

English

Dickensian Bildungsroman and the Evolution of Developmental Psychology

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During the 19th century, a time of new ideas and the industrial revolution, theoretical psychology begins to emerge. The idea that what happens in childhood affects the adult personality starts to take shape. As people take hold of and begin to believe in this concept, children who previously were not protected by law, from things such as child labor and general mistreatment, begin to be better taken care of. For example, the first child labor laws in Britain were known as the Factory Acts (1833) and the Mines Act (1842). Children who were younger than nine could not work and those between the ages of nine and sixteen could not be forced to work more than fifteen hours a day. Novelists of the time played a crucial role in many social movements, including that of taking better care of children and advocating for children's rights through encouraging a better understanding of said children. One such writer was Charles Dickens. Dickens, the most popular 19th century novelist, developed characters from childhood into adulthood. David Copperfield from *David Copperfield* (1850), Phillip Pirrip, better known as Pip, from *Great Expectations* (1861), and Louisa and Tom Gradgrind from *Hard Times* (1854) are among his best known. Pip, David, Louisa and Tom make decisions, cultivate relationships, and develop their views on life during childhood, and these developments ultimately predict how and who they become.

Samuel Sipe sums it up well in discussing how Pip is the "author of his life's history, discovers the origins of his identity, and just as surely it is in the sum of Pip's past experiences and his present attitudes towards them that the readers of *Great Expectations* discover Pip the whole man" (198). Dickens makes it clear that the roots of these characters come from their childhoods and the developing personalities and traits which drive their decisions. The main traits through which Pip makes his decisions are his sense of guilt and his misplaced values and snobbish desires, while David's growth is fueled by his naiveté and an optimism which provides him a great deal of mental fortitude. Louisa is driven by her cold, fact-oriented upbringing but desire to be a good daughter, wife, and overall person, and Tom by his self-interested laziness and his desire to cut

corners in getting what he wants. Through his mastery of the bildungsroman, Dickens contributes to the direction that nineteenth century developmental/child psychology takes and the truth behind childhood experiences in relation to future successes or failures and character development.

Developmental Psychology is described as being a branch of psychology that seeks to explain how children and adults change over time. Developmental psychology generally tends to focus on childhood because this is when the most significant amount of growth and change occurs. According to the American Psychological Association,

“Developmental psychologists focus on human growth and changes across the lifespan, including physical, cognitive, social, intellectual, perceptual, personality and emotional growth. Throughout their lives, humans go through various stages of development. Developmental psychologists study how people grow, develop and adapt at different life stages.”

Developmental Psychology was in its infancy as England entered into the nineteenth century. Child labor laws were barely a whisper to the upper class and the influential middle class. Dickens himself was forced to work at a factory at the age of twelve after his father was thrown into debtor’s prison. At that time, there were no laws to prevent Dickens from being forced to work and to at least keep him from having to work long hours in poor conditions. The phrase “children are to be seen, not heard” was definitely a motto by which the English society had and was, for the most part, continuing to live by.

As the century progressed, so too did the sciences and, along with both, an increased understanding in determining the cause of some behaviors in adults. Before the progression of psychology, and in particular Child Psychology, connections were not made between what children experience when young and children’s behavior and situational responses when older. Children were merely seen as little adults, which is evident in not only the literature predating the nineteenth century but in art as well. Children were often depicted in very stilted, arranged positions, wearing miniature versions of the wigs and garments of adults. As the new attitudes towards children began to emerge, the art changed with it: depicting children in more natural positions, at play and in nature. As art began to back and help forge new images and ideas in thinking about children, so too did literature.

Dickens was in a unique position to be extremely influential, and he used that position responsibly. Although his private life was tumultuous, Dickens was a public figure and advocate on many different social fronts concerning equality.

Meir Kryger, a professor at the Yale School of Medicine, asserts that “Dickens presented the reader with the humanity of the ill, the deformed and the disabled” through his novels. For example, the character of Tiny Tim in a *Christmas Carol* is almost impossible to resist feeling sorry for. People of the nineteenth century were taught through novelists like Dickens to begin to view the less fortunate in a different, more forgiving light, including children.

Many novelists of the nineteenth century managed to have more than just a surface level impact through their works. For example, Charlotte Bronte’s novel *Jane Eyre* and George Elliot’s *The Mill on the Floss* are two novels which both follow their main characters from childhood into adulthood, thereby chronicling their growth and development in conjunction to the people, events, and choices that shape them. Dickens was another such, and arguably the most prominent, author who managed to affect and cause changes to real life social, moral, and medicinal issues. One area in which Dickens and his fellow novelists had a strong impact was the area of Child Psychology. Sally Shuttleworth points out that “The impact of the novel on child psychiatry is evident in one of the first specialist works in the field, Leonard Guthrie’s *Functional Nervous Disorders in Childhood*” (212), which was published in 1907. Guthrie was a pediatrician who was most interested in children’s diseases and nervous disorders. He was one of the first licensed physicians to begin to point out that understanding people and the reason for people’s behavior and reactions required a deeper look at and understanding of a person’s childhood and the psychological traumas therein. Guthrie used novels such as George Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) when pointing out the effects of childhood trauma on the adult psyche. Guthrie discusses how young Maggie Tulliver is suffering the consequences of impulsively cutting off her hair. To her, the situation is devastating, but Guthrie notes that as people grow into adults, they cannot remember experiences exactly as they once happened, even though those moments are intricately interwoven into their psyche. This causes the experience to feel somewhat removed from reality and that is how “we can look on at the troubles of our children with a smiling disbelief in the reality of their pain” (212). Guthrie believed that it was important to begin to take the psychological suffering of childhood much more seriously than it had ever been before (Shuttleworth).

It is worth noting that one of Dickens’ novels did in fact cause medical writers to wake up, pay attention, and begin thinking critically on the issues Dickens’ points out with the current century’s treatment of children. Sally Shuttleworth, a British academic specializing in Victorian literature, Professor of English Literature at the University of Oxford and a Professorial Fellow of St Anne’s College, points out that through his novel *Dombey and Son* “Dickens... helped launch a new diagnosis of ‘brain-forcing’ and a medical campaign for the improvement

of education” (213). She also states that “there are compelling similarities between the Victorian age and our own; their concerns with excessive examining, and suicides of the young, prefigure recent social anxieties” (213). Backed by the belief that children were simply little adults, undue mental stress was often placed on a child who was expected to learn and learn quickly. Children of poorer households who did not behave, could not contribute, or simply could not be afforded were often given up to orphanages. Somehow, the school of thought of the nineteenth century was that it was acceptable to leave no time for a child’s growth and development into an adult and instead expect an instantly well-adjusted and mature human being. The Dickensian bildungsroman would open the eyes of the people to the folly of this negligence.

Three of Dickens’ novels, *Great Expectations*, *David Copperfield*, and *Hard Times*, follow the main characters from their childhoods and into adulthood. These novels provide clear examples of how the experiences, relationships, and character development of the children in the novels affect how they and their lives turn out as they grow up and become adults. Pip is one such character whom we are able to watch throughout his lifetime and see the clear implications of his childhood relationships with adults, as well as his triumphs, failures, embarrassments, traumas, dreams, aspirations of love and disappointments.

Great Expectations opens with a scene of a very sad, dejected bundle that turns out to be the main character, seven-year-old Pip. The next few scenes follow the prisoner who will turn out to be Magwitch, the man who becomes Pip’s benefactor. For now, seven-year-old Pip only knows this man as a prisoner who terrifies him and makes him afraid that he will die. Nevertheless, though originally fueled by fear, Pip is kind to the prisoner when he meets him for a second time, cold, wet and hungry, with the food and file that he has stolen from Joe’s workshop. Pip even worries later in the story about the convict getting found and caught by the policeman even while he feels guilty for having stolen and helped the convict. Whatever else may happen in the novel, this short interaction that Pip has with Magwitch proves that there is within Pip the psychological capacity to be a person who is fair and capable of kindness and compassion.

We see this kindness again in Pip much later in the novel, but only after his character flaws and emotional and personal fixations developed in childhood have been resolved. Pip is a mere shadow of his possible self as he becomes pompous and prideful, despite the unknown origins of his wealth, of his benefactor’s identity, and with his assumption that he is being groomed to be Estella’s future husband. Although Joe was one of the only adults to ever treat him kindly and Biddy his only true, sweet friend, Pip turns his back on them and looks down on them because of his overblown expectations.

As it was previously mentioned, although it seems much too obvious, it is hard

to avoid a trait of Pip's developed in childhood that arguably causes considerable misunderstanding and confusion throughout his life. Pip often jumps to conclusions, letting his expectations get ahead of his reality. Pip seems very conscious of the fact that the adults in his life are unfairly unkind to him and wrong about many things; yet when "Pumblechook and Mrs. Joe... surmise that Miss Havisham intends to 'do something' for Pip... Pip comes to believe in it, so that when the 'Expectations' arrive he accepts them as the logical fulfillment of the daydream, of his 'longings'" (Brooks 103). When Pip begins to go to "play" at Satis House owned by Miss Havisham, a rich, bitter old woman, he meets Estella, a beautiful young girl a few years older than he.

Despite his current station and circumstances in life, Pip comes to believe, through his own speculative conviction that Miss Havisham intends to teach him how to be a gentleman and groom him to marry Estella. This is not only because of the casual effect of the belief of the grown-ups but also because of Pip's insecurities. According to social worker Sarah Font et al, "On average, children in lower-income and complex families (loosely defined to include families other than those consisting solely of a married couple and their joint biological children) have poorer sleep routines, housing, nutritional intake, child care, home environments, schools, and neighborhoods" (160-161). Pip is already at both situational and psychological disadvantage because of the nature of his household and Mrs. Joe's bullying, violent tendencies. Pip sets himself up for further bitter disappointment in his expecting far more than the world has to offer for someone of his social status. As a result of these unrealistic expectations, Pip causes himself to be estranged from those he cares about most. Because Pip is always made to feel small and guilty he cannot help but want to be just the opposite. Pip, as the narrator relates that he is at fault for his vain dream of worldly glory.

Another trait, as well as contributing factor of Pip's growth can be found during the scene where Pip feels responsible for Mrs. Joe, his sister, having been struck down by an unknown assailant. Although Pip knows he is in no way directly responsible, he says of the incident that "I was at first disposed to believe that I must have had some hand in the attack upon my sister, or at all events that as her near relation, popularly known to be under obligations to her, I was a more legitimate object of suspicion than anyone else" (117). Pip is at this point an adolescent and the results of the unfounded guilt fostered in him as a child has clearly grown with him and left the scars of psychological deficits and its consequences. As Julie Anne Levine, author of "The Psychodynamics of Shame and Guilt in *Great Expectations*," puts it, "Pip develops a guilt complex because of excessive criticism for his behavior during childhood" (62). Pip "grows up around adult figures only, and they seem to take on a pack mentality in order

to discipline him, ganging up on him as a group without planned direction” (62). There are many instances throughout the book where Pip is overwhelmed by feelings of guilt and responsibility for the actions of adults over which he has no control. These experiences clearly had an impact on his psyche and, therefore, his personality as well.

In this respect, regarding guilt, one of Pip’s most influential relationships is that with his sister, Mrs. Joe. The way Pip responds to Mrs. Joe’s constant admonishments and prescribed guilt trips is indicative of what will spur Pip to make decisions now and in the future. Even though Pip knows that he is not a bad boy and that he tries his best to do what is right, and he has known “from the time that [he] could speak that [his] sister... was unjust to [him]” (92), he cannot shake his sense of constant guilt no matter how aware he is of its false basis. Unlike David Copperfield, Pip’s character is significantly negatively affected by the relationships he has with adults who verbally berate him and his very existence. According to Sarah Font et al,

“emotional abuse may lead children to perceive themselves as unworthy of positive treatment, and these perceptions may manifest in depressive or anxious symptomatology.... Experiencing physical or emotional abuse may also evoke imitative behaviors (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961). This may be particularly relevant for children exposed to domestic violence, wherein the aggressive behavior of the abusive parent may be reenacted. At the same time, children are particularly prone to imitate the parent with whom they identify” (538).

Pip had two role models from which to choose to emulate early on in life. It can be inferred from his self-interested, deprecating manner and actions as a young man that Pip chose to emulate Mrs. Joe, his emotional abuser, rather than Joe, his sister’s husband and his first, closest friend and advocate. Pip is possessed of the same delusions of grandeur that Mrs. Joe had and his sense of self is only inflated by his beliefs about his benefactress and the supposed future that has been planned for him. It is only after Pip goes through the major trials of his young life that he then seems to emulate the goodness and kindness that Joe, although a simple minded-man, had always exhibited. Through his caring for Magwitch, forgiving kindness shown to Miss Havisham, reconciliation with Joe and Biddy, and overall efforts to improve himself and the lives of those he cares for, Pip finally comes into his own. He completes the process of maturation from child to adult, despite the emotional, psychological difficulties of his childhood. Like Pip, Dickens follows another character, David, from a very young age into adulthood, in order to chronicle the psychological effects and significance of childhood on an adult.

We meet David Copperfield at an even earlier age than Pip, his birth. The nar-

rator, who is the older David taking on the role of omniscient storyteller, tells of the eve of his birth. One key difference between Pip and David is that of David's relationship with his mother during his first seven years. Through modern psychological breakthroughs, the first few years of David's and all other babies' lives have been determined to be extremely formative and indicative of future mental health, happiness and behavior. According to Gerry Leisman et al., an Israeli neuroscientist educated in Medicine, Neuroscience, and Biomedical Engineering at the Universities of Manchester, New York, and Union,

"Basic principles have emerged that allow application to educational practice, especially in the early years from birth to five years that place great responsibility for brain development in the hands of parents and early childhood teachers. These include the following

1. The human brain develops from conception to the early twenties

from the bottom up with vital and autonomic functions and control

coming first and cognitive-motor sensory and perceptual

processes later and integration and decision making last (Melillo

& Leisman, 2009).

2. The child's brain is influenced by the combined roles of genetics

and experience (Leisman, Machado, Melillo, & Mualem, 2012;

Leisman & Melillo, 2012; Melillo & Leisman, 2009).

4. Cognitive, emotional, and social capacities are inextricably intertwined

throughout the life course (Leisman, Braun-Benjamin, &

Melillo, 2014).

6. Toxic stress damages developing brain architecture, which can

lead to life-long problems in learning, behavior, and physical and

mental health" (80).

As mentioned above, the early stages of life, particularly from birth until the twenties, are extremely important in the development of brain function: to include the areas of behavior, mental, emotional, and social health and capacity. The relationships of the characters with the adults in their lives and the experiences and impressions they gain of the world as young children play a crucial role in how they will act and react as adults.

As Gwendolyn Needham points out, "Dickens has David as older narrator continually comment on his feeling *then* and *now*, thus skillfully indicating the varying intensity, importance, and permanence of the experiences in his emotional development...." (795). Pip was orphaned when he "was very small" and has no recollection of his father and especially of his mother, and instead has Joe and Mrs. Joe as the most direct adult influences in his life. David's father died before he was born, but David benefits from the warm comfort, love, and devotion of both his mother and Peggotty during his most important developmental years. David has a house to call home and the room he shares with his dotting mother.

David's relationship with and remembrance of his mother are extremely important, especially when considering the fact that she dies early on in his life. David's mother is a widow before David is even born and comes across as a very child-like, naïve character herself. She and Peggotty spoil David with love and provide a sense of the world as a fair and generous place for the first, most formative years of his life. Although he has no father, David lives a relatively comfortable and easy life, coddled by two women who adore him. According to Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia, "the attitudes, values, and behaviors of parents toward their children clearly influence patterns of development.... It appears, then, that one of the ways children acquire patterns of behavior is by imitating their parents." David inherits or copies from his mother a persistent innocent sense of the world and deeply ingrained naiveté.

Given his much more charmed existence, David takes his naiveté with him when he is suddenly thrust into the world soon after the appearance of Mr. Murdstone. David is taken advantage of over and over again in situations where a little common sense might have saved him a lot of trouble. In one early scene in chapter five, David is taken advantage of by a waiter. After telling David a clearly false story about Mr. Topsawyer, who fell dead from drinking the ale, the waiter graciously offers to drink it for him, saying he is "used to it" and doesn't believe it will hurt him. David says "that he would much oblige [him] by drinking it, if he thought he could do it safely, but by no means otherwise" (64). David goes on to think that "when he did throw his head back, and take it off quick, I had a horrible fear, I confess, of seeing him meet the fate of the la-

mented Mr. Topsywaver, and fall lifeless on the carpet" (64). The scene continues in this fashion until poor, naïve David has had not one sip or a bite of the meal that was meant for him and he never does catch on to what was being done to him. The psychological effects of the kind, easy-going nature of his mother have stunted David's growth in other areas, such as perception and common sense.

As David gets older, he in many ways does not outgrow his naiveté, which often causes him to make decisions that are not well thought out or entirely sensible. With his naïve way of perceiving the world combined with a certain honesty and honorable qualities to the point of fallibility, David often causes his own misfortunes as a growing boy and young man. In chapter twelve, people continue to take advantage of David. David, recalling a time when a boy steals his possessions and money, says that "there was a defiant manner about this young man...that I did not much like; as the bargain was made, however, I took him upstairs to the room I was leaving, and we brought the box down, and put it on his cart" (157). Instead of listening to his small voice of reason, David heeds his sense of honor and pays the price for his morals and beliefs. As Jack Rawlins, Professor of English at the California State University, explains while discussing Dicken's own childhood psychological angst and struggle with his "ego/super-ego," "every child learns that his world is not the world others see" (669). David fails for a long time, especially as a boy, to see that the world operates on its own agenda and beliefs. The world will not treat him as fairly as he endeavors to treat its other inhabitants.

Even as David's naiveté causes him to set himself up for even more obstacles than he already faces, his optimism, along with both his mental and emotional strength help to carry him through these hardships. Throughout his life, David must suffer through his mother's death, poverty, little Emily's running away with his much admired friend Steerforth, the malevolent machinations of Uriah Heep, and little everyday misfortunes as well as other significant life events. Through it all, David neither cries nor loses heart as often as might be expected. He remains steadfast in his ability to adapt to his ever-changing situation and diligent in his desire and belief that he can do better than just "okay" for himself and the people he loves. In this way, the events and relationships of David's childhood that fostered his optimism and strong spirit, provide him with the psychological fortitude and defenses with which he may confront the adult world with a sense of optimism and hope.

Jerome Buckley notes: "To David, memory reaching back is in fact the strongest sanction of identity, for the present consciousness is constantly colored by the remembered or never quite forgotten past" (232). As all the characters grow, the major traits they exhibited as children

follow them into adulthood. Perhaps one of David's biggest mistakes in life was his decision to marry Dora Spenlow, against all common sense. This misguided union is made by a man still in the grasp of his childish hopes and sense of the world. In addition, David may have unconsciously chosen Dora due to her resemblance to his mother in her child-like disposition. Dora turns out to be a terrible housekeeper and bookkeeper; her shortcomings and unpreparedness to be a true wife are perpetuated in her wish that David call her his "child-wife." Amid the disarray of their home, food situation, and generally dismal state of living, David realizes that "I loved my wife, and I was happy; but the happiness I had vaguely anticipated, once, was not the happiness I enjoyed, and there was always something wanting" (587). David realizes that the happiness he could have obtained, the one he had expected to gain someday as a boy, had escaped him. This is because of his inability to realize the world is not as innocent nor as liable to fall perfectly into place as he was once inclined to believe.

It is at the point of Dora's death, and the deaths, triumphs and partings that follow, which David finally seems, after psychologically maturing, to come to terms with the actual world he lives in and not the one his naiveté had created. Once David has adapted his view of the world and what once drove him forward, he realizes the love, stability, and proper companion that has always awaited him in Agnes. Through David's optimism and development of emotional and mental strength, he has also managed to make a place for himself in the world as a capable and celebrated novelist. David overcomes the psychological stressors of the death of his mother, his mistreatment and exploitation at the hands of the Murdstones, the evil machinations of Uriah Heep, and countless other misfortunes in order to come out on the other side as an experienced, capable, and adjusted adult. Unfortunately, two other characters of Dickens are not as fortunate as David in turning their childhood psychological trauma around.

Louisa and her brother Tom are prime examples of the psychological effects of childhood manifesting in their adult lives. Tom and Louisa's earliest and most important adult relationship is the one they have with their father, Thomas Gradgrind, who imposes on all his children his iron-clad belief in only the facts and despises anything creative or imaginative. *Hard Times* is broken up into three sections or 'books.' Those sections are "Sowing", "Reaping", and "Garnering." While there are several meanings found within the book that can be attributed to the names of these sections, certainly Louisa and Tom themselves embody one of those possible meanings.

The very first lines of the book in the first section, Sowing, are spoken by Thomas Gradgrind: "...Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root

out everything else...nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir! (1)"What Gradgrind chooses to sow into the lives of his children are then reaped in the second section. All of the characters face the consequences and are left to garner, or pick up the pieces, in the third and last chapter of the book.

While the main plot of the book seems to focus more on Louisa, Tom is still a major, important character. As the story progresses and the children, who grew up under the psychologically damaging world views and lifestyle of their father, become adults, the effects on Tom's personality and character are revealed. Tom has become a very self-possessed and manipulative young man. Growing up under a "doctrine of facts" has left Tom unable to relate to the sufferings of others and to only think of his own happiness and well-being. Not only does Tom encourage Louisa, who cares for him more than anyone, to marry a man more than twice her age (Mr. Bounderby) in order to support Tom, but he also frames Stephen Blackpool, a poor factory worker. After being framed for robbing the bank by Tom, who was the actual robber, life continues to take a steady dive downwards for Blackpool, ultimately ending in his death.

Tom is never able to reach a state maturation as an adult, at least not when it matters. Tom dies abroad after being forced to flee England because of his crime, and realizes how wrong he was and wishes he could see Louisa just one more time. For her part, Louisa suffers great emotional distress and confusion over the course of the novel. Thanks to Mr. Gradgrind, Louisa seems unsure of what it even means to "feel." Louisa is torn between her fact-oriented upbringing, and the desire to experience something she cannot even name.

After being married to Mr. Bounderby, the psychological results of Louisa's upbringing in the way she views and relates to people is revealed. Bounderby fires Stephen Blackpool after he refuses to spy on the other factory workers who are unionizing. Moved by his refusal to bend to her husband's will, Louisa offers to help Stephen. She meets Stephen face to face and her thoughts reveal how she has thought of the factory workers: "something to be worked so much, and paid so much, and there ended" (147). Louisa had "scarcely thought more of separating them into units than of separating the sea itself into its component drops" (148). However, after meeting Stephen, a real, thinking, feeling individual, Louisa is moved all the more to help him, yet with what feeling she does not know.

With the psychological effects of her upbringing leaving Louisa unable to even identify and name feelings, she is an easy target for the kinds of games that

James Harthouse (aduplicitous, wealthy young man) is about to play with her. Out of sheer boredom, Harthouse decides to woo and seduce Louisa. Torn between being married to a man she hates and being pursued by a man she thinks she loves, although she does not even know what that means, Louisa endures an increasing amount of emotional and mental distress until she reaches her breaking point. After sending Harthouse away after a secret rendezvous, with the promise of meeting him later to supposedly have an affair, Louisa goes to see her father.

The story reaches a climax as Louisa points to where her heart should be and says to Mr. Gradgrind, "How could you give me life and take from me all the inappreciable things that raise it from the state of conscious death? Where are the graces of my soul? Where are the sentiments of my heart? What have you done, oh, Father, what have you done with the garden that should have bloomed once, in this great wilderness here?" (201). Because of her father's psychological abuse, y. Louisa does not know or understand the best parts of what it means to be a living, feeling human being. She has not known joy, merriment, or love. Louisa declares that her father's philosophy will not help her now and that he must do something else to save her. It is only through the caring attentions and devotion of minor character Sissy Jupe, the most selfless character in the book, that Louisa is finally able to reach a mature, adult state. Even then, Louisa never marries, and lives out her life and lost childhood vicariously through the children of Sissy.

All of the young characters suffer because of the intentions of the adults around them, even if they were not meant for ill. Some of our young main characters, in navigating their psychological issues on the road to maturation, handle the transition into adulthood better than others. In contrast to David, Pip, rather than managing to outgrow his misplaced feelings of guilt and rein in his expectations, becomes a young man who does things that he now should feel guilty about. Pip promises to visit Joe after he has moved away but feels the place too common and somewhat beneath who he has (or rather thinks he has) become; he is ashamed of Joe and Biddy. The expectations formed on the notions of beliefs and adults he did not trust in childhood have caused Pip to grow into a man with stunted, short-term vision, and a disdain for those who he considers beneath him. Pip also continues to let his desires and the value he places on not being "common" get away from him until it all comes crashing down around him. All the characters have major points in their lives at which they will either be forced to grow and change or fall into despair.

For Pip, it is the realization of who his true beneficiary in life is that brings his desires and expectations crashing down around him. It is only through this

experience and “a whole series of chastening physical experiences which the young Pip undergoes during the final stages of his expectations: his trial by fire at Miss Havisham’s, his brush with death at the limekiln, his immersion in the Thames, and his delirious illness that follows upon Magwitch’s death” (Sipe 1), that Pip is able to cast off his misplaced values and guilt that have been rooted within him since childhood.

The case of Louisa and Tom is somewhat different from that of David and Pip. Their journeys into adulthood show another aspect of the psychological effects that follow people into adulthood. Louisa and Tom were raised very intentionally by Mr. Gradgrind. They were raised to be people who were devoid of fanciful notions and filled with fact and practicality. But as discussed above, this intentional raising of his children had unintended psychological side effects.

The idea that childhood, and what develops and takes root during this time matters, comes full circle as all four characters enter adulthood and continue to make decisions based on these roots and psychological marks left on their psyche. The perceptions, beliefs, and reactions to general events and hardship are learned from an early age and this is illustrated well in Dickens’ novels. If the psychological filters through which a child views the world and makes decisions going forward are not “correct” or adjusted for the adult world, the child will suffer the consequences of the continued pattern of his decisions and behavior. As is the case with Pip, David, Louisa and Tom, trials and circumstances will either contrive to make a young person still moored in the psychological affects and beliefs of his childhood either grow up or give up. Pip, David, and Louisa manage, through the trials and growing pains of a young adulthood, to grow into adults who have not entirely left their childish selves and psychological issues behind; rather, they have adapted from the circumstances of their pasts to fit in with the adulthood of their present. Through Tom’s failure to adjust, Dickens also shows the other possible outcome and the reality of childhood upbringing and suffering.

Thanks to Dickens, and authors like him, the general feeling and beliefs about children in the nineteenth century were forever altered. Through Dickens’ style of bildungsroman writing, the people of England were able to make connections between the childhoods of the characters and the adults they became. As Shuttleworth proclaims, “intricate patterns of exchange between science, literature, and medicine, developed further through social practice and debate,” and that, especially in the earlier years of Victoria’s reign, literature “led the way” (359). People began to understand that things that were experienced in childhood had lasting psychological effects well into adulthood and that children could no longer merely be treated as little adults. Thanks to literature like that of Dickens’ novels, children moving forward would gain more rights, stop being forced to work, and be provided the appropriate attention, schooling and care that a society owes to its children.

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