

DICKENS  
AND THE ROMANTIC VISION OF CHILDHOOD

by

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*Dickens and the Romantic's Lessons of Childhood*

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## ABSTRACT

Images of the child in Austen, Wordsworth, and Dickens reflect an era in which change, in order to appear less threatening to the individual, had to be seen as growth--specifically moral growth. Unwilling to question the foundations of his Judeo-Christian morality, man came to believe that only a better, more educated performance was needed to overcome the ills of his society. As the focal point of this preoccupation, the child functioned more symbolically than realistically since he was made to bear much of the onus of responsibility for his society's failures and was therefore imbued with the obligation to improve, that is, paradoxically, to remove himself from that state of innocence which is the child's inheritance.

Utilizing subjective response and psychoanalytical interpretations which enlarge upon textual evidence, we may question the basis for perceiving any profound difference between Wordsworth's romantic and Austen's more realistic image of the child in The Prelude and Mansfield Park respectively. Since it mediates between these two seemingly opposite visions, Dickens' image of the child provides us with more comprehensive reasons why these images have been distorted. It appears that reliance on socially accepted premises rather than on psychologically painful insights has been the main reason why Dickens' The Old Curiosity Shop has been unduly criticized, its ideational

content largely ignored. It also appears that the Dickensian image of the child in Great Expectations is finally a tragic one but one which can be defended on the grounds that this was a parentally imposed image which could not be overcome.

If we reject the underlying assumptions about the nature of mankind upon which traditional morality is based, we can see why the image of the child has often been presented or interpreted negatively and how each of these authors either consciously or unconsciously provided the means by which we could begin to see the child and what he, perforce, becomes as Dickens saw him, in a more compassionate and affirmative light.

To my children:

Kathy, Yvonne, Carolyn, Lisa, and Duncan

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## CONTENTS

	Page
APPROVAL	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
NOTE ON REFERENCES	viii
PREFACE	ix
INTRODUCTION:	1
CHAPTER ONE: Romantic and Realistic Images of the Child	12
Footnotes	50
CHAPTER TWO: The Dickensian Child: <u>The Old Curiosity Shop</u>	54
Footnotes	96
CHAPTER THREE: The Dickensian Child: <u>Great Expectations</u>	104
Footnotes	168
CONCLUSION:	171
Footnotes	178
BIBLIOGRAPHY	180



## NOTE ON REFERENCES

All quotations from these texts are documented by the abbreviations I have listed below. For The Prelude the book number and lines are given after the abbreviated title.

Mansfield Park

MP

The Prelude

P

The Old Curiosity Shop

OCS

Great Expectations

GE

From Wordsworth's "best philosopher"  
to Celine's tortured infancy  
images of the child, Victorian, intervene.  
Where have we been?  
Where is our old reality?  
Our childhood was illiterate:  
we dreamed magnificent dreams.  
And outside the goblin market  
we swung the apples down and out  
from their protecting leaves,  
for then, they were good to eat.  
Spring was a time when fairies  
still flew intrepidly  
and freedom never had a name  
since it was always  
part of what we were  
in this eternity.

## INTRODUCTION

Firmly wedged in among the books in my library is an early portrait of me seated primly in a small wicker chair while my older brother plays on the floor. I am two, he is three, the background is cloudy, but we pose in front of it I, in a white ruffled dress and he, in a white sailor's suit. This picture has always disturbed me for I am fearful and almost ready to cry while my brother, his hand shoved into the open end of a pictureblock, is laughing happily. The portrait is old and yellowed now. There is rust or blood on its grey cardboard frame. Yet it has often made me wonder about my childhood. What did I see that made me respond so differently than my brother? Or, was I the mirror image of someone else's reality? And, if I was the mirror image of someone else's reality, whose was it?

Because of my interest in interpretation, these questions led me to wonder about the role of literature in creating images of the child and, if these works are influential, in sustaining them by parental projection upon succeeding generations. For, upon whose ideas did our parents base their own images of what the child should be? What authority gave them the right to believe that the child could be molded to conform to society, and, in particular, to a society which, in the main, required of its members blind obedience rather than

independent thinking, stoic acceptance rather than spontaneity, and sacrificial gestures rather than caring that is founded upon respect for the intrinsic capabilities of the individual human spirit? And if the literary child is "father of the man," what implications does that have for our future as a whole? For though "the novelist is no longer the sole interpreter of personal behavior in a social milieu,"<sup>1</sup> the way that literature is read does affect people's sense of personal and moral values, as anyone who has been exposed to the "comfortable English matrons, clergymen and antiquarians,"<sup>2</sup> who comprise the "Janeites" can testify.

Now the Victorian era, with its pseudo-religious morality, its regimentation of the ways of seeing by a rigid hierarchy of social beliefs, and its entrenched hypocrisy, based on a deep insecurity, was in many ways, similar to my heritage. Victoria, British Columbia in the 1930s was almost as Victorian as the queen who presided in the inner harbour and who, I swear, must have dictated the contents of our home library. Thus, by the age of eleven, I had read books such as Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Austen's Emma, and Pride and Prejudice, Dickens' David Copperfield, and, since reading The Bible was the only thing we were permitted to do on a Sunday, I had unconsciously memorized numerous passages from it. This, unfortunately, did not make me happy. Reading literature was for me primarily an escape from reality, from the

ensoriousness of my home atmosphere, from the images of the child I was supposed to be. But if literature does mirror the imagination of a people, and if Victorian literature is our heritage, perhaps we can find in it some clues to our imposed identity, some ways in which our own parents might have seen us and so created a self-fulfilling prophecy.

This paper will discuss a progression of child images, comparing and contrasting Wordsworth's depiction of the child with Austen's, and moving on to examine Dickens' treatment of the image of the child in The Old Curiosity Shop<sup>3</sup> and Great Expectations.<sup>4</sup> Since, upon close examination, Wordsworth's presumably "arch-romantic" image of the child in The Prelude<sup>5</sup> bears a strong resemblance to Austen's more "realistic" portrayal of the child in Mansfield Park;<sup>6</sup> since, in other words, Wordsworth presents a child who is "Fostered alike by beauty and by fear" (P, I, 302), who is, therefore, like Fanny Price, damaged almost from the beginning, my thesis will concentrate on this disturbing phenomenon as it is repeated and developed more completely in Dickens. Consequently, this study presupposes that we will discover, not who we are, but who we are not. Yet, hidden also between the leaves of these books is, perhaps, another reality, more true because it exists in the gap between reality and the dream, between the author's portrayal and his ideology. For, by attributing much less good to the Self than to the cultural

environment, by failing to realize that very early in life his ideas about himself and of reality may have been corrupted by his society, the much-vaunted imagination of nineteenth century man was twisted into believing that he could draw some wisdom from traditional ways of thinking, that through a determined application of some of society's rational or religious rules he could get at the truth about his own identity. Amidst these confusions, Romantics and Realists flaunted their own strange, contradictory brands of reality; each believing that their ways of seeing were at odds with one another rather than more or less equally imbued with a dark vision about the nature of the Self and, therefore, of mankind.

Common to all the works I shall be discussing, Wordsworth's The Prelude, Austen's Mansfield Park, and Dickens' The Old Curiosity Shop and Great Expectations, is the imposition of adult moral values when describing the child's reality and the child's tendency either to disregard, internalize, or attribute to other, less threatening people or things the environmental influences which had most severely affected him. Thus we do not see the child directly; we see him in the light of an adult mentality, in the light of the social values which had formed the author. The child is dressed in the garb of his age unwittingly. He does not pass through the looking glass, he becomes its shadowy formations;

he is created in the image of his creator's socially prescribed vision.

Equally common to these portrayals is the oppressive atmosphere which surrounds the child, an atmosphere to which the child responds with timidity or fear. His identity all too often becomes linked to these emotions; his life, an attempt to overcome them, to find something outside himself which is secure. That these children were all presented as orphans (a common childhood fantasy), points to a deeper reality. For, in a primarily cold or indifferent society, the child does begin to feel psychically abandoned. Even Wordsworth's "egotistical sublime"<sup>7</sup> was not enough to save him from this form of chastisement. He was forced to adopt a stoically philosophical stance in order to protect himself from knowing the true source of the terrors that he had experienced in his childhood. In all these novels, as well, we are presented with children who tend to repress their anger and to adopt, instead, rather ambiguous humilities which do not entirely succeed in convincing us that they are genuine. Thus, the quality of earnestness, so characteristic of the Victorian age, appears to me to be really based on fear, fear that has been repressed and transformed into an intense desire to please, to be accepted into a shared community of values, to become one with the attitudes and values which effectively destroy existential freedom.

Since these children really do not break from the mold within which their identities formed, their adulthood, doomed from the beginning, is an adulthood of clinging, of repeating a generational cycle in a tranced belief that they are behaving independently. Thus, despite all the narrative progressions in these works which might contribute to their separate identities, these children are essentially static individuals, engaging in a performance guaranteed to return them to the identities which the author had given them originally. This essay presumes that an author creates the images he sees, but that he does not create them from nothing, but from an inherited way of seeing peculiar to his age.<sup>8</sup> Yet, as is apparent from classroom response papers,<sup>9</sup> Austen's, Dickens', and Wordsworth's portrayals of the child can be emotionally disturbing. Often these portrayals arouse aggressive or defensive stances, rationalizations, justifications or purely negative attitudes; rarely, just simple acceptance of the image that is presented. This, I would suggest, is because we not only recognize aspects of ourselves in these children but we also sense another reality, a meta-reality, so to speak, which is frustrated by its very unspeakableness, but in which may lie the secret of mankind's true identity. We cannot, in other words, pin the butterfly and then maintain that it is still alive, yet from the evidence of its beautiful wings we can infer that once it was free. Like the butterfly,



childhood has a certain intangibility about it; the merest touch can damage its wings. Thus we both feel that we are like and are not like these children. Their images, pinned as they are with negative thoughts and feelings, both echo our own and tell us that this is not as it has to be. They are fraught with our own conflicts.

In their overall tone and in their selection of details which both support and undermine ordinary perception, these authors have presented us with certain folk tales of the race.<sup>10</sup> They are folk tales with a difference, however, since they give us the possibility of analyzing the social forces acting, not only upon these children, but also upon us. For if we believe that, in essence, most character portrayals reflect aspects of the author's personal experience (just as any interpretation of literature is, in part, subjective, a result of personal attitudes and experiences), then we can see how the same social forces which prompted the portrayal of these children often prompt us to interpret them with the same moral vision and attendant conflicts.

Yet something gets lost in the process. That "something" is the true image of the child--the image which has inspired this paper, the child whose rational faculties have not been distorted, contaminated by social restraints, whose morality is intrinsic rather than forced upon him, the child who exists only by his absence from nineteenth century liter-

ature. Theoretically, at least, Wordsworth could be said to have presented this romantic ideal, to have visualized for mankind a celebratory image of the child freed from the bonds of original sin. But, if we accept this premise we are obliged to disregard his claims for Nature's admonishing role in forming him, his concept of continued growth or perfectibility, and his own statement that man has been "made imperfect in himself" (p, 14, 224). That Wordsworth saw "In simple childhood something of the base / On which [man's] greatness stands" (p, 12, 274-5) cannot be denied. But that Nature, whose strength and divinity is supposedly reflected in the child (p, 3, 193-96) should also have the role of a conscience-forming agent similar in function to Freud's super-ego severely undercuts any notions we may have had that Wordsworth's child ever existed completely outside the bonds of a morally self-righteous and reproving society determined to impose its own sense of "sin" upon the child. By claiming that Nature both contributed to and inhibited spontaneity within the child, Wordsworth was able to mask the deleterious effects of the socialization process upon him. It is these processes as they are still manifested in his work that I wish to emphasize in this paper. For the paradox is that this literature which I shall be discussing should provide us both with the prison for and the key to a revelatory experience of who and what the child really is.

Now just as there are multiple levels of consciousness from which an author draws in order to fashion his narratives, so are there multiple levels of perception and emotional response from which a critic draws to form his interpretations. Literature is a form of communication which can only become meaningful to the reader if there are correspondences between the author's portrayal of an image or experience and the reader's understanding of the phenomenon. On the other hand, even the judgement that a given passage of either a critical or artistic text appears meaningless can be meaningful to the reader since it can challenge him to unravel the writer's confusions or alert him to the fact that his own perceptions may be limited.

Literature can and does present many levels of awareness. Embodied in descriptions and episodes, the language of literature is also, though perhaps unintentionally, often allegorical in nature. This quality provides critics with numerous approaches to an explication of its meaning--none of them necessarily wrong, nor completely right. The essence of any literary work is also embodied in its totality, which, like anything we try to grasp, to hold, to own, will slip from our fingers since we cannot possess its soul. This was Poe's predicament in Ligeia just as it is ours as critics of any poem or novel. As D.H. Lawrence says, "to know a living thing in its entirety is to kill it."<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, it has

always been my predilection to want to dig below the literal, the ordinary, the objective, the "literary" level of a text in order to apprehend in the gap, so to speak, the primary, or motivational life of the novel and thus, its reason for being. It is at this level that meaning exists for me.

My reading process, then, appears to be, in part, sensitive to responses from the unconscious, spiralling down through levels of meaning until I encounter primal images and emotions. My interpretation begins there and moves both underneath these images in order to ascertain the author's reasons for their use and then outward again in order to find the textual evidence which will either support or challenge my analysis. The inevitable result of this process is (1) that it is often anti-climactic,<sup>12</sup> and (2) that it could possibly go on forever since a thesis of normal length is rarely exhaustive of all the possibilities that this type of analysis can bring to literature. Consequently, I am drawn to that poetry and prose which presents a clear recognition of the role of archetypal images and experiences since myths evolve from these things and myths are at the heart of people's ideas about themselves and their experiences. Yet beneath the level of myth and mythological beings is life as it once existed, free of the intellectual rationalizations and justifications which, from time immemorial, society has imposed on its

members in order to keep them docile and compliant or rebelliously hooked in the social system.

## CHAPTER ONE

## Romantic and Realistic Images of the Child

Because it exists at the fine edge of conscious awareness, points to the gap between seen and unseen forces, the place that we, as sentient beings, truly inhabit, Jane Austen's ironically realistic style in Mansfield Park has an uncanny power. By the very effort, though, that it takes her to repress what is truly dark in the unconscious, to conceal what is truly rapacious in her heroes and heroines we are alerted to the fact that these people's problems are not superficial and to their inability to resolve them by a kind of paranoid attention to details of manner and form in their everyday lives. But their petty jealousies, their preoccupation with either social or moral respectability, their self-destructive and conformist tendencies do reveal a deep distrust with and hatred of the existential Self--a hatred which they can unconsciously transfer onto others by becoming, like Fanny and Edmund, dutifully submissive and therefore somehow morally superior.

Despite the so-called clarity of her writing, it is as if an unseen, though almost palpable pall is suffocating both this author and her characters, suffocating their sense of what constitutes true human freedom. The realistic aspects of Jane Austen's writing pretend to reveal that which simply is, and

so, as readers, we tend to expect an emotionally satisfactory resolution to the conflicts which she presents in her novel, yet her narrative is an emotional tight-rope balancing act on the part of both the author and her principal characters to the end. Compromise (symbolized by either a marriage or by the discreet disappearance of potentially disruptive individuals) seems to be the only form of conclusion which she finds possible under these difficult circumstances.

To have power over ordinary, daily reality, to control from another sphere of influence where real feelings have been replaced by the cult of sensibility (or, by the desire to appear, rather than be emotionally sensitive) while, at the same time, decisions are made more often than not from a rationalistic or from a moralistic basis, seems to be the goal both of this author and of her main characters in this, Jane Austen's darkest novel. Yet, paradoxically, it is neither rational nor moral to ignore, to attempt to deny the unconscious. For this is not realistic (in the sense that realism implies a recognition of all the facets of human consciousness including homicidal lusts and hatreds) but romantic in the Wordsworthian sense of repressing or transferring onto other people and things the more horrifying feelings or experiences of childhood and then attempting to eliminate any evidence of the internal corruption which inevitably results, with the help of Nature or the right exercise of the mind. Thus Austen's Fanny, like Wordsworth,

aspires to a kind of perfectibility which is ultimately alienating and which is based on the moral standards of a corrupt society--a society which ostracizes its own children in the belief that they have, as Sir Thomas Bertram did with Julia, destroyed their own characters (MP, I, 17, 353) rather than acknowledge that children's behavioral traits have been learnt from their elders. Contrived to conform to a society which devoutly believed in its inherited ways of being and yet was unconsciously horrified at the evil which existed within, Austen's realistic style in Mansfield Park, like Wordsworth's style in The Prelude, still reflects an underlying belief that man's true nature is primarily wicked--that it must be so molded and formed by a prescribed moral sensibility as to present what seems to be unquestionably right rather than stand outside that received morality in existential freedom. Consequently in Austen's realism as in Wordsworth's romanticism (with all his revisions and contradictions), all this effort to be precise reveals that repressed material in the unconscious was, like a dark force, a governing factor in their writing rather than simply another facet of human existence which can be successfully confronted and dealt with by the human spirit.

According to Elizabeth Jenkins, George Crabbe was more familiar than Wordsworth with the more sordid aspects of village life. He made it "a matter of urgent moral duty" to expose "every fictitious compliment paid to the romance of humble



life."<sup>13</sup> Jane Austen, Crabbe's follower and admirer, subscribes to this ethos, applies it to the gentry, and manages, by means of her all-pervasive irony, to indicate to the readers of Mansfield Park that all is not as it should be. Perhaps this is because Austen does sense that "realism involves the control and distortion of unconscious impulses,"<sup>14</sup> and that "the visionary mode of artistic expression"<sup>15</sup> might contain some truths about the nature of man which could be incorporated by means of her overall tone, into Mansfield Park. But I would also suggest that in her attempts to be precise, to avoid any romanticisation of the people and events in this novel except by the means of her tone, she only succeeded in creating an image of the child which was offensive in its unreality. Her irony points to the gap where the true spirit of man exists, but her detached and pragmatic treatment of all that is superficial, dull, and tedious in people and their affairs tends to negate it, to say, in effect, that there is no possibility for true self-realization within society. This is possibly because Austen presents us with only brief, isolated occasions when either she, as narrator, or her characters catch a glimpse of the true horror which underlies most of their relationships,<sup>16</sup> such as when Fanny Price senses the predatory and incestuous implications of Crawford's elopement with Maria (MP, III, 15, 335-6). Just as the sources and the depths of human depravity are not fully recognized, are mainly ignored or de-

nied, so is the possibility for summoning sufficient emotional strength to resist or reject their effects, to deny them a part in the psychological make-up of one's identity. In Mansfield Park Jane Austen's characters are minutely concerned with the emotional bumps and scratches which occur during their lives; they fail to realize that these superficial irritants are symptoms of a deeper and far more spiritually fatal social disease. Because they fail to realize this, there seems to be no possibility for any real change--only a renewed clinging to traditional values which offer a superficial peace.

In her attempt to fuse romantic and realistic modes of perception by the use of an ironic tone, to create a Cinderella-like image destined eventually to marry a pragmatically realistic prince, Austen is obliged to create an image of the child who is damaged from the beginning, whose potential for transcendence is limited to overcoming the hierarchical class structure of the society in which she lives. That Fanny Price uses society's rules in order to do this reveals how thoroughly she has been indoctrinated, how explicitly she accepts its standards of personal and moral excellence, how anxious she is to become a nonentity, a part of the glutinous mass who, like amoebas, consume their own identities through displacement of the Self, through the ceaseless ingestion of other personalities. For instance, how often have we observed people, uncertain of their own identities, adopt roles and mannerisms learnt

from others in a vain attempt to establish some credibility for themselves as individuals, little realizing that, in so doing, they have destroyed that same credibility? But, unlike Wordsworth, Fanny Price does not have any illusions of grandeur (fostered by his friend, Coleridge, and then incorporated into his image of himself as a child), to be smashed by "Nature's" hand, to be crushed into a form of pseudo-religious servility to an impossible ideal. She, with all her moral pretensions and timidity, is the socially impossible ideal and therein lies her power to disturb us.

Filled with self-importance, with the belief that he could write "the first truly philosophic poem,"<sup>17</sup> Wordsworth, on the other hand, believed that he was creating an image of the child with the potential for spiritual perfectibility (P, XIV, 234). That this child represented an image of himself--an egotistical exemplar of his doctrine that human nature, though initially imperfect, is capable of spiritual growth--may perhaps account for the fact that he was "misled. . . / By an infirmity of love for days / Disowned by memory--fancying flowers where none / Not even the sweetest do or can survive. . ." (P, I, 614-617). His child is apparently wild and free, free to roam the crags, the valleys, free, that is, both to adore and to desecrate viciously the bounty and the beauties of Nature, to have visions of a greater reality which is both benevolent and malevolent, a source of terror and of ineffable bliss. Nur-

tured, apparently, by his mother whom he describes as "love's purest earthly fount" (P, 2, 247), Wordsworth claims that it was she who first forged the filial bond between himself and Nature (P, 2, 243-44). But rather than question the type of bond which subsequently existed between himself and Nature or the quality of his mother's love that had created it in the first place, Wordsworth chose to perceive Nature's more terrifying aspects as somehow beneficial. Psychoanalytically speaking, it is apparent that Wordsworth's love and adoration of Nature is an extension of his feelings for his mother; his fear of Nature's more threatening aspects an extension of his equally strong fear of parental censure. By choosing to project these conflicting emotions onto an abstract entity with whom he could positively identify as an influential teacher, Wordsworth effectively protects the parental figures in his life from any serious scrutiny. Yet Wordsworth alienates himself from his Self by including all the negative or reproving aspects of the super-ego within his concept of Nature. Thus coveting "Union that cannot be" (P, 2, 24), he finds that "often do I seem / Two consciousnesses, conscious of myself / And of some other Being" (P, 2, 31-33) while The Prelude becomes a record of his attempts to regain that child-like state of "self-forgetfulness" (P, 4, 297) and spontaneity through the exercise of the self-consciously "sovereign

Intellect" (P, 5, 15). Ironically Wordsworth, himself recognizes this virtual impossibility when he says:

Oh! why hath not the Mind  
Some element to stamp her image on  
In nature somewhat nearer to her own?  
Why gifted with such powers to send abroad  
Her spirit, must it lodge in shrines so frail?

(P, 5, 45-49)

Had Wordsworth chosen instead to expose the social influences in his life that first inhibited his joyous spontaneity, that first created in him a guilt from whence his sense of duty sprang, he might have experienced less confusion in expressing his ideas about the child's essential divinity as opposed to the man's need to improve or perfect himself.

Superficially, however, it would appear as if Wordsworth and Austen, though from the same society and about the same age, are nonetheless poles apart in their perceptions of who the child is, or could be. Yet their depictions of these images bear some remarkable similarities. Where Wordsworth seems to mourn the loss of his childhood's visionary gleams, Jane Austen, pragmatically though ironically, appears to accept this loss as a given by presenting Fanny Price as a timid, psychologically damaged child by the age of ten. In actual fact both these attitudes are philosophically misleading--Wordsworth's because his condescending, self-justifying, though melancholic voice maintains that "other palms are won,"<sup>18</sup> and Austen's because she aims to elevate her child to

a position of moral superiority, to reward her with the marriage partner of her choice. Austen accomplishes this feat by smothering Fanny in passivity so that any erotic or rebellious tendencies she might have must eventually agree with the unconscious inclinations of her adoptive family; Wordsworth, by a lengthy process of exploration and rationalization which finally comes to depend upon repeating traditional religious ideas such as the efficacy of prayer "that frees from chains the soul" (P, 14, 184). Thus, but in only apparent contradiction, Wordsworth presents us with a nobly romantic, visionary boy while Austen gives us a realistically whimpering girl.

Yet his "vulgar joys" (P, I, 581) were ultimately the occasion for emotions not unlike Fanny's bitter tears (MP, I, 2, 11), his "gleams" of light from the natural environment (P, I, 581) had the same effect upon him as Fanny's sense of "gratitude and delight" (MP, I, 2, 13) when someone deigned to notice her. For although Wordsworth's childhood experiences superficially appear to point towards some basic differences between these children, his descriptive terminology, the degree of moral condescension, the sanctimoniousness which underlies this attitude, the lack of consistency about the holistic nature of many childhood experiences, the inability to describe the child's world without compulsively devaluing the child--attitudes which are embodied in his language--reveal an adult way of thinking which Wordsworth must have both experienced and

then internalized very early in life. For certain episodes in his childhood such as the boat stealing one when Nature manifests her disapproval in nightmarish forms (P, 1, 357-400), the woodcock snaring one when Wordsworth was "alone, / And seemed to be a trouble to the peace / That dwelt among them (P, 1, 315-17), and the bird stealing one when he guiltily

. . . heard among the solitary hills  
 Low breathings coming after me, and sounds  
 Of undistinguishable motion, steps  
 Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

(P, 1, 322-25)

reveal that Wordsworth had already experienced feelings of guilt and terror with regard to some of his boyhood activities, that Nature simply appeared to reflect his unconscious fears of transgressing the prevalent moral code. The territorial imperative (which, in any case, does not apply to nature's more nomadic creatures), might be cited in support of Nature's presumed role in these episodes, but that this imperative should also apply to a child playfully borrowing a boat and exploring an area which is not necessary for its human inhabitant's actual survival stretches our credibility.

In The Prelude Wordsworth's socially conditioned feelings often dictate how he will perceive the natural environment. Thus in the famous "spots of time" passages of Book Twelve he sets out to examine "to what point, and how, / The mind is lord and master -- outward sense / The obedient servant of her will" (P, 12, 221-23). He then recalls two incidents: one from

his boyhood and one from his young manhood when the same locale appeared differently to him. Having lost his "encourager and guide" (P, 12, 230) in the first scene, Wordsworth's child is forced to wander through the landscape which is invested with "visionary dreariness" (P, 12, 256). Having gained a beloved in his later young manhood "A spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam" (P, 12, 261-66) fell upon the same naked scene.

Although Wordsworth says in his subsequent commentary upon these events that "feeling comes in aid / Of feeling, and diversity of strength / Attends us, if but once we have been strong" (P, 12, 270-71), he also must have concluded that a companion or guide was necessary if he is to perceive the environment in a less threatening manner. For the next memory from childhood which Wordsworth relates involves himself as a boy ensconced in a desolate landscape and yearning for a glimpse "Of those led palfreys that should bear us home" (P, 12, 291), home for the school holidays to his father's house, to, perhaps, an opportunity to regain that lost guide. But, within ten days his father dies. Wordsworth sees, in this new loss a form of chastisement and, true to traditionally religious form, he is then forced to bow low "To God, Who thus corrected my desires" (P, 12, 316).

Foreshadowing Wordsworth's later religious conservatism which followed upon the loss of his brother John at sea, we can detect a movement in this passage away from the worship of



Nature and of reason as its highest expression and towards a more traditional way of thinking about life and death. He may have seen "In simple childhood something of the base / On which man's greatness stands" (P, 12, 274-75) but certainly not in these experiences of fear and bewilderment.

Wordsworth's acceptance of God as the ultimate guide seemed both to clarify his vision and to cause him to identify with images of desolation (P, 12, 317-25). His inability to transgress the prevalent moral code which viewed human needs, pleasures and desires as merely finite prevented him from complaining about the lack of care he had received as a child. He chose, instead, to believe that he had been especially favoured.

As a result of this unconscious fear of transgressing the prevalent moral code, Wordsworth defensively adopts a moralistically condescending point of view when he describes his boyhood pleasures. They are "fits of vulgar joy" (P, 1, 581), "giddy blisses" (P, II, 117), "vain-glories" (P, II, 70), "uncouth races" (P, II, 117). They are activities performed "In wantonness of heart" (P, II, 130) which are often enjoyed in places displaying a "foolish pomp" (P, II, 155).

In these episodes, and in his descriptive terminology which can be said to reflect an adult perspective on a child's activities rather than a child's holistic experience of them, Wordsworth shows us that he, like Austen's Fanny Price, was psychologically damaged as a child, that he had, along with his

more positive experiences of the beauty and "suchness" of Nature, internalized negative attitudes towards himself. For embodied in his language are adult or learned attitudes which imply that his boyhood experiences (the means by which children learn their social identities or who they are in relation to the world), are foolish, primitive in the pejorative sense, overly sensual and therefore possibly irreligious since they do not always reflect a "proper" sense of awe and gratitude. Wordsworth might say that Nature taught him to view himself this way as a boy. I would say that these attitudes are simply typical nineteenth century ones which Wordsworth reflects in opposition to his more radical insights on the child's reality.

There is one occasion, however, when Wordsworth does not subtly censure, nor does the environment threaten his activities. Yet it is here that an actual and terrifying image from nature in the form of a dead man rises from the depths of the lake to create "no soul-debasing fear" within the child (P, 5, 451). Wordsworth says that this is because he had encountered these kinds of images before "among the shining / Streams of faery land, the forest of romance" (P, 5, 454-55) or in his more than vivid imagination as an eight year old child! Now it could be argued, as Wordsworth seems to do, that he had already transcended the fear of death, or that, at this tender age he simply did not understand the full implication of this "spectre shape / Of terror" (P, 5, 450). But what is significant in this episode is how and why these spirits of the dead should

come to people a young child's imagination in the first place  
and then how and why they

. . . hallowed the sad spectacle  
With decoration of ideal grace;  
A dignity, a smoothness, like the works  
Of Grecian Art, and purest poetry.

(P, 5, 456-59)

Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss  
all the implication of this passage, I would suggest that  
Wordsworth's tendency to philosophically romanticize death, to  
give death-like images such as the old leech-gatherer, the old  
Cumberland beggar and the "Father" with his sickly babe (P, 7,  
598-618), the blind beggar (P, 7, 637-39), and the ex-soldier  
in The Prelude (P, 4, 371-469) a dignity and a capacity to  
teach enduring values far beyond their helplessly ignorant  
merits partially stems from this peculiar way of coping with  
the stark reality of death. For the general effect of these  
images is to teach us to

. . . learn to live  
In reconcilment with our stinted powers;  
To endure this state of meagre vassalage.

(P, 5, 516-18)

It appears now as if only the conditions attendant upon  
Wordsworth's boyhood, his ability to escape and to find some  
solace, in the beauty of Nature, versus Fanny's domestically  
strictured existence, might account for our initial impression  
that these children, the offspring of romantic and realistic

modes of perception, are vastly different. Yet Wordsworth's habit of removing himself one step from the true source of his feelings, of transferring his attitudes towards himself as a boy onto his activities as a boy is extended to include the social environment in which he lived. Thus the moods and activities of Nature rather than that of human beings become the presumed source of Wordsworth's traumatic as well as his more ecstatic boyhood experiences--a situation which only thinly disguises the basic similiarity between himself as a child and Fanny Price. For he, too, was admonished and chastised and he, too, developed an obsessive need to be perfect.

Unlike Wordsworth, Jane Austen gives us a description of the child rather than just of her activities. She does this, however, not only as she ostensibly sees or knows Fanny, but also as her adoptive family sees her. Consequently, Austen's readers can determine the attitudes towards Fanny both created by, and independent of, her already damaged image--attitudes which Fanny will probably later subscribe to, and possibly use in order to maintain and further the identity which has been imposed upon her. In so doing, Austen perhaps unconsciously recognizes that the value judgements which are placed upon a child's appearance and activities actually originate from without, but that these things do become internalized and thus come to form a part of one's own illusory identity, an identity that

the mind then incessantly strives either to overcome or to retain.

Austen records Fanny's initial impression upon her relatives in primarily negative terms: she was "nothing to disgust her relations," she "was not vulgar," and she had "no glow of complexion, nor any other striking beauty" (MP, I, 2, 10). As a poor relative and a seeming nonentity, Fanny is a most satisfactory object upon which the Bertram family can practice all their sadistic and egocentric whims. That Fanny comes to define herself this way, that she also comes to prefer the Bertrams to her own family despite the fact that Sir Thomas Bertram's reserve and Lady Bertram's indolence mask an equally profound indifference to her that is only mitigated at young womanhood by her improved appearance, shows us how deeply she had been injured and how fearful she was of confronting this reality. Fanny's timidity, her willing subservience and loyalty to the Bertram family suggests that she preferred to blame herself for their indifference rather than to believe that they were incapable of true caring. The raw, angry emotions which characterized her own family frightened Fanny. She came to prefer the dream to the reality, the facade to the fact, the cult of sensibility to a frank recognition of her own deeply repressed feelings--feelings she felt she could only express now in a socially acceptable manner through her tears. In a novel where submission seems to be the only means by which one

can achieve any stability or fulfillment, Fanny's disposition cannot help but constitute an ideal.

Here, then, is Jane Austen's full description of her heroine:

Fanny Price was at this time just ten years old, and though there might not be much to captivate, there was, at least, nothing to disgust her relations. She was small of her age, with no glow of complexion, nor any other striking beauty: exceedingly timid and shy, and shrinking from notice: but her air though awkward, was not vulgar, her voice was sweet, and when she spoke, her countenance was pretty.

(MP, I, 2, 10)

Now there are those who might argue that Fanny actually is this portrait, that these adjectives constitute her identity just as Wordsworth's adjectives constitute his true feelings about his childhood experiences. I would counter that, because this image is a product of a socially conditioned way of seeing which demands that children have a limited and limiting "personality" rather than unlimited potential, it can only represent all that is superficially obvious in the child's image. It is, however, beyond the scope of this paper to separate Fanny from (1) what she believes herself to be, (2) how she acts in order to conform to that image, (3) how other people see her because of or in spite of this acting ability, and (4) what they additionally project upon her which may help to negate, affirm, or enlarge this identity to suit their own purposes. Psychologically speaking, though, we know that shyness is generally the result of a poor self-image; timidity, of repeated

exposure to physiological or psychological violence, and that these are the effects of a specific type of social conditioning rather than aspects of an identity.

Yet the physical and spiritual demands of the human organism absolutely require fulfillment and therefore Fanny's timidity, her tendency to shrink from notice can also be seen as a form of life-denial which she has merely adopted in order to protect herself from further abuse. The pallor which she exhibits is the physical result of her existential terror just as Wordsworth's self-deprecations are the psychological result of his own unconscious fears. Both are defenses used in order to prevent undue censure. As defenses they are also conformist in nature since they tend to perpetuate the kinds of emotional strictures which created these children's fears in the first place. Austen's child, Fanny Price, and Wordsworth's child are products of a parental preoccupation with the same type of morality which had distorted the consciences of nineteenth century society. Their essence has been overlaid by performance.

In her description of Fanny, Jane Austen reveals that Fanny's relatives (people who consider themselves to be of the better class in society), would have been "disgusted" with Fanny had she been beautiful, well-developed, courageous, or outstanding in any way. She can be accepted into their family because she does not threaten their egos and because she has already assented to the processes of life-denial which char-

acterize "civilized" society. For the internalization of an imposed self-image which reflects values of self-sacrifice and humility--values which are based on the belief that there is a natural socio-religious hierarchy rather than a politically expedient one and that this hierarchy is rational both in appearance and in fact rather than capriciously arbitrary is life-destroying. For these beliefs and the values which derive from them deny one's own intuition and integrity.

These processes of life-denial which Wordsworth describes as ostensibly taking place gradually in The Prelude, have, in Fanny, already occurred. She has already learnt (presumably from her real family), what she then puts successfully into practice at Mansfield Park: that is, to rationalize her real feelings so that they will conform to pre-existent socio-religious idealities, to eliminate any trace of spontaneity which might disturb her adoptive family and thus, by extension, herself, and to justify her subsequent, though almost entirely unconscious, resentments about these self-inflicted psychic injuries in philosophically sanctimonious ways. In this, Fanny is, as a young girl, little different from Wordsworth in later life when his writings, according to a rather acid contemporary of his, became full "of moral and devotional ravings."<sup>19</sup>

To illustrate how these life-denying tendencies function socially in Austen's child we have only to consider the passages which follow Edmund's initial attentions towards Fanny



--attentions provoked by her "passive manner" (MP, I, 2, 12) and her seductive tears. Having discovered that her passive and shrinking image can elicit some attention, interest and pity, that her hesitancy, her fears and her humility can induce selected others into offering their protection, advice and assistance, that, in other words, through this image she can appeal to the egoistic weaknesses of others, Fanny immediately becomes more comfortable in her new family. She has realized an identity which has social value. It is an identity, however, which requires that her genuine fears be repressed and/or transformed into conformist servitude, that her "rusticities" be eliminated in exchange for a form of pseudo-tranquility which tends to evade or ignore legitimate differences in the ways of perceiving, and that her feelings of worthlessness be sustained through the constant display of an "obliging, yielding temper" (MP, I, 2, 14). In philosophical terms, Fanny can be said to have adopted a rather stoic attitude towards life.

Psychologically speaking, Fanny's self-martyrdom meant that she did not truly care for herself and thus could not truly care for others. Her acknowledged lack of affection for Henry and Mary Crawford (MP, II, 4, 157), Tom Bertram (MP, III, 13, 325), Sir Thomas Bertram (MP, I, 3, 26), and Mrs. Norris (MP, III, 17, 354)--all of whom were distinctly lacking in any tendency towards self-denial--indicates, to my way of thinking, how cold her personality really was. For her usefulness depen-

ded on the general misery of others, her tender-heartedness on their personal suffering and her caring on the degree to which they could conform to the kind of morality which had created these conditions in the first place (MP, III, 13, 325). Her terror of Sir Thomas Bertram was transformed into a belief that it was her duty to uphold and perpetuate his vision (MP, III, 14, 331), even though she knew that it contained no intuitive or "romantic delicacy" (MP, III, 2, 250).

Now Jane Austen lived a life not dissimilar to the characters in her novels, visiting and being visited by acquaintances she was not necessarily fond of and limited by the rules of propriety to a more or less excruciatingly dull round of inane conversation.<sup>20</sup> Judging by these facts we might also conjecture that she was, like Fanny, trained as a child to perform in socially innocuous ways. Consequently, her realistic writing style must have been a form of psychological release, which, when coupled with her ironic tone served both as a comment upon her society and, in Mansfield Park, as the means by which she might achieve some sort of balance between her pragmatic acceptance of that society and her unconsciously gothic perceptions about it.

The irony which pervades Austen's descriptions of Fanny as the social ideal, this speaking of her image in tones which tend to deny its reality, is to Austen what religion, according to Freud, has been to generations of people deprived of their

existential freedom. Its use, coupled with her realistic style, was the only socially acceptable means by which Austen could express her anger at society's hypocrisies. Like religion, Jane Austen's use of irony offered "substitutive satisfactions for the oldest and still most deeply felt cultural renunciations . . . ser[ving] as nothing else does to reconcile [her] to the sacrifices [she] had made on behalf of civilization . . . [and] providing an occasion for sharing highly valued emotional experiences."<sup>21</sup>

Irony also served to compensate for the surprising lack of a catholic world view. In the narrow, moralistically inclined world of Jane Austen's novels she depended upon its use in order to provide depth and scope--if not to her characters at least to our apprehension of the author herself. For Austen is, in many ways, at the center of her novels just as Wordsworth is at the center of his poetry. Limited in its application yet limitless in the inferences which can be drawn from its use, Austen's irony also demonstrates to me that the "secularization of spirituality"<sup>22</sup> which dominated her characters' lives was emotionally unsatisfactory to the woman who portrayed them.

Because of Austen's underlying sense that beneath the people and events which she narrated there was nothing but darkness, irony was the only means that she had at her disposal which would adequately register her still-born hopes and des-

pairs. Coupled with her pragmatism, then, irony served as nothing else could do both to reveal the existence of that gothic world of the unconscious and to fix it irrevocably as the felt basis of her society. Irony is, for Jane Austen, both an expression of her need to realize an ideal world and a response to her belief that a more "realistic" approach to people and events in the novel would display more of the truth about daily reality. Ultimately, Austen's use of irony is her way of reflecting the typically nineteenth century preoccupation with the opposites--particularly those very human emotions of hope and despair.

The image of the child offered some hope to these writers yet tempered as it was with traditional religious beliefs about the underlying nature of mankind and trapped as it was within the confines of a language based on these beliefs, it is no wonder that this image failed to provide the answers to their existential dilemmas.

Although both Wordsworth and Austen seem to present children through a social vision which regards them as somewhat nastily immature and so in need of some sort of chastisement since they have been "made imperfect" (P, XIV, 224), Wordsworth, with his own self-hating voice and with the help of "Nature," performs this service on himself, while Austen invites us to view this socialization process objectively by setting up the ubiquitous Mrs. Norris to instruct her equally fictional character

Fanny (while her readers look on with horror), as to her proper role in society. Austen also avoids using the word "vulgar" (meaning both ignorant and lacking in good breeding, as well as crude, indecent, obscene and lewd), when describing Fanny's "air," whereas Wordsworth uses it repeatedly when describing the childish joys of his youth. It is as if Austen's desire to reward socially her simpering anti-heroine hinges upon the absence of negatively loaded words when describing Fanny, whereas Wordsworth's contention that there is an essential divinity which passes within childhood is severely undercut by their use. Austen attempts to deny the presence of sexuality in any of her heroines. They may be totally preoccupied with catching men but they never lust after them! Wordsworth, on the other hand, suggests in "Nutting"<sup>23</sup> that children require painfully purgative experiences in order to rid themselves of sexually violent feelings and thus to realize their own full spiritual potential--a spiritual potential which is, paradoxically, filled with a sense of unutterable loss.

Although this poem relates a learning experience in his childhood, "Nutting" is significantly absent from Wordsworth's The Prelude. Wordsworth may, perhaps, have felt that the image of himself which he portrays here detracts from the image of himself he is attempting to create, or that the sentiments about Nature which he expresses in this poem do not really correspond with his more mature attitude towards her in The Pre-

lude. Yet, in this poem and in the emotions which accompany its narrative movement lies the key to Wordsworth's melancholy confusions in The Prelude. For this poem turns on pain and guilt rather than on insight; turns, that is, upon the emotions which he experiences after ravaging the bower rather than upon the painful insight which had provoked his rage in the first place. Nature who was all-in-all to the mature Wordsworth, Nature who had all the positive attributes of a mother<sup>24</sup> is virtually raped by the child in this poem because her virginal, yet voluptuously tempting image only masks her indifference to him. Wordsworth's realization that

The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,  
Wasting its kindness on stocks and stones,  
And on the vacant air.

provokes a kind of sexual violence, a correspondingly brief period of exultation and then pain and guilt. But rather than look back to the real sources of his misery, Wordsworth chooses instead to elevate the object or objects that had caused it in the first place, to worship rather than abandon Mother Nature's false image.

His predicament as a typical child

Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,  
With light upon him from his father's eyes<sup>25</sup>

his early loss of a beloved mother, the impecuniousness and frugality of his "Dame" which forced him to go about "More ragged than need was," to know more than he wished "the blessing then / Of vigorous hunger" (P, 2, 79-80), and to live

"Through three divisions of the quartered year / In penniless poverty" (P, 2, 83-83) drove him to Nature for poetic solace--a solace characterized by contradictions that reflected her own seemingly benevolent and malevolent attitudes. Like an Earth Goddess, Wordsworth's Nature appears to require that his servitude be expressed in justifying her deprivations, his gratitude for these uncomfortable lessons in awe and reverence, and his life to be spent in a melancholy desire for her continued Presence.

Wordsworth's guilty need to enshrine Nature only thinly disguises the oedipal nature of his conflicts with this projected image of his mother--conflicts which, like Fanny Price's conflict with Sir Thomas Bertram, could only be resolved by adopting a worshipful attitude towards the things or beings which had so mysteriously caused them in the first place. That this attitude also masks terror, the terror of a young child being alone in a primarily cold or indifferent society can be inferred from Fanny's home situation and from Wordsworth's virtual orphanage as well as his disinclination to pursue the idea that his affection for and loyalty to "Nature" might not truly be returned in kind. The notion that we must be cruel to be kind embodied in his justificatory attitude towards Nature's deprivations in early childhood, does not foster trust in an innocent child though it may inspire adoration as a protective response to her power. In sublimating the unconsciously sexual

nature of their conflicts with these parental figures in this way, Wordsworth's and Fanny's sexuality (which normally functions to unite), becomes the means by which they separate themselves from the realm of ordinary men: Fanny, in order to perpetuate traditional morality through Edmund, and Wordsworth in order to perpetuate traditional religiosity in his declining life. Somewhere in between, however, is the truth of a child's reality--for the sensual is spiritual when it is also part of that true Nature which is fearless, joyous, caring and free, that Nature which has no need to sanction, because it has not already corrupted the child and his subsequent activities.

The reader may object at this point that Wordsworth repeatedly refers to the visionary gleams that he experienced in his childhood and that these gleams gave him an ecstatic sense of joy far greater than Fanny's sense of gratitude and delight when someone deigns to notice her. But if Nature did reveal to him her true image as an effusion of light which stems from and irradiates our consciousness of the essential unity of all things, these experiences were somewhat rare, and grew exceedingly rare as the world's way of perceiving reality (reflected in the malevolent and benevolent roles that Wordsworth usually assigns to Nature) took control. For even as Wordsworth celebrates these visitations which he says awaken in him "A correspondent breeze" (P, 1, 35), he burdens them with the role of "quickenning virtue" (P, 1, 36), with a sense of gratitude for "breaking up a long continued frost" (P, 1, 40), and with



the hope of performing "punctual service high, / Matins and vespers of harmonious verse!" (P, 1, 44-45) in return.

Like Fanny's, then, I would suggest that these experiences of Wordsworth's seem to imply that the subject of these visitations may not really be worthy of any attention since they appear to inspire a sense of gratefulness and obligation rather than a simple acknowledgement and a kind of adulation imaged in the desire to create matins and vespers.

Although it is evident from numerous passages that Wordsworth believes that Nature both reflected and reinforced the child's inner being, and that his creativity stems from the meeting of the mind and the world in this way, he often appears to forget that his is also a socially-conditioned mind, often reflecting socially-conditioned ideas of good and evil. Thus he is "often . . . perplexed, and cannot part / The shadow from the substance" (P, 4, 263-64). For example in Book Six of The Prelude he sees his independent study at Cambridge as "hardy disobedience toward friends / And kindred, proud rebellion and unkind," deems it even "cowardice" and then suggests that perhaps some "original strength / of contemplation" or "intuitive truths" might have been "gained" (P, 6, 23-41) as a result of this "cowardice."

These children's sense of awe and gratitude (in Wordsworth's case, bordering upon ecstasy), when they have been mysteriously "favoured" from on high is not the only emotional re-

sponse which they share under similar circumstances. For is not Fanny "visionary" when she sees that in order to survive within the family she must be submissive? And, is not Wordsworth's child also "sanctifying, by such discipline/both pain and fear" (P, I, 412-13) when he guiltily returns the boat he has borrowed and goes home? Aren't Wordsworth's threatening landscapes, "the grim shapes that / towered up between him and the stars" (P, I, 381-2) like Fanny's unconscious perceptions of her adoptive family? (MP, I, 2, 14). She, too, is "Fostered alike by beauty and by fear" (P, I, 302), although it is of a more prosaic nature. She, too, responds in a "grave and serious" manner (P, I, 390) to the "unknown modes of being" (P, I, 393) which replace the sense of her own family's "blank desertion" (P, I, 395). In Austen's words, then, "Her feelings were very acute, and too little understood to be properly attended to" (MP, I, 2, 12). She becomes romantically despondent about the change in her environment. Wordsworth's and Fanny's similar emotionally charged experiences of fear and terror, coupled with feelings of guilt or inadequacy reflect similar social attitudes towards them and their activities.

Wordsworth and Austen, however, present these attitudes differently. Wordsworth reveals how these attitudes have become internalized while Austen reveals some of the human sources of these attitudes and the subsequent process by which the values which they imply become internalized. These two author's rhe-

toric, in turn, suggests that they tend to perpetuate the social values of their age through their descriptions of these children and through the resolutions which they propose for them in their adulthood. Yet we sense a kind of unreality about these resolutions, as if the authors, themselves, through the very excesses in their tone and style are consciously or unconsciously undercutting their own perceptions of what should constitute a child's ultimate or mature identity. Common to both Austen and Wordsworth, however, is the belief that something or someone wholly "other" is the true source of the ideal. It is this inherited way of seeing which prevents anything but a pragmatic or melancholy resolution to their narratives.

Just as some anthropologists have found that the symptoms of mental disease, the forms that it takes, vary in different cultures though the actual cause of it may be the same, so do the children in these narratives reveal, in their Self-denying tendencies, the restrictions which have been placed upon them by a death-orientated society. Consequently, in these works even these children's occasional joys and delights cannot be seen as intrinsic, self-generating emotions, but rather as the products of exterior circumstance. The image of the child is both a mirror and its reflection, both a static object and its mirroring activities for these authors. It is not real flesh and blood but a parody of itself.

Consequently, Wordsworth's undue emphasis on the "genius, power, creation and divinity" (P, III, 173-4) which passed within him as a boy both offends me with its egoistic insistence and makes me wonder why on earth he needed to be further "educated," while Austen's presentation of a simpering anti-heroine, makes me wonder why on earth she needed to diminish further the value and integrity of mankind. For it seems to me that organized religion has done this for centuries under various guises and for various political purposes. I can only suggest that Austen, partly because of the more positive implications in her ironic voice, may be unconsciously encouraging us to look more deeply into the sources of our own ideas about the child as well as attempting to deny that there is any alternative to traditional ideas. Plato is said to have supported the notion "that the deepest things are best spoken of in a tone of irony"<sup>26</sup> although Wordsworth, with his melancholy voice would have, I'm sure, found difficulty in accepting this premise. But certainly no boy could have been as impossibly wonderful as Wordsworth's, just as no truly rational girl could have been so consistently submissive, so completely lacking a sense of her own dignity as Fanny Price.

Thus, although Wordsworth and Austen tend to depict many aspects of the child from quite similar social viewpoints, their underlying intentions appear to be different. Wordsworth's intentions seem to be largely self-justificatory (P,

14, 307-11), while Austen's are more complex. For we might ask whether Austen is parodying the superficially romantic image of the child with its visionary gleams (instead of just mournfully describing loss and compensation for loss as Wordsworth does), forcing us to choose between romantic and realistic images, or suggesting, with her ironic voice, that there may be another image of the child which is more real. Being the craftsman that she is, though, Austen might be supposed to have known the limitations of language, and thus, the limitations of both romantic and realistic images. Given Austen's slippery style, and given the fact that she demonstrates, in Mansfield Park, that she is well aware of the hypocrisies inherent in her society, hypocrisies which she tended to use dramatically, as in her portrayal of Fanny Price, in order to point to their ridiculousness, I would suggest that she did see this possibility.

Heaven, for Jane Austen, as well as Fanny Price, then, might be seen as the union of opposites, as the means by which romantic and realistic images interpenetrate and, hopefully, give unconscious rise to a new identity for the child. That both these images are rooted in a negative perception about the nature of mankind is the ultimate irony in Mansfield Park, an irony from which Austen, depressingly enough, could not really depart.

Wordsworth, on the other hand, seems to equate heaven with Nature's maternal breast which, when it is withdrawn, leaves

the child feeling both fearful and bereft, a prey to her more malevolent aspects. His child's growth can be seen as a gradual weaning process and the adoption, in its place, of more or less socially prescribed religious values which he says have even greater significance even though it is plain that Wordsworth only feels happy when Nature smiles on him. For he "had been taught to reverence a Power / That is the visible quality and shape / And image of right reason" who "trains / To meekness, and exalts by humble faith . . . Holds up before the mind intoxicate . . . a temperate show / Of objects that endure" (P, 13, 20-32). Thus, for Wordsworth, "The gods retain their threefold task: they must exorcize the terrors of nature, they must reconcile men to the cruelty of Fate . . . and they must compensate them for the sufferings and privations which a civilized life in common has imposed on them."<sup>27</sup> For Austen, God is what he always was, an imaginative invention, which, like Fanny herself, reflects the best and the worst that society, given the limitations of its perceptions, can offer its members as the personification of the Ideal.

What, then, is the ideology which prompts both Wordsworth and Austen to present these images of children--ones that must inevitably help to determine their destinies? Do they both agree with Edmund Burke that terror is "The ruling principle of the sublime?"<sup>28</sup> Fanny is habitually in dread of her surrogate father, Sir Thomas Bertram (MP, II, I, 134), while Words-

worth is apparently afraid of a malevolent form of Nature. He justifies this fear by maintaining that "the terrors, pains and early miseries " (P, I, 345), comprised a "needful part ... in making up/ The calm existence that is mine when I/ Am worthy of myself!" (P, I, 348-10). Austen, however, sees terror as correspondent with conditions of innocence and feelings of compassion and solicitude in Fanny. For, upon the occasion of Sir Thomas Bertram's return to Mansfield Park, her dread of him mingles with compassion for him as well as solicitude for his priggish son, Edmund (MP, II, I, 134). Terror contributes to the spiritual growth of a child according to Wordsworth while it is co-present with more "god-like" attributes in Austen's child. In Fanny, terror is an emotional experience which demands constant appeasement, which prompts her to be intensely pre-occupied with the rules of propriety, decorum and delicacy, rules which govern her existence in society. This exercise, though, does not guarantee any release from terror; it merely provides an occasion for Fanny to indulge in introspection or moral self-righteousness. Thus, for Austen, terror prevents individual growth and independence by further imprisoning the child in a narrow society of cunningly cruel and bigoted people, just as her own apparent ignorance of its real, though unconscious, sources imprisons Austen in a superficially "realistic" style.

In their portrayals of children, both Wordsworth and Austen reflect the ideologies which govern their pre-Victorian society, ideologies which form future generations and which, by more than inference, show how they, themselves, must have been brought up. Terror is the ruling principle of their society's god Jehovah, a god the people in these children's immediate environment strove to emulate. It was a society where, as late as 1852, "The great aim of all Church of England instruction is to keep them the rural, poor and innocent ignorant of their real position in society and with a becoming reverence for all who have money or power in their purse."<sup>29</sup> It was also a society about which Wraxall, in 1858, said:

England is essentially the home of hypocrisy. We are brought from our youth up to fear what Mrs. Grundy will say, and, though we are not one whit behind our continental neighbours in vice, we conceal it so closely that superficial observers believe in the whiteness of the sepulchre. 30

To me, Wordsworth epitomizes this whited sepulchre since he was a man who saw and celebrated all "The terrors, pains, and early miseries, / Regrets, vexations, lassitudes" (P, I, 345-6) of early childhood as necessary in perfecting the man, rather than conditions which should be eradicated from a child's life. His idea of this man perfected is a parody of what it means to be truly human, suggesting, as it does, that a mild mannered docility is the answer to human problems rather than a mask behind which almost any depravity can or could exist. Like Fanny Price, this type of man would be almost in-



capable of initiating any radical change in himself or in his society. Thus Wordsworth says of this ideal:

his heart will  
 Be tender as a mother's heart;  
 Of female softness shall his life be full,  
 Of humble cares and delicate desires,  
 Mild interests and gentlest sympathies.

(P, XIV, 227-31)

But his description blissfully ignores the fact that all this dough-like "softness" implies spinelessness--certainly not a man who could take control of his own life or care for others in a truly meaningful way.

In her pragmatically ironic yet compassionate portrayal of Fanny Price, Austen demonstrates that the real result of such intellectually self-justificatory rationalizations about the beneficial aspects of terror is a life spent in endlessly boring, cowardly servitude to a society whose god Jehovah requires that one continually re-assess one's "proper" role in a hierarchical society, that one blindly attempt to perpetuate a tradition without examining its real merits and that one seek consolation in traditional institutions rather than ask why there is a need for consolation in the first place. If Wordsworth failed to make that distinction between social and natural influences necessary to the full realization of the Self, Fanny did not seem to know that these distinctions even existed. Her effusions over nature and her desire to preserve certain decorative aspects of it were prompted by her desire to

avoid the discomfort of social change. And though I would admit that Wordsworth's child did have considerably more vitality than Fanny, in later life Wordsworth was forced to acquiesce to the negative power of society to crush the independent spirit because he could not conjoin the conditioned mind with the unconditioned spirit or Soul of man. His moments of inspiration followed by rationalizing commentaries of a philosophically contradictory nature reveal the conflict which raged within him, a conflict which could only be resolved by capitulation to the formal requirements of a repressive society.

On Jane Austen's Mansfield Park

Could you bring an object close  
here, close beside me?

There is this need to climb inside  
these eyes, these smiles, this vulnerability.

Perhaps we could use this temple book  
where the author comes to sympathize  
with her own created things,  
puny and wistful as they seem.

Like votive candles placed to burn  
on the altar of society,-  
a sacrifice too much, too long, too often seen  
to be

anything but

a burning glee of beauty  
that's extinguished  
overnight.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Avrom Fleishman, A Reading of Mansfield Park (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1967), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Fleishman, P. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Dickens, The Old Curiosity Shop (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973).

<sup>4</sup>Charles Dickens, Great Expectations, ed. R.D. McMaster (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1965).

<sup>5</sup>William Wordsworth, The Prelude, in English Romantic Writers, ed. David Perkins (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1967), p. 212.

<sup>6</sup>Jane Austen, Mansfield Park (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965).

<sup>7</sup>John Keats, "Letter to Richard Woodhouse," in English Romantic Writers, p. 1220.

<sup>8</sup>See Philippe Aries, Centuries of Childhood, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1972).

<sup>9</sup>Michael Steig, "Studies in Nineteenth Century Literature" (Burnaby: Simon Fraser Univ., Fall 1983).

<sup>10</sup>John Buchan, "The Novel and the Fairy Tale," in Literary Assessment and Discussion, The Literary Association Pamphlet No. 79 (London: Imperial College Union South Kensington Press, 1931), p. 7.

<sup>11</sup>D. H. Lawrence, "Edgar Allan Poe," in Prose Keys to Modern Poetry, ed. Karl Shapiro (Evanston, Ill., Row, Peterson and Co., 1962), p. 230.

## NOTES

<sup>12</sup>In other words, I do not build an analysis; I seek to prove on that I have understood intuitively.

<sup>13</sup>Elizabeth Jenkins, Jane Austen (London: Victor Bollancz Ltd., 1964), p. 143.

<sup>14</sup>Patrick Brantlinger, "Romances, Novels, and Psychoanalysis," in The Practice of Psychoanalytic Criticism, ed. Leonard Tennenhouse (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1976), p. 22.

<sup>15</sup>Brantlinger, p. 23.

<sup>16</sup>See D. W. Harding, "Regulated Hatred," in Jane Austen, ed., Ian Watts (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall Inc., 1963), p. 166-79.

<sup>17</sup>David Perkins, ed., in English Romantic Writers, p. 172.

<sup>18</sup>William Wordsworth, "Intimations of Immortality," in English Romantic Writers, p. 279.

<sup>19</sup>Francis Jeffrey, "Review of The Excursion," in English Romantic Writers, p. 366.

<sup>20</sup>Jane Austen, Jane Austen's Letters to her Sister Cassandra, 2nd Ed., ed. R. W. Chapman (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964), p. 61.

<sup>21</sup>Sigmund Freud, The Future of an Illusion, ed. James Strachey, trans. W. D. Robson-Scott (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1964), p. 18.

<sup>22</sup>Lionel Trilling, "Mansfield Park, 1954," in Jane Austen, A CaseBook, ed. B.C. Southam (London, The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1976), p. 234.

## NOTES

<sup>23</sup>William Wordsworth, "Nutting," in English Romantic Writers, p. 212.

<sup>24</sup>See Richard J. Onorato, The Character Of The Poet: Wordsworth In The Prelude (Princeton, N.J., Princeton Univ. Press, 1971).

<sup>25</sup>Wordsworth, "Intimations of Immortality," in English Romantic Writers, p. 279.

<sup>26</sup>Edgar Wind. Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance, Rev. Ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), p. 236.

<sup>27</sup>Freud, The Future of an Illusion, p. 24.

<sup>28</sup>Brantlinger, p. 29.

<sup>29</sup>Myron F. Brightfield, Victorian England in its Novels (1840-1870), Vol I (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1968), p. 307.

<sup>30</sup>Brightfield, p. 185.

"And a little child shall lead them"

They say a nation wept  
over little Nell,  
though imageless  
her spirit kept  
company with death.  
The hands took hands  
and wrapped them  
round and round  
then crowned her  
heaven-sent weakness  
with a triple crown.

Say, does she still wander  
that little child  
looking in church grave-yards  
for the one  
who might have saved her  
had he not decided  
to be crucified  
instead?

## CHAPTER TWO

The Dickensian Child: The Old Curiosity Shop

How many of us have placed our affections on people who have, in turn, consciously or unconsciously tried to destroy us? How many of us have experienced the deep frustration that accompanies our endeavors to save people from the consequences of their diseased psychological state? And how many of us also have adopted false ideologies which promise life but which only lead us to the death of our hopes and dreams? Dickens' novel, The Old Curiosity Shop, speaks to me on very deep levels of personal experience, experiences that I have grown to accept as part of my own journey towards freedom. For Dickens' child/wife/mother image of little Nell could have been me, while her grandfather seems to personify those traditional ideologies, those cultural burdens, those trance-like simple beliefs and those familial obligations (born of our ignorance of what real love means), which cling like leeches to our psyche and suck the life-blood from our being.

This portion of my discussion, then, since it has such a strong emotional bias, will take the form of an extended response paper.<sup>1</sup> Because it is also written with the idea of drawing out my most immediate, and therefore strongest impressions it will not depend upon a formal outline nor on any



predetermined conclusion. For reader response criticism requires that we creatively feel with, rather than simply process and then intellectually comment upon literature, that we bring our own vitality and our own experiences to enhance and enlarge upon the author's intentionality.<sup>2</sup> Literature is seen as not only aesthetically in and for itself but also as the means through which we can discover our own humanity reflected in and arising out of the author's imagery. With Rollo May, the psychoanalyst, this form of interpretation implies that "we cannot know except as we feel,"<sup>3</sup> and relies on the premise that the subjective influences both our choice of subject matter and our interpretations of it. But, as objectivists have, perhaps, long suspected, feelings can often be inappropriate, can often mask, like the objectivists' own over-intellectualized responses, deep anger and pain. Like cynicism or sentimentality, some of these responses can be enculturated attitudes deemed appropriate to a specific time or place; puppet emotions brought out to play on a superficial and rickety stage.

With this more expansive and yet, perhaps, unconsciously limited methodological approach and through Dickens' image of little Nell and her grandfather, I hope to explore the reasons for my own anger and pain, to explore how my own epistemology has been warped by the standards of a corrupt society--a society which demands that we, in the name of duty, sacrifice our-

selves to those who, for whatever reason, have presumably cared for us and to whom we have therefore offered our unqualified love.

At an even deeper level, this discussion will draw its energy from my own desire to be free, free from that corrupted sense of guilt which arises as a result of my refusal to conform to traditional patterns of thinking and behavior and free of the anger and pain which accompany that refusal, which serve to mask my own caring. For the weight of tradition and of traditional concepts, imaged in the experiences of little Nell, her physical surroundings, her pilgrimage and her death lies heavily upon this novel as it does, sometimes, on me, while the helplessness of the child and the old man to determine their own destinies within that tradition seems to place mirrors around me. But, even when I do not identify with their helplessness, I still see their images everywhere. For they wander through time and emerge in succeeding generations, like the disembodied phantasies of our own felt sense of impotence, and, when I see them reincarnated in the lives of other people, they seem to take the place of life as it was truly meant to be. My past becomes mirrored in their present while my future seems to be inextricably linked to their destinies. Thus, for me, the ultimate degradation which underlies the ideologies that Nell and her grandfather attempt to re-enact in their lives must be exposed both analytically and compassionately if

we are to stop the generational wheel from turning and get off and walk with integrity.

Thus it surprises me that many critics have dismissed, rather summarily, The Old Curiosity Shop, a book in which Dickens was "more than in any other novel... dominated by feeling," a book in which "deep emotion, rather than a clearly perceived idea or sequence of actions, gave the work its innermost character"<sup>4</sup> and one in which, as John Forster testifies, there was "a profound unconscious element in the genesis of the story."<sup>5</sup> For this very lack of intellectually imposed discipline has, in my own rather heretical experience, often produced startling images, ideas and insights into the nature of reality despite the ideological framework within which we labour; while feelings, if they can be freed from traditionally imposed rationalizations and/or justifications about the nature of man's existence, can often offer us more truth than any philosophical treatise.

To go beyond these rationalizations and justifications in literature and in literary criticism is to reach into the realm of the unexpected, the place where

Dissonance  
(if you are interested)  
leads to discovery 6

and the place where the odd phrase, the injudicious comment, the juxtaposition of seemingly disparate elements, the strangeness of synchronicity or meaningful coincidence plays havoc

with our ordinary expectations. Like little blisters on the smooth surface of our usual sense of reality these "irregularities" are often either ignored or absorbed into the system by a mysterious mental process which infers that by naming or categorizing something, we can know it.

Thus some critics who sense the dissonance in The Old Curiosity Shop have called it Dickens' magical element, claiming that it stems from Dickens' propensity to rely on the fairy tale aspects of reality, but very few, to my knowledge, have taken the central images that he presents very seriously, nor the circumstances in which his characters find themselves as more real than fantastic. For in Dickens' case, the old adage has been turned around. Fiction is now stranger than truth. To many critics, Dickens' characters and their experiences are his creatures of the imagination, his wish-fulfilling fantasies, his neurotic yearnings, or, that much overworked and, consequently, highly suspect explanation, offshoots of his traumatic blacking warehouse experience or of his love for Mary Hogarth. They are, in short, anything but real. And so, if Nell, her grandfather, Quilp, Swiveller, et. al. do not, or never have had their counterparts in real life, or, conversely, are highly dramatized to the point of ridiculousness, there is, of course, no reason for taking them or their experiences very seriously. The drama of their lives can be most comfortably removed from any correspondence with say, the self, the person

down the hall or the intellectual slavey in the next cubicle.

Yet these so-called magical people, fantastic sights and strange occurrences have both a symbolic and an actual reality --the reality of a child who accepts the disturbingly arbitrary nature of the people and events which surround him and who simply lives in the existential present. For notions of good and evil, cause and effect, action and its consequence exist only in time. Dissonance is the child's reality made harmonious through his full realization of the moment. For, unlike adults, the child perceives his environment in terms of his own still integrated self. He is at one with his experiences. That Dickens was able to capture this reality, provide a form of verisimilitude for little Nell which appears like a fairy tale to adults is an achievement which ironically reveals the vast gulf that exists between Dickens and many of his critics, used as they are to rationalizing the irrational rather than wondering about the miraculous as it continually occurs around them.

The child in this tale of two wanderers, a bankrupt old man and his granddaughter who choose to flee to an imaginary freedom rather than remain in the city, is, however, both trusting and suspicious, both childlike in her courage and determination and fearful, both protective and in need of protection. For Nell teeters on the edge of innocence. She remembers "the simple pleasures" of childhood (OCS, XII, 94)

before the "uneasy dream" of adult life (OCS, XII, 93), the preoccupation with obtaining something more than what one already has was thrust upon her. She longs for a return to that innocence beyond experience, that existence which does not see happiness as ephemeral (OCS, IX, 71). In her desire to regain a lost Paradise which would include those that she cares for, she epitomizes the hopes and dreams of most of mankind just as her grandfather represents those attitudes which can stand in the way of their attainment. Her fate is the result of her innocent faith in traditional ways of achieving freedom and happiness.

The excuses that most critics provide for their rather brief discussions of this novel include: (1) that its structure is loose and episodic (thereby applying a novelistic convention to a work which was not originally intended to be a novel, ignoring the many allegorical conventions embedded in this work, and failing to recognize that its seemingly disparate subplots add depth and scope to the phenomenon of little Nell and her grandfather's peculiar, yet strangely familiar characters). (2) that Nell and her grandfather's flight from "the City of Destruction"<sup>7</sup> is insufficiently motivated, that there is, in other words, a "fragility about the nightmare's factual basis"<sup>8</sup> (thereby ignoring the fact that Nell and her grandfather's deep anxiety is more psychological than otherwise and that it stems from ancient social taboos which can determine

more powerfully than any combination of circumstances the impulse to flight). (3) that Quilp and Swiveller are the most vital and, therefore, the most interesting characters in the novel and, consequently, the main source of its energy (thereby ignoring the haunting quality which emanates from the figures of Nell and her grandfather even when they disappear from the narrative and that the daemonic and trickster forces which Quilp and Swiveller represent also have their counterparts with and in Nell and her grandfather respectively).<sup>9</sup>

For Nell is as daemonically driven by her idea of salvation through flight as Quilp is by his idea of destruction through malevolence, while her grandfather is as stubbornly incapable of recognizing the bald truth of his rather incestuous relationship to, and his peculiar image of, little Nell as Swiveller is of admitting the existence of the bed in his own "chambers." As Dickens says, Nell's grandfather (like many of the critics of this novel), was "content to read the book of her heart from the first page presented to him, little dreaming of the story that lay hidden in its other leaves . . ." (OCS, IX, 68). While about Swiveller, as the Perpetual Grand Master of the Glorious Apollos (or, the tongue-in-cheek titular head of the Apollonian rather than the Dionysian version of reality), Dickens says, "Implicit faith in the deception was the first article of his creed. To be the friend of Swiveller you must reject all circumstantial evidence, all reason,

observation and experience, and repose a blind belief in the bookcase" (OCS, VII, 54).

Swiveller's rather humorous title combined with his propensity to ignore or distort the more brutal facts of life to his liking imply a criticism of the Apollonian vision--a vision which Dickens, himself, with almost incantatory insistence, attempts to utilize in order to create an atmosphere of serenity around the death of little Nell. Unconsciously then, Dickens must have known that the Trickster aspects of Swiveller's "faith" have their counterpart in Christianity, luring us, as Nell's grandfather did to her, into deceptive beliefs about the nature of reality after death. Thus, in those happy days before Nell's grandfather thought he ought to "spare her the sufferings that poverty carries with it . . . [ought to] leave her--not with resources which could be easily spent or squandered away, but with what would place her beyond the reach of want forever" (OCS, III, 27), the old man would take Nell on his knee and tell her that her mother "was not lying in her grave, but had flown to a beautiful country beyond the sky, where nothing died or ever grew old" (OCS, VI, 49). The extreme pathos which Dickens brings to Nell's death scene could be seen as partially the result of Dickens' unconscious sense of responsibility for perpetuating this vision as well as an attempt to compensate for his own shaken faith upon



contemplating little Nell's, and her real life counterpart, Mary Hogarth's, demise.

Thus these two descriptive statements alone can provide the basis for a totally new reading of this novel, a reading in which Dickens, by playing on the opposites, that is, by portraying the brutal facts of life and the soporific effects of the religious vision, reveals that they are mutually supportive. Yet his tendency to mythologize, to exaggerate the idiosyncratic qualities of his characters also suggests that, like the gods and goddesses of old, these creatures (which he has insisted are real), operate at only superficially human levels in order to support an archaic and crumbling, yet mutually agreed upon socio/religious perception of reality. As aspiring saint and devil respectively, Nell and Quilp attempt to re-enact man's ancient belief that the opposites can exist in relative isolation from each other. For there is no doubt that Nell believes that she can, through self-sacrifice, save her grandfather, just as there is no doubt that Quilp believes that he, alone, can be the main instrument for her destruction. Co-operation on the part of his intended victim is not a factor which appears to occur to Quilp. But Nell's spiritual blindness, based upon a misguided sense of her own importance, leads to her death just as surely as Quilp's physical blindness (created by the hateful fog which surrounds him before his death) contributes to his. The flight and pursuit drama which

these two protagonists engage in requires mutual participation and it is only when one participant drops out of the game that the other ceases to exist. Thus what seems to be a coincidence in this novel is actually a truism involving the interdependence of opposites. But they are powerless when confronted with the inexorable reality of death since death does not recognize any difference between good, as we usually understand it, and evil as it is traditionally believed to manifest itself.

Yet because many readers are enamoured of the apparent vitality which underlies Dickens' depiction of Quilp and Swiveller (a vitality which depends for its existence upon arousing conscious or unconscious anger in others, which feeds on their energy), they also tend to ignore the extent of Nell's grandfather's ignorant malevolence, the type and degree of anxiety which energizes Nell's fatal determinism and the overall pathetic significance of their allegorical journey which has, as its most immediate prototype, Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress--a moralistically depressing, death-oriented Christian allegory.

Just as Nell transfers most of her dark fantasies (OCS, IX, 69-70) and her more conscious fears "of in some way committing or injuring the old man to whom she was so tenderly attached" and who was "the main cause of her anxiety and distress" (OCS, IX, 68) onto the more obviously malevolent Quilp,

so, it seems, do many readers choose to discuss him rather than explore the reasons why this child has become so apparently vacuous and self-sacrificing. But Quilp, a malicious yet lively dwarf sensitive to anyone who appears to disparage his image, could be seen as Nell's grandfather's double or as the repressed, cunningly avaricious and lustful side of the old man's personality that causes Nell so much anxiety and makes her want to escape from his contamination. Like Nell's grandfather Quilp never actually does anything obviously harmful to little Nell, appears to treat her with a seeming courtesy, but his greedy, self-centered, essentially callous nature coupled with his expressed desire to make little Nell "Mrs. Quilp the second, when Mrs. Quilp the first is dead" (OCS, VI, 45), unconsciously reminds Nell of her own relationship to her grandfather and of all that is so frightfully latent in her grandfather's character.

As her grandfather's double, then, the silent partner who makes his gambling fever possible, Quilp is quiescent during the "honeymoon stage" of Nell and her grandfather's flight from temptation. But when Nell is offered a "good situation" with Mrs. Jarley (OCS, XXVII, 205), Quilp erupts into Nell's conscious awareness as if he had magically "risen out of the earth" (OCS, XXVII, 207). For, determined to share in Nell's good fortune, to retain that seeming part of him which is more positively alive, Nell's grandfather has insinuated to Mrs.

Jarley, despite her protestations, that he would be lost without little Nell. The unconscious return of her grandfather's avariciousness is imaged in the reappearance of Quilp beckoning to little Nell to join him in his scheming and greedy life. Quilp dies, however, about the same time that her grandfather recognizes Nell's very human suffering and fragility, but by then it is too late to save her. Deprived of Nell, the "good" reason for his existence just as Quilp is gradually deprived of his rational senses, the old man also dies like Quilp, surrounded by people who could save him although "he himself had [psychologically] shut and barred them out" (OCS, LCVII, 510).

Nell's self-sacrificial tendencies stem from her apparent lack of true awareness, her inability to see that her grandfather's seeming helplessness gives him power over her, that it masks his need to possess and control her through the acquisition of money. But just as Nell and her grandfather run away from themselves rather than from any truly demonstrable threat, both physically and in the form of a quest and psychologically in the form of sudden illness (OCS, X, 78-81) or gradual death from their own personal fears and sexual conflicts, so, it seems do many readers attempt to avoid some of the central issues embodied in this text. That evil should manifest itself in the form of a feeble, seemingly loving old man, that it should also exist in the fears and speculations and in the "moral" behavior of an innocent child willing to ac-

cept the responsibility for his diseased psychological state undermines some precious illusions that we would often prefer to keep rather than confront in all their abhorrent reality.

Thus in contrast to their admiration of the vitality of Quilp and the lively yet conniving Swiveller, many readers appear to respond negatively to the child-as-mother image that Dickens presents in little Nell even though Dickens has quite clearly delineated the historical, environmental and psychological reasons why this child is compelled to present such an unnatural image. For Nell is not merely "the apotheosis of Mary Hogarth"<sup>10</sup> but a compassionately understood and portrayed distinctive character whose real childhood has been suppressed and her personality molded by the sick needs of her grandfather. Still critics complain about her so-called "purity" (thereby ignoring her fantasies which unconsciously involve her grandfather in a death wish) (OCS, IX, 69), while, contradicting themselves, they maintain that she is precocious. They see her as vapid and then claim that she is an anomaly. Her "goodness" is decried, while to some critics, such as Oscar Wilde<sup>11</sup> and Aldous Huxley, her life and death, as Dickens portrayed it, "is distressing in its ineptitude and vulgar sentimentality," a sentimentality which "leaves us not merely cold but derisive."<sup>12</sup>

What underlies this manifestation of ignorance? What peculiar kind of thinking could trigger glee from the death of

even a fictional fourteen year old child? Are there, perhaps, some correspondences here between these critical responses in which the "total conception of the child as heroine, martyr, angel, and child-bride of the underworld" is repellent and the fact that "so much significance is being read into her" by the novelist?<sup>13</sup> Persephone was safely ensconced in myth. Is little Nell's image and experience too close for comfort? And does this inappropriate emotional response constitute a defense or a reflection of the social attitudes towards the child which Wordsworth and Austen so ably depicted? Are these critics, as I have suggested in my poems, actually perpetuating Victorian attitudes toward the child which include the unacknowledged wish to malign or to destroy anything that is beautiful and innocent?

Thus Gabriel Pearson, in his flippantly clever interpretation, complains that the "significance [that] is being read into [little Nell is] all so unsupported by anything she does or suffers,"<sup>14</sup> and in so doing he displays not only a total lack of understanding about the internal suffering of children who are expected to take on responsibilities far beyond their age and experience and to endure physical hardships from which even an adult might cringe, but also an almost total lack of awareness that little Nell also symbolizes all those childhood experiences of social deprivation and repression, religiously seductive manipulation and ultimate betrayal--experiences that

are quite common in the lives of many children and ones that can, without some professional intervention, be quite devastating.

Yet that which is consciously or unconsciously ignored often has unadmitted importance. Like the silences in literature or the pauses in poetry and drama, the things which are never mentioned or never completely developed could be seen as signifying the observance of a deeply ingrained social taboo or the presence of repressed emotions "that do often lie too deep for tears."<sup>15</sup> Consequently, to discuss form rather than content, and/or the relative merits of Dickens' eidetic imagery, or to apply some pre-existing literary theory or definition of what the novel should be to this most unique work of art, is, I feel, an attempt to avoid coming to terms with the ideational content in The Old Curiosity Shop--a novel which, as I have previously mentioned, is grounded upon deep personal emotion and upon an expert interweaving of fantasy and reality and of traditional ideology and its inevitable consequences.

This mechanical approach, then, which is often brought to interpretations of The Old Curiosity Shop is also at variance with the emotional spirit with which this novel is written. Unlike many modern writers who adopt a pseudo-sophisticated cynicism in order to disguise the fact that they are baffled with life, Dickens celebrates the underlying reasons for its vitality. He provides us with clues from which we can draw in-

ferences; presents us with contrasting images that we might see their underlying unity; provides us with the tale of a paradoxical journey to freedom (since it involves the pilgrimage of a child), that we might ponder its unusual significance; encloses this in an allegorical framework in order to encourage us to study its repetitive aspects; and incorporates within his commentaries both the sympathetic ethos of a social worker and the underlying ambivalences of a more or less religiously conservative omniscient observer.

For Dickens' empathy with the child, as the embodiment of the Victorian ideal of self-sacrifice, is ridden with conflicts, conflicts which arise out of his attempts to apply a more or less Apollonian vision of the child, in the face of Dionysian or daemonic urges and impulses which his society, with its dying and resurrected god, reflects. As "the only pure, fresh, youthful object" among a throng of "wild grotesque companions" (OCS, I, 13), little Nell's image, according to Master Humphrey, the initial narrator of this tragic tale, does not require any particular "effort of imagination" to be pictured "alone, unwatched, uncared for, (save by angels,) yet sleeping peacefully" (OCS, I, 13). Dickens, through Master Humphrey's vision of little Nell, prepares us to accept the seemingly protective benevolence of Nell's grandfather's desire to "place her beyond the reach of want for ever" (OCS, III, 27). But although both statements appear to elevate Nell's im-



age beyond the norm, to impart a specialness to her condition, both statements carry with them the implication of her death.

Thus little Nell, Dickens' central character is, like Honig's courtly lady, also "the overidealized [child] woman [who] invariably evokes a religious sense of awe to which she is sacrificed as the fatal object. Being love's martyr and scapegoat, she is ultimately depersonalized; only the ideal espouses her."<sup>16</sup> But the fact that little Nell is a child and therefore much closer to that original state of innocence deemed perfection, rather than a figment of man's over-blown imagination which the woman in the courtly love tradition epitomizes, makes Nell's position just that much more precarious. For the urge to idealize and then to adore that ideal is inexorably linked to the urge to destroy. Traditionally, man has been quite willing to debase himself, yet he unconsciously both hates himself for this and, by projection, the image which he adores, which he feels by comparison with himself, has been responsible for that debasement.

Many readers have sensed a certain blankness or depersonalization about little Nell (as if she lived on another plane of existence) and yet have reacted violently to her death. For she represents both a reality and an ideal to them--the reality of the child which they feel they have lost and an ideal of perfection, which, because it has been adored rather than identified with, has now been even further removed from them by her

death. That this ideal image should also embrace the idea of self-sacrifice as a means to someone else's salvation can only increase the sense of sorrow and of unconsciously shared guilt that they feel at her death even though Dickens has made it very clear, through his imagery and through the concern evinced by Master Humphrey at the very beginning of this novel, that Nell is doomed, doomed to personify a Victorian ideal which is an abstraction from the reality of a life that is truly lived.

It is certainly more to Dickens' credit then, rather than the reverse, that he portrays little Nell as both real and as an abstraction from an ideal since, in so doing, he is making a social comment upon the upbringing of children which is still, I believe, relevant today. That he presents her as one in a succession of women idolized by a weak man for their propensity to uncomplaining faithfulness and self-martyrdom, and that he describes how much she has been kept from contact with other children, with, ostensibly, no knowledge of any different way of being in the world; that he also reveals how incapable her grandfather was of seeing Nell as a person in her own right--thus--" 'Aye, aye, I'll listen,' returned the old man, still without looking at her; 'a pretty voice. It always had when it was her mother's, poor child'" (OCS, XXXI, 232)--as well as how much the old man must have projected upon her the sweet ways and mannerisms of those dead women "who seemed to have been present to him through his whole life" (OCS, IX, 68) shows us

that little Nell was a child who was never permitted to live as a child even though she had the courage and the determination to do it. By succinctly outlining how the processes of isolation, projection, subtle encouragement of emulation (OCS, VI, 49), and guilt-sharing (OCS, XXXI, 232), can force a child to become an actor in a live performance orchestrated by someone else, Dickens demonstrates how children can lose their real identities, and thus why he presents Nell in such a seemingly vacuous way.

In this novel Dickens is also demonstrating how the capacity to love which children have can be used against them by stimulating their protectiveness towards the very people who are consciously or unconsciously destroying them. This phenomenon is well-known today in the case-histories of battered children. Yet the phenomenon of a psychologically battered child, with its more subtle but equally destructive experiences which Nell represents is still only superficially recognized today even though Dickens was apparently very well aware of it over a century ago. Consequently, some critics have deplored the degree of pathos which Dickens brings to little Nell's death, devoutly believing (because, I feel, of their own misplaced loyalties), that such things have never happened to them.

In relation to this, what I am also suggesting, then, is that, although Mary Hogarth may have been the model for Dick-

ens' little Nell, Nell's life, and the fact that she had to be a victim of both parental neglect and parental overprotectiveness, must have been a part of Dickens' own childhood experience, an experience which must have had far deeper and more traumatic causes than a few months working in a blacking warehouse. That Dickens chose not to reincarnate her through Kit Nubbles' progeny, that Nell is presented as the last of a line of such "saintly" women in this novel indicates to me both the degree of his horror at her fate and his devout wish that such exploitation might cease forever.

Yet if Nell was never able to live as a child, her grandfather, since his first wife's death, was never able to live as a man. For he held in his mind an idealized image of her on which, because of its uncomplainingly faithful and redemptive aspects, he felt dependent. Thus in her daughter "the mother lived again. [And] You may judge with what devotion he who lost that mother almost in the winning, clung [emphasis mine] to this girl, her breathing image" (OCS, LXIX, 524). Upon her early death, then, little Nell became the next victim, as, under the guise of parental protectiveness, the old man gambled, both literally and figuratively to keep her to himself exclusively. Ironically, he chained himself to the image of her that he had created and, in so doing, contributed to her death.

"Blest be the tie that binds . . . ."17 intones an old, and, I am sure, much loved Victorian hymn even though Christ said:

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth;  
I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am  
come to set a man at variance against his father,  
and the daughter against her mother . . . for He  
that loveth father or mother more than me is not  
worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter  
more than me is not worthy of me. 18

Thus, if we see Christ in the Jungian sense as the archetype of the Self, his own tenets suggest that we love and so become worthy of ourselves before we truly can extend our caring to others. Christ's divisive image of the sword also suggests that we must divorce ourselves from the negative influence of traditional authority figures in order to accomplish this task. In the combined religious and psychological sense, Nell and her grandfather's mutually exclusive devotion to one another is Self-destructive.<sup>19</sup> For the impulse to self-sacrifice which they both embrace in one form or another, was also the one which Christ mistakenly adopted and the one which inevitably resulted in his agonized cry on the cross of "Eli, Eli lama sabachthani."<sup>20</sup> As Robert Graves says of him:

At the Last Supper, in the attempt to fulfill a paradoxical prophecy of Zechariah, he offered himself as a eucharistic sacrifice for his people, and ordered Judas to hasten the preparations for his death. In the event he was crucified like a harvest Tammuz, not transfixed with a sword as the Messiah was fated to be . . . . 21

Thus Christ became, in effect, "the crucified Man-god of pre-historic paganism"<sup>22</sup> and, consequently, is still worshipped today in the cannibalistic rite of Holy Communion as if he were "another Tammuz, Dionysus, Zagreus, Orpheus, Hercules or Osiris."<sup>23</sup>

That Dickens must have sensed this central paradox in Christianity, the fact that self-sacrifice negates the archetype of the Self which Christ also represents and that, therefore, in emulating that aspect of Christ's life as Nell did, one is actually behaving in a mechanically suicidal manner, is reflected in the extremity of Dickens' feelings about her death. For Nell as a Christos figure, or the archetype of the Self, who sacrifices herself in a mistaken endeavor to save her grandfather is also, by implication, all men who feel constrained to follow this Christian precept. Thus Dickens says that Nell's approaching death ". . . casts the most horrible shadow upon me . . . I tremble to approach the place . . . Nobody will miss her like I shall. It is such a very painful thing to me, that I really cannot express my sorrow. Old wounds bleed afresh when I only think of the way of doing it; what the actual doing it will be . . . ." And, "I can't preach to myself the schoolmaster's consolation, though I try."<sup>24</sup> It seems to me that the child who pursued Dickens in his dreams was an image of himself as an innocent child as well as a haunting reminder of his now troubled religious conscience. It is

as if Nell, doomed as a result of the role Dickens assigns her in The Old Curiosity Shop, has returned to life, demanding that Dickens consciously recognize how distorted and self-destructive were the beliefs and values which both had created her self-sacrificial image and destroyed her freedom to be. In this sense, Dickens' repeated references to little Nell as "the child" imply that the child's image cannot be defined, that when we do define it, or impose a moral vision upon it, we can destroy it.

Significant to Nell's death as a form of suicidal self-sacrifice, as a spiritual neglect of the Self for other people, is the fact that nowhere in the text can we isolate symptoms of any physical disease other than a certain bodily weakness from which she apparently recuperates. We do know, however, that Nell was constrained to share in her grandfather's guilt by the mere fact of her existence (OCS, XXXI, 232) and that, in the course of her frustrating journey to save him, she made certain resolutions which, by textual implication, indicate that she has resolved to die as the only means left which will save him. Thus, says Dickens, "It was not the lightest part of her sorrow to know [when the old man steals her money in order to gamble, and plans to steal even more from their benefactress, Mrs. Jarley] that this was done for her" (OCS, XXXI, 232). Consequently, upon their escape from this new temptation, Nell becomes "sensible of a new feeling within her, which elevated her nature, and inspired her with an energy and a confidence

she had never known (OCS, XLIII, 320). But this new feeling contains "no fear for herself . . . no thought of any wants of her own" (OCS, XLV, 336). The seeds of self-sacrifice have been sown in her newly spiritualized nature. Nell has become her own worst enemy.

Dickens' tendency to elevate Nell's image, to give her a "face where thoughtful care already mingled with the winning grace and loveliness of youth," and a "spiritual head," a "too bright eyed" and "such high resolve and courage of the heart" (OCS, XLIII, 330) serves several purposes. It affirms her still child-like qualities; it focuses our attention upon them, rather than upon her necessity now to have them; and it effectively eliminates any suspicion that Nell, herself, suspected that there were any sexual implications in her relationship with her grandfather. Is this also, perhaps, one of the reasons why Dickens' grief was so deep upon the death of Mary Hogarth? Were there incestuous implications in their relationship which could only be resolved by elevating her image (as Nell's grandfather does) to the point of adoration--an adoration which unconsciously destroys the real person even while it seeks to preserve his or her image? We may never know.

Yet, though we may never know the real reasons why Dickens idealized Mary Hogarth, we can suggest how this idealization gives little Nell and, by association, her grandfather, such a paradoxical degree of power. For this martyred, somewhat mys-



terious pair's very helplessness is the source of their power, a power which generates feelings of either malevolence or benevolence from all those who touch them. Thus, in The Old Curiosity Shop both adults and children revolve about their images in attitudes of either love and adoration or of hatred, and Nell and her grandfather's protection and/or destruction assumes an importance in their lives out of all proportion to what this strange couple actually give in return.

For Nell's blind devotion to her grandfather (a virtue tacitly sanctioned by most of the old bachelor gentlemen of her acquaintance) forces her to abandon her bird (a symbol of her potentially independent spirit) and later flee from Mrs. Jarley, the only person who could offer her the opportunity to see that the world was reflected in her wax museum--full of misguided mannequins tricked out in human form. Her caring, courage, and determination is twisted into the service of death or deathlike beings; her curiosity into a sick fascination with the dead and dying since they unconsciously remind her of her grandfather's spiritual condition and consciously remind her of her own fate if she continues to attempt to save him. Nell is admired, then, not really for what she actually does, but for the qualities that she exhibits doing it. She is hated not only because men envy the qualities she has that they have lost, but also because they sense the self-deception and futility of her devotion and her impulse to self-sacrifice.

Nell's grandfather, moreover, is initially presented as a rather senile old man and then as a helpless, whining leech who is rather fuzzily fond of innocent children yet apparently ready, whenever the opportunity arises, to abandon this pose if he has a chance to gamble. He is both servile and cunning, both meek and, at times, angrily domineering. He is, in short, far more vicious than he first appears to be. His dependency on the child is both his weakness and the source of his feeble strength for without her he fades away and dies.

He may genuinely believe that he cares for Nell, but his caring is founded upon greed, both for her and for the money with which to keep her. His paranoia stems from this unconscious knowledge. As an individual Nell does not exist. She is merely an object upon which he can fantasize the past (manifested in his many absent states of consciousness), project the future (manifested in his dreams of her future riches), and use as an excuse for his own weaknesses.

Considering these aspects of their personalities, the fact that Nell and her grandfather seem to exist primarily in and for each other, that theirs is a closed circle based on mutual deception and one which cannot truly admit the light of reason, why would anyone want either to protect them or destroy them? In other words, if their real characters cannot command unqualified respect nor elicit unreasonable fear, how and why are they capable of arousing such passions? Quilp's stated reasons

for his pursuit of Nell--that the old man might still have some money, is patently false, since he himself had witnessed the grandfather's revelation of his pauperhood to Nell (OCS, IX, 70-72). But the fact that Quilp hated virtuous people might have more to do with it. Startlingly enough, the whole conflict in this novel seems to boil down to either hatred of the seemingly Christian virtues that Nell represents, or love and support of them.

Provoked by a Quilpian loathing of virtuous hypocrites, but, unlike him, realizing my own participation within this tradition when my judgements are not informed by experience and compassion, I seek in this discussion to mediate between these two responses, to see both how and why our innate caring has been perverted through the institutionalization of false ideologies. Thus I cannot delight in Nell's death though I agree that she had to die, nor can I truly blame her grandfather for performing within an age-old tradition which sees men as the dupes of seductively beautiful women, weak male partners unwilling to acknowledge their own drives to participate in the "sins" of carnal or of Self-knowledge. Thus in Genesis Adam blames Eve for his fall, while in the pagan worship of the Great Goddess her male servitors literally castrate themselves rather than admit that their adoration of this creature has a sexual basis.

But, one might ask, just what else do these two helpless wanderers represent? For there are many pathetically "virtuous" people who are not powerfully evocative, do not elicit a strong emotional response from us. I see them, despite the disparity in their ages, as Adam and Eve figures, while Dickens (in the context of an implied metaphor) links Nell and her grandfather with the conditions of sleep and death respectively (OCS, XXII, 92-3). (In this respect I am assuming that we are not dealing directly with Nell's childish qualities of love, innocence, courage, determination, and simple trust, since they are often subsumed in the service of her grandfather, but with those more "adult" virtues of hers which include: blind faith, perverted will, Christian humility, and the impulse to self-sacrifice.)

As Adam and Eve figures they are wanderers, cast out by a Quilp/Jehovah figure from the ruined garden with its mementoes of past glory which the Old Curiosity Shop can represent, and forced to wander the earth "hand in hand" in search of their lost innocence. Their plight is vast because they are ignorant of the fact that their quest can never be fulfilled and that, in terms of Christian theology, their journey, if it is to be successful, must end in death. Their combined helplessness in the face of the strangely popular belief that true happiness can only be realized in physical death makes them a living reminder of the futility inherent in traditional religious think-

ing, the circularity of its diseased logic and the underlying viciousness of its assumptions about the nature of humanity which determine most of its ethical principles. Thus, however dimly the archetypal aspects of these two figures are recognized by those who attempt to save Nell and the old man, these would-be helpers have one unconscious thing in common--the wish that this cycle of human misery, which Nell and her grandfather's frantic journey represents, be broken. For traditionally a quest implies that something has been lost and that this "something" cannot be found this side of death. Presumably created in the image of God, man evidences his lack of faith in this idea through a belief that peace can be found in some other state or place than that of the living Self.

Thus, if we look deeper into the parallel I have drawn between Nell and her grandfather and our first parents, we see (1) that they are fleeing from wrath brought on by a form of greed which has unconsciously sexual implications, (2) that, though Nell is only a child, she is used, like Eve, as an excuse for her grandfather's weakness as well as the reason for his eventual death, (3) that her ignorance of the real reasons for her attempt to recapture her lost innocence corresponds to Eve's ignorance of the degree of her "crime." Dickens says in a later, but similar context, "she [Nell] fed the fire that burnt him up, and put him perhaps beyond recovery" (OCS, XXXII, 240). For Nell's urge to save her grandfather before herself

is inextricably linked to her predetermined role as child/wife/mother and spiritual guide--a role that she cannot abandon and still remain true to her Grandfather's traditional values and to the identity which he has imposed upon her. But had she, instead, chosen to save herself, to release him from that sense of responsibility for her that he was so ill-equipped to handle, rather than simply increase his unconscious sense of guilt, her grandfather might have lived long enough to be able to take responsibility for himself. Their resemblance to our first parents is also paralleled by the fact that immediately preceding their flight from Quilp and his insidious helper, Sampson Brass, Nell and her grandfather engage in a kind of marriage ceremony. This is imaged by Dickens in the following passage:

And, then, the old man clasped his hands above her head, and said, in a few broken words, that from that time forth they would wander up and down together, and never part more until Death took one or other of the twain. (OCS, XII, 94)

Thus the latent incestuous implications of their relationship--the numerous instances of physical touching, their propensity to walk hand in hand and their loving, exclusive, devotion to one another tend to further support this interpretation of Nell and her grandfather's correspondences with Adam and Eve. That they were seemingly as ignorant of this taboo as their biblical counterparts is also apparent, although the old man's confusion when confronted with Quilp's sexually loaded

and rather pointed inferences with regard to Nell and himself might beg the question (OCS, IX, 73). In addition to this, however, is the fact that Dickens does not present Nell as a "normal" child, but rather as a reincarnated image of both her grandfather's wife and his daughter--a product of generations of female self-martyrdom in the service of weak men.

Yet in her role as mother to the old man, Nell achieves almost the status of the Madonna leading "her sacred charge [or the repository of traditional religious thinking] farther from guilt and shame" (OCS, XLIV, 333). Thus with her

too bright eye, the spiritual head, the lips  
that pressed each other with such high resolve  
and courage of the heart, the slight figure firm  
in its bearing and yet so very weak (OCS, XLIII, 320)

she tells a silent tale "as if they had lived a thousand years before and were raised from the dead and placed there by a miracle" (OCS, XLIII, 325).

Here it seems that Dickens, in the figure of little Nell, is resurrecting the age-old tendency to worship a virgin goddess whose most primitive manifestation is The Great Goddess. This creature compels men's adoration and consoles them with death for it. As a siren and a goddess, she leads men both to bliss and to destruction in the toils of her service. They, too believe that they cannot live without her. She is both a mother and a muse, their Generatrix and the inspiration of

their lives. Certainly, Nell seems to have been all these things to her grandfather in The Old Curiosity Shop.

Though I have traced the connections between Nell and her grandfather and Adam and Eve, and the similarities between Nell and the Virgin Mary as a manifestation of the Great Goddess, Dickens sees a parallel between the images of Nell and her grandfather and the states of sleep and death respectively. Commenting upon Nell's grandfather's seeming inability to "contemplate their real position," to lapse instead into a "listless passionless creature," Dickens says that "We call this a state of childishness, but it is the same poor hollow mockery of it, that death is of sleep" (OCS, XII, 92). He asks "Where, in the sharp lineaments of rigid and unsightly death is the calm beauty of slumber . . . ?" (OCS, XII, 93) Dickens then goes on to say:

Lay death and sleep down side by side, and say who shall find the two akin? Send forth the child and childish man together, and blush for the pride that libels our own old happy state, and gives its title to and ugly and distorted image. (OCS, XII, 93)

In so doing, he demonstrates the vast differences between the being of a child and the becoming of a childish old man--how the former is natural and the latter is emotionally overblown and distorted as the Christian eulogy Dickens performs upon Nell's death where he does compare her death with sleep.

Rather than blithely criticize Dickens' treatment of little Nell's death, it is as well to bear these earlier com-



ments in mind. The question then arises as to whether Dickens, at this point in the novel, felt as emotionally overwhelmed as the child he had felt with and wrote about, whether he deliberately chose this overly sentimental approach as a comment upon much of what her own life had been in relation to her grandfather and to death, or whether Dickens believed that the only way he could escape from his own pain was to fall back into illusion by elevating Nell's image to that of an angel.

He knew the difference between sleep and death, the horror of their mingling in the minds of foolish men, just as he knew the difference between a child and a childish old man. What was his underlying purpose? His intentionality? Or did he know, as the media know with respect to Ethiopia today, that sentimental portraits can provoke people to some activity on behalf of innocent victims where more legitimate feelings of anger at man's helpless ignorance and greed would only evoke self-defensive rage from his readers? Whatever his reasons or lack of reasons for writing about Nell's death in this way, Dickens cared about children more than he feared the censure of cynics and he expressed that caring rather than have it fester underneath a pseudo-sophisticated approach to the use of language.

Dickens' analogies between sleep and death, the child and the childish old man illuminate our perceptions about Nell and

her grandfather and alert us to the conflicts which underlie Dickens' presentation of these two people as engaging in a sort of Pilgrim's Progress towards the Eternal City. For if Nell's state is like sleep, she never truly awakens, while if the old man's is like death or like one of "the living dead who could crawl above" her grave (OCS, LXXII, 542), his actual death is simply a continuation of the same state. They are in this sense, then, both aspects of eternity, existing out of time and space as we usually know it. Yet, if they are aspects of eternity, they are also eternally with us in one form or another.

Dickens further illustrates this idea in Nell's attempts to awaken, to recover her innocence by fleeing to the countryside--a conventional symbol for the lost paradise. But since she is in a state of sleep (brought on by adopting traditional roles and ideologies), she must drag Death, its logical outcome, with her. She is also forced, in an uncanny way, to encounter death in its many guises repeatedly throughout her journey. For, as the embodiment of the Victorian ideal of self-sacrifice, she must, as she herself says, "learn to die . . . ." (OCS, LII, 386) in order to fulfill her own and her grandfather's dream. Ironically, it is only when it is too late to save her that the old man comes to see Nell as a truly human, suffering individual.

Nell's grandfather, moreover, has many similarities with the image of Death in Chaucer's The Pardoner's Tale.<sup>25</sup> Like

him, the old man complains to Quilp that death is always "shunning the needy and the afflicted, and all those who court it in their despair" (OCS, IX, 75). His walking stick and his scene with the gamblers in the woods where they quarrel over money (OCS, XLII, 313-17), also remind me of Death in this tale. For Chaucer's Death is also an old man who really only wants to die and who uses greed as the means whereby others may join him in that death. He creates a situation in which his own avariciousness becomes the occasion for both a homicide and a suicide just as Nell's grandfather's greed ultimately has both homicidal and suicidal effects.

In keeping with my thesis that Nell's grandfather also personifies all those traditional ideologies, those cultural burdens which can destroy us, just as Nell represents our youthful attempts to escape them, Dickens provides us with many instances where the old man can be seen as a clinging, creeping menace. From Nell's early fantasies of her grandfather's blood creeping towards her (OCS, IX, 69), to his actual acting out of these fantasies in the robbery scene (OCS, XXX, 229), from Dickens' comment on "the living dead . . . who could still crawl and creep above Nell's grave" (OCS, LXII, 542), to the later image of her grandfather hovering expectantly over it (OCS, LXXII, 546), Dickens' image of the old man resonates with all our superstitious dread of the restless living dead and their apparently unconscious desire to envelop and consume more posi-

tive and vital spirits just as society can consume and thereby destroy its own youthful idealists.

In defense of Nell's grandfather, critics, however, might say that his obvious senility might excuse him. But, as I have already suggested, this pose of his can be dropped the minute he has a chance to gamble. We may perceive gambling to be as stupid as Nell's grandfather appears to be, but we do not generally see gamblers as excusably insane. That Nell's grandfather must have played the same stupidly helpless, clinging role in relation to his wife and daughter, that he, in other words, was basically "senile" most of his life is evidenced by the "Good Angel" roles that they played "--abiding by [him] in all reverses--redeeming all [his] sins--" (OCS, LXIX, 524). Noble as their self-sacrifice may appear to be, all of the women in Nell's grandfather's life died an early death as a result.

"It has often been said," maintains Dorothy Van Ghent, "that Dickens' point of view is that of the undernourished child roving London streets at night . . . but it is not childish."<sup>26</sup> The child's point of view, and the adult's search for truth combine to produce a work whose significance does lie in the fact that "Nell's virtues are marooned, as it were, in the midst of a boundless waste of unreality." Her sufferings do not, as Huxley declaims, "lack significance

because of this isolation" but are the direct result of it.<sup>27</sup> Without real caring children can and do fade away and die. Without true communion, their courage alone can sustain them. That this courage should be put to the service of Death is the tragedy of Nell's life and the tragedy of all those who follow in her martyred footsteps.

Dickens, far more clearly than either Austen or Wordsworth, was able to see a child's essence; was able to see how traditional ideas and ideologies had warped and tainted it. His grief at Nell's death is far more real and more soundly based than either Austen's sophisticated irony or Wordsworth's pseudo-melancholy, since Nell's death symbolized to him the death of all that is beautiful and real in our lives in exchange for an ideology with no foundation in fact. Like Austen, Dickens was aware that children were used to uphold fictitious ideals. But, unlike Austen, his depiction of the old man as the logical outcome of clinging to these ideals and of the child as the victim of them shows us that he did not wish the misery that these false ideologies cause to be perpetuated in future generations. Dickens, to his credit, could not be either stoic or pragmatic about the death of a child's spirit. For upon the freedom of the child from beliefs and ideologies which damage or destroy his right to be rests our future as independently caring human beings.

In a footnote at the beginning of this chapter I have mentioned the concept of intentionality, while, in the introduction to my thesis, I have said that my interest does not lie with the obvious but with those details which subvert or undermine ordinary perception. To me, a novel which is informed purely by conscious intention holds no surprises, no sense and the author was engaged in any personal sense of discovery. We search for the Known down unstructured paths as Dickens did when he created this enchanting tale of a child and a feeble old man, as Dickens did when he subsequently found that he could not believe in the schoolmaster's consolation.

Intentionality is the whole person's response to his world as distinct from his conscious intention. Its province lies both within and without ordinary perception. Thus in Dickens' animated world, people, things and events escape through the grid which the conditioned mind would impose. Their vitality stems from the source of life which is beyond the mind's limited ability to control. In details such as Nell's fears and fantasies and the old man's sleazy sanctimoniousness (imaged in the "marriage" scene), Dickens unconsciously undermines his intention to present Nell as a wholly innocent child, her grandfather as a paternally caring old man. In details such as Nell's unnatural preoccupation with death and her grandfather's exaggerated fear of social punishment (OCS, XIX, 149), Dickens unconsciously undermines his intention to uphold morally the uncomplaining and self-sacrificial roles which his

society imposes upon its weaker members. This, I believe, was because Dickens sensed that these ideas resulted in the exploitation and eventual destruction of the child's independent spirit.

In Great Expectations, the novel which I shall discuss in the next chapter, we again see the child subjected to physical and psychological abuse--abuse which is only partially justified by reference to the moral superiority of these ideas. This time, however, the child attempts to escape his fate by a seeming rejection of the people who have acquired and attempted to perpetuate this moral heritage. Again we see Dickens' conscious intention to uphold traditional ideas which center around humility and self sacrifice undermined by the unconscious ethics of his artistic nature.

Prayer of the Twice-born

Because in the end  
there is nothing,  
all we have fought for  
only the rind of the lemon  
oily, bitter and twisted  
like the names of the dead  
we have striven to raise  
as outlets for our own chagrin  
that they might live  
though we die in them,  
Protect us  
God of the Starvelings  
from the raked edge  
of their helplessness  
mouths, raw as cynicism  
hungrily gaping  
for sustenance  
over and over  
again.



## Celebrating the Child

Sometimes  
when envy doesn't keep  
a watch on movement  
when the still days meet in silence  
and the skies retreat  
from this narrow strip of sun I live in  
and the day widens imperceptibly  
you stoop to gather these  
dark words from my eyes, try  
to give a name to this thing  
that has no memory in time  
flung like bits of promises  
for the wind to sail in  
warming the blood-red wine  
I never sip  
Then, backwards, detailing the story of our lives,  
I mourn the loss of comradeship--  
my beloved apprentice--  
sorcerers of time and bliss  
who have no indices  
with which to measure or to recognize  
the holy tribe  
who still speak  
sometimes  
through our eyes.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>For an extended discussion of the pedagogical and interpretive uses of response papers, see David Bleich, Subjective Criticism, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1978).

<sup>2</sup>Rollo May, Love and Will, (New York: Dell Pub. Co., Inc., 1983), pps. 231-2. Rollo May defines "intentionality" as an assertive response of the person to the structure of his world," a response which makes conscious intention or purpose possible, a "depth dimension which relates to the more total, organic feeling and wishing man, the man who is the product of his past as well as moving toward the future."

<sup>3</sup>May, p. 300.

<sup>4</sup>Harry Stone, Dickens and the Invisible World (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1979), pps. 107-8.

<sup>5</sup>John Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens, ed., J. W. T. Ley (London: Cecil Palmer, 1928), p. 146.

<sup>6</sup>William Carlos Williams, Patterson (Toronto: George J. Mcleod, Ltd., 1963). p. 176.

<sup>7</sup>John Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress (London: Collins' Clear-Type Press), p. 11.

<sup>8</sup>Geoffrey Thurley, The Dickens Myth (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), p. 52.

<sup>9</sup>See Steven Marcus, Dickens: from Pickwick to Dombey (New York: Basic Books, 1965) for a fuller discussion of these ideas.

<sup>10</sup>Gabriel Pearson, "The Old Curiosity Shop," in Dickens and the Twentieth Century, eds., John Gross and Gabriel Pearson (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1962), p. 78.

## NOTES

<sup>11</sup>George H. Ford says that "According to Oscar Wilde, one must have a heart of stone to read the death of Little Nell without laughing." George H. Ford, Dickens & his Readers (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1965), p. 55.

<sup>12</sup>Aldous Huxley, "The Vulgarity of Little Nell," in The Dickens Critics, eds., George H. Ford and Lauriat Lane Jr. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1961), p. 155.

<sup>13</sup>Pearson, p. 79.

<sup>14</sup>Pearson, p. 79.

<sup>15</sup>Wordsworth, "Intimations of Immortality," p. 282.

<sup>16</sup>Edwin Honig, Dark Conceit (Evanston, Northwestern Univ. Press, 1959), p. 34.

<sup>17</sup>The General Synod of the Church of England, The Book of Common Prayer (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1933), p. 389.

<sup>18</sup>\_\_\_\_\_, The Holy Bible, King James Version (Norwood, Mass., Norwood Press, 1900), Matt., 10:34,35,37.

<sup>19</sup>\_\_\_\_\_, The Holy Bible, Prov., 8: 34-36.

8:34 Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.

8:35 For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.

8:36 But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.

<sup>20</sup>\_\_\_\_\_, The Holy Bible, Matt., 27:46.

## NOTES

<sup>21</sup>Robert Graves, The White Goddess (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1981), p. 423.

<sup>22</sup>Graves, p. 422.

<sup>23</sup>Graves, p. 423.

<sup>24</sup>Charles Dickens, The Letters of Charles Dickens, eds. Madeline House, Graham Storey, and Kathleen Tillotson, Vol. II (Oxford: Pilgrim Edition, 1974), pps. 181-2.

<sup>25</sup>Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Pardoner's Tale," in Chaucer's Major Poetry, ed., Albert C. Baugh (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), pps. 490-500.

<sup>26</sup>Charles Dickens, in Jack Lindsay, "Final Judgement," The Dickens Critics, p. 241.

<sup>27</sup>Huxley, p. 156.

Believe me I would gladly take you  
from this spidery church  
its bad melodrama, its musty smell of candle  
and set you both free again  
in no make-believe world  
of sin and penitence  
but the sunlit square opposite  
alive at noon with arrogant men.

. . . does it  
matter, Cassandra,  
Whether people believe  
Your bitter fountain? Truly men hate the truth, they'd  
liefer  
Meet a tiger on the road. 2

All the tortures of repentance are tortures  
of self-reproach on account of our leaving  
the Divine Harvest to the Enemy: the struggles  
of intanglement with incoherent roots. 3

I wanted this quietness to last,  
this preparation for the defense  
of the child.

I'm tired  
of the critic's whine,  
the poet's false  
iambic style,  
glazed heartbeats,  
stunned philosophy,  
like those cheap ceramics  
in the pharmacy,  
it's the clinical cynicism  
of the dead and dying.

For with me a black-eyed child  
still loves his own image  
as I take him down the mirrored hallways  
away from  
those crazed images  
of self-hatred  
and  
of grief.



## Stepping Out

Not unfamiliar with your world  
I, too, have returned  
    to look upon the wilted garden  
    turn the setting sun  
    up a little on our wondering,  
For they are shaken in the tunnels  
    of the city  
torn by weak leaves  
    yellowing,  
and tired from a long passage;  
the necessity to move in keeping  
with the torrid seasons  
as if the world was wind  
and we must always run  
to catch it.

## CHAPTER THREE

The Dickensian Child: Great Expectations

Dickens, staunch upholder of Victorian morality, or Dickens, consciously unwilling critic of his own inherited values? Or, to put it another way, does Great Expectations merely reflect traditional ways of thinking as "an archetypal quasi-Christian retelling of man's innocence, fall, harrowing and redemption"<sup>4</sup> or does it suggest a much deeper and more tragic vision involving one man's struggle to escape from the past, to overcome an imposed identity? Traditional interpretations of Great Expectations would have us believe that Pip, Dickens' rather puny and priggishly acquiescent hero, achieves some sort of enlightenment through his "mature acceptance of the human condition"<sup>5</sup> (which, translated, actually means, through his failure to establish a sense of his own identity as a useful and worthy human being in the face of repeated efforts by almost everyone around him to prevent it).<sup>6</sup> Thus, to me, it is supremely ironic that Pip, whose greatest fear seemed to be the taint of criminality, should end up embracing, identifying with a criminal; should become, consequently, a broken and defeated man, and that this spiritual tragedy should then be interpreted as some sort of "redemption".

It is possible, of course, that Dickens may have intended this type of reading (certainly it has ample critical support), but if this is the case, then Great Expectations does not conform to Dickens' more usual perceptions about the damaging effects of the Victorian code of morality upon the child, nor does it explain why Dickens makes his hero's mature voice so pompously self-depreciating, so morally condescending, so altogether unaware that his mature or enlightened identity (evidenced by this voice), is so snobbishly forgiving, so self-righteously proud of his attempts at Christian humility. For ★ Pip constantly judges himself in comparison with other people, while judging them in comparison with the most influential persons in his childhood. Yet the fact that he is judging the merits of various social facades, rather than those of the real person beneath, that he cannot and does not apprehend the difference between true caring and the creation of moral, financial and emotional obligations and dependencies is as much a result of his Victorian upbringing as it is evidence of his lack of enlightenment. And again, if Great Expectations is, as some critics have suggested, illustrative of Dickens' own attempt to come to terms with worldly success, to understand his own position vis a vis religious and Wordsworthian homiletics such as "The meek shall inherit the earth"<sup>7</sup> and "the essential grandeur of human nature may be found in humble and rustic people,"<sup>8</sup> these beliefs are not borne out by the events in

the text, nor does their acceptance as truth lead, in Pip's case, to any true happiness or fulfillment. Needless to say, there is also little evidence to suggest that Dickens himself took Pip's resolution seriously, that he patterned his own life on a model of self-exile and self-abasement.

Peter Coveney has said that "Dickens' children tend to move in a world of terror, fantasy, melodrama and death,"<sup>9</sup> as if this was a peculiarly Dickensian vision, an odd, perhaps overly dramatic perspective rather than one which has, in truth, governed the lives of many children from Victorian times to the present. That these experiences are, in the main, mercifully repressed, that they do not, in consequence, appear reflected in our literature to the same degree or extent that they are actually experienced does not mean that these experiences are not common, that they have not, as a result, contributed to the spurious identities of people who now see themselves as fit to govern and to rule. Physical and psychic cruelty towards children was rampant in Victorian times; in the workplace, as unremitting labour; in the home, as unrelenting pressure to perform in a socially acceptable manner. Its avowed intention was to break the child's imaginative, independent spirit.<sup>10</sup> For the natural liveliness and curiosity of children was a threat to the existing order, to the atmosphere of oppression and repression, to the prurient sense of morality, the perverted ideas about sexuality, which governed the

Victorian age. The suppression of these natural instincts was deemed necessary though the repression which results is a form of psychic self-murder.

What was unusual in Dickens' novels, however, was the depths of emotion that Dickens brought to his portrayals of this situation, the apparent extremes to which he would go in his narratives in order to point up this social tragedy, and the fact that, at the risk of his own popularity, he did not fail to direct the reader's attention most of the time to the principal culprits in this crime--those parents, those socially conditioned adults who are most closely involved in a young child's life. These are the people to whom we should look in order to understand why Dickens' children spiritually die, why they fail to achieve any true freedom, any real sense of their own human worth and dignity and why, as a result, they adopt and people the world with mechanical facades, with personas which are both emotionally shallow and devastatingly predictable--people who, like Joe Gargery, tend to avoid any real confrontation with the Self or with the Selves of others, who perform socially acceptable roles in the tranced belief that this validates their existence as human beings.

That, in Great Expectations, Pip's awareness of himself begins as a "small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry" (GE, I, 2), and ends in a state of rather mock-penitential womb-like dependency on the conjugal relationships of other people, afraid of being "misremembered after

death" (GE, 53, 421), filled with a maudlin sense of his own "inaptitude" (GE, 58, 476) and sadly chastened by his whole experience, is textually self-evident. But what is not so self-evident is how the "stream of reversals and inverted values" (GE, x) which R.D. McMaster says characterizes Pip's thinking and experiences of other people had really begun at home, begun, that is, with Pip's inability to understand how his thinking and perceptions had been formed and distorted by Joe, Mrs. Joe and Biddy and how these people had so thoroughly indoctrinated Pip with a sense of his own guilt and worthlessness that almost anyone, including the criminal Magwitch, might come to be seen as his moral superior.

Thus the central problem in Great Expectations is not Pip's unconscious refusal to accept the social values which had kept the lower classes in a state of mental, material, and spiritual oppression (manifested in his desire to become a scholar, and, perhaps a gentleman long before he is exposed to the pernicious influence of Miss Havisham) (GE, 7, 43), but the way he goes about both maintaining and attempting to overcome these values within the limitations of his vision. The central paradox is the fact that this vision was also enculturated, that Pip was acting out parental wishes and expectations and that he also carried within the seeds of his own destruction in the form of a parentally imposed image of himself that he could not overcome. In other words, Pip's problem (which seems to

imply a critique of class-consciousness in Pip's illusory expectations, his self-recognized snobbery, and his attempts to overcome it) is really a problem of identity.★ His aspirations were both acquired as a result of his constant exposure to the socially ambitious Mrs. Joe, and justified in a purely personal context. For, understandably, Pip did not wish to become as an adult what he had been as a child, perpetually victimized. His seeming rejection of Joe and his values stems from this unconscious realization. Becoming a gentleman seemed to offer a way out of this predicament, yet Pip, who valued the absence of snobbery in his friend, Herbert (GE, 22. 175, 181), felt that he, himself had been guilty of this crime.★

★ But, just as Pip's snobbery is self-destructive, masking a lack of self-confidence, so is Pip's guilt self-defeating, revealing itself in self-hatred. Yet it was Joe, Mrs. Joe, and Biddy who both helped to create Pip's poor self-image and expected him to improve it, and who, as seeming victims of his subsequent patronage, expected him to be patronizing. Thus, in his treatment of the classes in Great Expectations, Dickens does not offer a purely one-sided criticism. Instead, he shows how the lower classes support the system through their false sense of contentment and their humble pride in their inferior, yet socially victimized position--a position which Pip originally found untenable but one which he, too, was forced to adopt in the end.

This portion of my paper, then, will examine the people and the events which shaped Pip's upside-down vision, who helped to form his image of himself as a weak, morally corrupt, and uncaring individual and who were, as a result, ultimately responsible for his emasculation, for his failure to achieve an independent identity. That this image was a projection of their own failings, will, I hope, become apparent. That it was also the means by which these people both achieved status and fettered Pip's independent spirit by compelling him both to attempt to overcome an imposed identity and finally to accept it, will, I hope, also become apparent. In keeping with my thesis that the Victorian morality is alive and well, I will also seek to show that the critics who have perpetuated Pip's vision, perpetuated, that is, his image of the so-called "saintliness" of Joe and Biddy Gargery, the comparative "criminality" of Pip himself, and morally approved Pip's ideas about how this presumably guilty Self can be redeemed have also perpetuated the repressive Victorian code. But, with the possible exception of Robert Garis, who expresses some concern that Pip is "so utterly persuaded of the validity of his civilization's ideals,"<sup>11</sup> and who, upon examining Joe's overt characteristics declares him to be both "an ideal image of pastoral civilized manliness and an utterly useless and frustrating model for any spirited young human animal,"<sup>12</sup> they have failed to distinguish between Pip's healthy and legi-



timate desires for self-fulfillment and the confused and often negative ways he goes about achieving them and they have failed to distinguish between Pip's perceptions and judgements of the people and events around him and the people and events as they actually are and have affected him. Ultimately, of course, Pip must take responsibility for what he has become. Yet, to exonerate from all responsibility those who have contributed to his downfall is to perpetuate a vision which has haunted man from the dawn of history in one form or another and one which has, more than anything else, contributed to man's negative image of himself--the concept of original sin.

Wordsworth has said:

. . . there is a dark  
 Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles  
 Discordant elements, makes them cling together  
 In one society. (P, I, 341-4)

as a way of introducing the role of guilt, fear, and terror in transforming a boy's natural feelings of curiosity and adventure into a more or less stoic perception of the world. Yet Dickens, like Blake,<sup>13</sup> recognizes that self-pity and pity--a sympathetic identification with the fallen being of another person and one of the first emotions which arises from the divided Self--also play a part in linking us emotionally to a world of distraught men, to a world in which human passions, no matter how distorted, become more or less acceptable. Thus the popular expression "I am (he is) only human" carries with it

the implication that we cannot overcome our so-called animal inheritance, that emotions such as lust, hatred and cowardliness are a part of our genetic makeup. It begs from us a sort of liberal tolerance which pretends to sophistication but which, in actual fact, constitutes an admission of our own self-defeat. Ungrounded, we are thrust into the nightmare world of relativism.

For what is pity but a diseased form of identification, an unwelcome recognition of the fallen, impotent self, a form of understanding which negates the innate ability of others to determine their own destinies, to be responsible for their own choices, to be able to act with dignity and integrity in the sure knowledge that others can do so too? Unlike compassion which affirms true feeling, pity legitimizes a belief that one is suffering without cause or justification and that one does not have the ability to overcome it. Consequently, "huge and mighty forms, that do not live like living men" (P, I, 398-99), appear to people the world with injustice; cause and effect dissolve into incoherence, and, in the face of this ultimate alienation from the Self, man truly does seem helpless.

Great Expectations begins with an exposition of just such primitive feelings of self-pity, helplessness and fear which seems to have no logical basis as Pip, unconsciously driven by the need to discover his own identity to the graveside of his parents, becomes aware, instead, of his own mortality. For, as

we subsequently come to realize, Pip has been repeatedly made to feel guilty for being born, for being alive. The spectacle of his own parents, his five siblings so resolutely dead and underground, such nonentities now to the world of the living, does nothing but reinforce his sense of guilt and of the only way he feels that he can be free from it. By becoming a seeming nonentity, a mere "bundle of shivers" or nervous reactions to a rigidly cold and pitiless environment, a thing incapable of truly independent existence, he can somehow fulfill his felt obligation to join the living dead or those who have become the false identities which were originally imposed upon them.

The taint of criminality which clings to Pip throughout his life begins, then, not from his association with Magwitch, nor from anything Pip subsequently does, but from his overwhelming sense of being a scourge and a nuisance to his emotionally disturbed sister, a thing whose very presence above ground has been deemed by her to be some sort of crime against humanity. The feelings of guilt and fear which Pip, in his ignorance, carries for this "crime" are echoed in the leaden atmosphere which surrounds the child in this opening scene. Like the medieval horrors which surround, and provide such a contrast to little Nell in The Old Curiosity Shop, this landscape is a metaphor for a society which both reflects and contributes toward the so-called existential fear and guilt of its members--a guilt that is caused, not by anything the child does

but by what he is--a living, daily reminder of what his parents have lost in falling from that unselfconsciousness, that eternity which is the child's inheritance. This fall, this betrayal of the Self for others, becomes a continuing source of man's pain and fear--a pain and fear seemingly as real as the terrifying creature who, like Pip himself now, suddenly emerges out of the mists, a hunted and shackled man.

Like Quilp in The Old Curiosity Shop, Magwitch's first words and horrifying appearance serve to distract the child and the reader from the full realization that the original source of Pip's anxiety and guilt stems not from his involvement with this man but from his situation at home. Prior to this meeting with Magwitch, Pip only knows that he has become afraid and that this fear seems to stem from his sense of separateness from what has now become a savage and forbidding environment. Like the first Adam, in the act of naming things, including himself, he has broken from that eternity which is the child's heritage; has become, in other words, self-conscious, aware of his own mortality.

But with Magwitch's "'hold your noise!'" and "'Keep still, you little devil, or I'll cut your throat!'" (GE, I, 2) all Pip's developing awareness that his guilty fears are solely a product of his treatment at home are repressed, transferred, in part, onto this weird creature who, for some inexplicable reason, appears to lust after his "fat cheeks," who, like Mrs.

Joe, his female counterpart, uses physical violence and threats which have distinctly sexual overtones in order to compel Pip's obedience and who, in so doing, paradoxically displays a kind of helplessness which is both frightening and strangely familiar to Pip. Magwitch conflates with Mrs. Joe in Pip's mind, evoking the same sort of pity and fear which she now might have done had he not been at this time conditioned to see only males as fellow human sufferers.

For the link which is formed between Magwitch and Pip, the link which has been attributed primarily to Pip's participation in so-called "criminal" activities on Magwitch's behalf, is first forged here in Pip's recognition that this man, like his image of himself now, is a pitiable human being--one who has been "cut by flints, stung by nettles, and torn by the briars" of life (GE, I, 2). This initial bond, then, accounts for the fact that, though Pip never feels guilty about his theft from Mrs. Joe (from whom he has now been psychologically disconnected), he feels guilty for not confiding in Joe about it--Joe, the man whom he knows would be the principal rival for Pip's compassion, loyalty and affection and one whom Pip unconsciously knows would deny any legitimacy to Pip's independent activities.

The emergence of these emotions of guilt and pity, emotions which, in the future, will bind Pip in mistaken allegiance to other destructive and self-destructive people, tend

to both justify and compensate for his own weakened self-image, and thus to prevent him from fully realizing how much his understanding attitude towards Magwitch as a fellow human sufferer has been exploited by other weak people to their selfish advantage. For Pip is almost incapable now of experiencing legitimate, Self-directed, Self-affirming anger--anger which might separate him from those who would destroy him. Nor is he able to see that this unconscious tendency to understandingly pity people not only makes him appear snobbish but also drives him away from those people who, like Joe Gargery, most elicit this twisted response.

But what of this Joe, this man whom Pip initially identifies with, and then against whom Pip comes to so unfavourably compare himself; this man who frequently shows caring for those whom he pities yet withdraws uncomfortably at any sign of self-sufficiency; this man for whom Pip psychologically crucifies himself by projecting on to the criminal Magwitch the qualities he had previously projected (that is, had thought he had seen from the centre of his own still child-like being) on to Joe? That Magwitch eventually becomes "a man who had meant to be my benefactor, and had felt affectionately, gratefully, and generously towards me with great constancy through a series of years" (GE, 54, 441) rather than a man who had bought Pip, used him for his own sick purposes and then placed all the guilt and responsibility for his activities upon Pip, shows us

that Magwitch, like Joe, has used Pip's mistaken identification with him and his mistaken sense of gratitude towards him as a means to ensure his own safety and status. Magwitch evokes a filial duty in Pip directly reminiscent of Pip's mature attitude towards Joe--a duty in which pity, admiration and love are strangely intermingled.

This projection of Joe's presumed qualities upon Magwitch is, as I have already suggested, a repetition of Pip's earlier projection of his own childlike qualities upon Joe. Yet Magwitch's newly exalted image finally forces Pip to take on all the guilt and responsibility for his activities while it negates Pip's spontaneous and legitimate feelings of repugnance towards a man who had secretly manipulated his whole existence, who had wanted to enjoy vicariously Pip's painfully won social position, and who had done this primarily in order to compensate for his own sense of helpless inferiority.

This situation also echoes Pip's childhood relationship with Joe: a situation in which Joe's unconscious hostility towards the child found its expression in his lack of protection of Pip, in his manifest contentment which indicated how much he was in control, not of his own, but of Pip's life, and in his desire to console the child for this treatment by offering him a form of exclusive friendship based on the illusion that they were equals. To accept this illusion, however, is to deny the innocence of the child, or, conversely, to identify with the

weaknesses of others, those for whom life has proven too much and who, consequently, have stooped to a form of situational ethics which is narrowly utilitarian. But Joe's insistence upon Pip's "superiority" after Pip had become a gentleman does as much to alienate Pip unconsciously from him as Joe's inability to protect Pip when he was a child. Paradoxically, however, Pip does not see Joe's class alienation, his inverted snobbery, his pre-occupation with what the neighbours might think (GE, 23, 276) rather than what is right and necessary as belonging to Joe but to himself. For, in order to preserve Joe's pristine image of himself as a stupidly affectionate and humbly acquiescent person whom Pip would never forget (GE, 19, 145), Pip must take the blame, be the one who evidences a lack of true caring. That his relationship with Joe was illusory is something Pip could not emotionally handle, for it meant that Pip truly was alone in an alien, horrifying, and fallen world.

Our first indication that Pip's loyalty and affection for Joe Gargery is not reciprocated in kind occurs very early in the novel when Dickens has his narrator say, "But I loved Joe--perhaps for no better reason in those early days than because the dear fellow let me love him--and, as to him, my inner self was not so easily composed" (GE, 6, 39). There are implications here that Joe may not have a nature which is truly deserving of such love but that Pip's initial love for him was the indiscriminating love of children, given freely to those



who can accept it as well as to those who cannot. For it is in the nature of young children to love unreservedly, to feel pain if they feel that they have caused pain. Yet Pip's reluctance to tell Joe about his involvement with Magwitch also indicates that now he unconsciously realizes Joe's love may not be so pure, that it is, at least in part, based on the child's performance rather than his being. Philosophically, of course, we know that Joe is not a child and that, therefore, he cannot be as trusting or as unreservedly affectionate as a child. That he is a rustic conformist, a "good" man, or, according to Bertrand Russell's definition, one "whose opinions and activities are pleasing to the holders of power"<sup>14</sup> also makes him unreliable as a source of real support. And, when we consider the nightmare aspects of Pip's home life, the fact that Joe never protects Pip from Mrs. Joe's tyranny, Pip's reluctance is far more justified than Pip ever gives himself credit for. Thus Pip's so-called "cowardliness" is both intuitive and rational. He knows that he cannot rely on Joe's unqualified support even though he believes that Joe loves him. As previously mentioned, we can only conclude that Pip has projected his own unqualified love onto Joe and that therefore he has to believe in its reality for his own emotional well-being. Paradoxically, he can only do this by accusing himself of a seeming perfidy.

According to Kantian philosophy, "The mind determines the form that reality appears to us."<sup>15</sup> Applying this to the realm of human relationships, a mind like Pip's, conditioned to believe in his own inferiority, must eventually create idols, false images to whom he can compare himself unfavourably. This does not mean that these people or objects actually are superior; it only means that they fulfill a socially determined need. That this need is catered to, in one form or another, by various social institutions indicates, to me, how widespread Pip's upside-down vision still is today. Perhaps it will now become apparent that, although the fictional Joe, Bidy, and Magwitch appear to be the focus of my criticism, the fact is that these people, considered by some critics to be more or less sacrosanct, represent a type of morality which is destructive to human self-respect and dignity. Joe's childishness, like little Nell's grandfather's, cannot then continue to disguise the fact that his thinking has been perverted by society, that his weakness is reprehensible when it contributes to destroying a child's independent psyche.

Thus, in addition to the previous sobering evidence of Joe's lack of true caring, we might consider the peculiar conversation which takes place between Pip and Joe--a conversation which reveals not only Joe's true attitude towards Pip, but his rationale for permitting this child to be used as a "connubial missile" (GE, 2, 7), as a scapegoat for the marital

problems which existed between Joe Gargery and his wife. For, in response to Pip's expressed inability to understand why Joe thinks his tyrannical wife is still "a-fine-figure-of-a-woman" despite "whatever the world's opinions" (GE, 7, 46) Joe places himself solidly on her side by stating that Pip's "bringing up by hand" (with all the connotations that brings with it), on the part of his sister was "very kind of her too" He agrees with the limited social point of view that regards an orphaned child's strict upbringing by his own sister as an act of social charity, rather than as a completely natural act of familial love.

Joe goes on to cap this argument with a description of Pip which leaves no doubt in Pip's mind as to the manifest unworthiness of this object upon whom Mrs. Joe has lavished such care and attention. His manner of expressing these sentiments leaves the reader in no doubt that Joe too shared her negative opinions of Pip--ones that appeared to justify her vicious treatment of the child. For Joe, "with a countenance expressive of seeing something very nasty indeed" continues his argument in support of his wife by saying,

As to you . . . if you could have been aware  
how small and flabby and mean you was, dear me, you'd  
have formed the most contemptible opinions of  
yourself. (GE, 7 46)

Despite Pip's ugliness, however, Joe maintains that he still told Mrs. Joe to "bring the poor little child with her" to the

forge (GE, 7, 46). Pip is reduced to tears and "begging pardon" for doubting both Joe and Mrs. Joe's great generosity.

In passages such as these, meant to be funny yet containing traumatic psychic material, the mature Pip uses humor as a defense against pain. Like Wordsworth's morally condescending attitude towards some of the experiences in his childhood, this adult perspective dulls the intensity of these experiences and prevents Pip from identifying too closely with the child who felt them. Its use by Dickens effectively demonstrates how alienated Pip had become from himself as a child and from the true source of his pain.

Dickens also reveals, through these descriptions, through Pip's discomfiture upon hearing them, and through Pip's subsequent burst of grateful affection towards Joe for still condescending to permit him to live with them, that Joe not only shared Mrs. Joe's negative opinion of the infant Pip, but also uses this opinion in order to manipulate the child's innocent affections. Joe's need to justify Mrs. Joe's authority is expressed at Pip's expense. Pip, accepting this image of himself as truth, regards Joe with "new admiration" (GE, 7, 48) for his "noble" yet self-glorifying generosity. He is thus psychologically prepared to accept also Joe's excuses for his lack of interference when Pip is being beaten. For Joe, continuing in the same vein, tells Pip that he'd rather experience some pain himself than be forced to beat his wife.

Joe's fear of "going wrong in the way of not doing what's right by a woman," (GE, 7, 48) is interpreted by Pip as evidence of Joe's great heart rather than as an indication of weakness. In his limited world, as in Joe's, Pip probably could not consciously conceive a third alternative--that of calmly, yet forcefully, standing up for one's rights as a human being. Easily hoodwinked, Pip could also not possibly have imagined that Joe, conditioned from childhood to being a spectator of violence, might have unconsciously enjoyed the excitement that it brought to his dull life, as is the case with so many today. Joe's irrational fear also indicates the degree of power which the thought of doing violence had over his life even though, as a blacksmith, he had ample opportunity to vent his aggressions. Seemingly afraid of his wife, Joe is actually afraid of himself, of his own tendency to violence. Joe's rationale is one which, though seemingly plausible, might have occasioned conscious doubts in a child who had not already been convinced of Joe's presumed magnanimity.

This image of himself as "small," "flabby," and "mean," an image which Pip had already unconsciously carried into his encounter with Magwitch and which had subsequently helped to form the bond between them, just as his image of being a "fellow sufferer" with Joe had helped to form the bond between them, does not, however, contribute to any self-confidence on Pip's part, nor to any real trust in Joe. Pip fears that Joe will

think him worse than he already is and that he will also lose Joe's confidence if he tells him about Magwitch.

Yet what was the true nature of this confidence? What kind of confidence was it that prevented Pip, even after Joe's admission to Magwitch that "We don't know what you have done, but we wouldn't have you starved to death for it, poor miserable fellow-creature-would us Pip?" (GE, 5, 38) from telling him about the nature of his involvement with Magwitch? This obvious opening, one might have thought, would have given Pip the opportunity to confess his theft of food and a file for Magwitch without fear of moral censure.

As I have already suggested, there is textual evidence enough to support the idea that Joe is not a true friend of Pip's and that he unconsciously shares with Mrs. Joe a very low opinion of him. Yet this, of course, is not all there is to it. Thus I should like to invite my readers to step outside the text for a minute, to step outside and view Pip's home situation as a more or less co-operative enterprise between two adults, an enterprise in which each of them uses the child as an outlet for their own frustrations rather than confront their own inadequacies and one in which each peculiarly benefits from this exchange. For Pip is used as a "connubial missile," a connubial missile at Joe, who, according to Dickens, was "ever glad to get hold of [him] on any terms" (GE, 2, 7). There are implications here that Joe was not "over-particular" as to how

he got the child as long as he got him, for in comparison with Mrs. Joe, the seemingly passive and gentle Joe could not help but look good to the child. Pip, though, has still other reasons for not telling Joe about his involvement with Magwitch, reasons which have to do with his misplaced loyalty and his underlying shame at the homosexual implications of Magwitch's threats about the young man hid with him who must be restrained from attacking the child's innards (GE, 1, 4)--threats that Pip unconsciously knows might expose Joe's own latent tendencies, Joe's own preference for the company and friendship of a young boy rather than his own wife. For this conferred a degree of "speciality" to their relationship which Pip both enjoyed and felt uncomfortable about. It is also the reason why Pip, in later life, had difficulty relating to women other than cold, masculine ones--his loyalty to Joe prevented it.

But, in order to see the full implications of this aspect of Joe, Joe, who could lay his hand upon Pip's shoulder "with the touch of a woman" (GE, 18, 139), Joe, who displays a kind of passivity which, in those days, would have been considered feminine, we must digress to a consideration of Mrs. Joe, the person who most obviously and directly inflicts psychological and physical damage upon the child. Mrs. Joe is the prototype of, and the model for, Pip's subsequent and dubious attraction to cold, masculinized, malignant women--women who hate both the

world and themselves and project that hatred principally upon men as the so-called instigators and perpetuators of all their manifestly grievous problems rather than seeing them as equally victimized pawns of a social system which depends upon competition rather than cō-operation for its existence.

Mrs. Joe is presented primarily as a frustrated and angry woman, as unapproachable as her prickly bib with which she armours and thus protects herself against an uncomprehending and indifferent world. For like Miss Havisham, immured in her crumbling mansion and Estella, encased in her cold and brittle beauty, Mrs. Joe sees herself as a victim, or as a potential victim of men's social status and social ignorance. Her defense usually takes the form of an attack, while Pip, as a young and helpless member of the male sex, becomes her most convenient victim.

But she is also an aspiring woman--one who feels that her obligations to the child and her subsequent marriage to Joe have prevented her from rising above her social position (GE, 2, 8). Through what she feels as her social martyrdom, however, she can justify her inferior position as well as use it as a means whereby she can hobnob with petty merchants and parish clerks. Like Joe's, then, her felt sense of personal martyrdom becomes the means by which she can achieve some social status. Blatant physical and verbal aggression against those whom she considers her inferiors coupled with equally blatant



flattery of those whom, paradoxically, she considers her social equals reveal not only her aspirations but also her deep sense of personal insecurity. But Joe does nothing to alleviate this insecurity; on the contrary he aggravates it, and, in so doing, increases the likelihood of Pip's victimization.

"Given to government" (GE, 7, 46), Mrs. Joe adopts the masculine, aggressive role, while Joe, in turn, takes on the same feminine, submissive role that his own mother had played in relation to his brutal father. This stubbornly subordinate, passive, simple and presumably "humble" stance towards the persona that his wife presents whereby Joe manages both to ennoble his own social ignorance and to take pride in his deliberately contrived inferior position does nothing to counter Mrs. Joe's sense of injustice, nor does it offer her any assurance that her feelings are in the least understood or justified. On the contrary, Joe's insistence that he is stupid, coupled with his tendency to ignore her legitimate questions, directing his attentions, instead, towards the child, Pip (GE, 7, 9, 10)--a pattern of behavior towards threatening women which he later extends to Miss Havisham--as well as his cunning way of undermining Mrs. Joe's authority in order to get the child's exclusive affection and loyalty, only infuriates her further. For Joe, by convincing the child of his essential goodness, by deliberately ignoring her and favouring the child whom she apparently detests, increases her underlying sense of social iso-

lation and impotence.

That Mrs. Joe's irrational rage against Pip is an unconscious projection of her hatred of Joe, of the things he stands for, that her wrath is really directed against a man who denies her true existence, who will not permit her to be a woman in the sense that she understands this but must pre-empt those qualities for himself while at the same time forcing her to take responsibility for everything, including the psychological seduction of her own brother is an insight which, I feel, must partially explain Mrs. Joe's great anger. For, ironically, anger is a perverted form of caring since it is usually directed against those whom we care about rather than against those to whom we are indifferent. Certainly, Mrs. Joe's abrupt change (modified, of course, by the implication that her brain might have been damaged) when someone does express his refusal to accept her tyranny any more--no matter if it is accomplished in a violent, rather than in an adult way--indicates that perhaps Mrs. Joe unconsciously was attempting all along to provoke Joe into being a man even if this had to be done at the expense of her own being.

Thus her seemingly melodramatic statement, "You'll drive me to the churchyard betwixt you, one of these days, and oh, a pr-r-recious pair you'd be without me!" (GE, 2, 8) has not only prophetic but realistic overtones since she is involved in a marital game which Joe masterfully manipulates. It is the game of "nice guy," "horrible bitch" upon which so many marriages

flounder and it has as one of its principal victims the one who is seemingly the most overt oppressor.

Yet in all this, we must not forget the child Pip, an innocent victim used by both these adults as a means to assert their dominance over each other and as an outlet for their own perverted feelings. For Pip will become a vehicle which will unconsciously carry the hatred he has learned and experienced into his own future, so that he later attempts to look upon Miss Havisham, a broken and sorrowing woman like Mrs. Joe, "without compassion" but finds he cannot do so (GE, 49, 394), to find humor in death masks (GE, 20, 160) and in the circumstances of his sister's funeral (GE, 35, 275-76) and to call upon God to be merciful to Magwitch his "saintly" benefactor (GE, 56, 456). For Joe's reaction to his wife's presentiment about her own death is not horror or protest but, says Pip, instead he "peeped down at me over his leg, as if he were mentally casting me and himself up, and calculating what kind of pair we practically should make, under the grievous circumstances foreshadowed" (GE, 2, 8). Here Dickens makes it very clear that Joe is not averse to the idea of Mrs. Joe's untimely demise, since, at that time he thought he would then be alone with the child, without the woman against whom he felt unable to defend himself. There is also no evidence in the text which would show that Joe felt any real compassion for

Mrs. Joe during her long illness, nor that he showed any mercy towards her when her numerous attempts to conciliate Orlick made it obvious that she was afraid of him since Joe continued to employ Orlick after she had become a helpless invalid. Her death, not suprisingly, elicits no more than an ambiguously descriptive and repetitive phrase and then silence from Joe, while Pip--conditioned as he has been to hate her comments that "It was the first time that a grave had opened in my road of life, and the gap it made in the smooth ground was wonderful" (GE, 35, 274). If we consider Joe's earlier, placid yet calculating response to the idea of Mrs. Joe's demise, as well as the possibility that, by now, Joe must have been attracted to Biddy, Pip's observation about Mrs. Joe's death could be seen as Joe's thinking consciously articulated. For Pip's life had not been smooth, nor would Mrs. Joe's death create any significant gap in it since Pip had been away from home for some time. Pip's comment could also be seen as an example of inherited attitudes--attitudes which are often inappropriate to the situation in which one finds oneself. For, despite harsh treatment, children usually continue to care for their parents and siblings. The degree of their denial of this caring is the measure of their pain at its failure to be reciprocated.

Now, lest my readers protest that Joe's lack of response to Mrs. Joe's death simply means that Joe was stupid, that,

consequently, this exegesis is a little too critical of this "saintly simpleton,"<sup>16</sup> and that, after all, Pip was primarily the victim of only one "parent," a close examination of what I shall term "The Slice of Bread Scenario" might serve to illustrate my point. Here, as we know, Pip is attempting to save his slice of bread for the convict and, as a result, is unable to participate in the childish game between Joe and himself of comparing bites. (It is a game, incidentally, which effectively serves to isolate Mrs. Joe from any adult conversation, which makes the dinner hour centre exclusively around a man and a boy rather than on the family as a unit). Knowing this, Joe is astonished when Pip's bread disappears almost immediately spoiling the game, but since "somebody must keep the pot a-biling, . . . or the pot won't bile . . ." (GE, 7, 45) Joe cannot help but comment upon this. Having already aroused Mrs. Joe's easily aroused curiosity and irritation against the child, Joe compounds the issue by repeatedly ignoring her questions about what is the matter and, instead addresses himself exclusively to Pip. The result is, of course, what you might expect. Mrs. Joe becomes enraged at this insult to herself and to her authority; Pip is manhandled and dosed; while Joe escapes with only half a pint of tar-water and the unconscious satisfaction, as he sits quietly munching before the fire, of having made Mrs. Joe angry again. I would suggest that Joe is the one in control here, and that Mrs. Joe is merely a very

predictable tool which he can use in order to express his own confused hostilities. That Orlick as well as Bidy also come to serve this purpose will be discussed later.

Joe's insistence that he is dull (GE, 7, 46) (a ploy which tends to exonerate him from any complicity with regard to Pip's daily torture at the hands of his sister and from any complicity in Pip's self-admitted, though guilt-ridden, snobbery) does not prevent him from being able to offer seemingly rational justifications for his lack of protection of Pip, from slyly arranging situations where he can circumvent his wife's authority, and from indulging himself in times when he can have the boy completely to himself. His celebrated stupidity, then, could be seen as the means he uses both to cunningly insult and undermine women and to present himself, at the same time, as a seemingly guiltless, socially unassuming individual, a man who would never, despite the benefits which accrue to the family income through Pip's labours, stoop to the acceptance of money or any improved social position on the boy's account. His presumed ignorance irritates the socially aspiring Mrs. Joe and serves as a means whereby he can both monopolize and demoralize Pip. His stubborn refusal to learn anything under the boy's tutelage coupled with his sly arrangement of the conditions under which he should learn, teach the boy dishonesty, prolong their exclusive association together, increase Pip's sense of frustration, ineptitude, and isolation and lessen the value of

Pip's own education since he could not share it with his beloved Joe. Yet we must not forget that Joe did manage to learn under Bidley's tutelage--a revelation which must have further shaken Pip's confidence in himself. For even in adulthood, Pip never did become aware that much of this vaunted "dullness" also protected Joe from social censure, from any close examination of his unconscious motives.

But there are further problems which arise from Pip's attempts to educate Joe--problems which arise when Pip, having given up on teaching Joe for the day, decides, instead, to share with Joe his desire to see Miss Havisham again. For Joe implies that Pip (despite his protestations) might be motivated by greed, that Miss Havisham does not want to see Pip again but that if Pip were to visit her, he should take a gift. Like a dog worrying about a bone, Joe insists upon this idea, ignores Pip's interjections of dismay, and, when he has driven Pip to the point of desperation, immediately reverses his stance "as if he had been contending [for Pip's position in the argument] all along" (GE, 5, 110). As it turns out, Miss Havisham makes Pip neither welcome nor unwelcome when he visits her. Her unconscious pleasure at his apparently caring gesture prompts her to request his periodic return but, when Pip begins to look around for Estella, her more usual malevolent attitude towards men reasserts itself (GE, 15, 114).

Joe's assessment of the situation, then, reveals his own sense of personal unworthiness, his acute awareness of stereotypical social attitudes and responses and the conciliatory means that he has adopted in order to deal with them. By attempting to demean Pip's image of himself, suggesting that he take a gift, and usurping Pip's more honestly direct ideas as his own, Joe is unconsciously attempting to transfer his feelings of worthlessness onto Pip. Thus Dickens shows, in this brief scene and in its later effects upon Pip, the depth and extent of class consciousness and alienation in England, and that, like all such artificially manufactured situations, it is an unconsciously co-operative enterprise. How much of Estella and Miss Havisham's scorn is a result of the timid image that Pip consequently projects remains open to conjecture, but that this image is created primarily through Joe and Mrs. Joe's influence is apparent.

Now just as Joe's ignoring of Miss Havisham during the interview which terminates Pip's employment ultimately releases Joe from any direct responsibility for receiving Pip's wages--a responsibility he has reserved for Mrs. Joe, so does Joe's treatment of Orlick set the stage for Orlick's confrontation with Mrs. Joe, a confrontation for which he can claim no responsibility. For Joe creates a kind of "sibling rivalry" between his two apprentices by seeming to favour Pip while ignoring Orlick, and, in so doing, he compels Orlick to release



his repressed rage upon Mrs. Joe, the person whom Orlick feels is ultimately responsible for Joe's unfair treatment of him.

This scene by the forge, however, is memorable for other reasons since it is here that Dickens has Joe suddenly step out of character, out of the character, that is, which we now realize has been largely created for Joe through Dickens' use of a droll and endearing dialect. As with Nell's grandfather in The Old Curiosity Shop, the stupid and helpless role that Joe displays around women is suddenly dropped and he becomes, momentarily, a harsh and domineering figure whose manner of speaking is both authoritative and linguistically decisive as his dialect falls away.

The grudging respect which Orlick is forced to grant Joe is, however, achieved in a manipulatory manner. For Joe teases and insults Orlick when he, too, wants a holiday by replying, "Why, what'll you do with a half-holiday, if you get it?" (GE, 15, 111) rather than answering Orlick's request directly, but, when Orlick accuses him of favouritism, Joe retreats behind a mask of righteous indignation forcing Orlick to remember his subservient position. Having established his mastery over Orlick in this way, Joe can now afford to be generous and give Orlick his wish.

Upon his wife's appearance, however, Joe reverts to his more usual inarticulateness and fails to restrain Orlick's rebellious tongue. The question we must ask ourselves here is

whether Joe is so afraid of his wife that he cannot speak purposefully in her presence, whether he is afraid of Orlick, or whether he is vicariously enjoying Orlick's denunciations of Mrs. Joe. Her frenzy at his weak attempts to stop Orlick would indicate the latter explanation, an explanation which is further supported by the fact that Joe has just proven himself capable of controlling Orlick verbally, that Joe is a physically strong man, and that he has to be begged hysterically to interfere. Mrs. Joe's demands for his protection constitute permission for Joe to indulge in a physical show of strength against his morose and rebellious journeyman while, at the same time, he can blame this on her.

That these two men really regard Mrs. Joe as a temporary excrescence, as an excuse for physical contact, is evidenced by the "peaceable manner" in which they afterwards share a pot of beer, brought in especially for the occasion from the Jolly Bargeman. The calm which ensues, and which Pip always seemed to equate with Sunday and "somebody dead," is therefore not only suggestive but prophetic--especially since Joe blames his wife for the disruption of their male happiness when he says that Mrs. Joe was, as usual, "on the rampage, Pip, and off the rampage, Pip; such is life!" (GE, 15, 113).

This apparent friendship between Orlick and Joe raises further, yet, I must admit, rather speculative considerations. Traditionally, Orlick has been seen as Pip's double, or as

Pip's libidinous, presumedly violent side. This argument has been buttressed by Orlick's mad statements: "You was always in Old Orlick's way since ever you was a child" (GE, 53, 420). "It was you as did for your shrew sister." "I tell you it was your doing--I tell you it was done through you," (GE, 53, 421) and, "But it warn't Old Orlick as did it: it was you. You was favoured, and he was bullied and beat. Old Orlick bullied and beat, eh? Now you pays for/it. You done it: now you pays for it" (GE, 53, 422). It has also been supported by the guilty feelings Pip has upon hearing of the attack on Mrs. Joe. But, fostered in early childhood, Pip's unconscious fear that he might be inclined towards criminality (GE, 2, 13) and his more recent exposure to Mr. Wopsle's Barnwellian diatribe (which rather pointedly casts Pip in the role of a potential parricide) both combine to affect his immediate feelings. His seemingly guilty "complicity" in this crime is therefore externally imposed rather than self-originating--a product of other people's imaginary constructs internalized. For Pip is a decidedly passive character in contrast to Joe who, when his image of himself is challenged, occasionally resorts to violence. Orlick's accusations, moreover, could be seen as merely another example of Joe's refusal to take any responsibility for his actions, to project his feelings onto Pip and to create situations wherein the child must take on all the guilt. Thus it seems to me that Orlick could just as easily represent Joe's

unconscious urges--the more violent because they have been so long and so thoroughly repressed and the more rejected because they conflict with his own image of himself.

If this is the case, we must consider how Orlick's wild accusations might apply to Joe, might reveal, that is, what really was going on underneath that placid exterior. For, logically speaking, Orlick should have wanted to murder Joe, not Mrs. Joe and Pip, for showing favouritism, beating him, and getting in the way of his pursuit of Biddy. Yet there are many psychological reasons for Orlick, as Joe's shadow, to want to kill Mrs. Joe, expose Magwitch and then murder Pip while, at the same time, accusing Pip of being responsible for everything.

That Dickens invents Orlick at a time when Pip is becoming increasingly restless, when only his loyalty to Joe keeps him at home is expedient. For Joe, if he is to keep the boy, must inevitably project another image than that of a "fellow sufferer." Mrs. Joe is, therefore, expendable. On the other hand, Joe's unconscious jealousy of the child as the main focus of his wife's social aspirations (manifested in his desire to compete with Pip for her attention, even if it was negative attention, by stubbornly maintaining a childish persona) places him in an unenviable position. For he can neither suddenly change his childish image without losing credibility nor prevent Pip from straying away. Orlick, as an image of all Joe's

repressed anger turned to hatred, had to emerge. Pip's expectations, however, put an end to his hopes of keeping the boy in a changed atmosphere as well as aggravating his unconscious jealousy--a jealousy manifested by Orlick's shadowy pursuit of Pip. But with Pip's anticipated loss of expectations, the possibility that he might return home and court Bidy (the one Joe has chosen as a replacement), Pip becomes a threat and therefore Orlick emerges again.

In the light of these speculations, Orlick's accusations that Pip had come between him and the woman he liked, that Pip had given him a bad name, that Pip had always been in his way since he was a child, and that Mrs. Joe's murder was done "through him" (GE, 53, 420-1) could have expressed all the repressed feelings about Pip that Joe must have had in his ignorance of what a child really is. For Pip's irritating presence caused problems in Joe's marriage while Pip's expectations and his feelings for Bidy could all be used as justifications for blaming Pip for all Joe's unacknowledged problems and lack of assertive activity as well as for Orlick's more aggressive expression of them.

A compromise position which sees Orlick as both Joe's and Pip's double, which, as a result, sees that hatred and violence are passed down from generation to generation is possible. But since both hatred and the use of violence to solve one's problems do not originate in the child--the former being the product of numerous occasions when legitimate anger is repressed,

the latter, learned behavior--Joe still becomes the more likely owner of this shadow.

On the other hand, even if we do view Orlick as a real person, his motivations for attacking Pip and Mrs. Joe still have much more to do with his relationship with Joe than they do with his victims personally. For if Pip is to be deemed responsible in Orlick's eyes, this can only be because Joe favoured him, because Joe's wife was believed to be the cause of Joe and Orlick's unhappiness and because Joe's favourite prevented both of them from actively pursuing Biddy. Thus, in jealous and unconscious one-upmanship, Orlick could have attempted to murder Mrs. Joe and Pip for Joe. Certainly Joe had displayed no real or lasting disapproval of him when Orlick had verbally assaulted Mrs. Joe; on the contrary, their relationship had grown closer.

Yet Jagers is not fooled by Joe's social facade: Jagers, the man who had the ". . . air of knowing something to everybody else's disadvantage" (GE, 20, 160), who expects a man to acknowledge and pay for his debts as opposed to Joe who creates obligations which cannot be repaid, who refuses a man the dignity of simple (financial) release. Thus Joe's apparently noble stance prompts Jagers to say that "Brag is a good dog, but . . . Holdfast is a better" (GE, 18, 135), to say, that is, that Joe's refusal to accept compensation for the loss of Pip's

services is a form of social bragging which has not, in his experience, ever been a final position.

Now Dickens may have intended to present Joe in a superior light, to show that Jaggers' mercenary attitude has no place in human relationships. But when we recall that it is toward Joe that Pip feels a sense of guilt and obligation, we are forced to view this situation differently. To me, therefore, Joe's angry, pugilistic response to Jaggers' repeated offers is defensive as well as competitive. For this response indicates a refusal to examine his own motives for making a claim to Pip's loyalty and affection beyond the power of money to negate. Joe may appear to have defeated Jaggers, but, as Jaggers senses, Joe is clearly a dangerous man, one who will refuse money in order to assert his moral dominance over people and things. Jaggers' pragmatism, born of his sure knowledge of social hypocrisy, clashes with Joe's unconscious working-class sense of the guilt-provoking power of "honest" poverty. Joe sees his position as honorable; Jaggers sees it as stupid; I see it as further evidence of Joe's ability to confute the logic of the marketplace with his own brand of social and psychological manipulation.

Pip's social elevation and subsequent exclusion from Joe and Biddy's society (a situation for which he mistakenly blames himself), begins almost immediately after this conference with Jaggers and the news that Pip is to become a gentleman. For

Biddy, the village girl brought in to nurse the invalided Mrs. Joe, has become more of a companion to Joe than an employee. She also apparently shares with Joe the working man's humble pride in his socially inferior status, deeming this attitude to be morally superior to what she perceives to be upper class snobbery rather than as the other side of the same coin. Unlike Mrs. Joe, who obviously lusts after social prestige, Biddy and Joe compete for it negatively. Thus their congratulatory responses to Pip's expectations involve "a certain touch of sadness" (GE, 18, 141) which Pip instinctively resents because he senses that they, while seeming to care for him, also think that he will reject them. They, with their class-consciousness, cannot conceive that Pip will not become snobbish. Pip's reaction to his own resentment of them is, however, more defensive than emotionally direct. Vainly, he attempts to divert them by raising the subject of his new clothes and of his anticipated discomfiture should the townspeople "make such a business of it" (GE, 18, 142), rather than tell Joe and Biddy how embarrassed he feels at the present moment. Yet their repeated expression of "wonder at the notion of [his] being a gentleman" (GE, 18, 141) certainly does justify Pip's resentment since Joe and Biddy's doubts and self-pity prevent them from sharing with him the joy of his new found freedom from dull, routine labour and financial concerns, and of his oppor-



tunity now to discover and develop his own interests and inclinations. For Joe and Bidy see Pip's expectations negatively. They choose to project these negative feelings on Pip and so colour his whole evening with self-doubt about his own motives and attitudes. Pip, incapable of believing that he could be dissatisfied with his good fortune and equally incapable of understanding how these two people whom he cares for could have taken away his joy, can only turn his resentment inwards, become dissatisfied with himself.

Yet, if we visualize that momentous occasion, with Pip looking into the fire and "those two" talking about his going away--Pip on one side--they on the other, Pip's seeming paranoia, his feeling that "they were expressing some mistrust of me" (GE, 18, 141) is justified. For later, both Joe and Bidy infer that he naturally will become snobbish and wonder whether he will even share the sight of his new wardrobe with them (GE, 18, 142). The total effect of Joe and Bidy's response to Pip's news, then, is to make the "first night of [Pip's] bright fortunes . . . the loneliest [he] had ever known" (GE, 18, 143) and to set the stage for Pip to perform in accordance with their expectations.

Now Pip may be ashamed of his working-class origins (GE, 14, 105) but this, in turn, suggests how much he has taken responsibility for the accident of his birth and for the people he has known since childhood--people whom Dickens does not pre-

sent in a manner worthy of our unqualified admiration or respect. The Trabbs, the Orlicks, the Pumblechooks and the Mrs. Joes of this world thrive in every class. But would we want to identify with them as a group?

Pip's tendency to blame himself is based on his topsyturvy means of perception, a perception that has been distorted by his belief in the essential goodness of Joe and Biddy, their belief that they are truly caring, and his own poor self-image. Thus there are numerous incidents throughout the book when his legitimate feelings of irritation and anger which the narrator perhaps unconsciously reveals, are turned in on and against himself. He increasingly becomes an unreliable narrator in the sense that, although the dialogue, the interactions between Pip and his family, often reveal the manipulatory devices which force Pip repeatedly to adopt a defensively cold, and apparently snobbish stance towards Joe and Biddy, Pip usually judges the situation in their favour. Ironically, it is this propensity to demean himself in favour of others no more or less worthy than himself which appears to constitute his moral "progress." Pip becomes virtually incapable of defending himself against their subtle attacks upon his shaky ego in spite of the renewed hope that his expectations have given him that he can transcend, somehow, his underlying feelings of worthlessness.

These feelings of worthlessness through which the narrator often views himself as a child often prompt him to judge and interpret Pip's feelings and reactions in the light of "Christian" morality, to cast guilty shadows on the image of the child. Thus Pip's snobbishness is seen as both ungrateful and nasty rather than as a defense stemming from his own insecurity; Pip's physical and psychological distance from Joe as uncharitable and dishonorable rather than as a condition attendant upon his expectations, a natural result of Pip's commitment to growth and change; Pip's ambitions and aspirations as both disloyal and potentially destructive to others rather than as the result both of his own conditioned upbringing at the hands of Mrs. Joe and of his unconscious desire to escape a primitively ignorant, self-righteously sadistic and psychologically limited world. Granted, the world Pip aspires to is not much better, but Pip has yet to experience the complete irony of his great expectations.

For Great Expectations is a saga of psychic destruction, an "etiology of guilt and atonement"<sup>17</sup> which leaves Pip, like the Ancient Mariner, a victim of the world's guilt and hatred--forever disposed to demean himself, to confess to strangers the details of his presumed wickedness, and to exonerate those priestlike vultures of the human spirit who derive their own status from the misery that they (through the imposition of a false moral code and the necessity, on the part

of its adherents, to atone for their transgressions), have actually created. This moral code assumes that, from birth, man is vile, that he must be controlled, that his life must be prescribed by the observance of rules of behavior which are designed to ensure that he never rise above his humble station. It is a vision which sees the adoption of a spurious humility as wisdom, and not as an admission of self-defeat. It is a vision characterized by hopelessness and self-hatred; a vision which Pip, both psychologically, as a child, and culturally, as an adult, is coerced into believing. It is based on the biblical doctrine of original sin--the taint of criminality that Pip had felt since he had been a child socially translated into religious dogma. f

This doctrine has been replaced in modern times, however, by the doctrine of original sex--the imposition of the ubiquitous Oedipus complex upon the conscience of man with all its interpretively twisted ideas that the sexually immature, innocent child is the principal originator of incestuous feelings rather than the adult parent. I have yet to see an interpretation of Great Expectations which seriously examines Joe's contribution to Pip's sense of guilt even though critics might readily admit that these guilty feelings constitute Pip's main concern about their relationship. If critics had examined Joe's contribution, I suspect, Pip's image as an enlightened man would be somewhat tarnished. For though the

child "usually follows some indication from its parents, whose affection bears the clearest characteristics of a sexual activity, even though of one that is inhibited in its aims" and "as a rule a father prefers his daughter and a mother her son"--a situation which the child "reacts to"<sup>18</sup> in Dickens' novel, this pattern is reversed: the father figure preferring his son. In psychological terms, then, Pip could be said to have unconsciously wanted to kill his mother in order to marry his father. For, just as Joe married an image of his father in the brutally aggressive Mrs. Joe, so does Pip, according to this way of thinking, want exclusively to live with the principal male figure of his childhood.

This is not to say that Freud's Oedipus complex with its variations does not have a symptomatic reality; it is only to suggest that this reality initially is parentally projected and then internalized. I am sure that we would not encounter the same surprised sense of disbelief on the part of students of literature if its true origins were explained. Beginning with the reasonable assumption that a father might, on occasion, feel jealous of his young wife's preoccupation with her newborn child and going on to explain that, since these feelings are socially unacceptable, they are twisted into a belief that the infant at some time becomes jealous of his father, while concurrently suggesting that the young wife could on occasion, hope that her son might surpass his father in some respects, we

could, at least superficially, justify the presence of an Oedipus complex in the child. That this complex is primarily sexual in nature stems from the unconscious sexual conflicts which already exist between his parents and which are aggravated by the arrival of a child sensitive to non-verbal nuances. A child's passionate jealousy of one or other of his parents, cited as proof of the existence of this complex, is born of his insecurity and nurtured by parental conflicts.

Yet, like many of his followers today, Freud himself tends to downplay the role of parents in the formation of the Oedipus complex by subtly equating a child's natural love of his parents with a sexual desire for them<sup>19</sup> and by choosing instead to emphasize what he believed was infantile sexuality in an attempt to destroy the romantic illusion of children's "innate purity and non-sensuality."<sup>20</sup>

Just as most interpretations of the biblical myth of Adam and Eve tend to ignore the fact that it was "God" who first introduced the notion of the forbidden tree into our consciousness, setting the stage for our presumed fall, so do most Freudian interpretations of the Oedipus complex tend to ignore the possibility that children's so-called sexually incestuous desires may be the result of internalizing parental wishes. Thus, in some portions of his text, Freud discriminates between a child's natural sensuality and a more adult sexuality, while in others both these are decried in moralistic terms as if

feelings, including sexual ones, mean that somehow one is contaminated. Yet, if there is such contamination, if "small children do have to struggle against the power of sexuality"<sup>21</sup> it is because the true source of that power, being adult, being parentally imposed, is contaminated by prurient thinking.

In statements such as:

We have to learn that sexual instinctual impulses accompany life from birth onwards, and that it is precisely in order to fend off those instincts that the infantile ego institutes repressions. 22

No, analysis leaves us in no doubt that the child's wishes extend beyond such affect to all that we understand by sensual satisfaction--so far, that is, as the child's powers of imagination allow. 23

It may seem to us an unsavoury fact, but it takes quite a long time for children to develop feelings of disgust. This is not disputed even by people who insist otherwise on the seraphic purity of the child's mind. 24

and

But please do not ask me how people could reconcile these observations of the immoral inclinations of children ... with the theory of their innate purity and non-sensuality. 25

Freud's "rationally scientific" discoveries appear to place much of the cause for these complexes upon the so-called sexuality of children, while, couched as these writings are in moralistic terminology, they reveal that a Victorian sense of morality still rages beneath--a morality which can only exist in the absence of any idea that we were once pure and innocent and which, by its very imposition, implies that we are not.

Nowhere in the text of Great Expectations is the phenomenon of the psychological put-down of our purest being and intentions more self-evident than in Pip's conversations with Biddy--conversations in which he is consistently defeated in his attempts to establish himself as a worthy human being in her eyes. Thus we have the spectacle of Pip and Biddy's Sunday walk (GE, 17, 125-130), a walk in which Pip confides to her his aspirations while she, in turn, consistently attempts to demean him and his ideas. Dickens, of course, may have intended Biddy to be the commendable voice of those who, throughout the ages, have been content to stay within known boundaries, who feel secure within their psychological prisons. Her irony, then, may be seen as a reaction to Pip's snobbish resentment of her traditional folk-wisdom and to Pip's pompous yet apologetic rejection of her as a possible mate. But we are also dealing with two young people who tend to fall back on trite and empty statements rather than admit how insecure the world has made them feel. Pip struggles to convey his feelings honestly, while Biddy remains rigidly self-contained. For Pip is to Biddy as he is unconsciously to Joe. His ambitions and aspirations represent a threat to their own falsely won contentment as staunch upholders of the status quo, to their own lack of an independent spirit. Thus Biddy's response to Pip's expressed desire to become a gentleman is primarily negative: "Oh, I



wouldn't if I was you! . . . I don't think it would answer" (GE, 17, 125), although she can give no apparent reason for this objection. But when Pip protests that he is unhappy, that he is "disgusted with [his] calling and with [his] life" and that Biddy therefore is being absurd, Biddy self-defensively counters with an apology, the implication that she had not intended to be absurd and then, with the inference that, if Pip's intentions were realized, he would neither "do well" nor be "comfortable" (GE, 17, 126). She further goes on to suggest that it is a pity that Pip should want to "lead a very different sort of life from the life [he] lead[s] now" even though he has told her how unhappy he will continue to be if he doesn't realize his ambition (GE, 17, 126). For Pip sees in the image of Estella, his guiding light, that state of being within himself which is untouchable, which can exist without apology or remorse in a judgemental world.

Biddy's unconscious commitment to the known world of rigid class structures, her sense of responsibility (which she equates with personal dignity and caring) towards it, and her belief that she is therefore doing the right thing by Pip when she attempts to deflate him and his aspirations, cannot mask the fact that she is apparently incapable of realizing that Pip's discontent with this narrow world is both natural and justified. That both Miss Havishman and Estella have just recently recalled, reiterated from another perspective, Mrs.

Joe and Pumblechook's low opinions of him has made Pip desperate to change his image, to seek some personal status which cannot be continually attacked. He sees this possibility in the image of a gentleman. Now Pip's desire to become a gentleman may not seem to us to be ethically valid. Yet there is no textual evidence to support the idea that Pip wanted to exploit or demean other people upon the realization of his good fortune. Perhaps this is because Mr. Pumblechook had provided him with such a classic example of these practices in the middle class while Miss Havisham and Estella had taught him how much pain these attitudes can cause. Pip plays with the idea of being a lordly benefactor (GE, 19, 144), yet practices his charity secretly (GE, 36, 286-87); learns to enjoy his distinguished position (GE, 30, 241), yet becomes embarrassed by the attention that it brings (GE, 30, 342); pretentiously employs a valet, yet finds himself uncomfortable with this decision (GE, 27, 125). Yet Bidy can only equate unconsciously his aspirations with the adoption of an oppressor's role, with using people rather than being used. Pip's relative inability to understand his own motives, to express his need for a new identity which offers some security from the world's condemnation may contribute to Bidy's ironic attitude when confronted with Pip's "snobbery" yet the fact remains that her perspective is limited by moralistic preconceptions and that her overall reaction is more defensive than truly understanding. For Pip's

aspirations threaten her apparently chosen image, her belief that she is worthy, despite her humble servant status in the community and her acceptance of this status as somehow pre-ordained.

Like Jane Austen in Mansfield Park, Bidy's irony reveals a world that she believes to be either static or superficial, either pragmatically realistic or romantically ironic, a world where the impulse towards self-fulfillment must be contained with socially determined rules, where individual likes and dislikes must be subsumed under a mask of rectitude. It is a world she projects upon Pip, unconsciously stifling his natural impulses with its dark, apparently incontrovertible truth.

Preoccupied with his own thoughts, Pip's reaction to all this is not anger; it is only rather that, though she was not flattering, she "meant well" (GE, 17, 126). Despite the sense of irritation and impatience which his encounters with Bidy always seemed to create in him, Pip is convinced of Bidy's essential superiority. As his first teacher whose wisdom Pip was unable to question (a circumstance which she uses along with her tears to remind Pip both of his humble origins and of his need to be grateful), she can draw on this early impression as well as his still relative ignorance to maintain her authority.

Superficially, though, Bidy's response to Pip's comment that he now believes himself to be "coarse and common," (a belief which, by association, reflects upon herself), appears to

be quite genuine. But when she discovers that Estella was the first one to tell Pip this, and that he still admires her and wants to be a gentleman "on her account," Bidy uses this opportunity to degrade Pip's image of himself still further by asking, "Do you want to be a gentleman to spite her or to win her over?" (GE, 17, 127) The possibility that Pip might love Estella or that Pip might dislike, for legitimate reasons, his inferior social status, does not occur to this woman. Her negatively worded question merely reinforces Pip's already poor self-image. The fact that Pip has also thought these things with regard to his relationship with Estella, that he felt incapable of having a non-competitive relationship, reveals how effective had been his early indoctrination at the hands of Joe and Mrs. Gargery. For they, too, had been competitive, and had (while professing "love" for him) unconsciously used him either for spite or conquest and had then required that he respond to this by continually acting in a humbly grateful manner if he cared for them.

Pip's subsequent action of wrenching his hair (which prefigures Mr. Pocket's similar reaction when the confusion in his household has reached epic proportions), along with his tears, reveals the sense of frustration and helplessness he feels as a victim of Bidy's subtle onslaught--a situation which Bidy immediately capitalizes upon by now behaving in a "motherly" fashion and by implying that, though she knows the lesson she

would set under the circumstances, it would be too hard for Pip to learn. This mothering of apparently grown men, the implication that they are still helpless, stupid children is not caring but castrating. Yet, if we are to believe many cough and cold T.V. advertisements, it is an image of women that is still popular today. Thus Pip's vague conviction that he "was very much ill-used by somebody, or by everybody" (GE, 17, 127), has a basis in fact--the fact that Bidy, like nearly all of the people around him, is manipulating him into the belief that he is their opinion of him and that he is nothing more than that.

Yet, falling into the trap, Pip, in an ecstasy of misunderstanding responds to Bidy's "motherly" gestures of affection in a childishly spontaneous manner, kissing her and promising her that he will always tell her everything. This, of course, gives Bidy another opportunity to reject him as she replies that she is sure he will "Till you're a gentleman." Then, despite his protestations, she turns and looks away self-pityingly as if to imply that Pip will never be able to fulfill his promise to her. Though we might say that Bidy is much nicer to Pip than the cold and haughty Estella, at least Estella never attempts to "deceive and entrap" him (GE, 38, 307) "under mask of sympathy and pity and what not that is soft and soothing" (GE, 33, 263) whereas Bidy unconsciously leads Pip to believe that she might have been available.

Biddy's attack upon Pip's aspirations and his self-image, however, has had its desired effect. For, confused, Pip begins to reconsider his desire to become a gentleman since "all that Biddy said seemed right" and begins to wonder why he cares for Estella more than her (GE, 17, 128). He therefore mentions to Biddy that he knows she is the better of the two, that he wishes he could fall in love with her in the hope that she doesn't mind his openness while she sarcastically replies, "Oh dear, not at all! . . . Don't mind me." and then caps this with the implication that he will never change his outlook. Though Pip wants to disagree with Biddy's position, he believes that she is right, that he is congenitally incapable of choosing truly "superior" people like Biddy to fall in love with.

At this juncture, Orlick's appearance and Biddy's revelation that he has been paying unwelcome attention to her serves to appease, somewhat, her own injured sense of self-worth by arousing Pip's jealousy and indignation. Prompted by her own insecurity, this ploy becomes the means whereby Biddy can still test her power over Pip, while, at the same time, denying it. Thus her repeated "it makes no difference to you, you know" (GE, 17, 130) statements both recognize and reject Pip's caring and involvement in her life.

No wonder Pip is confused. No wonder he distrusts his own feelings. For they have been twisted unmercifully since Pip has been designed to carry as his own, their own unconscious

self-hatred, their own lack of true caring, and their own inability to effect any positive change in their lives. Thus when Joe later confesses no doubt that Pip will never forget him, Pip is disturbed. He has come to believe their previous expectations of him--that he will become snobbish, that, when he has become a gentleman, he will forget them. Yet Joe's statement shows that, despite their protestations, these humble people really do know the guilt-provoking power that they have over him, and how this guilt, bound up as it is with Pip's caring, will continue to dominate his life.

Pip's coldness, his apparent snobbishness, constitute both a defence against Joe and Biddy's projections and a self-fulfilling prophecy with regard to their so-called accuracy. For Pip cannot, given his belief in Joe and Biddy's "goodness," attribute his snobbishness, his uncomfortable pride to them. He cannot even consider Biddy's observation that Joe could be proud--too proud of his ignorance even to want to change. For this idea does not coincide with Pip's vision of Joe as a man who is seemingly untouched by negative qualities. Pip believes that he himself is "quite an untaught genius" (GE, 6, 39) in matters which involve cowardliness.

Pip and Biddy's basic misunderstandings, however, arise from conflicting personal ideologies. Biddy sees life as socially determined while Pip views it as having a potential for fulfillment. As their respective names suggest, she is bidden

to follow established social rules, while he believes that these rules cannot imprison him. That this vision of Pip's should return him full circle to the cowering child on the marshes, self-exiled because of his loyalty to others rather than to himself and to his vision is tragic. For Pip, like Mrs. Joe (who once, too had aspirations), ends up propitiating his enemies: propitiating people like Joe, Bidy and Magwitch whom he thought he had never truly cared for but who, in actual fact, had never truly cared for him. There is little difference, however, between Mrs. Joe's seeming acts of penitence and Pip's. For, from a purely practical point of view, as a cripple constantly living within the shadow of her potential murderer, Mrs. Joe's obeisance to Orlick could be seen as the only means she now can adopt in order to save herself. Pip, on the other hand, appears to propitiate Magwitch in order to save him, succumbing helplessly as he had to Joe and Bidy, to his seductive and manipulatory blandishments, and rationalizing this in the name of Christian morality and the forgiveness of sins. Pip sees, in his protection of Magwitch, a dramatic opportunity to expiate his guilty feelings about Joe, feelings which result from Pip's conditioned belief that it is an act of gross ingratitude to be angry with, or to abandon those who have contributed to one's financial support. Yet, what would have happened to Pip had he refused to hide Magwitch, had he refused to take responsibility for a grown



man's deliberately unlawful act? Magwitch's murderously vengeful attitude towards Compeyson's betrayal, his ever-ready jack-knife, and Pip's dreadful sense of obligation towards him all contribute to Pip's decision to protect Magwitch. Thus, pity guilt, fear and an unconscious identification of Magwitch with Joe are the motivating factors in Pip's desire to save Magwitch. But the conscious articulation of Pip's identification of Magwitch with Joe--a conclusion which I have reached based on Pip's exaggeration of Magwitch's "good" qualities (GE, 56, 441) as opposed to his criminally murderous ones--comes only after the man is a prisoner, only after Pip is no longer physically threatened by him.

Pip's identification of Magwitch with Joe at this point, then, does not truly indicate any enlightenment. That it has been interpreted as such, that Pip, himself, sees his terror magically transformed into a sense of loyalty and self-sacrificial love, in an image of himself as the self-righteous chief celebrant in the age-old ritual of self-abasement to an imaginary idea of what constitutes true caring and love, does not mitigate the fact that Pip unconsciously must also have had very pragmatic reasons for his change of heart. This explains why, consumed with repressed anger Pip "earnestly hoped and prayed that he [Magwitch] might die before the recorder's report was made," why Pip fancied that he was suspected of carrying poison to Magwitch, and why Pip so self-righteously prayed "O Lord, be

merciful to him a sinner" (GE, 56, 455-6) even after he had apparently come to see Magwitch as primarily benevolent.

But, in the misty world of this novel where nothing that breathes is not tainted with hypocrisy, it is only the people who have obviously tortured Pip such as Mrs. Joe, Miss Havisham and Estella, who are obliged to undergo a brutal form of transformation before Pip can even partially accept them, while the others, it seems, merely require a greater and greater empathy, understanding and compassion from Pip.

Because his vision has been distorted since childhood, Pip tends to see most of the men in his life as stable or nurturing, while most of the women (with the possible exception of Biddy), are portrayed as either emotionally disturbed or selfishly materialistic. And, since Pip judges mainly by comparison, these equally destructive people can only benefit from the exchange. Thus Matthew Pocket (who shares in Pip's good fortune and condones Pip's self-sacrificial gestures), benefits in comparison with Miss Havisham, Joe benefits in comparison with Mrs. Joe, Magwitch in comparison with Miss Havisham, Mr. Pocket in comparison with Mrs. Pocket and even Jaggers in comparison with Estella's murderous mother. Unerringly attracted to those who will perform for him as Joe and Mrs. Joe did, to people for whom he can take responsibility, Pip's life in general becomes a pattern of succumbing to a form of male seduc-

tion and to female rejection with Pip as the seemingly guilty party in all these machinations.

Yet, if we dispense with this vision of Pip's, if we see these people, these seeming opposites, as interdependent, their images tend to lose their idealistic lustre, to perform vapid, pre-determined roles in a competitively insane, cruelly sadistic world--a world that Pip could not escape, that he, ironically, was destined to perpetuate.

Thus, in Great Expectations, Dickens hints at this generational phenomenon in Pip's clandestine arrangement of Matthew Pocket's sudden good fortune through a horrible old woman, in the image of little Pip "fenced into the corner with Joe's leg" (GE, 59, 477), in Pip and little Pip's later visit to the same graveyard with which this novel began and in Pip's expressed desire to take or borrow this pastoral child for a visit to the city. For, like little Nell in The Old Curiosity Shop, Pip is driven to emulate a mistaken ideal rather than confront the existential horror of his own childhood.

This paper, then, is an attempt to show that people, such as Magwitch, Joe and Biddy Gargery, whom Pip did not believe were detrimental to him, were as responsible as Mrs. Joe, Miss Havisham and Estella for his downfall and that Dickens, either consciously or unconsciously, supplied the clues which would support this interpretation. It is also an attempt to show that since self-images are imposed, they can be altered or,

ideally, dispensed with altogether. As Jung says "So long as the self is unconscious, it corresponds to Freud's superego and is a source of perpetual moral conflict. If, however, it is withdrawn from projection and is no longer identical with public opinion, then one is truly one's own yea and nay . . . ."<sup>26</sup> For, "It is not I who create myself, rather I happen to myself."<sup>27</sup> In other words, to accept, by identifying with, an imposed image, and then to attempt to improve that image through orthodox means, to equate the operations of the conditioned mind with one's identity rather than with one's false identity is to reject any potential for spontaneous self-realization, to become stuck in the generational wheel which grinds our souls to dust. For the one who sees is not the one who performs or professes but a stable, watching, non-judgemental presence--a presence that Dickens brings to this novel in his compassionate rendering of all its absurd and peculiar people.

With the close reading of passages from this text, I have also attempted to show that the popular view that Dickens' characters are primarily polar opposites,<sup>28</sup> either all bad or all good is a misconception based upon seeing the world, like Pip, in terms of opposites and in failing to see that one of Dickens' most effectively misleading devices is to set up apparently "evil" characters, such as Magwitch, Mrs. Joe, and Miss Havisham, as images upon which his readers will focus

their critical attention while he subtly weaves psychological complexities into the personalities of his apparently "good" ones.

Much more could be said about Joe, Mrs. Joe, and Bidly, about how they continually project upon Pip their own fears and limitations, and about how Pip's image of himself reflects their negative expectations of him: how Bidly thus neglects to inform Pip that Mrs. Joe is dying, how Joe consistently refuses to regard Pip as a real friend after he has become a gentleman, how Joe and Bidly keep their marriage a secret and how this ultimate act of betrayal which Pip can only see as final evidence of his unworthiness since their secrecy implies that Pip might not be able to wish them happiness, sets Pip on the road to continual self-exile and self-sacrifice since it permanently destroys his hopes of atonement to the man he loved, to the man whose image he mistakenly had come to worship, and for whom he had, through identifying him with Magwitch, given up all his own ambitions. But my concern is not really with what these people actually did but why the image of the child must continually be perverted through misapprehension and projection and through a blind trust in traditional values, how that perversion affects the child in the future, and how that, in turn, has affected the interpretations of Great Expectations. For if little Nell has come in for much critical abuse because she was essentially loving and courageous, so has Pip

come in for much critical abuse because he was snobbish and introspectively guilt-ridden. Yet no one has attempted to ascertain why they dislike Nell, nor how Pip truly came to be the way that he was. Thus many critics unconsciously have become like Joe, Mrs. Joe, and Bidley, parental figures seeking to establish Pip's "criminality" with obtuse statements such as "Magwitch is the concretion of Pip's potential guilt,"<sup>29</sup> and with assumptions that, in Dickens' world "The child is the criminal and it is for this reason that he is able to redeem his world: for the world's guilt is his guilt, and he can expiate it in his own acts"<sup>30</sup> as well as maintaining that Pip's "mature acceptance of the human condition"<sup>31</sup> somehow mitigates this. Thus they have added an interpretively ironic twist to the already ironic title and content of this book in an attempt to uphold an outdated Victorian vision which sees the nature of man as primarily evil and the only recourse to this negative assumption in the acceptance of this image as an incontrovertible truth.

The "sacredness" of the parental image is one thing. Truth is another. Thus we must learn, as G. Robert Stange says, to distinguish "between the Dickens who sees and the Dickens [in the personage of Pip] who professes,"<sup>32</sup> to distinguish, that is, between unconscious and intuitively perceptive overall character portrayals, and the traditional ways of seeing and thinking which can often almost overwhelm these more

subtle perceptions. For, to attribute to Dickens a limited vision in this, one of his greatest novels, is to ascribe to him our own conditioned responses, responses which, like Pip's are based on our own inherited ideas about the nature of man. Great Expectations is a tragedy, not a triumph. It is a tragedy of the defeat of the human will, of the defeat of a sensitive and conscientious child who, as a man, could not overcome the damaging effects of his childhood, could not transcend the murky world of humility, self-sacrifice and obligatory atonement for other people's sins.

## Self-deception

Was it that way  
in the beginning  
before Memory came  
dressed in dying stars,  
her veil

covering all the pain?

How she convinced us  
that the way was lit,  
that the paschal candle passed  
from hand to hand  
was promise  
of the Promised Land  
and  
the death of it.



Even now fade the bright faces  
for love will have its way  
and winter reign in pale and sceptred rage.

The price of earth: a name, a place,  
a common heritage,  
a frost-tipped splendour  
that the generations made  
as if the spring had never been,  
the summer, but a memory  
of things that have no sense or need.

And we

knowing that the beast

is stamped forever

in our thoughts

till thinking cease.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Irving Layton, "On Seeing the Statuettes of Exekiel and Jeremiah in the Church of Notre Dame," The Poems of Irving Layton, ed. Eli Mandel (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>Robinson Jeffers, "Cassandra," Robinson Jeffers Selected Poems (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 78.

<sup>3</sup>William Blake, "To the Christians," in English Romantic Writers, p. 159.

<sup>4</sup>Harry Stone, "Fire, Hand, and Gate: Dickens Great Expectations," Kenyon Review, XXIV (1962), p. 674.

<sup>5</sup>G. Robert Stange, "Expectations Well Lost: Dickens' Fable for His Time," The Dickens Critics, ed. George H. Ford (Ithaca, N.Y. Cornell Univ. Press, 1963), p. 294.

<sup>6</sup>Sigmund Freud, The Future of an Illusion, ed. James Strachey, trans. W. D. Robson-Scott (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1964), p. 52. Freud says, "Critics persist in describing as "deeply religious" anyone who admits to a sense of man's insignificance or impotence in the face of the universe, although what constitutes the essence of the religious attitude is not this feeling but only the next step after it, the reactions to it which seeks a remedy for it. The man who goes no further, but humbly acquiesces in the small part which human beings play in the great world--such a man is, on the contrary, irreligious in the truest sense of the word."

<sup>7</sup>\_\_\_\_\_, The Bible, Psalms 36:11.

<sup>8</sup>Perkins, English Romantic Writers, p. 320.

<sup>9</sup>Peter Coveney, The Image of Childhood (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1967), p. 160.

## NOTES

<sup>10</sup>Consider the major theme in Charles Dickens' Hard Times where a deliberate attempt to present the world in strictly factual (translate "see it my way") terms leads to the destruction of the creative imagination and a diminishment of human caring.

<sup>11</sup>Robert Garis, The Dickens Theatre (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 212.

<sup>12</sup>Garis, p. 219.

<sup>13</sup>William Blake, The Book of Urizen, in English Romantic Writers, p. 86.

<sup>14</sup>Bertrand Russell, "The Harm That Good Men Do," in Sceptical Essays (London: Unwin Books, 1961), p. 79.

<sup>15</sup>Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 12, p. 67.

<sup>16</sup>Dorothy Van Ghent, The English Novel, Form and Function (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1953), p. 134.

<sup>17</sup>Van Ghent, p. 130.

<sup>18</sup>Sigmund Freud, Two Short Accounts of Psycho-Analysis, trans., ed., James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 77.

<sup>19</sup>Freud, Two Short Accounts of Psycho-Analysis, p. 125.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, p. 130.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid, p. 121.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid, p. 121.

## NOTES

<sup>23</sup>Ibid, p. 125.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid, p. 124.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid, p. 130.

<sup>26</sup>Carl G. Jung, Psyche and Symbol, ed. Violet S. de Laszlo (Garden City, N. Y. Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1958), p. 211.

<sup>27</sup>Jung, p. 209.

<sup>28</sup>Edmund Wilson, The Wound and the Bow, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1941), p. 65.

<sup>29</sup>Van Ghent, p. 133.

<sup>30</sup>Van Ghent, p. 136.

<sup>31</sup>Stange, p. 294.

<sup>33</sup>Stange, p. 303.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## Conclusion

In the Talmudic Aggadah, Adam was as a golem, an unformed earthly being of cosmic dimensions, before God breathed a soul into him, and he shrivelled into the form of a man.<sup>1</sup> In much the same way have Austen, Wordsworth and Dickens created the image of the child, have they inflicted traditional ideologies on him, have they changed his image from one of infinite potential to one that is consumed by guilt and terror.

The dreariness of this vision, which Wordsworth both internalized and mourned, Austen both satirized and tacitly accepted, and Dickens both rationalized and, at times, transcended, reflected the attitudes of a society which was also unconsciously consumed by fear--a society in which "There was nothing, however minute in manner, however insignificant in appearance that did not demand some portion of attention . . . ."2 "To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet"<sup>3</sup> was almost a universal preoccupation--a preoccupation founded upon fear and insecurity.

If we assume that Wordsworth knew, but did not completely reveal the human sources of this terror just as Austen knew, but did not completely reveal the circumstances which had already damaged her Fanny by the age of ten, then we must ask ourselves why this information was withheld; why our attention is directed from these sources to other things or beings. I

can only suggest that, like Coleridge, These authors were either sensitive to social reproof,<sup>4</sup> or to the pain which might be re-created if they seriously examined and then reflected in their writings the primary sources of psychic trauma in childhood. In Austen's realism, therefore, there exists the same gap which we sense in Wordsworth's high romanticism, a kind of hollow disconnectedness between what is truly human and what is presumed to be that state.

The sacredness of the parental image, and its resultant incomprehensibility compelled them to create the image of the guilty child, to attempt to free it from that guilt through an acquired sense of morality and thus to ensure that this freedom could never be truly realized. A child might trail "clouds of glory,"<sup>5</sup> might poetically effuse over nature, might be a vehicle for, or a reflection of God's light: might be, that is, a prism through which various emotional and intellectual shades passed, but he could never be the source of that light. He was bound in contrarities and in contradiction to a world which would deny him.

Thus in Wordsworth's The Prelude and in Austen's Mansfield Park the child exists in ironic apology or at the edge of idealism, in pragmatic, stoic or melancholic absence from his own true being. Embodied in the motive for the quest in The Old Curiosity Shop and in The Prelude, his being is often hidden beneath one of Jehovah's terrifying masks. Consequently we

have the image of Fanny clinging to traditional mores which stultify human compassion and understanding, the image of Wordsworth celebrating the "obstinate questionings / Of sense and outward things . . . High instincts before which [his] mortal Nature / Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised,"<sup>6</sup> the image of little Nell drowning in a sea of self-sacrificial stupidity and of Pip struggling against his own intuitive capacities in the belief that society has adequately defined the limits of man's integrity and caring.

Blake has said that "the voice of honest indignation is the voice of God,"<sup>7</sup> and that in "Opposition is true Friendship."<sup>8</sup> Yet in these children tears often take the place of indignation; guilt and fear, the place of true friendship; awe and reverence, their own integrity, and sacrificial compliance, their own true caring. A world of mechanical beings, of enforced theatricality,<sup>9</sup> a world which, from Shakespeare to Sartre<sup>10</sup> has been meaningfully satirized and from Mead<sup>11</sup> to Goffman<sup>12</sup> has been the subject of sociological treatises is the world in which these children come to experience their own pruned and molded identities. It is a world in which their aspirations are twisted in order to conform to social expectations, and their integrity determined by the degree to which they can project a kind of egoistic humility which satisfies the very human craving for some identity while it undermines the existential basis for it.

Dickens' seemingly "odd perspective"<sup>13</sup> of a world in which there is "a universality of mechanical, systemized behavior," of oppressors and victims whose "compulsive tics and obsessive eccentricities . . . are therefore evidence of the pressure of the System on their lives," of a world in which there was a "gigantic" [though perhaps unintentional] conspiracy which takes myriad forms but of which the sole effect is to thwart and stifle human freedom"<sup>14</sup> has a psychological truth to it which (uncomfortable as it might seem), we not only can see in our own lives but in the lives of those literary characters who have been the subject of my thesis.

But, rather than become depressed by the world's theatricality, Dickens chose both to laugh at his performers and to denounce the people and the institutions which had made them that way. Infused as they are with his own freed vitality, Dickens' apparently superficial characters continue to dance through our minds long after Wordsworth's and Austen's characters, despite all their moralistic self-searchings, have faded in a fog of boring inconsequentiality. For Dickens well knew the essence of the child (and therefore of mankind), how it exists in spontaneity and how it can be crushed by a reprovng and paranoid society. Until he has been more or less irretrievably damaged, Dickens' child claims fellowship with the light (OCS, XVII, 128) rather than with the irrational shades that are cast upon him; empathizes with the joys of others rather



than making their seeming loss the reason for his melancholy (OCS, XXXII, 241).

Dickens also knew that the myth of the happy childhood, which Wordsworth unsuccessfully attempted to perpetuate, flies in the face of the socialization process--a process which requires that we become, like Pip in Great Expectations, "merchants of morality"<sup>15</sup>--not a morality whose aim is to free us from guilt, however, but one whose sole purpose is to increase it. Thus, according to George Santayana, "Mediocrity of circumstances and mediocrity of soul forever return to the centre of his stage."<sup>16</sup> For "the world is a perpetual caricature of itself; at every moment it is the mockery and the contradiction of what it is pretending to be."<sup>17</sup> The world of masks which "is superimposed upon reality,"<sup>18</sup> and which Dickens saw and made the focal point of his humor, presupposes an instinctive grasp of its essence, an essence that we, his readers can grasp when we laugh with him, an essence that is the child within us unhampered by the spurious thoughts and feelings of a hypocritical society.

In Great Expectations, Pip's nightmares, his early but unconscious recognition that the file which Magwitch sent as a token of his identity was murderously phallic (GE, 11, 77), his later but still unconscious realization that he was now a part of, yet desired to be struck off, society's "vast engine," his struggles with "real people in the belief that they were mur-

derers" (GE, 57, 458)--murderers, that is, of the human spirit--indicate that the adult Pip still unconsciously desired to free himself from the damaging effects of his society rather than be crushed, as Wordsworth was, into the form of "A meditative, oft a suffering man" (P, 14, 143). For Dickens, through Pip in Great Expectations, had already seen and denounced the things which destroy the human spirit, the feelings which had come to define Pip's so-called enlightenment like "the vanity of sorrow which had become a master mania, like the vanity of penitence, the vanity of remorse, the vanity of unworthiness, and other monstrous vanities that have been curses in this world" (GE, 49, 394).

## Ode to a Muse

You are the passion  
of my own lost faith  
how fate and form combined  
to create

                  your  
                          bright image  
when the grey dawn rose insensate  
from the twisted railings  
the iron fabricate  
of time and place  
to burn within your eyes inviolate  
but I

                  would bring you down  
  to earth again.

You are the child who said  
that this and this and this was mine  
enraptured in the confines  
of that limitless time  
when the world was all a miracle  
to my mind.

You are the boy  
at Main and Hastings  
who kept a shining space  
and there was magic in the city streets  
amid the crowds of evening.

And you are the one  
who now commands my spirit  
to rise, bring back  
the days of endless sunshine  
upon the springing lawns  
where I have drawn  
your image.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Gershom Scholam, On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), p. 161.

<sup>2</sup>Richard A. Wells, Manners, Culture and Dress of the Best American Society (Springfield, Mass. King, Richardson & Co., 1891), p. 297.

<sup>3</sup>T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." Selected Poems (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1964), p.12.

<sup>4</sup>S. T. Coleridge, "The Eolian Harp," in English Romantic Writers, p. 400.

<sup>5</sup>Wordsworth, "Intimations of Immortality," in English Romantic Writers, p. 281.

<sup>6</sup>Wordsworth, "Intimations of Immortality," p. 282.

<sup>7</sup>William Blake, "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," in English Romantic Writers, p. 72.

<sup>8</sup>Blake, "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," p. 74.

<sup>9</sup>Robert Garis, The Dickens Theatre (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), pps. 96-7.

<sup>10</sup>Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism," in Existentialism from Dostoevesky to Sartre, ed., Walter Kaufmann (New York: The New American Library, 1975), p. 314.

<sup>11</sup>Dennis Forcese and Stephen Richer, Issues in Canadian Society (Scarborough, Ont. Prentice-Hall, 1975), pps. 38-40.

## NOTES

<sup>12</sup>Erving Goffman, "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life," Current Perspectives in Social Psychology, 3rd Ed., eds. Edwin P. Hollander and Raymond G. Hunt (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), p. 311.

<sup>13</sup>Garis, p. 99.

<sup>14</sup>Garis, pps. 97-98.

<sup>15</sup>Goffman, p. 320.

<sup>16</sup>George Santayana, "Dickens," The Dickens Critics, eds. George H. Fore and Lauriat Lane, Jr. (Ithaca, N.Y. Cornell Univ. Press, 1963), p. 142.

<sup>17</sup>Santayana, p. 143.

<sup>18</sup>Santayana, p. 143.

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