

Great Expectations: Another Version of Dickens's David Copperfield

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce analyzuje romány Charlese Dickense *David Copperfield* a *Nadějně Vyhlídky* s cílem prokázat, že oba romány jsou příkladem autobiografické beletrie, přičemž pozdější z novel je další verzí té předchozí. Tato práce představuje stěžejní momenty Dickensova života; vysvětluje jeho důvody pro napsání daných románů a poukazuje na podobnosti i odlišnosti těchto dvou děl. Hlavním cílem práce je dokázat, že v díle *Nadějně Vyhlídky* se Charles Dickens více soustřeďuje na svou povinnost autora mravně vzdělávat čtenáře. Díky tomu je tento román kritickým přepisem díla *David Copperfield*.

Klíčová slova: Charles Dickens, David Copperfield, Nadějně Vyhlídky, autobiografická beletrie, viktoriánská společnost, gentleman, bildungsroman, kritický přepis, mravní účel umění.

ABSTRACT

The thesis analyzes Charles Dickens's novels *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectation* with the aim of demonstrating that both novels are an example of autobiographical fiction and that the later novel can be considered another version of the earlier. The thesis introduces key moments from Dickens's life; explains the reasons behind writing the two novels and reveals both the similarities and differences in the novels. The main objective of the thesis is to prove that in *Great Expectations* Charles Dickens focused more on his moral purpose of an author which is why the novel serves as a critical rewriting of *David Copperfield*.

Keywords: Charles Dickens, David Copperfield, Great Expectations, autobiographical fiction, Victorian society, gentleman, bildungsroman, critical rewriting, moral purpose of art.

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's/Master's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the characters from Dickens's novel *Dombey and Son* said that "vices are sometimes only virtues carried to excess."¹ It is interesting that this quote also defines the actions of Pip, the main character from another Dickens's novel *Great Expectations*. The character wants to become a gentleman, which on the first sight appears to be a good thing. But paradoxically, when he achieves this goal, it has much larger impact on his vices than on his virtues. With the character of Pip, Dickens shows us what should be the true values of a mature man and criticizes Victorian society. By doing this, he is redefining the relationship with his reading audience and focuses on his moral purpose of an author. This thesis explores Dickens's novels *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations* and analyzes them as autobiographical fiction to show that the later novel is another version of the earlier one with the difference that in *Great Expectations*, Dickens lays much more emphasis on the moral value of his art.

The thesis will firstly introduce Charles Dickens and the key moments of his life that he later depicted in both *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*. Next, the reasons why Charles Dickens never wrote a straightforward autobiography will be analysed. Then the thesis will focus on Dickens's urge to reinvent himself in the characters of David and Pip. The last part of the theory will describe the *bildungsroman* genre in which the two novels were written. In the analysis, the two novels will be put to a test to show whether they truly fit the *bildungsroman*. Next, the autobiographical elements in the novels will be explored and it will be explained why *Great Expectations* can be considered a rewriting of *David Copperfield*. The purpose of this thesis is to show that Dickens reinvented himself in the figure of David, but as his values changed, he needed to reinvent himself once more in the figure of Pip. That is why *Great Expectations* is another version of *David Copperfield*.

¹ "Charles Dickens Quote," Charles Dickens Info, accessed April 20, 2018, <https://www.charlesdickensinfo.com/quotes/single-quote/?QuoteId=101>.

I. THEORY

1 Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) was an author of the Victorian era who wrote 15 novels and many more short stories and other works.² Although his family was struggling with money, he managed to become a successful author thanks to his ambition and endeavour, as will be examined in the following chapters. In the thesis, a brief biography of Charles Dickens will be introduced, followed by the explanation of Dickens's troubles with writing an autobiography, and eventually using fiction to do so. Lastly, Dickens's urge to rewrite his first autobiographical novel will be analysed with the focus on the reasons he had for such reinvention. The following part of the thesis is centred on the experiences that shaped Dickens's life and stimulated his career as a novelist.

1.1 *The life of Charles Dickens*

Charles Dickens was born at Landport in Portsea on the 7th of February, 1812. His father, John Dickens, was a clerk in the Navy-pay office in Portsmouth where he met Dickens's mother, Elizabeth, with whom they had eight children, two of which died in infancy.³ This chapter explores the key fragments of the life of Charles Dickens with the focus on such experiences that served as a template for the autobiographical parts of Dickens's novels. On the following pages, Dickens's childhood, his experience with working in a blacking warehouse or the relationship with his wife will be analysed.

Because of his father's profession, young Charles Dickens and his family were frequently moving houses. However, most of Dickens's childhood memories were from the times when they lived in Chatham. He was a sickly boy back then and did not play outside with the other kids; instead of that he spent most of his time reading. His parents did not take much care of him, but one thing he was certainly grateful for was that his mother taught him to read and awoken the passion for it in him. His father had a collection of books which young Charles loved to read as he imagined the heroes of these books were his friends. This helped him to develop his imagination and subsequently, he began to write his own stories.⁴ The fact that he fell in love with literature already in childhood makes it

² "List of Works by Charles Dickens," Charles Dickens Info, accessed April 20, 2018, <https://www.charlesdickensinfo.com/novels/complete-works/>.

³ John Foster, *The Life of Charles Dickens* (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1875), 21-22.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 23-31.

feel like in the end, it was not Dickens who chose the profession of a writer, but rather that the profession chose him.

At the age of nine, Dickens and his family moved from Chatham to London. Soon after that, Dickens's father began to have financial problems and the family had to move to one of the poorest parts of London suburbs. Suddenly, Dickens was a poor, lonely and neglected child. When it comes to his father, Dickens described him to Foster as a man that was both kind-hearted and generous⁵, but he also stated this:

[My father] appeared to have utterly lost...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. So I degenerated into cleaning his boots of a morning, and my own; and making myself useful in the work of the little house; and looking after my younger brothers and sisters...and going on such poor errands as arose out of our poor way of living.⁶

When the financial problems of the family worsened even more, John Dickens was arrested for his debts and put in the Marshalsea prison. On his visit, young Dickens was told by his father that “if a man had twenty pounds a year and spent nineteen pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence, he would be happy; but that a shilling spent the other way would make him wretched”⁷ which is the same advice that Mr Micawber gave David in *David Copperfield*.⁸

Because of the situation in which the family was Charles Dickens had to begin to work in a blacking warehouse, which was a traumatic experience for him as he was a young boy of a poor health suddenly away from his family and forced to work in terrible conditions. This is how Dickens described the factory:

It was a crazy, tumble-down old house...overrun with rats. Its wainscoted rooms, and its rotten floors and staircase, and the old gray rats swarming down in the cellars, and the sound of their squeaking and scuffling coming up the stairs at all times, and the dirt and decay of the place, rise up visibly before me, as if I were there again.⁹

⁵ Ibid, 34-38.

⁶ Ibid, 38.

⁷ Ibid, 42-44.

⁸ Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2004), 177.

⁹ Foster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, 51-52.

Moreover, the experience was not only traumatic because of the physical factors, but also because of the influence it had on Dickens's mental state. Working in the factory, Dickens was thinking of the hopes he had for his future that were now crushed. He used to dream of becoming a wise, respected gentleman, but now he was a hopeless child whose dreams were vanishing right before its eyes. All that was left was shame and misery. Even when Dickens gained the recognition of a novelist in his adult life, the memory of the blacking factory was still haunting him. He claimed that sometimes he forgot in his dreams what he had accomplished and "wander[ed] desolately back to that time of [his] life".¹⁰

It is important to mention that Dickens had to continue in working in the factory even when his father came back home from prison. Dickens expected that his parents would stop his suffering, but nothing happened. This made the situation even worse. What is more, when his father finally decided that Dickens should leave the factory and go to school, his mother disapproved of such an idea. She wanted Dickens to be sent back to the warehouse to support the family's finances. This disappointed Dickens very much and he was never able to forget it. Generally, Dickens's memories of childhood serve as one of the main autobiographical elements that are visible in both *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*.¹¹

Another part of Dickens's life that influenced him in writing the two novels was his relationships with women. His first love was Maria Beadnell whom he met at the age of seventeen. Maria was a charming girl and Dickens quickly fell in love with her, and he was not the only one – she had many admirers, but it appeared that the affection between Dickens and Maria was mutual. At the time, Dickens was working as a reporter in law courts and was not earning much. Consequently, Maria's parents did not view Dickens as an ideal partner for their daughter. However, Dickens and Maria were still very young and Dickens did not give up on the hope of becoming wealthier and therefore worth of Maria's affection. The two were exchanging letters and gifts and in the meantime, Dickens was gradually climbing the career ladder. Nevertheless, the romance did not have a happy ending. Maria was sent to Paris by her parents to finish her education and when she returned, her attitude towards Dickens changed. There was a barrier between them and Dickens did not understand what caused it. Maria's father did not allow the pair to spend

¹⁰ Ibid, 53.

¹¹ Edgar Johnson, *Charles Dickens: His Tragedy & Triumph* (New York: Viking Press, 1977), 39-40.

enough time together and from the letters Dickens received from Maria, she seemed to be indifferent to him. In the end, Dickens could not bear the misery anymore and the two went their separate ways.¹² Once again, Dickens's hopes and dreams were destroyed.

Life went on and Dickens's career began to look promising. He was asked by a newspaper editor George Hogarth to write sketches for a newspaper which was an opportunity Dickens was excited to take. Hogarth's eldest daughter, Catherine, became Dickens's next object of interest. The two fell in love and Catherine's father was not against it. He saw potential in Dickens and did not stand in their way and so the happy pair became engaged. But the relationship was not as flawless as it seemed. Dickens soon realized that Catherine was often moody and he did not receive her occasional coldness well. In addition to that, Catherine was not very fond of Dickens's travelling and complained that he enjoys being away from her. She did not understand that Dickens was not away for the purpose of being distant from her, but to work hard and make money to ensure their bright future. Even though they were going through these problems, they eventually got married anyway.¹³ It is not a surprise that the marriage was not happy at all. After many years of marriage, the couple separated. In a letter Dickens wrote to Foster, he explained that he and Catherine were not made for each other and that the marriage made them both uneasy. Dickens was aware that the fault was on both sides and that Catherine would be happier if she had married someone else. He regretted that they fell for each other as their temperaments were not suited for each other.¹⁴ Yet another bitter experience shaped Dickens's life and became an inspiration for his writing.

Lastly, Dickens of course became a novelist. His path to this profession took its time. He started as a journalist, then he was asked to write the sketches by Catherine's father and eventually, he wrote his first novel – *The Pickwick Papers*. First, it was published as a monthly serial and later it was published in a book form.¹⁵ After that, there was no coming back from his career of an author and he was writing one novel after another. All of the phases of Dickens's life described above can be viewed as an analogy to the life

¹² Johnson, *Charles Dickens*, 56-64.

¹³ Johnson, *Charles Dickens*, 77-94.

¹⁴ Foster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, 186.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 108-131.

experiences of the heroes of two of his novels – David and Pip – which will be proved in the analytical part of the thesis.

1.2 Fiction as a tool for writing an autobiography

Throughout his life, Charles Dickens wrote many novels, but his attempts to write an autobiography were unsuccessful.¹⁶ This chapter focuses not only on Dickens's feelings towards writing an autobiography, but also on the reasons why he was unable to write one. The purpose of this chapter is to show that this inability led Dickens to use fiction as a tool for writing an autobiography with *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations* serving as examples of it.

“This is the first time I ever set down even these particulars, and, glancing them over, I feel like a wild beast in a caravan describing himself in his keeper's absence.”¹⁷ These lines about Dickens's endeavour to write an autobiography extracted from a letter he wrote to Wilkie Collins reveal his problems to accomplish such task. Ewald Mengel comments on these lines in his essay and concludes that for Dickens, the act of writing an autobiography meant revealing his most secret thoughts and feelings to the public which was difficult and liberating at the same time. The beast symbolizes his inner self and the parts of his mind he was struggling to expose while the keeper is his super-ego that controls the beast inside.¹⁸ Keeping a balance between the roles of keeper and beast was so frustrating for Dickens that he eventually decided to pass the role of the keeper on to his friend John Foster, the author of Dickens's biography named *The Life of Charles Dickens*.¹⁹ Dickens provided Foster with all the needed information about himself and guided him in the task of outlining his life. Therefore the biography, although written by Foster, is more or less a camouflaged autobiography of Dickens himself.²⁰ The question of why did Dickens need

¹⁶ Ewald Mengel, "Portrait of the Artist as a Grown Man: Dickens's Great Expectations as Autobiographical Fiction," in Proceedings of the conference of the German Association of University Professors of English, vol. 11, ed. Rüdiger Ahrens (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, 1990), 185.

¹⁷ Charles Dickens to Wilkie Collins, June 6, 1856, in *The Works of Charles Dickens: National Edition*, vol. 37: *Letters and Speeches*, Charles Dickens et al. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1908), 499.

¹⁸ Mengel, "Portrait of the Artist," 185.

¹⁹ Jean Ferguson Carr, "Dickens and Autobiography: A Wild Beast and His Keeper," *ELH* 52, no. 2 (1985): 448.

²⁰ Peter Merchant and Catherine Waters, *Dickens and the Imagined Child* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 77.

Foster to write his biography, or – more importantly – what was the cause of Dickens's inability to write a straightforward autobiography shall be discussed further on.

Even though Dickens's faithful audience was interested in finding out more information about the popular author and impelled him to write down an autobiography which would explain the links between his personal life and his novels, he never did that. The reason for this was not an urge to keep his privacy but rather a fear of losing control over his writing. He felt that his imagination could easily betray him or that he could reveal too much about himself. This made him concerned as he did not want to ruin his self-image.²¹

Nevertheless, Dickens gave it a try and worked on an autobiographical project that should have helped him to get over his distressing childhood memories, especially over the one of the blacking factory, where he used to work as a child. This memory was very traumatic for Dickens and the idea of writing about it seemed inadequate to him as he could not express the agony it made him feel or the suffering he went through.²² Such experience had an impact on Dickens for the rest of his life, but he managed to make use of it and depicted his memories in *David Copperfield*.²³ Edgar Johnson comments on this in *Charles Dickens: His Tragedy & Triumph* and says:

[A]fter struggling with [writing his autobiography] for a time Dickens found it too painful and gave it up... Only in the disguised form of *David Copperfield*, with many changes and omissions which are as significant as what he tells, could he make confessional to the world.²⁴

This shows that using fiction as an autobiographical tool was much easier for Dickens than to write about his experiences directly.

Moreover, *Great Expectations* can also be viewed as Dickens's means to write a partly autobiographical novel. Pip, the main character, rises from poverty to wealth and success just like Dickens did. David Cody claims that Pip is indeed a portrayal of Dickens's younger self and in *Great Expectations* he documents the sense of guilt and shame he felt all his life and also expresses his critical opinions on the Victorian society.²⁵ It is clear that even though Dickens had troubles with writing an autobiography he still felt a need to

²¹ Carr, "Dickens and Autobiograph," 448-449.

²² Ibid, 455.

²³ Mengel, "Portrait of the Artist," 184.

²⁴ Johnson, *Charles Dickens*, 345.

²⁵ David Cody, "Autobiographical Elements in Dickens's *Great Expectations*," *Universitat de València*, last modified October 2000, accessed March 29, 2018, <https://www.uv.es/~fores/cdaron4.html>.

express his inner thoughts, experiences and memories and evidently, he used his novels to do so.

1.3 Reinventing oneself through fiction

Charles Dickens was a novelist of the Victorian era, which brought many changes to society; an example of this is the industrial revolution, the spread of the factory system or the growth of cities.²⁶ Subsequently, Dickens as an author reacted to the changes through his novels. In addition to that, Dickens himself went through changes in the sense of seeing his past in a different light. The aim of this chapter is to explain what impelled Dickens to critically rewrite *David Copperfield* and reinvent himself in a different image in *Great Expectations*.

In his essay, Mengel discusses the features of autobiographical fiction and concludes that by describing his past the author also tells us a lot about his present. This is connected with the fact that the way an author depicts himself in an earlier novel may not correspond properly with his later self. As a result of seeing his past from a different perspective the author might feel the need to reinvent himself in a different image.²⁷ Such reinvention can be seen in *Great Expectations*, which will be analysed in later part of the thesis. However, the reasons for the reinvention shall be examined now.

Firstly, it is important to mention that in the Victorian era, the number of autobiographical texts began to grow as a reaction to the Industrial Revolution and a changing society. Not only Dickens, but also Coleridge, Wordsworth or Charlotte Brontë expressed themselves through autobiographical writing and referred to different issues of the 19th century England. When it comes to Dickens, his dissatisfaction with society as well as his frustrating inability to write an autobiography led him to writing *David Copperfield*. In this novel, Dickens portrays the rise of a successful novelist which is a metaphor for his own achievement of becoming a writer.²⁸ According to Johnson, the novel also serves as a social criticism in the way that the cruelty of the Murdstones depicts “society’s callousness

²⁶ Nicolas Tredell, *Charles Dickens: David Copperfield/ Great Expectations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 171.

²⁷ Mengel, "Portrait of the Artist," 187.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 188-189.

to human welfare.”²⁹ But only in his later novels Dickens’s true criticism of Victorian society began to emerge.

In *Great Expectations* Dickens reveals the corruption he saw in the society, especially in “the cult of the gentleman”. The Victorian era brought a rise of the middle class which overtook the aristocracy. Just like Pip, the main character of the *Great Expectations*, many people longed for becoming a gentleman, since the title was a route to a social prestige and acceptance.³⁰ Some people were born a gentleman thanks to their aristocratic roots; some became a gentleman thanks to gaining wealth and influence.³¹ But surprisingly, a respectable profession of a surgeon or an attorney did not connote gentility. Paradoxically, the social exclusiveness of a gentleman was based merely on income, not work. As Robin Gilmour explains, “It was considered essential that a gentleman should not only be able...to live without manual labour, but also without too visible attention to business, for it was leisure which enabled a man to cultivate the style and pursuits of the gentlemanly life.”³² Accordingly, in *Great Expectations*, Pip does not become a gentleman through his endeavour; he earns the status simply by receiving money. He lives the ideal Victorian life where his wealth is supported on the labour of others and he has nothing else to do than to spend it. Pip accepts this ideal which is the cause of his hollowness.³³ Conclusively, the first reason for Dickens’s reinvention of himself in *Great Expectations* was to point at the problems of society more obviously than he did in *David Copperfield* and to show the moral hollowness he saw in the Victorian middle class.

Secondly, Dickens lays much more emphasis on moral values in *Great Expectations* than he did in *David Copperfield*. According to Mengel, the turning point of the narrative is a scene where Pip finds out that his secret benefactor is a convict. He realizes that all he knew about his life was just an illusion and the truth is hard to accept. He “was made” by Magwitch and compares their relationship to that of Frankenstein and his monster. Mengel sums it up like this: “Pip compares himself to “the imaginary student”, that is, to Frankenstein, and Magwitch to the “misshapen creature” by which he is pursued. In reality, Magwitch is the creator who “made a gentleman” of Pip, whereas Pip is Magwitch’s

²⁹ Johnson, *Charles Dickens*, 342.

³⁰ Robert Gilmour, *The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 5-6.

³¹ David Cody, "The Gentleman," *The Victorian Web*, last modified April 12, 2017, accessed April 17, 2018, <http://www.victorianweb.org/history/gentleman.html>.

³² Gilmour, *The Idea of the Gentleman*, 7.

³³ Johnson, *Charles Dickens*, 489.

“creature”.” This shows that Pip has a problem with his identity or precisely, that he has no identity at all as if it was not for Magwitch, his life would be totally different and he would have nothing.³⁴ After this recognition, everything changes and Pip’s moral values begin to change to the better.

As it was already mentioned, in his earlier novel, the protagonist becomes a writer just like Dickens did. On the other hand, in the later novel the protagonist becomes a partner of a ship-merchant. This may initially give the impression of *Great Expectations* being less autobiographical than *David Copperfield*, but it is important to focus on the fact that only when Pip begins to earn money by honest work he reaches maturity. This serves as an autobiographical element as it shows Dickens’s own values which he wanted to pass on to his readers. Dickens realised it is important to emphasise the moral purpose of his art and as a result of that, he decided to express his ideals by reinventing himself and portraying himself as a man on a way to both physical and intellectual maturity. Opposed to that is the character of David in *David Copperfield*, who becomes a respected author at the end of the novel, but the reader does not learn what the moral purpose of his art is. The focus is primarily on the fact that David achieves to become famous and wealthy, but the question of what his moral beliefs are is absent.³⁵ Once again, it is visible that Dickens realised that becoming a wealthy gentleman should not be more important than becoming a mature person of virtuous behaviour, which is the reason why he reinvented himself in the character of Pip by the means of critically rewriting *David Copperfield*.

Moreover, Dickens felt a need to change the relationship to his reading public. He was very loyal to his public in the sense that he cared a lot about criticism or suggestions from his readers and was trying to provide them with what they wanted. Generally, the demands of his public were always on the first place. However, Dickens realised that such dependency on his readers was not the path he wanted to take as an author. In *Great Expectations* he focused more on the purpose of his art by emphasizing his moral and humanitarian qualities and redefined the relation to his readers accordingly. Consequently, the seriousness of his art is reinforced.³⁶

³⁴ Mengel, "Portrait of the Artist," 190.

³⁵ Ibid, 192-193.

³⁶ Ibid, 191-192.

2 Bildungsroman

There is one important aspect that *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations* have in common. Both novels are first-person narratives written in the form of an adult narrator's retrospection and can be considered a *bildungsroman*³⁷, which will be proved in a later part of the thesis. This chapter focuses merely on defining the term *bildungsroman*, on the origin of the term and on the characteristics by which a *bildungsroman* can be recognised. The German term *bildungsroman* is defined by Encyclopædia Britannica as a „class of novel that deals with the maturation process, with how and why the protagonist develops as he does, both morally and psychologically“. A literal translation of the word means “novel of education” or “novel of formation”.³⁸ The idea behind the first part of the word – *bildung* – was conceived by German classicists in the late 18th century and later on was adopted by other nationalities. For the Germans the term focused primarily on the individual's cultivation. On the other hand, the English cared not only about one's inner development, but also on the influence of social environment on a person.³⁹ Broadly speaking, *bildungsroman* is a novel about the childhood-to-adulthood stages of life. The term was coined by Karl Morgenstern in the beginning of the 19th century with reference to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, in which the hero goes through a course of an individual's development with each stage of his life portraying a gradual human growth.⁴⁰ Such development is also visible in both *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations* as will be discussed later on.

Jerome Buckley defined in his *Season of youth: the Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding* an archetypal plot of a *bildungsroman*, which can be summed up with the following quotation of Thomas L. Jeffers:

A sensitive child grows up in the provinces, where his lively imagination is frustrated by his neighbors'—and often by his family's—social prejudices and intellectual obtuseness. School and private reading stimulate his hopes for a different life away from home, and so he goes to the metropolis, where his transformative education begins. He has at least two love affairs, one good and one bad, which help him

³⁷ Merchant and Waters, *Dickens and the Imagined Child*, 78.

³⁸ "Bildungsroman," Encyclopædia Britannica, last modified May 19, 2017, accessed April 1, 2018, <http://www.google.com/policies/privacy/>.

³⁹ Thomas L. Jeffers, *The Bildungsroman from Goethe to Santayana* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 35.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

revalue his values. He makes some accommodation, as citizen and worker, with the industrial urban world, and after a time he perhaps revisits his old home to show folks how much he has grown.⁴¹

Not all of these elements are included in each *bildungsroman*, but according to Buckley, at least two or three of them are certainly present.⁴²

Jeffers supports this statement with his idea of three tests a novel must fulfil to demonstrate its genre of a *bildungsroman*. Firstly, the hero feels to be too grown up to receive affection from one or both parents or he rejects it completely and finds someone else to love. Secondly, the hero is relatable for the readers in the way that his work somehow contributes to the commonwealth. Lastly, during his life the hero goes through such experiences that help him realize what his ethical beliefs are.⁴³ How this test applies to both Dickens's novels will be examined in the analytical part of the thesis.

⁴¹ Ibid, 52.

⁴² Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 18.

⁴³ Jeffers, *The Bildungsroman*, 52-53.

II. ANALYSIS

3 Analysis of the bildungsroman genre in *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*

As it was outlined in the theoretical part of the thesis, according to Thomas L. Jeffers, a novel should fulfil three requirements to be considered a *bildungsroman*. Firstly, the hero usually finds someone else to love instead of one or both parents. Secondly, the hero contributes to the commonwealth by his work. Lastly, the hero's life experiences make him realize his ethical and moral values.⁴⁴ This chapter analyses both *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations* with a focus on the three requirements and demonstrates that both novels are written in the genre of bildungsroman.

3.1 *David Copperfield*

As we learn in the very first chapter, David never met his father as he died before David's birth. Later in the story he also loses his mother, whom he loved very much, and becomes an orphan. Because of such a fate it is inevitable for David to fulfil the first *bildungsroman* requirement, which is to find someone else to love instead of his parents. There are several woman figures that play an important role in David's life and it is important to analyze the impact each of them had on David. These characters are Clara Copperfield – David's mother, Clara Peggotty – David's nanny and Miss Betsey Trotwood – David's great-aunt. Even though David never meets his father, he is growing up happily in the company of his mother and his nanny. He admires his mother as much as she admires him, but their relationship is soon destroyed when his mother marries Mr. Murdstone. David views Mr. Murdstone as an intruder as he takes the happiness away from David's family. In addition, Mr. Murdstone demands David's mother to be firm so she can no longer show affection towards David. Finally, when David's mother gives birth to her second child, David becomes a redundant member of the family. From Mr. Mudstone's perspective he is an unwanted child and from the mother's perspective he is the child she cannot cherish as her husband to whom she is devoted would not approve of it. Consequently, David actually loses his mother long before she dies as her loyalty moved from David to Mr. Murdstone. This can be considered as one of the reasons for David's pursuit to find love elsewhere. In contrast with David's mother, his nanny Peggotty is always there for him. She is a loyal servant both to David and his mother and even after the death of Clara Copperfield she still

⁴⁴ Jeffers, *The Bildungsroman*, 52-53.

helps David as much as she can. Her loyalty can be seen in the fourth chapter where she secretly comes to inform young David that he will have to leave his family and go study to a boarding school: “What I want to say, is. That you must never forget me. For I’ll never forget you. And I’ll take as much care of your mama, Davy. As ever I took of you. And I won’t leave her....And I’ll write to you, my dear. Though I ain’t no scholar.”⁴⁵ When David’s mother dies, Peggotty leaves for Yarmouth, where her brother lives, and takes David with her. David already knows Peggotty’s family as he visited them in the time when his mother got secretly married to Mr. Murdstone. David likes Peggotty’s family and enjoys his time spent with them, they serve as his second family. The contrast between David’s own family and Peggotty’s family is substantial – on the one hand there is David’s birthplace, which does not feel like home at all. Mr. Murdstone may be well situated, but the atmosphere he creates at home is dismal. On the other hand, there is Peggotty’s family. They are neither rich nor classy, but their home is full of love and joyfulness. This teaches David that social class does not have an impact on a person’s character.

Lastly, the impact of David’s aunt shall be discussed. A dominant feature of Miss Betsey is her disfavour of men caused by her disappointment in marriage. At first she seems to be a rather unpleasant person as she comes to meet widowed Clara Copperfield only to leave her as soon as Clara gives birth to a boy. Miss Betsey expected a girl to be born and tells Clara this: “From the moment of the girl’s birth, child, I intend to be her friend. I intend to be her godmother, and I beg you’ll call her Betsey Trotwood Copperfield. There must be no mistakes in life with this Betsey Trotwood.”⁴⁶ From this sentence it is clear that Miss Betsey intended to raise the girl in such manner that the girl would not repeat Miss Betsey’s mistakes. Instead, a boy is born. As a result, Miss Betsey leaves and does not care about David’s or Clara’s fate. This creates a negative impression of Miss Betsey, but her true nature is revealed in a later part of the novel, when orphaned David finds her and begs her to let him stay with her as she is his last relative. Not only that Miss Betsey takes care of David, but she also supports him financially in his studies and apprenticeship to become a proctor. She is supportive, kind and helpful and all in all serves as a second mother to David, yet she is completely different from Clara Copperfield. She is independent and valiant; she is not afraid to tell her honest opinion to Mr. Murdstone: “You were a tyrant to

⁴⁵ Dickens, *David Copperfield*, 71.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 19.

[Clara Copperfield], and you broke her heart....you gave her the wounds she died of.”⁴⁷ She is the “mother” David needs and thanks to her his life path took a much better direction.

To sum up, all of these three characters somewhat represent a mother persona. The first one is his real mother, the second one is his loyal nanny who loves him as if he was a part of her family and the last one is his great-aunt who brings him up to be a good and self-reliant man. David loves all of them and their influence on his personal growth is indisputable.

Next, the aspect of David’s working life shall be discussed. Throughout his life David has the opportunity to do different kinds of work. He first starts working in young age when Mr. Murdstone sends him to a bottling factory after David’s mother dies. While working in the factory, David’s life conditions are poor and he suffers to the extent where he cannot handle it anymore and decides to run away and find his last living relative, Miss Betsey. Such experience teaches him to value his later opportunities such as studying or apprenticeship. When it comes to choosing his career, David does not know what it is that he wants to do, but he eventually agrees with his aunt’s advice to become a proctor and starts working in a law office. His aunt supports him financially, but then she loses her money and the roles are about to switch – now David has to work harder to support his aunt. In addition, David falls in love in the meantime and wants to marry Dora. Dora is not very happy with the idea of living in modesty and managing a household herself, but she loves David and when her father dies, she has no one to take care of her but her aunts, so eventually, she and David get married. There is no bigger motivation to work hard for David than the need to make his wife satisfied and keep her standard of living high; and to support his aunt. He ends his career in a law office as it does not provide him with enough money and begins his career elsewhere. He works for a newspaper, becomes a secretary and then starts writing fiction for magazines. It is clear he is not incompetent and is able to work hard when needed. His fiction writing gets successful and by the end of the novel he is a famous author. The progress he goes through is considerable – from a little tormented kid to a growing man who does not know what to do with his wife to a husband devoted to make his life happy to a mature man who achieved success through his hard work – a progress surely decent for a *bildungsroman*.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 224.

Lastly, a moral growth of the hero should be present in a *bildungsroman*, which is why David's values will be analysed in the following part of the thesis. First of all, David's personality has one important trait which is both positive and negative. He is not judgemental. It is a good trait, because he is not snobbish and does not form an opinion on other people based on their class. But it is also a rather inconvenient trait as he fails to see that some people's character is not as worthy of admiration as their charisma. It is David's naivety that makes him fall in love with Dora, his first wife, and idolize Steerforth, his friend from boarding school. Only when these characters die, David is able to see his life more clearly. One could say that with their death, David's naivety dies too.

Just like David's mother, Dora is also a childish wife. She does not know how to be a good housewife and she has no intention of learning it. But David is blinded by love and decides to marry her anyway. It can be speculated whether this resemblance between Dora and David's mother can be viewed as one of the reasons why David loves her so much. David felt guilty for his mother's suffering when she remarried and the loss of her haunted him most of his life. As a result, it is possible that he marries Dora to be a better husband to her than Mr. Murdstone was to his mother. In addition, his urge to work hard is motivated by making Dora happy and making himself worthy of her love rather than working for the sake of becoming a successful man. This is one of the examples of David's naivety.

Next there is Steerforth and his influence on David. From the moment they first meet, David is allured by Steerforth's charisma. After their first day spent together, David gives an insight into his thoughts of Steerforth:

I thought of [Steerforth] very much after I went to bed, and raised myself, I recollect, to look at him where he lay in the moonlight, with his handsome face turned up, and his head reclining easily on his arm. He was a person of great power in my eyes; that was of course the reason of my mind running on him. No veiled future dimly glanced upon him in the moonbeams.⁴⁸

This shows that David was idolizing Steerforth in his eyes from the very beginning. Throughout the novel Steerforth uses David in different ways but David fails to see it. Only when Emily, Peggotty's niece, runs away with Steerforth even though she is engaged to someone else, David realizes what Steerforth's character is really like – he enchants people and manipulates them. David finally learns his lesson not to trust everyone.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 99.

When these characters die, David's values begin to change. He is on his way to maturity at last. He leaves England for three years and in the meantime, he realizes his true love is Agnes, of whom he always thought of as a friend. It was always clear to David that Agnes is a good-hearted and caring person, but he never noticed she would be a much better wife than Dora. But although it was not a love at first sight and it took David some time to make such recognition, he eventually got there. In a late part of the novel, David finally perceives Agnes's affection towards him and states that "[She] cherished me always, and was always at my side go where I would; proud of what I had done, but infinitely prouder yet of what I was reserved to do."⁴⁹ Only when he sees this, he is able to unbind his feelings:

I cannot so completely penetrate the mystery of my own heart, as to know when I began to think that I might have set its earliest and brightest hopes on Agnes. I cannot say at what stage of my grief it first became associated with the reflection, that, in my wayward boyhood, I had thrown away the treasure of her love....But the thought came into my mind as a new reproach and new regret, when I was left so sad and lonely in the world.⁵⁰

This shows that in the end of the novel, David is mature enough to realize his mistakes and learn from them. He goes through losses, disappointments and grief which destroy his naivety and make him a wiser man. Thanks to this his values change and he is able to finally be happy with the woman who always loved and supported him. His path to adulthood is finished and he has everything he ever wished for.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 822.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 823.

3.2 *Great Expectations*

Just like David, Pip has also lost both of his parents. He is brought up by his older sister and her husband Joe. They are essentially Pip's surrogate parents. And although Joe is a very good friend to Pip, the first rule of the *bildungsroman* comes to effect – Pip looks for love elsewhere. In *Great Expectations*, the person who gets Pip's affection is Estella. Estella is rich and growing up becomes a lady, whereas Pip is a poor boy whose future is not very promising. Estella is brought up to view men as her toys and break their hearts, whereas Pip is a kind-hearted kid amazed by Estella's beauty. Even though they are so different, or maybe their difference is the reason why, Pip falls in love with her. Estella looks down on him and intentionally hurts his feelings, but for Pip this is nothing but a challenge to become a gentleman who will be worthy of her love. Sadly, this never happens and Estella marries someone else.

Throughout the novel, Estella serves as a torturer of Pip's soul and when Pip finally learns his lesson and realizes that he should have paid attention to someone else, someone kind and unselfish – his friend Biddy – it is too late. Biddy is getting married to Pip's widowed uncle. Dickens wrote two endings of the novel, as he was persuaded to give the novel a happier ending⁵¹: in the first one, Pip and Estella meet after a few years and Estella is married for the second time. She changed, but their ways part again. In the second, revised ending, which is more optimistic, they meet unexpectedly at Estella's old abandoned home. Estella's character has changed as her husband was treating her badly and the marriage broke her. She wishes she can stay friends with Pip, but it is clear that Pip does not want to leave her at all and the two may finally be together.

The affection Pip has for Estella has a bitter taste. Although it is not Estella's fault she acts the way she does as she was brought up in such manner, it is hard to understand why Pip is devoted to her so much. An explanation for that might be that Estella represents the expectations Pip has. She is noble and beautiful; she is a precious treasure Pip wishes to gain. However, Pip manages to become a gentleman, but the quest for Estella's affection is

⁵¹ Michael Slater, *Charles Dickens: A Life Defined by Writing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 488.

unsuccessful. Interestingly, both the social status and Estella's love represent something which is not as worthwhile as it seemed at first sight.

Another segment of Pip's life that should be analysed is his attitude towards work. At first, he is a poor boy prepared to become a blacksmith just like Joe, but once he gains money from his anonymous benefactor, everything changes. Suddenly, Pip lives in a big city and has money he can spend on whatever he wants – and he spends it in large amounts. After all of the troubles he goes through in the novel, he is ill and he is in debts. The one who takes care of both Pip and the debts is Joe, and Pip is very grateful for it. He then leaves to Cairo and finally starts making his own money, part of which he uses to support Joe and Biddy. Before he leaves, he tells them:

[R]eceive my humble thanks for all you have done for me, and all I have so ill repaid!...I am soon going abroad, and...I shall never rest until I have worked for the money with which you have kept me out of prison, and have sent it to you, don't think, dear Joe and Biddy, that if I could repay it a thousand times over, I suppose I could cancel a farthing of the debt I owe you, or that I would do so if I could!⁵²

Evidently, the progress here is connected to Pip's reconsideration of values. When he did not need to work, he did not value money as much as he should have. He was vain and definitely not self-reliant. Only when he lost everything he began to feel ashamed of his behaviour and realized how much he underappreciated Joe and Biddy. Then, his values changed and Pip started working. Consequently, he became independent and mature.

To continue with the topic of changing values of the hero, Pip's moral growth shall be discussed. Firstly, the aspiration to become a gentleman is a substantial part of Pip's journey. Pip does not want to become a gentleman for his own sake, but for the sake of gaining a higher social status to be more attractive for Estella. This shows how foolish he is. When his secret benefactor appears and Pip has the opportunity to leave his home, his personality quickly changes. He gets used to being wealthy and though he is still kind, particularly to his new friend Herbert, he also becomes rather snobbish. He looks down upon his family and soon stops visiting them completely. The reason for that is because Estella thinks Pip is too common, so once he begins his way to become a cultivated man, he starts to see Joe and Biddy as ordinary uncultured people Estella would despise. If he

⁵² Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2012), 548.

wants to marry Estella, he must forget about his old life. Ironically, Pip is no longer poor, but his values are.

Next, there is the situation with Pip's benefactor. Pip thought the person who secretly supports him financially is Ms Havisham and is unpleasantly surprised when the real benefactor turns out to be Magwitch, a convict whom Pip was forced to help when he was a kid. Suddenly, all Pip's hopes disappear. There are not any good expectations for him anymore. He does not want to continue on spending this man's money and he wants to get rid of him as soon as possible. But surprisingly, on his journey to get Magwitch out of England Pip learns Magwitch's story and begins to sympathise with him. Accordingly, when Magwitch is in prison and it is clear that he will be sentenced to death, Pip feels deep sorrow. Mr Jaggers, a lawyer who used to communicate with Pip in Magwitch's name, is angry at Pip for letting the money Magwitch possessed slip through his fingers as Pip did nothing to ensure he would inherit Magwitch's money when he dies. In this situation, it is visible that Pip's values have started to change, because he does not pity losing the money, but failing at the attempt to get Magwitch into safety:

[H]e had put his hand to no writing or settlement in my favour before his apprehension, and to do so now would be idle. I had no claim, and finally resolved, and ever afterwards abided by resolution, that my heart should never be sickened with the hopeless task of attempting to establish one.⁵³

At last, Pip realizes that the wealth he obtained did not improve his life. He sees that becoming a gentleman did not make him a better person.

Moreover, after his illness, he realizes how badly he mistreated Joe and Biddy, which has already been discussed. They may be common people, but they always loved him in contrast with Estella, who is from a higher-class, but her heart is cold. Pip learns all his lessons by going through a misery so at the end, he is mature but surrounded by melancholy. The original ending of the novel makes Pip's journey even more tragic, but the revised one brings a spark of hope into his life again. Lessons learned on both Pip's and Estella's side – he can finally be happy with the love of his life by his side.

⁵³ Ibid, 512.

4 *Great Expectations* as a critical rewriting of *David Copperfield*

The major purpose of the thesis is to prove that Dickens's later novel *Great Expectations* is a critical rewriting of his earlier novel *David Copperfield*. This means that the novels not only share some similar elements, but also that there are substantial differences between them, which shows that Dickens as an author realised what is the moral purpose of his art and decided to rewrite the narrative accordingly. The precedent chapter focused on the equivalent genre of the novels, and, as will be examined later on, equivalence can also be seen in the autobiographical segments based on Dickens's memories and experiences from childhood and adulthood which are present in both of the novels. The aim of this chapter is to analyze these autobiographical segments and moreover to explain why *Great Expectations* can be considered another version of *David Copperfield*.

Firstly, the autobiographical elements will be examined. As it was covered in the theory, Charles Dickens did not have an easy childhood. His parents did not take much care of him and he was generally a neglected child. When the financial situation of his family worsened and his father went to prison, Dickens had to work under terrible conditions in a blacking factory – at least this is how he sees it. Not only was he let down by his father, who allowed his debts to ruin the family, but also by his mother, who wanted Dickens to continue to work in the factory even when the father was released from prison. It is obvious that most of the trauma Dickens carried from his childhood was caused by his parents' actions. This trauma is also visible in the characters of David and Pip.

David grew up without a father and lost his mother when he was still a child. This means that just like Dickens, David also was not taken properly care of by his parents. Moreover, an analogy to the disappointment Dickens felt towards his mother is David's sorrow when he realised that his mother's affection was no longer directed to him, but to Mr Murdstone. As far as Pip is concerned, he also grew up without his parents. He was taken care of by his older sister and her husband, but just like David, or – more importantly – just like Dickens, he did not receive enough attention in his childhood.

On a more positive note, one thing Dickens valued his mother for was that she taught him to read. He found pleasure in literature and thanks to that, the foundations of his imagination had been built in young age. The heroes of the novels from his father's book collection were like his friends and leaving the house in Chatham also meant leaving those friends behind. The exact same experience can be seen in *David Copperfield*. David was

also taught by his mother and reading books was his favourite activity. His deceased father left a small collection of books in their house and for David those books were an access to a world of his own. Reading the stories of Roderick Random or Robinson Crusoe meant an escape from a gloomy reality. It is true that such experiences are absent in *Great Expectations*, but on the other hand, the memories of learning to write and read are being recalled by Pip which shows that these memories were important to Dickens and he wanted to make a reference to them.

Next, the shame and trauma rooted in the blacking factory experience shall be discussed. David went through the same experience as Dickens did. After his mother's decease, he was sent by Mr Murdstone to work in a warehouse. David described his time in the warehouse as a phase of his life when he was "miserably unhappy"⁵⁴ and ashamed. The work made him so desperate that eventually he decided to run away. For Dickens, the labour in such factory meant giving up on his dreams of a brighter future and for David it meant having no future at all. Even though Pip did not go through such an experience, a more symbolic reference to it is present in *Great Expectations*. Pip was supposed to become a blacksmith just like his uncle Joe. Blacksmithing and working in a blacking factory is not the same thing, but both of these jobs are dirty and to Pip, it felt just as inferior. His aspiration was to become a gentleman, not an ordinary blacksmith.

One important autobiographical element that has to be mentioned is the character of Mr Micawber from *David Copperfield* which represents Dickens's father. Both the father and Mr Micawber were in debts and went to prison. Also, as it was already mentioned in the theory, Mr Micawber gave David the same advice about managing money which Dickens heard from the lips of his father when he visited him in prison. As a matter of fact, the occurrence of prison scenes is present not only in *David Copperfield*, but also in *Great Expectations*. Moreover, in *Great Expectations*, Pip ran into debt just like Dickens's father or Mr Micawber did. Yet another part of Dickens's experience which he incorporated into both of the novels.

Next, the analogy between Dickens's troubles with romantic relationships and the inconveniences in David's and Pip's love lives shall be analysed. David's love for Dora resembles a combination of Dickens's affection towards his first love Maria and his wife Catherine. With Maria the situation was rather difficult as their parents did not find

⁵⁴ Dickens, *David Copperfield*, 173.

Dickens worthy of their daughter. Dickens was trying to climb the career ladder and become wealthier to make it possible to marry Maria. The same goes for David who fell in love with Dora and began working hard to keep her life standards high and to be a good husband to her. But eventually, David realized that Dora's character was not the definition of his ideal wife. He loved her, but it was not always easy to live with her. A similar situation was present in Dickens's marriage to Catherine. The two loved each other but the more years they spent together the more evident it was to them that they were not meant for each other.

Nor did Pip have it easy when it comes to love. It is possible that his unfulfilled love for Estella represents the unfulfilled relationship of Dickens and Maria. Maria seemed to have loved Dickens but then she became cold and distant and left Dickens heartbroken. Accordingly, Pip thought he and Estella were meant to be together, but she married someone else and what is more, she has always been torturing Pip with her cold-heartedness. The troubles with love are therefore undoubtedly present in both novels.

Lastly, probably the most noticeable autobiographical element is the fact that David became a novelist just like Dickens did. He also went through a similar process to get to this career. On the other hand, Pip was never even close to becoming a novelist. Here, the analogy is once again on a symbolical level. At the end of the novel, David became an author of novels, whereas Pip finally became an author of his own life. His past was a result of Magwitch's decision to make a gentleman out of Pip – Pip did nothing to achieve his wealth. He was basically Magwitch's puppet and only after his death was he able to make a living on his own and make rational decisions about his life. To sum up, it is clear that the autobiographical elements are present in both of the novels. The only difference is that in *David Copperfield*, the autobiographical parts are more obvious and easy to notice whereas in *Great Expectations* they are more hidden or metaphorical and the reader has to be more observant to remark them.

The autobiographical parts make the novels similar, but it is also important to notice the differences. Broadly speaking, Dickens changed as a person and because of that, his values of an author changed as well. He reinvented himself in the persona of David, but with the change in his own character, he needed to reinvent himself once more in the figure of Pip. But what was the cause of his change? His dream of becoming a respected man was fulfilled, he became a famous novelist and he also married the girl he loved. It would seem that everything was perfect, but the reality was different. He saw the corruption in Victorian society, he realized how hollow the urge of middle class men was to become

gentlemen and the relationship with his wife was nothing but miserable. As Ewald Mengel pointed out, *Great Expectations* were “a product of this crisis in Dickens’s life”.

David Copperfield was much more optimistic but also more shallow. David achieved all he ever wanted, but Dickens did not stress enough what were David’s moral values or what did he express with his art. The reader only learned that David’s novelist career made him famous and wealthy and that his second marriage was much happier, because he finally realized that Agnes was the perfect woman to marry. This was an ultimate happy ending, but it did not have any impact on the moral growth of the reader. Of course, David’s values changed on his journey to adulthood, but it was not expressed enough how. Dickens primarily showed that David became less naïve and realised that Agnes was basically an angel, but this did not teach the reader any lesson. On the other hand, in *Great Expectations*, there are many lessons to be learned. First of all, the whole concept of a gentleman is criticised. Dickens clearly expressed his negative opinion on the fault he saw in Victorian society. He showed that becoming rich does not necessarily mean being happy and pointed at the values that should be praised more than wealth – love, compassion, equality and work. At the end of the novel, Pip learns his lesson and knows that his behaviour was poor. He realizes he was so obsessed with becoming a member of a higher class that all his values disappeared and he forgot who he really was. He became ashamed of his old family, especially of Joe who suddenly seemed to be too common in Pip’s eyes; he did not appreciate Bidley, the first person ever who cared about Pip’s intellectual growth and who taught him everything she knew. Becoming a gentleman meant becoming a snob who felt superior to the people who always loved him, even when he was “common”. Pip is aware of all of these faults and becomes a morally responsible adult after all, which is also visible in his changing behaviour towards Magwitch and his endeavour to become self-sufficient man by the means of working as a partner of a ship-merchant.

But even though Pip achieves intellectual maturity, the novel has a rather bitter taste. It feels like he spent too much time longing for the wrong goals and now he has nothing. Mengel also points this out and says that “in the end, there is the feeling that [Pip] has no “plot” for his future life, and that he is on the “edge”⁵⁵ of society rather than in the middle of it” and concludes that Dickens chose this ending to point at the fact that society did not

⁵⁵ Mengel, "Portrait of the Artist," 193.

provide enough opportunity for self-realization.⁵⁶ Once again, Dickens is criticising the society. The conclusion is more or less obvious. Dickens's *Great Expectations* is his another attempt after *David Copperfield* to write an autobiographical novel which would focus in a greater extent on the critique of Victorian society and express accordingly the authors' beliefs and values he gained throughout his life and which he felt obligated to pass on to his readers as he realised that should be the main purpose of his art.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the thesis was to prove that Dickens's *Great Expectations* is another version of his earlier novel *David Copperfield*. The thesis focused both on the similarities and differences in the novels and proved that *Great Expectations* is indeed a critical rewriting of *David Copperfield*. Also, the reasons for such rewriting were analysed.

The thesis described key moments that shaped Dickens's life. His memories of childhood and the relationship with his parents were one of the main elements that influenced Dickens in writing the two novels. The thesis shows that Dickens was a rather neglected child just like both of the main characters from the analysed novels. Another important experience from Dickens's life was his work in a blacking factory. His traumatic memories are undeniably mirrored in the David's experiences and they are also reflected in the persona of Pip on a more symbolic level. Moreover, Dickens's troubles with romantic relationships are similar to those of both David and Pip. Also, David became a novelist just like Dickens and at the end of *Great Expectations* Pip finally became an "author of his life" which is yet another symbolic representation of Dickens's life. To sum up, the thesis proved that both novels are autobiographical.

Next, the thesis focused on Dickens's inability to write an autobiography and explained why it was easier for him to write autobiographical fiction. The reason for that was that his experiences were too painful to express and he was also afraid that his imagination would betray him or that he would reveal too much. That is why he reinvented himself in the character of David. However, Dickens realized he should change the relationship with his audience by becoming less dependent on their opinions and focus on the moral purpose of his art. That is why he reinvented himself once more in the figure of Pip. He also wanted to express more seriously his critique towards Victorian society, especially towards the obsession with becoming a gentleman. He perceived the concept of a gentleman as morally hollow because it meant achieving prestige on the base of wealth rather than on the importance of virtuous behaviour or hard work.

The thesis also described what a *bildungsroman* is and showed that both novels are written in this genre. Three criteria that a *bildungsroman* should fulfil were introduced and both novels were analysed accordingly. The first criterion was that the hero should find someone else to love instead of his parents. Both David and Pip lost their parents and as a result of that the first rule was easily fulfilled. Secondly, the hero should contribute to the commonwealth by his work. David became a novelist and Pip became a ship merchant so

the second criterion was fulfilled as well. Lastly, the hero should realize what his moral values are. David realised he was naïve and became mature and independent. He also realized who his true love is. When it comes to Pip, his values changed completely. He realized that wealth is not necessarily connected to happiness and that love, compassion, equality and work are much more important. Consequently, it was proved that both novels are examples of the *bildungsroman* genre.

Lastly, the thesis analysed *Great Expectations* from the position of a critical rewriting of *David Copperfield*. It was explained that even though Dickens became a successful author he went through a crisis in his life. The relationship with his wife was in ruins, he was disgusted by society and he realized it was necessary to become less dependent on his audience and focus on the moral purpose of his art. The thesis explained that *David Copperfield* is optimistic but rather shallow as the moral purpose is not stressed enough. On the other hand, *Great Expectations* is much more bitter, but it teaches the reader a lot of lessons. With *Great Expectations* Charles Dickens redefined his position of an author and focused on passing his moral values on to his readers. In conclusion, the thesis proved that *Great Expectations* can indeed be considered another version of *David Copperfield*.

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