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RELATIONAL IDENTITY IN DICKENS
RICE UNIVERSITY

RELATIONAL IDENTITY IN DICKENS

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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May, 1984
ABSTRACT

Relational Identity in Dickens
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The Romantic emphasis on individual feelings posited the heroic figure as a person who attempts to make the world adapt itself to his sense of interior identity. An examination of Charles Dickens' life and art suggests that he distrusted the Romantic hero. Dickens gives his villains strong wills and rigid identities. He creates other characters who, while not truly villains, are in error because they want to limit relationships to shared identity with one other who is viewed as an extension of the self. His virtuous characters see all identity as relational; passive and affectless, they have little sense of self as inner being.

Dickens' three basic character types are splits of their creator's own personality. The author was at his best when he could achieve loss of self identity in work, in the theater, or in relationships with groups of people. When most of his identity was shared with one other who became an alter-ego, Dickens was manipulative and autocratic. In his roles as husband, father, and businessman where maintaining a rigid self image was of paramount importance, his behavior was tyrannical, insensitive, even unethical.

Four Dickens novels contain normative figures who have little sense of self as interior. Tom Pinch of Martin Chuzzlewit is a prime example of a virtuous, other-directed character. Both Young and Old Martin go through a series of misadventures until they learn, partially from Tom's example, that relationships are more important
than self image. In *David Copperfield*, David is influenced to shift identity to meet the needs of others by the examples of Agnes and Traddles, both passive characters. He also loses some sense of consistent identity in the process of narrating his life story. Outer-directed, affectless characters in the world of *Little Dorrit* must engage in productive work in order to be happy and escape the clutches of a Society which demands an unyielding image of identity and position from everyone. Pip of *Great Expectations*, more than any other character, comes to conscious rejection of the Romantic idea that identity emanates from an inner self rather than being acquired through relationships with others.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply indebted to Alan Grob without whose encouragement I would not have begun this project and without whose assistance I would not have completed it. His insightful comments and suggestions as well as his supportive approach to the entire process made this work possible. I am almost equally indebted to Robert L. Patten—teacher and friend—whose lectures imbued me with a love for Dickens and formed the foundations on which this work rests.

My thanks also go to Calvin Cline, my first reader and chief critic, who helped me find the time to think and write. A final note of thanks to my family, friends, and colleagues, who supported and assisted in ways too numerous to list here.
for Zenobia and for Cara:

two with whom my
identity is shared
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Author's Identities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The House of Chuzzlewit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Twins at Mrs. Micawber's Breasts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IV</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negation or Nobody's Fault: <em>Little Dorrit</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter V</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Confounding impossible existences with my own identity&quot;: <em>Great Expectations</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The Romantics with their emphasis on each man's individual response to nature, to love, to grief, in fact to all situations and experiences, posited man as a duality: as inner subjectivity known only to himself and as objective exterior which the world knows and recognizes. The preeminence which they accorded the inner man—man as introspective entity—is patent, for in the Romantic view not only did this inner reality half create what it half perceived, but also much of what was exteriority was controlled, projected to the outside world from the inner. Morse Peckham sees this inner man, the self, as the regnant principle of Romanticism, taking the place which religion and nature had held in previous epistemes; he contends that for the Romantic imagination the self gave value and order to the world. Many Romantics came close to asserting that essence precedes existence, that man does not exist prior to the development of this preeminent interiority. Since for them interiority or essence predominates and controls, the Romantics had good reason to prize isolation, contemplation, and meditation whereby man as essence could further define and delineate a self. Moreover, given the importance of man's subjectivity, its controlling, creating faculty, the next logical step for the Romantics after they posited the self was to attempt to stabilize it, give it stasis, a recognizable identity. Thus, the Romantic artist's vision or beliefs were supposed to last his lifetime; his vision was thought to be fixed, unchanging. One legacy that the twentieth century has from the Romantics is the notion
that each man is capable of "finding himself" as a single, unchanging entity; of discovering who he is and of acting in congruence with a self which is a fixed, clearly defined structure. Peckham is quite correct when he asserts that Romanticism has been a durable metaphysic. Since the 1930s, much of man's energy has been expended on a search for a stable, fixed identity. In fact, it is not an overstatement to say that the theme of a period as recent as the first half of the twentieth century was a search for identity. But, as Lionel Trilling observes, recently "the conception of the self has been undergoing a drastic revision, of which a notable element is the lessening of the value formerly assigned to its individuation."2

In the latter half of the twentieth century the idea of a value-giving self, a stable or fixed identity, is under attack from at least three fronts. The existentialists have convinced most people that existence does precede essence. At least one psychiatrist, R. D. Laing, sees identity as a phantasy, calls schizophrenics "prophets," and in 1964 in his widely read The Divided Self makes the following announcement:

I would wish to emphasize that our 'normal' 'adjusted' state is too often the abdication of ecstasy, the betrayal of our true potentialities, that many of us are only too successful in acquiring a false self to adapt to false realities.3

Post structuralists interested in semiotics declare that man is a mental construct, pointing to the fact that man cannot become man—that is, a thinking animal—until he has acquired language with which to think and, once he has language, can only think what that language
allows. Transcendence and language, to name only two, are among the forces challenging the self as the regnant principle of the future. Romanticism has been a "tough old man," to borrow Peckham's phrase, but it is not indomitable. Already, according to Scholes and Kellogg, one of the hallmarks of modern literature is lack of a central self. Moreover, Wylie Sypher boldly proclaims the demise of what he calls "romantic individuality." He avers that, "The image of the self held in past eras has been effaced from the universe." Epistemes seem to move in a cyclic progression rather than in a progressively linear one. In the Middle Ages man was not a little world unto himself. Each man did what he had to do in relation to the physical and social world around him, not governed by any fixed image of himself. Religion and adherence to prescribed codes of conduct were more important than the individual. In the Renaissance the seeds of the self, of man's individual, fixed identity were sown. Consider Donne's "I am a little world made cunningly," and Shakespeare's "To thine own self be true": both are statements which could not have been thought in an era which did not recognize the value of each man's identity. Then came the Enlightenment with its emphasis on the social unit, and for a short period, man was less important than the order of nature and its reflected order which was to be found in the social unit. Perhaps having moved past the Romantic orientation of man as an individual psyche whose introspective self gives value to the world, the culture of the latter half of the twentieth century has arrived at a point similar to that of the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment. The world seems to be sliding into a new episteme.
In this age of advanced technology, perhaps computers will replace man as the dominant power. Certainly something seems to be replacing the individual man as the center of the universe. If the self were still the source of value for the culture, it would be impossible to talk of man as a mental construct, impossible to debate the fictive nature of identity. However, it would have been quite possible for a prescient artist to demonstrate that man is a mental construct and to exemplify the fictive nature of identity in his art years before the revolving cultural wheel made most others aware of the validity of such ideas. Art by its very nature is prophetic: there are those who contend that the artist creates change by bodying it forth long before the world is ready to consider such ideas. The avant-garde is always comprised of writers and other artists.

Writing about a child in A. A. Milne's *When We Were Very Young*, Anna Freud states:

> In a nursery of this three-year-old there are four chairs. When he sits on the first, he is an explorer, sailing up the Amazon by night. On the second he is a lion, frightening his nurse with a roar; on the third he is a captain, steering his ship over the sea. But on the fourth, a child's high-chair, he tries to pretend that he is simply himself, just a little boy.⁵

Compare that with Charles Dickens' comments in *David Copperfield*, a novel which draws heavily on the author's personal life for its details and emotions:

> I have been Tom Jones (a child's Tom Jones, a harmless creature) for a week together. I have sustained my own idea of Roderick Random for a month at a stretch, I verily believe.⁷

Charles Dickens was a man who never forgot the child's awareness that he was pretending to be just one self. Since his own identity was inconstant (See Chapter 1), Dickens explored the question of identity,
a fixed self, in many of his novels. J. Hillis Miller points out that Dickens' first central character, Pickwick, does not remain the same person throughout the novel. Miller says that Pickwick is "constantly reborn a radically new self ... never the same self from situation to situation ... passively he becomes what situations make him." Beginning with Martin Chuzzlewit (1841) and continuing through Great Expectations (1860), Dickens will use this fluid passivity as the basic criterion for the ideally good person as he illustrates the nature of identity more completely than he did in Pickwick.

An examination of his mature novels leads to the conclusion that Dickens was, at best, uncomfortable with the new "Man" created by the Romantics. Man as autonomous, introspective, self-validating, self-creating being who could search for and discover a fixed, stable identity is presented as an unnatural and potentially villainous creature in the four Dickens' novels most concerned with a delineation and definition of individual characters, those novels more concerned with character development than with plot. Dickens repudiates the Romantic orientation and shows value entering the world when man is free of self-identity. Once a character in these mature Dickens novels loses himself in work or concern for others, he is happy. Dickens presents authentic existence as the loss of self in relationships where a person has self-definition but no self-identity: a person knows that he is father, son, friend, brother, that he exists as significant other in a stable relationship and that knowledge gives value to his life. Characters such as Sairey Gamp so need to be significant other that they create a fictional complement to the
self in order to escape, for a moment, the relentless pursuit of self-
identity. Alone, without a significant other, a person in a Dickens
world must continually and vainly strive to effect change on the en-
vironment to reaffirm his existence. And Dickens presents only one
valid way to change the environment; an unselfish person may choose
to engage in productive work. Daniel Doyce of *Little Dorrit* and Joe
of *Great Expectations* are cases in point, but any Dickens character
who loses sense of self in practical labor is both dignified and re-
demed by that labor.

Dickens operates in direct reaction to the Romantic orientation.
Rosa Dartle, Mrs. Clennam, Uriah Heep, Jonas Chuzzlewit are Romantic
figures. Isolated and alienated from society, they have discovered
a self that gives value to the world. And Dickens makes them danger-
ous, capable of all types of villainy because each one follows the
dictates of self without any regard for what happens to others.
Dickens also creates William Dorrit as a basically good man until he
becomes a brooding Romantic type who has a fixed identity as Father
of the Marshalsea. Once the elder Dorrit accepts a figure-head iden-
tity that demands nothing but posturing from him, an identity which is
self-centered and obviates the need for him to enter into true rela-
tionship with any of his fictive "children," he becomes a villainous
character. In a Dickens world those characters who are normative
find value and order outside the self. Often these normative charac-
ters are orphans; in fact, a difference in the use of orphans illus-
states one basic variance between Dickens and his Romantic counter-
parts. The Romantic writer often uses orphans "to symbolize social
alienation when the author is after the uniqueness of the self and its opposition to the social role."\(^9\) Dickens uses orphans to show the insufficiency of the unique self and the need for social roles. Oliver Twist, Esther Summerson, and Pip are incomplete and unfulfilled, even near death, not being, until they find groups in which to function. Dickens predates Laing who argues, "All 'identities' require an other: some other in and through a relationship with whom self identity is actualized."\(^{10}\)

Every Dickens novel ends happily with the selfish vanquished or at least at bay; remaining are those who have actively worked to effect positive good, the ideally good who serve as passive examples of correct selfhood, and the now correctly perceiving who were once fallaciously concerned with discovering or maintaining a fixed self identity. In *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *David Copperfield*, *Little Dorrit*, and *Great Expectations* the novelist presents large panoramas of characters whose identities shift and change blending into a "great ocean of humanity in which we are drops." The ideally good characters sacrifice personal identity to communal role. They become the nuclei of a group and are passively fluid, existing in relationship as father, son, friend, partner. Their existence is limited to (or freed by) the various roles they play in their communities. For this group no self exists as inner reality. A person in the second group of characters exists by identification with another, usually viewed as an extension or a clone of himself. In such cases, there is almost no distinction between self and other. Very often those in this second group are involved in disjunctive—and thus immoral—
behavior. By attaching themselves to only one significant other, they limit relationships and threaten the larger community. Those in a third group set up a fixed identity, and they attempt to make the world adapt itself to them. Often they are types of the Romantic hero—active, handsome, strong; they are usually the villains in the worlds created by Dickens.

Dickens' art is basically metonymical. In at least four of his novels the problem is the same: to free a central character from selfish concern with finding or asserting his own identity. The central character must learn to be an "other directed" personality; "This is the personality whose whole being is attuned to catch the signals sent out by . . . his fellows . . . to the extent that he is scarcely a self at all," says David Riesman as he describes a personality that he sees becoming more salient in mid-twentieth century society. While Riesman decries loss of self, believing other-directedness to be the road to conformity and mass man, Dickens makes his "other directed" characters the happy exemplars of virtue, for the aspect of the author's own personality which was "other directed" was happiest and most free.
FOOTNOTES
(Introduction)


8. J. Hillis Miller, Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 23. Mr. Miller's point is the opposite of the one I wish to prove, for he sees that "the consciousness of Pickwick and the consciousness of Dickens do not coincide" (p. 1), while I seek to prove that on the point of fluid identity the two consciousnesses are congruent.


CHAPTER I

The Author's Identities

From the time John Forster published a biography of the novelist in 1872 until the present, Dickens' reviewers and critics have attempted to clarify his literary works by examining his life and, shifting focus, his life by examining his novels, stories, and essays. Writing only a year after Dickens' death while the memory of the man he had known more intimately than had anyone else was still fresh, Forster insisted that "His literary work was so intensely one with his nature that he is not separable from it, and the man and the method throw a singular light on each other."\(^1\) Edgar Johnson, whose *Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph* is the standard modern biography, also suggests that it is difficult to divorce Dickens from his art. Stating the plan of his work in the preface, Johnson declares, "The constant endeavor of this book . . . has been to integrate literary interpretation and life interpretation: to make critical discussion of Dickens' work illumine his personality and the portrayal of his character his literary achievement. For in the end it is the same lifeblood that flows in each."\(^2\) While Hillis Miller discusses few actual biographical events in his influential *Charles Dickens: the World of His Novels*, he does believe the novels and the novelist to be virtually inseparable, for he feels that the novels were the means by which Dickens came to know and, in part, to create himself.\(^3\) Assuming that these Dickensians are correct in their perception that Dickens and his novels form a remarkable continuum, it
should be instructive to determine the nature of the various identities which Dickens assumed in real life, to examine some probable causes of his tendency to assume varied and diverse roles, and to trace some consequences of his inconstant views of himself on his life before analyzing the treatment of identity in the novels.

Most students of Dickens' life accept, with only minor reservations, John Dickens' statement that his famous son educated himself. Many more modern biographers are beginning to argue that Charles Dickens also created himself. He made himself a successful figure who would be worthy of public acceptance and reverence primarily by subduing impulses that he considered unbecoming or base. When he was unable to subdue such impulses, as in the case of his separation from his wife and in some of his dealings with his publishers, he simply disregarded the facts and instead insisted on the fiction that he had behaved honorably. One point of proof that his creative powers were at work in deciding who and what Charles Dickens was is found in his correspondence. Dickens often avoided the pronoun I or any other first person singular pronoun indicative of a single, definite, controlling interiority when writing to friends and associates. Early in his career he used the first person plural pronoun we when referring to himself. In 1834, when Dickens was twenty-two years old and unmarried, he wrote to his friend Thomas Beard, "If business or leisure bring you in this Neighborhood, will you look in about that time?—Of course we shall be alone and happy to see you." And a letter to John Macrone, publisher of his Sketches, contains many references to a we who seems to be actually Charles Dickens alone.
After the salutation the letter proceeds,

It occurred to me after you left me the other day that we thoughtlessly did Cruikshank an injustice in supposing his past negligence would postpone the work for any very long time. We were marvellously indignant if you remember, at his saying you should have "a" plate next week, and "two" the week afterwards, but we quite forgot his having told us a minute before that each plate would contain "four" subjects. The sixteen will therefore be accomplished much sooner than we expected, and perhaps at as good a season after all.6

Perhaps as early as age twenty-two Dickens recognized the fact that rather than a single static identity there was a "we" of possible identities inside himself. Whatever the case, he dropped the rather royal, arrogant, and pretentious "we" from his correspondence and began referring to himself in a way even more suggestive of fictional creation.

Many later references to himself are in the third person; Dickens calls himself Boz, Dick, the Inimitable, Muddle, Sparkler, "the illustrious man," "the light and airy Joe" and by various other aliases. This long list of pseudonyms and nicknames for himself suggests his knowledge that he had no inherent and fixed identity. His "idealities," characters, needed to be fixed in his imagination even before he began a work. He needed to be able to say what reactions, comments, attitudes, and actions would be appropriate to them; in effect Dickens made the essence of his characters precede their existence. Thus, he was very concerned about naming both his characters and his novels, being unable to begin a new work without names being firmly fixed in his mind. He, himself, as a "reality" required many names for the many identities that were his. In addition to his use of aliases,
Dickens continually recounts his own actions as though he is a third person sometimes omniscient, sometimes objective narrator retelling events known to him only in his role as spectator. For example, in a letter to his American friend Cornelius Felton, Dickens describes his own actions in the following manner.

In a bay window in a one-pair sits, from 9 o'clock to 1, a gentleman with rather long hair and no neckcloth, who writes and grins as if he thought he were very funny indeed. His name is Boz. At one he disappears, and presently emerges from a bathing-machine, and may be seen—a kind of salmon-coloured porpoise—splashing about in the ocean. After that he may be seen in another bay-window on the ground-floor, eating a strong lunch—after that, walking a dozen miles or so. . . .

Dickens as creator made for himself not one identity, but almost as many for himself in the real world as he did in any imaginative world of any novel. He was always in the process of becoming, never completely fixed in his conception of who and what he was. Robin Gilmour in The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel notes this inconstancy of being in Dickens and claims that he was always trying on different images of himself; according to Gilmore, "All of them were possible for him and none was final." Norman and Jeanne MacKenzie make the following assessment of what they consider to be Dickens' role playing:

The contradiction between the impulse to reject society and the desire to be acceptable to it was always teasing Dickens, and he coped with it by breaking up his life into a series of roles and moving from one to another regardless of consistency. Now he was the radical editor, with a broken marriage and a clandestine relationship, now the famous novelist who celebrated the domestic virtues; now he was the actor-manager, hankering for the boards, now the country gentleman of
leisure; and though he was a fierce critic of the getting of money he was also a man who drove himself to acquire it as a means to the independence he prized.9

While the Mackenzies list some of Dickens' contradictory roles, many others abound. Moreover, some of the images of the self which he presented to his public, intimate friends, and family alike seem to be more than mere roles that were adopted and dismissed capriciously. When discussing Dickens, one must decide if he wants to concern himself with the light and comic Dickens or the dark and tragic one; Dickens as he showed himself to his publishers or as he represented himself to his friends; Dickens, father to Kate Dickens Collins Perugini (and none other children), or Dickens, advisor to Angela Burdett Coutts; Dickens the actor or Dickens the editor; Dickens the beneficent philanthropist or Dickens the rather unscrupulous businessman; Dickens the desperate lover or Dickens the dictatorial and unfaithful husband; Dickens the compulsively neat, hair-combing dandy or Dickens the tireless worker and jack-of-all trades stage manager who flew around unconcerned with his appearance; Dickens the Gad's Hill country squire or Dickens the radical reformer. Examined in light of the virtuous and villainous characters in the novels, Dickens' myriad and contradictory selves form a pattern. Furthermore, rather than evidence that he had no "city of the mind," they show Dickens consciously trying to reject a consistent self that gave value to the world. In his novels, Dickens created some happy, identity-free characters whose sense of self grew from their relationship with others or their work, other characters who were very rigid and controlled by their own self conceptions, and still others who
shared identities with one person exclusively and sought to live through and sometimes manipulate that person; each of these character types defined some aspect of Dickens' own personality.

The happy, identity-free Dickens was among the most unselfish of men. He was a person able to enter into immediate relationships with other people. Open and accessible to the most casual acquaintance, Dickens shared with them in their joys and pains, shared identity with them despite the fact that they had just entered his life, and he knew they would not remain in that bright circle long. Many who knew him only slightly spoke of his amazing sympathy for other people. Mary Frances Morgan, whose father was Dickens' friend, visited England as a teenager and went backstage with a group of her friends after Dickens had finished a reading in 1861. She recalled,

> The thing which struck me first, and which has always remained my strongest impression about him, was his power of putting himself in complete sympathy with other people; and I believe that to be the key-note of his genius. During that hour, and the hours which followed it--for we went back with him to the inn and sat beside him while he ate his hearty supper,—he was literally one of us—a boy—only a boy beyond compare in exuberance of mirth, quickness of wit, and inexhaustible capacity for happiness.10

Henrietta Ward, whose husband painted Dickens' portrait in 1853–4, also noted Dickens' great capacity for sympathy. She called it his "most remarkable characteristic," and her most vivid memory of Dickens was of his taking charge of her husband after the artist had suffered a wound to his hand. According to Mrs. Ward, Dickens performed "to perfection the combined functions of surgeon and nurse. He even appeared on the scene at midnight, provided with medicines and liniments
ordered by the doctor. . . ." 11

His identification and empathy with the masses of the poor and
unfortunate whom he did not know as individuals is well documented.
Less well known, though, was his intense, empathetic concern for the
everyday misadventures of those individuals whose lives were not desti-
tute, but rather were just filled with normal anxieties and fears.
Actor Charles Brookfield told the following story which demonstrates
how uniquely Dickens lived in harmony with individuals who were merely
casual acquaintances.

Dickens's strong sympathy gave him an extra-
ordinary memory even for trifles. . . . When my
father was given the living of Somerby . . .
both my mother and he rather dreaded the monotony
of life in a small country village. Dickens did
his best to cheer my mother on the subject. 'Are
there no old friends living anywhere in the
neighbourhood of Somerby?' he inquired. 'Surely
there must be somebody you know within ten miles
or so?' 'No,' replied my mother mournfully, 'not
a single soul. Oh! I think there is one acquain-
tance of my husband's,' she suddenly recollected.
'A Mr. Maddison, I fancy the name is. But he is
not an intimate friend. William knows him only
slightly.' 'Ah, but that's all right!' exclaimed
Dickens, his whole face brightening. 'You'll dis-
cover there's a lot more in Maddison than you ever
dreamed there was. Maddison will become a very
important factor in your life. Yes, I'm glad
you've got Maddison.' And wringing her heartily
by the hand he went his way. It so happened that
my mother did not meet Dickens again for three or
four years, till one evening at a crowded party she
cought his eye at the other end of the room. His
face immediately lit up with a humorous expression,
and he picked his way through the crush until he
reached her side. 'Well,' he inquired, in an eager
undertone, 'and how's Maddison?' 12

His ability to identify himself with those around him won him
many friends and caused most who met him to feel an instant kinship
with him. While in America on his reading tour, he boarded a train and sat beside a twelve year old Kate Douglas Wiggin, later author of Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm and other fiction. The young Miss Wiggin had attended his reading the night before. After they had discussed his novels, with Dickens chuckling as he took out pencil and paper to outline for her all the dull points of each one, both became misty-eyed recalling Steerforth's death. Miss Wiggin later remembered feeling that she had "never known anyone so well and so intimately before."\(^{13}\) This ability to spark relationship by adjusting to people, becoming what they wanted, needed, or expected him to be never seemed forced or insincere. However, his "sympathy for and with the real," as Forster put it, did lead to what seems to be Forster's most telling criticism of his famous friend:

\[ \ldots \text{his whole nature was too exclusively made up of sympathy for, and with, the real in its most intense form.} \ldots \text{There was for him no 'city of the mind' against outward ills, for inner consolation and shelter. It was in and from the actual he still stretched forward to find the freedom and satisfactions of an ideal.} \ldots \]^{14}\]

Dickens would not have considered this a criticism, for if he had no "city of the mind" he joined the virtuous characters of his novels in lacking any inner consolation which did not proceed from relationships with other people. Johnson says that Dickens often sublimated his own personal emotions, even transcended them, by using all his emotional energy as a means of understanding and sympathizing with other people whose joys and griefs he merged with his own.\(^{15}\)

Dickens had still another way of transcending his personal emotions, of losing himself, and that, of course, was his work. Many of
his identities were connected with the literary and theatrical pursuits which were both his vocation and his avocation. A man of indefatigable energy, he amazed as well as exhausted most of his friends and associates by his intense activity. However, he needed activity. Edgar Johnson suggests that loss of self awareness in almost frenzied activity was addictive to Dickens; Johnson is of the opinion that Dickens learned to use this tactic during a period of despair after his breakup with Maria Beadnell and that as he grew older more and more activity was needed to create the desired effect. Certainly Dickens spoke often of the "labour of being idle." In 1855 he wrote to Maria Winter,

A restlessness is upon me now. . . . The end of all this, most likely will be that I shall shut myself up in some out of the way place I have never yet thought of, and go desperately to work there.

In one letter to Forster, the expression of this need for activity takes on a desperate tone:

I have no relief but in action. I am become incapable of rest. I am quite confident I should rust, break, and die if I spared myself. Much better to die, doing. What I am in that way nature made me first. . . .

Frequently he juggled writing two works of literature—a novel and a Christmas book or two novels, ending one and beginning another—in addition to his work as editor of Bentley's Miscellany, Household Words, or All Year Round; moreover, his duties as editor often included writing an essay or sketch for those periodicals. But his writing allowed him escape from any sense of fixed identity, for he was able to inhabit the imaginary worlds he created. Since his characters were so real to him that he could weep with their pains and
exult in their joys, he derived as much pleasure in the process of creating them as did millions of readers in the process of reading about them. Often speaking of his characters as one might speak of real people, he once described himself as "sitting patiently at home waiting for Oliver Twist who has not yet arrived." His son, Henry Fielding Dickens, quoted him as saying,

So real are my characters to me that one one occasion I had fixed upon the course which one of them was to pursue. The character, however, got hold of me and made me do exactly the opposite to what I had intended; but I was so sure that he was right and I was wrong that I let him have his own way.

His attention to the children of his pen caused at least one of his real children to become jealous of his fictional offspring.

His wife, Catherine Dickens, was understandably jealous of a pursuit which took as much time from her and the children as did her husband's writing and which brought them no financial remuneration: his theatrical activity. Throughout his life he was to flee to the theater as actor, as stage manager, as director; here he found complete refuge from any vestiges of fixed identity which might remain to assail him. As director and stage manager he was able to satisfy the urge to manipulate people and things without fear of becoming overwhelmingly domineering or raising other people's ire. Surrounded by people and activity all involved in a single project, he could relate to various people and to the script as well. He could assign roles to others and assume identities for himself, safely losing his identity as Charles Dickens for the duration of the performance without fear of irretrievable loss of that self. Also he did not have to create the new identities; the scriptwriter had already done that for
him; thus he was relieved of the creative duties which he had to perform in his job as writer. He had merely to step into costume in order to become a new person whose motivations, problems, joys, actions were already prescribed. For Dickens nothing could bring more pleasure. He was often "in rapture" over a play; in one farce he played six roles, became six different people in the space of a two-hour performance. He had difficulty leaving such a happy, identity-free, fluid existence. After a play's run had been completed, he felt a tremendous letdown, something almost akin to death, for he had not played a part; he had become the character he portrayed. At the end of one play he lamented, "It was so sad to see the curtain dropped . . . that something of the shadow of the great curtain which falls on everything seemed . . . to be upon my spirits."23

Dickens did not always exist on a plane where he was free of a stable and exacting identity. There were roles which he could not escape that demanded consistency of being. Perhaps chief of these unchanging roles was that of husband, which by its very nature is limiting and stabilizing. In a marriage the male has unnatural, if the evidence of most of the rest of the animal kingdom is to be believed, societal constraints placed upon him restricting sexual activity to one woman. Dickens attempted to escape some of these boundaries placed upon him by marriage in a spirit of play, pretending that he was in love with the Queen, living through little mock conquests of those women safely out of reach such as the wives of friends as well as matrons much older than he. Occasionally he was shocked by the intensity of his desire to escape the identity of husband and have
the freedom to become involved with other women; for example, he was acutely distressed by the constraints imposed upon him in his role as husband when he met the beautiful young Christiana Weller. Also Dickens had entered into a more restricting relationship with his wife Catherine than we find in many marriages. Possibly in reaction to his unhappy association with Maria Beadnell, who was the controlling one in his unhappy first love affair, Dickens had consciously chosen a marriage partner who not only would allow him to control, but would actually need his firm, controlling hand. While Catherine's non-assertive personality allowed her husband to make almost every decision about both their lives, her dependence on him grew every time she acquiesced to his wishes. As Dickens needed to control in order for their family lives to have any order and stability, he became more and more tyrannical in his relationship with his wife. Finally, according to their daughter Kate, Catherine Dickens' spirit was crushed by his overbearing presence. She had no voice in any aspect of their lives together; in fact she was afraid to express her opinion on any subject. The more authoritarian and tyrannical he became, the more locked into an unyielding image of himself Dickens was, both in the sense of the responsibilities that were his and in the sense of the deference that should be paid him for assuming those responsibilities. Since Dickens wanted, as he told Collins, "to escape myself," not to be constantly locked into that self, the marriage became intolerable to him. He believed that by asserting his freedom to pursue Ellen Lawless Ternan he would be free of some of the constraints of a consistent identity.
Also, Dickens came to idolize his wife's young sisters because he found them more fluid in their identity than his wife. Once Catherine became Mrs. Charles Dickens, she had arrived at her point of stasis and, to a degree, made Dickens arrive at one too. She had attained what the world offered to her as a position worth seeking, and accepted the notion that her identity would not and could not change. Moreover, she was a woman who had her own needs, her own deficiencies which she expected her husband to supply and fulfill. She needed his time and attention and was not able to cease being when Dickens did not require her to satisfy some need of his. She even needed his assistance in entering and alighting from vehicles when they were traveling. Rather than being bodiless like Little Dorrit, Catherine Dickens was a woman whose very body seemed an obstacle to be hurdled only with Dickens' assistance. On the other hand, her sisters were young, energetic, virgin—hence, in a way bodiless—girls. Inasmuch as they were not his wives, Mary and Georgina Hogarth had few if any needs which Dickens was expected to supply on a day-to-day basis. As Catherine's sisters, their happiness was largely her responsibility. Thus, Dickens could forget about them at any time. In short, they could cease to be for their brother-in-law whenever he did not need their assistance. Younger than Catherine, they were more malleable, more open to Dickens' influence than was Catherine. Not wives and not mothers, not tied to identities which society dictates to women, they were less defined than Catherine. In addition, both girls seemed to idolize their famous genius of a brother-in-law. Since neither Dickens nor the
girls had any real responsibilities to each other, whatever Mary or Georgina did for Dickens or he for either of them would seem more freely given and could be interpreted as given more out of love than any action or gesture which Catherine or Dickens made toward each other. Since he was not locked into any role with them, the younger Hogarth girls did not restrict him the way his wife did.

Still another role he could not escape was that of father. When they were infants, the children brought him great joy, for at this point in their lives they were in the process of becoming, constantly changing. Dickens could, vicariously, change and become with them. However, even when the children were infants, the redundancy of having so many of them was constricting and much too stabilizing for Dickens' taste. What he enjoyed most was arranging activities for them, especially parties in which he could take part as clown, assuming still another identity. The day-to-day rearing of children required even more consistency than being husband. Someone had to be firmly in place to see that rules were established and adhered to. That someone for the ten Dickens children was their father, with the help of Georgina Hogarth. In this role he was, as with his wife, rigid and authoritarian with a vengeance. The children were required to keep their rooms in perfect order.

'He made a point of visiting every room in the house once each morning,' Mamie Dickens recalled, 'and if a chair was out of place, or a blind not quite straight, or a crumb left on the floor, woe betide the offender.' The ... obsession with neatness and order ... was increasingly directed against the whole family. It was necessary for him to have everything under his control.25

As the children grew older, Dickens tried to exert the same rigid control over their entire lives as he did over the condition of their
rooms, attempting to influence such things as their career choices and their decisions about marriage partners. The boys found it especially hard to mature under the pressure of Dickens' rigid identity as father. The more tightly Dickens exerted pressure for them to live up to his demands, the more dependent and unable to meet those demands they became. Many of them sought careers in the military, looking for the authoritarian hand of the father that they both resented and needed.

The fact that he had ten children also affected Dickens' rigid identity as a businessman. Almost desperate for success, partially because he felt he had to secure the financial position of ten children, Dickens not only learned to drive a hard bargain, but to be a bit unscrupulous when it came to his publishers and others with whom he had business dealings. With all of the publishers ever issuing his books becoming wealthy on sales of his works alone, Dickens learned to play the role of stable, shrewd businessman to perfection. Always his own clerk and record keeper, Dickens was orderly and meticulous. His relationship with his publishers has been thoroughly documented in Robert L. Patten's *Charles Dickens and His Publishers:* 26 suffice it to say here that after *Pickwick*, whose success no one could have predicted, Dickens was able to enter into agreements with his publishers that worked to his own advantage or to hector his way out of agreements which he found distasteful or unprofitable. He would simply remind them that they could not force him to write and would put himself in the role of sensitive creative genius whose temperament could be easily disconcerted to the financial disadvantage of
both artist and publisher. His strength of will in these dealings was indomitable. When he had decided on a course of action related to himself and the sources of his revenues, be that source his reading public or his publishers, he could not be swayed from a course of action by anyone. "The intense pursuit of any idea that takes complete possession of me is one of the qualities that makes me different—sometimes for good; sometimes, I dare say for evil—from other men," Dickens told Catherine in 1853. Hence, when he had decided to change publishers or to change the terms of an agreement made with them because he felt they were being unjust or taking an unfair advantage of him, there was no stopping him. It was in his identity as businessman, concerned over what effects rumors about the dissolution of his marriage would have on sales and revenues, that he became adamantly about publishing an ill-conceived and ill-fated announcement of his separation from Catherine along with the equally damning retraction of accusations against him which he forced the Hogarth family to sign. When he was rigid in his conception of identity, Dickens could be as vain, wrong-headed, and selfish as any of the unyielding and unchanging characters of his novels.

Another character type also exemplified an aspect of Dickens' own personality. In the novels he often presents a character who identifies so closely with another that he believes he can live through that other; the most extreme of his fictional creations of this type is Sidney Carton who sees himself as the less attractive second half of Richard Darnay. While Dickens did not perceive of himself and any of his peers as doppelgangers, he did have several
alter-egos in succession. Henry Austin, who was to marry Dickens' sister Letitia, was the first of those second selves with whom Dickens shared so many experiences that he found it difficult to separate himself from them. He and Austin had vied for the love of Maria Beadnell and sharing in love for and rejection by that capricious beauty formed a bond of kinship between them. Dickens even suggested that Austin share his first adult living quarters, "an offer that I would make to no other creature living," he told Austin. Also Dickens sought to deepen their relationship. Although he was only twenty-four at the time, surely not much older than Austin himself, he perceived of Austin as a fitting son; telling him "Had I a marriageable daughter . . . I should delight in seeing her set her cap at you." This father-son or creator-person created relationship often characterized his perception of the association between himself and his alter-egos. He saw himself as a Magwitch to the other's Pip and wanted to control that life. He wanted to re-create them as he had and was creating himself, leading one friend to say, "He assigned to all of us characters; and in his company we could not help playing our parts." It is quite probable that Dickens, having no marriageable daughter, exerted his influence on his younger sister, Letitia, and on Austin so that Austin could become a member of his extended family and thereby come more closely under Dickens' influence. Dickens came to see Austin as an alter-ego as well as brother-in-law and thus shared identity with this intimate friend.

Actually, Henry Austin did not remain alter-ego long. He was to be quickly ousted from that role by another, a person who was both
willing and able to put himself at Dickens' disposal, one with whom Dickens felt such an uncanny unity that there was no need for him to exert control; that person was John Forster. Forster sought out Dickens after reading and reviewing the novelist's Sketches and Pickwick. The same age—both were twenty-five when they met—they complemented and completed each other. Foils in many ways, each was enhanced by the difference of the other. By unspoken agreement, Forster became the obverse side of the coin that was Dickens. For example, Forster was frank and tactless, leaving Dickens to be subtle and charming. As far as the public was concerned, Dickens was the sensitive, caring author while Forster was the shrewd, tough businessman. Dickens would write; Forster would proof. When Dickens was unsure about the direction a novel or a character should take, there was Forster ready and willing to give suggestions, his mind a mirror to Dickens' own. Finally here was someone to whom Dickens could confide everything: the secrets of his youth, the unhappiness of his marriage. For nearly twenty years the two men were seldom apart for any length of time. When Dickens was on holiday, he would write requesting that Forster join him, and join him Forster would. Forster remained Dickens' chief alter-ego until both men reached middle age when Dickens obviously felt Forster presented a distorted reflection of himself. Dickens wanted to see himself as still young and capable of assuming more identities. He was not satisfied to be stable, middle-aged pillar of society as Forster had become. Thus, Dickens sought new, younger alter-egos; Wilkie Collins and Edmund Yates became the chief ones. Known as "Mr. Dickens's Young Men" by their contemporary press, these
youths, almost twenty years his junior, made Dickens feel that he still retained his youthful ability to be open to possibility. And, in part, Dickens was correct. Before Dickens left for America on his reading tour, an admiring Edmund Yates professed that his famous mentor "... in bodily and mental vigour, in buoyancy of spirits and keenness of appreciation, remained extraordinarily young." 32 Dickens' various alter-egos remained his loyal friends even when they had been supplanted by others as the primary confidants and close associates who shared identity with him. The varying aspects of his personality, his assumption of various identities, led to contradictions and ambiguities; they did not preclude his being admired and revered by most who knew him.

Biographers can never be absolutely certain what factors influence the direction a person's life takes. The person himself may not even have that knowledge. In the case of Dickens, perhaps his indefatigable energy, perhaps his breadth of vision, perhaps the lack of established religious beliefs that would give him a metaphysical base, perhaps his rise to fame at an early age before he was really mature, perhaps his attempt to meet the demands of an idolizing public occasioned the shifting shapes pulled together under the rubric of Charles Dickens. However, awareness of the importance of childhood on later development as well as Dickens' concern with childhood in the novels suggest that the early period of his life should be examined in any study of how and why he came to assume many roles and identities.

Dickens remembered his early childhood as happy. As a boy he was secure in his familial relationships. He was the oldest son in a
family that enjoyed good times; was adored by his nurse, Mary Weller, and by his mother who served as his first teacher. He was especially fond of his father. Happiest when he was being an extension of gregarious, ostentatious John Dickens, the boy often entertained his father's friends by singing comic songs for them. However, Dickens was a sickly child unable to engage in outdoor activities with boys his own age. According to Forster,

He was never a good little cricket-player. He was never a first-rate hand at marbles, or peg-top, or prisoner's base. But he had great pleasure in watching the other boys... at these games, reading while they played...33

Forster's description suggests a rather passive, affectless child, one who receives pleasure by identification with others. Dickens' happiest memories of childhood were of reading, of becoming the characters he read about and of vicariously enjoying his age-mates' competitive sports. Also, the sickly youth began attending the theater at a very young age, and perhaps even more than reading, the theater was a source of enjoyment for him. The lad went to dress rehearsals as well as to performances, and the theater was to continue to be his prime source of enjoyment even after financial disaster struck his family, depriving him of school and normal contact with his peer group.

The boy Dickens grew up, attained much of his sense of reality, in the theater, a place of shifting identities where for each new performance the actor becomes a new character while each individual member of the audience becomes the actor who has become the character, hence making the spectator's identity twice removed from the self. In all of these happy childhood activities the boy Dickens was passive, one who watched
and gained pleasure vicariously. His reading, his being a spectator at sporting events, and his early love affair with the theater opened a world of possible identities for him. Forever after he was to seek happiness in concerns fairly similar to these.

Edgar Johnson correctly identifies Dickens' childhood as the happy seed time which makes intelligible the Dickens we know. However, certainly Dickens would not have been the Dickens we know without the unhappy events of childhood too. By the time of the boy's eighth birthday his father's financial problems were casting gloom over the entire family. John Dickens, heavily in debt, was transferred from Chatham to London. After selling some of their possessions to pay off a few debts, the family made the move. Once they had settled in, Charles was disturbed to discover that he was not to be enrolled in school. Kept from close association and identification with his age mates when he was very young by sickness, as a pre-adolescent the boy was unable to attend school and make friends with those his own age because of poverty. What was even worse for his sense of self-worth was the fact that his parents were not overtly concerned about his plight. The boy spent a three-year period when, like Amy Dorrit, he was a passive, affectless child whose efforts were entirely other directed. Remembering when much older, Dickens was to sum up this period of his life by saying, "So I degenerated into cleaning his [his father's]7 boots of a morning, and my own, and making myself useful in the work of the little house, and looking after my younger brothers and sisters (we were now six in all); and going on such errands as arose out of our poor way of living." But such
conscientious attention to duty did not stave off the impending disaster for the family as the child's mind probably hoped and believed that it could. The boy was unable to control his destiny, unable to maintain the only relational identity that was his, the identity as son and brother.

The period of major trauma began two days after the lad's twelfth birthday. At the suggestion of James Lamert, a distant relative and one of the few fairly young friends that Charles Dickens had at that point, the boy's parents arranged for him to begin work at Warren's Blacking Warehouse. He had been a "poor little drudge" from the moment his family moved to London; now he felt totally cast away, totally locked into his role as menial laborer. To make matters worse, eleven days after the boy began his demeaning job his father was arrested and imprisoned for failure to pay his debts. What was crucial to the boy's sense of identity was the fact that he, as the oldest son, was not allowed to live in the Marshalsea with the rest of the family. Separated from the group which supplied him with identity as son and brother, the boy was set adrift in London alone and outcast.

What happens to a boy of twelve who has been accustomed to thinking of himself as valued primarily as a member of a family when he is suddenly and violently deprived of that identity creating unit? The boy Dickens roamed the streets of London looking at others who were outcasts the same as he. Not only did the boy clearly observe and store up in memory sights and actions that he would later turn into enduring works of art; he became one of those outcasts, suffering
with them in a way he was never to forget. Unsure and afraid of what his own future would be, the lad saw himself becoming one of the desolate, hopeless figures around him as he looked for a new identity to replace or supplement the ones now denied him.

Dickens learned two lessons from his experience as a poor, outcast twelve year old. First, he learned to identify with the poor, to realize that they were people the same as he who were pained by their conditions. The second lesson was to be fixed, firm, resolute of will in order to keep himself from becoming the same as those wrecked by poverty. He did not put the first lesson to use until he became a successful writer. However, the second lesson he put to use almost immediately. It was only by force of will that he kept himself from becoming one with Bob Fagin and Mealy Potatoes, boys with whom he shared his daily tasks. By sheer force of will he maintained his identity as "the young gentleman," even though deprived of family and every bit as poor as the boys around him. The pain and humiliation of his days as "poor labouring hind" made him decide that he would be firm, orderly, and in control of his financial affairs. He vowed never to subject any family he might have to the grief that came to him from his father's lack of steadfast attention to business affairs. He felt that his father was a basically good, industrious, loving man, quick to share himself with his children and friends. The only thing his father lacked was a sense of the identity required of him as business head of the house and the firm control of his wife and children. Since young Charles, secure in the knowledge of his father's love, was rendered completely insecure by his father's lack of power
to control their destiny, the lad resolved that he would attain financial power and never subject his sons to a lack of a father's control.

In another area, too, he saw his father's mistake. The boy Dickens believed that his mother—an attractive, fun-loving woman who attended a dance on the eve of the boy's birth—was in error in her desire to send him back to the blacking warehouse. He also saw her lack of insight in her belief that a school she tried to establish would be successful, since not a single pupil ever attended Elizabeth Barrow Dickens' school. These memories of his mother's incorrect perceptions, along with Maria Beadnell's later arbitrary manipulation of his emotions when she had the power to cause him pain with a look or a gesture, made him harden himself against women, especially beautiful ones. Convinced that most women were decidedly inferior to man, Dickens believed that the best of the female lot were meek, passive, and submissive; in his experience beautiful women possessed none of these qualities. He decided that his stance with them would be from a position of power and control. Hence when he became a husband and a father, with his wife and children as well as in his business affairs, he exhibited the rigidity of identity which he so deplored in the villainous characters of his novels. Youthful experiences were the cause of what Norman and Jeanne Mackenzie describe as the poles of his personality—36—the one being a happy, identity-free, open and accessible person, the other being a strong willed, manipulative, authoritarian person of rigid identity.

As Edgar Johnson indicated by the title of his biography, the
noted nineteenth century novelist who was his subject was a man whose life was sharply divided into tragedy and triumph. While most of his public life was triumphant and radiant, much of his private life contained tragic elements. A rousing success in almost every public endeavor which he undertook, Dickens suffered from a marriage which was intolerably unhappy for a long period of time; his sons, after they reached maturity, were a source of disappointment to him, his parents were an almost continual source of humiliation and worry after he became famous as well as the cause of trauma when he was a youth. However, on reading Forster's account of Dickens' life along with much of Dickens' correspondence, a more interesting tragedy and triumph emerge, one which is wholly internal, totally confined to Dickens himself and one which probably existed within Dickens from the time he was twelve years old. The picture of Dickens the man is clearly divided into halves; one half hard, one soft; one stable and rigid, one fluid and chameleonic. On the one hand, Dickens emerges as the picture of mature, authoritarian male who dominates by the force of his strong will; on the other hand he seems almost childlike in his desire to please, his need for approbation with its concomitant willingness to assume any identity which would make for good fellowship in a group. The tragedy of his life was that he could not maintain a balance between the two halves in his private life; the triumph was that in his public life and in his association with those who knew him only casually, he was able to achieve the balance he sought. Tragic was the fact that for most of his adult life two warring impulses divided him: one to let self give value to the
world, and another to find value in group relationship and work. Although the public Dickens was usually triumphant in subjugating the impulse which would lead to disharmony so that what the world came to know was a Dickens fairly consistent with the virtues exemplified by the characters of his novels, the private Dickens was not. Thus, Dickens probably caused as much grief to his immediate family as he received from them; especially is this true of his wife and children who had to live with the dichotomous selves of their genius father and husband. Dickens was happy when assuming various roles and identities or when totally absorbed in his work. When he found himself locked into identities which he could not escape try as he might, he wanted "to escape myself. For when I do start up and stare myself in the face, as happens to be the case at present . . . my misery is indescribable."37

In his novels, he was able to separate aspects of his identity and body them forth in the children of his imagination. He made the identity-free aspect of himself the virtuous exemplars of his fictional worlds. The rigid, unyielding aspect of his personality became the villains. That part of himself which sought to live through a second self became characters who vacillated between the extremes of vice and virtue just as their creator did.
FOOTNOTES
(Chapter I)


2. Edgar Johnson, Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952), p. x. Since this two-volume work has continuous pagination, references will be given by page number only.


4. Edgar Johnson, for example, says that "Dickens was himself a Dickens character, bursting with an inordinate and fantastic vitality." (p. vii).


10. Dickens: Interviews and Recollections, ed. Phillip Collins (Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble, 1981), p. 168. Since this two-volume work has continuous pagination, references are made to page numbers only.


15. Johnson, p. 81.


18. Forster, 3:158.


21. Interviews and Recollections, p. 151. This child was his daughter Kate. Her comment, "The only fault I found with my father was that he had too many children," is interpreted by Phillip Collins, editor of the work cited, as being directed to the children of his imagination, and I agree that this seems the most logical interpretation.

22. The play was Mr Nightingale's Diary, performed at Devonshire House on May 27, 1851. Johnson, p. 735.


28. Dickens often made triangular relationships draw all three parties--loved object and competing suitors--closer together in his novels. In Martin Chuzzlewit the triangle was Martin, Mary, and Tom Pinch; in David Copperfield the triangular relationship involved Agnes, Dora and David; in Bleak House, Esther Summerson, John Jarndyce, and Allan Woodcourt, and in Tale of Two Cities Lucie Manette, Sidney Carton and Charles Darnay become a triangle in which the men are so close because they share love for Lucie that Carton perceives of herself as Darnay's second self.


31. Interviews and Recollections, p. 334.
32. Interviews and Recollections, p. 206.

33. Forster, 1:5.
34. Johnson, p. 166.
35. Forster, 1:18.
CHAPTER II
The House of Chuzzlewit

Martin Chuzzlewit is the pivotal novel in the Dickens canon. Situated before it are works which are either loosely connected sketches in the picaresque tradition or sentimentalized adventure stories fitting a paradigm perfected by Sir Walter Scott. Just beyond Chuzzlewit are the mature Dickens novels which rank with Shakespeare for depth of insight into the human condition, with Balzac for realism of character portrayal, and with Dostoevski for use of physical detail to create mood and tone. More than a minor change in style, more than a mere step in development can be seen in this work, as both Dickens and his contemporary readers realized. While Dickens was proud of his newest literary offering, realizing that his new tightened construction would allow him to subsume a large number of varied characters and intricate plots under one rubric, his readers only knew that they were not reading the old Dickens to whom they had become accustomed.

Although critics and readers alike have now become very familiar with what became a popular and successful formula¹ the unity and coherence of Martin Chuzzlewit are still suspect. Critics still feel the need to defend such disparate aspects of the novel as the introductory chapter, the American episodes, the nature of the conclusion, Tom Pinch's place in the book, the development of Pecksniff's
character and the narrative stance.² The fabric of the novel is so dense, so fraught with characters and events, with metaphors and scene-setting descriptions that the frame which holds the work together is obscured. But Dickens did keep "a steadier eye upon the general purpose and design" when writing what was, in his opinion, "immeasurably the best" of his works to that date.

More than perhaps any other of his novels, Chuzzlewit seems designed to vitiate the Romantic conception of the self. It is a novel, as Dickens stated, about selfishness; this theme forms the base of the novel's frame and gives meaning to all other elements of the work. Most twentieth century Westerners accept without question the notion of a dual self—a self that is externally perceived coupled with a self that is inner subjectivity. In the world of this novel such a dualism leads to the sin of selfishness. The schism which leads to this vice is reified in the face of one of the novel's infamous Americans, Scadder.

Two grey eyes lurked deep within this agent's head, but one of them had no sight in it, and stood stick still. With that side of his face he seemed to listen to what the other side was doing. Thus each profile had a distinct expression; and when the movable side was most in action, the rigid one was in its coldest state of watchfulness. It was like turning the man inside out, to pass to that view of his features in his liveliest mood, and see how calculating and intent they were.³

Moreover, this schism is seen in the behavior of the novel's most villainous character, Jonas Chuzzlewit.

Perhaps, indeed, so singular a mixture of defiance and obsequiousness, of fear and hardihood, of dogged sullenness and an attempt at cringing
and propitiation, never was expressed in any one
human figure as in that of Jonas. . . .
(p. 454)

In the world of this novel, the selfish person sets up a fictive
identity which guides and directs what the external self does. Un-
willing to exist authentically in relationship to others, he splits
himself in two, as Scadder's face is split, and allows every action
to be controlled by a fiction of the self; the unselfish person knows
that he exists only as possibility, that circumstances and his con-
cern for others force him to change and shift, force his identity to
be fluid. Appropriately, the novel's epitome of selfishness,
Pecksniff, is not only a hypocrite but an architect by profession--
a self-styled teacher of the art of planning, design, and construction.
Conversely, Tom Pinch, the model of virtue for the novel, is unable
to make any workable plans for his life; he is unable to design and
construct any controlling stability because he is so open to possi-
bility. By the end of the novel, even though Tom has spent many years
as Pecksniff's pupil, Dickens abruptly makes his most virtuous char-
acter a land surveyor and civil engineer rather than an architect,
thus freeing him from the taint of planning as a career and putting
him in the ranks of those who engage in more practical labor.

Dickens makes a sharp distinction between those who are selfish
and those who are not by creating an ontological difference between
the two. As J. Hillis Miller asserts, "The novel is full of people
who are wholly enclosed in themselves, wholly secret, wholly intent
on reflexive ends which are altogether mysterious to those around
them."[^4] Miller is here, of course, discussing the selfish characters.
Four pages earlier Miller had noted that "Many of the characters in *Martin Chuzzlewit* have no secret interior lives whatever." What seems clear is that Mr. Miller is discussing two entirely different character types: one whose lives are secret, stable, inner directed—although the narrator and the readers are not privy to this interiority; a second type whose lives are open, externally directed, fluid, unfettered by any difference between interior and exterior. Those in the first group are guilty of error, with some of them being redeemable and others not. Those in the second group are normative.

Two major forces exist to help the incorrectly perceiving, inauthentically living selfish see the connections that bind people so that they will destroy their putative identities. One is an atomistic principle in nature whose chief agent is the wind. Just as the Romantic types who are in control for much of the novel think that things are ordered and directed by their fictive selves, the wind, a natural agent determined to destroy all that is sham, comes to stir up the falsely pastoral scene. For example, on the surface all seems pleasant in the little Wiltshire village which is Pecksniff's domain as the novel proper begins.

On the motionless branches of some trees, autumn berries hung like clusters of coral beads, as in those fabled orchards where the fruits were jewels; others, stripped of all their garniture, stood, each the centre of its little heap of bright red leaves, watching their slow decay; others again, still wearing theirs, had them all crunched and cracked up, as though they had been burnt.

(p. 57)

It is this scene that the wind disturbs. Following the ironic introductory chapter, a reader must suspect the serenity and beauty
of these branches, the entire scene of church spires, men lazily clustered around the village forge, "the noiseless plough as it turns up the rich brown earth and wrought a graceful pattern in the stubbled field." There is a discrepancy between what seems and what is. It is not in the quiet pastoral, meditative, Romantic world that value is found. For this world is a scene of burn, crunch, and decay. The wind sweeps away the leaves, for it is they who have created the false serenity.

The fallen leaves, with which the ground was strewn gave forth a pleasant fragrance, and subduing all harsh sounds of distant feet and wheels, created a gentle repose.

(p. 56)

And the wind tyrannizes over the leaves.

It did so disperse and scatter them that they fled away, pell-mell, some here, some there rolling over each other, whirling round and round upon their thin edges, taking frantic flights into the air, and playing all manner of extraordinary gambols in the extremity of their distress.

(p. 58)

The wind not only destroys the fictive scene, showing up the drab winter day for what it is, but it also knocks the hypocritical-upright Pecksniff prone. Just as Pecksniff only seems morally upright, the day only seems like summer.

A moment, and its glory was no more. The sun went down beneath the long dark lines of hill and cloud which piled up in the west an airy city, wall heaped on wall, and battlement on battlement; the light was all withdrawn; the shining church turned cold and dark; the stream forgot to smile; the birds were silent, and the gloom of winter dwelt on everything.

(p. 58)

It will take the wind much longer to subdue Pecksniff and show
forth his true nature than it took to dispel the false aura created by the leaves. Montague Tigg, too, knows the effects of the wind. When he first encounters Tom Pinch, Tigg mentions the "inconvenience of the easterly wind" (p. 158). The wind is an active agent in the service of a natural principle which binds together and connects. Things false such as barriers between people and stable, unchanging identities may exist for a short while in a world where such a principle operates, but they will eventually be shown as false. Certain characters are natural, not false. Like the wind, those who are naturally good help destroy what only seems valuable and correct.

Tom Pinch is the chief of the natural, passive characters. Merely by being in proximity with characters who are Romantically self-centered and handsome and who seem positively self actualized, Tom destroys the illusion of serenity and stable well-being which the Romantic self postulates. Martin, who represents the active, introspective Romantic type, has all of the things that Tom Pinch lacks. Martin is handsome; he is sure to inherit wealth; he has talent and skill, but he is unhappy and dissatisfied. On the other hand, Tom is ungainly; he is poor, his only talent is in allowing others to exist through him; his talent is in being other directed. And lack of an interior self keeps Tom happy despite his surroundings. This deficit also gives him almost magical powers. For example, a horrible meal becomes delicious in Tom's mouth.

The perfect and entire satisfaction of Tom, his surpassing appreciation of the husky sandwiches, which crumbled in his mouth like saw dust; the un-speakable relish with which he smacked his lips, as though it were so rich and generous that to lose
an atom of its fruity flavor were a sin. . . .
(p. 147)

Tom has settled down to enjoy himself, for this is what he believes
the Pecksniffs want him to do; what he actually eats and drinks is
inconsequential. And "Some would have seized him by his honest
hand, and thanked him for the lesson that his simple nature taught"
(p. 148), but not any of the selfish men around him at that time will
do this. Aided by Mark Tapley, Tom, along with the natural connective
force, has much to subdue, much to teach before the novel ends.

Tom Pinch and Mark, characters whose purpose is to instruct
the erroneously selfish, have little awareness of self as inner
reality. They exist primarily in terms of their relationship to
others. An excellent example of the difference between Tom's con-
ception of self and Martin's appears in another eating scene. When
Charity allows Tom to get his own breakfast, the absence of her in-
teraction causes Tom to "fall into a strange kind of flutter" (p. 140),
even though the miserly daughter's absence would allow the virtuous
pupil to eat as much as he likes, a rare thing for poor Tom. Martin,
on the other hand, has an "awful" self possession on this occasion
(p. 151). At least one Dickens scholar has criticized the novel be-
cause in his opinion Tom is superfluous. But Tom is necessary for
two purposes—as the binary opposite of Montague Tigg, who exists
totally without relationship to others, and for his instructive
nature. Tom exists as friend, brother, confidant, helper, and ad-
mirer of Pecksniff. He is, therefore, correct in feeling diminished
when he discovers Pecksniff's duplicity and can no longer admire his
former teacher and mentor; part of Tom's existence disappears with
the dissolution of the teacher/pupil relationship they shared.

An effective example of how Tom's lack of self leaves him open to possibility occurs in chapter forty-five. His sister Ruth, new in her role as Tom's housekeeper, decides, with some temerity, to try to cook a beefsteak pudding. Quite nervous about her "initiative dish, that first experiment in cookery," she seeks reassurance from Tom who responds, "I have not the least doubt that it will come out an excellent pudding" (p. 673). Later when John Westlock informs the two of them that Ruth has made her pudding with flour and eggs when the cookbook advises suet, Tom is able to shift from "devoted believer" to critic who can say "Why anybody knows better than that. I know better than that" (p. 766) without hypocrisy and with tenderness and good humor because he simply does not exist as "I." To act in true supportive relationship with John and Ruth at this point means joining John as mock critic who knows that Ruth prepared the dish incorrectly, whereas a few nights earlier when Ruth needed his sincere belief in her culinary skills, Tom could be "sincere believer in the pudding" without any contradiction. Tom has "That heart where self has found no place and raised no throne. . . ." (p. 304).

Furthermore, Tom is totally unaware of how others perceive him, unaware of himself as physical other, when not acting in relationship, in one of his roles that tie him to the members of the community. Just after the comment about the beefsteak pudding, Ruth and John leave Tom. Happy because they are happy, but for the moment cut off from all community "... it was no more to Tom that he was
anathematised and knocked about by the surly passengers than it would have been to a post. . ." (p. 766). Earlier Tom seems too credulous, believing himself to be a "great eater" because Pecksniff and Pecksniff's daughters tell him so, accepting responsibility for all sorts of misadventures because others pretend to perceive him as the culprit. He staunchly believes that Pecksniff is his teacher, his benefactor, his superior until two things happen: Tom's role as Pecksniff's admirer comes into conflict with his role as Mary's friend and Pecksniff himself insists that their teacher/pupil relationship must end.

Often in the Dickens world a child is able to redeem the entire community;⁷ in Chuzzlewit, it is Tom, who is child-like in his naivete, his lack of inner consciousness, his lack of well-defined boundaries between self and other, his inability to perceive either himself or others except in relationships, who is most effective in redeeming the family house of Chuzzlewit where he takes abode.

Mark Tapley also lives with the Chuzzlewits temporarily. Like Tom, Mark is an instructive figure who exists in relationship. Mark rarely uses the pronoun I; instead he speaks in terms of we or refers to himself in the third person. Often Mark associates himself with institutions: at one point he calls himself the Blue Dragon, the inn where he works, and often when he and Martin are in America he calls himself the Co in Chuzzlewit and Co. Mark is able to lose himself in work; his desire to work for a demanding task-master is not as foolish as it may seem. He realizes that the more emotionally demanding the work, the less time he will have for self concern, thereby increasing his "jollity." Also, Mark is able to
shift and change identities as the occasion demands. Aboard ship on the way to America, Mark is alternately nursemaid, mother figure, cook, and secretary to all aboard. And in the climactic chapter "... it was as natural and easy ... to Mark to be a butler in the Temple as it had been to volunteer as cook on board the Screw" (p. 879). Mark has so little interiority that when faced by pestilence, isolation, and death in America he creates an advisor and "reviver" with whom to communicate; since Martin is lost in self-pity and illness and the entire nation of Americans is irredeemably selfish, Mark has no one else to turn to. This "reviver" is totally congruous with Mark's external self unlike Sairey Gamps's fictional other, Mrs Harris, who exists to maintain a difference between the internal Sairey and the one externally perceived. Mark's adviser calls upon the young valet and jack of all trades to be more concerned, more involved with others. The two communicate with the fictional other talking and Mark listening.

'Now, Mr. Tapley,' said Mark giving himself a tremendous blow in the chest by way of reviver, 'just you attend to what I've got to say. Things is looking about as bad as they can look, young man. You'll not have such another opportunity for showing your jolly disposition, my fine fellow, as long as you live. And therefore, Tapley, Now's your time to come out strong; or Never.'

(p. 448)

To show the degree of error to which his selfish characters are prone, Dickens creates a world so full of connections that anyone who denies his shared existence does so in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Those who are selfish work desperately and vainly to maintain their fictive identities. In
her perceptive and influential "The Dickens World: A View from Todgers's" Dorothy Van Ghent begins a statement "But there is no discontinuity in the world of Dickens either between persons and things or between the private and public act." Van Ghent's words might serve as a theme for the novel. She persuasively argues that Dickens' physical coincidences stem from his conception of a "nervous universe, whose ganglia spread through things and people alike." These ganglia also serve to connect people to each other, forcing each person to become, in some way, a part of another. Many of the characters share their identity with a single other person. They have "true" connection. "The word 'true' must be read here with both of the meanings that Dickens gives it . . . --that is to say, 'true' in the sense of sincere affection as well as 'true' as an accurate account of reality." A critical question for those attempting to analyze the novel is who is the central character for whom the novel is named. Since the linear development seems to follow the younger Martin, it seems, on the one hand, that the novel is the story of the young man who has to seek his fortune, rid himself of a character flaw, and prove his merit before he wins the hand of the fair damsel who is in distress and is about to fall into the clutches of the villain. On the other hand, however, the older Martin is the instrument through which the villain is vanquished, is responsible for the wealth which ensures everyone's happiness, and is the one person to whom the virtuous maiden clings even when he is in error. Certainly Dickens did not use the same names out of a creative deficit. The grandfather and
grandson share more than names. Despite the generation gap, the older and younger Martins are mirror images of each other. The two men share the same vice—a selfish nature; they share the same virtue—an openess to possibility and change; they share the same attitude toward Mary. On separation, both men grow physically ill. Neither can be well and whole again until he accepts his need for and dependence on the other.

Old Martin's relationship to Mary deserves closer inspection. Mrs. Lupin and most of the old man's relatives suspect him of carrying on an unsavory liaison with the young girl. Although Dickens does not permit the old man any conscious sexual design on his young, defenseless ward, the sexual undertones of the relationship between the two are clear. Almost as soon as the novel begins, Old Martin is in bed wanting only Mary to minister to him. He alternately demands her presence and then her absence, suggesting his acceptance and rejection of Mary as desired sex object, a youth/age dilemma which Dickens probes more openly in the Esther Summerson/Jarndyce relationship appearing in Bleak House (a dilemma which plagued Dickens himself when he met the young Ellen Ternan). Old Martin has been traveling from place to place accompanied only by Mary, avoiding all who know them. He continues these travels until his meeting with the horridly hypocritical Peck-Sniff—whose relations with his own daughters is a bit suspect—in Todgers's. In the erotic setting of a dark, dirty boarding house whose "grand mystery . . . was a cellarage . . . reported to be full of wealth" (p. 187); in a place located in "a labyrinth whereof the mystery was known but to a chosen few" (p. 185); in a place inhabited
by "only people of a peculiar growth" (p. 182); in a house where even the self-controlled and disciplined Pecksniff gets drunk and makes public sexual advances to the proprietress; in a building surrounded by pumps, cisterns, posts and other penetrating objects with two girls about Mary's age who have been schooled to use their sexuality to acquire what they want fawning over him, Old Martin has an epiphantic awareness of his own vices. Without explanatory comment from Dickens' narrator, in fact kept a surprise from everyone including the readers for forty-two chapters (from its occurrence in chapter ten until the climactic fifty-second chapter), the old man decides that he has been wrong about his grandson, resolves to quit himself of the selfish habits of a lifetime, and begins the machinations which eventually lead to a resolution of all the story's conflicts.

Old Martin comes to realize that he has desired Mary in the same manner that the younger Martin does, as a sexual object. There is no other explanation for his anger with the grandson for doing exactly what the old man had planned. As both children's guardian, he has told his conscious mind that he was rearing Mary as mate for his grandson. However when the younger version of himself avows love for the girl and wants to marry her, the old man becomes furious. After his epiphantic conversion to the ranks of the unselfish, the elder Martin can be at peace with himself realizing that it is through the younger version of himself that he may achieve his sexual desires. At the end of the novel, the elder Martin leaves Mary and Martin in a house owned by him to "keep house for us" while he goes off behind another
matched young couple "smiling; and really, for a gentleman of his habits, in rather a knowing manner" (p. 895). What the Old Martin cannot do in actuality, he has resigned to do in fantasy through his namesake, just as he has planned all those years when the two young people were growing up. His sexual desire is no longer simply repressed; through identification with his grandson it will be released.

The younger Martin must mature before he can assume a full share of the bifurcated identity which is his heritage. The grandfather is forced by time and societal rules to abandon his own selfish desires; moreover, time creates circumstances which force him to admit his grandson to adulthood. Also, Old Martin feigns more weakness than he truly feels. When he voluntarily steps out of the role of wise, controlling, strong head of house of Chuzzlewit and accepts a passive role of dependent, he acquires some of the feminine strengths of intuition and a wiser perception of human nature. The younger Martin must become head of a unit, must accept part of his grandfather's identity as decision maker and planner. He must, too, share some of Tom's "pinched" repression of desires, must learn to delay gratification, to find substitutes for cathexed objects by being deprived of the necessities of comfort and security in America. Conversely, he must also share with Mark Tapley openness to possibility and true awakening of his sexuality (Mark is a taper aware of his effect on women and of the pleasure to be derived from association with the full-bodied, pleasant Mrs. Lupin). While the younger Martin and his grandfather are much alike, share most of their identity, the reader is left with the impression that some progress has been made over two
generations: Martin the younger will not make the same mistakes as did his grandfather because of his association with Tom and Mark.

A reworking of the parent/child shared identity motif appears in the relationship between Jonas and Anthony Chuzzlewit. Anthony has created his son to be a second self. But while Anthony recognizes that the two must depend on each other, Jonas fails to see this need. Jonas, therefore, unwittingly destroys himself by poisoning his father. He commits both patricide and suicide, killing whatever chance he had of authentic existence when he destroys a part of himself in his father. All that is positive, spiritual, moral within him dies with the self that is father, leaving only the bestial which is capable of murder or any other inhuman atrocity. Jonas cuts off all ties to community and continuity in a single act.

Other examples of shared identity exist in Chuzzlewit. Poll Sweedlepipe, for instance, needs Young Bailey for his existence to be complete. Here polar opposites complement and complete the whole. Poll is shy and retiring; Bailey, brash and gregarious. Poll's life is too drab without Bailey's dash; Bailey's too fluid and dangerous without Poll's stabilizing presence. While the Poll/Bailey relationship is similar to that of the two Martins in being a parent/child type, there is one point of dissimilarity: unlike the case of the Martins where both halves of the existence ultimately recognize dependence and the need for reciprocity, the Poll/Bailey relationship is unequal. Poll, the stronger of the two, recognizes that a part of himself is in danger of extinction. Bailey, as weaker self, could die without ever recognizing the binary nature of his own
existence.

Bailey is an extreme, a child who is a microcosm of all the errors of the adults in his world. The youngster sees himself as part of the business enterprise which Tigg heads. Looking for loss of self, as Mark Tapley does, in work, Bailey becomes enamored of the trappings of the false company. Thus the Bailey story is an example of an incorrect work relationship just as Mark Tapley's is a correct one. Bailey's first error is in choosing a company which is itself a sham, a mockery, and which therefore cannot afford real opportunity for self-liberating work. Instead of losing self in work, Bailey creates, fixates a false identity for himself based on the same absence of reality as the company's. He becomes Mr Bailey, Junior, with a Scadder-like schism between his external self and his internal one. Bailey even refuses to show his true feelings to the horse that pulls his cart because those feelings are inconsistent with the image he wishes to project.

Mr. Bailey had a great opinion of brother to Califlower, and estimated his powers highly. But he never told him so. On the contrary, it was his practice in driving that animal, to assail him with disrespectful, if not injurious, expressions. . . .

(p. 495)

The inner self that Bailey creates is totally incongruous with external reality. Bailey sees himself as possessing the qualities of those who surround him: the false self perceives itself as taller, older, wiser than it is. In fact, Bailey projects his own inferiority's reality onto others in a totally schizophrenic way. He has what Laing calls an "inner self in the schizoid condition."
In phantasy, the self can be anyone... It is thus omnipotent and completely free... The self avoids being related directly to real persons but relates itself to itself and to the objects which it posits... so that the individual expresses truth about himself with the same matter-of-factness that we employ about facts that can be consensually validated in a shared world.  

Bailey's false self anticipates what others are going to say about his external self and it utters those comments, "calling to a full-grown coal heaver in a wagon... 'Now young 'un, who trusted you with a cart? '" (p. 496). Later his first words to the adult Poll are "I say, how you've growed" (p. 519). Bailey refuses to act in true relationship to others, anticipating what they will say and thus directing all conversation from an unchanging image of the self rather than allowing conversation to flow naturally. All his thoughts are self-directed; all his psychic energy is used to establish and maintain an identity of the self which is devoid of relationship and comic in its lack of congruence with reality.

A second figure, Montague Tigg, has an identity which is not tied to any external reality or human commitments. Although Tigg is free to become whatever he wills, his identity is stable in a way that a normative character's such as Tom's is not. While he changes his name and appearance so that he is hardly recognizable by those who knew him before the metamorphosis, his inner reality stays the same. He obviously thinks of himself in the same way at all times.

And yet, though changed his name, and changed his outward surface, it was Tigg. Though turned and twisted upside down, and inside out, as great men have been sometimes known to be; though no longer Montague Tigg, but Tigg Montague; still it was Tigg: the same Satanic, gallant, military
Tigg. The glass was burnished, lacquered, newly stamped; yet it was the true Tigg metal notwithstanding.

(p. 497)

He never ceases to be concerned with satisfying his own needs and accomplishing his own goals no matter what the cost to others. He is still a parasite with no regard whatever for the host he feeds upon; he has merely widened his scope, changed his host from Chevy Slyme and all those who knew Slyme to the gullible public. Rather than being "wholly externalized," Tigg is a person who realizes that if it is possible to create an inner subjectivity divorced from the possibility of true interaction or concern for others as well as from external reality—a lesson which he has learned from Chevy Slyme whose inner self is totally at variance with the self which others perceive—then it is possible to allow that inner self to dominate the outer. All that is needed is a figurative change of "clothes"—language, gestures, actual mode of dress. Like Bailey, he is the phantasy self, totally omnipotent and free. Tigg, then, is a cipher, fictive inside and out. His double negation is prefigured by his saying earlier, "I . . . believe nothing. I don't even believe that I don't believe, curse me if I do" (p. 159).

Tigg accomplishes his transformation by a major change in appearance, certainly, but more striking is his change in language. It is as though by sheer force of the inner self's will he changes the bombastic, hyperbolic language of an obvious fraud and charlatan to the milder, more assured and therefore more persuasive rhetoric of an accomplished advertising executive. The old Montague Tigg uses a quantity of words to mystify, confound, and confuse. Tigg Montague
"rises to the occasion" by learning to use more quiet, self-assured language, polished and urban rhetoric to create illusions. Gone from his speech are slang terms, double superlatives, stilted metaphors, and allusions to folklore. Replacing such rather obviously fraudulent and flattering speech are inferences, innuendoes that convince by omission. Marcus sees Tigg, among others in this novel, as creating himself merely by committing himself to an appropriate language. Tigg is the first of a type of Dickens character who mirrors the new affluent businessman. Possessed of nothing but wit, this type sells no real goods or services, only an image of himself. Trading in people's need for hope and/or their greed, this image seller businessman creates a self which impresses. For him form becomes substance—the symbol for something becomes the thing. When discussing Chevy Slyme's bill at the Blue Dragon, Tigg calls the bill "a low performance on a slate, or possibly chalked upon the back of a door" (p. 159), thereby changing the debt owed to the writing which represents it, the substance to form.

Tigg does seem to share identity with Chevy Slyme. Tigg is the self-styled "ambassador from the court of Chiv," and of Slyme the narrator says, he "seemed to have no existence separate or apart from his friend Tigg" (p. 163). The problem is that the two men do not share a "true" connection, true in the sense of sincere affection. Each man is more concerned with himself, with gratifying his own individual needs than with the welfare of the other. Slyme lives only in terms of his own inner reality; everything is colored, distorted by his morbid self importance. He is a parody of the Romantic brooding,
melancholy, proud, haughty, isolated hero who believes that all value inheres in and grows from the self. While Slyme may himself engage in little culpable behavior, like the slime from which he takes his name, Chevy dirties those who come in contact with him. Tigg learns to be culpable from the Slyme with whom he associates.

Slyme does not see himself as tied to his fellowman. He brags "I am not a man of common capacity or accomplishments." In a parody of Byron, Slyme insists that he must not be judged by the same standards as ordinary men since he is "not of the mean, grovelling, tame characters they meet with commonly" (p. 165). He is Byron, crying "I have not loved the world nor the world loved me" when he cries "Society is in a conspiracy against me . . . I am the most persecuted hound on the face of the earth" (p. 164).

A split identity of the type Slyme and Tigg share--between two men connected only by a false sense of one's superiority to all others--is destructive. Tigg feeds on Slyme's presumed superiority until he as the parasite becomes the thing introjected. Tigg feeds on Slyme and increases as the host decreases.

And so abject and so pitiful was he that even his friend and parasite standing erect beside him, swelled into a Man by contrast (p. 163).

It is only at his death that Tigg's connections to the rest of the world can be revealed. (For Tigg's denial of relational identity vitiates all connections while he is alive.) Nadgett, for one, shares part of Tigg's identity. Jonas realizes after he has murdered Tigg that Nadgett is "the brain and right hand" of Montague. Jonas, learning too late that a single individual identity is a fiction in
this world, knows before his own death that Nadgett is an aspect of Tigg, that "... though he had walled the murdered man up, by enchantment in a rock, the story would have lived and walked around" (p. 869).

An examination of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, however, cursory, would not be complete without mentioning Sairey Gamp. Sairey needs help in creating and maintaining her fictive inner self; she finds it in an imaginary other. Mrs. Harris is essential to the image of self that Sairey holds. The fictional other, a kind of third self, allows Sairey to act in any way she desires without damage to a preconceived idea of self. Mrs. Harris's words create a reality totally independent of external evidence. Firmly embodied with her own name, occupation, and mode of dress, Mrs. Harris allows Sairey to see herself as good nurse, excellent midwife, a person of exalted reputation in the face of all evidence to the contrary. Mark Tapley's "reviver" helps the externally observed Mark to continue in actions that are helpful to those around him. He revives Mark's spirits and gives Mark the emotional energy to share with others. Sairey's fictional other helps Sairey keep the internal self secure. Sairey is free from all consequences of her actions. Therefore she can dupe her employers, be cruel to her helpless patients and drink excessively with a clear conscience and with relative good humor. Mrs. Harris is so necessary to the character's sense of self that Sairey becomes physically ill when she has to involve her fictional other in ordinary reality (p. 857). While it is perfectly congruent with Mrs. Harris's function to lie in order to bolster Sairey's identity (in fact, it is her only function):
for Sairey to say that Mrs. Harris did something that the fictional other could not do in the real world negates the existence of the second self. The fictional other does not exist at the whim or for the service of others in the community. When Sairey is forced to press the other into such service, Mrs. Harris is, for all practical purposes, destroyed. And clearly Dickens means for the imaginary self to exist for Sairey. On page 481 of the novel, while the narrator is describing the physical effect that occurs when Sairey is dressing, he concludes that "she became two people."

Just as Mrs. Harris's imaginary words give validity to Sairey's mode of existence, Chuffey's real ones reaffirm Anthony Chuzzlewit's. Anthony needs to feel that Jonas shares some identity with him. Chuffey, therefore, keeps asserting "He is your son, Mr. Chuzzlewit." And while the son, seeking to deny that existence, points out the difference between himself and his father by reminding Anthony of his advancing years, Chuffey says "Not old at all, sir" (p. 363). Chuffey is a follower who is able to lose himself in a way reminiscent of the way medieval squires lost themselves in service to knights. His tragedy is that he chooses the wrong person as hero. In choosing Anthony, Chuffey picks a person who denies his relational identity to others until near the end of his life. Anthony is redeemed before his death, however, for he sees his connections not only to his son but to Chuffey and Mercy; but most of his life has been sacrificed to the prevailing vice of the Chuzzlewit family.

And that vice which afflicts the family is the subject of the often censured introductory chapter of the novel. Disconcerting to
his contemporary readers and remaining a problem for many scholars
to this date, the introductory chapter is not integral to the plot of
*Martin Chuzzlewit*. It is, nonetheless, essential to the basic design
of the novel. When Dickens sat down to write a novel about selfish-
ness, he began with a discussion of the history of a proud family.
He made that pride fallacious because as his imagination conceived
it, a sense of self—a sense of a consistent inner consciousness of
what an "I" is—is a fiction constructed at least partially by a
sense of family and passed on from one generation to another. In
this novel selfishness can be both individual and collective with the
self-absorbed person extending his concern with self from I to we
and the egocentric becoming ethnocentric. But of more importance,
in the first chapter by constructing a family lineage for his char-
acters that went back through all of England's "glorious" history,
by extending that connection to Adam and Eve by virtue of the Bibli-
cal characters' selfishness and to each individual reader by the same
token, Dickens effectively negates time and space as boundaries for
the self. Not only are all members of the Chuzzlewit family akin,
morally contiguous, but all men partake of the Chuzzlewitean fallacy.
Thus, from the novel's beginning, Dickens postulates a continuum of
identity and the absence of an individual self.

Dickens allows a few people to escape the fallacy of perceiving
themselves to be fixed in their identities and complete without
others. And it is difficult to say exactly what forces insulate
these virtuous characters from the prevailing vices of those around
them. Some minor characters such as John Westlock and Mr. Bevan
seem to have unselfishness thrust on them for no special reason. They exist authentically in a world where most have an inaccurate perception of what is necessary for a peaceful and productive life; their unselfishness is a gift bestowed on them by a kind of grace. However most of the major characters who have little self concern and little interiority—Mary Graham, Tom and Ruth Pinch, Mark Tapley—have known some deprivation and hardship. All are relatively poor and have no special talents. None has had the kind of childhood which made him expect the world to revolve around him. In fact, Mary, Tom, and Ruth are all orphans. At least two characters—Mercy Pecksniff Chuzzlewit and Anthony Chuzzlewit—come to relate more authentically to others out of necessity. They are in such great psychic pain that they must reach out to others. In their distress they open themselves and find their lives greatly changed by dint of their need for other people. Only the two Martins, though, come to a full realization of the error of a closed concept of identity. They are well aware of their past selfishness, and they consciously choose to change and become less rigid and unyielding than they were previously. They choose to become more passive, to stop trying to make the world adapt itself to them. They voluntarily relinquish their prized images of their own identity and begin to be concerned with reacting to those around them on the basis of the needs of those others rather than expecting certain responses and actions from others as due to them because of who and what they are. The two Martins move from relationships that are self centered or centered on two parties to relationships that are triangular. They, thus, come to live in places akin to Tom and Ruth
Pinch's triangular parlor; they become parts of little trinities where each person is co-existent with at least two others, and identity is not limited to a single self. Old and Young Martin and Mary; Ruth, Tom, and John Westlock; Mark Tapley, Mrs. Lupin, and the nameless neighbors from America; Mrs. Todgers, Mercy, and Chuffey form little subgroups, with all recognizing their connections with one another, and they live peacefully immune from the selfish Pecksniffs of the world.
FOOTNOTES
(Chapter II)

1. *Chuzzlewit* forms a paradigm for most of Dickens' later works. Most have selfishness as theme; most have a controlling metaphor set up in the first chapter; and most, as this paper is designed to prove, have passive characters who have no interior lives as normative.


5. Miller, p. 100.


9. Allon H. White discusses the "true" connection which exists in the world of *Bleak House* in his "Language and Location in Charles Dickens's *Bleak House*," *Critical Quarterly*, vol 20, no. 4 (Winter, 1981), 73-89. It is his opinion that "True connection is what binds Ada to Richard and George to Mrs. Rouncewell, the Bagnet's to one another and to George; it is what binds Caddy to her husband and Mr. Snagsby to Jo, and what binds Land Dedlock to her dead lover." He believes that the word connection had a much stronger meaning in the nineteenth century than it now possesses and sees the "forging of this connection enduring as a singular indivisible formation in Dickens' writing." (p. 76).

10. Dickens avoids a direct Oedipal conflict by omitting a generation between the two Martins.
11. This is, incidentally, a novel about distorted reflections as Hablot Browne clearly shows in his many-mirrored frontispiece.

12. Laing, pp. 86-87.


CHAPTER III

The Twins at Mrs. Micawber's Breasts

In Martin Chuzzlewit Dickens posited a world largely inhabited by selfish persons, people whose false sense of self led to the sin of selfishness. Helping to redeem that world were a few characters who had little sense of a self identity, characters who were more concerned with others than themselves. In the world of Chuzzlewit connections between all persons—virtuous and villainous, present and past, characters and readers—existed; the omniscient, omni-present narrator made the readers aware of those connections which the characters failed to see. In David Copperfield the makeup of the world shifts; the bulk of those Dickens chose to create are unselfish. Endangering those people are a few who are selfish and evil, men and women whose sense of self and self-importance allow them to try to restructure the world according to their own designs. It would seem that the world of Copperfield would be brighter and happier inasmuch as the majority of its denizens are virtuous. Such is not the case. In Chuzzlewit the villains prey only on each other. Those capable of redemption have power and are able to control. Moreover, a unifying, beneficent force operates to bind, connect, and govern that earlier world, thereby rendering impotent all evil. On the other hand, the self-motivating, self-actualizing villains of the world of David Copperfield are dangerous; they cause the unselfish pain and pose a real threat to the order of things. Harvey Sucksmith in his
The Narrative Art of Charles Dickens sees Dickens in Copperfield warning his readers that natural goodness is by its very nature weaker than evil. Surely the villains are romantic heroes, strong in their demands that the world adapt itself to them rather than the reverse. The basically passive, basically non-assertive good characters are weak. They desire to and need to live in a world where they can exist in positive relationship with everyone around them. Also missing from the Copperfield world are the clear universal links found in Chuzzlewit. On the surface those who are villainous have only blood connections to members of their own families, and never does Dickens present ties of kinship, the sharing of identity with those related only by blood, as sufficient links to the rest of the world. The villains see themselves as isolated from the rest of society, and through most of the novel they seem correct in their perception.

The virtuous are weak individually, but their strength comes from the fact that they realize the fluid nature of their identities. They seek and find other unselfish persons who will complement and complete themselves. These virtuous men and women join forces in order to exist; this union usually takes the form of marriages where the marriage partners become unequal parts of a single unit drawing sustenance and strength from each other. There are, then, two large diverse groups in the novel: those who are unselfish, passive and normative comprise the first and largest group; the second group is composed of a few irredeemably evil, selfish, isolated antagonists who are romantic in that for them value inheres in the self. And
then there is David, the first-person narrator who must learn what connections exist in his world.

The novel is, of course, David's story. It traces his development from birth to a period in his life when he has found true happiness. The story records his coming into physical existence, developing an erroneous sense of himself as a fixed identity, losing that sense and thus arriving at authentic relational existence. David is in a group by himself; he is the incorrectly perceiving who is capable of being redeemed. He takes the place occupied by both Martins in Martin Chuzzlewit. As in Chuzzlewit, much of the discontinuity in this novel is internal; one aspect of David's personality is often at war with another. Not only must David vanquish Uriah, Mr. Murdstone, Miss Murdstone, Jack Maldon, and Steerforth; he must also defeat that aspect of his personality which is enamoured of Steerforth; that aspect of his personality which allows him to betray his kindly impoverished teacher, Mr. Mell; that aspect of his personality which thinks of the impressions he will make on his friends by a theatrical show of grief after his mother's death; that aspect of his personality which sees itself as a fixed entity. In other words, David must learn to forget himself in actions with and reactions to others, and the novel records his lessons and progress to that end.

The novel delineates the growth and development of David's sense of a fictive separate identity. In the first place, the boy, when an infant, seems to have a natural predisposition to see others as different kinds of beings from the self. In his "meanderings" in the chapter titled "I Observe" (Chapter 2), the narrator, who is the child reliving
his earliest experiences, looks back into the "blank of my infancy" to see what "objects standing out in the confusion of things" he can discern. These "objects" are his mother and Peggotty. The boy makes little or no distinction between the two mother figures and "a pigeon house on a pole without any pigeons in it; a great dog kennel in a corner without any dog." He is aware of himself, however, both as physically observable object and as inner, unobserved essence. In addition to the boy's innate confusion over the nature of others, the environment in which he is reared helps to create an individual who sees himself as a duality. The young boy, the center of attention of two adoring females, is the object of their adulation and praise. Missing from his household is a father figure to exert authority over him and with whom the boy can relate and identify. The two females are so different from him, being not masculine and not small, that they are perhaps too "other" for him to avoid perceiving them as "not me," therefore causing him to believe that they do not partake of the same kind of existence as he. Certainly his immature mother contributes to his seeing himself as a stable, fixed entity, for she equates him with an object and uses him as a pawn when she and Peggotty disagree.

Then turning affectionately to me, with her cheek against mine, "Am I a naughty mamma to you Davy? Am I a nasty, cruel, selfish, bad mamma? Say I am, my child—say 'yes,' dear boy, and Peggotty will love you, and Peggotty's love is a great deal better than mine, Davy. I don't love you at all, do I?"

(p. 19)

John Lucas in his essay on David Copperfield calls David's childhood happiness with his mother and Peggotty the story of Everyman with its
bliss destroyed by the intrusive father-figure who "threatens an expulsion from the undivided happiness of mother and child."\(^4\)

Everyman, however, does not have such a surplus of mother-figures as does David, nor does the blissful union of mother-mother-and-child without a father usually last as long as that which David enjoys or endures since the boy is school age before Murdstone enters his life. Furthermore, the kind of "blissful union" where the child receives excessive attention and adoration from a mother can easily turn sour with the child becoming the object of maternal cathexis. Examples of cathected children are Steerforth and Uriah Heep, both of whom selfishly and ruthlessly exploit others for their own gratification and without pangs of conscience since others are viewed as not sharing mode of existence or identity with the self.

Reflections from David's early childhood show that he is aware of an inner self who ponders the effect his actions will have on those around him.

But though Peggotty's eye wanders, she is much offended if mine does, and frowns to me, as I stand upon the seat, to look at the clergyman. But I can't always look at him—I know him without that white thing on, and I am afraid of his wondering why I stare so, and perhaps stopping the service to inquire—and what am I to do? It's a dreadful thing to gape, but I must do something. I look at my mother, but she pretend not to see me.

(p. 64)

His next impression is of a scene in their garden where his mother is gathering gooseberries, and again he records being aware of both an interior and an exterior self.
... my mother gathers some in a basket, while
I stand by, bolting furtive gooseberries, and
trying to look unmoved.

This scene shifts with no comment from the narrator.

A great wind rises, and the summer is gone in a mo-
ment. We are playing in the winter twilight,
dancing about the parlour. When my mother is out
of breath and rests herself in an elbowchair, I
watch her winding her bright curls round her
fingers, and straightening her waist, and nobody
knows better than I do that she likes to look so
well, and is proud of being so pretty.

(p. 65)

More than just a replication of how a child's mind works is
operative here. The child is conscious of a self which watches others
gauging the effect of his own actions on others as well as a self
which acts. The inner self directs and guides, giving value to the
world, thereby precluding true action and interaction with others.
Such interiority is the hallmark of a selfish, hypocritical person
in any Dickens world. For example, Pecksniff in Chuzzlewit and Steer-
forth of this novel have inner selves which ascertain what words and
actions will be most effective on others who are viewed as objects to
be manipulated rather than as entities coexistent with the self. While
the physically observable self is doing those things that will win ap-
proval, the inner self is removed from interaction, thinking itself
superior to all those who are the not self. David displays this dual-
ism perfectly just after learning of his mother's death.

I stood upon a chair when I was left alone, and looked
into the glass to see how red my eyes were and how sorrow-
ful my face. . . .

If ever a child were stricken with sincere grief, I
was. But I remember that this importance was a kind
of satisfaction to me, when I walked in the playground
that afternoon while the boys were in school. When I
saw them glancing at me out of the windows as they went up to their classes, I felt distinguished, and looked more melancholy, and walked slower. When school was over, and they came out and spoke to me, I felt it rather good in myself not to be proud to any of them, and to take exactly the same notice of them all as before.

(p. 177)

Two entities are present here, an I and a myself. Moreover, there is a theatrical, staged quality about this scene which prevents direct relational existence. Both others and the physical self are viewed as characters on a stage being directed by an interior version of the self, here the "myself" of the quote.

The dualism between the fixed inner self and the physically observable outer self has been termed Dickens' psychological realism by many modern critics, with most accepting without question David's dualistic nature. George Orwell's comment that on reading Copperfield at age nine he felt certain the novel had been written by a child, and most subsequent critical evaluation of the first half of the novel as more psychologically true than the remainder of the work do not obviate the need to question why Dickens made such a drastic shift in the mode of being of the older David, why there is such a change in presentation in the latter half of the novel. Perhaps it is psychologically true that most western children have both the predisposition to selfishness and the conditioning which creates a dual self. What is in question here is whether Dickens portrays such a dualism as normative. In Bleak House Esther Summerson shows no such self division. Esther is a duller character than David, for there is no internal discontinuity in her character; she does not change since
Dickens presents her as always a normative being, always a person who is exteriorized, outer directed. A lonely, isolated child, she must have a doll in whom she can confide; she must be able to tell her thoughts, direct them outward, for when she is not acting in relationship to others Esther ceases to exist.

I can remember, when I was a very little girl indeed, I used to say to my doll, when we were alone together, 'Now, Dolly, I am not clever, you know very well, and you must be patient with me, like a dear!' And so she used to sit propped up ... staring at me—or not so much at me, I think, as at nothing—while I busily stitched away, and told her every one of my secrets.

(Bleak House, Chapter III)

The first-person narrator of Bleak House verges on being the nothing the doll sees. None of Esther's actions are planned or designed for their effect on others. She relates to others directly with her whole being. When not in direct relation, direct interaction with others, she is unaware of a self, has no idea what effect her physical presence or actions are having on those around her. Like Tom Pinch and unlike David, Esther ceases to exist when she is not acting in relation to others, for she has no interior self.

... 'What the de-vil are you crying for?'
I was so frightened that I lost my voice, and could only answer in a whisper, 'Me, sir?'
'Yes, you' he said, turning around. . . .
'I didn't know I was crying, sir,' I faltered.

(Bleak House, Chapter III, p. 23)

While there are often two Davids operating, Esther's remarks show that no Esther exists until the gentleman in the coach speaks to her. What inner life Esther has is involved with improving her relationships with those from whom she receives her relational identity.
David changes, becomes redeemed, as he becomes more like Esther. Not only is this process recorded in the narration of Copperfield, but the act of narrating seems to foster the change in David's mode of perceiving and being.

David's progress is from being a fallible first-person narrator who has a vital, active, selfish interior life to becoming one who does not possess such. "David becomes," as Bert Hornback puts it, "his selfless understanding of the world." Esther is always talking to her readers as she narrates Bleak House. The younger David is talking to "an older" self in the first half of David Copperfield, the mature David being a kind of meta-narrator, listening and watching in utter fascination as the younger version of himself relives the story. Readers are eavesdroppers peering over the older narrator's shoulder as he watches a tableau unfold, and the meta-narrator is often so involved with the younger version of himself, so moved by the actions that he seems unaware of the readers. Near the beginning of the novel, his comments about what he sees and hears are personal, private murmurs almost involuntary cognitions which seem thought, not uttered aloud. In the following excerpt, for example, the meta-narrator is so caught up in the scene he has just witnessed that he seems totally oblivious to his audience.

God help me, I might have been improved for my whole life, I might have been made another creature perhaps, for life, by a kind word at that season. A word of encouragement and explanation, of pity for my childish ignorance... might have made me dutiful in my heart henceforth, instead of in my hypocritical outside... 

(p. 96)
The meta-narrator often says that he is stepping aside to allow the younger figure to tell, live again certain experiences. For instance, in the chapter titled "My 'First half' at Salem House," he begins one paragraph, "Here I sit at the desk again watching his eye. . . . " A subsequent paragraph begins with exactly the same words, "Here I sit at the desk again on a drowsy summer afternoon." This time a prepositional phrase is added to the main clause to indicate to the readers that the meta-narrator has shifted scenes. A third paragraph also begins, "Here I am," but this time it continues "in the playground." After each beginning sentence the meta-narrator turns the description over to a younger self who then enacts and relives the experience.

Recalling what happens to the younger self, the older narrator discovers that the lad David is not coexistent with him. Although the boy's experiences call up emotions in the older figure, evoke responses from him, these emotions and responses are not the same as the boy's; the mature David's responses are colored by new experiences, new conditions. A case in point: When discussing Creakle, the cruel principal and proprietor of Salem House, the meta-narrator feels what he calls a "disinterested indignation" and an anger that is entirely different from the awe and fear felt by the younger self (p. 141). Again, when recalling that the joy which the younger self received from the nightly story-telling sessions with Steerforth was mixed with certain negative emotions, what the meta-narrator feels is the pain of loss.

The drawback was, that I was often sleepy at night, or out of spirits and indisposed to resume the story, and then it was rather hard work, and it must be done;
for to disappoint or displease Steerforth was of course out of the question. In the morning too, when I felt weary, and should have enjoyed another hour's repose it was a tiresome thing to be roused, like the Sultana Scheherazade, and forced into a long story before the getting-up bell rang. But Steerforth was resolute. . . . Let me do myself justice, however. I was moved by no interest of selfish motive, nor was I moved by fear of him. I admired and loved him, and his approval was return enough. It was so precious to me, that I look back on these trifles now with an aching heart.

(p. 145)

The "I" of the last sentence, the meta-narrator, does not feel the same emotions as the "I" of the preceding sentences. Often the meta-narrator can remember things vividly—he can call up the emotions that he believes the young boy felt at his mother's funeral, for example—but there are times when he must say "I have no distinct remembrance whether it pleased or frightened me" (p. 208). In one instance, when trying to recall what he was like as the youngest boy at Dr. Strong's school, he concludes, "That little fellow seems no part of me" (p. 325). It is as though David is liberated by the pages of the book, by being the narrator who retells the events which happened to "him," the mature David realizes that there is no "him," that he changes with time and circumstance. The "he" who was David is not at all synonymous with the "he" who at the moment of writing is David. After he has "faithfully set the seal upon the Past," he comes to know that he is less connected to the young person he once was than he is to those persons who at the present moment share time, space, and current experiences with him. In Chapter 61, for instance, the mature David records that "Occasionally I went to London—to lose myself in the swarm of life there. . . .” It is also the mature David
who so often speaks of himself as a blank: he calls his life "A 
blank, through which the warriors of poetry and history march on in 
stately hosts that seem to have no end" (p. 325); of himself he says, 
"What a blank space I seemed" (p. 174), as well as talking of the 
"Blank of my infancy" (p. 61). In fact, immediately after his recep-
tion as a "new boy" by his Aunt he can record, "I never thought of 
anything about myself distinctly" (p. 272). The inner self has begun 
to dissolve.

The novel begins "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." David does not become the "hero" in the sense of 
an active, adventurous figure who persists in making the world adapt 
itself to him. The pages show that he becomes what is infinitely to 
be preferred in the works of Dickens—a quiet, rather docile person 
who is capable of change, of adjusting himself to whatever exigencies 
arise in his relationships with people. He becomes a person whose 
existence is based on reacting to the needs of those related to him, 
a person who acts out of the needs of others rather than one whose 
actions are based on behaving in a way congruent with any image of 
self identity. *Copperfield* is a story of how a young boy who could 
have become a Steerforth instead became a Traddles.

David's change is primarily a change in mode of perception, 
which in this case is almost but not quite the same as mode of being. 
David is designed for relationship; he is connected to all other 
characters in the novel. However, he perceives of himself as a 
separate entity, as having a totally separate identity, and this
perception blinds him to the connections which exist between himself and others. He is born with a caul; he does not see clearly as a young lad. His image of an inner self, of a fixed identity, must be destroyed before he learns to exist unselfishly and thus authentically.

The fact that Dickens wants David to be open to possible relationships, to be fluid, is clear in the author's blueprint for the novel, the detailed outline for the monthly installments in which the novel was first published. The word he referring to David as acting subject never appears in the number plans or on the outline for the novel. There are many I's in the chapter titles but these are usually employed in a passive voice: for example, "I become neglected and am provided for." Although the novel is supposed to be a record of David's life, there is no David, no I, no subject. David exists as possibilities, a different actant in every relationship that he enters. This existence as possibility can be seen in the many names David is given. Every time he enters a new relationship, David is given a new name. In being named and re-named by various individuals he is constantly being recreated.

David begins life auspiciously. He is unable to be what his Aunt Betsey, who is one of those "supernatural beings" (p. 60) who know the correct names for things and who can call into being by naming, has destined him to be. This being called forth by his aunt, this Betsey Trotwood Copperfield, remains "forever in the land of dreams, of shadows" (60), which is an indication that Dickens wants us to see David as existing in opposition to what he is not. To be
more accurate, he exists in the hinge between what his aunt names him—Betsey—and the name bequeathed to him by his dead father—David. Therefore, the homosexuality which is latent in his relationship with Steerforth is determined at his birth. When Aunt Betsey becomes aware that she has not been able to call him into being as she wishes, she vanishes "like a discontented fairy" (p. 60).

An examination of David's many other names is evidence of his lack of a stable identity. To Peggotty, he is Master Davy. This name sets up their relationship; therefore, Peggotty can never be his protector, his guide. He cannot go to her when he desperately needs help. Although Peggotty loves him and is close at hand, he must seek out his Aunt Betsey who has shown no interest in him and whom he has tremendous difficulty locating because his relationship to Peggotty is still partially a master-servant one. To his mother, he is Davy, a child's name for another child. This is precisely their relationship. In fact, Aunt Betsey shows her supernatural wisdom when she names Mrs. Copperfield "Baby," for David's mother never comes to be either wife or mother; her development is permanently arrested, and both she and David are almost Peggotty's children.

The next person to name David is Ham Peggotty. Ham defines their relationship by creating David as Mas'r Davy. There is something incomplete here—as their relationship is incomplete, is never fully realized. They are two young men who share a number of important life experiences, but they never come to know each other, and Ham never feels that he is David's equal. Also, err is heard in the last syllable in Mas'r, and it is David who introduces all the erring into
the life of the Peggotty household at Yarmouth.

Mr. Murdstone, the cruel stepfather, shows his murderous nature in the way he keeps creating and then destroying the boy's identity. There is no consistency in his name for David, just as there is no consistency in their relationship. At first David is "Somebody" to be deceived, to be kept ignorant of his own future: he is "Brooks of Sheffield." Later, when Murdstone pretends to be a true parent, the boy is Davy; but after calling him that only once, Murdstone realizes that the boy is not child enough to fail to realize that the stepfather is insincere. Murdstone then conceives of the boy as the enemy whom he will treat as an equal, so David becomes Copperfield. Evidence of the boy's total confusion is recorded when he is on his way to Creakle's school where the Murdstones have conspired to send him. When he stops at an inn for dinner, he asks if a meal has been set for Copperfield and is told no, he finds that without consulting or informing him, the Murdstones have changed his name to Master Murdstone (p. 116). And this naming and renaming continues.

To Steerforth, he is Daisy (note the feminine); he becomes Trotwood Copperfield when he runs away to his aunt and "Becomes a new boy"; his Aunt shortens this to Trot, and he does trot to do her bidding; Mr. Dick calls him Trotwood, indicating the equality and formality between them. To his first wife he is Doady, one child's name for another child. To the scheming, devious Uriah Heep is is "Master Copperfield—I beg you pardon Mister Copperfield" (436-442). One respectful addition to David's surname is not "umble" enough for Uriah. To Traddles he is "my dear Copperfield" who can do no wrong,
and finally to Agnes, who in her almost transcendental wisdom sees no need for a second name to indicate a primary relationship, he is merely "husband." For Dickens, not only do names create relationships, they also show forth or resemble the essence of the named.

Duplication of names here, as in Chuzzlewit, suggests duplication of identity. Clara Copperfield and Clara Peggotty certainly share more than just first names. They complement and complete each other. What one lacks the other supplies. One is beautiful and flighty, the other plain and stable. One Clara is very strong with much to give; a second Clara is weak, needing to take much. Clara Copperfield teaches her son to read; at least one critic sees Clara Peggotty teaching David to write, to narrate.10 Clara Peggotty is able to read Clara Copperfield Murdstone's mind. After a mock argument--on Peggotty's part--between the two, David records,

I think I had some glimpses of the real character of this conversation at the time; but I am sure now that the good creature originated it, herself and took her part in it, merely that my mother might comfort herself with the little contradictory summary in which she indulged. The design was efficacious, for I remember that my mother seemed more at ease during the rest of the evening, and that Peggotty observed her less.

(p. 168)

While they duplicate relationships the two women both survive. When they are both David's mother, both the heads of the Blunderstone Rookery household, even the weak member of the union can thrive. Only when Clara Copperfield begins to sever the bond between them by seeking strength and firmness, as well as love, from Edward Murdstone does the younger, weaker woman begin to wither.
The Murdstones, who also share names, are an interesting pair. Brother and sister who are twins in their firmness and other aspects of demeanor as well as physical appearance, the Murdstones are a closed unit, a couple. Edward Murdstone cannot nurture Clara Copperfield, for to all intents and purposes Jane Murdstone is his wife.\textsuperscript{11} The two have consciously chosen each other's company, each other's continued presence. They share their identity, thinking in concert and acting in concert. David constantly refers to them as "the Murdstones," for he cannot separate them in his mind. The only shade of difference between them is that Jane Murdstone has "the wrongs of her sex upon her," and thus must not only be less attractive than her male counterpart but must also be his "tributary."

Although David believes that Murdstone loves Clara Copperfield Murdstone after a fashion, Murdstone does nothing which displays love for his shadow wife. Murdstone is too fixated by his own sense of self to actually share emotions, thoughts, beliefs, identity with anyone other than an extension of himself, a tributary through whom his own being along with his image of himself flows. Since Jane and Edward grew up in the same family and shared exactly the same childhood experiences, whatever conditioned Edward also conditioned Jane, making her a more likely conduit through which his ideas, attitudes, and values can flow than any other person. Edward Murdstone projects such a strong and consistent image of closed self-identity and self-importance that even his business partners, his peers and comrades, are not at ease with him. When Murdstone and David go on a business trip with Murdstone's associates, Quinion and Passnidge, the two
associates, who clearly know Murdstone well enough to be aware of his plan to marry the Widow Copperfield, joke with each other, relate to each other with easy camaraderie, but not with Murdstone. In fact, Murdstone is cold with them, removed from them.

I observed all day that Mr. Murdstone was graver and steadier than the two gentlemen. They were very gay and careless. . . . It appeared to me that he was more clever and cold than they were, and that they regarded him with something of my own feeling. I remarked that once or twice, when Mr. Quinion was talking, he looked at Mr. Murdstone sideways, as if to make sure of his not being displeased; and that once when Mr. Passnidge (the other gentleman) was in high spirits, he trod upon his foot, and gave him a secret caution with his eyes, to observe Mr. Murdstone, who was sitting stern and silent. Nor do I recollect that Mr. Murdstone laughed at all that day. . . .

(p. 73)

Murdstone wants to be known for his firmness; his fixed self is characterized by that quality. Therefore in no situation is he relaxed; no matter what others around him share, he is aloof, stable, self-possessed. The mature David recognizes that when acting "freely and spontaneously" he himself is at his best (p. 345). But Murdstone is never free or spontaneous. The impression Murdstone gives is that from his birth he has been firm, resolute, cold, unbending, unchanging. David dares to wound this rocklike, resolute man with something as mundane as teeth. The boy does more than injure Murdstone's physical self; David damages the image of the fixed self that Murdstone holds. Whether Murdstone likes it or not, he can be moved; the fixed image which he has of himself can be shaken. When he and his sister come to Aunt Betsey's home after David has run away to her, the discussion of his wife Clara's unhappiness and death causes
Murdstone to wince, and "though the smile was on his face still, his colour had gone in a moment, and he seemed to breathe as if he had been running" (p. 270). Murdstone has lost a "tributary" in the death of his son, and it is the loss of that object which affects him. Murdstone remains villainous throughout the novel, never seeing himself connected to his fellowmen.

While the cause of Murdstone's villainy is only implied (he is a victim of the kind of beatings administered to David), Uriah Heep carefully describes the etiology of his villainy. He has been reared to know his singularity and to use it in order to manipulate the world. Even the very poor desire power, and in an effort to secure that elusive quality Uriah's family uses a device that servant classes have historically used: feigned humility masking the hostility which poverty and helplessness create. In Uriah, Dickens attacks the kind of education provided for the poor in England, an education which creates selfish sycophants.

But how little you think of the rightful humbleness of a person in my station, Master Copperfield! Father and me was brought up at a foundation school for boys; and mother, she was likewise brought up at a public, sort of charitable, establishment. They taught us all a deal of humbleness—not much else that I know of, from morning to night. We was to be humble to this person, and humble to that; and to pull off our caps here, and to make bows there; and always to know our place, and abase ourselves before our betters. And we had such a lot of betters.

(p. 639)

In what seems a fallacious reaction to Uriah's speech above, David concludes that the "detestable cant of false humility might have originated out of the Heep family." David is at least partially
correct. Uriah's father imbibes the doctrine taught by the charitable schools wholeheartedly, and he turns humility into a tool by which to wrest some degree of power from 'betters.' "'Be humble,' says father, 'and you'll do.' And really it ain't done bad!" Uriah gloats to David after the Wickfields are in his control. The trouble with feigned humility, as with all feigning and all hypocrisy, is that the pretender must always be a duality. The inner self must dictate what the physically observable self does, again precluding relationship. In order to keep up the facade, there must be a fixed interior, guiding and directing. Uriah is, in a way, trapped in a cycle. Although others despise and shun him for his oily unctuousness and duplicity, every slight and rebuff they give him makes him more devious and unctuous. David sees in Uriah aspects of himself that he does not like. Therefore, he rejects Uriah in an effort to reject the sycophant in himself. David perceives Uriah as the opposite of Steerforth: he thinks that Uriah is all false humbleness, fawning desire to please others, and that Steerforth is all true pride, superiority which refuses to curry favor. Although David never sees it, what binds Uriah and Steerforth, making them more alike than different, is the fact that they both have an image of what the inner self is like, which overrides all considerations of the needs and desires of others.

E. Pearlman in a perceptive essay entitled "David Copperfield Dreams of Drowning" says that David sees Uriah and Steerforth as two alternative moral paths, Uriah representing what David fears he is or might become, Steerforth being what David wishes to be. Pearlman concludes that David is triply split. However in the body of the
essay Pearlman, in effect, proves that both Uriah and Steerforth represent a repressed sexuality in David; Uriah being sexual aggression and Steerforth being David's desires to philander and seduce. The two men are variations of the fixed self planning and manipulating for self gratification. Traddles, who is the true opposite of both, has no image of self; he exists in the moment, having no more interior life than the skeletons which he continues to draw when a sensitive boy at Salem House School.

When David is at Salem House, he is more than triply split. Most of the young men his age partake of the same existence. All of the schoolboys have the same fears: of Creakle's and Tungay's harsh punishment, of incurring Steerforth's displeasure, of embarrassment in front of the group. They become a unit, thinking alike, dressing in the same manner, behaving in the way the group expects.

To further solidify the theme of shared identity, Dickens creates Creakle and Tungay, the school's proprietor and his assistant, also as a single unit. The two exist in concert, with Creakle being the brain and Tungay the voice. Creakle being the cognitive and Tungay the active aspect of a single individual: "Mr. Creakle was seen to speak, and Tungay was heard" by the boys. Not only is Tungay presented as Creakle's voice, the school master's assistant is more closely bound to his employer than Creakle's own family. Creakle has disowned his son and banned the young man from the house; one of the son's sins is that he has not been a favorite of Tungay's. Creakle and Tungay have been through many experiences together; they are twin peers who think alike and share the same values or absence of values. In this novel
time creates links. Those in the same age groups, those who share the
same experiences also share a common identity. A chief objective of
Chuzzlewit was to examine the shared father-child identity. The self
was shown as leaping generations, as having no time boundary. In
David Copperfield time binds peers together with no consideration of
family ties. Time is shown to create a milieu which binds relatively
discrete entities together. Those who share given experiences because
they have had their physical presences set in a given time and space
are shown also to share their very being. Time and space are postu-
lated as creators of a kind of communal self. Perhaps because
Dickens in this novel recounts and examines his own memories, time
and shared memories are presented as creative, positive forces. They
expand the human condition, forming links between men and women.

The women who are in the same age group have especially strong
bonds between them. Not only are Clara Copperfield Murdstone and
Clara Peggotty Barkis twins; all of the younger female figures are
splits of a single individual. All except Rosa Dartle recognize their
common bonds. Agnes, Annie Strong, and Dora see that they share fates
with each other; while they never discuss their problems, merely being
in proximity to each other gives them strength. Rebecca Rodalff
accurately identifies Dora as changing into Agnes. Rodalff notes
that while David calls Agnes the "centre of myself," what she becomes
is the missing center of Dora's being.

Dora . . . sheds her characteristic self until
it appears that her centre is Agnes; and, dying
into Agnes, she is understood to find peace in
the next world.
Miss Rodalff concludes that Agnes gets ascendency over the thoughts of both David and Dora, with Dora's speech beginning to sound like Agnes' as, even while alive, Dora is increasingly subsumed to Agnes. All of the women share a common fate: they end up being subservient to the demands of the males who dominate their society. Even the strong Aunt Betsey has no real power over her own life, inasmuch as males control and dictate what will happen to her finances and her profligate estranged husband may appear at any moment to disrupt her life. Furthermore, Aunt Betsey needs to see Mr. Dick as strong and wise, as someone who can resolve the questions of everyday living that plague her, for as a woman she can have wisdom but no power. Agnes, the other female font of wisdom, sees that all of the women her age as well as herself are interchangeable given the same circumstances. Only Rosa Dartle, warped by Mrs. Steerforth's sense of self-importance, sees herself cut off from other women. Thus Rosa can castigate Emily and all women who have fallen from the grace of unmarried virginity, seeing her "fallen" counterparts as a "them" whom she has the right and obligation to punish with physical abuse.

While Emily does not see herself as cut off from the sisterhood of other women, she does not see herself as destined to share the fate of those of her social class. It is not all women linked together by the "wrongs of their sex" whom she rejects; it is the class of working women, the Peggottys and Mrs. Gummidges, with which she does not wish to be conjoined. Emily, like the young David and Steerforth, has received too much attention, too much adulation from the well-meaning Yarmouth Peggottys. In Chapter Ten, David records that
"Emily was spoiled by them all . . . (p. 195), and later that "Emily was confused by our all observing her. . . (p. 197). Earlier, in Chapter 3, the seeds of the two young people's fictive interiority are sown.

We were the admiration of Mrs. Gummidge and Peggotty, who used to whisper of an evening, when we sat lovingly on our little locker side by side, "Lor! wasn't it beautiful!" Mr. Peggotty smiled at us from behind his pipe, and Ham grinned all the evening and did nothing else. They had something of the sort of pleasure in us, I suppose, that they might have had in a pretty toy, or a pocket model of the Colosseum.

(p. 87)

Being constantly watched and admired by those surrounding her, constantly viewed as a cherished object, Emily creates an image of what she desires to be, an image of herself in a particular station, which exists securely, independently in and for itself. While she wishes to do generous things for her guardians, she wishes to act in a way consistent with her view of herself rather than in relationship with and to them. She sees herself as becoming a lady who can dole out to Daniel Peggotty material goods that are inconsistent with the sailor/fisherman's mode of being and dealing with the world. In the following conversation even David, who still inaccurately perceives, sees the lack of congruence between Emily's desires and Daniel Peggotty's needs.

"If I was ever to be a lady, I'd give him a sky-blue coat with diamond buttons, nankeen trousers, a red velvet waistcoat, a cocked hat, a large gold watch, a silver pipe, and a box of money."

I said I had no doubt that Mr. Peggotty well deserved these treasures. I must acknowledge that I felt it difficult to picture him quite
at his ease in the raiment proposed for him by his grateful little niece. . . .

(p. 85)

Emily wants to act in a way congruent with some inner view of herself not to change as the people who give her relational identity need her to exist, not being sister, wife, friend, cook, nurse, companion as occasions demand but always being lady. While Emily is not villainous, her incorrect perceptions leave her vulnerable to Steerforth's seduction. Her generosity, the fact that she deeply cares for someone not her own flesh and blood, and wishes any good fortune to redound to others, gives her hope for redemption in Australia. She is, however, banned forever from the ranks of the happily married women who totally lose themselves in relation to their own nuclear families.

In this novel about finding marriage partners and attaining a state of unity, once the partners have entered the marriage contract, Dickens extols the female who submerges herself within the stronger self, the self without the "wrongs of her sex" upon it. Dickens presents the female who does not exist except through husband and family as the accepted norm. Mrs. Micawber would fade away, not be, without Mr. Micawber. Mrs. Gummidge must exist within the Peggotty household and exist there with constant references to the "Old um" and fits of depression because she has been deprived of her head; she is a tributary without a source. The female is walking, auring womb, creating an ambience in which all her family dwells secure. And as passively, involuntarily as she does for an unborn embryo, she serves as host for the males with whom she comes in contact. The woman in
Copperfield exists to create and maintain the atmosphere in which things live and flourish. Like Tom Pinch of Chuzzlewit, when there is no one around who needs her sustaining presence, she does not exist. Clara Copperfield is not allowed to become the external womb, to project into the world outside her the maternal presence that is woman. The fact that she is physically, internally fertile is not enough. Her life-creating, life-sustaining capabilities must extend to the outside world in order for her to be a viable Dickens woman. She and Dora are both babies, never women. It is possible to be mater-woman and not give birth to children--Peggotty, Aunt Betsey, Mrs. Gummidge are all examples. Nature/God/circumstances over which females have no control make them capable of giving birth. What the female must do in order to exist authentically is consciously, deliberately sustain and nurture; she must create a household in which children and full grown men can sustain themselves at the mater-woman's symbolic breasts.

Martin Chuzzlewit has as its central focus the family, those blood-related, vice-related individuals who make up the Chuzzlewit house. Only by extensions as others partake of the Chuzzlewitean nature and show themselves one with that family does the novel concern itself with any outside the family unit. Helping to redeem those capable of salvation in the family are a few persons who are graced with the knowledge that their identity is tied to and dictated by relationships with other people. David Copperfield deals with a problem which antedates the family as blood kin. Before the first family unit existed, there were Adam and Eve--two single
individuals unrelated by ties of blood who had to create through themselves and of themselves the family. **David Copperfield** is concerned with the establishing of a bond which will allow the family to come into being—the merging of opposing sexes into a constitutive family, a family unrelated by blood, yet tied together by "suitability of mind and purpose," which creates sensible, prudent love. The bonded couples will bring forth new families, new communities. Hence **Copperfield** shows how two people from totally different backgrounds, but linked by suitable cast of mind and purpose as well as by time-related and created experiences, discover each other, merge totally while losing self identity, and ultimately beget new families of their own.
FOOTNOTES
(Chapter III)

1. It is true that Old Martin is not in control in the American chapters, but America exists only as the wilderness where all civilized laws are overthrown and where Young Martin, like Job, must be tried.

2. Harvey Peter Sucksmith, The Narrative Art of Charles Dickens (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 205. Sucksmith argues that Dickens suggests an interdependence of good and evil since simple, pure goodness invites the assault of evil. In his assumption that blindness is not without blame in the Dickens' imagination, Sucksmith hints that the author's good and evil characters partake of the same identity. Sucksmith quotes R. O. Ballou's The Bible and the World: "The ego is not genuine, not a true reality but only a degrading composite of temporary obstructive delusions" (p. 206). The idea that for Dickens the ego, the identity, does not exist is, of course, the controlling idea of this paper.


11. Lucas is one critic who notes that the Murdstones are more a married couple than brother and sister. (The Melancholy Man, p. 175.)

12. David sees Uriah's humility as false both in the sense that it is feigned and in the sense that excessive humility is an erroneous way of dealing with the world.


14. Mr. Dick's problem is that he feels his identity connected with King Charles I, someone far removed from him in time and space.


CHAPTER IV

Negation or Nobody's Fault: Little Dorrit

Little Dorrit is the darkest, the most pessimistic of the Dickens novels. Not only do the virtuous characters have no chance of redeeming the rest of the world by serving as examples of how relational identity should flow, but they are also themselves nearly destroyed by the selfishness that is so very pervasive in the novel. The somber atmosphere of the world of Little Dorrit is the logical result of the author's vision, the thematic matrix out of which most of his works evolve. If truly virtuous people have no identity, if all force, action or planning which originates in people rather than in nature or circumstances is the result of the Romantic heroic types and those types are selfish, potentially if not actually villainous, then the world is controlled by those who are rapacious, those whose ends are self-aggrandizing. Thus the world is a place of hypocrisy, pretensions, and greed. In this novel even Fate and Time—important characters here—^1— are antagonistic enemies of the human spirit, forcing some people to be destined to live in abject poverty and misery while others, who have no more—sometimes much less—to recommend them, indulge themselves in idleness and luxury. When Fortune does shine on the denizens of this world, they may, like the eponymous character who is the novel's avatar of virtue, become more unhappy in luxurious surroundings than they ever were in poverty. In fact, most inhabitants of the world of Little Dorrit are doomed to be unhappy and
unsatisfied.

In this novel Dickens creates a world in which almost every character has a sense of identity and of position, of a place for the self in the society. Most of their energy goes into setting up the self in that place, maintaining it securely despite the needs of others, despite common sense, often despite their own needs. In this world fraught with pretensions, Dickens suggests that nothing is more pretentious and artificial than is the sense of stable identity that most of the characters possess. William Dorrit, for example, conceives of himself as a gentleman, a leader of people, a man of pride and attainment. Nothing—not love for his family, not the realities of his mendicancy or mendacity—is able to change that image. Furthermore, since the world is governed by people who also have a fixed sense of themselves as individuals and as members of a given social class and since the entire code of conduct is predicated upon selfishness, Dorrit's continued sham is accepted, is even deemed commendable by almost all who come into contact with him. Dickens posits this world as one whose culture, whose Society with a capital S, is based on sham and hypocrisy. Few in it value or seek the peace and joy which come from selfless negation of individual will in service to others.

The virtuous characters in Little Dorrit are will-less because they do not have personal, individual identities. They are nobodies in a world where to be somebody means to be selfish and artificial. They are also nobodies in the sense of being people of no importance, influence, or social position. They have no inner selves that plan and direct what they shall do. All of their actions are outer directed;
all are in the service of others. Whatever is done grows out of
the needs of others, for all identity comes from existing in relation
to others. Many of the reviewers who noted the absence of self will
in the novel have viewed will-less-ness as negative, as something
Dickens is criticizing \(^2\) (although Lionel Trilling as early as 1952
called Amy Dorrit absence of "social will" \(^3\) and deconstructionist
critic Alistair Duckworth talks of the "evils of the will" in vari-
ous characters including Amy. \(^4\) An examination of the virtuous and
villainous characters in the novel suggests that absence of self will,
absence of all self-identity, is the very hallmark of virtue. No one
in *Little Dorrit* is more willful than Rigaud or Mrs. Clennam or Fanny;
it is William Dorrit's will to be a gentleman that establishes him in
the position of Father of the Marshalsea; Merdle's will to financial
greatness creates his destructive facades. The villainous are will-
ful; they have strong identity images. Rigaud sees himself as a
gentleman, and by his strong will he convinces many people of his
nobility. Those who lack will in this novel have little sense of
identity except in relation to others; these are the virtuous char-
acters. Arthur says, "I have no will. That is to say . . . next
to none that I can put into action now." \(^5\) Any will that he later
evinces is reflected in his service to others. Little Dorrit is the
first person in the novel to be called a nobody, a nothing, although
other positive characters are later described in terms of negation.
When Arthur asks Affrey who the young dressmaker is, Affrey responds,
"Oh! She? Little Dorrit? She's nothing . . . (p. 80). Others who
have no self will are Frederick Dorrit, Affrey ("If Mrs. Affrey had
had any will or way of her own, it would probably have been unfavorable to Little Dorrit," says the narrator in Chapter Five of the novel (p. 94); in a way Daniel Doyce, too, is will-less; by the time Arthur meets him, Doyce has lost the will to exert himself against the Circumlocation Office. Not all will-less, identity-free characters are virtuous, however. Coupled to lack of identity must be activity.

In this novel there are three planes of existence, each based on its own identity principle and each containing willful and will-less persons. The sphere of existence outside the walls of the Marshalsea constitutes one plane. Inside the Marshalsea there is an entirely different order of things. And a realm which transcends time and space, a supernal sphere peopled by Little Dorrit, Daniel Doyce, Pancks, and the Meagles—a realm to which Arthur ascends by the end of the novel—exists as separate and distinct from the other two. For convenience these will here be labeled the outer realm, the inner realm, and the upper realm. Each realm is fairly homogenous; each has its own norms, codes of conduct and regnant principles.

Most inhabitants of the outer domain are the ones Affrey, Mrs. Clennan's housekeeper, calls "the clever ones." Like Mrs. Clennam and Flintwitch, these are ones who have fixed ideas of who they are and what they want out of life. Interested in being rather than in becoming, in stasis rather than in process, they exist as duality. Directed by fixed interior selves, they are full of pretension about themselves and their society; they exist with barely any relational identity. Mrs. Merdle and Mrs. Gowan have little existence as mothers,
for example. They see their sons as encumbrances or marketable goods to be disposed of or sold as pragmatically as possible. Nothing redeems in this realm. Even love is thwarted. This Society in which the Barnacles--along with Bar, Bishop, and Treasury--exist is a place of rigidity where each man presents himself to others as a fixed commodity, often not even as man but as position. H. M. Daleski perceptively concludes that the main idea at the heart of the novel is that the English society is "subject to a state of arrest, to a paralyzing stagnation."6 A person who projects himself as Bar or Bishop or politician is stagnantly relating to society, not to other individuals; such stagnant self identity precludes his shifting and changing in order to be friend, nurse, father, companion, brother as other people with whom he identifies need him to be. Each man in this realm has a dual existence. He exists as interiority who directs and projects and controls how the physically observable man conducts himself; he also must exist as the entity which is externally perceived. The sun and shadow duality in the novel is an analogue of the duality of the men who flourish in this outer realm.7 The external man with his unchanging rigidity stares at others as though they are objects and is stared at in return by those conscious only of position, making the staring habit universal, just as

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Everything in Marseilles, and about Marseilles, had stared at the fervid sky, and been stared at in return, until a staring habit had become universal there. . . .
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(p. 39)

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Everything that lived or grew, was oppressed by the glare.
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(p. 40)
The external man is the pitiless, intense sun. The interior man is the shadow, impervious to all other men, "gloomy, close, and stale" as a Sunday evening in London. The interior man is a prison of unchanging identity.  

The imprisoned air, the imprisoned light, the imprisoned damps... were all deteriorated by confinement... Like a well, like a vault, like a tomb, the prison had no knowledge of the brightness outside, and would have kept its polluted atmosphere intact in one of the spice islands of the Indian Ocean.  

(p. 41)

The outer realm is presided over by Merdle who for most of the novel displays the extreme pretension and false selves which the outer world both creates and extols. Held up as society's model man because of his money and nothing more, Merdle is almost a sympathetic figure. Once he has put his externally perceived self into action, once he has lied and speculated and deceived, giving Society what it wants in terms of a wife, money for its many superfluous activities and institutions, a house which proclaims the value of material things, and schemes by which other greedy people can attempt to gain wealth, then the symbol of success--Merdle--loses control of himself. He is owned by Society; he is its puppet and can thus be controlled and intimidated by his own butler who knows Society's facades and forms better than his employer. As its hero and the exemplar of all its guiding principles, Merdle is ruled by Society as well as by the image of himself created to be its financial ruler. Merdle is, in effect, more than duality; he is triply split. Having created an image of self as wealthy patron of Society, this interior self then directed and controlled all that the physically perceived self said and did. Soon,
however, both of these selves came to be controlled by the rigid set of customs, false values, and pretentions to which all who live in Society's favor are subject and subordinate. Merdle has helped to create this fixed self, this static class identity in which all who live in the outer realm and in Society's limelight are trapped. He is a victim of a negative loss of self, a loss of self not in others but in an artificial, unsustaining social unit. And he is the financial Lucifer responsible for the economic sins which affect Arthur Clennam and all others who live in the outer realm.

In her fixed, rigid way of looking at the world, Mrs. Clennam stares at it and at the people who inhabit it until "strangers were stared out of countenance" by her gaze. A perfect example of the duality of those who are villainous, Mrs. Clennam, whom her partner Flintwitch calls a "female Lucifer," is a woman who has decided what her response to every situation will be long before particular opportunities to interact with others arise. She "is as she always is" (p. 71) on every occasion, regardless of the demands of others or of the changing world around her.

'All seasons are alike to me,' she returned, with a grim kind of luxuriousness. 'I know nothing of summer and winter shut up here' . . . her being beyond the reach of the seasons seemed but a fit sequence to her being beyond the reach of changing emotions.

(p. 74)

Mrs. Clennam pretends to treat herself with rigor, but actually only others are the objects of her stern religion. Although she contends that she is suffering punishment by allowing the rigidity of her internal self to be mirrored by her external rigidity and lack of mobility, she luxuriates in her static identity. She uses her
immobility to get what she wants; in one instance she admits to being "shut up from the knowledge of some things that I would prefer not knowing" (p. 226). Also, the rigors of her self-imposed imprisonment are belied by the self-indulgent way that she eats. As much a hypocrite as Pecksniff of *Martin Chuzzlewit* with her "austere air of Luxuriousness" (p. 84), there is nothing Christian in her "mystical" religion. She has a set identity as self-righteous, stern, cold woman; she allows nothing except her own sensual gustatory pleasure to interfere with that image. Mrs. Clennam is the female villain in the outer realm's major plot. It is she who in her glaring rigidity has oppressed Arthur as a young boy. She has robbed him of both father and mother and has herself steadfastly refused to accept any relational identity with him. She has, in effect, blocked his growth just as the Marseilles sun has oppressed the growth of all living things under its glare. Near the beginning of the novel when Arthur has no relational identity, he "could not have felt more depressed and cast away if he had been on a desert island" (p. 203). Mrs. Clennam is the person who has cast him away, forcing him to wander among the "great thoroughfares for the sake of their light and life" (p. 203) in order to find someone or something with which to identify. When Arthur speaks to her of an "us"—meaning himself, his father, and her—she replies "Us all! Who are us all?" (p. 87). The three of them have never existed as a family. Because of the loneliness of his position, Arthur has developed some interiority. When alone, he ponders over the nature of his childhood and the cause of his isolation, both products of Mrs. Clennam's will; thus she is responsible
for whatever relational-blocking interiority that Arthur has. She also thwarts his attempt to exist as friend and benefactor to someone damaged by his family or, posthumously, to be son to his father by fulfilling the elder Clennam's dying request. The major plot in this outer realm involves Arthur's growth toward relational identities. He is blocked by Mrs. Clennam and also by Flintwitch, her physically active, male self.

Jeremiah Flintwitch and Mrs. Clennam have been consorts long before Arthur's relinquishment of any part of the business house allows them to be partners officially. Flintwitch, one half of the "two clever ones," has for fifteen years been Mrs. Clennam's legs, doing for her anything and everything that requires physical mobility. The two are mirror images of each other. The old man, for example, shares Mrs. Clennam's lack of emotion; when Arthur returns from China, although Flintwitch has not seen the younger Clennam for twenty years, his greeting to Arthur is cold and reserved: "'Ah, Mr. Arthur,' he said without any emotion, 'you are come at last? Step in'" (p. 71). Flintwitch dresses in black just as Mrs. Clennam does; Affrey tells Arthur that the two are "both of a mind." Moreover, Mrs. Clennam's description of Flintwitch is an exact duplication of the identity image which she has of herself.

"He is a sensible man, and a trustworthy man, and a persevering man, and a pious man." (p. 99)

Flintwitch is more Mrs. Clennam's mate, her alter-ego, than Arthur's weak father ever was. He has, Flintwitch tells Arthur, "stood between your father and mother for a number of years" (p. 71). It is also
Flintwitch who provides Mrs. Clennam with sensual gratification since it is he who prepares and delivers the epicurean meals on which she feasts. Flintwitch realizes that the two share identity. In an argument in which he tries to convince Mrs. Clennam that the two of them are equals, he protests that he, at least, should not be subordinated to the needs of her image of herself. Flintwitch says,

'Now, I won't go down before them /her purposes/. I have been faithful to you, and useful to you, and I am attached to you. But I can't consent, and I won't consent, and I never did consent, and I never will consent to be lost in you. Swallow up everybody else, and welcome. The peculiarity of my temper is, ma'am, that I won't be swallowed up alive.'

(p. 224)

Although at one point Flintwitch succeeds in making the resolute old lady use his language rather than her own—they argue over his insistence that she use the vernacular "dropped down upon" rather than her more formal "remonstrated with" (p. 223)—he is otherwise unsuccessful in his effort to make Mrs. Clennam relate to his needs, interact with him rather than in a way consistent with her view of a fixed identity. Flintwitch's attachment to Mrs. Clennam does neither of them any good since both of them are avaricious; yet their greed is not so much for money as it is for power and control. Mrs. Clennam is female villain of the novel, guilty of most of the oppressive crimes, and Flintwitch is one of the chief male villains, which leads straight to an examination of Blandois Rigaud, the novel's avatar of evil, its Satan symbol; surely Rigaud is more symbol of evil than character. 9

Almost all those in the novel whom Rigaud meets seem to recognize
that he is more than normal human being. Although John Baptist, for example, recognizes Rigaud's evil nature and tries to flee from it, the young Italian knows that the older figure's influence is supernaturally strong, not to be resisted by a mere sinful fellow-prisoner. Only when he is on a totally unselfish mission does John Baptist trust himself to be in the vicinity of the unctuous villain. Any character's goodness or villainy can be measured by the extent to which he accepts or rejects the Satanic Rigaud. Mrs. Clennam and Flintwitch accept him readily; he has business to conduct with their house because they have often in the past been about Satan's business. Later, when Rigaud threatens them with the consequences of their actions, when the devil attempts to collect his due, Flintwitch is not frightened by Rigaud's antics, for he has already accepted Satan into his life, has accepted the Lucifer aspect of his own identity. Flintwitch recognizes that he is attached to Mrs. Clennam; he recognizes that she is a female Lucifer; thus he must also recognize his own Lucifer-ness. On the other hand, Pet Meagles and Little Dorrit, who have had no traffic with evil, are warned by the goodness within themselves as well as by beneficent natural forces against the evil that is Rigaud. When Amy sees him at Pass of the Great Saint Bernard, the "warning arms seemed to be all pointing up at him" (p. 545). The Gowans' dog tries to protect the two virtuous girls from the personification of evil, even though he is usually meek, because nature wants to protect the goodness that is its own, a fact the narrator makes clear in an early description of Rigaud.
On this man, with his moustache going up and his nose coming down in that most evil of smiles, and with his surface eyes looking as if they belonged to his dyed hair, and had had their natural power of reflecting light stopped by some similar process, Nature, always true, and never working in vain, had set the mark. Beware: It was not her fault, if the warning were fruitless. She is never to blame in any such instance.

(p. 402)

Rigaud goes beyond the vice of a fixed identity as gentleman, although his initial sin grows out of his insistence on a certain self image despite the circumstances. His projected image is that of gentleman.

"Haha! You are right! A gentleman I am! And a gentleman I'll live, and a gentleman I'll die! It's my intent to be a gentleman. It's my game. Death of my soul, I play it wherever I go.

(p. 47)

And his insistence on the game of being what his interiority has conceived as a fitting image for himself is responsible for the death of Rigaud's soul. Thus, Dickens presents Rigaud as a person who was potentially villainous because of his tendency to project himself as a fixed identity. However, after Rigaud kills his wife because she stands in the way of his actualizing that image, readers are to view him as sub-human. The author leaves a trail of clues to his arch villain's demonically supernatural nature. In the first place, his eyes are not human; they are "pointed weapons with little surface to betray them" (p. 41). Both little children (the jailer's daughter) and animals detect the fact that he is unnaturally evil. Rigaud himself continually uses the word devil to call more attention to his kinship with that being. The landlady at the Break of Day, the inn
where the escaping murderer takes refuge, repeats the rumor that
"the devil was actually let loose at Marseilles" (p. 168). Rigaud
is that shadowy gentleman from the nether world as this description
of nature's recoil from him makes clear.

. . . he looked as if the clouds were hurrying from
him, as if the wail of the wind and the shuddering
of the grass were directed against him, as if the
low mysterious plashing of the water murmured at
him, as if the fitful autumn night were disturbed
by him.

(p. 166)

Questions about the cause of Rigaud's villainy are moot since he is
presented as an allegorical figure, a type of Satan, rather than an
actual person. As has often been noted, Rigaud commits no crimes ex-
cept the killing of the Gowans' dog. As Satan he does not need to
commit crimes since he exists in conjunction with others who partake
of his identity and do his work. All those who walk and talk with
him are his active agents; those who traffic with Satan commit his
evil acts. Rigaud must, therefore, destroy Henry Gowan's dog, the
unalloyed goodness associated with Henry, that part of Henry's iden-
tity which he shares with nature's divinity, to allow Henry to partake
of a truly evil identity. As the novel's symbol of evil, Rigaud can-
not be totally destroyed by man alone; he must be destroyed by the
collapse of another symbol—the house—although when Mrs. Clennam
gives up her fiendish plot, refuses to submit to the devil's demands,
she initiates the process that will cause his doom.

Miss Wade is another character who shares identity with the evil
Rigaud. As Richard Stang notes, Miss Wade, Mrs. Clennam, and Henry
Gowan have a perverse "will to power." They share that will to
power with Rigaud who represents the essence of that will. Miss Wade is always in complete control of who and what she will be; she isolates herself so that she can control every situation. Although the narrator says that it is not clear whether she has withdrawn herself from the rest of the company of travelers or if they have withdrawn from her at the beginning of the novel, he later explains that her face and manner declare "I am self-contained and self-reliant; your opinion is nothing to me; I have no interest in you, care nothing for you, and see and hear you with indifference." Her hostility sets her apart, causes the isolation which she wants. And her surly indifference is certainly one of the hallmarks of a Romantic hero. She has chosen to let the self give value to the world. Nevertheless some connective force within her tries to break out, to commune with another, to find a double in the universe so that they may share identity. She looks for other young women who have not known any parental influence, for others blocked from identity as daughter who are desperate for relational identity to share existence with her. However, Miss Wade wants exclusive love from, exclusive control over that other person. She will share her existence with one other person only, and she insists on that person existing only as lover. In effect, she can love only herself and the part of that self which she sees in one other. Her sexual pathology is a direct result of her rejection of all that is other than self. What is Satanic is the fact that she chooses to maintain a fixed identity of herself as an aloof, indifferent, rigid, isolated and perverse female even if in doing so she is self-destructive. J. Hillis Miller declares that what is darkest in
Little Dorrit is Dickens showing Miss Wade, among others, "altogether aware of their spiritual states and even deliberately choosing them." Moreover, Miss Wade seduces Tattycoram to evil, playing on the young girl's tendency to restrict the flow of identity between herself and her employers/family. Certainly since Miss Wade has been engaged in the devil's work, she does not reject Rigaud. "Esther Summerson gone cynical and paranoid," she actively seeks out Satan to aid her in her oppressive actions.

Another character sharing identity with Rigaud is Henry Gowan. He is another Lucifer agent in the world outside the Marshalsea's walls. Like Miss Wade, he is a Romantic hero. Young, handsome, artistic, aloof, and self-contained, Gowan has chosen an identity as the disappointed cynic. Since all value inheres in the self for him, he must contradict anyone else's opinion; he persists in calling black white and the reverse because to do so is in keeping with his identity image. Never having a mother--Mrs. Gowan exists only as society figure--he has never had a son-identity. After marrying Pet Meagles he refuses to become husband or protector. Gowan is not really Rigaud's friend; not even Gowan finds it easy to like Satan until all vestiges of inherent and natural goodness are destroyed. His initial attachment to the personification of evil grows out of his desire to be consistent with his identity image. And because Pet thinks that Rigaud is evil, Henry feels obliged to attest to the older man's worth and goodness. John Lucas accuses Gowan of being utterly depraved because he makes no judgments. It seems more appropriate to say that Gowan's judgments are not based on actual situations or true interactions with
people. Rather, all of his judgments are made based on what is consistent with his view of himself as a fixed identity. Everything that he says and does is designed for effect on others. Like young David in David Copperfield, there is about Henry an air of theatricality. He is always playing a part, acting in a manner congruent with an image he wants to project. Only once does he react spontaneously and freely: when Pet faints, Gowan becomes subdued and reacts to the situation without regard for what Mrs. General calls the "varnish" on his image of the self. However, by accepting Rigaud, by refusing to share his wife's identity through continued authentic reaction with her, Gowan loses his chance for redemption and becomes firmly ensconced in the Lucifer aspect of his own nature.

On the other hand, Arthur Clennam is pitted against all these who share their existence with Rigaud. This rather ineffectual hero is the one person in the outer world who is capable of redemption. At the beginning of the novel he has an image of himself as aging bachelor; he believes that he will never find a complementary female with whom he can share identity. Because of the absence of love from his mother, he feels incapable of loss of self in love. In addition, he has no useful work in which to lose himself. Called a blank, character-less figure by Barnard, Arthur has the potential to reach the upper realm of peace where Little Dorrit dwells because he has remained open to possibility; he is blank as interiority. Janice Carlisle in The Sense of an Audience accuses Arthur of being almost neurotic because "he is always assuming that the concerns of other characters relate to his own." It is this awareness that whatever
concerns others concerns the self, namely that there is no separate self identity, that makes Arthur a possible Dickens hero. Although hampered by his stepmother's overtly oppressive actions and limited by her refusal of true interaction with him, Arthur at least has not been the sole object of Mrs. Cleggam's emotional energy since his father was always present when the boy lived in the house with her. In David Copperfield we saw sons who were the cathedected objects of single-parent mothers come to have a distorted view of the nature of others and in so doing create what in the Dickens imaginative universe is the aberration of a fixed identity. Here we see the reverse: Arthur had the potential to grow up in the normative environment with both parents interacting with each other and with him forming a relational community of three, and surely no single person can be a fixed object of emotional energy in a threesome. Mrs. Cleggam destroys that community but at least she does not estrange Arthur from his father, even though she does put physical distance between them, nor does she set him up as cathedected object. So Arthur at forty exists as potential—as nobody—not as an actual relational figure. As "Nobody," a name Arthur gives himself, he is not son, not worker, not husband, not father—not any of the important relational identities except friend.

Set in another novel, being an open, sharing friend would be enough to allow Arthur to be at peace and happy. Tom Pinch would have been happy. And Arthur is much like Tom. In the world of Little Dorrit, however, it is not enough that Arthur has no will (p. 59), is an interior blank, and avoids the pitfall of viewing others as
objects; he is not a figure who has arrived at authentic selfhood until near the novel's end. In this novel many characters are similar to Arthur in that they are selfless and have a correct perception of their need for others. Most of these characters are not presented as normative; they are neither truly virtuous nor happy. Here the simple solutions of earlier worlds do not obtain. Insufficient to this world's demands is the lack of self which Frederick Dorrit exemplifies or the love which Arthur's father and the unnamed girl who is his real mother have for each other. Frederick Dorrit is weak virtue, so weak that the absence of force itself constitutes a sin which almost negates that virtue. He has the requisite lack of identity to be a normative figure. A "pale phantom of a gentleman,"

... he never, on any occasion, had any other part in what was going on than the part written out for the clarionet; in private life, where there was no part for the clarionet, he had no part at all.

(p. 282)

In addition to Frederick Dorrit, there is the young William Dorrit whose mild mannered ineffectuality leads him to the Marshalsea; there is Arthur's father whose weakness of will and identity allows his uncle to pair him with Mrs. Clegman; there is also Affrey whose name signals her lack of self, her affirmation to all that the two clever ones plan. Old Nandy is certainly without self will or identity. In the extreme there is Maggy who will never have any more identity than a ten year old child. Persons with weak self identities are unable to function in the outer realm of the Little Dorrit world. Those who set in Chuzzlewit or Copperfield would have been virtuous--although in need of assistance from others who were also virtuous--are in the outer realm of this world simply unable to function.
Arthur's father is sent to China; the rest are consigned to the inner realm behind the Marshalsea's walls. This prison world is a kind of purgatory; certainly it is not as dark as the outer sphere. Michael Steig points out that on Browne's title page for the novel the sunlight which "lends a sanctified air to Amy comes from within the prison, and that in a sense Amy goes into a world much darker than the prison." Steig also notes that in Chapter Fourteen Little Dorrit and Maggy "are imprisoned in the street outside the prison." Assuming that Browne was working at Dickens' directions as he usually did, we can conclude that the prisoners are correct in their belief that the Marshalsea is a peaceful world, a more beneficent realm than the world outside. Its inhabitants are protected from the greedy, grasping hands of the merchants and bill collectors whom they owe; they are free of the pretensions, lies, and snobbery of the upper class, and they cannot become completely destitute and thus criminal as do the extremely poor of the outer realm. What is most salutary is freedom from the rigid, artificial, identity-creating Society which dictates that every man must have a place, a position, based solely on the wealth or appearance of wealth which he can acquire.

All is not blissful in this arena of existence, however. The shadow of the outer realm infiltrates it in the form of a tendency to view others as objects foreign to and different from the self. At first one of the "insiders" and then more and more decide that William Dorrit is a man to be set apart. Dorrit accepts this objectification, this dehumanization. He becomes Father of the Marshalsea, rather than a person. He becomes the position, accepts a fixed identity which
must thereafter dictate how he will relate to all other persons in all other circumstances. Two of his children, born in the outer realm, also accept dual existence: Fanny becomes "Daughter of the Father of the Marshalsea" (p. 283), and Edward is Son. A fixed image of themselves as those positions dominates everything their physically observable selves do. They have an identity which precludes their relating fully with others.

Fanny is the more fully developed of the two identity-ridden Dorrit children. Dickens creates Fanny as a female counterpart of the typical male Romantic hero. Attractive, willful, spirited, Fanny is often the victim of Romantic ennui; overly dramatic, too, she often "wants to die" when the world does not turn to her liking. When she decides upon a course of action consistent with keeping her image of herself intact, she often goes first to inform Amy of those decisions knowing full well that Amy wants to preserve the bond of shared, sisterly affection that is so important to one aspect of the younger girl's relational existence. In this novel about pretensions, Fanny never tells Amy that the decision is firm, fixed by the inner self that is Fanny's interiority. Instead she puts forth questions that Amy must answer in a way which she, Fanny, has predetermined, a way that can be taken as an agreement with the impervious older girl's desires. Amy, while often believing that Fanny is not doing what is best, fears openly disagreeing with her sister. Especially when they are abroad after they have acquired wealth, Fanny is essential to the young, selfless Little Dorrit. At this point, the younger girl is Amy rather than Little Dorrit, and as Amy she has lost aspects of
her existence: no longer being the breadwinner of the family, its
cook-housekeeper-guide, and no longer directing the course of her
family's lives by planning means for them to keep their necessary
hopes and pretenses alive, Little Dorrit has little existence except
that of sister and confidante to Fanny. Fanny is safe seeking "advice"
which is really affirmation from her younger sister who is alternately
called wise and foolish by the more worldly Fanny as Amy's answers
suit or vary from Fanny's purposes. Fanny believes that by marrying
Edmund Sparkler, and thereby acquiring some of the renown associated
with the Merdle name, she will be able to bend Society to her will as
easily as she bends Little Dorrit. She aspires to another position:
Daughter-in-law to the Financial Wizard Merdle, little knowing that
even that position will bring her nothing except more febrile self-
seeking. While some who inhabit the inner sphere profit from living
there learning conviviality and a sense of unity often coupled with
a willingness to work in the service of others who are coexistent
with the self, Fanny learns nothing. Therefore, her place is out-
side in the midst of a Society that values appearance and stagnant
identity.

Arthur Clennam, on the other hand, does not belong in the outer
realm. His affinity is with the weak selves, the "nobodies." Out-
side, he has tried to become a "Somebody," to discover who he is, an
identity, through introspection. This attempt leads only to self-
pity.

He looked at the fire . . . and thought, 'How
soon I too shall pass through such changes, and
be gone!'
To review his life was like descending a green tree in fruit and flower, and seeing all the branches wither and drop off, one by one, as he came down towards them.

(p. 207)

He attempts to find an identity as worker and investor. While it is possible to lose self in productive labor, coupling the two together—attempting to produce as well as amass wealth through unproductive efforts—is a selfish way to relate to the world. Hence, Arthur's schemes fail and he finds himself in prison, in the inner realm. Here Arthur gives up attempts at constructing an identity; he almost gives up being. It is in this state that he is able to accept his dependence on Little Dorit, his need for another being to give him identity. The inner realm has been a place of refuge for him, a viable environment where he can grow into true relational identity.

Another viable environment is Bleeding Heart Yard. In its physical proximity to the Marshalsea it partakes somewhat of the purgatorial nature of the inner realm; persons who live there may escape the problems of Society; they may work through awareness of identity and so come to be in the outer realm but not of it. Pancks comes to have the peace of loss of identity and so do the Plornishes and Old Nandy. There is a "family sentimental feeling prevalent in the Yard" (p. 176) which suggests that its inhabitants are more concerned with relationships to others than with static self-identity or position, and the Yard is clearly set off from the rest of the outer realm, its physical locale forming a kind of lower sub-realm.

As if the aspiring city had become puffed up in the very ground on which it stood, the ground had so risen about Bleeding Heart Yard that you got
into it down a flight of steps which formed no part of the original approach, and got out of it by a low gateway into a maze of shabby streets, which went about and about, tortuously ascending to the level again.

(p. 176)

The Yard is beneath, not on a level with, the outer realm, and thereby is not tainted by the pervasive, irredeemable darkness of the rest of the domain outside the Marshalsea's walls.

Another incongruous domain is the Twickenham island domain of the Meagles. Presented as a separate, fairly transcendent realm, it certainly does not have much of the taint of the outer world about it. The Meagles seem simply smiled on by Fate, for although Father Meagles has been a dedicated worker before his retirement, no mention is made of what Mrs. Meagles has done to warrant living across the river free of the moral corruption of a fixed identity. However, both Meagles have lost themselves in parenting, have seen and continue to see themselves existing primarily as mother and father and as a devoted couple, as is shown by their relational names. What is so dark about Little Dorrit is that the Lucifer types or their ideas can intrude into the garden worlds or peaceful sub-realms and purgatories. Minnie Meagles can fall in love with Henry Gowan; Casby, owning most of Bleeding Heart Yard, can get a new collector to harass its tenants; William Dorrit did become the Father of the Marshalsea while residing therein. A. O. J. Cockshut, after an insightful discussion of Little Dorrit, concludes that "Dickens presents all of the lower world—that under heaven—a prison and offers no solutions, makes no real attempts on the question 'How shall we live in the prison?'"20 What Dickens
does present is a way to escape the lower realm of his mimetic world and ascend into an upper.

Dickens may have been without 'hope'... at the level of general social and political transformation. But for him it seems to have been an aspiration (and perhaps it was a conviction) that there could come a time for the individual, when a crisis of suffering, or perhaps plain need, could free him from the imprisonment of his own persona... As Dickens' novel resolves itself, the imprisoning surfaces are broken through by the emancipating reality beneath.21

Little Dorrit is free of persona throughout most of the novel. She resides in a realm of peaceful self sacrifice and self negation. In this novel the selfless character moves from the sidelines to center stage. Amy Dorrit is a combination of Tom Pinch and Agnes Wickfield. She has Tom's loyalty and devotion to an undeserving older figure; she has Agnes' patient ability to suffer in silence and wait for an unredeemed mate to recognize her worth. Instead of showing how a selfless Tom or Agnes influences others, here Dickens shows how the selfless Amy is. Like both virtuous characters from earlier novels Amy exists to serve others. Amy Dorrit is sexless, even bodiless. She glides rather than walks to and from the Marshalsea or through the slums of the city. She sits, an almost invisible figure, in Mrs. Clennam's or Flora's bedroom. Not only does Amy lack interior; she comes as close to lacking physical exterior as is possible. Lost in her cloak for most of the novel, she is serving spirit, almost supernatural. In this very symbolic novel, Dickens reinforces absence of self with absence of physicality. By repeated self-denial, by constant lack of self-awareness, Amy Dorrit almost totally escapes the ontological problems of the universe. Neither
external conditions such as poverty or imprisonment nor the internal
hurts of fear, shame, or hunger can cause Amy pain since she exists
only as she can affect the lives of others, in a separate realm from
those affected by the burden of the self. She tells her sister Fanny
of one pathway to this supernal realm:

'If you loved any one, all this feeling would
change. If you loved any one, you would no more
be yourself, but you would quite lose and forget
yourself in your devotion to him. If you loved
him, Fanny——'

(p. 648)

Love for anyone, in this world, means loss of self in work and
sacrifice for that loved one. Love for anyone means an identity with
that someone and for that someone. But there are other pathways to
this upper realm. Through practical, productive work one can also
lose self and acquire relational identities; this work must, however,
be in the interest of others. Amy has many such work-related selves
before she becomes Arthur's mate. After the Dorrit family has ac-
quired wealth and gone abroad, Amy loses some of these working selves
and is unhappy; life to her seems unreal on the plane of existence
where people are idle.

... she sat in her corner of the luxurious
carriage with her little patient hands folded be-
fore her, quite displaced even from the last
point of the old standing ground in life on which
her feet had lingered.
It was from this position that all she saw ap-
peared unreal; the more surprising the scenes,
the more they resembled the unreality of her own
inner life as she went through its vacant places
all day long.

(p. 517)

Amy has become the "figure of the little English girl." She is almost
a shell, an object, devoid of her work-related identities. Left for
a long time without her "practical" productive work, even Amy
develops some "inner life." But Amy knows that this inner life is unreal; for a while Amy has to will herself to be, to exist, for she can find no reality in the people around her. She is barred from existing in relationship with them; she is made an observer of life rather than a participant in it. However, as soon as Fanny marries Edmund and her father goes to England, Amy becomes Little Dorrit again as she cares for her uncle in the same way that she has once cared for her helpless father.

The word practical is applied again and again not only to Amy but to all the people who inhabit the upper plane. The Meagles are "practical" people; Pancks makes "practical plans" for his work in discovering the Dorrits' economic identity. Daniel Doyce himself, his invention, and his workshop are termed "practical." The entire upper realm is a practical, hard working place. All who inhabit it do the practical, productive work that is nearest at hand. It is a place of struggle but of joyous, spiritually rewarding struggle. Daniel Doyce, another normative figure in the novel, advises Arthur, "You hold your life on the condition that to the last you shall struggle hard for it" (p. 233). What is different in Little Dorrit when compared to earlier novels is the need for struggle, constant, endless, sometimes what seems to be unprofitable struggle. There is the need to be a thorough workman who, as Doyce tells Arthur, "works on for the work's sake" (p. 569).

Daniel Doyce is a new male type for Dickens, the active figure who will help change the world but cannot redeem it. While he can change its technic, he cannot change human nature. With no
possibility for changing human beings and with the pretensions which emanate from the fixed self institutionalized in all stratas of society, the male heroic figure retreats from the world into his study and works for the sake of working. Daniel Doyce combines the qualities found in Tom Pinch, Mark Tapley, and John Westlock of *Chuzzlewit*. However, even with Mark's productive labor, with John's clear perceptions of human nature and the human condition, and with Tom's patience and loyalty, Doyce is less effective as a force for societal change than any of the *Chuzzlewit* virtuous males. Doyce does not influence anyone to change. He aids those who are already virtuous with externals—money, his inventions, jobs. Doyce is a split of Arthur. As Arthur's partner, he provides the activity, confidence, and knowledge so requisite in this upper realm and so lacking in Arthur.

*Little Dorrit*, then, does not end on an unhappy note. It ends with an emphasis on the work that Little Dorrit and Arthur will attempt; this work will keep them busy and peacefully devoid of self-identity. They go down into the outer sphere carrying the aura of their upper realm with them, "quietly down into the roaring streets, inseparable and blessed." Although most of the nameless faces in the novel have either negatively lost self to Society or are hopelessly trapped in the prison of a fixed identity, Dickens presents isolated individuals—Amy and Arthur who have found each other, Daniel Doyce who has always had his work, the Meagles who having lost Pet now struggle with Tattycoram, Pancks who has escaped the destructive employ of Casby, even the nameless Physician who by
the very nature of his work has discovered the need for practicality and reality—as finding a way to a positive loss of identity as they discover that something other than the self gives value to the world.
FOOTNOTES
(Chapter IV)

1. *Little Dorrit* has received much critical attention in the past ten years. Two critics who have commented on the significance of fate and time in the novel are R. Rupert Roopnaraine, "Time and the Circle in *Little Dorrit*," *Dickens Studies Annual*, 3 (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1974), 54-75; and Harvey Peter Sucksmith, *The Narrative Art of Charles Dickens* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970). Sucksmith believes that fate is a central character in any Dickens novel (p. 244), while Roopnaraine offers perceptive insights on the cyclic nature of time in *Little Dorrit* as well as on a world where "man is the plaything of the gods" (p. 56).


3. Lionel Trilling, Introduction to The New Oxford Illustrated Dickens edition of *Little Dorrit* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. xvi. Trilling also sees the novel as extolling the "non-personal will in which shall be our peace."


7. Not only do the sun and shadow in Marseilles present a duality but the glaring Marseilles sun is in binary opposition to the secret shadows of Mrs. Clennam's house.

8. In *The Melancholy Man*, John Lucas asserts that at times both William Dorrit and Merdle struggle in vain to escape the prison of the self while Fanny Dorrit throughout the novel remains locked in this prison.

10. Dianne F. Sadoff, "Storytelling and the Figure of the Father in Little Dorrit," PMLA 95 (March, 1980), 234-245. Miss Sadoff contends that Rigaud's criminality "originates in his confused lineage," his absence of a father figure.

11. Stang, p. 147. Stang would disagree with the thrust of this entire argument, however, for he believes ". . . the weakening of itself, the tendency of somebody to become nobody, the loss of that energy that keeps a self a real self" as the very thing being attacked in Little Dorrit. (p. 155-156)


15. Barnard, p. 103.


17. As was noted in Chapter Two, most of the groups formed at the end of Dickens' novels are triangular: Old Martin--Young Martin--Mary Graham; Tom Pinch--Ruth Pinch--John Westlock; Little Dorrit, Arthur--Maggy; Herbert Pocket--Mrs. Pocket--Pip; Joe--Biddy--Little Pip. It seems that three is the minimum number for relational structures according to Dickens; perhaps it is his perfect number for sub-groups within a larger community.

18. For example, Arthur's loss of Minnie Meagles can be compared to Tom Pinch's loss of Mary Graham; neither man is assertive enough to make advances to the beautiful women who are the initial objects of their affection. This lack of assertiveness, this caution, is a positive quality in both novels. It keeps the men from making the mistake of a permanent attachment to someone valued for external appearance and thus viewed as an object, an entity different in kind from the self. To value someone for
physical beauty is a Romantic characteristic; such a judgment shows an erroneous perception of other in a Dickens world. We can note that none of Dickens' heroines has exceptional physical beauty except Esther Summerson, whom Alan Woodcourt comes to love after she has lost that attractiveness to the scars of smallpox.


21. John Holloway, Introduction to *The Penguin English Library Edition of Little Dorrit*, p. 27. I am deeply indebted to Holloway's introduction which I first read in 1970, and which I still feel is one of the most penetrating analyses of the novel which I have ever read.
CHAPTER V

"Confounding impossible existences with my own identity": Great Expectations

Perhaps nowhere else does Dickens dramatize the error of perceiving the self as an isolated entity more clearly than in Great Expectations. Many students of the novel have noted that here Dickens has created a world where individuals incorrectly believe that they are locked within themselves. Most of the prominent Dickensians agree that lack of perception of the relational identity among people causes most of the problems which Pip and other characters encounter. Dorothy Van Ghent in her brilliant and influential essay about this novel concludes that in Great Expectations Dickens presents a world "founded in fragmentariness and disintegrations" but made whole by redemptive acts which reveal the "manifold organic relationships among men."

J. Hillis Miller makes this point about characters in the novel: "Each becomes aware of himself as isolated from all that is outside of himself." Miller continues by declaring that many characters attempt "to transcend isolation without guilt by both being and not being another person." Martin Meisel notes, "Separation throughout the book, between the recluse and the world, the snob and his origins, the judge and the condemned... is the symptom of evil, the opposite of love and the enemy of the just society." While most critics agree that "fragmentariness" is presented as an inauthentic mode of being, they stop short of the conclusion that Great Expectations, like so many
other Dickens novels before it, is a repudiation of the Romantic notion of an important interiority, a fixed and secret inner self which gives value to the world. This secret, inner identity is the cause of the "fragmentariness" which the characters erroneously feel.

Actually, Dickens posits the world of Great Expectations as one full of connections. In the first place, what seems to the inhabitants of this universe to be mere chance and circumstance is, in fact, the principle of unity which is as present and pervasive as the sun. This omnipresent unifying force links rural and urban, murderer and victim, criminal and judge, rich and poor, even living and dead. After Pip recognizes that his identity is tied to that of the criminal Magwitch, he becomes aware of this linking force. Looking at those being sentenced for crimes he records,

The sun was striking in at the great windows of the court, through the glittering drops of rain upon the glass, and it made a broad shaft of light between the two-and-thirty and the Judge, linking them both together.\(^4\)

In a world so closely linked the range between villainy and vice, truth and error is very small. In fact, all who inhabit this world are connected by the fact that they accept the delusion that it is both possible and desirable to become a gentleman, with most believing that money and possessions alone can elevate a person to this station. All have accepted a "clothes mentality," believing that a Montague Tigg transformation based on change of clothes and language is to be valued. Everyone, from the most virtuous to the most villainous, agrees with Pip that his expectation is indeed great. No
one questions the notion that it is possible to attain a fixed identity which one can maintain forever after without regard for other people or for circumstances. This acceptance of the idea of a fixed, stable identity and the precise composition of the most desirous of identities—a dashing, non-productive Romantic figure—unifies the world of Great Expectations, making the distinctions between good and evil less pronounced than in earlier novels. By the end of the novel Pip, along with other virtuous characters, comes to a knowledge of connections with others and of the fact that a life of productive work free from the constraints of maintaining a static position is the happy, contented life. It is Pip alone, however, who knows that the value given the position of gentleman by all who inhabit his world is misplaced. Although Pip begins the novel as an identity-prone lad, he ends by becoming Dickens' most mature and satisfying hero.

One might say that Great Expectations is Little Dorrit in reverse. In Little Dorrit few connections except those forged by Amy Dorrit herself existed; in Great Expectations connections abound. Also, in Little Dorrit Dickens presented his self-effacing, passive, identity-free heroine as a given; from the time the novel opens until it closes, Amy Dorrit is shown as a character who is correct in both perceptions and actions. She exists as an extension of her family and friends, taking on various roles and relational identities for the different people with whom she relates with no regard for a stable sense of self. Amy exists as daughter, as sister, as niece, as mother figure for Maggy, as seamstress and confidant for her employers. Like Tom Pinch of Martin Chuzzlewit, Amy Dorrit is affectless, and like Tom she almost
ceases to exist when there are no people around to need her. In
*Great Expectations*, as in *David Copperfield*, Dickens begins with a
child who is introspective, a child who tries to assert a fixed iden-
tity for himself, and he traces that child's progress to adulthood
and a correct Amy Dorrit-Tom Pinch perception. Moreover, as *Little
Dorrit* is the story of Amy Dorrit's influence on those around her,
*Great Expectations* is the story of other people's effect on the iden-
tity-prone Pip; the latter novel is the story of Pip, his mentors,
and his antagonists.

Some of Pip's identity problems stem from the boy's inherent,
uncorrected propensity to selfhood. Dickens begins the novel with
Pip explaining his origin to the reader. He is another of Dickens' children without parents, but in Pip's case the absence of both father
and mother has helped to render the boy independent, strong willed,
and introspective. The first thing Pip tells the reader is that he
is self named. Nowhere in the novel is he called by the name bequeathed
to him as son.⁵ Thus, even before Miss Havisham first meets the young
boy and launches his great expectations, Pip has the potential for
self-identity. In his second sentence, where as narrator he explains
the state of affairs at the novel's beginning, Pip already perceives
of himself as a duality: "So I called myself Pip, and came to be
called Pip." Present here are a thinking inner self--an I--and an
externally perceived self--a myself named Pip. The boy has no parents
to show him how to become Phillip Pirrip correctly. However, he has
been given the nucleus of an identity in the family name. If he were
to accept the family name, not as a distinction of which he is proud,
but as a simple, factual given, he would show his connection to a particular group which is larger than the self. Being a member of a particular family would locate Pip, give him relational identity as son, brother, nephew, cousin, and rather than an isolated self the lad would be connected to a certain group, part of that group, in fact subsumed within it. Having a family name suggests infinite connections, for the group as family existed prior to the individual's appearance; it continues long after the individual ceases to be. While Dickens does not condone ancestral pride such as the Dedlocks of Bleak House or the Chuzzlewits of Martin Chuzzlewit display, he does accept family continuity of the type exemplified by Little Dorrit, who willingly and gratefully accepts her place as youngest in the Dorrit family as of more importance than any individual identity. She shows this acceptance of family by preferring Little Dorrit, a name that indicates her place in the family, to Amy Dorrit, a name which suggests emphasis on the individual. Seeing the self as a link unable to exist without the chain of which he is a part would reduce the tendency for the self to be thought of as an autonomous entity. An act of self-naming which divorces the self from all kinship with, all reliance on, a larger group is a fragmenting, isolating action. Such naming suggests that an individual can be auto-creating. And Pip's act of self-naming is not corrected or challenged. Circumstances robbed him of parents who could serve as concrete reminders of the fact that he is a being created by, in large part constituent with, a larger group; his own tendency toward incorrect perception compounds the problem.
Pip's father and mother are not only absent, they are negated both by his refusal to be Phillip Pirrip and by the fact that they do not exist in the boy's memory as warm, loving beings who once were coexistent with himself. All of Pip's memory of his parents is connected to externally perceived objects. The boy shows no real longing for his parents, for he does not consider himself like them in any way. They are totally "other" than he. He connects any memory of them with tombstones, objects that symbolize death; and he "never saw any likeness of either of them" (p. 35). Certainly he does not conceive of himself as having any "likeness" to them. So totally divorced from the people who gave rise to his physical being is Pip that he sees no need to grieve for these "non-him" like objects.

Thus, at a very young age Pip has an inner world of the self that does not need relational ties to sustain it. Unlike other young central figures created by Dickens, Pip does nothing to improve his relationships with those around him. He does not feel any brotherly affection for Mrs. Joe. His relationship with Joe is a result of Joe's good will and need to establish ties. Joe goes to the boy's level; they are two children together, for Joe seems to realize that the boy needs and will accept another child. So it is Joe who changes to fill a need that another has, not Pip. Estella is the first person with whom he wishes to share any of himself, and here Pip is motivated by physical attraction, a motivation Dickens always presents as suspect.

Pip's inherent tendency toward duality might have been ameliorated by Joe's corrective presence, but circumstances and people who are negative role models have a great influence on the youth's life.
Great Expectations is a story of conflict; at issue is the kind of person Pip will become. With the exception of Orlick and Drummle, no one impedes Pip's progress toward the goals he has set for himself. Once he decides what identity he desires, he finds people who seem to be allies in the most unlikely places. But often the people whom he considers his allies are in fact antagonistic to the development of an unalienated, outer-directed, happy adult. His true mentors try to teach by example what he should value, what kind of person he should become. The antagonists are those who by action or example encourage Pip to set up a fixed identity.

One antagonist is readily identified as such by Pip. Mrs. Joe, the boy's sister, is guilty of the worst kind of parenting. Pip is not a neglected child; neglected children in a Dickens world usually turn out to be virtuous, selfless people who interact positively with the world around them. Biddy, Jane, and Herbert Pocket are neglected children of this novel. Pip is a mistreated, abused child, the object of his sister's watchful attention. He receives as much negative attention as Steerforth of David Copperfield does positive. Robert Barnard says that Mrs. Joe thinks of Pip as a delinquent and treats him as such. However, a delinquent would be at least a person, and reaction to the delinquent would be based on the delinquent's actions. Pip is less than a person to Mrs. Joe. She has a preconceived notion of how the boy is to be treated; he is to be the object of her scorn, displeasure, and punishments no matter what he does. For example, her administrations of tar-water are regular, routine, ritualistic—a chore to be performed because she has decided to do so, not for any
benefit to the boy's health. Further, it is of no consequence to her if Pip and Joe eat bread containing needles, for the two are part of a work-related "not-me" to her; she regards them as burdens. They are objects to be attended to in the same way that she attacks a dirty floor or other objects involved in her chores. Mrs. Joe never communicates with the boy although she constantly talks about him and directs her comments and questions at him expecting parroted answers. None of her friends talk to him unless they are questioning him in an effort to justify their preconceived notions of his guilt and ignorance. A case in point: during the Christmas dinner, Pip is treated as non-human; he records that his sister and her guests "point the conversation at me, every now and then, and stick the point into me. I might have been an unfortunate little bull in a Spanish arena, I got so smartingly touched up by these moral goads" (pp. 56-57).

Mrs. Joe's mistreatment of the boy is the partial cause of the boy's duality, what he calls his tendency to be sensitive. In direct explanation to the reader, Pip says,

"My sister's upbringing had made me sensitive. ... Within myself, 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. ... Through all my punishments, disgraces, fasts, and vigils, and other penitential performances, I had nursed this assurance; and to my communing so much with it in a solitary and unprotected way, I in great part refer the fact that I was morally timid and very sensitive."

(p. 92)

Pip, always the object of his sister's scrutiny, has grown from infancy "sensitive" of his own being. Because he is always under her
watchful eye and the object of undeserved sessions with Tickler, he
has learned to guard his actions, has come to realize that outward
behavior does not have to accord with inner feelings. The result is
the kind of double self present in such statements as "I was in mortal
terror of myself . . . (p. 46); ". . . I and my conscience showed our-
selves" (p. 53); or ". . . what I suffered outside was nothing to
what I underwent within" (p. 54); and "I have never been absolutely
certain whether I uttered a shrill yell of terror, merely in spirit,
or in the bodily hearing of the company" (p. 61).

Pip keeps his feelings about Mrs. Joe's friends--such as Uncle
Pumblehook, whom the boy is not allowed to call Uncle--to himself,
a secret, inviolate, private self created out of fear of punishment
and fear of misunderstanding from a parent substitute who does not
value the boy as an extension of herself. Again the boy explains
himself:

If a dread of not being understood be hidden
in the breasts of other young people to anything
like the extent to which it used to be hidden
in mine . . . it is the key to many reservations.
(p. 95)

The boy refuses to say what he feels. He is "vicious" in his reti-
cence because "Whitewash on the forehead hardens the brain into a
state of obstinacy . . ." (p. 95). Mrs. Joe's repeated cruelties have
solidified a stubborn inner self incapable of sharing itself with
anyone; she is certainly inimical to Pip's development into an open,
caring person who sees his identity as connected to all those around
him.

Another person who is inimical to Pip's development into identity-
free maturity is Miss Havisham. While the boy thinks of her as mentor, he is incorrect on two counts. Not only is he wrong when he thinks that she is the cause of his dream of great expectations becoming a reality; he is also incorrect to feel that his development is in any way enhanced by contact with her. Actually many similarities between Miss Havisham and Mrs. Joe exist. Both women are locked into the roles that their titles signify. Miss Havisham is locked into the role of Miss, or rejected, spurned unmarried woman. She has frozen her entire identity into a single image of herself that is predicated on one action in the distant past. Mrs. Joe is, similarly, locked into the role of housewife/mother, ritualistically doing those things that she feels appropriate to her, without regard to the needs of those around her. Moreover, both women are, as Joe would say, "given to government." Both attempt to direct and control the lives of those around them from a position of fixed identity. Miss Havisham has locked herself in a small world where she can not only control herself, Estella, and all who visit Satis House but also time itself. Mrs. Joe exerts the same kind of total control on Pip and Joe. One major difference between the two is that Miss Havisham governs, or attempts to govern, her own feelings while Mrs. Joe freely gives vent to her rage and anger whenever she feels that situations and people are out of her control or are contrary to her wishes. Mrs. Joe governs by using violence, her emotions. She is akin to fire. Miss Havisham governs by limiting the range of her control and dispassionately refusing to allow change; ice is her province. Both are deadly; either will suffice to destroy all living organic relationships.
Harry Stone sees Miss Havisham as deadly witch. The shrewish, ill-tempered Mrs. Joe is also deadly and witchlike. She openly talks to Pip of "all the times she had wished me in my grave" (p. 59). Certainly she has been transformed from ordinary human being in this description:

Here my sister, after a fit of clasplings and screamings, beat her hands upon her bosom and upon her knees, and threw her cap off, and pulled her hair down—which were the last stages on her road to frenzy. Being by this time a perfect Fury... she made a dash at the door, which I had fortunately locked.

(p. 142)

Both women are consumed by what nourishes them. Miss Havisham's emotional destruction comes at the hands of Estella who turns the icy, frozen detachment taught her as a young girl by Miss Havisham on the older woman. Mrs. Joe is destroyed by the violence she has stirred up in Orlick by her screams and taunts to Joe. Also, both women learn before their deaths that connections between themselves and the rest of humanity do exist. They discover that they share some aspects of their identity, their very being, with other people. Mrs. Joe realizes that she is connected to Orlick, if in no other way than by their propensity to violence. In forgiving Orlick for his violent attack on her, Mrs. Joe seeks forgiveness for the violence of which she is guilty. Miss Havisham, too, realizes that she is like others, a part of common humanity, when she discovers that her heart can break again. Since she and Pip have suffered the same kind of pain from Estella, she attempts to make Pip's life happier by sharing an important part of herself—her money—with him. She begs the young
man's forgiveness in the same way that Mrs. Joe begs Orlick's.

A fourth similarity is seen in their self-righteousness. Each is convinced that what she is doing is justified. It is either correct because it is justified by an earlier wrong (Miss Havisham's case) or it is justified by the world's opinion (Mrs. Joe's case). Both women are theatrical; both play to audiences, large or small. Pip tells the readers that Mrs. Joe is putting on a performance in the scene where she transforms herself into a Fury.

And I must say of my sister . . . that passion was no excuse for her, because it is undeniable that instead of lapsing into passion, she consciously and deliberately took extraordinary pains to force herself into it, and became blindly furious by regular stages.

(p. 142)

Here is the first performance of many that Pip witnesses at Satis House.

'Do you know what I touch here?' she said laying her hands, one upon the other, on her left side.
'Yes ma'am.' . . .
'What do I touch?'
'Your heart.'
'Broken!'
She uttered the word with an eager look, and with strong emphasis, and with a weird smile that had a kind of boast in it.

Each uses her home as a stage complete with props that enhance her performance. Miss Havisham's props are the ruined wedding cake and the disordered, decaying wedding preparations. All the props call attention to her fixed identity. They say "Look at me; I am poor misused, spurned spinster." They give justification for her being vengeful and alienated and isolated as well as to her leading a life
where she does not need to engage in productive labor, does not need to concern herself with the entire world around her. Mrs. Joe uses her clean parlor, her apron, the delectable Christmas dinner to say "Look at me; I am to be admired for being overburdened mother-figure caring for two 'Mooncalfs,' a recalcitrant orphan of a brother and an oaf of a husband." Her props give her justification for being irritable, domineering and harsh.

Finally, both women have children entrusted to their care. It is as surrogate mothers that the two women are most deadly. Both women are enamored with the role they play as omnipotent molders and shapers of their young charges. They subscribe to the fiction of childhood as distinct and separate from the world of adults; beings younger than the self and less experienced than the self are viewed as different in kind from the self. To them children are unfeeling objects to be "soaped and kneaded, and towelled, and thumped, and harrowed, and rasped," and molded and twisted into any shape the adult wishes. Miss Havisham would not have expected adults to enjoy themselves in play in the strange and gloomy atmosphere of her private quarters, but she sees nothing incongruous in issuing the command that the frightened Pip play when the boy is obviously uncomfortable and ill at ease, as Mrs. Joe sees nothing incongruous in her threat "And he had better play there . . . or I'll work him."

As molder and shaper of children, Miss Havisham affects Pip directly and indirectly. She affects him directly by serving as an example of a fixed identity. She shows Pip that it is possible to exist in total disregard for everything around her. She is known to
Pip by reputation even before he meets her as a recluse, a person cut off from other people. Instead of adapting herself to meet the needs of her world, Miss Havisham persists in making the entire world adapt itself to her. She has circumscribed its boundaries so that her world is very small and peopled it with those who suit her self-proclaimed "sick fancies." When Pip meets her, he discovers that it is possible to create an outer world so controlled by an image of the self that time is defied. From Miss Havisham's example Pip learns to negate time: she has cut herself off from the future; Pip will, when circumstances allow, cut himself off from his past. 13

To a great extent, Miss Havisham is cast in the mold of Miss Wade of Little Dorrit. Both women want to re-create themselves in young charges, disregarding the effect that their manipulations have on the welfare of the young women they influence. Both women are rigid and unyielding. They seek out younger victims through whom they wish to recapture their youth, clones through whom they expect to circumvent the changes wrought by time. By seeing themselves mirrored in the faces of younger versions of themselves, they gain, through force of will, a kind of immortality. And immortality is unchanging; it defies the laws of nature, is unnatural and rigid. Pip learns unnatural rigidity and the power of the fixed identity, that one can control the world by creating an unyielding image of the self, from Miss Havisham.

While she does want to share identity with Estella, Miss Havisham's motives and approach are not consistent with those of a person whose identity sharing is outer-directed. Instead of being open and
available to change in order to fit the girl's needs, Miss Havisham seeks to control the girl's life. In a Dickens world, the character whose perception of identity is correct is willing to become whatever another with whom he shares identity needs him to be. Miss Havisham makes no changes in her life to accommodate the girl's needs. Not one decayed prop is removed from Satis House to make it more suitable to Estella. Instead, Miss Havisham molds the girl's entire being so that Estella will fill the older woman's need. Needing to be young and beautiful again to avenge herself against men, the older woman forces Estella to become a young Miss Havisham to the detriment of everyone involved; all true relationships between the two females or with other people are proscribed by the nature of the static identities Miss Havisham forces on herself and Estella. Van Ghent asserts that "In the sense that one implies the other, the glittering frosty girl Estella, and the decayed and false old woman, Miss Havisham, are not two characters but a single one, or a single essence with dual aspects, a spiritual continuum." Precisely what Miss Havisham desires is a continuum; however, what she gets is a symbiotic relationship, for once the girl becomes an adult she no longer needs the frail old woman. When Estella becomes Miss Havisham, she closes her heart to everyone, Miss Havisham included. A reversal of roles with a neat ironic twist occurs. As host, Miss Havisham has forced Estella to become parasite by denying the girl access to other nourishment. By introjection Estella acquires coldness and strength but leaves a deficit in the host. When Estella becomes Miss Havisham, that is, takes on the identity of Miss Havisham, the girl no longer needs her
mentor. But Miss Havisham has developed a need for Estella. The frail older woman is deprived of the only thing outside the self that she needs for sustenance when Estella leaves.

Indirectly Miss Havisham affects Pip through Estella. The boy might well have been talking of the girl's rigidity when he says "Her contempt for me was so strong, that it became infectious, and I caught it" (p. 90). Without Miss Havisham and Estella's intervention, Pip might have grown up to be adult peer to Joe with Joe's corrective presence teaching the boy to become a person who could lose himself in productive labor. However, once Pip meets and desires to possess Estella, the split between the boy's outer and inner selves becomes greater. No longer is he content just to have an inner self which he keeps secret. He now is unhappy with his physical, exterior self. Once Estella calls him coarse and common, even his own hands become "accessories." He explains "They had never troubled me before, but they troubled me now as vulgar appendages" (p. 82). The inner self has set up an image to govern all actions, even the outer self's physical appearance. Like Montague Tigg of Martin Chuzzlewit or Uriah Heep of David Copperfield, Pip now wants to cut off all potential for true relational identity by allowing a fixed image of identity to govern all his actions. Pip wants to re-create himself so that he will become a fit match for Estella.

After his first visit to Satis House, Pip lies with no purpose except to be enclosed, apart from his sister and Pumblechook. He does not wish to share his experiences and beliefs with them. Keeping even his memories of his day with Estella and Miss Havisham to a
private, inner self, Pip tells Joe that he does not know why he lied, but he does know that an awareness of duality—of an inner self that is aware that an outer self is common—has something to do with it. Now not only does Pip know duality ("... I hadn't been able to explain myself"), he wants to deny the possibility of change to meet the needs of those around him. He is willing to forgo all other identities, to become frozen into identity as gentleman, so that he can possess Estella as love object. From this point on, Pip wants to share himself with Estella, an impossibility for he sees her as object, as different in kind from the self. At one point he explains, ",... it was impossible for me to separate her, in the past or in the present, from the innermost life of my life" (p. 257). He later realizes that he loved her "against reason, against promise, against peace, against hope, against happiness ..." (pp. 253-4). He loves Estella not for her actions, not because they complement and complete each other, but for her appearance alone; in his own words, "I loved her simply because I found her irresistible"(p. 253). To add to his list of incorrect perceptions and desires, Pip wants to limit himself to sharing identity with Estella exclusively; there is no room for anyone else in the relationship he imagines for himself and his loved object.

A final antagonist to Pip's development is Jaggers. Pip first sees the lawyer at Satis House, a house symbolic of stasis. For much of the novel Pip believes that Jaggers represents those at Satis House; and for much of the novel Jaggers partakes of stasis, of unyielding rigidity; he is akin to the forces that hinder organic
relationships, fluidity of identity, and commitment to other people. But Jaggers is also Magwitch's agent; he learns from Magwitch and Pip's experience; he moves from stasis toward organicism; in literary terms, he is a developing, not a static character. Jaggers' original position is that of uncommitted agent, although there are times even before he meets Pip and Magwitch when he does allow the unifying principle to control his life and make him do something to save a soul that he fears will otherwise be lost. Jaggers is not a vicious man; he is a man with some good instincts who does not want to become emotionally involved, does not want to truly share identity with anyone else. Never retreating from his identity as cool, detached, uninvolved man of law, Jaggers does little overt harm; he also does little overt good, and by his example covertly influences Pip. Jaggers follows Arnold's advice to "cut your losses," have few ties to the rest of the world. Jaggers expects little from life in the hope that he will receive little pain when people and life disappoint him as he feels they invariably will. Jaggers projects an image of himself as unemotional, aloof professional to keep people at bay. But a projection of a single image denies the possibility of new kinds of relationships. So Jaggers is another of a long line of figures who limit connections by constructing a fixed interiority which governs every action. Albert D. Hutter gives this accurate analysis of the lawyer.

Jaggers' goal would seem to be total self-reliance: sufficient control over those people and objects around him to ensure his safety, his own freedom of action, and ultimately his dissociation from any human emotion. His actions
exaggerate and parody the popular notions of self-reliance and self-help of the period. The "self-made" man is a man who owes his success to no one, who has perfect control over his own movements, over what he takes in and what he releases. In psychoanalytic terms the concept suggests an individual's desire for mastery of his body and of his very existence: he has made (created) himself.17

Jaggers is a Montague Tigg type, a self-controlled, self-created person, but Jaggers does not have Tigg's greedy motivation; Jaggers' goal is simply to avoid pain. Since he deals with criminals daily, he is aware of man's innate depravity. "Knowing something secret about each one of us," himself included, Jaggers keeps a tight rein on his own emotions as well as a distance from his fellow men. He has, as a consequence, become "disagreeably sharp and suspicious."

A recurrent phrase associated with Jaggers is "I have nothing to do with that." While he may work hard to represent a client, he is "not otherwise responsible" for anyone. His bullying suspicion keeps him disconnected from fellow men. However, Jaggers has correct instincts. He tries to help Estella and her mother. Jaggers recognizes that Bently Drummle has more than his share of natural depravity and cautions Pip against further association with Drummle. Jaggers is aware that all men share some identity; he is aware of the negative connections between men, the possibility of evil actions; what he learns from Pip, Magwitch, and Wemmick is that men are also connected by the possibility of beneficent actions and by their dreams. He learns that others may want to help those who are outcase without ulterior motives, just as he did, from Pip and Magwitch. He comes to connect himself with Pip, to see Pip as a younger version of
himself because both men have had their "poor dreams" of love. Jaggers realizes that Pip's hopes and aspirations are his (Jaggers') own, only "fresher" and more recent. He is surprised to discover connections with Wemmick of the same kind. For Wemmick already has what Jaggers dreams of attaining, a pleasant home and private life. Jaggers assents when Wemmick says,

Now, I look at you, sir, I shouldn't wonder if you might be planning and contriving to have a pleasant home of your own, one of these days, when you're tired of all this work.

Mr. Jaggers nodded his head retrospectively two or three times, and actually drew a sigh.

(p. 424)

Jaggers is a Pancks figure, a basically good man nearly destroyed by being attached to a profession which precludes true relationship with people. As Wemmick perceives in a moment of epiphany between the two men, "this man must be the most cunning imposter in all London." Implicit in the last long scene between Jaggers and Wemmick is the fact that they will now reverse roles, at least where the private and personal life is concerned. The once rigidly authoritarian lawyer will place himself under Wemmick's tutelage and the two men will together work out some measure of their own redemption, recognizing that they share occupations, goals, dreams, identity.

Wemmick is a key figure, for he stands squarely between Pip's antagonists and those who are his positive preceptors. And while Wemmick is not a totally normative figure, he is one example of how a person may exist with some degree of happiness in an urban setting full of hypocrisy and selfishness. Instead of having one constantly fixed image dominate all that is done, Wemmick has split himself in
two. Twin Wemmicks exist, identified by Pip as a wrong one and a right one. The wrong twin is Mr. Jaggers' votary, assuming Jaggers' mannerisms and personality. As the lawyer's assistant, Wemmick is tough and rigid. Shunning identification with the criminals and outcasts who cross his path in the course of a business day, he presents an exterior which is completely controlled by a projecting interior. He is, of course, never as rigid as is Jaggers. One way to determine the difference between the two men, even in their professional roles, is to note the difference in the names which other characters and Pip as narrator use in addressing the two. Jaggers is always Mr. Jaggers to Pip, always distant and removed, formal and unapproachable. Wemmick, seldom referred to by any formal title, is easily approached, has erected far fewer barriers to keep people at bay. The absence of Mr. from Wemmick's name suggests the absence of a distancing formality between Pip as narrator and Wemmick.\footnote{And Wemmick does not have a fixed identity. He benefits from a positive self schism. Once he leaves his office, he becomes the right twin, a man with no work-related boundaries. When he drops the role of lawyer, he is much less rigid, in fact he becomes almost comically fluid as far as his identity as worker is concerned. Once in Walworth he totally loses the office Wemmick and becomes soldier living in a fortification. He is also farmer and gardener; in fact, no occupation is closed to him. He shares his secret for happy, fluid existence with Pip, telling the boy, 'I am my own engineer, and my own carpenter, and my own plumber, and my own Jack of all
Trades... Well it's a good thing, you know. It brushes the Newgate cobwebs away...
(p. 230)

Wemmick uses fancy and the imagination to keep from becoming rigid. In his private life he becomes the exact opposite of what he is in his public one. At his office he is fixed in his occupational role and quite separate from his clients. In his private life he sees no barriers except age from "the Aged"; thus, he has no other name for his father, for his father is the aged self which is Wemmick. Wemmick realizes that only time separates them, and that with time he will arrive at the same identity; he will be precisely the same person that his father currently is. As Wemmick and Pip walk back toward little Britain, "By degrees, Wemmick got dryer and harder as we went along" (p. 232). As he goes back toward his professional rigidity he is less the fluid and malleable private, happy, identity-free self. The right twin, the Walworth twin, is willing to help Pip, to share in the boy's misfortunes, taking some of the risks that Pip takes.

What causes the schism into right and wrong twins is Wemmick's concern for "portable property"; were it not for a particle of greed in his total personality, Wemmick would always be the right twin, would leave an occupation where he felt forced to play an unnatural role continually. Pip realizes that the one constant in Wemmick's two separate lives is a concern for money and what it will buy. In rejecting Wemmick's advice to secure Magwitch's portable property, Pip chooses not division but harmony; he chooses total negation of selfish interests so that he will not have to spend at least half of his life, as Wemmick does, being rigid and projecting a fixed image
of self identity.

Fortunately, Pip does have truer mentors, people who constantly teach unity by their example, in his development toward harmony and loss of self. The first of these mentors is Joe who has such total disregard of selfish interests as to have no self identity, no fixed image of himself. In a psychoanalytic reading of the novel, Lawrence Dessner describes Joe as follows:

Submissiveness, humility, loving-kindness,
Joe is their perfection... He is the least threatening, least competitive, most self-sacrificing of men... Joe Gargery is incapable of anger. No provocation or punishment hurts him.

Joe is another avatar of virtue, an embodiment of self loss who exists only in relationship to others. He is, throughout the novel, whatever the boy he has always befriended wants him to be. When Pip is very young, Joe is his peer and confidant. He is not the lad's protector at this point because the selfless man is caught between his identity as husband and his identity as the boy's friend, his duty to Mrs. Joe and his duty to Pip. Mrs. Joe needs Joe to allow her to exist as director and manipulator of the family's affairs. His need to be husband coupled with the memory of his deceased father's abusive actions to his own mother precludes Joe from any attempt to change the way Mrs. Joe treats the boy. Also Dickens has shown earlier with Tom Pinch in Martin Chuzzlewit, with Agnes in David Copperfield and with Amy Dorrit in Little Dorrit that the totally selfless character is passive, lacks the ability to initiate actions. Affectless, the selfless character must induce positive
change by his mere example. Thus, when the boy grows up and wants to deny Joe's existence, the older man does not intrude; he, in fact, ceases to be as far as the boy is concerned, only coming back into Pip's life when needed as nursemaid and benefactor.

Joe is the touchstone figure in the novel. Other characters can be judged by their reaction to him. Those who immediately recognize his goodness--such as Herbert and Biddy--share identity with him, partake of that goodness they identify. Those who see only his awkwardness and lack of education tend toward selfishness and villainy. When Joe seems ill at ease and unsuited to his surroundings, it is the surroundings that need to be changed, not Joe. Often when he is presented as inarticulate, he is being rendered through Pip's fallible eyes. And just as a redeemed Pip admits that the fault was in him when he thought Herbert Pocket guilty of "inaptitude" (p. 489), when Joe is presented unclothed in his simple dignity, the fault is in Pip as observer and narrator. After a long and comical description of Joe's dress and action, an older, wiser Pip shows some insight into his own youthful error in making Joe feel stiff and out of place.

I had neither the good sense nor the good feeling to know that this was all my fault, and that if I had been easier with Joe, Joe would have been easier with me.

(p. 244)

Dorothy Van Ghent offers Joe's inability to communicate with Miss Havisham and with Mr. Jaggers (after the lawyer tries to deny Joe's friend-identity with Pip) as evidence that Dickens' art presents characters who are totally alone, totally cut off from each other. However, Joe does not desire isolation; isolation vitiates
his entire being. He is unable to communicate, almost unable to be when around people who refuse to interact with him authentically. If Joe is aware that people refuse to allow themselves to exist through him, if they refuse to allow him to become important to them, if their identity is not bound up with his so that he can serve some need of theirs, he cannot communicate with them. Joe talks to Pip, not to Miss Havisham, at their initial meeting, for he has no relational identity with her. He has no existence for her, and there is no inner Joe that wants to project itself outward, no interiority that is concerned with what Miss Havisham thinks of it. Since Joe knows that what he says will not materially affect Miss Havisham, will not speak to any needs of hers, and since he is not trying to impress her, make her view of his identity conform to some preconceived view of himself that he holds, there is nothing for him to say, no basis for true communication. Joe listens to her and talks to Pip, someone for whom he exists. Like other truly virtuous Dickens characters, Joe is totally other-directed, even other-activated; he must exist to serve a need. At the beginning of their visit to Miss Havisham, if Pip had not been present when Joe listens to the elderly recluse, Joe would have had no one with whom to interact. When he remains with her after she asks Pip to leave, Joe does so because he feels that he may serve Pip by listening to her. That aspect of Joe which is Pip's friend and mentor stays to hear Miss Havisham. No other Joe can exist with her. As virtuous as he is, Joe is not responsible for the transformation in Pip. Pip must be the author of his own salvation. Magwitch is the agent through which that salvation
occurs.

Dickens hints at the crucial effect Magwitch will have on Pip's life by having the first real action scene involve the boy and the man: two who will be so inextricably bound up with each other that each will become the means of redemption for the other. Magwitch's character invites comparison with Miss Havisham because both attempt to mold the lives of the young central characters of the novel. Yet there are fundamental differences between the two. Unlike Miss Havisham, Magwitch's actions do not proceed from a desire to freeze time or to project any identity that he has. Furthermore, Magwitch does not initiate Pip's desire to become a gentleman; Estella does that. Magwitch merely supplies the means by which the boy's dreams come true; thus he makes no major changes in the boy's inner life as Miss Havisham does in Estella's. Pip's desires to be a gentleman and to possess Estella as love object have already ruined his chances for correct relational existence long before Magwitch's plan begins to unfold. Once he has met the lovely, heartless young girl and the dream of becoming a fixed point around which all action must revolve has adulterated the boy's world, some major change must occur to destroy the dream of self. The change must come through Magwitch whom the boy has befriended on the marshes.

When Pip provides Magwitch not with food, which is supplied under coercion, but with something which the convict needs much more than food, words of good fellowship, the boy reminds the alienated prisoner of his connection to all humanity and so sews the seeds of salvation for them both. Precisely at this point in their relationship Magwitch
recognizes his connections with the boy; until near the end of the novel the convict always sees more clearly than his younger alter-ego. From the time he confesses to the burglary that Pip committed until he decides to come back from Australia, all of Magwitch's actions proceed from a desire to better the boy's conditions. While it seems at first that despite his good intentions he is actually responsible for conditions that increase Pip's propensity for error-producing identity, in the long run it is through relationship with Magwitch that Pip learns to forget self and destroy the interiority that insisted on projecting an identity as gentleman.

Until he accepts responsibility for the lowly Magwitch, until he sees that what endangers Magwitch endangers him and what benefits Magwitch benefits him, Pip cannot see all the other connections which bind him to the rest of humanity. He does not know that Bentley Drummle is his sadistic side that wishes to punish Estella for her taunts and the pain she has inflicted; that Herbert's "inaptitude" as well as his gentle goodness and knowledge are his, Pip's, and will make him a true gentleman; that Orlick cannot be destroyed until some of the violence latent in himself (and evident in his bloody fight with Herbert) is destroyed. He does not know that in the world he inhabits "the guilt of one character tinges the other character, just as the moral regeneration of one character tinges the other."24

After he accepts his shared identity with Magwitch, in a moment of bright illumination Pip also sees the connections which bind all men together. Looking at those being sentenced for crimes, Pip recognizes the unity principle of his world that links the judge and the
prisoners, the guilty and those who accuse them (p. 465). Later, Pip falls ill and experiences a death of his secret, interior life. He dreams

That I lost my reason... that I confounded impossible existences with my own identity, that I was a brick in the house wall, and yet entreated to be released from the giddy place where the builders had set me; that I was a steel beam of a vast engine, clashing and whirling over a gulf, and yet that I implored in my own person to have the engine stopped, and my part in it hammered off, that I passed through these phases of disease, I know. (pp. 471-2)

In his dream of other existences, Pip learns that just as single inanimate things are indistinguishable parts of a larger whole, so are men. He learns that his only identity is one of man totally connected to other men and that he is a single almost indistinguishable part of common humanity. He discovers that trying to maintain a separate identity is akin to the brick wanting to be released from a wall or the steel beam seeking to be hammered off the vast engine. Upon awakening Pip comes to know that he must become a trusting child again and that his identity must be shared with Joe who has nursed the youth through his physical illness—metaphor for the spiritual illness he has suffered for so long and from which he cannot be cured without his own realization of that illness and the help of virtuous people. Pip actually experiences two rebirths. In his own right he is reborn when he comes to realize that instead of free floating individual, he is part Joe, part Magwitch, part Biddy, even part Miss Havisham and Estella. He gets a second rebirth in Biddy and Joe's child.

Pip exists again, as a young boy with loving and living parents, without the psychological complications of his first incarnation. The two Pips—one
could as well refer to them in the singular—return to the graves of their original parents. . . .

After this symbolic journey back to the graves of his parents and to the spot where he met another parent, Magwitch, Pip is free to begin a life unhampered by plotting and great expectations. He can now live a happy, contented life of many possible relational identities. Here, at last, we find a true hero, one who has ascended beyond the intuitive morality of Joe, Tom Pinch or Magwitch. Pip comes to a more complete morality than any previous Dickens character, for it is a thinking, aware morality, a conscious rejection of the Romantic ideal.
FOOTNOTES
(Chapter V)


2. Miller, pp. 251 and 259.


5. The name Phillip is mentioned only once after Pip informs us of his given and surnames. The boy introduces himself to Herbert Pocket as Phillip (p. 202). At this point Pip is again casting off a name given him by an authority figure who wants to help create or recreate the lad, for the one stipulation he agreed to when accepting his legacy from his anonymous benefactor was to always bear the name of Pip (p. 165). Interestingly, Herbert rejects the name Pip as inappropriate, and he, too, attempts to re-create Pip by naming him Handel.


8. Engle traces the development of love interests in many Dickens novels. His major premise is that mature, steady affection is a positive while youthful sexual attraction is a negative in most Dickensian worlds (p. 150).

10. As Hillis Miller notes, Miss Havisham is responsible for her own fate for "in willing to freeze her life at the moment the annihilating blow comes from the outside, she changes her abandonment from a 'cruel fate' to a chosen role. It is Miss Havisham herself who chooses to make her betrayal the central event and meaning of her life" (p. 257).

11. Miss Havisham identifies herself with ice. She says, "I stole her /Estella's/ heart away and put ice in its place" (p. 412).


13. Martin Meisel makes the point that both Pip and Miss Havisham foolishly try to deny aspects of time (p. 185).

14. Satis House is an interesting name. In Miss Havisham's abode (House) when something or someone has placed itself (Sat), it stays (-is) with no possibility of change, thus, Sat-is House. And as the name Murdock suggests the murderous effect the stepfather has on David's happiness, so does the name Satis suggest the condition of Stasis in Miss Havisham's home.


16. Robin Gilmore says, "... Pip's natural resistance to the coercion of his elders is aggravated by an awareness that what has happened at Satis House is something unique and personal, something belonging to Pip as Pip" (p. 134).


18. Pancks is the bill collector turned detective in Little Dorrit.

19. The use of Mr. or Miss before a surname seems to suggest a distancing in a Dickens world, either the natural distance of time or the artificial distance of an unyielding identity.

20. Joe does get angry once. When Jaggers tries to deny the validity of his friend-identity by suggesting that Joe might desire money in exchange for releasing Pip from his apprenticeship, Joe is ready to do battle with the lawyer.


23. Harry Stone discusses the characters approximately Pip's age who are his alter-egos, especially Orlick (pp. 303-308).


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