded in my own ears like a
laugh, I thanked God for those blessed words.
(p. 419)

Tom brings her to the house of Lady Knollys and safety.

In the attempt on Maud, the pattern of Charke's murder is re-enacted and the truth about that previous crime becomes

apparent. The secret of the maze is disclosed to the world.

The conclusion of the novel finds Maud happily married and with her own family. From a naïve girl who loves "a mystery," she has matured into a woman who desires insight into deep spiritual truths:

This world is a parable--the habitation of symbols--the phantoms of spiritual things immortal shown in material shape. May the blessed second-sight be mine--to recognize under these beautiful forms of earth the ANGELS who wear them; for I am sure we may walk with them if we will, and hear them speak! (p. 424)

Because of her passage through the labyrinth, Maud has acquired an intuitive sense of the immanent presence of virtue in the world. Her experience has taught her that goodness can reside in many forms, as the examples of Dr. Bryerly, her cousin Milly, Meg, and Tom Brice demonstrate. Maud's ritual initiation at Bartram-Haugh has turned her from her own romantic obsessions to more practical matters; as she says, "The shy useless girl you have known is now a mother--trying to be a good one" (p. 424). As has been shown in the novels of Dickens and Collins, the passage through the labyrinth is a process of education which furnishes the initiate with a more realistic and comprehensive understanding of the world.

As in the fiction discussed previously in this chapter, the labyrinth figures as an important setting in these novels by Le Fanu. There are some differences, however,

in the deployment of the image by each of the three writers. In the four novels of Dickens considered here, the image of the labyrinth is most frequently used to describe the urban experience. In its form as the city-maze, the emblem is developed in a more detailed and graphic manner by Dickens than it is in the comparable settings of Collins and Le Fanu. In contrast to Dickensian London, the "house-forest" of London in The Woman in White and the Dublin of The Cock and Anchor remain generalized and anonymous locations. Dickens, with his stronger awareness of social milieu and the accumulated circumstances which ensnare his characters, sees the labyrinth literally around him in London. His characters are obliged to go out into the world to grapple with its problems and to chart for themselves and for others its perplexing ways. As shall be seen in later chapters, Collins and Le Fanu are more interested in the labyrinth "within" their characters and the distortion of perception which that entails.

For Dickens, the image of the labyrinth in its various forms becomes an important vehicle for his view of the expanding nineteenth-century city where there is a real danger of becoming physically, and consequently morally, lost. The emblem of the maze offers a creative means of illustrating in physical terms the "threatening and undomesticated otherness"⁶⁷ of this changing London. The pattern of the journey through the labyrinth reveals Dickens's feelings of ambiguity toward the urban world. While the city-maze is fascinating to explore, it is also

a form of Hell which can destroy through corruption, riot, and disease. Within its turnings, the labyrinth of London harbours genuine evil and dangers which must be avoided and yet, at the same time, the heart of the maze must be penetrated, and its hidden monsters revealed if these corrupting forces are to be opposed effectively. Through his novels, Dickens shows that for his characters the journey to knowledge involves a ritual initiation in the form of a confrontation with evil.

Although the pattern of ritual initiation is thematically and structurally important for Collins, he uses the maze as a physical setting in a far less imaginative way than Dickens and Le Fanu. For him, the labyrinth in its physical form is a practical device useful for the manipulation and advancement of the plot; its appeal lies in its function as a convenient place in which to keep people and secrets until required.

Le Fanu, unlike Collins, develops the maze image for its atmospheric value, as in the Gothic-influenced depictions of Bartram-Haugh and Morley Court. Because physical surroundings are described in emotional terms, the physical maze blurs into a psychological one and the two become inextricably connected. As is seen in Uncle Silas, the labyrinth of Bartram-Haugh exists primarily through Maud's reactions to it; her descriptions of the house can be interpreted as a map of her own mind. As in the works by Dickens and Collins, although to varying degrees, the physical setting symbolically reflects the moral and spiritual

journeys upon which Le Fanu's characters embark. For Le Fanu, as for the others, the image of the labyrinth provides a structure through which he can express and develop the theme of ritual initiation.

Notes: Chapter One

¹ The influence of the Gothic school upon later writers in general and Charles Dickens in particular has been amply illustrated in various critical works. See, among others, Archibald Coolidge, "Charles Dickens and Mrs. Radcliffe: A Farewell to Wilkie Collins," Dickensian, 58 (1962), 112-16; Gareth Cordery, "The Gothic and Sentimental in Charles Dickens," Diss. Univ. of Wisconsin Madison 1975; Earle Davis, The Flint and the Flame (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1963); L. Kirkpatrick, "The Gothic Flame of Charles Dickens," Victorian Newsletter, 21 (1967), 20-24; James Hunt Madox, Jr., "The Survival of the Gothic Romance in the Nineteenth Century Novel: A Study of Scott, Charlotte Brontë, and Dickens," Diss. Yale Univ. 1970; R. C. Maxwell, Jr., "G. M. Reynolds, Dickens, and the Mysteries of London," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 32 (1977), 188-213; W. C. Phillips, Dickens, Reade, and Collins: Sensation Novelists (1919; rpt. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1962); Summers, The Gothic Quest.

² For other discussions of Dickens and the image of the labyrinth, see Bert G. Hornback, "Noah's Arkitecture": A Study of Dickens's Mythology (Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 178-80; Steven Marcus, Dickens: From Pickwick to Dombey (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), pp. 63-64, 255-58; J. Hillis Miller, Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), pp. 54-66, 110-13, 204-05; Ann Ronald, "Dickens's Gloomiest Gothic Castle," Dickens Studies Newsletter, 6 (1975), 71-75; and Schwarzbach, Dickens and the City. Perhaps the most recent consideration of the Dickensian use of the metaphor of the labyrinth, particularly as it is linked to the theme of detection, is Patrick Kelly's "The Way of the Labyrinth: Mystery and Detection in the Novels of Charles Dickens," Diss. Univ. of Toronto 1980.

³ Frye, Secular Scripture, p. 54.

⁴ Frye, Anatomy, p. 150.

⁵ Frye, Secular Scripture, p. 129.

⁶ Donald Fanger, Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965), p. 79.

7 Mayhew, p. 9.

8 Robert Barnard, Imagery and Theme in the Novels of Dickens (New York: Humanities Press, 1974), pp. 13-14. See also "Gone Astray," Household Words 7 (13 Aug., 1853), 553-57. In this article, Dickens describes how he got lost himself in London when a child. The fear of being adrift in the city, a recurring theme in the novels and especially apparent in Oliver's attitude, would appear to originate in Dickens's own experience. He writes, "The child's unreasoning terror of being lost, comes as freshly on me now as it did then. I verily believe that if I had found myself astray at the North Pole instead of in the narrow, crowded, inconvenient street over which the lion presided, I could not have been more terrified" (p. 553)

9 Marcus, p. 256.

10 Hornback, p. 30.

11 Barnard, p. 14.

12 Charles Dickens, The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964), p. 645.

13 Edward LeComte, Afterword, Oliver Twist (Scarborough: New American Library, 1961), p. 484; see also Humphrey House, Introd., The Adventures of Oliver Twist (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964), pp. viii-ix; and Marcus, pp. 79-82.

14 Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. lxii. All subsequent references are to this edition and are cited in the text.

15 Miller, p. 58. For another discussion of Fagin as a devil, see Lauriat Lane, Jr., "The Devil in Oliver Twist," Dickensian, 52 (June, 1956), 132-36. While Dickens does make use of demonic imagery to describe Fagin, he does not make the character the powerful and manipulative satanic force that the later villains are. If Fagin is a devil, then he is a minor one under the control of Monks. The connection between London and Hell, suggested through the maze imagery, is less strongly presented in Oliver Twist than Miller's comment would indicate and is certainly more overtly drawn in other novels.

16 Miller, p. 62.

17 Schwarzbach, p. 239, n. 6.

18 The description of Fagin, quoted below (p. 121, Clarendon Press Edition), is incorrectly cited by Hornback as being a description of Oliver; see Hornback, p. 178.

19 Miller, pp. 56-57; Schwarzbach, pp. 45-46.

- 20 Miller, p. 59.
- 21 Charles Dickens, The Old Curiosity Shop (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 19. All subsequent references are to this edition and are cited in the text.
- 22 Miller, p. 59.
- 23 Malcolm Andrews, Introd., The Old Curiosity Shop (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 19.
- 24 See John Lucas, The Melancholy Man (London: Methuen, 1970), p. 82 and Schwarzbach, p. 70.
- 25 Kirkpatrick similarly interprets the Trents' journey as a "flight from responsibility," p. 21.
- 26 Charles Dickens, Barnaby Rudge (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961), p. 26. All subsequent references are to this edition and are cited in the text.
- 27 While one could argue that goodness in the form of Nell resides in the urban labyrinth of The Old Curiosity Shop, she is clearly an alien presence there and her reaction is to flee. Although other characters, Dick Swiveller, the Marchioness, Kit Nubbles, and the "single gentleman" live in the city, none of them is accorded the "actively good" status of Mr. Brownlow or Gabriel Varden. At the conclusion of The Old Curiosity Shop, as well, most of the virtuous people, like those of Oliver Twist, move to the suburbs, away from the central core.
- 28 Harold Folland, "The Doer and the Deed: Theme and Pattern in Barnaby Rudge," PMLA, 74 (1959), p. 407.
- 29 Schwarzbach, pp. 70, 77-79.
- 30 Folland, p. 417.
- 31 As some critics, Ronald, Schwarzbach, and Alice Van Buren Kelley principally among them, have discovered, the labyrinth is a significant motif in the novel. Both Schwarzbach and Kelley, in "The Bleak Houses of Bleak House," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 25 (1970), 253-68, point out the labyrinthine nature of Jarndyce's Bleak House and its reflection in other settings, while Schwarzbach goes on to contrast that apparently benign location with the "terrible labyrinth" of London (p. 137): Ronald calls the London of this novel "Dickens's Gloomiest Gothic Castle," seeing in the city his ultimate expansion of the Gothic structure (p. 71). She states further that "Dickens incorporates the image of a labyrinth in many of the Bleak House settings and thus imposes an impression of a Gothic castle on many of the other locales as well"

(M. A. Ronald, "Functions of Setting in the Novel: From Mrs. Radcliffe to Charles Dickens," *Diss. Northwestern Univ.* 1970, p. 212). While Ronald is correct to see the maze as the foundation for the imagery of setting, her comment that the frequent appearance of the image recalls the Gothic alone is reductive. As I have argued previously, the image predates the Gothic and is used by Dickens in more complex ways, especially in Bleak House, than the Gothic connection suggests.

32 The image appears even more extensively in Little Dorrit, but its usage in that work repeats the patterns and connections established previously, although on a larger scale. As in Oliver Twist, The Old Curiosity Shop, and Barnaby Rudge, the urban maze is the dominant setting for Little Dorrit. The approach to Bleeding Heart Yard is through "a maze of shabby streets" (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 129, and Miss Wade lives in "a labyrinth near Park Lane" (p. 316). As in Bleak House, Dickens creates the sense in the reader that all of the action of the novel takes place within a labyrinth, whatever the particular location. "Wigglomeration" has become institutionalized in the Circumlocution Office, whose very name is a reminder of the maze image.

33 Charles Dickens, Bleak House (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), p. 766. All subsequent references are to this edition and are cited in the text.

34 Schwarzbach, p. 140.

35 Schwarzbach, p. 140.

36 J. Hillis Miller, Introduction, Bleak House (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 32.

37 See Trevor Blount, "Dickens's Slum Satire in Bleak House," Modern Language Review, 60 (1965), 340-51, and his "The Graveyard Satire in Bleak House in the Context of 1850," Review of English Studies, 14 (1963), 370-78.

38 Michael Steig, "Dickens's Excremental Vision," Victorian Studies, 13 (1970), p. 353.

39 Jarndyce's comment is echoed in a statement made to the heroine of Little Dorrit which emphasizes the similarity of the two heroines. When Amy goes to find her sister Fanny at the theatre, she must pass through confusion and "a maze of dust" (Little Dorrit, p. 227). Surprised that Amy did not get lost in her travels, Fanny says, "You can make your way anywhere, I believe. I couldn't have managed it, Amy, though I know so much more of the world" (p. 227).

⁴⁰ Henry James, "Mrs. Braddon," The Nation (9 Nov., 1865) as quoted in Wilkie Collins: The Critical Heritage (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 122.

⁴¹ Wilkie Collins, "Letter of Dedication," Basil (New York: Dover Publications, 1980), pp. iv-viii.

⁴² The matter of influence between Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens is a particularly complicated, not to say muddy, one. Much critical crossfire has been exchanged; arguments have been offered to support the idea that Collins was a major influence on Dickens in the area of plot construction and this has been categorically denied. See Robert Ashley, Wilkie Collins (London, 1952; rpt. Folcroft, Pa., 1974); T. W. Hill, "The Enigma of Wilkie Collins," Dickensian, 48 (1952), 54-57; Earle Davis, The Flint and the Flame; Archibald Coolidge, "Charles Dickens and Mrs. Radcliffe," Dickensian, 58 (1962), 112-16; and J. W. T. Ley, "Wilkie Collins's Influence upon Dickens," Dickensian, 20 (1924), 65-69. Even T. S. Eliot has entered this critical fray, although with a calmer and more balanced judgment than most of the others. He manages to skirt the main issue by discussing "resemblance" rather than direct influence (Selected Essays [New York, 1947; London: Faber, 1969] 461-62). The most recent treatment is Sue Lonoff's "Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 35 (Sept., 1980), 150-69. This subject is one which demands an examination of its own and cannot be adequately considered here. Suffice it to say that these men were friends and collaborators and were aware of each other's work.

⁴³ Wilkie Collins, The Dead Secret (New York: Dover Publications, 1979), p. 28. All subsequent references are to this edition and are cited in the text.

⁴⁴ Keith Reierstad, "The Demon in the House; OR, The Domestication of Gothic in the Novels of Wilkie Collins," Diss. Univ. of Pennsylvania 1976, pp. 210-11.

⁴⁵ Behind Sarah's injunction is the motif of the "forbidden room" which appears in the story of Bluebeard and in other folktales. See W. A. Clouston, Popular Tales and Fictions (Edinburgh, 1887; rpt. Detroit: Singing Tree Press, 1968), I, 198-205. As Clouston suggests, the entrance into the "forbidden room," an action of disobedience which brings knowledge, is a displaced version of the Fall.

⁴⁶ Henry Phillips, Floral Emblems (London: Saunders and Otley, 1825), p. 202.

- 47 J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, trans. Jack Sage (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), 2nd edition, pp. 46-48.
- 48 Kenneth Robinson, Wilkie Collins (London: Bodley Head, 1951), p. 104.
- 49 Ashley, p. 52.
- 50 Reierstad, p. 211.
- 51 Reierstad, p. 211.
- 52 William Wilkie Collins, The Woman in White (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1980), p. 571. All subsequent references are to this edition are are cited in the text.
- 53 Of The Dead Secret, Ashley writes that "the narrative presents hide and seek in its most exciting form--the convergence of rival parties upon a hidden object" (p. 52).
- 54 While it is not known if they ever met in person, Le Fanu and Dickens did correspond for a short time. Several of Le Fanu's stories appeared in All the Year Round, and Dickens advised Le Fanu about characterization in The Rose and the Key which was later serialized in the periodical. A critical piece by Le Fanu, entitled "Modern Novel and Romance" in the Dublin University Magazine of April 1863 reveals that he was aware of and admired the fiction of Wilkie Collins whom he called "the greatest living master of the enigma novel" (p. 437).
- 55 Walter Edens, "Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu: A Minor Victorian and his Publisher," Diss. Univ. of Illinois 1963, p. 22.
- 56 Quoted by Edens, p. 119.
- 57 Herbert van Thal, Introd., The Cock and Anchor (London: Cassell, 1967), p. xi.
- 58 Montague Summers, "Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu and his Houses," Architectural Design and Construction, (May, 1932), p. 297.
- 59 Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, The Cock and Anchor (New York: Arno Press, 1977), I, 7. All subsequent references are to this edition are are cited in the text.
- 60 "The Cock and Anchor," Dublin University Magazine, 26 (Nov., 1845), p. 610.
- 61 "The Cock and Anchor;" p. 624.

62 "Our Library Table," Athenaeum, (21 June, 1845), 609.

63 See, among others, "New Novels," Athenaeum, (7 January, 1865), 16; E. Benson, "Sheridan Le Fanu," The Spectator (21 February, 1931), pp. 263-64; Elizabeth Bowen, Introduction, Uncle Silas (London: Cresset Press, 1947.); and S. M. Ellis, "Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu," The Bookman (October, 1916), pp. 15-21.

64 Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, Uncle Silas (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1980), p. 196. All subsequent references are to this edition are cited in the text.

65 In Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland and his Introduction to the Oxford University Press edition of the novel, W. J. McCormack discusses the duality of Austin and Silas in connection with the Swedenborgian principles about the continuity of life after death. See Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp. 163-73, 181-85; Introduction, Uncle Silas (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1981), pp. x-xiii.

66 As McCormack indicates in his discussion of the novel, a connection between Bartram-Haugh and Hell is explicitly made by Bryerly when he reads part of Swedenborg's Heaven and Hell to Maud. See Sheridan Le Fanu, pp. 175-76 and Introduction, p. xii.

67 Schwarzbach, p. 220.

Chapter 2:

Variations on an Image

I: The False Guide

So spake the Enemy of Mankind enclos'd
In Serpent, Inmate bad, and toward Eve
Address'd his way, not with indented wave,
Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,
Circular base of rising folds, that tow'r'd
Fold above Fold, a surging Maze, his Head
Crested aloft, and Carbuncle his Eyes.
Paradise Lost (IX.494-500)

The first chapter has examined the effect which an entry into the physical labyrinth has upon certain characters of nineteenth-century fiction. The present chapter will consider other ways in which the image is used to develop different versions of the theme of entrapment. In Seth Pecksniff of Martin Chuzzlewit and Mr. Vholes of Bleak House, Dickens presents versions of the false guide, villains who entrap their victims by offering to induct them into spurious "mysteries."

Pecksniff has set himself up as a teacher of architecture. None of his pupils, however, learns to do much more than construct "in the air a vast quantity of Castles, Houses of Parliament, and other Public Buildings."¹ He has made his own reputation as an architect by appropriating the designs of his more talented pupils and passing them

off as his own work. When Martin and Mark arrive back in England from America, they witness the laying of the cornerstone of the school which Pecksniff has "designed." In fact, the conception was Martin's and his former "teacher" has only ruined it by putting in extra windows. Pecksniff may claim to be an architect and builder, like the mythic Daedalus, but in only one respect is he like that character, in his ability to devise traps: "His genius lay in ensnaring parents and guardians, and pocketing premiums" (p. 13). His true creativity is exercised, not in architectural projects, but in the maintenance of his persona and in the pursuit of money. He also takes on the function of moral arbiter, but he is as fraudulent in this role as he is in that of teacher. As certain perceptive characters notice, Pecksniff works through the distortion of language and ethics. It is pointed out that

Mr. Pecksniff was in the frequent habit of using any word that occurred to him as having a good sound, and rounding a sentence well, without much care for its meaning. And he did this so boldly, and in such an imposing manner that he would sometimes stagger the wisest people with his eloquence, and make them gasp again. (p. 15)

In this respect, Pecksniff's methods mirror the way in which the majority of Americans whom Martin meets act. Of Mr. Elijah Pogrom, for example, it is said that "he greatly favoured the free and independent custom (a very harmless, and agreeable one) of procuring information of any sort in any kind of confidence, and afterwards perverting it publicly

in any manner that happened to suit him . . ." (p. 533).

This description is comparable to what Pecksniff does when he overhears Mary Graham and Tom Pinch in the church. Pecksniff "turns the tables" on Tom and claims to have been betrayed by Tom in order to safeguard his own reputation. Like the Americans who are similarly governed by self-interest, Pecksniff operates through the distortion of the truth. His moral pose is an effective cloak for his mercenary ambitions. His power to manipulate others is based upon the appearance of moral rectitude and the ability to assert his own desires under the guise of disinterestedness and "public spirit." He erects "moral labyrinths" by which he manages to ensure his own good fame and the confusion of his enemies; instead of resolving problems, he creates new ones which he turns to his own advantage. Therefore, he is able to sow dissension among the various members of the Chuzzlewit family while appearing to be the upholder of familial values. While Pecksniff preaches morality, his precepts have little bearing on his own behaviour; by some he is likened to "a direction-post, which is always telling the way to a place, and never goes there . . ." (p. 12). This particular image neatly captures the essence of Pecksniff as a misleading instructor both of architecture and morality. In light of his claims to lead others, it is ironic that Pecksniff himself is in a labyrinth: "All his life long he had been walking up and down the narrow ways and by-places, with a hook in one hand and a crook in the other, scraping all sorts of

valuable odds and ends into his pouch" (p. 328). This maze is the trap of Pecksniff's own greed which will finally cause him to over-reach himself and bring about his own financial ruin.

Pecksniff may clearly be a hypocrite, but he is not easy to forestall. His real character is seen by Martin, Mary, Tom Pinch, and John Westlock, but they are powerless against him because he still retains a controlling hand on their destinies. It is only by playing Pecksniff's own deceptive charade that old Martin can outflank and discredit him. Pecksniff's persona is destroyed when other people comprehend his motives; it is then that his true nature becomes evident. There is a sudden glimpse of the real man after Mary Graham has escaped from him:

. . . he seemed to be shrunk and reduced; to be trying to hide himself within himself; and to be wretched at not having the power to do it. His shoes looked too large; his sleeve looked too long; his hair looked too limp; his features looked too mean; his exposed throat looked as if a halter would have done it good. For a minute or two, in fact, he was hot and pale, and mean, and sly, and slinking, and consequently not at all Pecksniffian.
(p. 485)

This real self is exposed once for all by old Martin at the conclusion of the novel. Like Duessa in Spenser's Faerie Queene, Pecksniff represents a type of evil which protects itself and ensnares others through the projection of a pleasing, but illusory, image. The "spell" is broken by a recognition of the genuine character behind the façade; Pecksniff is revealed as "the incarnation of all selfishness

and treachery" (p. 796). Tom Pinch is forced to realize that his idol, "the moral Pecksniff," existed only as a façade. In reality, Tom discovers, "there was no Pecksniff; there had never been a Pecksniff . . ." (p. 502). Once recognized in its true form and exposed, the evil represented by Pecksniff is not only thwarted, but also ceases to exist.

Although Pecksniff is the character who most thoroughly exemplifies the ability to construct illusory façades, he is not the sole possessor of that faculty. In the world of the novel, appearances are frequently deceptive. Many of the characters, for whatever purpose, create false personas to mask the truth. The creation of "Tigg Montague" by Montague Tigg and of "Mrs. Harris" on the part of Mrs. Gamp are just two examples of this perverse creativity. The Anglo-Bengalee Disinterested Loan and Life Assurance Company is a swindle given respectability by its atmosphere of efficiency and the imposing waistcoat of Bullamy the porter. The whole American episode can be taken as a prolonged look below the surface of "Democracy" and "Independence." The much-touted Eden turns out to be "the grim domains of the Giant Despair" (p. 377) instead of a flourishing colony. Pecksniff, far from being unique, is a characteristic citizen of this delusive world.

It is metaphorically apt that the London residence of the devious Pecksniff should be the labyrinthine Todgers's. Pecksniff's skill as a guide for others is undercut by his own difficulty in finding Todgers's when he comes to London.

Maze-like in itself, this building is situated within a labyrinth:

You couldn't walk about in Todgers's neighbourhood, as you could in any other neighbourhood. You groped your way for an hour through lanes and bye-ways, and court-yards, and passages; and you never once emerged upon anything that might be reasonably called a street. (p. 127)

The narrator comments that "Todgers's was in a labyrinth, whereof the mystery was known but to a chosen few" (p. 127).

Critics who have written about this image in Martin Chuzzlewit have, for the most part, considered Todgers's in isolation, apart from the patterns of the novel; they have also described it as a "benign" labyrinth.² While it is true that there are no threats of death or violence lurking in the city, as there are in Oliver Twist, Barnaby Rudge, or Bleak House, Todgers's, when seen in connection with the larger context, is less benign than it would appear at first.

Todgers's Commercial Boarding House with its labyrinthine structure serves an emblematic function in the novel. Todgers's is an allegorical House of Self which reflects the themes of the novel. The convoluted progress both to Todgers's and within the house itself represents the warped and twisted nature of the personality ruled by selfishness. The "grand mystery" of the place concerns its cellerage:

approachable only by a little back door and a rusty grating; which cellerage within the memory of man had had no connexion with the house, but

had always been the freehold property of somebody else, and was reported to be full of wealth: though in what shape--whether in silver, brass, or gold, or butts of wine, or casks of gunpowder--was matter of profound uncertainty and supreme indifference to Todgers's, and all its inmates. (pp. 129-30)

The "treasure" which is underneath and cut off from the rest of the house symbolizes the human heart, similarly isolated by barriers of pride and obstinacy. Dickens alludes to this symbolic connection when he describes the relationship of Mercy and Mrs. Todgers after Mercy's marriage to Jonas. Mrs. Todgers is seen to resemble her house:

the main chance--it was such a very small one in her case, that she might have been excused for looking sharp after it, lest it should entirely vanish from her sight--had taken a firm hold on Mrs. Todgers's attention. But in some odd nook in Mrs. Todgers's breast, up a great many steps, and in a corner easy to be overlooked, there was a secret door, with 'Woman' written on the spring, which, at a touch from Mercy's hand, had flown wide open, and admitted her for shelter. (p. 585)

Mrs. Todgers can overcome mercenary considerations and respond with compassion when the need arises. For other characters, however, the labyrinth of self is not so easily overcome.

The maze is a symbolically appropriate image for Martin Chuzzlewit which focuses upon deceit and hypocrisy. Old Martin describes what he has discovered in his exploration of the labyrinth of the self:

Treachery, deceit, and low design; hatred of competitors, real or fancied, for my favour; meanness, falsehood; baseness, and servility;

. . . or an assumption of honest independence, almost worse than all; these are the beauties which my wealth has brought to light. Brother against brother, child against parent, friends treading on the faces of friends, this is the social company by whom my way has been attended. (p. 39)

Old Martin sees that many have learned to turn this maze-like world to their own advantage. The peculiarity of the opportunistic Chevy Slyme is, as Montague Tigg tells Pecksniff, "that he is always waiting round the corner. . . . He is round the corner at this instant" (p. 46). Slyme is representative of many characters in this world who are metaphorically "waiting round the corner" for others. Old Martin laments the apparent treachery of his grandson, "A new plot; a new plot! Oh self, self, self! At every turn nothing but self" (p. 42). The danger here may be less overtly threatening, but it is still serious. Evil in this novel is parasitic, financially and morally. In Martin Chuzzlewit, one is less likely to be killed than to be swindled.

As a false guide to the "mysteries" of architecture and morality, about which he really knows very little, Pecksniff functions as an ironic Ariadne. It is significant that Dickens makes Pecksniff an architect; his methods, which are destructive rather than constructive, reveal a perversion of the creative impulse. Instead of creating order and harmony in his building plans and in his relationships with people, Pecksniff literally creates chaos and disharmony. In Martin Chuzzlewit, Dickens shows that it is self-seeking

characters like Pecksniff who are responsible for the problems which currently exist. The confusing nature of London, typified by the difficulty which people have in finding Todgers's, Dickens would suggest, is the fault of incompetent architects and planners like Pecksniff.

The city is clearly getting out of control and is beginning to perplex and to mystify both the outsiders who visit it and those who inhabit it. The Monument, as seen from the roof of Todgers's, is described "with every hair erect upon his golden head, as if the doings of the city frightened him" (p. 130). This fear is hardly unusual when the view of London from there is of "wilderness upon wilderness" (p. 130). Tom Pinch gets lost very easily while trying to find John Westlock's lodgings in Furnival's Inn. This sense of physical confusion reinforces the distance between the inhabitants of the city. Tom Pinch notes from his reading of the newspaper that those who have services to offer never seem to get together with those who require these services (p. 567).

The condition of the city, in both physical and moral terms, is approaching that which we find in Bleak House where we encounter Tulkinghorn and Snagsby walking through the evening crowd "in whose way the forensic wisdom of ages has interposed a million of obstacles to the transaction of the commonest business of life" (p. 123). The network of the urban maze is gradually but inexorably expanding, making all aspects of life increasingly difficult. The virtuous characters who attempt to deal with Jonas's "poisoning"

of his father find that the moral implications of the situation complicate matters more than they expected: "In a word, they were wholly unable to discover any outlet from this maze of difficulty, which did not lie through some perplexed and entangled thicket" (p. 744). It is no longer a simple matter of "doing good" to oppose evil; complex moral issues require intelligence and shrewdness to be resolved successfully.

As a perverse type of Ariadne, providing misdirection through the moral labyrinth, Pecksniff prefigures the lawyer Mr. Wholes in Bleak House. In that novel, the physical mazes of the house and the city are complemented by the maze of the law.³ The selfishness which was an individual vice in the earlier novel has become institutionalized in Bleak House. The narrator comments ironically:

The one great principle of the English law is, to make business for itself. There is no other principle distinctly, certainly, and consistently maintained through all its narrow turnings. Viewed by this light it becomes a coherent scheme, and not the monstrous maze the laity are apt to think it. Let them but once clearly perceive that its grand principle is to make business for itself at their expense, and surely they will cease to grumble. (p. 482)

The central example of the working of this "coherent scheme" is the Chancery suit of Jarndyce and Jarndyce which continues under the guidance of Mr. Tangle.⁴ Through its effect upon Richard Carstone, Jarndyce and Jarndyce points up the diminished moral condition of society. The case illustrates the desire for undeserved wealth, under the claim for justice and "rights," and carries with it a legacy of

continuing corruption and self-interest:

Shirking and sharking, in all their many varieties, have been sown broadcast by the ill-fated cause; and even those who have contemplated its history from the outermost circle of such evil, have been insensibly tempted into a loose way of letting bad things alone to take their own bad course, and a loose belief that if the world go wrong, it was, in some off-hand manner, never meant to go right. (p. 9)

The struggle with the law becomes, for Richard, an initiation comparable with that of Esther. However, where the experience of Esther is life-centred, moving toward integration with society through the acceptance of responsibility, that of Richard is death-centred, proceeding to isolation and breakdown. Richard sets out, like a questing hero, to conquer the Chancery "Monster" (p. 441); he says, "I am young and earnest; and energy and determination have done wonders many a time. Others have only half thrown themselves into it. I devote myself to it. I make it the object of my life" (p. 464). More than once he believes that he has got "at the core of that mystery" (p. 286), but his confidence is ill-founded. As Esther suggests, but he is unwilling to believe, the "truth and justice" of the case existed long ago, but have since disappeared (p. 464). For Richard, as for Miss Flite, Gridley, and Tom Jarndyce, Chancery becomes a psychological trap, a maze from which there is no escape. Esther learns from Miss Flite that to approach the Court is to be fascinated and paralyzed by it; the little madwoman says, "There's a cruel attraction in the place. You can't

leave it. And you must expect" (p. 440).

The consequence of being involved in the suit is to turn Richard inward to an obsession with his interests before all else. The psychological damage which this does to Richard is symbolically conveyed by Esther when she visits Richard at Symond's Inn and sees him "poring over a table covered with dusty bundles of papers which seemed to me like dusty mirrors reflecting his own mind" (p. 611). The extent of Richard's preoccupation is shown in his rejection of his guardian on the pretext that Jarndyce is devious and interested in the suit himself. In this attitude he resembles Harold Skimpole, whose posthumous book labels Jarndyce as "the Incarnation of Selfishness" (p. 729). Richard's condition is abetted and his quest for justice directed by his lawyer, Vholes. That Dickens means the course taken by Richard to be seen as an inversion of that followed by Esther is demonstrated by their respective "guides" to the labyrinth of the world.

Bucket, Esther's guide, and Vholes function as opposing characters: one resolves complications and the other generates them. Richard's belief in the ability of Vholes is part and parcel of his illusions about the ultimate success of his endeavours with the case. He comments on his lawyer's expertise with Chancery, "Vholes knows all their windings and turnings, and we are upon them everywhere" (p. 612). The straightforward advice of Woodcourt is dismissed as inadequate for the requirements of the situation. In contrast to Vholes and himself,

Richard says, Woodcourt "is only an outsider, and is not in the mysteries. We have gone into them, and he has not. He can't be expected to know much of such a labyrinth" (p. 612). In this comment, Richard emphasizes the theme of "ritual initiation" into the "mysteries" of the legal system. However, this mystery ritual is a counterfeit one which will have fatal consequences.

Vholes, with his three daughters and "an aged father in the Vale of Taunton" (p. 470), represents the "respectable" parasitic life which the maze of Chancery has created and rendered necessary. The description by Esther of the attorney and his client reinforces this point: "So slow, so eager, so bloodless and gaunt, I felt as if Richard were wasting away beneath the eyes of this advisor, and there was something of the Vampire in him" (p. 720). Vholes with the sharp awareness of the professional parasite realizes that Richard and his tangled suit will provide a suitable "host." This relationship becomes clear when Skimpole reveals that Vholes bribed him to furnish an introduction to Richard (p. 469). The consistent use of death-oriented imagery on the parts of Esther and of the unknown narrator to evoke Vholes suggests where his guidance of Richard will lead. Esther describes the two of them "driving away at speed to Jarndyce and Jarndyce" in a mourning coach behind a "gaunt pale horse" (p. 471). Vholes's desk, which he claims is his client's "rock" and security, "sounds as hollow as a coffin" when he raps it, although Richard does not hear it

that way (p. 485). Richard, consumed by his case, fails to understand that Vholes, like the system of English law, is interested only in prolonging the suit and thereby "making business" for himself. With such a motive, it is obvious that Vholes is a perpetuator, not a resolver, of legal mazes. His role is that of a sinister Ariadne, to lead Richard deeper and deeper into the labyrinth without seeking to help him extricate himself.

The relationship between Richard and Esther and the theme of the ordeal are further amplified by the literal and symbolic alteration in their appearances. Richard is transformed by his initiation into the legal world just as Esther is scarred by the smallpox: "There is a ruin of youth which is not like age; and into such a ruin Richard's youth and youthful beauty had all fallen away" (p. 722). Unlike Esther who is spiritually renewed by her illness, Richard falls into a decline. This destruction of Richard by the consuming lawsuit is a further development of Dickens's theme of "the initiation of children into the ways of life," mentioned in The Old Curiosity Shop. Although Richard is not a child, he has been under the shadow of Chancery all his life and, as John Jarndyce tells Esther, the lawsuit "was the curtain of Rick's cradle" (p. 435). Like Jo, Richard is an example of the waste of youth and life which can result from an irresponsible initiation into the ways of the world; even the restorative powers of an Esther Summerson cannot reclaim those who have been so blighted from birth.

Because of the poisonous influence of Chancery, the sole redemption that is possible for Richard is "beginning the world" in death. Jarndyce and Jarndyce has a parasitic, yet life-sustaining, hold on Richard. Once the case dissolves, he is free, but with all his youth and vitality gone, he can only die. Wholes, however, like the system of Chancery, continues to exist and is last seen leaving the court, looking "as if he had swallowed the last morsel of this client" (p. 760). Unlike Pecksniff, Wholes is not exposed as a false guide because the lawyer is an integral part of a self-perpetuating system. The legal labyrinth, for one reason or another, has been accepted with all its adherents as an essential, though recognizably perverse, institution necessary in urban life.⁵

II: The Maze as Asylum: The Madhouse Education

As the poor frightened deer that stands at gaze,
 Wildly determining which way to fly,
 Or one encompassed with a winding maze
 That cannot tread the way out readily,
 So with herself is she in mutiny,
 To live or die which of the twain were better
 When life is shamed and death reproachs debtor.
 Shakespeare, "The Rape of Lucrece" (1149-55)

In Uncle Silas the battle between good and evil is enacted, not only on the physical, but also on the psychological level. When Maud proves intractable, she is threatened with incarceration in an asylum. Silas undermines her resistance by implying that her grasp on reality is tenuous:

"You were always odd, niece; I begin to fear you are insane," he replied, in the same stern, icy tone:

"Oh, uncle--oh!--am I? am I mad?"

"I hope not; but you'll conduct yourself like a sane person if you wish to enjoy the privileges of one." (p. 410)

The fact that Maud has to ask whether she is sane shows her inability to direct herself in a shifting environment. She has become vulnerable because she has depended upon the external world to provide her definition; that world has now proved to be unreliable. The particular experience which has overwhelmed her with confusion and uncertainty is the illusory trip to Dover. A journey which she thought was linear has turned out to be circular, bringing her back to the place of origin. Instead of escaping from the maze, Maud is stunned by the realization that she has been brought back into its heart and by what this return implies about her fate:

I sat down at the window, and tried to appreciate my dreadful situation . . . It did not seem as if all this were really happening to me. I remember sitting at the window, and looking and blinking at the opposite side of the building, like a person unable, but striving, to see an object distinctly; and every minute pressing my hand to the side of my head and saying--

"Oh, it won't be--it won't be--Oh no!--never--it could not be!" (p. 406)

Silas clearly intends to destroy Maud by disorienting her psychologically before he murders her. While Maud is brought deeper into the house and imprisoned in a room overlooking the inner court, she is at the same time

forced deeper into herself. Joseph Henderson has written in The Wisdom of the Serpent,

The experience of the labyrinth, whether as pictorial design, a dance, a garden path, or a system of corridors in a temple, always has the same psychological effect. It temporarily disturbs the rational conscious orientation to the point that . . . the initiate is "confused" and symbolically "loses his way." Yet in this descent to chaos the inner mind is opened to the awareness of a new cosmic dimension of a transcendent nature. 6

The physical setting of the labyrinthine house points to the psychological meaning of her ordeal. Maud must draw on her faith and her powers of endurance and cunning in order to survive the "valley of the shadow of death" (p. 406). This theme is developed as well in The Rose and the Key, which works as an important variation on the endangered heiress motif.⁷

Maud Vernon, like the heroine of Uncle Silas, is a character whom others find it expedient to get "out of the way." She is an independent and willful girl whose behaviour, when interpreted in the worst possible light by her enemies, looks like madness. According to them, her pretence of being poor while on a sketching tour is evidence of a serious delusion and her tantrums reveal a suicidal streak. Believing that she is going to visit a friend at her country-house, Maud is actually sent to Glarewoods, a lunatic asylum. Maud's drive to "Carsbrook" which takes place at night is a symbolic passage into psychological darkness. It is heralded by a foreboding sunset which unsettles Maud's composure, leaving a "vague

sense of the melancholy and portentous":⁸

The sun dives into its abyss of fire. Black clouds, like girding rocks, with jagged edges dazzling as flame, encircle its descent with the yawn of a crater; and, high in air, scattered flecks of cloud, like the fragments of an explosion, hang splendouring the fading sky with tongues of fire. (II, 268)

Like her counterpart in Uncle Silas, she is separated from her family, friends, and faithful attendant, and imprisoned. The primary agent behind this action is her mother, a coldly devout woman, who hates her daughter. She believes that Maud is fascinated by Captain Vivian, who, unknown to Maud, is her half-brother. Maud, however, is "covering" for a friend, Ethel Tintern, who is secretly engaged to Vivian. Resenting her mother's criticism of her behaviour, Maud refuses to deny her attraction to Vivian, although she is indifferent to him. The true relationships between Captain Vivian, Maud, and Lady Vernon are misread all around; the asylum with its further inversion of appearance and reality is a symbolically logical development of this misunderstanding. Isolation in a madhouse becomes an effective way of "killing" Maud without incurring the guilt attached to the actual taking of her life.

Glarewoods, as befits a place of psychological entrapment, is described in the manner of a labyrinth. Ushered into a room upon her arrival, the heroine attempts to open the door:

Maud accordingly tries the handle of the particular door through which she thinks she had entered, but it will not turn; then another, with the same result. It is a rather disconcerting situation, for by this time she cannot tell by which door she had come in, or by which of all these Mr. Darkdale had gone out, each door is so like its neighbour. (III, 20-1)

The asylum is "a vast house" (III, 57) with many corridors, confusing turns, and "several zigzags" (III, 58). While walking through the halls, she is aware of people lurking in the shadows to avoid being seen by her. She also hears strange voices at night and the voice of a young man, apparently Captain Vivian, complaining of unjust imprisonment. As in a dream-world, people are seen close by, but remain out of reach: Maud tries to approach Lady Mardyke, whose guest she believes herself to be, at least three times, but her passage is blocked, and Maud cannot get to her before she disappears. One day she takes a wrong turn "in threading the long passages" (III, 98) and finds the "office" where she discovers her scissors, penknife, and paper-cutter which had previously disappeared from her possession. Being unsuspecting of where she is, as yet, Maud thinks this is curious, but does not investigate any further. A riot among the "guests" shortly afterward, a brief glimpse of the hellish chaos, reveals the true situation to Maud. Her reaction is the hysteria of a frustrated child:

"I'll not stay in this dreadful place. I'll lose my life, or I'll get out of it. Oh! mamma--mamma--how could you--could you--could you? I shall go mad. I can't stay here! I'll not eat or drink--I'll find a way, some

way, a short way. Oh, mamma! you'll be sorry then." (III, 129)

The reader feels the force of Maud's altered perception because, in terms of viewpoint, he has been "placed" with Maud. Le Fanu has carefully manipulated Maud and the reader so that they both believe they are at a country-house. The exteriors of the two places correspond in the points of colour, decoration, and the plan of the gardens. Maud also sees a notice in the social column of the newspaper which describes the company Lady Mardykes is entertaining at Carsbrook. Maud has already "met" two of the people described in the notice, not knowing that they are schizophrenics suffering from delusions. Because everything appears to be as it should, Maud does not doubt that she is at Carsbrook.

The episode at Glarewoods is meant as a time of trial which will "do a good work" in Maud (III, 156). Le Fanu comments, "God has found her a time and place in which to think upon Him, and on herself. These awful days, if they lead her to see and to amend her faults, will not have passed in vain" (III, 156). What we have here is another version of Maud Ruthyn's ordeal at Bartram-Haugh, a journey through the maze which educates through suffering. That the labyrinth, in which the heroine is imprisoned, is a lunatic asylum, develops the theme of a psychic progress even more strongly. In The Rose and the Key, the quest through the labyrinth turns "inward" and focuses on the psychological to a greater degree than in Uncle Silas.

As a girl who has been used to having her own way, Maud has become cynical beyond her years or experience. On the sketching tour, she tells her cousin, "We shan't see today a person so reckless of the future, a person with so little hope, a person who sees so little to live for, as I; or one who is so willing to die" (I, 50). Miss Max, the cousin, warns Maud that she really knows "nothing of life or of God's providence" (I, 50), but she remains unconvinced. She tells Miss Max that she feels oppressed by her rank and wealth: "You walk in the light, and I in darkness. The people who surround you, be they what they may, are at all events what they seem. When I look round, do I see images of candour? No; shadows dark and cold. I can trust no one--assassins in masquerade" (I, 50). Maud claims to see the "dark" side of her situation, but refuses to consider the "light" as well; she encounters only "a selfish, cruel world" (I, 60). This is the world which she will actually confront at Glarewoods and which will demonstrate how she has undervalued the other. Maud's stay at the asylum becomes a metaphorical descent into a psychic Hell where she is forced to witness the torments of the "damned." The most striking example occurs when Maud is made to watch the therapeutic shower-bath of the "Duchess of Falconbury," the severity of which nearly kills the patient. Maud's chief adversary at Glarewoods, the pale, black-haired Dr. Antomarchi, "all the life of whose face seems concentrated in his extraordinary eyes" (II, 83), is obviously a descendant of the satanic villain of Gothic

romance. His desires for power and wealth are greater than his moral scruples; he agrees to cooperate with Lady Vernon because of generous financial arrangements. The rumours which circulate about him after Dr. Damian dismisses him from the asylum indicate the inevitable path of his career: "some of which represent him in sore straits; others, following dark and downward paths, and picking gold and silver, 'on Jews' ground,' but in danger, all the while, of breaking his neck, and quite lost sight of by the decent upper world" (III, 310).

Stripped of her independence and the privileges which she was accustomed to take for granted, Maud must re-evaluate herself and her judgment of the world. An authorial statement outlines the moral of her plight: "We don't know what human nature can bear till it is submitted to experiment" (III, 187). As with the heroine in Uncle Silas, Maud finds herself in a situation where the usual standards do not apply. Her understanding of reality is called into question by the revelation that she has misjudged appearances. This is illustrated by the exchange with her attendant, Mercy Creswell:

"And you really think me mad?"

"I'm not fit to judge, miss; 'tis for wiser heads than me."

A longer silence than before ensued; Maud was thinking, as she leaned her head lightly on her hand.

It was a strange thought that even her companion had no faith in her sanity; horrible that her own word went for nothing. How can she prove that she is not mad? Prove a negative? (III, 166)

The nature of Maud's entrapment is plain; in a group where madness is the norm, how can she be considered abnormal? Because the external world proves hostile, Maud is compelled to look inside herself and to change those aspects of her nature which will endanger her. She learns to be patient and to accept other people: "But already Maud Vernon had grown more tolerant. In this strange seclusion, she had learned more of human nature, and had her sense of superiority more humbled, in two or three days, than in all her life before" (III, 171). As the narrator had predicted, she does find time "to think upon Him, and on herself" (III, 156). She listens as she "had never so listened to sermon before" (III, 186) to the Chaplain's words: "[he] told them how short a time man has to live, and how full of misery he is; and spoke of that beautiful world, the light of which seemed already to shine from afar on his gentle face, and make its homely lines and its traces of grief beautiful" (III, 186).

Maud is finally rescued from Glarewoods through the efforts of her friends, the discovery that her imprisonment has been purchased by her mother, and most significantly, by the evidence of her own sanity. When the Lunacy Commissioners examine her, Maud is too intimidated by the presence of Dr. Antomarchi to answer coherently. When Dr. Damian speaks with her, without Antomarchi, he becomes convinced that she is perfectly sane and therefore free to leave. Because Maud is emotionally shaken and her perceptions reordered by her journey through the labyrinth,

she is psychically reborn through her misfortune. Her sense of her own identity as a sane person is threatened, but not destroyed.

The psychic damage which results from the attempt to subvert identity is more markedly shown in Wilkie Collins's The Woman in White. The conspiracy which is detailed in this novel has its point of origin in the likeness between two women, Laura Fairlie, later Lady Glyde, and Anne Catherick. In a plot to seize Laura's considerable fortune, her husband and Count Fosco manage to switch the identities of the two so that when Anne Catherick dies, she is buried as Lady Glyde and Laura is locked up in the private asylum as Anne. Her escape from there is effected by her half-sister Marian and the second half of the novel relates the efforts to restore Laura's identity legally.

As with the experience of Le Fanu's two Mauds, Laura's isolation in the asylum is a psychological induction into a lower realm of overturned reality.⁹ Laura, like the other heroines, enters this world by means of a journey which begins the process of confusion: "Lady Glyde's experience of London was so limited, that she could not tell, at the time, through what streets they were driving" (p. 391). London becomes the entrance to the psychological maze in which Laura is to be ensnared. Because she is kept under sedation, her sense of reality is undermined and she believes that she had done things which, it is later made clear, she really did not. Thus Laura becomes an unwitting party in the conspiracy to weaken her perception of her own

identity. When she literally "awakens" from this dream-world, she is in the asylum wearing Anne Catherick's clothing. She is imprisoned in the asylum on the twenty-seventh of July:

From that date until the fifteenth of October (the day of her rescue) she had been under restraint, her identity with Anne Catherick systematically asserted, and her sanity, from first to last, practically denied. Faculties less delicately balanced, constitutions less tenderly organised, must have suffered under such an ordeal as this. No man could have gone through it and come out of it unchanged.
(p. 394)

What it does to Laura is to strengthen her likeness to Anne Catherick. This resemblance now extends to her intellect; like Anne, Laura has an uncertain hold on reality:

Her mind in this instance, and, as I feared, in other instances besides, confusedly presented to her something which she had only intended to do in the false light of something which she had really done. The unconscious contradiction of herself was easy to account for in this way--but it was likely to lead to serious results. (p. 402)

The shattering of Laura's memory means that she is unable to aid Walter's enterprise of vindication. The escape from the asylum does not guarantee liberation from the psychological labyrinth. Laura needs "therapy" to restore her health and to re-affirm her sense of identity. In the sense that the plot against Laura is a "labyrinth,"¹⁰ Walter, Marian, and Laura are not free of its entanglements yet either. The extent of their dilemma is intimated by the suggestions that London where they hide is a maze. In spite

of the measure of security and refuge which London offers, this world is still a threatening one in which there are dangers of Walter's being followed and of "Anne's" being sent back to the asylum if discovered. Both Walter and Marian are forced by their circumstances to operate outside the law in order to retrieve Laura's identity and position; because of their limited financial resources and the weakness of Laura's evidence, they cannot seek legal help. This situation ultimately works to their advantage, as Walter states:

It was strange to look back and to see now that the poverty which had denied us all hope of assistance had been the indirect means of our success, by forcing me to act for myself . . . The law would never have obtained for me my interview with Mrs. Catherick. The law would never have made Pesca the means of forcing a confession from the Count. (p. 578)

Underlying this independence is the "test of merit" which is a convention of romance.¹¹ By his struggle and final success in bringing Laura out of her psychic imprisonment and back from the legally dead, Walter the poor drawing master proves his worthiness to be the husband of the great heiress. As Walter's statement above makes evident, the only way out of the labyrinth is through the discovery and use of certain secrets pertaining to Glyde and the Count. The knowledge which the possession of these secrets gives provides the "safe-conduct" out of the difficulty.

H. P. Sucksmith, in an introduction to The Woman in White, discusses Laura and Marian in terms of the Jungian

archetypes of anima and shadow.¹² Laura does fulfill the role of anima, as Walter's description demonstrates:

The woman who first gives life, light, and form to our shadowy conception of beauty, fills a void in our spiritual nature that has remained unknown to us till she appeared. Sympathies that lie too deep for words, too deep almost for thoughts, are touched, at such times, by other charms than those which the senses feel and which the resources of expression can realize.
(pp. 41-2)

Laura becomes the idealized inspiration of Walter's life, a relationship emphasized by his role as an artist and hers as a model. I believe that Sucksmith is wrong when he interprets Marian as the shadow of Laura. Surely the pattern of the work would indicate that it is Anne Catherick, the "sickly likeness" (p. 304) who is the shadow. The resemblance which gives rise to the plot also informs Anne's symbolic role. Anne represents the dark side which apparently had knowledge of evil:

Her face, at all ordinary times so touching to look at, in its nervous sensitiveness, weakness, and uncertainty, became suddenly darkened by an expression of manifestly intense hatred and fear, which communicated a wild unnatural force to every feature. Her eyes dilated in the dim evening light, like the eyes of a wild animal.
(p. 91)

Anne has been put under restraint because she claims to know Sir Percival Glyde's secret. For him, she represents the accusing voice of guilt which he attempts to "bury" within the asylum, but which manages to escape and haunt him still. Anne's appearances, sudden and apparently from

out of nowhere, are like the manifestations of a ghost (pp. 15, 73-5). Her fixation with the past, as shown by her constant wearing of white, and her concern for the Fairlies epitomize her function as a spectral figure of warning. While she does not appear mad at first glance, under stress she reveals uncontrollable and obsessive impulses. There is also a streak of deviousness which enables her to escape from the asylum by pretending obedience and docility. While she really does not possess Glyde's secret, she does have an intuitive knowledge of what he conceals within. She describes her vision of his "inmost heart" to Laura:

It was black as night, and on it were written, in the red flaming letters which are the handwriting of the fallen angel, "Without pity and without remorse. He has strewn with misery the paths of others, and he will live to strew with misery the path of this woman by his side."
(p. 68)

As the shadow of the innocent Laura, Anne has more perception of the evil which exists in the world. Like Laura, she suffers captivity, but for Anne the only way out of the psychological labyrinth is through death: "Through what mortal crime and horror, through what darkest windings of the way down to death--the last creature had wandered in God's leading to the last home that living she never hoped to reach" (p. 515). When Walter first looks at Laura, he is struck by "the idea of something wanting" in her face (p. 42). This deficiency is noted when as a result of her marriage and her stay in the madhouse, she becomes the image

of Anne.

The identification of the two women is reinforced by Marian's dream of Walter kneeling by a tomb from which emerges "the shadow of a veiled woman" (p. 249). This dream foreshadows Laura's meeting with Walter after her escape from the asylum, but it also suggests the symbolic "union" of the two women, dead and alive in one person. If Laura provides the chief impetus for Walter's quest of detection, Anne also has a major part to play. Walter says; "My old superstition clings to me, even yet. I say again the woman in white is a living influence in our three lives. The End was appointed, the End is drawing us on-- and Anne Catherick, dead in her grave, points the way to it still!" (p. 415). The entrapment in the psychological labyrinth is, for Laura, a process of "becoming" Anne whom she ends up resembling mentally as well as physically. In the matter of "the Secret," Laura's knowledge is finally identical to that of Anne; both are aware that their knowledge is a secret, but neither really knows the truth. The revelation that they are sisters is scarcely a major surprise because their relationship has been illustrated, symbolically and psychologically, long before the revelation. When she met Anne, Laura had been take aback, perhaps by an unconscious sense of their kinship:

Her face was pale and thin and weary--but the sight of it startled me, as if it had been the sight of my own face in the glass after a long illness. The discovery--I don't know why--gave me such a shock, that I was perfectly incapable of speaking to her for a moment. (p. 252)

The discovery of the kinship adds force to Anne's role in the novel as the emblem of past guilt. Not only is the past of Sir Percival revealed through the intervention of Anne, but also the past of Laura's family.

By descending into "Anne," Laura reveals the dark side of her own nature and fosters new perceptions in Walter. She is not simply a golden-haired ideal, but a living woman who can be psychologically destroyed. She is also discovered to be a real woman who is capable of love:

Slowly and falteringly, in sorrow and in hesitation, she had once approached me. Now she came with the haste of happiness in her feet, with the light of happiness radiant in her face. Of their own accord those dear arms clasped around me, of their own accord the sweet lips came to meet mine. (pp. 522-3)

Once she has recovered, Laura has forgotten the troubles of the past. Her memory of the experience must remain in her mind, even if it remains buried in her subconscious. Any allusions to the past reveal a glimpse of "Anne" under the surface: "At the slightest reference to that time she changed and trembled still, her words became confused, her memory wandered and lost itself as helplessly as ever. Here, and here only, the traces of the past lay deep--too deep to be effaced" (p. 517). The psychic death and rebirth of Laura are supported symbolically by the seasonal background. She is imprisoned in the madhouse from mid-summer to mid-fall and spends the winter in hiding. Her final re-emergence is parodied by her false rebirth as Anne at the asylum. The return of her mental and physical health and the

public recognition of her true identity come in the spring. Laura can be seen as a nineteenth-century version of Persephone, immured in a psychologically labyrinthine underworld. She is rescued by the hero who must uncover the secrets of the maze and follow the "thread of the past" in order to escape further entrapment.

III: The Labyrinth of the Mind

Which way I flie is Hell; my self am Hell
Paradise Lost (IV. 75)

While it is possible to escape from the asylum, it is less easy to break out of the labyrinth of the mind. In Martin Chuzzlewit, The Moonstone, and The House by the Churchyard, the themes of persecution and pursuit are internalized. In two of these novels, the monster hidden at the centre of the labyrinth is revealed to be, not another character, but the darker side of the protagonist himself.

Of all the characters who inhabit the labyrinth of Self in Martin Chuzzlewit, no one is so thoroughly entangled in its windings as Jonas Chuzzlewit. Anthony Chuzzlewit raises his son to be a cunning and self-centred man of business in much the same way that Miss Havisham teaches Estella to be her revenge upon men. So successful is Anthony in the materialistic education of his son that Jonas comes to grudge the money which is "wasted" upon his father and decides to put him out of the way. His single-minded upbringing has left Jonas with only one goal because

"conscious that there was nothing in his person, conduct, character, or accomplishments, to command respect, he was greedy of power, and was, in his heart, as much a tyrant as any laurelled conqueror on record" (p. 449). In spite of his ambition and his sharp practice, Jonas is easily managed by others because of his greed and his essential cowardice. This aspect of his character is made evident by his behaviour at Tigg Montague's dinner: "And thus while the blundering cheat--gull that he was, for all his cunning--thought himself rolled up hedge-hog fashion, with all his sharpest points towards them, he was, in fact, betraying all his vulnerable parts to their unwinking watchfulness" (p. 454-5).

The scheme to poison his father and take control of the family business is apparently successful, but what Jonas (and the reader at this point) do not know is that Anthony had discovered his son's purpose and, like Miss Havisham realizing what she has done to Estella, dies of "remorse" and a broken heart. This fact is known only to Chuffey, the clerk, whose talk of his old master and "foul play" serves to feed Jonas's developing sense of persecution. Through the employment of the detective Nadgett, Tigg Montague becomes the possessor of Jonas's apparent secret and uses it to gain control over him. Believing himself guilty of his father's death, Jonas is readily manipulated by Tigg, and drawn further into his fraudulent business. His deviousness is no match for the tireless Nadgett, "his pursuing Fate" (p. 598), who forestalls him

when Jonas attempts to flee the country.

The first hint of what is to come appears after the frustrated escape when Jonas acts "as if he were bound, and in the other's power, but had a sullen and suppressed devil within him, which he could not quite resist" (p. 632). This demonic side is overtly manifested when he and Tigg travel down from London to visit Pecksniff in order to ensnare him in the Anglo-Bengalee swindle. The trip takes place at night against the backdrop of a storm which symbolically reflects the power of Jonas's feelings towards his blackmailer. Jonas begins to see the landscape as accusatory because of his desire to destroy Tigg. His paranoid fears are stirred by the sight of people who "seemed to be looking out upon the night and them from almost every house they passed" (p. 645). He begins to imagine that the outside world is able to understand his own unspoken thoughts, a fear that will return to plague him after the murder.

Because of Jonas's decision to act, something of his previous emotional state passes over to Tigg who becomes aware that somehow their roles as master and subordinate have been reversed. A lightning flash, like a sudden insight into the subconscious, reveals the truth to Tigg:

He thought he saw Jonas with his hand lifted, and the bottle clenched in it like a hammer, making as if he would aim a blow at his head: At the same time, he observed (or so believed) an expression in his face: a combination of the unnatural excitement he had shown all day, with a wild hatred and fear: which might have rendered a wolf a less terrible companion.
(p. 646)

Tigg's fears of Jonas find allegorical expression in his warning dreams.¹³ The first dream suggests his own part in some impending event, an unconscious acknowledgement that he has pushed Jonas too far. He dreams that there is a secret behind the door in his bedroom; "a secret which he knew, and yet . . . did not know, for although he was heavily responsible for it, and a party to it, he was harassed even in his vision by a distracting uncertainty in reference to its import" (p. 652). The second dream is a stronger indication of his peril, because he dreams of his attempts to secure the door against the evil, "whether it was in the shape of man, or beast, he neither knew nor sought to know," on the other side (p. 653). The psychic bond between the two men is formed of the mutual fear and victimization which find outlets in dreams for one and in action for the other.

This "night journey," during which Jonas twice makes attempts on the life of Tigg, becomes for him a further descent into an amoral world of instinctual self-preservation. This condition is symbolized by the dream he has before the murder in which he travels through a strange, but not unknown city¹⁴ where it is necessary "to descend great heights by ladders that were too short, and ropes that moved deep bells . . ." (p. 721). With its Judgment-Day setting, the dream also discloses Jonas's fears of detection and retribution which force him to kill Tigg. The pattern of descent is continued by the movement toward the location of Tigg's final encounter with Jonas. Tigg is described

going, as his murderer must have done before him, "down, down, down into the dell" (p. 724). The place of the actual murder is suggestive of a labyrinth. It is "a close, thick, shadowy wood, through which the path went winding on, dwindling away into a slender sheep-track" (p. 724). In this place

Vistas of silence opened everywhere, into the heart and innermost recesses of the wood, beginning with the likeness of an aisle, a cloister, or a ruin open to the sky; then tangling off into a deep green rustling mystery, through which gnarled trunks, and twisted boughs, and ivy-covered stems, and trembling leaves, and bark-stripped bodies of old trees stretched out at length, were faintly seen in beautiful confusion. (p. 724)

This is the "dark forest" of romance which indicates metaphorically moral or spiritual danger. The wood here has, in addition, a psychological function because, as the setting for murder, it represents a descent into the darkest part of Jonas's psyche. The experience which he has there haunts him for the rest of the novel. Dickens describes Jonas springing out of the wood "as if it were a hell" (p. 725), yet Jonas will never be free of the psychological hell which his act of murder has brought upon him. The maze of selfishness has become a labyrinth of inner fear and trauma.

In The Hero with a Thousand Faces, Joseph Campbell writes that³

if anyone--in whatever society--undertakes for himself the perilous journey into the darkness by descending, either intentionally or

unintentionally, into the crooked lanes of his own spiritual labyrinth, he soon finds himself in a landscape of symbolical figures (any one of which may swallow him) . . . 15

By giving in to his fears and to violence, Jonas has unintentionally entered a maze. What Jonas discovers in "his own spiritual labyrinth" are not symbolic guides to purification and rebirth, but the reflections of his fear and guilt. In his paranoia, he credits the landscape and its inhabitants with a knowledge of his crime:

Now, in taking his seat among the people behind [on the coach], who were chiefly country people, he conceived a fear that they knew of the murder, and would tell him that the body had been found; which, considering the time and place of the commission of the crime, were events almost impossible to have happened yet, as he very well knew. (p. 727)

Jonas becomes afraid, not of what he has done, but of the place to which he is returning:

He had a greater horror, infinitely greater, of that room than of the wood. Now that he was on his return to it, it seemed beyond comparison more dismal and more dreadful than the wood. His hideous secret was shut up in the room, and all its terrors were there; to his thinking it was not in the wood at all. (p. 725)

The psychological labyrinth in which he is trapped has begun to narrow and turn inward upon itself. The centre of this maze is now in his own room and he as a criminal is the monster at its heart:

He was so horribly afraid of that infernal room at home. This made him, in a gloomy, murderous, mad way, not only fearful for himself, but of

himself; for being, as it were, a part of the room: a something supposed to be there, yet missing from it: he invested himself with its mysterious terrors; and when he pictured it in his mind the ugly chamber, false and quiet, false and quiet, through the dark hours of two nights; and the tumbled bed, and he not in it, though believed to be; he became in a manner his own ghost and phantom, and was at once the haunting spirit and the haunted man. (pp. 726-7)

The empty and yet haunted room becomes a symbolic mirror of Jonas's guilty soul; he is afraid to look into it because of what he knows it will reveal about him. Even when he has safely returned, after stealthily creeping through the streets, he remains afraid of the room and of himself. Dickens suggests that language is unable to convey the emotional turmoil of Jonas:

the starts with which he left his couch, and looking in the glass, imagined that his deed was broadly written in his face, and lying down and burying himself once more beneath the blankets, heard his own heart beating Murder, Murder, Murder, in the bed; what words can paint tremendous truths like these! (p. 728)

Dickens here suggests, as he has through the depiction of Jonas's sense of guilt, that the crime has created a psychological division in Jonas.¹⁶ In the passage cited above, Jonas is clearly afraid of self-betrayal, that the criminal self will become as physically apparent to other people as it is to him. A process of psychic estrangement has taken place so that Jonas is afraid he will turn on himself.

For Jonas there is neither physical nor mental escape from the fact of the murder: the world is transformed into

a landscape of his own guilty mind. Like a man who, lost in a maze, traces one path over and over again, his thoughts continually return to the scene of the crime. He projects his obsession, his own "inner darkness," outward, creating a hostile and suspicious external world:

His mind was fixed and fastened on the discovery, for intelligence of which he listened intently to every cry and shout; listened when any one came in or went out; watched from the window the people who passed up and down the street; mistrusted his own looks and words. And the more his thoughts were set upon the discovery, the stronger was the fascination which attracted them to the thing itself: lying alone in the wood. (p. 774)

He sees the homicide recreated in the actions of others; a gesture of an unknown man seen in the street is to him identical to "the blow he had struck in the wood" (p. 778). Because of his paranoia, he is not at all confident that he will get away with his crime; his continual listening betrays his watchfulness for the approach of nemesis:

Whether he attended to their talk, or tried to think of other things, or talked himself, or held his peace, or resolutely counted the dull tickings of a hoarse clock at his back, he always lapsed, as if a spell were on him, into eager listening. For he knew it must come; and his present punishment, and torture, and distraction, were, to listen for its coming.
Hush! (p. 729)

The arrival of Nadgett and his unravelling of Jonas's crimes are heralded by the sound of the accusation which he had feared all along. The private deed finally becomes

public knowledge, like the tolling of a bell: "The sounding street repeated Murder; barbarous and dreadful Murder; Murder, Murder, Murder. Rolling on from house to house, and echoing from stone to stone, until the voices died away into the distant hum, which seemed to mutter the same word!" (p. 787). Jonas feels his entrapment and exposure as if he were being drawn to annihilation in a vortex: "Inch by inch the ground beneath him was sliding from his feet; faster and faster the encircling ruin contracted and contracted towards himself, its wicked centre, until it should close in and crush him" (p. 782). Confronted by the truth "which nothing would keep down, which blood would not smother, and earth would not hide"

(p. 782), Jonas's world collapses in on itself, the final stage in a process of psychic constriction. His fears of trial and execution drive Jonas to a last and characteristically desperate act, death by his own hand. The violence which the darker side of Jonas had unleashed against Tigg is finally directed against Jonas himself. The process of alienation which had begun with the murder of Tigg is completed by Jonas's act of self-destruction.

In Jonas Chuzzlewit, Dickens illustrates the psychic damage done by guilt and fear. Governed by "self," Jonas becomes a prisoner in an interior labyrinth of his own devising. For such as Jonas, there is no escape from the path which his nature dictates: "It was in his punishment; it was in his guilty condition. The very deed which his fears rendered insupportable, his fears would have impelled

him to commit again" (p. 773). A major element of the horror of Jonas's situation lies in the realization that he himself is the monster in his psychological maze. This recognition creates further psychic disturbance in that Jonas becomes isolated and afraid, not just of the outside world, but also of part of himself. For Jonas, the descent into the labyrinth is a journey toward mental disintegration.

A major part of the action of Le Fanu's The House by the Churchyard turns on the device of the "labyrinth of the mind." Mr. Mervyn comes to Chapelizod under an alias to place his father's body in the family vault. He has taken another name because there is a stain on the family honour. Several years previously his father, Lord Dunoran, had killed himself because he had been found guilty of a murder he did not commit. While a few people are aware of Mervyn's real identity, the truth about the murder is known only to three in the village, Zekiel Irons, Dr. Sturk, and the actual murderer Charles Archer who is living under the name Dangerfield. At the time of the murder, Dr. Sturk was asleep in an adjoining room under the influence of laudanum and was apparently oblivious to the crime and the "cover-up" by Archer and his accomplices. However, this information, as well as another vital piece of evidence, is buried within his unconscious mind. Sturk will later say that this memory was "like a page cut out of a book, and never missed till 'twas found again, and then sharp and clear, every letter from first to last."¹⁷

The matter of his father's "crime," which has disgraced

and financially ruined his family, has turned Mervyn inward upon himself. Alienated from the external world, Mervyn gives in to brooding and melancholy:

He ruminated upon his own hard fate--the meanness of mankind--the burning wrongs, as he felt confident, of other times, Fortune's inexorable persecution of his family, and the Stygian gulf that deepened between him and the object of his love; and his soul darkened with a fierce despair and with unshaped but evil thoughts that invited the tempter. (II, 44-5)

From this passage the reader can see that Le Fañu means to convey the young man's isolation by casting him in the mold of the solitary Byronic hero-villain who is given to Gothic attitudes. However, these Gothic stances become a psychological trap for him. In view of his father's conviction and apparently "guilty" suicide, there is no way for Mervyn to alter the past or repair the emotional damage it has done: "His whole life had been a flight and a pursuit--a vain endeavour to escape from the evil spirit that pursued him--and a chase of a chimera" (I, 31). He has been psychologically stalemated by an overriding sense of familial disrepute so that he has been incapable of forming goals or directing his life:

It would seem that the young man had formed no very distinct plan of life. He appeared to have some thought of volunteering to serve in America, and some of entering into a foreign service, but his plans were, I suppose, in nubibus. All that was plain was that he was restless and eager for some change--any. (I, 134-5)

His dwelling in Chapelizod, the Tiled House, is a symbolic

externalization of his condition; it is altogether fitting that a man who is vainly trying to escape his past should take up residence in a haunted house. According to the tales of Old Sally, Liliias Walsingham's nurse, "something" got into the Tiled House and it "was never a happy one, or a quiet house after" (I, 116). The stories which are told in connection with Mervyn's house do not have an essential part in the narrative, but they do add to the "Gothic apparatus" which accompanies him. The resulting aura which surrounds him proves so powerful that when it is dispelled at the conclusion, Mervyn loses much of his interest as a character.

His entrance into Chapelizod is accompanied by some very portentous weather: "There was a weight in the atmosphere, and a sort of undefined menace brooding over the little town, as if unseen crime or danger--some mystery of inequity--was stealing into the heart of it, and the disapproving heavens scowled a melancholy warning" (I, 18). The advent of Mervyn is one of the factors which start the unwinding of a mystery which will influence the fate of many others. Le Fanu shows an acute awareness of how presumably independent lives affect one another: "In this respect, indeed, society resembles a pyramid of potatoes, in which you cannot stir one without setting others, in unexpected places, also in motion" (I, 301). As the riddle of the past is traced, it brings to light a network of unsuspected relationship and connections.

The first movement in this direction occurs when

Zekiel Irons pays a secret visit to Mervyn and discloses that the late Lord Dunoran was innocent. Irons can prove what he says, but will not do so as yet, because he is afraid of possible reprisals: "There's them watching me that can see in the clouds, or the running waters, what you're thinking of a mile away, that can move as soft as ghosts and can grip as hard as hell, when need is" (II, 51).

Irons's insinuation is enough to make Mervyn believe that his situation is not irredeemable and that with effort he will escape from the psychic labyrinth in which he is caught. He speaks of this chance to Gertrude Chatterworth to whom he is secretly engaged:

I'm like a man who has lost his way among the catacombs--among the dead . . . and sees at last the distant light that shows him that his horrible wanderings are to end. Yes, Gertrude, my beloved--yes, Gertrude, idol of my solitary love--the mystery is about to end--I'll end it. Be I what I may, you know the worst, and have given me your love and truth--you are my affianced bride; rather than lose you, I would die; and I think, or I am walking in a dream, I've but to point my finger against two men, and all will be peace and light--light and peace--to me long strangers. (II, 217-8)

Gertrude, troubled by the equivocation which the secret engagement has forced her into, catches his tone. When she compares himself to Lillias, the sentimental heroine, she makes use of Mervyn's language of psychological confusion:

You've walked in the light, Lily, and that's the way to peace. I turned aside, and walked in mystery; and it seems to me I am treading now the valley of the shadow of death. Waking

and talking, I am, nevertheless, in the solitude and darkness of the grave. --(II, 20)

Le Fanu uses Gertrude to mystify the reader further by concealing the identity of the man with whom she has her fugitive trysts. It is near the conclusion that he lets the reader know that it is Mervyn she has been meeting.

While Mervyn is meditating on his troubles, Sturk is struggling with his memory. He begins to wonder where he has seen Paul Dangerfield before. Through his tracing of Dr. Sturk's mental reflections, Le Fanu demonstrates his interest in the process whereby subconscious ideas become conscious. At their first meeting, Dangerfield's face "produced an odd and unpleasant effect upon Sturk, who could not help puzzling himself then, and for a long time after, with unavailing speculations about him" (I, 190). The doctor then begins to be troubled by dreams about an ominous man whose face he cannot see (I, 264). In one he sees "a portentous old quizzical carrion-crow, the antediluvian progenitor of the whole race of carrion-crows, monstrous, with great shining eyes, and head white as snow, and a queer human look . . ." (I, 264) which he is startled to discover resembles Dangerfield. Finally, there emerges "a strange painfully-sharp remembrance of things past" which reveals the truth to him (II, 79). Under the pressure of his debts, he decides to put what he has remembered to financial use and arranges to approach "Charles Archer" through Dangerfield. Sturk is later found unconscious in the woods after being attacked and clubbed nearly to

death. The circumstantial evidence points to Charles Nutter, a rival who has disappeared.

A source of mystery and confusion for the characters in the novel and for the reader exists in the "separation" of Charles Archer and Dangerfield. Le Fanu treats them as if they were two different men. When Dangerfield talks to Zekiel Irons about the doings of Charles Archer, he pretends to be discussing a third party: "'Well, Charles Archer's here, we've seen him, haven't we? and just the devil he always was,' said Dangerfield with a deliberate chuckle of infinite relish, and evidently enjoying the clerk's embarrassment as he eyed him through his spectacles obliquely" (II, 146). While it is clear that Dangerfield is a dangerous man, it is always the Archer "side" which commits acts of savagery. As with Jonas Chuzzlewit, the violent side eventually takes over completely and the villain kills himself.

Mervyn makes a mistake in going to consult Dangerfield about his problem because he believes that Dangerfield is acquainted with Charles Archer and can help him resolve his dilemma. Dangerfield tells him that he has proof that Archer died in Florence, contradicting Irons's tale of seeing Archer in Chapelizod. In spite of this turn of events, Mervyn hopes that tracking down Archer will clear his name and proclaims his resolution: "And my life I cheerfully devote to the task of seizing and tracing out the bloody clue of the labyrinth in which I'm lost" (III, 23).¹⁸ Like Franklin Blake in The Moonstone, he becomes

a detective in order to save himself. Ironically, because he follows the advice of Dangerfield, Mervyn remains trapped in his own labyrinth:

As we see those wild animals walk their cages in a menagerie, with the fierce instincts of suppressed action rolling the vexed eye and vibrating in every sinew, even so we behold this hero of the flashing glance and sable locks treading in high excitement the floor of the cedar parlour. Every five minutes a new hope--a new conjecture, and another scrutiny of the baronet's letter, or of the certificate of Archer's death, hour after hour speeding by in the wild chase of successive chimeras. (III, 190)

Dangerfield has covered his tracks too well to be discovered easily, and, in effect, sends Mervyn off on a hunt after a false lead. This "double-cross" is Dangerfield's typical mode of operation. While acting as if he had the interests of the village at heart, he is really a force of disunity. In his efforts to dispose of Sturk, he tries to stir up quarrels and duels between the doctor and other people. Likewise, the evidence which Dangerfield sends Mervyn after is deliberately misleading.

It is Dangerfield himself ironically who sets in motion the events which will prove his undoing. Pretending to have the cause of justice at heart, Dangerfield arranges to bring a surgeon from Dublin to trepan Sturk so the doctor will regain consciousness and point out his attacker. In reality, Dangerfield sees this as an opportunity to finish off Sturk and, to this end, chooses "Black" Dillon as his instrument. Because of this young surgeon's reputation for drinking, Dangerfield hopes he will

inadvertently kill his patient through negligence. Dillon is described:

Without order, without industry; defying all usages and morality; lost for weeks together in the catacombs of vice; and emerging to reassert in an hour the supremacy of his intellect; without principles or shame; laden with debt; and shattered and poisoned with his vices; a branded and admired man. (III, 96)

In spite of Dangerfield's hopes, the operation is a success and Sturk returns to life for a brief time. Like Ezra Jennings in The Moonstone, Dillon functions as the guide to the unconscious; it is his skill which unlocks the mind of Sturk and enables the truth to emerge from its imprisonment. Practically the first words which the doctor speaks after the operation reveal the truth. Mrs. Sturk, waiting outside the door, hears a "loud voice, in a sort of shriek, cry out that name--holy and awful--which we do not mix in tales like this. It was Sturk's voice; and he cried in the same horrid shriek; 'Murder--mercy--Mr. Archer'" (III, 152). The name of his assailant, like his awareness of the murder at the Pied Horse Inn, has been trapped within his mind. Sturk describes his experience:

I never spoke of it, for I could not. The whole of that five minutes' work slipped from my mind, and was gone quite and clean when I awoke. What I saw I could not interrupt. I was in a cataleptic state, I suppose. I could not speak; but I saw like a lynx, and heard every whisper. When I awakened in the morning I remembered nothing. I did not know I had a secret. The knowledge was sealed up until the time came. (III, 226-7)

Hearing that Sturk has been revived and has accused Charles Archer, Irons goes to the justice and adds his testimony of the past events to the doctor.

Mervyn's disguise, which he had used as a defence, temporarily works against him when Dangerfield is found to be Archer. Because few people know who Mervyn really is, he is one of the last people in the village to hear the news. This is fitting, however, because his obsession with the past has isolated him for the most part from the village. His efforts at detective work, while showing the proper spirit, have been futile because they have been controlled by the man for whom he has been looking. His "Ariadne," like Vholes in Bleak House, instead of leading him out of the maze, attempts to lose him in further complications. It is the "labyrinth of the mind" which must be opened to consciousness in order to deliver him from his predicament. Once that is achieved, he can be re-integrated with society through marriage to the girl he loves and the resumption of his proper status. Because of the skill of Dillon, Mervyn's part of the novel, which begins in a storm at night like a Gothic romance, concludes "like a fairy tale" (III, 304).

The alienation that Jonas Chuzzlewit experiences is somewhat akin to that experienced by Franklin Blake in The Moonstone. Each man discovers within himself the capacity to break the bounds of law and conventional behaviour. Each is confronted by an "alter ego," a criminal self, which emerges from the darker side of his personality and creates

a form of psychological paralysis in each man. However, in spite of his "psychic resemblance" to Jonas, Franklin is the "hero" of the Collins novel and the motive for which he stole the jewel and the means by which he took it mitigate his criminality. At the same time; that he can be compared with Jonas, the villain of Martin Chuzzlewit, indicates that the characters of The Moonstone inhabit a more ambiguous world than the characters of Dickens.¹⁹

Further parallels with Martin Chuzzlewit and The House by the Churchyard can be seen in the function of Lewsome. As the man who sold Jonas the poison, he is a witness, if not to Jonas's act of murder, then at least to his criminal nature. Lewsome falls ill with a fever so that, like Sturk in The House by the Churchyard, he keeps the guilty secret locked within his mind:

When once again, in a tone more terrible than that which had vibrated in her slumbering ear, these words were shrieked out:

"Chuzzlewit! Jonas! No!"

Mrs. Gamp dropped the cup she was in the act of raising to her lips, and turned round with a start that made the little tea-board leap. The cry had come from the bed. (p. 416)

For Jonas, Lewsome becomes so identified with the secret that the sight of the young man alone makes him betray himself:

It was not a groan, or a shriek, or a word, but was wholly unlike any sound that had ever fallen on the ears of those who heard it, while at the same time it was the most sharp and terrible expression of what was working in his guilty breast, that nature could have invented. (p. 780)

Lewsome, like the detective Nadgett, is another "of the phantom forms of this terrific Truth" (p. 789) which reveals the baser side of human nature and the evil which is done for self-preservation.

Trying to make logical sense of the mystery of the Moonstone and his own part in it, Franklin Blake finds himself in a "labyrinth of useless speculations."²⁰ As in the case of Jonas Chuzzlewit, the image of the maze functions as a symbol of a mystery which deepens into a psychological dilemma. Franklin is not the only character in a "maze": the four characters, Rachel, Godfrey, Rosanna, and Mr. Candy, who help to engineer the mystery also find themselves caught in its entanglements. Because these characters have acted independently of one another, no one of them is in a position to make sense of the events either. Gabriel Betteredge says of the birthday dinner after the presentation of the Moonstone that "the cursed Diamond must have cast a blight on the whole company" (p. 101). In a very real sense, Betteredge's belief is correct; the introduction of the Moonstone into Lady Verinder's house becomes, for the central characters, the beginning of a descent into a realm of moral equivocation and psychological doubt. After the theft, Franklin speaks of an "atmosphere of mystery and suspicion" (p. 155) and feels oppressed by the "infernal network of mysteries and uncertainties that now surrounded us" (p. 129). Betteredge believes that a mood of paranoia will be inevitable:

Prying, and peeping, and listening are the natural occupations of people situated as we are. In another day or two, Mr. Franklin, we shall be struck dumb together--for this reason, that we shall all be listening to surprise each other's secrets, and all know it. (p. 183)

The clear-cut distinctions between good and evil become blurred as various characters explore the perplexing issues of motive and action.

The note of ambiguity is sounded by the speculations of Franklin and Gabriel Betteredge about Colonel Herncastle's reasons for bequeathing his diamond to Rachel. Franklin wonders, "In bringing the Moonstone to my aunt's house, am I serving his vengeance blindfolded, or am I vindicating him in the character of a penitent and Christian man?" (p. 75). He sees that this issue has two sides: "An Objective side, and a Subjective side. Which are we to take?" (p. 75). This two-sidedness and the resulting uncertainty run as a theme through the thoughts and deeds of many characters. The Moonstone is both "unfathomable as the heavens themselves" and "mere carbon" (p. 97). Godfrey Ablewhite has a public persona and a private one; he is the figure of the Victorian establishment, the middle-class "Christian Hero" (p. 239), and at the same time, the representative of its sordid underside with his secret villa and mistress. His death in disguise as the dark sailor is a symbolic comment upon the way in which he has lived his life. In his creation of Godfrey and Franklin, Collins is inverting the reader's expectations of the hero's physical appearance. Franklin is

personable and attractive enough, but he is overshadowed by Godfrey who has all the attributes of the Victorian gentleman. Betteredge compares them:

In the first place, Mr. Godfrey was, in point of size, the finest man by far of the two. He stood over six feet high; he had a beautiful red and white colour; a smooth round face, shaved as bare as your hand; and a head of lovely long flaxen hair, falling negligently over the poll of his neck. . . . He was a barrister by profession; a ladies' man by temperament; and a good Samaritan by choice.
(p. 89)

Ironically, this exterior is that of a swindler and thief, not the example of moral rectitude he first appears to be. The duality surfaces again in the appearance of Ezra Jennings who, while still a fairly young man, has the face of an old one and whose hair is both black and white, without any intervening gray (p. 371). Jennings, himself isolated from the outside world, will paradoxically become the agent of Franklin's re-integration into the social fabric. The motif of ambiguous duality reaches its culmination in Franklin Blake. He is both detective and thief; as such, he is at once the upholder of the moral order and the unconscious subverter of that order.

There are four "detectives" who, by various means and with the help of others, attempt to solve the mystery: Superintendent Seegrave, Sergeant Cuff, Franklin Blake, and Ezra Jennings. Although each man takes on the role of "Theseus" in attempting to sort out the twists and turns of the case, no one of the four is completely successful in resolving it. As each considers the problem,

it becomes apparent that each has more insight and more knowledge than his predecessor. It is also manifest that we are moving from views which are based solely and incorrectly upon material evidence to those which take into account the psychological characters of those involved in the theft. Seegrave reveals the least perception of all the detectives: he follows the obvious clue of the Indians and dismisses the essential evidence of the paint-smear. At the same time, he manages to alienate the servants and therefore cut himself off from a helpful source of information. It turns out later than Penelope Betteredge knew all along about the smeared door, but because Seegrave practically accused her of the crime she decided to conceal her knowledge. Cuff can see farther than Seegrave but he is hampered by the "cover-up" carried on by the unwitting conspiracy and by Lady Verinder's sense of "acceptable" behaviour. From the limited evidence that is available to him, Cuff comes to a conclusion which, while not altogether right, is not entirely wrong either. Rachel is "privy to the suppression of the Diamond" (p. 208) and Rosanna is her accomplice, although neither is aware of the other's "assistance" in the matter. Later, when more evidence becomes known, Cuff is able to deduce who had actually taken the Moonstone.

Third in the series of investigators is Franklin Blake. When first introduced, he appears to have something of the dilettante about him, at least in the opinion of Betteredge:

After he had learnt what the institutions of Germany could teach him, he gave the French a turn next, and the Italians a turn after that. They made him among them a sort of universal genius, as well as I could understand it. He wrote a little; he painted a little; he sang and played and composed a little--borrowing, as I suspect, in all these cases, just as he had borrowed from me. (pp. 47-8)

There is more than a suggestion, emphasized by the grammatical construction of the passage, of Dickens's description of Harold Skimpole in Bleak House. This impression is corrected by the actual behaviour of Franklin, but he does show a comparable laxity in terms of his financial arrangements, which, although not developed in the novel, hints at the amoral side of his character which the opium releases. Unlike Skimpole, Blake is aware of his flaws and perceives Rachel as the one person able to inspire him and to rectify his faults. He tells Gabriel, "I have several worthy aspirations, Betteredge; but what am I to do with them now? I am full of dormant good qualities, if Rachel would only have helped to bring them out!" (p. 214). This point is reinforced when, after being rejected by Rachel after the theft, he begins, significantly, to wander without a particular goal through Europe and the East.

On his return to England, he takes up the mystery in the manner of a man who wishes to take control of his life: "I am determined to find out the secret of her silence towards her mother, and her enmity towards me. If time, pains, and money can do it, I will lay my hand on the thief who took the Moonstone!" (p. 343). He decides

to retrace the events of the past in order to fill in the missing parts of the puzzle. The first breakthrough comes with the delivery and reading of Rosanna's letter. This document, like the disclosures of Rachel and of Mr. Candy later in the novel, functions like a delayed-action bomb, suddenly explosive when least expected. The contents of the tin box create further twists in Franklin's path to the truth: they complicate the situation more than they resolve it; "I had penetrated the secret which the quicksand had kept from every living creature. And, on the unanswerable evidence of the paint-stain, I had discovered Myself as the Thief" (p. 359). There are symbolic overtones in the description of Franklin's discovery of the box which point to the psychological level of the story and the method by which the question of Franklin's guilt will be settled. In this case the box must, like the truth, be pulled from the depths of the Shivering Sands, which reflect the human psyche. The truth is hidden under the sand just as it is buried within Franklin's mind. Bending over to reach the box, he becomes afraid of what else will surface:

A horrible fancy that the dead woman might appear on the scene of her suicide, to assist my search--an unutterable dread of seeing her rise through the heaving surface of the sand, and point to the place--forced itself into my mind, and turned me cold in the warm sunlight. I own I closed my eyes at the moment when the point of the stick first entered the quicksand.
(p. 357)

His fears prove to be justified; although Rosanna does not.

actually appear, she manages, through her secret, to point an accusing finger at him. Mr. Bruff's favourite expression to indicate his awareness of some fact which is hidden from him is that there is "something below the surface" (pp. 315, 318, 326). Here, that is both literally and metaphorically true: the submerged box reveals aspects of the mystery which had previously been concealed.

This expression corresponds with a pattern of images which conveys attempts to find one's way in the dark ("groping in the dark", p. 105; "Moving blindfold in this matter" p. 233; drifting "blindfold into some nasty pursuit" p. 84; "Sounding blindfold" p. 357; "the slow and toilsome journey from the darkness to the light" p. 380 and p. 408). It is significant that all of these descriptive expressions are either used by or applied to Franklin Blake to symbolize his relation to the truth. At the same time, they illustrate the psychological position. He is "in the dark" about the theft and about the darker side of his own nature; only the conscious realization of the latter will provide the answer to the former. The labyrinth of his mind must be successfully negotiated to restore his identity and reveal the truth.

The paradoxical nature of Franklin's find causes him to fall into a "state of complete bodily and mental prostration" (p. 360). This revelation, symbolically rising from the unconscious, suspends his powers of rational thought and forces him into defensive egoism. He asks Mr. Bruff of Rachel, "What right has she to suspect.

Me, on any evidence, of being a thief?" (p. 385). Insisting on his own innocence in the face of incriminating evidence, Franklin attempts to see the ambiguity of the situation as external and separate from him. Although he will not accept that he is involved in the crime, he begins to feel oppressed by the "abominable imputation" (p. 388) which has been levelled against him. Under this pressure, he does concede that "innocence can look like guilt" (p. 388).

Rachel's irrefutable testimony leaves him with no option except the recognition of a morally ambiguous role.

Franklin describes his state in a fashion which incorporates all previous images describing movement in the dark:

There rose the horrible fact of the Theft-- the one visible, tangible object that confronted me, in the midst of the impenetrable darkness which enveloped all besides! Not a glimpse of light to guide me, when I had possessed myself of Rosanna Spearman's secret at the Shivering Sand. And not a glimpse of light now, when I had appealed to Rachel herself, and had heard the hateful story of the night from her own lips. (p. 399)

Regardless of his denials, the hero finds himself in a maze. Like Oedipus, Franklin finds that the proofs which he has sought have turned against him and convicted him. The rational, "plainly practical" (p. 409) view of the case as followed by Cuff, Franklin, and Seegrave has ended in a deadlock; a solution has been found but it does not make sense. Franklin cannot reconcile his new "identity" as a thief with what he remembers of past events or what he knows of his own nature. His attempt to reconstruct the events of the birthday dinner, which he himself cannot

remember, leads him to Mr. Candy and to Ezra Jennings.

It is the latter who takes over from Franklin as detective, but with an important difference. Jennings functions as a psychological investigator, exploring the processes of the conscious and, most significantly, the unconscious mind.

The clue to Franklin's act of theft is buried within the unconscious mind of Mr. Candy which has been damaged by fever: "While he remembers dimly plans that he had formed--things, here and there, that he had to say or do, before his illness--he is perfectly incapable of recalling what the plans were; or what the thing was that he had to say or do" (p. 418). The relationship of Jennings to Franklin Blake is analogous to that between Murthwaite and Mr. Bruff. The lawyer consults Murthwaite about the Indians and finds that he, because of his knowledge of the East, can explain their motives and predict their future proceedings. Bruff comments, "Lawyer as I was, I began to feel that I might trust Mr. Murthwaite to lead me blindfold through the last windings of the labyrinth, along which he had guided me thus far" (p. 336). Jennings, who has spent some time on "the intricate and delicate subject of the brain and the nervous system" (p. 423), becomes a psychological Ariadne, providing a coherent path through the labyrinth of the mind. He takes down Candy's words during his period of delirium and is able to reconstruct the whole by tracing and understanding the pattern of Candy's thought processes:

It is all confusion to begin with; but it may be all brought into order and shape, if you can only find the right way . . . In plainer words, after putting the broken sentences together, I found the superior faculty of thinking going on, more or less connectedly, in my patient's mind, while the inferior faculty of expression was in a state of almost complete incapacity and confusion. (p. 424)

The confession of Mr. Candy provides the reason for Franklin's unaccustomed behaviour, but it goes only so far to explain the complete situation. In an effort to bring it all to light, Jennings attempts a recreation of the past. The repetition of events offers a paradoxical resolution: in proving that Franklin is indeed guilty, Jennings also proves that morally he is innocent. As William Marshall says, the doctor's assistant returns "to Blake his moral identity by revealing the capacities of his unconscious self to be amoral."²¹ The criminality of Franklin is excusable because it is dictated, not by selfish motives but by his love and concern for Rachel. While Jennings's experiment resolves Franklin's psychological and moral impasse, it fails to tie up all the loose ends of the case. This failure occurs because his recreation of the past was incomplete; the last part of the puzzle in the form of Godfrey Ablewhite was missing. This absence is no fault of Jennings, however, since there was no way that he or anyone else could have known Godfrey was there. Godfrey's role in the mystery is clarified only by later events and his own admission of guilt to Mr. Luker.

In his dissertation, Patrick Kelly writes,

In The Moonstone, the possible psychological mystery that Collins's depiction of the effects of opium might have provided is eschewed in favour of its use as a twist in the plot. Similarly, Franklin Blake's detection that he is apparently the thief of the Moonstone is, though a brilliant effect in the plot, devoid of psychological significance. 22

This is a rather sweeping and inexact judgment of the novel; Collins's concern with psychology goes deeper than Kelly believes and is an important aspect of the novel. The crime illustrates, not only the capacity of Franklin "to be amoral," but also that tendency in a number of other characters. The "dark side" needs to be recognized and integrated into the personality. Collins clearly takes the human capacity for moral compromise or criminality for granted; it is part of human nature and will become evident if personality is sifted deeply enough. His characters act from psychologically accurate and complex motives which distance them from a simple morality of black and white. 23

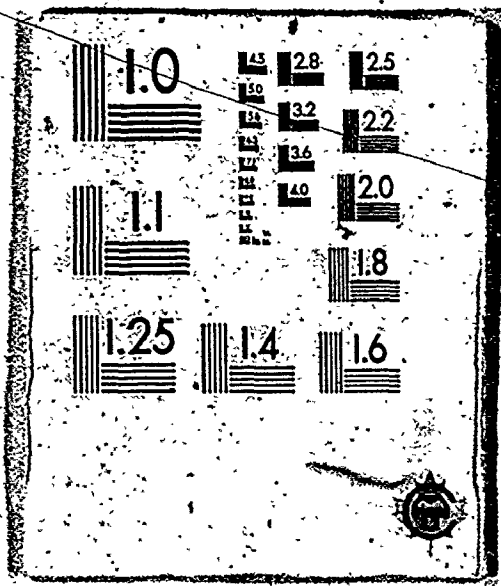
In his preface, Collins makes clear the essential function which psychology would have in the work: "The attempt made, here, is to trace the influence of character upon circumstances. The conduct pursued, under a sudden emergency, by a young girl, supplies the foundation on which I have built the book" (p. 27). The action may spring from the temperament of Rachel, but it is further complicated by the interrelation of other natures. The Moonstone shows that, under certain circumstances, the average young man can steal and a morally upright young woman will conceal the truth and obstruct justice. Mr.

Bruff, from his limited viewpoint, is "morally certain" (p. 266) that Rachel, Franklin, and Godfrey are all innocent. The truth, morally and psychologically, is, of course, that they are all, if not criminal, then at least culpable. Collins is interested in the ambiguous potentiality of the human psyche. That is why it is essential and inevitable that the course of detection must turn inward to the labyrinth of the mind for resolution. The unconscious minds of both Mr. Candy and Franklin Blake must be tapped in order to guide Franklin out of the mazes, moral and psychological, in which his action has trapped him. It is only through a union of material fact and psychological truth that the crime and its consequences can be properly understood.

In this chapter we have seen the application of the image of the labyrinth to physical setting and to social and psychological themes. The maze, as a metaphor of descent into a lower world, reenacts the pattern of the Fall. This movement, combined with accompanying images of darkness, crookedness, and deviousness which are inherent in the image, emphasizes the impelling force of the symbol--the confrontation of guilt. As used by Dickens, Collins, and Le Fanu, the labyrinth becomes a nineteenth-century variation on the pattern of the Fall. Each author explores the problem of man's guilty nature in his own characteristic way. For Dickens, it is social guilt which is uppermost. In the characters of Pecksniff and Wholes, Dickens portrays the nature of the self-serving,

3 3

OF / DE



parasitic, and therefore anti-social individual who continues the pattern of exploitation rather than reversing it. For Dickens, the entanglements of the labyrinth involve a recognition of complex social connections--relationships between people which must be faced in spite of their guilty nature.

In Le Fanu's works, the emphasis is a spiritual and moral one. As Robertson Davies comments about Le Fanu's supernatural stories, Le Fanu "makes us fear for threatened women, and the fear we feel is not a simple worry that some simpleton may lose her virginity, but that a human creature may lose its soul."²⁴ In his work, as in that of Dickens, the labyrinth is important for its connections, though here the connections are in a more spiritual context. He is interested in establishing the lines of communication beyond the physical world. Dr. Bryerly's advice in Uncle Silas provides an apt illustration of Le Fanu's religious ethos:

Therefore, though your body be in solitude and your mortal sense in darkness, remember to walk as being in the light, surrounded with a cloud of witnesses. Thus walk; and when the hour comes, and you pass forth imprisoned from the tabernacle of the flesh, although it still has its relations and its rights . . . you will rejoice. (p. 126)

For both Dickens and Le Fanu, then, the labyrinth is a focus for the exploration of the polarization between the way man lives and the way he should live. In a religious context, the way is the straight and narrow path. The

labyrinth, as a symbol of the negative journey, is a type of anti-pilgrimage. For both authors, the essential polarization between good and evil remains, even if the theological foundations have become shaky.

In Collins, by contrast, the reader witnesses the increasing secularization of guilt. In place of the basically redemptive vision of Dickens or Le Fanu, Collins presents an essentially amoral universe. Collins's interest in the labyrinth lies in the access which it affords him to the study of neurosis and its causes, rather than to any insight into the plight of fallen man. In his novels, it is the personal rather than the social or the cosmic which takes precedence. The labyrinth, as a result, becomes the mind itself. In keeping with this secularized vision, the ritual initiation or the successful journey through the labyrinth does not yield spiritual wholeness but psychological integration of personality, in a modern, even Jungian, sense. In Ezra Jennings, the guide to the psyches of Franklin Blake and Mr. Candy, Collins presents one of the first therapist-heroes, a character who attempts to minister to the mind. Like Dillon in The House by the Churchyard, but in a more obviously modern fashion, Jennings dares to "enter into the infinite labyrinth of another's brain"²⁵ in order to restore psychological health. The labyrinth, then, by virtue of its flexibility as a focussing symbol, contains at its centre the key to an understanding of the differing perspectives of Dickens, Le Fanu, and Collins in their attitudes to evil and its place in the human scheme.

Notes: Chapter Two

¹ Charles Dickens, Martin Chuzzlewit (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), p. 14. All subsequent references are to this edition and are cited in the text.

² See Marcus, p. 256; Miller, pp. 109-11; Schwarzbach, pp. 80-93; and Van Ghent, "The Dickens World," The Dickens Critics, ed. George Ford and Lauriat Lane (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1961), pp. 228-29.

³ The influence of Bleak House on Le Fanu's The Rose and the Key may be indicated by the appearance of this image in the later novel. Speaking of legal matters, the heroine tells the family lawyer, "I'm afraid, Mr. Coke, I have not mamma's talent for business. I should very soon be lost in the labyrinth" (I, 192). Also the relationship of Lady Vernon and Mr. Dawe has echoes of that of Lady Dedlock and Tulkinghorn. Dickens certainly advised Le Fanu about some details of the novel.

⁴ For further discussion of the lawsuit as "social labyrinth," see Patrick Kelly, "The Way of the Labyrinth: Mystery and Detection in the Novels of Charles Dickens," Diss. Univ. of Toronto, 1980.

⁵ A further development of the false guide appears in the person of Mrs. General in Little Dorrit. It is her function to "harness the proprieties to the carriage of some rich young heiress or widow, and become at once the driver and guard of such vehicle through the social mazes" (p. 436). In this novel, society, which deals in "genteel mystifications" (p. 507), has taken on the characteristics of a mystery ritual, like the legal system in Bleak House, and those who would be initiated into the social "mysteries" require the professional assistance of Mrs. General.

⁶ Joseph Henderson and Maud Oakes, The Wisdom of the Serpent (New York: George Braziller, 1963), p. 46.

⁷ Hornback has commented upon the possible influence of Charles Dickens upon The Rose and the Key. See "Five New Dickens Letters," The Michigan Quarterly Review, 10: 4 (1971), 255-60.

⁸ Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, The Rose and the Key (New York: Arno Press, 1977), II, 268. All subsequent references are to this edition and are cited in the text.

⁹ The asylum also forms the backdrop for the climactic scenes of Collins's Armadale, which will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter. It is in the "sanitorium" that Lydia Gwilt, the villainess, traps the two protagonists and attempts to kill the hero for the third and final time. The place provides, not only the confinement reminiscent of the Gothic romance, but also a "modern" and scientific means of murder through asphyxiation. The symbolic overtones of this setting are indicated by the name of its owner, Dr. Downward, and its position in a barren wasteland; even the villainess shivers as she steps over its threshold. Wilkie Collins, Armadale (New York: Dover Publications, 1977), pp. 521-22. All subsequent references are to this edition and are included in the text.

¹⁰ There is more than sufficient evidence to support this idea in the imagery which describes the conspiracy. Early on, Walter fears "some undiscoverable danger lying hid from us in the darkness of the future" (p. 66). Marian speaks of "the conviction of an unseen design in the long series of complications which had now fastened round us" (p. 257). Walter describes the conspiracy at one point as "a daring and intricate crime" (p. 307). When he interviews Mrs. Clements about Sir Percival Glyde, Walter momentarily believes he has made an important discovery. He comments, "My heart beat fast--I thought I had my hand on the clue. How little I knew, then, of the windings of the labyrinth which were still to mislead me!" (p. 431). Later, after searching after Mrs. Catherick's secret, Walter says, "Even in that moment, I began to doubt whether the clue I thought I had found was really leading me to the central mystery of the labyrinth after all" (p. 432).

¹¹ Clouston, I, 249-61.

¹² H. P. Sucksmith, Introd., The Woman in White, pp. xviii-xix.

¹³ For an extended discussion of the thematic and psychological details of the dreams, see J. Brogunier, "The Dreams of Montague Tigg and Jonas Chuzzlewit," Dickensian, 58 (Autumn, 1962), 165-70; and W. Winter, "Dickens and the Psychology of Dreams," PMLA, 63 (1948), 984-1006.

¹⁴ Brogunier interprets the dream-city as "the outward symbol of Jonas's personal experience of the act of murder; it is a 'strange city' (beyond the realm of normal human experience), but not strange to Jonas because he had previously tried to murder his father" (p. 169).

15 Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (1949; rpt. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), p. 101.

16 This study of the guilty mind is strikingly similar to that of Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart."

17 Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, The House by the Churchyard (New York: Arno Press, 1977), III, 227. All subsequent references are to this edition and are included in the text.

18 The maze was a favourite image with Le Fanu to express psychological and moral confusion. It also appears in Haunted Lives (New York: Arno Press, 1977), I, 271, III, 99; "The Room in the Dragon Volant," In a Glass Darkly (New York: Arno Press, 1977), II, 65, 191, 246; and Willing to Die (New York: Arno Press, 1977), I, 122, II, 4-6.

19 It is noteworthy that two years before Collins writes The Moonstone, Le Fanu publishes All in the Dark in which a preoccupied hero unconsciously creates a mystery by sleepwalking.

20 Wilkie Collins, The Moonstone (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 408. All subsequent references are to this edition and are cited in the text.

21 William Marshall, Wilkie Collins (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970), p. 82.

22 Kelly, pp. 232, 33.

23 The Moonstone has provided fertile ground for psychoanalytic critics who interpret the theft of the diamond as the taking of Rachel's virginity and Franklin's stained night-gown as the predictable evidence of this activity. For such views of the novel, see Charles Rycroft, Imagination and Reality: Psycho-Analytical Essays 1951-1961 (London: Hogarth Press, 1968); Erik Routley, The Puritan Pleasures of the Detective Story (London: Victor Gollancz, 1972), pp. 215-19; and Albert Hutter, "Dreams, Transformations, and Literature: The Implications of Detective Fiction," Victorian Studies, 19 (1975-76), 181-209.

24 Robertson Davies, "Gleams and Glooms," One Half of Robertson Davies (Toronto: Macmillan, 1977), p. 230.

25 William Blake, "The French Revolution," Complete Poems (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), p. 173.

Chapter 3:

The Novel as Labyrinth: The Strategies of Mystery

I give you the end of a golden string;
Only wind it in a ball,
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate
Built in Jerusalem's wall. 1

An anonymous critic of Wilkie Collins's Armadale commented in the Saturday Review of June 16, 1866, that the novel "from beginning to end, is a lurid labyrinth of improbabilities. It produces upon the reader the effect of a literary nightmare."² Later writers have seconded that opinion, calling the work "a long and labyrinthine melodrama, full of unblushing sensational contrivance."³ Another contemporary reviewer, Bishop Thirlwall, stated, "I have read that Armadale, drawn on by curiosity to see how such a very complicated skein is to be unravelled, but with very little enjoyment."⁴ Each of these commentators in turn has fastened upon the same idea as the others, the idea of the novel as a labyrinth.⁵ This is the issue which I shall investigate in the present chapter.

Previously, I have considered the situation of the character who, like Theseus, finds himself trapped within a physical or psychological labyrinth devised by his enemies. I would like to extend this analogy to describe the relationship of writer and reader. It seems to me

that the novelist, particularly the writer of fiction that involves mysteries, stands in the same position to his audience as the "maze-makers" do to their victims. The author functions as both Daedalus and Ariadne, creating a complex mystery and, at the same time, providing the clues to its solution. Once the reader's attention has been caught, he is drawn inexorably into the fictional creation, and in his desire to decipher the puzzle becomes a "Theseus" to the "Daedalus" and "Ariadne" of the romancer. The statement of Thirlwall, cited above, epitomizes this attraction and the powerful urge to discover "what happens," in spite of his essential dislike of the novel. In like manner, The Critic said of one of Le Fanu's works, "We can fully recommend The House by the Churchyard to those among our readers who delight in unravelling mysterious murders, and in hunting out and trying to guess at the person who committed them."⁶ The mystery clearly becomes the bait which the novelist uses to lure the reader on to the conclusion. The reader is frequently teased into a belief that, with a little more knowledge, he will be able to solve the riddle before the characters within the fictional world do. However, if the writer of mystery acts as a guide and gives the reader direction, as Ariadne provided Theseus with the secret of the maze by means of a ball of thread, so too does he illustrate the more sinister part of Daedalus by deliberately misguiding and confusing the reader in order to protect the mystery. The writer must be careful that he does not completely bewilder

his reader so that the latter loses interest altogether; the comments on Armadale reveal that Collins must have sorely tried the patience of some readers.

Writing about the maze, Michael Ayrton has stated, "The function of the maze is twofold: to arrest the intruder by confusing him, and to protect the centre from intrusion."⁷ Comparable structural principles work for the novel of mystery as the novelist, like Daedalus creating the labyrinth to hide the Minotaur, preserves his secret by various narrative devices. If the solution has not been discovered already by the clever reader, it will be revealed by the novelist at the proper time for the maximum effect. In order to demonstrate the idea of the novel as a labyrinth, I will examine the techniques of narrative control and authorial manipulation as used by Collins and Le Fanu. In the fiction of these writers, there are strategies for "including" and "excluding" the reader so that even the most alert "armchair detective" will not hit upon the answer before the appropriate moment.⁸

Whatever else critics may think of the novels of Wilkie Collins, they appear to share a common respect; genuine or grudging, for their construction. Le Fanu, writing in the Dublin University Magazine, compared Collins to Edgar Allan Poe. He said, "Both writers put a tale together as a skilful lockmaker does a difficult lock; the various parts fit into each other with wonderful accuracy, and the keenest intellect cannot find a way through the difficulty."⁹ An earlier reviewer in the

same journal was less admiring, calling Collins

a painstaking manufacturer of stories, short or long, whose chief merit lies in the skilful elaboration of a startling mystery traceable to some natural cause, but baffling all attempts to solve it until the author himself has given us the right clue. 10

While clearly less enthusiastic about The Woman in White than other readers, as we shall see, this critic was perceptive about the matter of authorial control characteristic of Collins's work. The literary credo by which Collins wrote was rumoured to be "Make 'em laugh, make 'em cry, make 'em wait."¹¹ While this motto is possibly apocryphal, it is altogether apt for the ingenious creator of The Moonstone and The Woman in White. Harper's New Monthly Magazine defined Collins, on the publication of The Moonstone, as "the one great 'story-wright.'"¹² The article stated further that he had "the faculty of constructing a story in such a way that while no one when it is in progress shall even guess at its winding-up, yet when all is done the reader will wonder why he had not anticipated the end of the plot."¹³ About the same novel, Arthur Compton-Rickett, in a notice in The Bookman, said,

[it] is a masterpiece of construction: from the impressive opening scene where the gem is shown in its splendid Eastern setting, through all the mazes of the story, down to its final recapture by the Indians, there is not a scene which does not carry forward the tale, not a character that has not a part to play in the solution of the mystery. 14

While there has been praise for Collins's method of managing

his plot, there has been little analysis of how the plot actually works. There has been some discussion of his use of "narratives" to tell his stories, primarily by William Marshall and Sue Lonoff, but the comments of both critics can be usefully supplemented by more detailed consideration.¹⁵ These narratives are the major vehicles for the misdirection and manipulation by which Collins creates his labyrinths of fiction.

I

The narrative technique which Collins employs in The Woman in White and The Moonstone is apparently simple and straightforward. The hero of each novel presents a series of first-person and first-hand accounts of past events. The preamble to The Woman in White explains that the role of narrator will be undertaken by the hero and "by other persons who can speak to the circumstances under notice from their own knowledge, just as clearly and positively as he has spoken before them" (p. 1). The opening chapter of the "First Period" of The Moonstone introduces a similar, but more elaborate proceeding. Included in Miss Clack's narrative later in the novel is a series of letters between Miss Clack and Franklin Blake, which discuss the prescribed limits of her account:

She is requested to limit herself to her own individual experience of persons and events, as recorded in her diary. Later discoveries she will be good enough to leave to the pens

of those persons who can write in the capacity of actual witnesses. (p. 285)

Under the appearance of verisimilitude and "eye-witness" reporting lies the "false turning" for the unwary reader of either work. The preamble explains that the object is

to present the truth always in its most direct and most intelligible aspect; and to trace the course of one complete series of events by making the persons who have been most closely connected with them, at each succeeding stage, relate their own experience, word for word.
(p. 33)

The trap lies in believing that these eye-witnesses know the whole truth, and tell it all in their narratives. The reader is invited to be a "Judge" over the events which are described (p. 33). This role cannot possibly be carried out by the reader because he does not have the opportunity to judge what is the truth, since only one view of each succeeding event is presented. Only at the end of the novel does the reader see the "other side" of the case, by which time the role of "Judge" is irrelevant.

Collins sets up his heroes, Walter Hartright and Franklin Blake, as "editors" to guide the reader through the events of their respective stories. That these novels can be considered as labyrinths is shown by a statement on the part of Hartright. Overcome momentarily by the thought of the task of reporting which lies before him, he says, "This must not be, if I who write am to guide, as I ought, you who read. This must not be, if the clue that leads through the windings of the story is to remain from end

to end untangled in my hands" (p. 378). While their / announced plan is to record the truth as clearly as possible, in reality the two heroes become writers of mystery-fiction themselves. By describing the mystery as it was experienced by them or others and by suppressing later knowledge which would reveal the truth at once, Hartright and Blake essentially recreate the mystery in its original terms. The best example of the tactic of suppression occurs in The Moonstone. It is not until at least the half-way point that we realize that the most obvious "eye-witness" has been left out. If Blake is acting "in the interests of truth" (p. 39) as he claims, why does he not ask Rachel to describe the theft of the Diamond, instead of Gabriel Betteredge who knows nothing of what happened? Strictly speaking, the plan of proceeding through various narratives would seem to be a "round-about" means of getting at the truth.

If Rachel had described "the events of the night" then we would know who stole the Diamond much sooner than we do. However, discovering the identity of the thief answers only a part of the question. Once we learn who the thief is, we still must uncover how the theft was managed, which is a more complex problem. Franklin Blake shows that he is an able fabricator of "sensation scenes" by arranging the narratives so that he himself uncovers the identity of the thief. Through this manipulation of the "evidence," Blake recreates his sense of entrapment for the reader, although in his role as "editor" of the

work, he is free of it himself. The reports of Rosanna, Rachel, and Mr. Candy are withheld from their proper chronological place in order to be delayed-action surprises or "narrative time-bombs." We may also wonder while reading why Godfrey has not contributed a narrative, because we are kept "in the dark" about his role in the plot and his fate. However, it is only after reading the novels that we realize how we have been misled and that there has been a process of selection and suppression. Both Hartright and Blake, by insisting that their witnesses relate events without the benefit of hindsight, manage, for the most part, to keep any hints of what happened afterward from their stories.

While the opening chapter of The Moonstone discloses that the central event of the story will be the theft of the diamond, the beginning of The Woman in White leaves the details of the subsequent crime deliberately vague. The preamble of the later novel hints at a happy, or at least satisfactory, conclusion when it describes itself as "the story of what a Woman's patience can endure, and what a Man's resolution can achieve" (p. 1). The opening of The Moonstone, however, betrays no clue as to what occurred to the characters involved in the story, except for Franklin Blake and Gabriel Betteredge who are introduced at the start. Through the manner of their editorship, each becomes, in effect, a persona for Collins in his fictional world, both directing and complicating the progress of the reader.

The use of the narratives is similarly double-edged. These supposedly eye-witness accounts, which will take the reader close to the mystery, actually frustrate the reader's detective impulse. Sue Lonoff points out the benefits of a first-person narrator for the mystery writer:

it would enable him to shift the perspective at will, to lead the reader astray legitimately through the words of an honest but misinformed witness, and to avoid the appearance of omniscience--of knowing what will happen; as of course he must--by channeling the action through speakers whose knowledge is demonstrably incomplete. 16

In addition, there is also the vehicle through which the narration is maintained. The narratives do not "tell all" because they cannot; all the evidence cannot be shown through the viewpoint of the diary or journal form. This form remains fixed in "the present" as the characters tell the story while being involved in it. This technique ensures an immediacy of impact and means that the reader will encounter events and characters as the individual narrators do, without the benefit of more comprehensive knowledge. William Marshall, discussing this method in The Woman in White, argues, "By the control that he attains in his narrative method, Walter Hartright, explicitly casting the reader in the role of judge, offers him an object with which he can make an intellectual identification."¹⁷ The fact that they are cast in a present tense, combined with the matter of editorial selection, means that the reader, far from being a judge, becomes another

victim. This problem is one about which J. Hillis Miller writes in his consideration of critical terminology and the "maze" formed by the narrative line. He comments,

The critic . . . may experience the impossibility of getting outside the maze altogether and seeing it from without, giving it its laws or finding its laws, rather than the impossibility of reaching a commanding centre. Any terminology of analysis or explication is already inextricably folded into the text the critic is attempting to see from without. 18

Because the narrative structure denies him the advantage of superior knowledge, the reader, like Miller's critic, becomes trapped "inside" the maze with the other characters who are also struggling to understand it.

The use of the first-person narration provides for the reader a focus or point of identification in a confusing world. At the same time, the accounts can be deceptive. The reader must sift through the prejudices which colour the narratives of characters like Frederick Fairlie and Mrs. Michelson in The Woman in White or Betteredge and Miss Clack in The Moonstone. The reader must also realize that the narratives are only fragments, none of which individually can provide the solution to the mystery. Early in his investigation, Sergeant Cuff says: "Wait a little . . . The pieces of the puzzle are not at all put together yet" (p. 143); this statement is true of the novel itself. As the isolated fragments of a whole, these narratives are like the "blind alleys" of a maze; each is a disjointed part which may lead toward, but not directly to, the final

end. Ending his narration, Gabriel Betteredge states, "In the dark I have brought you thus far. In the dark I am compelled to leave you, with my best respects" (p. 233). Both works reveal the need for "collective knowledge" which is not immediately given to the reader. Only at the conclusion does the reader have the answer because it is only then that Collins reveals the complete truth. It is only then that the reader can see how all the fragments fit together into a coherent pattern of motive and action. It is impossible, for example, to solve The Moonstone on the basis of logic because Collins holds too much back. This is not the "Fair-Play" method, described by Dorothy Sayers as the hallmark of the detective story, but then Collins did not deliberately set out to write detective fiction; he was writing works of mystery, or, in the case of The Moonstone, "romance."¹⁹

The Woman in White and The Moonstone also utilize the "red herring" device deliberately in order to confuse and deceive. In the first half of The Woman in White, several characters, including Marian and Walter, and the reader pursue Anne Catherick's secret. This secret appears to be of major importance since good and bad alike are anxious to learn it. Anne's enigmatic behaviour, like that of Rosanna in The Moonstone, provides a "false trail." Marian and Walter eventually understand that Anne herself, in her resemblance to Laura, rather than her "knowledge," is the important clue to the mystery. Because of her past, Rosanna becomes the most likely suspect. Soon after

Betteredge has introduced Rosanna, he teases the reader with the following comment, "If I could only have looked a little way into the future, I would have taken Rosanna Spearman out of the house, then and there, with my own hand" (p. 92). Her attempt to protect Franklin, motivated by partial knowledge of events, leads Cuff and the reader to presume that she had a more substantial part in the crime. Neither Anne nor Rosanna possesses the whole truth, although each believes that she does, and the subsequent actions of the two women prove misleading both to the other characters and to the reader.

Unlike the group of characters in The Moonstone who unconsciously create a "conspiracy of silence" which conceals the truth, there is no central eye-witness to the crime in The Woman in White except the villains. While Marian eavesdrops on Glyde and Fosco, she unwittingly hears the genesis of the real plot when the Count learns of the resemblance between Anne and Laura. At this time, however, she has no way of knowing what will come of it. She later guesses at the nature of the plan when she frees Laura from the asylum, but by then it is too late. Once the plot begins, the narrative viewpoint "withdraws" in order to distance the reader from the events at Blackwater Park and, subsequently, in London. We can determine only by implication what is going on from the evidence of Frederick Fairlie, Mrs. Michelson, and the series of witnesses who testify to Lady Glyde's illness and death. The later group is misleading in its testimony because the

witnesses have no reason to suspect that they are being imposed upon by the conspirators, and that the fatally ill woman is not Lady Glyde. The reader, however, has no reason to question the veracity of these statements and is made to believe, like Walter, that Laura is dead. The testimony of Marian, which would explain what really has happened, is deferred until after the sensational revelation at Laura's grave. The suspicious reader may guess at the actual circumstances of "Laura's" death, but the apparently truthful evidence of the novel denies his conjectures. It also falls out, through chance or clever management, that anyone who could see through the scheme and report what is actually happening is temporarily "out of the way." The use of Betteredge as narrator of the early events in The Moonstone, mentioned previously, is another example of "distancing" for the purposes of narrative manipulation. This strategy serves to keep the reader "inside" the narrative so, although he may guess at the truth, he has no way of getting at it directly.

The method of narration in Armadale is slightly different from the authorial "sleight-of-hand" practised by Collins in The Woman in White and The Moonstone. The narrative is carried primarily by an omniscient voice, combined with letters and documents which the other characters never see. This viewpoint gives the reader the position of superiority which is denied to him in the other two novels. This position is essential because Armadale is one of Collins's most complex romances,

involving three generations of two families and two pairs of fathers and sons with the same name, Allan Armadale.

The novel follows the course of the friendship between the two Allans of the third generation, one of whom, using the name of "Ozias Midwinter;" attempts to atone for his father's crime of murder by protecting the other Allan Armadale, the son of his father's victim. The work also traces the schemes of Lydia Gwilt to avenge herself on the family that "wronged" her. Armadale, unlike the other novels, has no "editor" to compile and revise the evidence; the reader is cast implicitly in that role. Ozias Midwinter gathers certain narratives, including his father's confession, and the description of Allan's prophetic dreams, but he cannot make an all-inclusive collection because a good deal remains hidden from him. The reader alone is granted special authorial "licence" to eavesdrop from "above" on the events of the novel, as Marian does in The Woman in White. The characters within the fiction are akin to other Collins characters, as they are entangled in mystery and possess only fragmentary knowledge of their circumstances.

For many characters, experience threatens to be a labyrinth which they can control only by creating a continuous "thread," composed of logical cause and effect. This factor accounts for the motif of "the thread of the narrative" which turns up in this novel (pp. 10, 81). The stories of the past become guiding "threads" to establish coherence in a confusing world.²⁰ The past must be made *

comprehensible; if it can be understood, it can be controlled, and people therefore will not be victimized by it, as the characters in Armadale are. This novel shows the dangers of wandering into the maze without a clear sense of direction, because there is the danger of becoming victimized by those who know the path. The image of the maze, therefore, appears as a warning of the peril which lies ahead. The narrator describes Midwinter and Allan taking "the first irrevocable step together on the dark and tortuous road of their future lives" (p. 92). Allan is lucky that Midwinter is willing to act as "guide," although Allan remains unaware of this relationship. The description of the Norfolk Broads, the location which Allan chose for Miss Milroy's picnic, signals danger in what is supposed to be a carefree outing:

Nets appeared on cottage palings; little flat-bottomed boats lay strangely at rest among the flowers in cottage gardens; farmers' men passed to and fro clad in composite costume of the coast and the field, in sailors' hats and fishermen's boots, and ploughmen's smocks,-- and even yet the low-lying labyrinth of waters, embosomed in its mystery of solitude, was a hidden labyrinth still. (p. 215)

The reason for the ominous note becomes clear and symbolically apt when we realize that at the end of the journey through the "low-lying" labyrinth of waters, "Miss Gwilt, like the Minotaur, is waiting for them. The conclusion of the novel, with the dangerous Miss Gwilt out of the way, emphasizes symbolically the successful passage from confusion into peaceful resolution: "He rose, and walked to the

window. While they had been speaking together, the darkness had passed. The first light of the new day met him as he looked out, and rested tenderly on his face" (p. 595).. From the darkness and confusion of the labyrinth, typified by the events at Dr. Downward's asylum, the characters finally emerge into the light.

Levels of perception are revealed, not only in the relative positions of the reader and the characters, but also between the characters themselves. At the lowest level of awareness are the nominal hero and heroine, Allan Armadale and Miss Milroy. They seem to exist only at the basic level of emotion and sensation; the narrator specifically mentions "Allan's essentially superficial observation" (p. 145). These two are the necessary victims of the machinations of the villainess, but, beyond that function, neither is particularly interesting to the reader, nor, one feels, to Collins himself. Far more interesting and of more consequence to the plot are the pair Ozias Midwinter and Lydia Gwilt who are the shadows of the young lovers. Both of these characters are compromised by their knowledge of, or involvement with, past events. Ozias is more perceptive than the man he wishes to protect. He knows what transpired between their fathers, as Allan does not, and fears its possible hold on the present. The ironic question as to whether Allan is worthy of Midwinter's sacrifices remains unasked; it is more important that it is through Allan that Midwinter and eventually Lydia work out their own salvation. The

contrast between the two men is deftly illustrated by Collins on their first day at Thorpe-Ambrose, Armadale's estate. While Allan, "who saw nothing under the surface" (p. 163), encounters nothing to disturb him and falls in love with Miss Milroy at first sight, Ozias continually glimpses behind the facade:

"Am I fated to see nothing and hear nothing to-day which can give me heart and hope for the future?" he thought, as he angrily swung back the lodge gate. "Even the people Allen has let the cottage to, are people whose lives are embittered by a household misery which it is my misfortune to have found out!" (p. 171)

While Ozias has more discernment than Allan, he too is limited in his awareness.

Lydia is able to manipulate and, to a certain degree, control the destinies of the other three characters because she knows more of the family history and of human nature than the rest. Midwinter is the only one who could combat her because he too knows the past, but the sense of guilt which this knowledge brings to him and his resulting superstitious fear of the future paralyze his will. In the final analysis, it is Lydia's knowledge of herself, the realization of her love for Midwinter and of what she has become, that puts an end to her plotting. The mystery story becomes a moral struggle within Lydia herself which her "better nature" wins. In her ultimate actions, Lydia becomes "Ariadne," the detective who solves the puzzle by leaving her confession for Midwinter, and her own executioner.

Herself a participant in the crimes of the past, she learns additional details through her emotional hold on Midwinter, who knows little or nothing of her true history. We discover her background by "listening in" on the conversation of the Bashwoods, who are the only characters, apart from Lydia's partners in crime, who know much about her. Only we are able to "look over her shoulder" at the diary entries which no one else sees, and only we are privy to her thoughts:

Have I looked at the consequences of my marriage to Midwinter? No! Do I know how to meet the obstacle of my husband, when the time comes which transforms me from the living Armadale's wife, to the dead Armadale's widow?

No! When the time comes, I must meet the obstacle as I best may. I am going blindfold then--so far as Midwinter is concerned--into this frightful risk? Yes; blindfold. Am I out of my senses? Very likely. Or am I a little too fond of him to look the thing in the face? I daresay. Who cares?

I won't, I won't, I won't think of it! Haven't I a will of my own? And can't I think, if I like, of something else? (p. 399)

This private information includes her final redemptive deeds of rescue and sacrifice. Although Lydia leaves a letter for Midwinter which hints at what she had intended to do, the reader alone is master of all the particulars. Therefore, at the conclusion of the novel, we are in the unique position of being the only ones who know everything that has taken place. For the characters within the fictional world, much of the mystery remains unsolved. Writing to his son, the lawyer Pedgift says:

All I know of the mystery at the Sanatorium, I know from Mr. Armadale; and he is entirely in the dark on more than one point of importance. . . . My idea is, that Mr. Midwinter had a motive of his own for not coming forward with the evidence that he might have given. I have also reason to suspect that Mr. Armadale, out of regard for him, followed his lead, and that the verdict at the inquest (attaching no blame to anybody), proceeded, like many other verdicts of the same kind, from an entirely superficial investigation of the circumstances. (pp. 590-1)

Allan is shielded from knowing the truth by Midwinter who still does not have all of the details of the story himself.

We pay a price, however, for being the only ones to see how the whole pattern is worked out. The price is complicity in the plans of Lydia to seduce, swindle, and murder. Next to the omniscient voice, it is Lydia to whom we listen most in the novel. Her "narration" in its various forms occupies, perhaps; a third of Armadale. The difference which this makes both in tone and in our awareness of evil can be indicated by imagining what The Woman in White would be like if narrated to a large extent by Count Fosco or The Moonstone by Godfrey Ablewhite. Even the innocuous Allan and Miss Milroy are seen in a new light when described by Miss Gwilt:

"While that hateful Miss Gwilt was in the house," says this model young person, "I would have gone to school willingly--I wanted to go. But it's all different now; I don't think of it in the same way; I feel too old for school. I'm quite heart-broken, Mr. Armadale." There she stopped, as if she had meant to say more, and gave him a look which finished the sentence plainly--"I'm quite heart-broken, Mr. Armadale, now we are friendly again, at going away from you!" For downright brazen impudence, which a grown woman would be ashamed of, give me

the young girls whose "modesty" is so pertinaciously insisted on by the nauseous domestic sentimentalists of the present day! (p. 381)

Once we have looked at these two through the cynical gaze of Miss Gwilt, we are unlikely to think of either of them uncritically (as the embodiments of "sweetness and light") again. Because Lydia is also the cleverest character in the novel, we may develop a grudging admiration for her intelligence and her wit to the detriment of sympathy with the virtuous characters. In this respect, she is like Count Fosco in The Woman in White, a character who steals the spotlight from less impressive creations. Lydia's fascination as a character, combined with her "narrative authority," may lead us to identify with the villain of the novel, instead of the hero. The knowledge which we gain through reading Lydia's diary and her correspondence with Mother Oldershaw, and through seeing her plot with Dr. Downward, destroys our "innocence." We know what she is planning to do because we, and only we, are able to invade her mind. At the same time, we are unable to do anything with our knowledge except watch and wait. In this manner, we are made "silent partners" of her manipulations. Because the information we acquire from Lydia remains "our secret," we are initiated into evil and become as guilty as she. Knowledge may mean power, but it also entails for the reader a fall from innocence. If the narrative form of The Moonstone and The Woman in White places us "inside" the labyrinth and confuses us, then that

of Armada places us "above" the maze and shows us how the trap is devised and erected.

II

In The House by the Churchyard, there is the following description of the conversation at the dinner-party at the King's House:

There are said to have been persons who could attend to half a dozen different conversations going on together, and take a rational part in them all, and indulge, all the time, in a distinct consecutive train of thought beside. I dare say Mr. Morphy, the chess-player, would find no difficulty in it. But Devereux was not by any means competent to the feat, though there was one conversation, perhaps, the thread of which he would gladly have caught up and disentangled. So the talk at top and bottom and both sides of the table, with its cross-readings, and muddle, and uproar, changed hands, and whisked and rioted, like a dance of Walpurgis, in his lonely brain. (I, 230)

The entanglements of the dinner conversation provide an apt analogy for the structure of the novel itself; the reader may often feel like Captain Devereux, unable to follow even one thread in the surrounding babble. A later passage supplements this metaphor of perplexing sound:

The buzz of a village, like the hum of a city, represents a very wonderful variety of human accent and feeling. It is marvellous how few families thrown together will suffice to furnish forth this dubia coena of sweets and bitters. . . . So, on this night, as usual, there rose up towards the stars a throbbing murmur from our village--a wild chaos of sound, which we

must strive to analyse, extracting from the hurly-burly each separate tune it may concern us to hear. (III; 137-8)

It was in this position that at least two of the contemporary reviewers found themselves. The Critic said of the novel,

Its great defect is the multiplicity of personages who are brought upon the scene; there are characters and incidents sufficient to fill six volumes instead of three. The result is that a medley or confusion is presented to the reader's mind, and much of the interest is consequently lost. 21

The Athenaeum reviewer was more hostile:

By way of complicating the interest, a digression is made into the fortunes of many individuals; a soupçon of bigamy is raised which is perfectly unnecessary: indeed, most of the characters, both male and female, are mere marionettes, stiff and stupid. A great deal of irrelevant comic business is also introduced, which is forced and wearisome, and in extremely bad taste. 22

According to this critic, "all is told in a series of jerking, fragmentary hints, so obscure that we do not feel too sure that we have grasped the facts."²³ The sense of perplexity which is apparent here is the result of two factors, Le Fanu's narrative technique and his love for the past, which seems to "run away" with the novel.

In his thinly-veiled persona of Charles de Cresseron, Le Fanu seems as concerned with telling us about the social and romantic aspects of life in Chapelizod of 1709 as he is with unravelling the mystery which is ostensibly the main interest. Le Fanu indulges in a full-scale

evocation of the past as if this were the only way the reader could fully understand what happened. The danger is that the reader, like those early critics, will be overwhelmed by detail and will become completely alienated. While I would not argue that every detail was calculated by Le Fanu as an addition to a completely organic whole, I would also not agree that the novel is as shapeless as some critics make it out to be. W. J. McCormack, for example, claims that the story-line is "so complicated that one forgets that a plot exists only to have the delicious rediscovery of terror surprise one again and again."²⁴ Although the spectrum of the novel is broad, I do not think that the reader is actually in any danger of forgetting that a plot exists, if he pays attention to the action: Le Fanu makes potent and adroit use of his "multiplicity of personages" and his various plots. While the critics may talk about "irrelevancy," Le Fanu illustrates his cunning as a fabricator of mysteries by a skilful alternation of characters and narrative threads. This technique enables him to create suspense by regulating the novel's focus and to gain variety of tone by shifting to a different set of characters.

In The House by the Churchyard, Le Fanu employs narrative devices similar to those of Wilkie Collins to enhance the creation of mystery and to manipulate the reader. As his comment from the article "Modern Novel and Romance," cited earlier in the chapter, indicates, Le Fanu knew and, to a certain degree, admired Collins's

work. In The Woman in White, Collins retains a tight control on the developments of "one complete series of events" (p. 1) which explain a single mystery. Like Collins in that novel, and later in Armadale and The Moonstone, Le Fanu in The House by the Churchyard retells the events of the past to resolve a puzzle and to trace everything back to its source. The story of Sturk's skull becomes the "thread" which leads Le Fanu and his reader back in time from the narrative present, sometime in the 1860's, to when he was fourteen, back further to the present of the narrative in 1767, and finally back to 1745 when the original crime took place.

However, a central difference between the two writers is revealed in terms of the narrative focus. In contrast to the practice of Collins, Le Fanu develops his mystery as one element in a larger scheme. He is interested in the influence which mystery and evil have upon a community rather than upon a few individuals, as Collins is. In this respect, Le Fanu, with his wider social focus, is more like Dickens, but without the specific institutional targets of the latter writer. The detailed portrait of Chapelized is necessary because practically all of its members are connected by or interested in the pivotal matter of the attack upon Sturk. The process of discovery which reveals Sturk's murderer involves, either directly or indirectly, the revelation of a host of other secrets. This interdependent relationship which exists between the inhabitants of Chapelized is conveyed by Le Fanu in an

apt, if inelegant, metaphor, first noted in the previous chapter. He says that

society resembles a pyramid of potatoes, in which you cannot stir one without setting others, in unexpected places, also in motion. Thus it was, upon very slight motives, the relations of people in the little world of Chapelized began to shift and change considerably, and very few persons made a decided move of any sort without affecting or upsetting one or more of his neighbours. (I, 301)

By the time that Paul Dangerfield is exposed and tried, all of the past crimes, concealed identities, and even "innocent" secrets, like Aunt Rebecca's attachment to Paddock or Mrs. MacNamara's debts, have been brought to light.

The difficulty lies in the fact that Le Fanu, like Collins, places the reader "inside" his fictional world, as if he were another character in search of the truth. The reader is granted more licence through the omniscient viewpoint here than he is by Collins in The Woman in White or The Moonstone, but his path is likewise circumscribed by the author. Because Cresseron is a more overt presence as the narrative voice, the reader is more aware of the shaping process which is going on. The dual perspective of the narrator, who is, after all, describing, as if in the present, events which took place about one hundred years before, sometimes intrudes on our notice. He reminds us that the characters who have just been before us are long-dead. Shortly after Lilius Walsingham is introduced, the narrator breaks off to comment:

Oh, pretty Liliias--oh, true lady--I never saw the pleasant crayon sketch--perished--lost--that my mother used to speak of, but the tradition of thee has come to me --so bright and tender, with its rose and violet tints, and merry, melancholy dimples, that I see thee now, as then, with the dew of thy youth still on thee, and sigh as I look, as if on a lost, early love of mine. (I, 46-7).

At least twice he lets slip a hint of the "little did they know" variety, revealing his foreknowledge of events.

These moments, however, are fairly rare and remain vague enough to heighten suspense. This discussion of Mary Matchwell provides a case in point:

The fact is, however, that neither the Doctor nor his patient quite understood Mrs. Matchwell or her powers, nor had the least inkling of the marvellous designs that were ripening in her brain, and involving the fate of more than one of the good easy people of Chapelizod, against whom nobody dreamed a thunderbolt was forging. (I, 294-5)

Cresseron informs his readers about the process of writing, revealing that he has "corrected" the language of the original characters (I, 250) and has "toned down" the practice of swearing, substituting mythological names for profanities (II, 129). In the interests of medical verisimilitude, he has, he tells us, discussed Sturk's case with "the most eminent surgeon of my acquaintance" (III, 129) and discovered that it is possible to survive in that condition for a length of time. He tells us of his desire to include an entire letter from Aunt Rebecca on the subject of the Tiled House, but his publisher, in the interests of brevity, has vetoed this plan (I, 119-20).

The narrator also reveals the debate which he has with himself over the fate of one of his characters. Originally, he had planned to change the end of Lilius Walsingham's story to let her live and marry Captain Devereux, who would be made worthy of her. However, knowing what really happened, he could not "fictionalize" it:

all about her was so linked in my mind with truth, and melancholy, and altogether so sacred, that I could not trifle with the story, and felt, even when I imagined it, a pang, and a reproach, as if I had mocked the sadness of little Lily's fate; so, after some ponderings and trouble of mind I gave it up, and quite renounced the thought. (III, 182)

The intrusion of Cresseron into the narrative does not have the neurotic compulsiveness of a *Tristram Shandy* which all of this might suggest; it is more in the style of the artist who has fallen in love with the creation and wishes to do it justice, so that others will admire and love it as well.

W. J. McCormack describes the novel as "a narrative of the past explicitly as a retreat from the grimly present."²⁵ The prologue to the novel with its contrast of the past with the industrial present clearly manifests this idea, but it also shows that the narrator is under no illusion about the past to which he is escaping in the reader's company. Those days, he says, are "with all their colour and adventure--perhaps, on the whole, more pleasant to read about, and dream of, than they were to live in" (I, 6). Cresseron is aware that "his" past

Still their violence, follies, and hospitalities, softened by distance, and illuminated with a sort of barbaric splendour, have long presented to my fancy the glowing and ever-shifting combinations upon which, as on the red embers, in a winter's gloaming, I love to gaze in a lazy luxury of reverie, from my own arm-chair, while they drop, ever and anon, into new shapes, and silently tell their "winter's tales." (I, 6)

The narrator does suggest that the sources from which he is working, principally Aunt Rebecca's letters and diaries, do not give him a complete picture of earlier days: "If I stuck at a fib as little as some historians, I might easily tell you who won the prizes at this shooting on Palmerston Green. But the truth is I don't know . . . Well it can't be helped now, and the papers I've got are silent upon the point" (I, 52). This apparent ignorance is, in fact, an attempt to provide an air of authenticity for the artistic creation. This gap in Cresseron's knowledge is, perhaps, the only one; certainly, no event of major importance or its outcome is missing from the narratives. The sources, of course, cannot explain the omniscience of the narrator. This basic premise is, however, the one upon which Cresseron's "winter's tale" is built, and, if we reject it, then we must reject the entire work.

While we may realize that our perspective on events is being governed sooner than we do in The Moonstone, there is still no way to avoid the false trails which the narrator lays for us. "Cresseron" plants "red herrings," conceals information, and generally misleads us, but we are forced

to accept his guidance towards the solution; once inside the labyrinth of the novel, we have no choice except to follow the "Ariadne's thread" held by the author. Circumstantial evidence leads both the characters and us to suspect Charles Nutter of trying to kill Sturk, and neither has any way of proving otherwise. The narrator drops a clue in front of us; as he looks in a window of the Brass Castle, Captain Cluffe sees something which will prove significant: "whom should he see but Dangerfield, who was drying his hands in a towel; and . . . he further saw him make some queer little arrangements, and eventually pour out and swallow a glass of brandy . . ." (II, 122). What Cluffe sees is Dangerfield getting rid of tell-tale evidence of his attempt on Sturk's life, but, since this scene takes place before the crime is discovered, neither Cluffe nor the reader realizes what it means until much later. The villainous Charles Archer, responsible for the attack on Sturk and the "framing" of Lord Dunoran, is described by Dangerfield and Irons, and by the narrator, as if he were another person instead of being Dangerfield's true identity (II, 145-6, 156). When the narrator describes the "vampire" that attends the church service, he similarly leads us to believe that this is not Dangerfield but someone else. Into the church comes

a phantom, with the light of death, and the shadows of hell, and the taint of the grave upon him, and sat among these respectable persons of flesh and blood--impenetrable--secure--for he knew that there were but two in the church for whom clever disguises were

idle and transparent as the air. (II, 179)

When Sturk finally names Charles Archer as his assailant, the information is still screened from the reader. Sturk is asked where Archer lives: "'Here--in this town--Chapelized, up the river, a bit, with--with a--changed name,' answered Sturk. And at the name he mentioned, Lowe and Toole, in silence and steadfastly, exchanged a pale, grim glance that was awful to see" (III, 164). The identity of Mervyn, the disguised Lord Dunoran, is handled in a comparable manner; it is relatively late in the novel, at the end of the second volume, that the reader finds out who he really is. Mervyn's courtship of Gertrude Chattersworth is deliberately cloaked in secrecy. Our view of his matter is that of the other characters who do not know what is going on. Liliias is surprised by something she glimpses when visiting her friend:

Gertrude, she thought, was looking toward her, though she did not move, until she drew nearer, wondering why she did not approach, and then, pausing in a kind of unpleasant doubt, she heard a murmured talking, and plainly saw the figure of a man, with a cloak, it seemed, wrapped about him, and leaning, from outside, against the window-sill, and as she believed, holding Gertrude's hand. (II, 17)

We later find out that this man is called "Mordaunt," but this fact only serves to deepen the mystery because we have never met anyone by that name.

The viewpoint of the reader is restricted here, as it is at other critical moments. Sturk's sudden realization

of where he has seen Dangerfield before is kept from us, even though previously we have been privy to all his mental struggles. Mary Matchwell's hold over the Nutters remains a secret until a dramatically appropriate time comes for its revelation (II, 103-8). When Charles Nutter, who disappeared after the attack upon Sturk and who is presumed dead, returns secretly to collect certain possessions from his house, the narrator deceives us by describing Nutter "with rigid features and white eye-balls" as if he had returned from the grave (III, 16). A body, identified as Nutter's, has been found, so we are teased into believing that this apparition really is a ghost. The stories of the Tiled House, which old Sally has told to Lillias, have "prepared" us as well to accept this apparent advent of the supernatural into the narrative. Mary Matchwell's enforced departure in the custody of the law is described by someone who has only hearsay evidence, so it is thought by Toole and by us that it is Sally Nutter, Matchwell's intended victim, who has been carried off instead (III, 237-8). The reader is even excluded from the key scene of the novel which begins the process of clarification. When Dillon trepanns Sturk, the reader is outside the bedroom, overhearing the event with Mrs. Sturk, rather than inside seeing it himself. Le Fanu manipulates the position of the reader here as he does during the murder of Madame in Uncle Silas; he removes the reader to a "safer" place in order to spare him a bloody and grisly sight.

The "strategies of mystery" which Le Fanu uses have the same effect as they do in the novels of Collins. The deliberate suppression of information and the restriction of viewpoint work together to confine the reader within the perplexing world of the novel, without a key to release him. He is plunged into mystery as well by being forced to enter the fictional labyrinth as one of the characters, knowing a little more than they do, but not enough to predict the final outcome. The reader may suspect the truth, but, because of narrative barriers and "false trails," he cannot know it for certain until the author guides him to it. The reader undergoes a form of "ritual initiation," following the clues of the author and progressing from confusion and bewilderment to enlightenment and a new sense of order.

As we have seen in this chapter, Wilkie Collins and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu could devise "labyrinths of fiction" through the control and manipulation of narrative technique. The form of their fiction, at least in the examples under discussion here, complements its themes. The tales of Laura Glyde's "death," the theft of the Moonstone, and the fatal assault on Sturk are related in a manner which recreates the mystery. Since the explanation is embodied in the process of the narrative, these novels are, at the same time, mysteries and their own solution; they exist simultaneously as "maze" and "thread." Miller writes,

The line of Ariadne's thread is at once the means of retracing a labyrinth which is already there, and at the same time is itself the

labyrinth, a "rope-walk," according to Ruskin's false etymology, spun from the belly of a spider in mid-web, Ariadne anamorphosed into Arachne. The line, Ariadne's thread, is both the labyrinth and a means of safely retracing the labyrinth. 25

The Collins novels The Woman in White and The Moonstone illustrate this point exactly; they are divided into two distinct parts, the first of which sets up the problem and the second resolves it. It is approximately at the mid-point of each novel that we learn that Laura is alive and that Franklin is the thief of the diamond. While the truth is thus discovered, it does not make any sense because the supporting evidence which would explain how these things came about is yet missing. The "labyrinthine" nature of the Collins novels becomes apparent when we recognize that the second part of these works retraces the events of the first half and makes a coherent pattern or "thread" of them, which clarifies the central enigma.

Both writers show their faith in the capacity of the individual to extricate himself from complications by the use of logic. Through their detectives, amateur and professional, Collins and Le Fanu emphasize the ultimate success of the rational process over the social and moral entanglements of life. This important motif is evident from the actions of the characters within their fiction. The ability to make sense of baffling circumstances there is the key to a satisfactory conclusion. It is true also in terms of the literary achievements of both men as creators of fiction; like Daedalus, they are ingenious

craftsmen who, through the use of their own rational faculties, "entrap" the reader within their art.

Notes: Chapter Three

¹ William Blake, "Jerusalem," Complete Poems, p. 797.

² Quoted in Wilkie Collins: The Critical Heritage, p. 151.

³ J. I. M. Stewart, Introd., The Moonstone, by Wilkie Collins (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 23. See also Robinson, p. 190.

⁴ Quoted in Wilkie Collins: The Critical Heritage, p. 145.

⁵ J. Hillis Miller, "Ariadne's Thread: Repetition and the Narrative Line," Critical Inquiry, 3 (1976), 57-77. Miller considers the myth of Theseus and Ariadne and "the image of the 'line'" in connection with narrative terminology.

⁶ "New Novels," The Critic, 25 (May, 1863), 341.

⁷ Michael Ayrton, The Rudiments of Paradise (New York: Weybright and Talley, 1971), p. 298.

⁸ Charles Dickens uses narrative methods equivalent to those of Collins and Le Fanu in arranging the mysteries of Bleak House. For discussions of his technique in that novel and particularly of his management of the two narrative voices, see especially: D. S. Delebinasse, "The Significance of Point of View in Bleak House," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 23 (1968), 253-64; Robert Donovan, "Structure and Idea in Bleak House," in Bleak House: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. J. Korg (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966), pp. 31-44; M. E. Grenander, "The Mystery and the Moral: Point of View in Dickens's Bleak House," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 11 (1956), 301-05; W. J. Harvey, "Chance and Design in Bleak House," in Dickens and the Twentieth Century, eds. J. Gross and G. Pearson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), pp. 145-57; Archibald Coolidge, Charles Dickens as a Serial Novelist (Ames: Iowa State Univ. Press, 1967); Earle Davis, The Flint and the Flame; Taylor Stoehr, Dickens: The Dreamer's Stance (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1965).

⁹ Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, "Modern Novel and Romance," Dublin University Magazine, 61 (April, 1863), 437.

¹⁰ "Recent Popular Novels," Dublin University Magazine, 57 (Feb., 1861), 200.

¹¹ Bradford Booth, "Wilkie Collins and the Art of Fiction," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 6 (1951), 131-43.

¹² Quoted in Wilkie Collins: The Critical Heritage, p. 178.

¹³ Critical Heritage, p. 178.

¹⁴ Arthur Compton-Rickett, "Wilkie Collins," The Bookman, 42 (June, 1912), 109-10.

¹⁵ See Marshall, pp. 59-62 and Lonoff, pp. 150-69.

¹⁶ Lonoff, p. 165.

¹⁷ Marshall, p. 61.

¹⁸ Miller, "Ariadne's Thread," 73.

¹⁹ While technically not detective fiction in themselves, the novels of Collins contain the roots of the genre, especially in the use of the labyrinth image. The characters and motifs of detective fiction are all present here, including the central focus of a crime, the country house, the small cast of suspects, and a professional detective. With their emphasis on mysteries, villains, and conspiracies, but with the addition of a detective to interpret events logically and rationally, these Victorian mystery novels provide a link between the eighteenth-century Gothic thriller and the twentieth-century detective novel. See Dorothy Sayers, Introd., The Omnibus of Crime (New York: Pausan and Clark, 1929); Robert Ashley, "Wilkie Collins and the Detective Story," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 6 (1951), 47-60; and R. F. Stewart, . . . And Always a Detective (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1980), pp. 27-40.

²⁰ The metaphor of the thread appears as well in The Moonstone. Betteredge speaks of Franklin's recovering "the last thread" of the story of Colonel Herncastle (p. 69). Sergeant Cuff is introduced as the best hand at "unravelling a mystery" (p. 132). The solicitor, Matthew Bruff, describes the attempt to recollect the past as "tracing my way back along the chain of events, from one end to the other . . ." (p. 312).

²¹ "New Novels," The Critic, 25 (May, 1863), 341.

- 22 "Literature," Athenaeum, 14 Feb., 1863, 226.
- 23 "Literature," Athenaeum, 225.
- 24 McCormack, Sheridan Le Fanu, pp. 138-39.
- 25 McCormack, p. 139.
- 26 Miller, "Ariadne's Thread," 67.

Conclusion

I have often thanked heaven for its mercy in conducting me through the labyrinths in which I had all but lost myself. 1

In "The Summing-Up" of Sheridan Le Fanu, Nelson Browne discusses that author's fascination with the sources of terror:

Le Fanu, then, was venturesome enough to explore those unknown regions whose shadowy labyrinths promise some dread encounter which must be faced at last. Sooner or later the silver cord must break and the intruder, all hope of retreat or escape denied him, must do battle with his adversary. 2

Browne's statement, far from being simply metaphorical, focuses upon an important image in the writing of Le Fanu, which, as this thesis has shown, is also present in the novels of Dickens and Collins. In their fiction, the image of the labyrinth is developed to embody the theme of ritual initiation. The passage through the maze-like city or house or asylum becomes, for certain characters, a process of education by which they become witnesses to the "mysteries" of the nineteenth century and learn social, spiritual, and psychological truths. In order to comprehend these truths, the characters must encounter those "evils" which most middle-class Englishmen would have preferred

not to see."³ Although they emerge from the experience less innocent than they were originally, they are more aware and better equipped morally and spiritually to deal with an increasingly problematic condition of life. Like a secularized version of the Christian pattern of the Fall, the experience of ritual initiation necessarily trades innocence for knowledge.

The motif of the exploration of a "ritual Mystery" with its celebration of "birth into vision,"⁴ which E. S. Shaffer argues in "Kubla Khan" and The Fall of Jerusalem dominates the poetry of the age, finds comparable expression in the period's fiction through the use of the labyrinth as setting and image. The ritual Mystery, which Shaffer discusses, whereby the "soul of the initiate encounters itself,"⁵ can be seen in the quests of Collins's Franklin Blake, Dickens's Jonas Chuzzlewit and Esther Summerson, and Le Fanu's Maud Vernon, among others. The real self is discovered either in the physical setting of a maze or in the labyrinthine turnings of the mind. The idea of a psychological progress becomes increasingly important as a theme in the fiction of the nineteenth century as other writers, like George Meredith, similarly agree that "the brainstuff of fiction is internal history."⁶

For characters like Jonas Chuzzlewit, Franklin Blake, and Laura Fairlie, the passage into the labyrinth becomes an entry into an unfamiliar, inimical world, a psychological Hell where their sense of their own identity is called into question. In this situation, the maze image forcefully

conveys the sense of alienation which most of the characters feel, however temporarily. Jo in Bleak House and Jonas Chuzzlewit are only two examples of those who remain trapped in the alienated state which has become a characteristic of modern life and a recurrent, if not the dominant, theme of modern literature. Collins, Dickens, and Le Fanu all use the image of the labyrinth as a metaphor for a condition of alienation from the rest of the world. In so doing, they pave the way for later writers in the attempt to describe psychological states in imaginative terms. However, for most of the characters, the successful completion of the ritual initiation results in a deeper sense of spiritual and psychological integration. As well as this personal fulfillment, many of the protagonists achieve a greater social integration; previously isolated characters, like Collins's "Ozias Midwinter," Dickens's Oliver Twist and Esther Summerson, and Le Fanu's two Mauds and Mr. Mervyn, discover a set of associations with the world and a place in the social hierarchy which they had not known before.

While the protagonists of Collins, Dickens, and Le Fanu are engaged, either consciously or unconsciously, in a search for identity and knowledge, their adventures bring into sharp definition the particular interest of their creators. For Dickens, the labyrinth reflects the increasing complication and uncertainty of the world. His novels illustrate his concern with the "fallen" condition of the city and its inhabitants who are trapped "among the

multiplicity of paths in the labyrinth trodden by the sons of Adam."⁷ In its form as a maze, the city of Dickens becomes an "infernal garden," a civilized perversion of Eden which nurtures the "seeds of ruin" rather than redemptive growth and renewal. As a Dickensian image, the maze signifies the corruption of order, the breakdown into sprawling chaos, and the concealment of crime and its influences. Through the experiences of his characters within the urban labyrinth, Dickens teaches his readers about the necessity to redeem their world.

Although seemingly less heroic than the socially-minded characters of Dickens, the protagonists of Collins's novels take part in an equally perilous psychological confrontation. Collins explores the realm of the mind and the potential criminality or amorality, the Minotaur, which lurks within every man. Through the figure of Ezra Jennings in The Moonstone, Collins experimented with the character of the psychological detective who solves problems by attempting to investigate the workings of the mind. Similarly concerned with psychological issues, Le Fanu believes that for complete integration to occur, there must be an acknowledgement of the spiritual. For some of his characters, like the heroines of Uncle Silas and The Rose and the Key, the via negativa of the labyrinth becomes a progress through a "vale of Soul-making."⁸ In the fiction of Le Fanu, the successful negotiation of the maze is achieved only with a recognition of the power of God.

In the case of The House by the Churchyard and the

Collins novels, particularly Armadale, the thesis has demonstrated how form mirrors content; the mysteries in the narratives find their counterparts in the labyrinthine technique of the works themselves. The motif of alienation, an important subject for both Collins and Le Fanu, is adopted by them as a function of narrative technique so that the reader himself, like the detectives who try to solve the mysteries, can become caught in "a maze of useless conjecture."⁹ In their deployment of this type of structure which manipulates and guides the reader, these works provide a link between the earlier Gothic romances and later detective fiction. The complexity of the narrative form, as well as the ambiguity required by the mechanics of a mystery plot, offer further parallels to the developing complexity and ambiguity of modern life.

The labyrinth has been an important symbol in many different cultures and systems of thought from the primitive to the modern. That it can reappear with such force in nineteenth-century fiction reveals its potency and significance as an enduring archetype.

Notes: Conclusion

¹ Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, "The Room in the Dragon Volant," In a Glass Darkly (New York: Arno Press, 1977), II, 246.

² Nelson Browne, Sheridan Le Fanu (London: Arthur Barker, 1951), p. 119.

³ G. Robert Stange, "The Frightened Poets," The Victorian City: Image and Realities (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), II, 479.

⁴ Shaffer, p. 188.

⁵ Shaffer, p. 188.

⁶ George Meredith, Diana of the Crossways (New York: Russell and Russell, 1968), p. 17.

⁷ Little Dorrit, p. 556:

⁸ "To the George Keatses," 21 April, 1819, The Letters of John Keats 1814-1821, ed. H. E. Rollins, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1980), II, 102.

⁹ The Dead Secret, p. 31.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Collins, Wilkie. Armada. New York: Dover, 1977.
- . "Letter of Dedication." Basil. New York: Dover, 1980.
- . The Dead Secret. New York: Dover, 1979.
- . The Moonstone. Ed. J. I. M. Stewart. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977.
- . The Woman in White. Ed. Harvey Peter Sucksmith. Oxford Univ. Press, 1980.
- Dickens, Charles. Barnaby Rudge. Introd. Kathleen Tillotson. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961.
- . Bleak House. Ed. George Ford and Sylvère Monod. New York: Norton, 1977.
- . "Gone Astray." Household Words, 7 (13 Aug., 1853), 553-57.
- . Little Dorrit. Ed. Harvey Peter Sucksmith. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979.
- . Martin Chuzzlewit. Introd. Geoffrey Russell. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966.
- . Oliver Twist. Ed. Kathleen Tillotson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.
- . The Letters of Charles Dickens. Ed. Kathleen Tillotson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.. Vol. IV 1844-46.
- . The Old Curiosity Shop. Introd. Malcolm Andrews. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976.
- . The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club. Introd. Bernard Darwin. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964.

- Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan. All in the Dark. London, 1866; rpt. 2 vols. New York: Arno Press, 1977.
- . Haunted Lives. London, 1868; rpt. 3 vols. New York: Arno Press, 1977.
- . In a Glass Darkly. London, 1872; rpt. 3 vols. New York: Arno Press, 1977.
- . "Modern Novel and Romance." Dublin University Magazine, 61 (April, 1863). 436-42.
- . The Cock and Anchor. Dublin, 1845; rpt. 3 vols. New York: Arno Press, 1977.
- . The House by the Churchyard. London, 1863; rpt. 3 vols. New York: Arno Press, 1977.
- . The Rose and the Key. London, 1871; rpt. 3 vols. New York: Arno Press, 1977.
- . Uncle Silas. Ed. W. J. McCormack. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1980.
- . Willing to Die. London, 1873; rpt. 3 vols. New York: Arno Press, 1977.

Secondary Sources

- "Ariadne." Encyclopedia Britannica. 1817 ed.
- Ashley, Robert. Wilkie Collins. London, 1952; rpt. Folcroft, Pa.: Folcroft Library Press, 1974.
- . "Wilkie Collins and the Detective Story." Nineteenth Century Fiction, 6 (1951), 47-60.
- . "Wilkie Collins Reconsidered." Nineteenth Century Fiction, 4 (1950), 265-79.
- Ayrton, Michael. The Rudiments of Paradise. London: Weybright and Talley, 1971.
- Banier, Antoine. The Mythology and Fables of the ancients explain'd from history. London, 1739-40; rpt. New York: Garland Press, 1976.
- Barnard, Robert. Imagery and Theme in the Novels of Dickens. New York: Humanities Press, 1974.

- Begnal, Michael H. Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. Lewisburg: Bucknell Univ. Press, 1971.
- Benson, E. F. "Sheridan Le Fanu." Spectator, Feb. 1931, pp. 263-64.
- Birkhead, Edith. The Tale of Terror. London: Constable, 1921.
- Blake, William. Complete Poems. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977.
- Blount, Trevor. "Dickens's Slum Satire in Bleak House." Modern Language Review, 60. (1965), 340-51.
- "The Graveyard Satire in Bleak House in the Context of 1850." Review of English Studies, 14 (1963), 370-78.
- Booth, Bradford A. "Wilkie Collins and the Art of Fiction." Nineteenth Century Fiction, 6 (1951), 131-43.
- Bord, Janet. Mazes and Labyrinths of the World. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1976.
- Bowen, Elizabeth. Introd. The House by the Churchyard. By Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. New York: Stein and Day, 1968.
- Introd. Uncle Silas. By Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. London: Cresset Press, 1947.
- Briggs, Asa. Victorian Cities. London: Odhams Press, 1963.
- Brogunier, J. "The Dreams of Montague Tigg." Dickensian, 58 (Autumn 1962), 165-70.
- Browne, Nelson. Sheridan Le Fanu. London: Arthur Barker, 1951.
- Burstein, Janet. "Victorian Mythography and The Progress of the Intellect." Victorian Studies, 18 (1974-75), 309-24.
- Campbell, Joseph. The Hero with a Thousand Faces. 1949; rpt. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973.
- "Catalogue of the Library of the Very Reverend Thomas P. Le Fanu, L.L.D. . . . to be sold by auction by Charles Sharpe . . . 22nd Nov. 1845."

- Cirlot, J. E. A Dictionary of Symbols. Trans. Jack Sage. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971.
- Clouston, W. A. Popular Tales and Fictions. 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1887; rpt. Detroit: Singing Tree Press, 1968.
- Compton-Rickett, Arthur. "Wilkie Collins." Bookman, 42 (June 1912), 107-14.
- Conrad, Peter. The Victorian Treasure-House. London: Wm. Collins and Sons, 1973.
- Coolidge, Archibald. "Charles Dickens and Mrs. Radcliffe: A Farewell to Wilkie Collins." Dickensian, 58 (1962), 112-16.
- Charles Dickens as Serial Novelist. Ames: Iowa Univ. Press, 1967.
- Cordery, Gareth. "The Gothic and Sentimental in Charles Dickens." Diss. Univ. of Wisconsin--Madison 1975.
- Cox, George W. The Mythology of the Aryan Nations. London: Longmans and Greene, 1870.
- Crompton, Louis. "Satire and Symbolism in Bleak House." Nineteenth Century Fiction, 12 (1956), 284-303.
- Dacre, Charlotte. Confessions of the Nun of St. Omer. London, 1805; rpt. 2 vols. New York: Arno Press, 1972.
- Zofloya; or, The Moor. London, 1806; rpt. 3 vols. New York: Arno Press, 1974.
- "Daedalus." Encyclopedia Britannica. 1817 ed.
- Davies, Robertson. One Half of Robertson Davies. Toronto: Macmillan, 1977.
- Davis, Earle. The Flint and the Flame. Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1963.
- Davis, Nuel Pharr. The Life of Wilkie Collins. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1956.
- Delespinasse, D. S. "The Significance of Dual Point of View in Bleak House." Nineteenth Century Fiction, 23 (1968), 253-64.
- De Vries, Duane. Dickens's Apprentice Years: the Making of a Novelist. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1976.

- Donovan, Robert A. "Structure and Idea in Bleak House." In Bleak House: A Collection of Critical Essays. Ed. J. Korg. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966, pp. 31-44.
- Dunlop, J. C. History of Prose Fiction. Edinburgh, 1814; rpt. 2 vols. Ed. Henry Wilson. New York: A. M. S. Press, 1969.
- Edens, Walter E. "Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu: A Minor Victorian and His Publisher." Diss. Univ. of Illinois 1963.
- Eigner, Edwin M. The Metaphysical Novel in England and America. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1978.
- Eliot, T. S. Selected Essays: 1917-32. New York, 1947; London: Faber, 1969.
- Ellis, S. M. "Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu." Bookman, 51 (Oct. 1916), 15-21.
- Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu and Others. 1931; rpt. Freeport, N. Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1968.
- Elwin, Malcolm. Victorian Wallflowers. 1934; rpt. Port Washington, N. Y.: Kennikat Press, 1966.
- Faber, George Stanley. The Origin of Pagan Idolatry. 3 vols. London: Rivingtons, 1816.
- Fanger, Donald. Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965.
- Feldman, Burton and Robert D. Richardson. The Rise of Modern Mythology: 1680-1860. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1972.
- Folland, Harold F. "The Doer and The Deed: Theme and Pattern in Barnaby Rudge." PMLA, 74 (1959), 406-17.
- Forster, John. The Life of Charles Dickens. Ed. T. W. Ley. London: Cecil Palmer, 1928.
- Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism. 1957; rpt. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973.
- The Secular Scripture. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973.
- Gissing, George. Critical Studies of the Work of Charles Dickens. New York: Greenberg, 1924.

- Grenander, M. E. "The Mystery and the Moral: Point of View in Dickens's Bleak House." Nineteenth Century Fiction, 10 (1956), 301-05.
- Grote, George. A History of Greece. 12 vols. London: 1849; rpt. London: John Murray, 1884.
- Harvey, W. J. "Chance and Design in Bleak House." In Dickens and the Twentieth Century. Ed. J. Gross and G. Pearson. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962, pp. 145-57.
- Henderson, Joseph and Maud Oakes. The Wisdom of the Serpent. New York: George Braziller, 1963.
- Hill, T. W. "The Enigma of Wilkie Collins." Dickensian, 48 (1952), 54-57.
- Hooke, Samuel, ed. The Labyrinth. New York: Macmillan, 1935.
- Hornback, Bert G. "Five New Dickens Letters." Michigan Quarterly Review, 10, No. 4 (1971), 255-60.
- "Noah's Arkitecture": A Study of Dickens's Mythology. Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1972.
- Houghton, Walter. The Victorian Frame of Mind. 1957; rpt. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1973.
- House, Humphrey, introd. The Adventures of Oliver Twist. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964.
- Hughes, Winifred. The Maniac in the Cellar. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980.
- Hutter, Albert. "Dreams, Transformations, and Literature: The Implications of Detective Fiction." Victorian Studies, 19 (1975-76), 181-209.
- Hyder, Clyde K. "Wilkie Collins and The Woman in White." PMLA, 54 (1939), 297-303.
- Ireland, William Henry. The Abbess. London, 1799; rpt. 4 vols. New York: Arno Press, 1974.
- Jephson, Henry. The Sanitary Evolution of London. 1907; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1972.
- Johnson, Edgar. Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph. 2 vols. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952.
- Keats, John. The Letters of John Keats. Ed. H. E. Rollins. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1980. Vol. II.

- Kelley, Alice Van Buren. "The Bleak Houses of Bleak House." Nineteenth Century Fiction, 25 (1970), 253-68.
- Kelly, Patrick. "The Way of the Labyrinth: Mystery and Detection in the Novels of Charles Dickens." Diss. Univ. of Toronto, 1980.
- Kendrick, Walter M. "The Sensationalism of The Woman in White." Nineteenth Century Fiction, 32 (1977), 18-35.
- Kiely, Robert. The Romantic Novel in England. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1972.
- Kirkpatrick, Larry. "The Gothic Flame of Charles Dickens." Victorian Newsletter, 21 (1967), 20-24.
- Kissane, James. "Victorian Mythology." Victorian Studies, 6 (1962-63), 5-28.
- Knoepflmacher, U. C. "The Counterworld of Victorian Fiction and The Woman in White." In The Worlds of Victorian Fiction. Ed. Jerome H. Buckley. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1975.
- "Labyrinth." Encyclopedia Britannica. 1817 ed.
- Lane, Lauriat. "The Devil in Oliver Twist." Dickensian, 52 (1956), 132-36.
- Le Comte, Edward. Afterword. Oliver Twist. By Charles Dickens. Scarborough: New American Library, 1961.
- Lee, Sophia. The Recess. 3 vols. London: T. Cadell, 1786.
- Lemprière, J. Biblioteca Classica; OR, A Classical Dictionary. London: Black, Young, and Young, 1832.
- Levine, George. The Realistic Imagination. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981.
- Lewis, Matthew. The Monk. New York: Grove Press, 1959.
- Ley, J. W. T. "Wilkie Collins's Influence upon Dickens." Dickensian, 20 (1924), 65-69.
- "Literature." Athenaeum, 14 Feb. 1863, pp. 219-28.
- Lonoff, Sue. "Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins." Nineteenth Century Fiction, 35 (1980), 150-69.
- Lubbock, Percy. The Craft of Fiction. New York: Smith, 1945.

- Lucas, John. The Melancholy Man: A Study of Dickens's Novels. London: Methuen, 1970.
- MacAndrew, Elizabeth. The Gothic Tradition in Fiction. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1979.
- MacKenzie, Norman and Janet. Dickens: A Life. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979.
- Madox Jr., James Hunt. "The Survival of the Gothic Romance in the Nineteenth-Century Novel: A Study of Scott, Charlotte Brontë, and Dickens." Diss. Yale 1970.
- Marcus, Steven. Dickens: From Pickwick to Dombey. London: Chatto and Windus, 1965.
- Marshall, William. Wilkie Collins. New York: Twayne, 1970.
- Masson, David. British Novelists and Their Styles. Cambridge, 1859; rpt. Folcroft, Pa., Folcroft Library, 1977.
- Mathews, W. H. Mazes and Labyrinths. London, 1922; rpt. New York: Dover, 1970.
- Maturin, Charles Robert. Melmoth the Wanderer. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968.
- The Fatal Revenge: or, The Family of Montario. London, 1807; rpt. 4 vols. New York: Arno Press, 1974.
- Maxwell Jr., R. C. "G. M. Reynolds, Dickens and the Mysteries of London." Nineteenth Century Fiction, 32 (1977), 188-213.
- Mayhew, Henry. The Criminal Prisons and Scenes of Prison Life. London: Griffin and Bohn, 1862.
- McCormack, W. J. Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980.
- Meredith, George. Diana of the Crossways. New York: Russell and Russell, 1968.
- Miller, J. Hillis. "Ariadne's Thread: Repetition and the Narrative Line." Critical Inquiry, 3 (Autumn 1976), 57-77.
- Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958.

- Miller, J. Hillis. Fiction and Repetition. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1982.
- , introd. Bleak House. By Charles Dickens. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971.
- "Minotaur." Encyclopedia Britannica. 1817 ed.
- Mitford, William. The History of Greece. 10 vols. London: T. Cadell, 1835.
- Murch, A. E. The Development of the Detective Novel. London: Peter Owen, 1958.
- "New Novels." Athenaeum, 7 Jan., 1865, pp. 16-17.
- "New Novels." Critic, 25 (May, 1863), 340-41.
- Newsom, Robert. Dickens on the Romantic Side of Familiar Things: Bleak House and the Novel Tradition. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1977.
- "Novels of the Week." Athenaeum, 28 Oct., 1871, pp. 558-60.
- Oliphant, Mrs. M. "Sensation Novels." Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 91 (May, 1862), 564-84.
- "Our Library Table." Athenaeum, 21 June, 1845, p. 609.
- Ousby, Ian. Bloodhounds of Heaven. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1976.
- Ovid. Metamorphoses. Trans. Mary M. Innes. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980.
- Page, Norman, ed. Wilkie Collins: The Critical Heritage. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974.
- Pearson, Ann Bowling. "Setting in the Works of Charles Dickens." Diss. Auburn Univ. 1971.
- Penzoldt, Peter. The Supernatural in Fiction. New York: Humanities Press, 1965.
- Phillips, Henry. Floral Emblems. London: Saunders and Otley, 1825.
- Phillips, W. C. Dickens, Reade and Collins: Sensation Novelists. 1919; rpt. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1962.
- Pritchett, V. S. Books in General. London: Chatto and Windus, 1953.

- Pritchett, V. S. The Living Novel and Later Appreciations. New York: Random House, 1964.
- Purce, Jill. The Mystic Spiral. New York: Avon, 1974.
- Radcliffe, Ann. The Novels. rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1974.
- Radcliffe, Mary Anne. Manfroné; or, The One-Handed Monk. London, 1828; rpt. 2 vols. New York: Arno Press, 1974.
- Railo, Eino. The Haunted Castle. London: Geo. Routledge and Sons, 1927.
- "Recent Popular Novels." Dublin University Magazine, 57 (Feb., 1861), 192-208.
- Reed, J. R. Victorian Conventions. Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1975.
- Reierstad, Keith Browne. "The Demon in the House; or, The Domestication of Gothic in the Novels of Wilkie Collins." Diss. Univ. of Pennsylvania 1976.
- Robinson, Kenneth. Wilkie Collins: A Biography. London: Bodley Head, 1951.
- Rollin, M. Ancient History. London: Thomas Tegg and Son, 1837. Vol. I.
- Ronald, Ann. "Dickens's Gloomiest Gothic Castle." Dickens Studies Newsletter, 7 (1975), 71-75.
- Routley, Erik. The Puritan Pleasures of the Detective Story. London: Gollancz, 1972.
- Ruskin, John. Fors Clavigera. New York: Lovell and Coryell, n.d. Vol. II.
- Rycroft, Charles. Imagination and Reality: Psycho-Analytical Essays: 1951-1961. London: Hogarth Press, 1968.
- Sayers, Dorothy, Introd. The Omnibus of Crime. New York: Payson and Clarke, 1929.
- Wilkie Collins. Ed. E. R. Gregory. Toledo: Friends of the University of Toledo Libraries, 1977.
- Schwarzbach, F. S. Dickens and the City. London: Athlone Press, 1979.

- Scott, Sir Walter. "Marmion." In The Lady of the Lake and Other Poems. Toronto: New American Library, 1962.
- , Woodstock; or, The Cavalier. Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1863.
- Shaffer, E. S. "Kubla Khan" and the Fall of Jerusalem. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1975.
- Sheppard, Francis. London: 1808-1870: The Infernal Wen. London: Secker and Warburg, 1971.
- Shroyer, Frederick. "A Critical Survey of Representative Works by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu and of Comments upon his Works." Diss. Univ. of Southern California 1955.
- , introd. Uncle Silas. New York: Dover, 1966.
- Sleath, Eleanor. The Nocturnal Minstrel. London, 1810; rpt. New York: Arno Press, 1972.
- Stang, Richard. The Theory of the Navel in England: 1850-1870. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1966.
- Stange, Robert G. "The Frightened Poets." In The Victorian City: Image and Realities. Ed. H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973. Vol. II.
- Steig, Michael. "Dickens's Excremental Vision." Victorian Studies, 13 (1970), 339-54.
- Stewart, R. F. . . . And Always a Detective. Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1980.
- Stoehr, Taylor. Dickens: The Dreamer's Stance. Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1965.
- Stone, Donald. The Romantic Impulse in Victorian Fiction. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1980.
- Summers, Montague. "Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu and His Houses." Architectural Design and Construction, May 1932, pp. 296-99.
- , The Gothic Quest. New York: Russell and Russell, 1964.
- Symons, Julian. Mortal Consequences. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.
- "The Cock and Anchor." Dublin University Magazine, 26 (Nov. 1845); 607-25.

- "Theseus." Encyclopedia Britannica. 1817 ed.
- Trollope, Edward. "Notices of Ancient and Mediaeval Labyrinths." Archaeological Journal, 15 (1858), 216-35.
- Van Ghent, Dorothy. "The Dickens World." In The Dickens Critics. Ed. George Ford and Lauriat Lane Jr. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1963.
- Van Thal, Herbert, Introd. The Cock and Anchor. London: Cassell, 1976.
- Varma, D. P., Introd. The Collected Works of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. New York: Arno Press, 1977.
- . The Gothic Flame. London, 1957; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966.
- Vickery, John B. The Literary Impact of the Golden Bough. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973.
- Walcott, M. E. C. Sacred Archaeology. London: Reeve, 1868.
- Walpole, Horace. The Castle of Otranto. In Three Gothic Novels. Ed. Peter Fairclough. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972.
- Welsh, Alexander. The City of Dickens. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- Wilson, Edmund. The Wound and the Bow. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965.
- Winter, W. "Dickens and the Psychology of Dreams." PMLA, 63 (1948), 984-1006.
- Yates, Frances. The Rosicrucian Enlightenment. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972.

END

1	4	0	1	8	3
---	---	---	---	---	---

FIN

