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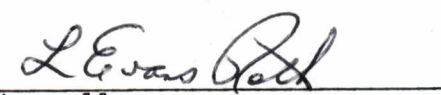
I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Apryl Lea Denny entitled "The Effects of Duality on Freedom and Control in Charles Dickens' Our Mutual Friend and The Mystery of Edwin Drood." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in English.


Don Richard Cox, Major Professor

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4

THE EFFECTS OF DUALITY ON FREEDOM AND CONTROL IN CHARLES DICKENS'
OUR MUTUAL FRIEND AND THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD

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Apryl Lea Denny

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ABSTRACT

Charles Dickens' last completed novel, Our Mutual Friend, instigates an idealistic theory of duality which culminates in the realism of his unfinished novel, The Mystery of Edwin Drood. In Our Mutual Friend duality only exists outside the characters. The main characters are not internally torn between two conflicting identities but, instead, have clearly defined identities which are eventually changed for the better by the contest of the external, dialectic forces of manipulation and benevolence. This contest reveals truth and causes the characters to change in light of that revelation. Since conflict must take place in order for the characters to progress, these good and bad forces must be free to interact. Consequently, freedom is lauded in Our Mutual Friend, and manipulation is disparaged. The ideal world of Our Mutual Friend refuses to limit any character's freedom. Such an idealistic view of the world denies the need to punish evil and even attempts to deny the very existence of evil. The Mystery of Edwin Drood presents a more realistic definition of and solution to duality. This novel illustrates that the good and bad forces of benevolence and manipulation are part of all men and that in order to discover truth, dialectic internal forces must be controlled rather than freed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Charles Dickens' critics have outlined two types of duality in his novels. The first and most frequently discussed duality is that purposely adopted by the characters to disguise their motives. In his book Victorian Conventions, Charles Reed claims that Dickens "used disguise in almost all conceivable ways."¹ Reed discusses hypocrisy, anonymity, and clothing and cosmetics as forms of disguise; and he generally seems to hold that disguise is a conscious masking of identity. According to Reed, characters purposely adopt disguise in order to masquerade as something they are not. Reed's definition of disguise is useful as far as it goes, but even he recognizes that it cannot account for all the duality in Dickens' novels. When Reed attempts to categorize "multiplicity of the self" as disguise, he finds that in *Little Dorrit* Arthur Clennam "doubts his identity" and "takes to viewing himself as 'Nobody.'"² Furthermore, according to Reed, Arthur's vague identity becomes "consolidated" when he marries Little Dorrit. If disguise is actually the masking of a true identity, then the resolution of conflict must involve discovery not consolidation. Reed, himself, realizes the discrepancy in

¹John R. Reed, Victorian Conventions (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1975), p. 303.

²Reed, p. 306.

his theory and tries to compensate by stating that the devices in *Little Dorrit* "are not actually disguises."³ In other words, disguise alone cannot account for all the duality present in Dickens' novels.

Reed's discussion of Little Dorrit actually suggests a second type of duality in Dickens' novels--dissolution of the self into two conflicting parts. Unlike the disguised characters who attempt to conceal a clearly defined identity, some of Dickens' characters do not understand their own personalities. They feel torn between two conceptions of themselves and cannot, as Reed suggests, consolidate their identities. Each of these characters does not externally disguise a clear identity; rather, each is internally torn between two identities.

The development of duality in Dickens' last two novels--Our Mutual Friend and The Mystery of Edwin Drood--suggests Reed's two observations. Both novels utilize disguise. But Our Mutual Friend principally utilizes external duality (either as disguise or as pairs of opposing character types), whereas The Mystery of Edwin Drood principally incorporates genuine internal duality.

Duality does not exist within either of the novels for its own sake; instead, it is closely linked with the novels' conceptions of freedom and control. In his book Excess and Restraint in the Novels of Charles Dickens, John Kucich explains that a character "understands

³Reed, p. 306.

truth not in terms of itself, but in terms of its opposite."⁴

Furthermore, he explains that Dickens' "excess," the term Kucich uses to describe opposition, is "the expression of a desire to annihilate separateness"⁵ among the characters. Kucich claims that Dickens' characters adopt hubris or humility in an attempt to "overcome the loneliness or the restricted significance of . . . separateness."⁶

Kucich's theory applies neatly to Our Mutual Friend since the dialectic influence of the villains' hubris and the heroes' humility reveals the truth that benevolence, rather than manipulation, produces cooperation among the characters. As a result, they learn to be benevolent rather than manipulative so that everyone may cooperate in an environment of freedom. Our Mutual Friend presents duality as a positive force, an external dialectic approach to discovering external truth. However, The Mystery of Edwin Drood is just as concerned with the separateness within characters as that among them. In fact, Dickens' final novel holds that separateness among characters is due to separateness within them. Consequently, The Mystery of Edwin Drood suggests that duality is a negative force and the cause of isolation in the novel. Since these two novels present opposing views of the value of duality, they also differ as to whether or not its conflicting forces should be controlled. Because Our Mutual Friend presents external

⁴John Kucich, Excess and Restraint in the Novels of Charles Dickens (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1982), p. 10.

⁵Kucich, p. 10.

⁶Kucich, p. 9.

duality as the solution to truth, the novel allows duality the freedom to run its course. However, since The Mystery of Edwin Drood holds that internal duality is the cause of isolation, the novel consolidates opposition through the use of control. The two novels' differing conceptions of duality cause the split between their attitudes toward freedom and control.

CHAPTER II

INTERNAL DUALITY IN OUR MUTUAL FRIEND

Much is written about the duality in Our Mutual Friend.

Robert Morse writes of the novel: "Where were there ever so many pairs and pairs of pairs and new pairs formed after a reshuffling of old pairs?"⁷ He notes examples of "duplicity, disguise, false claims, hourglass reversals and dual natures."⁸ Morse holds that genuine internal duality exists in the novel, yet every example of doubleness that he discusses is adopted consciously by the characters to disguise themselves. He proves the existence of externally adopted duality but never that of genuine character duality. Both Robert Morse and J. Hillis Miller believe that the novel's characters possess identities split between two conflicting desires. Robert Morse sees the split as existing between the desires for activity and for inactivity; J. Hillis Miller defines the split as being between the characters' desires to manipulate and to be benevolent.

Morse supports his suggestion that "Doubleness appears . . . as character duality"⁹ by discussing the ambiguity in Twemlow's character. Morse states: "Then there is Twemlow who is meek, down-trodden, and vague until at the end [of the novel] he takes his

⁷Robert Morse, "Our Mutual Friend," in The Dickens Critics, eds. George H. Ford and Lauriat Lane, Jr. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1961), p. 207.

⁸Morse, p. 207.

⁹Morse, p. 207.

tremendous stand in defense of the principles that make a gentleman."¹⁰ According to Morse, because Twemlow begins the novel inactively but becomes actively "outspoken" later, he is unsure of his identity. But Twemlow's "tremendous stand" occurs "at the end" of the novel; therefore, it actually suggests not a "character duality" but, rather, a character change. Twemlow becomes forceful and outspoken--attributes this "dining-room table" which Veneering "puts leaves in"¹¹ never previously displays. The characters in Our Mutual Friend do intentionally adopt external duality, but they do not possess genuine internal duality.

An internally dual character must be uncertain of himself. He must have two warring attitudes embodied in him and be torn between two perceptions of himself. In short, he must doubt his own identity. But none of the characters in Our Mutual Friend doubts his identity. In fact, the characters are so sure of their identities that their perceptions of themselves determine their behavior--or, rather, their lack of it.

From the beginning of Our Mutual Friend the main characters see themselves as pawns: inactive and unproductive. J. Hillis Miller writes that "the dominant state [of the characters in Our Mutual

¹⁰Morse, pp. 207-208.

¹¹Charles Dickens, Our Mutual Friend (New York: Bounty Books, n.d.), p. 6; further references to this edition will be noted in the text by book, chapter and page numbers.

Friend] is boredom."¹² Boredom, which grows out of the characters' perceptions of themselves, accurately describes the novel's first glimpse of Eugene Wrayburn as he sits "buried alive in the back of his chair" (Bk. I, Ch. iii; p. 11). He describes himself as inconsistent in everything but "susceptibility to boredom" (Bk. I, Ch. xii; p. 152) and hopeful for nothing more than "a defined and limited monotony" (Bk. II, Ch. xii; p. 150). At the opening of the novel, Eugene is inactive. He tells Mortimer, his accessory in sloth, "show me something really worth being energetic about, and I'll show you energy" (Bk. I, Ch. iii; p. 21). But Eugene has no reason for energy and, so, remains idle. He and Mortimer blame their inactivity on their having been manipulated by their fathers to enter professions which they "hate." Mortimer whines, "I have had no scrap of business but this romantic business," and Eugene claims that after seven years he has "had no business at all, and never shall have any" (Bk. I, Ch. iii; p. 20). As Mortimer says to Eugene, "My own small income [his inheritance] . . . has been an effective Something in the way of preventing me from turning to at Anything. And I think yours has been much the same" (Bk. IV, Ch. xvi; p. 847). Eugene and Mortimer clearly perceive of themselves as useless and slothful because they are manipulated. They suffer no internal conflict. They are certain of their identities and have even searched themselves deeply enough to provide scapegoats for their sloth--their fathers' manipulation.

¹²J. Hillis Miller, Charles Dickens: The World of his Novels (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 300.

Another similarly inactive victim of his own perception is Riah, the old Jew. Because Riah perceives himself to be locked into a situation he cannot change, he cannot throw off the bonds inflicted by Fascination Fledgeby. Riah becomes, as John Lucas quotes from Kant, "like the mere tool of another,"¹³ inactive and unable to evoke change in his situation.

Because these characters are so trapped in their rigid perceptions of themselves as pawns, they decide to retreat to escape conditions that they believe they cannot change. Because he feels he cannot defeat Fledgeby, Riah retreats in silence and blind obedience. Eugene and Mortimer see no use for action in their world and desire to retreat to "an isolated rock in a stormy sea" (Bk. I, Ch. xii; p. 150). Mortimer encourages Mr. Boffin to escape his responsibilities by selling the dust mounds and taking a trip to the Rocky Mountains. Bella Wilfer retreats into false mourning. Mr. Venus, the "articulator of human bones," cloisters himself with his art. And Jenny Wren seeks refuge in her imagination.

Although these characters feel they are trapped and manipulated, they, too, have a strong desire to manipulate. As Morse suggests with his idea that Twemlow is dual because he is once "meek" and later "outspoken," the ambiguity between inactivity and activity is one reason that the characters in Our Mutual Friend are often considered internally dual. However, these characters become

¹³John Lucas, The Melancholy Man: A Study of Dickens's Novels (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1970), p. 326.

active only when they are sheltered in retreat. By escaping they assure that any action they attempt will be unproductive. Eugene and Mortimer practice law but only in the retreat of their office. As Mortimer says, they haven't any hope of "turning to at Anything." Neither of them ever solicits business; and when business comes to them, they only make a mockery of it. When Rogue Riderhood comes to Eugene Wrayburn to file an "Alfred David," Eugene is more interested in taunting Riderhood than in determining the guilt or innocence of Gaffer Hexam. Although Wrayburn goes through the motions of being a lawyer, his manner of conducting business and his place of business are retreats from productivity.

Jenny Wren, too, manipulates. But her manipulation is also done in retreat. She pretends that her father is her son so that she can punish him for his alcoholism. Her retreat into the imagination allows her to manipulate, but she realizes her control will not have any effect on her father. His "circumstances" are beyond his and Jenny's control. Like Mortimer and Eugene, Jenny realizes that manipulation in the confines of retreat is not productive. Mr. Venus commands his art but realizes that it has no productive outcome in his life since it prevents him from possessing his beloved Pleasant Riderhood. Because he retreats, he cannot control his own life. Similarly, Bella Wilfer is manipulative. She controls her father and she desires to control a husband. Bella has manipulated others all her life. In fact, Old Harmon chose Bella to be John's betrothed when he saw her, as a child, throw a tantrum and her bonnet in the process. Even so, Bella's manipulation is done in retreat and,

therefore, with no real hope of productivity. Even as she enslaved her father during her childhood, she retreated behind his generous nature in an attempt not to control, but to avoid interacting with her mother. Similarly, as an adult, she hides in the bower of the benevolent Boffin in hopes of catching a rich husband without ever socializing with any eligible men.

All of these characters manipulate; but because they perceive themselves as pawns, they have no hope of causing any change either in their own lives or in the lives of others. Until they are exposed to benevolence in the face of manipulation, these characters remain unproductive manipulators.

As I have suggested, Robert Morse obviously believes that duality exists within the characters in Our Mutual Friend. However, what he mistakes for internal duality in Twemlow is actually character change. Morse feels that Twemlow possesses his "meek" ways in combination with his new "outspoken" ways, in other words, that he is potentially active even while he is inactive. However, Twemlow, like Eugene, Bella, Jenny and Venus, conceives of himself as a pawn. In fact, he is so manipulated that he doesn't even attempt to control others. As Veneering's table, Twemlow makes no attempt to act. Morse's notion that such characters possess internal duality is contradicted by the facts that the characters in the novel never doubt their inactivity, that they attempt to manipulate with no hope of productivity, and that they retreat from any possibility of productive action.

Another type of internal character duality is assumed by J. Hillis Miller when he writes of the novel's main characters: each man and woman has been "a good fellow all along."¹⁴ Both Morse and Miller believe that the characters in the novel learn to cultivate a good characteristic which they have possessed all along. But J. Hillis Miller's concept of internal duality rests on the fact that some of the manipulative characters in the novel are regenerated, whereas others are not. Mr. Podsnap and Mr. Veneering, who manipulate their friends for material self gain, never change; but Bella and Eugene do. Morse sees internal duality in the ambiguity between activity and inactivity; but Miller (in an attempt to explain the regeneration of Bella and Eugene) sees internal duality in the characters' ambiguity between manipulation and benevolence. Miller's explanation seeks to solve a valid problem in the novel; but because the characters never doubt their identities, his belief has no basis for support. A simple solution to the problem of regeneration is to assume that internal duality does not exist in the novel. Rather, change occurs as a result of external dual examples of manipulation and benevolence which often mask themselves in disguise.

¹⁴J. Hillis Miller, "Our Mutual Friend," in Dickens: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Martin Price (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 177.

CHAPTER III

EXTERNAL DUALITY IN OUR MUTUAL FRIEND

As I have illustrated, the only duality in Our Mutual Friend is external. J. Hillis Miller is right in believing that the novel is concerned with manipulation and benevolism. However, this split is illustrated between the characters, not within them. One group of characters adopts disguise in order to manipulate for self gain, and one group adopts disguise in order to become benevolent. The manipulators, or villains, adopt disguise in order to control others for personal gain: respectability, social status, or money. Bradley Headstone secures friendship with Charlie and Lizzie Hexam in hopes of gaining respectability in marriage. The Veneerings pretend to adore their friends whom they really see as stepping stones to social advancement. Mr. and Mrs. Lammle both pretend they are rich so that each can marry the other for money. Silas Wegg pretends to be a literary man to extract money from Boffin. Rogue Riderhood masquerades as "an honest man" in order to collect money for the conviction of his innocent partner, Gaffer Hexam, as the murderer of John Harmon. And Fascination Fledgeby pretends to assuage the greed of Riah while actually forcing him to front Fledgeby's ruthless lending firm, Pubsey and Co. These characters are villains because they adopt disguise to manipulate others for self gain.

John Harmon and Noddy Boffin adopt disguise, but their purpose is to aid Bella Wilfer. Harmon and Boffin perceive Bella's venality

and manipulation and seek to change her. However, they do not manipulate her but, rather, adopt disguise in an attempt to guide her toward her own decision to change. John Harmon, heir to his father's fortune in dust, pretends to be a middle-class secretary to Old Harmon's former servant, Noddy Boffin. He plays the role of flunkey to the kind-hearted Boffin who pretends to be a miser. Laying his finger along side his nose, Boffin flaunts his pretended philosophy of "Scrunch or be scrunched" and proceeds to "scrunch" Harmon (alias John Rokesmith) in a style befitting "Dancer and Elwes, and Hopkins, and Blewbury Jones" (Bk. III, Ch. xv; p. 614). By pretending to be what they are not, Boffin and Harmon evoke a beneficial change in Bella without manipulating her.

Bella herself is a manipulator, but she comes from a class of manipulators other than that of the villains. Bella Wilfer, Eugene Wrayburn, Jenny Wren, and Mr. Venus are all caught somewhere between the manipulators and the benefactors. Certainly, these four characters are manipulators, but since they perceive themselves to be retreating pawns, they feel their actions can never benefit them. They believe themselves to be unproductive and, therefore, unlike the villains, do not seek material self gain.

Mr. Venus, Jenny Wren, Bella Wilfer, and Eugene Wrayburn have no faith in the productivity of their manipulation. Mr. Venus, "the articulator of human bones," is an active man: "a workman without an equal" (Bk. I, Ch. vii; p. 86). Yet he bemoans his fate: "I am" he says, "surrounded by the lovely trophies of my art, and what have they done for me? Ruined me" (Bk. I, Ch. vii; p. 86). Venus, an

active artisan, manipulates the materials of his art. His beloved, Pleasant Riderhood, perceives that she, too, is made of the stuff of which Venus is in control; consequently, she fears for her own freedom: "I do not wish . . . to be regarded in that boney light" (Bk. I, Ch. vii; p. 86).

Jenny Wren, too, manipulates others. She claims to be "making a perfect slave" (Bk. III, Ch. ii; p. 453) of a woman of fashion by copying her clothing in miniature to dress dolls. Also, she is almost savage to her alcoholic father, ordering, "Go along with you! Go along into your corner!" (Bk. II, Ch. ii; p. 249). "I'll circumstance you and control you too," she scolds (Bk. II, Ch. ii; p. 249). Yet Jenny's manipulation is not done venally. She gains nothing from control and, in fact, believes herself to be doing the right thing by scolding her "bad boy."

Bella Wilfer does desire to control others mercenarily. She has every intention of marrying money. However, she never actually attempts to control anyone for her own gain. Mrs. Lammle states that she will show Bella rich men who will "fall at her feet enslaved" (Bk. III, Ch. v; p. 488). But Bella never meets any men, and certainly never enslaves them. She does, however, take pleasure in manipulating her father for no reason in the retreat at the Wilfer's home. She is fully aware that she is his "lovely woman" (Bk. III, Ch. xvi; p. 628), and she plays the part to the hilt. After she marries Harmon, she is as condescending to her father as Jenny Wren is to hers:

"He has been grubbing at school," said Bella, looking at her

father's hand and lightly slapping it. . . . The cherub . . . was accordingly conducted to a little washing-room, where Bella soaped his face and rubbed his face, and soaped his hands and rubbed his hands, and splashed him and rinsed him and towelled him, until he was as red as beet-root, even to his very ears. . . . "Be good directly, and do as you are told!" (Bk. IV, Ch. v; p. 713)

Although Bella is manipulative, her manner with her father is "playful" and whimsical (Bk. IV, Ch. v; p. 714). She never hopes to gain anything for herself as a result of her manipulation.

In his control of Mr. Dolls and of Bradley Headstone, Wrayburn is malicious and even evil. He brings on Mr. Dolls' death by paying in rum for information which Eugene intends to use to control Lizzie Hexam. Also, he takes great pleasure in taunting Bradley Headstone. Eugene travels out at night fully aware that Bradley is "secretly" following him. Eugene doubles back, passing Headstone, and pretends to ignore him as he contorts in fits of passion. Eugene also basks in his power over Lizzie. When he meets her at the Weir in the seclusion of her inactive retreat, he has full control over her; her only defense is to run away. Eugene delights in his power for the sake of power itself, not for its results, as he muses, "Yet I have gained a wonderful power over her, too, let her be as much in earnest as she will" (Bk. IV, Ch. vi; p. 725). Eugene manipulates for the pure pleasure of control. Like Mr. Venus, Jenny Wren, and Bella Wilfer, Eugene does not seek to control for material self gain. The lack of greed separates these manipulators from the "villains" in the story. It is true that Eugene Wrayburn's sadistic pleasure in manipulation may at first seem more reprehensible than the villains' venality. However, just as Mr. Venus observed that the "lovely

trophies of his art" had done nothing for him, so a satisfaction that does not bear some tangible fruits for the self will not last long. Eugene controls Lizzie; but getting nothing for himself from such a relationship, he longs for something more.

It is a seemingly perverse but realistic notion present in Our Mutual Friend that the self always seeks gratification. All the characters in the novel desire personal happiness. The villains believe that manipulating others will result in happiness. The benevolent characters believe that giving to others makes themselves and others happy too. Bella, Eugene, Jenny, and Venus see no hope for happiness through manipulation. They, too, desire happiness, but because they feel that they are retreating pawns and that nothing they do can benefit them, they are still searching for the route to happiness. Consequently, they are susceptible to change evoked by the contest of the dual forces of manipulation and benevolence. Whether disguised or not, the two camps of characters--manipulators and benefactors--become external models of dual behavior and evoke benevolent change in the dissatisfied manipulators.

CHAPTER IV

EXTERNAL DUALITY AND BENEVOLENCE IN OUR MUTUAL FRIEND

Manipulation for self-gain is condemned as reprehensible in the novel, but any type of manipulation is held up as a bad example. Critics have praised the order created by Miss Abbey Potterson at the Six-Jolly Fellowship-Porters Inn. Garrett Stewart refers to the tavern as a "haven divided from the rough world."¹⁵ It is true that Miss Abbey has created an ordered environment, but only by use of control. She is "the law here" (Bk. I, Ch. vi; p. 65), and her tavern is a separate society imbedded in the society of the novel. Abbey is compared to a schoolmistress, and the men who frequent her tavern are her pupils. Abbey tells the men when to go home, and they do not balk: "'George Jones, your time is up! I told your wife you should be punctual.' Jones submissively rose, gave the company good night, and retired" (Bk. I, Ch. vi; p. 67). Also, Abbey controls the lowest of the "birds of prey"--Rogue Riderhood. She tells Rogue "I am not afraid of you . . . if you mean that." And he replies, "But I humbly don't mean that, Miss Abbey" (Bk. I, Ch. vi; p. 65). Abbey forbids both Riderhood and Gaffer Hexam entrance into her ordered tavern: "They are both tarred with a dirty brush [rumor of

¹⁵Garrett Stewart, "The Golden Bower of Our Mutual Friend," in Dickens and the Trials of Imagination (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 200.

the murder of John Harmon], and I can't have the Fellowships tarred with the same brush" (Bk. I, Ch. vi; p. 71). Abbey offers the offenders no mercy. She sacrifices justice to maintain order. Her control is unjust since the innocent Gaffer did not deserve to be cast out of the Fellowships. Abbey, of course, desires to do what is right; however, she is fallible; and her use of control causes an innocent individual to suffer in order to spare the whole.

Manipulation, then, even for good ends, is not praised in the novel. The most striking example of this is in the change of Mr. Venus, Jenny Wren, Bella Wilfer, and Eugene Wrayburn. As I have illustrated, none of these characters is internally torn between differing perceptions of himself. At the opening of the novel each sees himself as an unproductive manipulator. However, once exposed to positive and negative external examples of active behavior, these characters begin their metamorphoses. In his discussion of Our Mutual Friend, Masao Miyoshi suggests that "role playing is each character's way of testing the possibilities still open to him so as to choose what he ultimately will be."¹⁶ However, the main characters in Our Mutual Friend do not "test" the possibilities themselves; rather, they observe their external possibilities. Because all of these characters are dissatisfied manipulators and feel they cannot change their situations or even their perceptions of them, they cannot

¹⁶Masao Miyoshi, "Resolution of Identity in Our Mutual Friend," Victorian Newsletter, 16 (Fall, 1964), 8.

change their conditions alone. They must be convinced of their productivity. In Our Mutual Friend Bella, Eugene, Venus, and Jenny are changed by external role models. Each of these developing characters is exposed to a manipulative and a benevolent model of behavior. Each character sees externalized before him the conflict between what he is and what he might become. Once exposed to their examples of manipulation and benevolence, these dissatisfied manipulators change and become benevolent. When he meets Boffin, Mr. Venus rejects the bad influence of the manipulator Wegg, who desires to control and extract money from Boffin.

Jenny renounces her manipulative ways when she meets Sloppy. As she tells Eugene, her manipulator, a bad dog can "reform and be a good dog" (Bk. II, Ch. ii; p. 243). And so does Jenny when she is robbed of the ability to control. Her "bad boy" dies, and "He" (Sloppy) finally arrives to deliver Jenny from her imaginative retreat. Sloppy is clearly not to be manipulated. He, like Jenny and Venus, is an active artisan. He makes his own decisions and will not be controlled by Jenny's leading questions. She picks up her cane to demonstrate her gait: "Hoppetty, Kicketty, Peg-peg-peg. Not pretty; is it?" But he replies "It seems to me you hardly want it [the cane] at all" (Bk. IV, Ch. xvi; p. 844). Sloppy's good influence, in contrast with the example of Eugene, causes Jenny to sever her ties of manipulation and rewards her with a relationship that promises to bloom into love.

Bella, of course, is purged of the desire, but not the opportunity, to control. She learns to offer of herself rather than

to take selfishly from others. Just as Venus and Jenny are changed by new influences, Bella is changed by the influence of Boffin and Harmon. Her good and bad example work to turn Bella to benevolism not by manipulation but, rather, by example.

At the opening of the novel, John Harmon and Noddy Boffin are in retreat. Harmon is legally "dead," and Boffin is nestled in his bower. Boffin and Harmon, like the other retreating characters, become benevolent as a result of external role models. Mrs. Boffin urges Noddy to act up to his fortune and to stop retreating as Old Harmon had done. Young Harmon refuses to follow in the footsteps of his manipulative father and, instead, follows the Boffins' path of benevolism. However, Boffin and Harmon escape the tendency toward manipulation into which Jenny Wren, Bella Wilfer, Mr. Venus, and Eugene Wrayburn fall. The only difference is that, whereas Venus, Jenny, Bella, and Eugene seek control (but not materialistic gain), Harmon and Boffin desire neither. That is not to say that they are wholly altruistic; for, surely, Harmon desires to see Bella changed so that she might love him, and Boffin reveals himself as a pretended miser so that she might love him as well. But their motive is not to control, and their concern for themselves is not placed before their concern for others.

Boffin's play-acting reaps generous gain. Bella, on seeing Boffin's "coming out as a regular old brown one" throws off her venality. However, the example of Boffin does not change her as much as the example of Rokesmith does. Boffin and Harmon do not, by any means, manipulate Bella to make her change. Rather, as Bella

later says, they become "finger-post[s]" to generous behavior. When Rokesmith first approaches Bella with declarations of love, her response is:

"Is it generous and honorable to use the power here which your favor with Mr. and Mrs. Boffin and your ability in your place give you, against me . . . bringing their influence to bear upon a suit which I have shown you that I do not like?" (Bk. II, Ch. xiii; p. 392)

Bella's question is at the heart of an understanding of Our Mutual Friend. It certainly is not generous or honorable to manipulate, whether for materialistic gain or otherwise. Harmon's and Boffin's ruse is not a manipulation of Bella. They do not bring their influence to bear on her. Rather, they supply her with the opportunity to see and do what is right. She is free to take or reject the opportunity as she sees fit. Boffin and Harmon are the externalization of Bella's choices. She can either manipulate others, as Miser Boffin does, or she can rebel against manipulation and become benevolent, as Harmon does. Because she feels sympathy for John and subordinates her own desires to her concern for him, Bella becomes benevolent; but the change is her own. Bella's freedom is reinforced in the novel by the fact that Mrs. Lammle, who had desired to manipulate the benevolent Georgiana Podsnap, does not change and act benevolently when shown generosity. When Georgiana discovers that the Lammles have no money, she signs her jewels over to the couple. Mr. Lammle is perfectly happy to accept Miss Podsnap's gift and only becomes "sentimental" upon Boffin's "appropriation of the jewels" (Bk. IV, Ch. ii; p. 676). When Georgiana's benevolence is juxtaposed with Mr. Lammle's greed, Mrs. Lammle does become sentimental. She feels the "generous"

response--"some tears fell from her eyes." However, she does not act on what she feels but remains linked to Alfred by "concealed handcuffs" as they turn "out of this world" in retreat (Bk. IV, Ch. ii; p. 677). Just as Bella does, Mrs. Lammle sees what is right, and she feels what is right; however, she cannot act on what she understands. Unlike Bella, Mrs. Lammle is controlled. Because she is not free she cannot make the choice she feels is right.

CHAPTER V

DUALITY AND FREEDOM IN OUR MUTUAL FRIEND

Freedom is one of the most important concepts in Our Mutual Friend. Manipulation is the greatest evil in the novel, and freedom, after benevolence, the greatest good. These moral judgments are not arbitrary. They are intertwined with the novel's concept of duality. Since the main characters in Our Mutual Friend are not split between two internal extremes and since they believe themselves incapable of bringing about change in their own lives, their regeneration must be initiated by other characters. External conflicts between the villains and the heroes cause each developing character to contemplate his own condition, to realize his unproductivity, to become active, and to choose one of the two exemplified behaviors and internalize it. In order for the characters to make a choice from two external possibilities, they must be free. If they are manipulated or if they manipulate others, they lose all freedom of choice.

Eugene Wrayburn, at first, attempts to manipulate his one positive example of behavior, Lizzie Hexam. By forcing Lizzie into retreat, Eugene prevents her from becoming his example of benevolence. When Eugene seeks control, Lizzie seeks retreat.

These two tendencies come to a head when Eugene meets Lizzie after she has fled from him to a retreat by the river. Lizzie, seeing that she cannot deal with Eugene's manipulation, takes her one mode of defense and runs away. As the two part, each maintains his

respective tendency. Dickens notes that "The rippling of the river seemed to cause a correspondent stir in . . . Eugene's uneasy reflections" (Bk. IV, Ch. vi; p. 727). Simultaneously, Lizzie "had meditated and taken comfort" (Bk. IV, Ch. vi; p. 728).

Eugene has before him the manipulative example of Bradley Headstone who desires to kill him and the benevolent example of Lizzie Hexam who sacrificed herself for her brother, Charley. However, while Eugene controls Lizzie, she cannot stimulate him to positive change. H. M. S. Daleski claims that the degeneration of Bradley Headstone is the cause of Eugene's redemption.¹⁷ Certainly, Eugene's negative influence is important; however, Lizzie's benevolence is equally important.

When Bradley strikes Eugene, he frees Lizzie so that she can become benevolent. Once Eugene is immobile, Lizzie becomes benevolently active.

Without vain waste of breath in crying for help where there were none to hear, she ran towards the spot from which the sounds had come. . . . A sure touch of her old practiced hand, a sure step of her old practiced foot, a sure light balance of her body, and she was in the boat. . . . Another moment, and she had cast off (taking the line with her), and the boat had shot out into the moonlight, and she was rowing down the stream as never other woman rowed on English water (Book IV, Ch. vi; p. 729).

Once Eugene is unconscious and Lizzie is free of his manipulation, she can become his positive model of behavior and evoke his change. "It was only in that moment that she thought of herself, and then

¹⁷H. M. Daleski, Dickens and the Art of Analogy (New York: Schocken Books, 1970), pp. 328-29.

she thought of herself only for him" (Bk. IV, Ch. vi; p. 730).

Lizzie's selflessness convinces Eugene of right action. He sees that benevolence, unlike manipulation, is productive both for the self and for others. When he returns from his faint, practically reincarnated by Lizzie's vigil at his bedside, he chooses to marry her, despite her social position, and to live with her among the society of the novel rather than to retreat to the colonies.

Both Bella and Eugene are transformed by benevolence in the face of manipulation. They are not "good fellow[s] all along." They are changed by the external contest of dual example. They see the unproductivity of manipulation and the productivity of benevolence; and, consequently, they choose to become their opposites, replacing manipulation with benevolence in their lives. However, in order to change, they must neither manipulate nor allow themselves to be manipulated--either by others or by themselves. These inactive characters must be freed from their perceptions of themselves by active benevolence--the unmanipulative and unmanipulated influence of external example.

CHAPTER VI

BRADLEY HEADSTONE AS A FORESHADOWING OF DUALITY IN

THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD

Our Mutual Friend illustrates only external duality--either that purposely assumed by characters who intend to manipulate (the villains) or that purposely assumed by benevolent characters in order to initiate change (Boffin, Harmon, Venus). Any seeming internal duality in the novel is actually change. Furthermore, characters change not because they are internally torn, but because of the external influence of dialectic character types.

This theory is true of all the characters in the novel but one--Bradley Headstone. Headstone is clearly an oddity in Our Mutual Friend. Unlike any other character, Headstone is, at the opening of the novel, internally torn between extremes. Other characters claim to be torn. Bella believes that she is at war with herself, but she suffers no real internal duality. She never experiences doubt until she is exposed to her external examples--Boffin and Harmon. Bella is not unsure of her identity; she is merely going through the process of change. Bradley Headstone, however, is as John M. Robson wrote, "the schizoid pursuit of incompatible goals."¹⁸ From the beginning, Bradley prides his respectability above all things; but,

¹⁸John M. Robson, "Our Mutual Friend: A Rhetorical Approach to the First Number," Dickens Studies Annual, 3 (1974), 208.

in order to possess such an attitude, he has "suppressed whatever vitality he does possess."¹⁹ According to Edwin Pugh, Bradley's "drab respectability" cloaks "scarlet passion."²⁰ The first mention of Headstone in the novel presents him donning decency externally.

Bradley Headstone his decent black coat and waistcoat, and decent formal black tie, and decent pantaloons of pepper and salt, with his decent hair guard round his neck, looked a thoroughly decent young man of six and twenty. (Bk. II, Ch. i; p. 224)

Bradley has learned his respectability.

He had acquired mechanically a great store of teacher's knowledge. He could do mental arithmetic mechanically, sing at sight mechanically, blow various wind instruments mechanically, even play the great church organ mechanically. (Bk. II, Ch. i; p. 224)

If this were not enough, Dickens blatantly states: "Suppression of so much to make room for so much, had given him a constrained manner" (Bk. II, Ch. i; p. 225). From the beginning, Dickens sets up Bradley as internally torn and even goes on to outline Bradley's tics, such as finger biting, which John Romano calls "the revenge of the depths against the deceitful surface."²¹ But Bradley's deceitful surface is not like that of the villains in the novel. He doesn't merely adopt respectability in order to manipulate others. Bradley

¹⁹Frank Lawrence, "The Intelligibility of Madness in Our Mutual Friend and The Mystery of Edwin Drood," in Dickens Studies Annual, 5 (1976), 155.

²⁰Edwin Pugh, Charles Dickens: The Apostle of the People (London: The New Age Press, 1908), p. 262.

²¹John Romano, "The Hollow down by the Flare," in

is just as intent on deceiving himself. Unlike Rogue Riderhood or Silas Wegg, Headstone is not designing because he is not in control of himself. When he follows Eugene Wrayburn at night, he contorts in fits of passion; when he meets Lizzie to warn her of Eugene's intentions, he experiences a "tight screwing movement of his right hand in the clenching palm of his left" (Bk. II, Ch. xi; p. 358); and when he finally proposes to Lizzie, he claims to "have no government" of himself (Bk. II, Ch. xv; p. 411); he brings "his clenched hand" down upon a stone "with a force that laid the knuckles raw and bleeding" (Bk. II, Ch. xv; p. 414) and threatens Eugene Wrayburn's life.

Bradley Headstone is not like any of the other characters in Our Mutual Friend. He is not like the villains because he is exposed to models of positive and negative behavior without being totally manipulated by the negative example as, for instance, Mrs. Lammle is. He is not like the heroes because he does not change and become benevolent once he strikes Eugene and eliminates the one manipulative force in his life. Bradley is unlike all the characters in Our Mutual Friend because his conflict is within himself. Since destruction of outside control cannot order internal chaos, the freedom that is mandated so strongly in Our Mutual Friend cannot aid Bradley Headstone. In fact, Dickens seems at a loss as to how to deal with Bradley. He is an attempted murderer; yet, because freedom is so strongly set

forth in Our Mutual Friend, no justice can be wreaked on Headstone. If Eugene Wrayburn were to seek revenge on Bradley, he would be interfering with his freedom--manipulating him--the greatest evil in the novel. In Our Mutual Friend no justice is ever carried out by means of manipulation. At the end of the novel, Boffin offers retribution to Silas Wegg and, when refused, pushes him into a dung cart. Evil characters cannot be reprimanded by the law since it too seeks to manipulate. In fact, the proponents of the law--Mortimer, Eugene, and the Inspector--have little faith in the legal system. They all agree that "according to the success with which you put this and that together, you get a woman and a fish apart, or a Mermaid in combination" (Bk. I, Ch. iii; p. 32). Eugene's lack of faith in the law is one reason he resists revenge on Headstone. As Eugene says to Mortimer, "I trust to you that the perpetrator is never brought to justice" (Bk. IV, Ch. x; p. 769).

Such a conception of freedom obviously breaks down any positive notion of justice and makes it impossible to deal realistically with evil. Neither the characters nor the law can punish evil by restricting freedom; consequently, the evil characters in the novel, Bradley Headstone and Rogue Riderhood, must kill each other. The novel's reverence for freedom cannot deal with a Bradley Headstone. Because his conflict is internal, freedom cannot regenerate him.

Bradley Headstone is Dickens' growth toward a more complex notion of duality which is crystallized in his last novel, The Mystery of Edwin Drood. Although Dickens died in the middle of his

creation, its thematic direction is clear. The evolution of Bradley Headstone and his incompatibility with the rest of Our Mutual Friend seems to have stirred another concept of duality in Dickens' mind. In The Mystery of Edwin Drood Dickens clearly sets up internal duality.

CHAPTER VII

EXTERNAL DUALITY IN THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD

In Our Mutual Friend developing characters are exposed to two external models of action: a benefactor and a manipulator. In The Mystery of Edwin Drood each of the main characters has an internal conflict, and its two sides correspond to a desire to manipulate and a desire to be benevolent.

Septimus Crisparkle is a former coach and reverend. He still boxes in the confines of Minor Canon Corner and is as interested in the health of the body as in the health of the soul. Crisparkle is paradoxically described as having "a soft-hearted benevolence" which "beamed from his boxing gloves."²² Edwin Drood's love, Rosa Budd, is revealed as obviously dual just by her picture; her beauty is described as "remarkable," yet she displays a "touch of saucy discontent" (Ch. 2; p. 43). She can either please Drood with her beauty or manipulate him with her childish whims. The stonemason, Durdles, is described both as a "wonderful workman" and a "wonderful sot" (Ch. 4; p. 67). Furthermore, he speaks of himself in third person as if he were unsure of his own identity. Durdles manipulates the materials of his art, yet his tendency to drink allows him the opportunity to aid Deputy benevolently by paying him for his "Wee Widdy Warnings."

²²Charles Dickens, The Mystery of Edwin Drood, ed. Arthur J. Cox (New York: Penguin Books, 1980), p. 78; further references to this edition will be noted in the text by chapter and page numbers.

Luke Honeythunder is a manipulative ass who pretends to be benevolent. He is introduced as a philanthropist who aids his "fellow-creatures" by "bumping them into the paths of peace" (Ch. 6; p. 81). Neville Landless plainly has a burning passion subdued by years of restraint. And his sister, Helena, was never "subdued" by anything in her "misery" and shows "the daring of a man" (Ch. 7; p. 90). Mr. Grewgious claims himself to be a "particularly Angular man" (Ch. 9; p. 113) inexperienced in "young ways" (Ch. 9; p. 114), yet he explains love to Drood. Furthermore, as "awkward and hesitating" as Grewgious appears on the outside, he still has "some strange capacity in him of making on the whole an agreeable impression" (Ch. 9; p. 110). Bazzard claims that Grewgious manipulates him, yet Grewgious is Rosa's benefactor. Drood, himself, is torn between the notions of benevolence and egotism. He intends to become a missionary in Egypt, yet he holds a decidedly condescending attitude toward the foreigners, Neville and Helena. Furthermore, he claims to be in love with Rosa, yet he desires to control her as a pet and calls her "Pussy." Miss Twinkleton exposes "two states of consciousness which never clash, but each of which pursues its separate course as though it were continuous instead of broken." Miss Twinkleton is the straight-laced school marm in charge of the Seminary for Young Ladies in Cloisterham. By day she is "ignorant as a granite pillar" of the affections of her beau, Mr. Porters. But "Every night, the moment the young ladies have retired to rest," she "compassionately" refers to him as "Foolish Mr. Porters" (Ch. 3; p. 53).

But the most obviously dual character in the novel is John Jasper. Jasper spends his days conducting the Cathedral choir and his nights lying in a drugged stupor in Princess Puffer's opium den. An early glimpse of John Jasper reveals "his own solitary shadow betwixt his two windows--the one looking this way and the one looking down into the High Street" (Ch. 2; p. 42). Metaphorically, Jasper is positioned between two different ways of looking at his world. On one hand, Jasper is "Lay Precentor" of the Cathedral and enjoys "the reputation of having done such wonders with the choir" (Ch. 2; p. 48). He is a quiet, passive man with, as Drood says, "a gift of teaching" and "connexion" (Ch. 2; p. 48). Superficially, Jasper seems to have found his "niche in life," but he claims that he is "not made for his vocation" but, rather, must "subdue himself to it" (Ch. 2; p. 49). Like Bradley Headstone, Jasper has suppressed "so much to make room for so much." He pretends to enjoy his occupation because "It's too late to find another now" (Ch. 2; p. 49).

Actually, Jasper regards his existence as a "cramped monotony" and claims

the echoes of my own voice among the arches seem to mock me with my daily drudging round. No wretched monk who droned his life away in that gloomy place, before me, can have been more tired of it than I am. (Ch. 2; p. 49)

In London Jasper escapes the monotony of Cloisterham in the opium den of Princess Puffer. The opening of the novel finds him lost in an opium dream of Turkish robbers, flashing scimitars, white elephants, and a writhing figure on a grim spike inspired by "the rusty spike on the top of a post of an old bedstead that has tumbled all awry"

(Ch. 1; p. 37). Jasper dreams in the dens of London then returns to his drudgery at the Cathedral. More than Miss Templeton's, Jasper's mental state seems to be one of those "cases of drunkenness" or of "animal magnetism" in which there are two states of consciousness which never clash, but each of which pursues its separate course as though it were continuous instead of broken" (Ch. 3; p. 53). Jasper is a respected choirmaster, but he is also a cold-hearted manipulator.

Jasper attempts to manipulate by pretending subordination. As Dickens' notes read: "Connect Jasper with [Mr. Sapsea]." He may "want a solemn donkey bye and bye."²³ Jasper obviously considers Sapsea a fool but pretends to admire him probably because he intends to use Sapsea for his own ends. When Sapsea begins droning on about his wife's dedication to him, "Jasper, in the act of yawning behind his wineglass, puts down that screen and calls up [my italics] a look of interest" (Ch. 4; p. 65). When Mr. Sapsea begins to "reproach" himself for his wife's death ("What if her husband had been nearer on a level with her? If she had not had to look up quite so high, what might the stimulating action have been upon the liver?"), Jasper puts on "an appearance of having fallen into dreadfully low spirits" (Ch. 4; p. 66). But the most obvious example of Jasper's pretended admiration is his response to Sapsea's self-praising verse to his dead wife: "'Admirable!' quoth Mr. Jasper, handing back the paper"

²³Charles Dickens, "Appendix" in The Mystery of Edwin Drood, p. 285.

(Ch. 4; p. 67). Jasper manipulates Sapsea with flattery in order to make him vulnerable to further manipulation. As Dickens puts it, the visitor [Jasper] intimates that he will come back for more of the precious commodity on future occasions" (Ch. 4; p. 71).

Jasper also manipulates Durdles. After following Durdles on his nightly journeys through the tombs, Jasper tells Durdles "'I am beginning to have some idea of asking you to take me on as a sort of student, or free 'prentice, under you'" (Ch. 5; p. 75). Again, Jasper subordinates himself and uses flattery in an attempt to gain control. Jasper uses his benevolent image as a respected citizen of Cloisterham to further his manipulative ends. Pretending to be a friend of Durdles, Jasper offers him a drink and, presumably, drugs him in order to steal his keys to the tombs.

Also, Jasper attempts to control his nephew, Drood. Because Jasper is Drood's relative and, in a sense, his guardian, when Drood receives his father's will, Grewious desires also "to place a certified copy of it in Mr. Jasper's hands" (Ch. 9; p. 113). As a guardian and a friend, Jasper attempts to control Drood's decisions. When Jasper tells his nephew of his "'stray sort of ambition, aspiration, restlessness, dissatisfaction,'" he adds, "'Take it as warning then'" (Ch. 2; p. 49). Again Jasper's attempt to control is camouflaged as benevolence. Drood responds "deeply" to Jasper's speech stating "'Of course I knew that you were extremely fond of me, but I really was not prepared for your, as I may say, sacrificing yourself to me, in that way'" (Ch. 2; p. 49). Jasper pretends subordination as he attempts to control.

Presumably Jasper does eventually control Drood completely. He either kills Drood and locks his body in one of the tombs with the keys stolen from Durdles or, perhaps, hides Drood in one of the tombs and leaves him lying like the dead nuns at Miss Twinkleton's "walled up alive in odd angles and jutting gables of the building for having some ineradicable leaven of busy Mother nature" in him (Ch. 3; p. 52). But whether Drood is dead or not it is obvious he is, as Dickens' notes read, "in hiding,"²⁴ presumably through the manipulation of Jasper.

But the real object of Jasper's manipulation is Miss Rosa Budd. Jasper again pretends to be benevolent. He is superficially Rosa's music master and responsible for her beautiful voice. Yet he actually loves and manipulates her despite the fact that she is to become his nephew's fiancée. The effects of Jasper's control on Rosa are illustrated early in the novel. When Grewgious asks for permission to give Jasper a "certified copy" of Edwin's father's will, Rosa replies "'I don't like Mr. Jasper to come between us [her and Drood] in any way'" (Ch. 9; p. 113). When Rosa and Eddy meet at the Nun's House and walk toward the Cathedral, Edwin hears the music coming from the choir and fancies he "can distinguish Jack's voice." Rosa replies

"Take me back at once please. . . . They will all be coming out directly; let us get away. Oh, what a

²⁴Charles Dickens, "Appendix," in The Mystery of Edwin Drood, p. 283.

resounding chord! But don't let us stop to listen to it; let us get away!" (Ch. 3; p. 61)

The "resounding chord" seems to strike fear in Rosa, presumably because Jasper controls her with music. One critic, Arthur J. Cox, has assumed that Jasper is a mesmerist. He states that magnetic control is not a submission but, rather, "the magnetist was 'active' and the other 'passive.'"²⁵ Jasper uses music to manipulate Rosa and to make her passive. At the dinner party at the Crisparkles', Jasper, at the piano, accompanies Rosa as she sings. But, clearly, the accompanist, not the soloist, is in control: he "followed her lips most attentively, with eyes as well as hands; carefully and softly hinting the key-note from time to time" (Ch. 7; p. 92). Jasper continues to watch "the pretty lips" and to hint "the one note" until "the singer broke into a burst of tears, and shrieked out, with her hands over her eyes: 'I can't bear this! I am frightened! Take me away!'" (Ch. 7; p. 92).

Although Jasper disappears and his attitude toward the scene is never revealed, his image as the respected choirmaster saves him from suspicion. As Helena states, Jasper's disappearance is attributed to his not liking "to be charged with being the monster who frightened" Rosa. Even so, Jasper's manipulation is witnessed in the reactions of Rosa. She claims that "'he has made a slave of me with his looks'" and that

"When he corrects me, and strikes a note, or a chord, or

²⁵Arthur J. Cox, "'If I hide my watch--,'" Dickens Studies, 3 (March, 1967), 26.

plays a passage, he himself is in the sounds, whispering that he pursues me as a lover, and commanding me to keep his secret. I avoid his eyes, but he forces me to see them without looking at them." (Ch. 7; p. 95)

Jasper does attempt to control Rosa and presumably he uses music to do so. Jasper attempts to keep his manipulative self concealed from the world and to use his respected self to manipulate.

Much like Bradley Headstone in Our Mutual Friend, the characters in The Mystery of Edwin Drood have suppressed "so much to make room for so much." In Our Mutual Friend the characters are exposed to two external models of action which correlate with the concepts of manipulation and benevolence. In The Mystery of Edwin Drood each individual has a characteristic internal conflict, and its two sides correspond to a desire to manipulate and a desire for benevolence. Our Mutual Friend praises freedom, and The Mystery of Edwin Drood praises control.

CHAPTER VIII

EXTERNAL DUALITY AND CONTROL IN

THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD

The contrast between freedom and control in the two novels is supported by a plot parallel. In Our Mutual Friend John Harmon and Bella Wilfer are willed (literally) to marry if John is to inherit his fortune. But Rosa and Edwin need not marry to obtain their inheritances. Their fathers preferred that they get married, but Edwin and Rosa are not manipulated as John and Bella are. Consequently, Rose and Edwin have no bonds to rebel against. Freedom is not their major concern because they have not been manipulated.

Certainly, Rosa and Edwin attempt to manipulate one another. Edwin becomes upset when he realizes Rosa can have fun during his absence, that he doesn't fully control her. And Rosa attempts to control Edwin by refusing his advances for so small a reason as the boots he wears. When the two finally decide to end their courtship and to think of each other as friends, they do so to avoid a "life long bondage" (Ch. 13; p. 66). Rosa explains that she wants neither to be "a drag" on Edwin--to be controlled by him--nor to "trifle with him"--to control him (Ch. 13; p. 165).

As this example suggests, manipulation for selfish reasons is despised in the novel. Mr. Grewgious lectures Edwin Drood on the nature of love, telling him that the true lover "must not make a plaything of a treasure" (Ch. 9; p. 143). Luke Honeythunder is

despised for ordering his fellow creatures: "'Curse your souls and bodies, come here and be blessed'" (Ch. 6; p. 85). And, of course, Jasper, the most evil character in the novel is considered so for his presumed murder of Edwin Drood and his attempt to control Rosa Budd.

However, all forms of control are not disparaged in The Mystery of Edwin Drood. Whereas freedom solves duality in Our Mutual Friend, control solves duality in The Mystery of Edwin Drood. In Our Mutual Friend duality is external. The characters may either remain what they are; or, if they are free, they may choose to change--to cast aside their previous identities and assume new ones. However, since duality is embodied internally in the characters in The Mystery of Edwin Drood, the only possible solution to duality is to harmonize the conflict. These characters cannot discard one side of themselves; they can only repress it. And repression ends in bodily and emotional chaos, as in the case of Bradley Headstone. When a character is torn between two sides of himself, he must right the chaos by ordering himself. The word order in The Mystery of Edwin Drood is beautifully ambiguous since it implies both manipulation and harmony. Grewgious tells Bazzard, "You are not ordered." Indeed, Bazzard is neither manipulated by Grewgious nor self-controlled, harmonized internally. In The Mystery of Edwin Drood, manipulation brings about harmony; orders create order.

The highest goal of the characters in The Mystery of Edwin Drood is to arrive at internal order. All of the characters have two sides, but all have not found a compromise between the two. In

fact, several of the characters refuse to accept one side of themselves. As Charles Mitchell says, "the characters . . . who receive the brunt of Dickens' satiric attack are those who have neglected the interior self to foster an exterior self."²⁶ Rosa Budd has repressed one side of herself. She has denied the woman in herself and given over completely to the child. She is constantly referred to as a "child" or a "girl," and at the Nun's House, she is spoiled--not unappreciatively so but, still, spoiled like a child. Rosa sees that recognition of her womanliness--her sexual side--may make her vulnerable to control. She prefers to play the spoilt child with Edwin, obviously fearing the bondage that admission of adulthood and consequent engagement would entail. Also, when Jasper controls her, she is obviously afraid of his sexual appeal. She explains to Helena a "feeling of not being safe from him, and of the solid walls of the old convent being powerless to keep out his ghostly following of her" (Ch. 20; p. 233). Rosa's innocence cannot cover up her womanliness. Before she can resist Jasper's control or begin a married life of anything but bondage to Drood, she must learn to accept both sides of herself.

Much emphasis in the novel is placed on seeing into oneself. The constant imagery of dark and light and of depth and surface implies a need to look beyond the obvious. Septimus Crisparkle is the one character in the novel who seems most in harmony, and his success

²⁶Charles Mitchell, "The Mystery of Edwin Drood: The Interior and Exterior of Self," ELH, 33 (June, 1966), 228.

is due largely to his ability to look within himself. Just as Durdles carries the keys to the depths of the catacombs, so Crisparkle has the keys to his own secret depths. Crisparkle looks within himself just as he looks into his mother's dining-room closet. He finds there

no common closet with a vulgar door on hinges, openable all at once, leaving nothing to be disclosed by degrees, this rare closet had a lock in mid-air where two perpendicular slides met: the one falling down, and the other pushing up. (Ch. 10; p. 123)

Similarly, Crisparkle finds locked within himself two opposing sides--one, generous (the reverend); and one, manipulative (the boxer). In the upper cabinet is every "benevolent inhabitant," and in the lower cabinets are the sweets and the wine. But the beauty of the closet is that anyone exposed to its depths comes forth "mellow-faced and seeming to have undergone a saccharine transfiguration." The closet is a model of harmony, overseen by a portrait of Handel--a model of Classical order--who beams "with a musical air of intending to combine all its [the closet's] harmonies in one delicious fugue" (Ch. 10; p. 123).

Harmony results in the novel only when one is both exposed to harmony and able to look within himself. Whenever the Reverend Septimus "fell a-musing, his good mother took it to be an infallible sign that he 'wanted support,'" and "made all haste to the dining-room closet" (Ch. 10; p. 123). Crisparkle is exposed to his depths while in an atmosphere of harmony.

Just as the closet becomes a model of harmony for Crisparkle, Crisparkle becomes a model for Neville Landless. Neville is torn

between his manipulative and cooperative sides because he--like Rosa--greatly fears being manipulated. Although he desires to cooperate, he meets manipulation with manipulation. Once exposed to the order of Crisparkle's house and the gravity of Cloisterham, Neville's heart and mind are opened. After his quarrel with Edwin and his talk with Crisparkle, he sees that his lack of self-control affects others and recognizes that he has upset Crisparkle's ordered household. As a result, Neville sets out to retreat to the mountains.

Retreat in The Mystery of Edwin Drood has not the negative connotation which it takes on in Our Mutual Friend. There retreat is an inhibition to freedom and a refusal to interact with others. Since duality and choice is external in Our Mutual Friend, retreat is an escape from responsibility--the responsibilities of making one's own choices and of influencing the choices of others. However, in The Mystery of Edwin Drood retreat is often the first step to self-control and harmony. Cloisterham itself is a retreat.

An Ancient City, Cloisterham, and no meet dwelling-place for any one with hankerings after the noisy world. A monotonous, silent city, deriving an earthly flavor throughout, from its Cathedral crypt, and so abounding in vestiges of monastic graves, that the Cloisterham children grow small salad in the dust of abbots and abbesses, and make dirt-pies of nuns and friars..(Ch. 3; p. 51)

As Angus Wilson says "Cloisterham itself is a place from which the good characters must escape."²⁷ They must go to London if they are to accomplish anything. However, before they act, they must

²⁷Angus Wilson, "Introduction," in The Mystery of Edwin Drood, ed. Arthur J. Cox (New York: Penguin Books, 1980), p. 27.

contemplate and order themselves. And retreat into harmony at Cloisterham--especially, at the ordered Minor Canon Corner--is the ideal place for contemplation.

Neville finally learns the necessity of looking within himself in the confines of retreat. He has been violent all along because he does not wish to be controlled. He and his sister, Helena, escaped the bondage of their earlier keepers, and they had planned to flee the expected manipulation of Crisparkle. However, once exposed to Crisparkle's order in the retreat at Cloisterham, Neville begins to order himself.

Crisparkle is a model of proper behavior for Neville just as John Harmon is for Bella Wilfer in Our Mutual Friend. However, the difference is that Neville submits himself to the control of Crisparkle.

In The Mystery of Edwin Drood characters who cannot accomplish their own self-control often desire to be controlled by others. Tope so reveres the Dean that he desires to play flunkey to him. Durdles pays Deputy to stone him out of the crypts late at night. Mr. Grewgious wants Bazzard to control him so that he will feel secure, and Bazzard wants Grewgious to control him so that he will have a reason for martyrdom. Even John Jasper, the arch manipulator in the novel, desires to be controlled. When he meets Rosa in the garden he begs her to debase him:

There is my past and my present wasted life. There is the desolation of my heart and my soul. There is my peace; there is my despair. Stamp them into the dust, so that you take me, were it even mortally hating me (Ch. 19; p. 231).

Neville Landless best sums up domination when he distinguishes between "submission to a generous spirit" and "submission to a base or trivial one" (Ch. 10; p. 126). Good men do not attempt to control unless they are requested or required to. Tartar will not aid Rosa without her permission. Crisparkle claims he can't aid Neville without his permission, and even the men who take Neville captive when he is suspected of Drood's murder claim that they had intended only to lead him home: "We wouldn't have touched you if you hadn't forced us" (Ch. 15; p. 186). Although all forms of control are disparaged in Our Mutual Friend because they prevent the realization of truth through the dialectic, models of good behavior in The Mystery of Edwin Drood do manipulate; and Crisparkle does control Neville. But as he explains to Neville how to choose a walking stick, Crisparkle inadvertently explains his own role as an example of harmony: "'You don't rest upon'" the stick; "'you merely balance with it'" (Ch. 14; p. 172). Crisparkle and his home help Neville look within and attempt to order himself. Since Neville has "not lived long in a walking country," he can only learn "with practice." He eventually finds that he cannot lean on Crisparkle; he can only learn to balance himself from Crisparkle's example and to prepare himself to leave the retreat at Minor Canon Corner and "walk" on his own.

CHAPTER IX

ORDER AND BENEVOLENCE IN THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD

Walking on their own is the goal of the characters in The Mystery of Edwin Drood. Like those in Our Mutual Friend, the men and women of The Mystery of Edwin Drood must become benevolently active. Once a character has ordered himself, it is his responsibility to order others. It is difficult to project exactly what the end of The Mystery of Edwin Drood held in store, but it is plain enough that several of the characters are destined to become benevolent. Crisparkle will aid Neville; Tartar has already begun to help Neville by promising to bring flowers to his window box. Helena Landless has already promised to aid Rosa in refusing the advances of Jasper, and she will probably become involved in freeing her brother from the suspicion of Drood's murder. But one character who most surely becomes benevolently active in the novel is Mr. Grewgious.

Mr. Grewgious has refused to admit his emotional side; however, once he comes to see that Rosa needs his compassion, he begins to feel emotions strongly. He reflects on his love for Rosa's mother, and he is reluctant to give Drood her ring, which holds so many of his denied emotions. I suspect that Datchery is Grewgious in disguise and strongly support Richard Baker's argument against the Tartarians and Bazzardites. But, in addition to Baker's proof of Datchery's identity based upon his and Grewgious' hair cuts, I have noticed an "archness" common to both Grewgious and Datchery. Throughout the

novel, Grewgious claims that he is not an "arch man" and pretends to have no understanding of irony. However, that statement itself is ironic since Grewgious is so adept at dropping ambiguous lines throughout the novel. His punning statement to Bazzard "'You're not ordered'" (Ch. 11; p. 137) suggests that Grewgious has a much deeper understanding of others than he dares to admit. When he speaks of love to Edwin Drood, Grewgious obviously understands Drood's manipulation of Rosa. Grewgious dislikes Drood's pet name for Rosa, "Pussy," and intimidates and parodies Drood for his slip of "PRosa."

Datchery displays very similar archness when he speaks with the mayor, Sapsea. Datchery sees through Sapsea's pomposity and pretended knowledge and very shrewdly insults Sapsea's intelligence while pretending to agree with him. Sapsea states "It is not enough that Justice should be morally certain; she must be immorally certain." Datchery responds "'His Honor . . . reminds me of the nature of the law. Immoral. How true!'" (Ch. 18; p. 222). Not only is the archness of this statement similar to that of Grewgious; but since it insults Sapsea as well as the law, it is doubly ironic when spoken by the disguised lawyer, Grewgious.

Furthermore, Datchery repeatedly talks of himself as a "single buffer," an idea with which Grewgious is also obsessed. Grewgious speaks of himself as an old bachelor and continually implies that such is the reason for his "Angularity," his lack of emotion, and his unfamiliarity with "young ways."

Another reason for suspicion is that Datchery appears in the novel for the first time immediately after a speech by Grewgious. At the end of Chapter 17, after the introduction of Tartar and his friendliness to Neville, the scene suddenly switches for one brief paragraph to Mr. Grewgious' consideration of the stars. His revelation that "few languages can be read until their alphabets are mastered" (Ch. 17; p. 216) applies to Tartar. He is an ordered man who understands that one must become active a step at a time. Unlike Honeythunder, who desires to save all mankind but who ignores the immediate problems of Neville and Helena, Tartar wants to feel his way to the "command of a landed estate" by "beginning in boxes" (Ch. 17; p. 215). His offer to bring his flowers to Neville is a small step toward benevolence.

But Grewgious' realization as he stares at the stars seems also to apply to Datchery. Dickens is very sensitive to juxtaposition and often implies unstated relationships between two consequent chapters. If Grewgious is indeed Datchery, his disguise may represent an attempt to look into the "windows" of himself in order to learn his "letters in the stars." Grewgious, as Datchery, is attempting to realize and harmonize his inner duality while aiding his ward, Rosa.

But in the context of my own theory, the most convincing proof that Grewgious is Datchery is that before becoming active, all chaotic characters must first retreat to look within themselves and to discover their two conflicting sides. Once they have harmonized themselves, their duty is to become active in helping others realize their inner selves. Grewgious, as Datchery, retreats to Cloisterham

to discover the truth of Drood's disappearance and to realize his other self--Datchery. At the end of the novel, Grewgious, then, must return to London to actively aid Rose in her realization of her inner self.

In The Mystery of Edwin Drood becoming active does not guarantee freedom from manipulation as it does in Our Mutual Friend. In the earlier novel action presupposes freedom; characters cannot act unless they are free. However, in The Mystery of Edwin Drood, active characters may be manipulated. Only internal order accomplishes invulnerability to control. Crisparkle becomes benevolent toward Neville much as Grewgious/Datchery does to Rosa. However, once he lets down his guard and loses faith in his own order, Crisparkle is susceptible to John Jasper's domination. Crisparkle's method for harmonizing himself is symbolized in his trips to the medicine closet with his mother. First he was exposed to the harmony of the dining-room closet to be "healed." Like Neville, Crisparkle submits to an ordered power; he is "submissively led" to the closet. Once inside the harmony of the medicine closet, Crisparkle takes the medicine administered. It leaves him nauseous, so he "takes a corrective of rose-leaves and lavender." This image seems to suggest that the ordered man must consider both sides of any question (the medicine and the rose-leaves). The man with a wholesome mind considers both alternatives and synthesizes them to reach a temperate mean.

Crisparkle generally follows the rules for harmonious thought exemplified by the dining-room and medicine closets. However, when

he once fails to examine both sides (when he doubts his order) he falls prey to Jasper's manipulation. When Neville and Drood have both disappeared, Jasper speaks with Crisparkle "honestly" about "his great prepossession against Mr. Neville Landless."

"You know that I even entered in my Diary and showed the entry to you, that I had dark forebodings against him. Mr. Grewgious ought to be possessed of the whole case. He shall not, through any suppression of mine, be informed of a part of it, and kept in ignorance of another part of it." (Ch. 16; p. 195)

Jasper's honesty causes Crisparkle to doubt his own judgment.

Jasper's "fairness troubled the Minor Canon much. He felt that he was not as open in his own dealing" and feared that his suppression of Neville's outbreaks of temper against Edwin Drood might be "a piecing together of falsehood in the place of truth" (Ch. 16; p. 196). With this loss of order Crisparkle retreats to Cloisterham Weir where he falls prey to the control--perhaps, mesmerism--of Jasper and discovers Drood's watch and shirt-pin.

Crisparkle's justice, then, is fallible. Of course, he is right that Neville is not guilty, but his method for arriving at the truth by weighing both sides of the question is affected by his human imperfection--his predilection for Neville. Crisparkle suggests the order created by Abbey Potterson in Our Mutual Friend. At Minor Canon Corner he has set up an ordered retreat similar to the Six-Jolly Fellowship-Porters Inn. Like Abbey, Crisparkle is fallible--or at least his method is. But, whereas Abbey's manipulation is disparaged in Our Mutual Friend, the manipulation of justice is accepted in the later novel, even in the face of human imperfection. It is true that

Crisparkle tells Mr. Honeythunder that a clergyman's "first duty" is not "the discovery and punishment of guilt" (Ch. 17; p. 205). However, despite its lesser importance, Crisparkle never denies its necessity. Furthermore, Collins' illustration for the frontispiece of The Mystery of Edwin Drood seems to suggest that Crisparkle will be among those who finally discover justice. Many critics, for example, C. F. Lehman-Haupt, feel that the first or second figure ascending the staircase may be Crisparkle chasing Jasper who holds the key to the truth of Drood's disappearance.²⁸

The Mystery of Edwin Drood admits that only ordered men may escape manipulation. However, even the most ordered men are never completely so. Despite their imperfection, men who have learned to look within themselves and to attempt to synthesize their two conflicting selves have a responsibility to the disordered man. Since the chaotic man is vulnerable to manipulation--either detrimental or benevolent--the ordered man must take it upon himself to manipulate the disordered man for his own good--to aid him in an attempt to become introspective and to harmonize himself so as to become invulnerable to manipulation.

²⁸C. F. Lehmann-Haupt, "New Facts Concerning Edwin Drood," Dickensian, 25 (Summer, 1929), 169.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

G. K. Chesterton called Dickens' Our Mutual Friend, "the Indian summer of his farce."²⁹ In his last completed novel, Dickens creates a world that praises absolute freedom. Our Mutual Friend illustrates ubiquitous greed and selfish manipulation but praises freedom to the point of refusing to accept the need to punish evil and, therefore, denying the very existence of evil. The world of Our Mutual Friend is unreal--seen through rose-colored glasses, or, perhaps, through the mirror in Veneering's dining room. As a rule, the novel's characters express a surety about themselves and their environment; and when they develop dissatisfaction with either or both, they cope with their situations by altering themselves so as to duplicate external models of behavior. Overall, Our Mutual Friend presents a positive view of man. It claims, as Jenny Wren asserts, that a bad dog can "reform and be a good dog" (Bk. II; p. 243), that social barriers can be broken down with human benevolism. Yet within the novel's ideal world, where good triumphs despite the insurrection of selfish manipulation, a creeping pessimism slithers in taking the form of Bradley Headstone. The world of Our Mutual Friend cannot admit, much less hope to rejuvenate, Bradley Headstone since his conflict

²⁹G. K. Chesterton, Appreciations and Criticisms of the Works of Charles Dickens (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1911), p. 207.

cannot be solved through freedom. Seemingly, Dickens discovered during the course of Our Mutual Friend a conception of man's duality which an ideal world cannot resolve. Evil does actually exist and must be accounted for. Dickens' last novel, The Mystery of Edwin Drood, attempts to produce an ideal solution to internal duality in the real world. In The Mystery of Edwin Drood, man, despite his unsureness of himself and his environment, manages both to carry out active benevolence (similar to that realized in the ideal world of Our Mutual Friend) and to harmonize himself so that he becomes as nearly ideal as possible in the real world. The Mystery of Edwin Drood presents Dickens' maturation of the theme of duality initiated in Our Mutual Friend.

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VITA

Apryl Lea Denny was born in Fairfield, California and attended elementary school in Gainesville, Georgia. She graduated from John S. Battle High School in Bristol, Virginia, in June 1977 and received a Bachelor of Arts in English from The University of Tennessee in 1981. The following fall she accepted a teaching assistantship at The University of Tennessee and began study towards a Master's degree.

The author is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, the Modern Language Association, and the Dickens Society. After graduation she will begin study toward the Ph.D. in English at the University of Colorado, Boulder, where she will also be employed as a part-time Instructor.