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David Copperfield and Great Expectations: A Comparison of Dickens' Bildungsromane

Donald R. Price

Eastern Illinois University

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David Copperfield and Great Expectations:

A Comparison of Dickens' Bildungsromane
(TITLE)

BY

Donald R. Price

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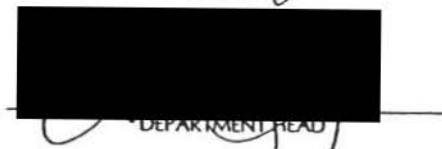
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ABSTRACT: David Copperfield and Great Expectations:
A Comparison of Dickens' Bildungsroman

Charles Dickens wrote two autobiographical novels which are developed in the Bildungsroman genre. Although the self-formation of the two young heroes, David in David Copperfield and Pip in Great Expectations, are very similar, reflecting the struggles in Dickens' own development, there is an important and interesting difference in the forces that influence each young hero. This difference evolves from Dickens' responses to forces affecting his life at the time he wrote David Copperfield in 1849-50 and Great Expectations in 1860.

This thesis addresses the internal forces influencing David's development, contrasting them with the external forces to which Pip must respond. David's heart is undisciplined because of the unfulfilled relationship with his mother, and he is unable to progress toward maturity until he can release his need for the images of his mother. Pip, on the other hand, struggles with people who attempt to thrust him into a life of disrespect for the values which he learned from his brother-in-law, Joe Gargery. Pip's self-formation is complete when he is able to remove himself from these undesirable forces and return to the values of his innocence.

Using the Bildungsroman traits defined in Randolph P. Shaffner's The Apprenticeship: A Study of the Bildungsroman as a Regulative Type in Western Literature with a Focus on

Three Classic Representatives by Goethe, Mougham, and Mann
and Jerome Buckley's Season of Youth: the Bildungsroman from
Dickens to Golding, this study establishes the distinguishable
differences in Dickens' treatment of the development of David
and Pip, while working within the conventional Bildungsroman
patterns. Additionally, this study concludes that although
each hero struggles with different forces and ends his self-
formation with different goals, each completes a process of
apprenticeship prepared for successful adulthood.

Charles Dickens, highly acclaimed for his novels of social criticism during the nineteenth century, departed somewhat from this emphasis to write two novels which each present a young man journeying toward maturity. These two Bildungsromane novels, David Copperfield [1850] and Great Expectations [1861], seem almost identical treatments of the two young heroes on their way to maturity. David in David Copperfield and Pip in Great Expectations encounter many of the same obstacles at home with guardians, at school with fellow students, and in social affairs with friends and lovers. Both characters experience many of the same losses and successes throughout the course of their journeys toward mature adulthood. David and Pip each struggle with the death of parents and friends, with cruel treatment by guardians, with exploitation by unfriendly city life, with unstable romances, and with adults who use them for personal satisfaction. Each hero also discovers those who love him and others who subsidize his upward social mobility. Jerome Buckley remarks that both David and Pip are concerned with apprenticeship to life rather than to a trade (65). Each hero is committed to facing conflicts which will help him develop into a fully realized self. Joseph Gold, in Charles Dickens: Radical Moralists, says, "David Copperfield has a purpose of morality, and it presents a quest for meaning in personal experience and the need to establish the relation of

'I' to the world" (177). In David Copperfield we can see what it means to find one's own identity in society and be a whole man. George E. Kennedy makes a similar observation about the goal of Pip in Great Expectations, in a 1983 article entitled "The Weakened Will Redeemed": "No other novel focuses so precisely on the nature of Christian morality and the progress of the soul" (81). David and Pip each end a journey of apprenticeship and become men who through knowledge of the world have found their individual place in society. In presenting this Dickens treats the development of the two characters very similarly. Charles Dickens, himself, immediately preceding the first episode of Great Expectations in 1860, told his friend, John Forster, of the similarities in the self-formation of David and Pip:

The book will be written in the first person throughout, and during the first three weekly numbers you will find the hero to be a boy-child, like David. Then he will be an apprentice.

(Buckley 43)

However, a closer look at the forces affecting the growth of David and Pip indicates that Dickens stresses different aspects of development in each hero. Jerome Buckley concludes in Seasons of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding that Pip has to conquer the social improprieties of snobbery, hypocrisy, and selfish pride. He

has to learn to be considerate of the feelings of others. David, on the other hand, knows how to treat people well. He is a gentleman by nature, but Pip must become one (53). Thus, Pip's journey to maturity is controlled by external influences which compel him to discover the truth about love, honesty and loyalty, values which were absent in many of his acquaintances, but which he learned to appreciate in Joe and Biddy and was able to pass on to Magwitch, Miss Havisham, and Estella. David, however, is not in search of a set of values but must overcome an "undisciplined heart," which has held him captive since the death of his mother. Unlike Pip, David's struggles are primarily internal and keep him from establishing his own identity and becoming the "hero of his own life." About Dickens' two Bildungsroman novels, John Forster concludes in his biography of Dickens that the novelist kept distinct the two stories of the boys' growth:

There is enough at once of resemblance and of difference in the position of each to account for the divergences of character that arises; both children are good-hearted, and both have the advantage of association with models of tender simplicity and oddity, perfect in their truth and quite distinct from each other; but a sudden tumble into distresses steadies Peggotty's little friend, and as unexpected a stroke of good fortune turns

the head of the small protege of Joe Gargery. (285)
The internal forces that David encounters and the external forces that Pip encounters, thus, define Dickens' different uses of the Bildungsroman patterns he inherited.

Dickens may not have been familiar with the term Bildungsroman, but he certainly was familiar with the conventions of the novel of self-formation. In writing both David Copperfield and Great Expectations, Dickens employed the motifs which conform each novel to the Bildungsroman genre while refraining from a repetitious treatment of each hero. The accepted prototype of all Bildungsromane, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre, published in 1794-1796, would have been available to Dickens since Carlyle's 1824 translation, Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship (Shaffner 4). Undoubtedly, Dickens had also been familiar with other responses to Goethe's Bildungsroman, some of which were published in Monthly Review in 1798 and 1812. In addition to critical references to Goethe's novel, Thomas Taylor, Bulwer-Lytton, Benjamin Disraeli, and George Henry Lewes had all written Bildungsroman novels prior to the release of David Copperfield in 1849 (Howe 68-221).

Goethe applied the concept of the Bildungsroman in 1794 in Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre. This novel, which sets forth the pattern for later novels of this genre, focuses on the inner life of the hero while he is developing into maturity.

It presents the hero in confrontation with his environment as he strives toward a definite prearranged goal, and as E.L. Stahl notes, "It is the unfolding of his life from infancy to maturity until that form is attained which the author intends" (qtd. in Shaffner 7-8). The pattern of the Bildungsroman that Dickens then found available to him dealt with descent, birth, conflict, change, development, and maturity. According to Shaffner, at the end of this process the hero, now fully formed, is armed and prepared to live life. He has developed into a mature master ready to serve society (12). Therefore, Dickens' model for the Bildungsroman is spiritual and not professional or educational. It encompasses the formation of the total person to the degree that it serves to influence and change the hero. Hermann Weigand, writing about the Bildungsroman novel says, "The keynote of the true 'Bildungsroman' is an affirmative attitude toward life as a whole" (17).

More than one-hundred years later Jerome Buckley outlines more precisely in Seasons of Youth characteristics of the Bildungsroman with which Dickens was working. He emphasizes a plot that sets forth a child protagonist who grows up in the country or small town where he finds social and intellectual constraints; the child leaves home at an early age after experiencing one or more hostile family members [usually a father] and frustration with the first

contact with formal schooling; the child makes his way to the city where his real education begins; the protagonist has at least two love affairs or sexual encounters, which lead to a reappraisal of his values; after painful soul-searching, the protagonist decides that he has left his innocence behind and begins to enter upon his or her maturity; he or she usually returns home, which demonstrates a mature choice (17-18). Dickens incorporates these identifiable structural traits of the Bildungsroman in David Copperfield and Great Expectations.

Charles Dickens, however, faced difficulties in applying the Bildungsroman genre to nineteenth century English novels. One of the difficulties was the awkwardness of the German term and its concepts when translated to English literature. The two different languages, the two different cultures and the two different literary traditions blurred any direct effect that Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre could possibly have had on the Bildungsroman in English literature (Howe 6). For Dickens, his two heroes of self-formation must react to the influences of a stormier world than Wilhelm Meister's. Nineteenth century England was a society of progressive industrialization, growing cities, and mechanized transportation, all of which either directly or indirectly influenced one's maturity in a way that Wilhelm Meister would have escaped. Concerning this difference between Wilhelm

Meister and Dickens' two heroes, Susan Howe observes that many of the heroes of English Bildungsroman novels are world-weary, supersensitive, and introspective (7-8). This is a departure from Goethe's hero, Wilhelm Meister. An English variation was necessary, and Dickens creates his two novels of this genre with less emphasis on a prescribed course of study in school or career goals and helps develop the English pattern, which is less rigid than the German prototype. Dickens' Bildungsromane emphasize the direct goals of marrying the right woman, becoming a gentleman, and assuming responsibility as a public servant, all of which are more relevant than Goethe's novel to the process of the total self-formation of the hero. In the framework of English Bildungsroman, Dickens also gives more serious attention to the psychology of the child than that found in Goethe's prototype. Jerome Buckley attributes the growing attention to children's maturity as crucial to the development of the Bildungsroman genre in nineteenth century English literature (19). Although the difficulties of time, geography, and traditions dimmed Dickens' view of the pure Goethean Bildungsroman, he preserves the life journey in search of truth, to reach adulthood ready to live life with the struggles of maturity behind.

Relying not only on his familiarity with and interest in the conventions of the Bildungsroman genre, Dickens projected

much of himself into David Copperfield and Great Expectations. This combination of personal experience and conventions of the genre adds perspective and objectivity to each novel. From personal experience Dickens focuses on the absence of one or more parents, the expulsion from home at an early age, and the attempts to live within the accepted standards of society concerning marriage. Fred Kaplan, in his 1988 biography of Dickens, notes that between the years of 1847 and 1857 the middle-aged Dickens became nostalgic. Although he was middle-aged, he was feeling young, romantic, and unfulfilled. It was during these years he began to search for what he had lost during the childhood he detested. He then created David Copperfield, dramatizing the traumas of his childhood, as an antidote to the restlessness and dissatisfactions of his young life. In 1849, his sister Fanny died, and he revived the painful images of his father, which intensified his preoccupation to continue a strong autobiographical emphasis in David Copperfield (222-241). In the years following David Copperfield, Dickens became seriously ill; his father died; he separated from his wife Catherine, and all of his unfulfilled past began to haunt him. Even his readers began to berate him about his departure from society's norms, and his reputation was waning. All of this gripped him with a passion for self-exploration and resulted in the creation of his second

Bildungsroman, Great Expectations. Dickens reread David Copperfield to avoid duplicating his first novel of self-formation, and then returned to the marsh country of his childhood days to write the story that would recapture the emotional truths of his life. Here in the marsh landscape of Gadshill, he recreated the relationships and passions which shaped his life. Kaplan says that these recreations were adult misrepresentations of his childhood driven by forces of guilt, betrayal, moral values, and the desire for personal redemption (432-433). Combining the personal perspective with the Bildungsroman conventions, Dickens gives David Copperfield and Great Expectations both personal intensity and objective authority.

Dickens clearly differentiates the self-formation of the two heroes in one facet of their young maturing lives. In David Copperfield, Dickens creates a young apprentice who primarily contends with a force which manifests itself internally. One cannot point to any single individual, desirable or undesirable, who leads David toward or away from his goal of self-formation. External forces, however, are forceful, recurrent elements in Pip's journey in Great Expectations. Pip, unlike David, is the victim of individuals and their passions, and he achieves maturity as he responds to these external influences. Although each hero completes his self-formation and reaches adulthood with the

struggles of apprenticeship behind him, David does so by conquering the internal antagonist and Pip, the external. In The Maturity of Dickens, Monroe Engle argues, "Great Expectations provides a correction to the conventional optimism of David Copperfield. Pip must learn that fortune is not the way to happiness" (168). Pip loses all that he thought would lead him to his goal. He must reconcile himself to forfeit his property and Estella, everything he thought he had gained through his great expectations. David, however, once he is able to overcome his errant heart, gains everything that will make him happy. Humphry House concludes that David Copperfield is the more mature version of Dickens' two Bildungsroman novels; yet, others would agree with George Bernard Shaw that Dickens' finest work of the progress of a young man in the world is Great Expectations (Buckley 43).

The internal struggle which leads to the complete self-formation of David is precipitated by the relationship between him and his mother, and the absence of a strong father. Even though Dickens stresses the Murdstone's abuse of David and seems to avoid the cruelty of his mother, who continually betrays him after she begins her relationship with Mr. Murdstone, young David is fully aware that he is being rejected by his one surviving parent. When David comes home from visiting the Peggotty home in Yarmouth, he enters his new world of rejection by a mother torn between her love

for David and her loyalty to Mr. Murdstone:

He drew her to him, whispered in her ear, and kissed her. I knew as well, when I saw my mother's head lean down upon his shoulder, and her arm touch his neck--I knew as well that he could mould her pliant nature into any form he chose, as I know now that he did it. (David Copperfield 95)

The only affection and acceptance offered to David during these young impressionable days comes from the house servant, Peggotty, but soon David is forbidden to spend time with her and begins to feel that he is unwanted and does not belong with his mother any longer:

A word of encouragement and explanation, of pity for my childish ignorance, of welcome home, of reassurance to me that it was home, might have made me dutiful to him in my heart henceforth, in my hypocritical outside, and might have made me respect him instead of hate him. I thought my mother was sorry to see me standing in the room so scared and strange, and that, presently, when I stole to a chair, she followed me with her eyes more sorrowfully still--missing, perhaps, some freedom in my childish tread. (96)

"How wicked I began to feel" reports David (108).

Almost immediately David begins to bear the weight of guilt

that any young child must feel who has been totally replaced in his mother's affections by a new companion; he believes he is unwanted and in the way. He even spends a complete week in his room imagining that he is Tom Jones -- that is, a young child who has no knowledge of his biological parents and lives his entire life searching for a home to call his own. At other times David compares himself to heroes in other stories while dreaming of ways to escape from his repressive home. David's guilt even follows him to the city as he is expelled from his home and enters a boarding school in London: "So I saw her afterwards, in my sleep at school-- a silent presence near my bed--looking at me with the same intent face" (175). By this time his mother has had a baby, another replacement for young David, who arouses a death wish in David; he does not wish to exist any longer. The Murdstones will allow him to have no attachment to his baby half-brother, and his mother is more concerned with presenting to him a baby than the mother whom he needs:

And it is not so much the embrace she gave me, that lives in my mind, though it was as fervent as could be, as what followed the embrace. . . . I looked out, and she stood at the garden alone, holding her baby up in her arms for me to see. It was cold still weather; and not a hair of her head, nor a fold of her dress, was stirred, as she looked

intently at me, holding up her child. (174-5)

This inner struggle with guilt and alienation is compounded for David when he is informed that his mother has died. He now cannot embark upon his quest for identity in the world because he is driven to fulfill fantasies that obstruct his self-formation. Gwen Watkins says that even before her death his mother "is already frozen into the stillness of a memory" (34). David's memory of his mother riddles him with guilt for having been born and having been abused by Mr. Murdstone, which strips the life from his mother. Even though David is innocent of any wrong which possibly could have led to his mother's death, he is a very sensitive young boy, which makes him quite vulnerable to the mages forced upon him by the cruelty of adults. When he is in the presence of the Murdstones, he feels guilt, and this guilt disallows him the freedom to pursue his own identity. This inner struggle constantly haunts David, whether he is with the Murdstones at Blunderstone or alone, not knowing if he will ever have to face his childish mother and her cruel husband again. He is vividly reminded of his mother again as he is on his difficult, almost fatal, journey to find refuge with his Aunt Betsey in Dover:

I seemed to be sustained and led on by my fanciful picture of my mother in her youth, before I came into the world. It always kept me company. It was

there, among the hops, when I lay down to sleep; it was with me on my waking in the morning; it went before me all the day. . . . When I came, at last, upon the bare, wide downs near Dover, it relieved the solitary aspect of the scene with hope; and not until I reached that first great aim of my journey, and actually set foot in the town itself, on the sixth day of my flight, did it desert me. (David Copperfield 244)

So David begins his ill-fated search for a surrogate mother. He has an unfulfilled part of his childhood, which he is not able to leave behind, and which precipitates an "undisciplined heart."

If David is to be victorious in the internal conflict of his unfulfilled life with his mother, he must be able to discipline his own heart. His own identity and complete maturity is not a possibility until he can abandon the idea that he is responsible for his mother's unhappiness and death. Aunt Betsey realizes the inner force that haunts him, impeding his process to maturity, and sends him back to Blunderstone to visit the family graves, especially that of his mother. Her attempt to release David from the internal struggle is unsuccessful, and he continues to be held captive, always looking for this image of his mother. This lost part of his childhood establishes the complete pattern

of his emotional need. All of his attempts to establish relationships with Miss Sheperd, Miss Larkins, and Dora stem from his need to find this mother image and release himself from the guilt that has stalled his self-formation.

David becomes aware of the force with which he is dealing when he observes the relationship between Dr. Strong and his wife Annie. This knowledge about himself is the first step in breaking the bonds of his heart held captive by the image of his mother. By entitling this chapter of the novel "I am a New Boy in more Senses than One," Dickens implies that David has finally made some discovery about himself that will illuminate his road to maturity. It is Annie Strong's reference to the "undisciplined heart" which stirs David to self-recognition and diagnosis. David's observation of Annie and Dr. Strong's relationship has aroused in him a hope for his own redemption, even though he is not sure at first what Annie possesses that is absent in him. He remembers the first time he ever saw them together as husband and wife and remarks, "It made a great impression on me, and I remembered it a long time afterwards" (304). On a similar occasion David observes them more closely, and insight is added to his already curious impression of this couple, who seem to be somewhat mismatched but allow nothing to separate them; he begins to associate Annie's loyalty to Dr. Strong with his childhood home and his mother:

I cannot say what an impression this made upon me, or how impossible I found it, when I thought of her afterwards, to separate her from this look, and remember her face in its innocent loveliness again. It haunted me when I got home. I seemed to have left the Doctor's roof with a dark cloud lowering on it. . . . The impending shadow of a great affliction, and a great disgrace that had no distinct form in it yet, fell like a stain upon the quiet place where I had worked and played as a boy, and did it a cruel wrong. I had no pleasure in thinking, any more, of the grave old broad-leaved aloe-trees, which remained shut up in themselves a hundred years together, and of the trim smooth grass-plot, and the stone urns, and the Doctor's walk, and the congenial sound of the Cathedral bell hovering above them all. It was as if the tranquil sanctuary of my boyhood had been sacked before my face, and its peace and honour given to the winds.

(339)

Gwendolyn Needham concludes that David's true moment of insight into his own inner struggle comes when he hears Annie explain her reasons for loving and remaining loyal to her husband against the will of her mother and the accusations of friends of the family. It is her words, "There can be no

disparity in marriage like unsuitability of mind and purpose," and her reference to "the first mistaken impulse of my undisciplined heart" that enlighten David about his own static condition (Hardy 40). However, for David, this insight does not come all at once:

I pondered on those words, even while I was studiously attending to what followed, as if they had some particular interest, or some strange application that I could not divine.

.

I was thinking of all that had been said. My mind was still running on some of the expressions used.

(David Copperfield 729, 733)

David begins to piece together the answers he desperately needs to release his captive heart. The images and voices of the past will remain with him until he takes control of his "undisciplined heart;" as Jerome Buckley surmises, "His growth lies in the ordering of his 'undisciplined heart'" from this point forward (37). David's awareness of himself through these words of Annie is his first step toward establishing inner discipline, which he must accomplish to complete his apprenticeship and become the "hero of his own life."

As a part of that apprenticeship, Dickens provides for David a child-bride, Dora, who is David's reincarnation of

his mother. Demonstrating his "undisciplined heart," David uses Dora to fulfill the fantasies of his childhood. He thinks he has made a choice that will heal the hurts of the past, but Dora is, for David, a "mistaken choice of immaturity" (Kincaid 233). The whole marriage between David and Dora is a repeat of the child-mother relationship that has David bound. As he had watched the cruel Mr. Murdstone crush his mother's will to live, now he sees himself crushing Dora's:

I was a boyish husband as to years. I had known the softening influences of no other sorrows or experiences than those recorded in these leaves. If I did anything wrong, as I may have done much, I did it in mistaken love, and in my want of wisdom.
(David Copperfield 714)

His instantaneous falling in love with Dora has been a blind exercise stemming from his "undisciplined heart." Aunt Betsey tries to warn David about the mistake of a mismatched marriage, as she had warned David's mother, but he refuses to question Betsey's reference to Dora's silliness:

All was over in a moment. I had fulfilled my destiny. I was a captive and a slave. I loved Dora Spenlow to distraction!

She was more than human to me. She was a Fairy, a Sylph, I don't know what she was--anything that

no one ever saw, and everything that everybody ever wanted. I was swallowed up in an abyss of love in an instant. There was no pausing on the brink; no looking down, or looking back; I was gone, headlong before I had sense to say a word to her. (450)

David often hears the voice of Annie and tries all the harder to adapt himself to Dora to dispell the disparity in their marriage, to find suitability and purpose in it, but like his mother, Dora remains a child. Her presence only serves to make David more aware of his heart that he has yet to discipline:

"The first mistaken impulse of the undisciplined heart." Those words of Mrs Strong's were constantly recurring to me, at this time; were almost always present to my mind. I awoke with them, often in the night; I remember to have even read them, in dreams, inscribed upon the walls of houses. For I knew, now, that my own heart was undisciplined when it first loved Dora; and that if it had been disciplined, it never could have felt, when we were married, what it had felt in its secret experience. . . .This was the discipline to which I tried to bring my heart, when I began to think. (766)

Dickens makes the weeks of Dora's death some of the most

important in David's personal development toward maturity. During these days David's inner struggle intensifies as he considers his "undisciplined heart." On the night that Dora dies, David observes his own inner agony. "As I look out on the night, my tears fall fast, and my undisciplined heart is chastened heavily--heavily" (838). This ordeal of Dora's death is David's second step in overcoming the haunting image of his mother. He is fully aware that Dora is his, only as the result of his "undisciplined heart," and now he must be willing to give her up, something he has never been able to do with his mother. Although he emerges from this experience much further along in his self-formation, he finds it difficult to pick up the pieces of his life to proceed on to maturity; he suffers his own symbolic death in life:

I came to think that the Future was walled up before me, that the energy and action of my life were at an end, that I never could find any refuge but in the grave. I came to think so, I say, but not in the first shock of my grief. It slowly grew to that. (839)

One other hurdle that David must surmount to find the truth about himself and his relationship to the self is his idolization of Steerforth. To David, Steerforth is the adult model that he was never able to find in his mother; therefore, Steerforth poses a threat to the completion of

David's own identity and his apprenticeship toward maturity. Dickens clearly indicates from the very first time the two boys meet at Salem House that Steerforth is the figure that David wishes to become. It is on the first encounter that Steerforth says to David, "You belong to my bedroom, I find" (137). Steerforth is intent on allowing David every opportunity to become what David sees in him. Dickens again shows that Steerforth leads David into a relationship that serves to stagnate David's own maturity as he strives to be what he thinks Steerforth is. When the two meet at an inn, where each is spending the night while traveling to different destinations, they renew their friendship after a separation of several years. Steerforth is curious to know all about David and gives his reason for his zealous curiosity. He tells David, "I feel as if you were my property" (348). Once again, upon the two young men's arrival at Yarmouth to spend some time with Peggotty and Mr. Barkis, Steerforth refers to his idea that he and David could be interchangeable, that he is David's ideal self. Steerforth, walking alone on the beach early in the morning, spots the house of Mr. Peggotty (David undoubtedly had described it to him in detail). He later tells David that he had had a great mind to walk in on Mr. Peggotty and Emily and swear he is David Copperfield grown to maturity (359). In Charles Dickens and The Romantic Self, Frank Lawrence responds to this scene, associating it

with David's dream for his own formation:

Steerforth seemed to have stepped out of David's dreams as the dazzling figure David wishes, and fears to become. The two seem curiously interchangeable. Even Peggotty fails to recognize her "darling boy." The confusion about identity indicates that David is no longer simply the aggressive Steerforth's property. In fulfilling desires David cannot fully acknowledge, Steerforth has, ironically, become David's property too. (76)

David so idolizes Steerforth that any hint of his strong unwavering character being altered is impossible for David to accept or even imagine. Thus, David violates his own self-formation unless he can free himself from the bondage of becoming a surrogate Steerforth. His relationship with Steerforth lies in his childhood and poses a serious challenge to the completion of his own personal identity and complete maturity.

This relationship with Steerforth culminates in an experience so parallel with his life that it provokes him to recall the truth about the childhood days and face the decision he must make in order to leave behind the childhood losses and complete his self-formation. The death of his child-bride, Dora, has begun a process of deep introspection that continues with the death of Steerforth, David's other

replacement for his mother. David has left behind the death of Dora without gaining any meaning contributing toward his maturity, but the next step in his formation, the death of Steerforth, gives meaning to David for the first time with regard to the inner force with which he has been contending. The mature David is so sure that the stormy night and the death of Steerforth are the events which inspire his hope for redemption from his "undisciplined heart," that looking back on it, he sees it growing larger and larger in his thoughts and dreams:

I now approach an event in my life, so indelible, so awful, so bound by an infinite variety of ties to all that has preceded it, in these pages, that, from the beginning of my narrative, I have seen it growing larger and larger as I advanced, like a great tower in a plain, and throwing its fore-cast shadow even on the incidents of my childish days.

For years after it occurred, I dreamed of it often. I have started up so vividly impressed by it, that its fury has yet seemed raging in my quiet room, in the still night. I dream of it sometimes, though at lengthened and uncertain intervals, to this hour. I have an association between it and a stormy wind, or the lightest mention of a sea-shore, as strong as any of which my mind is

conscious. As plainly as I behold what happened, I will try to write it down. I do not recall it, but see it done; for it happens again before me. (David Copperfield 854-5)

In the storm which took the life of Steerforth, David recalls two other storms. Vivid in his memory on that night is the stormy night on which he was born and the raging storms that continue to prevail within him over the losses of his childhood. Even before he knows the danger the storm poses for Steerforth, David is haunted by the night that summons him to the beginning of his struggle with his identity. Associating the storm with his life, David remembers, "Something within me, faintly answering to the storm without, tossed up the depths of my memory and made a tumult in them" (860). So intermingled is this storm with his storm-tossed life that throughout the thundering, windy night the horror of his childhood, faces and scenes, emerge from the fire in the hearth as David awakes from his sleep. Looking out the window to better examine the effects of the storm, David sees only his own face staring back at him. No other experience in all of David's life has ever brought him so close to the reality of his inner-self and the two replacements for his mother that he has affixed to himself:

I have an impression that for a long time, though I dreamed of being elsewhere and in a variety of

scenes, it was always blowing in my dream. At length, I lost that feeble hold upon reality, and was engaged with two dear friends, but who they were I don't know, at the siege of some town in a roar of cannonading. (862)

Once the fierce wind and waves of the storm capsize Steerforth's ship and take his life, David is free to embark on his final stage of self-realization, and on to establishing his own identity. The storm and loss of Steerforth, joined with the death of Dora, redound to David, revealing the misfashioned place he made in his life for these two who died within hours of each other; they were only attachments to him, mother images of his "undisciplined heart." There was no difference between his relationship with Dora and his relationship with Steerforth. Out of an "undisciplined heart," David took a child-bride, Dora, to replace his mother and now he mourns her death. Similarly, out of an "undisciplined heart," he took Steerforth, and lost him. As he explains the loss to Mrs. Steerforth, he says, "I am unhappily a widower" (868).

Henrich Keiter and Tony Kellen, explaining the pattern of a hero's apprenticeship on the path to self-formation, note:

The hero swims midway in the sea of life,
frequently in danger of being swallowed up by the

waves, often gently wafted by them. So powerful influences not infrequently affect him in his life, force him back, toss him, until he is no longer fully conscious of his intentions or in a totally different way, until he comes at last to a clear insight into his destiny. (qtd. in Shaffner 19)

Such is the pattern of David's life until he finally mourns the deaths of his two companions. These substitutes, underdeveloped and childish themselves, must be put aside so David can fully grasp his own maturity.

The choice David makes to marry Agnes, following deep introspection, shows that he has finally conquered his "undisciplined heart." He emerges from three years of sustained self-analysis and introspection with a new knowledge of his identity and a desire to fulfill his own destiny. This self-analysis leads him to see his life as "a ruined blank and waste, lying wide around (him), unbroken, to the dark horizon" (David Copperfield 886). David, for the first time, is alone to contend with the inner force, an "undisciplined heart," that has served to suppress his self-formation; he now faces what he sees as his final opportunity to discipline his heart and move on to maturity. He knows there is a dark, horrifying part of him that must be left behind. That darkness of his life with which he has so long contended passes as he sees his destiny in Agnes. She has

always been the model of stability and maturity for David, and even now, her letters point upward, toward his complete redemption, and help him make the mature choice:

She knew that in me, sorrow could not be weakness, but must be strength. As the endurance of my childish days had done its part to make me what I was, so greater calamities would nerve me on, to be yet better than I was; and so, as they had taught me, would I teach others. She commended me to God, who had taken my innocent darling to His rest; and in her sisterly affection cherished me always, and was always at my side go where I would; proud of what I had done, but infinitely prouder yet of what I was reserved to do. (888)

David takes his first step, free from the bondage of his childhood images, as he reassesses the worth of Agnes and subsequently proposes to her. With his heart disciplined, he can now release to Agnes the affections he has always had for her, but due to his inner struggles of self-discipline, could never recognize. He is unconstrained in telling her, "There is no alloy of self in what I feel for you" (935), as there had been in his feelings for Dora and Steerforth. David, entering adulthood and his relationship with Agnes, has conquered his "undisciplined heart," that inner force that influenced previous relationships and threatened his

maturity. He has served his apprenticeship and at last possesses his own identity, an implicit answer to his opening question: "Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show" (49).

Dissimilar to the internal force conditioning David's self-formation, the forces molding Pip's maturity are primarily external. David's heart is undisciplined, while Pip is completely aware that his decisions to associate with or disassociate himself from particular people and experiences will shape his life toward his accepted goal. Although both David and Pip are each seeking for an identity in the world, and are each misdirected by unworthy forces enslaving them and leading them away from their goal of self-formation, the story of Pip's redemption recounts a socially destructive process that transforms his behavior; he responds primarily to the influences around him. The defects of the society are enacted in his being, and he is changed by the profound impressions that several external forces have on his pliable heart. In The Moral Art of Dickens, Barbara Hardy explains the environmental influences that shape Pip:

Pip's progress in Great Expectations is probably the only instance (in Dickens' novels) of a moral action where the events precipitate change and growth as they do in George Eliot or Henry James.

Pip is marked by a dominant flaw . . . but the flaw does not absorb the whole vitality of the character. . . . he is shown subjected to the influences of accident and environment, and hardening in his pride and ingratitude, though never without some measure of shame. (45-6)

In Pip's quest for maturity, he confronts characters with some of the most undesirable elements found in people. One such person influencing Pip's very early years is his sister, with whom he lives as an orphan. Mrs. Gargery, Pip's sister, gives him his first knowledge of injustice; she is fond of the authority she has over him and flaunts the fact that she is "bringing Pip up by hand." The mature Pip, looking back on the early years at the forge and reliving the physical abuse by his sister, realizes how insensitive this injustice had caused him to become:

My sister's bringing up had made me insensitive. In the little world in which children have their existence, whosoever brings them up, there is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt as injustice. It may be only small injustice that the child can be exposed to; but the child is small, and its world is small . . . I had sustained, from my babyhood, a perpetual conflict with injustice. I had known, from the time when I could speak, that

my sister, in her capricious and violent coercion, was unjust to me. . . . I in great part refer the fact that I was morally timid and very sensitive. (Great Expectations 57)

Pip's sister and others in his circle of acquaintances are influential forces who are so unjust that he has little possibility of escaping insensitivity during his years of apprenticeship. David predominantly feels guilt for the abuse he experienced at home, but Pip primarily feels dulled and insensitive as a result of similar experiences, although he bears some guilt for existing, feeling like he is some stray animal who has wandered into the Gargery home.

One event in Pip's life, the Christmas dinner, reveals just how oppressive these people in his environment are. Pip, on this occasion, is equated with a detestable pig. The final blow, penetrating the sensitive heart of young Pip, is his sister's announcement of the many troubles he has been to her:

"Trouble?" echoed my sister, "trouble?" and then entered on a fearful catalogue of all illnesses I had been guilty of, and all the acts of sleeplessness I had committed, and all the high places I had tumbled from, and all the low places I had tumbled into, and all the injuries I had done myself, and all the times she had wished me in my

grave, and I had contumaciously refused to go there. (24)

This catalog of Pip's "crimes" serves only to further harden his heart, and precipitates his insensitivity to the environment around him.

Another personality serving to shape Pip's formation is Miss Havisham. She is not an acquaintance of his own choosing; he is suddenly forced into her environment by Mr. Pumblechook and Pip's sister, who hope to use Pip's relationship with Miss Havisham to gain part of her estate. After experiencing the undesirable elements in his sister at home, Pip welcomes a change in environment but finds Miss Havisham to be a reminder of how the absence of love and acceptance cripples one's progress toward maturity. She is nothing more than what Pip is about to become, an adult who allows the external forces in life to destroy the formation of the self. The mature Pip's understanding of Miss Havisham destroying herself by the choices she makes following her painful rejection shows Pip an image of his own past that he now is struggling to correct. Pip realizes that Miss Havisham's condition is the result of shutting out positive external influences, and that his salvation depends on allowing the light of day [positive forces] into his life:

. . . in shutting out the light of day, she had shut out infinitely more; that in seclusion, she

had secluded herself from a thousand natural and healing influences; that her mind, brooding solitary, had grown diseased, as all minds do and must and will that reverse the appointed order of their Maker, I knew equally well. (370)

Thrust from one undesirable environment [the forge home with Mrs. Gargery] into another [Satis House with Miss Havisham], Pip becomes the victim of another abuse. He has been chosen by Miss Havisham to be the object of her revenge on men.

Pip might have made a mature choice to flee the clutches of Miss Havisham had it not been for the presence of Estella, Miss Havisham's adopted daughter. He is able to detect the undesirable elements in his sister and Miss Havisham and strives to separate himself from that environment. In this way he is like David. However, Estella is an influence that he finds irresistible. Although her treatment of him is just as abusive as that of Mrs. Gargery and Miss Havisham, Pip is obsessed with her beauty and overlooks her obnoxious comments and actions toward him, blaming Joe for the faults Estella finds in his common behavior. Yet, Pip thinks he has discovered love, even though Estella tells him there is nothing in her to be loved; from his very first visit to Satis House, Pip develops false admiration like David, but with more self-knowledge:

I loved her against reason, against promise,

against peace, against hope, against happiness, against all discouragement that could be. Once for all; I love her none the less because I knew it, and it had no more influence in restraining me than if I had devoutly believed her to be human perfection. (216)

Pip's desire to possess Estella proves destructive, and until he is willing to reject the outward beauty of Estella, there can be no progress in his self-formation. Unlike David, Pip knows his own heart; he has no illusions and knows that Biddy is much better for him than Estella. At times when Pip confronts the idea of love and places Biddy and Estella in his arena of choice, he sees clearly that for him, Biddy is immeasurably better than Estella, but he chooses Estella:

I asked myself the question whether I did not surely know that if Estella were beside me at that moment instead of Biddy, she would make me miserable? I was obliged to admit that I did know it for a certainty, and I said to myself, "Pip, what a fool you are!" (122)

Lying in his room thinking about Miss Havisham and Estella and the first day he had spent at Satis House, Pip wonders how his character could "fail to be influenced by them" (88) or what he could "become with these surroundings" (88). Later, a much matured Pip understands that it is how he

responds to such influences [the choices he makes] which determines what he will become.

Estella's cold distance [which is indicated by her name] is contrasted with the warmth of Joe, Mrs. Gargery's husband, who is almost always found at the blacksmith forge or sitting by the hearth in his country home. Joe is a desirable influence until Pip compares Joe's common talk and dress to the upper-middle class expectations of Estella. Prior to his knowledge of Miss Havisham and Estella, Pip looked up to Joe with great admiration. Joe had always been there for Pip, protecting him from Mrs. Gargery's abuse when he could, teaching him that "lies is lies," values Pip could never have learned from other acquaintances in his environment. Joe is the one person in the early days of Pip's life who accepts him. Looking back on those early days at the forge, comparing Joe with the other influences around him, the mature Pip is able to see Joe's positive influence on him and says, "I loved Joe--perhaps for no better reason in those early days than because the dear fellow let me love him" (37). Once Pip discovers why Joe cannot read and write, and why he does not use his physical strength to dominate his wife, he gains a new admiration for Joe, a decision that he soon dismisses for the preservation of his pride:

We were equals afterwards, as we had been before;
but, afterwards at quiet times when I sat looking

at Joe and thinking about him, I had a new sensation of feeling conscious that I was looking up to Joe in my heart. (45)

But Estella makes Joe look common to Pip, and his dream of being an apprentice to Joe in the blacksmith forge changes. Pip had always considered blacksmithing his road to identity and manhood. However, his idea of Estella's expectations for him has no room for dirty hands and a coarse, common friend like Joe. Pip is willing to sacrifice Joe, the only true friend he has ever known, for a dream that Estella has woven for him, a false dream forced upon him by those who care nothing for him.

Frank Lawrence observes these two forces on Pip's life and comments, "Pip lives in perplexities torn between honest working life and the remembrance of the Havisham days" (164). An ungrateful Pip, who has become a gentleman [fulfilling his false dream], immediately chooses to turn his back on Joe and the warmth of life at the forge [since Mrs. Gargery has been hurt and Biddy has moved in to care for her and Joe]. He thinks the only way he can improve himself and have Estella accept him is by becoming a gentleman, but he has a poorly developed concept of what a gentleman is. From Uncle Pumblechook he has been led to associate snobbery with gentility, an association he dislikes in Bentley Drummel but repudiates Joe to achieve. The matured narrator reveals the

thoughts of those days when as a younger Pip he dreamed about becoming a gentleman. He remembers thinking, "I wanted to make Joe less ignorant and common, that he might be worthier of my society and less open to Estella's reproach" (101). These same sentiments are in Pip's words to Biddy on the day he leaves the forge to pursue his education as a gentleman. He tells Biddy not to pass up any opportunity to help Joe overcome his backwardness in his learning and manners. Biddy seems to quickly detect the snobbery in Pip's answer to her question, "Won't his manners do, then?" Pip's answer confirms his snobbery:

"My dear Biddy, they do very well here

 Hear me out--but if I were to remove Joe into a
 sphere, as I shall hope to remove him when I fully
 come into my property, they would hardly do him
 justice." (139)

Pip decides to separate himself from Joe; Pip does not want him coming to London to see him and chooses to spend the night at the inn instead of at the forge when business brings him back to the countryside. Pip has chosen the external forces he wishes to influence his life, and the presence of Joe and any association with the common life at the forge only serves to cause Pip shame. Pip's shame of Joe and Biddy increases as he pursues his false dream, but Joe continues to

evinced his love and acceptance for Pip, always offering for him his friendship and the warmth of his home. Pip would like to believe that his repudiation of Joe is justified, but he knows it is not. He has chosen against his better nature; the undesirable influences have conquered his heart, and he is fully aware that he has submitted to the wrong force:

But I never thought there was anything low and small in my keeping away from Joe, because I knew she (Estella) would be contemptuous of him. It was but a day gone, and Joe had brought the tears into my eyes; they had soon dried--God forgive me!--soon dried. (227)

If Pip is to salvage any sort of life before he is totally consumed by his false dream, he must renounce his mistaken ideas about gentility and return to the best impulses of his childhood, which all revolved around Joe. The longer Pip waits to reverse his direction, the harder it will be for him to surmount the forces affecting his choices, and it is his memory of Joe that often directs him to reconsider the wrong choices he has made:

As I had grown accustomed to my expectations, I had insensibly begun to notice their effect upon myself and those around me. Their influence on my own character I disguised from my recognition as much as possible, but I knew very well that it was not

all good. I lived in a state of chronic uneasiness respecting my behavior to Joe. (254)

The turning point in Pip's life, the one that ushers in his desire to make the right choices, the one that finally leads to progress toward desirable self-formation, is the result of a sudden fall from his expectations. One other external force [really the first force he remembers] influencing Pip's maturity is Abel Magwitch, an undesirable acquaintance of Pip's who provides the resources to make Pip a gentleman. When Magwitch reveals that he is Pip's secret benefactor, and that it is his intention to own a gentleman because he cannot be one himself, Pip realizes that his idea of gentility has been a false one; the life he has pursued has been built on the wrong choices. Moreover, when he discovers that Estella is not at all what he thinks she is, that her outward beauty has been deceiving, that she is the illegitimate daughter of Magwitch [a convict] and Molly [a murderess and a servant to Jaggers], Pip abandons his false dreams and begins to repair the damages he has created. Ironically, Pip's transformation happens as he finds worth and human dignity in Magwitch, who, in Pip's analysis, has been a much more loyal friend to him than he has been to Joe. Pip's decision, a mature one, is to give love and respect to this repugnant criminal, the love and respect he failed to give to Joe:

. . . I only saw a man who had meant to be my benefactor, and who had felt affectionately, gratefully, and generously towards me with great constancy through a series of years. I only saw in him a much better man than I had been to Joe.

(415)

As Joe had always been available for Pip back at the forge, he comes to Pip's aid in London when Pip lies sick, facing death, and broke, facing debtor's prison. Once again Pip encounters the kindness and generosity of one who truly loves another. Pip has given up his false ideas about gentility and is able to give Joe, the real gentleman, the respect Joe deserves. He finds it in his heart to say, ". . . I lay there, penitently whispering, 'O God bless him! O God bless this gentle Christian man'" (431).

Leaving Joe and Biddy at the forge, Pip shows his complete dedication to further his self-formation by joining Herbert in Cairo to become a clerk in Herbert's business. Pip reveals his willingness to work hard, live frugally and pay his own debts. Although it was Pip's own money that made possible Herbert's partnership in the business, Pip selflessly works his way up until he is third in the firm, a value he learned from Joe and Biddy. His association with Herbert reminds him of the days when he felt Herbert to be lacking in the ability to make something of himself without

his [Pip's] money. But now, proud of the firm for having a good reputation and maintaining a profit, Pip realizes the importance of Herbert's influence on his life:

We owed so much to Herbert's ever cheerful industry and readiness that I often wondered how I had conceived the old idea of his inaptitude, until I was one day enlightened by the reflection that perhaps the inaptitude had never been in him at all, but had been in me. (447)

The events surrounding Pip's return to the forge after eleven years in Cairo leaves no doubt that he has completed his self-formation. He tells Bidy that his false dream has not been forgotten, but is all in the past and he no longer frets for Estella. Even when he runs into Estella in London and sees that she is a greatly changed person, he leaves her thinking, "She gave me the assurance that suffering had been stronger than Miss Havisham's teaching, and had given to her a heart to understand what my heart used to be" (453-4).

The now mature Pip clearly understands that the true self is not built on false dreams and false people, and that true love is measured by loyalty and respect. He discovers that Joe, Bidy, and the warmth of home at the forge is his passport to maturity. His immature desire to form a self by building on false dreams has crumbled. Pip has now left the image of his sister behind; he has visualized himself through

Miss Havisham; he has overcome his obsession for Estella, and through the influence of Magwitch, he has found Joe to be a model gentleman. Finding his true identity, Pip has completed his self-formation, ready to step out into manhood.

Working within the conventions of the Bildungsroman, Charles Dickens completes David's and Pip's self-formation with quite different approaches. While Dickens creates for them many of the same situations at home in their early lives, it is their responses to these early forces and the nature of the later ones that define the difference in the patterns of their self-formation. Not knowing how to cope with the early influences, David permits them to antagonize him inwardly while using Dora and Steerforth to overshadow his lack of discipline. For David, there is no relocating in another town nor finding another companion to replace his mother that will establish his maturity; the inner forces must be surmounted inwardly. Pip, however, can choose to flee the forces on his life which halt his progress toward maturity. The external forces, people and places, that convey to him false ideas of love and gentility can be avoided with a simple choice to abandon them. If David had struggled with the forces that influenced Pip, would he have made the right choices? Right and wrong were never values which confused David's decision-making. When David suspected Uriah Heep of being dishonest with Mr. Wickfield to greedily

take sole possession of Mr. Wickfield's legal business, he would not rest until the activity had been disclosed and Uriah relieved of his position in the firm. But Pip is willing to remain attached to the undesirable influences while he still holds on to the false dreams they have created for him. Pip yields to the more desirable external forces on his life only when Magwitch becomes a known influence and Pip's expectations crumble beneath him. Each hero completes his own self-formation, but the mature goals have obvious differences. David's need is to marry Agnes to demonstrate that he no longer has an "undisciplined heart," which has blinded him to his love for Agnes in the past. Pip, on the other hand, needs to be separated, by his choice, from forces that deceive him, to demonstrate his completed self-formation. This suggests that the first ending Dickens' wrote for this novel is the most satisfying, coherent ending. He does not end up marrying Estella or even being an heir of the Havisham estate; he chooses to live in another family's home [the Pocket's] and work in another man's business [Herbert's], apart from all the ornamental trappings of his false dream and those who helped him spin it. Even though David's goal and Pip's goal are quite different [David's seeming to be the more fulfilled outcome], each goal met is needed to complete the respective struggles of self-formation in each hero.

Although David Copperfield is considered the more autobiographical of the two Bildungsroman novels of Charles Dickens, the formation of Pip's life more closely discloses the truth about Dickens' responses to the forces on his life. Unlike David, Charles Dickens missed achieving romantic fulfillment; therefore, he created Pip, his second child progressing toward maturity, who completes his self-formation without fulfilling his romantic ambitions, but learns the value of love among friends and family. With David Copperfield, Dickens' childhood may have lived again, but the completed formation of Pip is the true story of the mature Dickens, who sees himself more objectively and reveals what he has become. With Pip, Charles Dickens reveals an apprentice much like himself; even though his days of self-formation are behind him, he must live with the fragmented pieces of his experiences.

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