‘What is Life But Learning!’: Informal Education in *A Christmas Carol*, *Bleak House*, and *Great Expectations*

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ABSTRACT

The following study is interested in informal education in three of Charles Dickens’s novels: *A Christmas Carol* (1843), *Bleak House* (1852), and *Great Expectations* (1860). While substantial scholarly attention has been paid to Dickens’s interest in formal education, for example his educational reform efforts, his fictional depictions of schools and schooling, and his “student” and “teacher” characters, my project considers the fictional moments in which Dickens depicts education happening outside traditional “school” settings. I argue against claims that Dickens was exclusively interested in *critiquing* pedagogical practices; rather, Dickens offers informal solutions to Victorian attempts at establishing a state-run educational system. My project begins with a chapter providing historical context on formal Victorian educational practices; practices which inform Dickens’s descriptions of both formal and informal learning/teaching experiences. In my analysis of *A Christmas Carol,* I analyze the Christmas Spirits’s teaching strategies and find that the ghosts offer a more humane pedagogical approach than common Victorian teaching methods like Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster’s Monitorial System. My chapter on *Bleak House* considers the ways in which gendered teaching and learning complicate a Dickensian perspective on what can be defined as best-practice pedagogy. In *Great Expectations,* I explore how the generic form of the Bildungsroman, or the novel of education, contributes to Dickens’s evaluation of learning and social mobility. My project concludes by demonstrating how Dickens explodes and expands definitions of “teacher,” “pupil,” and “learning” in *A Christmas Carol, Bleak House,* and *Great Expectations,* even for twenty-first century audiences.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

In his novels *Hard Times, Dombey and Son,* and *Our Mutual Friend* Charles Dickens famously criticizes common Victorian educational practices by depicting unfair and cruel treatment in school and classroom settings. However, Dickens’s portrayals of excellent educational settings is often overlooked. My thesis argues that examples of Dickens’s successful teachers occur most frequently in his portrayals of informal education. In *A Christmas Carol* (1843), *Bleak House* (1852), and *Great Expectations* (1860), ghosts, friends, mothers, dancing-masters, and dubious neighbors become the best teachers to needy students. My project begins with a chapter providing historical context on formal Victorian educational practices; practices which inform Dickens’s descriptions of both formal and informal learning/teaching experiences. In my analysis of *A Christmas Carol*, I analyze the Christmas Spirits’s teaching strategies and find that the ghosts offer a more humane pedagogical approach than common Victorian teaching methods like Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster’s Monitorial System. My chapter on *Bleak House* considers the ways in which gendered teaching and learning complicate a Dickensian perspective on what can be defined as best-practice pedagogy. In *Great Expectations,* I explore how the generic form of the Bildungsroman, or the novel of education, contributes to Dickens’s evaluation of learning and social mobility. My project concludes by demonstrating how Dickens explodes and expands definitions of “teacher,” “pupil,” and “learning” in *A Christmas Carol, Bleak House,* and *Great Expectations,* even for twenty-first century audiences.

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Introduction

"Education is a high word; it is the preparation for knowledge, and it is the imparting of knowledge in proportion to that preparation" says John Henry Newman in his *The Idea of a University Defined and Illustrated*.[1] Newman defines education as elevated, specific, and orchestrated: having an education is no common achievement, and cannot be attained by anyone, doing anything. He states "recreations are not education; accomplishments are not education. ...Stuffing birds or playing stringed instruments is an elegant pastime, and a resource to the idle, but it is not an education; it does not form or cultivate the intellect."[2] Newman's ideas separate a "true" education from other kinds of learning, defining only certain practices as educational contributions and devaluing "recreations," sciences, and utilitarian skill training. His answer is the university, a place where liberal education is touted as the only "right standard" that can "help forward all students."[3] However, the Victorian university defined "all students" as white, wealthy, and male. According to Newman, then, only an exclusive few would ever be admitted to the "educated" sphere. Trade education, apprenticeships, teacher and domestic training programs are all dismissed in Newman's assessment.

For Charles Dickens, on the other hand, a *true* education is never exclusively formal, requiring the blending and overlapping of spheres. In *Our Mutual Friend* (1864), a novel widely understood to explore Dickens's views on education, Bella and her father, Reginald Wilfer, mix the domestic, educational, and public spheres in the following conversation:[4]

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[1] John Henry Newman. *The Idea of a University Defined and Illustrated: In Nine Discourses Delivered to the Catholics of Dublin* (London: Longman's, Green, and Co., 1852) 144.
[2] Newman. *The Idea of a University*. 144.
[3] Ibid. 153.
[4] Philip Collins states that in *Our Mutual Friend* Dickens explores "his...educational interest [in]...the sociology of the new race of trained teachers" (159). Collins's *Dickens and Education* heavily cites *Our Mutual Friend* as an education-centered novel. Phillip Collins. *Dickens and Education* (London: Macmillan &Co, Ltd., 1964). John

> "You are a very good little boy," said Bella, "to come unexpectedly, as soon as you could get out of school. And how have they used you at school to-day, you dear?"
>
> "Well, my pet," replied the cherub, smiling and rubbing his hands as she sat him down in his chair, "I attend two schools. There's the Mincing Lane establishment, and there's your mother's Academy. Which might you mean, my dear?"
>
> "Both," said Bella
>
> "Both, eh? Why, to say the truth, both have taken a little out of me to-day, my dear, but that was to be expected. There's no royal road to learning; and what is life but learning!"[5]

Bella begins this conversation with her father presuming that his activities of the day have been done "at [a] school" of some kind. Mr. Wilfer's response does not reject Bella's playful assertion, but instead builds on it. He has not attended one school "to-day," but "two." He asks, is Bella referring to his "school" at work? His school "in the drug-house of Chicksey, Veneering, and Stobbles" where he works as a clerk (31)? Or is she referring to his "school" at home? Mr. Wilfer is a "pupil" in all these settings; *school* is wherever *he* is. Unlike Newman's claim that only university education can truly form one's intellect, Mr. Wilfer is educated everywhere. After all, "there's no *royal* road to learning."

The following study examines Dickens's incorporation of educational practice in three novels: *A Christmas Carol* (1843), *Bleak House* (1852), and *Great Expectations* (1860). While substantial scholarly attention has been directed to Dickens's education reform efforts, his fictional depictions of schools and schooling, and his "student" and "teacher" characters, less attention has been paid to the fictional moments in which Dickens depicts education happening

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Manning's *Dickens On Education* also cites *Our Mutual Friend* as a novel which criticizes schools founded on monitorial and mechanical systems (59-63). John Manning. *Dickens On Education* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959). These foundational texts on Dickens and educational criticism do focus primarily on Charley Hexam, Bradley Headstone, Lizzie Hexam, and Eugene Wrayburn in their analyses of *Our Mutual Friend* and Dickens's interest in British state structures of educational practice.

[5] Charles Dickens. *Our Mutual Friend*, ed. Deborah Wynne (Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth Classics, 2002) 647; All citations from *Our Mutual Friend* come from this edition, and will be cited parenthetically in text for the rest of this project.

outside traditional "school" settings.[6] Especially in *A Christmas Carol*, *Bleak House*, and *Great Expectations*, Dickens explodes and expands definitions of "teacher," "pupil," and "learning." To be sure, traditional school settings are depicted: Scrooge is sent to boarding school, Esther trains as a governess at Greenleaf, Richard attends Winchester, Pip is enrolled in a dame school. However, in *A Christmas Carol*, *Bleak House*, and *Great Expectations*, these traditional settings are not separated from other moments of learning. Instead, school settings emphasize the learning and teaching that characters do in all spheres of their lives. For example, Scrooge's most transformative "lessons" come from the ghosts and their nighttime wanderings, Esther is the best teacher and learner in domestic settings, and Pip's instruction is a life-long project undertaken by a variety of "educators," many of whom are not themselves conventionally well-educated. David Paroissien, Clotilde De Stasio and others have analyzed the pedagogical methods employed by Dickens's teachers in the novels I have chosen to study.[7] Other scholars, too, have reminded audiences that Dickens writes novels about many different kinds of learning and teaching.[8] The

[6] See Hugh Cunningham's "Dickens as a Reformer" in *A Companion to Charles Dickens*, ed. David Paroissien (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 159-173 for a brief history of Dickens's influence as a reformer; see Phillip Collins's *Dickens and Education* (London: Macmillan & Co, Ltd, 1964) as the seminal work on Dickens's connections with education, both in his fiction and in his public life; see Dinah Birch's *Our Victorian Education* and especially the section: "Fiction and Memory: Charles Dickens" (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 30-41 for a connection between Dickens's fiction and Victorian educational movements.

[7] See Eric G. Lorentzen's "'This Schoolroom is a Nation': Subverting the Catechistic Method in Dickens" in *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction* 49, no. 2 (2018): 279-329; Clotilde De Stasio's "Starving vs. Cramming: Children's Education and Upbringing in Charles Dickens and Herbert Spencer" in *Dickens Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (2010): 299-306; David Paroissien's "Ideology, Pedagogy, and Demonology: The Case Against Industrialized Education in Dickens's Fiction" in *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction* 34 (2004): 259-282.

[8] Sharon Marcus identifies Pip as a pupil to Estella and Miss Havisham's teachings in "The Female Accessory in *Great Expectations*," in *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) 167-190. Marcus considers Pip to be a student in desire, learning to desire Estella from Miss Havisham's teachings. Claudette Kemper Columbus states that *Our Mutual Friend* is a novel in which "good people learn collectively to read history and society and themselves" and contrasts this novel of successful learning with *Bleak House*, which Columbus finds "preserve[s] the illiteracy that demonizes the character of the society they inhabit and blasts them all." "The (Un)lettered Ensemble: What Charley Does Not Learn about Writing in *Bleak House*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 28, no. 4 (1988): 609-623. Columbus finds that *Bleak House*, therefore, is a study in learning that is unsuccessful, but that learning is still central to the novel in all respects. Ayla Oguz finds that *A Christmas Carol* can be studied as a myth of psychological transformation by analyzing it through Carl Jung's individuation theory: "throughout the novel it is witnessed that Scrooge is subjected

following study combines these two sets of critical perspectives to investigate pedagogy and learning more broadly, and as central to the fictional agenda of these three novels.

In choosing *A Christmas Carol, Bleak House,* and *Great Expectations* as my primary texts, I decided to forego analysis of *Hard Times* (1854), *Dombey and Son* (1848), and substantial analysis of *Our Mutual Friend*. These novels are often analyzed as Dickens's fictional treatises on education, critiquing public schools, Ragged Schools, teachers, and utilitarian methods of instruction.[9] I read *A Christmas Carol, Bleak House,* and *Great Expectations* as concerned with social education, rather than " hard-headed utilitarianism" or formal pedagogical practice.[10] Additionally, scholarship has long noticed the novels' didactic potential. Philip Collins says that *Bleak House* and *Great Expectations* "are...ironical presentments of contemporary society and its values."[11] Brenda Ayres claims that "the pedagogical nature of Victorian novels" remains integral to their structures "regardless of [their] plot[s], setting[s], and character[s]."[12] My project acknowledges both informal education central to the plots of *A Christmas Carol, Bleak House,* and *Great Expectations,* and the educational potential to audiences of the novel.

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to a kind of transformation from ignorance to maturity" Ayla Oguz "Practising Interdisciplinarity: *A Christmas Carol,*" *Journal of Language and Literature Education* 11 (2014): 34-37. Arthur P. Patterson, too, calls Scrooge's journey one of " transformation" in "Sponging the Stone: Transformation in *A Christmas Carol,*" *Dickens Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (1994): 172-176. Patterson says specifically that the reader is subjected to "lessons" that the ghosts "teach" which have the power to transform the reader along with Scrooge (176). Linda M. Lewis's *Dickens, His Parables, and His Reader* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011) establishes that reading Dickens's novels is a "participatory" endeavor that requires the reader to engage in "moral lessons" (2). Lewis cites Dickens's letters which declare that his Christmas stories are based on parables and uses this framework to read other Dickens novels (notably, *Bleak House* and *Our Mutual Friend* which I will revisit in this study). Dinah Birch significantly calls Scrooge's interactions with the ghosts a "'needful' education" in *Our Victorian Education* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008) 32.

[9] See Phillip Collins's *Dickens and Education,* 146-150 and "Introduction" to Dinah Birch's *Our Victorian Education.*

[10] Collins, 149.

[11] Ibid, 147.

[12] Brenda Ayres, *Dissenting Women in Dickens' Novels: The Subversion of Domestic Ideology* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998). 1.

A Christmas Carol, *Bleak House,* and *Great Expectations* also span Dickens's career. By reading the educational commentary in each novel, readers are given access to Dickens's opinions in his early, middle, and later writing career. While I do not presume to construct a narrative of developing educational theory from only three of Dickens's novels, I do argue that the educational moments in my chosen primary texts expose Dickens's complicated and sometimes contradictory grappling with ideas about who should learn and teach, what the best teaching looks like, and where the best teaching techniques are employed. By choosing novels written throughout his career, rather than concentrating on texts published relatively closer together, this study is able to reflect on both Dickens's changing stances on education and changing educational movements in the Victorian period.

Two historical contexts inform my reading of these novels: I utilize the nineteenth-century educational theory and twenty-first-century best practices to interpret the strategies employed by Dickens's teachers. In the 2017 special issue of *Neo-Victorian Studies*, "Neo-Victorianism and the Discourses of Education," Frances Kelly and Judith Seaboyer urge us to "revisit nineteenth-century ideas about the role of education to interrogate our relationship to the present and future."[13] By paying attention to nineteenth-century periodicals, philosophical writing, teaching manuals, and to Dickens's speeches and letters, I situate the novels historically in the context of the work they were doing in their own time. Kelly and Seaboyer remind readers that contemporary discourses on education are "haunted by Victorian voices, ideals, and contentious debates."[14] Applying contemporary pedagogical vocabulary to Dickens's works makes it possible to consider these "hauntings," and the current trend in research that

[13] Frances Kelly and Judith Seaboyer. "Introduction: Neo-Victorianism and the Discourses of Education," *Neo-Victorian Studies* 10, no. 1 (2017): 1.
[14] Ibid., 6.

investigates Dickens's place in educational curricula.[15] A combination of historical study and contemporary pedagogical application reveals why Dickens's fictional teaching/learning relationships continue to be interesting to literary scholars, policy-makers, and educators. When we apply pedagogical vocabulary to non-traditional learning moments, we affirm that learning and teaching occur all around us. In the best circumstances, characters like Scrooge learn from non-traditional teachers. In the worst, characters like Pip prove susceptible to best-practice pedagogy employed by corrupting instructors.

In the following study, I have broken my analysis of Dickens's instructional models into one chapter on historical, educational contexts, three chapters that examine *A Christmas Carol, Bleak House,* and *Great Expectations,* and an Afterward that allows Dickens a final word on the subject with *Our Mutual Friend*. The first chapter, "Context and Overview: Dickens and Education" provides necessary grounding in Victorian educational practices which informs my subsequent analyses. In chapter two, "Ghostly Best Practice: Dickens Champions Informal Instruction" I demonstrate the validity of examining non-traditional learning moments in Dickens's novels by analyzing the ghosts as "best-practice" instructors to Scrooge, a typical nineteenth-century "difficult pupil," as described in contemporary pedagogical manuals.[16] In chapter three, "Gendered Education in *Bleak House,*" I notice how gendered teaching and

[15] The North East branch of the Modern Language Association's 2020 conference in Boston, MA includes a panel sponsored by the Dickens Society titled "Teaching Dickens Now." This panel posits the question "what can Dickens offer us now?" and is interested in research about Dickens's place in education. This panel builds on other research about how Dickens is being used in public school classrooms and in higher education, like research sponsored by the Dickens Project: UCSC's Neighborhood Academic Initiative and Highschool Seniors' participation in a Dickens-themed LitLab. "Events," The Dickens Society, accessed October 10, 2019, http://dickenssociety.org/?page_id=734.; "High School Students," The Dickens Project, accessed October 10, 2019, https://dickens.ucsc.edu/education/high-school.html.

[16] On the subject of "difficult pupils," Reverend Thomas Mozley described "hated" boys "who presented unusual difficulties" for their schoolmasters in his *Reminiscences, Chiefly of Towns, Villages, and Schools Vol. 1 (London: 1885),* 285. These descriptions, and other contemporary texts describing both ideal and difficult pupils can be compared to Scrooge's characterization in *A Christmas Carol* to make startling parallels.

learning complicate notions of best practice introduced in the parable structure of *A Christmas Carol*. In chapter four, "'Perhaps I could attend more': *Great Expectations*" I examine Dickens's inversion of the bildungsroman narrative.[17] In *Great Expectations* Dickens's ultimate failed learner, Pip, loses everything in interactions with a series of variously successful instructors. In the afterwards, I offer a brief reading of *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens's final completed novel. In his final completed novel, wealthy individuals learn from working-class literate characters in informal teaching settings; children attend school and form relationships with their instructors; women learn in domestic and public spheres, and operate successfully in both; and adults refuse to give up their status as cherubic school boys, even as they become grandparents. For Dickens, a permanent state of learning is the only way to maintain "life" or humanity. For readers of Dickens, examining non-traditional learning and teaching moments allows us to redefine what it means to be "taught" or "educated" at all, especially in twenty-first century contexts.

[17] See Jerome Mekier's "*Great Expectations* and *Self Help*: Dickens Frowns on Smiles" in *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 100, no. 4 (2001): 537-554. Mekier considers *Great Expectations* to be a re-imagining of *David Copperfield* and a criticism of Samuel Smiles's philosophies supporting the amassing of wealth through hard work and self-improvement. It is an anti-development novel.

Chapter One

Dickens and Education: Context and Overview

In the introduction, I stressed the importance of informal education in Dickens's works. The following chapter provides historical background on Dickens's experiences with *formal* pedagogy. In *A Christmas Carol, Bleak House,* and *Great Expectations,* I notice that Dickens often alludes to formalized education in his descriptions of informal teaching and learning. Dickens borrows formal pedagogical vocabulary to describe informal education and compares successful informal teaching outcomes to unsuccessful formal ones. The following chapter describes Dickens's personal educational experiences, his interactions with Victorian educational reform, and provides a general introduction to important nineteenth century educational movements. I read Dickens's novels as analyzing *informal* educational practices through the language and history of nineteenth century *formal* pedagogy.

The Victorian period witnessed the passage of major legislation related to educational reform. Government funding for schools was tied to standardized examination results when Robert Lowe introduced the Revised Code in 1862.[18] This code worked to standardize elementary school curricula, and promoted "the teaching of rudimentary skills in the basic subjects of reading, writing, and arithmetic."[19] In 1870 W. E. Forster sponsored the Elementary Education Act which provided a national education system for children in England and in Wales

[18] Exams were designed to test pupils' proficiency in reading, writing, and arithmetic. These exams worked to standardize elementary curricula that was previously much more diverse. Laura Novo notes that the Revised Code became known as the "payment by results" system, and reduced schools' interest in teaching "crafts, domestic subjects, drawing, applied science, and other...subjects to concentrate more on those that produced revenue." The code was dismantled in 1895, but the practice of standardized testing continued in different forms throughout the nineteenth century. Novo, "Elementary Education" in *Victorian Britain, An Encyclopedia* edited by Sally Mitchell (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988) 241-243.

[19] "Elementary Education" by Laura Novo in *Victorian Britain, An Encyclopedia*, 242.

and allowed the government to establish schools where they were most needed, and provided funding for voluntary schools that were fighting for funds from local governments. In 1880, education was made compulsory for children ages ten and below. By the end of the century, reform extended to secondary education, and in 1902 secondary education was made universally accessible through the Balfour Act.

The legal changes restructuring public education in England occurred both during and after Charles Dickens's lifetime. However, nation-wide educational reform was an important part of Victorian public debate, spanning Dickens's life. Before the nineteenth century, most educational opportunities were restricted to wealthier males in England.[20] In the eighteenth Century, many male children from wealthier families were sent to public schools, or schools like Winchester, Eton, Rugby, Shrewsbury, or Charterhouse, while female children were often educated at home by a governess or other domestic teacher.[21] Despite their name, public schools were not open to children of the general public. British public schools are "non-local endowed boarding-schools for the upper classes" which often resisted interference from governing structures.[22] By 1815, seven public schools were widely regarded as "*the* public schools" in England: Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Shrewsbury, Winchester, Westminster, and Charterhouse.[23] The

[20] The following chapter cannot hope to cover the mass of educational movements in England that led to the changes enacted in the Nineteenth Century. For a classic but general account of education in England, see W. H. G. Arytage's *Four Hundred Years of English Education*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970). For more specific historical accounts of education, divided by time period in England before the Nineteenth Century, see works like Nicholas Orme's *Medieval Schools from Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); Rosemary O'Day's *Education and Society, 1500-1800: The Social Foundations of Education in Early Modern Britain* (New York: Longman, 1982); M. G. Jones's *The Charity School Movement: A Study of Eighteenth Century Puritanism in Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938); or Christopher Martin's *A Short History of English Schools, 1750-1965* (East Sussex, England: Wayland Publishers Limited, 1979). *The Oxford Companion to Family and Local History* offers a succinct overview of education in England with its "Education" entry. See *The Oxford Companion to Family and Local History*, 2 ed., s.v. "Education," by David Hey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[21] See Edward C. Mack, *Public Schools and British Opinion, 1780 to 1860* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1938).

[22] Mack, *Public Schools and British Opinion, 1780 to 1860,* xi.

[23] Ibid., xiii.

reputations of each of these schools have fluctuated over time, however the Victorian public of the early nineteenth century would have regarded most public schools as having fairly conservative curricula and requiring hefty fees.[24] The early nineteenth century saw a "widen[ing" of the "social register," or growth of the middle class, which resulted, among other things, in a rise in public school enrollment.[25] Nonetheless, public schools remained an exclusive form of education for wealthy young men in the Victorian period.

Although some working-class families or families living in poverty were illiterate in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many were not. The Sunday School Society and other religious movements promoting the education of children, as well as more readily available print materials, led to a larger reading public than ever before by the beginning of the nineteenth Century, despite "rigid class distinctions" and upper and middle classes that wanted to maintain order and avoid a revolution by preventing mass literacy.[26] Accompanying this new reading public was a debate on the public versus private education movement.[27] While many public voices were claiming the superiority of either public boarding schools or domestic educational experiences, M.O. Grenby reminds us that the lines between public and private education settings were blurry; education, for those lucky enough to have access to it, was often the product of several teachers, domestic, official, or otherwise.[28]

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[24] Ibid., 73-90.
[25] Ibid., 73.
[26] See Christopher Martin's *A Short History of English Schools, 1750-1965* (East Sussex, England: Wayland Publishers Limited, 1979) 7; and Patrick Brantlinger, *The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998).
[27] M.O. Grenby's "Children's Literature, the Home, and the Debate on Public Versus Private Education, c. 1760-1845" succinctly outlines this debate, with special attention to how children's literature demonstrates a more overlapping reality in which children were not *either* educated at a public boarding school or in their homes, but often, children received educational training in both spaces. M.O. Grenby, "Children's Literature, the Home, and the Debate on Public Versus Private Education, c. 1760-1845" *Oxford Review of Education* 41, no. 4 (2015): 464-481.
[28] Ibid., 466.

During the first half of the nineteenth big shifts were made to provide more regulated educational experiences to more people, especially to the poorer and working classes, with the goal of using "schooling" to "cure…the social ills of the time, providing children with the foundation they required to become obedient, moral citizens."[29] Early in the century, Bible study groups, mechanics' institutes, and self-help groups were formed by "radical workers" who "valued private reading of the Scriptures" for working-class adult men who lacked literacy skills.[30] Before 1870 brought about the formal establishment of a national system of education in England and Wales, early in the century, education was "uncentralized," and few children were able to attend school for more than two or three years.[31] Laura Novo notes that "local authorities, usually parishes, provided for the destitute with workhouses and industrial schools" early in the century, with Ragged Schools only instituted in 1844.[32] The Sunday School Society was also a force for giving educational experiences to England's poorest children, "providing the poor with reading and sometimes writing instruction well into the century" with "over two million students...enrolled" by 1851.[33] Two societies that "took on the bulk of the task of educating working-class children for most of the nineteenth century" were the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Church of England (founded in 1811) and the British and Foreign Schools Society (founded in 1808).[34] These societies formed schools in which many students of different ability and skill levels were all taught by a single teacher and a series of student-teachers who came from the top class. The resulting schools were

[29] Marianne A. Larsen, *The Making and Shaping of the Victorian Teacher: A Comparative New Cultural History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 29.
[30] "Education, Adult" by Sally Mitchell in *Victorian Britain, An Encyclopedia*, edited by Sally Mitchell, Michael J. Herr, et. all, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988) 240.
[31] "Education, Elementary" by Laura Novo in *Victorian Britain, An Encyclopedia,* edited by Sally Mitchell, Michael J. Herr, et. all, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988) 241-243; 241.
[32] Ibid., 241.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.

famously strict and "mechanical," and inadequately provided instruction to students.[35] Mechanical methods of education were adopted widely after their perceived success in the early nineteenth century. Charles Knight's serially published *London* (1841), a "pictorial" and "abstract" description of many London attractions, offers a generally bleak view of Victorian education with the notable exception of praising monitorial school methods.[36] Knight describes most schoolrooms as "confined and badly ventilated" with masters who "do *not* attempt to teach anything beyond the commonest rudiments of knowledge" and who are unfit for any other professions.[37] In high contrast, teachers of monitorial schools are "earnest[]," working "with great ardour" to teach, and "comparatively [doing] great good," following the tradition of Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell, the creators of this system.[38] While this assessment appears to represent public attitude concerning monitorial methods which were used widely, in practice, monitorial methods were abusive and ineffective, especially for the most vulnerable populations they served. Public schools and schools for the "laboring poor," like workhouse schools, most often employed the Monitorial System with poor effects.[39]

The regulation of these school movements begins with government funding, available to some charitable institutions early in the century. The Reform Bill of 1832 and the Factory Act of 1833 helped to restrict children's working hours and age of employment, and mandated that children receive at least two hours of education every day. National financial aid for education also allowed for more reform in 1833. Christopher Martin states that although some endowments

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[35] N. W. Saffin, *Science, Religion, & Education in Britain, 1804-1904,* (Lowdon, Australia: Lowden Publishing Co., 1973) 139-141 and Martin, *A Short History of English Schools*, 10-11. Martin specifically notes that Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell are mostly to be credited with this system of a single teacher and "monitor assistants" that work to teach "twenty times the number of pupils" as a single teacher working alone (10).
[36] Charles Knight, *London*, (London: Charles Knight & Co., Ludgate Street, 1841) i-ii; 17-21.
[37] Knight, *London*, 18.
[38] Ibid., 20.
[39] See Marianne A. Larsen, *The Making and Shaping of the Victorian Teacher: A Comparative New Cultural History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 73.

had been made to educational systems before 1833, the "grant of £20,000 to be made to help school building by National and British Societies...was a historic turning point: the first practical act involving the state in England's schooling."[40] After this first state intervention, larger moves in government practice were made to facilitate English government assistance in school development. 1839 saw the founding of a Committee of the Privy Council on Education, with Dr. James Kay-Shuttleworth as its first Secretary. Kay-Shuttleworth saw education as a way of "cur[ing] social ills such as poverty and vice" and began working to establish a system of national education in Britain.[41] Kay-Shuttleworth began his work on the committee by instituting the practice of government inspections of schools and soon followed these efforts by establishing teacher training colleges beginning in 1846.[42] The first teacher training college was founded in Battersea, and was like a formal apprenticeship program for the "youths" enrolled there.[43] Students entering Battersea, and other programs, often entered teacher training colleges having been teacher-pupils in their previous schools. Teacher training colleges were often difficult settings for learning. Mack describes them as places where "youths trained for three years, working a spartan day of study and physical labour, with little recreation."[44] Additionally, teacher training colleges did not usually lead to university education. Upon completion, new teachers received an official teaching certificate and were filtered into schools needing new instructors.

The public-school movement led to the popularization of teaching methods that had been mostly practiced in private schools. Notably, in the 1850s and 1860s the "Victorian

[40] Martin, *A Short History of English Schools*, 14.
[41] "Kay-Shuttleworth, James Phillips (1804-1877)" by Olwyn M. Blouet in *Victorian Britain, An Encyclopedia,* edited by Sally Mitchell, Michael J. Herr, et. all, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988) 421.
[42] Martin, *A Short History of English Schools*, 16-19.
[43] Ibid., 17.
[44] Ibid.

phenomenon" referred to as "Muscular Christianity" was promoted first by Dr. Thomas Arnold during his time as headmaster at Rugby School.[45] The term was derived from a scathing article reviewing Charles Kingsley's work, *Two Years Ago* (1857) and described a particular type of masculinity endorsing vigorous, energetic participation in sports and a strict sense of Christian moral duty.[46] Arnold's set of Muscular Christian values were highly connected to his teaching, which Pete Newbon describes as a "seminal pedagogic blend of austere Anglicanism and neo-Spartanism" and were "in part, a consequence of structural and ideological changes to the culture of education at Oxford University in the early nineteenth century."[47] Rigor was the main focus for university education in the wake of the French Revolution, and Arnold's pedagogy reflects this. Newbon explains:

> …when Arnold assumed his role [as headmaster of Rugby], British public schools were somewhat anarchic institutions, characterised by a mixture of physical violence and bullying intimidation—both by boys and by masters…One of Arnold's signature reforms was to calibrate student promotion, not by age or social rank, but by moral and intellectual maturity…Although corporal punishment was deployed at Arnold's Rugby, the use of shame and emulation [were far common[er] psychological tools, applied with greater enthusiasm.[48]

Arnold's ideology was received with interest and adapted widely to fit into the moral training that was deemed appropriate for all teachers to employ in their practice.[49]

The period of teacher training schools also resulted in the establishment of Victorian conceptions of the good "Modern Teacher" and his counterpart, the virtuous "Moral Teacher."[50]

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[45] Pete Newbon, *The Boy-Man, Masculinity and Immaturity in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 214.
[46] Newbon, *The Boy-Man, Masculinity and Immaturity in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 214-215.
[47] Ibid., 215.
[48] Ibid., 221.
[49] Ibid., 214-220; See also, Marianne A. Larsen's *The Making and Shaping of the Victorian Teacher* for more information on the moral training deemed necessary for public school curricula.
[50] Larsen, *The Making and Shaping of the Victorian Teacher*, 74.

Teacher training colleges, like the ones established by Kay-Shuttleworth, should produce Modern Teachers that were

> active, enthusiastic,…dedicated learner[s], intellectually capable…highly knowledgeable and confident about philosophical knowledge, pedagogy…and about the children he taught. He was to know these things thoroughly and completely through study and observation…the Modern Teacher was informed by and reflected the Enlightenment optimism and faith in scientific knowledge as the key to progress and human happiness...[51]

This description notably characterizes the ideal Victorian Teacher as male, while the "Moral Teacher" was often described as female:

> The Moral teacher, on the other hand, was like a humble, kind, and loving mother. She was a Christian role model for her students, cultivating in them moral habits and dispositions such as humility and obedience to maintain social order.[52]

The Moral Teachers, female governesses or schoolmistresses, were generally expected to learn their pedagogical skills from good boarding schools rather than from teacher training colleges.[53] However, the best teachers were expected to combine skills of both the modern and the moral educator, regardless of the educator's gender or access to education.[54] This ideal, modern and moral teacher was encouraged to use pedagogical methods like Charles and Elizabeth Mayo's *Lessons on Objects,* adapted from Swiss educational theorist Johann Pestalozzi's ideology concerning educating the "whole child," or to promote practices like Robert Owen's use of music and dancing to "reform vicious habits."[55]

While ideas concerning what constituted good Victorian teaching were circulated in the public consciousness, practicing educators in the nineteenth century were challenged by

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[51] Ibid., 75.
[52] Ibid.
[53] See Philip Collins's mention of this phenomenon on 124-125 of *Dickens and Education*.
[54] Marianne Larsen, *The Making and Shaping of the Victorian Teacher*, 98-103.
[55] Ibid., also see Charles and Elizabeth Mayo's *Lessons on Objects; as given to children between the ages of six and eight, in a Pestalozzian School, at Cheam, Surrey* (London: Seeleys, 1853). Ian Donnachie, "People, Places and Spaces: Education in Robert Owen's New Society" in *Informal Education, Childhood and Youth: Geographies, Histories, Practices* edited by Sarah Mills and Peter Kraftl, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) 81-96.

inadequate training programs, difficult classroom settings, public disrespect, and financial constraints of small salaries.[56] Despite their hard work, teachers were widely regarded as inadequate members of society whose work was devalued and feminized. Most children's teachers were thought of as glorified babysitters. Charles Knight's scathing description of London teachers, of even the best schools, runs thus:

> …we see…that education means the keeping out of the streets the children of those who are not able, or who are unwilling, to take care of them at home, and that the educator is a person who, being utterly unfit for anything in the world else of any importance, naturally resorts to this. It is true that at such intervals of time as the mistress can spare from her needle-work, her washing-tub, or her culinary operations, perhaps even during these avocations—she teaches reading and spelling; but her labours are more meritorious than successful…[57]

Schools were sites of discipline under Mathew Arnold's inspection system, and training colleges often served to control teachers' ideas and even bodies.[58] Even well-intentioned curricula struggled to successfully support students. Despite its good intentions, *Lessons on Objects* was used as a quizzing method for teachers.[59] Robert Owen's curriculum, on the other hand, was not widely adopted outside of Scotland, despite its relative success in producing the sort of "well-rounded" student Pestalozzi's philosophies hailed as a demonstration of learning.[60] Teacher training was often unevenly distributed and influenced by highly diverse motivations, resulting in differing results for pupils and educators in nineteenth century public school settings.

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[56] Larsen, *The Making and Shaping of the Victorian Teacher*, 107-184; 187-190. Note that while some small-scale schoolmasters did hold positions of authority in their small towns, public opinion often contended that teachers, governesses, or schoolmasters were the failed children of wealthier parents who had the benefit of good educations. Teachers of workhouses or of the poorest students were especially poorly regarded, as were governesses who were forced into the profession. Many governesses came from middle- or upper-class families that suffered financial hardship and required their matrimonially ineligible daughters to work. For an extensive study including analysis of governess' positions in the nineteenth century, see Mary Poovey's *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).
[57] Knight, *London*, 15.
[58] Ibid., 132-186.
[59] Christopher Martin, *A Short History of English Schools*, 20-22.
[60] Donnachie, "People, Places and Spaces," 94.

In 1862 the Revised Code established a system of state funding for elementary schools based on the results of standardized tests, followed in 1864 by a series of grants to teacher training colleges awarded to colleges that sponsored teachers certified with two years of training.[61] In 1870 the Elementary Education Act finally created a truly national system of education, established school boards, enforced attendance, and distributed grants.[62] Secondary education was awarded the same attention with the 1902 Act.[63] Ultimately, the Victorian era was one of nation-wide educational experimentation. Change happened on large and small scales and was understood and assessed differently by many groups of the public.

During this time of educational reform, Patrick Brantlinger states that "[f]or Dickens, few issues were more important than education."[64] During his lifetime, Dickens commented publicly

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[61] Larsen, *The Making and Shaping of the Victorian Teacher*, 31.
[62] Ibid., 31-32.
[63] Ibid., 32.
[64] Patrick Brantlinger, "Educating the Victorians" in *Charles Dickens in Context,* ed. Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 219-226; 219. Other scholars have combed through Dickens's letters, non-fiction writing, speeches, and fiction to conclude that to Dickens, childhood and issues concerning the development of the person were the most important to him. His first biographer, John Forster tells readers that Dickens cared deeply about the poor children of England and the education that they were receiving. In an edited edition of Forster's biography, Holly Furneaux connects the Ragged Schools with *A Christmas Carol* by including Dickens's account of visiting the Ragged Schools in the 1843 section. See John Forster's *The Life of Charles Dickens* ed. Holly Furneaux, the Illustrated Edition (New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc, 2011) 180-195. Jane Smiley, too, notes that Dickens's visits to the Ragged Schools were a catalyst to his attempts to depict the problems in educational settings with the hopes of reform, *Charles Dickens* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2002) 49-62. As for literary histories, Philip Collins's *Dickens and Education*, 1964 and John Manning's *Dickens On Education,* 1959 are seminal and thorough explorations on the subject of Dickens and Education. Hugh Cunningham's "Dickens as a Reformer" in *A Companion to Charles Dickens* ed. David Paroissien (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011) 186-198 cites education as one of Dickens's main reform concerns, as does Lauren M.E. Goodlad's *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State: Character and Governance in a Liberal Society* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), see especially Chapters 3, "Is There a Pastor in the House? Sanitary Reform and Governing Agency in Dickens's Midcentury Fiction" 86-117, and 5 "A Riddle without an Answer: Character and Education in *Our Mutual Friend*" 159-191; and Patrick Brantlinger's *The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), see especially Chapter 4 "How Oliver Twist Learned to Read, and What He Read" 69-92. While it is certainly telling that literary critiques are able to find proof of Dickens's interest in education, it is perhaps more telling that historians cite Dickens as a major reformer of the time. See Martin's *A Short History of English Schools*; N. W. Saffin's *Science, Religion & Education in Britain 1804-1904*; and Dinah Birch's *Our Victorian Education, (* as proof of his lasting affect on Victorian educational reform in historical memory. Dickens is widely considered one of the Victorian era's most important activists on behalf of education, through his fictional portrayals of school settings, teachers, and the sufferings of students, and through his public appearances, speeches, writings, and reform efforts. In historical accounts of Victorian education reform, Dickens is almost universally cited as a major voice of the era. After Dickens's death, Gissing is quoted as crediting Dickens with the advancements in female education,

about or published criticism on Yorkshire Schools, Ragged Schools, Charity Schools, and Winchester.[65] He was a close friend and admirer of Thomas Carlyle, who, in addition to his philosophical and historical tracts, also advocated for Universal State Education.[66] Dickens was "on friendly dining terms" with educational reformers like Sir James Phillips Kay-Shuttleworth, Lord Shaftesbury, and Dr. Southwood Smith.[67] It is no secret that Dickens had major problems with some of the educational methods practiced in Victorian school settings. Philip Collins succinctly describes Dickens's opinions on schools and schooling practices, most of which were derived from his own experiences as a child in various institutions of learning, and then from the experiences of his own children.[68] While there has been some debate about Dickens's opinions on the relative helpfulness, or not, of a "State System" of education, it is also true that Dickens never appeared to believe whole-heartedly that a school-based educational experience of any kind was enough.[69] By the time Dickens published *A Christmas Carol* through Chapman and Hall in 1843, he had written fictional accounts of children who receive incomplete educations in *Oliver Twist* (1837-1839) and *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-1839).[70] Schools were settings or topics

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and Philip Collins states: "[Dickens] seems, on the whole, to have been most influential where he was at his best as a writer and as an educational propagandist...on the earlier years of childhood and on the simpler basic needs of education. ...there is no knowing how many a paterfamilias or mother or schoolmistress was so influenced" (219).

[65] Phillip Collins. *Dickens and Education,* (London: Macmillan &Co, Ltd., 1964), Collins lists these schools on page 211, but makes more specific note of Dickens's commentary throughout the book.

[66] Collins, *Dickens and Education,* 214-216.

[67] Ibid., 20.

[68] Ibid., See Chapters 1-4, pages 1-97, with an especial focus on Chapter 4, "The Duty of the State" (70-97).

[69] See Philip Collins's *Dickens and Education,* 1964, page 71, and John Manning's *Dickens on Education,* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959). On page 71 of *Dickens and Education,* Collins outlines what he sees as a misunderstanding of John Manning: "...there had long been a substantial body of opinion...that England desperately needed universal schooling, and that only a State System could secure it. Dickens believed this, too, as everyone assumed until Dr. John Manning told them different in his book *Dickens on Education.* But Dr. Manning is mistaken, I think: partly because he seems to understand 'a State System' to mean that the State itself should run all the schools, and compel all the children to attend them." Collins asserts that Dickens did believe in a state system for schools: "Dickens meant what was generally meant, that the State should ensure that all children received some minimum of schooling should be prepared to help pay for it, and should supervise the standard of teaching." (all on page 71). Manning asserts that Dickens's advocation of private school systems was too strong to allow for historians to classify him as pro State System. See pages 147-150 for this argument.

[70] Consider Oliver Twist as "learning" or being educated in a series of spaces: First with Mrs. Mann, later at the workhouse, later still with the Sowerberrys, then at Fagin's "school" of theft, and with Mr. Brownlow who "went

of discussion, too, in Dickens's *Sketches by Boz* (1836), *Pickwick Papers* (1836-1837), *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-1841), and later, in *American Notes* (1842) and *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843-1844).[71] While each of the above fictional works included conventional classroom settings, they also included educational experiences outside of schools. For example, Oliver Twist "learns" difficult lessons from both the Sowerberry's household and from Fagin's "institution." In *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Little Nell is a wanderer and pupil to the series of situations she encounters. All of Dickens's early children are learning important life lessons from teachers outside classrooms.

This phenomenon perhaps derives from Dickens's own unconventional learning experiences as a child. John Forster first, and other biographical researchers, like Peter Ackroyd and Holly Furneaux, note that while Charles Dickens began his education fairly typically, his education in school was supplemented first by informal educational experiences, and later by traumatic lessons in a blacking factory that affected him for the rest of his life.[72] According to Forster, Dickens began his education in Chatham: "his first desire for knowledge, and his earliest passion for reading, were awakened by his mother, who taught him the first rudiments not only of English, but also, a little later, of Latin."[73] His education at home was complimented by time at a day-school with his sister, Fanny, and then later at Mr. Giles's school on Clover Lane.[74] This time at Chatham represents that fairly typical learning experience for middle class children

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on, from day to day, filling the mind of his adopted child with stores of knowledge" Charles Dickens, *The Adventures of Oliver Twist* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1858), 437; and Nicholas Nickleby's more formal experiences as a teacher at Dotheboys Hall where many children are terrorized by the villainous Wackford Squeers.

[71] Phillip Collins has done the scholarly work to piece out exactly the educational settings and topics addressed in the works listed. See "Appendix: A Chronological Table of Dickens's Main Educational Activities and Writings" in *Dickens and Education*, pages 222-223.

[72] John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens* ed. Holly Furneaux, the Illustrated Edition (New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc, 2011); Jane Smiley *Charles Dickens* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2002). Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens*, (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990).

[73] Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, 23.

[74] Ibid., 25-26.

during the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. M. O. Grenby notes that many children received lessons outside the home, sometimes in highly formal settings, but that these experiences were often supplemented by private, domestic teaching experiences with children's literature used as a tool for instruction in both spaces.[75] Michael Allen notes that it was in Chatham that Dickens "first tried his juvenile hand at creative writing" and by all accounts enjoyed his early educational experiences.[76] Although Dickens demonstrated a great love for literature and learning at an early age, his early education did not continue in a typical fashion.

At age nine, Dickens and his family moved from Chatham to London and there Dickens's formal education was no longer a serious consideration for his family.[77] Several biographers depict this event as a serious blow to the young Dickens. Peter Ackroyd states "he had been removed from the friends of his own age, but, more importantly, his family gave no thought to his education...he was reduced to cleaning his father's boots and running errands for the rest of his family."[78] Michael Allen notes that he was "disappointed not to be sent to school, especially since his older sister was boarded at the Royal Academy of Music."[79] Forster describes Dickens's father's disinterestedness in his young son's education: "he appeared to have utterly lost at this time the idea of educating me at all, and to have utterly put from him the notion that I had any claim upon him, in that regard, whatever."[80] While this lack of formal training was certainly upsetting for young Dickens, some of the time Dickens was in London, he was getting an education of a different kind: "He was at another school already, not knowing it," Forster

[75] M.O. Grenby, "Children's Literature, the Home, and the Debate on Public Versus Private Education, c. 1760-1845" *Oxford Review of Education* 41, no. 4 (2015): 464-481.
[76] Michael Allen, "A Sketch of the Life" in *A Companion to Charles Dickens* ed. David Paroissien (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011) 3-17; 4.
[77] Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, 26-27.
[78] Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens: Public Life and Private Passion*, 8.
[79] Allen, "A Sketch of the Life," 5.
[80] Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, 27.

noted. "The self-education forced upon him was teaching him, all unconsciously as yet, what, for the future that awaited him, it most behooved him to know."[81] Walter Bagehot, writing in the late fifties, believed that Dickens's genius was well-matched by this "unsymmetrical" education.[82] Of course, I do not mean to suggest that the young Dickens was served better by poverty and neglect. Instead, I am interested in the way Forster frames Dickens's early experiences in London, the young Dickens unconsciously replacing a formal classroom setting for education with informal spaces like the toy theater given to him by his step-cousin James Lambert, his godfather, Christopher Huffam's ship supply business at Limehouse, his uncle Thomas Barrow's home above a bookshop, and his grandmother's house where he heard tales about the Gordon Riots and the French Revolution.[83] Clearly, the young Dickens did not stop learning during this early time in London.

When Dickens was 11 years old, he was forced to work at Warren's Blacking Factory, tying up bottles of boot blacking and pasting labels onto them for 6 or 7 shillings a week.[84] The Dickens family was undergoing serious financial difficulty, so serious that his father was incarcerated in the Marshalsea, a debtor's prison, for three months. During the imprisonment, his mother died and Dickens was asked to continue working at Warren's to provide some tiny additional income. Dickens's experience in the warehouse was "a nightmare," a "wound [that] had a deep and lasting impact upon Dickens's imagination."[85] In the autobiographical fragment included in Forster's *The Life of Charles Dickens,* Dickens tells his readers that his time at

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[81] Ibid.
[82]Walter Bagehot, "Charles Dickens," review of the Library Edition of Dickens's Works, *National Review*, October 1858, 459-86, cited in Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *Knowing Dickens*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2012) 3.
[83] Allen, "A Sketch of the Life," 5.
[84] Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, 30-40.
[85] Allen, "A Sketch of the Life," 5; Toru Sasaki "Dickens and the Blacking Factory Revisited" *Essays in Criticism* 65, no. 4 (2015): 401-420.

Warrens was an "agony of [his] soul" and that "the sense [he] had of being utterly neglected and hopeless...cannot be written."[86]

That Dickens's experience at Warren's Blacking Factory proved a formative educational experience for him, can be seen in his later writing. Dickens himself admits to using names like "Fagin" and "Poll," learned first at Warren's, in *Oliver Twist* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*.[87] He also states vehemently that he was afraid what he was learning with his new peers at Warren's was over-writing lessons from his boyhood. He felt "shame...in [his] position" and that it was "misery...to [his] young heart to believe that, day by day, what [he] had learned, and thought, and delighted in...was passing away from [him], never to be brought back any more."[88] Edmund Wilson famously argued that the trauma Dickens experienced in the blacking factory altered his life and affected his writing.[89] Michael Allen's book *Charles Dickens and the Blacking Factory* draws parallels between Dickens's fictional account of the wine-bottling business in *David Copperfield* and his real lived experience in the Blacking Factory; several other scholarly works of Allen's also cite the influence of Warren's on Dickens's later fictional works.[90] In her edited edition of John Forster's *The Life of Charles Dickens*, Holly Furneaux includes sections from *David Copperfield, Dombey and Son,* and *Little Dorrit* as examples of how the Blacking Factory made its way into Dickens's novels.[91]

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[86] Charles Dickens, "Autobiographical Fragment" in *The Life of Charles Dickens* by John Forster, ed. Holly Furneaux the Illustrated Edition (New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc, 2011), 30-37; 33.
[87] Charles Dickens, "Autobiographical Fragment," 33.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Edmund Wilson, "Dickens: The Two Scrooges" in *The Wound and the Bow: Seven Studies in Literature*, (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1941), 1-104.
[90] Michael Allen, *Charles Dickens and the Blacking Factory*, Kindle Edition (UK: Oxford-Stockley Publications, 2014). Allen finds that experiences with individuals Dickens met at Warrens influenced his development of characters like Fagin in *Oliver Twist,* and plot points in *Little Dorrit* and *Great Expectations*, as well as several other novels. See Chapter 3: Blacking, specifically for these connections. Other works by Michael Allen that suggest the Blacking Factory was a learning experience made evident by its influence on later novels are *Charles Dickens's Childhood*, (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1988) and "A Sketch of the Life" in *A Companion to Charles Dickens* edited by David Paroissien.
[91] Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, 32-37.

Thus, by all historical accounts, while Dickens certainly endows formal educational training with value, he credits informal experiences with the ability to teach lessons that are equally lasting and remarkable. The two years after Dickens worked at Warren's, he attended the Wellington House Academy. In his article titled "Our School," Dickens describes Wellington House Academy as "a School of some celebrity in its neighbourhood" although "nobody could have said why."[92] Dickens says that the boys trained white mice "better than the masters trained the boys" and describes an usher who was supposed to know more than "the Chief who was considered to know nothing," a Latin master, a dancing-master, and a French master.[93] All-in-all, it is considered a very typical middle-class educational establishment, one which was probably influenced by Andrew Bell's and Joseph Lancaster's system of employing monitor-pupils to supervise the work of other students.[94] This monitorial system, which Christopher Martin reminds us was "not new" but had been popularized by Bell's and Lancaster's new publications on the topic, consisted of a single master "training...young pupils in habits of strict discipline and prompt obedience" so that he ultimately is "conducting a school through the medium of the scholars themselves."[95] Dickens definitely experienced the punishments that were recommended by systems like Bell's and Lancaster's. He reports that it was run by a master, Mr. Jones, whom pupils "supposed...to know nothing" but who "was always ruling ciphering-books with a bloated mahogany ruler, or smiting the palms of offenders with the same diabolical instrument, or

[92] Charles Dickens, "Our School," *Household Words*, 81 (1851): 49-52;
[93] Dickens, "Our School," *Household Words*, 49-52.
[94] Collins, *Dickens and Education*, 13. Collins has collected research from Matthew Arnold's letters, Dickens's public writing and speeches on Wellington House, and Arnold's assessment of what he calls "the fictional transmogrification of Wellington House, 'Mr Creakle's school'" to come to the conclusion that Wellington House was "not likely to inspire loyal affection" from its pupils, and that its good reputation was probably not deserved. (14; 11-14).
[95] Martin, *A Short History of English Schools*, 10; Andrew Bell, *An Experiment in Education, Made at the Male Asylum of Madras: Suggesting a System by which a School or Family May Teach Itself Under the Superintendance of the Master or Parent* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1797) 10.

viciously drawing a pair of pantaloons tight with one of his large hands, and caning the wearer with the other."[96] While Dickens did appreciate the efforts of several of the other teachers, scholars agree that he probably did not learn much of the curriculum's objectives while there.[97] After Wellington's, Dickens was employed by Mr. Edward Blackmore of Gray's Inn as a clerk at around the age of 14, and continued working in various places of employment as a clerk or reporter until his publishing career in fiction really took off in 1836 with *Sketches by Boz*.[98]

Attempts to formalize educational experiences for middle and working class people in the nineteenth century meant that judgements about "respectability" and "morality" were made about uneducated versus educated people in popular literature, with mass literacy as an extremely controversial topic.[99] While Dickens sometimes romanticized illiteracy and was not always clear about his stance on education for all, beginning in the 1840s, he was a vigorous public advocate for educational reform. [100] In 1843, Dickens published both *Martin Chuzzlewit*

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[96] Dickens, "Our School," 49.

[97] Philip Collins in *Dickens and Education* tells readers "Dickens does not seem to have added substantially to his knowledge there," (13); see pages 12-13 for more details on the "staff" of Wellington's, which was "not so vicious" as Mr. Jones, the proprietor. Forster states that "what [Dickens] brought from the Wellington House Academy can have borne but the smallest proportion to his acquirement at Mr. Blackmore's," indicating that the law office he clerked at after time at Wellington's was much more of an educational experience than the school was, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, 43.

[98] Forster, *Life of Charles Dickens*, 41-52; Smiley, *Charles Dickens*, 1.

[99] See Chapter Two: "Making the Working Man Like Me: Charity, the Novel and the New Poor Law" in Lauren M. E. Goodlad's *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State: Character and Governance in a Liberal Society* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003) 32-85 for a discussion of middle-class morality and Harriet Martineau's ideas on "respectability" in early Victorian literature. The rest of Goodlad's work is also useful for analyzing discussions of literacy in Victorian literature. Also see Richard D. Altick *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900*, 2nd ed. (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1957) for an early account of the debates on mass reading/mass literacy in the Victorian Era. See Patrick Brantlinger's *The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998) for another critical discussion of literacy in Victorian fiction. James Phillips Kay-Shuttleworth's *Recent Measures for the Promotion of Education in England* (London: 1839) demonstrates some Victorian anxieties concerning the education of the working classes and discusses state efforts to promote religious education for both adults and children.

[100] Hugh Cunningham succinctly describes Dickens's interest in education in "Dickens as a Reformer" in *A Companion to Charles Dickens* by saying "Dickens saw education as a vital ingredient in the fight against crime" (168), and the work of other scholars clearly demonstrate Dickens's devotion to education. The works of Lauren M. E. Goodlad and Patrick Brantlinger demonstrate, though, that this devotion to education was more complicated than whole-hearted support for the education of the masses. See Goodlad's *Victorian Literature and the VIctorian State: Character and Governance in a Liberal Society* and Brantlinger's *The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literacy*

and *A Christmas Carol*. He spoke at several events and published essays on education in periodicals like *The Examiner*. In September of 1843, Dickens began his first reform efforts with the Ragged Schools. On October 5, 1843, Dickens addressed the Manchester Athenaeum in support of their efforts to "provide a place of education and recreation for the laboring men and women" of Manchester, found about "200 miles north of London."[101] In this speech, Dickens says that he sees efforts like the Athenaeum as making "strides in the path of the very best civilization" as an alternative to "certain gaols and nightly refuges" which are populated by "thousands of immortal creatures condemned, without alternative or choice."[102] Dickens says of such educational institutions: "I regard them as of great importance, deeming that the more intelligent and reflective society in the mass becomes, and the more readers there are, the more distinctly writers of all kinds will be able to throw themselves upon the truthful feeling of the people and the more honoured and the more useful literature must be."[103] Dickens professes that if only there had been these types of institutions sooner, they would have prevented the needless creation of "certain monsters of virtue" which perhaps hold too much power over the common

in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction. Patrick Brantlinger says in "Educating the Victorians," an essay in *Charles Dickens in Context* that even though Dickens professed to believe that education was the "best cure for crime," his "fiction...suggests the opposite: something close to the statistical correlation between the growing literacy *and* the growing crime rates in London, Manchester and other cities" (224). Brantlinger notes that educated schoolmasters "are just as criminal as Fagin or Sikes" and "a handful of Dickens characters are illiterate, and these...are typically innocent and kind-hearted" (224). Juliet John explains that Dickens was "fiercely critical of much of the educational provision for the working classes" and that he "distrusted Polytechnic Institutions," Utilitarian methods of educational practice, and adult education that was sometimes "informed by intellectual snobbery" (144). "The Novels and Popular Culture" in *A Companion to Charles Dickens*, ed. David Paroissien (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011) 142-156. It mattered to Dickens how ideas were presented, what ideas were presented, and how people were treated. The simple ability to access education for the working classes did not seem to be enough for Dickens.

[101] Description found at "Speech given by Dickens in support of the Manchester Athenaeum," The Charles Dickens Page, accessed November 4, 2019, https://charlesdickenspage.com/speech-manchester10-05-1843.html.

[102] Charles Dickens, "Manchester Athenaeum Speech," (speech, Manchester Athenaeum, October 5, 1842) published on The Charles Dickens Page webpage under "Dickens and Christmas," copyright owned by David A. Perdue, 1997-2019, accessed November 4, 2019, https://charlesdickenspage.com/speech-manchester10-05-1843.html.

[103] Dickens, "Manchester Athenaeum Speech," https://charlesdickenspage.com/speech-manchester10-05-1843.html.

people.[104] He endows education with the power of freeing the masses from "the wolf--hunger--...the dragon--ignorance--."[105] Dickens says it is education, applied in this speech to the formal space of the Manchester Athenaeum, which fosters "the man who improves his leisure in such a place" to "learn[], the better, gentler, kinder man he must become."[106]

It is no coincidence that readers of *A Christmas Carol* might recognize similar ideas expressed in the novella. Dickens had promised early in March of 1843 to write a pamphlet titled "An Appeal to the People of England, on behalf of the Poor Man's Child," but his interactions with the Ragged Schools, the publication of the *Second Report of the Children's Employment Commission*, and his frustration with a prevailing sense of inhumanity led him to request "a change of direction."[107] After his October speech in Manchester, Dickens offers *A Christmas Carol* as a text that can "educate the social conscience of [his] popular readership," but one that does so through "human fellowship and fireside domesticity" rather than by depicting successful formal educational environments.[108]

In the ten years between the 1843 publication of *A Christmas Carol* and the 1853 publication of *Bleak House*, Dickens's involvement in education reform changed. Dickens's first efforts with the Ragged Schools, as well as his early interest in the Athenaeum dwindled and diminished. Instead, Dickens devoted himself to participation in reform through his public appearances and publications. In 1850, Dickens began editing his journal *Household Words*, a publication with pedagogical motives. Dickens's choice of *Household Words* as the title of his

[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Sally Ledger, *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 119.
[108] Sally Ledger, "Christmas" in *Charles Dickens in Context* edited by Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 178-185; 179-180.

new publication speaks to this motivation. In its first issue, "A Preliminary Word" he states that the journal is intended to be a kind of friendly educator:

> We aspire to live in the Household affections, and to be numbered among the Household thoughts, of our readers. We hope to be the comrade and friend of many thousands…We seek to bring into innumerable homes, from the stirring world around us, the knowledge of many social wonders, good and evil, that are not calculated to render any of us less ardently persevering in ourselves, less tolerant of one another, less faithful in the progress of mankind, less thankful for the privilege of living in this summer-dawn of time.[109]

Compare this description to advice for ideal "Modern Educators" in an essay titled "The Expediency and the Means of Elevating the Profession of the Educator in Public Estimation." This essay gives explicit direction to modern educators, and explains that its goal is to:

> …make [the professor of education] an object of liking rather than of loathing to the boys, and the lecture room a place of amusement, instruction, and delight, instead of being the dislike and abhorrence of the boys…[110]

Like the ideal modern educator, Dickens's *Household Words* is intended as a welcome and instructional addition to its audiences' stores of knowledge. The ideal teacher and *Household Words* aim to be liked by their pupils, and to create positive settings for learning.

Dickens's goal to disseminate knowledge to "many thousands of people, of both sexes, and of all ages and conditions" also matches the advice given to modern educators.[111] Modern educators should be interested and willing to share their knowledge with the masses:

> The character of the educator might stand higher with the public if he gave gratuitous lectures occasionally, upon subjects connected with the arts and manufactures of the kingdom, to the poor operatives who could not find leisure to read, or money to purchase books. It would be an easy way to heighten the respect paid to him personally…[112]

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[109] "A Preliminary Word," *Household Words* (London, UK), March 30, 1850, 1.
[110] "The Expediency and the Means of Elevating the Profession of the Educator in Public Estimation" (London: H.Hughes, 15, St. Martin's-Le-Grand, 1840), 30. The author of this essay is listed only as "The author of the prize essay "On the Means of Promoting the Literature of Wales," and is never referred to by name. While the work is called an "essay," it appears to have been published on its own, not as part of a journal or another periodical. The essay runs 116 pages long. While Dickens may not have read this particular essay, I have included it as it reflects contemporary thoughts about the relationship of an ideal modern educator with his students.
[111] "A Preliminary Word," *Household Words* (London, UK), March 30, 1850, 1.
[112] "The Expediency and the Means of Elevating the Profession of the Educator in Public Estimation" (London: H.Hughes, 15, St. Martin's-Le-Grand, 1840), 106.

Household Words and the best English teachers share the same goals for elevating themselves in public opinion, and for their professional capacities: to be friendly, welcome sharers of knowledge.

Household Words makes another clear statement of goals that references educational practice:

> No mere utilitarian spirit, no iron binding of the mind to grim realities, will give a harsh tone to our *Household Words*. In the bosoms of the young and old, of the well-to-do and of the poor, we would tenderly cherish that light of Fancy which is inherent in the human breast…[113]

Here, Dickens resists educational movements like the monitorial system, or call-and-response utilitarian educational methods, and again positions his journal as a positive, modern educator that respects individual knowledges and "cherish[es]" its pupils' curiosity and imagination. Rather than de-personalizing his journal's audience, Dickens intends that *Household Words* be a comfort and a guide, connecting domestic and public spaces and creating a very informal teaching and learning environment.

Household Words is not a total redirection of Dickens's interests to subjects unrelated to educational reform. Rather, *Household Words* is another example of Dickens's investment in informal education projects. The journal welcomes overlap of public and private spheres, nontraditional settings of learning, and opens educational experiences to a broader but always humanized audience. *Household Words* aims to share and to value many human experiences, and rather than deindividualize students, to value them all: "these….in all their many phases of endurance, in all their many moving lessons of compassion and consideration, we design to tell."[114]

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[113] "A Preliminary Word," *Household Words* (London, UK), March 30, 1850, 1.
[114] "A Preliminary Word," *Household Words* (London, UK), March 30, 1850, 1.

In addition to using *Household Words* as a general instructor on various topics, Dickens uses his journal to teach readers about education and public schools. According to the carefully organized *Dickens Journals Online*, a web archive of Dickens's periodicals *Household Words*, *Household Narrative*, *Household Words Almanac*, and *All the Year Round*, 284 articles published in all of Dickens's journals were written on the topic of education.[115] 81 of those articles were published in *Household Words* between the first issue of the journal in 1850 and *Bleak House*'s publication in 1853. Many of these education-related articles fall under the categories of "Biographies," "Obituaries," or "Anecdotes." However, others are designed to instruct readers with "moving lessons," just as *Household Words* aims to do, specifically about the state of English education. Phillip Collins's analysis of these journals includes mention of "the first notable essay in English on the Kindergarten movement: an article much quoted and commended by Froebelians, at the time and later, and often (though wrongly) attributed to Dickens" and Dickens's *A Child's History of England* (1851-1853), a children's history serially published in *Household Words*.[116] *A Child's History of England* was a project that Dickens took on for his own children's benefit, specifically stating that he wanted to guard against the over-conservative histories they might encounter elsewhere.[117] Dickens's subsequent publication of the history in *Household Words* later, which made the history accessible to the larger public, cements the journals' status as a teaching tool circulating instructional materials.

[115] "Article Index: Search Results for articles with subjects, 'Education; Universities and Colleges; Schools;' 'Education: Europe; Universities and Colleges; Schools;' and 'Education: Great Britain; Universities and Colleges; Schools." Dickens Journals Online, The University of Buckingham and The Leverhulme Trust, Accessed 8 March 2020. http://www.djo.org.uk/indexes/articles.html.
[116] Collins, *Dickens and Education*, 3; 53.
[117] Collins quotes Dickens as saying "For I don't know what I should do if he [Charley Dickens] were to get hold of any Conservative or High Church notions; and the best way of guarding against any such horrible result, I take it, to wring the parrots' necks in his very cradle." *Dickens and Education*, 53. For more detail on *A Child's History of England*, see the chapter "Dedicated to My Own Dear Children" in *Dickens and Education*, pages 53-69.

Besides Dickens's new instructor/journal project, he published two education-related novels between 1843 and 1853. He serially published *Dombey and Son* between 1846 and 1848 and *David Copperfield* between 1849 and 1850. *Dombey and Son* is discussed regularly as one of Dickens's treatises on education as it depicts the harm that a "forcing" education can have on vulnerable children.[118] The novel focuses on the lives of Florence Dombey, and for a short time her brother, Paul Dombey, children of the wealthy Mr. Dombey. Despite the Dombey wealth and connections, Florence and Paul are largely left to fend for themselves emotionally as they suffer in their respective schools. Paul Dombey dies as a small child, partly because of the miserable conditions at Blimber's School, where the boy's bad health is ignored until it is too late. This novel, along with others published later in Dickens's career, is a perfect example of Collins's assessment of Dickens's contributions to educational reform movements: "He seems, on the whole to have been most influential where he was at his best as a writer."[119] David Vincent agrees with this assessment: "Dickens's…engagement with social reform was less a campaign than a dialogue."[120] Vincent characterizes this "dialogue" as one that is importantly held in his publications, and one that is motivated by educational intent: "He [Dickens] enlarged the knowledge of his readers and increased their impatience with the absence of change….Those who bought the monthly serials were at once comforted and infuriated by the vices Dickens exposed."[121] This period between 1843 and 1853 demonstrates Dickens's investment in his

[118] Collins in *Dickens and Education* lists *Dombey and Son* as an example of Dickens describing "good intentions and bad results" in two different schools, in Mrs. Pipchin's school and in Dr. Blimber's academy. See Chapter 7 of *Dickens and Education,* especially pages 138-144. More recently, Elizabeth Gargano in *Reading Victorian Schoolrooms: Childhood and Education in Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, (New York: Routledge, 2013), states that *Dombey and Son* remakes the schoolroom into "an unacknowledged sickroom, an unhealthy house where no cure can be attempted" a subversion of the original intention of the Victorian school as a place where the social illness, ignorance, is cured for the good of the nation (149).
[119] Collins, *Dickens and Education*, 219.
[120] David Vincent, "Social Reform," in *The Oxford Handbook of Charles Dickens* edited by Robert L. Patten, John O. Jordan, and Catherine Waters (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) 420-435; 423.
[121] Vincent, "Social Reform," 423.

writing, in the form of his new journal, and through his fiction projects, as a way of participating in influencing public opinion on education reform efforts.

The publication of *Bleak House* in 1853 continues the pattern in Dickens's career of using his novels and longer fiction to make contributions to public opinions on education, both formal and informal. With regards to commentary inspired by formal educational systems, Phillip Collins claims that *Bleak House* contains Dickens's most explicit condemnation of public-school curriculum in its description of Richard Carstone's public education at Winchester.[122]Collins notes that Dickens's critique might be derived from his interactions with Sydney Smith, a well-known comedic wit, writer, and pastor whose informal accounts of his own experience at Winchester Dickens was familiar with.[123] In *Bleak House*, "Winchester was…blamed for helping to ruin Richard [Carstone]'s prospects for life," in a critique that Collins claims remained "valid in the 1850s" when Dickens wrote *Bleak House* (182).[124]

Besides critiquing the "time-wasting" curriculum at Winchester, Esther is frustrated with Richard's de-personalized school experience, a frustration that most of Dickens's narrators express as they describe formal educational experiences. A lack of student-centered teaching is always described as a problem in Dickens's unpleasant fictional schools.[125] David Paroissien's careful analyses of educational scenes from Dickens's novels *Hard Times* (1854) and *Our*

[122] Ibid., 24.
[123] Collins, *Dickens and Education*, 24-25.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Depictions of impersonal pedagogy in practice appear in *Dombey and Son, David Copperfield, Nicholas Nickleby, Hard Times, Great Expectations,* and *Our Mutual Friend.* While I believe that cases could be made that depictions of impersonal or depersonalized school settings appear in some of Dickens's other novels, the previous list represents my personal experience with Dickens's novels, as well as a combination of scholarly analyses and biographical writing citing these novels as "Dickens's education novels" or "Dickens's treatise on education." Scholarly references to David Paroissien in ""Ideology, Pedagogy, and Demonology: The Case Against Industrialized Education in Dickens's Fiction," *Dickens Studies Annual*: *Essays on Victorian Fiction* 34 (2004): 259-282. Phillip Collins. *Dickens and Education,* (London: Macmillan &Co, Ltd., 1964); John Manning, *Dickens on Education*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959); Dinah Birch, *Our Victorian Education* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008).

Mutual Friend (1864) illustrate this point.[126] Paroissien argues that "the teaching practices emphasized by Mr. Gradgrind and Bradley Headstone [characters in *Hard Times* and *Our Mutual Friend*, respectively]…date from ideas introduced in the 1840s and indicate Dickens's distaste for a system he found increasingly troublesome."[127]

Collins's and Paroissien's findings bolster my assertion that Dickens's discomfort with Victorian educational practices emerge in informal spaces of learning, as well as formal ones. Dinah Birch notices this, too, when she states: "Dickens believes in the extension of learning, but when it has the nature of programmed schooling he starts to get anxious."[128] Birch ties this anxiety to Dickens's feelings concerning gender, and gendered learning. To extend Birch's analyses of *Hard Times* and *Our Mutual Friend,* I find that these connections seem especially relevant in *Bleak House.*[129] In *Bleak House,* Dickens explores issues of gendered education to present readers with positive alternatives to contrast Richard's failed experience. These alternatives generally involve overlapping formal and informal settings with gendered connotations. For example, Caddy Jellyby's educational training involves lots of exposure to, and interaction with, the general public in her letter-writing on behalf of her mother's charitable projects. It also involves domestic instruction with Esther Summerson and Miss Flight. The resulting combination provides us with one of the best educated characters of the book. The following short history of women's education and domestic education serves to contextualize Dickens's combination of domestic and public educational practices in *Bleak House.*

[126] David Paroissien, "Ideology, Pedagogy, and Demonology: The Case Against Industrialized Education in Dickens's Fiction," *Dickens Studies Annual*: *Essays on Victorian Fiction* 34 (2004): 259-282.
[127] Paroissien, "Ideology, Pedagogy, and Demonology," 260.
[128] Birch, *Our Victorian Education,* 33.
[129] Ibid., see especially pages 33-41.

In what seems like direct opposition to the "Muscular Christian" ideology, women's education throughout the Victorian period emphasized private, relatively passive morality rather than public, energetic acts of service. Dinah Birch characterizes Victorian female education thus: "Because women were thought to represent sympathy rather than rivalry, the cultivation of private virtue rather than public achievement was judged to be what mattered most in their school."[130] While Birch highlights that not every piece of advice for Victorian female education prescribed passivity, limited schooling, and high levels of domestic training, she does remind readers that Dickens's "ideal of a feminized model for education was based on the supposed domesticity of women."[131] In the history of Victorian education, Dickens's domesticized, feminized ideal is the most prevalent among the most popular training systems and curricula for women.

Early in the nineteenth century, girls were mostly educated at home by a variety of different kinds of teachers, often determined by the wealth of the family.[132] Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) highlights a distinction of women's class-based access to different kinds of education.[133] In a scene involving women of several classes, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, an extremely wealthy, property-owning widow, outlines a few options available to only the most fortunately-positioned girls of the early nineteenth century. She asks Elizabeth Bennet, a

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[130] Ibid., 76.
[131] Ibid., 77.
[132] Rosamund Billington, "Education, Women's" in *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia* edited by Sally Mitchell (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988) 248-250. Laura Novo, "Education, Elementary" in *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia* edited by Sally Mitchell (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988) 242. David Hopkinson, "Education, Secondary" in *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia* edited by Sally Mitchell (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988) 245.
[133] Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (London: RD Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1858 edition). While many scholars claim that Jane Austen's work should not be considered Victorian, I have referenced this novel because as it was published in 1813, the views in it are representative of early nineteenth century educational opportunities for women. The policies developed later in the century expanded on ideas about women's education from early in the century. By using *Pride and Prejudice* as a framework for exploring women's educational opportunities, I provide an introduction to early nineteenth century expectations to historicize developments throughout the century.

daughter of a much lower-class family, about her family's' skills and education. After learning that the Bennet sisters have very few "desirable" or "marketable" skills which would position them well to be married early, Lady Catherine asks about their training at home:

> "Has your governess left you?"
> "We never had any governess."
> "No governess! How was that possible? Five daughters brought up at home without a governess! I never heard of such a thing. Your mother must have been quite a slave to your education."
> Elizabeth could hardly help smiling as she assured her that had not been the case.
> "Then who taught you? Who attended to you? Without a governess, you must have been neglected."
> "Compared with some families, I believe we were; but such of us as wished to learn never wanted the means. We were always encouraged to read, and had all the masters that were necessary. Those who chose to be idle certainly might."
> "Ay, no doubt: but that is what a governess will prevent …I always say that nothing is to be done in education without steady and regular instruction, and nobody but a governess can give it."[134]

In this passage, three types of domestic educators are mentioned: masters, governesses, and mothers. Educational access across class divisions is also evident. Lady Catherine's resources allow her daughter to benefit from both masters and governesses in her education.

Masters were usually male experts or specialists whose achievements in one area made them employable for families who wished their children to learn particular subjects like music, languages, dancing, or drawing.[135] While many masters traveled to their students' homes, others worked from a central location, like a studio, where pupils would attend lessons. Masters did not often live in their pupils' homes if they taught in these domestic spaces, as their salaries were often dependent on the number of lessons they could give to several different families. Earlier in *Pride and Prejudice*, Lady Catherine mentions a group of drawing masters who work in London and are available "every spring" to teach many wealthy young ladies.[136] Dickens was aware of

[134] Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 144-145.
[135] Billington, "Education, Women's," 249.
[136] Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 144.

this type of educational opportunity. In *Bleak House,* Prince Turveydrop works as a dancing master to both male and female pupils. Prince holds lessons in his dancing school and travels to individual students' homes. However, this kind of instruction was not as widely available as Lady Catherine suggested.

Lady Catherine also presumed that the Bennet sisters had had a governess's instruction, and perhaps were still benefitting from her teaching. Governesses were "female teacher[s] of middle- and upper-class children."[137] While readers may commonly understand these teachers to refer only to women who lived in their pupils' homes, as Lady Catherine implies, during the nineteenth century and before, "governess" could also refer to a female teacher in a school.[138] Dara Rossman Regaignon tells us that governesses were much more available to a wider group of students, explaining that they were "the primary educator of male and female children in a middle-class household" during the nineteenth century.[139] Christopher Martin describes the governess position as a bleak one.[140] Governesses were expected to be experts in many subjects, as well as excellent teachers. "Wanted" advertisements in *The Times* ask for "a Lady who has been Governess in Families, capable of teaching the French and English Languages grammatically, Geography, the Use of the Globes; Writing, and Arithmetic" (1801); lad[ies]…capable of teaching English, Music, and the first rudiment of drawing" (1808); "a Lady who has been accustomed to the education of young folks…who must be perfectly mistress of the English and French languages, music and drawing, without the assistance of masters"

[137] Cynthia F. Behrman, "Governesses," in *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia* edited by Sally Mitchell (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988) 337.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Dara Rossman Regaignon, "Instructive Sufficiency: Re-Reading the Governess Through *Agnes Grey*," *Victorian literature and Culture,* 29, no. 1 (2001): 85-108; 85.
[140] Martin, *A Short History of English Schools,* 39.

(1811).[141] As the above advertisements suggest, governesses were usually expected to teach languages, have previous experience, be of genteel birth, and provide students with some other special skill besides "basic" training in reading and writing. Regaignon summarizes these expectations thus: "her [the governess's] primary job was to train the daughters of the family to be ladies."[142] Christopher Martin's research on the subject uncovered that a fairly standard salary for a governess able to meet all the above requirements in 1843 was "only £12 a year," and well below a livable wage.[143]

Despite the high expectations for governesses, they were often the subject of public debate. Governesses were sometimes viewed as predatory, preying on families and attempting to supplant mothers by poisoning their children's minds and vying for husbands' and sons' affections.[144] At other times, they were considered a pitiable group of vulnerable young women exploited by the families they worked for.[145] Governesses were also not regarded as highly qualified, or notably well-educated. Women who were applying for governess positions were often not well-trained as teachers, even if they did have decent educational experiences.[146] In reality, most governesses were victims of exploitation, rather than man-eating exploiters.[147] In 1843, The Governesses' Benevolent Institution was established to "provide some relief from the stringent conditions faced by governesses" and to protect them from problematic or even abusive

[141] All *Times* advertisements were found by searching *The Times Digital Archive* for newspapers containing the word "governess" in the "Advertising" newspaper section.
[142] Regaignon, "Instructive Sufficiency: Re-Reading the Governess Through *Agnes Grey*" 86.
[143] Martin, *A Short History of English Schools*, 39.
[144] Regaignon, "Instructive Sufficiency: Re-Reading the Governess Through *Agnes Grey*" 86-88.; Behrman, "Governesses," 338. Thank you to Dr. Bonnie Zare for pointing out that some Victorians were also suspicious that governesses may attempt to seduce the sons of wealthy families.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Martin, *A Short History of English Schools*, 39.
[147] Christopher Martin describes governesses as having "the status of a higher servant, with life divided between school-room and garret." *A Short History of English Schools*, 39.

employment circumstances.[148] The Governesses' Benevolent Institution was marginally successful in its reform efforts, attempting to provide the important supports governesses needed to protect themselves.

Girls' boarding schools or ladies' schools were also available for upper- and middle-class families. However, the schools of the early nineteenth century were often focused only on "polishing pupils for the marriage market, rather than providing serious intellectual or moral training."[149] Schools emphasized gaining "accomplishments," or "feminine skills" which were designed to make them more desirable for marriage.[150] These ladies' schools were sometimes held in the homes of fairly well-off older ladies; sometimes the settings were more structured, but in every space, domesticity was emphasized. However, these schools that focused on providing "superficial" education on "gentility" to women, slowly died out as Victorian sensibilities disapproved of "the futility of decorative idleness" that these boarding schools prepared their pupils for.[151] While women's education should still impart "feminine arts," thinkers, both conservative and radical, felt that women were not being adequately provided with education that could serve them in an ideal married life.[152]

Thanks to nineteenth century reformers Emily Davies, Maria Grey, Frances Buss, Dorothea Beale, and Josephine Butler, girls' schools became both more accessible and more academic for middle- and lower-class pupils.[153] These schools, like the governess jobs, gave more women the means to provide for themselves, and sometimes their families.[154] Women running the schools charged fees for lessons and for room and board, as the case dictated. Dinah

[148] Behrman, "Governesses," 338.
[149] Birch, *Our Victorian Education*, 80.
[150] Martin, *A Short History of English Schools*, 37.
[151] Billington, "Education, Women's," 249.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Birch, *Our Victorian Education*, 80-83.

Birch's research uncovered that the teachers in these schools often did "relish" their work, "the challenges of the profession, and the scope for authority and influence that it provided."[155] Other women taught to actively promote their religion in society, a freedom that had historically been allowed mostly to men in the Christian tradition.[156] These freedoms were accompanied by minimal pay, but with enough luck and careful financial management, even teachers could earn enough to support themselves reasonably.[157]

However, these schools were not totally positive places, for teachers or their female pupils. The differences between classes continued to be harmful to the most vulnerable in educational settings. The boarding schools available to poorer pupils were not usually well-maintained and sometimes became breeding-grounds for disease.[158] Additionally, social class influenced the subjects available for pupils to study. While the middle- and upper-class enjoyed more academic training, the working classes attending charity schools or girls receiving their education at orphanages were often taught only the most rudimentary academics.[159] Instead, these school curricula taught the necessary skills that would allow students to become "useful servants" to the higher classes.[160] The *Journal of Education* published in 1831, described the curriculum used by Cogan's Charity School for "the children of poor people of good character":

> each girl remains three years at the school, and is accustomed to knit and sew, and in her turn to wash and do all the work of the house. They receive 20*s*. on leaving the school 'for fitting them with necessaries for service;' and as an inducement to a perseverance in good conduct afterwards.[161]

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[155] Ibid., 82.
[156] Ibid., 83.
[157] Ibid., 83.
[158] Martin, *A Short History of English Schools*, 38. A famous literary example of this is Jane Eyre's experience at Lowood being based on Charlotte Bronte's real experiences at Cowan Bridge. Boarding schools for both male and female pupils often harbored disease, so that the class of pupils was the largest determining factor of whether or not the school would be poorly maintained.
[159] "Charity Schools" *Journal of Education*, 1 (1831): 279-292.
[160] Ibid., 286.
[161] Ibid., 285.

School for working class students, then, was not as accessible or available as for their middle-class counterparts. Families had to prove "good character" and students were admitted selectively. Schools for the lower classes were not well-regarded. In the same 1831 issue of *The Journal of Education*, the anonymous author of the "Charity School" article expresses frustration at the high cost of charity schools and what he/she sees as their lack of results:

> The object of charity schools is to form industrious, honest, and intelligent working men and women; and this object will be best obtained by combining with the ordinary elements of school education, an acquaintance with some certain means of obtaining a livelihood. Such an object is, perhaps, one of the most important that can occupy the mind of those benevolent persons whose zeal is the cause of zeal in others. …we cannot but feel surprise when we contrast these great and good exertions with the indigence which yet infests every corner of the land, and with the ignorance in which so many of the working people are found whenever particular events make them prominent objects of attention. …The evident conclusion is, that a large part of the funds of charity is mispent, and that much of the care and attention of the patrons of education is little better than thrown away.[162]

This author's opinions were held by many, and while educational reform efforts continued to provide wider access to the lower classes, these efforts were met with widespread public resistance and heavy debate.[163]

Despite the push to give women access to school settings, the majority of women continued to be educated at home, or at least partially educated at home, during the nineteenth century.[164] Remember that Lady Catherine of *Pride and Prejudice* assumes that if the Bennet sisters did not have a governess, did not go to school, and did not "benefit" from masters, their mother "must have been quite a slave to [their] education."[165] The Victorian expectation that mothers would take over if no other educators could be provided was virtually universal. As part of the "Angel of the House" ideology, mothers were viewed as moral compasses for their

[162] Ibid., 291.
[163] Martin, *A Short History of English Schools*, 39.
[164] Billington, "Education, Women's," 249-250.
[165] Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 144.

households, guiding and instructing both their children and their husbands with the "responsibility to counteract the onslaught of evil in the world."[166] This accepted ideology, then, meant that mothers were expected to work miracles with their daughters: to provide them with academic, moral, and social educations. Sarah Ellis, in her famous 1843 advice manual, *The Women of England,"* advises:

> In rearing an infant, we not only supply its appetite with food, but also find it necessary to teach it the habit, and assist it in the power, of exercising its limbs; we guide its steps, and, as far as we are able, give it just notions of exercising its bodily functions with the best effect.
>
> To feed the mind, then, is but a small part of our duty. If we leave it helpless and inert, without ability to exercise its various powers, and judgement to exercise them aright, the most important portion of that duty is neglected.[167]

Good mothers providing good instruction from home must find a balance for their children and provide them with mental, physical, emotional, and social instruction. Unlike masters who specialize in teaching one academic subject or skill, governesses who only teach academics, but are charged with teaching several subjects and skills, or boarding schools that provide room and board as well as academic instruction, mothers must do it all.

Victorian ideology concerning women's learning abilities appeared to be just as overwhelmingly ambitious as expectations for what they could teach. Sarah Ellis states:

> no woman can reasonably complain of incapability, because nature has endowed the sex with perceptions so lively and acute, that where benevolence is the impulse, and principle the foundation upon which they act, experience will soon teach them by what means they may best accomplish the end they have in view.[168]

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[166] Brenda Ayres, *Dissenting Women in Dickens' Novels: The Subversion of Domestic Ideology* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 4.

[167] Sarah Ellis, *The Women of England, Their Social Duties, and Domestic Habits* (London: Fisher, Son & Co., 1839) 334.

[168] Ibid., 26.

Therefore, anything that a mother did not teach her daughter, "experience" and self-teaching would result in women being the mistresses of all domestic and moral knowledges. The belief that women were capable self-educators comes from much earlier than Ellis's 1839 treatise. In Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, published first in 1813, Elizabeth Bennet replies to Lady Catherine that she and her sisters educated themselves. Elizabeth and her sisters used the resources available, books and instruments, to teach themselves anything their mother had failed to.[169]

In general, women's access to education expanded in the nineteenth century. While fairly "trivial[]" girls schools were commonplace before 1870, after 1870 larger schools with more standardized and academic curricula became the norm.[170] Bedford College and Queens College, good secondary schools, offered classes and certificates to women and girls training for teaching careers.[171] Birch explains: "teaching offered women opportunities for economic self-determination."[172] As girls were more broadly accepted in classroom settings, there were notable shifts away from "competitive" pedagogical methods in schools.[173] The belief that girls required more "personal" instruction than boys meant changes to teaching practice that often resulted in what we might recognize as better, if not best, practice in the twenty-first century. Class sizes were usually smaller when girls were allowed into them and teachers reduced their use of cruel or brutal punishments with female students present.[174] Of course, this was not always the case, but towards the end of the century, largely 1870 and onward, women in classrooms helped humanize educational policies.

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[169] Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 145.
[170] Birch, *Our Victorian Education*, 80.
[171] Martin, *A Short History of English Schools*, 74-75.
[172] Birch, *Our Victorian Education*, 78.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid.

Dickens's novels reflect and complicate Victorian standards of acceptable women's education. several of the period's ideas concerning female education.[175] In *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge's sister, little Fan, remains behind while Scrooge attends boarding school, presumably to be educated at home. In *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844), Dickens's portrayal of Ruth Pinch indicates his sympathies are with governesses.[176] *Bleak House* offers readers a whole range of female educational settings. Esther Summerson is educated with her aunt at home, then at a little day school, and finally at a boarding and teacher training school called Greenleaf. We do not learn where Ada Clare was educated, but the result is that she can "dance, and play music, and sing[.] She can talk French…and do geography, and globes, and needlework."[177] Caddy Jellyby's mother taught her only how to write, but she seeks other teachers, like the dancing master, Prince Turveydrop, and demonstrates the aptitude for self-education Dickens's female characters almost always possess. Little Charley received a domestic education from Esther which prepared her to be an excellent wife. In my chapter, "*Bleak House* and Gendered Education," I explore how Dickens anticipates positive results when traditionally masculine, competitive teaching practices are melded with traditionally feminine, nurturing ones.

In *Great Expectations*, Miss Havisham is the only female character given significant attention who is educated solely at home, and without a mother, at that. Biddy is educated by her grandmother who runs a day school out of her cottage for children from the village. While the day school setting does not seem to provide her with much, she also demonstrates an aptitude for self-education. Biddy learns academic subjects as quickly as Pip, the main character of *Great*

[175] The following short survey is dedicated mostly to the novels I read more closely later in the thesis. The one exception is Ruth Pinch from *Martin Chuzzlewit*, included to provide Dickens's opinions on governesses, teachers who are absent from the novels I have chosen to discuss at length.
[176] George P. Landow, "Dickens on the Plight of the Governess," The Victorian Web: Literature, History, & Culture in the Age of Victoria, 8 June 2007, victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/chuzzlewit/governess.html.
[177] Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (New York: Signet Classics Edition, 2011), 54.

Expectations, and demonstrates that she is "an extraordinary girl…equally accomplished in the terms of [the blacksmith] trade, and the names of [the] different sorts of work, and [the] various tools."[178] Biddy describes herself "catching" knowledge "like a cough," she is such a quick learner.[179] Estella also has a mixed education. First she learns from her adopted mother, Miss Havisham, at their home, Satis House. As a young teen, she is sent to boarding school abroad where she learns to be a lady. Estella claims "suffering" as her final teacher, a cruel one.[180]

In the following chapters, I use the language and history detailed in this chapter to connect Dickens's portrayals of informal educational spaces to the particulars of formal Victorian teaching and learning settings. I argue that *A Christmas Carol, Bleak House,* and *Great Expectations* are all responses to Dickens's interactions with changing educational policies. His imaginings include blending formal and informal learning settings and progressive, nurturing teaching models. His fiction warns readers from continuing strict, gendered pedagogical methods which he depicts as harmful to both male and female pupils. *A Christmas Carol, Bleak House,* and *Great Expectations* are pedagogical parables with as much right to claiming the titles of Dickens's "education novels" as *Nicholas Nickleby, Hard Times* or *Our Mutual Friend.*

[178] Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (New York: Bantam Books Edition, 2003), 133.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Ibid., 515.

Chapter Two

Ghostly Best Practice: Dickens Champions Informal Instruction

Good, humane teachers are extremely rare in Charles Dickens's fiction. Philip Collins's famous count of "thirty-odd schools to which Dickens sent his fictional boys and girls" includes "cruel" schoolmasters like Wackford Squeers of *Nicholas Nickleby*, "incompetent" teachers like Mr. Wopsle's great aunt in *Great Expectations*, and "warped" educators like M'Choakumchild of *Hard Times* or Bradley Headstone of *Our Mutual Friend*.[181] Usually, humanity is reserved for Dickens's students and pupils, his learners. Readers are asked to sympathize with Nicholas Nickleby and Pip as they suffer at the hands of inhumane pedagogues. However, I would like to cast new light on some undeniably effective, good teachers who operate informally in Dickens's works. In the following chapter, I highlight undeniably educational moments in *A Christmas Carol* and study the novella as investigating pedagogical methodology, in addition to exploring Christmas, humanity, and ghosts. I notice that *A Christmas Carol* offers us Scrooge, a character coded as a difficult pupil, who learns from good, but ghostly, teachers.[182] The spirits teach effective lessons which allow Scrooge to thaw his frozen feelings and care for the emotional, mental, and physical health of others. Scrooge, however, is not the only learner of Dickens's narrative. As Linda Lewis notes, Dickens attempted to construct a relationship with his readers

[181] Philip Collins, *Dickens and Education* (London: Macmillan and Co Ltd, 1964). For the useful categorizations of teachers listed above, see Patrick Brantlinger's chapter "Educating the Victorians" in *Charles Dickens in Context* ed, Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 222-225. Brantlinger lists other characters who could be classified as "cruel" or "incompetent" teachers in addition to the ones mentioned.

[182] For citations from *A Christmas Carol,* see Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*, Bantam Books Classic Mass Market ed.(New York: Bantam Books, 2009), 42. All further citations from *A Christmas Carol* will come from this edition. All citations from the Bantam Books Classic edition will be made in text for the rest of the project.

that influenced them to make changes in their lives.[183] *A Christmas Carol*'s lessons are meant to be adopted by readers of Dickens's "ghostly little book" (i), who benefit from Scrooge's story and the pedagogically-minded narrator directing their learning.

As Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol*, education was on his mind. In 1843, Dickens published the novella *and* began his first reform efforts with the Ragged Schools. On October Fifth, 1843, Dickens addressed the Manchester Athenaeum in a speech supporting its efforts to "provide a place of education and recreation for the laboring men and women" of Manchester."[184] Dickens says he sees efforts like the Athenaeum making "strides in the path of the very best civilization" and providing an alternative to "certain gaols and nightly refuges" populated by "thousands of immortal creatures condemned, without alternative or choice."[185] He endows education with the power of freeing people from "the wolf--hunger--...the dragon--ignorance--."[186] Dickens says it is education that allows "the man who improves his leisure in such a place" to "learn[]" and be a "better, gentler, kinder man."[187] Readers of Dickens must recognize the similarities in this speech to language in *A Christmas Carol*. In fact, Dickens's experience at the Athenaeum inspired him to write not the pamphlet he had promised: "An Appeal to the People of England, on behalf of the Poor Man's Child," but a parable.[188] In *A*

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[183] Linda Lewis, *Dickens: His Parables, and His Reader* (Columbia, MI: University of Missouri Press, 2011) 4-6.
[184] Description found at "Speech given by Dickens in support of the Manchester Athenaeum," The Charles Dickens Page, accessed November 4, 2019, https://charlesdickenspage.com/speech-manchester10-05-1843.html.
[185] Charles Dickens, "Manchester Athenaeum Speech," (speech, Manchester Athenaeum, October 5, 1842) published on The Charles Dickens Page webpage under "Dickens and Christmas," copyright owned by David A. Perdue, 1997-2019, accessed November 4, 2019, https://charlesdickenspage.com/speech-manchester10-05-1843.html.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Sally Ledger, *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 119. See also Linda M. Lewis's *Dickens: His Parables, and His Readers*. Lewis does not dedicate an entire chapter to the parable nature of *A Christmas Carol* like she does with other Dickens works. However, she does describe his interest in parables and her classifications of how Dickens imagined parables aligns well with *A Christmas Carol*. Harry Stone also describes *A Christmas Carol* in terms of a parable, and with connections to fairy tales. Stone says of Dickens's use of a fairy tale structure in *A Christmas Carol*: "[Dickens] could effect aesthetically justifiable overnight conversions. He could teach by parable instead of by exhortation. And he could

Christmas Carol, Dickens imagines ideal teachers transforming a truly difficult pupil *outside* a formal classroom.

Dickens had mixed feelings about what went on in formal classrooms around England. While he endeavored to support efforts to provide universal access to adult education, Dickens felt highly critical of pedagogical methods used in Victorian classrooms.[189] Particularly, as many systems were designed with punishment or behavior-altering practices in mind. The Monitorial System allowed a single teacher to work with a large group of students whose ages and abilities ranged enormously.[190] Many found this system "mechanical" at best, and ineffective or oppressive at worst.[191] Joseph Lancaster's adaptation of the monitorial system included harsh punishments "designed to humiliate offenders."[192] These punishments ranged from physically imprisoning students by "shackl[ing]" them to each other or to their desks, to "labell[ing]

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deal with life in therms of a storybook logic that underscored both the real and the ideal." "*A Christmas Carol*: Giving Nursery Tales a Higher Form," *The Haunted Mind: The Supernatural in Victorian Literature*, ed. Elton E. Smith and Robert Haas (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1999) 11-18.

[189] For information on Dickens and his involvement in adult education, see Philip Collins's "Dickens and Adult Education," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 3, no. 2, (1955): 115-127 and his text *Dickens and Education*, especially pages 92-93. Dickens's mixed attitudes on Victorian pedagogy are best expressed by the author himself. Collins points readers to Dickens's *Uncommercial Traveler* in which Dickens describes learners "knocked on the head" and forced to experience "Shakespeare's works" not as entertaining, but as difficult and uncomfortable material (237). Clearly, his support for the Chatham Mechanic's Institute did not prevent him from criticizing the teaching methods he disapproved of, and that he witnessed there. Dickens, *Uncommercial Traveler*, in *A Message From the Sea; and the Uncommercial Traveler*, (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson and Brothers, 1867). Other scholars contend that his depictions of teachers in *Hard Times*, *Dombey and Son*, and *Our Mutual Friend* are his fictional criticisms of Victorian pedagogical practices like the catechistic method, the practice of corporal punishment, starving students to motivate them to learn, and the "disciplined teacher training systems instituted by Kay-Shuttleworth" (Birch 36). See Dinah Birch, *Our Victorian Education* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008); Collins *Dickens and Education* 70-97, 138-171; Clotilde De Stasio "Starving vs. Cramming: Children's Education and Upbringing in Charles Dickens and Herbert Spencer," *Dickens Quarterly* 27, no. 4, (2010): 299-306; Eric G. Lorentzen "'This Schoolroom is a Nation': Subverting the Catechistic Method in Dickens," *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction* 49, no. 2, (2018): 279-329.

[190] Andrew Bell's *An Experiment in Education, Made at the Male Asylum of Madras: Suggesting a System by which a School or Family May Teach Itself Under the Superintendance of the Master or Parent* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1797) detailed these practices and spread them in England so that while they were not new, they did become newly popular in Britain. For a brief account of this system see Christopher Martin's *A Short History of English Schools, 1750-1965* (East Sussex, England: Wayland Publishers Limited, 1979), 10-12.

[191] Patrick Brantlinger, "Educating the Victorians" in *Charles Dickens in Context*, ed. Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 219-234; 221.

[192] Martin, *A Short History of English Schools*, 11.

[students] with their fault[s]," to public, embarrassing washing.[193] The catechistic method discouraged pupils from disrupting their classrooms by employing rote memorization and call-and-response learning approaches. Eric Lorentzen describes this method as "a popular form of...rote memorization pedagogy which...sought to keep at-risk learners content with their marginalized social positions."[194] Pupils were expected to be highly passive, learning to memorize and recite rather than to engage with material or ask questions themselves. David Paroissien notes that Victorian classrooms were impersonal spaces in which teachers were encouraged by popular educational theorists to drill and quiz students, rather than to get to know them.[195] Paroissien reminds us that Dickens noticed the educational "emphasis on 'creeds and formulas'" and the lack of attention given to students' basic needs.[196] Disruptive behavior was severely, harshly punished, and teachers were quick to label pupils as difficult, problematic, or undesirable with the intent of quashing unwanted behavior immediately.

It is interesting, then, to notice similarities between Dickens's depiction of Scrooge, a character with a tremendous amount to learn, and needy, even difficult, Victorian pupils.[197] In fact, there is a direct parallel between Dickens's characterization of Scrooge and nineteenth century descriptions of "difficult" students. Despite Victorian interest in depicting children as angelic, educators worried about the corruptibility of children, and their potential, even at a young age, for bad behavior.[198] Andrew Bell stated that "upon men advanced in years, and

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[193] Ibid.
[194] Eric G. Lorentzen, "'This Schoolroom is a Nation': Subverting the Catechistic Method in Dickens," *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction* 49, no. 2 (2018): 279-329; 380.
[195] David Paroissien, "Ideology, Pedagogy, and Demonology: The Case Against Industrialized Education in Dickens's Fiction," *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction*, 34 (2004): 259-282.
[196] Paroissien, "Ideology, Pedagogy, and Demonology," 263.
[197] Birch, *Our Victorian Education*, 30-41. Birch says that Scrooge "profits from" a "'needful' education" in *A Christmas Carol*, clearly setting him up as a pupil.
[198] Naomi Wood outlines some of the major trends in Victorian attitudes on childhood in "Angelic, Atavistic, Human: The Child of the Victorian Period" in *The Child in British Literature: Literary Constructions of Childhood, Medieval to Contemporary* edited by Adrienne E. Gavin (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) 116-130.

confirmed in their habits of thinking and of living, it is always difficult to make any great impression, so as to produce a change or work a reformation."[199] General fear of what Sir James Phillips Kay-Shuttleworth calls "confirmed bad habits" is widely prevalent in Victorian imaginations. Education, then, is offered up as a solution for eliminating these bad habits.[200] Ebenezer Scrooge is the ultimate difficult pupil exhibiting "ill behaviors" for readers. He is "confirmed" in his habits which he does not alter, even for the death of his friend, Jacob Marley: "Scrooge was not so dreadfully cut up by the sad event, but that he was an excellent man of business on the very day of the funeral, and solemnised it with an undoubted bargain" (1). Scrooge "never paint[s] out Old Marley's name" above the warehouse door so that "years afterwards" his firm keeps the title "Scrooge and Marley," confirming his disinterestedness in change, and habits so ingrained that even death cannot influence them (2).

Scrooge appears past the point of "redemption." In Hannah More's *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, the educational theorist states that the best time for learning is "the lively period of youth, the soft and impressible season when lasting habits are formed, when the seal cuts deep into the yielding wax, and the impression is more likely to be clear, and sharp, and strong, and *lasting*."[201] Scrooge is anything but "impressible," he is frozen. Instead of "yielding," Scrooge was "a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone," "hard and sharp as flint" (2). Scrooge's frozenness "shrivel[s] his cheek, stiffen[s] his gait; [makes] his eyes red, his thin lips blue" and transforms him into a monster. Even weather does not affect him: "external heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, nor wintry weather chill

[199] Bell, *An Experiment in Education, Made at the Male Asylum of Madras*, 6.
[200] Sir James Phillips Kay-Shuttleworth, *Recent Measures for the Promotion of Education in England* (London: 1839), 11.
[201] Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education: With a View of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent Among Women of Rank and Fortune* (London: A. Strahan, 1799) 278. Emphasis More's.

him." (2). In fact, Scrooge competes with the weather, and triumphs over it as a monstrous force: "No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty" (2).

At first, the ghosts seem as monstrous as Scrooge. However, they successfully employ principles of humanity in their undeniably good teaching. They do all the things the best teachers do: they organize their lessons around a shared objective, motivate him with effective tools like rewards and consequences, and hold Scrooge accountable with high expectations. While the ghost of Jacob Marley and three Christmas Spirits, Past, Present, and Future, share a single pedagogical goal: to teach Scrooge to live differently, with "mankind as [his] business," they each have very different teaching styles (17). Even more interestingly, none of these teaching styles adhere to the mechanical systems popular in the early nineteenth century or utilize lasting, traumatic punishments.

Jacob Marley's ghost aims to disrupt Scrooge's "confirmed habits," establish high expectations for his pupil, and prepare him for the Christmas Spirits' visits. Marley chooses Scrooge's knocker to begin asking Scrooge to change his habits. This knocker is part of Scrooge's daily routine. The narrator tells us "Now, it is a fact, that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door, except that it was very large" and that "Scrooge had seen it night and morning during his whole residence" (10). The knocker's change becomes the instructional text for Scrooge to interpret: "Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker, without its undergoing any intermediate process of change: not a knocker, but Marley's face" (10). Scrooge is presented with a situation to attempt to understand; however, Marley's ghost is not looking for a rote response from Scrooge. Instead, he allows Scrooge to actively engage with the unexpected event in an authentic learning environment. Scrooge is

startled, and "his blood was...conscious of a terrible sensation to which it had been a stranger from infancy" so that he makes immediate changes to his "confirmed habits" (11). Scrooge "*did* pause, with a moment's irresolution, before he shut the door; and he *did* look cautiously behind it first, as if he half-expected to be terrified with the sight of Marley's pig-tail sticking out into the hall" (11). Scrooge also "walked through his rooms to see that all was right" and "locked himself in; double-locked himself in, which was not his custom" in response to his memory of Marley's face in the knocker (11-12). These authentic student responses allow Scrooge to engage with Marley's ghost personally and to help him achieve lasting learning over the course of the ghost's visits.

Marley encourages Scrooge to ask his own questions, rather than expecting his pupil to perform a memorized passage. When Scrooge asks "dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?" and "why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?" Marley responds with genuine answers (15). He states:

> it is required of every man...that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow-men, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death...and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness!" (15-16)

This dialogue allows Scrooge to learn at his own pace and to ask questions, unusual occurrences in many nineteenth century classrooms. However, it also begins establishing high expectations for Scrooge as a learner. In Marley's answers, Scrooge learns that he must suffer after his death if he does not learn his lessons well.

To achieve his final goal, preparing Scrooge for the visits to come, Marley gives Scrooge all the information he needs to be successful with the tasks ahead. He tells Scrooge

> 'You will be haunted...by Three Spirits. ...Without their visits...you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first to-morrow, when the bell tolls one. ...Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third upon the next night when the last stroke of

> twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more; and look that for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us!' (18).

Marley's explanation provides Scrooge with necessary information and establishes the consequences that his pupil should expect if he fails to learn the imminent lessons. Marley selects the details that are most important for Scrooge, the number of spirits coming and when to expect each of them. He does not pretend that this educational experience will be easy: Scrooge is to be "haunted," late at night for three nights in a row, but the consequences of failing to engage in the learning process are sufficiently motivating that Scrooge takes the coming lessons seriously. Scrooge is unable to dismiss Marley's visit with a "humbug," demonstrating that he has already altered vocabulary thanks to Marley's teaching (20).

The Ghost of Christmas Past similarly refuses to adopt the techniques of Bell and Lancaster, and instead provides a first instance of extremely student-centered pedagogical practice within the novella. The Ghost of Christmas Past carefully selects memories for Scrooge to interact with, then encourages him to make new connections with his former life. Dinah Birch notes that this ghost asks Scrooge to "enter fully into the lessons of his own past."[202] The Ghost reminds Scrooge of the lessons he should have learned earlier in his life and encourages Scrooge's more humane impulses. Together, the Ghost and Scrooge return to his boyhood home where the spirit shows him "his poor forgotten self as he had used to be" (27). At this reminder of his younger self, Scrooge weeps and demonstrates an unfreezing of feeling that the ghost encourages. He helps Scrooge label feelings and directs him to engage meaningfully with his humane emotions, all the while providing necessary teacher support. On the road to Scrooge's old village, he notices that Scrooge's "lip is trembling" (26). He provides support, assessing the learner's needs, by asking if Scrooge "recollect[s] the way" to his old school. The ghost provides

[202] Birch, *Our Victorian Education*, 32.

useful background information, that the memories are "shadows of the things that have been" which "have no consciousness" of the teacher and his pupil. Scrooge, prepared to engage with his memories, makes new connections between his past and future selves:

> 'I wish,' Scrooge muttered, putting his hand in his pocket, and looking about him, after drying his eyes with his cuff: 'but it's too late now.'
> 'What is the matter?' asked the Spirit.
> 'Nothing,' said Scrooge. 'Nothing. There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something: that's all.'
> The Ghost smiled thoughtfully, and waved its hand: saying as it did so, 'Let us see another Christmas!'(28)

Here, the Ghost merely facilitates Scrooge's new conclusions. Scrooge makes connections between his younger "poor" self, and the "boy singing a Christmas Carol at [his] door." He expresses a new desire to be generous to the caroller as he remembers the vulnerability and loneliness of childhood. Scrooge's young self had to "get[] up by candle-light" with "not too much" to eat. The older Scrooge recognizes his privileged position and wishes to share these resources with others. Scrooge is beginning to understand that "mankind [is his] business," which the ghost positively reinforces by "smil[ing] thoughtfully," and ushering him into a new memory for more practice with these generous impulses. The Spirit of Christmas past allows Scrooge agency in his learning, guiding him gently to make his own conclusions. At the beginning of Stave Three, Scrooge recognizes the spirit's instructional plan as he explains to his next ghostly teacher that he "went forth last night on compulsion, and...learnt a lesson which is working now." Even more importantly, Scrooge voluntarily engages with the new instructor, and begs "To-night, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it." Scrooge's new use of the word "profit" to refer to something other than monetary gain, indicates the Ghost of Christmas Past's lessons are "working" in him.

The Ghost of Christmas Present gives Scrooge clear directions, answers specific questions, and corrects Scrooge's mistakes with short lectures. After visiting "the city streets on Christmas morning," Scrooge and the spirit travel "straight to Scrooge's clerk's" to Bob Crachit's home (42; 46). There, the spirit encourages Scrooge to learn at his own pace, responding to his questions, correcting Scrooge's misunderstandings, and asking Scrooge to notice the people who suffer from inhumane policies and treatment. At the Crachits' house, Scrooge is introduced to his clerk's family. In particular, Scrooge notices Bob's little son, Tiny Tim, who "bore a little crutch, and had his limbs supported by an iron frame" (47). He watches as "Bob held [Tiny Tim's]...little hand...as if he loved [him], and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him" (50). Scrooge's thawed sympathy goes out to the little child, as he inquires "with an interest he had never felt before," "Spirit...tell me if Tiny Tim will live" (50). The Ghost explains that Tiny Tim "will die" if the future "remain[s] unaltered," encouraging Scrooge's engagement with the scene (50). The ghost's next speech forces Scrooge to recognize that his own inhumanity directly affects children like Tiny Tim. He reminds Scrooge of his own words, that "If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population" (50). The ghost lectures on this inhumane declaration and provides Scrooge with clear directions for changing his perspective: "Man...if man you be in heart not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered What the surplus is, and Where it is" (50). Scrooge sees the truth in this lecture, and "ben[ds] before the ghost's rebuke, and trembling cast[s] his eyes upon the ground" (50). The Ghost of Christmas Present's methodology is more direct than the Ghost of Christmas Past's, but it remains humane. The Ghost of Christmas Present allows its student to engage meaningfully and make mistakes; it intervenes when Scrooge misunderstands, and continues to encourage Scrooge's changing behavior.

The two travel to a place where miners' live, to Scrooge's nephew's Christmas party, and finally, and most memorably, "as they stood together in an open place" where Scrooge notices that the ghost is sheltering two children, Ignorance and Want, in "the foldings of its robe" (60-61). Here, Dickens has transformed the "wolf" and "dragon" from his Athenaeum speech into children.[203] The children, Ignorance and Want, do not "ravage," they are in need of generosity like Scrooge wished he could show when he visited scenes from his past. The Ghost of Christmas Present helps Scrooge understand that it is not "too late" to help children he will encounter. With a final lecture, and a reminder of Scrooge's impersonal, inhumane conclusions, the Ghost of Christmas Present highlights Scrooge's responsibility to provide alternative "refuge" and "resource" for children suffering in prisons and workhouses (61-62).

While the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come is Scrooge's quietest teacher, never speaking during its instruction, it is the most responsive to Scrooge's confusion. This final spirit provides Scrooge with space to draw conclusions and form plans for future action. Scrooge follows the spirit into a series of visions, and each time he fails to understand, the spirit adapts and shows him another. First, the spirit introduces Scrooge to his future peers as they anticipate a funeral. Second, he shows him a scene in which the possessions of a dead man are unfeelingly pawned off. Next, he indicates that Scrooge should discover the dead man's identity by raising a sheet that covers his face (66-71). Scrooge does not process the full meaning of the visions. Only when the spirit takes him to a churchyard and points out his tombstone does Scrooge finally realize the perilous consequences of his actions. Scrooge begs for answers, asking "Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of things that May be, only?" and "Am *I* that man who lay upon the bed?" But the Spirit quietly forces him to decode the scene himself (77).

[203] Dickens, "Manchester Athenaeum Speech," https://charlesdickenspage.com/speech-manchester10-05-1843.html.

Without a lecture or a comforting word of direction, Scrooge lays claim to his own learning and makes a plan for future change:

> 'I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse...I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach.' (78)

Instead of prescribing a plan *for* Scrooge, the last spirit has given him the space to make one for himself.

The ghosts' lessons and Scrooge's plan are successful. The narrator tells us that "Scrooge was better than his word...He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew...He had no further intercourse with Spirits,...and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge" (85). The ghosts' instructional objectives are met: Scrooge is "good," he is humane, and his changed behavior is lasting. Scrooge possesses a new knowledge and makes mankind his business.

However, Scrooge is not the only intended pupil, nor are the ghosts the only teachers in *A Christmas Carol*. The narrator of the "Ghostly little book" instructs readers to benefit from Scrooge's model, and to learn alongside him, a practice that Dickens's narrators undertook frequently (i). Linda Lewis notes that this narrational habit was highly intentional on Dickens's part. She acknowledges that often, a "change-of-heart [was] demanded of a Dickens reader," something corroborated by other scholars.[204] John Bowen, for instance, states that "Dickens's narrators are not content with merely appreciative audiences; they want their readers to sob, rage, see visions, and then to do things about them. The books are performative, concerned to make their readers different people from the ones who began the book."[205] In *A Christmas Carol*, the

[204] Lewis, *Dickens: His Parables, and His Reader*, 5.
[205] John Bowen, *Other Dickens: Pickwith to Chuzzlewit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1.

narrator's predilection for guiding reader experience and changing behavior is especially teacherly. It reflects the pedagogical work that the ghosts do and employs similar strategies with Dickens's reading audience.

The didactic nature of the story is revealed even before the narrator speaks. In *A Christmas Carol*'s Preface, Dickens himself emphasizes the importance of making an enjoyable, lasting impression on his readers, of "mak[ing]...readers different people."[206] He states: "I have endeavoured in this Ghostly little book, to raise the Ghost of an Idea, which shall not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with me. May it haunt their house pleasantly, and no one wish to lay it" (i). Dickens encourages new interaction with a pleasant idea that readers should take to heart rather than "laying it;" he directs readers to use the book as a learning tool, an instructional manual.

The narrator, acting as a supportive co-instructor, supports the Prologue's message and guides its readers' learning throughout the text. Beginning with gentle repetition, the narrator directly addressing readers as it explains that "Marley was dead" at the beginning of the book (1). The narrator says this five times, repeating the key information, and then explains that Marley's death "must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story [it is] going to relate" (1). This provides students with a reward for successful learning: attentive readers can anticipate "something wonderful" at the end of the lesson. The narrator puts readers at ease by presenting his lesson in the guise of a fairy tale, or nursery tale, another type of story intended to teach. The tale begins: "Once upon a time---of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve---" (3).[207] Here, the instructor/narrator takes nineteenth century educational

[206] Ibid.
[207] See Harry Stone's "*A Christmas Carol:* Giving Nursery Tales a Higher Form," 11-18. Stone's research indicates that Dickens's "Christmas books draw their innermost energies from fairy tales: they exploit fairy-tale themes, fairy-tale happenings, and fairy-tale techniques" (11). Stone cites Dickens's own statement that "he was here taking old

practice and changing it to prioritize student needs. While classroom settings might coopt "fairy tales, beast fables, nursery rhymes, and other texts" to "social[ly] disciplin[e]" students, *A Christmas Carol*'s narrative gently signals to the reader that their job is to learn in a new way.[208]

The narrator's gentle guidance takes on a more insistent tone as the tale continues. In Stave Two, audiences discover that we are being monitored; that we will be held accountable for changed behavior, just like Scrooge: "Scrooge, starting up into a half-recumbent attitude, found himself face to face with the unearthly visitor...as close to it as I am now to you, and I am standing in the spirit at your elbow" (23). Notice the physical parallel between the reader and Scrooge. While Scrooge sits facing the Ghost of Christmas Past, we sit with the ghost of the narrator.

By the end of the story, the narrator lectures readers and Scrooge together. He states:

> Oh cold, cold, rigid, dreadful Death, set up thine altar here, and dress it with such terrors as thou hast at thy command: for this is thy dominion! But of the loved, revered, and honoured head, thou canst not turn one hair to thy dread purposes, or make one feature odious. It is not that the hand is heavy and will fall down when released; it is not that the heart and pulse are still; but that the hand WAS open, generous, and true; the heart brave, warm, and tender; and the pulse a man's. Strike, Shadow, strike! And see his good deeds springing from the wound, to sow the world with life immortal! (71)

While the narrator addresses Death, this message is clearly intended for the reader. The lecture is intended to teach humans, not supernatural entities, that good deeds are the most lasting legacies that we can leave behind. What is surprising about this message is not that readers hear it, but that Scrooge does as well: "No voice pronounced these words in Scrooge's ears, and yet he heard them when he looked upon the bed" (71). The narrator wants us to share Scrooge's educational

nursery tales and 'giving them a higher form' (11)." Stone ultimately argues that "*A Christmas Carol* is a mytho or a fairy tale for our times, one that is still full of life and relevance (17)."

[208] Lorentzen, "'This Schoolroom is a Nation,'" 281-282.

experience, we need to hear the same lectures and learn the same lessons so that something "wonderful can come of this story."

History demonstrates that Victorians learned Dickens's lessons about Christmas well.[209] Lucinda Hawksley and other scholars notice that Dickens's interpretation of Christmas celebrations was adopted by Victorian audiences, and continues to influence holiday traditions in the twenty-first century.[210] What is less apparent is the legacy of good teaching that the spirits' pedagogy forecasts. While Nineteenth Century instructional methods would have had the ghosts force Scrooge to memorize catechisms, engage in object lessons, learn in crowded spaces, and suffer beatings for wrong answers, Scrooge's instructors do something much closer to twenty-first century best-practice pedagogy. Current theories advise teachers to check students for understanding, always be aware of students' fluency with skills, establish high expectations for learning, and allow students to make mistakes in safe learning environments. Most importantly and universally, it is agreed that education should be student-centered, that teachers should know their students and tailor their lessons to them.[211] Dickens's ghostly instructors are fundamentally humane, facilitating nuanced learning for Scrooge, and all of *A Christmas Carol*'s readers.

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[209] See Lucinda Hawksley's *Dickens and Christmas* which investigates Dickens's influence on Christmas celebrations lasting even longer than his lifetime. Lucinda Hawksley, *Dickens and Christmas* (South Yorkshire, England: Pen and Sword History, 2017). Sally Ledger's Chapter "Christmas" in *Charles Dickens in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 178-185, similarly claims that Dickens's Christmas stories have "continued to influence yuletide celebrations in England ever since" their publications (184).

[210] Hawksley, *Dickens and Christmas*.

[211] See the following resources for twenty first century teaching handbooks that recommend teachers know their students, engage them meaningfully in lessons, set high expectations for learning, and keep instruction student centered. Doug Lemov, *Teach Like a Champion: 49 Techniques That Put Students on the Path to College,* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010) especially the sections titled "Setting High Academic Expectations," "Setting and Maintaining High Behavioral Expectations," and "Building Character and Trust" through "positive framing," "precise praise," and "normaliz[ing] error" on pages 27-56, 167-202, 203-213, 221-222.; John V. Antonetti and James R. Garver, *17,000 Classroom Visits Can't Be Wrong: Strategies that Engage Students, Promote Active Learning, and Boost Achievement* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2015). Antonetti and Garver remind teachers to focus on learning rather than teaching, which requires high participation in an environment that encourages "mistake making" or experimentation; Ken Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004) Bain explains that the best teachers expect students to perform well on assigned tasks, but that they also "help students to feel relaxed and to believe in their capacity to learn." Bain also notes that the best college teachers "create a natural critical learning environment" which promotes "think[ing] critically,...reason[ing] from evidence"

While it is true, then, that Dickens often painted frustrated pictures of failed educational spaces, he also imagined pedagogical practices for good teachers. Dickens believed in informal, sometimes fantastic, spaces in which education could powerfully affect learners. He believed in the power of ghostly instructors for Scrooge, and the power of fiction as an instructor for reading audiences. Public debates on Victorian schools continue to affect Dickens as he writes *Bleak House* and *Great Expectations.* What seemed like possible and plausible solutions for educational practice are tested in *Bleak House*, where I will discuss Dickens's commentary on the role that gender plays for teachers and pupils alike.

and raise questions rather than "giv[ing] answers." Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do*, 96, 68-97, 99-109; Ruth Powley, *Powerful Pedagogy: Teach Better Quicker* (London, Routledge, 2018). Ruth Powley cites "desirable difficulties" as a principle of effective learning and explains that the best learning can be messy and difficult for students, but that subjects are learned "long term" when students have to work hard to achieve them.

Chapter Three

Gendered Education in *Bleak House*

While the previous chapter defined Dickens's educators as either "good/successful" or "bad/unsuccessful," in the following chapter, I complicate that binary by studying gender performance as it intersects with informal education in *Bleak House*. In *Our Victorian Education,* Dinah Birch notes "generous teaching," or student-centered teaching in Dickens's fiction "is likely to come from a girl, and to take place in the setting of domestic warmth."[212] It follows that abusive teaching, is regularly employed by male educators, and is often public, formal, and rigid. At first glance, *Bleak House* appears to prove these rules rather than challenge them. As a representative example, Esther Summerson, the novel's main character and female narrator, is both an eager learner and a "generous teacher."[213] Conversely, male characters like Richard Carstone, encounter difficulties as life requires them to learn and change. In Richard's case, this leaves him dangerously susceptible. In this way, *Bleak House* affirms Victorian

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[212] Dinah Birch, *Our Victorian Education* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008) 35. Please also note the way that Birch's description of "generous teaching" coincides with 21st century descriptions of student centered pedagogy. See especially Ken Bain's anecdotal analysis of how the best college teachers treat their students in the chapter "How Do They Treat Their Students?" in *What the Best College Teachers Do* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004) 135-149. Other works in which "generous teaching" or student-centered teaching which requires instructors to invest time and other resources in their students is considered "good" teaching by 21st century pedagogues include Doug Lemov, *Teach Like a Champion: 49 Techniques That Put Students on the Path to College*, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010) and John V. Antonetti and James R. Garver, *17,000 Classroom Visits Can't Be Wrong: Strategies that Engage Students, Promote Active Learning, and Boost Achievement* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2015).

[213] Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (New York: Signet Classics Edition, 2011). All quotes following will be cited from this edition in text, when appropriate. See pages 34-35 for Esther's account of her teaching at Greenleaf; pages 51-56 for the first instance of Esther's entertaining the Jellyby children and making changes in the home to comfort the family, as well as Caddy's confession: "'You used to teach girls...If you could only have taught me, I could have learnt from you! I am so very miserable, and I like you so much!'" (55). This confession precedes Caddy's attempts to copy Esther's manners and learn some housekeeping skills. On page 122 Esther interacts with the brickmakers, and in contrast to Mrs. Pardiggle's inappropriate distribution of leaflets that the families cannot read, Esther "tried to comfort" Jenny, the mother of the dead child, and "whispered to her what Our Saviour said of children," instructing her about the fate of her baby. The first mention of Esther teaching Charley is on page 357, however, a more detailed description of Charley's writing lesson occurs on pages 452-453.

expectations concerning gender, and applies them to the educational realm. Catherine Waters explains that there was a "binary opposition based upon sex that was widely used to prescribe the roles of men and women throughout the nineteenth century."[214] She states:

> The separation of workplace and home associated with the development of industrial capitalism, combined with assumptions about the biological differences of sex, led to the formation of gender identities defined by the so-called doctrine of 'separate spheres.' Women, assumed to be innately maternal, passive and emotional, had their duties circumscribed by the home according to the dominant middle-class ideology of domesticity. Men, assumed to be strong, active, competitive and possessing an innate energy requiring manly self-discipline for its management, were identified as industrious breadwinners for the domestic establishment, which was superintended by their womanly helpmeet. The ideal was one of gender complementarity...[215]

The domestic Esther is "innately maternal" and therefore a successful moral compass and educator. The "competitive" Richard, though certainly strong and energetic, is poorly educated and thus fails to achieve maturity and economic self-sufficiency.

Careful inspection, however, reveals that not all of Dickens's characters fit easily into a binary structure. Many scholars have commented on some of the complicated gender performances in *Bleak House*, especially as they intersect with Victorian ideologies concerning work and private/public spaces.[216] Some characters anticipate Judith Butler's theory that bodies "indicate a world beyond themselves," sometimes not easily aligned with prescriptive pressure to

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[214] Catherine Waters, "Gender Identities" in *Charles Dickens in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 365-372; 365.
[215] Waters, "Gender Identities," 365.
[216] Notably, Natalie B Cole's *Dickens and Gender* discusses the varied gender performances in *Bleak House* in addition to pointing readers towards other related texts. *Dickens and Gender: Recent Studies, 1992-2008* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 2009). See Kimberle L. Brown's "'When I Kissed Her Cheek': Theatrics of Sexuality and the Framed Gaze in Esther's Narration of *Bleak House*" *Dickens Studies Annual* 39 (2008): 149-175; Patricia Ingham *Dickens, Women & Language* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992). Texts that Cole's book is too early for include Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux's *Charles Dickens in Context*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), especially Holly Furneaux's chapter "Sexuality" on pages 365-372 and Catherine Waters' chapter "Gender Identities" on pages 373-389; *The Victorian Novel and Masculinity* edited by Phillip Mallett (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), especially Natalie McKNight's "Dickens and Masculinity: The Necessity of the Nurturing Male" on pages 51-66; and finally Lillian Nayder's *Dickens, Sexuality and Gender* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2012), which collects many essays previously published to represent a range of scholarship dating from before Cole's *Dickens and Gender* to well after.

be female and domestic, male and public.[217] Natalie McKnight comments that "criticism...has increasingly emphasized ways in which Dickens was far more prone to bend and blend stereotypical gender roles than many had previously thought."[218] Holly Furneaux observes that "Dickens's particular admiration of figures who exhibited…tender and nurturing styles of masculinity...challenge[s] what we have been used to thinking about Victorian ideals of maleness," specifically maleness that operates with little knowledge of caretaking, sympathy, or domestic functions.[219] These subversions of conventional gender binaries reflect the more complicated experiences that many Victorians had with their gender performances, and help readers make sense of Dickens's experiences with gender and education.

In my analysis of *A Christmas Carol*, I emphasized the ways the spirits' pedagogical methods contrasted with those employed in formal learning settings. I read *Bleak House* as a further development of these ideas reconsidered through the lens of gender; criticizing formal, public, and masculine education and affirming informal, domestic, and feminine education. However, *Bleak House's* endorsement of teaching practices associated with women and domestic spaces comes at a cost. *Bleak House* famously punishes female characters who reject domestic teaching responsibilities, like Mrs. Jellyby, for their "unnatural" ambition and global outlook. Even female characters who are successful learners and teachers, like Esther Summerson, never openly admit how arduous their teaching responsibilities are. Esther perpetually denies her hard work and attributes her educational achievements to a natural aptitude for learning and helping. Prince Turveydrop and Caddy Jellyby are exceptions to Dickens's pattern of failed male learners and "naturalized" female ones. Turveydrop is a successful educator whose non-binary gender

[217] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (New York: Routledge, 1993) ix.
[218] Natalie McKnight "Dickens and Gender." In A Companion to Charles Dickens, ed. by David Paroissien, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 186.
[219] Holly Furneaux, *Queer Dickens: Erotics, Families, Masculinities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 7.

performance and teaching style results in a hopeful blend of masculine and feminine education. In addition, his rather atypical marriage to Caddy Jellyby also allows Caddy to lay claim to her own arduous educational labor, and to label it as such.

Bleak House problematizes early nineteenth century "masculine" educational practices through its characterization of Richard Carstone, the exemplary public-school pupil whose education fails to prepare him for Victorian life. As one of two wards in the Jarndyce and Jarndyce Chancery suit, Richard's prospects at the beginning of *Bleak House* are sunny. Liked and admired by others Richard is described as "a handsome youth with an ingenuous face and a most engaging laugh," and is positioned to be a successful, happy, energetic participant in the John Jarndyce's household.[220] However, Richard's potential is soon overwhelmed by the poisonous temptations of the Jarndyce and Jarndyce suit. His negative qualities, an "indecision of character" and "a habit of putting off…and dismissing everything as unsettled, uncertain, and confused" eventually overpower Richard (181-182). Esther Summerson is the first character to notice that these traits can be traced to Richard's public-school education. Esther states:

> I thought it much to be regretted that Richard's education had not counteracted those influences or directed his character. He had been eight years at a public school and learnt, I understood, to make Latin verses of several sorts in the most admirable manner. But I never heard that it had been anybody's business to find out what his natural bent was, or where his failings lay, or to adapt any kind of knowledge to *him*. *He* had been adapted to the verses and had learnt the art of making them to such perfection that if he had remained at school until he was of age, I suppose he could only have gone on making them over and over again unless he had enlarged his education by forgetting how to do it. Still, although I had no doubt that they were very beautiful, and very improving, and very sufficient for a great many purposes of life, and always remembered all through life, I did doubt whether Richard would not have profited by some one studying him a little, instead of his studying them quite so much (182).

[220] Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (New York: Signet Classics Edition, 2011), 41-42. All quotes following will be cited from this edition in text.

In his early study of Public British schools, Edward C. Mack tells readers that *Bleak House* is Dickens's "direct[] attack[]" on public schools in which he makes "a passionate plea for that variety and individual attention which alone could produce love of learning and intellectual independence."[221] Phillip Collins agrees with this assessment and states: "Winchester was…blamed for helping to ruin Richard's prospects for life," and for wasting Richard's time with "Latin Verses of several sorts."[222]

Unlike American public schools which were designed to serve all children living in America, nineteenth century English public schools were exclusive. Regarded as the best secondary schools, public colleges like Eton and Rugby admitted only the sons of wealthy families who paid "fairly substantial fees" for an education primarily in Greek and Latin.[223] Besides Greek and Latin, boys were taught some social organization skills, heavily based on the monitorial system. They were expected "to govern themselves through house systems and prefects;" sports and rigorous physical activities were encouraged "to absorb free time and adolescent energy."[224] A public-school education was widely considered the best possible form of education that a young man could receive in nineteenth-century England.

While Winchester was the oldest of England's public schools, its reputation was fast declining by the time the fictional Richard would have attended. Compared to other public schools which thrived at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Winchester lost patrons and "by 1830 there was hardly a vestige of her former patrician glory."[225] Mack's mention of the year, 1830, is especially relevant to Richard's circumstances. The two most widely-entertained

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[221] Edward C. Mack, *Public Schools and British Opinion, 1780-1860* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1973) 396.
[222] Phillip Collins, *Dickens and Education*, (London: Macmillan & Co, 1964), 24-25.
[223] David Hopkinson, "Education, Secondary" in in *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia* edited by Sally Mitchell (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988) 245.
[224] Hopkinson, "Education, Secondary," 245.
[225] Edward C. Mack, *Public Schools and British Opinion*, 74.

theories concerning the temporal setting of *Bleak House* suggest that the novel's events either occur in 1827 or sometime in the 1830s.[226] Richard would have been a pupil at Winchester, then, as the school lost public acclaim, in no small part due to the series of rebellions at the school.[227] Winchester's strategy for holding onto the positive reputation it built in the eighteenth century was to cling to the idea that "the school [was] the embodiment of traditions and customs from an ever remoter past."[228] Winchester aligned with other public school's ambitions "turn a boy into a certain kind of man" and to "encourage[] him to be a defender of the education that aimed to produce the type that he had become;" in Winchester's case, a traditionalist fit only for upper class living.[229]

In referencing Winchester, Dickens's audience would have understood that Richard comes from a school whose name was a byword for entrenched curricular conservatism. Moreover, Richard is not part of the "upper class" at the beginning of the novel; his achievements at school mean very little for a young man who must choose a career. Richard, however, seems oblivious to these concerns, exhibiting the defensive attitude that Edward Mack attributes to nineteenth-century public-school graduates. Richard's "light-hearted" attitude keeps him from taking his situation seriously (185). He never settles on a career, instead restlessly pursuing one field after another. In conjunction with this series of career failures, Richard accrues a series of ever-increasing debts, and separates himself from his beloved cousin, Ada, in his inability to prove himself a fit caretaker. He is increasingly reliant on the Jarndyce and

[226] William Holdsworth first argued for the 1827 date in his *Charles Dickens as a Legal Historian* based on Dickens's claim in the preface of *Bleak House* that every legal detail of the novel is true. Holdsworth, *Charles Dickens as a Legal Historian*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1929). However, Dickens's mention of the railroad soon to be built in chapter LV seems to suggest a later temporal setting, perhaps the 1830s.
[227] Mack, *Public Schools and British Opinion*, 80.
[228] Mack, *Public Schools and British Opinion*, 76.
[229] Ibid., 103-105.

Jarndyce Chancery suit, and dies obsessed and impoverished, the product of an education that left him with no practical assets.

It is Richard's lack of *practicality* that bothers his friends most. Unlike Scrooge, who learns nothing at school, Richard excels. Esther explains that Richard learned to write verses "to perfection." He "meritoriously acquitted himself in the…classic shades." Dickens criticized Scrooge for failing to retain lessons; in Richard's case, Dickens's frustration resides more with Winchester than with Richard, himself. Though Richard is never characterized as utterly faultless, he is also never the heartless monster that Scrooge becomes. Instead, Richard is helpless. Winchester's curriculum, designed for upper class men who never need to manage their own money, leaves Richard desperately unprepared. Esther explains: "all this time [Richard] was, in money affairs…generous, profuse, wildly careless, but fully persuaded that he was rather calculating and prudent" (260). In his own words, Richard explains his understanding of "saving" money:

> "…I gave eight pounds odd (or whatever it was) for a certain neat waistcoat and buttons a few days ago. Now, if I had stayed at Badger's I should have been obliged to spend twelve pounds at a blow for some heart-breaking lecture-fees. So I make four pounds—in a lump—by the transaction!" (260)

Dickens's judgement of Winchester, and conjointly of all the revered, ancient public schools of England, is that they are dangerously impractical for the men they teach.

In contrast to Richard's failed public-school education, Esther Summerson's domestic training allows her to be the learner and educator *Bleak House* most values. As a young child, Esther receives a moral and domestic education from her godmother, Mrs. Rachel, which leaves a lasting impression (25-27). Mrs. Rachel explains to Esther that she is an "unfortunate girl, orphaned and degraded" because she is born out of wedlock as a "disgrace" to her own mother (26). Mrs. Rachel ends this explanation with a moral lecture: "submission, self-denial, diligent

work, are the preparations for a life begun with such a shadow on it" (26). Esther takes this lecture to heart and resolves as a young child that she "would strive as [she] grew up to be industrious, contented, and kind-hearted and to do some good to some one, and win some love" (27).

Despite Mrs. Rachel's failings as an educator, Esther's resolution to be "industrious, contented, and kind-hearted," demonstrates her aptitude for learning. Her childhood resolution correlates with popular Victorian attitudes towards women's social and national responsibilities. In *The Women of England* (1838), Sarah Ellis states:

> It is perhaps the nearest approach we can make towards any thing like a definition of what is most striking in the characteristics of the women of England, to say, that the nature of their domestic circumstances is such as to invest their characters with threefold recommendation of *promptitude in action, energy of thought, and benevolence of feeling*. With all the responsibilities of family comfort and social enjoyment resting upon them, and unaided by those troops of menials who throng the halls of the affluent and the great, they are kept alive to the necessity of making their own personal exertions conducive to the great end of promoting the happiness of those around them.[230]

Ellis was considered one of the most popular writers of conduct manuals for middle-class women in the nineteenth century.[231] Esther's resolution to be "industrious" and to "do some good" echoes Ellis's call for women to be energetic, prompt, and benevolent. Unlike Richard, Esther demonstrates the ability to interpret her lessons, showing an early proclivity for navigating difficult learning environments, and teaching herself when her teachers are subpar. Despite the emotionally abusive lectures from Mrs. Rachel, Esther leaves her home having learned domestic skills necessary for Victorian women.

[230] Sarah Ellis *The Women of England, Their Social Duties, and Domestic Habits* (London: Fisher, Son & Co, 1839), 21.
[231] Robin Sheets "Ellis, Sarah Stickney (1799-1882)" in *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia* edited by Sally Mitchell (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988) 260.

Unusual for a working- or middle-class woman in the nineteenth century, Esther also receives a secondary education. When Esther is fourteen, her godmother dies and she moves from her house to Greenleaf, a female boarding institution run by the Donny sisters. There, she is trained as a governess. Esther describes Greenleaf as "precise, exact, and orderly" with "a time for everything all round the dial of the clock and everything…done at its appointed moment" (34).[232] Esther is successful at Greenleaf, and she "was very soon engaged in helping to instruct others" at school, so that "at last, whenever a new pupil came who was a little downcast…she was so sure…to make a friend of me that all new-comers were confided to my care" (34-35). While there are few details concerning Greenleaf's actual academic curriculum, its domesticity and alignment with nineteenth century feminine ideals are stressed. Greenleaf is organized, neat, and reinforces Esther's determination to be "industrious, contented, and true-hearted and to do some good to some one" (35). The school allows Esther to practice her pedagogy, and simultaneously allows her close connections that she had yet to experience. Denied a loving relationship with Mrs. Rachel, Esther turns to her teaching responsibilities at Greenleaf for her first real friendships. Esther explains: "As I began to know more, I taught more, and so in course of time I had plenty to do, which I was very fond of doing because it made the dear girls fond of me" (34-35). Esther's educational activities provide her with important human experiences, which encourages her, understandably, to pursue teaching and learning opportunities in the future. However, Greenleaf also conditions Esther to expect payment in emotional currency for her labor. While no Victorian governess would have anticipated a large salary in return for her

[232] Christopher Martin, *A Short History of English Schools*, 39.) This model of efficiency and organization is at odds with nineteenth century opinions on governess training programs which were believed to poorly prepare pupils for teaching experiences.

work, Esther's example models how some Victorian women were indoctrinated into the unfair expectation that they would care only about "promoting the happiness of those around them."

Nevertheless, Esther is a model of eager learning. She is the novel's most indefatigable learner. Situations that appear insurmountable to other characters, Esther approaches strategically. Even in Esther's description of Bleak House, John Jarndyce's home, she indicates that even apparently trivial puzzles can be an interesting challenge:[233]

> It was one of those delightfully irregular houses where you go up and down steps out of one room into another, and where you come upon more rooms when you think you have seen all there are, and where there is a bountiful provision of little halls and passages, and where you find still older cottage-rooms in unexpected places with lattice windows and green growth pressing through them. Mine, which we entered first, was of this kind, with an up-and-down roof that had more corners in it than I ever counted afterwards and a chimney (there was a wood fire on the hearth) paved all around with pure white tiles, in every one of which a bright miniature of the fire was blazing. Out of this room, you went down two steps into a charming little sitting-room looking down upon a flower-garden, which room was henceforth to belong to Ada and me. Out of this you went up three steps into Ada's bedroom…Out of this room you passed into a little gallery, with which the other best rooms (only two) communicated, and so, by a little staircase of shallow steps with a number of corner stairs in it, considering its length, down into the hall. But if instead of going out at Ada's door you came back into my room, and went out at the door by which you had entered it, and turned up a few crooked steps that branched off in an unexpected manner from the stairs, you lost yourself in passages, with mangles in them, and three-cornered tables, and a native Hindu chair, which was also a sofa, box, and a bedstead…Or you might, if you came out at another door (every room had at least two doors), go straight down to the hall again by half-a-dozen steps and a low archway, wondering how you got back there or had ever got out of it (76-77).

Though Bleak House's architecture is unpredictable and difficult to navigate, Esther characterizes it as "delightfully" so. Without Esther's tonal framing, audiences could read Bleak House as problematically complicated, overwhelming, or even terrifying.

As a learner, Esther is not easily discouraged by an initial wrong assumption. Instead, she makes predictions, assesses outcomes, and reworks theories as she learns. When Esther "come[s] upon more rooms when [she] think[s] [she] ha[s] seen all there are," instead of giving up, she

[233] Thanks to my thesis adviser, Dr. Metz, for this insight.

explores further, mapping Bleak House's interior for the reader, and subsequently becoming the reader's instructor. Esther begins her instruction by organizing confusing information for her reader-pupils. Her description moves from general, non-specific information: "a bountiful provision of little halls and passages" where "cottage-rooms" crop up in "unexpected places," to giving precise, careful directions so that a reader has the tools to navigate Bleak House confidently. Esther's directions are neat and tidy: "Out of this you went up three steps into Ada's bedroom," "Out of [Ada's] room you passed into a little gallery, with which the other best rooms (only two) communicated," "Out of [Richard's room] you went straight, with a little interval of passage, to the plain room where Mr. Jarndyce slept." The steps between rooms measure out the journey precisely, so that walking from one space to the next is no longer an unpredictable journey. Esther also provides landmarks so that future walkers might check that they are in the place they intended to be. In Esther's room there is "a chimney…paved all around with pure white tiles," in Ada's, "a fine broad window commanding a beautiful view," and Richard's contains "part library, part sitting-room, part bedroom, and seemed indeed a comfortable compound of many rooms."

Esther's approach to the intricacies and complications of Bleak House is typical for her. With the same interest, calculation, and awareness of her surroundings, she helps to solve other puzzles, some much more serious than the navigability of a country house. Esther takes care of her little maid, Charley when she contracts smallpox from Jo, not merely becoming her caretaker, but quarantining Charley and herself to protect the other inhabitants of Bleak House. She arranges for Richard and Ada to rely on Allan Woodcourt, Esther's future husband, and John Jarndyce as the couple's debts overwhelm them and Richard's health fails. She aids the Jellyby children, first by puzzling little Peepy from his trap in his house's railings, then by nurturing the

whole group of Jellyby children in their home, and finally by assisting Caddy in her ambitions to become less "worldly" and more domestic.

Esther's accomplishment in navigating Bleak House seems less trivial when we read Bleak House as a metaphor for England.[234] Esther is the answer to Sarah Ellis's plea that the young ladies of England understand their place in the world as a powerful one. Ellis tells England's women: "You have deep responsibilities, you have urgent claims; a nation's moral wealth is in your keeping."[235] In her position as a learner and teacher, Esther Summerson shoulders these responsibilities with earnest dexterity.

Bleak House endorses Esther's character, her judgements, and her teaching, especially when she denies the real labor of educational activities. Despite her obvious intelligence, Esther is the first character to claim otherwise. "I know I am not clever" Esther tells readers at the start of her narrative (23). Emily Heady argues that Esther's self-deprecation actually exposes the constructed nature of her positionality and character rather than endorsing an "idealized…femininity," or the passive, unassuming façade that Esther hopes to adopt.[236] I would expand on this position and argue that reading Esther as a teacher exposes how complicated the relationship between "natural" and "taught" truly is. Esther cannot fully "unmask" a constructed idea of Victorian femininity because she endorses and teaches the opposite: that female responsibilities are natural, and therefore not burdensome.[237] Her attachment to duty and her rejection of her own self-interests lead Esther to accept a marriage proposal from John Jarndyce, Esther's kind and much older father-figure. Only at the

[234] See Emily Heady's "The Polis's Different Voices: Narrating England's Progress in Dickens's *Bleak House*" in which she tracks the many references to current events in the England of 1853 found in *Bleak House*.
[235] Ellis, *Women of England*, 13.
[236] See specifically Heidi Pennington's *Creating Identity in the Victorian Fictional Autobiography*, and especially chapter three: "Domestic Interiors and the Fictionality of the Domestic: Esther Summerson Writes Home." (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2018), 101.
[237] Pennington, *Creating Identity in the Victorian Fictional Autobiography*, 101.

intervention of Allan Woodcourt, does Esther avoid this fatal step which would have kept her serving others for the rest of her life. Instead, Esther marries Woodcourt and becomes a more fulfilled character.

Comparing Esther's language to her actions allows Dickens's audience to discern a difference between Esther's conscious, constructed narrative which, explicitly endorses the Victorian "Angel of the House" ideology, and an underlying, less conscious recognition that social expectations are, in fact, heavy and difficult. These dueling perspectives result in sometimes contradictory positions. For example, although Esther celebrates Caddy Jellyby's fate as her family's breadwinner at the end of *Bleak House*, she does so only from her framework of ideal womanhood. Esther sees Caddy as a fulfilled wife and mother who naturally accepts the burdens of life. To Esther, Caddy is a successful pupil of Victorian feminine expectations, another model for the women of England. However, in Esther's own account of Caddy's fate, readers must recognize that Caddy undermines a binary gendered education. She does marry a young man and acts as a supportive moral compass within her household, but she also runs the family business, owns property and travels independently for her career. Caddy may be cheerful and dutiful, but she also claims her own hard work in a way that Esther never manages.

At the beginning of the novel, Caddy Jellyby is positioned to follow in Esther's footsteps, and to suffer similar stifling consequences. Caddy, like Esther, is first educated at home by an emotionally distant female figure. Mrs. Jellyby, Caddy's mother, is a famous contradiction to the earlier binary division between "good" female teachers and "bad" male ones. Esther states: "It struck me that if Mrs. Jellyby had discharged her own natural duties and obligations before she swept the horizon with a telescope in search of others, she would have taken the best precautions against becoming absurd" (568). Esther refers to housekeeping duties and familial

responsibilities when she discusses "natural duties and obligations," and emphasizes the effort that Mrs. Jellyby must make with campaigning and letter-writing (46-51). Any teaching Mrs. Jellyby does with her children, including Caddy, involves Africa and public-facing charity work. Caddy and Mrs. Jellyby's other children have been dreadfully neglected. Esther calls her a "jaded and unhealthy-looking…girl" who is covered in ink when Esther first encounters her (47). Caddy is her mother's "amanuensis" and is engaged daily in copying down dictated letters for her mother, the only real skill she has been taught (48). Caddy confesses to Esther, "I can't do anything hardly, except write," and bemoans how little she knows, especially in comparison to Ada and Esther (54).

Caddy's lack of knowledge, though, is a key difference between her character and Esther's. Mrs. Jellyby emotionally neglected her children; she did not actively teach them they were unlovable. Unlike Esther, who actively learns to dismiss and devalue herself from Mrs. Rachel, Caddy emerges from her mother's house a blank slate. Caddy has the freedom to learn new lessons in a way that Esther never could. After "passionately begging" Esther's pardon for complaining about her sad state, Caddy appeals to Esther: "'You used to teach girls,' she said. 'If you could only have taught me, I could have learnt from you!'" (55). Esther cannot stay at the Jellyby household, and Caddy seeks out other instructors. Caddy tells Esther later that she "felt so awkward" that she decides to "be improved…and to learn to dance" (202). She begins dancing lessons at Prince Turveydrop's academy, falls in love with her teacher, and becomes engaged.

Prince Turveydrop emerges as another of *Bleak House*'s excellent teachers. Like Esther, Prince Turveydrop is a "good" teacher who instructs his pupils "tirelessly" and rigorously, but not impersonally (206-207). Turveydrop's gender-coding resists easy binary classification.

While he is gendered by masculine pronouns, dress, and a hetero-sexual male partnership with Caddy Jellyby, Turveydrop is also feminized through comparisons to his mother and in descriptions of his physical appearance. Turveydrop's pedagogy, in addition to his person, represents a blending of masculine- and feminine-coded teaching practices. While Prince has the almost uniquely masculine advantage, in Dickens's novels at any rate, of running his own, successful, school, his approach to teaching is more typical of Dickens's feminine educators. In a rare, positively-depicted blend of masculine and feminine gender performances, Turveydrop combines domestic attention with public interests in his dancing instruction.[238] He "bend[s] and blend[s] gender roles" while emphasizing the labor of feminine-coded pedagogy.

Prince practices thoughtful, student-centered pedagogy, rather than the impersonal instruction advocated by male theorists.[239] As the previous two chapters have indicated, educational systems created by Andrew Bell, Joseph Lancaster, and Charles Mayo advocated for depersonalized, and sometimes humiliating instructional practices.[240] David Paroissien notes that typical Victorian classrooms were impersonal spaces mostly supervised by male teachers who drilled and quizzed students.[241] There was pervasive educational "emphasis on 'creeds and formulas'" and a lack of attention to students' basic needs.[242] While Prince Turveydrop's academy is populated by "several...pupils, ranging from thirteen or fourteen years of age to two

[238] Mr. Simon Tappertit of *Barnaby Rudge* is not as favorably described, though he shares traits like a "well enough formed" figure and "thin face" with Prince, in whom similar physical features are described as "little," "innocent," and "feminine" (205). Simon Tappertit is described in Charles Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge: A Tale of the Riots of 'Eighty,* Penguin Classics Edition, ed. John Bowen (London: Penguin Books, 2003) 41.
[239]Remember that pedagogical systems like the monitorial system of Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster required teachers to distance themselves from pupils as they instructed large groups of students whose ages and abilities ranged enormously. Andrew Bell's *An Experiment in Education, Made at the Male Asylum of Madras: Suggesting a System by which a School or Family May Teach Itself Under the Superintendance of the Master or Parent* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1797).
[240] Charles and Elizabeth Mayo's *Lessons on Objects: As Given to Children Between the Ages of Six and Eight in a Pestalozzian School, At Cheam, Surrey* (London: R.B. Seeley and W Burnside, 1840).
[241] David Paroissien, "Ideology, Pedagogy, and Demonology: The Case Against Industrialized Education in Dickens's Fiction," *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction*, 34 (2004): 259-282.
[242] Paroissien, "Ideology, Pedagogy, and Demonology," 263.

or three and twenty," reminding readers of the mass of differently-aged students in highly-masculine, monitorial classrooms, Prince Turveydrop does not practice impersonal pedagogy (205). Instead, Esther Summerson characterizes Turveydrop's teaching thus:

> He sometimes played the kit, dancing; sometimes played the piano, standing; sometimes hummed the tune with what little breath he could spare, while he set a pupil right; always conscientiously moved with the least proficient through every step and every part of the figure; and never rested for an instant. (207)

Turveydrop is an active attentive teacher, switching instruments, positions in the room, and methodology to suit his pupils' needs. Rather than passively assess his large group of pupils, he models correct form alongside his neediest students. Although Prince's students are exclusively female, his attention to individual student needs destabilizes any presumed masculine hierarchy in the classroom. Prince "move[s] with the least proficient through every step," deserting a position of power at the front of the classroom. Turveydrop abandons masculine practices that humiliate struggling students, instead supporting them through "every part of the figure."

Hannah More's defense of female education, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, advocates for "knowing, active, witty" female teachers.[243] Published in 1800, this text remained an influential guide to female educators in both domestic spaces and in more public, though small, classrooms. More states that female teachers should "speak...with particular kindness and commendation…" to pupils.[244] She explains that "severity will drive terrified children to seek, not for reformation, but for impunity" and that teachers should demonstrate a "readiness to forgive" struggling students.[245] More's recommendations align with Catherine

[243] Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education: With A View of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent Among WOmen of Rank and Fortune*, Vol. I (Philadelphia: Budd and Bartram, 1800) 21.
[244] Ibid. 112.
[245] Ibid. 117.

Waters's description of Victorian ideology which prescribes that female teachers be "innately maternal, passive and emotional."[246]

Prince Turveydrop's instruction is extremely kind. In spirit, his pedagogy is much more aligned with More's recommendations for female teachers. Emphasizing this point, Prince's pedagogical legacy comes from his mother, a character whose passivity results in her own death. Mrs. Turveydrop was a "meek little dancing-mistress" who was "worked...to death" in the dancing academy Prince inherits (205). Prince also inherits his mother's manners. Esther notices that while Prince is publicly employed, his gender performance is highly dependent on maternal legacy. She states: "he had a little innocent, feminine manner which not only appealed to me in an amiable way, but made this singular effect upon me, that I received the impression that he was like his mother and that his mother had not been much considered or well used." (205) His physical appearance is also coded female. Esther depicts him as "...a little blue-eyed fair man of youthful appearance with flaxen hair parted in the middle and curling at the ends all round his head." (205). Smallness, like Prince's "little fiddle," "little bow," and "diminutive" dancing shoes, is usually reserved for Dickensian female characters. Dinah Birch notes that "Dickens habitually approves of smallness in women---the virtues of Little Dorrit, or Little Nell, are closely associated with their diminutive stature."[247] Prince's "little innocent...manner," his "diminutive" dancing shoes, his "little fiddle" and "little bow" all reinforce his femininity.

Combining feminine and masculine pedagogical styles is effective for Prince. Esther notices that the dancing master's apprentices dance "with great gravity;" she observes with amusement and a trace of condescension that one apprentice in particular is seen "doing wonders

[246] Catherine Waters, "Gender Identities" in *Charles Dickens in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 365-372; 365.
[247] Birch, *Our Victorian Education*, 35-36.

with his lower extremities" (570). However, Esther looks with unreserved positivity on Caddy's accomplishments, saying that she has "acquired a grace and self-possession" thanks to Prince's instruction (570). Esther acknowledges Prince's expertise more explicitly in conversation with his father, Mr. Turveydrop, Esther says of Prince "he appears to be an excellent master...your son is indefatigable" (210). Mr. Turveydrop is unable to deny this statement, though with characteristic superciliousness, he damns his son with faint praise: "he *is* an excellent master. All that can be acquired, he has acquired. All that can be imparted, he can impart" (210).

Prince's future is not so distinctly optimistic. While Prince does happily marry his former pupil, Caddy Jellyby, he is also lamed by his educational efforts and his little daughter is described as "deaf and dumb," rather than as a reproductive triumph (923). Prince's fate reminds us that his dedication to teaching always required personal sacrifice. Caddy remarks that Prince's teaching prevented him from learning to write. She says of her husband: "how could he be expected to be a scholar when he had passed his whole life in the dancing-school and had done nothing but teach and fag, fag and teach, morning, noon, and night" (212). Prince's situation mirrors Hannah More's complaint that women's education leaves much to be desired. She states that modern systems of female education are "unreasonable and unjust."[248] They leave women "dangerously" vulnerable, without the practical knowledge that they are nevertheless expected to possess.[249] According to Caddy, Prince's "education had been so neglected" that in writing "he put so many unnecessary letters into short words that they sometimes quite lost their English appearance" (212). In his incomplete literacy, Prince is situated alongside Krook, a character whose incomplete knowledge of letters directly affects his livelihood. The owner of a rag and bone shop, Krook spells out words one letter at a time, never connecting them, and never

[248] More, *Modern Systems of Female Education*, ix.
[249] Ibid.

deciphering the contents of important documents that he possesses. Prince's energetic inclusion of too many letters also results in confusion. Like education for women that focused exclusively on lady-like "accomplishments," Prince has had to forego fluent literacy to become an accomplished teacher and dancer. Prince's sacrifice has made him difficult to read.

Prince's dedication to teaching also requires physical sacrifice. After Esther's first observation of Prince's instruction, Prince has no time to "dine out comfortably" like his father (210). Instead, he eats a "morsel of dinner standing" and rushes away to make another teaching appointment (211). This perpetual deprivation combined with Prince's weak health causes him to gradually relinquish teaching duties to Caddy after their marriage.[250] Finally, Prince is left "lame" requiring Caddy to take up all public, financial, and domestic responsibilities for their little family (923).

Prince's relegation to the domestic sphere is not an unhappy or unproductive one. As Prince is located more firmly in the domestic, Caddy demonstrates public success. Caddy takes on Prince's teaching responsibilities and is the sole provider for her family by the end of the novel. Esther notably does not call Caddy by her married surname, but forever refers to her as Caddy Jellyby, an indication that Caddy's identity was not altered by her married state. Esther also describes Caddy as a property owner. She calls the little family's house "her, [Caddy's] new house" rather than Prince's (923). Caddy also "keeps her own little carriage...instead of hiring one," demonstrating that Caddy's blending of spheres is financially successful (923). Even more encouragingly, this blending of gendered spheres is not depicted monstrously, in the vein of Mrs. Jellyby and Mrs. Pardiggle. Rather, Esther acknowledges that Caddy both "works very hard," and is "contented and does all she has to do with all her heart" (923). Caddy ends the novel a

[250] Caddy explains to Esther that Prince's "health is not strong," and that she helps as much as she can 568.

successful provider, the best of mothers, and energetically healthy "perpetually dancing...as if she had never given a dancing-lesson in her life" (923).

Throughout *Bleak House*, Prince Turveydrop's refusal to adhere to Victorian masculine expectations allows him to be an excellent educator, rather than a ridiculous caricature. In his blend of feminine and masculine-coded pedagogical practices, Prince distinguishes himself as a truly best-practice teacher. He instructs many students in public spaces, and pays careful, kind attention to his neediest pupils. This overlapping gendered performance does take a toll on Prince. However, Caddy's bright future of overlapping domestic and public responsibilities allows even Esther Summerson to acknowledge that feminized work, like teaching, can be both laborious and successfully fulfilling for her fellow women.

Chapter Four

'Perhaps I could attend more': *Great Expectations,* Bildungsroman, and Inversion

The very first pages of Dickens's 1861 novel *Great Expectations* are full of informal learning. Pip begins his narrative by recounting his first childish attempts at self-teaching using his parents' tombstones as instructional resources. He examines the letters on his father's tombstone and "unreasonably derive[s]" that his father "was a square, stout, dark man, with curly black hair" while his mother, based on her inscription, "was freckled and sickly."[251] Pip represents his first real memory as an educational one; a discovery characterizing his own desolate and empty place in the world: that his parents and younger siblings are all dead, that his home is a "bleak place," a "dark flat wilderness," and that he is but "a bundle of shivers" sitting amongst it all (1-2). Soon after Pip's discovery on the marshes, he encounters Magwitch, an escaped convict, who becomes the novel's first educator. He dangles little Pip over the headstones in the churchyard and threatens to cut out his heart and liver if the boy does not steal a file and "wittles" for him; a lesson that children are helpless and must do desperate things to protect themselves (3-4). Pip responds: "If you would kindly please to let me keep upright, sir, perhaps I shouldn't be sick, and perhaps I could attend more" (4). In effect, Pip is pleading for better learning conditions. He is aspirational; if his environment were more favorable, "perhaps" he could be a more attentive, engaged learner. Pip's is a fitting introduction to a novel as much about self-discovery and informal education as *A Christmas Carol* is. However, Pip's earliest, bleak discovery about the "identity of things" indicates a tragedy, an "inverted fairy tale," as Harry Stone so famously calls

[251] Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations,* Bantam Classics Edition, (New York: Bantam Dell, 2003) 1. All further citations will come from this edition and be cited in text.

it, rather than Scrooge's triumphant reclamation.[252] Pip's circumstances, and his appeal forecast the novel's ultimate tragedy. Unlike Dickens's earlier championing of informal educational settings, *Great Expectations* hints that all education, not just formalized schooling, can be polluted, disrupted, or distorted. While it is not uncommon to study *Great Expectations* as a version of the popular nineteenth century Bildungsroman, in the following chapter I suggest that by reading the events in the novel through the dual frameworks of informal education and the Bildungsroman, Pip's life-long education becomes a warning against popular Victorian philosophies promoting self-help as a solution to mass social crises.[253]

Florian Schweizer conclusively states that a "universally accepted definition of the term Bildungsroman…does not exist."[254] However, for the sake of my later argument, some tracing of the generic debates surrounding the Bildungsroman is fruitful. The Bildungsroman traditionally follows one character's identity formation as they face social, religious, philosophical, or practical obstacles over the course of their maturation. Sarah Graham explains that Bildungsroman narratives as we know them today "offer[] privileged access to the psychological development of a central character whose sense of self is in flux, paralleling personal concerns with prevailing values."[255] The Oxford English Dictionary's entry for "Bildungsroman" states

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[252] Harry Stone, *Dickens and the Invisible World: Fairy Tales, Fantasy, and Novel-Making,* (London: The Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1980), 299.

[253] Many scholars have studied *Great Expectations* as part of the Bildungsroman genre. The following are a selection of useful examples that by no means represent all the scholarship done on this topic: John H. Hagan, Jr.'s "The Poor Labyrinth: The Theme of Social Injustice in Dickens's *Great Expectations*" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 9, no. 3 (1954): 169-178; Florian Schweizer's "The Bildungsroman" in *Charles Dickens in Context* edited by Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 140-147; Julia Prewitt Brown's "The Moral Scope of the English *Bildungsroman*" in *The Oxford Handbook of the Victorian Novel* edited by Lisa Rodensky (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 663-679; Aleksander Stevic's "Fatal Extraction: Dickensian Bildungsroman and the Logic of Dependency" *Dickens Studies Annual* 45, no. 1 (2014): 63-94; and finally, Richard Salmon's "The Bildungsroman and Nineteenth-Century British Fiction" in *The History of the Bildungsroman* edited by Sarah Graham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019) 57-83.

[254] Florian Schweizer, "The Bildungsroman," in *Charles Dickens in Context* edited by Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 140.

[255] Sarah Graham, "Introduction," in *The History of the Bildungsroman* edited by Sarah Graham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019) 1-9; 1.

that it is "a novel that has at its main theme the formative years or spiritual education of one person."[256] "Bildungsroman," according to the OED, comes from the two German words "bildung," meaning "education," and "roman," or "novel."[257] The Bildungsroman originated in Germany, and some scholars claim that the only true Bildungsromane are German. However, the OED's translations are an argument for claiming the Bildungsroman as a European genre, rather than a uniquely German one. In its translation of "bildung" as "education," rather than "development," the OED asserts that educational experiences are varied and can be formal or informal and reminds readers of the Bildungsroman's traditional reliance on a blend of educational experiences.[258]

It is widely accepted that the first Bildungsromane were written during the German Enlightenment with most scholars identifying Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Lehjahre (Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship,* 1795-6) as the first true Bildungsroman, or a "novel of formation" or "novel of development."[259] As the father of the genre, a select few assert that only novels that exemplify Goethe's conception of "Bildung" can be labeled Bildungsromane. They hold that only novels of the German Enlightenment which detail the

[256] "Bildungsroman, n." OED online. March 2020. Oxford University Press. https://www-oed-com.exproxy.lib.vt.edu/view/Entry/18946?redirectedFrom+bildungsroman& (accessed April 3, 2020).
[257] Ibid.
[258] For example, the widely-acknowledged "first" Bildungsroman, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Lehjahre* or *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, is a story describing Wilhelm Meister's choice to abandon his family's business and to travel, join an acting troupe, and eventually learn that his life is an apprenticeship, to an extent. The novel combines real analysis of formal learning moments with equally relevant informal ones so that Meister's disillusionment over his first love is just as important in his educational adventure as his formal apprenticeships. This assessment comes from Todd Kontje's "The German Tradition of the Bildungsroman" in *The History of the Bildungsroman* edited by Sarah Graham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019) 10-32.
[259] Sarah Graham does note that there is debate on this subject. Other scholars contend that Christoph Martin Wieland's *Geschichte des Agathon* or *The Story of Agathon* written in 1766-7 was the first Bildungsroman. "Introduction," 2-3. Tobias Boes, as well as Marianne Hirsh both translate "Bildungsroman" as "Novel of Formation" or "Novel of Development" to set the Bildungsroman apart from the Erziehungsroman. Marianne Hirsh "The Novel of Formation as Genre: Between *Great Expectations* and *Lost Illusions*" in *Genre* 12, no. 3 (1979): 293-311; Tobias Boes *Formative Fictions: Nationalism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Bildungsroman* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press and Cornell University Library, 2012).

"growth" of a single hero from immaturity to maturity and "the intense philosophical debates" particular to the German enlightenment are the true Bildungsromane.[260] "Bildung" must recall "the German tradition of self-cultivation wherein philosophical and educational principles unite to refer to a process of both personal and cultural maturation;" in other words, true "Bildung" must involve a single German hero whose personal growth and development are reflected in his novel's German culture.[261] Julia Kuehn explains that the relationship between the growing Bildungsroman hero and his society leads to "a process of harmonizing the individual's mind and emotions [with]…a broader social context," a process that cannot happen without some "crisis."[262] German adaptations of the Bildungsroman allow for two sub-genres: the "Erziehungsroman" specifically translated as "the novel of education" which "describes works that deal specifically with problems of schooling or education," and the "Entwicklungsroman" which "include[] those representatives of the genre that, though conscious of Goethe, depart from specific Goethean norms…and incorporate[] as well the more specific Bildungsromane."[263]

However, the Bildungsroman's key elements are ingrained in the literary traditions of many nations and eras, with many scholars arguing that a "parallel cross-cultural generic formation, rather than a direct lineage of cultural transmission" would better explain the origins of the "novel of formation."[264] Most scholars accept that the genre includes novels from Europe,

[260] Ibid., 3.
[261] Julia Kuehn, "*David Copperfield* and the Tradition of the Bildungsroman," *Dickens Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (2018): 25-46; 26.
[262] Kuehn, "*David Copperfield* and the Tradition of the Bildungsroman," 26.
[263] Marianne Hirsch clarifies these definitions in her "The Novel of Formation as Genre: Between *Great Expectations* and *Lost Illusions*" in *Genre* 12, no. 3 (1979): 293-311.
[264] Graham, "Introduction," 1-5.; Richard Salmon, "The Bildungsroman and Nineteenth-Century British Fiction" in *A History of the Bildungsroman* edited by Sarah Graham, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019) 57-83; 57. Salmon cites Franco Moretti here, which I unfortunately could not access. Please see footnote 15 for an explanation.

America, Russia, and various nations and traditions.[265] Mikhail Bakhtin locates the origins of the Bildungsroman in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, but leaves the tradition open so that many novels written after this time period can be classified as Bildungsromane. Bakhtin argues that a novel need only be "constructed on the idea of testing a hero," in order to be a Bildungsroman, and that it can be influenced by global "biographical and especially…educational novel[s] to arrive at the same classification."[266] Tobias Boes similarly argues that from the Bildungsroman's birth, the genre is "cosmopolitan" and "globaliz[ed]."[267]

Studies of nineteenth-century British Bildungsromane agree that in addition to exploring themes of identity formation, personal growth, and education, Victorian Bildungsromane are particularly concerned with moral development.[268] Julia Prewitt Brown asserts that "what

[265] Sarah Graham's *A History of the Bildungsroman* includes chapters on the genre's impact in France, England, America, and Soviet Russia. The Bildungsroman is also commonly taught as merely a generic type, not tied to a nation or to a group of people, meaning that many novels can be legitimately interpreted as part of the Bildungsroman tradition, even if they were not written during the German Enlightenment. Tobias Boes makes this argument in his book *Formative Fictions: Nationalism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Bildungsroman* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press and Cornell University Library, 2012). An important scholarly study missing from this critical conversation is Franco Moretti's 1987 *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*. Due to the important social distancing guidelines in place during the COVID-19 outbreak, I was unable to order this volume from Virginia Techs Interlibrary Loan system, and the library was unable to obtain an ebook copy for my research. Moretti's study is consistently cited by other important scholars. It is quite possible that my research or central argument would have been affected by reading Moretti's work. I plan to do so in the future, and will cite his work as it is relevant to my research in a later draft of this project.

[266] Mikhail Bakhtin, "The Bildungsroman and its Significance in the History of Realism" in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist; translated by Vern W. McGee (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1986) 10-59; 16-21.

[267] Boes *Formative Fictions: Nationalism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Bildungsroman* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press and Cornell University Library, 2012) 1-4.

[268] The following scholarly works take for granted that Victorian, and especially Dickensian, Bildungsromane are particularly concerned with their heroes' moral development: Elisabeth Jay, "'Be sure and remember the rabbits': Memory as Moral Force in the Victorian *Bildungsroman*" in *Literature and Theology* 24, no. 4 (2010): 360-377; Florian Scheweizer "The Bildungsroman" in *Charles Dickens in Context* edited by Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 140-147; Julia Prewitt Brown "The Moral Scope of the English *Bildungsroman*" in *The Oxford Handbook of the Victorian Novel* edited by Lisa Rodensky, Chapter printed from the 2018 online edition (Oxford: Oxford University Handbooks Online, 2013) 1-17; Julia Kuehn "*David Copperfield* and the Tradition of the Bildungsroman" *Dickens Quarterly*, 35, no. 1 (2018): 25-46; Petru Golban and Tamer Karabakir "The Bildungsroman as Monomythic Fictional Discourse: Identity Formation and Assertion in *Great Expectations*" *Humanitas* 7, no. 14 (2019): 318-336; and Richard Salmon "The Bildungsroman and Nineteenth-Century British Fiction" in *A History of the Bildungsroman* edited by Sarah Graham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019) 57-83.

distinguishes the Victorian or 19th-century *Bildungsroman* from the French and German is its overriding ethical concern, its preoccupation with questions of *conduct* as distinct from questions of personal feeling or romance."[269] As the OED's definition also suggests, the specifically English Bildungsroman is education-focused. Connections between education and morality highlight how difficult it is for an individual to resist a greater "educating" system. Sometimes, Victorian Bildungsromane assert the character's moral obligation to *resist* powerful structural forces, as in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, where Jane must rebel against her abusive and insular family-by-adoption, the harmful, pseudo-religious boarding school she is sent to, and against a misogynistic social system which requires her to choose between comfort and happiness or morality and misery. Other texts, like Dickens's *David Copperfield,* illustrate a character's moral journey as they *assimilate* into a greater social system. Both novels chronicle an individual's relationship with structure; they handle the convergence of morality and society in one person's educational quest for identity.

Just as importantly, however, is the Victorian Bildungsroman's potential for instruction or education outside the world of the novel, in other words, the Victorian Bildungsroman's potential for educating readers. Brown explains that the Victorian Bildungsroman has an "instructional element" that allows it to adapt fairy-tale traditions of the past and converse with "modern social real[ist]" novels of the future.[270] The nineteenth century British Bildungsroman, then, is uniquely positioned as a generic form that combines instructional, self-help style manuals, as Richard Salmon has noticed, with artistic, character-interested fiction.[271]

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[269] Julia Prewitt Brown, "The Moral Scope of the English Bildungsroman" in *The Oxford Handbook of the Victorian Novel* edited by Lisa Rodensky, Oxford Handbooks Online Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Oxford Handbooks Online, 2013) 4. All emphasis original to Brown's text.
[270] Julia Prewitt Brown, "The Moral Scope of the English Bildungsroman," 2-3.
[271] Richard Salmon, "The Bildungsroman and Nineteenth-Century British Fiction" in *A History of the Bildungsroman* edited by Sarah Graham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019) 66-67.

In the previous chapters I have demonstrated that in his fiction, Charles Dickens was dedicated to questioning popular educational philosophies, like those found in self-help manuals. While Florian Schweizer points out that Dickens "was not particularly interested in adapting Goethe's model" of a traditional Bildungsroman novel, his *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations* are almost universally acknowledged as some of "the most representative bildungsroman[e]."[272] While he may not have read *Wilhelm Meister,* or been interested in the Bildungsroman's German heritage, he was influenced by "the English incarnation of the formational novel," specifically early nineteenth century Bildungsromane like "Lewes's *Ranthorpe* (1847) and Thackeray's *Pendennis* (1848)."[273] It was the tradition, then, that Dickens explored and adapted in his fiction.

Many claims have been made that Dickens's *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations* coincide with definitions of the Bildungsroman as a "novel of formation" and specifically adheres to the Bildungsroman requirements Marianne Hirsch outlines.[274] Hirsch's theoretical framework is intended for a "European" rather than a "purely German genre," and references Mikhail Bakhtin's earlier guidelines for the Bildungsroman genre.[275] According to Hirsch, the "novel of formation" must:

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[272] Florian Schweizer, "The Bildungsroman" in *Charles Dickens in Context* edited by Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 140. The second quotation comes from Victor Xavier Zarour Zarzar's "Authoring Desire: *Great Expectations* and the *Bildungsroman"* in *Dickens Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (2019): 347-361; 347.
[273] Schweizer "The Bildungsroman," 143.
[274] Marianne Hirsh lays out seven main requirements which her "novel of formation" must meet to be considered part of the genre. Please note, in Hirsh's 1979 article, she is attempting to redefine Bildungsroman in order to classify more European novels as "formation novels"—akin to Bildungsromane and definitely derived from the German Enlightenment tradition. Hirsh's argument submits to other arguments that no true Bildungsroman can come from literary traditions outside the German Enlightenment period. However, since her article was published in 1979, the definition of Bildungsroman has been expanded in several important ways to allow for broader generic classifications within the genre. While I respect Hirsch's intent, I am liberally applying Hirsh's framework to Dickens's two Bildungsroman novels, *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations* in order to establish clear generic guidelines not separate from the Bildungsroman tradition, but as derived from and part of it. Hirsch, "The Novel of Formation as Genre: Between *Great Expectations* and *Lost Illusions*," *Genre*, 12, no. 3 (1979).
[275] Ibid.

1. "focus on one central character's…growth and development within the context of a defined social order"

2. analyze both "*biographical* and *social*" consequences of the hero's development

3. adhere to a "version of the quest story" in plot necessitating a "*linear chronological plot*" in which "growth is a *gradual process*" and "necessitates errors and the pursuit of false leads"

4. only provide details concerning the hero's "development of selfhood" during his/her life; "this type of novel is a *story of apprenticeship* and not a full biography" but will "end[] with [an] *assessment of himself and his place in society*"

5. express "*irony* toward the inexperienced protagonist, rather than nostalgia for youth"

6. contain "other characters" which can be mainly classified into three sets: "*educators* [who] serve as mediators and interpreters between the two confronting forces of self and society," "*companions* [who] serve as reflectors on the protagonist, standing for alternative goals and achievements" and "*lovers* [who] provide the opportunity for the education of sentiment"

7. be "conceived as a *didactic* novel, one which educates the reader by portraying the education of the protagonist"[276]

I have chosen to apply Hirsch's theoretical framework to Dickens's *Great Expectations* not to simplify Dickens's work or to reduce it to a set of conventional standards, or even to claim that the novel conforms completely to her framework, but to establish a dialogue with this conception of the "novel of formation." In my analysis of *Great Expectations*, I assert that Pip's journey resembles Hirsch's "novel of formation," but only partly. Pip's story requires two educational

[276] Ibid. All emphases are true to Hirsch's article.

journeys: the first a more typical Bildungsroman plot which largely adheres to Hirsch's model, followed by a second, inverted narrative in which Pip must unlearn his lessons. Pip's story follows a typical Bildungsroman pattern until he learns that Magwitch, a convict whom he encounters as a child on the marshes, and not the wealthy Miss Havisham, is his benefactor. This knowledge propels Pip into a state of unlearning. His second narrative subverts bildungsroman expectations and directs reader attention specifically to education as counter to formation rather than synonymous with it.

Pip's first "bildung" follows Hirsch's "novel of formation" model, and Bakhtin's analysis of "biographical" novels in which "emergence takes place in biographical time, and it passes through unrepeatable, individual stages."[277] In this "linear, chronological plot," Pip is brought up "by hand," apprenticed to Joe, falls in love with Estella, bequeathed "great expectations," and becomes a "London gentleman" (6; 146; 342). Pip's early comrades and acquaintances fall neatly into Hirsch's categories of "educators," "companions," and "lovers." He overcomes tests, sacrifices youthful fantasies, and, most importantly, learns lessons which help him achieve the mature goal of integrating into Victorian society. Notably, Pip's lessons appear to advance ideologies like Samuel Smiles's self-help philosophy, which states that hard work and self-education can turn any man, regardless of class or station, into a "true gentleman."[278] Pip's early narrative prioritizes the "bildung" tradition as it aligns with Victorian philosophies and socio-cultural movements.

While it takes many lessons on several subjects for Pip to become a London gentleman, the following reading will focus closely on Pip's education on class. Pip's beliefs about social

[277] Bakhtin, "The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism: Toward a Historical Typology of the Novel," 22.
[278] Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help,* Astounding Stories reprinted edition (Columbia, SC: Astounding Stories, 2017) 133.

mobility are directly influenced by informal systems of education. Furthermore, it is easy to trace these lessons in Pip's first "bildung" and to watch him actively unlearn these lessons in his second narrative. Pip's family is part of the working class. He begins life in "the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea" under care of his sister and her husband, the blacksmith (1). Working class status does not mean that Pip's childhood was an unequivocally bad one, though he does suffer physical and emotional abuse at the hands of his "rampaging" sister (7). Pip has a comrade and friend in his brother-in-law, Joe Gargery, who does his best to protect Pip from abuse. Pip says of Joe "I always treated him as a larger species of child, and as no more than my equal" (7). Despite the regular beatings Pip undergoes, as a young child he looks forward to being apprenticed to Joe and to learning how to be a blacksmith. He writes to Joe "wEn i M preNgtD 2 u JO woT larx" *(when I'm apprenticed to you, Jo, what larks)* (46).

Pip learns to write at a dame school, a school for working-class children which was common until the 1850s.[279] Christopher Martin depicts a typical dame school thus:

> An elderly woman took children into her cottage, taught knitting and 'half-taught' them to read, still using the age-old hornbook with the 'cross row'. All the equipment needed, it was said, was a notice saying 'Children taught to read and work here', a rod to beat them and a corner in which to stand the dunce.[280]

Pip's experience is very similar to the one Martin describes:

> Mr. Wopsle's great-aunt kept an evening school in the village; that is to say, she was a ridiculous old woman of limited means and unlimited infirmity who used to go to sleep from six to seven every evening in the society of youth who paid twopence per week each for the improving opportunity of seeing her do it. …There was a fiction that Mr. Wopsle 'examined' the scholars once a quarter. What he did on those occasions was to turn up his cuffs, stick up his hair, and give us Mark Antony's oration over the body of Caesar. This

[279] David Paroissien calls Pip's experience typical according to the 1858 Royal Commission on Education's reports on Dame Schools. See David Paroissien, *The Companion to 'Great Expectations'* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000) 108.
[280] Christopher Martin, *A Short History of English Schools, 1750-1965*, 8.

> was always followed by Collins's Ode on the Passions, wherein I particularly venerated Mr. Wopsle as Revenge… (45)

Pip's attempts to learn under Mr. Wopsle's great-aunt are difficult. He states that he "struggled through the alphabet as if it had been a bramble bush" and that learning sums was like "f[alling] among those thieves, the nine figures, who seemed every evening to do something new to disguise themselves and baffle recognition" (45-46). However, thanks to help from Biddy, another orphaned child and "Mr. Wopsle's great-aunt's grand-daughter" Pip does begin "in a purblind groping way, to read, write, and cipher on the very smallest scale" (45; 46). Pip is proud of both these accomplishments and of his friend, Joe as a young child.

According to typical Bildungsroman tradition, though, Pip soon learns to look down on Biddy and Joe, characterizing them as what Hirsch calls "companions" rather than "educators."[281] Though Pip faces trials in his sister's home, his first real education, or development, occurs at Satis House. There, Estella and Miss Havisham teach Pip to see himself differently; to view his past accomplishments with "*irony*" towards himself as an "inexperienced" individual.[282] Miss Havisham is established immediately as an "educator" rather than as a "companion" in relation to little Pip. Hirsch explains that while companions "serve as reflectors on the protagonist, standing for alternative goals and achievements," educators "serve as mediators and interpreters between the two confronting forces of self and society."[283] In the early narrative, Joe is positioned as an equal to Pip, and needing an education.[284] Biddy, too, is positioned as a "reflector" for Pip, as another orphan in similar circumstances who, despite her

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[281] Hirsch, "The Novel of Formation as Genre: Between *Great Expectations* and *Lost Illusions*," 16.
[282] Ibid.
[283] Ibid.
[284] See page 46 of *Great Expectations*. In his letter to Joe, Pip looks forward both to a time when he will be apprenticed to Joe, and to a time when Pip "shAl soN B haBelL 4 2 TeeDge…Jo" (*shall soon be able for to teach…Joe)*.

ability to "help" Pip learn to read, is discredited as an interpreter or mediator. Pip describes Biddy as "like [him]self" and as "most noticeable…in respect of her extremities; for her hair always wanted brushing, her hands always wanted washing, and her shoes always wanted mending and pulling up at heel" (45). Pip never sees Joe or Biddy as potential educators because of their similarity to himself. Miss Havisham, though, is immediately distinguished from his circle of companions. In contrast to Mr. Wopsle's great-aunt who is "ridiculous," "infirm," and has "limited means," Miss Havisham is "an immensely rich and grim lady who lived in a large and dismal house barricaded against robbers, and who led a life of seclusion" (52-53). She lives "up town," and not in their little village out on the marshes (52). When Pip is selected to "go and play" at her house, this requires a departure from his old life, and introduction to a new station and class (54). He must "part[]" from people considered companions in order to receive an informal education with Miss Havisham, represented in a formal scene that clearly delineates a "scrubbing out" of Pip's old values (54). Mrs. Joe washes the little boy so that he enters this new stage of life like a clean slate, totally ready to learn new lessons:

> 'And Lor-a-mussy me!' cried my sister… 'here I stand talking to mere moon-calfs, with Uncle Pumblechook waiting…and the boy grimed with crock and dirt from the hair of his head to the sole of his foot!'
>
> With that, she pounced on me, like an eagle on a lamb, and my face was squeezed into wooden bowls in sinks, and head was put under taps of water-butts, and I was soaped, and kneaded, and towelled, and thumped, and harrowed, and rasped, until I really was quite beside myself. …
>
> When my ablutions were completed, I was put into clean linen of the stiffest character, like a young penitent into sackcloth, and was trussed up in my tightest and fearfullest suit (53-54).

In true Bildungsroman fashion, Pip begins his move from "immaturity" to "maturity" by "travel[ing] from the provinces to the big city," born into this new stage of life.[285] The washing with Mrs. Joe is a formal acknowledgement that his new learning process is beginning. Pip's

[285] Brown, "The Moral Scope of the English *Bildungsroman*," 2.

"crock and dirt," is washed away. More significantly, Pip is "squeezed," "kneaded," and "towelled" into a new world, so that physically this new stage is very like a birth. Pip's old life with the Gargerys, then, was a liminal one, in which Pip's "development" could be taken for granted. Like an embryo that cannot control or participate in its growth process before birth, Pip had no choice but to acquire his limited literacy skills or form bonds with proximate companions. Now that he has begun life, Pip's education becomes more significant, more mature. He is "thumped" into a new existence, and, like a new-born, cries as he parts from his old, comfortable surroundings.

Miss Havisham, then, becomes Pip's first real educator. He allows her to interpret and mediate his world in totally new ways. Sharon Marcus famously acknowledges Miss Havisham's ability to educate Pip. Marcus argues that Miss Havisham first teaches Pip about sexual desire: Miss Havisham models desire so that Pip "wants to win the prized object [Estella, Miss Havisham's adopted daughter] away from Miss Havisham…and to win Miss Havisham's attentions away from Estella."[286] However, I would add that Miss Havisham and Estella teach Pip lessons on many subjects, sexual desire being only one of them. Miss Havisham's prize pupil is Estella, a fact that Estella acknowledges later in the novel: she asks her mother by adoption, "'who praised me when I learnt my lessons?'" (325). Jerome Meckier additionally describes Estella as "apprentic[ed]" to Miss Havisham, who "teach[es] [her] the art of breaking men's hearts."[287] However, Pip is educated alongside Estella. In his first visit to Satis House, Pip learns to identify working-class identifiers while he and Estella play cards:

> 'He calls the knaves, jacks, this boy!' said Estella with disdain, before our first game was out. 'And what coarse hands he has! And what thick boots!'

[286] Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007) 169.
[287] Jerome Meckier, "Apprentices and Apprenticeship in *Great Expectations*" *Dickens Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (2016): 102-108; 102.

> I had never thought of being ashamed of my hands before; but I began to consider them a very indifferent pair. Her contempt for me was so strong that it became infectious, and I caught it.
>
> She won the game, and I dealt. I misdealt, as was only natural, when I knew she was lying in wait for me to do wrong; and she denounced me for a stupid, clumsy laboring-boy. (62)

While Pip describes Estella's language as merely "infectious," unintentionally teaching disdain for working-class hands, Pip's learned bias is strategically reinforced by both Estella and Miss Havisham at Satis House. Upon hearing Estella's comments, Miss Havisham does not correct her daughter, but instead asks that Pip demonstrate what *he* is learning: "'You say nothing of her,' remarked Miss Havisham to me, as she looked on. 'She says many hard things of you…What do you think of her?'" (62). It is important to Miss Havisham that Pip respond as an open-minded student. She needs to know that he can learn the lessons she has in store for him. Pip responds: "I think she is very proud…I think she is very pretty…I think she is very insulting…I think I should like to go home" (62-63). Miss Havisham asks that Pip clarify these answers: "And never see her again, though she is so pretty?" to which Pip responds, "I am not sure that I shouldn't like to see her again" (63). Pip's answer indicates he could make a good pupil at Satis House; he wants to see Estella again, and views another encounter with her as an incentive for learning.

Pip further proves his suitability to the school at Satis House by describing his internal learning process. Upon leaving Miss Havisham's room, Pip explains:

> I took the opportunity of being alone in the court-yard to look at my coarse hands and my common boots. My opinion of those accessories was not favourable. They had never troubled me before, but they troubled me now, as vulgar appendages. I determined to ask Joe why he had ever taught me to call those picture-cards jacks which ought to be called knaves. I wished Joe had been rather more genteelly brought up, and then I should have been so, too.

Though Pip calls Joe a teacher, someone who "taught" him to "call those picture-cards jacks," Pip is really engaged in Miss Havisham's lessons here. He is thinking critically and has learned

to re-assess his own body. Pip's "accessories" are more than hands and boots after his lesson; they are "coarse hands" and "common boots," which mark him as part of the "laboring" class. For the first time, Pip calls his life with Joe into question and wishes that they both had "genteel" vocabulary and habits.

Pip has an emotional reaction to his learning, too. He "got behind one of the gates in the brewery-lane, and leaned [his] sleeve against the wall there, and leaned [his] forehead on it and cried…kicked the wall, and took a hard twist at [his] hair" (64). While Pip believes these expressions of feeling were private, he learns later that Estella witnessed them. She explains that she knows he has "been crying till [he is] half blind" as he prepares to leave Satis House (66).

Estella and Miss Havisham approve of Pip and chose him over other candidates to continue lessons there. Pip discovers later that there was competition for his position. Miss Havisham considered Herbert Pocket, her young relative, as a potential pupil, and a subject for Estella to practice on. Herbert tells Pip after they become friends in London:

> "Miss Havisham had sent for me, to see if she could take a fancy to me. But she couldn't—at all events, she didn't. …Yes, she had sent for me on a trial visit, and if I had come out of it successfully, I suppose I should have been provided for" (184).

Pip even encounters Herbert at Satis House as a child, though he did not know Herbert then or understand his purpose there. However, this encounter confirms that at least one other boy was considered before Miss Havisham selected Pip as the permanent fixture in the house. When Pip reacts emotionally to Estella's manipulative treatment, he demonstrates his own teachability. He establishes himself as the pupil Miss Havisham will have the most successful influence over.

Miss Havisham proves right. Her first lesson withstands his trip home. One of Pip's first interactions there is to destabilize Joe's uncle, Uncle Pumblechook, from the position of educator. While Pip never respected him, Pumblechook was nevertheless consistently presented

to Pip as a credible teacher. Before his visit to Satis House, Uncle Pumblechook lectured and quizzed Pip, directing him to "be grateful…to them which brought [him] up by hand" and asking him to repeat his pence tables (25; 56). While Pip *internally* rejected Pumblechook's ineffectual "lessons" at Christmas and cannot participate in Pumblechook's "conversation consist[ing] of nothing but arithmetic," he never openly defies him (56). Before visiting Miss Havisham, Pip remained silent during Pumblechook's lectures or attempted to answer his questions correctly. After his visit, Pip answers Pumblechook incorrectly, intentionally aggravating him. Pip states "it was highly gratifying to me to see that [my] answer spoilt his joke and brought him to a dead stop" (69). Pip declares himself Miss Havisham's pupil by becoming unteachable at home. Before his visit to Satis House, Pip avoided doing anything that might result in physical punishment.[288] After establishing that Miss Havisham as his chosen teacher, physical punishment cannot reinstate either Mrs. Joe or Pumblechook as his instructors. Pip states that "though [his] sister instantly boxed [his] ears" after he gives intentionally incorrect answers to Pumblechook's questions, his stubborn refusals remain "highly gratifying," worth the punishments (69). Pip's open rebellion continues with a series of lies about his experiences at Miss Havisham's. He creates a fantastic tale involving a "black velvet coach," a game with "flags" and "swords," and dogs eating "veal cutlets" (69-72). Pip's "naughty" behavior towards Mrs. Joe and Pumblechook destabilize their places as his potential educators.

The life Pip experiences at home with Mrs. Joe or in the company of Pumblechook appears common after Miss Havisham and Estella model a genteel alternative. Pip's resolve to become a gentleman begins on the day that Miss Havisham teaches him to look disdainfully on

[288] As a telling example of Pip's attempts to avoid punishment, see pages 12-13 the linguistic acrobatics Pip attempts to *both* get his questions about the "great guns" on the marshes, and to avoid inciting Mrs. Joe to the point of physical abuse.

his working-class roots, including Joe's earnest, working-class morality. In addition to dismissing Pumblechook and his sister, Pip formally rejects Joe as an educator after returning home from Satis House. At first, Pip is "overtaken by penitence" when he tells Joe his story involving flags, dogs, and swords at Miss Havisham's (72). As Joe "open[s] his blue eyes and roll[s] them all round the kitchen in hopeless amazement" at Pip's tale, Pip "consider[s] [him]self a young monster" (72). Pip regrets the lies because Joe is a friend, while "the other two" abuse and belittle Pip (72). He confesses his lies to Joe, and also confesses his new ambitions that he "wished [he] was not common" and that he could impress "a beautiful young lady at Miss Havisham's" (73). Joe takes the opportunity to "teach" Pip Victorian lessons on Christian morality. Joe explains:

> "There's one thing you may be sure of…namely, that lies is lies. Howsever they come, they didn't ought to come, and they come from the father of lies, and work round to the same. Don't you tell no more of 'em, Pip. *That* ain't the way to get out of being common, old chap. And as to being common, I don't make it out at all clear. You are oncommon in some things. You're oncommon small. Likewise you're an oncommon scholar" (73).

Victorian readers would have recognized and approved of Joe's sentiments regarding lying, and Pip notably does not openly reject these moral sentiments. However, Joe cannot tell Pip "the way to get out of being common." He discourages Pip's ambitions, hinting "whether common ones…mightn't be the better of continuing for to keep company with common ones, instead of going out to play with oncommon ones" and advises that Pip work hard and try to advance in life by "going straight" (74). This advice tallies with that of the nineteenth century philosopher Samuel Smiles who endorses the saying "Heaven helps those who help themselves" in the first chapter of his book, *Self Help*.[289]

[289] Smiles, *Self Help*, 9.

Neither Joe nor Smiles have useful advice for individuals like Pip, who are "miserable" at the thought of continuing in their working-class stations forever (73). Pip's responds to Joe's lecture with: "No, I am ignorant and backward…I have learnt next to nothing, Joe. You think much of me. It's only that" (73). Pip expresses his desire to *learn* as a way of becoming "uncommon," but Joe has no practical lesson for him. His love for Pip is not enough. In *A Christmas Carol*, the Ghost of Christmas Present warns Scrooge, and mankind, against the parasitic children Ignorance and Want. Young Pip identifies the same burdensome entities as hindering his own development, but Victorian morality provides no help in overcoming these barriers to success. Jerome Meckier agrees that *Great Expectations* is Dickens's argument against Samuel Smiles's ineffective self-help gospel.[290] Pip's "bildung" dictates that the morality and hard work Victorian society revered are part of the challenges Pip must defeat. Pip must supplant Joe's well-intentioned instruction to achieve the development required in a Bildungsroman.

Miss Havisham's lessons seem to offer practical answers to Pip's questions. If he follows her instructions, Pip will gain knowledge and defeat his own ignorance. Miss Havisham may also help him satisfy his wants. Mrs. Joe, Pumblechook, and Joe all "had no doubt that Miss Havisham would 'do something' for [Pip]" in exchange for playing at Satis House (72). As early as Pip's very first visit, Pip's family speculates that she will leave him "property" or that she will assist his social climb by providing a "handsome premium for binding [him] to some genteel trade" (72). Pip learns that, despite what Joe says, social connections provide a way of bypassing hard work and achieving upward mobility. Aleksander Stević remarks that for Dickens, "benefactors are a singularly efficient device for evading the actual dynamics of social mobility,"

[290] Jerome Meckier, "*Great Expectations* and *Self-Help*: Dickens Frowns on Smiles" *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology 100, no. 4 (2001): 537-554.*

confirming that informal instruction seems to help Pip achieve his goals while formal educational opportunities limit him.[291] In a decisive moment, Pip decides to invest all his energy in informal systems of education with the hope of achieving the social refinement he desires. Pip explains that the day of his first visit to Miss Havisham's "was…memorable…for it made great changes in me" (75). He resolves to become "uncommon" in whatever way he can, and to look outside formalized or accepted systems to do it. Dismissing the village school, Pip formally asks Biddy to "impart all her learning to [him]" in order that he might "get on in life" (76). Even after ending his frequent visits to Satis House and officially binding himself to Joe as apprentice, Pip spends his "birthday guineas" on books or other educational tools which he hopes will help him "be a gentleman" (133; 135). The lessons at Satis House are so lasting that Pip remains "ashamed of home" and life at the forge (132). He believes his working-class "ignorance" is a trial that must be overcome, telling Biddy "'I am not at all happy as I am. I am disgusted with my calling and with my life. …I never shall or can be comfortable…unless I can lead a very different sort of life from the life I lead now'" (135).

When Pip is presented with "great expectations," his lessons at Satis House appear to be reinforced: he believes that by maintaining social connections with Miss Havisham and by seeking his own informal educational experiences, his journey up the social ladder is finally beginning (146). Pip's new guardian, Mr. Jaggers, explains "I am instructed to communicate…that [Pip] will come into a handsome property. Further, that it is the desire of the present possessor of the property that he be immediately removed from his present sphere of life and…be brought up as a gentleman" (146). In the communication, Jaggers has been "instructed," perhaps recalling Miss Havisham's position as educator for Pip, because he certainly reads the

[291] Aleksander Stević, "Fatal Extraction: Dickensian Bildungsroman and the Logic of Dependency," *Dickens Studies Annual*, 45 (2014): 63-94; 88.

event as a reward from Miss Havisham. He thinks "My dream was out; my wild fancy was surpassed by sober reality; Miss Havisham was going to make my fortune on a grand scale" (146). Pip believes that his confessions to Miss Havisham about "knowing nothing and wanting to know everything in the hope that she might offer some help towards that desirable end" are finally, and quite literally, paying off (99). According to Mr. Jaggers, his benefactor has "considered that [he] must be better educated," and "mentions" Mr. Matthew Pocket, a "gentleman" Pip remembers learning about at Miss Havisham's (147). The news confirms all of Pip's family's speculations that Miss Havisham will surely "do something" for Pip. A visit to Satis House appears to also confirm that Pip's loyalty to Miss Havisham has led to this next great educational opportunity; that Miss Havisham is his benefactor, and that he has earned his expectations from her. Pip's "bildung" continues, and he leaves his town on the marshes for London.

In London, Pip continues his education. Lessons with Miss Havisham are expanded by new teachers like Matthew Pocket and his son, Herbert. These instructors also operate outside formal educational settings; however they do so at differing degrees. David Paroissien helpfully explains that Matthew Pocket is a "tutor," "providing an alternative…to boarding schools and academies" whose lessons take place in his home (194).[292] Additionally, Master Pocket's lessons are not intended to help Pip participate in any kind of formal profession, merely to help Pip "'hold [his] own' with the average of young men in prosperous circumstances" (206). While Pip does receive formal lessons at Matthew Pocket's house, they are presented to Pip as an alternative to a more formal educational experience.

[292] Paroissien, *The Companion to Great Expectations*, 159.

Herbert Pocket serves as both a companion figure and an educator to Pip. While Pip never respected Biddy and Joe as teachers, he invites Herbert to "give [him] a hint whenever [Herbert] saw [him] at a loss or going wrong" (186). Herbert becomes an educator on "the ways of politeness" for Pip (187). Herbert trains Pip to "not…put the knife in the mouth," to use "the spoon…not…overhand, but under," and to avoid "emptying one's glass, as to turn it bottom upwards with the rim on one's nose" all in one dinner (188-189). Paroissien indicates that Herbert's lessons on manners are also an alternative to more formal instruction. He explains that Pip could have read "conduct manuals like Day's *Hints on Etiquette and The Usages of Society* (1834) and 'how to' books written for 'those who do not know what is proper.'"[293] Instead, Herbert's advice comes as informal training.

Additionally, Herbert provides Pip with important information about Miss Havisham's history, namely that she was abandoned by her lover on her wedding day, and that she adopted and brought up Estella to "wreak revenge on all the male sex" (185). Miss Havisham's history might have been a discouraging one for Pip to hear, except that Herbert follows the story by insinuating that he, too, believes Miss Havisham to be Pip's benefactor. Herbert declares "…as to the condition on which you hold your advancement in life—namely, that you are not to inquire or discuss to whom you owe it—you may be very sure that it will never be encroached upon, or even approached, by me" (191). Pip understands this declaration to mean that Herbert "perfectly understood Miss Havisham to be [his] benefactress" (191). Herbert serves two educational purposes for Pip's London phase. In addition to providing specific, corrective instructions for Pip's manners, Herbert confirms that through advantageous social connections, Pip can become a London gentleman.

[293] Paroissien, *The Companion to Great Expectations*, 196.

Estella both maintains her old role as an assistant in Miss Havisham's lessons, and takes on a new educational position. After Pip lives in London for more than a month, Miss Havisham asks Pip to return to Satis House where she reintroduces him to Estella "so much changed,…so much more beautiful, so much more womanly, in all things winning admiration had made such wonderful advance" (248). In Miss Havisham's company, Estella assures Pip that his "bildung" is progressing nicely, that his expectations have "changed" him, making him "less coarse and common" (249). As a girl, Estella had pointed out Pip's course hands and common vocabulary, identifying working-class markers that Pip should try to grow out of. As a young woman, Estella has returned "from France" where she was educated abroad and has returned "with perfect composure," confirming that Pip has succeeded (249). Estella judged Pip's station as a child and continues to define and affirm Pip's belief in his maturation as an adult.

Estella also becomes what Marianne Hirsche calls a "lover;" someone who "provides the opportunity for the education of sentiment" for the Bildungsroman's hero.[294] Estella, under Miss Havisham's direction, teaches Pip the gentlemanly expectations for courting a young lady. As a child, Estella incentivized Pip's education by allowing him to kiss her cheek, or by behaving familiarly. In her new role, Estella substantiates Pip's belief that Miss Havisham is his benefactor by implying they are betrothed, and that Pip's new education must prepare him to marry her. She "lure[s]" Pip on with statements like "if we are to be thrown much together," and implies that Pip's company and protection are all part of Miss Havisham's ultimate plan for her (251; 287). Under Estella's guidance, Pip learns that gentlemen call on women they admire, that they escort them to "picnics, fete days, plays, operas, concerts, parties," and that they become familiar with the friends and family of their loved ones (320-321).

[294] Hirsch, "The Novel of Formation as Genre: Between *Great Expectations* and *Lost Illusions*," 16.

By Pip's twenty third birthday, he has acquired the superficial habits and mannerisms associated with gentility, and in many respects, has completed his education. Pip has "parted company" with Matthew Pocket, no longer requiring his tutoring in order to enjoy reading "many hours a day" (333). Pip has joined a society called "the Finches of the Grove," a social club for would-be gentlemen that validates his credentials for acceptance in an "exclusive" social set. Pip even begins teaching Herbert some lessons on accounting and wealth management. Although both Pip and Herbert are accumulating debt, Herbert regards Pip as an authority. When the two friends sit down to "look into [their] affairs," Pip helps Herbert create a "memorandum" of his debts (293). He instructs Herbert to "be firm" in his accounting, and teaches him to "leave a margin," or over-estimate a bill if he does not have it on hand (293-294). Instructional roles are reversed, so that Herbert now looks to Pip for advice and counsel. By Pip's twenty third birthday, Pip has apparently achieved the goal of a Bildungsroman: he has been delivered from his working-class roots and is established in high society.

While Pip's first narrative mostly aligns with Hirsch's and Bakhtin's Bildungsroman, there are some indications that the genre will be subverted. Pip's mature narration is one such hint. The narrator's confessional tone provides readers with information about Pip's inner life, allowing us to witness his perpetual guilt and emotional turmoil in ways that the young Pip does not fully acknowledge. The more experienced narrator knows, for instance, that his first visit to Miss Havisham's has dire consequences that his young self knows nothing about. In a stylistic move similar to the narrator in *A Christmas Carol*, Pip addresses the reader after his first lesson at Miss Havisham's:

> Imagine one selected day struck out of [any life], and think how different its course would have been. Pause you who read this, and think for a moment of the long chain of iron or gold, of thorns or flowers, that would never have bound you, but for the formation of the first link on one memorable day (107).

Pip is learning lessons with Miss Havisham, but here his future self hints that those lessons may be thorny ones. Like the chain that Jacob Marley must carry in death, the experienced Pip hints that his young self begins forging shackles by rejecting Joe's instructions and turning to Miss Havisham for guidance.

Some scholars take the narrator's retrospective outlook as a reason for reading all of Pip's tale as an inverted Bildungsroman.[295] I agree with scholars like Jerome Meckier, Victor Xavier Zarour Zarzar, Margaret J-M Sönmez, and Julia Prewitt Brown who assert that Pip's narrative departs from the traditional Bildungsroman so that it can no longer be classified as an exemplar of the traditional genre.[296] However, I see the narrative as broken into two parts, rather than continuing in a single downward spiral. Pip's story begins by adhering to the formula of a typical educational novel, and then takes a decided turn. *Great Expectations* requires that Pip actively *unlearn* his lessons. Two formalistic components in *Great Expectations*' second act are uncharacteristic of the typical Bildungsroman progress narrative. First, Pip's developmental process is *begun anew* rather than *resumed* after Pip learns that Magwitch is his benefactor. Second, Pip's narration becomes a language of *unlearning* in *Great Expectation's* second act, utterly destabilizing any linear progress narrative.

Jerome Meckier makes a similar argument when he states that "*Great Expectations* should be read as an irreverent revaluation of the many Cinderella stories in nineteenth-century

[295] See Victor Xavier Zarour Zarzar's "Authoring Desire: *Great Expectations* and the *Bildungsroman*" *Dickens Quarterly*, 36, no. 4 (2019): 347-361 and Aleksandar Stević's "Fatal Extraction: Dickensian Bildungsroman and the Logic of Dependency" *Dickens Studies Annual* 45 (2014): 63-94.

[296] Jerome Meckier, *Dickens's* Great Expectations*: Misnar's Pavilion versus* Cinderella, (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2002); Victor Xavier Zarour Zarzar, "Authoring Desire: *Great Expectations* and the *Bildungsroman*" *Dickens Quarterly*, 36, no. 4 (2019): 347-361; Margaret J-M Sönmez, "Walking through the Valley of the Shadow of Death: Pip's Comfortless Progress through a Decaying World in *Great Expectations*" *Interactions: Ege Journal of British and American Studies*, 28, no. 1, (2019): 73-86; Julia Prewitt Brown "The Moral Scope of the English *Bildungsroman*" in *Oxford Handbook of the Victorian Novel* edited by Lisa Rodensky, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 1-17.

fiction"[297] Meckier argues that Pip's story is, at first, a retelling of *Cinderella*, but that it "turns to a fall, a replay of the collapse of Misnar's pavilion in *The Tales of the Genii*."[298] Meckier also sees the narrator as "replacing *Cinderella* with…Misnar" in his retelling of his own story.[299] With the helpful lens of education, we can examine Pip's life as he lived it, and set aside the narrator's warnings, not to reject them, but to try to live through Pip's devastating informal education, and its undoing, along with him. This allows readers to re-examine Dickens's previous endorsement of informal educational structures.

Pip's un-learning begins when the identity of his benefactor is revealed, seemingly at the pinnacle of his gentlemanly education. As readers learn that Pip no longer reads with Mr. Pocket, that his London education has ended, Pip encounters Magwitch, the convict Pip helped as a child. Magwitch, escaped from a prison ship and roaming the marshes, bullies the young Pip into stealing "a file" and "wittles" from his sister's house (4). The frightened Pip complies with Magwitch's demands, and although Magwitch is recaptured in Pip's presence, the convict remembers Pip's kindness as "nobility" (336). Magwitch is "sent for life" to the "New World" where his hard work pays off handsomely (343; 338). Magwitch, and not Miss Havisham, then "made a gentleman" out of Pip (340). Unlike the scene in which Pip is "reborn" before visiting Miss Havisham's for the first time, Pip's reaction to Magwitch is very like a death, an undoing. He recounts:

> All the truth of my position came flashing on me, and its disappointments, dangers, disgraces, consequences of all kinds rushed in in such a multitude that I was borne down by them and had to struggle for every breath I drew…I could not have spoken one word, though it had been to save my life. I stood, with a hand on the chair-back and a hand on my breast, where I seemed to be suffocating—I stood so, looking wildly at him, until I grasped at the chair, when the room began to surge and turn. (339-340).

[297] Jerome Meckier, *Dickens's 'Great Expectations': Misnar's Pavilion versus 'Cinderella'* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2002) 2.
[298] Meckier, *Dickens's 'Great Expectations': Misnar's Pavilion versus 'Cinderella',* 2.
[299] Ibid., 3.

Like a dying man, Pip's mind returns to scenes from his life which "flash[]" and "rush[]" upon him. These impressions are part of Pip's unraveling. The "truth" comes with "disappointments" and "consequences," new words to describe old hopes. Pip struggles for breath in an attitude very like a man having a heart attack—leaning against the furniture with his hand clutching his heart. Magwitch's confession means the dying of old dreams, and the undoing of all his previous education.

> After his initial shock, Pip begins the process of unlearning:
>
> …I began fully to know how wrecked I was, and how the ship in which I had sailed was gone to pieces.
>
> Miss Havisham's intentions towards me, all a mere dream; Estella not designed for me; I only suffered in Satis House as a convenience,…a model with a mechanical heart to practise on when no other practice was at hand; those were the first smarts I had. (344).

Like his childish self's first realization that he is "coarse and common" after visiting Miss Havisham's, this first unlearning requires that Pip understand himself in a new way. Unlike his younger self, though, Pip cannot turn to Miss Havisham or other informal systems of education for guidance. Pip's new position requires unlearning, not a new "bildung."

The rest of the novel, then, focuses painfully on the process of Pip's undoing and unlearning. He must fully dismantle the lessons Miss Havisham taught him about social connections and class mobility. In his first exchanges with Magwitch, Pip must unlearn the lesson that by associating with wealthy people, one should anticipate "great expectations." Pip discovers that money can come from anywhere, and that his education under Miss Havisham was not intended to do him any good. Further, he must unlearn the lesson that having money can means transcending class. Magwitch models this for Pip. Magwitch embodies:

> …a savage air that no dress could tame…In all his ways of sitting and standing, and eating and drinking—of brooding about, in a high-shouldered reluctant style—of taking out his great horn-handled jack-knife and wiping it on his legs and cutting his food—of

> lifting light glasses and cups to his lips as if they were clumsy pannikins—of chopping a wedge off his bread, and soaking up with it the last fragments of gravy round and round his plate, as if to make the most of an allowance, and then drying his fingers on it, and then swallowing it—in these ways and a thousand other small nameless instances arising every minute in the day, there was prisoner, felon, bondsman, plain as plain could be (357).

Despite Pip's disgusted tone, his description illustrates that there can be no class transcendence for Magwitch. Despite the technical similarities of Magwitch's social mistakes to Pip' early mistakes, Magwitch's behavior marks him as unteachable, while Pip's denoted trainability. Both are unaccustomed, at first, to gentlemanly "ways of…eating and drinking." In Herbert's company, Pip puts a knife into his mouth, uses a spoon overhand, and turns a glass upside down on the brim of his nose. However, each of these mistakes is corrected. They highlight teachability. Magwitch's behavior, on the other hand, brands him unmistakably as a "prisoner, felon, bondsman." Even if Pip wanted to teach Magwitch London manners, his social status as an escaped prisoner necessitates that Pip remove him from London for his own safety. There is no time to teach Magwitch the little social lessons that Herbert imparted to him. Pip is horrified when confronted with the truth that social mobility is not possible for every person. He describes Magwitch as "a dreadful mystery" and an "abhorrence," recalling *A Christmas Carol's* "Ignorance" and "Want" (357).[300] Pip's unlearning process, then, is not as Meckier suggests, an abrupt disillusionment, but takes the rest of the novel, and several conversations with previous instructors.[301]

Significantly, Magwitch's own personal narrative provides Pip with a model for unlearning Miss Havisham's lessons. Like Pip, young Magwitch believes that social connections with better-off individuals would improve his circumstances. Magwitch falls in with

[300] Thank you to my thesis advisor, Dr. Nancy Metz for her insight here.
[301] Ibid., 8.

Compeyson, who hints that his "luck…is going to change" if he agrees to become Compeyson's "pardner" in the "business" of "swindling, handwriting forging, stolen bank-note passing, and such-like" (368). Magwitch does not benefit from his alliance with Compeyson, though, and when the pair is "committed for felony," Compeyson, the younger, better-educated, better-connected man is sentenced to "seven years" while Magwitch is sentenced to "fourteen" (370-372). Magwitch's poverty and ignorance stands in sharp contrast to Compeyson's performance in court as a man who "had been to school," was a member of "such clubs and societies," and "could speak…wi' his face dropping every now and then into his with pocket-handkercher…wi' verses in his speech, too" (371). Compeyson does not repay Magwitch's loyalty and service with assistance or aid, and instead practices on his ignorance and want for personal gain.

Magwitch's story helps Pip re-write and unlearn his previous educational experience. Like Compeyson, Miss Havisham exploits the young Pip to advance her personal agenda. Stević notes that "Pip…enter[s] the world of Miss Havisham not in order to be educated or elevated…but in order to serve as an instrument in her formative efforts directed at Estella."[302] As her name suggests, Miss Havisham's education of Pip is a sham, a mere side effect of her carefully constructed lessons for Estella. Magwitch's narrative helps Pip confront the truth of his own history, and to begin unlearning. After hearing his tale, Pip "reflects on the abyss between Estella in her pride and beauty" and his own situation in the company of a convicted felon (374). This reflection takes on a new character, though. Before hearing Magwitch's tale, Pip's remembrances of Estella are agonizing only. After listening to Magwitch, Pip asks himself "why should I pause…when the end would be none the better for it; [Magwitch] would not be helped, nor I extenuated [?]" (374). Pip's question "why should I?" interrogates his old lessons. He could

[302] Stević, "Fatal Extraction: Dickensian Bildungsroman and the Logic of Dependency," 85.

have easily asked: Why should I be used by Miss Havisham? Why should I be resigned to Estella's torture? What good does it do? Magwitch's story pushes Pip to begin actively unlearning.

Pip's "why should I?" is not rhetorical. He plans immediately to "see both Estella and Miss Havisham" before he takes Magwitch abroad (374). Pip makes these plans anticipating that Miss Havisham and Estella will confirm that his old lessons were learned in vain. Rather than refusing the process, then, Pip seeks to destabilize his old education; he participates in his own un-schooling. Back at Satis House, Pip sits with Miss Havisham and reflects "with all that ruin at my feet and about me, it seemed a natural place for me, that day" (380). The simple past tense "seemed" suggests here that it is the Pip sitting with Miss Havisham who reflects on his own ruin, rather than the narrator imposing his judgement using a past perfect progressive tense. Earlier, the narrator describes Pip leaving the Blue Boar:

> …I washed the weather and the journey from my face and hands, and went out to the memorable old house that it would have been so much the better for me never to have entered, never to have seen (379).

The narrator describes his past actions in simple past tense: "washed the weather from my face and hands;" "went out to the memorable old house." The narrator imposes a future judgement on past experiences using the past perfect progressive tense: "it would have been so much the better for me never to have entered." It is the old Pip washing and going, the more experienced Pip pronouncing "it would have been…better" never to "have seen" Satis House. In the room with Miss Havisham, then, in simple past tense, the narrator shows that his old self knows that "ruin," is upon him, and yet pursues the unlearning anyway.

Miss Havisham confirms Pip's suspicions. She did take on Pip "as a kind of servant," and as "any other chance boy" might have been taken on (381). She "led [Pip] on" when he

misunderstood their relationship, and knowingly "punished" both him and others who believed his rise in fortune to be her doing (382). Estella reveals that she and Pip were not intended for each other, and that their marriage was never a potential reward. Instead, she reminds Pip that she always claimed to have "no heart" and that it is she, who is rewarded with riches for learning her lessons (384; 325). After hearing their confirmations, Pip chastises Miss Havisham and Estella:

> It would have been cruel in Miss Havisham, horribly cruel, to practise on the susceptibility of a poor boy, and to torture me through all these years with a vain hope and an idle pursuit, if she had reflected on the gravity of what she did. But I think she did not. I think that in the endurance of her own trial, she forgot mine… (384).

This speech further unravels Pip's past educational experience. As his teacher, Miss Havisham was an unimpeachable authority who considered and planned for Pip's future. In his unlearning, Pip recognizes that Miss Havisham's actions were at least thoughtless, if not "cruel." In her comfortable, privileged status, she never considered Pip fully human, susceptible to the emotional torture she had experienced. Pip's language resists educational vocabulary here, he accuses Miss Havisham of "practise[ing] on" him, not molding, making, or teaching him as with Estella.

As Pip unlearns his lessons, his fortunes are similarly unraveled. While Pip makes plans to escape London with Magwitch, he states that his "worldly affairs began to wear a gloomy appearance, and [he] was pressed for money by more than one creditor" (404). Pip "began to know the want of money" and sells some of his jewelry in order to pay his expenses (404). Pip's return to "want" represents an unlearning. In his "bildung," Pip recognized that money constituted a rise in station, and gratefully accepted the property he was offered. In this second narrative, Pip "had quite determined that it would be a heartless fraud to take more money from [his] patron in the existing state of [his] uncertain thoughts and plans" (404). He refuses to accept

the pocketbook of cash that Magwitch presses on him, and feels "satisfaction…in not having profited by [Magwitch's] generosity since his revelation of himself" (404). Pip's unlearning costs him money, social status, and property.

Contrary to critics, Franco Moretti, Florian Schweizer, and David Paroissien, I cannot read Pip's story as one of "eventual success," in which he has "become complete and fulfilled;" instead I argue alongside Aleksander Stević that Pip ends the novel as an outsider, and therefore unable to fulfill Bildungsroman expectations.[303] Moretti, Schweizer, and Paroissien read Pip's journey as uninterrupted, all events contributing to a final conclusion in which Pip gains "gentility of the mind and character," ultimately endorsing Victorian philosophies of self-improvement.[304] Although Pip resumes his friendship with Biddy and Joe, he is "excluded" from "entering a caring relationship" with *any* of his friends. Both Pip's real benefactor, Magwitch, and his imagined benefactor, Miss Havisham die before the end of the novel: Magwitch, from injuries sustained in an accident on the river, Miss Havisham from injuries sustained after catching fire in Satis House. Pip's tender care does not save either of them. Herbert Pocket marries Clara, and they embark on their own adventure in Cairo. Pip joins Herbert and Clara in Cairo, but he does so as a disappointed bachelor when Estella marries Pip's rival, Bentley Drummle, and Biddy marries Joe. Pip explains "I sold all I had, and put aside as much as I could, for a composition with my creditors…and I went out and joined Herbert" (511).

[303] David Paroissien, *The Companion to* Great Expectations, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000) 420; Florian Schweizer, "The Bildungsroman" in *Charles Dickens in Context* edited by Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 140-147; 146; Florian Schweizer represents Franco Moretti's views in her article. She states on page 46: "Franco Moretti's belief that the English *Bildungsroman* resembles the fairy tale seems particularly appropriate in relation to Dickens, who needed an outrageously positive view of life in which the individual can emerge triumphant from its vicissitudes." Stević, "Fatal Extraction: Dickensian Bildungsroman and the Logic of Dependency," 87. I defer to Stević's definition of "caring" as "caretaking" here.
[304] Schweizer, "The Bildungsroman," 146.

Dickens's revisions of the novels' final scene keep the novel, and Pip's learning, from ever truly ending.[305] In *Great Expectations*'s first ending, Pip

> heard of [Estella] as leading a most unhappy life, and as being separated from her husband, who had used her with great cruelty…I had heard of the death of her husband from an accident…and of her being married again to a Shropshire doctor…and that they lived on her own personal fortune (517).

He encounters her again in London, walking in Picadilly. There she mistakes his godson, Joe and Biddy's child, for his own. Estella kisses the child, and the two part company forever, but not before Pip sees "that suffering had been stronger than Miss Havisham's teaching, and had given her a heart to understand what my heart used to be" (518). Bulwer Lytton, a friend of Dickens, "criticized the ending of the novel" for condemning Pip to a life of loneliness.[306] Dickens was so affected by Lytton's critique that he "un[wound] the end and then put it back together," publishing a "so-called 'happy' reunion between Pip and Estella."[307] In this ending, Estella still suffers at the hands of Bentley Drummle, but she does not remarry after his death. Instead, Pip encounters her on the grounds of Satis House and has a much longer conversation with her than he was allowed in the first ending. The two talk about Satis House and their new lives. In answer to Estella's question "you do pretty well?" Pip does not reply with an unconditional "yes" (515). Instead he answers, "I work pretty hard for a sufficient living, and therefore—Yes, I do well!" (515). Pip's answer indicates some hesitation. Doing "pretty well" means something different to him now, than it did before. He redefines the phrase for her in his answer, including the middle-class vocabulary of "hard work" and "sufficient living," so that Estella has no illusions about his place in the world. Pip's answer speaks of a successful unlearning—he no longer looks to

[305] Zarzar argues as much in the final pages of his "Authoring Desire: *Great Expectations* and the *Bildungsroman*," 358-360.
[306] Paroissien, *The Companion to Great Expectations*, 4-5.
[307] Ibid.

generous benefactors to help him transcend social class. In the first ending, Estella and Pip part ways in confusion. Pip believes Estella to have mistaken Joe's son for his, and the two avoid any clarifying conversations. In the second ending, Estella has no choice but to confront that he is no longer a gentleman of leisure. However, the two end their meeting on equal terms; they agree "we are friends," and "we will continue friends" (515; 516). While scholars continue to debate over the true nature of their parting, the narrative refusals in this double ending are what remain interesting to me. Robyn Warhol-Down explains that the writing and re-writing of the novel's end "puts Pip through a paroxysm of disnarration, unbinding the novel's closure."[308] If this is the case, Pip's education can never truly end. As Victor Zarzar suggests, the novel's dual endings indicate that "no wisdom was wrested from Pip's plot" and that while Dickens's "novel ends; the plot doesn't."[309] As readers, then, we must wrestle with a narrative that does not provide an easy moral lesson. With Pip, we must accept that life means both learning, and unlearning the lessons we encounter along the way.

Dickens's "novel of education" does meet many of the requirements for the Victorian Bildungsroman. As the novel's hero, Pip becomes more mature, learns to value morals over money, and regrets the mistakes of his youth. I want to emphasize, however, that much of what Pip learns must be unlearned, or subverted, by the novel's end. The narrative itself is much more concerned with Pip's final unwinding than with any new lessons he may acquire along the way. Rather than successfully overcoming a series of social and moral obstacles, Pip's journey is one of learning then and unlearning. The trajectory is not smooth or simple, but requires two arcs, both equally important, and both demonstrating the dangers of formal and informal lessons.

[308] Robyn Warhol-Down, "'What Might Have Been Is Not What Is": Dickens's Narrative Refusals" *Dickens Studies Annual* 41 (2010): 45-59; 49.
[309] Zarzar, "Authoring Desire: *Great Expectations* and the *Bildungsroman"* 359; 360.

Scrooge's education, though informal, merely demonstrates the potential successes of informal learning. In *Bleak House,* the combination of formal and informal projects a future of blended pedagogical triumph. *Great Expectations* investigates a "bildung" gone array; Pip's well-learned social lessons do not serve him well, and he is forced to unlearn them.

Afterwards: A Dickensian Legacy of Lifelong Learning

Charles Dickens continues commenting on the tensions between formal and informal education in his final completed novel, *Our Mutual Friend*. Many scholars have acknowledged *Our Mutual Friend*'s relevance in Dickens's analysis of formal education, grouping it alongside *Hard Times* and *Dombey and Son*. However, I see *Our Mutual Friend* as making an analysis by comparison: the critique of failed formal educational settings depends on the success of informal ones.[310] The villainous schoolteacher Bradley Headstone teaches especially malicious lessons compared with the generosity of the illiterate Mr. and Mrs. Boffin. The novel begins with Lizzie Hexam, a young woman who never receives formal education, "reading" the future at her father's hearth. She describes to her younger brother, Charley, that she sees "in the hollow down by the flare" that he will succeed in a formal educational setting, become a pupil-teacher, and transcend their family's poverty (28-29). Lizzie's reading envisions a future for her brother that seems fantastic, considering her family's dire circumstances. However, it employs a language of literacy that makes Charley's future seem certain: *interpreting* a future that is already written or fixed. Charley's reply further legitimizes Lizzie's skill: "'You said you couldn't read a book, Lizzie. Your library of books is the hollow down by the flare, I think (29).'" Lizzie's reading at the hearth is asserts that mystical, imaginative, emotional lessons are as necessary for success as Charley's participation in school. Because of Lizzie's fireside education, Charley does exactly as she predicts: succeeds as a favorite pupil in school and becomes a financially independent teacher himself. Although Lizzie lacks formal education, her ability to project a future of in

[310] I would apply this statement to the other two novels, *Hard Times* and *Dombey and Son*, as well. Informal education in all three makes formal structures seem especially sinister.

which success is assumed for her especially vulnerable brother makes her a great teacher, far better than Charley's schoolmaster who only cares about skill acquisition and personal gain.

Dickens continues *Our Mutual Friend* in a similar vein. In my introduction, I drew attention to Reginald Wilfer, the "poor clerk" who exclaims to his daughter "what is life but learning." Dickens describes Wilfer as a perpetual cherub, a schoolboy "grubbing" at many diverse, and life-long "schools" (31; 647). In a reference just as explicit, Dickens strategically titles Chapter I of Book II "Of an Educational Character" and the subsequent Chapter II "Still Educational" (201; 219). Chapter I, "Of an Educational Character," describes Charley Hexam's formal education at school. The chapter begins by detailing the school's "atmosphere," its teachers, its pupils, and its curriculum. By the end of the chapter, Charley and his schoolmaster, Bradley Headstone, are plotting to "educate" Lizzie with a series of formal lessons, probably taught by Headstone himself (201-218). Chapter II, "Still Educational," opens on an informal, domestic setting: in Jenny Wren's home, where Lizzie Hexam is staying after her father's death (219). In this chapter, Eugene Wrayburn, a barrister and an admirer of Lizzie's, offers to pay for a more informal instructional enterprise for both Lizzie and Miss Jenny Wren, an invalid who makes her living as a doll's dressmaker. However, Chapter II also includes descriptions of Jenny Wren's "pleasant fancies" which teach her the joys of living without her "bad" back and legs, and Jenny Wren's drunken father who teaches her the miseries of living with no money and constant heartache (225-229). Chapter II mixes the details of Wrayburn's obviously educational tutoring plan with intimate details about Jenny Wren's circumstances and classifies them all as "Still Educational." Chapter II ends with an educational admonition by the narrator, directing the reader to notice, and learn from, Jenny Wren's unfortunate plight:

> Poor doll's dressmaker! How often so dragged down by hands that should have raised her up; how often so misdirected when losing her way on the eternal road, and asking guidance! Poor, poor little doll's dressmaker! (229)

Dickens asks that his audience respond generously, compassionately, to the Jenny Wrens of the world, making use of his claim that Chapter II is "still educational." Ultimately, *Our Mutual Friend* celebrates informal education's potential for doing good, both inside *and* outside the world of the novel.

Our Mutual Friend affirms Dickens's career-spanning investment in informal educational practices. Dickens used his fiction to grapple with the issues that mattered most to him. I chose to analyze three of Dickens's novels and to represent moments that range from early in Dickens's writing career and to his final finished novel. Scholars Nia McIntosh and Florian Schweizer agree with my timeline, noting that Dickens's "fear of ignorance" appears in his fiction as early as *A Christmas Carol*, and that Dickens publicly "took a great interest in promoting…life-long learning" and what they call "creative education" during the rest of his life.[311]

My research project considered *A Christmas Carol*'s, *Bleak House*'s, and *Great Expectations*' contributions to ideas on creative, informal education. Dickens's texts require readers to confront their uncomfortable dependency on formal structures *and* to acknowledge that informal instruction does not always meet pupils' needs. With its imaginative setting and fantastic characters, *A Christmas Carol* offers a successful pedagogical alternative to the early Victorian formalized educational structures which made Dickens so "anxious."[312] The Christmas Spirits prove that successful, student-centered pedagogy can occur outside classrooms. Dickens's

[311] Nia McIntosh and Florian Schweizer, "Great Expectations: Dickens and Education—a Bicentenary Perspective" *Use of English* 64, no. 1 (2012): 47-56; 47, 50, 51.
[312] Dinah Birch, *Our Victorian Education*, 33.

portrayal of blended masculine and feminine pedagogy in *Bleak House* legitimizes previously undervalued educational opportunities available to nineteenth century women. *Great Expectations* complicates the educational messages found in both previous texts. While Pip's journey asserts, in many ways, the power of informal educational settings, it also reminds readers that students are always reliant on their teachers. Pip may learn social lessons in Miss Havisham's domestic setting, and from an impassioned and eager instructor, but those lessons have formal consequences, and must be unlearned for Pip to face the reality of his reduced circumstances.

Recent scholarship notices ways in which Dickens's texts continue, even in the twenty-first century, to participate in educational settings. McIntosh and Schweizer note Charles Dickens's novels have become teachers in their own right; they are "increasingly used as [] model[s] for young and aspiring authors and storytellers."[313] However, Dinah Birch's picture of a "Victorian education," is bleaker.[314] Birch rejects characterizations that the Victorians are "benign" ancestors, instead drawing attention to failures within the British educational system, which she traces back to policies established in the nineteenth century.[315] Birch mentions "state-sponsored yardsticks" like standardized tests which "reveal dishearteningly high numbers of failing children," bullying, and prejudice in school systems based on gender and class as all rooted in Victorian educational practices.[316] While Birch's research is focused on British school systems, my experience as a classroom teacher in an American public school affirms that the United States' school systems suffer from similar crises. Historians have noted that England's educational models, specifically curricula like Joseph Lancaster's monitorial system, were

[313] McIntosh and Schweizer, "Great Expectations: Dickens and Education—a Bicentenary Perspective," 53.
[314] Dinah Birch, *Our Victorian Education,* 121-124.
[315] Ibid., 122.
[316] Ibid.

adopted and adapted for American use, often with damaging expansionist agendas.[317] The Charles Dickens who warned against oppressive and dangerous school practices in the nineteenth century, would likely recognize many of those same policies active internationally in the twenty-first. Of course, I would not advocate that twenty-first century educators implement a purely Dickensian curriculum, which would be, like many Victorian philosophies, exclusive, biased, and fundamentally imperialist. However, I agree with Birch that there remains something "valuable" in the Victorians', and specifically Dickens's, impassioned belief "in the power of education" for "giving children from all backgrounds…the chance to flourish."[318]

Twenty-first century best practice pedagogy calls for student-centered, compassionate educational practices similar to the pedagogy Dickens depicts as successful. Just as the Christmas Spirits challenge Scrooge with practical, human-centered lessons, Ken Bain finds that the best teachers "favor [objectives] that embody the kind of thinking and acting expected for life" in "challenging yet supportive conditions."[319] In language reminiscent of Prince Turveydrop's approach to dancing instruction, John Antonetti and James Garver call twenty-first century teachers to "know [their] learners," and "differentiate" to accommodate all students' needs.[320] In an instructional move that would have given Pip clearer answers earlier in his life, Ruth Powley advises that educators provide "concrete" explanations to their questioning

[317] Ronald Rayman, "Joseph Lancaster's Monitorial System of Instruction and American Indian Education, 1815-1838," *History of Education Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (1981): 395-409. Rayman notes that Lancaster's policies helped found many ancestors to what we now consider the most vulnerable, and highest-need school systems—inner-city schools. He states "the rise of urbanization, cities, and the working class fomented a groundless paranoia that rebellion of some description was imminent from landless wage earners unless they were educated. Schools modeled on the plan soon opened in Philadelphia, New Haven, Pittsburgh, and Washington City…and the plan was employed from the founding of the New York City public school system in 1806." Rayman also explains that it was Lancaster's method that was "seized upon as the most promising vehicle to achieve the goals of Indian education, eventual assimilation" (397).
[318] Birch, *Our Victorian Education*, 123.
[319] Ken Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 18.
[320] John Antonetti and James Garver, *17,000 Classroom Visits Can't Be Wrong: Strategies that Engage Students, Promote Active Learning, and Boost Achievement* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2015), 62-77; 116-126.

students.[321] Dickens's recommendations, then, are echoed in the guidance of twenty-first century scholars and educators who direct teachers to respect students' knowledge, facilitate a love for learning, and encourage pupils' curiosity.

Dickens's nineteenth-century advocacy for informal teaching and learning experiences has the potential to affect twenty-first century practices. My research highlighted the ways in which Dickens's model educators often employ best practice pedagogy, diverging from popular Victorian instructional methods. Perhaps twenty-first century education policymakers and educators could benefit their vulnerable students by rejecting a single "royal road to learning," and adopting a blended pedagogy affirming "informal" approaches to education.

[321] Ruth Powley, *Powerful Pedagogy: Teach Better Quicker* (New York: Routledge, 2018)

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