

Social Performativity in the Victorian Novel: An Insight into Ambition and Morality

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Social Performativity in the Victorian Novel: An Insight into Ambition and
Morality

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Abstract

Due to their social performances, the characters in Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* and George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* mimic the problematic divide between Victorian ideals of ambition and morality. Each protagonist must perform a curated self to navigate the instability of Victorian England's conflicting social expectations. Furthermore, through conducting a character analysis of Pip in Dickens's novel and Gwendolen in Eliot's novel, one can conclude that the authors are suspicious of Victorian ambition, and one's ability to maintain morality and ambition without sacrificing one to the other.

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Introduction

The Victorian Era was one of rapid ideological and social change. English society experienced an abrupt introduction to industrialization, a new monarch, religious fervor, scientific innovations, colonialization, and class mobility. Victorian England, with its sudden influx of innovation, colonialization, and power, became fixated on personal and national progress; acquiring “self-made” success, rather than through inheritance, became a new object of respect. For example, “individualised narratives of great men building fortunes from nothing became a staple part of Victorian middle-class culture” (Loftus). Thus, the idea of progress in Victorian society was brought forward with new focus, but not without individualized tension. In addition to a new standard of progress, these changes also brought forth new moralistic standards set by Evangelistic Christianity. While it was encouraged for the Victorian man to rise socially and economically like the idealized “self-made man,” the Christian ideals of the era chastised mammonism, the idolization of material wealth. Perhaps, then, a defining feature of Victorian society is that it is split between ideals and realities, both feeding into one another, leading the English to look for ways to navigate these conflicting expectations. The conflict of ideals in the Victorian era often led to hypocrisy and a reliance on appearance, as the Victorians could not naturally meet all social norms without a bit of falsity.

Many have criticized the Victorians for living a hypocritical lifestyle. As stated in *The Victorian State of Mind*,

Of all brought against them by the Lytton Stracheys of the twentieth century, the Victorians would have pleaded guilty to only one. They would have defended or excused their optimism, their dogmatism, their appeal to force, their strait-laced morality, but they would have confessed to an unfortunate strain of hypocrisy. To understand the charge, it must be broken down into three specific counts. One, they

concealed or suppressed their true convictions and their natural tastes. They said the ‘right’ thing or did the ‘right’ thing: they sacrificed sincerity to propriety. They passed themselves off as being incredibly pious and moral; they talked noble sentiments and lived—quite otherwise. Finally, they refused to look at life candidly. They shut their eyes to whatever was ugly or unpleasant and pretended it didn't exist. Conformity, moral pretension, and evasion—those are the hallmarks of Victorian hypocrisy (Houghton 395).

In this regard, Houghton asserts that the Victorians are aware of their own hypocrisy. When discussing Victorian hypocrisy in *Political Hypocrisy*, author David Runciman states,

it is not unusual to look to nineteenth century novels for insights into the great dance of hypocrisy and anti-hypocrisy: Judith Shklar makes use of Hawthorne and Dickens; other novelists who get drawn into these discussions include Jane Austen (particularly her most “theatrical” novel, *Mansfield Park*), and George Eliot, whose *Middlemarch* is one of the holy texts of hypocrisy studies. But what all these writers have in common is that they tend to be much more sensitive to the nuances of private hypocrisy than the public or political kind” (143-144).

As a result of Victorian England’s inconsistent social expectations, nineteenth century authors used fiction as a way to understand, and in some cases criticize, the conflict between Christian moral and social standards of the era. For example, Charles Dickens and George Eliot, and more specifically in their novels *Great Expectations* and *Daniel Deronda*, criticize the conflict of their society’s ideals through the motif of performance, in order to convey a message of societal inauthenticity and hypocrisy. When comparing these two novels, the reader will notice that the protagonists in each text perform a social identity that differs from their psychological identity as a means of ambition. More specifically, Gwendolen and Pip perform a false identity in order to acquire what they believe they deserve materially:

Gwendolen feels she deserves to continue living the high-status life of a wealthy English lady, even after losing her family's fortune; Pip believes he deserves to win Estella's love, and desires to become a gentleman worthy of her. Ironically, both characters ultimately achieve what they deserve *morally* as a result of their ambitious performances, which are paradoxical to the characters' original ambitions. The irony of Pip's and Gwendolen's fates resulting in the opposite of their performances' objectives, depict the authors' suspicion of Victorian ambition: although there is the social pressure of meeting both high spiritual and material standards, when looking at what Pip and Gwendolen *believe* they deserve materially versus what they morally deserve, it is clear that morality must be sacrificed for worldly ambition, or vice-versa -- the two cannot mutually be maintained.

To explore the presence of performance in these texts, Schechner's model of performance as social drama and Kenneth Burke's pentad of dramatism will be applied to each novel in order to differentiate the characters' actions in accordance to their psychological identity and their performative social identity. In Schechner's model, "to perform is to take a complex series of actions that integrate skills and knowledge to produce a valuable result" (Elger 11). Thus, in *Great Expectations* and *Daniel Deronda*, the characters' "performances" consist of carefully chosen actions, reactions, appearances, and dialogue to manifest the life they want at the expense of their allegiances, relationships, and moral codes.

Chapter One: Proof of Performance

Before exploring how Dickens and Eliot manipulated theatricality as a literary device, one must understand the role theatre played in Victorian England itself. Although both literature and theatre blossomed at the time, the Victorian era is marked generally by its novelists, not by its playwrights. While plays and theatre from the era have previously been left unstudied by scholars, "theatricality and performativity were central to Victorian literature. For the past several decades, scholars housed mostly in English departments have

highlighted the importance of closet drama (Burroughs), improvisation (Esterhammer), and dramatic monologue to nineteenth-century poets, and analyzed how nineteenth-century novelists engaged with theatricality, performativity, melodrama, and spectacle” (Marcus 440). How is it that Victorian novelists embraced theatricality and performativity, while Victorian plays have been an overlooked part of the literary canon for years? A potential answer to this question is in how, “Michael Meeuwis attests to the Victorian awareness and acceptance of theatrical emulation as crucial to social existence, alerting us to the many circuits connecting professional and amateur performances, public and private spaces” (Marcus 441). Following Meeuwis’s logic, theatre existed as means of entertainment in addition to socialization, aligning the concepts of performance with class and society. This opens the possibility of performance being a vehicle for social commentary and social ambition, as the two, historically, were related closely to one another.

Moreover, to understand how Dickens uses his performance motif in *Great Expectations*, one must consider Dickens’s personal relationship to the theatre. The author “attended pantomimes throughout his life, both inside and outside the theatre” (Buckmaster 41) in addition to performing and directing “his own pantomimes in his private theatricals” (Buckmaster 42). Dickens was an active part of the theatrical community, and thus, “through this multi-faceted engagement Dickens makes pantomime a flexible and polysemic vehicle for his own ideas, which he articulated in his writing” (Buckmaster 43). The way pantomime and performance is manifested in Dickens’s writing is not particularly obvious to the reader at first glance. Instead of relying exclusively on melodrama and theatrical elements, Dickens weaves the concept of performance into the realism of the Victorian novel. For example, in his work, “‘The Pantomime of Life’, Dickens persuasively reassigns ‘serious’ theatre’s ability ‘to hold [. . .] the mirror up to Nature’ (Shakespeare 2008b: III, ii, 21–2) to a less earnest form by interweaving pantomime scenes and characters with those from real life”

(Buckmaster 45). Instead of only relying on theatrics to demonstrate reality, Dickens blends the division between “real life” and pantomime, perhaps suggesting that there is no solid division to begin with.

That being said, Dickens did not turn a blind eye to the realities of Victorian society. Dickens often criticized aspects of his society, and “was accorded primacy of place among Victorian novelists both as an artist and a chronicler of society” (Mazzeno 119). That role was evident mostly in his journalistic writing for social reform, but also in his novels. Dickens has been deemed as “one of the most important social commentators who used fiction effectively to criticize economic, social, and moral abuses in the Victorian era” (Diniejko). A. O.J. Cockshut has also asserted when “he examines Dickens’s work as a social reformer, he claims it was a characteristic of his personality ‘to be angry’” (Cockshut 9-50; Mazzeno 120-121). It is a characteristic of Dickens writing to be an angry response to the inhumane aspects of Victorian society, but in which ways is it communicated via his fiction? Many have considered that Dickens’s social commentary in his novels is communicated through symbolism, giving Dickens’s a reputation of as a “dark symbolist” (Mazzeno 127). However, according to A. O.J. Cockshut, “in the case of Dickens, he [Cockshut] goes on to say, many aspects of his novels that contemporary critics consider symbolic are merely theatrical, a technique commonplace in Victorian literature and not modern at all” (Cockshut 50; Mazzeno 122). Perhaps, though, the symbolic and the theatrical are not interchangeable. Perhaps it is possible that symbolism and melodrama are not working in place of one another, but working together in Dickens’s fiction to make his social rebukes.

In *Great Expectations*, the motif of performance and theatre act as symbolism for the way Dickens’s viewed his society – one that requires man to perform an insincere self in order to appease both Christian moral expectations and social expectations of status and wealth. Namely, Dickens’s criticism of his hypocritical society is embodied in Pip’s sincerity

(honesty about self-representation) which is expressed through the motif of acting. For example, Pip's inheritance allows him to become a gentleman worthy of Estella (which is a performance conducted not only to satisfy worldly ambition, but as a vehicle to attain emotional and sexual desire for Estella). Pip, then, performs an identity on what he believes a gentleman to be, sacrificing relationships along the way: his performance leads to moral losses, such as abandoning Joe and criticizing Biddy, which he atones for once his inheritance is lost and his performance as a gentleman ends. When Pip finally stops performing a role and begins following his natural sensibilities and morals, he ironically becomes what is considered a true gentleman, as defined by Mr. Pocket, Pip's educator in London. Herbert describes his father's definition of a true English gentleman as, "it is a principle of his that no man who was not a true gentleman at heart, ever was... a true gentleman in manner. He says, no varnish can hide the grain of wood; and the more varnish you put on, the more grain will express itself" (211-212). Pip can only become a gentleman when he feels guilt for his insincerity, and redeems himself by acting in accordance with nature. This is just one example in many of Dickens's novels that, "[as] Stoehr argues.. the hero suffers from some form of guilt for which he must atone" which Stoehr also asserts, "[is] a phenomenon common to the Victorians" (Stoehr 225; Mazzeno 125). In Pip's case, his moral guilt is induced by his pursuit of ambition through performance, demonstrating the dilemma of maintaining both Victorian ideals.

To continue, George Eliot uses performance in her fiction similarly to Dickens. While the author is not known to have actively participated in the theatre community of her society, she did,

“...[hold the] belief in the dangers of the influence of public opinion and her belief that exceptionally talented women can gain power – albeit tenuously – through interacting with audiences... These works contradict the understanding of Eliot's

preference for privacy, as each examines how Eliot negotiated between public and private, attempting to fulfill her need for a 'productive exteriority' even as her relationship to it was vexed" (Miller 106).

Eliot viewed performativity as a means for female ambition in Victorian society due to the importance of public appearance at the time. Because the gender roles of Victorian England confined women to the domestic sphere without the same access to rights and social mobility as men had, opportunities for female ambition were limited. Thus, performing as an actress or singer allowed women an alternative route to gain social influence and independence. As a novelist, "...Eliot's place in the developing understanding of women, theatricality and the public world... demonstrates that Eliot was a precursor of the twentieth-century suffrage movement" (Miller 107). Thus, Eliot acknowledges performance as a tool for a range of ambitions, including social ambition and ambition for rights and privileges, but when considering the fates of the women who perform in her novels, one can argue that she is suspicious of this ambition.

That is not to say that Eliot is suspicious of female ambition as a positive social movement, but is suspicious of the success of this ambition in a society holds woman to an even higher moral standard than men. In Victorian England, women were held to the high moral standard of the angel in the house. The idealized feminine role of the era is described as, "credited with natural goodness, an innate allegiance to 'a law of kindness'" (Noddings 59). More so, "if a woman accepts her role as angel gracefully, the myth goes, she can inspire men to all good things, even to the divine" (Noddings 59). Being that the role of the woman was held to an almost divine status, tasked with the responsibility to moralize their male counterpart, social ambition was sacrificed to their moral duty in the domestic sphere. Also, there was a binary of morality represented in woman related directly to their ambition in society: "confined to the home and subject to men's rule, the obedient woman has been an

angel in the house; loose in the world or rebellious toward male domination, she becomes ‘the devil's gateway,’ an ambiguous evil indeed” (Noddings 60). In Eliot’s text, the female characters are presented with the option to follow typical social standards for morality and domesticity, or the option to perform a false self in order to rise socially. Those that choose the former are written as receiving their desired outcome, and those that choose the latter, suffer a moral chastisement at the hands of their society.

In *Daniel Deronda*, there are many “performing women created by Eliot – most notably Mirah, the Alcharisi and Gwendolen... [who are analyzed] in order to examine Eliot’s emphasis on women’s talent not as a mode of self-expression or spirituality but as a vehicle through which women can broaden their influence and play a role in the public sphere” (Miller 107). The performing women in *Daniel Deronda* use performance as a tool for ambition, to broaden their influence and to rise socially. However, by the end of the novel, the women who choose performance over conventional domesticity are punished. Beginning with the protagonist of the novel, Gwendolen chooses to perform excitement for a marriage she does not want, which leads to her entrapment by Grandcourt, and her unhappiness. She then performs contentment in marriage, and is faced with the feeling of guilt associated with feeling responsible for Grandcourt’s death. Gwendolen believes that Grandcourt’s death is a result from their marriage, insisting, “...I ought not to have been married. That was the beginning of it. I wronged someone else. I broke my promise. I meant to get pleasure for myself, and it all turned to misery” (607). In this instance, Gwendolen references her betrayal of Lydia, but the catalyst to making the decision to betray Lydia stems from Gwendolen’s desire to gain social and monetary security. Thus, her performance to rise in wealth and status resulted in a moral loss, symbolizing the incompatibility of morality and ambition, as seen also in *Great Expectations*. Similarly to Gwendolen, Princess Halm Eberstein, receives moral punishment for choosing ambition over marriage. Princess Halm

Eberstein abandons her role as mother and wife to pursue the life of a performer, that is, until she believes she has lost her voice and must marry for wealth and stability. The princess admits to Daniel, “I made believe that I preferred being the wife of a Russian noble to being the greatest lyric actress of Europe; I made believe-- I acted that part. It was because I felt my greatness sinking away from me, as I feel my life sinking now. I would not wait till men said, ‘she had better go’” (561). Here, Princess Halm Eberstein explains that when she becomes self-conscious of her career as a performer, she acts the role of a woman who wants to be domestic. It is an example of situational irony that Princess Halm Eberstein abandons a traditional life as a mother for an untraditional life as a singer, and is forced by her own self-doubt to return to the domestic life she does not want. The performative life of both the Princess and Gwendolen leads both to be punished as they are forced into a domestic life neither of them desired. Returning to Eliot’s use of performance as a means of female ambition, the way in which her performing characters are forced back into a domestic sphere after attempting to rise socially mimics the constrictive expectations set specifically on Victorian women. This is evident also in how the princess also attempts to justify abandoning her son by stating, “had I not rightful claim to be something more than a mere daughter and mother? The voice and genius matched the face. Whatever else was wrong, acknowledge that I had a right to be an artist, though my father's will was against it. My nature gave me charter” (583). The question of whether it is her right to pursue a career outside of the domestic sphere is directed at both Daniel and the society she lives in. This question exposes how the high idea of Victorian social mobility is afforded only to women through the channel of marriage. Talent and performance on any other stage is not permitted. Lastly, the final performing woman, Mirah, sings by trade, but is committed to living an authentic life, in addition to prioritizing her domestic duty over the performative. For example, when it is suggested to her that she change her name in order to establish herself in a higher position as

a singer, she refuses. Mirah affirms, “No. If Cohen will not do, I will keep the name I have been called by. I will not hide myself” (414). Although she performs as a singer, she does not perform a false identity, and is rewarded for her authenticity. Furthermore, Mirah does not originally choose to become a performer, but does so out of necessity and to appease her father. Mirah explains, “my father began to believe that I might be a great singer: my voice was considered wonderful for a child; and he had the best teaching for me. But it was painful that he boasted of me and set me to sing for show at any minute” (186). Being that Mirah does not act insincerely and acts obediently to the male figures in her life, she is rewarded at the end of the novel as she is reunited with her family, and marries Deronda, the man she who rescued her. By comparing the fates of the performing women, the woman who values the domestic over the performative is rewarded, while the women who fail are the women who choose to perform over to lead the typical female life, symbolizing the inequality of Victorian expectations.

Correspondingly, Charles Dickens and George Eliot seem to suggest a cynicism for the ideals set by Victorian society in their motifs of performance in *Great Expectations* and *Daniel Deronda*. Besides establishing that performance is the method for these authors to communicate their social critiques, it is also essential to determine how the characters can be considered performative. That is -- *anything* can be seen *as* a performance. Richard Schechner explains that performance can be applied to any field, discipline, object, etc., “just as everything, absolutely everything, can be studied ‘as’ physics, chemistry, law, medicine -- or any other discipline of study whatsoever. For what the ‘as’ says is that the object of study will be regarded ‘from the perspective of, in terms of’ the discipline of study” (Schechner). This discipline of study is Performance Theory, an area of research that began to be developed in the late 1940’s, and which

focuses on the pervasiveness of performance as a central element of social and cultural life, including not only theater and dance but also such forms as sacred rituals and practices of everyday life, storytelling and public speaking, avant-garde performance art, popular entertainments, microconstructions of ethnicity, race, class, sex, and gender, world fairs and heritage festivals, nonverbal communication, play and sports, political demonstrations... (McKenzie)

The question that follows, of course, is: what qualifies as a performance? In Performance Theory, there are a few guidelines that validates a performance:

...performances mark identities, bend and remake time, adorn the body with costumes, and provide people with behavior that is 'twice-behaved,' not-for-the-first time, rehearsed, cooked, prepared. Having made such a sweeping generalization, it is necessary to add that every genre of performance, even every particular instance of a genre, is concrete, specific, and different than every other (Schechner).

As previously mentioned, performances are not confined to the theatre. As long as one abides by the above guidelines, "we can organize performance genres, performative behaviors, and performance activities into a continuum... playing games and spectator sports... performance in everyday life -- identity constructions -- ritualizing performance in everyday life permeates all aspects of peoples' lives" (Schechner). In light of this, the behavior of the characters in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* and Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* fit into the definition of a performance, or acting a part. By examining the texts, the reader will notice how the characters in each novel put on a social performance (that is, a performance done in the public sphere that is *separate* from a private, natural sphere) through calculated behavior, rehearsed reactions, a manipulation of stage-time, costumery, and more. The second question this poses is: *why* do the characters perform? Using both Performance Theory and Kenneth Burke's dramatist Pentad, it is evident that the characters perform as a mechanism of

obtaining what they believe they deserve, resulting in their moral reckonings and receiving what they deserve morally as a result of their actions.

As seen above, behavior qualifies as performance by possessing specific criteria such as the bending or remaking of time (stage-time versus real time), costume, rehearsal, and a delineation between natural and constructed identity. To begin, by analyzing the rehearsed behavior of the characters, it is apparent that they are expressing a performed self rather than a natural self. Gwendolen, the protagonist of *Daniel Deronda*, is central to Eliot's theme of social performance. In the novel, she is often seen preparing, or rehearsing, how she will behave before certain given circumstances. For example, before Gwendolen interacts with company, "she adjusted herself, put on her little air of self-possession, and going down, made herself resolutely agreeable" (384). The language used in this passage indicates that Gwendolen actively adjusts herself in order to be perceived in a way that is not inherently natural to her in this moment. The active verbs here ("adjust," "put on," "made,") indicate that Gwendolen is consciously rehearsing a performed behavior in order to construct an appearance in addition to combatting the natural state of being alone. She prepares an appearance before she is viewed by others in order to *act* her desired role.

In *Great Expectations*, Pip is not described actively rehearsing as Gwendolen does, but he does prepare to play the part of a gentleman. Before leaving for London to begin his education, Pip says aloud, "I have been thinking, Joe, that when I go down on Monday, and order my new clothes, I shall tell the tailor that I'll come and put them on there, or that I'll have them sent to Mr. Pumblechook's. It would very disagreeable to be stared at by all the people here'" (176). Here, Pip is preparing for his transition from working class to upper class by planning ahead where his costume will be worn. Also, in this statement, Pip is separating himself from the people of his neighborhood, as if his new wealth makes him a spectacle and the people of his village an audience due to class difference. Moreover, once he

arrives in London, Pip even acquires a new character name, symbolizing Pip's role change from country-worker to London gentleman. When he meets his companion Herbert, he suggests that Pip go by a new name, insisting, "Would you mind Handel for a familiar name? There's a charming piece of music by Handel, called the Harmonious Blacksmith" (209). Pip accepts, insinuating that he is willing to take on a new identity, and let go of the identity he carried during his life in the marshes.

Next, Gwendolen and Pip are aware of an audience that is present to their inner-thoughts throughout their inner-conflicts. In Eliot's novel, Gwendolen is quite comfortable with an audience, most of the time often preferring to have an audience rather than be alone. In fact, Gwendolen is first introduced via the audience surrounding her. Just as the reader learns Gwendolen's name, it is noted that the secondary characters in the opening scene "were walking about or standing to chat with acquaintances; and Gwendolen was much observed by the seated groups" (8). The theme of other characters observing her in a way that resembles how an audience observes a spectacle is prevalent throughout the text. Even in her time of despair, "Gwendolen made the expected application, and was not without alarm at the notion of being a gawky. For she, too, with her melancholy distaste for things, preferred that her distaste should include admirers" (516). Gwendolen's appearance in society, her social performance and interaction with her audiences, is essential to her character, for even if her family has lost their fortune, she must *appear* to be a part of a genteel society. Evidently, Gwendolen enjoys being admired, which is fitting as she had rather become an actress to support herself before marrying Grandcourt (222), demonstrating Gwendolen's comfort and grace in front of an audience, and how necessary performance is to her identity.

Similarly, in *Great Expectations*, there are audiences present. However, unlike Gwendolen, Pip is less comfortable with the idea of being an observed performer. Dickens describes a sense of discomfort in Pip when he is being observed. In Gwendolen's example,

she feels she *deserves* to be perceived as an English lady despite not having the means to actually be one, thus audiences are integral to how she expresses herself, and she feels comfortable performing in front of them. In Pip's circumstances, he feels his position as a social imposter unlike Gwendolen, which leads to a self-conscious performance. For example, one of the first times Pip must put on a formal performance is in front of Miss Havisham. The guardian demands, "'I sometimes have sick fancies,' she went one, 'and I have a sick fancy that I was to see some play. There, there!... Play, play, play!'" (94). Miss Havisham wants to watch the children play at cards so she can witness the dynamics between Pip, the assigned lover, and Estella, the assigned heart breaker. This "play" that Miss Havisham demands the children to partake in is at Pip's expense; playing, Pip admits, makes him want to return home (96). To emphasize Pip's discomfort with performing, the text also groups the idea of punishment and performance together. Shortly after the performance described above, Pip realizes, "through all of my punishments, disgraces, fasts and vigils, and other potential performances, I had nursed this assurance... I was morally timid and very sensitive" (98). Considering how Pip associates trauma with performance, his stage fright may have spurred from the abuse of his sister as a child, or perhaps, more simply, because he acknowledges that he is a bad actor. Pip's bad acting becomes apparent in his childhood, distinctively in how he behaves at dinner after stealing a pork pie for Magwitch. When Mrs. Joe announces that they will then serve the pork pie, Joe says, "'You shall have some Pip'" which prompts Pip to run away. In response to Joe's offer, Pip reveals, "I have never been absolutely certain whether I uttered a shrill of terror, merely in spirit, or in bodily hearing of the company. I felt that I could bear no more, and that I must run away. I released the leg of the table, and ran for my life" (66). In this instance, Pip runs away after a dinner scene in which he is terrified to be caught for stealing this pie. Instead of continuing to act as if he had no relation to the pie, his natural instinct is to run – he had rather run away in truth than

perform a lie. This gives the reader insight into how Pip feels while performing, and indicated that performing is not natural to him, and foreshadows his self-conscious social performance.

Moreover, the idea of an audience being a paranoid or uncomfortable one appears again during Pip's arrival in London. Pip notices that "Pumblechook appeared to conduct his business by looking across the street at the saddler, who appeared to transact his business by keeping an eye of the coachmaker, who appeared to get on in life by putting his hands in his pockets and contemplating the baker, who in turn folded his arms and stared at the grocer, who stood at the door and yawned at the chemist" (89). The protagonist takes note of the way in which people of all professions observe those in other professions, without knowing exactly the need for observation. Each observer watches another observer. To show that the audience is, in fact, watching itself suggests a more suspicious kind of performance, or even, a self-conscious performance, furthering the notion that Pip is uncomfortable with or unconvinced by his own inauthentic performance.

Costumes in both novels play a significant role in how Gwendolen and Pip perceive themselves, as well as others around them. The importance of costumes to Gwendolen is established early in the novel, specifically when she and others at Offendene put on a small play. Performing the role of the queen in the play, Gwendolen insists she will not perform without a costume. Gwendolen states, "No. It will not do. There must be three men in proper costume, else it will be ridiculous" (Eliot 50). Her resistance to acting without a costume signifies that, to Gwendolen, costumes are essential to performance and identity, which can also be seen in how "...the days before Christmas were passed pleasantly in the preparation of Costumes, Greek, Oriental, and Composite, in which Gwendolen attitudinised and speechified before a domestic audience, including even the housekeeper" (46). Gwendolen is excited to perform in this play and believes that in order for the play to be conducted well, the costumes must fit the characteristics of each role, which sets up a potential reason as to why

she acts adversely to wearing Lydia's diamonds. After marrying Grandcourt, Gwendolen is expected to wear the diamonds that have been in Lydia's keeping for Grandcourt's future wife. Gwendolen firmly denies the gift when it is given to her. Grandcourt commends, "'put on the diamonds,' said Grandcourt, looking straight with his narrow glance" to which Gwendolen responds "...as indifferently as she could, 'Oh, please not. I don't think diamonds suit me'" (377). Grandcourt asserts his dominance over Gwendolen, and in her defeat, "she did not answer, but simply stood still, leaving him to take out the ornaments and fasten them as he could" (378). Gwendolen, at this point in the novel, has already committed her act of betrayal to Lydia by marrying Grandcourt, making her reluctance to wear Lydia's diamonds out of guilt seem like ill-timing. However, her reluctance to wear the diamonds demonstrates the importance of symbolism in costuming to Gwendolen, as it did in her play at Offendene. The diamonds are a part of a costume that signify the role she is playing, and are symbolic of her identity and future. The act of putting on the diamonds seems to address Gwendolen's fear of marriage, which is previously referenced during Gwendolen's and Lydia's first encounter: "Gwendolen, watching Mrs. Glasher's face while she spoke, felt a sort of terror: it was as if some ghastly vision had come to her in a dream and said, 'I am a woman's life'" (133). Thus, the diamonds, once a part of Lydia's costume, symbolize Gwendolen's own unhappiness, in addition to actualizing her guilt. Gwendolen also thinks, "The words of the bad dream crawled about the diamonds still, but only to her: to others they were brilliants that suited her perfectly" (378). To Gwendolen, the earrings as a part of her costume make a statement about her eventually having to live out her fear of a "woman's life," as Lydia had also. Additionally, the diamonds are a class-marker, as referenced above when Gwendolen ponders how others will perceive her diamond earrings. The diamond earrings act as a part of social commenting, and expose the falsity of her marriage to Grandcourt as it is a marker of the money that motivated Gwendolen's acceptance of Grandcourt's engagement.

Like Gwendolen, Pip must put on a costume in accordance with his new social position. Before Pip is taken to London to be educated as a gentleman, the first matter of importance is assembling a gentleman's wardrobe. The text reads, "'First,' said Mr. Jaggers, 'you should have some new clothes to come in, and they should not be working clothes'" (172). The idea of wardrobe being the first step towards becoming a gentleman highlights the importance of costuming and appearance in performance as well as ambition. This extends inversely to the costuming of other characters, such as Joe. When Joe goes to London to visit Pip, he admits, "'You and me is not two figures to be together in London; nor yet anywheres else but what is private, and unbeknown, and understood among friends. It aint that I am proud, but that I want to be right, as you shall never see me no more in these clothes. I'm wrong in these clothes'" (254). Joe feeling as if he "wrong" in the gentleman's clothes he wears to London shows the relationship between costume and class. His change in clothes does not change his social position, but it alters the representation of his social position, making Joe behave awkwardly as he knows he is in a setting he does not naturally belong to, and that he is acting a false self. Joe does not want to act a part that is not natural to him, which is relevant to his role as Pip's moral compass in the novel. Because Joe is written to be Pip's moral instructor and example, Joe not wanting to wear clothes that do not represent his inner nature suggests, for Pip to act morally, he must also not hide his natural self.

Lastly, the duration of time in each novel is manipulated in a way that is similar to how time is manipulated in theatre. Much like how time is represented in specific ways on stage in order to move along the play's action, the representation of time in each novel is played with to convey different meanings. In *Daniel Deronda*, for instance, time is extended due to the way the audience interacts with the performer. When Gwendolen and Daniel first meet, his presence alters her perception of time. The narrator describes this as, "measuring her [Gwendolen] and looking down on her as inferior... [as if] he [Daniel] was of different

quality from the human dross around her... [it] roused a tingling resentment which stretched the moment with conflict” (Eliot 6). This moment is stretched, lasting longer than real-world time. Like different moments in a play, time passes in accordance to how the performers react to it. As months can pass in a moment due to lighting, props, and the actors behavior, so, too a moment can last longer by using the same tools. In *Great Expectations*, time is often sped up, resembling *Hamlet*’s concept of time being out of joint, as the play is frequently mentioned in the text. Pip remarks, “until she opened the side entrance, I had fancied, without thinking about it, that it must be nighttime. The rush of daylight confounded me, and made me feel as if I had been in the candlelight of the strange room for hours” (Dickens 97). Just as time is suspended in the theatre, Pip finds himself surprised by how disconnected he feels to the passing of time in the Satis house. This is important to note, particularly because Pip’s perception of time is altered just after he “performs” at jacks with Estella in front of Miss Havisham. By playing with the perception of time after being “at play,” suggests an association to theatrical plays and drama.

What delineates a social performance from that of a traditional performance is that the performance is given with the intention to fit social norms and expectations, typically replacing how one acts in private with a public performance that is quite different. As for understanding the difference between the private behavior and public behavior, one can begin by dividing them into two sections: the inner-self (a self that is unadulterated by societal expectations, and thus, considered natural) and the outer-self (a public self the mediates desires through filters of social expectations). When reading these novels, it can be seen how each character has an “inner-self” that is distinctive from their “outer-self,” allowing the reader to distinguish between the characters’ natural state and their performance. This idea is further expounded upon through a motif of duality in each text, suggesting that everyone possesses the duality of selves. When explaining performance theory, Schechner states,

The growing acceptance of the performative as a category of theory as well as a fact of behavior has made it more and more difficult, and inadvisable, to assign "truth" to the realm of life and 'artifice' (or worse) to the realm of theatre. Such distinctions between the false mask and the true face, for example, belie more the anti-theatrical prejudice than any steady examination of phenomena. It is increasingly difficult to sustain the distinction between appearances and facts, surfaces and depths, illusions and substances. Appearances are actualities. And so are what lies beneath appearances. More often than not there is a layering of appearances or of depths, and what we see or immediately experience is that which is presented; reality is constructed through and through, both on its many surfaces and throughout its multiple depths. (Schechner)

It is difficult to determine where the line of delineation between the actor's "mask" and the true self is. As described above, reality is constructed by both performed artifice and inherent naturalness. To help determine what is performed and what is natural, one must determine an inner world and an outer world of an individual. In other words, the inner world consists of an actor's feelings, thoughts, and desires without cultural, societal, and other public influences. The actor's outer world is the sphere of performance – an identity that is filtered through social normality, cultural acceptance, appearance, and more. In both Eliot's and Dickens' novels, characters experience both an inner world and outer world that is distinct from one another. For instance, in *Daniel Deronda*, Mirah explains to Daniel and the Meyrick family,

"I made a life in my own thoughts quite different from everything about me: I chose what seemed to me beautiful out of the plays and everything, and made my world out of it; and it was like a sharp knife always grazing me that we had two sorts of life which jarred so with each other -- women looking good and gentle on the stage, and

saying good things as if they felt them, and directly after I saw them with coarse, ugly manners.” (186)

In order to cope with the harsh reality of the outer-world, Mirah creates an inner-world she prefers. Likewise, she notes how outward reality can exist just as an inner reality exists by comparing it to the women she recognized on stage acting in competition with their true selves. Pip also recognizes the difference in state between a private and public reality, not only for himself, but for others too. For example, in his youth, Pip tells Estella, “‘I’ll never cry for you again,’ said I. Which was, I suppose, as false a declaration as ever was made; for I was inwardly crying for her then, and I know what I know of the pain she cost me afterwards” (117). Pip acknowledges how he acts betrays how he feels on the inside. Pip even goes so far as to describe his crying occurring physically in his inner-self, illustrating how inner and outer-selves exist independently from one another. To continue, the difference between a private self and a public self is exemplified in Wemmick’s character. Wemmick decorates his home in a way that resembles a castle, declaring himself the king of his domestic sphere. Wemmick explains to Pip, “‘...No; the office is one thing, and private life is another. When I go into the office, I leave the Castle behind me, and when I come into the Castle, I leave the office behind me. If it’s not in any way disagreeable to you, you’ll oblige me by doing the same. I don’t wish it to be professionally spoken about’” (239). Here, Wemmick asks Pip not to discuss Jaggars nor his office, as it is the inappropriate space to discuss work, whether that be because work is an aspect of social responsibility or it belongs to the public realm. Wemmick insists on a delineation between his inner-world and outer-world in order to separate his performance from his natural state.

As seen above, both texts insist on a separation between the inner-self and the outer-self. However, one can see how, in each novel, it is both the inner reality and the outer reality that make up an overall perceived reality. In *Daniel Deronda*, Daniel asks himself, “‘I

wonder whether one oftener learns to love real objects through their representations, or the representations through real objects” (372). The idea of an overall perception consisting of a natural state of an object and its outward representation coincides with the idea of an inner-self and outer-self making an overall perceived public identity. Additionally, the concept of reality is skewed in *Daniel Deronda*, as what is imagined or constructed often appears closer to reality than what is actually occurring. Daniel realizes during his confrontation with his birth mother that, “... he had lived through so many ideal meetings with his mother, and they had seemed more real than this!” (548). The imaginary, or the constructed idea, of this meeting is represented as more “real” than what is supposed to be the current reality of the text. The idea of a subjective reality seems to suggest that what is natural and what is constructed work together or against one another to create the characters’ consciousness. In *Great Expectations*, the imagined reality also often appears more real than natural reality. This is established once again in Wemmick’s home. Wemmick, while giving Pip a tour of his home, states, ““That’s a real flagstaff, you see,’ said Wemmick, ‘and on Sundays I run up a real flag. Then look here. After I have crossed this bridge, I hoist it up -- so -- and cut off communication” (237). Clearly, the idea of what is “real” is stressed here. It is ironic because his home is not a *real* castle, thus Wemmick’s stress on having *real* accessories that make his house appear like a castle seems unfounded. One can argue that these accessories being real is more important than Wemmick’s home being an actual castle: the perceived reality of the home being a castle due to the way the castle is costumed (much like set design) is sufficient enough to inspire natural reality. Conforming to the way performance theory defines reality as being constructed by both artifice and the natural, Wemmick ironically builds an illusion through authentic props.

To further expand upon the presence of a distinct inner-self and outer-self, it is necessary to look at the motif of duality that runs through each text. The duality of

Gwendolen is noted by Mrs. Arrowpoint, as she states, “she disguises it under an air of taking everything as a matter of course... a stranger might suppose that she had condescended rather than risen. I always noticed that doubleness to her” (484). Also, in a conversation between Daniel and Gwendolen, Daniel explains, “...in all deep affections the objects are a mixture -- half persons and half ideas -- sentiments and affections flow together” (368). In this statement, Daniel is describing what he is interested in, and that he has interest in most things because they are made up of subparts. In addition to human beings having a double-nature, as Daniel acknowledges, everything can be seen as dual. The theme of duality in the novel acts as a base for the argument of an inner and outer-self, as the two make up the whole person. Duality is also symbolized visually through an image of two horses. As Gwendolen ponders the troubles of her life, she sees “horses being taken slowly round the sweep, and the beautiful creatures, in their fine grooming, sent a thrill of exultation through Gwendolen. They were the symbols of command and luxury, in delightful contrast with the ugliness of poverty and humiliation at which she had lately been looking close” (267). In this image is duality: the same type of animals showing two opposing sides of its nature -- the beautiful and the ugly. Like the outward performance and the inner-self, one object can consist of subcategories and differing states.

In Dickens’ text, the duality of people exist, but less so in a way that creates immediate conflict as it does in Eliot’s novel. The duality that appears in *Great Expectation* works to create a singular image. Yes, of course, there are obvious symbols of doubleness -- some being differences that contrast one another. For example, two characters are described side-by-side indicate a nature of good versus bad: “after another moment’s listening, Joe (who was a good judge) agreed, and Mr. Wopsle (who was a bad judge) agreed” (Dickens 71). Other times the duality appears in the way objects are described. For example, “... in the affair of his heart by all practicable and impracticable means;” and how Wopsle’s voice is

described as "...very up-hill and down-hill" (284). What is most striking, however, is how duality works toward a cohesive performance. Besides the presence of obvious contrasts, there are multiple instances in Dickens's novel that include miming and imitation, to put forth a theme of reflection, or seeing double. When Joe feels uncomfortable while visiting London in Pip's new circumstances, the conversation begins with reflect. Pip asks, "'Joe, how are you Joe?'" to which he responds, "'Pip, how air you, Pip?'" (249). Although Pip looks at this imitation negatively when coming from Joe, Pip engages in mimicry himself. After Wopsle's *Hamlet* performance, Herbert and Pip are asked how they enjoyed the play. Pip describes how, as a response, "Herbert said from behind (at the same time poking me), 'capitally.' So I said 'capitally'" In the same scene it is done once again: "Herbert said from behind (again poking me), 'massive and concrete.' So I said boldly, as if I had originated it, and must beg to insist upon it, 'massive and concrete'" (285). Here, the two young men are miming each others' words, as if Wopsle is seeing double. They men in this moment are reflections of one another, working together to create an overall impression of approval, despite both characters' truly believing that Wopsle's performance was subpar.

In *Great Expectations*, it is when Pip falls ill and cannot perform his genteel self that his relationship with Joe improves. Pip notes during his illness,

As I became stronger and better, Joe became a little less easy with me. In my weakness and entire dependence on him, the dear fellow had fallen into the old tone, and called me by the old names, the dear 'old pip, old chap,' that now were music to my ears. I too had fallen into the old ways, only happy and thankful that he let me.

But, imperceptibly though, I held by them fast, Joe's hold upon them began to understand that the cause of it was in me, and that the fault of it was all mine. (490)

Pip depicts the difference in Joe's behavior toward him during Pip's sickness versus his health. While Pip is unable to act as a gentleman, Joe reverts to treating Pip affectionately as

he did as a child. The language used here, being “easy with me,” is used previously in the scene in which Joe comes to visit Pip in London for the first time (252). While Pip is sick, Joe does not call him “Sir,” as he does when he first visits Pip in London and reverts to affectionate names like “old, pip, old chap.” Once Pip becomes well, and returns to acting more like the gentleman-version of Pip Joe met in London, he becomes “less easy” with him, just as he becomes less easy with him as he does during their encounter in London. Pip’s level of performance, or the closer he is to being perceived as a gentleman correlates with the way Joe, Pip’s moral compass, responds to him. This relationship illustrates how Christian morality lessens as ambition rises, due to a sense of inauthenticity and prioritizing earthly success over spiritual success.

In *Daniel Deronda*, Gwendolen acknowledges her sacrifice of morality in pursuing a high social status. Gwendolen admits, “...she was appalled by the idea that she was going to do what she had once started away from with repugnance. It was new to her that a question of right or wrong in her conduct should rouse her terror; she had known no compunction that atoning caresses and presents could not lay to rest” (271). Gwendolen chooses to go forward with her marriage, despite how her moral compass prompts her to behave, because she prioritizes her status and wealth. Gwendolen’s desire for economic security trumping her conscience is specified in the next page, which states,

the brilliant position she had longed for, the imagined freedom she would create for herself in marriage, the deliverance from the dull insignificance of her girlhood -- all were immediately before her; and yet they had come to her hunger like food with the taint of sacrilege upon it, which she must snatch with terror. In the darkness and loneliness of her little bed, her more resistant self could not act against the first onslaught of dread after her irrevocable decision. That unhappy-face woman and her children -- Grandcourt and her relations with her -- kept repeating themselves in her

imagination like the clinging memory of a disgrace, and gradually obliterated all other though, leaving only the consciousness that she had taken those scenes into her life” (272).

Here, the text positions the choice between a moral decision and an ambitious decision before Gwendolen. Ultimately, she chooses to submit to Grandcourt and perform a role as a content wife to achieve her ambition. The two exist in binary that Gwendolen cannot balance.

To continue, both texts touch on another binary, that of the natural and the artificial, signifying a divide between the authentic self and the performed self. In *Great Expectations*, the natural is perceived as the moral, while the artificial is associated with the corruption that self. For example, Pip reproaches Miss Havisham’s intentions of raising Estella, asserting, “‘better,’ I could not help saying, ‘to have left her a natural heart, even to be bruised or broken’” (Dickens 422). Next, the good of what is natural is manifested by way of a compromise between the performed self and the natural self. Pip notices, “after the funeral Joe changed his clothes so far, as to make a compromise between his Sunday dress and working dress: in which the dear fellow looked natural, and like the Man he was” (308). This occurs after Joe attempts to dress in a costume, his Sunday clothes, that are fit for a constructed identity, rather than his authentic self. Dressed only in his Sunday clothes during their first encounter in London, Joe realizes “‘You and me is not two figures to be together in London; nor yet anywheres else but what is private, and unbeknown, and understood among friends. It aint that I am proud, but that I want to be right, as you shall never see me no more in these clothes. I’m wrong in these clothes. I’m wrong out of the forge, the kitchen, or off th’meshes’” (254). The difference in Joe’s natural costume that becomes him, rather than the ill-fitting Sunday clothes highlights the morality of naturalness and the immorality of the artificial performance.

As for this binary in *Daniel Deronda*, Eliot blurs the line between what is natural and what is artificial, suggesting that Victorian expectations are confused between Christian ideals of truth (that which is natural) and ambition (that which derives from the artificial representation of self). This contrast also suggests that the idea of artificiality in Victorian society being opposed to not only Christian ideals toward money (mammonism), but also toward honesty. First, Eliot insinuates that she is suspicious of the reliability of nature as her narrator suggests: “extension, we know, is a very imperfect measure of things; and the length of the sun’s journeying can no more tell us how far life has advanced than the acreage of a field can tell us what growths may be active within it” (617). In this metaphor, Eliot states that nature is an imperfect measure of success, and natural time being an imperfect measure of growth. Thus, the natural or honest life cannot measure Earthly success because it exists spiritually, while the artificial can measure earthly success because it is the means of achieving it. Through this metaphor, Eliot advocates that spiritual goals and Earthly goals cannot comfortably coexist; one must be sacrificed to the other. Victorian expectations existing in a confused state of spiritual morality and earthly material success is dramatized again in an encounter between Gwendolen and Daniel. Gwendolen assumes, ““You despise me for talking artificially.”” Daniel responds to this assumption by saying, ““No,’ said Deronda, looking at her coolly; ‘I think that is quite excusable sometimes. But I did not think you what you were last saying was altogether artificial’” (496). Daniel notes that there is a combination of the natural and artificial in Gwendolen’s behavior, a confused blending of the two, that results in Daniel responding to Gwendolen in a distant manner. Furthermore, the idea of artificiality being excusable in certain circumstances and inexcusable in others once again blurs the line between natural and artificial, demonstrating that they interact awkwardly and cannot be mutually maintained.

To document the shift between a worldly-successful life and a spiritually-successful life, the authors present a moral awakening from self-consciousness to self-awareness that coincides with the rise and fall of the characters' performances. To begin, Pip's performance is often portrayed as a self-conscious performance. Pip displays his self-consciousness through the feeling of being watched: "Difficult as it is in a large city to avoid the suspicion of being watched, when the mind is conscious of danger in that regard, I could not persuade myself that any of the people within sight cared about my movements" (365). Furthermore, Dickens' uses the verb "tumbling" repetitively in the text while Pip is in London to suggest a performance, and plays with its similarity in sound to the word "stumbling" to portray an awkward performance. The word tumbling is associated with circus style performance and acrobatics, and is used in playful ways. For example, Pip describes the pocket family as, "but in the general tumbling up of the family, his tumbling out in life somewhere, was a thing to transact itself somehow" (301-302). Then, Pip discusses his own disingenuousness when he uses the same verb: "I was modestly wondering whether my utmost ingenuity would have enabled me to say anything that would have amused him half as much as this imaginary pleasantry, when I was startled by a sudden click in the wall on one side of the chimney, and the ghostly tumbling open of a little wooden flap" (320-321). Here, Pip associates ordinary acts such as raising a family and the objects moving with acts in a circus through the verb tumbling. Later in the text, Pip begins to use the word "stumble" in a similar way: "This course I decided on while I was yet groping about in the darkness for the means of getting a light. Not stumbling on the means after all, I was fain to go out to the adjacent lodge and get the watchman there to come with his lantern" (351). The act of stumbling when performing suggests a bad actor, or a self-conscious actor, as Pip realizes he is acting a false identity as a gentleman. In the text, these verbs suggest performance in daily life and an awkward performance as well highlighting Pip's self-consciousness in his false role. The feeling of

guilt and self-consciousness intensifies after Mrs. Joe dies. As Pip says, “the figure of my sister in her chair by the kitchen fire, haunted me night and day. That the place could possibly be, without her, was something my mind seemed unable to compass; whereas she had seldom or never been in my thoughts of late, I had now the strangest ideas that she was coming towards me in the street, or that she would presently knock at the door” (305). Mrs. Joe’s death occurs at the peak of Pip’s performance, and is the reason as to why Pip returns home for the first time. Once he returns back to London, he experiences feelings of being watched by others in addition to his deceased sister. Because these feelings of self-consciousness and guilt manifest after Pip revisits the home of his youth, it is evident that his performance as a gentleman becomes less stable as a result of a moral revelation -- his instability comes about through the moral influence of Bidley and Joe, and by being reintroduced to the environment in which he performed a more natural self.

There are critical moments in which Pip transitions from being self-conscious to being self-aware. The most crucial, perhaps, occurs when he relinquishes his resentment toward Magwitch, and becomes grateful for him. Pip expresses,

nothing was needed but this; the wretched man, after loading wretched me with his gold and silver chains for years, had risked his life to come to me, and I held it there for my keeping! If I had loved him instead of abhorring him; if I had been attracted to him by the strongest admiration and affection, instead of shrinking from him with the strongest repugnance; it would have been no worse. On the contrary, it would have been better, for his preservation would then have naturally and tenderly addressed my heart. (349)

When Pip comes to the realization that he should have loved Magwitch, he also acknowledges that this love would have “naturally” affected his heart. The inclusion of the natural here brings forth the argument that with moral revelations comes a more natural self.

Likewise, the man-made, that of “gold and silver chains” is associated with his resentment, while the natural is associated with more feeling heart. This binary exemplifies the relationship between the constructed self with wealth (the restriction of mammonism symbolized through gold and silver chains) and the empathy that comes about from authentic feeling.

Gwendolen experiences a transition between self-consciousness and self-awareness as well. This realization occurs during her confession to Deronda, admitting that, ““ever so long ago I saw it; and I wished him [Grandcourt] to be dead. And yet it terrified me. I was like two creatures. I could not speak – I wanted to kill – it was as strong as thirst – and then directly – I felt beforehand I had done something dreadful, unalterable – that would make me like an evil spirit”” (606). Gwendolen explains that she was split between “two creatures” which can be interpreted as being split between her authentic self and her performed self. She experiences guilt from her decision to marry Grandcourt and believes God is punishing her for betraying her promise to Lydia: “it was not my own knowledge, it was God’s that had entered into me, and even the stillness – everything held a punishment for me” (608). When the performance of Gwendolen’s marriage ends, she is able to feel divine conviction, depicting how spirituality replaces worldly ambition instead of the two working together. The verbal irony used at the end of Gwendolen’s confession also suggests a relationship between false appearances and nature. The text reads, “such grief seemed natural in a poor lady whose husband had been drowned in her presence” (616). Because Gwendolen’s grief stems from her feeling responsible for Grandcourt’s death and not from mourning the loss of her husband, the word “natural” acts ironically, illustrating the incompatibility between the natural and appearances, suggesting how performance cannot facilitate truth.

The performance of the characters extends beyond the public sphere – to create a convincing performance, the characters must perform to themselves also. In *Great*

Expectations, Pip acknowledges that he is lying to himself while performing a false role.

After Joe leaves Pip in London to return home, Pip states,

All other swindler's upon earth are nothing to the self-swindlers, and with such pretenses did I cheat myself. Surely a curious thing. That I should innocently take a bad half-crown of somebody else's manufacture, is reasonable enough; but that I should knowingly reckon the spurious coin of my own make, as good money! An obliging stranger, under pretense of compactly folding up my bank-notes for security's sake, abstracts the notes and gives me nutshells; but what is his sleight of hand to mine, when I fold up my own nutshells and pass them on myself as notes.

(255)

Above, Pip equates the way he behaves in London as one who attempts to pass counterfeit money off to himself, as if Pip's performative self is attempting to swindle his authentic self. This is representative of how he acts a false identity publically and how he had convinced himself that this performance is his true identity. In order to perform as a gentleman, Pip, who struggles with his self-conscious performance, must perform to himself as well.

In order to continue her performance throughout the novel, Gwendolen also performs to herself with what can be considered an "actor's preparation." An instance in where Gwendolen's preparation is in her discontentment with being Grandcourt's wife, despite her performing contentment. In order to give a convincing performance of fulfillment in marriage, Gwendolen attempts to deceive herself by considering reasons as to why the marriage should satisfy her. Gwendolen thinks to herself, "'at least he is not mean about money,' thought Gwendolen, 'and mamma is the better off for my marriage'" (379). She continues performing optimism, thinking, "By-and-by she promised herself that she should get used to her heart-sores, and find excitements that would carry her through life, as a hard gallop carried her through some of the morning hours" (379). Gwendolen silently looks for

reasons to feel content in her marriage, and meditates on them as if they are tools for her performance. This inward dialogue puts forth reasons as to why Gwendolen believes she should be satisfied with her life with Grandcourt, and much like props on a stage, she arranges them in front of herself and the audience (in this case, the reader) to attempt a convincing performance of a projected desire to be happy.

A Dance of Deserving

If the characters in Eliot's and Dickens' texts are performing, one must understand *why*. Why do the characters feel as though they cannot behave naturally, that they must put on a constructed self? Kenneth Burke's Pentad of Dramatism is "a model for analyzing written and spoken language to better understand and even predict human behavior" (Moxley). Furthermore, the pentad "can be used to understand or interpret human behavior and to develop ideas for stories. The pentad assumes people can have ambiguous, conflicting, and complex reasons for acting" (Moxley). The five aspects that construct this pentad are: act, scene, agent, agency, and ultimately, purpose. One can deduce the motives of character performances in *Great Expectations* and *Daniel Deronda* through this model, specifically Gwendolen's marriage and Joe's visit to Pip in London, analyze Gwendolen's and Pip's behavior in each scene via Burke's pentad, and apply the deduced motive to the character's overall performance in each novel. By doing so, one will find that Gwendolen's and Pip's ambition performances are conducted to achieve what they believe they deserve.

The first tier of the pentad is the act, or simply, the action one chooses to analyze. This includes "any verb, no matter how specific or general, that has connotations of consciousness or purpose falls under this category" (Burke). In *Daniel Deronda*, Gwendolen's *act* in this scene is the act of marriage, or as it is described in the novel, "on the day when Gwendolen Harleth was married and became Mrs. Grandcourt" (309). The marriage itself is a performance, particularly in how it is staged: "an old friend of the

Rector's performed the marriage ceremony, the Rector himself acting as father, to the great procession" (309). The diction in this excerpt is important for situating Gwendolen's act in a smaller performance; "performed" and "procession" positions the marriage as a production, and the rector also *acts* a role that is not his own. Thus, Gwendolen's act is *becoming* Grandcourt's wife. In *Great Expectations*, the scene in which Joe comes to London to visit Pip happens after Wopsle's play, which the men first talk about when meeting. The first words spoken by Pip and Joe when reuniting is an act of miming; Joe imitates pip's greeting because he is unsure how to behave in a new upper-class setting (249). To determine Pip's act in this scene, the reader must look to how he feels about Joe coming to London. Pip reacts to Joe's visit "not with pleasure, though I was bound to him by so many ties; not with considerable disturbance, some mortification, and a keen sense of incongruity. If I could have kept him away by paying money, I certainly would have paid money" (248). Pip is embarrassed to have Joe visit him because Pip does not want his genteel society to see a part of his modest upbringing. Pip even admits, "my greatest reassurance was, that he was coming to Barnard's Inn, not Hammersmith, and consequently would not fall in Bentley Drummle's way. I had little objection to his being seen by Herbert or his father, for both of whom I had a respect; but I had the sharpest sensitiveness as to his being seen by Drummle, whom I held in contempt" (248). Considering this, Pip's *act* in this scene with Joe would be to mask. Although Pip would have "liked to run away" (249), he must accept this visit with Joe and attempt to maintain his role as Gentleman in his new society. Pip is glad that others are not there to witness the entire scene of Joe's visit, as Pip mentions, "I was heartily glad when Herbert left us for the city." Pip also admits that he feels frustrated with Joe, as Pip states, "I felt impatient with him and out of temper with him" (252). This feeling of frustration and embarrassment is a projection of Pip's self-consciousness, as, subconsciously, his relation to Joe signifies a relation to country life, disturbing his performance as London gentleman. Pip's

frustration also stems from how out of place Joe acts in London. The text states, “Here Joe’s hat fell off the mantelpiece, and he started out of his chair and picked it up, and fitted it to the same exact spot. As if it were an absolute point of good breeding that it should tumble off again soon” (251). Pip attempts to cover up Joe’s awkwardness: “He [Joe] made extraordinary play with it [the hat] ... beating it up, and humouring it in various parts of the room and against a good deal of the pattern of the paper on the wall... finally, splashing into a slop-basin, where I took the liberty of laying hands upon it” (252). To avoid others perceiving that he is unworthy of being a gentleman, Pip’s act must be one of masking, particularly in how he is relieved by other’s not being there to witness Joe’s behavior and by assisting Joe’s awkwardness in the London setting.

Secondly, the scene is the setting in which the act takes place. There are two overarching settings to each novel that affect the purpose of Gwendolen and Pip’s acts. Of course, the setting to Gwendolen’s marriage is a church in Offedene and Pip’s reunion with Joe takes place in London. However, the setting that I will be looking at for both texts, is the time setting of the novels, which is the Victorian era. The cultural aspects of this era directly affect how the characters perform. For example, Victorian society was one of ambition and great change: “The 19th century was one of rapid development and change, far swifter than in previous centuries. During this period England changed from a rural, agricultural country to an urban, industrialized one. This involved massive dislocation and radically altered the nature of society” (The Historical Association 2020). Society was hierarchal, but because of industrialization, “there was much social and geographical mobility. Self-made entrepreneurs used their new wealth to rise in society, building large houses, educating their children and employing domestic servants” (The Historical Association 2020). Given these new cultural aspects, as “in any society which is ambitious and at the same time unsure of itself because it is new, conventions assume enormous force. For his part, the individual himself is only too

eager to find something to rely on, and to avoid any ideas or behavior which by distinguishing him from his class—or the class just above—might make him look like an outsider or an upstart” (Houghton 395). The act of behaving in line with one’s class is the first example of a social performance, or, acting a social role. Performance of class, as stated, is included in the conventions that came along with Victorian culture in addition to performative morality. The act of Gwendolen, that of becoming a wife, and the act of Pip, that of masking the class of his family, both are done in the cultural setting where there is a focalization on performing socially and morally.

Next, is the agent, or, *who* is acting. This tier, is perhaps, the most integral to discovering the purpose behind the protagonists’ social performances. One can simply state that Gwendolen and Pip are the agents that perform the act, and while this is true, there are two distinct personalities to each character that indicate how they perform: the private self and the public self. While acknowledging that Gwendolen and Pip are the characters performing the act, I assert that the agent that conducts the acts described above is the performed self rather than the natural, private self. In other words, the agent who is performing the act, is not just Gwendolen; the agent performing the act is a “happily married” Gwendolen, rather than her true-self who is unhappy with her circumstances. Similarly, the Pip who acts as the agent is the performed self, the genteel-self, rather than the “course and common” Pip he believes he is. In Gwendolen’s circumstances, the act of becoming Grandcourt’s wife is one that is made possible due to her performance. The narrator describes Gwendolen’s feelings on the day of her marriage as:

This morning she could not have said truly that she repented her acceptance of Grandcourt, or that any fears in hazy perspective could hinder the glowing effects of the immediate scene in which she was the central object. That she was doing something wrong – that a punishment might be handing over her – that the woman to

whom she had given promise and broken it, was thinking of her and in bitterness and misery with just reproach... above all, that the cord which united her with this lover... was now being flung over her neck, -- all this yeasty mingling of dimly understood facts with vague but deep impressions, and with images of half real, half fantastic, had been disturbing her during the weeks of her engagement. (310)

However, the narrator in this instance is describing the feelings of the character Gwendolen is playing. Gwendolen performs as if she does not feel guilty about betraying her promise to Lydia. The reader can confirm this because the text reveals her inner-self as one that does feel ashamed for breaking her promise. Gwendolen questions, "Was not all her hurrying life of the last three months a show, in which her consciousness was a wondering spectator?" (313). The agent that is committing the act of getting married is performing a bride who reflected "the brilliancy of the occasion" (309), despite her true feelings of regret. It is also important to notice the language used when portraying Gwendolen's emotions surrounding her marriage. The idea that the images of her engagement are composed of "half real" and "half fantastic" images can be interpreted as the emotions belonging to two people, or the different public performative and private selves Gwendolen possesses. Pip behaves negatively to Joe's visit because the agent who hosts the visit is Pip's performed genteel self. The narrator, perceived to be the future Pip who has already learned the moral lesson of the novel, states during Joe's visit, "I had neither the good sense nor the good feeling to know that this was all my fault, and that if I had been easier with Joe, Joe would have been easier with me" (252). What can easily be seen by this excerpt is that Pip acts in a way that he regrets, or believes was unjust. The idea that the Pip in London, and the narrator (the Pip has returned home after his time in London and learns that he was not destined for Estella) appear to act in two separate moral spheres. Thus, one can deduce that the Pip who performs the act of masking during Joe's visit is facilitated by his performative self, rather than his natural self. His

natural self can be said to be morally aware. That self also operates in his youth, as is evident in the guilt he feels for stealing food from his pantry to feed Magwitch. Pip expresses how “instead of running at everything, everything seemed to run to me. This was very disagreeable for a guilty mind” (53). This natural self is replaced by the performed gentleman in London, who prioritizes appearance of class rather than morality, to commit the act of masking during Joe’s visit.

The agency of the pentad is the means by which the action is done, or “the instrument or instruments he [the agent] used” (Burke). The agency, or the instrument, used to facilitate the protagonists’ acts, to marry and to mask, is performance itself. It is both Gwendolen’s performance of contentment and repression of guilt that leads to her becoming Mrs. Grandcourt, and it is Pip’s performance of gentility that causes him to mask his attachment to Joe. Thus, the use of performance as a tool to commit these acts leads to the final tier of the pentad is the purpose, or *why* the act was committed. Taking into account the cultural pressure of Victorian England as a setting to perform morally and socially, the characters’ separation of self, and Gwendolen and Pip’s circumstances that lead to this performance, it is evident that both protagonists perform as a means of achieving what they feel they deserve materially, rather than morally. Gwendolen believes that she is entitled to her former status of a lady, and marries Grandcourt at Lydia’s expense to maintain the role she feels she deserves. For example, on Gwendolen’s wedding day “every one else seemed to reflect the brilliancy of the occasion – the bride most of all. Of her [Gwendolen] it was agreed that as to figure and carriage she was worthy to be ‘lady o’ title’” (309). It is insinuated in this excerpt that Gwendolen is pleased not because she is marrying Grandcourt for love, but because she is pleased because she has regained the social and monetary status she had once lost. In Dickens’s novel, Pip’s shame for Joe derives from his desire to be a gentleman in pursuit of Estella. Pip’s ambition is to be worthy of Estella, that is *deserve* her love, and performs that

role that he believes will result in acquiring that love. This is evident in how Pip is preoccupied about his behavior, particularly around Estella. The text states, “if only Estella had been the spectator of our proceedings, I should have felt sufficiently disconcerted” (119). Gwendolen and Pip act as a means of receiving what they believe they deserve, altering their original status in society to one of higher status.

Chapter Two: The Shift of Shame

As seen above, in both *Great Expectations* and *Daniel Deronda*, the protagonists’ performances are conducted in order to obtain what they feel they deserve. However, this feeling of deserving what the characters do not have is manifested due to shame. In both novels, the concept of shame relationship is congruent with the characters’ performances: shamefulness ignites the performance, shamelessness continues the performance, and shame reappears in a new moral light to punish the characters’ insincerity.

The pursuit of the Gwendolen’s ambition begins with shame: Gwendolen feels shameful about her family’s loss of fortune and shamelessly attempts to maintain her social status despite her newfound poverty. Gwendolen’s pride and shame associated with her social position motivates her performance in the text, which is made apparent at the very beginning of the novel. For example, Gwendolen first meets Deronda while abroad, where she also discovers the loss of her family’s fortune. To recover the money lost while gambling during this time, Gwendolen pawns her Etruscan necklace, which Deronda repurchases and delivers back to her. When she receives the necklace, Gwendolen is described as being “reddened with the vexation of wounded pride” (15). The narrator further elaborates on Gwendolen’s embarrassment, stating

He [Deronda] knew very well that he was entangling her in helpless humiliation: it was another way of smiling at her ironically, and taking the air of a supercilious mentor. Gwendolen felt the bitter tears of mortification rising and rolling down her

cheeks. No one had ever dared to treat her with irony and contempt. One thing was clear: she must carry out her resolution to quit this place at once; it was impossible for her to reappear in the public salon, still less stand at the gaming table with the risk of seeing Deronda (15).

In this excerpt, it is clear that her necklace holds “social prominence” (McMaster 1): having sold her necklace in secret, and being discovered by another person of her society, establishes early in the novel Gwendolen’s insecurity concerning money and status. Being that Daniel is now aware of her financial need, Gwendolen feels as though she can no longer appear in “the public salon,” as one of Gwendolen’s audience members is suddenly conscious of the fact she is performing the role of an English lady, rather than truly belonging to high society. In addition to the necklace having social prominence, it also has moral prominence. For instance, the necklace

set the pattern for their [Gwendolen’s and Deronda’s] relation as it develops later in the book: Daniel Deronda watches Gwendolen Harleth as she gambles at the roulette tables in Leubronn, she is conscious of a morally evaluative gaze, and from winning strikingly proceeds to losing strikingly... So in the novel at large Gwendolen's reckless attempt to gain from another's loss leads her to marry Grandcourt and then to regret it; and Deronda becomes her moral mentor, awakening her consciousness of wrong done and good to be achieved (McMaster 1).

Deronda’s decision to repurchase Gwendolen’s necklace and her wounded pride sets up the power struggle between moral pursuits and ambitious pursuits: Gwendolen sells the necklace because she cannot afford the loss of her gambling, which allows Daniel to exercise his moral influence over her and subtly rebuke her for gambling, which awakens Gwendolen’s moral shame alongside her social shame. This shame occurs again before Gwendolen’s interview with Mrs. Comport for a governess position. As the rector assures Gwendolen that she will be

impressed with Mrs. Comport's social status, being that she is "a woman with taste and also of strict principle," Gwendolen experiences an intense feeling of shame: "Gwendolyn dared not answer, but the repression of her decided dislike to the whole prospect sent an unusually deep flush over her face and neck" (237). Gwendolen physically reacts to her embarrassment and begins thinking,

wild thoughts of running away to be an actress, in spite of Klesmer, came to her with the lure of freedom; but his words still hung heavily on her should; they had alarmed her pride and even her maidenly dignity: dimly she conceived herself getting amongst vulgar people who would treat her with rude familiarity — odious men, whose grins and smirks would not be seen through the least of the adventuress; the demand to be held a lady was in her very marrow (239-240).

As seen here, Gwendolen believes that being held to the status of a lady is what she *deserves* and feels the shame of interacting with a lower class, despite the reality of her financial struggle. The shame of admitting that, financially, she truly no longer is an English lady, propels Gwendolen's performance in marriage as social promotion, which is later repaid with a moral reckoning.

In *Great Expectations*, Estella is the source of Pip's shame concerning his economic and social status. Before meeting Estella, Pip does not feel shameful about his humble upbringing. Once they meet and are encouraged to play together, Estella teases Pip for his "course hands" and for calling Knaves by its more common name, Jacks (95). Because of Estella's reaction to his social position, Pip admits, "I had never thought of being ashamed of my hands before; but I began to consider them a very indifferent pair. Her contempt was so strong; that it became infectious, and I caught it" (95). Pip states that it is when Estella reacts negatively to Pip's status that he first feels shame for it. Pip continues, "I was so humiliated, hurt, spurned, offended, angry, sorry — I cannot hit upon the right name for the smart... that

tears sprang to my eyes. The moment they sprang there, the girl looked at me with quick delight in having been the cause of them” (97). Estella causes Pip’s shame, which Pip attempts to redeem when coming into his inheritance and thus becoming a gentleman worthy of her. Ironically, when Pip does come into his fortune and begins his education, he acts similarly to Joe, as Estella had acted toward Pip in his childhood, when Joe visits him in London, inducing a new moral shame. The way Pip behaves during Joe’s visit in London causes Joe to feel as though they must sever public ties, stating “...life is made of ever so many partings welded together, as I may say, and one man’s a black smith, and one’s a white smith, and one’s a goldsmith... Divisions among such must come, and must be met as they come” (254). After Joe concludes that Pip and him are from two different social spheres that do not belong together in public, he swiftly ends his visit. Once Joe leaves, Pip feels guilty for how he behaved toward Joe. Pip confesses, “The fashion of his dress could no more come in its way when he spoke these words, than it could come in its way in Heaven. He touched me gently on the forehead, and went out. As soon as I could recover myself sufficiently, I hurried out after him and looked for him... but he was gone” (255). Here, Pip aligns Joe with spiritual morality, almost as if Joe creates a divine conviction in Pip. Pip’s performance as gentleman is conducted at the expense of Joe’s feeling, however, unlike how Pip reacts to Estella’s social shaming, Joe is dignified in his class and does not desire to perform a false self. Thus, Joe’s sincerity causes moral shame in Pip, which conflicts with the shame that motivates his own insincere performance.

Next, the protagonists’ shame shifts into the shameless pursuit of what they feel they deserve. To acquire their ambitions, Pip and Gwendolen shamelessly perform a false self; shameless as it is at the expense of others, Lydia and Joe. For Gwendolen, she openly acknowledges the power marriage has over social status. The narrator indicates that for Gwendolen,

her thoughts never dwelt on marriage as the fulfilment of her ambition; the dramas in which she imagined herself heroine were not wrought up to that close... her observation of matrimony had inclined her to think it rather a dreary state, in which a woman could not do as she liked... of course marriage was social promotion; she could not look forward to a single life; but promotions have sometimes to be taken with bitter herbs (32).

Although Gwendolen does not want to be married, she does acknowledge that marriage can be used as a means of social promotion for women. The last sentence in this excerpt, which warns against the bitter sacrifices made with social promotion, not only foreshadows Gwendolen's fate in the novel but also suggests a moral sacrifice in ambitious pursuits. When Gwendolen does decide to marry Grandcourt to secure a higher social position, the narrator's statement concerning "bitter herbs" comes to fruition – Gwendolen sacrifices Lydia's fate in order to secure her own comfort prompting Lydia's bitterness toward Gwendolen, which also leads to Gwendolen's future bitterness from living a life with a tyrannical man she does not love. To soothe the guilt she feels from her shameless performance, Gwendolen attempts to rationalize her decision to marry Grandcourt in spite of Lydia's request. Gwendolen ponders, "perhaps we shall have no children. I hope we shall not. And we might leave the estate to the pretty little boy...' This made Mrs. Glasher appear quite unreasonable in demanding that her boy be made sole heir, and the double property was a security that Grandcourt's marriage would do her no wrong, when the wife was Gwendolyn Harleth with all her proud resolution not to be fairly accused. The maiden had been accustomed to think herself blameless; other persons only were faulty" (274). In order to continue her shameless performance, Gwendolen reassigns her moral guilt to Lydia, the victim of her immoral decision. The idea of projecting her moral shame on another in order to act shameless is furthered as the narrator continues,

It was striking, that in the hold which this argument of her doing no wrong to Mrs. Glasher had taken on her mind, her repugnance to the idea of Grandcourt's past had sunk into a subordinate feeling. The terror she had felt in the night-watches at overstepping the border of wickedness by doing what she had at first felt to be wrong, had dulled any emotions about his conduct. She was thinking of him, whatever he might be, as a man over whom she was going to have indefinite power; and her loving him never been a question with her, any agreeableness he had was so much gain. Poor Gwendolen had no awe of unmanageable forces in the state of matrimony, but regarded it altogether a matter of management, in which she would know how to act (275).

Here, Gwendolen consciously overlooks the potential wrong doing in her marriage to believe she can perform a convincing role in her marriage. In this excerpt, the narrator references Psalm 63:6, which reads, "When I remember thee upon my bed and meditate on thee in the night watches" (KJV). The inclusion of this biblical reference draws the reader's attention to Gwendolen's performance in matrimony being a source of religious conviction, which she ignores by refocusing her attention on the social benefits of her marriage. Although Gwendolen feels shame due to her decisions, she chooses to overlook this shame or rationalize it, allowing her to continue a shameless performance.

Pip's performance prompts him to act shamelessly toward Joe and Bidy, his moral compasses in the novel. When discussing his recent inheritance with Joe, Pip betrays his attempt at hiding his self-consciousness concerning his new role as gentleman. When Pip and Joe discuss Pip's upcoming journey to London, Joe remarks on the suddenness of these new expectations. This offends Pip, causing him to reveal, "I should have liked him to have betrayed emotion, or to have said 'It does you credit, Pip,' or something of the sort. Therefore, I made no remark on Joe's first head: merely saying as to his second, that the

tidings had indeed come suddenly, but that I had always wanted to be a gentleman, and had often speculated what I would do, if I were one” (179). Here, Pip’s own self-consciousness concerning whether he deserves to become a gentleman is projected on to Joe. Pip wants to believe that he deserves his new place in a higher class, and desires Joe’s approval on the matter. When it appears that Joe finds Pip’s new circumstances serendipitous, rather than a fated opportunity for Pip to be who he was destined to be, Pip feels self-conscious, and ignores Joe’s comments so that they do not affect his insincere performance. The idea of “deserving” is referenced also when Pip plans how he will be able to help Joe once he comes into his property: “What I had mean was, that when I came into my property and was able to do something for Joe, it would have been much more agreeable if he had been better qualified for the rise in station” (180). The irony in this excerpt has to do with whether or not Pip deserved *his* rise in station. At this point in the novel, Pip is unaware of the source of his expectations, and suspects that it comes from Miss Havisham as means of becoming worthy of Estella. Because he believes he is thought to be deserving of Estella, he acts as if he has the authority to determine whether Joe “deserves” a rise in station, when in reality, it is questionable as to whether Pip deserves to become a gentleman for assisting a convict. When discussing Joe’s education, Pip asks Biddy to help elevate Joe through academic and social education. Biddy is offended by this, as Pip acts pretentiously toward those who educated him. When Biddy points this out, Pip shamelessly responds, ““You are envious, Biddy, and grudging. You are dissatisfied on account of my rise to fortune, and you can’t help showing it.”” Biddy retorts, ““If you have the heart to think so,’ returned Biddy, ‘say so. Say so over and over again, if you have the heart to think so’” (181). Lastly, Biddy ends their conversation by stating, ““...whatever opinion you take away of me, shall make no difference in my remembrance of you. Yet a gentleman should not be unjust neither’” (181). In this

instance, Bidy accuses Pip of acting unjust toward those that love him, which Pip overlooks to continue his shameless performance.

Finally, this shameless performance leads the characters to feel shameful for their actions against others, bringing about their moral awakening. In *Daniel Deronda*, Gwendolen experiences guilt from her decision to marry Grandcourt and believes God is punishing her for betraying her promise to Lydia: “it was not my own knowledge, it was God’s that had entered into me, and even the stillness – everything held a punishment for me” (608). When the performance of Gwendolen’s marriage ends, she is able to feel divine conviction, depicting how her moral shame trumps her original societal shame. The verbal irony used at the end of Gwendolen’s confession also suggests a relationship between false appearances and nature. The text reads, “such grief seemed natural in a poor lady whose husband had been drowned in her presence” (616). Because Gwendolen’s grief stems from her feeling responsible for Grandcourt’s death and not from mourning the loss of her husband, the word “natural” acts ironically, illustrating the incompatibility between the natural and appearances, suggesting how performance cannot facilitate truth.

Once Pip discovers the true source of his inheritance, the convict Magwitch, Pip experiences newfound shame for betraying Joe and Bidy. After Pip fully understands that it was not Miss Havisham’s intentions for Pip to marry Estella that opens the opportunity for him to become a gentleman, Pip considers how to move forward. Pip mentions, “I would not have gone back to Joe now, I would not have gone back to Bidy now, for any consideration: simply, I suppose, because my sense of my own worthless conduct to them was greater than every consideration. No wisdom on earth could have given me the comfort that I should have derived from their simplicity and fidelity; but I could never, never, never, undo what I had done” (350). For Pip, the truth of his expectations disrupts his shameless performance, allowing him to understand the immoral way he behaved toward those that were faithful to

him. Truth allows Pip to replace his shameless performance with moral shame, making shame both the catalyst to Pip's immoral behavior and also his means of moral retribution. Toward the end of the novel, when Pip discovers that Joe and Biddy are to be married, Pip communicates the shame he feels from betraying them, addressing them with, "Dear Joe, I hope you will have children to love, and that some little fellow will sit in this chimney corner of a winter night, who may remind you of another little fellow gone out of it for ever. Don't tell him Joe, that I was thankless; don't tell him, Biddy, that I was ungenerous and unjust; only tell him that I honoured you both, because you were both so good and true, and that, as your child, I said it would be so natural to him to grow up a much better man than I did"" (498). In this instance, Pip's interaction with Joe and Biddy resembles a religious scene of repentance and grace. Here, Pip behaves in a confessional way to his moral figures, admitting to betraying Joe and Biddy despite their faithfulness to him. Pip also elaborates on Joe's and Biddy's grace toward him being a Christ-like grace, being that they continued to be faithful to him despite his rebellion. Once Pip admits to his wrong doing and acknowledges his moral figures' grace, Pip can atone for his mistakes, similar to the Christian act of penitence and forgiveness.

Chapter Three: Moral Retribution

As Pip and Gwendolen perform to gain what they feel they deserve materially, the novels conclude with the protagonists receiving what they deserve morally. The battle between what the characters *feel* they deserve with what they *actually* deserve depicts the war between the material self and the moral self, and further proves that there must be a concrete winner – one of the selves, the moral self and the material self, will be sacrificed and one will triumph. As seen in Gwendolen's and Pip's final outcomes, morality prevails.

The title of the chapter in which Gwendolen makes the decision to marry Grandcourt is entitled "Gwendolen Gets Her Choice" (269), already insinuating that the choice to marry

Grandcourt will have unforeseen consequences. Gwendolen swiftly learns the consequences of her immoral decision to marry Grandcourt against Lydia's wishes, realizing that Grandcourt is unable to be mastered by Gwendolen as she originally perceives, and in fact masters Gwendolen, providing her confinement instead of the freedom she performs for. When Gwendolen ruminates on her decision to marry a tyrannical man, she professes, "He [Grandcourt] delights in making the dogs and horses quail: that is half the pleasure in calling them his,' she said to herself, as she opened the jewel-case with a shivering sensation. 'It will come to be so with me; and I shall quail. What else is there for me? I will not say to the world, 'Pity me'" (377-378). Here, Gwendolen accepts her unhappy fate as a result of her shameless performance -- she does not ask for pity because she recognizes her situation as retribution for acting against Lydia's wishes. Grandcourt's abuse and Gwendolen's confinement is the beginning of Gwendolen's consequences from her performance. The most prominent moment in which Gwendolen fully accepts her moral punishment occurs after Grandcourt's death. Because Gwendolen secretly and shamefully wishes for Grandcourt's death, she feels responsible for his fate when it occurs in reality. Because of this guilt, Gwendolen desires to lead a new life that follows a moral path rather than an ambitious path, admitting to Deronda, "...I want to be good -- not like I have been" (673). In order to begin this journey toward morality, Gwendolen asks Deronda after Grandcourt's death, "I want you to tell me what I ought to do,' she began at once. 'Don't be afraid of telling me what you think is right, because it seems hard. I have made up my mind to do it. I was afraid once of being poor; I could not bear to think of being under other people; and that was why I did something -- why I married. I have borne worse things now. I could bear to be poor'" (672). Like Pip's confession to Biddy and Joe, Gwendolen admits the true motive of her marriage to her moral instructor, Deronda, in a confessional way. In this example, it appears as if Gwendolen needs to atone for her social ambition by forfeiting it to a moral ambition. As a

response, Deronda attempts to console Gwendolen by saying, ““See! You have been saved from the worst evils that may have come from your marriage, which you feel was wrong. You have had a vision on injurious, selfish action – a vision of possible degradation; think that a severe angel, seeing you along the road of error, grasped you by the wrist, and showed you the horror of the life you must avoid”” (674). Deronda’s response to Gwendolen also recalls a Christ-like figure in that he acknowledges the retributions of Gwendolen’s sins, but encourages her to continue by leading a new life and basically “sinning no more.” This idea alludes to the biblical scene of John 8:11, where Jesus encourages the adulteress “Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more” (KJV). The confessional state of this excerpt is also highlighted in the language Deronda uses to encourage Gwendolen. The Christian diction used, such as being “saved” from a life of evil and being instructed by a “severe angel” highlights the religious association with Gwendolen’s new life. Finally, the narrator concludes Gwendolen’s moral journey with a statement on morality that is applied to society in general. The narrator states,

Gwendolen, in settling there... was experiencing some of that peaceful melancholy which comes from the renunciation of demands for self, and from taking the ordinary good of existence, and especially kindness... There is a way of looking at our daily life as an escape, and taking the quiet return of morn and evening – still more the star-like out-glowing of some pure fellow-feeling, some generous impulse breaking our inward darkness – as a salvation that reconciles us to hardship. Those who have a self-knowledge prompting such self-accusation as Hamlet’s, can understand this habitual feeling of rescue. And it was felt by Gwendolen as she lived through and though again the terrible history of her temptations, from their first form of illusory self-pleasing when she struggled away from the hold of conscience, to their latest for

of hatred dragging her towards its satisfaction, while she prayed and cried for the help of that conscience which she had once forsaken (697).

The narrator essentially outlines the rise and fall of Gwendolen's performance as a conscience forsaken and returned to, while also applying this journey to the reading public. The narrator asserts that everyone has experienced shame as a means of moral reckoning, accentuating the social claim concerning morality and ambition in the novel. Furthermore, Gwendolen is compared to Hamlet, likening her to the performative role of guilt and redemption, similar to how Dickens aligns Pip with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. In *Great Expectations*, Pip has a dream about putting on an unconvincing performance, describing it as, "...I had to give my hand in marriage to Herbert's Clara, or play Hamlet to Miss Havisham's Ghost, before twenty thousand people, without knowing twenty words of it" (286-287). The allusions to *Hamlet* in both texts confirm their relationship to shame and moral retribution, specifically in the parameters of theatre.

As previously stated, Pip's moral reckoning comes as a result of realizing that his inheritance was not given to him with the intention of marrying Estella. Once Magwitch reveals that he is the benefactor of Pip's fortune, he realizes, "Miss Havisham's intentions for me, all a mere dream; Estella not designed for me; I only suffered in the Satis House as a convenience, a sting when no other practice was at hand; those were the first smarts I had. But sharpest and deepest pain of all -- it was for the convict, guilty of I knew not what crimes, and liable to be taken out of those rooms where I sat thinking, and hanged at the Old Bailey Door, that I had deserted Joe" (349). This allows for the question, then, what does Pip morally deserve as a result of his performance? As moral punishment, Pip atones for the debt he accrued as gentleman, lives as a bachelor in Herbert's home, and moves abroad. Pip describes his later years as, "I sold all I had, and put aside as much as I could, for a composition with my creditors -- who gave me ample time to pay them in full -- and I went

out and joined Herbert. Within a month, I had quitted England... many a year went round, before I was a partner in the House; but, I lived happily with Herbert and his wife, and lived frugally, and paid my debts, and maintained a constant correspondence with Bidly and Joe” (499). Fundamentally, Pip received the paradox of what he strived to achieve when performing; rather than being the quintessential English gentleman, he lives modestly and quits the country altogether. Finally, instead of obtaining the love of his youth, he ends the novel being an old bachelor. When visiting Joe and Bidly for the first time in many years, Bidly suggests that Pip must marry. Pip responds, ““So Herbert and Clara say, but I don’t think I shall, Bidly. I have so settled down in their home, that it’s not at all likely. I am already quite an old bachelor” (500). Originally, Pip believes he deserves Estella and is socially ambitious with the intention of being worthy of her love. Instead, as moral punishment, Pip does not receive the love of his childhood, and lives to be an old bachelor, doubting his prospects of ever marrying. To conclude, both Pip and Gwendolen perform as a means of obtaining what they deserve materially, they ultimately receive what they deserve morally as a result of their performance. The moral reckonings of these characters’ ambitions suggest that the authors are suspicious of one’s ability to succeed spiritually and materially in Victorian England, and criticize Victorian insincerity by punishing performance.

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