

Secret Selves:

The Narration of Childhood Fear in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*

and Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*

by

Carolyn Jacobs

A thesis presented for the B. A. degree

with Honors in

The Department of English

University of Michigan

Spring 2002



© March 15, 2002

Carolyn Beth Jacobs

◦ To my Family ◦

Acknowledgements

At the culmination of this project, I wish to recognize a number of individuals whose tremendous support and assistance, throughout the evolution of my thesis, have made possible the realization of my goal. My meetings with Professor Martha Vicinus were invaluable in organizing my thoughts and developing my ideas. Her insightful comments and suggestions, coupled with her extensive knowledge of Victorian literature and culture, have been integral to my thesis work. Professor Vicinus has challenged me to press my thinking further through her constructive criticism of my drafts, and her enthusiastic encouragement has continually motivated my progress. Furthermore, I would like to thank Professor Adela Pinch for both her in- and out-of-class support; her advice has been extremely helpful in addressing my questions and allaying my concerns. To Professor Merla Wolk, my instructor, concentration advisor, and friend, I owe considerable thanks for encouraging me to pursue an honors concentration in English and to undertake the writing of an honors thesis. Both have proven to be highly rewarding decisions.

Special thanks are also due to my fellow Honors English students. Their thoughtful responses to my work have been particularly valuable, and I am continually inspired by their collective enthusiasm, intelligence, and humor, in even the most stressful of thesis-writing moments. I also wish to acknowledge my housemates (and best friends) for their persistent support and contagious laughter. To Jacob Chachkin, I owe thanks for his steadfast encouragement, for his relentless confidence in me, and for helping me to keep it all in perspective. Finally, I must thank my wonderful family—my mom, my dad, and my sister Renee—for the unfailing support they have exhibited in all of my endeavors, the diligent guidance they have provided me through each new challenge, and the abundant love they have bestowed upon me throughout my life.

Abstract

This thesis explores the role of secrecy in Victorian fictional narratives of childhood fear by examining the early scenes of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1861). At the outset of both novels, a lonely, isolated, and mistreated child experiences a series of terrifying encounters with the adult world. Through the immediacy of Brontë and Dickens's first-person narration, the reader receives direct access to the child's perception of these fearful moments. My thesis will probe the ways in which these perceptions and experiences are constructed into language—including *why* and *how* the child conceals his/her fears as "secrets."

Throughout the novels, both Jane and Pip (the children) suppress much about their frightening experiences, from others as well as from themselves. As I will demonstrate, their fear is often kept secret from adults, because the children are concerned that their emotions will be misunderstood. Such anxieties appear to be well founded, as adults (both fictionally and historically) tend to view secrecy as deception and consequently brand these children as "liars." Therefore, in order to dispel such adult misconceptions, the narrators in Brontë and Dickens's novels re-enter the interior world of the child, revealing the language that children use to conceal fear not only from their elders, but also from themselves. I will argue that, in moments of terror, the child frames his/her perception in figurative language, and the narrator-as-child expresses these experiences through metaphor, simile, and even personification. By using language in this manner, the child is able to conceal from him/herself the reality of a frightening situation. Thus, I will assert that Jane and Pip's well-timed use of figurative language unexpectedly *diminishes* rather than heightens the emotional intensity of their fearful experiences. This self-protection of childhood moves toward self-vindication, as the grown narrators seek to explain, to reinterpret, and to justify their youthful terror.

This shifting perspective suggests an organizational scheme for my thesis, centering on three separate levels: (i) the attitudes of adults toward childhood fear and concealment, (ii) the interior perceptions and expressions of the child, and (iii) the reflection and retrospection of the adult narrator. However, before addressing these perspectives in the text, my thesis commences with a discussion of historical context. In the opening section, I present the authors' own childhood histories, including their early experiences with tragedy and fear, highlighting the impact of such experiences upon their later writing. I also examine a range of Victorian child-rearing texts, which offer insight into nineteenth-century adult viewpoints concerning childhood fear and deception. In my second section, I begin my analysis of the primary texts, underscoring the severely punitive adults whom young Jane and Pip encounter, as well as the children's (deliberate or unwitting) concealment of fear from such abusive figures. In Section III, I argue that the children not only conceal their fear from unsympathetic adults, but also from *themselves*, through protective figurative language. In the final section, I examine the intervention of the adult narrators Jane and Pip, in order to clarify the disparate methods by which they retrospectively nurture their childhood selves.

CONTENTS

Short Titles	i
Introduction	1
Section I: Childhood Fear in Victorian England: Origins and Outcomes of the Secret Self	8
Section II: Punitive Adults and the Secrecy of Childhood Fear	24
Section III: The Interior World of the Child: Linguistic Concealment	38
Section IV: The Adult Narrator: Nurturing the Self	55
Conclusion	70
Works Consulted	74

Short Titles

GE: Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations*. Edited by Edgar Rosenberg. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999.

HM: Martineau, Harriet. *Household Education*. Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1849.

JE: Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Edited by Margaret Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

MG: Galbraith, Mary. "Pip as 'Infant Tongue' and as Adult Narrator in Chapter One of *Great Expectations*." *Infant Tongues: The Voice of the Child in Literature*. Edited by Elizabeth Goodenough, et. al. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994.

MGD: Galbraith, Mary. "Subjectivity in the novel: A phenomenological and linguistic approach to the narration of childhood self." Diss. State University of New York at Buffalo, 1990.

PB: Brown, Penny. *The Captured World: The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in England*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993.

PC: Coveney, Peter. *The Image of Childhood: The Individual and Society: a Study of the Theme in English Literature*. Baltimore: Penguin Books Ltd., 1967.

SSE: Stickney Ellis, Sarah. *The Mothers of England: Their Influence and Responsibility*. New York: Edward Walker, 1843

Introduction

Since that time, which is far enough away now, I have often thought that few people know what secrecy there is in the young, under terror. No matter how unreasonable the terror, so that it be terror. I was in mortal terror of the young man who wanted my heart and liver; I was in mortal terror of my interlocutor with the ironed leg; I was in mortal terror of myself, from whom an awful promise had been extracted; I had no hope of deliverance through my all-powerful sister, who repulsed me at every turn; I am afraid to think even now of what I might have done, upon requirement, in the secrecy of my terror.

-Dickens, *Great Expectations*¹

With these words, the adult narrator Pip reflects on a terrifying childhood experience in the early pages of Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1861). Throughout the novel, the author demonstrates that Pip's fearful encounter with the escaped convict has a critical influence upon both his childhood and his adult years. More importantly, Pip's retrospective description of his intense childhood fear reveals much about the psychology of childhood and the nature of fear in early youth. Indeed, Dickens demonstrates an acute appreciation for the complexity of the child's dilemma—a unique understanding that is virtually unparalleled among English writers in the nineteenth century. The notion of childhood terror described here comprises multiple levels of experience and interpretation, each of which offers valuable insight into the treatment of childhood fear by both Victorian authors and Victorian parents. His fictional account clearly recognizes the fierce secrecy that characterizes the child's sense of fear. It attests to the "all-powerful" nature of the adult world in the eyes of a child. It indicates an inner struggle within the child, who must battle against his conscience, terrified both of revealing and of concealing the extent of the fear. It highlights the young orphan's search for support and "deliverance," as well as his subsequent "repulsion" by uncaring adult figures. Moreover, it implies that adults often remain blind to the child's conflict, as "few

¹ Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, ed. Edgar Rosenberg (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 18. Hereafter cited in the text as "GE."

people” (i.e. few adults) can discern the fear that lies hidden within young children. Finally, this passage reflects the lasting impact of this fear through the horror of an adult narrator who is “afraid to think even now” of the intensity of his childhood terror.

Dickens’s novel articulates and elaborates upon the concerns brought forth by an earlier Victorian publication, Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847). In Brontë’s work, a similarly isolated young child faces a myriad of frightening experiences, suffers repulsion by unsympathetic and domineering adults, and strives to conceal the intensity of her terror, for fear of being doubted and misbelieved. Young Jane, like Pip, is an orphan, deemed to be a “burden” upon her harsh benefactress and forbidden from speaking in the earliest dialogue of the novel. In response to the girl’s simple question, “What does Bessie say I have done?” Mrs. Reed commands, “until you can speak pleasantly, remain silent.”² Explicitly denied a voice as children, both Jane and Pip assert their respective voices by assuming roles as “narrators” of their own stories. Because Brontë and Dickens’s novels allow the wronged and frightened children to tell their own tales retrospectively, these works are predisposed to offer compassionate and perceptive portrayals of childhood. As first-person narrators, Jane and Pip represent the child’s struggles, emphasizing the often-overwhelming sense of fear that can plague a young mind.

Indeed, renderings of the terrifying and ambiguous position of the child appear throughout Victorian literature, a trend largely attributable to the dramatic social changes that occurred during this era. In the wake of the Industrial Revolution, capitalist individualism significantly dissolved the ties of community, an upwardly mobile middle class began to blur prior hierarchical distinctions, and the position of art (and the artist) was rendered ever more

² Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ed. Margaret Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 7. Hereafter cited in the text as “JE.”

ambiguous as literature became commercialized and mass-produced for a new literate public.³

As Peter Coveney writes,

In this context of isolation, alienation, doubt and intellectual conflict, it is not difficult to see the attraction of the child as a literary theme.... In childhood lay the perfect image of insecurity and isolation, of fear and bewilderment, of vulnerability and potential violation. (PC 31-2)

In a society that was, itself, searching for a place—grasping for an identity that remained elusive and rapidly evolving—the figure of the frightened child provided an apt emblem for the anxiety of all citizens. Indeed, it is precisely the child’s fear and vulnerability in an uncertain adult world that lie at the heart of nineteenth-century literature about children.

Although many other authors of this period chose “to regress, quite literally, into a world of fantasy and nostalgia for childhood” (32), as Coveney goes on to assert, such perspectives tend to overlook the complexity of the child’s experience. These Romantic images portray childhood as a joyous time of innocence, before the “cumulative pressures of social Experience” had corrupted the society (31). However, despite the validity of such social commentary, this approach misleadingly simplifies the picture. Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* and Charles Dickens’s *Great Expectations*, two pivotal novels of this era, destroy the tidy Romantic notion, by suggesting that there are no “happy childhoods” in Victorian England. They insist rather that childhood is a time of intense terror from which an individual may never fully recover. It is a stage of desperate fear, powerlessness, and incomprehension of the world. In fact, Brontë and Dickens’s use of the first-person narrative suggests that childhood may be safely approached *only* from the perspective of an adult reflecting back,

³ Peter Coveney, *The Image of Childhood: The Individual and Society: a Study of the Theme in English Literature* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1967), 31. Hereafter cited in the text as “PC.”

because the adult consciousness is better able to frame and understand such experiences. Thus, fear, not happiness, is the dominant emotion in Victorian childhood. For my thesis, I have chosen to examine *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations* precisely because these texts seek to embrace and explore—rather than simply to escape—childhood terror.

By skillfully employing first-person narration, Brontë and Dickens's adult narrators revisit fearful and life-altering moments from their youth, often directly *entering into* the child's point of view to tell the story through the child's eyes. With striking immediacy, Jane poignantly describes her sufferings in the frightening and severely punitive household of her Aunt Reed, and Pip recalls the terror he felt as a small boy, when forced to assist an escaping convict. It is my intention to separate the "child's" experience from the adult narrator's retrospection, and to analyze it separately as the child's perception. I will therefore distinguish between the moments in which the narrator actually re-enters and re-lives his/her childhood, and moments of hindsight commentary. Thus, the experience of fear centers on three separate, but interrelated, perspectives: the attitudes of adults toward childhood fear and concealment, the interior perceptions and expressions of the child, and the reflection and retrospection of the grown narrator. This unique and complex set of viewpoints allows for an exploration of language in moments of terror: what is told, what is not told, and how it is told.

Indeed, the natural consequence of the children's intense fear is an equally powerful secrecy, a conscious or unconscious concealment that occurs on multiple levels. In this thesis, I explore the role that secrecy plays in Victorian fictional narratives of childhood fear, by examining the early scenes of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1861). I will probe the issue of constructing the child's perceptions and experiences into language—including *why* and *how* these fears are concealed as "secrets"—

and uncover the language of childhood to perceive and express childhood fears. “Secrecy” implies a dichotomy—a separation between the secret-keeper and those from whom the secret is withheld. In the novels of Brontë and Dickens, this separation occurs on two levels: between the child and the adult world, as well as between the child and him/herself.

Often, the children’s experiences are kept secret from adults, presumably because the children are concerned that their emotions will be misunderstood. Such worries appear to be well founded, as adults (both fictionally and historically) tend to view childhood secrecy as deception and consequently brand these children as “liars.” Throughout both novels, adults continuously misinterpret the children’s fears, either willfully or unknowingly, thus increasing the children’s anxiety and sense of powerlessness. In the face of such adult misconceptions, the narrators in Brontë and Dickens’s novels re-enter the interior world of the child, revealing the language that children use to conceal fear not only from their elders, but also from themselves.

This thesis will assert that, in moments of terror, the child frames his/her perception in figurative language, and the narrator-as-child expresses these experiences though metaphor, simile, and even personification.⁴ I will argue that this linguistic practice allows the child to conceal from him/herself the reality of a frightening situation. Thus, Jane and Pip employ metaphors to manage their terror or to distance themselves from the experience of their own fear. In this way, figurative language diminishes, rather than heightens, the emotional intensity of fearful experiences. Throughout the novels, this need for self-protection motivates the children’s perceptions and expressions of their terror. Fear clearly affects young Jane and Pip in profound ways, by provoking physical reactions, such as Jane’s fit in the red-room and her subsequent illness or Pip’s disembodied “liver” pain in Chapter Three,

⁴ See “Section III: The Interior World of the Child...” for a discussion of how this is achieved.

as well as mental stress, such as Jane's overwhelming panic or Pip's guilty conscience. Furthermore, both children's status as orphans, and the tremendous sense of isolation and vulnerability that accompanies this position, undoubtedly affects their desire for security. In the absence of protective and caring adults, it is the children's own language that serves a defensive function against their fear. Moreover, the grown narrators also appear to nurture and support their childhood selves, through their cleverly biased renderings of the child's experiences.

In *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*, the self-protection of childhood moves toward self-vindication in adulthood, as the narrators return to moments of youthful terror to explain (with more complete language), to reinterpret (with a keener perspective), and to justify (with the removal of the "liar" label imposed upon the child by the adult world). Here, it is important to distinguish between the adult who misconstrues the child and accuses him/her of lying, and the adult narrator who tells the child's story and, thus, defends the child (and him/herself) in the process. The adults who impose their authority upon young Jane and Pip clearly remain aloof and highly detached from the world of the child, whereas the adult narrators Jane and Pip actually enter into—and remain closely allied with—their childhood selves. Thus, the first-person narrative enables a double vision. The adult narrators look back upon their childhood fear in order to justify and to diminish it. However, in telling their stories, they also relive these fearful experiences in all of their intensity.

Brontë and Dickens's works, which both enjoyed considerable contemporary success, have captivated readers for 150 years, because they encourage—and even demand—reader involvement. *Jane Eyre*, the first example of an extensive and emotionally accurate narrative of childhood, made a particularly strong impact upon its nineteenth-century readership.

Recognizing the reader's close identification with the text, as well as the unifying quality of Brontë's narrative technique, Sydney Dobell wrote in 1850, "This 'I,' that seems to have no inheritance in the earth, is an eternity with a heritage in all heavens."⁵ Indeed, *Jane Eyre* envelops its readers, involving them in the eternal community of "I's" that is developed through the readers' personal relationships with the story. Both *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations* establish a rapport with their readers, a feature that lends significant scholarly and psychological appeal to these works. The novels' renderings of the child's experience attest to the timeless power of first-person narration. Through the striking immediacy of Brontë and Dickens's narrative technique, readers of all generations may actually *enter into* the world of the child. Moreover, historical and cultural rifts may be bridged by the shared experience of childhood, as readers recall their own childhood encounters with terror and adult misbelief.

This thesis will analyze the complex interaction among fear, secrecy and deception in the childhood stories of *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*, in order to develop a more complete comprehension of Victorian attitudes toward childhood fear, as well as to establish a deeper understanding of Victorian fictional portrayals of children. Although I read Brontë and Dickens's novels as fictional representations of history (*not* as historical documents themselves), it is nonetheless critical to examine the historical context of these works. Therefore, I commence with brief presentation of the authors' own childhood histories, including their early experiences with fear and loss, and I examine a range of Victorian child-rearing texts, which provide insight into the nineteenth-century notion of childhood terror and its place in Victorian literature and society.

⁵ Sydney Dobell, *The Palladium* (September 1850); cited in Kathleen Tillotson, *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 299.

Section I: Childhood Fear in Victorian England: Origins and Outcomes of the Secret Self

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* offer highly sympathetic and emotionally insightful portrayals of childhood. Written by adults and told through the retrospection of an adult narrator, these stories nonetheless offer a decidedly *child*-centered view of fear and concealment in early youth. The novels devote considerable attention to presenting (and justifying) the child's perspective, dedicating numerous chapters to describing the hopes, the fears, and the frustrations that characterize the often-mysterious world of children. Moreover, Brontë and Dickens further prove their loyalty to the child through their unforgiving presentations of the adult characters who abuse the novels' poor orphans. This intense sympathy with children (and the corresponding attack upon adults) is hardly surprising in light of the authors' own histories. Although the novels are largely fictional, Charlotte Brontë and Charles Dickens both draw upon personal memories of childhood, including their acute perceptions of fear and their recollections of adult mistreatment. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the authors' childhood experiences, in order to appreciate the influences that underlie and motivate their works.

Charlotte Brontë was born on April 21, 1816, the third of six children, to the Reverend Patrick Brontë and his wife, Maria. Brontë grew up in a strictly religious household.⁶ Her father, an Anglican minister, opposed ornament and encouraged his family to remain indifferent to worldly goods.⁷ Although Patrick Brontë exhibited a concerned interest in his children's welfare and education, he primarily remained aloof from the rest of his family,

⁶ Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (London: Downey & Co. Ltd., 1901), 39-40. Hereafter cited in the text.

⁷ In one particular instance, Mr. Brontë even destroyed several colorful boots that the children's nurse had selected for them to wear. The reverend felt that the boots were "too gay and luxurious for his children, and would foster a love of dress; so he had put them into the fire" (Gaskell 40).

often taking his meals alone. Charlotte Brontë experienced much tragedy in her early years. Her mother, whose health had declined considerably after the birth of her sixth child in seven years, spent very little time with her children and died while Charlotte was yet quite young. As Brontë's contemporary biographer, Elizabeth Gaskell, relates,

[T]he mother was not very anxious to see much of her children, probably because the sight of them, knowing how soon they were to be left motherless, would have agitated her too much. So the little things clung quietly together, for their father was busy in his study and his parish, or with their mother, and they took their meals alone; sat reading, or whispering low, in the "children's study," or wandered out on the hill-side, hand in hand. (38)

This early instinct to "cling together" marked the beginning of an ever-growing separation between the children and the adult world. However, the trauma of a mother's prolonged illness and death served only as a prelude for the tragedy to come. Within six years of Mrs. Brontë's passing, both of Charlotte's older sisters, Maria and Elizabeth, would succumb to illnesses contracted at school. For a time, the oldest daughter, Maria, served as a second mother to her siblings. A kind and nurturing force, Maria was adored by her brother and four sisters, and her goodness and saintly virtue were "enshrined by Charlotte in the portrait of Helen Burns in *Jane Eyre*."⁸ Indeed, much of Jane's experiences at Lowood School are drawn from Charlotte's own memories of the Clergy Daughter's School at Cowan's Bridge, where Mr. Brontë sent his eldest four girls. At this charity school, situated in a scenic but unhealthy location, the Brontë girls endured the most horrible of living conditions. The food was consistently of poor quality and meager quantity; the children were made to suffer long

⁸ Helene Moglen, *Charlotte Brontë: The Self Conceived* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1976), 21. Hereafter cited in the text.

walks in freezing weather conditions; and deadly epidemics ran rampant throughout the school. In addition to the physical discomfort of life at Cowan Bridge, the girls experienced significant mental anguish under the harsh religious regime instituted by the school's founder, William Carus Wilson.⁹ As Gaskell relates, Charlotte harbored indelible memories of the psychological abuse borne by her sister Maria, who was continually reprimanded for "untidiness" and singled out for punishment by Miss Andrews, the model for Miss Scatcherd in *Jane Eyre*:

Her heart, to the latest day on which we met, still beat with unavailing indignation at the worrying and the cruelty to which her gentle, patient, dying sister had been subjected by this woman. Not a word of that part of 'Jane Eyre' but is a literal repetition of scenes between the pupil and the teacher. (Gaskell 57-8)

Sadly, the patient, ever-enduring Maria contracted tuberculosis in her weakened state and died in 1825 at the age of twelve. As Helene Moglen notes, for the Brontë children, the loss of Maria must have felt like "the loss of a second mother, better known than the first, perhaps more familiarly—more consciously—loved" (Moglen 22). Their sister Elizabeth succumbed several weeks later, a victim of the school's typhoid epidemic. For Charlotte, coming to terms with her sisters' deaths must have been a long and difficult struggle. Wracked by fear at the growing possibility of her own death, frustrated by her "impotence before circumstances she could in no way control," and guilt-ridden as a survivor of the tragedy, young Charlotte additionally faced an important responsibility as the oldest remaining child (Moglen 22-23). After these deaths, the children continued to insulate themselves from the frightening and seemingly hostile adult world. Locked away within the intimate realm of childhood, the four surviving Brontë children (Charlotte, Branwell, Emily, and Anne) created a place of fantasy

⁹ Lyndall Gordon, *Charlotte Brontë: A Passionate Life* (London: Chatto & Windus Limited, 1994), 15.

and escape through their writing. In the stories of Angria, the children's anxieties and fears became redirected through the realm of the imagination, and Charlotte, with her brother and sisters, wrote numerous tales and poems about this make-believe kingdom (23). So powerful—and perhaps, so protective—was this imagined world of fantasy that Charlotte did not fully quit it until she was twenty-two years old. In her “Farewell to Angria” (1839), Brontë expresses her intention to progress beyond the characters and places conceived in her youth, yet the spirit of her adolescent creations (and the impact of the real-life events which prompted their creation) can be clearly discerned in the voice of the adult author.

On February 7, 1812 (only four years prior to Brontë's birth), Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth to John and Elizabeth Dickens.¹⁰ Although the family moved quite often, most of Dickens's early childhood was stable and happy. Even amidst his comfortable household, however, young Charles experienced several instances of intense childhood fear, which the grown author recalls with surprisingly precise detail. In particular, Dickens's childhood terrors were induced by one of the family's servants, a girl named Mary Weller, who related scores of frightening stories to the child. Among these horrifying tales is the account of Captain Murderer, a brutal villain who chopped up his young brides and baked them into pies. As Dickens recollects,

The young woman who brought me acquainted with Captain Murderer had a fiendish enjoyment of my terrors.... So acutely did I suffer from...this infernal Captain, that I sometimes used to plead I thought I was hardly strong enough and old enough to hear the story again just yet.¹¹

¹⁰ Michael Allen, *Charles Dickens' Childhood* (Houndmills: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1988), 18-19. Hereafter cited in the text.

¹¹ Charles Dickens, “Nurse's Stories,” *The Uncommercial Traveller* (1861); cited in appendices to Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, ed. Edgar Rosenberg, 585.

Clearly, such recollections reveal the intensity of the boy's early fears, regardless of their seemingly irrational nature. When Charles reached the age of ten, his family came upon hard times. Moving to London in 1822, the Dickens' already-mounting financial difficulties quickly became overwhelming. Charles and his family eventually settled in one of the poorest sections of the city's suburbs, and, as Coveney writes, "the rest of his childhood is a tale of neglect and deeply-felt misery" (PC 116-7). Consumed by financial burdens, Charles's parents devoted little time to their young son during these difficult times. Moreover, at the suggestion of James Lamert, a relative, the Dickens sent ten-year-old Charles to work in a blacking warehouse at Hungerford-stairs (Allen 81). By usefully employing the boy, it was justified, the family could acquire an additional 6 to 7 shillings per week to help cover expenses (PC 117). For the child, however, working at the warehouse was a miserable experience. Wrenched from his familiar life to work among rough and comparatively uneducated companions, young Charles suffered immensely. The feelings of degradation and utter hopelessness experienced by the child left psychological wounds that remained painfully impressed upon the man, even decades later:

No words can express the secret agony of my soul, as I sank into this companionship; compared these everyday associates with those of my happier childhood; and felt my early hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man, crushed in my breast.... My whole nature was so penetrated with the grief and humiliation of such considerations, that, even now—famous and caressed and happy—I often forget in my dreams that I

have a dear wife and children—even that I am a man—and wander desolately back to that time of my life.¹²

The trauma of his experiences in the blacking warehouse—an ordeal forced upon the child by adults in whom he trusted and from whom he sought support—produced in young Charles a “secret agony” of fear and confusion that remained concealed within his anguished soul. The boy’s situation was further exacerbated by the imprisonment of his father for outstanding debts, which occurred almost immediately after Charles began work at the blacking factory. In the ensuing months, the child faced a series of difficult circumstances, including painful visits to Mr. Dickens in the Marshalsea, the removal of the family furniture, and the eventual removal of the family itself, as Charles’s mother and his youngest siblings joined Mr. Dickens in prison for a time (Allen 84). It is from these vivid recollections of childhood suffering that Dickens’s acutely sensitive portrayals of children arise. Indeed, the author wrote much about his personal experiences, even incorporating autobiographical elements into his fictions (most notably in *David Copperfield*).

Thus, as children, both Brontë and Dickens experienced the terror unique to childhood and felt keenly the harsh imposition of adults. Both (for at least some portion of their childhoods) felt the absence of nurturing and supportive parental figures; both faced grief, anxiety, and fear in a seemingly hostile world—one in which they had no control, no power, no voice; and both courageously drew upon these painful experiences in writing their novels.

The perspectives of Brontë and Dickens did not exist in isolation. In fact, their viewpoints arose from half a century of varied publications on the psychology of childhood and the art of childrearing. In particular, treatises on raising and educating children provide

¹² John Forster, *The life of Charles Dickens* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1872-4), 33; cited in Michael Allen, *Charles Dickens’ Childhood*, 83.

compelling insight into how the adult world regarded childhood fear, as well as childhood deceit, in Victorian England. Not surprisingly, a wide spectrum of attitudes emerges from the nineteenth-century explosion of literature written for parents and their children. The severely didactic religious writings of Evangelical Christians existed alongside Sarah Stickney Ellis's conservative treatise on child rearing, as well as Harriet Martineau's remarkably child-sensitive parenting guide. These differences in tone reflect the Victorians' conflicting viewpoints of the character and emotions of children.¹³ Moreover, while fear was regularly regarded as a natural consequence of childhood, an examination of Victorian texts reveals various methods for understanding and treating childhood terror. In addition to the discussion of fear itself, an important point of investigation is the association between childhood fear and the fear of G-d.¹⁴ This common Victorian pairing links fear with morality, as well as with secrecy and concealment (manifest in the suggestion of a guilty conscience). Moreover, the prevalence of morality-based depictions of childhood fear also implies a discussion of childhood lying (itself a form of concealment). An examination of historical texts reveals a widespread belief that deceit was a particularly reprehensible crime in children and a sin that warranted severe punishment.

Among the most punitive discourses on Victorian childhood are the didactic writings of the Evangelical movement, which emphasize the child's inherent wickedness and the necessity of teaching children to fear G-d. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, the Evangelicals, adherents to a particular form of Puritanism, promulgated a vast catalog of

¹³ Indeed, there is an intriguing duality in the representations of children in Victorian writing. As Peter Coveney writes, "Idealization of the child's nature and cruelty towards the 'children of Satan' existed side by side in nineteenth-century society" (PC 34).

¹⁴ As my religion forbids writing out the full name of G-d, I use the abbreviation throughout this thesis.

literature aimed at teaching religious values to children.¹⁵ Underlying these tales is an “‘Original Sin’ view of the child,” as Penny Brown observes, “with its insistence on innate depravity and its constant and often gruesome reminders of the awful punishment awaiting those who fail to combat their faults in this life and assure their salvation in the next” (PB 43-4). In fact, among the characters in these stories, children who fail to reform their sinful ways suffer injury, contract near-fatal (or fatal) diseases, are burned to death, or incur any similar form of presumably heaven-ordained punishment. These tactics of religious education rely on imbuing the young reader with fear—fear of G-d’s judgment and wrath, fear of Hell’s damnation, fear for his/her own soul. Such methods found frightening fictional manifestations. In Mrs. Mary Martha Sherwood’s *The History of the Fairchild Family* (1818), young Augusta Noble, who “has been brought up ‘without the fear of G-d,’ ...sets fire to herself by playing with candles and dies a ghastly death” (PB 46).¹⁶ In another episode, Mr. Fairchild designs a gruesome lesson to teach his children about the dreadful consequences of quarrelling with one another. He forces the children to view a decomposing corpse, explaining “‘This is a gibbet...and the man who hangs upon it is a murderer—one who first hated, and afterwards killed his brother!’”¹⁷ Despite the children’s terrified pleas to leave, Mr. Fairchild insists that they hear the entire ghastly tale and concludes by urging them to “pray for new hearts” (588).

Moreover, these religious tales also address the issues of childhood deceit and concealment. When Emily Fairchild steals several damsons and spills the juice on her dress,

¹⁵ Penny Brown, *The Captured World: The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women’s Writing in England* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), 40-41. Hereafter cited in the text as “PB.”

¹⁶ Unfortunately, because Mrs. Sherwood’s work remains missing from the University’s collections, I am compelled to utilize secondary sources for many of my references to this influential text.

¹⁷ Mary Martha Sherwood, *The History of the Fairchild Family* (London: J. Hatchard, 1818); cited in appendices to Charles Dickens *Great Expectations*, ed. Edgar Rosenberg, 587-8.

the fear of discovery leads her to conceal her crime by washing the garment herself. Although her parents are initially deceived, the girl's wet clothing causes her to fall ill with a fever and nearly perish. The precarious state of Emily's physical and spiritual health causes her parents much grief, and thus, "deceit is seen to bring unhappiness on the whole family" (PB 45-6). Through such stories, Evangelical texts stress the wickedness of lying and encourage an awareness of guilt in dishonest or secretive children. Furthermore, adults are called upon to punish deceptive children. Indeed, "adult authority is seen as G-d-given and punishment, even quite severe punishment for the very young, as not only consonant with the utmost paternal tenderness, but as a positive religious duty" (PB 49). Thus, Evangelical works pair fear with religion, relying upon the unquestionable authority of adults to inspire terror and inflict punishment on their (inherently sinful) children.

A less extreme, though largely religion-based, treatment of childhood fear appears in Sarah Stickney Ellis's child-rearing treatise *The Mothers of England* (1843). Significantly, Stickney Ellis does not examine fear in isolation from other influencing factors. She devotes a chapter to the discussion of "moral courageousness," a term that encompasses both the concepts of fear and lying. Moral courageousness, defined as a child's determination to tell the truth regardless of how frightening the situation, implies the paired directives of resisting fear and living honestly. As the author observes, "A want of moral courage is most frequently recognized in a fear of acting in, or even advocating, a good cause, where blame would attach to the individual who should venture to do so."¹⁸ Stickney Ellis elaborates upon this definition by presenting the example of a schoolchild who is frightened into concealment by the terror of possible punishment. When an adult furiously demands, "What naughty boy or

¹⁸ Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The Mothers of England: Their Influence and Responsibility* (1843), from *The Family Monitor and Domestic Guide*, ed. Edward Walker (New York, 1844), 60. Hereafter cited in the text as "SSE."

girl has done that,” “terror gains the ascendancy, and the poor little culprit endeavors to conceal its transgressions by a lie” (SSE 62). Here, fear causes the child to lie, and the act of concealment attempts to hide the child’s guilt. Although guilt is assumed, Stickney Ellis does demonstrate a certain degree of sympathy for the “poor” frightened child, recognizing its vulnerability in the face of adult authority.

Stickney Ellis directly relates moral courageousness to religion. In fact, she insists that teaching moral courageousness is impossible without allusions to religious values:

Without any reference to a future state, or to the will of a Supreme Being, I am not aware by what means moral courage could be inculcated...but by the help of this reference, a pious mother has always in her power the means of directing the attention of her child from a lesser to a greater good—from the mere chance of escaping chastisement, to the hope of doing what is most pleasing in the sight of G-d. (SSE 62)

Indeed, moral courage must be rooted in religious principle, in order successfully to imbue children with an unwavering reverence for truth. Thus, as with the Evangelicals, religion plays a crucial role in combating children’s tendencies toward falsehood. However, the religious viewpoints that Stickney Ellis professes are quite different from those of the Evangelicals. In fact, the author’s words suggest an explicit desire to distance herself from the hell-and-brimstone model of instruction. Arguing against parents’ immediate invocation of a wrathful G-d to teach their children, she writes:

Alas! how often is the idea of a Supreme Being brought first before the minds of children, when they are under chastisement for having done wrong! How many are told then, and then only, that there is an All-seeing eye upon them,

detecting their falsehoods, and discovering their secret sins! [...] Yet why, when we are so ready in the management of children, to bring to our aid the terrors of a G-d of justice—why are we not equally ready to make use of the attractiveness of a G-d of love? (59-60)

While religion still provides a foundation for Stickney Ellis's discussion of childhood fear and lying, adults are not called upon to inflict religious terror upon children. Indeed, unnecessarily imposed fear could prove detrimental to the child's development of honesty. Throughout the chapter, Stickney Ellis maintains that fear (exemplified by moral cowardliness) is the enemy of truth and thus interferes with the pursuit of G-dliness. According to Stickney Ellis, "A want of moral courageousness lies at the root of almost all the falsehoods which are told in early youth" (61). Thus, fear impedes the child's aspirations toward pious integrity. In order to raise honest children, Stickney Ellis's treatise explains, a mother must "endeavor to fortify the moral character, as that children shall not be afraid to tell the truth" (61). With this method of training, children will come to appreciate the inherent value of truth, and to despise falsehood.

An even more sympathetic and child-centered approach to youthful fear can be found in the works of Harriet Martineau, who penned *Household Education* (1849), an instruction manual on raising children. Fusing elements of the Romantic sensibility with her own Unitarian beliefs, Martineau examines a decidedly secular, quotidian form of terror in children. She devotes an entire chapter to fear, virtually without reference to its religious and moral implications. With this approach, her focus shifts away from the adult's imposition of specific Christian values, and toward an exploration of the child's own emotions and perceptions. Most importantly, Martineau treats fear as a natural, normal consequence of

childhood. In introducing the concept, she explains that “every child has it more or less—or ought to have it.... A child who has never known any kind of fear, can have no power of Imagination;—can feel no wonder, no impulse of life, no awe or veneration.”¹⁹ Not only is fear a common and necessary part of childhood, but it also enriches the child’s experience of the world, by opening the young mind to the possibilities of wonder and genuine reverence. A child who cannot experience fear cannot appreciate the power of a thunderstorm, or the majesty of a lovely sunset, or the spiritual fervor of a religious experience. Thus, Martineau’s views radically differ from those of Stickney Ellis and the Evangelicals, by highlighting the *positive* benefits of fear for a child, rather than centering on its punishable manifestations.

According to Martineau, parents must be compassionate, comforting, and, above all, *vigilant* with respect to childhood fear. Martineau strictly opposes the notion of deliberately causing fear in children, calling upon adults to foster tenderness, rather than terror, in the young. In her words, “Such inflictions make a boy restless, or obstinate, or deceitful.... A tender parent will never have the heart to breed fear in a child, knowing that ‘fear hath torment’” (HM 60). Far from inculcating fear in children (and therefore reinforcing the child’s own sense of vulnerability), Martineau’s advice suggests comforting and supporting frightened children. Regardless of the cause, the mother must be an “unfailing” source of refuge for the terrified youth (62). In addition, Martineau urges parents to be especially attentive to their children, who are prone to develop seemingly irrational fears that may escape the notice of a rational adult. Indeed, parents must necessarily be conscious of the child’s limited understanding, “for the most terrible fears are precisely those which have nothing to do with reason” (63).

¹⁹ Harriet Martineau, *Household Education* (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1849), 57. Hereafter cited in the text as “HM.”

Moreover, acute adult watchfulness is necessary, explains Martineau, because the child (especially the timid, proud child) feels a natural instinct to conceal his/her fear. This secrecy may prove destructive to the child's disposition and mental tranquility. Despite "the agonies of its little heart, the spasms of its nerves, the soul-sickness of its days, the horrors of its nights," the child "hides its miseries under an appearance of indifference or obstinacy, till its habitual terror impairs its health, or drives it into a temper of defiance or recklessness" (HM 58). With this vivid description of the child's inner torment, Martineau acknowledges the child's need to conceal its terror from adults. Martineau further supports her beliefs by citing evidence from her own childhood, thus clarifying the source of her keen perception of the child's consciousness. She declares that she, herself, was an extremely timid child, particularly susceptible to terrors, but also stubbornly secretive about these feelings. Referring to her often overwhelming fear of lights and shadows, she writes, "I misled every body about me by a habit of concealment...which I am sure I should not now have strength for under any inducement whatever" (59). Here, Martineau recognizes the strength required by the child to maintain such a difficult secrecy, directly contrasting Stickney Ellis's portrayal of concealment as a weakness. Although she declares earlier that such secrecy may manifest itself as "obstinacy" or "defiance," Martineau also suggests that this outward emotional display masks more serious inward concerns. Her sympathetic words recognize that the child's world can be mysterious and concealed from adult comprehension, and she warns parents to avoid making hasty conclusions about a child's morality based upon his/her concealment.

Significantly, Martineau does not refer to childhood lying or deception; instead, she entitles her chapter "Truthfulness," aptly demonstrating her belief in original innocence over

original sin. Martineau rejects Calvinist and Evangelical notions of childhood depravity and refuses to regard untrue childish utterances as evidence of “a constitutional vice” or “a hereditary curse.” Rather, she feels that all children have the potential for truthfulness: “I believe that the requisites of a habit of truthfulness lie in the brain of every child that is born; but that the truthfulness itself has to be taught, as the speech which is to convey it has to be taught; by helping the child to use his natural powers” (HM 102-3). Martineau cites four primary requisites, which must be cultivated by parents. The first is the child’s innate “sense of right and justice.” A child, observes Martineau, “can feel injustice done to himself with the infallibility of an instinct, and claim his rights with the acuteness of a lawyer” (104). It is this inherent conception of “moral truth” that parents must develop, in order to raise just and honest children. Another requisite is the power to develop an accurate perception of the physical world. Here, too, the parent’s guidance is crucial, as the young child is likely to misinterpret his/her own observations. In infancy, perception may become confused, leading to untruths that cannot justly be deemed lies; the child, who lacks advanced capabilities of reasoning, also lacks the motive to deceive maliciously. Martineau stresses that the youth’s perceptive “faculties must be exercised and trained very carefully, if the child is to be made accurate in its statements” (104). An additional requirement for cultivating integrity is “the belief that truthfulness is a duty.” Children may become so absorbed in the realm of fantasy that they unwittingly betray their duty to truth through imaginative or impossible tales. Rather than assuming a childhood penchant for deceit, Martineau maintains that parents should monitor the child’s storytelling habits and encourage reflection upon their words, in order to assist children in distinguishing between fantasy and reality (105). Finally, the child’s own “self-government” represents the fourth condition for developing truthfulness.

Conscientiousness must be cultivated as the child grows, in order that it might serve as his/her guide in the absence of parental support. Not only must parents strive to develop their child's inherent potential for truthfulness, but they must also serve as a shining example of integrity (108-9). Thus, Martineau's instructions rely on the cooperative interaction between adult and child, the child's natural moral sense providing the raw material to be refined by the understanding parent.

As Martineau's text demonstrates, drawing upon one's own personal experiences offers a far more powerful understanding of childhood than a distanced and didactic adult approach. Stickney Ellis's accounts of childhood, though considerably less severe than the Evangelical viewpoints, nonetheless seem highly detached from the world of the child. She adopts and maintains an adult perspective throughout the treatise, with only a few faint glimmers of the child's own point of view. Thus, although Stickney Ellis raised children of her own (and thus, possessed immediate access to the child's perceptual and emotional world), she maintains a strict distance between her adult self and the child that lies at the heart of her treatise. Her examples center on child-rearing anecdotes from her friends (i.e. other adults) and her own mothering experience, rather than from a careful exploration of the *childhood* experience. Ironically, the childless Martineau offers a more sensitive approach to childhood fear than Stickney Ellis, the traditional housewife. Martineau's advice more vividly attests to the child's interior world, because she incorporates memories from her own youth and even *enters into* her past experience. It is precisely this method of relying upon and extracting from personal experience that renders Brontë and Dickens's works so masterful in their depictions of childhood and the misunderstandings of the adult world.

The nature of the authors' own childhood memories may partly account for the cruel and insensitive nature of the adult figures in *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*. In addition, in light of the novels' subjects and narrative techniques, Jane and Pip's unsympathetic depictions of their adult guardians seem entirely reasonable. The novels present portraits of lonely and isolated orphan children, who have already been abandoned, in a sense, by the adult world. Jane and Pip will never know the love of a caring parent, such as Martineau and Stickney Ellis describe as crucial to the child's development. Correspondingly, many of the novels' adults must raise children that are *not* their own and who consequently represent a troublesome burden upon them. The adults' continual abuse and neglect of their wards provides sufficient cause to warrant the merciless treatment they receive through the children's acutely perceptive eyes. Thus, described from the perspective of the children they abuse and even cast aside, the adults in Brontë and Dickens's works constitute much harsher manifestations of the adult world than those of most Victorian treatise-writers.

Section II: Punitive Adults and the Secrecy of Childhood Fear

The majority of the adult figures in *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations* espouse strict religious teachings that resemble those of the Evangelical publications. The novels' adults assume an unquestionable authority to impose stringent principles upon the children, presumably for the salvation of their souls (i.e. for their own good). Not surprisingly, this frequent sermonizing, which is often accompanied by harsh punishment, creates an extremely unsupportive and fear-filled environment for the revelation of the children's terrors. Indeed, the young orphans' reticence can be traced to their frightening and abusive encounters with the adult world. Pip and Jane are certain that if they voice their terrifying experiences, they will not be believed, and justifiably so. Powerful adults ensure that the children are perpetually and painfully aware of their own innate depravity and the wickedness of childhood deceit. Moreover, religiously-sanctioned authority often translates into sadism, as characters like Mrs. Reed and Mrs. Joe wield their power to abuse the children both physically and psychologically. Not only must Jane and Pip suffer bodily harassment, but they are also made to feel emotionally conflicted between the desire for secrecy and the pursuit of an adult standard of "morality." This inner struggle, however, goes unnoticed by the adult world, just as Harriet Martineau predicts. Thus, throughout the early scenes of *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*, the largely unsympathetic and unsupportive adult world gravely misconstrues childhood terror.

Through their retrospective narrators, Brontë and Dickens offer the child's perspective of the adult world, thereby revealing adult abuses and misconceptions. Indeed, the authors delineate a strict separation between the adult world and the world of the child, in order to emphasize that certain aspects of the child's emotions and experiences of fear remain

enigmatic or “secretive” to grown-ups. This secrecy arises both from a deliberate suppression on the part of the child, as in the case of Pip, and from an unwitting concealment through adult misapprehension, as often seen with Jane. However, whether deliberately or not, the children’s fearful experiences remain apart from adult understanding, shrouded in a veil of secrecy.

Throughout the novels, adults “sermonize” on the wickedness of lying, as well as on the depravity of the children themselves, underscoring the unquestioned authority of grown-ups over children. Such adult warnings, which introduce prominent Evangelical and Calvinist notions with reference to Jane and Pip, serve only to increase the children’s terror. When Jane is sent to the red-room as punishment for talking back to Mrs. Reed, she is terrified at the thought of staying in the very chamber where Mr. Reed died. As if her fears of entering this “haunted” space were not great enough, Abbot’s forebodings render the situation even more menacing. Pushing the child into the red-room, the housemaid sneers,

G-d will punish her: he might strike her dead in the midst of her tantrums, and then where would she go? ...Say your prayers, Miss Eyre, when you are by yourself; for if you don’t repent, something bad might be permitted to come down the chimney, and fetch you away. (*JE* 13)

Here, the legacy of the Evangelical doctrines mingles with bedside ghost and goblin stories to deliberately induce fear in Jane’s young mind. Abbot’s rhetorical “and then where would she go?” implies the girl’s likely descent into hellfire and damnation. Just as the Evangelical publications sought to inculcate a doctrine of repentance, Abbot urges Jane to atone for her behavior. Moreover, the maid’s words reflect the Evangelical teachings that bad little

children are punished, by mysteriously falling ill or being struck “dead in the midst of...tantrums,” while good little children are rewarded here on earth.

Brontë’s most memorable example of this harsh religious system is Mr. Brocklehurst’s lessons to Jane on the wickedness of youthful deceit. When Mrs. Reed tells the stern school director that Jane is “a naughty little girl” (*JE* 32), he immediately compels Jane to contemplate the nature of hell, which she dutifully describes as “a pit full of fire.” Mr. Brocklehurst continues by directly relating his discussion of hell to Jane’s supposed sin, lying: “Deceit is, indeed, a sad fault in a child.... [I]t is akin to falsehood, and all liars will have their portion in the lake burning with fire and brimstone” (34). With such associations, the timid little girl is unjustly deemed a liar and made to face the prospect of an eternity of horrifying punishment. Despite Jane’s poignant and humorous attempts to express herself,²⁰ she is eventually overcome by the onslaught of adult authority and religious fervor. Contemplating the injustice of the adults’ characterization of herself, she is finally reduced to tears of utter helplessness (34). In addition, Brontë underscores her satire of the Evangelical belief in childhood depravity, through Brocklehurst’s gift to Jane: a small book filled with stories of wicked little boys and girls who pay the ultimate price for their wickedness (35). In fact, the “*Child’s Guide*” given to Jane recalls *The Children’s Friend*, an actual magazine published by Carus Wilson, the historical adult upon whom Brontë’s character is based. Like the Evangelicals described in Section I, Mr. Brocklehurst clearly intends to heighten the young girl’s terror, in order to make her obedient to adults and therefore “good.”

²⁰ When asked how she will endeavor to avoid falling into the pit of hell, Jane responds, “I must keep in good health, sir, and not die” (*JE* 32). Later, after Mr. Brocklehurst explains that Jane must pray in order to “take away your heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh,” the little girl reflects, “I was about to propound a question, touching the matter in which that operation of changing my heart was to be performed, when Mrs. Reed interposed” (33).

In *Great Expectations*, young Pip is similarly bombarded by religious lessons steeped in the language of Calvinism and its accompanying doctrine of original sin. In particular, these principles are reflected in adult attitudes toward children. At the Christmas dinner table,

Mrs. Hubble shook her head, and contemplating me with a mounting presentiment that I should come to no good, asked, "Why is it that the young are never grateful?" This moral mystery seemed too much for the company until Mr. Hubble tersely solved it by saying, "Naterally wicious." Everybody then murmured "True!" and looked at me in a particularly unpleasant and personal manner. (*GE* 26)

Not only do the adults assume that Pip will "come to no good," but they express a belief that all children are naturally wicked. The grown-ups continue to impart distorted moral lessons to Pip throughout the meal, rendering the boy quite self conscious about his own "wicious" nature and further disturbed by a mounting sense of guilt for his previous crimes.

Moreover, the above passage underscores a significant dilemma for both orphans: adults continually demand that the children show gratitude for their current position. This insistence on the benefactor/beneficiary relationship is crucial in establishing the children's complete dependence upon grown ups, despite the adults' cruelty and abuse. In *Jane Eyre*, both Mr. Brocklehurst and the apothecary Mr. Lloyd suggest that Jane ought be grateful to her "excellent benefactress," Mrs. Reed, for her comfortable situation. Jane, on the other hand, feels utter revulsion at the term: "they all call Mrs. Reed my benefactress; if so, a benefactress is a disagreeable thing" (*JE* 32). However, in her position of subordination, there is little that Jane can do to prevent the abuses that her inferior status naturally permits. Like Jane, Pip is continually told that he must be grateful to his sister for raising him "by hand." Mr.

Pumblechook, among others, commands, “be grateful, boy, to them which brought you up by hand” (*GE* 26). Despite the comedy of Pumblechook as a source for moral wisdom, Pip’s dependence upon adults cannot be denied. In this way, Jane and Pip’s often hostile relationships with the adult world are complicated by their absolute reliance upon adult provisions. Not only do the children receive constant reminders of their own wicked nature and the prospect of eternal punishment, but they are also repeatedly made aware of their subjection in the face of adult power.

Indeed, adult power through religion often grants authority for the abuse—both physical and mental—of the children. In their early years, Jane and Pip must endure the inescapable influence of “bad mother” figures like Mrs. Reed and Pip’s sister, Mrs. Joe. In every possible aspect, these cruel guardians contradict the vision of the nurturing and protective “good mother” that the orphans desperately seek. Mrs. Reed commands the servants to “Take [Jane] away to the red-room, and lock her in there. Four hands were immediately laid upon me, and I was borne upstairs” (*JE* 11). Although somewhat diffused by the detached “hands” that execute the orders, the violence of Jane’s removal is clear.²¹ Bessie and Abbot even begin to tie her up, before the little girl’s objections are finally heeded. Mrs. Reed sanctions additional physical abuse, by allowing the intense cruelty and unregulated violence of John Reed to go unpunished; indeed, it is completely overlooked. The tyrannical fourteen-year-old strikes Jane unmercifully and even knocks her down by flinging a book at her head (*JE* 11). However, in such instances, “Mrs. Reed was blind and deaf on the subject: she never saw him strike or heard him abuse me; though he did both now and then in her very presence” (10). In this way, the “bad mother” demonstrates an inability

²¹ Mary Galbraith, “Subjectivity in the novel: A phenomenological and linguistic approach to the narration of childhood self,” diss., State University of New York at Buffalo, 1990, 143. Hereafter cited in the text as “MGD.”

or an unwillingness to set appropriate boundaries; she places unnecessary restrictions on young Jane, while giving dangerously free reign to her own abusive son. Pip, too, has grown up in a world of adult abuse. At home, the boy receives persistent threats of physical violence from his sister. Pip relates that Mrs. Joe often used an instrument called Tickler to reprimand the boy for his faults: "Tickler was a wax-ended piece of cane, worn smooth by collision with my tickled frame" (*GE* 13). Moreover, Mrs. Joe forces Tar-water, a supposed "restorative," down the child's throat as a form of punishment, holding "my head under her arm, as a boot would be held in a boot jack" (16). Far from receiving love and support from Mrs. Joe, Pip is continually reprimanded and threatened by his sister for even the slightest offenses.

Far worse than the children's physical punishment, however, is the mental anguish that they are forced to endure. As Jane reflects amid the silence of the red-room, "I felt physically weak and broken down; but my worst ailment was an unutterable wretchedness of mind" (*JE* 20). Bad mothers heighten the children's fear, by enforcing psychological punishment that imposes upon them a belief in their own depravity, as well as a wracking sense of conscience. In retrospect, Jane reflects: "Yes, Mrs. Reed, to you I owe some fearful pangs of mental suffering" (20). Specifically, Jane justifies her hatred of Mrs. Reed by explaining the woman's habitual practice of wounding the child "cruelly" with her words (33). Reminded daily of her own inferiority and "deceitful" nature, Jane's mind becomes tormented by the belief that, quite possibly, she *is* a naughty child. She experiences "humiliation, self-doubt, [and] forlorn depression," worrying, "All said I was wicked, and perhaps I might be so" (16).

Whereas young Jane's mental anguish is primarily imposed by external sources, Pip is largely tormented by the inner pangs of his ever-deliberating conscience—a clear

consequence of the adult-dominated and religion-conscious world into which he has been socialized. When Pip is caught one night by an escaped convict, still in chains, the boy is forced to steal from Joe and his sister, for fear of losing his life. Thus, Pip has a valid reason to feel guilty (he actually takes Joe's file and some food at the command of the criminal), yet the true source of his fear lies in the prospect of adult disbelief and punishment. Perhaps to deflect or diffuse the child's guilt and inner agony, the narrator Pip utilizes humor to express his worries through a series of amusing personifications. As the boy leaves his house to deliver the stolen goods, he envisions "every board upon the way, and every crack in every board, calling after me, 'Stop, thief!' and 'Get up, Mrs. Joe!'" (GE 18). Despite the comic tone of this personification, Pip is genuinely afraid, caught between two fears—the convict and Mrs. Joe. Later, a similar phenomenon occurs as he crosses the marshes:

One black ox, with a white cravat on—who even had to my awakened conscience something of a clerical air—fixed upon me so obstinately with his eyes, and moved his blunt head round in such an accusatory manner...that I blubbered out to him, "I couldn't help it, sir! It wasn't for myself I took it!" (19)

Here, in particular, the influence of adult religious teachings is apparent; the child's guilt-ridden mind perceives figures of spiritual authority wherever he goes. Thus, even in a herd of harmless oxen, he senses the "clerical air" and "accusatory manner" of adult religious power. Moreover, Pip even personifies the conscience itself. When he returns from his second encounter with the convict, he notes, "'And where the deuce ha' *you* been?' was Mrs. Joe's Christmas salutation, when I and my conscience showed ourselves" (23). Evidently, the boy's conscience has grown to such a proportion that it has actually taken on a personality of its own. Moreover, the very fact that Pip *separates* himself from his guilty conscience

indicates the extent of his inner torment. The child must utilize a defense mechanism to cope, splitting from his bad/guilty conscience, in order to continue regarding *himself* as a good boy. In spite of the wry humor of such descriptions, it is evident that Pip's mental state is powerfully influenced by the stirrings of his conscience. Thus, in *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*, the adult world bestows upon the child a legacy of maltreatment, torment, and terror. It is little wonder that these children experience significant difficulty in expressing their fears and emotions to adults.

Undoubtedly, both children's fears remain enigmatic or misunderstood among adults. However, significant differences arise between Jane and Pip's encounters with adults and the nature of the resulting concealment. The secrecy surrounding Jane's fear occurs, not from any deliberate acts of concealment, but from a reigning adult incredulity and willful disbelief. Pip, on the other hand, anticipates the skepticism of adults and intentionally conceals his fearful experiences. Therefore, underlying each child's concealment of fear exists the additional fear of not being believed. Young Jane and Pip are convinced that their accounts will be deemed false by grown-ups, and indeed, their anxieties are not unfounded. In fact, both are reprimanded for lying (even, as in Jane's case, when the accusations are unsubstantiated), thus setting a precedent that renders the children ever more fearful of revealing their emotions to their adult guardians.

In most instances, Jane does not directly attempt to conceal her fear from adults. In fact, she tries, on several occasions, to tell adults about the terrors that plague her. Locked in the red-room, the terrified Jane shrieks out for help, but the girl receives little comfort. When she begs to be removed, crying, "Oh! I saw a light, and thought a ghost would come" (*JE* 17), she is immediately doubted and rebuked: "'She has screamed out on purpose,' declared

Abbot in some disgust.... '[S]he only wanted to bring us all here: I know her naughty tricks'" (17). Jane is at once painted as a mischievous and duplicitous child, simply for her artless—and instinctive—reaction to a fearful experience. Moreover, when Jane attempts to describe her distress to her Aunt Reed, the cruel woman immediately silences her. As Jane explains, "I was a precocious actress in her eyes: she sincerely looked on me as a compound of virulent passions, mean spirit, and dangerous duplicity" (18). Through this negation and neglect of the child's fears, the truth of Jane's experience remains locked within her, ever mysterious to the adult world. This attitude of adult incredulity occurs with sympathetic, as well as unsympathetic, figures. Even when the kind apothecary Mr. Lloyd questions Jane about her reaction to the red-room, her fear is not treated with the seriousness it warrants. Mr. Lloyd dismisses her dread of evil spirits as mere childishness, exclaiming "Ghost! What, you are a baby after all! You are afraid of ghosts?" (23). Thus, the secrecy of Jane's fears and emotions lies in the fact that she is *not believed* or *not taken seriously* by adults. The child's terror is either disregarded as an atrocious lie, or marginalized as a childish overreaction.

In this environment, it is not surprising that Jane is a timid and emotionally secretive little girl who has developed a preference for remaining aloof from her relations. At the outset of the novel, the narrator reveals young Jane's curious act of concealing *herself* from the adult world, by hiding away in the window seat: "having drawn the red moreen curtain near close, I was shrined in double retirement" (*JE* 8). With this description, Jane ascribes a sense of religious serenity to her enclosure, which directly counteracts the religious severity of adult spaces. However, among adults, such tendencies toward secrecy become equated with deception in children. Indeed, Abbot notes, "She's an underhand little thing: I never saw a girl of her age with so much cover" (12). Although Jane's passionate nature does not allow

her to remain silent, the child's efforts to express her emotions do little to remove the doubt and suspicion of adults. Consequently, she is caught in an impossible situation: if she openly expresses her fears, she will not be believed; if she conceals them, she will be accused of exhibiting "cover," of being deceptive.

Pip, on the other hand, anticipates adult misapprehension and makes a deliberate decision to conceal from adults the truth of his fearful experiences. The reader learns much about the boy's thoughts, because he often debates within himself whether or not to reveal his frightening encounter with the convict. He ponders issues of conscience, contemplating the prospect of adult disbelief or censure. Soon after the episode on the marshes, Pip reflects:

It was much upon my mind...that I ought to tell Joe the whole truth. Yet I did not, and for the reason that I mistrusted that if I did, he would think me worse than I was. The fear of losing Joe's confidence, and of thenceforth sitting in the chimney corner at night staring drearily at my for ever lost companion and friend, tied up my tongue. (*GE* 36-37)

This poignant description attests to the child's exaggerated fears about the loss of his only friend. Pip worries that Joe "would think me worse than I was," echoing Jane's similar anxieties that Mrs. Reed's words to Brocklehurst "transform" her "into an artful, noxious child" (*JE* 34). Both children fear to be branded by adults as bad children. However, Pip's desire to be regarded by Joe as a good child is especially fervent, because of the great love and admiration he feels for his companion. Thus, while the fear and guilt of Pip's criminal encounter provide the initial framework for his concealment, it is the fear of appearing naughty before his closest adult ally that *keeps* him silent. Reflecting upon his childhood course of action, the narrator Pip asserts, "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” (*GE* 37). This inner conflict resonates with the language of Sarah Stickney Ellis and her discussion of “moral courageousness.” Much like Stickney Ellis’s frightened schoolchild, who “endeavors to conceal its transgressions” (*SSE* 62), so, too, is Pip afraid to reveal the truth. Pip’s “moral cowardliness,” driven by his “fear of losing Joe’s confidence,” reflects another critical childhood worry, one that is also experienced by Jane: the prospect of adult disbelief.

Pip is certain that he will not be believed, and he receives ample evidence from the adult world to support this assumption. Unlike Jane, who is reprimanded for telling the truth, Pip is actually guilty of lying once in the past. This previous lie arises out of an abusive adult interrogation, following the boy’s first visit to the wealthy recluse, Miss Havisham. Mostly to escape Pumblechook’s ruthlessness bullying, Pip invents a myriad of fantastical descriptions about the nature of Miss Havisham’s home and lifestyle. He tells of eating cake with Estella on golden plates and describes four great dogs fighting for “veal cutlets out of a silver basket,” in addition to many other fabrications of a similar nature (*GE* 57). Nonetheless, it is important to note that Pip’s falsehoods are induced, significantly, by an apprehension that he would not be believed if he told the truth:

If a dread of not being understood be hidden in the breasts of other young people to anything like the extent to which it used to be hidden in mine...it is the key to many reservations. I felt convinced that if I described Miss Havisham’s as my eyes had seen it, I should not be understood. (56)

Thus, the lies that Pip tells stem precisely from a fear of adult misunderstanding. However, the boy’s reasonable motives for lying are not articulated or taken into consideration when the fib is discovered. When Pip’s guilt compels him to admit his falsehoods, even Joe (who is

arguably the most sympathetic adult figure in the novel) admonishes the boy for his lies. As Joe states plainly, “lies is lies. Howsever they come, they didn’t ought to come, and they come from the father of lies, and work round to the same. Don’t you tell no more of ‘em, Pip” (59). Thus, although Joe’s words are sincerely meant to improve and teach the child, even he employs the typical religious imagery associated with the adult world, by evoking the dangerous influence of the Devil.

Like Jane, Pip’s history of adult reprimands for lying affects his ability to reveal the truth of his fear. Later in Volume I, when Mrs. Joe is assaulted and officials identify the weapon as a convict’s leg-iron, Pip is overwhelmed by guilt. However, he is still afraid to tell of his fearsome encounter with the escaped convict, once again maintaining that he will not be believed. He explains,

In addition to the dread that, having led up to so much mischief, it would be now more likely than ever to alienate Joe from me if he believed it, I had the further restraining dread that he would not believe it, but would assort it with the fabulous dogs and veal cutlets as a monstrous invention. (*GE* 97)

Thus, the boy’s previous lie makes the truth harder to reveal, just as Sarah Stickney Ellis warns. In this respect, Pip’s experience with secrecy and the prospect of adult disbelief appears to follow a cyclical pattern. His concealment arises out of a fear that he will not be believed, and his subsequent lies establish a precedent of adult disbelief of which he is ever more fearful. Moreover, the earlier portion of this passage vividly illustrates Pip’s additional difficulties in revealing his fears to adults. Describing his childhood concealment as a kind of inescapable enchantment, Pip’s words illustrate the barrier to understanding that exists between the world of adults and the world of children. As Pip relates,

I suffered unspeakable trouble while I considered and reconsidered whether I should at last dissolve that spell of my childhood, and tell Joe all the story.... I every day settled the question finally in the negative, and reopened and reargued it the next morning. The contention came, after all, to this;—the secret was such an old one now, had grown into me and become a part of myself, that I could not tear it away. (97)

With Dickens' beautifully phrased descriptor, "that spell of my childhood," Pip evokes wonderfully the enigmatic world of childhood, which seems hidden, as if by a magic spell, from the understanding of adults. Moreover, Pip calls attention to the way in which his secret has evolved with him to become an intimate part of his existence. This act of "growing into" and "becoming a part of" one's own self attests to the tremendous power of childhood secrecy. Martineau observes a similar force in her own childhood concealment of terror, which she describes how obstinately she concealed her own "hidden passion of fear" (HM 59). Thus, Pip's ability to reveal his emotions is further complicated by the powerful enchantment and intimacy of his secret.

For Jane and Pip, the sad outcome of this process of youthful concealment, adult disbelief, and harsh reprimand is a vicious circle of fear. The children experience terrifying situations, but they remain afraid to reveal their fear in the face of the dominant adult power. As a result, they are accused of lying and are accordingly admonished by unloving adults. Predictably, these harsh and mistaken adult reactions only render the children *more* afraid, thus creating additional fear to be concealed in tormented secrecy. Consequently, the children attempt to suppress their emotional reactions even more as their dread of adult wrath and judgment grows.

For the child, expressing fear becomes an additional source of terror, due to the prospect of adult disbelief and censure. Amidst harsh and overbearing guardians, the lives of young Jane and Pip become dominated by fear, although their emotions remain apart from adult understanding. However, the powerful “spell” surrounding childhood fear is, at last, broken. Tapping into former abuses, in much the same way that Brontë and Dickens themselves draw from personal experience, the adult narrators uncover the secretive and rather mysterious inner world of children. Thus, having suffered at the hands of unsupportive and uncaring adults, the grown narrators seek not to obscure and misinterpret the child’s perspective, but to reveal it, by re-entering the realm of their childhood experience.

Section III: The Interior World of the Child: Linguistic Concealment

Jane and Pip's frightening encounters amidst adult society suggest the mysterious and complicated nature of the child's interior world—a world that is inscrutable to both old and young. Fear compels the children to hide their inner emotions, including their terror, from grown-ups. However, the children's fear-driven secrecy, while outwardly manifest in their concealment from adults, actually begins with an inward concealment from themselves. This suppression is achieved through figurative language. In moments of terror, the children Jane and Pip employ figures of speech to describe their perceptions, seemingly as a mode of linguistic self-protection. Whereas figurative language is generally thought to *add* emotional intensity through striking comparisons, the children's figures of speech in *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations* actually appear to *lessen* and conceal the terror of their frightening situations, thus providing an unusual refuge from their fears. Terrifying circumstances are rendered more innocuous when the child expresses these experiences through metaphor, simile, or personification. Moreover, the children's figurative language also serves to separate them from their fear, by comparing each youth to something alien—a stranger distinct from him/herself. In this way, Jane and Pip's language distances themselves from their own terrified selves.

Before examining instances of distance, however, it is necessary to address issues of proximity in *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*. Both Brontë and Dickens establish a striking closeness between the textual children and their respective narrators and readers, an intimacy largely attributable to the novels' use of first-person narration. In order to explore the realm of childhood, the authors, through their fictional narrators, often directly enter into the child's point of view to tell the story through the child's eyes. In this way, the narrators'

retrospection takes on the immediacy of lived childhood. As Kathleen Tillotson notes, “Jane keeps no journal and writes no letters; she simply re-enters her experience, and even the vision of herself as retrospective recorder is rare and delicately timed.... Truth to immediate experience extends to minutest detail.”²² Such immediacy is apparent in Jane’s terrified and choppy description of her fright in the red-room: “My heart beat thick, my head grew hot; a sound filled my ears, which I deemed the rushing of wings: something seemed near me; I was oppressed, suffocated: endurance broke down—I uttered a wild, involuntary cry” (*JE* 17). Here, the narrator’s broken phrasing and syntactical structure seem to suggest that Jane is actually reliving the anxiety of the red-room experience through the process of writing her story. In *Great Expectations*, too, a significant number of moments involve the narrator’s direct identification with and transference to the child’s consciousness. With all the nearness of child-like imagination, Pip recalls watching the convict walk away from him, “limping on towards [the gibbet], as if he were the pirate come to life.... It gave me such a terrible turn when I thought so; and as I saw the cattle lifting their heads to gaze after him, I wondered whether they thought so too” (*GE* 12). Thus, in the special cases of *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*, the already intimate connection between the narrators and their younger selves becomes even closer, as the distinction between past and present is temporarily collapsed.

Additionally, this immediacy enhances the experience of the reader, who also enters into the child’s perceptual and emotional world. As fellow Victorian, Sydney Dobell, proclaimed in 1850,

Who that remembers early childhood, can read without emotion the little Jane Eyre’s night journey to Lowood? How finely, yet how unconsciously, are

²² Kathleen Tillotson, *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 297-8. Hereafter cited in the text.

those peculiar aspects of things which cease with childhood developed in this simple history! ... Is there not something awful in these 'I's' and 'me's'?

They go about the page with a kind of veiled divinity.²³

Here, the writer highlights the tremendous strength—and even “divinity”—of the first-person narrative technique and its impact on readers. As Dobell’s words illustrate, readers have identified with Bronte’s novel from its inception. The child-like awe that is apparent in Jane’s narration seems to draw us not only into the world of “little Jane,” but also into our own memories and experiences of childhood. Dobell, like so many others, has clearly discovered a personal connection to the textual child, and his description vividly demonstrates the power of entering a work of fiction.

Mary Galbraith discusses this literary “theme of ‘entering into,’” both with respect to the reader’s engagement with a text, and to the narrator’s connection to his/her subjects (MGD iv). In her dissertation, she illustrates this immediacy by drawing a comparison between the moments in which the children themselves first “enter into” their fearful episodes. The parallel begins with Jane’s reflections from her concealed window-seat: “I feared nothing but interruption, and that came too soon. The breakfast door opened. ‘Boh! Madame Mope!’ cried the voice of John Reed” (*JE* 9). This abrupt disturbance resembles Pip’s experience at the opening of Chapter One. In this instance, the convict alarms the young boy—and the reader—when he disrupts Pip’s solitary reflections by shouting, “Hold your noise!” (*GE* 10). As Galbraith notes:

In both cases, a young, lonely orphan is lost in extended contemplation of a landscape.... In both stories, a rough intruder bursts in upon the child’s private

²³ Sydney Dobell, *The Palladium* (September 1850); cited in Kathleen Tillotson, *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 299.

world.... The interruption comes from a loud voice, indicating that the person was heard before he was seen, and showing the channel of interruptions; sounds can be modulated to break into the child's reveries, since the child cannot close off his/her ears from contact with the world. (MGD 125)

Galbraith's analysis of this initiation into terror features many elements that reflect the immediacy of the novels' depictions. First, the readers, with the narrator, are given direct access to the child's perception. As the child enters into his/her fearful encounter, the readers enter into the child's consciousness. We hear the "loud" register of the intruder's voice; we note the sequence of sensory events (hearing before seeing); and we are made aware of the child's perpetual auditory intrusion (due to an inability to "close off his/her ears from contact with the world"). Here, the focus is two-fold, encompassing both the subjectivity of the child and the ways in which readers interact with him/her. Moreover, the critic treats the child as a separate entity, by describing and delineating the "young, lonely orphan" in terms that cannot logically be attributed to the adult narrators. This treatment, which will be adopted throughout this section of the thesis, allows one to "extract" moments of re-entered childhood trauma (which equate to the child's direct perception) from moments of distanced adult commentary. The narrator re-experiences his/her childhood through the child and therefore, *becomes* the child in an important sense.

This section of my thesis will examine such moments of childhood fear, in which each narrator appears to re-enter his/her childhood self. In such instances, the narrator refrains from imposing adult viewpoints and/or hindsight reflections on the situation, and the tense is predominantly the "just-after-present" (Tillotson 298). The narrating adult merges with the child's consciousness to exist as one single being (the narrator-as-child, or simply, the child).

This type of merging occurs in such passages as Pip's frightened dialogue with the convict, which begins with a direct entreaty: "'O! Don't cut my throat, sir,' I pleaded in terror. 'Pray don't do it, sir'" (*GE* 10). Indeed, large segments of this dialogue could be easily attributed to an instantaneous first-person narrator, rather than a retrospective one. Therefore, references to Jane or Pip will allude to the *child* Jane and the *child* Pip in this section, unless otherwise stated. This assumption is largely possible because of the authors' skillful establishment of immediacy, through compelling renderings of the child's perception.

The perceptual experience of the child, especially in moments of terror, is crucial to the definition of figurative language that will be used throughout this section. Paradoxically, the use of figurative language (usually considered in opposition to the literal) actually implies a literalized perception on the part of the child. The author allows the narrator to enter into the child's direct perception, and the child's sensations appear as figurative language when reported by the narrator-as-child. In this way, Pip's literal [sensory] perception that "the church jumped over its own weather-cock" is expressed as the personification of an inanimate church (*GE* 11). The young Pip literally sees the church jump, perceiving himself to be stationary as the world turns around him. However, when expressed in writing (by the child/narrator), this literal description takes on qualities of the figurative, redefining the situation in language that personifies. A similar phenomenon occurs when Jane fearfully descends the stairs to encounter "a black pillar" (*JE* 31), rather than the person of Mr. Brocklehurst. Indeed, Jane's surprisingly apt metaphor results from her initial perception of the grave, black object before her. To Jane's young eye, the imposing figure is literally a dark column, until she is able to establish its true identity through additional perceptual cues. Such descriptions lend humor and poignancy to the children's fearful experiences. Significantly, in

both examples, figurative language functions by renaming the circumstances of the child's terror, thus mediating between the child and the terrifying situation. Ultimately, Jane and Pip's use of figurative language serves two primary purposes: it renders certain situations less harmful by concealing the most frightening aspects from the child, and it distances the children from their terrified selves, and thus, from their own fear.

In order to conceal from herself the frightening reality of her circumstances, Jane envisions "a black pillar" in the place of a man, when the intimidating Mr. Brocklehurst comes to visit Gateshead. The narrative build-up to this encounter establishes the fear that Jane feels at the moment of his arrival. Jane's harsh benefactress, Mrs. Reed, summons the timid ten-year-old downstairs to meet the man in the breakfast-room. Terrified, the little girl descends and stands "ten minutes...in agitated hesitation," before finally entering the breakfast-room:

The handle turned, the door unclosed, and passing through and curtsying low, I looked up at—a black pillar!—such, at least, appeared to me, at first sight, the straight, narrow, sable-clad shape standing erect on the rug: the grim face at the top was like a carved mask, placed above the shaft by way of capital. (*JE* 31)

Here, the narrator Jane Eyre briefly explains the phenomenon of the child Jane's literal perception with "such, at least, appeared to me, at first sight." After entering directly into the child's eyes, she steps back for a brief moment to attest to the power of the child's initial sensory image, before resuming in the child's own voice. The remainder of the description appears to come from the child's direct vision, elaborating upon the image of the man as a black pillar. Jane extends this powerful metaphor, lending additional attributes to her perception. The object before her is also a "straight," "narrow," and "sable-clad *shape*," an

indication that it is still not quite a man in her eyes (31, italics mine). Young Jane even employs additional figurative language in a simile, comparing the object's "grim face" (whether or not she recognizes it to be a man) to "a carved mask."

Some critics have argued that this pillar image creates a *more* frightening reality for the child. In their influential text, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar note the phallic imagery in Jane's description of Mr. Brocklehurst, suggesting that such a vision would induce additional fear in any timid and innocent Victorian girl who has been taught to fear "the adult male animal."²⁴ However, I would argue that this figure of speech actually *diminishes* the power of the frightening man, by concealing his intimidating and animalistic qualities. The vision of a "pillar" (a mere "shape") renames as inanimate the man who will later instill additional fear into Jane's heart through both his physical appearance and his harsh and unfair judgment. Jane sees Mr. Brocklehurst's countenance as a "mask," an inanimate disguise obscuring the reality of the frightening creature beneath. In fact, when he bends to the level of her face, the true nature of the imposing man is even more frightening for young Jane. Internally, she exclaims, "What a face he had, now that it was almost on a level with mine! what a great nose! and what a mouth! and what large prominent teeth!" (*JE* 32). This astonished, terror-induced description is highly reminiscent of Little Red Riding Hood's queries to the wolf in Grimm's fairy tales (Gilbert & Gubar 344). Therefore, the man takes on the even more terrifying characteristics of a horrible beast when Jane can no longer conceal his authenticity through metaphor. The initial image of a mask thus seems reassuringly harmless by comparison.

²⁴ Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 344. Hereafter cited in the text.

Moreover, the child's figurative language serves to de-humanize the figure before her, thereby removing the man's power and authority over her. Undoubtedly, Mr. Brocklehurst has considerable control over Jane, not only (as she perceives) over her prospects, but also over her state of mind and mental peace. From the Gateshead encounter onward, Jane lives in extreme fear of Mr. Brocklehurst and his influence upon her future. Jane reflects, "All along I had been dreading the fulfillment of this promise,—I had been looking out daily for the "Coming Man," whose information respecting my past life...was to brand me as a bad child forever" (*JE* 61). The religious imagery of this description reveals that the man's arrival represents Jane's utmost horror. Clearly, the thought of being "branded" as an outcast is an especially frightening possibility for a "poor orphan child," who has entered life already marginalized, with few, if any, viable prospects. Moreover, as mentioned in Section I of this thesis, Mr. Brocklehurst claims to know of the state of her immortal soul and condemns her as a liar, suggesting her imminent dismissal to Hell. An inanimate "black pillar," on the other hand, has no such power to humiliate, to judge, or to damn. Thus, Jane's metaphoric representation of Brocklehurst provides an intermediate, screening image between the child and the terrifying figure of authority. Her language serves a fiercely protective function, denying—and distancing the child from—the frightening reality before her.

At school, Jane's fear of the man continues, as do her figurative references to Mr. Brocklehurst's pillar-like qualities. Jane portrays his arrival: "A long stride measured the school-room, and presently beside Miss Temple, who herself had risen, stood the same black column which had frowned on me so ominously from the hearth-rug of Gateshead. I now glanced sideways at this piece of architecture" (*JE* 61). In this comic rendering of Mr. Brocklehurst's pompous and grandiose air, the child personifies a column (who "frowned"

down upon her) that is actually a human being. Even though Jane realizes that he is a living man, she continues to refer to Mr. Brocklehurst with de-animating, dehumanizing terms, thus illustrating the child's persistent tendency to conceal from herself his fearful nature.

Furthermore, her designation of him as a "piece of architecture" continues to minimize the power of the frightening figure through deflationary humor. The comedy here lies in the tension created between the high and the low, between the seemingly great power in a "piece of architecture" or in Mr. Brocklehurst himself, and their actual impotence. By initially representing him as grandiose and immense, the obvious exaggeration in Jane's portrayal destroys his pretensions to monumental status, reducing him to a humorously inanimate, and essentially powerless, figure. Thus, Jane not only conceals Mr. Brocklehurst's influence, but she actually *transforms* him into an object with *no* influence over her life—physically imposing, but entirely impotent. Thus, the child protects herself from terror both by hiding the fearful truth, as well as by metaphorically inventing a less frightening reality.

Pip, too, employs language to protect himself from his terrifying encounters.

Although the narrator's voice regularly intervenes in the early part of Chapter One, the child's perception is apparent throughout. The chapter begins with Pip's vision of the dreary landscape and the tombs of his dead family members. Dickens establishes the orphan's vulnerability and isolation from the outset, as the narrator Pip describes his childhood beliefs about his parents, derived rather poignantly from their gravestones. For example, "The shape of the letters on my father's [tombstone], gave me an odd idea that he was a square, stout, dark man with curly black hair. From the turn and character of the inscription '*Also Georgiana Wife of the Above*,' I drew a childish conclusion that my mother was freckled and sickly" (GE 9). Pip's act of making the tombstones *into* his parents reflects his desire for love

and protection. The child's attempt at ascribing human attributes to inanimate headstones evokes a nearness to his departed relatives, thereby concealing the reality that Pip is alone and afraid. Thus, Pip attempts to manage his isolation by searching for nurturing, caring family members, even amidst the melancholy tombstones. Moreover, when asked to locate his mother, the child unknowingly creates a metaphor by referring to a gravestone. When the convict questions, "Where's your mother?," Pip points to the woman's tombstone:

"There sir!" said I.

He started, made a short run, and stopped and looked over his shoulder.

"There, sir!" I timidly explained. "Also Georgiana. That's my mother." (10)

Here, the child directly associates the tombstone with his flesh-and-blood mother, so much so that his listener initially expects to see a living human being or, perhaps, a ghost. Startled, the convict turns and begins to run away, before realizing that the child has pointed at an inanimate headstone. Thus, while the tombstone does not ultimately protect the frightened child from his attacker, the convict is momentarily frightened away by this invocation. More important, however, is the *psychological* protection that this association provides. Pip himself feels a closeness to his deceased mother through this figurative correlation, thus providing a real, if only fragile or fleeting, sense of security and nurturance. As Galbraith notes, "The nearness of the stones, both in actual proximity and in felt connection, to the bodies of his kin creates the only family intimacy Pip can have."²⁵ On the other hand, there is an undeniable physical and spiritual distance created between Pip and "Also Georgiana." The gravestone's appellation indicates the woman's marginal status, both in relation to the male, father figure and as an influence in Pip's life. The two cheerless words represent all that this young boy

²⁵ Mary Galbraith, "Pip as 'Infant Tongue' and as Adult Narrator in Chapter One of *Great Expectations*," *Infant Tongues: The Voice of the Child in Literature*, ed. Elizabeth Goodenough, et. al. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994), 126. Hereafter cited in the text as "MG."

will ever know of his true maternal figure. Pip's search for a "good mother" begins here, in the lonely graveyard, with Dickens's illustration of the painful distance between the child and his deceased mother, as well as the boy's attempts to conceal metaphorically the fearful isolation that characterizes his existence.

When the escaping convict (later identified as Magwitch) flips Pip upside-down, the child again resorts to figurative language to describe his sensations. Wrested from his solitary contemplation of the landscape, the boy is suddenly threatened and assaulted by a fearsome stranger. Young Pip is "turned...upside-down" twice in the span of only two pages. As he relates of the first instance, "When the church came to itself—for he was so sudden and strong that he made it go head over heels before me, and I saw the steeple under my legs—when the church came to itself, I say, I was seated on a high tombstone, trembling" (*GE* 10). Although not explicitly figurative language, this first instance of flipping does suggest the personification of the church, which is moving ("coming to itself") in relation to the seemingly still Pip. Moreover, while aspects of this narrative render the situation more frightening, by attributing a great deal of power to the assaulting convict, the perception of the church's movement actually conceals a degree of the child's fear, by separating the boy from the violent external movement.

The later, more directly figurative reference to this phenomenon does not require as much narratorial explanation. Thanks to the child's earlier testimony, the readers clearly understand the upside-down motion implied in Pip's description: "He gave me a most tremendous dip and roll, so that the church jumped over its own weathercock" (*GE* 11). Here, as observed earlier, the church is personified—the product of the child's figurative explanation of a literal perception. The jumping movement of the church is clearly at odds

with one's expectations of a church's behavior. Contrary to the notion of an immobile church, Pip positions his own body as the central, stationary point of reference, around which the church—and all other figures of the landscape—are perceived to move (MG 133). The fearful nature of Pip's situation is therefore dissipated as something outside of and apart from the child. Moreover, this figurative image locates the child at the calm center of a swirling storm, in a place of safety amidst a chaotic world. Pip especially needs this sense of stillness and tranquility, as this is clearly a moment of great fear and potential danger. He introduces this flipping motion by explaining, "I was dreadfully frightened, and so giddy that I clung to him with both hands" (GE 11). This image of "clinging" recalls Pip's earlier act of holding "tighter to the tombstone on which he had put me; partly to keep myself upon it; partly to keep myself from crying" (10). In this world-altering moment of fear, the child clings to anything believed to be stationary, unmoving, unchanging. He grasps, not only for the convict and the headstone, but also for the notion that he, himself, is stationary and unchanging. By perceiving the church jumping, Pip is able to achieve a sense of stability with respect to his own life—an understandable desire, in light of his precarious position as a lonely orphan child.

Another compelling instance of concealment through figurative language occurs early in Chapter One, when Pip recalls "a memorable raw afternoon towards evening," in which he obtains some of the earliest impressions of his environment:

At such a time I found out for certain, that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard...and that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond, was the

river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea; and that the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip. (GE 9-10)

Although clearly a retrospective reflection, “the child’s own perception is not subordinated to the narrator’s commentary” in this passage (MG 127). In fact, the child’s perception dominates this sentence, as young Pip struggles to gain an understanding of his world. The very structure of the sentence itself, with its long, run-on descriptions, is effective stylistically in evoking the troubled and erratic mind of a very young child. The boy also appears quite small in comparison to the vastness of the precisely detailed landscape before him; indeed, he is represented simply as “was Pip” amidst a sea of expressive clauses. More significant, however, is the passage’s use of various “equivalences” (MG 127). These comparisons, while consciously drawn, appear to function as metaphors by renaming and redirecting the child’s frightening perceptions. With this technique, the actual perception of a “bleak place overgrown with nettles” is given the reassuring name of “churchyard;” the “dark flat wilderness” is harmlessly deemed “the marshes;” and the frightening image of a “distant savage lair” is diffused with a more comforting designation, “the sea.” Even the attributes of fear associated with the child himself (“shivers,” “afraid,” “cry”) are reassigned as “Pip” (MG 127). Therefore, the “reassuring” words rename the frightening reality of Pip’s experiences, concealing the fearful truth in much the same way as the church’s bizarre motion or Jane’s inanimate black pillar. Furthermore, this last metaphor, Pip as a bundle of shivers, illustrates another important function of the children’s figurative language: to effect an internal separation from source of their terror.

In order to conceal their fear, the children distance themselves from the vessels of their fear, their own selves. In such instances, the figure of speech renames the child, thus creating a separate entity. Therefore, Jane and Pip's fears become disembodied; they are no longer an attribute of their *own* experience, but that of the distanced being. With Pip's self-ascribed designation, "the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry was Pip" (GE 9-10), the child appears to align himself with the vessel of his fear, the bundle. Yet, paradoxically, in drawing a metaphoric comparison between himself and the assembly of shivers, Pip actually effects a separation from himself. The fearful bundle remains Pip's "*actual perception*" of the experience, while "Pip" (the child's personal identifier) provides the "*reassuring name*" that conceals the source of the boy's fear (MG 127). Through this comparison, the child reminds himself that he is *Pip*, a human child, and not merely a collection of fearful tremblings. Pip's own name is a source of strength, a distancing mechanism that helps to protect the child from the realization of his own fear. Thus, although Pip acknowledges—and even assigns—this comparison, the fearful attributes of the metaphor ("shivers," "afraid," "cry") are nonetheless assigned to a separate entity, the bundle, and remain explicitly separate from the child himself.

In Jane's case, this separation is even more fully realized. During her fearful confinement in the red-room, Jane catches a glimpse of herself in the mirror. However, her words provide no indication that she recognizes herself in the reflection:

I had to cross before the looking glass; my fascinated glance involuntarily explored the depth it revealed. All looked colder and darker in that visionary hollow than in reality; and the strange little figure there gazing at me, with a white face and arms specking the gloom, and glittering eyes of fear moving

where all else was still, had the effect of a real spirit: I thought it like one of the tiny phantoms, half fairy, half imp, Bessie's evening stories represented as coming out of lone, ferny dells in moors, and appearing before the eyes of belated travelers. (*JE* 14)

In this observation, Jane's perception renders the mirror world more frightening than the real world ("colder and darker...than in reality"), even though it is a direct reflection of the child's own surroundings. This may, perhaps, represent Jane's attempts to lessen the fear of her present environment by ascribing the coldness and darkness to the alternate world within the mirror. Here, the implied metaphor compares Jane to the "strange little figure," or "real spirit," in the mirror. The intriguing separation and detailed description of body parts (arms, face, eyes) strangely dismembers this product of the fearsome "visionary hollow." Moreover, the child's description assigns the "glittering eyes of fear" to the "strange little figure" in the reflection, *not* to young Jane. The frightened eyes remain in the mirror, apart from Jane's own consciousness. Therefore, Jane's perception places this terrified creature outside herself and refuses to acknowledge her own identity in the figure of the impish being. The child (and thus, the source of her fear) becomes a stranger to herself. As Gilbert and Gubar write, "her own image floats toward her, alien and disturbing" (340). Indeed, this unwitting alienation has the effect of concealing the nearness of Jane's fear. Moreover, she extends the imagery to include an elaborate simile comparing the figure in the mirror to a small phantom. This fairy tale image of a "half fairy, half imp" lends an innocuous quality to the reflection, rendering it considerably less dangerous. Consequently, not only does Jane's language distance herself from the object of her fear, but her figures of speech also lessen the terror of the distanced, fearful body in the mirror.

Occasionally, however, the child's figurative language, which stems from his/her literal perception, actually *increases* the terror of the situation. It is precisely Jane's personification of the strange light in the red-room that heightens her fear. To the child's literalizing eyes, the light behaves like an erratic phantom upon the wall: "Was it, I asked myself, a ray from the moon...? No; moonlight was still, and this stirred: while I gazed, it glided up to the ceiling and quivered over my head.... I thought the swift-darting beam was a herald of some coming vision from another world" (*JE* 17). In this instance, the stirring, gliding, and "swift-darting" movements attributed to the light are completely at odds with how light ought to act, rendering the vision considerably more terrifying. Her figurative treatment of the light conjures up the image of an angry spirit, a thought already entertained in her mind through contemplations of the departed Mr. Reed. Jane's fears are echoed in Harriet Martineau's personal stories:

Some of my worst fears in infancy were from lights and shadows. The lamplighter's torch on a winter's afternoon...used to cast a gleam...and my blood ran cold at the sight, every day. [...] I hid my face in a chair that I might not see what was dancing on the wall.... I thought they were alive,—a sort of imps. (*HM* 63)

Here, Martineau retrospectively recognizes her childish mistake, but to the child's perception, the images seem frighteningly real, even "alive." To the reader, Pip's worry about the imposing clerical air of the cow may seem wonderfully absurd and irrational, but to the mind of a guilt-ridden child, such fears seem entirely valid.

In such cases, a type of "secrecy" arises unknowingly as a result of the child's limited understanding of his/her fearful circumstances. On these occasions, the children remain

unaware of the relative harmlessness of their seemingly terrible experiences. However, in other instances, the children's fears are entirely justified, as Jane and Pip find themselves in real danger of being mentally or physically harmed by their encounters. Indeed, while the dancing lights are clearly *not* evil spirits, Jane's underlying red-room terror, a fear of madness, is certainly legitimate. In addition, Pip's fright is quite reasonable, as he is faced with a fearsome and potentially vicious escaped convict. However, the children themselves are unable to distinguish the difference between rational and irrational fears; only the adult narrators (and the readers) are able to make this distinction. Indeed, the children's youth presupposes boundaries to their language and understanding, a significant disadvantage to the articulation of their fear. Young Jane and Pip describe what they directly perceive, but they do not always have the words or the knowledge to distinguish reality from fantasy, or to express fully their fears and anxieties. In many ways, these limitations are at the heart of their deepest fears, and Brontë and Dickens, like Martineau, recognize and address this phenomenon. In the next section, I will discuss the role of the adult narrator in explaining and justifying the child's cognitive and linguistic limitations with respect to fear.

Section IV: The Adult Narrator: Nurturing the Self

Through the adult narrators' re-visitation of their fears, the "spell" of childhood secrecy is finally broken. Jane and Pip reveal their terror, concealed for years in steadfast silence, by telling their stories, thus allowing the reader into the mind and eyes of the child. Moreover, because they narrate their *own* tales, Jane and Pip are able to offer their personal versions of their stories to a new adult audience—one that is likely to be more sympathetic than the adults of their childhood. Indeed, these narrators even have the power to *construct* a sympathetic audience through the presentation of their stories. Although critics have called attention to the limitations of a potentially "unreliable" first-person narrator,²⁶ I would argue that this perspective also offers myriad possibilities. In the cases of *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*, the narrator's "bias" is crucial in vindicating and protecting the child, who has been shunned by the adult world for supposed deception. The narration in these novels explains that concealment does not necessarily imply lying, that the children's fears are real—and even rational—in their own minds, and that the terrible injustices done to them provide justification for both their fear and their secrecy. Furthermore, the narrators expose the

²⁶ See especially James Kincaid, "Pip and Jane Recovered Memories," *Dickens Studies Annual* 25 (1996), 211-25. In his article, Kincaid argues that it is difficult to rely upon the "memory" of a first-person narrator or to trust the "accuracy" of such accounts. He aptly notes, "memory does not go fetch things. It makes things, constructs them, tells stories—the stories we need and demand. Memory is not an operation like mining but an art like making a pot or a plot. Memory is of no use in testing the accuracy of its narratives, telling us whether something happened—whatever that means" (211). I agree with these statements, but I would argue that such observations point to the strengths, not the weaknesses, of the first-person narrative mode. The fact that Jane Eyre's account of her own life will be slanted to serve her needs is precisely the point. Bias should not be viewed as an unfavorable side-effect of first-person narration. Bias is necessary, especially in *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*, in order to provide nurturance for the child, by giving Jane and Pip a voice amidst an overpowering adult world that bids them, "Hold your noise" and "remain silent." Moreover, it seems futile to seek "accuracy" (whatever that means) in Brontë and Dickens's works. Indeed, verifying the "accuracy" of such fictional accounts would be irrelevant and illogical. Such works are conscious *creations*, works of art designed specifically to influence the readers in a particular way. We receive only the information that Jane and Pip (through their respective authors) "remember" and choose to impart to us within the realm of fiction; this is the only evidence that we can examine. I therefore embrace Kincaid's notion of memory as an artistic endeavor, although I will argue for the *positive*, rather than the negative, functions of such deliberately crafted accounts.

children's cognitive and linguistic limitations as additional justification for the seeming "irrationality" of their terror. In accomplishing these tasks of vindication, defense, and protection, the narrators thus serve as supportive "parental" figures for their hitherto parentless childhood selves. However, although both Jane and Pip retrospectively nurture themselves as children, their methods vary considerably. In relating her childhood to the readers, Jane seeks to invoke intense pity for her sufferings, while Pip resorts to humor in explaining even the most frightening and painful moments of his youth. Whereas the older Jane often takes her childhood terror too seriously, the older Pip does not take it seriously enough (although, in certain instances, he faces far more dangerous situations than Jane). Therefore, throughout the narrators' vindication of the children, Jane regards her childhood self with pity that dramatizes; Pip, with humor that diminishes.

In justifying the children's terror, both narrators explain the fearful confusion and indecision that afflict young Jane and Pip. Unaware of the impending encounter with her new schoolmaster, Jane is ordered downstairs unexpectedly by her aunt. Beginning in the "now" of the child's perception, Jane expresses the terror she feels before entering the breakfast-room:

I now stood in the empty hall; before me was the breakfast-room door, and I stopped, intimidated and trembling. What a miserable little poltroon had fear, engendered of unjust punishment, made of me in those days! I feared to return to the nursery; I feared to go forward to the parlour; ten minutes I stood in agitated hesitation: the vehement ringing of the breakfast-room bell decided me; I *must* enter. (JE 31)

This description vividly presents the child's troubled state of mind. The little girl is horribly afraid, enough to prompt the intervention of the narrator, who, in a characteristically dramatic fashion, deems her younger self a "miserable little poltroon" at this moment. This technique of abruptly inserting retrospective commentary amidst the child's perceptions occurs in both *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*. Clearly, the grown narrators seek to capture the readers' attention, in order to garner sympathy for child's predicament. Here, Jane's words reveal that the girl's senses are heightened. The ordinarily harmless tinkling of a bell sounds cruelly "vehement" to her terrified ears. Standing a full "*ten minutes*" in "agitated hesitation," she is torn in two contrary directions, both of which seem frightening and potentially perilous. She inwardly debates whether she should return to a place of security (the nursery) and subsequently incur the wrath of her aunt, or venture forth into the unknown—a particularly difficult prospect for a child who has only known unkindness and mistreatment. In both structure and content, Jane's words parallel the narrator Pip's reflections on the secrecy of his early fear.²⁷ Jane's repetition of "I feared to..." mirrors Pip's recurring "I was in mortal terror of..." As in Jane's description, all of the young boy's available options are terrifying or entirely unfeasible. Just as Jane fears to go either forward or backward, Pip, too, is pulled in various directions, afraid to execute his "awful promise" to the convict, but even more terrified to disobey. Thus, both narrators present the image of a child with nowhere to turn, surrounded by fearful possibilities and tormented by the realization that s/he must choose from among them. This poignant picture serves to remove the guilt and blame from Jane and Pip, by encouraging the reader to consider the child's position. If given such dreadful (and dread-full) options, we would likely side with the frightened child.

²⁷ See page 1 of this thesis (*GE* 18).

Not only do the narrators establish the child's terrifying situation, but they also demonstrate that such fears are well founded, genuine, and even *rational* in the child's mind. Amidst the child's description of her red-room horror, the narrator Jane intervenes once again to offer an adult perspective. Jane explains,

I can now readily conjecture that this streak of light was, in all likelihood, a gleam from a lantern, carried by some one across the lawn; but then, prepared as my mind was for horror, shaken as my nerves were by agitation, I thought the swift-darting beam was a herald of some coming vision from another world. (JE 17)

This account, rendered at the very height of the child's fear, provides a calm and "rational" explanation for the light upon the wall. However, Jane also asserts that, at this particular moment, a "rational" reaction (by the standards of adults) is not possible for the little girl. To the child's eye, to the child's mind, young Jane's situation appears threatening and dangerous. Indeed, the girl is "prepared...for horror," primed to react instinctively in order to protect herself. Moreover, in the absence of additional experience and information, the child literally *sees* a "herald of some coming vision," not merely a lantern's beam. Thus, given young Jane's state of mind and limited understanding, she responds in the most reasonable way—with terror and attempted flight. While fleeing from a "herald" or another vision may not appear rational to the mind of an adult, Jane's narration insists that it is a perfectly sensible reaction for a terrified, timid, and agitated child.

The narrator Pip justifies his childhood fear in a similar way, by revealing the honest perceptions and reactions of the frightened child. One particular passage in Chapter Two, which is framed by narratorial intervention, seems structured so as to allow the reader inside the child's thought process through the narrator's retrospection. The narrator Pip opens with a

humorous reflection on the nature of conscience (a frequent topic, as earlier thesis sections have shown), before explaining the child's fears. Referring to the bread and butter that the boy steals for the convict and conceals in his pants, Pip asserts, "Conscience is a dreadful thing when it accuses man or boy; but when, in the case of a boy, that secret burden co-operates with another secret burden down the leg of his trousers, it is (as I can testify) a great punishment" (GE 16).²⁸ While the humor of this passage accentuates the physical burden of the stolen goods, Pip also draws attention to the tremendous *psychological* burden of secrecy. The narrator goes on to reveal the mental anguish of the child, as he contemplates the crime that he must commit:

The guilty knowledge that I was going to rob Mrs. Joe...almost drove me out of my mind. Then, as the marsh winds made the fire glow and flare, I thought I heard the voice outside, of the man with the iron on his leg who had sworn me to secrecy.... At other times I thought, What if the young man...should think himself accredited to my heart and liver tonight, instead of tomorrow! If anybody's hair stood on end with terror, mine must have done so then. (16)

Again, the child feels severely conflicted. In relating this inner anxiety, the narrator seems to lapse into the child's direct perception, only to re-assume an adult voice for the last sentence. This recurring shift in perspective serves both to demonstrate (through the child's eyes) and to justify (through adult commentary) the competing forces that lead young Pip to steal from his sister. Although lighter in tone than Jane's confession of her fears, young Pip's concerns parallel hers in many respects. Just as young Jane imagines that she sees a spirit in the harmless beam of light, Pip believes that he hears the voice of his attacker with each flicker of

²⁸ Although I recognize the potentially sexual undertones of this citation, I do not feel that such suggestions are relevant to my discussion of childhood fear and narratorial nurture. Therefore, I have chosen not to address them here.

the fire. Like Jane and her ominous “herald,” the boy genuinely fears for his life. He truly believes that his bodily organs will be violently extracted by a vicious criminal if he does not steal the file and food. In fact, the perils that threaten Pip’s safety are far more tangible and treacherous than the lantern gleams that harass little Jane. According to the narrator’s description, then, the child makes a highly rational decision, considering the grave nature of this threat. Conflicted between the fear of stealing and the fear of incurring the convict’s wrath, Pip is forced to choose the path that leads to his own guilt.

Moreover, both narrators reflect back upon the injustice that they sensed as small children, confirming Harriet Martineau’s assertion that children possess an almost innate ability to discern fair from unfair treatment. Brontë’s narrator reveals little Jane’s inward cries, as she considers the unfair nature of her confinement in the red-room. “‘Unjust!—unjust!’ said my reason, forced by the agonizing stimulus into precocious though transitory power” (*JE* 15). Here, the “agonizing stimulus” is Jane’s realization that, while her attacker John Reed goes unpunished for his actions, *she* has been disciplined severely for simply defending herself against the onslaught. In the case of Pip, the narrator directly addresses the reader to explain, “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” (*GE* 53). With these simple words, Dickens (through his narrator Pip) acknowledges the sensitivity of the child’s perceptions and emotions. Pip continues, justifying his position by encouraging the reader to consider the child’s perspective:

It may be only small injustice that the child can be exposed to; but the child is small, and its world is small, and its rocking-horse stands as many hands high, according to scale, as a big-boned Irish hunter. Within myself, I had sustained,

from my babyhood, a perpetual conflict with injustice. I had known, from the time when I could speak, that my sister, in her capricious and violent coercion, was unjust to me. I had cherished a profound conviction that her bringing me up by hand, gave her no right to bring me up by jerks. (*GE* 53-54)

This passage adopts a touching and rather serious tone, reminding the reader that even seemingly small offenses can feel, proportionately, like enormous injustices to a small child. Of course, this naturally implies that large injustices, like those done to Jane and Pip, may appear even larger and may be felt even more acutely. Pip's words further demonstrate the ostensibly inherent nature of the child's sense of right and wrong. According to the narrator, Pip has known the injustice of his sister's mistreatment since his "babyhood," even "from the time when I could speak." Not only are these very early perceptions, but they are felt with great intensity from their inception, taking on the quality of a "profound conviction." Thus, the boy has clearly suffered for a long time. Although both narrators expose the injustices done to the children throughout the early chapters of the novels, the fact that both Jane and Pip *recognize* and resent this mistreatment *as children* increases the poignancy and difficulty of their position. If the young ones had remained in ignorance, unaware that their treatment by adults was unjust, their situation would be pitiable nonetheless, but far less heartrending. For this reason, the narrators explain their keen awareness. As children, Jane and Pip understand that they are being raised by bad mothers. They are also aware that they desire—and deserve—more. It is this painful recognition, coupled with their powerlessness to change the situation, which renders their condition so frustrating and so pitiable.

Despite their keen comprehension of adult injustice, the children Jane and Pip are also limited in many aspects of their understanding. In particular, the narrators call attention to the

children's difficulties with reflection and analysis, as well as to the many language barriers that they encounter in expressing themselves and their fears. In the earliest pages of *Jane Eyre*, the narrator's commentary alerts the reader to the girl's limited comprehension, by noting that her impressions of the Arctic landscapes in her book are "shadowy, like all the half-comprehended notions that float dim through children's brains" (*JE* 8). Later, when Mr. Lloyd questions young Jane after her fainting episode in the red-room, the narrator emphatically intervenes: "How much I wished to reply fully to this question! How difficult it was to frame any answer! Children can feel, but they cannot analyze their feelings; and if the analysis is partially effected in thought, they know not how to express the result of the process in words" (23). The child is entirely frustrated in her efforts. When finally offered a chance to express her feelings to an understanding adult, little Jane can barely "frame any answer." After considerable exertion, she finally forms a "meager," but true, response for the doctor—one that, nonetheless, hardly expresses the depth of her grief. Here, the narrator explains the child's limitations, both with respect to her knowledge and her language skills. Intervening with an adult perspective, the narrator Jane notes the challenges that children face in understanding their world. Because the child cannot completely analyze her feelings, she is incapable of fully comprehending even her own thoughts and emotions. Hence, Jane's dramatic outburst calls attention to the child's inward effort to overcome her limited understanding. Moreover, young Jane is unable to explain her feelings verbally, thus reflecting her linguistic constraints. Overall, the narrator's description presents the picture of a small girl trying desperately—but failing miserably—to frame her emotions into words. Inevitably, Jane is misunderstood. With the dramatic tone of this moment, the narrator seeks the reader's pity for the small, struggling child.

Pip, too, faces limitations that are explained and rationalized by the narrator. In fact, the opening lines of the novel introduce the boy specifically in terms of his early language barriers: “My family name being Pirrip, and my christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So, I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip” (*GE* 9).²⁹ Like most infants, the child was once unable to pronounce his own name. However, even as he grows, this childhood impediment—preserved in his familiar name—comes to represent who he *is*. Indeed, he is known throughout the story simply as “Pip,” and, according to a legal stipulation, he must retain the surname Pip in order to acquire his great expectations (*GE* 109). Thus, the child’s very identity is shaped by the limitations of his “infant tongue.” These opening lines also introduce the narrator, who will expose the difficulties he faced as a boy; and who will, through the process of storytelling, demonstrate how far he has progressed beyond the linguistically-challenged years of his childhood. In the early chapters of the novel, Pip explains a number of the child’s humorous misconceptions. As discussed earlier, the opening paragraphs feature the little boy’s “childish conclusions” about his parents’ personalities, based solely on the lettering of their tombstones (9). In a later reflection, Pip further expounds on his childhood misunderstandings:

At the time when I stood in the churchyard, reading the family tombstones, I had just enough learning to be able to spell them out. My construction even of their simple meaning was not very correct, for I read “wife of the Above” as a complimentary reference to my father’s exaltation to a better world; and if any

²⁹ This monosyllabic name may derive from a number of sources, most notably “Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus* (1836) 2.7: ‘Wherefore, like a coward, dost thou forever pip and whimper and go cowering and trembling?’” Cited in notes to Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, ed. Edgar Rosenberg, 10. Therefore, even the allusions of Pip’s name imply fear and worry.

one of my deceased relations had been referred to as "Below," I have no doubt that I should have formed the worst opinions of that member of my family. (38)

In his characteristically comic manner, the narrator explains the child's misinterpretation. By presenting such instances of childhood confusion, the narrator can rationalize the boy's other mistakes, most particularly those that lead him to commit crimes against his conscience. If, to the child, it is possible for the tombstone's message to exalt his father's aspirations toward heaven, it is entirely possible that Pip's heart and liver will be torn from his body if he refuses to steal from his sister.

Here, as in previous examples, Pip's tendency to poke fun at his limited childhood understanding marks an important difference in the roles of Pip and Jane as narrators of their own stories. Indeed, these two characters vary significantly in their approach to childhood fear and the nurturing of their younger selves. Whereas Pip finds humor in his early confusions (and encourages the readers to laugh with him), Jane's reflections are aimed at drawing the readers' pity and sympathy, rather than their laughter.

In Brontë's text, histrionics (not humor) dominates Jane's retrospective portrayal of her childhood. Dramatically illustrating the child's lack of understanding, Jane relates the girl's reaction to her aunt's severe punishment:

What a consternation of soul was mine that dreary afternoon! How all my brain was in tumult, and all my heart in insurrection! Yet in what darkness, what dense ignorance was the mental battle I fought! I could not answer the ceaseless inward question—*why* I thus suffered; now, at the distance of—I will not say how many years, I see it clearly. (JE 15)

Here, vivid descriptors, expressed in exclamatory outbursts, encourage profound pity for the child. The imagery points to young Jane's position as victim. Her heart is "in insurrection," longing to revolt against her oppressors, like a slave against his master, or a downtrodden people against the ruling power. With such language, Jane recalls the child's assertion that John Reed is "like a slave-driver...like the Roman emperors!" (11). Jane's physiological reactions to her treatment are equally dramatic. Not only is her fury and frustration felt in "all my brain" and "all my heart," but these effects are experienced even within her very soul (which feels not merely worry, but out-and-out "consternation"). Moreover, the narrator's choice of words ("consternation," "tumult," "insurrection," "ignorance") connotes utter chaos and confusion. The child is trapped in "darkness," enveloped in a "dense ignorance" that seems inescapable. Such images present a small child entirely dwarfed by the extent of her woes and completely lost in her own misunderstanding. Indeed, as a child, young Jane does not have the knowledge to make full sense of her situation. Only at a distance, with the wisdom of adult experience, can Jane fully comprehend what she was made to suffer, and why. The passage goes on to note the various reasons for Jane's marginalized position at Gateshead. Retrospectively, she describes the little girl as Mrs. Reed views her: "a heterogeneous thing...a useless thing...a noxious thing" (15-6). Such references recollect Jane's own appellation of herself as "a miserable poltroon" (31). In this way, Jane the narrator self-validates her fears through self-pity. In dramatizing the child's (and, in essence, her *own*) pitiable position, she seeks to invoke the sympathy of her readers.

Scholars have severely criticized Brontë's work in recent years for its self-pitying, victimized tone. Peter Coveney refers to the author's "sensationalism of emotion" and appears to disapprove of Jane's supposed "persecution mania" (PC 105, 107). The critic's

selective use of quotation marks to denote Jane's status as "victim" and her representation of "reality" indicate his skepticism of the effectiveness and believability of Brontë's narrative strategies. In addition, James Kincaid's writing regards *Jane Eyre* with a particularly disparaging tone. Referring to the red-room episode, Kincaid claims, "She asks us to regard her and her childhood in exactly the way she regards it: with indignation, measureless pity, and deep, deep admiration.... She is pure victim and nothing but victim."³⁰ I disagree with the extremity of such viewpoints. While I do concur that Jane seems to exaggerate or dramatize her sufferings at points, I believe that these tactics add, rather than detract, from the quality and overall impact of the work. By recreating the emotional intensity of the little girl's experiences, the narrator tells a story with all the vivacious energy of the wronged child, permitting a compelling immediacy that draws us into the action of the plot. The supposed "sensationalism" of Jane's feelings reflects the intense sense of injustice and psychological scarring associated with childhood abuse. Moreover, a certain degree of exaggeration is necessary—and highly effective—in exciting the readers' pity. Indeed, establishing sympathy toward a novel's protagonist is necessary, in order to sustain interest and cultivate a connection between the reader and characters in the story. Thus, Jane nurtures her childhood self by providing her with the sympathy and pity she never received. As if taking up the child into her arms through her fiction, the narrator Jane comforts the frightened little girl. In the process, the sentiments generated for the child are transferred to the adult as well—an advantageous, if not unexpected, phenomenon. In this way, Brontë creates an interesting and sympathetic character whose story we wish to follow, which is, after all, the mark of a great novel.

³⁰ James Kincaid, "Pip and Jane Recovered Memories," *Dickens Studies Annual* 25 (1996), 216-17.

On the other hand, Dickens's narrator uses humor to manage the pain and fear that the child experiences. Looking back on his childhood, Pip organizes his fearful experiences in a comic way, seemingly to diminish and to distance himself from both his fears and his faults. With wry humor, the narrator refers to the "cowardly" concealment of his encounter with Magwitch, observing that the child comes to this decision entirely on his own. "Quite an untaught genius," he asserts, "I made the discovery of the line of action for myself" (GE 37). In this instance, Pip uses humor to "laugh off" his wrongs, while still fully admitting to them. Thus, the reader cannot fault Pip for failing to confess his transgressions, and we are able to laugh with him as he recalls his youthful "folly." Although Pip's comic tone seems to marginalize his culpability, the boy is clearly still tormented by the stirrings of his conscience. In fact, Pip's guilty conscience is the subject of many funny moments, as the narrator employs his defense mechanism to disguise the gravity of the child's situation. When the boy envisions the floorboards calling out "Stop, thief!," the moment seems humorous primarily because of the *narration*, not as a result of the situation itself. As already established, young Pip's guilty, terrified, and imperiled position at this instant is quite serious. Indeed, many instances of the narrator's humor (the chastising floorboards, the clerical cows, etc.) appear to be simply funny, while actually masking very grave concerns and dangers in the boy's life. When bringing Magwitch the stolen food, Pip encounters the other convict, whom he believes to be the menacing "young man" of his nightmares. The intense terror of this meeting makes young Pip's "heart shoot as I identified him." Yet, the narrator intervenes humorously to add, "I dare say I should have felt a pain in my liver, too, if I had known where it was" (20). In this instance, Pip's witty addendum momentarily disguises the severity of his violent physical reaction to fear, drawing attention away from the child's dangerous situation. Thus, humor,

the stereotypically male defense mechanism, allows Pip to acquire temporary distance from his own insecurities.

The defensive function of the narrator's humor is also apparent in another of Pip's many childish misunderstandings. Referring to Mrs. Joe's bringing him up "by hand," the voice of the narrator Pip reflects, "Having at that time to find out for myself what that 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" (*GE* 12). Here, the child, who lacks a nurturing mother to answer his questions, must "find out for myself" the meaning of the words and expressions that define his existence. Pip's description is rather humorous, as it represents the child's highly straightforward interpretation of his world. Indeed, it makes logical sense to connect the expression "by hand" to his sister's "hard and heavy hand," as it is the nearest and most closely associated hand involved in his upbringing. Moreover, as her hand is also used upon Joe, it seems entirely reasonable to conclude that he, too, is raised "by hand." The simplicity of the child's evaluation contributes to the poignancy and wit of the passage. However, beneath the humor lies the very serious issue of young Pip's physical abuse by his older sister. In this respect, Dickens's narrator appears to diminish and conceal the impact of this mistreatment through his comedic explanation. The description of the sister's abuse is not referred to directly. This passage simply describes Mrs. Joe's hand, a mere element of her anatomy, while only suggesting its abusive occupation. In fact, his sister's act of "laying it upon her husband as well as upon me" may or may not imply violence and may, at the least, be rather innocuous. Furthermore, the references to Mrs. Joe's abuse of Pip (and Joe) are placed in intermediate clauses, amidst a series of other clauses, rather than within the main

part of the sentence. In this way, the boy's mistreatment is almost thrown away as an aside. Pip's language disguises the extent of his sister's actions, retrospectively concealing his former pain and suffering. Through well-crafted and well-timed humor, the narrator seeks to diminish the grief experienced by the child, thus serving as a nurturing force in the absence of a good mother.

In many ways, the narrators represent the essence of the "good mother" figure. Defending the children against their fears, justifying their secrecy, and recognizing their misunderstandings, Jane and Pip, as narrators, provide a supportive and safe fictional realm for the children's stories. As Merla Wolk explains, "Just as an author can create the illusion of community for himself when he creates character and plot, he can imagine for the vulnerable child security in the protective care of the narrator's world of language and form."³¹ Thus, until the children find appropriate maternal substitutes within the text—and even well after—Brontë and Dickens's narrators provide them with protection and care.

³¹ Merla Wolk, "Narration and Nurture in *What Maisie Knew*," *The Henry James Review* 4.3 (1983), 204.

Conclusion

Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Dickens's *Great Expectations* represent stirring accounts of the child's achievement of self-protection and self-vindication. Unable to find support outwardly, where an uncaring, unsupportive, and even cruelly abusive adult world often *causes* the worst of their fears, the children must turn inward, in order to defend *themselves* against their terror. In many instances, Jane and Pip seek protection by concealing such anxieties, both from others (through willful secrecy) and from themselves (in the form of figurative language). Moreover, the narrators—the children's older selves—also provide support and nurturance for the frightened child. With this reliance on the self, Brontë and Dickens underscore the child's isolated and often lonely position amidst unsympathetic adults, as well as the child's fiercely independent commitment to his/her own development.

Pip and Jane do eventually find supportive, "good mother" figures among the other characters in the text, although often after the worst of their fearful suffering has taken place. Jane initially discovers a kind, motherly influence in Helen Burns, an older girl at Lowood school and a patient, saintly, and tranquil fellow-sufferer. After Helen's tragic death from tuberculosis (a result of the unhealthful site of the school), Jane finds support in Miss Temple, Lowood's kindhearted school superintendent. Miss Maria Temple (another telling reference to Brontë's beloved sister) not only listens to Jane's stories of abuse; she also *believes* the little girl's assertions. Moreover, she reassures Jane when she is wrongly chastised by the frightening Mr. Brocklehurst. With the encouragement and assistance of Miss Temple, Jane excels in school and attains confidence in her own abilities. Young Pip's interaction with supportive adults is more ambiguous, though nonetheless crucial for his development. Although he considers marrying Biddy twice in the course of the novel, she is far more of a

mothering figure than a romantic companion for Pip. A fellow orphan, Biddy assists Pip with his early education, as he strives to avoid being “common.” With an almost maternal intuition, Biddy keenly discerns the troubles of his conscience, often expressing important truths about Pip that the boy would much rather ignore. One may also argue that Joe provides parental support for Pip, although he is more often on equal footing with the child. Nonetheless, Joe is a supremely kind adult figure in Pip’s life—one who genuinely loves the boy, despite all his faults. Joe exhibits unfailing compassion and sympathy toward Pip the child, as well as toward Pip the grown man.

However, despite the presence of such figures, Jane and Pip’s childhood fear never fully subsides. In fact, it returns to haunt them in strange and unexpected ways. The “fairy-tale” ending of *Jane Eyre*, while ostensibly blissful, only thinly masks its many underlying tensions. Jane and Rochester’s final retirement to Ferndean Manor seems particularly unusual, in light of Rochester’s own admission of “the unhealthiness of the situation, in the heart of a wood” (*JE* 300). Although his “conscience recoil[s]” from the thought of sending his reviled (and exceptionally hardy) wife Bertha to this place, he appears content to remain here with his beloved Jane, who is far weaker and more “fairy-like” in her constitution. Indeed, Ferndean’s situation uncomfortably recalls the unsanitary location of Lowood School, the site of numerous fearful and grief-stricken moments in Jane’s childhood. In addition, near the end of the novel, Jane’s refusal to accompany St. John Rivers to India prompts his reading of a Bible passage that has frightening associations for her. Deliberately directing his words at Jane, he quotes from a portion once cited by Mr. Brocklehurst: “the fearful, the unbelieving, &c., shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (417). Thus, Brocklehurst’s ghost returns to haunt the grown

woman in the form of her zealous cousin, once more preaching hellfire and damnation and warning against the weakness of fear. St. John's imposing voice recurs in the jarring final words of the novel. Despite the tone of piety and almost divine resignation, St. John's death is an oddly disturbing way to conclude the seemingly "happy ending" of the novel.

Even for Pip, the transition into adulthood, as well as the attainment of love and forgiveness, do not fully relieve him of his fearful childhood memories. In particular, the return of the convict Magwitch revives a number of Pip's anxieties. In addition to the child's youthful terror of this man, Pip's early fears of being "common" are also embodied in the figure of this man, who reveals himself to be Pip's secret benefactor. In the instant of revelation, the truth becomes painfully clear to Pip: he has been raised to greatness by a rough and common criminal. "All the truth of my position came flashing on me; and its disappointments, dangers, disgraces, consequences of all kinds, rushed in in such a multitude that I was borne down by them and had to struggle for every breath I drew" (*GE* 240). Thus, the man who caused Pip so much fear and inner torment as a child is also the man who grants him freedom from the dreary prospect of a "common" existence. This problematic relationship is further complicated when one considers that the fortune itself is a mixed blessing for Pip—one that brings financial freedom and power, but also anxiety for his subsequent neglect of his dearest friends. In this way, the frightening memories of Pip's childhood return to haunt him in his later years. For Pip, they are inescapable, despite the buffering distance of time. In the final chapter of the novel, Pip revisits the graveyard of his childhood musings, to gaze once more upon the remains of his family and the tombstone to which he clung as a terrified boy. He brings with him Joe and Biddy's small child, also called Pip, thus providing a compelling visual image of the child's return to the site of his former

fears. Indeed, this moment is a testament to the force of Pip's childhood terror. At this significant homecoming, the grown man discloses to Biddy the vividness of his memories: "I have forgotten nothing in my life that ever had a foremost place there, and little that ever had any place there" (356). Clearly, he has not forgotten the impact of even his earliest experiences; they continue to live with him and influence the progression of his adult life.

Thus, in spite of their efforts, Jane and Pip never fully conquer the fear that once terrorized them in their childhood. Lurking in mysterious corners of even the happiest endings, remembrances of past anxieties suggest a continual need for self-protection and support, even well into one's adult years. Clearly, the act of telling their stories represents an important step in this direction. However, for Jane and Pip, self-nurturing ultimately means learning to live with one's fear and its troubling legacy, while recognizing that childhood terror will never completely be overcome.

Works Consulted

- Adrian, Arthur A. *Dickens and the Parent-Child Relationship*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1984.
- Allen, Michael. *Charles Dickens' Childhood*. Houndmills: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1988.
- Berry, Laura C. *The Child, The State, and The Victorian Novel*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999.
- Bodenheimer, Rosemarie. "Jane in Search of Her Story." *Papers on Language and Literature* 16.3 (1980): 387-402.
- Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Edited by Margaret Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Brown, Penny. *The Captured World: The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in England*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993.
- Coveney, Peter. *The Image of Childhood: The Individual and Society: a Study of the Theme in English Literature*. Baltimore: Penguin Books Ltd., 1967.
- Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations*. Edited by Edgar Rosenberg. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999.
- Dickens, Charles. "Nurse's Stories." *The Uncommercial Traveller*. London, 1861.
- Dobell, Sydney. *The Palladium*. London, 1850.
- Ellis, Sarah Stickney. *The Mothers of England: Their Influence and Responsibility*. 1843. *The Family Monitor and Domestic Guide*. Ed. Edward Walker. New York, 1844.
- Forster, John. *The life of Charles Dickens*. London: Chapman & Hall, 1872-4.
- Galbraith, Mary. "Pip as 'Infant Tongue' and as Adult Narrator in Chapter One of

- Great Expectations.*" *Infant Tongues: The Voice of the Child in Literature*. Edited by Elizabeth Goodenough, et. al. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994. 123-40.
- . "Subjectivity in the novel: A phenomenological and linguistic approach to the narration of childhood self." Diss. State University of New York at Buffalo, 1990.
- Gaskell, Elizabeth. *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. London: Downey & Co. Ltd., 1901.
- Gates, Barbara Timm. *Critical Essays on Charlotte Brontë*. Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1990.
- Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Goodenough, Elizabeth, Mark A. Heberle, & Naomi Sokoloff, eds. *Infant Tongues: The Voice of the Child in Literature*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994.
- Gordon, Lyndall. *Charlotte Brontë: A Passionate Life*. London: Chatto & Windus Limited, 1994.
- Hoeveler, Diane Long & Beth Lau, eds. *Approaches to Teaching Brontë's Jane Eyre*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1993.
- Johnston, Ruth D. "Dis-Membrance of Things Past: Re-Vision of Wordsworthian Retrospection in *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 22 (1994): 73-102.
- Jordan, John O. "Partings Welded Together: Self-Fashioning in *Great Expectations* and *Jane Eyre*." *Dickens Quarterly* 8.1 (1996): 19-33.
- Jordan, Thomas E. *Victorian Childhood: Themes and Variations*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987.
- Kincaid, James. "Pip and Jane Recovered Memories." *Dickens Studies Annual* 25

(1996): 211-25.

Martineau, Harriet. *Household Education*. Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1849.

Moglen, Helene. *Charlotte Brontë: The Self Conceived*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1976.

Rawlins, Jack P. "Great Expiations: Dickens and the Betrayal of the Child." *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 23.4 (1983): 667-82.

Sherwood, Mary Martha. *The History of the Fairchild Family; or the Child's Manual: Being a Collection of Stories Calculated to Shew the Importance and Effects of a Religious Education*. London: J. Hatchard, 1818.

Siebenschuh, William R. "The Image of the Child and the Plot of *Jane Eyre*." *Studies in the Novel* 8.3 (1976): 304-17.

Tillotson, Kathleen. *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954.

Teachman, Debra. *Understanding Jane Eyre: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historical Documents*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001.

Von Schmidt, Helen. "The Dark Abyss, The Broad Expanse: Versions of the Self in *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*." *Dickens Quarterly* 2.3 (1985): 84-92.

Wolk, Merla. "Narration and Nurture in What Maisie Knew." *The Henry James Review* 4.3 (1983): 196-206.