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The Implications of the Journey and the Quest Myth in Four Dickens Novels

Christine Grotefeld

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ABSTRACT

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Christine Grotefeld

This thesis studies the relations between the structures of the journey in Dickens' The Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist, David Copperfield and Great Expectations and his statements about his own society. Dickens patterns his first novel, The Pickwick Papers, on the picaresque journey. However, as his perceptions of society change and develop, Dickens relies more heavily on the structure of the mythic quest. Dickens' gradual disenchantment with the values and goals of the middle-class is reflected in Great Expectations in which the mythic quest is used satirically.

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A Note on Citations and Bibliography

A version of the new (unconfirmed) MLA method was used: Complete bibliographic information on each text quoted or referred to will be found in the appended Bibliographies. There are no footnotes for citations; rather, author, page number, and the title (where appropriate) are cited in the text, contiguous to the quotation or reference -- it was frequently unnecessary to cite the title.

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INTRODUCTION

Each of Dickens' four novels, The Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist, David Copperfield and Great Expectations, is structured similarly on the form of a journey. The two forms of the journey that appear in these novels are the picaresque and the mythic quest. Of the two, the mythic quest has the dominant influence in Dickens' work. As Dickens' attitudes and values evolved and as his criticism of society intensified, he shifted from the picaresque to the mythic quest. The transition is evident in The Pickwick Papers and more so in Oliver Twist. In David Copperfield and Great Expectations, the mythic quest provides the unifying structure. This transition from the picaresque to the mythic quest results because of Dickens' changing perception of society. The hero's quest myth enables Dickens to criticize the values, institutions, and goals of his society in a more serious way. The experience of his main characters, patterned on the struggles of the hero of the mythic quest, communicates vividly the problems, hardships and shortcomings of 19th century England. The mythic quest also allows Dickens, through the behavior and attitudes of his main characters, to picture in an ideal form new values and directions for society.

In The Pickwick Papers, Dickens' first major fiction, the journey provides a unifying structure for the novel. As Pickwick progresses in his travels, though, the quality of his character and the nature of his journey change. The novel begins in the tradition of the picaresque. Dickens, typical of the picaresque writer, has created a satirical distance between his main character and the reader. Although Pickwick is the object of much humor, it is nevertheless evident

that Pickwick's humanity, energy and goodness are valued by the author. Pickwick is the ideal model of the wealthy upper class gentleman who willingly shares his wealth with others in order that their lives may be enriched. As George H. Ford points out (Dickens and His Readers, 1955, 22) this attitude of Pickwick's results in a "feeling of oneness with his diverse public". Nevertheless, after Pickwick's experience with Dodson and Fogg, a significant change occurs in his character. As Pickwick becomes the victim of injustice, the satirical distance between the author and hero diminishes. Pickwick's courage in defying Dodson and Fogg gives his character a heroic dimension. His unsuccessful encounter with these two cunning lawyers changes the direction of the novel. Pickwick's journey now gives way to a quest for justice. When his quest is unsuccessful, his journeying ceases. His failure to achieve victory introduces a serious criticism against Victorian society. In spite of the fact that the nature of journey changes, comic and satiric elements remain throughout.

In his discussion of literary modes, Northrop Frye in Anatomy of Criticism (1957, 45) points out that the goal of comedy is the integration of the main character into society. Typically, the ending of comedy sees the society forming around the hero often signified by weddings. Frye believes that this new society is a "kind of moral norm." (164) The typical hero of comedy escapes to the country.(43) After Pickwick's adventures with Dodson and Fogg and Fleet, Pickwick returns to his friends and retires to the country where his married friends and their children make him the hub of their small universe. Although Pickwick emerges with heroic qualities, in a way he is a parody of the traditional hero of the romance quest. As Frye (137) points out, the hero of romance is usually

a virtuous young man. Pickwick, on the other hand, is a middle-aged bachelor. Although his physical appearance is a parody of the hero of quest, his spirit is in the tradition of the romantic hero. Dickens places great value upon the generosity and good will of Pickwick, but these qualities alone are not sufficient for a hero. In the three subsequent novels, the Pickwickian character is no longer the central character. He is present in the form of the benefactor or wise guide.

Although Oliver Twist contains some picaresque elements, basically it is influenced by the mythic quest as are the novels David Copperfield and Great Expectations. In discussing the appearance of the mythic quest in these novels, I will be referring to the three stages of the mythic quest identified by Joseph Campbell (The Hero with a Thousand Faces, 1949) as the following: Departure, Initiation, and Return.

Two researchers have studied the journey and the mythic quest specifically in Dickens: Norma Whittington's thesis Journeys and Journeying in Dickens (University of Southern Mississippi, 1970) and Sandra Lee Marsyla's The Unheroic Hero: A Study of Mythical Echoes and Their Effect Upon the Technically Ineffectual Heroes of Charles Dickens' Fiction (Thesis. Kent State University, 1972). Both have used Frye's work as a frame of reference. To date, though, no one has, as far as I can determine, made as detailed a study of the mythic quest and its implications in Oliver Twist, David Copperfield and Great Expectations as I propose here.

In Oliver Twist, the mythic pattern serves as a vehicle for Dickens to examine the psychological and social implications of contemporary institutions and social conditions. In a certain way, it continues an examination of the prison community that Pickwick encountered

in Fleet. Oliver's journey, like that of the mythic hero, can be divided into Departure and Initiation. The presence of the protective Nancy and Mr. Brownlow assures the ultimate success of Oliver's quest for identity and reaffirms the values which Dickens wishes to emphasize. Mr. Brownlow is strongly reminiscent of the primordial divinity or God-father because, through mysterious means, he provides the proof of Oliver's identity, thus validating the inherent nobility of Oliver's character. However, he is unable to protect Oliver completely from the reality and horror of Fagin's world. Through Brownlow, Dickens queries the power that an individual has to transform society.

Oliver's journey is unique because, while David and Pip develop and grow to manhood, Oliver remains a child. Thus Oliver, unlike the mythic hero, undergoes an abbreviated journey because he does not struggle with, and obtain victory over, his less desirable self. Oliver's absolute innocence and purity preclude undesirable human qualities. Moreover, he does not experience a rebirth or change of character. As a mythic hero, then, Oliver is somewhat simplified, and the mythic quest in Oliver Twist is an abridged one.

In David Copperfield, the use of the mythic quest is more fully developed than in Oliver Twist. David undergoes a journey which has all the characteristics of the classical mythic quest. He has a mythical and magical birth, he is called to adventure, he meets with trials and tribulations, and finally his experiences result in changes and growth in his character. The various themes in David Copperfield are woven upon this pattern of the mythic quest. Dickens develops the themes of the child's relationship to society, the development of the artist, and the individual's need to deal with the realities of society. The

successful voyage of David resulting in his second marriage is a symbol of the values he learns and the security and success which he achieves as an individual.

The same mythic patterning that occurs in David Copperfield exists in Great Expectations. This novel clearly deals with the themes of the mythic quest. It starts with the hero in a position of ignorance and details his struggles, voluntary or not, to formulate his own values and accept fully his own nature. Pip's successful but painful journey results in his acknowledgement of Magwitch. Pip, more than either Oliver or David, is responsible for his own progress and personal growth. Also, Pip's personal anguish is much greater than that of either Oliver or David.

By studying the use of the journey in the above-mentioned four novels, the progression of Dickens' values and techniques can be observed. As a young writer, Dickens began Pickwick in the tradition of the picaresque, and emphasized the saving value of money. However, as his art evolves, so does his application of the structure and symbols of the journey, until in Great Expectations he uses the mythic quest satirically, to attack the very upper-class money values to which he had earlier ascribed, replacing them with a more egalitarian ideal, based on self-help.

The Pickwick Papers

In The Pickwick Papers, published first in 1837, Dickens makes use of the structure of the journey; Dickens' treatment of the journey and of the character of Pickwick is at first in the tradition of the picaresque. As the novel progresses, Pickwick's character is transformed from the satirized protagonist of the picaresque to the approved hero of a comic parody of the quest romance. This transition occurs when Pickwick becomes the victim of the injustice of a court case. His character takes on an heroic quality as he challenges the law, personified by Dodson and Fogg. As this theme is developed, Pickwick, embodying the author's values of justice and benevolence, tests these virtues against established law. Because of this sharing of principles between author and hero, the satirical distance established early in the novel gradually diminishes. Pickwick's struggle against Dodson and Fogg is presented in the form of the romance quest. Dickens' satirical use of the romance quest enables him to make a more serious and realistic criticism of society. In the latter part of the novel, he focuses his attacks on the law and on the miseries of debtor's prison.

Steven Marcus (From Pickwick to Dombey, 1965, 22) and V.S. Pritchett, ("The Comic World of Dickens" The Dickens' Critics, 1961, 310) show that Dickens was familiar with the works of Fielding, Smollet, Goldsmith and Cervantes, all of whom wrote in the picaresque mode. Arnold Kettle also points out, in his Introduction to the English Novel (1951, 23-24) that picaresque elements are present in Pickwick. These elements which I am going to discuss may be divided into two groups:

the minor and the major. The minor picaresque elements, which remain fairly constant throughout the novel, consist of vivid and accurate detail, inclusion of interpolated tales, colloquial expression, and a protagonist who is accompanied by a servant or friends. The major picaresque elements, which become transformed, are the episodic adventures within the framework of a journey, and the satirized nature of the protagonist.

Like earlier picaresque novels, The Pickwick Papers starts out as a journey in which the main characters encounter many unrelated adventures. The framework of the journey is provided by the nature of the Pickwick Club defined in its regulations:

> That the Corresponding Society of the Pickwick Club is therefore hereby constituted; and that Samuel Pickwick, Esq. G.C.M.P.C., Tracy Tupman, Esq., M.P.C., Augustus Snodgrass, Esq., M.P.C. and Nathaniel Winkle, Esq., M.P.C. are hereby nominated and appointed members of the same; and that they be requested to forward, from time to time, authenticated accounts of their journeys and investigations, of their observations of character and manners, and of the whole of their adventures....(24)

The incidents that Pickwick and his friends encounter vary in length and complexity. A few examples of these unrelated incidents are the elopement of Wardell's sister with Jingle, the election at Eatanswill, the ball at Rochester and the duel between Winkle and Dr. Slammer. These events are independent of each other. However,

they are thematically related in that they ridicule social norms and provide an attack on society and the relationships which exist between people.

Also in the picaresque tradition is the satirical method by which Dickens describes Pickwick. A satirical distance is established early in the novel as Dickens ridicules Pickwick's naiveté, his "scientific detachment", his courage and sense of honour. This distancing is illustrated as Dickens makes fun of Mr. Pickwick's exaggerated impact on the world of science:

> There sat the man who had traced to their source the mighty ponds of Hampstead and agitated the scientific world with his Theory of Tittlebats. (25)

Dickens ridicules the attitude of "scientific detachment" and curiosity which Pickwick demonstrates in his pursuit of knowledge of human nature. Pickwick is a self-declared "observer of human nature". (34) He is often engaged in the study of individuals and speculates:

> ...upon the characters and pursuits of the persons by whom he was surrounded--a habit in which he in common with many other great men delighted to indulge. (92)

He never refuses an opportunity of adding to this knowledge and "could not resist so tempting an opportunity of studying human nature". (311) Like a true student, Mr. Pickwick has a propensity to take notes of his observations. Thus in his conversation with the cabman in the early part of the novel, Pickwick's "scientific detachment" and his tendency to take notes results in a heated discussion:

> "Would anybody believe," continued the cab-driver, appealing to the crowd, "would anybody believe as an informer 'ud go about in a man's cab, not only takin' down his number but ev'ry word he says into the bargain"' (a light flashed upon Mr. Pickwick--it was the note-book). (30)

In ironic contrast to his pursuit and observation of human nature, Pickwick is often a victim of his own innocence. Although Pickwick is past middle age, he seems to have a total lack of experience and perception concerning people and human nature. He entertains many false assumptions, such as his belief that all medical students are "fine fellows...with judgment matured by observation and reflection, and tastes refined by reading and study". (448) His naiveté is reflected during the political activities at Eatanswill when the voters are locked up:

> "Fitzkin's people have go three-and-thirty voters in the lock-up coach-house at the White Hart."
>
> "In the coach-house", said Mr. Pickwick, considerably astonished by this second stroke of policy. (191)

In addition, he is constantly surprised and astonished at the variety of incidents and at the various human reactions. It is as if he had never encountered the world before. He is like an eternal child.

> Mr. Pickwick expressed a strong desire to recollect a song which he had heard in his

> infancy, and the attempt proving abortive, sought to stimulate his memory with more glasses of punch, which appeared to have quite a contrary effect; for, from forgetting the words of the song, he began to forget how to articulate any words at all; and finally, after rising to his legs to address the company in an eloquent speech, he fell into the barrow, and fast asleep, simultaneously. (291)

This incident shows how easily Pickwick is reduced to an infant state. Like a child, Pickwick has very little control over himself or his environment. Even though he has an old body, Pickwick has the innocence and youth frequently associated with the hero of the picaresque.

Pickwick's concept of courage is a target of satire. For example, when the Pickwickians find that they have chosen a battlefield for their picnic site, Pickwick's leadership and his behavior in the face of danger are satirized:

> Man is but mortal, and there is a point beyond which human courage cannot extend. Mr. Pickwick gazed through his spectacles for an instant on the advancing mass, and then fairly turned his back and--we will not say fled; firstly, because it is an ignoble term, and secondly, because Mr. Pickwick's figure was by no means adapted for that mode of retreat--he trotted away at as quick a rate as his legs would convey him. (73)

Instead of inspiring his followers to noble behavior, his efforts at leadership get him into trouble. Mr. Pickwick, in one incident, is so disappointed in the behavior of his disciples that he reprimands them, only to have his criticisms backfire:

> "Is it not a wonderful circumstance," said Mr. Pickwick, "that we seem destined to enter no man's house without involving him in some degree of trouble? Does it not, I ask, bespeak the indiscretion, or worse than that, the blackness of heart--that I should say so!--of my followers that beneath whatever roof they locate, they disturb the peace of mind and happiness of some confiding female?" (278)

At this point, Mr. Pickwick is interrupted by Sam, who hands him a letter from Dodson and Fogg informing him that Mrs. Bardell is suing for breach of promise. Pickwick is being satirized as a hero in that he never has any control over the situations. He even becomes a victim of his own hat when it blows off his head and he gives chase. The hat develops a will of its own and "rolled sportively...as merrily as a lively porpoise in a strong tide". (74)

Though Dickens satirizes all aspects of Pickwick's character and appearance, making fun of his pretentions as leader, man of science and man of honour and dignity, nevertheless, he never shows Pickwick as losing his good nature or his optimism. His sunny disposition is often alluded to. He is described as bursting "like another sun from his slumber". (28) He has a "beaming face" which "beamed with the most sunny smiles". (291) When he is upset, his good nature is easily

restored and he is always able to laugh at himself. When Pickwick falls asleep in a wheel barrow and is taken off to the pound, he wakes up to find himself the centre of attention.

> Do what he would, a smile would come into Mr. Pickwick's face; the smile extended into a laugh; the laugh into a roar; the roar became general. (296)

Pickwick is the perfect image of benevolence and optimism. Throughout the novel, this aspect of his character is never satirized because Dickens believes that these values are desirable.

As a result of Pickwick's experience with Dodson and Fogg and his exposure to Fleet, a change occurs in the narrative voice as well as in the two major elements of the picaresque; namely, the satirization of the main character and the episodic nature of the plot.

In the early part of the novel, as Philip Rogers points out in his article "Mr. Pickwick's Impotence" (Sphinx, 9, 1979, 28-35), it is very clear that the consciousness of Pickwick and the consciousness of Dickens do not coincide. In fact, Dickens separates himself from the voice of the narrator by having the narrator assume the persona of an editor. As an editor, the narrative voice is a spectator who does not identify with Pickwick, but rather observes his behavior. The editor appears to be superior to Pickwick and is disdainful of Pickwick's pomposity. Behind the editor, as observed by J. Hillis Miller (Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels, 1958, 2 - 5) is the opinion of the author, who is making fun of the editorial style which describes with ridiculous solemnity the appearance of the "so-called great man". This is the narrative voice of the editor in the early

part of the novel:

> We are bound, on the authority of Mr. Pickwick, to state that Mr. Tupman's mode of proceeding evinced far more of prudence and deliberation than that adopted by Mr. Winkle. Still, this by no means detracts from the great authority of the latter gentleman on all matters connected with the field....(287)

The distance between the narrator who is editing Pickwick's notes and Dickens the author is maintained throughout the early part of the novel. The "we" does not identify with Pickwick nor necessarily Dickens:

> We will frankly acknowledge that up to the period of our being first immersed in the voluminous papers of the Pickwick Club, we had never heard of Eatanswill; we will with equal candour admit that we have in vain searched for the proof of the actual existence of such a place at the present day...(187)

Dickens is ridiculing the attitude of the editor who presumes to judge Pickwick. Ironically, the editor demonstrates some of the same character traits that he attacks in Pickwick. He prides himself on his observation and study of human nature:

> A casual observer might possibly have remarked nothing extraordinary in the bald head and circular spectacles which were intently turned towards his [the secretary's] face during the

> reading of the above resolutions; to those who knew...the gigantic brain of Pickwick was working beneath that forehead, and that the beaming eyes of Pickwick were twinkling behind those glasses...(25)

The voice of the editor and the sense of inferiority and absurdity associated with Pickwick gradually diminish as Pickwick's stature takes on the heroic overtones normally accompanying the hero of the quest.

The transition of Pickwick from being the satirical hero of the picaresque to becoming a character with heroic qualities begins when Pickwick becomes the object of a misunderstanding. Mrs. Bardell believes he is proposing to her and she faints at the moment when Pickwick's friends appear. Mr. Pickwick's protestations of innocence are not entirely believed by his friends:

> "I cannot conceive--" said Mr. Pickwick when his friends returned, "I cannot conceive what has been the matter with that woman. I had merely announced to her my intention of keeping a man-servant when she fell into the extraordinary paroxysm in which you found her. Very extraordinary thing."
>
> "Very," said his three friends.
>
> "Placed me in such an extremely awkward situation," continued Mr. Pickwick.
>
> "Very," was the reply of his followers as they coughed slightly and looked dubiously at each other. (185)

For the first time Dickens creates a distance between Pickwick and his friends. Pickwick, the author and the reader are united in the knowledge that Pickwick is a victim of circumstance. This incident marks the point at which author and reader begin to feel empathy for Pickwick. This empathy is underlined when Pickwick refuses to pay Dodson and Fogg:

> Not a pound, not a penny, of my money, shall find its way into the pockets of Dodson and Fogg. That is my deliberate and irrevocable determination. (470)

Pickwick's decision to fight what he considers an injustice adds a heroic element to his character. He courageously accepts the challenge to right a wrong. Like the hero of the quest myth, as described by Frye (189) Pickwick goes forth to slay a dragon which is infinitely more powerful than he. As the court proceedings unfold, it becomes apparent that the "law" is very easily manipulated by unscrupulous men. The law is used to fulfill pecuniary interests and has very little to do with achieving justice. It is seen as a complicated and vast network which is a formidable enemy. Its supporters are opportunists and parasites who see law as a game. And the satire now moves off Pickwick and onto this profession of law. When Sam Weller perceives that Pickwick is being baited by Dodson and Fogg he says:

> "You just come avay," said Mr. Weller. "Battledore and shuttlecock's a wery good ven you an't the shuttlecock and two lawyers the battledores, in which case it gets too excitin' to be pleasant."(303)

It is no longer Pickwick who is the butt of the satire, but the lawyers,

are seen as being manipulative and devious.

Pickwick still remains naive, especially in his belief that the law exists to serve justice. But his naiveté is not satirized during his experience with Dodson and Fogg and Fleet because this assumption is one of the values which Dickens supports. Pickwick's belief in the law results from his assumption that the law protects the innocent. His attitude reflects the faith that the middle class had in their own establishments. As he says to his own lawyer:

> I am innocent of the falsehood laid to my charge;...I must beg to add that unless you sincerely believe this, I would rather be deprived of the aid of your talents. (534)

Pickwick's refusal to recapitulate to Dodson and Fogg adds stature to his character. He is willing, if necessary, to take on this adversity alone because his friends and lawyer are doubtful of the wisdom of his decision. Pickwick, however, has no doubts and maintains his cheerful disposition even though he has only two months before his incarceration.

Dickens further illustrates the way in which the lawyers misrepresent the facts. In this famous example, a great deal is read into the notes that Pickwick leaves for Mrs. Bardell.

> "Garraway's twelve o'clock. Dear Mrs. B--
> Chops and Tomata sauce. Yours, Pickwick."
> Gentlemen, what does this mean? Chops and Tomata sauce. Yours, Pickwick! Chops gracious heavens, gentlemen, is the happiness of a sensitive and confiding female to be trifled

away by such shallow artifices as these? (519)

The note is totally devoid of any meaning, save to tell her that he will be late for dinner and that he would like to have chops and tomato sauce; nevertheless, Pickwick is depicted by Sargeant Buzfuz as being an example of "revolting heartlessness" and accused of carrying out "systematic villainy". (517)

Pickwick's innocence and naiveté handicap him in the world of Dodson and Fogg. His strongest ally against these lawyers is Sam Weller, who is able to damage but not defeat the evidence against Pickwick. Weller is the only one among Pickwick's circle of friends whose shrewdness enables him to defend and help Pickwick. He is an able opponent, lending his heorism to the approval of Pickwick. In spite of Sam's efforts, however, Pickwick is found guilty. Pickwick's own courage and determination now strengthen his earlier resolve not to weaken or be cowed by Dodson and Fogg. He undertakes a crusade which is not at all in keeping with picaresque tradition and the behavior of the picaro.

He does not allow his experience of the trial, or his rather negative observations of human behavior, to jaundice his sense of benevolence. While in Fleet, he feels kindly disposed to help alleviate the suffering of others. It is because Parker appeals to his generosity that Pickwick finally agrees to pay the costs and so free Mrs. Bardell from prison. Towards those who have humiliated him, such as Jingle and Mrs. Bardell, he acts generously, for he is moved by their plight.

It is in Fleet that Pickwick further evolves to take on more characteristics of the hero; moreover, Dickens uses the now-positive character of Pickwick to examine the horrors of prison, through which he

hopes to enlighten the general public. Fleet represents an aspect of life of which that polite Victorian society prefers to remain ignorant. In this arena, middle class ethics and decorum are strangers. It is a microcosm of society where people from all walks of life live in equally impoverished conditions. Inhabiting it are gamblers, scoundrels, drunks, thieves and vagabonds as well as cobblers and butchers. Some are victims of unknown misfortune and their rank is unknown, their crime forgotten and they abandoned:

> "Friends!" interposed the man in a voice which rattled in his throat. "If I lay dead at the bottom of the deepest mine in the world, tight screwed down and soldered in my coffin, rotting in the dark and filthy ditch that drags its slime along beneath the foundations of this prison, I could not be more forgotten or unheeded that I am here. I am a dead man; dead to society, without the pity they bestow on those whose souls have passed to judgment." (645)

Fleet in this instance has taken on the demonic imagery, a state to which those who have transgressed against society are banished. Appropriate to one stage in the quest myth, Frye (189) describes this demonic world as being fallen, where "struggle and poverty and disease abound". The physical appearance of Fleet is reminiscent of sinister catacombs. There is a staircase "which appeared to lead to a range of damp and gloomy stone vaults beneath the ground", (623) Pickwick's entrance to Fleet is similar to an entrance to hell:

> They passed through the inner gate and descended a short flight of steps. The key was turned

> after them; and Mr. Pickwick found himself, for the first time in his life, within the walls of debtor's prison. (622)

In this mythic quest, the force opposing the hero is not only associated with demonic imagery, but it also has overtones of a waste land. According to Frye (189) the enemy is accompanied by "winter, darkness, confusion, sterility and moribund life". In Fleet physical life and spiritual life are stifled and warped:

> There was a lean and haggard woman, too--a prisoner's wife--who was watering, with great solicitude, the wretched stump of a dried-up, withered plant, which, it was plain to see, could never send forth a green leaf again--too true an emblem, perhaps of the office she had come there to discharge. (648)

and again:

> His lips were bloodless, and his bones sharp and thin. God help him! The iron teeth of confinement and privation had been slowly filing him down for twenty years. (645)

Challenging this demonic force and wasteland is Pickwick, now the hero. As in the quest myth, the hero, in contrast, is seen as representing "order, fertility, vigor, and youth". These are the characteristics with which Dickens has endowed Pickwick. His note-taking, his observations, his energy, his child-like innocence and his sunny personality are in total contrast to the withering aspects of Fleet; objects of satire earlier in the novel, they come to represent Dickens'

values.

Pickwick's quest is depicted in the plot of this prison section. When Pickwick enters Fleet, he is totally unprepared and is taken off guard. His naiveté is based upon his ignorance of prison conditions and of the threat of debtor's prison that faces many members of the working class. Pickwick's first reaction is to be amused by the behavior of the inmates, who appear to be highly entertained in Fleet:

> "It strikes me, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, leaning over the iron rail at the stairhead, "it strikes me, Sam, that imprisonment for debt is scarcely any punishment at all". (626)

Soon after his entrance into Fleet, Pickwick begins his education into the conditions of life faced by many of the less privileged in society. His teacher is Sam Weller. It is only after Sam's explanation that there are some in Fleet who are totally destitute, that Pickwick becomes slowly aware of the true meaning of incarceration in Fleet:

> " ..I'll tell you wot it is sir: them as is always a-idlin' in public-houses it don't damage at all, and them as is always a-workin' wen they can it damages too much. 'It's unekal', as my father used to say wen his grog worn't made half-and-half. It's unekal, and that's the fault on it." (627)

Through Pickwick, Dickens hopes to attack the general apathy concerning debtors' prisons. As a result of his experience, Pickwick gradually moves from ignorance to awareness, a process through which Dickens hopes to lead his readers. This new seriousness of purpose

transforms Pickwick's character. Pickwick is invested with maturity and strength. For the first time he is vulnerable to despair, loneliness and frustration; consequently, his character takes on new depths.

Because he cannot cope with his new humanity, or his new awareness, Pickwick seeks a self-imposed exile:

> "I have seen enough", said Mr. Pickwick as he threw himself into a chair in his little apartment. "My head aches with these scenes, and my heart too. Henceforth I will be a prisoner in my own room". (698)

Even though Pickwick personally feels that he is unable to help anyone in Fleet, by his example of charity others are influenced. For example, when Pickwick shows compassion towards Jingle, Sam's relationship to Job Trotter is affected. Sam, in turn, treats Job with kindness and offers him a "pot of porter" in true fellowship. Pickwick becomes a model of behavior on which others pattern themselves.

The distance between Pickwick and Dickens is lessened considerably during this section of Fleet. Pickwick is no longer satirized. Pickwick and Dickens become closer as Dickens shares his experience of debtor's prison with him. Pickwick embodies the sensibilities of Dickens which are outraged by the inhumane conditions found in Fleet. Pickwick also comes to feel anger at the injustices perpetrated by the law. As Frye points out:

> The central form of romance is dialectical: everything is focussed on a conflict between the hero and the enemy, and all the reader's values are bound up with the hero. (187)

This sharing of values between author, reader and protagonist is one of the main elements of the quest myth. The Pickwick Papers, begun as satire in the picaresque tradition, has evolved to take on qualities of the quest.

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As John Lucas points out in his book The Melancholy Man (1970, 24) Pickwick retires to the country, where others have to seek him out. Pickwick's innocence and benevolence are preserved by his isolation; he is free from the stresses of active life. Pickwick no longer offers leadership and initiative. He is passive.

Pickwick's retreat from society is a result of his exposure to the sufferings of the lower classes. The realization that such misery exists coupled with his awareness that he is powerless to help, culminates in his withdrawal to a smaller and more manageable community, at Dulwich, where his benevolence is more effective:

> He is known by all the poor people about, who never fail to take their hats off, as he passes, with great respect. The children idolize him, and so indeed does the whole neighbourhood. (863)

The ending of the novel is a parody of comedy because the nucleus of happiness surrounding Pickwick is very small by contrast with the inhumanity of law in London and the misery of Fleet prison. Pickwick's idyllic community at Dulwich is isolated from urban London. Pickwick does not possess the power to reform society and only a handful are affected by his benevolence.

Unlike the hero of the romance, Pickwick's quest for victory is unsuccessful. His failure to achieve victory parodies the successful quest. Through this parody, though, Dickens is able to criticize the values of Victorian society. As the romance hero, Pickwick is ineffective as a social reformer and rebel. His release from Fleet is achieved only when he capitulates to Dodson and Fogg and for charity's sake, pays up so he, Mrs. Bardell and Sam can leave prison. Unlike the "romantic" hero, Pickwick submits to the forces which oppose him because he cannot bear to be responsible for the suffering of others. Through Pickwick's submission to Dodson and Fogg, Dickens makes the statement that law does not lead to justice, only the individual by acts of charity can disseminate it.

In Oliver Twist, David Copperfield, and Great Expectations, Dickens develops the use of the quest myth which he began in The Pickwick Papers. He does not, however, bestow on any of the central characters of these novels Pickwick's infinite benevolence, because Dickens realized that this characteristic is an ineffectual catalyst for change. This type of character does however appear as benefactor or guide.

Oliver Twist

There is a note of sadness as Dickens bids farewell to the character Pickwick, whose personal benevolence and generosity have become an ethical ideal:

> Let us leave our friend in one of those moments of unmixed happiness, of which, if we seek them, there are ever some to cheer our transitory existence here. There are dark shadows on the earth, but its lights are stronger in the contrast.(Pickwick 861)

Oliver Twist, published in 1837, which follows The Pickwick Papers, was Dickens' first attempt to deal more frankly with the "dark shadows". The themes of imprisonment, crime and innocence are the subjects of Oliver Twist. In addition, Dickens deals with the denizens of Fleet Prison, the world of Fagin and Sikes which Pickwick was exposed to in Fleet:

> There were the same squalor, the same turmoil and noise, the same general characteristics in every corner, in the best and the worst alike. The whole place seemed restless and terrible, and the people were crowding and flitting to and fro like the shadow of an uneasy dream. (698)

Dickens, in Oliver Twist, examines the value of innocence and its ability to survive in such a world. Mr. Pickwick can find refuge from the suffering of Fleet by retreating to his own quarters. "My head aches with these scenes, and my heart, too. Henceforth I will be

a prisoner in my own room". (Pickwick, 698). This world is alien to the middle classes of which Pickwick is a member. His behavior is representative of the isolationalist attitude that the upper classes had toward the lower classes. In Oliver Twist, these two social groups again exist in separate spheres. Members of the two classes encounter one another only as a result of accident or crime. Because of a lack of communication, neither group can draw upon the strengths of the other. Thus the security and financial resources of the upper classes are unavailable to those who most need it, while the upper class is unaware of the humanity and energy to be found in the lower social strata.

Unlike Pickwick, there is no safe refuge in Oliver Twist for those who are caught up in the life of Fleet. They have no place to which they can retreat. As Nancy says in Oliver Twist:

> How many times do you read of such as I who spring into the tide, and leave no living thing to care for or bewail them. It may be years hence, or it may be only months, but I shall come to that at last. (415)

Nancy, Sikes and Fagin live in a world which is shadowed by death and destruction:

> Everything told of life and animation but one dark cluster of objects in the centre of all--the black stage, the cross-beam, the rope and all the hideous apparatus of death. (476)

The polarization of the upper and lower classes, the daily struggles of the poor, and the resilience of goodness and innocence are the themes woven upon the framework of Oliver's journey. Critics

disagree on the nature of this journey. Sherman Eoff believes that the journey of Oliver is based upon that undertaken by the picaro. In his article, "Oliver Twist and the Spanish Picaresque Novel" (Studies in Philology, July 1957, 440-447), Eoff focuses the reader's attention on the similarities that exist between this novel and the picaresque. For example, he points out that Oliver, like the picaro, is a homeless and destitute orphan who becomes the victim of an unsympathetic society. The picaro is sensitive to his hopeless plight. Oliver is aware of his vulnerable position in the workhouse, and begs to die rather than be "rented out". The encouragement to follow a life of roguery is much stronger than the influence of good in the picaresque. Oliver's first encounter with Fagin creates a favourable impression upon him. Like the picaro, Oliver, having won his employer's confidence, absconds with valuables. Mr. Brownlow takes Oliver into his home and develops such trust in him that he gives Oliver books and money to deliver. Unfortunately, Oliver is intercepted in his errand by Nancy and is returned to Fagin, against his will. To Mr. Brownlow and Mr. Grimwig, the evidence seems to point to Oliver's willing reversion to his former companions.

Although picaresque elements may be discerned, they are not fully developed nor are they consistently present throughout the novel. For example, in marked contrast to the young picaro, who falls in with corrupt friends, Oliver does not succumb to the temptation of a life of crime. He remains instead faithful to an inborn aristocratic purity. Although the picaresque novel deals with the world of criminals, Dickens' underworld characters in Oliver Twist are not shown as leading a rollicking life, as in Pickwick; instead their lives are depicted as

being full of oppression and as being a dreary struggle for survival. A deeper analysis of Oliver's journey through the novel reveals that there is a significant structural resemblance between it and the features of the mythic quest. The complexity and social significance of the themes in Oliver Twist result in a journey that owes more to the mythic quest than to the picaresque. Oliver's birth and his character correspond to that of the mythic hero. In the manner of the birth of the mythic hero, Oliver's true identity is unclear.

Sandra Lee Marsyla, in her thesis on The Unheroic Hero (101-102), points out other striking similarities between Oliver's birth and that of the mythic hero. She notes the implication in the novel that Oliver accomplishes his own birth. Oliver is introduced to the reader fighting alone for his life; his mother lies dying and others are unable to help:

> There being nobody by...but a pauper old woman, who was rendered rather misty by an unwonted allowance of beer; and a parish surgeon who did such matters by contract; Oliver and Nature fought out the point between them. (24)

Mystery surrounds Oliver's birth. His mother's identity is not revealed; "...where she came from or where she was going to, nobody knows". (25) Although the workhouse personnel conduct a nine-year search for Oliver's father, his heritage remains a mystery, and, as far as the workhouse is concerned, he has no father. Marsyla believes that Oliver's arrival has overtones of a miraculous mythical birth. (71-72)

Again, Oliver, like the mythic hero, is an orphan and is raised by surrogate parents. Like the mythic hero, he seeks to escape his

world. In myth, the hero's early adolescent years are spent away from the main stream of society. Motivated by a sense of adventure and a need for a change, a desire to escape grows in the young hero. (Frye, 198-200) He seeks to flee his world because it is passive and restrictive. Oliver begins life in a nineteenth-century orphanage where he becomes a "victim of a systematic course of treachery and deception". (2) Oliver desires escape because he seeks relief from suffering and abuse. Dickens uses the nineteenth-century Victorian orphanage, rather than the idyllic rural setting surrounding the adolescent mythic hero, because he wishes, by this irony, to criticise and expose the mentality which gave rise to inhumane institutions.

> ...he was badged and ticketed and fell into his place at once--a parish child--the orphan of a workhouse--the humble, half-starved drudge--to be cuffed and buffeted through the world--despised by all, and pitied by none. (25-26)

After leaving the world of his childhood, the typical mythic hero is thrown upon his own resources. According to Frye (188) the hero is able to successfully respond to the various challenges which await him because he has outstanding qualities. Likewise, when Oliver runs away from Sowerberrys he is forced to depend upon himself. Oliver's determination to survive and his absolute innocence and purity shield him from death and corruption. He does not succumb to the same fate as those who have died in the orphanage because "nature or inheritance has implanted a good sturdy spirit in Oliver's breast". (24) He is not tempted by crime even though "desolate and deserted, he stood

alone in the midst of wickedness and guilt. (188) Fagin remarks that Oliver "was not like other boys in the same circumstances". (239)

The mythic quest, according to Campbell, is divided into three sections, called by him Departure, Initiation, and Return. "Departure" consists of the adolescent hero being called to adventure by a herald. "The Call to Adventure" occurs after the hero has undergone a personal crisis. The herald suddenly appears and offers the hero a chance to break away from old patterns. (Campbell, 51-52) The hero in accepting the challenge to adventure "crosses the first threshold" and enters a new world. The entrance to this new world is protected by a "threshold guardian who has knowledge of this world". (Campbell, 77) This world is associated with darkness and confusion where there are elements of "violence, danger and delights". (Campbell, 79)

This first part of the mythic quest, "departure", has definite parallels in Oliver Twist. Oliver's early years of intense misery culminate in a crisis. His herald is a charity boy, Noah Claypool, who challenges Oliver to stand up for his rights regardless of the consequences. Oliver responds with uncharacteristic violence. Marsyla (150-152) sees this incident with Noah as Oliver's Call to Adventure. As with the mythic hero, a change occurs which suggests that Oliver has accepted and responded to the challenge and has begun crossing a new threshold:

> A minute ago, the boy had looked the quiet, mild dejected creature that harsh treatment had made him. But his spirit was roused at last; the cruel insult to his dead mother had set his blood on fire. His breast heaved; his

> attitude was erect; his eye bright and vivid; his whole person changed, as he stood glaring over the cowardly tormentor who now lay crouching at his feet; and defied him with an energy he had never known before. (70)

Oliver's adventure takes him to London where he meets the threshold guardians. In myth, according to Campbell (77-79) these figures act as custodians to the entrance of the unknown world. These guardians often act as links between the world that the hero has known and the new world that he is about to enter. Even though they are powerful, they can be rendered harmless by the right person. (Campbell, 82) The Artful Dodger represents one of the threshold guardians, who ushers Oliver into the unknown world of London. Fagin is the other guardian. As in the myth, Fagin poses a threat and is dangerous. He is instrumental in keeping Oliver in the underworld. Fagin, who works with Monks, knows of Oliver's parentage. On a parallel with Campbell, Oliver is able at times, to change the nature of Fagin. At one point in the novel, Fagin wishes to speak to Oliver, but when he sees him sleeping "so pale with anxiety, and sadness, and the closeness of his prison, that he looked like death--" Fagin turns "softly away. Not now", said the Jew, "To-morrow. To-morrow". (185)

In myth, the new world that the hero enters consists of a dark primeval forest "beyond the protection of his society". (Campbell 77) The archetypal symbol of the labyrinth is symbolic of the confusion found here. The labyrinth represents a descent into unfamiliar territory, from which escape is difficult. (J.E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, 1962, 174) Entrance into this area is also a test through

which the hero has to pass. Often it becomes the zone of combat between the hero and the forces which oppose him. In the novel, the primeval forest is transposed to urban London. To Oliver, London is a "crowded mass of house-tops, blackened chimneys and gable-ends. (169) He is bewildered and frightened by the "maze of mean and dirty streets". (176) Throughout the novel, London has all the characteristics of a labyrinth to Oliver:

> In another moment he was dragged into a labyrinth of dark narrow courts and was forced along them at a pace which rendered the few cries he dared to give utterance to, unintelligible. (146)

Like the mythic guardians, Fagin is able to move through this maze with ease:

> The Jew was evidently too familiar with the ground he traversed to be at all bewildered, either by the darkness of the night or the intricacies of the way. He hurried through several alleys and streets, and at length turned into one lighted only by a single lamp at the farther end. (177)

In contrast to Fagin, Mr. Brownlow and the Maylies find it impossible to enter or understand this zone. In the interview with Nancy, Rose cannot comprehend Nancy's allegiance to Sikes, or her desire to return to him. Nancy attempts to explain:

> I must go back, because--how can I tell such things to an innocent lady like you?--because

> among the men I have told you of, there is one, the most desperate among them all, that I can't leave--no, not even to be saved from the life I am leading now. (362)

In the mythic quest, the journey into the unknown may be a journey of the hero into self. By contrast, however, in Oliver Twist, the journey becomes a tool of social comment, by means of which the author reveals the harsh living conditions of the London poor. In spite of the dehumanizing environment of the slums, however, loyalty and kindness exist; it is here that Oliver is exposed for the first time to them. It is while with Fagin that Oliver laughs for the first time and finds camaraderie and fellowship. By showing the loyalty of the boys to Fagin, and Sikes' remorse at killing Nancy, Dickens humanizes them. At the same time he reveals the desperate struggle for survival and shows them as living always with the threat of violence. Nancy describes her living conditions to Rose Maylie:

> ...you had friends to care for and keep you in your childhood, and that you were never in the midst of cold and hunger, and riot and drunkenness, and--and--something worse than all--as I have been from my cradle. I may use the word, for the alley and the gutter were mine, as they will be my death-bed. (358)

She is described as being "the miserable companion of thieves and ruffians", "the associate of the scourings of the jails and hulks, living within the shadow of the gallows itself.." (357)

To those of the upper class the citizens of this underworld are simply thieves and criminals, preying upon and threatening the security and material comfort of the rest of society. When the two worlds do meet, death or destruction follows. When the criminals are caught stealing and kidnapping in order to survive, they pay for their transgressions through the gallows. The upper class is ignorant of any humanity which may exist in this world. This dual character of the London slums is typical of the new world that the mythic hero enters. According to Campbell (79) this world is dangerous and threatens violence, while at the same time being seductive and alluring.

At first, Oliver's attraction to this world is strong. In his innocence, Oliver misinterprets the behavior of Fagin and his boys. He believes their interest in him is sincere; he is unaware that he is their victim. On his first meeting with Fagin he is greeted warmly by Jack Dawkins and the others, who make a fuss over him and go to great pains to make him feel welcome:

> Upon this, the young gentleman with the pipes came round him, and shook both his hands very hard--especially the one in which he held his little bundle. One young gentleman was very anxious to hang up his cap for him! and another was so obliging as to put his hands in his pockets, in order that, as he was very tired, he might not have the trouble of emptying them, himself, when he went to bed. (87)

In his innocence, Oliver is not aware of the true sentiments which incite this behavior. At first, to Oliver, Fagin's world is

fun. Oliver laughs when Fagin, "the merry old gentleman", and the boys were playing "at a very curious and uncommon game". (82) Oliver does not perceive that this is a game of survival. He appreciates only the comfort and fellowship and remains oblivious to the true business of Fagin's game. It is not until Oliver encounters Mr. Brownlow that he becomes aware of his spiritual danger. While at Mr. Brownlow's, Oliver experiences emotional and material well being. All his needs are catered to and he feels secure and happy with the peace and order of which he feels a part:

> Everything was so quiet, and neat, and orderly--everybody was kind and gentle--that after the noise and turbulence in the midst of which he had lived, it seemed like Heaven itself. (130)

He is accepted by Brownlow and his household. His sense of belonging is strengthened by the fact that Oliver identifies with the values of the upper class. When he is kidnapped from Mr. Brownlow's and taken to Fagin's house, Oliver wakes up and experiences his first fear of Fagin and reacts by feeling "desolate and deserted". A transformation has occurred in Oliver. He shows the typical mistrust and fear of the upper classes towards the lower. He feels that his security is threatened by the criminal element. Having been exposed to a materially "better life" he knows instinctively that it is to be preferred. (Ford and Lane, 1955, 263)

In the mythic quest, there is a guide or protective figure present who aids the hero. In Oliver Twist this figure is represented by Mr. Brownlow, who shares many of the attributes of Pickwick. He possesses warmth, benevolence and financial security. He is

benign and reassuring. His heart is "large enough for any six ordinary old gentlemen of humane disposition". (115) Unlike Pickwick, though, Mr. Brownlow plays a secondary role to the hero, Oliver, although he assumes responsibility for him.

In the quest, passage from one area to another is often indicated by a sleep or illness. The unconscious state allows the hero to make a transition from one condition to another. (Campbell, 91) Oliver experiences a version of this several times. When Mr. Brownlow takes Oliver home, Oliver undergoes a deep sleep. "For many days Oliver remained insensible to all...dwindling away beneath the dry and wasting heat of fever". (130) When the crisis is past he belongs to the world again, but his surroundings are unlike any environment he knows. Norma Whittington points out that in the novel Oliver twice undergoes an illness and is reawakened each time to the happy world of either the Maylies or Mr. Brownlow, and this is a device that Dickens has adopted from the quest myth. (Whittington 139) Campbell (91) believes that sleep is also used to indicate self-annihilation and rebirth of the hero. Certainly when Oliver wakes up in Brownlow's house and the Maylie's house, he feels a new energy and a new interest in life. But Oliver is not destined to stay with Mr. Brownlow, he is captured again by Fagin's gang. The second phase of the journey, that of Initiation has begun.

Initiation is characterized by a series of tests that the hero must survive. Campbell refers to these tests as the Road of Trials. The hero is aided by a supernatural or benevolent helper whom he has previously met. (Campbell, 97) This is the point to which Frye refers as the "crucial struggle". (Frye, 187)

Oliver's second re-entry into the world of Fagin enables Dickens to explore further the possibilities of innocence surviving in a corrupt world. Oliver is now aware of the difference; he must now wrestle to maintain his virtue while Fagin attempts to corrupt him. The struggle now becomes crucial as Oliver is cognizant of the violence that permeates Fagin's environment. His sensitivity makes him vulnerable. In the absence of Brownlow, Nancy becomes Oliver's protector and guide in this zone.

> "I won't stand by and see it done, Fagin," cried the girl. "You've got the boy, and what more would you have?--Let him be--let him be--or shall I put that mark on some of you, that will bring me to the gallows before my time". (153)

Oliver's crucial struggle centers around his resistance to becoming an accomplice to a burglary: "And now, for the first time, Oliver well-nigh mad with grief and terror, saw that housebreaking and robbery, if not murder, were the objects of the expedition". During the robbery Oliver is shot, of course, and is moved into the Maylie household. In the country scene once again, nevertheless, he dreams of Fagin and Monks. The dream becomes reality as Oliver wakens and becomes aware of Fagin and Monks at the window. The presence of Monks suggests that the barrier between the two social classes is being breached, while at the same time it stresses the link between Monks and Oliver. Oliver and Monks are the only two characters in the novel who bridge the separate spheres of the workhouse, the London poor and the upper class of Brownlow and the Maylies. The relationship between the step-

brothers is so strong that one is reminded of the appearance of the anima and "shadow" in myth, in which it can represent the negative self. (Marsyla, 189) The hero is unable to exert any control over his life until his counterpart has either died or vanished, or, as in the case of Monks, been exposed and rendered harmless. (187)

As a result of seeing Monks and Fagin at the window, Oliver feels vulnerable. He has not developed the strength and depth of character normally associated with the mythic hero in this stage. He has not grown as a result of his difficulties. His character does not attain the power and scope of that of the mythic hero at the end of his quest. It is at this point that the novel begins a deviation from the structure of the mythic quest in order that Dickens may fulfill his thematic goals. Oliver is identified with the upper classes and consequently, his vulnerability is a reflection upon them. It is not only Oliver who is a potential victim, but also the Maylies. In order to protect themselves and Oliver, the Maylie household develops a siege mentality; Harry Maylie, Mr. Giles and Mr. Losberne search for the interlopers, Monks and Fagin.

By keeping Oliver a child, Dickens preserves his vulnerability throughout the novel. The fact that Oliver does not engage in combat on his own behalf suggests that such purity and innocence as possessed by Oliver are fragile and require protection. Oliver's identification with Brownlow and the Maylies strengthens the argument that the upper class feared contamination and contact with the social group below it and sought separation as a solution.

Oliver's passivity means that his identity is revealed to him, not like the quest-hero through his own efforts, but by the efforts of

others. It is Nancy who approaches Rose with information about Oliver. She has overheard Monks tell Fagin that Oliver is his half-brother. Brownlow, acting on the information, resolves to uncover Oliver's true parentage. He undertakes a plan with the object of "the discovery of Oliver's parentage and of regaining for him the inheritance of which, if this story be true, he has been fraudulently deprived". (371) Oliver does not share this interest in his identity. Because he is passive and does not engineer his own success, the structure of the last part of the novel no longer parallels that of the mythic quest. Oliver's quest comes to an end when his identity and his relationship to Monks and Brownlow are established. Oliver does not go through the last stage of the mythic quest, that of the "Return". The "Return" phase is characterized by the hero's victory over the forces that oppose him. As a result of his maturation, the traditional hero is able to accept his "shadow" or counterpart and so becomes a psychic whole. (Marsyla, 132) The triumphant hero is restored to his society. He shares his knowledge and values with the community, thus ensuring its survival and prosperity. (Campbell, 226) Ultimately, the vision of the quest is one of optimism. Oliver does not embody these attributes, nor is the final vision of the novel a positive one. Instead, Dickens believes that the upper classes with an ideal, sentimental vision, essentially remain indifferent to the actual conditions under which the lower classes live. He sees that the relationship between the two classes is characterized by a lack of communication and understanding. The workhouses, orphanages and the law provided a buffer which controlled and absorbed the lower classes and kept them isolated from the rest of society.

Oliver represents the epitome of innocence and purity. His passivity, naiveté, childlike acceptance of the values of the upper class, and lack of power, render him ineffectual to bring about change. His perception of reality is immature and childish and represents the short comings of the upper class. During Rose's sickness, Oliver's reliance on God is revealed. He is not wrong to believe there is a providential order, but he is mistaken in believing that in the daily affairs of the world, Providence necessarily protects and preserves the good. Thus no one is able to save Oliver's little friend, Dick, or Nancy, in spite of their goodness. The truth is that Providence is removed from the affairs of men. Rose's sickness tests the sentimental trust in Providence that Oliver had and denies the romantic idea that physical nature and human well-being are related. When Rose is ill, "The sun shone brightly: as brightly as if it looked upon no misery or care". (296) Nature is indifferent to the human condition; Oliver's observation of a funeral further emphasizes this point:

> They stood uncovered by a grave; and there was a mother; a mother once; among the weeping train. But the sun shone brightly and birds sang on. (297)

Oliver's innocence blocks him from realizing that God is removed from suffering. Man is responsible for causing the suffering of others and therefore has the power to effect a remedy by adopting a code of behavior that alleviates injustice. Moral and social reform is not up to God but is man's responsibility. It is people like the Maylies, Mr. Brownlow and Nancy, who, by their efforts, alleviate Oliver's suffering. Oliver is saved because the

determination of these people outweigh the attempt of Monks and Fagin. This, however, is only true in the case of Oliver, who is an exception in that he has a personality which is attractive and which inspires others to protect him. Oliver's nature is of benefit to society in that he brings out the good in others.

As Oliver is restored at the end to the upper class, his immature and idealistic view of life represents the values of the upper class. The only character who perceives the reality of life and the limitations of Oliver's vision is Mrs. Maylie. She corrects Oliver, when he says:

> "...Heaven will never let her die so young".
> "Hush!" said Mrs. Maylie..."You think like a child, poor boy...I have seen enough, too, to know that it is not always the youngest and best who are spared to those that love them". (292)

Oliver's immaturity and restricted vision do not enable him to become a spokesman for the community. He therefore is unable to complete the journey in the terms of the mythic quest. Although Oliver's quest is aborted, Dickens nevertheless sees that in both classes there is a potential for bridging the gap and bringing about positive change. However, in Oliver Twist this potential is never translated into action.

For the remainder of the novel, the focus of interest shifts from Oliver to Nancy, Sikes and Fagin. Their struggles to survive arouse sympathy in the reader as Dickens depicts their humanity. He shows Nancy as being in a state of conflict over whether to reveal her knowledge of Monks. Sikes' evil is slightly mitigated by his guilt and remorse at having murdered Nancy. Fagin and Sikes become the

victims, and Dickens arouses sympathy for Fagin:

> At times he [Fagin] turned his eyes sharply upon them to observe the effect of the slightest featherweight in his favour; and when the points against him were stated with terrible distinctness, looked towards his counsel in mute appeal that he would even then urge something in his behalf. (468)

However, when Brownlow visits Fagin in jail, Brownlow makes no effort to help him. He is untouched by Fagin's appeal for freedom:

> He [Fagin] struggled with the power of desperation for an instant, and then sent up cry upon cry that penetrated even those massive walls and rang in their ears until they reached the open yard. (476)

The gap between the two classes remains unbridged.

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Dickens uses Oliver's quest as a means of examining the relationship between the upper and lower classes. Oliver acts as a catalyst which causes the two groups to confront each other. The intentions of the upper class, represented by Brownlow and the Maylies, are good, but their efforts are limited. Rose is unable to help Nancy, and Brownlow is unable to reform Monks, although Oliver is saved. Oliver, however, provides no challenge to either because he is so easily assimilated. Like Pickwick, the well-intentioned behavior of the Maylies and Brownlow is admirable but restricted. Like Pickwick, in the end Oliver retreats

to the country. Oliver remains uninvolved in the powerful emotional incidents surrounding Nancy, Fagin and Sykes. Even though both these heroes, Oliver and Pickwick, have had first-hand experience with conditions of the lower classes, neither becomes an effective social reformer.

In Oliver Twist, Dickens presents the problems which keep the two social classes separated. Although he sees that the potential for change lies within the individual, he does not propose any definite solutions. In David Copperfield Dickens will not separate society into two classes, rather he will focus on the values and goals of the middle class.

David Copperfield

In David Copperfield, first published in 1849, Dickens continues to build upon the ideas emanating from Pickwick and Oliver Twist. The evolution of themes is reflected in a transition of structures as Dickens moves even further away from the influence of the 18th-century picaresque tradition to a more complete reliance on the mythic journey. David Copperfield represents a progression from these two novels. In David Copperfield, Dickens does not champion the upper classes in the way he did in Pickwick or Oliver Twist, through the benevolent capitalism of Pickwick or Brownlow. Through these two novels, there has been the suggestion that Dickens experienced difficulty in reconciling the values of the hero with the values of society. Although Dickens idealizes Pickwick as a universal benefactor, Pickwick feels discomfort in society and eventually retreats to the country. Oliver, after venturing into the world, retreats to a permanent childhood, also on a country estate. In David Copperfield, Dickens moves away from the naive and sentimental idealizations of the quest myth by which "the virtuous heroes and beautiful heroines represent the ideals". (Frye, 186) He shows that David develops and matures in spite of society's efforts to instil its own set of values in him. David's success stems from the fact that he has formulated his own moral code which enables him to keep his integrity while still interacting with society. He does not retreat from society, nor escape to the country, but rather he continues his interaction with society at the end.

> I see myself, with Agnes at my side, journeying along the road of life. I see our children

> and our friends around us; and I hear the roar of many voices, not indifferent to me as I travel on.

As Campbell points out, the original purpose of the mythic quest was to teach the essential oneness of the individual and the group. (Campbell, 384) However, David's quest does not end in a glorification of society. His quest is a prescription for security and integrity in a society which is undermined by socially acceptable behavior based on hypocrisy, tyranny over children, narrow-minded self-righteousness and the parasitic self-indulgent behavior of the upper class.

Dickens' exploration of innocence and benevolence, begun in The Pickwick Papers and Oliver Twist, is continued in David Copperfield. Pickwick is innocent and naive. At first, Pickwick's personal generosity is an effective agent in alleviating the distress and misery surrounding him. During his stay in Fleet, however, Pickwick realizes that his good intentions have a limited effect. In Oliver Twist benevolence and innocence are separated. Mr. Brownlow is the worldly wise benefactor and the child Oliver embodies innocence. Dickens no longer associates innocence with the adult state. Oliver's absolute innocence and piety act as a shield which leave him untouched by the environment of the London slums. Oliver's rescue by Mr. Brownlow and the efforts of Nancy ensure that Oliver will remain innocent. Pickwick, like Oliver, was protected from prolonged exposure to reality. Pickwick's money cushioned him against unpleasant experiences. Dickens does not favour David with such a shield. By making David suffer, Dickens shows that wisdom, independence and self-discipline are necessary

for maturity. Those who, like Dora Spenlow and Clara Copperfield, are unable to accept the challenge of life, remain childlike and are unable to survive. David's journey is the journey of the individual from childhood to maturity; David undergoes the complete cycle of Departure, Initiation and Return found in the mythic quest. "Departure" consists of David's birth, early life and the death of his mother. "Initiation" begins when David leaves Salem House, and is completed when Steerforth dies. The final "Return" phase corresponds to David's return to England, and is completed by his marriage to Agnes.

Two of the critics mentioned above who have studied the journey in the works of Charles Dickens do not agree with my view that David Copperfield's journey parallels the three phases of the mythic quest. Whittington believes that the "elements of the heroic quest" in David Copperfield are "not pronounced enough to be significant". (137) She sees almost no influence of the quest myth in this novel, although she concedes that David's limited journey is a reflection of Dickens' own search for security and a father figure. (115) Marsyla believes that although mythic elements are present, David does not complete the Return phase. She does not believe that David returns with a message or lesson for mankind. (198-199) She supports the view that there are very strong mythic elements present which indicate that:

> deep in his unconscious being there welled up certain profound truths that Dickens knew without knowing he knew, and then he purposefully embodies these in his writing. (137)

As other critics have noticed (Shirley Grob, Dickens and some Motifs of the Fairy Tale, 1966, 268) David's birth is surrounded by magic

and enchantment. He is born at midnight on Friday, with a caul (a membrane enclosing the foetus). A portion of caul, found on a child's head, is considered to be a good omen and a charm against drowning. Frye (198) links the mythic hero's birth with sea images. David's birth draws heavily upon this mythic archetype. The sea plays an important part in the novel; David's caul is an amulet which prevents him from drowning and insures that his quest will be successful in spite of lengthy misfortunes (Monroe Engels, The Maturity of Dickens, 1959, 151)

As Whittington observes (110) David Copperfield is a novel made up of many questors, such as Steerforth, Mr. Micawber and the Murdstones. Although she examines only the journey of Mr. Micawber in great detail, I believe that the success and failure of these other quests provide comment upon David's development, as well as upon society. Steerforth's death by drowning signifies that his quest has failed; Steerforth did not have a caul to protect him. It is David's values which are seen as worthwhile and not Steerforth's. Steerforth's unsuccessful quest reflects Dickens' attack upon those who use their powers of personal attraction to manipulate others. Through Steerforth, Dickens is also criticizing the socially desirable goal of being a gentleman when that state implies that an individual, through no efforts of his own, is entitled to enjoy material success and social prestige. Steerforth is a parasite and his values are self-destructive and dangerous to others. His unsuccessful quest serves as a warning and reminder that wilfull pursuit of self-gratification will only victimize the individual.

David's early years are marred by unhappiness when his mother

marries Mr. Murdstone. By defying Murdstone, the young David accepts responsibility for his own behavior and answers the challenge of the Call to Adventure, the first stage in his quest. Like Oliver, he is transformed by cruel treatment and fights back: "How well I remember, when my smart passion began to cool, how wicked I began to feel". (55) Murdstone is the herald who summons David to begin his journey. By biting Murdstone, David rejects him as a father figure. By this act David also refuses to passively accept unjust authority and is willing to accept responsibility for his actions in a way that his mother cannot.

The Murdstones are manipulators. They present a moral and spiritual barrier which David eventually overcomes. The Murdstones' tendency is to force their unyielding will on others. There is a related weakness that David eventually has to recognize and overcome in himself; this happens later, when he tries to instruct Dora. (Joseph Gold, Charles Dickens: Radical Moralist, 1972, 179) Murdstone and his sister are also on a quest. Murdstone's goal of "victimizing young women by reducing them to a state of imbecility [by] tyranny, gloom and worry",(795) is central to his quest. At this point in the novel, the quest of Murdstone initiates David on his journey. By responding to Murdstone's challenge, David is expelled from home. Like the mythic hero, David "crosses the first threshold". He is ushered from his home to Salem House, his new zone of experience. His helpers are Peggotty and Barkis, who give him the moral support he needs in order to make the transformation.

While he is at Salem House, David encounters Steerforth, to whom he is immediately attracted.

> There was an ease in his manner--a gay, and

> light manner it was, but now swaggering--which I still believe to have borne a kind of enchantment with it. I still believe him, in virtue of this carriage, his animal spirits, his delightful voice, his handsome voice, his handsome face and figure, and for I know, of some inborn power of attraction besides. (99)

Steerforth wields a very strong influence over David, who adopts him as his guide and protector. Even though David is aware that Steerforth misuses his influence, David's infatuation out-weighs his judgement. For example, when Steerforth torments Mr. Mell, David sides with Steerforth although his conscience bothers him. He cheers for Steerforth: "I did not quite know what for, but I supposed for Steerforth, and so joined in them [cheers] ardently, though I felt miserable". (95) In the same way that Clara allowed herself to be manipulated by Murdstone, so David gives the same licence to Steerforth.

Marsyla in her dissertation suggests that one of the points that can be made to further the analogy between the journey of David Copperfield and the mythic hero is the presence of the "Shadow". The shadow is identified by his resemblance to and close relationship with the hero. Usually he mirrors the hero's less attractive qualities. (174) Marsyla believes that Steerforth is David's shadow. They share similar backgrounds in that both come from oppressive households and both are attracted to Em'ly. Unlike David, though, Steerforth is motivated by self-gratification. Through his manipulation he humiliates Mr. Mell and Em'ly, both friends of David. As David matures, he perceives the flaws in Steerforth's character, until he finally disowns him as friend

and guide. Steerforth's death by drowning is highly significant; because according to Marsyla (186) the Shadow has its origin in water. By rejecting Steerforth, David recognizes as false the values that Steerforth represents. It also indicates that David has achieved freedom from Steerforth's influence and suggests that David has achieved a strength of character that was lacking in his mother and in Steerforth. The "false guide" has been vanquished.

Phase one of the journey comes to an end when David's mother dies. Initiation begins when the Murdstones send David away from Salem House to work, and ends with Steerforth's death. This phase is characterized by Campbell as consisting of the Road of Trials, Atonement, and Apotheosis, all of which, I believe, have parallels in David Copperfield.

The "Road of Trials" consists of a series of tests that the hero must undergo. He is aided by protectors and guides who help him to succeed. The hero also meets the Goddess; Campbell tells us that in myth the Goddess is the archetype which represents the hero's aspirations and potential. She contains the key to the hero's success. (Campbell 116) Union between the Goddess and the hero signifies the hero's fulfilment. (Campbell, 119) This union is usually preceded by a crisis of some sort. Atonement is the state in which the hero is competent to act as guide or initiator to others. (Campbell, 137). His maturity and insight enable him to have a degree of control over his life. His message to others finds expression in art, literature or myth. (Campbell, 190)

For David, the Road of Trials begins when he works for Murdstone and Grinby. He suffers "slow agony" (161) at the factory

and feels abandoned, rejected and unappreciated.

> As a child of excellent abilities, and with strong powers of observation, quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt bodily or mentally, it seems wonderful to me that nobody should have made any sign in my behalf. But none was made; and I became, at ten years old, a little labouring hind in the service of Murdstone and Grinby. (161)

His plight, like that of the mythic hero, is made tenable by the presence of a benevolent spirit; Mr. Micawber. In her thesis, Whittington (7) points out that Micawber is also a questor. His journey influences David's, and like that of Steerforth, Micawber's quest provides a measure against which David's progress and values can be evaluated.

The Micawbers, like David, are striving for material well-being and respectability. They are, however, hampered in their quest by unrealistic expectations and an irresponsible attitude. (Bert G. Hornback, Noah's Architecture, 1972, 69) Ultimately they are successful because Micawber's shortcomings are compensated for by his generosity towards David and by his determination to expose the fraudulent Uriah Heep. It is through Micawber's decision to leave London that David is given the incentive to leave Grinby and Murdstone and seek his aunt in Dover. (Whittington, 110) Guided by the Micawbers' optimism for the future and fearful of being friendless, David flees to Dover. His decision to run away is an indication that he is unwilling to accept the harsh life which the Murdstones have condemned him to.

He refuses to be victimized by their decision and so engineers his own flight. He accepts full responsibility: "That there was no hope of escape from it, unless the escape was my own act, I knew quite well". (165)

David reaches Dover after suffering a few minor mishaps; and Betsey Trotwood, the fairy-like visitor of Chapter One is re-introduced. With David's intrusion into her life she is forced out of seclusion. Disappearing into the countryside is for her no longer a guarantee of peace or a reward for a successful quest as it was in The Pickwick Papers and Oliver Twist. Betsey Trotwood accepts the challenge that David's presence gives her. Throughout the novel, she serves to point out the dangers of "blind and irrational love and dangerous expectations." Her mission is to guide. Her comments provide insight into David's progress. When David confesses his love for Dora and his intention of marrying her, she perceives the danger of a marriage where both partners are inexperienced and have so few prospects:

> Poor little couple! And so you think you were formed for one another, and are to go through a party-supper-table kind of life, like two pretty pieces of confectionery, do you, Trot? (477)

As a mark of his growing maturity, David begins to realize the wisdom of his Aunt. Increasingly he begins to examine his relationship with Dora in the light of his Aunt's criticism and feels a "vague unhappy loss or want of something overshadow me like a cloud." (478) Later on he reflects on the marriage itself: "Would it, indeed, have been better if we had loved each other as boy and girl, and forgotten it?" (733) David also recalls Dora's comments that she was unsuited

for the responsibility of marriage so it was better that she die: "...and after more years, she would so have tried and disappointed you, that you might not have been able to love her half so well!" (732)

Not only does Betsey Trotwood act as guide, but she also becomes a surrogate parent. Whittington believes that Miss Betsey and Mr. Dick give David the protection, security and warmth that a father and mother would have provided. Although I concur with Whittington that David is seeking surrogate parents, I am of the opinion that Betsey Trotwood alone represents both father and mother. She combines the warmth and love of a mother with the wisdom and strength normally associated with a father. In order to accommodate all these qualities in one person, Dickens describes her in such a way that she appears to be androgynous:

> Her dress was of a lavender colour, and perfectly neat; but scantily made, as if she desired to be as little encumbered as possible. I remember that I thought it, in form, more like a riding-habit with the superfluous skirt cut off, than anything else. She wore at her side a gentleman's gold watch, if I might judge from its size and make, with an appropriate chain and seals; she had some linen at her throat not unlike a shirt-collar, and things at her wrists like little shirt-wrist-bands. (184)

David refers to her as a "female Robinson Crusoe". (470) Campbell tells us that such androgynous figures have much power in myth because they represent an ideal state, one which combines the positive qualities of both male and female. (152) I believe that she is the

"wise old man", the wise counsel here. And she is the character who most clearly represents Dickens' viewpoint, because she possesses the qualities that Dickens most admires and because she is the ideal towards which David struggles.

When she first meets the Murdstones, she perceives the kind of people they are and is strong enough to stand up and expose them:

> "Mr. Murdstone," she said, shaking her finger at him. "You were a tyrant to the simple baby, and you broke her heart. She was a loving baby--I know that; I knew it for years before you ever saw her--and through the best part of her weakness you gave her the wounds she died of." (203)

During this phase of his journey, David meets Uriah Heep, who I believe, is another questor; Uriah shares qualities with David and Steerforth. All three are fatherless, and all three are searching for security and identity. Both Uriah and Steerforth manipulate and exploit others in order to achieve their goals. Uriah's quest, to be successful and respectable, is carried out in an anti-social manner. His behavior results from the institutions which taught him to believe that humility would ensure his success:

> "Be umble, Uriah," says father to me, "and you'll get on. It was what was always being dinned into you and me at school; it's what goes down best. Be umble", says father, "and you'll do! And really it ain't done bad!" (546)

When David first meets Uriah, he is unaware of the "destestable cant of false humility" represented by Uriah. He is flattered by and

attracted to him. Because humility and flattery are socially accepted, and even fostered by society, David is taken in by Uriah (Geoffrey Thurley, The Dickens Myth: Its Genesis and Structure, 1976, 157).

Uriah and his mother are variations on the pattern of the Murdstones and the Steerforths who are manipulative and predatory. Their victims are those who manifest a failing of human nature, such as Wickfield who allows grief to engulf him, and Clara and Em'ly, who are blinded by their emotions. At this point in his journey, although he is no longer a victim of the Murdstones, David is still a victim of the Heeps:

> They did just what they liked with me; and wormed things out of me that I had no desire to tell, with a certainty I blush to think of: the more especially as, in my juvenile frankness, I took some credit to myself for being so confidential and felt that I was quite the patron of my two respectful entertainers. (243)

During this early part of the Road of Trials, as a result of their renewed acquaintance, Steerforth's influence over David grows once again. As his aunt counsels him against an unwise marriage to Dora, so Agnes, David's "good Angel", warns him against entrapment by his "bad Angel" Steerforth, David's anima. David is so infatuated that he does not appreciate the true nature of Steerforth. He admires Steerforth a great deal even though Steerforth himself gives David many clues as to his negative personality: "I wish with all my soul I could guide myself better." He knows he is undisciplined and unscrupulous in indulging himself. He admittedly carries on thoughtless of others: "Rough-shod if need be, smooth-shod if that will do, but

ride on! Ride on over all obstacles, and win the race!" (404) At first, David refuses to accept Steerforth's self-evaluation. He continues to believe that his friendship with Steerforth is a mutually regarded one. "I joyfully believed that he treated me in life unlike any other friend he had. I believed that I was nearer to his heart than any other friend, and my own heart warmed with attachment to him." (283) It is only after Steerforth elopes with Em'ly that David gradually removes himself from Steerforth's influence. Even before Steerforth's actual death, David mourns:

> What his remembrances of me were, I have never known--they were light enough, perhaps, and easily dismissed--but mine of him were as the remembrances of a cherished friend, who was dead. (431)

As mentioned earlier, the hero is not totally freed of the shadow's influence until his counterpart is vanquished. Steerforth's death symbolizes David's complete liberation from this harmful relationship. Steerforth's death is seen by Rosa as being Steerforth's repayment for all the misery he caused: "Now has he made atonement to you-- with his life." (762)

Just as Steerforth's death frees David, so also does the death of Dora. The termination of this unrealistic romance enables David to pursue a relationship with Agnes, who is better able to help David realize his potential as an artist. He has achieved "Atonement" with his Aunt and Agnes by accepting their values and by realizing that discipline and wisdom are preferable to irrational emotions. His marriage to Agnes will not be like that to Dora, in which there was a

"disparity...of mind and purpose." (629)

Towards the end of this phase, David also increasingly detests Uriah Heep, whose ascendency over the Wickfields dismays him, until David is goaded into striking Uriah and totally rejects him. David's developing maturity has given him the strength and courage to repel Heep. In contrast to David's growth and progress Heep's own quest is at the point of failure. Through Micawber's efforts, Uriah is revealed as a cheat and sent to jail. Ironically, in jail he receives a certain amount of prestige as a "model" prisoner because of his behavior. In jail he continues to practise his humility. When David and Traddles visit the prison, only they see through him and his hypocrisy. (Joseph Gold, 182). Although David's experiences constitute the main quest in the novel, the journeys of Heep and Steerforth, which intersect David's, are significant as a measure of David's maturation. His attitude and assessment of their characters and their influence on him indicate David's progress.

Campbell calls the final section of the hero's journey "the Return". This deals with the hero's departure from the world of adventure and his re-entry into society, where he shares his wisdom with others. His knowledge is beneficial to society.

Chapter LIX, called "Return", marks (I believe) the final phase of David's journey, although critics like Marsyla disagree with this interpretation. Marsyla believes that David lacks heroic stature and does not attain leadership.(1) She believes that the absence of a wise old man who offers advice is a barrier to the development of David as a hero. I disagree with this statement. First, as I have pointed out, Betsey Trotwood is David's counsel. And Dickens makes

David an agent of social reform. Through David's journey, and those journeys which intersect his, Dickens explores socially acceptable ways of behaving which are harmful to society and the individual. Through David, more importantly, Dickens expresses those values and attitudes which he sees as being positive and desirable. David's message reflects the author's belief that it is possible for the individual to achieve integrity and fulfillment in spite of the obstacles placed there by society. David has learned to judge the quality of the goals that others pursue and through maturity and strength is able to minimize the effects upon himself of those goals which are harmful yet tolerated by society.

By using David as a model, Dickens is teaching society about false values. At the end of the novel, Traddles and David are not taken in by the two model prisoners Lattimer and Heep, whose behavior is an example of a society programming people to feed back its own false images. (Joseph Gold, 182)

> It would have been in vain to represent to such a man as the worshipful Mr. Creakle, that Twenty Seven and Twenty Eight were perfectly consistent and unchanged; that exactly what they were then, they had always been; that the hypocritical knaves were just the subjects to make that sort of profession in such a place; that they knew its market-value at least as well as we did, in the immediate service it would do them when they were expatriated; in a word, that it was a rotten, hollow, painfully suggestive piece of business altogether. (817)

Dickens has tailored the mythic structure to meet his thematic needs. David's journey is an examination and criticism of the values of society. I maintain, moreover, that the manner in which the characters in David Copperfield pursue their respective goals reflects their values. David and Micawber's successful quests result from Dickens' approval of their values. However, the evils of the Murdstones and Heep have been exposed and they have only limited success in seeking new victims. In the mythic quest, the self-righteous questor cannot properly complete his quest because he misuses human nature. The goal of the quest is to dispel ignorance, not contribute to it. The self-righteous hero has invented a false, unjustified image of himself as an exceptional phenomenon in the world, not guilty as others are but justified in sinning because he believes he represents the good. (Frye, 238) In the cases of Uriah and Murdstone, each believes that his formula for success is the correct one. It is a comment upon society that both continue their victimization of others, although in a restricted way. Although no longer a danger to David and his circle, they continue their duplicity upon those who are weak.

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In David Copperfield the androgynous figure of Betsey Trotwood provides comment and guidance like the wise old man in myth. She combines insight, wisdom and intuition. She is also benevolent and willing to help others. From her David has learnt the value of a disciplined heart and responsibility. His second marriage, to Agnes, is the reward of a successful quest. His goal has been achieved and he

reaches his potential:

> Clapsed in my embrace, I held the source of every worthy aspiration I had ever had; the centre of myself, the circle of my life, my own, my wife; my love of whom was founded on rock! (825)

Great Expectations

In The Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist and David Copperfield, Dickens used, in increasing measure, the structures of the mythic quest as a vehicle for his themes. Dickens' use of the mythic quest reaches its fullest expression in Great Expectations, published in 1860. Roberta C. Schwartz points out ("The Moral Fable of Great Expectations", 1979) that Great Expectations is "acknowledged almost universally to be his most tightly constructed and best unified work." (55) Others agree with this statement. It seems to me that this unity results in great measure from Dickens' use of the mythic quest. Norma Whittington suggests that this novel exhibits "the most completely representative pattern of the heroic quest". (145)

In the earlier novels, Dickens uses the quest myth to reinforce those values which he believes desirable, while at the same time, it enables him to show the effects of negative social values and behavior. Dickens presented his heroes in a highly positive light. Pickwick exemplifies an optimistic and generous spirit; Oliver represents incorruptible innocence, and David Copperfield emerges as a mature and self-disciplined individual. The quest myth was used to emphasize Dickens' belief in the personal ideals portrayed by these characters. Although the quest myth provides the structure for Great Expectations, Dickens' perception of personal values changes in this novel. He uses the quest myth ironically as he criticizes some values which he had idealized in his earlier novels. In particular Dickens examines the state of the upper-class gentleman. In The Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist and David Copperfield financial security was synonymous with the

good and suggested a solution to social ills. Pickwick solved all problems with money. Oliver and David struggled toward the middle-class security which was their reward. However, even in Oliver Twist, Monks, the Maylies and Brownlow are criticized for their isolationist attitude. Angus Wilson, writing in the Afterword of Great Expectations (1963), suggests (526) that Great Expectations attacks the concept of the middle-class gentleman, who "now, far from being an ideal", becomes the villain.

Apart from this major change of ideal, however, Great Expectations evolves out of the three previous novels. Dickens continues his examination into the themes introduced in these earlier works, especially those of maturation and social values. In Oliver Twist, Oliver remains an innocent child; because he does not really mature, he does not complete the quest. In David Copperfield, David moves from a state of childhood innocence and vulnerability to a condition of strength and maturity. This journey foreshadows the pattern of Pip's development. Although both experience moral growth, Pip's ordeals have more psychological effect on him. He undergoes the anguish of guilt, loss and conflict more deeply than David, as Mary Alice DeHaven suggests in "Pip and the Fortunate Fall." (1975, 42-43) Other critics have also noted that Pip's suffering is more acute than David's. I agree with Joseph Gold (245) that Pip's suffering results from his internalization of undesirable social values. Influenced by Miss Haversham, encouraged by his sister and Pumblechook, Pip's obsession with becoming a gentleman makes him, like them, arrogant, insensitive and greedy. For a time, Pip's behavior and attitude are dictated by these qualities.

Pip's anguish is also a result of his feeling guilty. This

guilt, as many critics have observed (Roberta C. Schwartz; also Robert Barnard, Imagery and Theme in the Novels of Dickens, 1974; and John P. McWilliams, Jr. "Great Expectations: the Beacon, the Gibbet and the Sky", 1972) is very strong in the novel. Guilt is closely related to Pip's quest. The degree to which he experiences this emotion indicates his moral progress. For example, as a young child, Pip is made to feel guilty, even though he has done nothing wrong. While under the influence of Miss Haversham, his feelings of guilt diminish and are replaced by smugness and self-satisfaction. It is only after Magwitch is revealed to him as his benefactor that he again feels intense guilt. This guilt motivates him to re-evaluate and redirect his journey. One of Pip's rewards for achieving a successful quest is that he is able to expurgate the guilt and achieve peace of mind.

Pip's journey, like those of David and Oliver, is based on a search for security, identity and a father figure (Geoffrey Thurley, 289). Unlike Oliver, though, neither David nor Pip owe their salvation to a magically empowered moneyed father figure such as Brownlow. Dickens in these two later novels has moved away from the belief that benevolent wealth is able to intercede on behalf of others. (Thurley, 289). I agree with Angus Wilson (526) that Pip is able to achieve true fulfillment only when he is able to exorcize his false expectations and guilt. The implications are extreme. In Great Expectations, Dickens turns against the economic foundations of Victorian middle-class society. The status of gentleman criticized in David Copperfield, is attacked more openly in Great Expectations as Pip's goal of becoming a gentleman is seen as being achieved at a great moral cost. Dickens examines the corrupting influence of money, power and status and

exposes the values of a capitalistic and mercenary society. As H.M. Daleski points out (Dickens and the Art of Analogy, 1970, 237) the false expectations of Pip are the reflection of the false ideals of Victorian society.

The problem of self-delusion based on unrealistic goals appears in David Copperfield when Em'ly, who aspires to be a lady, deludes herself into thinking that Steerforth loves her. David is infatuated with Steerforth and his life-style, but he is shocked out of his infatuation by Steerforth's elopement with Em'ly. Pip's self-deception is more complete than David's because his false expectations are encouraged by those around him, such as his sister and Pumblechook.

> They had no doubt that Miss Haversham would "do something" for me; their doubts related to the form that something would take. My sister stood out for "property". Mr. Pumblechook was in favour of a handsome premium for binding me apprentice to some genteel trade..." (80)

Later on, Traddles reiterates Pip's expectations:

> "Lucky for you then, Handel", said Herbert, "that you are picked out for her and allotted to her. Without encroaching on forbidden ground, we may venture to say that there can be no doubt between ourselves of that fact." (269)

Pip completely succumbs to the expectations of those around him; in order to overcome them he suffers much agony and torment. His final moral awareness is more acute and more complete than David's because

he exorcises values far more false. (Daleski, 144)

Unlike Oliver Twist and David Copperfield, this novel does not begin with the actual physical birth of the hero; nevertheless Marsyla points out that the novel opens with the child experiencing a second birth. (87) The narrative begins as Pip is contemplating the graves of his parents and siblings:

> My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found out for certain that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard; and that Phillip Pirrip, Late of this Parish, and Also Georgina Wife of the Above, were dead and buried; and that Alexander, Barthblomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant children of the aforesaid, were also dead and buried; (9)

Pip's "second birth" is initiated by his encounter with his family's burial plot. It constitutes in him a first consciousness leading to realization that he is quite alone in a hostile world. He describes himself as a "small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry." (10)

Whittington and Marsyla do not agree concerning the significance of the appearance of Magwitch at this point. Marsyla believes that he is the herald who calls Pip to adventure. She argues that when Magwitch "turns Pip upside down, his world is not righted until the end" (145) She believes that Magwitch has all the loathsome, dark and

terrifying qualities that Campbell associates with the herald. (Campbell, 145) She points out that Pip has received the call because Pip's life is changed after this meeting. Whittington does not agree with this point of view. She believes, as I do, that Magwitch (bad witch) is the fairy demon who like Betsey Trotwood, in David Copperfield, arrives at the birth of the hero. This idea supports Marsyla's belief that Pip is undergoing a second birth. Like Betsey Trotwood, Magwitch disappears only to materialize late as a benevolent figure. I believe that if Magwitch were the herald to an adventure, Pip, like the mythic hero, would have found his life changed. When Oliver and David answer the Call to Adventure, both experience a change which set them upon a course of events. No such change occurs at this time to Pip. No real change takes place in Pip's life except that he meets Magwitch, and his feelings of guilt are intensified when he steals for him. Later on, however, Magwitch will play an important role in Pip's journey.

At this first meeting, a link is established between Pip and Magwitch. Pip senses a similarity in their situations because both are treated as criminals and both live within the shadow of the hulks: "I felt fearfully sensible to the great convenience that the Hulks were handy for me. I was clearly on my way there." (21) It is no wonder that Pip shows empathy towards the convict. Pip's kindness is rewarded by Magwitch, who assumes the mythic role of protector.

Associated with the hulks is the image of a wicked "Noah's Ark". (48) The image of the ark first appeared in David Copperfield where it was a refuge to David. Peggoty's ark, however, became the victim of Steerforth's unsuccessful quest. As punishment for

destroying the ark, Steerforth drowns during a shipwreck. In Great Expectations the image of the ark is again used by Dickens. Its character, however, has changed because of its nature as a place of punishment rather than refuge. Magwitch, though, comes from the hulks, and it is through his intervention that Pip's journey begins and his fortunes change. The hulks which appear to be a wicked Noah's ark are closely linked to Magwitch and it is through his relationship with Magwitch that Pip undergoes the journey of moral growth. The source of Pip's moral salvation comes from the hulks in the form of Magwitch. Dickens' reversal of the archetype of the ark is in keeping with the theme of Pip's journey. Through this image, Dickens indicates his disillusionment with established Victorian morality and the goals of his society.

I agree with Marsyla (158) that Pip's Call to Adventure begins when he meets Miss Haversham. She shares all the loathsome and fearful qualities associated witn the Herald. Her appearance has a powerful effect on Pip to whom she appears as a living corpse:

> Once, I had been taken to one of our old marsh churches to see a skeleton in the ashes of rich dress that had been dug out of a vault under the church pavement. Now, wax work and skeleton seemed to have dark eyes that moved and looked at me. I should have cried out, if I could. (67)

As in myth, Pip is fascinated as well as frightened by Miss Haversham. As a result of his exposure to her and Estella, his values drastically change, paralleling the change that occurs in the mythic hero. In the

quest myth, the hero learns to exchange his negative values for positive ones: "What was formerly meaningful may become strangely emptied of value. Even though the hero returns for a while to his familiar occupations, they may be found unfruitful." (Campbell, 56)

In Pip's case, however, the values which he discards are positive, and the values which he adopts are negative. As a result of his encounter with Miss Haversham and Estella, Pip's relationship with Joe is transformed. He moves away from the love and honesty that Joe represents as he seeks a higher station. His sense of superiority makes him feel ashamed of Joe:

> ...I thought long after I laid me down, how common Estella would consider Joe, a mere blacksmith; how thick his boots and coarse his hands. (82)

Pip's spiritual centre of gravity is transformed from the forge to "zone hitherto foreign to him... a zone of magnified power" as Campbell says.(77) In Pip's case, this is represented by Satis House, a place beyond common experience:

> I had heard of Miss Haversham up town-- as an immensely rich and grim lady who lived in a large and dismal house barricaded against robbers, and who led a life of seclusion. (60)

The first thing Pip notices about the house is its darkness. "No glimpse of daylight could be seen". (66) When Pip first meets Estella he associates her with a star which casts a guiding light: "her light came along the dark passage like a star" (69) and I "followed

the candle down, as I had followed the candle up." (71) When he leaves Satis House he is disoriented and confused:

> I had fancied, without thinking about it, that it must necessarily be night-time. The rush of the daylight quite confounded me, and made me feel as if I had been in the candle-light of the strange room many hours. (71)

His confusion results from his exposure to new values. He now aspires to belong to the social class represented by Estella and Satis House. He does not take into account, as Hillis Miller observes (267), that Miss Haversham's house is one of decay and frozen time, and symbolizes the empty human values of the upper class. (Hillis Miller, 255) Mr. McWilliams points out (259) that Estella is a false guide. Pip's decision to marry her and adopt the values of the class to which she belongs, will cause him much grief.

Ironically, Pip's response to his Call to Adventure does not give him heroic status as it does the mythic hero. Unlike Oliver or David, he does not rebel against injustice. Instead his response to the challenge given to Miss Haversham is not to resist her efforts; rather, he joins forces with her. It is Joe, his former ally, that he spurns: "I was truly wretched, and had a strong conviction on me that I should never like Joe's trade. I had liked it once, but once was not now." (119)

Throughout the remainder of the novel, I am of the opinion, the parallels between Pip's quest and that of the mythic quest are ironic because Dickens wishes to show that the middle-class' pre-occupation with gentility, wealth, and social status creates

spiritually impoverished individuals. The benevolent wealth of Pickwick and Brownlow becomes transformed into the selfish and wasteful behavior of Steerforth and later Pip. By reversing the significance of the mythic archetypes Dickens shows that Pip's quest is undertaken for the wrong moral reasons, though socially acceptable.

The various events which occur to Pip throughout this section comprise the Road of Trials. Pip's reaction to these events reveals the unheroic quality of his behavior. He sets out upon his journey with wrong attitudes and a wrong goal. For example, as he becomes more comfortable at Satis House he rejects his sanctified home with Joe.

> I had believed in the kitchen as a chaste though not magnificent apartment: I had believed in the forge as the glowing road to manhood and independence. Within a single year all this was changed. Now, it was all coarse and common. (120)

By rejecting Joe, Pip moves away from the ideals of honesty, industry and loyalty that Joe represents. Pip easily accepts the role of parasite and willingly depends upon the bounty of his unknown benefactor. "I know I have done nothing to raise myself in life, and that fortune alone has raised me." (269)

It is no wonder then that just before Pip departs for London to take up the life of a gentleman, he dreams his quest will end in failure: "Fantastic failures of journeys occupied me until the day dawned and the birds were singing." (176) Early on there is a premonition that Pip's material well-being will rise in proportion to his loss of morality:

> so I drew away from the window, and sat down in my one chair by the bedside, feeling it very sorrowful and strange that this first night of my bright fortunes should be the loneliest I had ever known. (162)

Long before he leaves for London, he has already displayed misguided behavior. During his indenture to Joe he confides to Biddy: "I am not at all happy as I am. I am disgusted with my calling and with my life. I have never taken to either since I was bound." (143) Pip gladly exchanges life as blacksmith for the status of a gentleman. He feels justified in allowing his love for Estella to destroy his relationship with Joe: "Then a burst of gratitude came upon me that she should be destined for me, once a blacksmith's boy." (264) The more of a gentleman he becomes in London, the more ashamed he is of Joe. When he hears of Joe's visit to London he reacts "not with pleasure, though I was bound to him by so many ties: no: with considerable disturbance, some mortification, and a keen sense of incongruity." (237) He rationalizes his behavior towards Joe, but nevertheless is aware that he is practising self-deception: "All other swindlers upon earth are nothing to the self-swindlers, and with such pretences did I cheat myself." (245)

A further indication of Pip's moral decline is found in his relationship to Mr. Pumblechook. Before his "expectations" Pip detested Pumblechook as a pompous hypocrite and a bully. However, when Pip receives notification of his status, he allows Pumblechook to flatter him: "...I remember feeling convinced that I had been much mistaken in him, and that he was a sensible practical good-hearted

fellow." (172) Moreover, he accepts Pumblechook's hint that Miss Haversham is his "fairy god-mother", source of his bounty, and that she has chosen Pip to marry Estella.

As he enjoys living up to his expectations, Pip realizes that his lifestyle is having adverse effects:

> As I had grown accustomed to my expectations, I had insensibly begun to notice their effect upon myself and those around me. Their influence on my own character I disguised from my recognition as much as possible, but I knew very well that it was not all good. (294)

Slowly the realization occurs to him that material security is not bringing him happiness. Unlike Oliver, Pip's financial success is not accompanied by emotional well-being. This reflects Dickens' growing disenchantment with the economic goals of his society.

An unselfish act towards Herbert Pocket foreshadows Pip's salvation. By helping Herbert, Pip helps himself, especially if Herbert is viewed as Pip's shadow as Marsyla suggests. This identification supports my argument that Pip's quest is, in part, a reversal of the archetypal quest. Normally the shadow, as discussed earlier, represents the negative qualities of the hero. Since Pip himself displays negative moral traits, his shadow must exemplify the opposite values, the values which, in effect, the author champions. When Pip first meets and fights Herbert, he is aware that Pocket "...seemed so brave and innocent." (104) Pip's early defeat of Herbert indicates that Pip will successfully manage, for a while, to suppress his better nature. Dickens gives Herbert the perception that Pip lacks

concerning Estella: "That girl's hard and haughty and capricious to the last degree, and has been brought up by Miss Haversham to wreak vengeance on all the male sex." (193) Herbert is easy going and good natured and lacks snobbishness. His behavior and attitude provide a contrast to Pip. As Lucas observes, (314) Herbert, through his own industry, achieves his expectations of becoming a lawyer and marrying Clara. He is not motivated by financial gain or desire for status as is Pip. I believe that through the character of Herbert, Dickens is showing that it is appropriate to desire a better life. However, the fulfillment of such expectations is achieved only through one's own efforts and when one's industry is of benefit to others.

> We owed so much to Herbert's ever-cheerful industry and readiness that I often wondered how I conceived the old idea of his inaptitude, until I was one day enlightened by the reflection that perhaps the inaptitude had never been in him at all, but had been in me. (516)

Herbert's relationship to Clara is in contrast to that between Pip and Estella. Herbert is not infatuated with Clara, but behaves in a rational way. Herbert is also aware of false matrimonial expectations and the harm that they can do. He wisely warns Pip that "Estella cannot surely be a condition of your inheritance." (271) Herbert's knowledge of unrealistic matrimonial plans comes from the experiences of his family. His parents' marriage is an example of a relationship based on unrealistic foundations:

> Still, Mrs. Pocket was in general the object of a queer sort of respectful pity because

> she had not married a title; while Mr. Pocket was the object of a queer sort of forgiving reproach because he had never got one. (206)

The name Handel that Herbert bestows upon Pip further emphasizes the bond that is between them. Herbert gives Pip the name because "There's a charming piece of music by Handel called 'The Harmonious Blacksmith'." (195) This is a projection of Herbert's positive and egalitarian attitude. To him, the profession of blacksmith is one that is laudable. Herbert is also reminding the snobbish Pip of his own past values, of which the image of a blacksmith is a symbol. Herbert's inclination towards music is an indication of his romantic nature. He is not in any way mercenary or materialistic, although he does believe that one is responsible for one's own fortune: "I find the truth to be, Handel, that an opening won't come to one, but one must go to it." (297)

Pip's downward movement ends when Pip enters the archetypal Belly of the Whale. Campbell describes this (92) as a metamorphosis which is a life-centering, life-renewing act. When Magwitch arrives Pip sees his expectations shattered. He compares the arrival of Magwitch to an Eastern story of a sultan who brings about his own destruction:

> All being made ready with much labour, and the hour come, the sultan was aroused in the dead of the night, and the sharpened axe that was to sever the rope from the great iron ring was put into his hand, and he struck with it,

> and the rope parted and rushed away, and the ceiling fell. So, in my case, all the work, near and afar, that tended to the end had been accomplished, and in an instant the blow was struck, and the roof of my stronghold dropped upon me. (337)

This story foreshadows the fall of Pip's expectations. Like the sultan in the story, Pip is responsible for the demise of his fortune; he has built his hopes on a false foundation.

Magwitch introduces himself to Pip and claims to be his second father. At first Pip loathes Magwitch "as if he had been some terrible beast" (345), but he feels chained to him. Pip goes into a state of shock as he realizes that Magwitch was his benefactor: "Miss Haversham's intentions towards me, all a mere dream; Estella not designed for me." (348) He realizes that he has allowed Miss Haversham to manipulate him and use him, "as a convenience, a sting for the greedy relations!" (348) He feels deep remorse for his shabby treatment of Joe. He has a strong sense of his "own worthless conduct" to Biddy and Joe. Pip feels totally destroyed by Magwitch's confession and likens his condition to that of a shipwreck. "I began fully to know how wrecked I was, and how the ship in which I had sailed was gone to pieces." (348) The image of a shipwreck is associated with Steerforth, who has a failed quest. In the case of Pip, though, he is given an opportunity to salvage himself. Pip is forced to confront and examine the values upon which he has built his expectations. As a result, he no longer accepts money from Magwitch because he is "determined that it would be a heartless fraud to take more money from

my patron". (409) Pip's change of attitude and behavior enables his moral development to begin, and so avoid the fate of Steerforth.

Pip's gradual acceptance of and love towards Magwitch correspond to "Atonement" in the myth. Campbell (136) describes this as the point at which the hero abandons his personal ego and matures into an adult. Through the help of the father-figure, the hero himself passes into the role of initiator and guide. (130) The hero is reconciled to the fact that his father is the source of all power and the two become reconciled or become as one. (130)

Though Pip at first loathes and detests Magwitch, he slowly comes to admire Magwitch's unselfish devotion towards him. Pip's struggle to protect Magwitch from the authorities by shipping him out of the country follows from Pip's new sense of responsibility. Gradually Pip's hostility towards Provis is replaced by love and compassion:

> For now my repugnance to him had all melted away, and in the hunted wounded shackled creature who held my hand in his, I only saw a man who had meant to be my benefactor, and who had felt affectionately, gratefully, and generously towards me with great constancy through a series of years. I only saw in him a much better man than I had been to Joe. (479)

Having been transformed into a guide himself, Pip assumes control over Magwitch's safety and treats Magwitch as his charge. (475) Although Pip's expectations plummet, his moral growth flourishes as he displays loyalty, compassion and courage during Magwitch's arrest and

and Joe and Biddy stand at last before him, they are about to be married. Dickens does not make it easy for Pip to share his message nor does Dickens allow Pip the usual escape of marriage and retreat to the country. As De Haven observes (46) Pip has to live his message of love and industry by going to Cairo and working with Herbert. After serving his apprenticeship, Pip is ready to take his message to Estella. In keeping with Pip's ironic relationship to the mythic quest, while Estella receives his message, Pip is not destined to marry her. I agree with Albert Dunn ("The Altered Endings of Great Expectations: A Note on Bibliography and First-Person Narration", 1978, 40-43) that Pip's separation from Estella supports the thesis of the book that false expectations do not lead to happiness. By remaining apart from her, Pip's message remains a strong one, and is not weakened by a happy, convenient marriage. Pip's quest puts the pursuit of financial security and respectability in proper perspective. His journey teaches that some of the commonly held ideals of the Victorian society needed examination. When material success is achieved without regard to the moral cost, the results are detrimental to both the individual and society. Throughout Great Expectations Dickens has used the archetype of the mythic quest to present the Victorian reading public with a forceful warning of the perils of pursuing material "great expectations" at the expense of love, loyalty, and compassion.

Great Expectations was, I believe, the last novel that Dickens wrote using the complete form of the mythic quest. In Great Expectations the mythic quest offers Dickens a systematic approach to examine the individual in society. Joseph Gold (280-281) supports the argument that this novel allows Dickens to explore society and to probe its

trial. He has abandoned all thought of becoming a gentleman and marrying Estella.

Pip has now reached the state of "apotheosis". During this state, the hero is freed from his selfish ego and is capable of unconditional love, having rejected false values. (Campbell, 157) Pip, like the mythic hero, has broken through his own personal limitations and finally achieves moral growth. (Campbell, 190)

After Magwitch's death, Pip must return across the threshold. Whittington believes that Pip has undergone his trials and has suffered the annihilation of his ego and must now return. I agree with Whittington's interpretation that Pip, like the mythic hero, is unable to cross the return threshold unaided. Dickens makes Pip undergo a ritual illness, during which he experiences severe hallucinations. Dickens first used sleep as an agent of a changing state in Oliver Twist. As discussed earlier, sleep symbolizes Oliver's journey of transition from one state to another. Pip's sleep is essentially a life-renewing one. Like Oliver, Pip experiences severe hallucinations which have some connection with reality. Pip wakens at last to the consciousness that all the figures of his delirium have concentrated themselves into the figure of Joe. Joe is the guide who nurses Pip back to life and makes it possible for him to exorcize evil and cross the mythic threshold. Pip is now ready to undertake the final phase of his journey, that of the return.

As Whittington suggests, ironically, (150) when Pip comes bearing his newly-revealed knowledge of the meaning of love, he finds that his quest has become useless. The people that he would take his message to already know about love. When he journeys back to the forge

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preconceptions and prejudices.

Conclusion

From Pickwick to Great Expectations Dickens' use of the journey indicates his changing perception of the world. In The Pickwick Papers the picaresque journey allows Dickens to satirize 19th-century England. When Pickwick's status as hero changes, Dickens refers to mythic archetypes. In Oliver Twist there are both picaresque and mythic elements present as Dickens looks more critically at society and attacks with more vigor the various institutions and attitudes which he finds prevalent.

The mythic quest gives both David Copperfield and Great Expectations a unifying structure. Events and characters are given shape by the mythic archetypes. Q.D. Leavis observes (Dickens the Novelist: London, 1970 282-283) in her examination of David Copperfield and Great Expectations that the difference between David and Pip is the nature of their quests. David achieves happiness and fulfillment by coming to terms with his society. Pip, on the other hand, is very much harmed by his participation in society's materialistic goals. He is only saved by divorcing himself from these values. Therefore Pip's quest is an ironical one since the hero's salvation is not found by sharing society's values. As Leavis points out (291) Pip moves from being a victim of society's deception to becoming an individual who formulates his own values. Pip takes full responsibility for his own spiritual regeneration.

The four novels discussed in this thesis span Dickens' most productive years and are the novels in which the journey and mythic quest are clearly apparent. It is only in Great Expectations, however, that the

mythic quest reaches its fullest expression.

A NOTE ON THE TEXTS

The New American Library editions of these novels were chosen by me because they are textually accurate. Also, a good commentary is provided by well-known critics. In the case of David Copperfield, I used Everyman's Library edition because this novel was not available in the New American Library. As in the case of the other novels, Everyman's Library provides commentary by a well-known critic.

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