

# *David Copperfield:* Colonial Dissemination of Self (2)<sup>1</sup>

Fumie TAMAI

**Keywords:** middle-class identity, *Kunstlerroman*, dissemination

**Abstract:** *David Copperfield* is a *Bildungsroman* and *Kunstlerroman* which describes the process of David's establishing his middle-class identity as a professional writer. In the second part of this essay, I examine the novel with a special focus upon the way in which Dickens uses the metaphor of racial conflicts such as invasion and conquest in describing the formation of David's middle-class identity, and clarify that his self-making process as a writer is related to the consolidation of middle-class hegemony not only in Britain but also in the whole of the British Empire.

## I

In the Victorian era the middle class was the dominant class which claimed hegemony and provided the norm for all the British people. Citing Henry Brougham and Sarah Ellis, Margaret Homans points out that after the 1830s the middle class was often presented as the only class (155). Sarah Ellis, for example, writes in *The Women of England* in 1838:

---

*Doshisha Studies in Language and Culture*, 4(1), 2001: 229 – 251.

Doshisha Society for the Study of Language and Culture,

© Fumie TAMAI

[W]hen we consider the number, the influence, and the respectability of that portion of the inhabitants who are, directly, or indirectly, connected with our trade and merchandise, it does indeed appear to constitute the *mass* of English society, and may justly be considered as exhibiting the most striking and unequivocal proofs of what are the peculiar characteristics of the people of England. (qtd. in Homans 155)

Here the characteristics of the middle class are equated with those of the people of England, and this is not a logic peculiar to Lewis but a logic typical of Victorian writings in general. The glory of Britain at that age was attributed to the middle-class. Brougham stated that the middle class was “the wealth and intelligence of the country, the glory of the British name” (qtd. in Homans 155), and Matthew Arnold wrote in *Essays in Criticism*, “The English middle class . . . has done all the great things which have ever been done in England,” though he was at the same time critical of the “demoralisation” of the class (128).

Discussing *David Copperfield* in an essay entitled “The Incompatibles,” Arnold says, “Intimately, indeed, did Dickens know the middle class; he was bone of its bone and flesh of its flesh” (267). In the same essay, however, he also says, “in this country the middle class has no naturally defined limits,” and that “it is difficult to say who properly belong to it and who do not” (268). There is, indeed, no clear-cut definition of “the middle class,” and within the class there again are fine strata from lower- to upper-middle. It might be defined as a group of wealthy London bankers and city merchants at the top, that of professionals such as lawyers and surgeons in the middle, and that of tradesmen, clerks, office workers and schoolteachers at the bottom, with minimum annual income of £50 (Harrison 103-07; Davidoff and Hall 18-22).<sup>2</sup> It is, however, cultural, ethical, and moral rather than material elements which are the decisive factors in defining the class.

Chris R. Vanden Bossche argues that “[f]or the purposes of defining one’s class status, the moral economy outweighs the economic one” (43). In *David Copperfield*, Dr. Spewlow, for instance, can be said to be more aristocratic than bourgeois in terms of the genteel style of his living, though he belongs to the group of professionals. The representatives of the middle class are the people such as Miss Trotwood, the Wickfields, the Strongs, and the Traddles, in whom can be found many elements which constitute Victorian bourgeois culture—the Samuel Smiles ethos of “self-help,” the belief in home as the place of peace and the shelter from all the strifes and anxieties of the public sphere, “the Angel in the House”<sup>3</sup> who creates an ideal home with her female “influence,” and the ideal of education based on liberal humanism.

*David Copperfield* is a *Bildungsroman* and *Kunstlerroman* which describes the process of David’s establishing his middle-class identity as a professional writer. The making of a class identity is a communal as well as an individual act, which is located both in an individual’s inner self and in the particular class community to which he/she belongs. David’s middle-class self-making is a search for a community to which he belongs and with which he identifies himself, but it is at the same time a participation in the act of establishing and consolidating the class boundaries by championing the ethical and moral values which differentiate the middle-class community from other class communities. His middle-class identity is built on his assertion of his superiority over decadent aristocrats, the lower-middle, and the working classes. It is formed, in other words, only in relation to Others.

Bossche and Poovey discuss the formation of David’s identity in social and historical contexts. Bossche equates David’s search for identity with that for home and discusses the way in which David re-establishes his identity by finding and accepting the value of practical middle-class domesticity. Poovey looks at the complex process of David’s establishment

of self as a professional writer in the context of the social controversy about domestic and international copyrights in the 1840s and 1850s, and shows how David as a writer constructs an idealised middle-class home which disguises the inequalities and hypocrisies of class society (89-125). Both critics focus upon the ideological work of gender and class of the novel to establish and consolidate middle-class hegemony in Victorian Britain. The emphasis of my reading, however, is the way in which Dickens uses the metaphor of racial conflicts such as invasion and conquest to describe the process of the formation of David's middle-class identity. If it is clarified, then it will also become clear how David's self-making process is related to the establishment and consolidation of middle-class hegemony not only in Britain but also in the whole of the British Empire.

## II

The first person who has a great influence upon David's formation of self is James Steerforth, an aristocrat, who is self-centred and arrogant but at the same time has "some inborn power of attraction" (157). According to Mrs. Steerforth's description of her son's character, his "high spirit made it desirable that he should be placed with some man who felt its superiority, and would be content to bow himself before it" (354). His aristocratic arrogance is most clearly expressed in the conversation between Steerforth and Rosa Dartle about the Peggottys:

"That sort of people.—Are they really animals and clods, and beings of another order? I want to know *so* much."

"Why, there's a pretty wide separation between them and us," said Steerforth, with indifference. "They are not to be expected to be as sensitive as we are. Their delicacy is not to be shocked, or hurt easily. They are wonderfully virtuous . . . but they have not very fine

natures, and they may be thankful that, like their coarse rough skins, they are not easily wounded.” (352)

It is common in Victorian writings that the working-class people are represented as “savages.” As Tim Barringer argues, “The most powerful concept which could be deployed in asserting the otherness of social groups was that of race” (34). In Steerforth’s concept, the working classes are the ideological Other, “they” as opposed to “us,” and in this respect they are not much different from the “noble savages,” who, though having certain virtues, are not cultivated in intellect and sensitivity, and between whom and him there is a wide gap which cannot be bridged. Before his first visit to the Peggottys’ boathouse, he says to David, “Let us see the natives in their aboriginal condition” (360). He sees himself as an anthropologist who is going to investigate the world of natives. For him, Emily is not a woman whom he can marry on equal terms, but a “purchased slave” (787) after all, whom he can easily desert and give away as a commodity to another person when she cannot please him any more.

However, if the relationship between Steerforth and the Peggottys is that between the coloniser and the colonised, his relationship with David is marked by his equally arrogant assertion of his superiority, or, more precisely, by David’s servile, or even slavish obedience to him. On their first meeting at the Salem House, David is carried before Steerforth “as before a magistrate” (136), and feels that he “became bound to him ever afterwards” (136). Steerforth is “a person of great power in [David’s] eyes” (140), and, while other students at the school are depicted as “wild Indians”(136), “[m]iserable little propitiators of a remorseless Idol” (142), or “miserable little dogs” (142), Steerforth alone stands out for his nobility. He is “the monarch of the place” (354), as his mother later puts it. David offers him everything he has, even the money his mother gave him, just as a conquered race offers its treasures to a new king. In his nightly story-

telling, David is Scheherazade, a captive female, whose life is at the mercy of the Sultan Steerforth. David's fascination with Steerforth is not weakened even after they have grown up. When they meet again in London, Steerforth says to David, "I feel as if you were my property" (348) and treats him "like a plaything" (358), which is for David "more agreeable . . . than any behaviour he could have adopted" (358).

Steerforth's seduction of Emily is an episode which indicates the "moral bankruptcy" (Bossche 45) of the aristocracy, but David's inner self is divided between admiration for his attraction and doubt about his moral values at a much earlier stage, when he has the night of his "first Dissipation" (415) and "abandon[s] [him]self to enjoyment" (420) with Steerforth and his Oxford friends. Steerforth's aristocratic epicurean lifestyle is something that David cannot accept. David's superego, the repository of ethical and moral values which has been nurtured within him in the middle-class culture in Canterbury, is personified in the figure of Agnes, the paragon of middle-class virtues and his "good Angel" (426), whom he meets at the theatre in a state of inebriation. It is this superego, the Agnes in himself, that makes him feel "the agony of mind, the remorse, and shame" (423) when he becomes sober again on the next day. Middle-class ascetic ethics win a victory over aristocratic hedonism. It is, therefore, not a coincidence that the fall of Steerforth is followed by the bankruptcy of Miss Trotwood and the subsequent beginning of David's new life as a self-made man, who, with hard work, self-discipline, and perseverance, raises himself on the social ladder.

While Steerforth is at the top of the social ladder in David's world, the urban proletariat, the "common men and boys" (216), whom David encounters at the factory of Murdstone and Grinby, are at the bottom. Contrasted with the aristocratic coloniser, Steerforth, David might be defined as a middle-class humane liberalist who believes in the fundamental equality of all human beings, but his strong class-consciousness manifests

itself most clearly in his attitudes towards this section of the urban proletariat. He keenly feels the social distance which lies between him and them, and which makes him distinguished from them: "Though perfectly familiar with them, my conduct and manner were different enough from theirs to place a space between us" (218). He is "the little gent" (218) among them, but he at the same time learns that the class boundary that divides him from them is fragile, because it is a socially constructed fantasy after all. It is not only he himself but also society that defines what he is and to which class he belongs, and that is why he fears that he might have "grown more shabby" (223), and that he might be taken for "a little robber or a little vagabond" (216).

The fragility of the class boundaries is even more keenly felt when David encounters an upstart from charity school, Uriah Heep, who appears before him immediately after he "make[s] another Beginning" (272) as a pupil at Doctor Strong's. Upon the description of Heep is projected his anxiety about the lower-class people who had a potential to subvert the class order. Whereas Steerforth is described as a coloniser who invades the peaceful world of innocent uncivilised people, Heep is described as a savage who counter-invades the world of the civilised. Steven Marcus points out that Heep shows every symptom of a masturbator described by a physician of the period, William Acton, such as a "stunted and weak" frame, "undeveloped" muscles, "sunken and heavy" eyes, a "sallow, pasty" complexion, "damp and cold" hands, and "moist" skin. According to Acton, a boy who habitually masturbates "may end in becoming a drivelling idiot or a peevish valetudinarian," and "[s]uch boys are to be seen in all stages of degeneration" (qtd. in Marcus 19). Heep is a degenerative savage rather than a wild savage, and his degeneracy is suggested in all the metaphors of lower life of all levels which David uses in describing him: Heep is an ape (578), a baboon (637), a hound (429), a mongrel cur (828), a fox (580), a vulture (444), a bat (636), a frog (437), a fish (440), and an eel

(579). Bestial imagery is commonly used by Victorian writers to describe people of different races and cultures, but especially in the following passage it is obviously charged with racial implications:

[T]he thing that struck me most, was, that with the evidences of [Mr Wickfield's] native superiority still upon him, he should submit himself to that crawling impersonation of meanness, Uriah Heep. The reversal of the two natures, in their relative positions, Uriah's of power and Mr Wickfield's of dependence, was a sight more painful to me than I can express. If I had seen an Ape taking command of a Man, I should hardly have thought it a more degrading spectacle. (578)

The horror is twofold. First, there is the horror of the subversion of order, that is, the horror of an ape taking command of a civilised man. More horrifying thing, however, is that a civilised man might degenerate into the state of an ape. Mr. Wickfield gradually degenerates because of alcoholism and the degenerative influence of Heep until he becomes totally dependent on him and “obsolete” (629). The anxiety about degeneration is deeply rooted in David's psyche. The word “degrading” used in the above quotation reminds the readers of the “sense of unmerited degradation” (223) which David felt at the factory of Murdstone and Grinby. If there is the possibility of upgrading on the social ladder, there is also the possibility of de-grading. Heep is threatening to David because he arouses an anxiety about the obliteration of the class boundaries in both directions.

Heep's existence is felt to be more threatening in the private sphere than in the public sphere. To David his ambition to subvert power in the business world is not so offensive as his ambition to invade the domestic world of the Wickfields. What is especially outrageous to David is Heep's ambition to marry Agnes. When Heep discloses his plan to marry her,

David feels an extreme antipathy towards him, imagining Agnes violated by a “red-headed animal:”

[T]he image of Agnes, outraged by so much as a thought of this red-headed animal’s, remained in my mind when I looked at him, sitting all awry as if his mean soul griped his body, and made me giddy. (441)

Agnes exists more as an image than as a living woman. An image of a white woman violated by a savage is a commonplace image through which colonial fears are expressed (Lomba 164). David’s fantasy of the violation of Agnes is the manifestation of his fear of invasion of the “red-headed animal” into the sacred domestic sphere. Heep’s ambition to marry her is outrageous not only because she is almost like a sister for David, but also because she represents the middle-class ideal of home itself. Heep’s subversion of power can be accomplished only when he wins that symbolic figure of “home.” He calls Agnes “my Agnes” (442) and tells Mr. Wickfield that he is “to make your Agnes my Agnes” (641). In the novel, however, there is no actual contact or even conversation taking place between Agnes and Heep. She is possessed and violated only in Uriah’s, David’s, and the readers’ imagination. The image of Agnes becomes a site around which men’s fantasies of invasion centre.

The real threat of Uriah Heep, however, comes from the fact that Heep and David are fundamentally the same, not that they are different. Heep is not exactly David’s Other, but the mirror image of David’s self. Around David are always positioned certain characters, his alter egos, who represent his suppressed self, or who act out his wish or desire. Heep is one of those alter egos of David, who represents the dark side of David’s inner self. Just like David, Heep is a filial son who is deeply attached to his mother, and just as David does, he tries to succeed in life with hard work and

perseverance, and aspires to marry his master's daughter. He is a "mimic man" of middle-class culture, who tries to realise the success story of a self-made man. According to Bhabha, mimicry, which produces "a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" ("Of Mimicry" 86), acts like a distorting mirror which fractures the identity of the colonising subject: he sees the distorted picture of himself in the colonised as self projected onto the Other. In *Heep*, David sees a grotesque picture of himself—hard-working and full of ambition, and that is why Heep has "a sort of fascination" (290) for him. The "partial" resemblance of himself makes Heep fascinating as well as repulsive.

A "mimic man" is originally the product of the coloniser. In Heep's case, it is the middle-class society that has taught him to be *like* a middle-class man, but the same society never allows him to become a full-fledged member of the middle class, just as the British colonisers in India tried to create the "Anglicised" Indian who was "English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect,"<sup>4</sup> but never recognised them as "English." The presence of those "mimic men," however, has a disturbing effect upon the discourse of the coloniser. "The effect of mimicry on the authority of colonial discourse," Bhabha says, "is profound and disturbing," because it reveals the limitation of "the dream of post-Enlightenment civility" ("Of Mimicry 86). Heep discloses the limitation and hypocrisy of middle-class liberalism, saying to David as follows:

"[T]hey used to teach at school . . . from nine o'clock to eleven, that labour was a curse; and from eleven o'clock to one, that it was a blessing and a cheerfulness, and a dignity, and I don't know what all, eh? . . . . You preach, about as consistent as they did." (829)

Jeremy Tambling sees the dramatisation of the contradiction within the two dominant discourses of Victorian society; the Evangelical teaching of

labour as a curse and the Samuel Smiles ethos of “self-help” and the *laissez-faire* (xvi). The same society that celebrates hard work and efforts as “a blessing” actually estranges and excludes manual labour and the working-class people. To David, Heep is ugly and repulsive because he reflects not only David himself but also the ugliest side of the society in which David lives and enjoys the rewards of his success.

Mimicry poses another disturbing question to the coloniser. The subject who is the imitation of the coloniser “that is almost the same, but not quite” asks the “original” what it means to be an “original” to begin with. An “Anglicised” Indian, for example, problematises the notion of “English” itself and asks what it means to be “English” (Childs and Williams 131). Littimer is the “mimic man” who threatens David’s middle-class identity by posing this troubling question to him. He is “a pattern of respectability” (356), and David believes that “there never existed in his station a more respectable-looking man” (356). He is “so thoroughly respectable” and “surround[s] himself with an atmosphere of respectability, and walk[s] secure in it” (356). In a word, Littimer is much more like a middle-class man than the original middle-class, David, and David’s bourgeois identity is destabilised and fractured before him. David becomes so unconfident in himself that he feels “particularly young in this man’s presence” (357): “in the presence of this most respectable man,” he writes, “I became . . . ‘a boy again’” (358). Littimer challenges the middle-class authority with his perfect mimicry.

Bhabha explores the potential for an active resistance to the coloniser in mimicry. In order to mimic, the colonised subject has to observe the coloniser, and thus he is empowered to subvert the power structure by returning the coloniser’s gaze. Mimicry is one of the “strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power” (“Signs” 112). Gaze and surveillance belong to the power of the institution. David is “a child of close observation” (61), and it is his “power

of observation” (61) that endows him with the authority to become the “author” of the story which he is writing. In the relationship between him and Heep, however, this power structure of the gazer and the gazed is reversed. David is caught in the net of Heep’s observation of his “sleepless eyes” (278) from the beginning.

[I]t made me uncomfortable to observe that, every now and then, his sleepless eyes would come below the writing, like two red suns, and stealthily stare at me for I dare say a whole minute at a time, during which his pen went, or pretended to go, as cleverly as ever. (278)

It is through this Panopticon-like systematic surveillance that Heep and his mother try to counter-colonise the household of the Wickfields. To observe is to know, to know is to control, and to control is to possess. Heep is “subtle and watchful” (429), and never leaves Agnes and her father alone. When David visits them Mrs. Heep’s “unwinking eyes” (635) keep watch on them all the time. The middle-class home—the locus of bourgeois identity—is put under the surveillance of the colonised.

Heep’s attempt to counter-invade the middle-class home, however, cannot be accomplished. Heep is expelled from the bourgeois world by the allied forces of the middle-class people, David, Agnes, Miss Trotwood, and Traddles, and their faithful agent, Mr. Micawber—“a precious set of people” (816), as Heep ironically puts it. Heep’s defeat, however, has already been decided even before the “Explosion” of Mr. Micawber. He gains perfect control of the public sphere, but not of the private sphere, for it is the space where Agnes’s “influence” prevails even after he and his mother moved into the house. In Victorian terminology “influence” is the special attribute of women, before which men’s power of control gives way. The word “influence” appears nine times in David’s narrative to describe Agnes. Her influence is not diminished throughout the story and is

exercised to console her father, guide David, and help Miss Trotwood in her trouble. Heep's presence darkens the house, but she is still able to employ her influence which gives the people there "a blessed sense of rest" (631). Heep cannot reach the innermost sanctuary of the middle-class home after all. After Mr. Micawber's "Explosion," he is imprisoned and put under surveillance together with Littimer. As Michiel Heyns points out, Heep is the scapegoat of the novel, the "figure that has to bear the burden of guilt of a particular community, usually by being sacrificed or expelled" (4). Heep is expelled and imprisoned, bearing all the guilt of the hypocrisy of the middle-class society. David says to Heep, "it is you who have been, in your greed and cunning, against all the world" (828), and Mr. Micawber hysterically denounces him, "HEEP alone. HEEP, and only HEEP, is the mainspring of that machine, HEEP, and only HEEP, is the Forger and the Cheat" (819).

All the destabilisers who have a potential to subvert the class order are expelled at the end. Heep is imprisoned, and Steerforth and Emily, whose love transgressed the class boundary, are either destined to die or to be expelled to the colony. Emily is another Uriah Heep, who aspires to rise in society with her ambition to become a lady. While Heep attempts to raise himself through intrigue and machination, Emily attempts to do the same through marriage. Both of them are the threatening lower classes who arouse the fear of the obliteration of the class boundaries in David's mind. As Poovey points out, Emily's punishment for her elopement with Steerforth is "multifaceted and extreme" (96). David's punitive anger takes shape in the detailed description of Rosa Dartle's cruel face-to-face accusation against Emily and the latter's virtual expulsion from the text after her fall. Emily has to be thus severely punished not only because she aspires to become a lady but also because she is so dangerously alluring to David as well as to Steerforth as to make him forget the class boundary between them. It is David who falls in love with her first, and Steerforth is

his alter ego who has acted out his desire. What remains after their expulsion is the home of David and Agnes and that of Traddles and Sophy—the peaceful and static world of the middle-class professionals.

### III

Mr. Micawber does not seem to belong to this group of destabilisers, but he is in one sense a more dangerous figure than any of the other characters who might threaten David's middle-class identity. He is another alter ego of David, and they share certain traits in their characters like imaginativeness, romanticism, and over-sentimentality—essential qualities which have contributed to David's success as a writer. David admits a great influence which Micawber has exercised on him in the formation of his character. Looking back at the days when he lodged at the Micawbers, the narrator David writes: "some main points in the character I shall unconsciously develop, I suppose, in writing my life, were gradually forming all this while" (224). Gail Turley Houston points out that Dickens creates "two feminized male writers who act as David Copperfield's foils" in the novel; Mr. Dick and Dr. Strong (217), but she certainly should have added Micawber to this list. As the first mental substitute father David encounters in his life, this compulsive letter-writer has an influence even on his writing style: David finds "something in the style of Mr Micawber" (618) in his letter to Miss Mills. In Micawber the traits which have a beneficial influence on David's self-making process and those which have a harmful influence are mixed together. It is not difficult to see some similarities between Micawber and Dickens's father John Dickens, who was also confined to debtor's prison because of his reckless habit of expenditure. Laxness in pecuniary matters can endanger middle-class identity, for it is because of his father's laxness that young Charles Dickens had the traumatic and degrading experience of working in Warren's Blacking

factory. What is equally dangerous to David's bourgeois identity is Micawber's childlike naiveté, which blinds him to Heep's revengeful spirit lurking under his mask of humbleness. He discloses every secret about David's dark past to Heep and thus unwittingly endangers the former's position. These characteristics of Micawber are certainly David's own when he is young. He is romantic, sentimental, naive, and not very thrifty as his bachelor life and his matrimonial life with Dora show. As he becomes more mature and well-established as a professional writer, however, these traits give way to the middle-class virtues such as self-discipline and diligence, and his mental father is sent to the colony together with Emily.

"[P]erseverance," "a patient and continuous energy," "the habits of punctuality, order, and diligence," and "the determination to concentrate [him]self on one object at a time" (671)—these qualities which have been gradually matured within David represent the typical ethos of the Victorian middle class. In a passage from *A Child's History of England*, which was cited in the earlier part of this essay, Dickens uses similar language to describe "the English-Saxon character:" "patient, persevering, never to be broken in spirit, never to be turned aside from enterprises on which they have resolved" (148-49). The Victorians considered that the prosperity of the nation and the empire was the fruit of the industry and diligence of the middle class. Nine years later Samuel Smiles wrote in *Self-Help*, a powerful expression of the Victorian *Zeitgeist*, "The spirit of self-help, as exhibited in the energetic action of individuals, has in all times been a marked feature in the English character, and furnishes the true measure of our power as a nation" (5). Here the power of the nation is attributed to "the spirit of self-help," "a marked feature in the English character," and in *A Child's History of England*, "the English-Saxon character" is inseparably connected to their glorious achievement in the empire as adventurers and colonisers.

David himself is not a coloniser, but the process of his promoting himself in society is described in the masculine language of conquest and exploitation. He writes about his resolution to strive against difficulties following his aunt's bankruptcy using the metaphor of a settler cultivating new ground:

What I have to do, was, to turn the painful discipline of my younger days to account, by going to work with a resolute and steady heart. What I had to do, was, to take my woodman's axe in my hand, and clear my own way through the forest of difficulty, by cutting down the trees until I came to Dora. (582)

The difficulties and obstacles he has to overcome are described in the image of savages: he determines to master stenography, "the alphabet, which was an Egyptian Temple in itself" (609), and finally he has "tamed that savage stenographic mystery" (692).

The link between the Smilesean ethos and colonisation leads my discussion to the actual colonisation in the story, that is, the Peggottys' and the Micawbers' emigration to Australia. Discussing the emigration episode, Trevor Blount points out that Dickens had a strong interest in the family colonisation project led by Chisholm, and argues that "Dickens was alive to everything that could give his novel extra edge, excitement, and topicality for his contemporary readers" (36). The Peggottys and the Micawbers, who eventually become successful colonisers, are the model for the family colonisation. Mr. Peggotty's account of their life in the colony is almost like one from "A Bundle of Emigrant Letters:"

"We haven't fared nohows, but fared to thrive. We've allus thrived. We've worked as we ought to 't, and maybe we lived a leetle hard at first or so, but we have allus thrived. . . . [A]nd we've done nowt but

prosper. That is, in the long run.” (941)

Mrs. Gummidge’s sudden metamorphosis from a pessimistic, querulous woman to a patient supporter of Mr. Peggotty also reflects the ideal picture of a settler’s wife portrayed in the propaganda articles in *Household Words*. One settler says, talking about his wife who has never given in in hardship, “in emigrating, a wife of the right sort is half the battle” (“Father Gabriel’s Story” 89), and another settler also says, “it is *virtuous wives who rule us most*, and in a lovely land make the difference between happiness and misery” (“An Australian Ploughman’s Story” 43). Moreover, there is Martha, who is obviously modelled after the group of the “fallen women” sent to Australia by Dickens to “begin life afresh.” Dickens writes in “An Appeal to Fallen Women:”

[T]hey will be supplied with every means, when some time shall have elapsed, and their conduct shall have fully proved their earnestness and reformation, to go abroad, where, in a distant country, they may become the faithful wives of honest men, and live and die in peace. (*Letters* 5: 699)

The emigration episode, however, has more meaning than something that gave “an extra edge, excitement, and topicality for his contemporary readers” (36), as Blount puts it. The key for understanding the meaning of the episode is in Mr. Micawber’s epistolary article addressed to David in the newspaper, the *Port Middlebay Times*, which Mr. Peggotty has brought back from Australia:

“Go on, my dear sir! You are not unknown here, you are not unappreciated. Though ‘remote,’ we are neither ‘unfriended,’ ‘melancholy,’ nor (I may add) ‘slow.’ Go on, my dear sir, in your

Eagle course! The inhabitants of Port Middlebay may at least aspire to watch it, with delight, with entertainment, with instruction!” (945)

As David's alter ego, Mr. Micawber works as an agent who realises David's desire or wish. It is Mr. Micawber's pen that drives Heep out of the middle-class circle, and here he greatly contributes to David's success as a world-famous writer by becoming a propagandist of his writing. Another writer in the novel, Mr. Dick, cannot disseminate his writing successfully. He makes a kite from the “old leaves of abortive Memorials” (273), but in spite of “his belief in its disseminating the statements pasted on it” (273), it falls down from the sky onto the ground and lies there “like a dead thing” (273). David's writings, however, are successfully disseminated not only in Britain but also in the whole of the British Empire with the help of his alter ego.

The last sentence of the above quotation indicates the classical idea of the role of a creative writer as a moral teacher who both delights and teaches readers, which dates back to the Roman poet Horace (Daiches 59). Agnes also implies that a writer has a moral responsibility to the public, saying to David: “Your growing reputation and success enlarge your power of doing good” (915). David is very taciturn about his activities as a writer. Poovey argues that “Dickens's references to David's writing are all euphemistic or nonchalant”(100), and that his reluctance to write about David's writing and his emphasis on effortless writing are themselves a part of the ideological work to cover over “the hypocrisy and alienation that pervade class society” (122). It should be noted, however, that Dickens emphasises the moral responsibility of a creative writer through the voices of Micawber and Agnes. As Agnes says, David is endowed with a “power of doing good,” and, supposing her voice is Dickens's own, it is a power to diffuse the writer's self and propagate the English middle-class norms and identity throughout Britain and her colonies in order to make the empire one world. Before leaving for Australia, Mrs. Micawber says to her husband, “You are

going out, Micawber, to this distant clime, to strengthen, not to weaken, the connexion between yourself and Albion” (879), and the connection between Britain and the colony is indeed strengthened by Micawber’s dissemination of David’s writings.

The image of an unified empire is subtly presented in Mr. Micawber’s remark as well. On their parting, he says to David, “It is merely crossing. . . . The distance is quite imaginary” (878), and the narrator David makes a comment about this remark as follows:

I think, now, how odd it was . . . that when he went from London to Canterbury, he should have talked as if he were going to the farthest limits of the earth; and, when he went from England to Australia, as if he were going for a little trip across the channel. (878)

What is happening here is what Edward W. Said calls “the curious alternation of outside and inside” in his discussion of *Mansfield Park*, that is, the rhetoric of internalising the outside space by alternating relationship between the mother country and a colony with that between the capital and a province (90-91). In the quotation above, the distance between England and Australia is alternated with that between London and Canterbury, and the actual distance between the mother country and the colony is nullified as “quite imaginary.” The British Empire is thus represented as one unified country, that is, as England.

The phrase “Go on” which is repeated in Micawber’s article echoes also in the manifesto of *Household Words*, which Dickens launched on March 30, 1850, six months before the last installment of *David Copperfield* was published:

Thus, we begin our career! The adventurer in the old fairy story,

climbing towards the summit of a steep eminence on which the object of his search was stationed, was surrounded by a roar of voices, crying to him, from the stones in the way, to turn back. All the voices *we* hear, cry Go on! The stones that call to us have sermons in them, as the trees have tongues, as there are books in the running brooks, as there is good in everything! They, and the Time, cry out to us Go on! With a fresh heart, a light step, and a hopeful courage, we begin the journey. (“A Preliminary Word” 178)

The image of an adventurer in a fairy story conquering the world is used to describe the process of the dissemination of the journal throughout the world. To diffuse the writings and the writer’s self and to recreate the world after his image is to conquer the world, and this is what is taking place in the ending of *David Copperfield*. England and the colonies are connected with each other to make one unified world of empire by the power of David, Dickens’s “favourite child.” Dickens’s autobiographical *Kunsterroman* thus ends suggesting his idea on the responsibility and potentiality of a creative writer as a moral unifier of the empire.

### Notes

- 1 The abridged Japanese version of this paper was read on May 20 at the 73rd general meeting of the English Literary Society of Japan which was held from May 19 to 20, 2001 at Gakushuin University, Tokyo Japan.
- 2 David Copperfield earns £70 per annum as Dr. Strong’s secretary, and later £350 per annum when he starts working as a professional writer.
- 3 The first part of Coventry Patmore’s poem of the same title was published in 1854.
- 4 T. B. Macaulay, “Minute on Education” (1835), qtd. in Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man,” p.87.

## Works Cited

- Arnold, Matthew. *Essays in Criticism. Selected Prose*. Ed. P. J. Keating. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970. 126-174.
- . "The Incompatibles." *Nineteenth Century* 9 (June 1881). Rpt. in *Dickens: The Critical Heritage*. Ed. Philip Collins. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971. 267-69.
- "An Australian Ploughman's Story." *Household Words* 1 April. 1850: 39-43.
- Barringer, Tim. "Image of Otherness and the Visual Production of Difference: Race and Labour in Illustrated Texts, 1850-1865." *The Victorians and Race*. Ed. Shearer West. Aldershot: Scolar, 1996. 34-52.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- . "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse." Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 85-92.
- . "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree outside Delhi, May 1817." Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 102-22.
- Blount, Trevor. Introduction. *David Copperfield*. By Charles Dickens. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966. 13-37.
- Bossche, Chris R. Vanden. "Cookery, not Rookery: Family and Class in *David Copperfield*." *Dickens Studies Annual* 15 (1986): 87-109. Rpt. in *David Copperfield and Hard Times*. Ed. John Peck. London: Macmillan, 1995. 31-57.
- Childs, Peter, and Patrick Williams. *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory*. London: Prentice Hall, 1997.
- Daiches, David. *Critical Approaches to Literature*. 2nd ed. London: Longman, 1981.
- Davidoff, Leonore, and Catherine Hall. *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*. London: Routledge, 1992.
- Dickens, Charles. "A Bundle of Emigrants' Letters." *Household Words* 30 March. 1850: 19-24.
- . *A Child's History of England*. 1851-53. *Master Humphrey's Clock and A Child's History of England*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1958. 120-531.
- . *David Copperfield*. 1849-50. Ed. Trevor Blount. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966.
- . "A Preliminary Word." *Household Words* 30 March. 1850. Rpt. in *The Amusements of the People and Other Papers: Reports, Essays and Reviews 1834-5*. Vol. 2 of *Dickens' Journalism*. Ed. Michael Slater. London: Dent, 1996. 175-79.
- "Father Gabriel's Story." *Household Words* 19 October. 1850: 85-90.

- Harrison, J. F. C. *Early Victorian Britain, 1832-51*. London: Fontana, 1988.
- Heyns, Michiel. *Expulsion and the Nineteenth-Century Novel: The Scapegoat in English Realist Fiction*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.
- Homans, Margaret. "Dinah's Blush, Maggie's Arm: Class, Gender, and Sexuality in George Eliot's Early Novels." *Victorian Studies* 36 (1993): 155-78.
- Houston, Gail Turley. "Gender Construction and the *Kunstlerroman*: *David Copperfield* and *Aurora Leigh*." *Philological Quarterly* 72 (1993): 213-36.
- Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Marcus, Steven. *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964.
- Poovey, Mary. *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England*. London: Virago, 1989.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage, 1994.
- Smiles, Samuel. *Self-Help: With Illustrations of Conduct and Perseverance*. 1859. London: John Murray, 1876.
- Storey, Graham, and K. J. Fielding, ed. *The Letters of Charles Dickens*. Vol. V (1847-1849). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981.
- Tambling, Jeremy. Introduction. *David Copperfield*. By Charles Dickens. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996. vii-xxii.

## 梗概

『デイヴィッド・コッパフィールド』：作家の植民地的自己拡散 (2)

玉井史絵

『デイヴィッド・コッパフィールド』は主人公のミドル・クラス・アイデンティティーの確立を描いた教養小説であり、また芸術家の成長を描いた芸術家小説である。本論(前半、後半からなる後半部分)では、デイヴィッドの中産階級作家としてのアイデンティティーの確立を描く上で、ディケンズがいかに侵略や征服といった人種の対立を想起させるメタファーを用いたかという点に着目して、小説を分析した。

階級アイデンティティーとは個人のアイデンティティーであると共に、共

同体のアイデンティティーである。デイヴィッドの中産階級作家としての自己確立は、自分が属する共同体の探求であると同時に、中産階級と他の階級とを隔てる倫理的・道徳的境界線を強固なものにする共同の行為に参加することでもあった。デイヴィッドのミドル・クラス・アイデンティティーは、退廃的な貴族階級や下層中流階級、労働者階級の人々に対する優越性の主張の上に成り立っている。すなわち、それは「他者」との関係において成立しているのである。そして『デイヴィッド・コッパーフィールド』では、この階級の「他者」は人種の「他者」に置き換えて描かれている。デイヴィッドが最初に大きな影響を受ける他者、ステアフォースは「君主」であり、デイヴィッドは彼に対して盲目的に服従する。それに対して、ユライア・ヒープは文明化された中産階級の世界を逆侵略しようとする、退化した「野蛮人」として描かれている。しかしこれらの他者は最終的にはテキストの世界から駆逐され、その一方で、デイヴィッドは勤勉、強い意志、秩序といった典型的な中産階級の美德を身につけ、作家としての成功を収める。

デイヴィッドの成功はイギリス国内に留まらず、彼の著作は、彼の分身ともいべきミコーバーの力を借りて、植民地にも広められる。ミコーバーがデイヴィッドに宛てた書簡体新聞記事の中で繰り返される「進め」というフレーズは、ディケンズ自身の手による『ハウスホールド・ワーズ』の創刊号の序文でも使われている。そこでは、雑誌が世に普及してほしいというディケンズの願いが、御伽噺の冒険家が世界を征服するイメージで語られている。作家とそこに表現される作家の自己が世界に行き渡ることは、世界を征服することであり、それはまさに『デイヴィッド・コッパーフィールド』の結末で起こっていることなのである。イギリスと植民地はデイヴィッドというディケンズの「秘蔵っ子」のペンの力で一体となり、帝国という一つの世界を作っている。このように、中産階級作家のアイデンティティーの確立を描いた自伝的芸術家小説は、道徳的統合者としての作家の責任と可能性に対するディケンズ自身の考えを示唆する形で終わるのである。