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CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN REPRESENTATIVE VICTORIAN NOVELS

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CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN

REPRESENTATIVE VICTORIAN NOVELS

A Thesis

Presented to

the Graduate Faculty

Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in English

by

George T. Mitchell

June, 1972

Preface

I am deeply indebted to my thesis director and graduate advisor, Dr. Bruce E. Teets, for guidance, advice, and encouragement during the writing and editing of this work. He allowed me the fullest measure of freedom to develop my theory in accordance with my own interpretations of the novels included in this study; therefore, I am responsible for any errors of judgment made herein. It was during a graduate seminar taught by Dr. Teets in the Winter Quarter, 1971, that I became interested in character development and wrote the first paper on this subject.

I would also like to thank my friend Theodore Sommer for his perceptive and honest criticism of my theory. He also contributed two important terms to the study--"defined and undefined" moral stance.

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REPRESENTATIVE VICTORIAN NOVELS

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May, 1972

This is a study of how characters are developed in five representative Victorian novels. Character is studied on the basis of a moral stance which motivates actions. Because the concept of the moral stance is primarily dependent upon the individual character, the characters in this paper are studied in relation to themselves. There are many events and relationships in the novels which are not discussed here, aspects of the respective narratives which would illumine other interpretations but which are irrelevant to this particular study.

INTRODUCTION

This study concerns development of "character" in five selected Victorian novels. It is arranged in roughly chronological order, beginning with Great Expectations by Charles Dickens, published in 1860-1861; Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë, 1847; Vanity Fair by William Makepeace Thackeray, 1847-1848; Middlemarch by George Eliot, 1871-1872; and "Heart of Darkness"[1] by Joseph Conrad, 1899. Admittedly, the evidence is limited to a very few novels, but because they are major representative works, they provide some basis for a tentative conclusion about character development.

In this study, "character" is discussed on the basis of a "moral stance." A moral stance is the set of beliefs a character will act to establish or reaffirm. It is the standard by which a character modulates his actions, the position he takes to establish himself in a particular situation. For a character to employ a moral stance is for him to use all his sensibilities in evaluating a situation, circumstance, or action, and to form a synthesis of how those circumstances accord or correlate with an overall position,

[1]That Conrad is in several ways a Victorian novelist has been sufficiently established: Michael P. Gallagher, "The Nigger of the 'Narcissus': Two Worlds of Perspective," Conradiana, 3 (1970-71), 51-60; U. C. Knoepflmacher, Laughter and Despair: Readings in Ten Novels of the Victorian Era (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: Univ. of California Press, 1971), pp. 240-42, 271-73; Charles Burkhart, "Conrad the Victorian," English Literature in Transition, 6:1 (1963), 1-8.

a moral stance.

The novelist gives each figure a moral stance which that figure does or does not develop. The development, if any occurs, depends upon recognition by the character of his moral stance and a desire to change or reaffirm it. One premise of this study is that an entity who does not act to show his awareness is not a character but a figure, and as a consequence is of less importance. It is the consciousness of his ability to react in a manner that will change or reaffirm his moral stance which ultimately makes a figure a character.

Because the concept of the moral stance is primarily dependent upon the individual character, the characters in this paper are studied in relation to themselves. An attempt has been made to examine the actions and decisions which appear to have directly affected the moral integrity of the individual characters. As a result of the concern with only one main character in each novel, there are many events and relationships which are not discussed here, aspects of the respective narratives which would illumine other interpretations but which are irrelevant to this particular study.

In order to forestall any premature objections about discussing characters in a novel as if they were real people, we recognize that characters are only abstractions of living people, or abstractions of the imaginations of living people; Robert Liddell says of this matter: "Yet for all their likeness to real people, fictional

characters are not real people: they do not have to function in life, but in the novel, which is an art form. They function in plots, which are abstractions, patterns, conventions--and they themselves are, like the plots they function in, abstractions, patterns, conventions."[2]

In daily encounters with our fellowmen we use a framework by which we limit or expand our associations, and that framework is our moral stance. Obviously, in our daily judgments or evaluations of the people we meet, talk with, react to or with, we have only abstracts of their personalities, just as they have only abstracts of our personalities by which to form evaluations of us. This being the case, it would appear that any judgment we make of characters in a novel is just as legitimate, just as valid as those we make of our associates in "real" life because, as Liddell says: "the creation of character seems not unlike the process whereby we understand other people--since our knowledge of other people is derived from our knowledge of ourselves."[3]

In fact, it would appear that the evaluations we make of fictional characters are more legitimate, more valid, than those we make in daily life, because in fiction we are often able to see more of the character, almost, in some instances, to possess the mind of the character. Leon Edel, in writing about point of view,

[2]Robert Liddell, A Treatise on the Novel (London: Jonathan Cape, 1947), p. 97.

[3]Ibid., p. 103.

explains how readers come to know characters so well: "The reader finds himself placed behind the eyes of the character, thinking the character's thoughts and looking out upon the world through the character's eyes. He has also acquired all the senses of the character. He not only sees, but touches, smells, hears in the particular way of this character; he is endowed, in a word, with his feelings."[4]

In drawing distinctions between the sciences of nature and the sciences of culture, Heinrich Rickert says that individuals can be discovered and comprehended only in reference to some scheme of values, which is merely another name for culture.[5] Now if, as Rickert says, individuals can be discovered and comprehended only in reference to some scheme of values, we have a firm basis for evaluating figures in fiction according to a construct of human values or, as this study suggests, a moral stance. With an evaluation based on a moral stance, our determination or opinion of character should be more objective, if we keep in mind that we are only looking for the existence of a moral stance, awareness and affirmation of it.

By tracing character development on the basis of moral stance, we see three distinct types of development in the novels discussed.

[4]Leon Edel, The Modern Psychological Novel (1955; rpt. New York: Universal-Grosset & Dunlap, 1964), p. 199.

[5]René Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature, 3rd ed. (1942; rpt. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1956), p. 17.

In Great Expectations and Wuthering Heights we note that Pip and Heathcliff go through three stages in their development. At the end of these respective novels we find that each character has returned to a position which is approximate to that with which he began, thereby making his development somewhat circular in effect.

In Vanity Fair, Becky Sharp fails to change from the beginning to the end of the novel. Her goals and aspirations are always centered on gaining wealth and respectability. She is not influenced by conscience in her machinations, thereby revealing that her moral stance is a conglomeration of expedient actions, rather than a studied effort at making her decisions from any one particular set of values. Because she evidences no tendency towards one basic set of moral values, she never changes and can be depicted as a static figure. Becky has also been used as a pivotal point in this study. Pip and Heathcliff have a somewhat cyclical development, Becky's is static, and Dorothea Brooke and Marlow have a more or less linear development.

In Middlemarch and "Heart of Darkness," the characters begin the narratives with an awareness of their basic moralities; those attitudes are changed, however, as a result of the individual's experiences, making both people fully aware of their own limitations. Dorothea and Marlow learn that once they have involved themselves with someone whom they have idolized, they abnegate their own moral integrity and must suffer the consequences. Both characters go only so far in their associations with another character and never allow

themselves to be absorbed completely by him. Dorothea and Marlow learn from their experiences, and although they emerge with altered attitudes, their moral stances still retain characteristics of their original ones.

The work done by E. M. Forster in Aspects of the Novel was instrumental in prompting this study. Forster, however, discusses character status on the basis of action, whereas this work discusses character on the basis of motivation. For the purposes of expediency, the terms "flat and round character" in Forster's work and "figure and character" in this work may be equated; although there are differences, it is not the purpose of this paper to disagree with or elaborate upon Forster's work, but to discuss character development on the basis of the moral stance.

CHAPTER I

CIRCULAR CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Great Expectations: Pip

Initially, I said that a character is a figure imbued by the author with a moral stance, and I think it is true that all characters in any particular work begin as figures, simply because it takes a few pages for the figures to be given attributes which will make them characters. Since it takes longer for some figures to exhibit themselves as characters, we should be careful not to judge them too quickly; in fact, not until we have completed the novel in question should we attempt to make any definite decisions as to the "character" status of a particular figure.

In the first chapter of Great Expectations we learn only the protagonist's name, Pip--nothing about his religion, his philosophy, or his beliefs about what is right or wrong. It is not until the second chapter that we begin to learn of Pip's impressions of the people around him and his feelings of what makes a good person; he then begins to reveal his moral stance.

Speaking of Joe Gargery, his brother-in-law, Pip says, "He is a mild, good-natured, sweet-tempered, easygoing, foolish, dear fellow--a sort of Hercules in strength, and also in weakness." Speaking of his sister, Pip says: "My sister, Mrs Joe Gargery, was more than twenty years older than I, and had established a great

reputation with herself and the neighbors because she had brought me up 'by hand.' Having at that time to find out for myself what the expression meant, and knowing her to have a hard and heavy hand, and to be much in the habit of laying it upon her husband as well as upon me, I supposed that Joe Gargery and I were both brought up by hand."[6]

It is apparent that Pip likes Joe and sympathizes with him, while his attitude toward his sister is very different. Pip's mention that his sister had a "hard and heavy hand" is an implicit judgment of her method of child rearing.

Pip's attitude toward his sister is evidenced again when she administers "Tar water" to him for having supposedly "bolted" his food at the evening meal: "On this particular evening, the urgency of my case demanded a pint of this mixture, which was poured down my throat, for my greater comfort, while Mrs Joe held my head under her arm, as a boot would be held in a boot jack" (pp. 9-10).

Psychiatrist Viktor E. Frankl, in explaining the insult of punishment, says: "The most painful part of beatings is the insult which they imply."[7] So it is with Pip: the insult of the punishment, implied by the method of administering the potion, goes further to help Pip form an unfavorable opinion of Mrs. Joe than

[6]Charles Dickens, Great Expectations (1860-61; rpt. Boston: Riverside--Houghton Mifflin, 1962), p. 5. Further references to this work will be found in parentheses in the text.

[7]Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy (1959; New York: Washington Square, 1963), p. 37.

all the "Tar water" in England.

While Pip had developed an attitude of antipathy toward his sister's method of raising children and toward the woman herself, a different aspect of his moral stance was not affected, that of his honesty. He was instructed by Magwitch, the escaped convict, to secure some food without revealing whom it was for; otherwise Magwitch would tell his "young friend," who would proceed to eat Pip's heart and liver. Pip reflected that "Conscience is a dreadful thing when it accuses man or boy. . . . The guilty knowledge that I was going to rob Mrs Joe . . . almost drove me out of my mind."[8]

Even at the age of seven, Pip has an awareness of his conscience, of what is right and wrong according to his environment, the social conditions, and the way he has been raised. We see from his pangs of guilt that his attitude toward his sister does not keep him from regarding his stealing as just that, stealing. He does not try to justify his intended theft by saying that his sister deserves to be stolen from because of the way she treats him.

Pip's moral stance is emerging; he is becoming a character, or at least seemingly so. We have noted that in a character's developing a moral stance the actions must be voluntary. Pip is being forced to perform a physical act of stealing, but his conscience recognizes that what he is being forced to do is wrong,

[8]Dickens, p. 10.

and he does not accept that mode of behavior as being justified. In fact, even though he is being forced to steal, he condemns himself and feels bound for the "Hulks" as a result of his action: "I felt fearfully sensible of the great convenience that the Hulks were handy for me. I was clearly on my way there. I had begun by asking questions, and I was going to rob Mrs Joe" (p. 12).

The importance of Pip's attitude is his conscious recognition of the wrongness of stealing, even though he is being forced to commit the crime. No one has to tell him that it is wrong; he voluntarily reacts by condemning himself, because his actions do not accord with his conscience, his whole moral stance.

This instance also points out that a moral stance must be dynamic in order to be defined or effective. Had Pip's moral stance been undefined and static he would have excused the theft of the food on the basis of his sister's treatment of him, or on some other pretext. At any rate, he would not have felt that he was guilty of anything; he would have justified his act by saying that he was only a victim of circumstance. However, he took all of the factors into consideration, and came to the conclusion that even though he was being forced to steal for Magwitch, the act of stealing was enough to condemn him. So, in essence, Pip's recognition of the wrongness of what he is about to do is actually a reaffirmation of his moral stance; the physical act is of no basic consequence.

Pip's exoneration by Magwitch's confession of stealing the

food leaves the young man in still another moral dilemma. Pip loves Joe and wants to maintain their relationship and feels that that would be impossible if he admits to Joe that Magwitch lied for him. Pip realizes how his actions fail to accord with what he believes to be the right course to take: "In a word, I was too cowardly to do what I knew to be right, as I had been too cowardly to avoid doing what I knew to be wrong. I had had no intercourse with the world at that time, and I imitated none of its many inhabitants who act in this manner. Quite an untaught genius, I made the discovery of the line of action for myself" (p. 36).

Of course, we must realize that the manner in which he was being raised by his sister was an influence on how he would react to certain situations. Joe's influence, too, would have had a great deal to do with how he would have reacted. But the fact that he judges his actions on the basis of what he believes, of how he has acted in the past, and on his sense of what is right or wrong, shows us that his behavior is consistent with his moral stance; his response originates with himself, and it is a conscious and voluntary response. While it would therefore seem that Pip is moving away from character status, he is actually becoming more fully defined as a character, or as a character with a defined moral stance.

Pip's conception of injustice is what modulates much of his behavior and causes him to act in certain ways. During his first visit to Miss Havisham's he is humiliated by Estella, not because of any deficiency in his personal make-up, as far as he is concerned,

but for the deficiencies in his upbringing. It is this feeling of injustice which he harbors that causes him to lie to Mrs. Joe and his Uncle Pumblechook about the Havisham household. He feels that his sister has treated him as an adult when she should have been treating him as a child. At one point he says: "In the little world in which children have their existence, whosoever brings them up, there is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt as injustice. It may be only small injustice that the child can be exposed to; but the child is small and its world is small" (p. 55).

It is this concept of injustice, coupled with the "dread of not being understood," that causes Pip to be so reticent about telling his sister what occurs at Miss Havisham's. He also admits that he felt "there would be something coarse and treacherous in my dragging her [Miss Havisham] as she really was (to say nothing of Miss Estella) before the contemplation of Mrs. Joe" (p. 58).

Pip feels an identity with Miss Havisham, possibly because they are both alone, and he is very reluctant to have anything deprecatory thought or said of the woman. Knowing his sister's and his Uncle Pumblechook's dispositions for doubting what is true, simply because it comes from someone who is in an inferior position, he decides to give them a fantastic tale that will satisfy their vulgar curiosity and make them let him alone. We notice, however, that his attitude toward Joe is not the same as it is toward his sister and his uncle. He has no desire to deceive Joe and, in fact, doesn't think that his sister will tell Joe everything he has

related to her and Pumblechook.

When Pip and Joe are alone, Pip says:

> "You remember all that about Miss Havisham's?"
> "Remember?" said Joe. "I believe you! Wonderful!"
> "It's a terrible thing, Joe; it ain't true."

Pip then explains why he told the lies: "And then I told Joe that I felt very miserable, and that I hadn't been able to explain myself to Mrs. Joe and Pumblechook, who were so rude to me, and that there had been a beautiful young lady at Miss Havisham's who was dreadfully proud, and that she had said I was common, and that I knew I was common, and that I wished I was not common, and that the lies had come of it somehow, though I didn't know how" (pp. 61-62).

In his conscious and deliberate act of lying to Mrs. Joe and Uncle Pumblechook, Pip is acting to defend a part of his conscience or beliefs. Miss Havisham has treated him with a great deal more respect and consideration than either of these two people has ever shown him, and his natural reaction is to defend her and her image against those who want to know what goes on at her house for the sake of satisfying their curiosity.

Notice, though, that Pip in no way attempts to deceive Joe or devalue their relationship. He values Joe's love and friendship and tells him that everything he has told his sister and his uncle was a lie. He knows what Joe's opinion of lies is, yet he so esteems Joe's friendship that he is willing to hazard the blacksmith's censure by telling him the truth.

In addition to the moral judgment Pip makes in this instance,

we see the first indication that he is aspiring to something which is impossible for him to attain, his great expectations. What he does is exactly what a figure would do: he makes a response that is not a result of his own evaluation: "I thought long after I laid me down, how common Estella would consider Joe, a mere blacksmith: how thick his boots, and how coarse his hands."

He has previously valued Joe's friendship and all that Joe could teach him. He is now allowing an acquired response to modulate his behavior so that it is no longer consistent with his basic moral stance. Pip even admits that he is changing as a result of that day's events: "That was a memorable day to me, for it made great changes in me" (p. 63).

Greater changes than he imagined! He has begun his rejection of the values that have previously sustained him in his relationship with his sister. He has begun his desertion of the values that have given him happiness in his relationship with Joe. Later, when he is faced with going to London, his repudiation of these values brings an initial unhappiness.

However, before Pip is faced with the actual leave-taking, he is made aware of his good fortune, or "great expectations" by Mr. Jaggers, a lawyer from London. It is after Jaggers has left and Pip and Joe have retired to the kitchen where Biddy and Mrs. Joe are seated, that we have a fine example of how Pip's values have already been impaired by the news of his good fortune.

Prior to the news about his endowment, Pip has thought of Joe

as being one of the best people on earth. His opinion of the blacksmith does not change, but he does misjudge a quality that Joe possesses, that is, the quality of being able to remain silent when there is a need to do so. Jaggers has told them that there must be no mention or speculation as to where the good fortune comes from, and Pip has agreed. Upon returning to the kitchen, Pip says:

> At length I got out, "Joe, have you told Biddy?"
> "No, Pip," . . . "which I left it to yourself, Pip."
> "I would rather you told, Joe."
> "Pip's a gentleman of fortun', then," said Joe, "and God bless him in it!" (p. 128).

This, contrasted with Pip's later remarks, shows how an acquired attitude impairs Pip's ability to evaluate character on the basis of his own moral stance: "I took it upon myself to impress Biddy (and through Biddy, Joe) with the grave obligation I considered my friends under, to know nothing and say nothing about the maker of my fortune" (p. 129).

Joe's very simple, obvious, direct approach to imparting or concealing information is in keeping with his actions thus far in the narrative. However, Pip's attitude or manner of impressing upon his friends the obligation that he could say nothing of his benefactor indicates the superfluous manner he is about to adopt.

Another interesting development has occurred in Pip's outlook on the figures in his life. For instance, "That ass, Pumblechook" (p. 85), "that basest of swindlers, Pumblechook" (p. 92), has become "a sensible practical good-hearted prime fellow" (p. 139), in spite of the fact that Pip recognizes that "If I had taken ten

times as many glasses of wine as I had, I should have known that he never had stood in that relation towards me, and should in my heart of hearts have repudiated the idea" (p. 139).

There is little doubt that at this point Pip's behavior has become inconsistent with his original moral stance. Although he is making conscious responses and sees that some of those responses are antithetical to his moral stance, he nevertheless continues with the response. What he moves into is an unconscious acquired response, because his action is exactly the type of action we would expect of a figure who gives no consideration to the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of a fortune. What makes it wrong for Pip is that he is violating his previously defined moral stance.

Thus, the end of the first stage of Pip's "expectations" is characterized by his moving away from a defined moral stance to one which has been acquired.

As we have seen Pip move from a moral stance that was beginning to take a definite form, so we now move to a section of the novel in which we see him continue to lose his defined moral stance and take on one that is largely undefined. His expectations are, as a whole, arranged in three stages: boyhood, youth, and maturity, or as R. George Thomas says: "The major structural feature of the novel is its division into the three distinct 'stages of Pip's Expectations.'"[9]

[9] R. George Thomas, Charles Dickens: Great Expectations, Studies in English Literature, No. 19 (London: Edward Arnold, 1964), p. 13.

Immediately upon his arrival in London, Pip's impressions of the city are indicative of the fact that he is now a free agent; he has no determination of his own. When he gave up his moral stance and started acting by the precepts of an acquired one, he also gave up the potential for directing his own future. Even his observations about his physical surroundings are controlled by what he believes is acceptable by society, rather than by his own sense of what is or is not attractive: "We Britons had at that time particularly settled, that it was treasonable to doubt our having and our being the best of everything: otherwise, while I was scared by the immensity of London, I think I might have had some faint doubts whether it was not rather ugly, crooked, narrow, and dirty."[10]

Not only has Pip abnegated his right to make decisions for himself, he has also impaired his ability to see things as they really are. For instance, in spite of all of Pumblechook's pretensions to pinching, gouging, and generally making him miserable, for the purpose of making him a better boy, Pip knows the old man is malicious. He is even able to discern the power of his new financial position, when at tailor Trabb's the old man commands his boy to open the door for Pip: "The last word was flung at the boy, who had not the least notion what it meant. But I saw him collapse as his master rubbed me out with his hands, and my first decided experience of the stupendous power of money, was, that it had morally laid upon

[10]Dickens, p. 144-45.

his back, Trabb's boy" (pp. 136-37).

We see Pip make a much, much less discerning observation about Jaggers' clerk, Wemmick, shortly after arriving in London, evidencing that his ability to make rational judgments about observable phenomena has been impaired by his new moral stance: "I judged him [Wemmick] to be a bachelor from the frayed condition of his linen, and he appeared to have sustained a good many bereavements; for he wore at least four mourning rings, besides a brooch representing a lady and a weeping willow at a tomb with an urn on it. I noticed, too, that several rings and seals hung at his watch chain, as if he were quite laden with remembrances of departed friends" (pp. 152-53).

Pip also makes observations about his new friend Herbert Pocket which are just as absurd as the wrong conclusions he draws about Wemmick's "portable property" (p. 236). These later observations about Herbert derive from Pip's feeling superior to his friend because he has money and Pocket hasn't: "There was something wonderfully hopeful about his general air, and something that at the same time whispered to me he would never be very successful or rich. I don't know how this was. I became imbued with the notion on that first occasion before we sat down to dinner, but I cannot define by what means" (p. 158).

I suggest that Pip does know by what means the thought occurred to him; he simply refuses to admit that he feels superior to Herbert because he has ostensibly met with Miss Havisham's favor, and her favor and Estella's opinions are Pip's new yardstick of value.

Pip's introduction to his new society is aided by Jaggers' having procured him a tutor in the person of Herbert Pocket's father. It is at the Pockets' residence that Pip meets Drummle and Startop, who are also the old man's students. Pip's reaction to Drummle is unfavorable:

> Bentley Drummle, who was so sulky a fellow that he even took up a book as if its writer had done him an injury, did not take up an acquaintance in a more agreeable spirit. Heavy in figure, movement, and comprehension--in the sluggish complexion of his face, and in the large awkward tongue that seemed to loll about in his mouth as he himself lolled about in a room--he was idle, proud, niggardly, reserved, and suspicious. He came of rich people down in Somersetshire, who had nursed this combination of qualities until they made the discovery that it was just of age and a blockhead (p. 182).

Pip's antipathy toward Drummle is not a simple case of disliking someone because he is not educated; after all, he admits that he would have been just as dull and slow as Drummle had he not had the help of Startop and Herbert. It is apparent that Pip's negative feelings toward Drummle are very similar to the way he had felt about Orlick, Joe's helper at the forge. If we remember what Pip had said, about Joe's boots being thick and his hands being coarse, after his first visit to Miss Havisham's, we see some of the same implications in his remarks about Drummle. Pip also appears to be resentful toward Drummle because the youth will in no way acknowledge his position as being superior. Drummle's position is actually superior to Pip's in that he was "the next heir but one to baronetcy" (pp. 171-72). It would appear, therefore,

that Pip is offended by anyone who does not acknowledge his new status in the world.

Pip's resentment of Drummle's condescending attitude is evidenced very soon after the two have met, and it is with this reaction that he moves further from consciously manipulating the events in his life to being manipulated by his social environment:

> As Drummle and Startop had each a boat, I resolved to set up mine, and to cut them both out. I was pretty good at most exercises in which country boys are adepts, but, as I was conscious of wanting elegance of style for the Thames--not to say for other waters--I at once engaged to place myself under the tuition of the winner of a prize wherry who plied at our stairs, and to whom I was introduced by my new allies. This practical authority confused me very much, by saying I had the arm of a blacksmith. If he could have known how nearly the compliment had lost him his pupil, I doubt if he would have paid it (p. 175).

Pip desires to "set up" his own boat because Drummle and Startop have boats, not for any enjoyment he derives from rowing, although the boat does serve later to effect the temporary escape of Magwitch. His resolution to "cut them both out," followed by his admission that he is good at things which require physical prowess, is an excellent example of the contrast between his former and his acquired moral stances. His consciousness of his lack of elegance in style complements his perspicacity, but does little to alleviate his moral dilemma; to acknowledge his adeptness at things requiring physical prowess is to acknowledge a part of his former self. And the further remark of how the "practical authority" nearly lost a

student because of his unknowing accuracy moves Pip further from his previous moral stance. In this last admission Pip moves to reject all that his previous life represented by contemplating recrimination against someone who has made an innocent remark that is misconstrued because of his own guilt feelings.

Just as Pip moves to reject his former life by acquiring the physical possessions expected of a young gentleman in London, and just as he resents being inadvertently recognized for what he was formerly, so do his new associations evoke feelings from him which he would not have admitted at home. We saw earlier how he had lied to his sister and his uncle to protect Miss Havisham and because he was afraid of not being understood, but such is not the case when he has dinner with his companions Drummle, Startop, and Pocket at Jaggers' house: "For myself, I found that I was expressing my tendency to lavish expenditure, and to patronize Herbert, and to boast of my great prospects, before I quite knew that I had opened my lips" (p. 191).

There is certainly no fear of not being understood here. Nor does any tone of regret seem to creep into this admission. Pip is in a much more obligatory position as far as the necessity for discretion is concerned, yet he does and says more than he would venture with his own family, and that is indicative of how far he has strayed from his previously well defined moral stance. His desire to impress people with his newly acquired wealth is uncharacteristic of the influences he was under while he resided at the forge with

Joe and his sister until he became acquainted with Estella and Miss Havisham.

And Pip continues his deviation from his original moral stance. When he learns that Joe is to pay him a visit, he feels uncomfortable with his new associates. He also feels very vulnerable in Drummle's presence and as a result is unwilling to have the blacksmith visit him at Hammersmith. He intimates that the reason he wants to avoid a meeting between the two is so that Joe will be spared Drummle's derision, but it is quite obviously for his own image that Pip desires the two never to meet: "I had little objection to his being seen by Herbert or his father, for both of whom I had a respect; but I had the sharpest sensitiveness as to his being seen by Drummle, whom I held in contempt" (p. 196).

Pip's immersion in his new society has led him to reject Joe, actually to dread his visit, but his position does not cause him to reject Estella or Miss Havisham. In fact, he is much more hopeful of creating a better impression on Estella, now that he has come into property: "While my mind was thus engaged, I thought of the beautiful young Estella, proud and refined, coming toward me, and I thought with absolute abhorrence of the contrast between the jail and her. I wished that Wemmick had not met me, or that I had not yielded to him and gone with him, so that, of all days in the year on this day, I might not have had Newgate in my breath and on my clothes" (pp. 237-38). Of course he can't reject Miss Havisham because she appears to him to be the person responsible for his

new status. The apprehension with which he anticipates Joe's arrival and the anticipation with which he awaits Estella's arrival indicate that he has really lost control of his own reactions. In fact, Estella makes a remark to the effect that Pip has no choice in what he does, just as she has no choice:

> "We are not free to follow our own devices, you and I" (p. 238).

It seems apparent that Pip's condition is clear to everyone except himself.

Although Pip has rejected Joe, Biddy, and his former life, he is aware that he is wrong to do so. After Joe has visited him in London and Estella has returned from Europe, Pip tells Herbert:

> "You call me a lucky fellow. Of course, I am. I was a blacksmith's boy but yesterday; I am--what shall I say I am--today?" (p. 223).

In aspiring to the status of a young gentleman in London, Pip has lost his sense of identity. By taking on an identity, a set of values, a mode of behavior, which is not consistent with his originally defined moral stance, Pip has become unable to say what he is. At least, his former moral position provided a frame of reference to let him know what he was--a blacksmith's boy--but his new position doesn't give him any hint of what he has become.

Because Herbert had never seen the old Pip, he too is unable to recognize that the new identity Pip has assumed is not right for him. He attempts to help Pip define himself:

> "Say, a good fellow, if you want a phrase," returned Herbert, smiling, and clapping his hand

> on the back of mine: "a good fellow, with impetuosity and hesitation, boldness and diffidence, action and dreaming, curiously mixed in him" (p. 223).

It is a valiant attempt on Herbert's part to imbue Pip with some identity with which he will be comfortable and satisfied, but the result, "good fellow," is about as nebulous a term as can be imagined.

Pip recognizes the inadequacy of this new identity and ponders it: "I stopped for a moment to consider whether there really was this mixture in my character. On the whole, I by no means recognized the analysis, but thought it not worth disputing" (p. 223).

His acknowledgement of the fact that he did not recognize the attributes Herbert had given him show that Pip is still thinking, but it also indicates that he is not acting. If this failure to act stemmed from a conscious recognition that the circumstances of his position do not accord with his moral stance, he would maintain some character status. What has happened, however, is that he chooses not to act, thereby consciously negating his previously defined moral stance. His admission that he is not a good fellow would show that he valued his way of life before he became propertied and that his way of life as a blacksmith's boy was more in keeping with his moral stance than was his present life.

Pip's remark about not being able to recognize the qualities in himself which are necessary for being a good fellow indicates that he is aware that his character has changed, and we see that

he is willing to admit that all of the change has not been for the better: "As I had grown accustomed to my expectations, I had insensibly begun to notice their effect upon myself and those around me. Their influence on my own character I disguised from my recognition as much as possible, but I knew very well that it was not all good" (p. 244). But without action no amount of recognition and confession will make him a character, move him back to his defined moral stance, or begin to correct the damage he has done.

We see that he does attempt to mitigate the evil he has done Herbert Pocket, when he receives a present in earnest of his expectations on his twenty-first birthday:

> "Mr. Wemmick," said I, "I want to ask your opinion. I am very desirous to serve a friend. . . . "This friend," I pursued, "is trying to get on in commercial life, but has no money, and finds it difficult and disheartening to make a beginning. Now, I want somehow to help him to a beginning" (p. 261).

I think we can see that Pip's feelings for Herbert are sincere. He may be feeling a bit of remorse about his having had no real aim in life, other than to become a gentleman, while Herbert, who did have an aim in life, was not the one to receive the expectations from Miss Havisham, the supposed source of Pip's property.

Pip also seems to be negating all of the circumstances which surround his present situation. He has admitted that he is not happy, that he has no identity, and that his possession of property has led him to extravagance. Yet, for all of these admissions, for all of the misery and unhappiness he has experienced as a result of

his expectations, he is about to do somewhat the same for his friend. This indicates that Pip has not really learned anything, even if he does help Herbert; his experience has done him no good. He is about to put himself into the same position in relation to Herbert as he believes Miss Havisham stands to himself.

This expressed desire to assist Herbert appears to move Pip back toward a defined moral stance. His response, or desire, is voluntary, originates with himself, is consciously made, and in addition, seeks to right a wrong.

This seeming return to a defined moral stance is probably a result of Pip's feeling guilty about Herbert's being deprived of a chance to make good and become further involved with his intended, Clara. In a sense, Pip's action could be construed as an act of substitution, whereby Herbert's success in business and love is compensation for Pip's failures, or not being destined for any specific occupation and not being able to succeed with Estella.

Pip's ostensible return to a defined moral stance is somewhat impaired when he learns that his expectations proceed from Magwitch, the convict, rather than from Miss Havisham. Upon learning who his benefactor is, Pip reflects: "Miss Havisham's intentions towards me, all a mere dream; Estella not designed for me; I only suffered in Satis House as a convenience, a sting for greedy relations, a model with a mechanical heart to practice on when no other practice was at hand; those were the first smarts I had. But, sharpest and deepest pain of all--it was for the convict, guilty of I knew not

what crimes, and liable to be taken out of those rooms where I sat thinking, and hanged at the Old Bailey door, that I had deserted Joe" (p. 291).

The sequence of reflections would appear to negate Pip's claim that the sharpest pain was his desertion of Joe for the convict. I think we can see Pip's words as an attempt to justify himself in what he has done to Joe, rather than as self-reproach. He fails to recognize that what he did to Joe was not a result of anything except his inverted view of what was good and bad. He still appears to be hesitant about admitting that he consciously and voluntarily moved away from his defined morality to acquire one which someone else provided.

His recognition is all the more ironic because he fails to see that if Miss Havisham had been his benefactor his desertion would have been even more despicable, more loathsome, because he would not have had occasion for regret. Regardless of whether he deserted Joe as a result of Miss Havisham's or Magwitch's benevolence, the fact remains that he deserted Joe because of money and social position; the source has significance in the sense that his pride is injured when he learns that his money came from a source which could in no way be considered genteel. He rejects Magwitch in much the same way he has rejected Joe, and for essentially the same reason: neither man is compatible with his new world view. He sees himself as having been deceived by Magwitch but he does not reject the society or standard of life which he has acquired while under

the deception.

At the end of the second stage of Pip's expectations, we find the young man attempting to solve the conflict between his actions and his motives. The knowledge that his property is from Magwitch causes him to doubt his right to be in his present position. He also doubts the propriety of his relationship with Miss Havisham and Estella. But he doesn't reject the things that represent his moral downfall; he regrets only that the source of his income is not socially acceptable.

Although Pip only marginally realizes the moral implications of what he has done for the sake of money and position, he does resolve that he will not take any more money from Magwitch. His ability to deny himself of the very source of his expectations begins to move him back toward his original moral stance: "But I had quite determined that it would be a heartless fraud to take more money from my patron in the existing state of my uncertain thoughts and plans" (p. 342). And his desire to repay the convict would indicate that Pip is aware of certain moral implications; however, his proposal of "soldiering" to reimburse Magwitch brings a response from Herbert which raises a doubt about Pip's ability to break completely with the influence to which he has succumbed:

> "Anyhow, my dear Handel," said he, presently, "soldiering won't do. If you were to renounce this patronage and these favors, I suppose you would do so with some faint hope of one day repaying what you have already had. Not very strong, that hope, if you went soldiering. Besides, it's absurd. You would be

> infinitely better in Clarriker's house, small as it is. I am working up towards a partnership, you know."
>
> Poor fellow! He little suspected with whose money (p. 307).

When Pip visits Miss Havisham to inform her and Estella of his situation, he perpetuates Herbert's position by asking the old woman to provide the money necessary for Herbert to buy a partnership in Clarriker's. The motives behind Pip's keeping the information from Herbert are not clear; however, since he appears to be trying to shed his acquired morality, I think his move should be interpreted as consideration for Herbert. And when he tells Miss Havisham and Estella of his new situation, his tone is one of regret more than of self-reproach, indicating that he is struggling to resolve his dilemma as best he can:

> "I have found out who my patron is. It is not a fortunate discovery, and is not likely ever to enrich me in reputation, station, fortune, anything" (p. 322).

Pip's maturation, as evidenced in the third stage of his expectations, consists of a series of revelations and unexpected events. The source of his expectations is revealed to him; at Miss Havisham's, Estella declares that she will marry Drummle; there is a fire at Miss Havisham's and she is seriously burned; Pip is lured into the country by Orlick and narrowly escapes being murdered; and finally, Pip and Herbert attempt to effect Magwitch's escape but are prevented from doing so.

The essential factor in Pip's maturation would seem to be his change of attitude toward Magwitch. This change, however, appears

to be precipitated by the conclusion he reaches regarding the relationship between the convict and Estella:

> "So! You know the young lady's father, Pip?" said Mr. Jaggers.
> "Yes," I replied, "and his name is Provis [Magwitch's alias]--from New South Wales" (p. 369).

I think there is little else we can infer from Pip's change of heart toward Magwitch other than that it is predicated upon his knowledge that the man is Estella's father. Pip has lost Estella to Drummle, but that fact doesn't make him happy about the situation. The last vestige of hope he has is that he can have some sort of relationship with Estella via his concern for Magwitch. This concern for Magwitch does Pip double duty in that he can, as Jaggers suggests, protect Estella from knowing that her father is a convict:

> "For whose sake would you reveal the secret?--For the father's? I think he would be much the better for the mother. For the mother's? I think if she had done such a deed she would be safer where she was. For the daughter's? I think it would hardly serve her, to establish her parentage for the information of her husband, and to drag her back to disgrace, after an escape of twenty years, pretty secure to last for life" (p. 372).

Yet, at the same time he can feel that he has a part of Estella with him while he is near Magwitch. Although this construction of events might seem unnecessarily harsh toward Pip, his attitude toward Magwitch before this discovery indicated, as we have seen, that he wanted as little as possible to do with the man.

Pip's concern and attitude toward Magwitch after the convict has been apprehended help show that he has been able to change his mind and recognize what the convict has done for him: "For now my repugnance to him had all melted away, and in the hunted, wounded, shackled creature who held my hand in his, I only saw a man who had meant to be my benefactor, and who had felt affectionately, gratefully, and generously, towards me with great constancy through a series of years. I only saw in him a much better man than I had been to Joe" (p. 402).

Pip has regained his ability to see and evaluate for himself. This evaluation on Pip's part is reminiscent of the very early Pip, who recognized that he was being forced to steal but that the act was still theft and not mitigated by circumstances, who recognized Joe's worth, who acted to defend Miss Havisham from the vulgar curiosity of his sister and his uncle. It is in this regained ability to judge for himself that Pip returns to what we see as approximately his original moral stance.

His experiences have allowed him to see that expectations must be earned; they cannot be acquired any other way. Some people would contend that Pip did earn his expectations by helping Magwitch in the churchyard. But this is not true. Pip's act in the beginning was forced by the convict's threats; we cannot rightfully infer what he would have done had the situation been different. According to Ian Watt, interpretation "should not be allowed to go beyond what is positively stated" by the author or character

concerned.[11]

Further evidence of Pip's return to his original moral stance appears when he returns to the country at the behest of a note promising information about his uncle Provis. A good indication that Pip has returned approximately to his former values is his choice of lodgings: "Avoiding the Blue Boar, I put up at an inn of minor reputation down the town, and ordered some dinner."[12]

In conversation with his landlord, Pip's own story is unknowingly revealed to him, with the inclusion of Pumblechook as Pip's earliest benefactor. Pip's reflections evidence his former ability to evaluate with a clear sense of integrity: "I had never been struck at so keenly, for my thanklessness to Joe, as through the brazen impostor Pumblechook. The falser he, the truer Joe; the meaner he, the nobler Joe" (p. 378).

In addition to his ability to see his friends and those who pretended to be his friends in the same clear light as he did before he received his expectations, Pip's moral return is manifested in his seeing himself as inept, rather than seeing his friend Herbert as being that way: "We owed so much to Herbert's ever cheerful industry and readiness, that I often wondered how I had conceived that old idea of his ineptitude, until I was one day enlightened by the reflection, that perhaps the ineptitude had

[11]Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel: Studies in DeFoe, Richardson, and Fielding (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1957), p. 111.

[12]Dickens, p. 377.

never been in him at all, but had been in me" (p. 433).

Pip's awareness that his troubles were a result of the weakness in himself, not in Miss Havisham, Estella, Joe, or Magwitch, brings him around to the defined moral stance that is necessary for him to remain a character at the end of the novel. He is no longer afraid to evaluate his life and come to a resolution or conclusion that might cause him embarrassment or discomfort. His final admission, that the ineptitude he had projected onto Herbert had actually been in himself, is evidence that he is again living in the rational world for which he was created.

Although Pip does not return to exactly the same moral stance as that with which he began, he comes close enough so that an approximate circle characterizes his movement quite well. The circle reflects Pip's movement because in the beginning he was consciously manipulating his actions, then he moved away from controlling his own actions to allowing them to be modulated by his society, and finally he moved back to conscious, deliberate choice of action on the basis of his moral stance.

Wuthering Heights: Heathcliff

Just as Great Expectations is divided into three stages, so has Wuthering Heights a similar structure, with the exception that the three stages of Heathcliff's life are not as easily distinguished as are the stages in Pip's. For schematic purposes, Heathcliff's development may be divided roughly into three stages--simple revenge, conflict between revenge and love, and a more complex revenge which is eventually abandoned. This division is to delineate certain phases in his life in order to examine his character development on the basis of the foregoing moral stance theory and in light of the earlier discussion about Pip.

We have our first view of Heathcliff as a child when Mr. Earnshaw returns from London: "We crowded round, and over Miss Cathy's head, I had a peep at a dirty, ragged, black-haired child; big enough both to walk and talk: indeed, its face looked older than Catherine's; yet, when it was set on its feet, it only stared round, and repeated over and over again some gibberish, that nobody could understand."[13] In this early view of Heathcliff, supplied by Nelly Dean, we have a cryptic distinction between what a child should be and what Heathcliff appears to be. She says he looked like a child but was big enough to walk and talk, and his face looked older than Catherine's, intimating that there is something unusual about the child, other

[13]Emily Brontë, Wuthering Heights (1847; rpt. New York: Modern Library, 1950), pp. 42-43. Further references to this work will be found in parentheses in the text.

than the fact that he appeared to be a "gypsy brat" (p. 43).

Mrs. Dean carries this cryptic tone further: "So, from the very beginning, he bred bad feeling in the house; and at Mrs. Earnshaw's death, which happened in less than two years after, the young master had learned to regard his father as an oppressor rather than a friend, and Heathcliff as a usurper of his parent's affection and his privileges" (p. 44).

The old servant also relates that "He [Heathcliff] was not insolent to his benefactor, he was simply insensible; though knowing perfectly the hold he had on his heart, and conscious he had only to speak and all the house would be obliged to bend to his wishes."

The insensibility, or detachment, Heathcliff shows to Mr. Earnshaw is evidenced in his remarks to Hindley:

> "You must exchange horses with me: I don't like mine; and if you won't I shall tell _your_ [my emphasis] father" (p. 45).

We would expect a "normal" child to call Mr. Earnshaw "Father," from respect, if for no other reason. But the intimation is that Heathcliff is not a normal child and his desire to maintain his independence outweighs any social convention or personal gratitude he might feel for the old man.

So we see that in his relationship with Mr. Earnshaw he is not like the other children, Catherine and Hindley. He becomes aware of the power he holds over old Earnshaw and manipulates people and circumstances with the power which his awareness affords him.

However, in order not to reduce Heathcliff too quickly to the

calculating creature of revenge which he eventually becomes in his third phase, we need to recognize that there are moments in which his feelings for other people demonstrate his ability to express himself in some way other than by forcing others to his will; for example, Nelly says of him and Catherine: "The little souls were comforting each other with better thoughts than I could have hit on: no parson in the world ever pictured heaven so beautifully as they did, in their innocent talk" (p. 51). And later, when Catherine and Heathcliff have been apprehended in the process of spying at Thrushcross Grange, Heathcliff expresses his willingness to place himself in danger for Catherine's sake:

> "because, if Catherine had wished to return, I intended shattering their great glass panes to a million fragments, unless they let her out. . . . I saw they were full of stupid admiration; she is so immeasurably superior to them--to everybody on earth, is she not, Nelly?" (pp. 59-60).

Later, when Catherine returned from Thrushcross Grange influenced, if not deeply affected, by the Lintons' concept of social gracefulness, Heathcliff shows that he has a sense of humiliation and outrage, that he is not the unfeeling, unperceiving individual the others deem him to be:

> "I shall not stand to be laughed at. I shall not bear it! . . . You needn't have touched me! . . . I shall be as dirty as I please: and I like to be dirty, and I will be dirty" (p. 63).

It is important that we understand these different aspects of Heathcliff's personality, because later when we see him in conflict,

in his second phase, we will realize that that stage is really a struggle between the good and the evil that are raging within him. On making decisions about personality, Ian Watt says, "Usually when we attempt to make up our minds about anyone's total personality we take into account as many views about the person as possible, and by comparing them with our own are able to achieve a kind of stereoscopic effect."[14] If we hold only one view of Heathcliff, his antics become macabre and artificial; he becomes inhuman, guided by unknown forces. While it may be true that he does come to be guided by unknown forces,[15] to see him only as a pawn of those forces greatly reduces his effectiveness as a character and, indeed, the over-all effectiveness of the novel. And to see him as a pawn of those forces would reduce his actions to a series of forced responses, whereas if he is the controller of his actions he is consciously and voluntarily responding; thereby his moral stance is in the process of being defined, and we can see him as a character rather than a figure.

The first seeds of a desire for revenge are sown in Heathcliff's mind when Hindley humiliates him on Christmas Eve by refusing to allow him to eat dinner with Catherine and the Linton children. Heathcliff verbalizes this desire when he comes downstairs and sits in the kitchen with Ellen:

[14]Watt, p. 112.

[15]Melvin R. Watson, "Tempest in the Soul: The Theme and Structure of Wuthering Heights," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 4 (1949), 87-100.

> "I'm trying to settle how I shall pay Hindley back. I don't care how long I wait if I can only do it at last. I hope he will not die before I do!"

What follows this conversation, however, is more important than a verbal expression of the desire for revenge:

> "No, God won't have the satisfaction that I shall," he returned. "I only wish I knew the best way! Let me alone, and I'll plan it out: while I'm thinking of that I don't feel pain" (p. 71).

Hindley could have done nothing that would have evoked a stronger response in Heathcliff than to humiliate him in front of Catherine and the Lintons. The revenge, of necessity, must be of like proportion; to obtain his revenge in that manner is the only means by which the thoughts of it can assuage the physical and mental pain that Heathcliff experiences.

Furthermore, the statement is indicative of what is to follow. By humiliating him in front of the Linton children, Edgar in particular, Hindley has laid Edgar open to Heathcliff's revenge, inadvertently, of course, but it has happened just the same. It is this vehement declaration by a child, so vivid in our minds when we later see Heathcliff dealing with Hindley and Edgar, that causes us to realize that this is the basic experience for Heathcliff; it is this point of intended behavior from which he never deviates, for which he actually lives out his tormented life.

The reaction Heathcliff has toward Hindley is much the same as the feelings Pip has toward his sister when she administers Tar

water to him; both children resent being treated as mere objects. Although their experiences are similar, Pip's reaction to his antagonist is less vehement because he has someone to console him in his misery whereas Heathcliff is alone in his battle for existence. An observation by Pip is particularly appropriate to understanding the reaction of both individuals in their respective situations: "In the little world in which children have their existence, whosoever brings them up, there is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt as injustice. It may be only small injustice that the child can be exposed to; but the child is small, and its world is small."[16]

The final factor in making Heathcliff the vengeful character he eventually becomes occurs when he overhears Catherine tell Nelly she intends to marry Edgar Linton because it would degrade her to marry Heathcliff. Up to this point, Heathcliff has been able to endure all that Edgar has inflicted upon him. With Catherine's announcement, Heathcliff feels deserted and betrayed and decides that there is only one thing to do--leave the Heights: "He had listened till he heard Catherine say it would degrade her to marry him, and then he stayed to hear no further" (p. 95).

The part of Catherine's announcement that Heathcliff hears insults him because he has regarded her as being superior to everyone else, especially to the Lintons. To have her ally herself with Edgar Linton, and in effect Hindley since he approves of Edgar, causes

[16]Dickens, p. 55.

Heathcliff to experience a frustration he can cope with only by leaving. Part of the frustration is that he knows she loves him, not Linton, yet she cannot marry him because Hindley has degraded him in her eyes. He knows that in order to gain her respect and eradicate the impression of him that Hindley has created in her, he must have money and power.

Heathcliff knows Catherine well enough to know that she won't change her mind about marrying Edgar Linton unless he can prove to her that he can give her all that the Lintons can offer, which she apparently values. We see how he knows her so well in her explanation to Nelly about the way she feels toward Heathcliff:

> "I cannot express it; but surely you and everybody have a notion that there is or should be an existence of yours beyond you. What were the use of my creation, if I were entirely contained here? My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries, and I watched and felt each from the beginning: my great thought in living is himself. . . . Nelly, I am Heathcliff!" (pp. 96-97).

Part of Heathcliff's frustration also appears to be his inability to comprehend Catherine's rejection of him. His leaving the Heights is an implicit judgment of her; he would never have violated his moral posture for anyone else. Her rejection or denial of him for Edgar Linton is behavior inconsistent with her own moral stance, but she isn't strong enough to do otherwise. Rather than be inconsistent, Heathcliff leaves Catherine to establish himself in a position whereby he might be able to effect his vowed revenge against Hindley and reestablish himself favorably in her eyes.

After an absence of three years Heathcliff returns to find Catherine married to Edgar Linton and settled at Thrushcross Grange. He confesses to them that his purpose in returning to the area is to wreak on Hindley the revenge that he had planned years before:

> "afterwards settle my score with Hindley; and then prevent the law by doing execution on myself" (p. 113).

This begins the second stage of Heathcliff's struggle for moral definition, the impetus of which is grounded in his desire for revenge. This second stage of development is distinguished by the conflict he experiences in his desire for revenge and his desire to protect Catherine, which arises from his love for her, conflict which is eventually resolved by her death.

Arnold Kettle says that the first of Heathcliff's callous and ghastly acts of revenge is his marriage to Isabella. Although I agree generally with Kettle's remarks about the marriage between Heathcliff and Isabella Linton, it is not the first act of revenge. Earlier in the novel, Nelly Dean pays a visit to the Heights and is confronted by Hareton. On finding that the child's language has deteriorated shockingly since her departure, she asks:

> "Who's your master?"
> "Devil daddy," was his answer.

Nelly misinterprets Hareton's reply and thinks he means Hindley, but the following remarks make it clear that the youngster means Heathcliff:

> "Ah! and the devil teaches you to swear at daddy?" I observed.

> "Ah--nay," he drawled.
> "Who then?"
> "Heathcliff."
> I asked if he liked Mr Heathcliff.
> "Ay!" he answered again.
> Desiring to have his reasons for liking him, I could only gather the sentences--"I known't: he pays dad back what he gies to me--he curses daddy for cursing me. He says I mun do as I will" (p. 129).

It would appear, therefore, that Heathcliff's first vengeful act is to turn son against father, not because he necessarily seeks Hareton's approbation, but because he seeks to repay Hindley in kind for the treatment he had received after old Earnshaw's death. Just as Hindley had banished him from the company of the family, so does Heathcliff desire to deprive Hindley of the company of a family: "He [Hindley] drove him [Heathcliff] from their company to the servants, deprived him of the instructions of the curate, and insisted that he should labour out of doors instead; compelling him to do so as hard as any other hand on the farm" (pp. 53-54).

Hareton shows that Heathcliff has not been as subtle about reducing Hindley's son to his own former state, when the child replies to Nelly's questioning:

> "And the curate does not teach you to read and write then?" I pursued.
> "No, I was told the curate should have his ---- teeth dashed down his ---- throat, if he stepped over the threshold--Heathcliff had promised that!" (p. 130).

Although our first inclination may be to see Heathcliff as seeking revenge on everyone who has degraded him, this is not entirely true. In marrying Edgar Linton, Catherine had denied the

feeling she and Heathcliff had for one another, and in a very real sense she was a party to the degradation Hindley inflicted upon Heathcliff. But because he realizes the affinity between himself and Catherine, he does not attempt to wreak vengeance on her:

> "I seek no revenge on you," replied Heathcliff less vehemently. "That's not the plan. The tyrant grinds down his slaves and they don't turn against him; they crush those beneath them" (p. 132).

Implicit in this statement is Heathcliff's belief that Hindley has been responsible for the degradation he has suffered and that he and Catherine are, in one respect, Hindley's "slaves." With this statement he attempts to categorize his own actions as being different from those of Hindley. He is denying being a tyrant because that would imply that he is no better than Hindley. He also sees Catherine and Edgar as slaves to Hindley and their crushing "those beneath them" would be their marriage in order to effect further disgrace on himself. In essence, Heathcliff sees Catherine and himself as victims of Hindley's and Edgar's machinations, but with the exception that Edgar is simultaneously perceived as a slave because he sought to degrade Heathcliff, as evidenced by his attitude toward his wife's friend: "He [Edgar] looked vexed, and suggested the kitchen as a more suitable place for him [Heathcliff]" (p. 111).

Heathcliff's marriage to Isabella Linton is evidence of an intense desire to strike back at his oppressors. The marriage serves a dual purpose: by marrying Isabella, he is reducing her to his

level, and he is dealing the same sort of blow to Catherine that she has dealt him by marrying Edgar. During an interview with Nelly Dean, Heathcliff admits that the main motivating force in his life is to avenge the wrongs done him, showing no pity for the guilty parties:

> "I have no pity! I have no pity! The more the worms writhe, the more I yearn to crush out their entrails! It is a moral teething; and I grind with greater energy, in proportion to the increase of pain" (p. 179).

There isn't much to be said about the marriage except to note that Heathcliff's antipathy for Isabella is such that there appears to be no reason for the reader to expect it:

> "And I like her too ill to attempt it," said he, "except in a very ghoulish fashion. You'd hear of odd things if I lived alone with that mawkish, waxen face: the most ordinary would be painting on its white the colours of the rainbow, and turning the blue eyes black, every day or two: they detestably resemble Linton's" (p. 125).

We can see that it would take an enormous enticement to prompt Heathcliff to suggest marriage, but that enticement results from his motivating force, revenge.

If the calculated marriage to Isabella has reduced Heathcliff's appearance to that of a vengeance-filled creature only, we need to look at a confrontation between him and Catherine to see that he is motivated by the conflict between the desires of love and revenge. He has come to Thrushcross Grange on a Sunday, while the family is away at church, in order to prove to himself that she, during her

illness, has not forgotten him, and also to protect her from Edgar's "duty and humanity":

> "But do you imagine that I shall leave Catherine to his duty and humanity?" . . .
> "You suppose she has merely forgotten me?" he said. "Oh, Nelly! you know she has not! You know as well as I do, that for every thought she spends on Linton, she spends a thousand on me!" (pp. 174-75).

There is little doubt but that the marriage to Isabella is an act of vengeance, but it is evident that he is not possessed by the one motive entirely; he still has an over-powering love for Catherine, as shown by his actions when he sees her again:

> He neither spoke nor loosed his hold for some five minutes, during which period he bestowed more kisses than ever he gave in his life before, I dare say. . . (p. 185).
> Heathcliff went to the back of her chair, and leant over, but not so far as to let her see his face, which was livid with emotion . . . (p. 187).
> He flung himself into the nearest seat, and on my approaching hurriedly to ascertain if she had fainted, he gnashed at me, and foamed like a mad dog, and gathered her to him with a greedy jealousy. I did not feel as if I were in the company of a creature of my own species (pp. 188-89).

It is hardly necessary to observe that Nelly is indeed not in the company of a creature of her own species. She, after all, is not undergoing any turmoil or conflict, whereas Heathcliff's moral attitude is dependent upon the resolution of his turmoil and conflict.

According to U. C. Knoepflmacher,[17] the fullest expression of

[17]Knoepflmacher, p. 111.

Heathcliff's love for Catherine comes in the form of a curse at the time of her death, when her lover says:

> "May she wake in torment!" he cried, with frightful vehemence, stamping his foot, and groaning in a sudden paroxysm of ungovernable passion. . . . "Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living! You said I killed you--haunt me, then!"[18]

His willingness to undergo torment until and after he dies is evidence of his deep love for Catherine and shows him as being possessed by the emotion which conflicted with his desire for revenge.

Catherine's death brings us to the end of the second phase of Heathcliff's development. He no longer has to be careful that his behavior will wreak vengeance on others but spare her. He is now free to deal with Edgar Linton in any manner he desires and not be afraid that she will be injured.

In general, this second phase of Heathcliff's development may be considered as beginning with and spanning the marriage of Cathy and Linton. However, if we see that Heathcliff is freed from bonds of restraint by Catherine's death, we will see that the forced marriage is only a part of the retribution he has been meting out to Hindley, Edgar, Isabella and their descendants, who, he feels, have wronged him.

With all restraints on his behavior removed, Heathcliff moves into a period when he is in effect a free agent of evil. In a very

[18] Brontë, p. 197.

definite way, Heathcliff's behavior has been moderated by Catherine in much the same way that Pip's behavior is affected by his relationship with Miss Havisham. Upon the introduction of both individuals to the influencing agent, their behavior changes from what it had previously been. We don't see the dramatic change in Heathcliff's actions that we do in Pip's, but we still see a change, or we see the influence Catherine has on him through his restraint:

> "I [Heathcliff] wish you had sincerity enough to tell me whether Catherine would suffer greatly from his [Edgar's] loss: the fear that she would restrains me. And there you see the distinctions between our feelings: had he been in my place, and I in his, though I hated him with a hatred that turned my life to gall, I would never have raised a hand against him. . . . I never would have banished him from her society as long as she desired his" (p. 174).

His love for her is much stronger than the desire for revenge if he would restrain himself from an act of self-gratification for her sake.

It is not my intention to neglect the events of the plot from Catherine's death to the confrontation between Cathy and Joseph about the uprooted currant bushes, toward the end of the novel, as inconsequential or unimportant. I see this period of Heathcliff's life as being integrated with his final recognition that the revenge he has wrought on those who have supposedly wronged him has been of little consolation.

Admittedly, many events occur in this part of the novel which

have an important relationship to the integrity of the plot, but Heathcliff's presence is not seen as easily in this portion of the book as it is earlier, and it is Heathcliff with whom we are concerned. We still feel his presence, but it is not the physical intrusion which we have had previously. We do see him several times in this part of the novel, e.g., we see him holding Nelly against her will and forcing Cathy to marry Linton.

Heathcliff's behavior changes after Catherine's death, and that change is evident in the third and final phase of his development. His actions in dealing with Cathy and Linton are not as erratic as they were in his dealings with Catherine and Edgar because he is motivated by only one force in his concern with the younger Lintons, revenge, whereas his associations with Catherine and Edgar were influenced by conflicting forces, desire for revenge on him and love for her. The conflict, between vengeance and love, has been partially resolved for Heathcliff at the beginning of this third stage of development. This resolution, Catherine's death, has made him realize the emptiness of a life motivated only by the hatred and revenge with which her death leaves him.

In Pip's case, once the inner conflict has been resolved he can see the folly of his ways and begin to change his behavior to accord with his new moral awareness. With Heathcliff, however, this is impossible. Pip has insured his ability to modify his behavior by helping Herbert Pocket; Heathcliff has not done anything to benefit anyone; he has no friends who will help him, as Cathy

tells him:

> "Mr. Heathcliff, _you_ have _nobody_ to love you; and, however miserable you make us, we shall still have the revenge of thinking that your cruelty arises from your greater misery. You _are_ miserable, are you not? Lonely, like the devil, and envious like him? _Nobody_ loves you--_nobody_ will cry for you when you die!" (p. 338).

The only thing Heathcliff has in his life is enemies. This fact, coupled with the failure of his disposition to revenge himself on those enemies, makes his "success" rather bland:

> "My old enemies have not beaten me; now would be the precise time to revenge myself on their representatives: I could do it; and none could hinder me" (pp. 382-83).

It is interesting to note that Heathcliff is consciously reassessing his situation. In the first stage of his development, that of vengeance, he is incapable of consciously looking at what he is doing. When he does become capable of assessing his actions, he is exercising his ability as a character in that he is moving away from revenge back toward his love for Catherine.

Evidence of Heathcliff's new awareness is that he can see a change coming in his life, a turning away from revenge toward a union after death with Catherine:

> "Nelly, there is a strange change approaching: I'm in its shadow at present" (p. 383).

This admission comes after Catherine's death, after Cathy and Linton's marriage and Linton's death, after the Heights and the Grange are in his possession, and after Hareton is dependent on Heathcliff for his livelihood.

But the change Heathcliff speaks of is not the kind we might expect. After he realizes that there is no satisfaction in wreaking vengeance on those who have supposedly wronged him, or on their descendants, we might expect him to make peace with those descendants, the people he has wronged in his maniacal obsession with revenge. This, of course, is not what he does. Instead, he almost completely ignores Cathy and Hareton; he relinquishes his design for further physical revenge and concentrates on seeking a spiritual union with Catherine after death. It is only through this spiritual union that he feels he can finally satisfy the restlessness of his soul--a restlessness obviously not subdued by his acts of vengeance:

> "I have a single wish, and my whole being and faculties are yearning to attain it. They have yearned towards it so long, and so unwaveringly, that I'm convinced it _will_ be reached--and _soon_--because it has devoured my existence: I am swallowed up in the anticipation of its fulfillment. My confessions have not relieved me; but they may account for some otherwise unaccountable phases of humour which I show. O God! It is a long fight, I wish it were over!" (p. 385).

Heathcliff's new awareness is a redirection of his former obsession. Realizing the tepid satisfaction of being able to wreak physical revenge on those he holds responsible for injustices done him, he redirects the desire for revenge into the desire for spiritual union with Catherine.

It is this conscious ability on Heathcliff's part which makes him a character rather than a figure. The tendency might be to consider him a figure since his entire existence seems to be directed

or controlled by one force, revenge. His ability to consciously direct his actions to resolve the conflict between revenge and love is what gives him a defined moral stance. This new, single-directed morality, love for Catherine, allows no other forces to influence it or modify its effects on his behavior. It demands that his behavior be consistent with it, that his responses originate with himself, that those responses be voluntary and conscious--all of the requirements for a defined moral stance and thereby character status.

The moral stances of Pip and Heathcliff are similar, yet different. Because Pip is eventually able to move back consciously to a position which is similar to his original moral posture, his development would appear more nearly circular than Heathcliff's. Since Heathcliff is able to consciously abandon his desire for revenge on the Earnshaw and Linton descendants, he becomes very much like the Heathcliff who decided to deprive himself of Catherine's presence for a few years while he worked to regain favor in her eyes. It is his giving up an acquired personality, as it were, that moves Heathcliff back toward the first stage of his development in a somewhat circular manner. The primary difference between the two characters' developments is that Pip's was an assumed, or a parasitic, morality, whereas Heathcliff's had made revenge an integral part of his personality. Both characters, however, come to realize the futility of attempting to find happiness and satisfaction at the expense of their own basic moral precepts.

CHAPTER II

STATIC CHARACTER

<u>Vanity Fair</u>: Becky Sharp

Since we have seen characters whose development has been approximately circular, we need to look at a character whose moral stance is static, that is, the character's outlook is the same at the end of the novel as it was in the beginning.

It might be beneficial at this point to remind the reader that no attempt should be made to assign qualitative values to any character studied in light of the moral stance. Our concern is not whether a particular moral stance is good or bad, only whether the character being discussed is aware of and active in some affirmation of that moral stance. For instance, Pip begins by being a respectable, dutiful son and progresses to being a greedy, vacillating, ungrateful dandy; however, his eventual realization and repentant actions and attitude convince the reader that he is not really "bad" in the final analysis. In the same way, we see Heathcliff taken in by Earnshaw and would think that the young man would grow up to be a grateful son. However, the treatment Heathcliff receives as a child from the other members of the Earnshaw household turns him into the diabolical avenger he appears to be at the end of the novel. Whereas Pip goes from "good" to "bad" to "good," Heathcliff goes from simple revenge to a conflict between revenge and love to a more complex revenge. However, we need see only whether each character is aware

of his moral stance and whether his actions accord with that awareness.

Very much like Pip and Heathcliff, whose actions have affirmed their moral postures, Becky Sharp, in Thackeray's Vanity Fair, evidences a conscious awareness of her moral stance and reaffirms this awareness by her behavior, but she never feels compelled or bound by any particular precept. It would appear, at first, that Becky has no moral stance, but she has. It is only that her moral stance is not the kind that pleases the reader or the other characters. U. C. Knoepflmacher says Becky is characterized by "frank egotism,"[19] and that appears to be the single guiding principle of her morality; in fact, it appears to be the only guiding principle of Becky's moral stance.

Having been taken into the girls' academy on Chiswick Mall by Miss Pinkerton upon her father's death, Becky adamantly refused to do anything beyond her required scope of duties, which consists of speaking French with the regular students at the school:

> "I am here to speak French with the children," Rebecca said abruptly, "not to teach them music, and save money for you. Give me money, and I will teach them."[20]

This attitude of reluctance to do nothing without remuneration characterizes Becky throughout the entire novel. Edwin Muir says that the characters in Vanity Fair "are almost always static" and

[19] Knoepflmacher, p. 205.

[20] William Makepeace Thackeray, Vanity Fair (1847-48; rpt. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1955), p. 13. Further references to this work will be found in parentheses in the text.

that the alteration Becky undergoes "is less a temporal one than an unfolding in a continuously widening present."[21] What actually changes in the novel, according to Muir, is not her character but the reader's knowledge of her machinations.

The impetus for Becky's action is always the hope for monetary reward. Her inquiries about Joseph Sedley's marital status can, as Thackeray points out, be translated as interest in gaining a wealthy husband:

> "If Mr Joseph Sedley is rich and unmarried, why should I not marry him? I have only a fortnight, to be sure, but there is no harm trying."[22]

This emphasis on financial reward, security, or desire for respectability is predicted upon her resentment at being confined to a penurious social position in which she is unable to indulge all of her selfish desires. While she was at the girls' academy on Chiswick Mall, "The rigid formality of the place suffocated her: the prayers and the meals, the lessons and the walks, which were arranged with a conventual regularity, oppressed her almost beyond endurance: . . . She had a little room in the garret, where the maids heard her walking and sobbing at night; but it was with rage, and not with grief" (p. 12). Perhaps we might understand Becky's anger with her situation if she were being forced to suffer physically,

[21] Edwin Muir, The Structure of the Novel (London: Hogarth Press, 1928), p. 24.

[22] Thackeray, p. 16.

but it seems apparent that her rage stems from the fact that her financial situation is not what she would like it to be.

Having fully ensconced herself in Amelia Sedley's affections, Becky tries but fails to get Amelia's brother, Joseph, to propose marriage. Having failed to get the proposal from Joseph, Becky reaches the time when she must go to the borough of Queen's Crawley to begin employment as governess to Sir Pitt Crawley's family. Although Amelia is deeply saddened by Becky's departure, Blenkinsop, the housekeeper, consoles her mistress:

> "Don't take on, miss. I didn't like to tell you. But none of us in the house have liked her except at fust. I sor her with my own eyes reading your ma's letters. Pinner says she's always about your trinket-box and drawers, and everybody's drawers, and she's sure she's put white ribbing into her box" (p. 61).

The housekeeper reveals Becky for the conniving, despicable snooper that she really is. She has violated the canons of hospitality between guest and host by delving into things which are none of her concern; and she does so without any apparent feelings of remorse or guilt, because when she departs from the Sedley's she appears to be sweet and devoted: "a scene in which one person was in earnest and the other a perfect performer--after the tenderest caresses, the most pathetic tears, the smelling-bottle, and some of the very best feelings of the heart, had been called into requisition--Rebecca and Amelia parted, the former vowing to love her friend for ever and ever and ever" (p. 62).

Thackeray's careful use of adjectives which exaggerate the scene superbly shows us that Becky's departure is entirely sham and pretense, whereas Amelia's feelings are genuine. This aspect of Becky's character should not surprise anyone since she has shown herself to be an unconscionable cynic.

In her usual way of seeking to make situations comfortable for herself Becky soon ingratiates herself with Sir Pitt Crawley: "With Mr Crawley Miss Sharp was respectful and obedient. She used to consult him on passages of French which she could not understand, though her mother was a Frenchwoman, and which he would construe to her satisfaction" (pp. 87-88).

Although Becky is able to solicit the good will of Sir Pitt and his sister, she cannot hope to gain anything other than a good opinion, since there is already a Lady Crawley; she therefore turns to Sir Pitt's son, Rawdon, and soon accomplishes what she thinks will be a good move, marriage to him. Becky's marriage appears to be motivated by Rawdon's good standing with his aunt whose "great good quality . . . [was that] she possessed seventy thousand pounds, and had almost adopted Rawdon" (p. 89).

The intentions behind the marriage to Rawdon are foiled because Becky has become a favorite with aunt Matilda Crawley and the old woman is furious when she learns of the young people's marrying. To compound matters, Lady Crawley, Sir Pitt's wife, dies and Sir Pitt proposes marriage to Becky, whose refusal reveals only that she is already married, but not to whom she is wedded.

Although Becky realizes that she has blundered in her marriage to Rawdon, she makes the best of the situation. Whereas she is cunning and selfish, she does not waste her time in regret. When Rawdon has an opportunity to meet his aunt and doesn't pursue the chance to invite himself into her house, Becky calls him a fool. The old woman, however, later grants her nephew an interview, one before which he had expressed certainty that he could get at least two hundred pounds from her. Upon his return from the interview he reveals to Becky that he has gained only twenty pounds:

> "By Jove, Becky," says he, "she's only given me twenty pounds!"
>
> Though it told against themselves, the joke was too good, and Becky burst out laughing at Rawdon's discomfiture (p. 261).

Although one would expect Becky to be taken aback by the turn of events, her laughter at Rawdon is in keeping with her selfish nature, and it shows her gleaning enjoyment from a bad situation. Her laughter also indicates her final realization that she and Rawdon can no longer hope for any inheritance from his aunt, that the old woman will never forgive them for marrying.

Although Becky has remained for some time with Rawdon and they have had a certain measure of felicity, she does not allow his departure, with his army unit for battle, to make her miserable. Instead, on the morning after his departure we find Becky's thoughts turned toward her financial situation: "Should the worst befall, all things considered, she was pretty well-to-do. There were her own trinkets and trousseau, in addition to those which her husband left

behind. . . . Every calculation made of these valuables, Mrs Rebecca found, not without a pungent feeling of triumph and self-satisfaction, that should circumstances occur, she might reckon on six or seven hundred pounds at the very least, to begin the world with" (pp. 303-04). She allows no thing or person to jeopardize her position in society, which is built upon her cash-basis attitude.

Becky appears to be genuinely concerned for Amelia after her friend's husband, George, has gone off to war with Rawdon and Dobbin. Mrs. Rawdon goes to visit Amelia and is accused of being a false friend and a false wife. We might think Becky is sincerely interested in her friend's condition, from the way she answers Joseph and tells Mrs. O'Dowd to go and be with the young woman:

> "There should be somebody with her," said Rebecca. "I think she is very unwell": and she went away with a very grave face. . . . Meeting Mrs O'Dowd . . . and informing her that poor little Mrs Osborne was in a desperate condition, and almost mad with grief, sent off the good-natured Irishwoman straight to see if she could console her young favourite (p. 318).

That is, we could take Becky seriously and believe her interest in the health of her friend is genuine were it not for a reflection she makes after having been accused of being a false friend and a false wife: "She knows nothing, Rebecca thought" (p. 317).

Of course her concern can be solicitous if she thinks Amelia knows nothing of her intrigue with George. What has she to lose? Nothing, obviously, or she would not make the move to console Amelia.

After Rawdon returns from the war, he and Becky remove to Paris

and spend some few years there, living on nothing but their credit and his meager earnings from gambling. While in Paris, little Rawdon is born. If such an event would seem significant enough to change the life of an ordinary woman, we must conclude that our Becky is indeed not an ordinary woman, because "After the amiable fashion of French mothers, she had placed him out at nurse in a village in the neighbourhood of Paris, where little Rawdon passed the first months of his life, not unhappily, with a numerous family of foster-brothers in wooden shoes" (p. 381). One of the more memorable recollections Becky has of little Rawdon is that "once he spoiled a new dove-coloured pelisse of hers" (ibid.).

Becky's dislike of her child is increased by her association with Lord Steyne, while she, Rawdon, and the child are living in London in Great Gaunt Street. The child can do nothing to increase Becky's stature in London society; Steyne can; therefore she sings to the old man and cuffs the child's ears.

Lord Steyne does accommodate Becky and arrange for her presentation at court, the height of her social ambition. The clothes and jewels she wears on this great occasion are representative of the type of character Becky is, even on such an august day as her presentment at Court. Participation in the greatest event in her life is characterized by the dishonest means by which she comes into possession of her accoutrements for the occasion; the dress material had been stolen from the Crawley's house in Great Gaunt Street and the jewels were gifts from Sir Pitt and Lord Steyne.

Although Becky rises to the apogee of her social career after her presentation at Court, Lord Steyne prophetically warns her that she won't be able to stay there: "You won't be able to hold your own there, you silly little fool. You've got no money" (p. 505). In addition, the old man advises Becky that the position she seeks is not worth the effort. Becky doesn't believe the old man because her practice is to do whatever pleases her for the moment and worry about the consequences later. She doesn't realize that her "success" in society has been a result of her affiliation with Lord Steyne and that once she is disassociated from him her fortune will rapidly fall away.

The downfall starts when Lord Steyne and Becky are discovered in their affair by Rawdon. Steyne thinks she and Rawdon have laid a trap for him and therefore condemns Becky. Rawdon impetuously throws a diamond stick pin at Steyne and wounds him in the forehead. After Steyne has left, Rawdon feels compelled to demand "satisfaction" via a duel with the old man. However, not wishing to be revealed in his dealings with the lower classes, Steyne sends his man to buy Rawdon off. Rawdon accepts because he feels it would infuriate the old man to have the Crawleys' living off his influence.

After Rawdon leaves her, Becky's life consists at first in trying to remain respectable, but just when she has built up a new retinue of friends, someone informs about her and she is left alone.

When her son becomes heir of Queen's Crawley, Becky writes to him, but he is not impressed with his mother's attention; it is too

little and too late. Her motherly concern obviously springs from her desire to share in the new fortunes of her son. Her earlier treatment of him in no way makes her reticent about attempting a reconciliation. The one thing in her mind is the acquisition of wealth in order to raise herself to a respectable position in society.

Near the end of the book, Becky finds herself at Pumpernickel, where she encounters Amelia, Joseph, and William Dobbin, who had been infatuated with Amelia for several years. Amelia's forgiving nature and insistence that Becky move into the house with the Sedleys drives Dobbin away. Becky acquiesces in Amelia's persuasions and moves in, taking charge of the household and resuming her flattering appeal to Joseph Sedley, for obvious reasons.

When the three people remove to the resort of Ostend for reasons of health, Becky encounters old acquaintances who snub her. She doesn't worry about these encounters, however, because "she was strong enough to hold her own. She had cast such an anchor in Jos now as would require a strong storm to shake" (p. 718).

The renewed acquaintance of a Major Loder and Captain Rook precipitates a situation in which Becky appears to act altruistically. The Major and the Captain determine between themselves that one of them will have Amelia for a wife, and proceed to lay siege to the Sedley household. Becky resolves that Amelia shall not marry either of the men. She still refers to Amelia as "the silly little fool," because of the way her friend reveres the memory of her first husband, George Osborne, who had been killed in the war. Becky advises

Amelia to write to Dobbin asking him to come to Ostend, thereby ridding herself of the two officers. To convince the widow that her husband had not been faithful, Becky goes so far as to show Amelia a letter George had written her on the eve of his departure for the war zone. Becky's revelation causes Amelia to confess that she has already written to Dobbin for assistance. Dobbin comes as soon as he receives Amelia's summons; they proceed to admit their affection for each other and get married.

It is this marriage and some of the inferences we can make about Becky's encouraging such a move by Amelia that show Becky to be just as much a manipulator at the end of the novel as she was at the beginning: "Perhaps it was compunction towards the kind and simple creature who had been the first in life to defend her, perhaps it was a dislike to all such sentimental scenes,--but Rebecca, satisfied with her part in the transaction, never presented herself before Colonel Dobbin and the lady whom he married. 'Particular business,' she said, took her to Bruges, whither she went; and only Georgy and his uncle were present at the marriage ceremony. When it was over, and Georgy had rejoined his parents, Mrs Becky returned (just for a few days) to comfort the solitary bachelor, Joseph Sedley" (p. 724).

I think we can accept the excuse offered by Thackeray for Becky's absence from the wedding--her dislike for such sentimental scenes. There has been little about Becky throughout the novel which would depict her as being sentimental in any way.

We can also see that she is apparently satisfied with her part in the transaction, as Thackeray puts it. She has once again done something with an ostensible altruistic intention which benefits her just as much as the person for whom the act is performed. She insures her affection in Amelia's heart by encouraging the alliance with Dobbin, and she assures Dobbin's tacit approval of her in the same way.

It is her intention toward Joseph Sedley, however, which shows Becky in her true light. With Amelia out of the way, Joseph is free to do whatever he pleases, and "He preferred a Continental life, he said, and declined to join in housekeeping with his sister and her husband" (p. 724). Joseph's infatuation with Becky can come to fruition with Amelia married and his insistence on not living with her and Dobbin.

With Amelia's marriage, Becky has accomplished the coup which insures her of a comfortable living as long as Joseph Sedley is alive: "For wherever Mr Joseph Sedley went, she [Becky] travelled likewise; and that infatuated man seemed to be entirely her slave" (p. 725). We also learn that Joseph "had effected a heavy insurance upon his life" (ibid.). We may not want to go so far as to conclude that Becky was instrumental in Joseph's death, but we can see that she had squandered all his available fortune:

> "All my money is placed out most advantageously. Mrs Crawley--that is--I mean, it is laid out to the best interest."
> . . . It was found that all his property had been muddled away in speculations,

> and was represented by valueless shares in different bubble companies (pp. 726-27).

Joseph had made Becky administratrix of his estate and beneficiary of his insurance because

> "I thought--a little present to her--in case anything happened; and you know my health is so delicate--common gratitude, you know" (p. 726).

But from a later remark he makes we see that it is not gratitude entirely which has forced him to make her beneficiary; rather it is fear:

> "They musn't say anything to Mrs. Crawley: --she'd--she'd kill me if she knew it. You don't know what a terrible woman she is," the poor wretch said (pp. 726-27).

After Joseph's death, Becky presents herself at the reluctant insurance company to demand payment of his policy, declaring "that she was the object of an infamous conspiracy, which had been pursuing her all through life, and triumphed finally" (p. 727).

This pretended attitude of feeling persecuted is opposed to her sincere feeling in the first part of the novel, when Becky and Amelia are leaving Miss Pinkerton's school:

> "I hate the whole house," continued Miss Sharp, in a fury. "I hope I may never set eyes on it again. I wish it were in the bottom of the Thames, I do; and if Miss Pinkerton were there, I wouldn't pick her out, that I wouldn't. Oh, how I should like to see her floating in the water yonder, turban and all, with her train streaming after her, and her nose like the beak of a wherry" (pp. 8-9).

Essentially, Becky has not changed throughout the entire novel; she

remains just as vicious and contriving in her relations with people in the later years of her life as she was in the early years. Her attitude toward Miss Pinkerton and the academy, her desecration of the canons of hospitality, her alliance with men whether she or they were married, her attitude toward her child, her unconcern for her husband when he went off to war, and her machinations to involve Joseph Sedley for her own benefit make her guilty of "frank egotism."

Becky remains a figure throughout the novel because she never once evidences behavior which is moderated or influenced by her consideration of any moral precepts she might hold, unless we can call her Machiavellian attitude towards everything a moral precept. To classify her attitude that way, however, would presuppose some recognition of moral values, which she never indicates she has. She always acts from impulse and always for what will benefit her most in her present situation.

Unlike Pip in Great Expectations who is aware that his acts in the city were in opposition to the moral precepts he had been exposed to by Joe, Becky never appears to regret that she has not learned anything from the people around her, unless it is a new way to extort money. Even Heathcliff in Wuthering Heights is able to restrain himself in his desire for revenge because he can conceive the consequences his actions against Edgar Linton would have on Catherine, but Becky is quite unable to restrain herself in anything or with anyone. She is able to produce certain emotional expressions which make people think she is capable of great remorse or sympathy, but

she knows that her acts are for nothing more than the moment; she anticipates or plans no long-term returns on what she does or says.

Unlike Becky, the other characters we have considered, Pip and Heathcliff, and the others we shall consider next, Dorothea Brooke and Marlow, have a certain standard by which they act. The moral stance of a character allows him to go so far and no further; Becky, obviously has no limit to which she will not go, and because she has no means by which she modulates her actions, no moral attitude, she remains a figure at the end of the novel.

CHAPTER III

LINEAR CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Middlemarch: Dorothea Brooke

The next character to be studied in relation to the moral stance theory is Dorothea Brooke in George Eliot's Middlemarch. Dorothea's character is vastly different from Becky Sharp's in that Dorothea consciously seeks to make her actions accord with her moral stance but Becky never does so; Becky acts to her own advantage at all times.

Just as Heathcliff experiences internal conflict concerning actions in which he can indulge without hurting Catherine, so does Dorothea suffer internal conflict regarding the actions in which she can indulge without negating the precepts of her moral stance. The difference between Heathcliff and Dorothea is that the first is guided by a selfish motive, in that he wanted to wreak revenge, and an unselfish motive, in that he didn't want to hurt Catherine; Dorothea, on the other hand, is guided by selfless motives, in that she wants to be charitable to those less fortunate than herself, but has conflicting interests in the physical reality and spiritual idealism of her life: "She could not reconcile the anxieties of a spiritual life involving eternal consequences, with a keen interest in guimp and artificial protrusions of drapery."[23]

[23]George Eliot, Middlemarch (1871-72; rpt. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1956), p. 6. Further references to this work will be found in parentheses in the text.

We see Dorothea attempt a reconciliation of spiritual ideas and interest in "artificial protrusions of drapery" when her sister suggests they divide the jewels their mother had bequeathed them. The two girls have gone through the jewels, looking and admiring, but Celia is the only one who openly expresses her pleasure, until Dorothea discovers an emerald and diamond ring and bracelet. She has refused all of Celia's attempts to be persuaded to take some of the jewels until she puts on the ring and bracelet; then she decides that she will keep only those two things, but this decision is not without some internal struggle, attempting to justify her interest in and desire for objects which are so obviously valued by the physical rather than the spiritual part of man: "All the while her thought was trying to justify her delight in the colours by merging them in her mystic religious joy. . . . 'Yes! I will keep these--this ring and bracelet,' said Dorothea. Then letting her hand fall on the table, she said in another tone--'Yet what miserable men find such things, and work at them, and sell them!'" (p. 10).

At Celia's suggestion that she might wear them in company, Dorothea's conscience is provoked by the apparent inconsistency in her moral position:

> "Perhaps," she said, rather haughtily.
> "I cannot tell to what level I may sink"
> (p. 11).

This remark, coupled with Eliot's remarks about Dorothea's

"keen discernment" and that "If Miss Brooke ever attained perfect meekness, it would not be for lack of inward fire" (p. 10), evidently depicts the two forces, physical and spiritual, at conflict in the elder girl. We learn from Celia's later remark that Dorothea does not consistently win the battle:

> "But Dorothea is not always consistent" (p. 11).

Dorothea's later action of penitence toward Celia is indicative of an awareness of her inconsistent actions in the light of her moral posture: "As Celia bent over the paper, Dorothea put her cheek against her sister's arm caressingly. Celia understood the action. Dorothea saw that she had been in the wrong, and Celia pardoned her (ibid.).

Dorothea is seeking forgiveness from Celia for the outburst of temper, not for her covetousness of the jewels. Her Christian morality is strong enough to elicit this exaggerated response, but that same morality is not strong enough to cause her to relinquish the objects which caused the friction between the two women. That her Christian morality is not strong enough to make Dorothea give up the jewels and experience a thorough cleansing, as it were, may be indicative of her immature idealism. With her Christian idealism in the formative stage we cannot expect her to recognize the necessity for complete abandonment of those desires which cause conflict between the ideal and the manifestation of the ideal. She is still immature enough to confuse the ideal with the real and her conflict

stems from the inability to see that when Christian ideals pass through the medium of expression, they are modified according to the strongest influences on the individual.

Her blindness to the impracticality of having an ideal manifest in the physical realm also extends to her view of Mr. Casaubon. Her image of him is simply a part of the grandiose conception she has of herself, that she is destined to do something great and magnanimous for mankind.

Having been asked by Celia if she thinks Casaubon has a great soul, Dorothea replies:

> "Yes, I believe he has," said Dorothea, with the full voice of decision. "Everything I see in him corresponds to his pamphlet on Biblical Cosmology" (p. 15).

We don't know what the pamphlet contains, but since it is a religious pamphlet it probably sets forth certain principles of an idealistic nature; however, we should also note that these principles have been modified by man, so for Dorothea to say that she sees everything in Casaubon corresponding to his pamphlet is for her to unknowingly admit the limitations of the ideal. She fails to see that the ideal can never be effected physically, because it always passes through a medium which will change it. For that matter, she fails to see that the ideal is simply a matter of what each individual perceives it to be.

Although Dorothea is blind to the limitations of man's ability to embody ideals, she is not blind to the social conventions or

concerns of her time. For instance, her attitude toward Sir James Chettam is one of impatience until he displays an interest in her proposal of building houses for the poor: "She proposed to build a couple of cottages, and transfer two families from their old cabins, which could then be pulled down, so that new ones could be built on the old sites. Sir James said, 'Exactly,' and she bore the word remarkably well" (p. 25). Her exasperation with Chettam is diminished because he is helping her fulfill one of her idealistic goals, but she is unaware of the reasons behind his acquiescence. He is in love with her and intends to make a marriage proposal, which he believes will be accepted. When Dorothea finds out what Chettam has in mind, she shows her concern for social decorum by allowing that she must give up her association with the man:

> "It is very painful," said Dorothea, feeling scourged. "I can have no more to do with the cottages. I must be uncivil to him. I must tell him I will have nothing to do with them. It is very painful" (p. 27).

Celia blames Dorothea for being blind to anything that does not fit her conception of what is right:

> "You always see what nobody else sees; it is impossible to satisfy you; yet you never see what is quite plain. That's your way, Dodo" (ibid.).

But Dorothea's earlier unspecified "it" is what she refers to later as "anything nobly Christian" (ibid.) and, more specifically, her desire to build cottages for the poor. She doesn't blame herself for being blind to Chettam's real intentions, but rather society's

"intolerable narrowness": "She was disposed rather to accuse the intolerable narrowness and the purblind conscience of the society around her" (ibid.).

Dorothea's real unhappiness with the circumstances arises from the indignation she feels with Chettam for having aspired to her affections and gone about that aspiration in a devious manner. Having been told it was apparent to everyone but herself that Chettam was in love with her, she reacts: "The revulsion was so strong and painful in Dorothea's mind that the tears welled up and flowed abundantly. All her dear plans were embittered, and she thought with disgust of Sir James's conceiving that she recognised him as her lover" (p. 26).

Celia's earlier remark about Dorothea's devotion to ideals reveals something of the elder girl's real dedication:

> "Yet I am not certain that she would refuse him [Chettam] if she thought he would let her manage everything and carry out all her notions" (p. 24).

Her sister does refuse Chettam, however, and Celia is proven wrong in her opinion. Dorothea's rejection of Chettam, because she feels personally insulted and believes that he is not worthy of her, is evidence that she is caught up in the conflict between her ideals of Christian morality and her earthly desires. She attempts to resolve the conflict by rejecting Chettam and marrying Casaubon, but her devotion to the ideals of Christian charity is certainly less important to her than her own welfare, since she is unwilling to sacrifice herself, as Celia suggested she might do, for the means

to carry out her ideals.

Dorothea's character, therefore, is established: she is caught in the conflict between selfless ideals and selfish desires. She is unable to see that she must be willing to compromise in both areas before she can be happy. She appears willing to sacrifice other people and their ideals for her own ends, but doesn't see that such sacrifices would not bring her the satisfaction she desires.

Before her marriage to Casaubon, Dorothea goes to Lowick Manor and is disappointed to find that there will be nothing there for her to do in the way of charity: "Dorothea sank into silence on the way back to the house. She felt some disappointment, of which she was yet ashamed, that there was nothing for her to do in Lowick" (p. 57). This observation is indicative of someone who has yet to understand that life doesn't always fit the individual formula; indeed, she has yet to realize that she must fit life's formula, as her fiancé tells her:

> "Each position has its corresponding duties. Yours, I trust, as the mistress of Lowick, will not leave any yearning unfulfilled" (ibid.).

Dorothea has talked a great deal about being Casaubon's helper and partner in his intellectual pursuits, but she hasn't once mentioned her duties as wife and mistress of a household. Her idealism seems to have blinded her to all duties except those of a humanitarian nature, whereby she feels she would be lifting some of mankind's burden from his back.

Her goals seem to change, or at least take a different course, when she realizes that there would be practically nothing in Lowick for her altruism to rectify or alleviate. Although she has looked forward to the time when she could be enlightened by Casaubon's superior mind and knowledge, it is only when she finds that there will be so little charity work to be done at Lowick that she begins to look toward Casaubon's work as legitimate grounds for the satisfaction of her own desires.

Before they are married, Casaubon mentions that their wedding trip to Rome would be more enjoyable for his wife if her sister accompanied them in the place of Dorothea's maid:

> "I should feel more at liberty if you had a companion" (p. 64).

Dorothea's vexation at what this remark implies is couched in language which seems to have an air of self-adulation about it:

> "You must have misunderstood me very much," she said, "if you think I should not enter into the value of your time--if you think that I should not willingly give up whatever interfered with your using it to the best purpose" (ibid.).

The remarks appear innocent and charitable enough out of context, but we have just been told that Casaubon's words had "grated" on Dorothea, that she had "coloured from annoyance" when she replied, and that she spoke "haughtily" to her intended (ibid.).

The importance of this clash, minor as it may appear, is that Dorothea is having trouble subjugating the actions prompted by her self-image, her self-will, to the proper perspective in her union

with Casaubon. Her words indicate that she is willing to sacrifice what would make her happy for what would make her husband happy, but what appears to emerge, instead, is the implication that she wants to share everything with him. She wants to enter into his work as much as she possibly can. The intimation is that she would willingly give up anything that interfered with his work, as long as that is not her own desire. She does not yet recognize what is expected of her as a wife; she is too occupied trying to be a helpmate and wants to be on an equal basis with Casaubon, intellectually, socially, and religiously.

When they are ready to leave Rome, after spending their honeymoon there, Dorothea again prods Casaubon about her being able to help him:

> "And all your notes," said Dorothea. . . . "All those rows of volumes--will you not now do what you used to speak of?--will you not make up your mind what part of them you will use, and begin to write the book which will make your vast knowledge useful to the world?" (p. 148).

By this time Casaubon has recognized a threat in his wife. She is very much like other people in the world who have prodded him about his someday-to-be-published book. In fact, he sees her as "a personification of that shallow world which surrounds the ill-appreciated or desponding author" (p. 149). He repulses her suggestion in very much the same way he would deliver a sermon on one of the seven deadly sins:

> "My love, . . . you may rely upon me for knowing the times and the seasons, adapted to the different stages of a work which is not to be measured by the facile conjectures of ignorant onlookers. It had been easy for me to gain a temporary effect by a mirage of baseless opinion; but it is ever the trial of the scrupulous explorer to be saluted with the impatient scorn of chatterers who attempt only the smallest achievements, being indeed equipped for no other. And it were well if all such could be admonished to discriminate judgments of which the true subject-matter lies entirely beyond their reach, from those of which the elements may be compassed by a narrow and superficial survey" (ibid.).

Although there is an obvious pedantic air about this measured deprecation, we can see that there is a great deal of truth in it, theoretically. Casaubon, however, is constantly using similar rationale and rhetoric to protect himself, and Dorothea is unable to perceive his tactics. Her perception does appear to have been sharpened at the end of the day when Casaubon returns home from working in the library. Having had her apology practically thrown in her face, "she had begun to see that she had been under a wild illusion in expecting a response to her feeling from Mr Casaubon, and she had felt the waking of a presentiment that there might be a sad consciousness in his life which made as great a need on his side as on her own" (p. 156).

She is beginning to realize that Casaubon feels threatened by her insistence, or by what her insistence, if bowed to, would eventually reveal. She is also beginning to see that he is aware of his shortcomings and aware that if he publishes his Mythology he will reveal his shallowness. She sees that he is perhaps incapable of

carrying his intended project through and therefore hesitates to undertake it because of the failure which seems inevitably to await him.

Dorothea is also realizing the difference between their needs. Hers is a need for doing something which will make her a part of human society, a need to do something that will make her feel good: a need for sympathy, love, and protection. His is the need for isolation; he must be alone in order that he won't be intimidated, challenged, or threatened by small minds.

When Casaubon's cousin, Will Ladislaw, suggests to Dorothea that her husband's work may be of little value if it is ever published, because it has taken so long just to gather the notes, she rises to the minister's defense. If this defense were made with the naiveté which characterized her premarital bliss we should have to see her as not having developed at all. The defense, however, is made with her new awareness of Casaubon, that he has at least tried to do something significant in his lifetime and failed:

> "Failure after long perseverance is much grander than never to have a striving good enough to be called a failure" (p. 165).

The remark Dorothea makes is very important because she is acting from a new consciousness on her part. She is now aware of someone's need or condition other than her own, and she is doing something to help that person. She has accepted Casaubon for what he is, and she is attempting to justify him to someone else who may be unable to see the importance of what the man has done. Now she

is coming close to Celia's earlier expectation of her, of sacrificing herself for her ideals. Of course, in this instance she is married and need not worry about having to sacrifice her physical or social happiness to those ideals, but she is doing something far greater by sacrificing her idealistic misconception about her husband in order to defend him.

Dorothea's acceptance of Casaubon's condition and the striking of her ideals are part of the process of her linear development at this time. She does not turn back; instead, she assimilates her new awareness into her morality and continues her relationship with him. The relationship will be different, and of necessity, otherwise we could not believe that her recognition of his condition is authentic.

Now that we have seen Dorothea come to realize her husband's condition, we should not jump to the conclusion that she has completely changed her former character. Indeed, she has made _a_ change but not a complete change.

Upon returning to Lowick Manor, Dorothea reflects upon her new position and what that position entitles her to: "Marriage, which was to bring guidance into worthy and imperative occupation, had not yet freed her from the gentlewoman's oppressive liberty; it had not even filled her leisure with the ruminant joy of unchecked tenderness" (p. 202). Although she has realized that Casaubon does not want her to intrude upon his affairs, she doesn't seem to know

exactly what her role of wife entails. Indeed, we might feel a certain amount of sympathy for the woman; after all, she is supposed to be a dutiful wife, but she is unable to define any duties for herself, and her husband apparently desires only that she not insist that he publish or begin preparations for the publication of his book. We find that she has been able to help him in his studies, but apparently at her own insistence, rather than at his: "But she had succeeded in making it a matter of course that she should take her place at an early hour in the library and have work either of reading aloud or copying assigned her" (p. 207).

While she apparently recognizes the necessity for not insisting upon his publishing his Mythology and for making her will subservient to the knowledge that she must accept his outward failure as a paradoxical success, Dorothea fails to recognize her actual relationship to Casaubon because she is still trying to be a colleague more than a wife.

Whereas we have seen Dorothea's apparent inability to grasp all of the implications of her new position as Casaubon's wife, we should not denigrate her intelligence and perception as a humanitarian. She is very compassionate toward Casaubon; indeed, when he has his first heart attack in the library her first impulse is to help him in any way she can: "She started up and bounded towards him in an instant: he was evidently in great straits for breath. Jumping on a stool she got close to his elbow and said with her whole soul melted into tender alarm--

'Can you lean on me, dear?'" (p. 209).

There is little doubt as to the way she feels at this moment. We could suspect her of reacting from a guilt complex, since she and Casaubon have just had short words over a letter from Will Ladislaw, but to attribute any such feelings to her reaction would be wrong. In the first place, she hasn't developed as that type of character up to this point, and it seems obvious that her reaction is untainted by anything other than sincere concern for another human being. Her later words to Lydgate are evidence also of her concern for the happiness and health of a fellow human being, although the concern appears to be more maternal than wifely:

> "Oh, you are a wise man, are you not? You know all about life and death. Advise me. Think what I can do. He has been labouring all his life and looking forward. He minds about nothing else. And I mind about nothing else" (p. 214).

At the Featherstone funeral Will Ladislaw makes an appearance which puts Dorothea in a defensive position, since it had been his proposed visit to Lowick Manor which was the topic of discussion immediately prior to Casaubon's first seizure. Dorothea's concern for Casaubon's feelings is shown in her reaction to the remarks about Ladislaw's being a "very nice young fellow": "Poor Dorothea felt that every word of her uncle's was about as pleasant as a grain of sand in the eye to Mr Casaubon" (p. 240-41).

Dorothea is afraid that her husband will think she has had a hand in inviting the young man to Middlemarch. Casaubon's earlier

implication was that she would wish to do anything which would annoy him:

> "I trust I may be excused from desiring an interval of complete freedom from such distractions as have been hitherto inevitable, and especially from guests whose desultory vivacity makes their presence a fatigue" (p. 208).

Her reaction to Celia's announcement that Ladislaw is present at the Featherstone funeral has, however, a certain amount of ambiguity about it: "Dorothea felt a shock of alarm: every one noticed her sudden paleness as she looked up immediately at her uncle, while Mr Casaubon looked at her" (p. 240). Her paleness may be construed as apprehension of Casaubon's finding out that Ladislaw is back and that the minister will be physically affected by his cousin's presence. The look at the uncle would indicate that she was wondering why he had not written to Will to discourage a visit as he said he would. Casaubon concludes, apparently, that Dorothea has again gone against his expressed will and allowed Ladislaw to be invited to the Grange because she is infatuated with him.

Although it becomes evident that Casaubon has reason to worry about the relationship between Dorothea and Ladislaw, it is not because of anything that Dorothea has consciously done. Will has been in love with Dorothea from the time he saw her in Rome, and his feelings about the minister's marriage to the young woman override any and all support he has received from Casaubon: "He was much obliged to Casaubon in the past, but really the act of

marrying this wife was a set-off against the obligation. It was a question whether gratitude which refers to what is done for one's self ought not to give way to indignation at what is done against another. And Casaubon had done a wrong to Dorothea in marrying her. A man was bound to know himself better than that, and if he chose to grow grey crunching bones in a cavern, he had no business to be luring a girl into his companionship" (p. 264).

Casaubon and Ladislaw have the wrong conception of Dorothea, each in his own way. The minister doesn't see that her mercy has gone out to Ladislaw because of the dislike his elder cousin has for him, a dislike "which must seem hard to her till she saw better reason for it" (p. 268). By the same token, Will misjudges her feelings, or he judges how she should feel if she were aware of her situation, according to his own perspective. When Will attacks Casaubon for being too uncertain and too doubtful of himself ever to accomplish anything great, Dorothea's perception of her husband is clear and there is no tinge of regret concerning her marriage: "She was no longer struggling against the perception of facts, but adjusting herself to their clearest perception; and now when she looked steadily at her husband's failure, still more at his possible consciousness of failure, she seemed to be looking along the one track where duty became tenderness" (p. 267). She also tells Will that

> "It would be very petty of us who are well and
> can bear things, to think much of small offenses

from those who carry a weight of trial" (p. 269).

Although she reprimands Will for making light of Edward's work, she is honest with him and would like to be able to share her fortune with him. When asked if she would like him to stay in the vicinity, she answers:

> "I should like you to stay very much," said Dorothea, at once, as simply and readily as she had spoken at Rome. There was not the shadow of a reason in her mind at the moment why she should not say so. (ibid.).

Later, after she has told her husband about Ladislaw's visit, she begins to think of the injustice that has been done the young man. She wants to help him because she feels guilty at her having so much and his having so little. Her desire is not motivated by any malicious intention, and she is unaware, as Eliot tells us, that she might further alienate her husband: "Meanwhile Dorothea's mind was innocently at work towards the further embitterment of her husband" (p. 272).

She cannot know that she will be suspected by Casaubon of infidelity. Her motives, in her own consciousness, are justified. If we remember that from the very beginning Dorothea believed it was her destiny to help people, and that she was determined that her life would have some point to it, more than just settling down as an ordinary housewife, we will understand her decision to try to help Will acquire what she considers to be rightfully his.

Her initial revulsion to Chettam and her attraction to Casaubon

were the result of the way she looked at life, the type of destiny she had in mind for herself. Her feelings for Ladislaw are only a part of the feelings she has for mankind as a whole, that she should be able to do something beneficial and good, because she has been so richly blessed in life. There is nothing in her actions to indicate that she has deviated from her basic moral integrity. All of her actions have been to help someone else achieve a modicum of the success and happiness she feels she has attained. It is true that she has come to realize that her husband is incapable of the task he has set for himself, but she does not attempt to sway him from that task, and she does not alter her attempts to help him. The realization that Casaubon would not be able to publish the work on which he had expended his life is indicative of moral growth in Dorothea, as W. J. Harvey says of her: "Dorothea's moral growth is slow and painful but is skilfully charted in the novel; it begins with the change in her attitude to her husband, with the 'first stirring of a pitying tenderness fed by the realities of his lot and not by her own dreams.'"[24] It is because Dorothea's moral attitude has deepened with her experience that she wants to right a wrong as far as Ladislaw is concerned.

Even in her concern for doing what is right toward Will, she doesn't forget or lose her concern for Casaubon's health. Having broached the subject of providing for Will and being told that she

[24] W. J. Harvey, The Art of George Eliot (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962), p. 46.

had again gone beyond her scope of understanding in the matter, Dorothea refrains from answering as she had not refrained just prior to her husband's first seizure: "Alarm at the possible effect on himself of her husband's strongly-manifested anger, . . . checked any expression of her own resentment."[25]

Dorothea's constancy to Casaubon and her new life is made abundantly clear on a visit to the Grange. She has gone there because Chettam has indicated that her uncle is going to make changes in the management of his estate. She begins speaking of her former life there and of her early plans for the cottagers on her uncle's estate: "Dorothea had gathered emotion as she went on, and had forgotten everything except the relief of pouring forth her feelings, unchecked: an experience once habitual with her, but hardly ever present since her marriage, which had been a perpetual struggle of energy with fear" (p. 285). It seems obvious that if she was in the habit of pouring forth her feelings before she was married to Edward, it would take a great deal of restraint to refrain from speaking her mind, as she did when Casaubon told her that she had no business talking about restitution for Ladislaw. Whether that restraint stemmed from fear or love, it is an affirmation of her moral stance, since it is conscious restraint.

It also appears that Dorothea is more than constant in her moral attitude. While Casaubon receives her complete devotion, she remains convinced that Will has been wronged, and even though she

[25]Eliot, p. 275.

refrains from saying anything that will aggravate her husband's physical condition, she retains her belief in what is morally right.

The first indication Dorothea has that her motives toward Casaubon and Ladislaw have not been as pure as she originally thought comes when she visits Lydgate's house, to ask whether her husband has developed any further symptoms of illness. Her reaction at finding Ladislaw singing in the parlor with Mrs. Lydgate is one of wonder. But she reasons that she has also been alone with Will in Mr. Casaubon's absence, but justifying that encounter with the fact that Will is a relative of Edward's. There is, however, more to her thoughts about her relationship with Will that causes her to doubt that she has been as circumspect as she should have been: "Still there had been signs which perhaps she ought to have understood as implying that Mr Casaubon did not like his cousin's visits during his own absence. 'Perhaps I have been mistaken in many things,' said poor Dorothea to herself, while the tears came rolling and she had to dry them quickly" (p. 317).

Because she says that she may have been mistaken about many things, we can conclude that her mistake lay primarily in receiving Will when Edward was not at home. We can also see that she recognizes the impropriety of her unconscious motives, and how those unconscious motives on her part may have appeared as conscious indiscretions to Casaubon.

This recognition, by Dorothea, is a positive development in her character. Mark Schorer says of Eliot's characterizations: "The

general view of character she gives us constantly: her concept of character is a concept of growth, of alteration, of change, of progress."[26] We have at least three of these four elements in Dorothea's recognition--alteration, change, growth. Schorer was probably not thinking that the view of character should necessarily embody all of the elements simultaneously, but the fact that Dorothea's recognition entails three of the four elements at the same time emphasizes the importance of Schorer's proposition.

Because Dorothea's development embodies three of the four elements that Schorer discusses, her moral attitude becomes more complicated. Essentially, however, we have to keep track of only two moral stances: Dorothea's original one, before her marriage to Casaubon, and her assumed one, the one taken on after her marriage to the minister. The assumption of a moral stance was a violation of her original one. The acknowledgement she made previously about always trying to be what her husband wanted and excluding her own desires from her life is evidence that she recognizes the marriage as an infraction of her original morality. The main point to remember about all of these inviolate peregrinations is that they have not been consciously plotted by Dorothea. She is still the simple, truthful, trusting soul she was in the beginning. If she weren't, she wouldn't be able to come to the realization she does, and her

[26]Mark Schorer, "The Structure of the Novel: Method, Metaphor and Mind," in "Middlemarch": Critical Approaches to the Novel, ed. Barbara Hardy (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), p. 18.

character would not grow, alter, or change.

Dorothea's ultimate test with Casaubon comes when he requests that she promise to carry out his wishes after his death:

> "It [his request] is that you will let me know, deliberately, whether, in case of my death, you will carry out my wishes: whether you will avoid doing what I should deprecate, and apply yourself to do what I should desire."[27]

Her hesitancy to accede immediately to his request shows that she thinks the request may require her to do something inconsistent with her moral attitude. The moral posture in this case is not the assumed one of Casaubon's; yet it isn't her original one either. Rather, it is her original stance modified by her experiences. She still longs to do something for humanity; she still has a sense of what is right and wrong in the world. She has subverted herself to Casaubon, but she has not submitted herself entirely; she still maintains a certain integrity, as evidenced by her feelings toward the relationship between Ladislaw and Casaubon.

Dorothea's answer to her husband's request shows us that she has maintained her personal integrity, even though she has submitted to his will:

> "I think it is not right--to make a promise when I am ignorant what it will bind me to. Whatever affection prompted I would do without promising. . . . I cannot give any pledge suddenly--still less a pledge to do I know not what" (p. 350).

How could Casaubon ask for any more? Of course, we know he is

[27]Eliot, p. 350.

fearful that Ladislaw will persuade Dorothea to marry him after his cousin has died. The minister's jealousy prompts him to seek to bind his wife after his death just as much as he did while alive.

Casaubon dies before Dorothea has a chance to give him a definite answer to his request. After she has recuperated somewhat at Freshitt with Celia and Sir James, Dorothea expresses the desire to be about her duties again. She is still unaware of the codicil Casaubon had attached to his will. Celia reveals the existence of the codicil to her sister and tells her that it is aimed only at Will Ladislaw. It is this final blow, struck from the grave, that causes Dorothea's attitude and feelings for Casaubon to change: "One change terrified her as if it had been a sin; it was a violent shock of repulsion from her departed husband, who had had hidden thoughts, perhaps perverting everything she said and did" (p. 360).

This reaction is quite different from the feelings of guilt she had experienced at Casaubon's death. She had been delirious and had spoken of going to her husband to do as he had requested. But now she feels that she has been betrayed, that all of her privations have been for nothing. Whatever Casaubon intended, it is obvious that he misjudged Dorothea's character. He thought she cared more for property than for her own integrity. His codicil has done nothing but insure exactly what he desired to prevent, to make Dorothea more susceptible to Ladislaw: "Then again she was conscious of another change which also made her tremulous; it was a sudden strange yearning of heart towards Will Ladislaw. It had

never before entered her mind that he could, under any circumstances, be her lover" (ibid.).

In addition to pushing Dorothea in the direction opposite to that intended, Casaubon's codicil serves to show that she was really devoted to the man and had never thought of Will in any light other than as a relative. The codicil is responsible for suggesting to Dorothea that her relationship with Ladislaw has more potential than she ever imagined.

Instead of insuring a place for himself in the hearts or minds of mankind, and especially of Dorothea, Casaubon succeeded only in proving how insecure and inept he really was. His despicable action in the matter of the codicil elevates Dorothea's character, however, and her attitude toward him changes: "there remained only the retrospect of painful subjection to a husband whose thoughts had been lower than she had believed, whose exorbitant claims for himself had even blinded his scrupulous care for his own character, and made him defeat his own pride by shocking men of ordinary honour" (p. 362).

The words "a husband whose thoughts had been lower than she had believed" and "men of ordinary honour" are evidence of how Dorothea, in spite of the way he had treated her, had perceived her husband while he was alive. Casaubon's perception was superficial and his judgment of Dorothea was wrong because he had blinded himself with his own goodness and could not see hers. She did not consider him a man of "ordinary honour" or a man with low thoughts, and these are good signs that she had remained faithful to him,

physically as well as philosophically, even though she was aware of his limitations. Although his character has been revealed as petty, Dorothea is determined to follow the dictates of his wishes, if she can: "even with indignation against him in her heart, any act that seemed a triumphant eluding of his purpose revolted her" (ibid.).

Dorothea had reason to feel resentful or indignant toward her husband. He had attempted to make her agree to his request that she would carry out his wishes after his death, and this attempt had been made _after_ he had attached the codicil to his will. The fact that she still does not want to elude his purpose is evidence of the constant integrity of her character.

After a three month visit with Celia and James at Freshitt, Dorothea returns to Lowick Manor with the intention of resuming her life in a manner which would perhaps have pleased her husband, but she finds herself unable to carry out the work which he had started. Taking the "Synoptical Tabulation for the use of Mrs Casaubon" and sealing it in an envelope, she writes:

> "I could not use it. Do you not see now that I could not submit my soul to yours, by working hopelessly at what I have no belief in?" (p. 393).

This "superstition," as Eliot calls it, intimates that Dorothea could submit her soul to Casaubon's as long as he was alive, but once his influence was gone she could no longer go on working on a hopeless project. The fact that she cared enough for him to submit herself while he was alive should be enough to convince us that she never had any thoughts which would be interpreted as an

inconstancy on her part.

We are also told that Dorothea returned to Lowick with a deep longing: "That silent colloquy was perhaps only the more earnest because underneath and through it all there was always the deep longing which had really determined her to come to Lowick. The longing was to see Will Ladislaw" (ibid.).

Dorothea had been shocked by the revelation that her husband had had unjust thoughts about her and Will, when her concern was the justice with which Will was meeting and his being deprived of a decent living simply because his mother had been indiscreet. This longing, which in part prompts her to return to Lowick, is to explain to Will that she had had nothing to do with the codicil, that her own hands were tied from being able to offer any restitution to him.

It is not until Ladislaw has paid a visit to Lowick to say goodbye and has left that Dorothea feels an indefinable passion take hold of her: "She did not know then that it was Love who had come to her briefly, as in a dream before awaking, with the hues of morning on his wings--that it was Love to whom she was sobbing her farewell as his image was banished by the blameless rigour of irrestible day. She only felt that there was something irrevocably amiss and lost in her lot, and her thoughts about the future were the more readily shapen into resolve" (p. 399).

It should not be surprising to us that Dorothea is apparently unable to recognize love. With Casaubon she had never had anything

other than ideas to engage her thoughts. In order to recognize love one must have been exposed to a pattern. Dorothea had never been exposed to a desirable pattern of conjugal love, so we should not expect her to recognize her feelings for Will as being love. Her confusion seems natural at this point because she still reveres the memory of Casaubon, to an extent, and tries desperately to remain constant to his memory. Any feelings she might have for Will would naturally be construed as being feelings of pity at the injustice done him by her husband.

After Will's departure, Dorothea determines that she will never marry again. She intends to resume her plans for cottages, as she had intended before her involvement with Casaubon:

> "I shall never marry again," said Dorothea. . . . "Not anybody at all. I have delightful plans. I should like to take a great deal of land, and drain it, and make a little colony, where everybody should work, and all the work should be done well" (p. 401).

Will, however, has not gone away as he had been determined to do. He is aware of his love for Dorothea, and that is one factor in his remaining in Middlemarch as long as possible, but he is unaware of the codicil to Casaubon's will. On learning of the stipulation, he becomes indignant and determines to depart from the area as soon as he has had the opportunity to explain to Dorothea that he had had no previous knowledge of her husband's actions and that his own intentions had been completely honorable.

It is on the basis of this interview that Dorothea finally comes

to feel and admit that perhaps Will does love her: "Joy came first, in spite of the threatening train behind it--joy in the impression that it was really herself whom Will loved and was renouncing, that there was really no other love less permissible, more blameworthy, which honour was hurrying away from. . . . At that moment the parting was easy to bear: the first sense of loving and being loved excluded sorrow" (pp. 464-65). The first sense of loving and being loved! Important words to Dorothea. Important words to the reader and judge of her character. For the first time she has recognized and admitted a genuine feeling or emotion, an emotion that is a true reflection of what she as a woman, as an individual, as a human being, desires. She is now making the distinction among her desires. In the beginning of the novel she is unable to make this distinction, and that is what leads her to marry Casaubon, because as Jerome Thale says of her, "Dorothea is unable to distinguish between her desires."[28]

Ready to champion Lydgate in his difficulties, Dorothea exhibits some of her original impetuosity. Her interest and willingness to help Lydgate are especially important since her experience with Casaubon could have damaged her outlook on the goodness of mankind. After all, she could have expected almost anyone other than Casaubon to harbor vicious thoughts about her relationship with Ladislaw. And if Casaubon, a minister and her idea of fulfillment personified, was weak, tractable, and impressionable, then who could be strong

[28]Jerome Thale, The Novels of George Eliot (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1959), p. 115.

enough for her to believe in? The importance of her wanting to help Lydgate is that she has not been embittered by her experience with Casaubon. In fact, she tells Celia exactly why the experience with the minister has not affected her adversely:

> "Of course I submitted to him [Casaubon], because it was my duty; it was my feeling for him," said Dorothea, looking through the prism of her tears.[29]

It was her duty and her pity that caused her to subvert her own will for Casaubon's. She was blind enough to believe that that was what she had wanted in the beginning of their relationship. She was strong enough morally after the decision had been made to perform her duty. But now that that relationship has been terminated she is better able to evaluate circumstances and situations and to react to them more rationally, and that is why she is ready to believe in Lydgate's character.

Dorothea's desire to clear Lydgate of the implications about him in the Bulstrode affair is an attempt to correct an injustice very much like the one done her by Casaubon, which she has no power to rectify. She tells Lydgate:

> "I would take any pains to clear you. I have very little to do. There is nothing better that I can do in the world" (p. 559).

By implication, we can infer that Dorothea would take any pains to clear anyone who had shown himself worthy of her trust and who had been wronged by society. She has undoubtedly had a shadow cast on

[29]Eliot, p. 539.

her character by Casaubon's actions; about that she can do nothing, but with Lydgate she can possibly attain a vicarious vindication.

After hearing of the circumstances surrounding the doctor's involvement with Bulstrode, Dorothea decides to explain the situation to Mrs. Lydgate. In order that her charitable intercession on the doctor's behalf not appear to have ulterior motives, Lydgate's perception of her as a result of her offer of assistance is important:

> "This young creature has a heart large enough for the Virgin Mary. She evidently thinks nothing of her own future, and would pledge away half her income at once, as if she wanted nothing for herself but a chair to sit in from which she can look down with those clear eyes at the poor mortals who pray to her. She seems to have what I never saw in any woman before--a fountain of friendship towards men--a man can make a friend of her" (p. 563).

Lydgate's description of her as being like the Virgin Mary makes Dorothea appear as a friend to mankind, rather than to any particular man. Indeed, Lydgate says she has "a fountain of friendship towards men." This description elevates Dorothea's character above the petty concerns of the society in which she has been placed. It also depicts her as being interested in that which will benefit others and, as a secondary condition, justify herself. Always before, she has wanted to build cottages for the poor; she has been almost obsessed with the plans, but now she is interested first and foremost in Lydgate's welfare. She said earlier that she had nothing better to do in the world, but her effort toward helping Lydgate is so selfless that she gains stature in the reader's eyes.

On her visit to Mrs. Lydgate, Dorothea encounters Will Ladislaw in what appears to be a rather compromising position. And a visit afterwards with the Farebrothers brings Dorothea to the point where she openly admits to herself that she is in love with Will: "The limit of resistance was reached, and she had sunk back helpless within the clutch of inescapable anguish. Dismissing Tantripp with a few faint words, she locked her door, and turning away from it towards the vacant room she pressed her hands hard on the top of her head, and moaned out--

'Oh, I did love him!'" (pp. 575-76).

Her admission comes because she thinks Ladislaw and Rosamond are involved. Thale says that "her [Dorothea's] nature is so large that what she needs is both love and work."[30] She has finally admitted loving someone, Will, but because she believes him to be involved with Rosamond she determines, after a sleepless night, that she must look upon the world and her life in a different way: "The objects of her rescue were not to be sought out by her fancy: they were chosen for her. She yearned towards the perfect Right, that it might make a throne within her, and rule her errant will. 'What should I do--how should I act now, this very day, if I could clutch my own pain, and compel it to silence, and think of those three?'"[31]

[30]Thale, p. 119.

[31]Eliot, p. 577.

What Dorothea actually does is to combine her love with her work. She removes herself, temporarily anyway, from involvement with a particular love and involves herself in a universal love, and her work, saving the three, Rosamond, Lydgate, Will, is the manifestation of that love. As Harvey says of her: "The emphasis is on a new kind of moral insight and acceptance very different from the blind devotion and easy desire to serve and reform from which she started out."[32] In order to reinforce her new moral insight, to reaffirm it, she must act: "Nevertheless at eleven o'clock she was walking towards Middlemarch, having made up her mind that she would make as quietly and unnoticeably as possible her second attempt to see and save Rosamond."[33]

At Lydgate's, Rosamond reveals to Dorothea that Will is in love with the young widow; when she hears this, "The revulsion of feeling in Dorothea was too strong to be called joy. It was a tumult in which the terrible strain of the night and morning made a resistant pain:--she could only perceive that this would be joy when she had recovered her power of feeling it" (p. 585).

When Ladislaw visits Dorothea later to explain why he felt that any claims he could lay to her would be invalidated by his parentage and her position in society, they finally confess their love for each other:

"Oh, I cannot bear it--my heart will

[32]Harvey, p. 196.

[33]Eliot, p. 579.

> break," said Dorothea. . . . I don't mind about poverty--I hate my wealth."
> In an instant Will was close to her and had his arms round her, but she drew her head back and held his away gently that she might go on speaking, her large tear-filled eyes looking at his very simply, while she said in a sobbing childlike way, 'We could live quite well on my own fortune--it is too much--seven hundred a-year--I want so little--no new clothes--and I will learn what everything costs'" (p. 594).

If the manner in which she abandons herself to her emotion does not convince us that Dorothea has finally succumbed to her strongest desire, to love and to be loved, then her remarks about money, clothes, and economizing should. She is no longer talking about ideals and plans and being a helpmate to humanity. Although Derek Oldfield says, "Dorothea's essential nature has deepened in its capacity for feeling, but she has had to submit to a conventional and inadequate expression of her love."[34] I think a denial of her desire to marry would be a conventional and inadequate expression of Dorothea's love. It would appear that her essential nature has deepened in its capacity for feeling by the very fact of her being able to abandon her false image of what was expected of her.

Eliot tells us at the end of the novel that Dorothea was happy with her choice: "Still she never repented that she had given up position and fortune to marry Will Ladislaw."[35] And, as Eliot

[34] Derek Oldfield, "The Language of the Novel: The Character of Dorothea," in "Middlemarch": Critical Approaches to the Novel, ed. Barbara Hardy (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), p. 80.

[35] Eliot, p. 610.

indicates, there seems to be no indication of what she could have done had she rejected Will: "Many who knew her, thought it a pity that so substantive and rare a creature should have been absorbed into the life of another, and be only known in a certain circle as a wife and mother. But no one stated exactly what else that was in her power she ought rather to have done" (p. 611).

To condemn Dorothea for choosing Will Ladislaw is to condemn her because she did not carry out someone else's wishes. In the beginning, we see a misguided idealist whose idealism leads her to subvert her own moral integrity to that of another. While she is yoked to Casaubon, she maintains the integrity of the morality she has assumed. After she is freed from that assumed moral stance, she returns to some of her original idealism, but she is not as blind as she has been earlier. She now sees that she has a choice and that that choice requires her to exert her own moral integrity rather than the one she had assumed while married.

Her experience with Casaubon makes her a much wiser person, but it also makes her a person afraid of making another mistake of the kind she had committed with Casaubon; that is why her relationship with Will Ladislaw is so slow in developing. By the same token, her marriage awakened her to many things that she would not have thought possible before her marriage: Casaubon's suspicious nature, his incapacity to complete his work, the narrow attitudes of society.

In the end, Dorothea's character has again become fused with that of another, but in a much different way than it originally was.

This last fusion is made with complete knowledge of what she is giving up, not with idealistic aspirations of saving the world from itself. Her moral stance has been affected by her marriage experience with Casaubon, but she is able to have her physical actions accord with her moral integrity without undergoing any physical privations. Because she acts with moral integrity she is in the final analysis not a mere figure but a character.

"Heart of Darkness": Marlow

Our discussion of the moral stance as a factor in character development culminates with a consideration of Marlow in Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness." Marlow is very similar to Dorothea Brooke in *Middlemarch* because his development is also linear. Just as Dorothea comes to recognize her husband for what he really is and assimilates that knowledge into her moral attitude, so does Marlow's experience with Kurtz make his moral attitude at the end of the narrative different from the one which he evidences at the beginning.

Marlow is first introduced to us as he sits on board the *Nellie*, recounting his African experience. His admission that he has begun to deviate from his usual method of obtaining employment is evidence of his awareness of the change taking place in himself:

> "I am sorry to own I began to worry them. This was already a fresh departure for me. I was not used to get things that way, you know. I always went my own road and on my own legs where I had a mind to go."[36]

From this statement, we know that Marlow is an individual, someone who has formerly plotted his own course of life. Upon this occasion, however, we see that he has begun to change. The change comes about because he is tired of being without a job and because of his keen desire to travel the uncharted regions of Africa.

[36]Bruce Harkness, ed., *Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" and the Critics* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1960), p. 6. Further references to this work will be found in parentheses in the text.

His admission is also evidence of a compromise. Having been a self-sufficient person previously, he finds himself in a position where he chooses to rely on someone else for help, an aunt. While he doesn't necessarily like having to deviate from his principles, he does so because the drive to get to Africa is stronger than his desire to maintain his moral integrity. In a very real sense, Marlow sacrifices one set of values for another set, but his conscious recognition of what he is doing helps him maintain character status.

After Marlow has secured the job as captain of a boat on the Congo River and while preparing to depart for his assignment, he reveals his feelings about negating his former principles of independence:

> "After this I got embraced, told to wear flannel, be sure to write often, and so on--and I left. In the street--I don't know why--a queer feeling came to me that I was an impostor" (pp. 9-10).

This feeling of being an impostor reveals that he is uncomfortable with his decision to secure a job with someone else's assistance, especially since that person is a woman. This discomfort, or feeling like an impostor, is, however, natural and should not disturb Marlow; after all, his decision to seek a woman's help is conscious and deliberate. But because his attitude toward women is very closely related to his attitude toward a lie, he knows that his deviation has more significance and greater moral implications for him than it would have for an ordinary man. Marlow's attitude toward women and how they perceive reality is not tempered because his practical world is

made dependent upon their unreal world, as evidenced by his remarks:

> "It's queer how out of touch with truth women are. They live in a world of their own, and there had never been anything like it, and never can be. It is too beautiful altogether, and if they were to set it up it would go to pieces before the first sunset. Some confounded fact we men have been living contentedly with ever since the day of creation would start up and knock the whole thing over" (p. 9).

To seek assistance, as Marlow did, from those who live in an unreal world is to give tacit approval to their existence. It is important for Marlow that he not give such approval, because it is those forces which he opposes. The only way we can see his actions as not affording that approval is by interpreting his accepting a woman's help deliberately and for a larger moral purpose than the compromise of principles involves.

Marlow appears to equate "confounded facts" with truth, and this equation depicts him as believing that what is observable physically is true and what is not is untrue, or a lie. This would seem to be borne out by his later remark about his antipathy toward a lie:

> "You know I hate, detest, and can't bear a lie, not because I am straighter than the rest of us, but simply because it appalls me. There is a taint of death, a flavour of mortality in lies--which is exactly what I hate and detest in the world--what I want to forget" (p. 23).

A deliberate person would be appalled by the mortality a lie imposes on a situation. A practical person such as Marlow would find great discomfort in being forced into a situation where his

practicality would do him little or no good, and that is exactly the situation in which one is placed by a lie.

A later comment, made while he is at the Central Station awaiting materials with which to repair his disabled vessel, shows how Marlow deals with unreal situations:

> "I went to work the next day, turning, so to speak, my back on that station. In that way only it seemed to me I could keep my hold on the redeeming facts of life. Still, one must look about sometimes; and then I saw this station, these men strolling aimlessly about in the sunshine of the yard. I asked myself sometimes what it all meant. They wandered here and there with their absurd long staves in their hands, like a lot of faithless pilgrims bewitched inside a rotten fence. The word 'ivory' rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it. A taint of imbecile rapacity blew through it all, like a whiff from some corpse. By Jove! I've never seen anything so unreal in my life" (p. 19).

Marlow goes to work on a practical, time-consuming project, with a definite purpose in mind, in order to avoid looking at the "pilgrims" wandering about aimlessly. At least he has a purpose; the pilgrims have none. Their actions do no more than take the form of sighs and prayers, while his actions are overt attempts at repairing the boat and keeping in touch with reality.

Marlow's introduction to Kurtz occurs at the Outer Station when the bookkeeper tells him that Mr. Kurtz is in charge of a very important trading post. The feeling Marlow builds or has for Kurtz increases every time someone says anything about or against the manager. It would appear, then, that Marlow builds an affinity for Kurtz because the other people seem to dislike the man, and Marlow

feels drawn to anyone whom the pilgrims dislike. Apparently Kurtz is a worker and the pilgrims dislike him because of that. Marlow feels that the pilgrims disapprove of him because he is also a worker, or at least reportedly so. Marlow's affinity for Kurtz appears to be a result of their both fighting the darkness and mystery of the country, rather than being passive as the pilgrims are. Marlow cannot explain his conduct in regard to Kurtz; he has, after all, compromised himself to the point of allowing someone to believe what his situation implies rather than explain what it actually is in relation to Kurtz and the company:

> "I would not have gone so far as to fight for Kurtz, but I went for him near enough to a lie. . . . This simply because I had a notion it somehow would be of help to that Kurtz whom at the time I did not see--you understand" (p. 23).

This affinity for Kurtz has resulted from the reports Marlow has had of the man's being the most active person in the country, and Marlow believes in being active in order to see the truth of things; he evidently feels, therefore, that since Kurtz has been so active he is much nearer to the truth of the situation than the rest of the people are, since they remain so inactive.

That Marlow believes idleness keeps one from the truth of things can be seen in his remark about his status as a passenger while aboard the French steamer bound for the continent:

> "The idleness of a passenger . . . seemed to keep me away from the truth of things" (p. 10).

Apparently, then, the truth of things can be found in activity, not in idleness, according to Marlow. Activity and work are states which result in enlightenment because they test the individual's moral strength, pierce the unknown, and bring order out of the unformed chaos of human consciousness. Work, as a tool by which one can discover the truth, is important to Marlow. He says he doesn't like to work, but he likes what it reveals to a person:

> "I don't like work--no man does--but I do like what is in the work--the chance to find yourself. Your own reality--for yourself, not for others--what no other man can ever know. They can only see the mere show, and never can tell what it really means" (p. 25).

The implication is that those who do work are unlikely to be guilty of lying because they are engaged in seeking the truth via their work, while those who wander about aimlessly with their "staves" are likely to indulge in untruths. Those who do not work, who do not seek the truth, are also inevitably led astray by every chance remark or situation.

We see that Marlow believes that human actions should have a moral purpose behind them, by what he says about the insanity of the French gun-boat shelling the jungle:

> "Pop, would go one of the six-inch guns; a small flame would dart and vanish, a little white smoke would disappear, a tiny projectile would give a feeble screech--and nothing happened. Nothing could happen. There was a touch of insanity in the proceeding" (p. 11).

This insanity has the same futility about it which characterizes

those who do not actively search for the truth. The French gunboat is just as ineffective in its shelling of the jungle as are the pilgrims at the Central Station. Marlow's objection to acts which do not have a moral purpose is seen again when he comments on the Eldorado Exploring Expedition:

> "To tear treasure out of the bowels of the land was their desire, with no more moral purpose at the back of it than there is in burglars breaking into a safe" (p. 26).

A final aspect of Marlow's moral stance is his belief in restraint as the saving factor in man's life. Restraint is important to him because it is evidence of physical behavior influenced by a moral standard or purpose:

> "Yes; I looked at them as you would on any human being, with a curiosity of their impulses, motives, capacities, weaknesses, when brought to the test of an inexorable physical necessity. . . . It takes a man all his inborn strength to fight hunger properly. It's really easier to face bereavement, dishonour, and the perdition of one's soul--than this kind of prolonged hunger. . . . Restraint! I would just as soon have expected restraint from a hyena prowling amongst the corpses of a battlefield" (pp. 36-37).

Marlow sees restraint as being necessary so that man does not go to extremes; it is necessary so that he is not overcome by his physical desires or needs; it is the factor which preserves the spiritual essence of mankind in that it prevents the emotions from ruling or determining behavior and, instead, allows reason to determine human deportment.

Just as Dorothea Brooke restrains herself from succumbing to

her desire to argue with her husband, so does Marlow refrain from indulging in the dances and rituals of the natives he witnessed as his boat moved up the Congo River toward the Inner Station and Kurtz:

> "You wonder I didn't go ashore for a howl and a dance? Well, no--I didn't. . . . I had no time. I had to mess about with white-lead and strips of woollen blanket helping to put bandages on those leaky steam-pipes--I tell you. I had to watch the steering, and circumvent those snags, and get the tin-pot along by hook or by crook. There was surface-truth enough in these things to save a wiser man" (p. 31).

The strength of Marlow's character is shown by his consciously restraining himself from indulging his emotions. His strength is also emphasized in the contrast with Kurtz's succumbing to his baser instincts. Marlow wouldn't even go ashore for a howl and a dance, whereas Kurtz had surrendered all vestiges of civilized influence, as evidenced by the heads on the stakes which surrounded the Inner Station:

> "They [the heads] only showed that Mr. Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts, that there was something wanting in him--some small matter which, when the pressing need arose, could not be found under his magnificent eloquence" (p. 51).

The last instance of Marlow's restraint is evidenced when he tells Kurtz's "Intended" that the man's last words were her name. Marlow begins the narrative by saying that he hates a lie, that there is a mortality about a lie which appalls him, yet in the end he tells a lie. He does so because he has come to recognize that the horror Kurtz saw was the lack of restraint leading to self-gratification,

to self-indulgence, which has isolated him from the outside world. And just as he had deflected his moral integrity to a larger moral purpose in order to get his job, so now Marlow again deflects his basic moral integrity for a larger moral purpose. Because Kurtz finally recognizes "the horror" of unrestrained self-indulgence, Marlow is able to assimilate this knowledge into his own value system, deviate from his principles, and tell the fiancée a lie.

After telling the girl that the man's last words were her name, Marlow adds:

> "The heavens do not fall for such a trifle. Would they have fallen, I wonder, if I had rendered Kurtz that justice which was his due?" (p. 69).

Marlow has, however, rendered Kurtz that justice which was his due, by telling a straight-forward, deliberate lie. By understanding Kurtz's pronouncement and seeing the necessity to preserve the fiancée's illusion, Marlow grants credence to the manager's realization.

We have seen that the character development of Marlow and Dorothea Brooke is almost parallel. The most significant factor in both characters' development is that they begin with a defined moral stance; they have already evolved means by which they deal with the world. Both characters assimilate their experience into their moral attitudes and continue to function as strong individuals. Neither character ever gives up his initial moral stance entirely; therefore their development is linear. Pip and Heathcliff return approximately

to their original moral positions, whereas Becky retains her static posture throughout the novel. Thus these three patterns of character development, circular, static, and linear, seem typical of those found in many Victorian novels.

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