

In May 1861, while the *Cornhill* carried Thackeray's essay "On Being Found Out," *All the Year Round* brought Pip to his poleaxing "you have found me out" peripeteia. This was five months after Pip had first voiced his "fear of being found out." Originally afraid of being proclaimed a pork pie pilferer, however, he now fears being denounced as a man dressed in borrowed robes, who is not the young Knight of romance, nor was meant to be.

"Found me out" is a slippery phrase. When Mrs Pardiggle used it of herself in Esther's presence, the ambiguity of the expression brought a blush into the cheek of the young person. One of its Dickensian senses involves a tracing of whereabouts; another, intuitive understanding; a third, the detection of imposture. In that solemn third sense, Pip's fear is distributed across the whole of Dickens. The fate in store is not as Larkin has it in "The Old Fools," that "we shall find out," but rather that we shall be found out by others. Always the pursuing phantom is the prospect of becoming known for what you really are: a boy from the blacksmith's forge; or even, perhaps, from the blacking factory.