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The Dogs of Dickens: the Canine Presence in the Author's Works

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The Dogs of Dickens: the Canine Presence in the Author's Works

Shortly before his death in 1791, John Wesley, English cleric and founder of the Methodist church, said that "benevolence and compassion toward all form of human woe have increased in a manner not known before" (Turner, 6). During this time, movements concerning antislavery, prison reform, and charity schools told of a society that was becoming increasingly aware of injustice. The populace was becoming more educated, and "high literacy rates in urban areas and a flourishing provincial press played a major role in stimulating new ideas and facilitating political discussion."¹ With the increasing ability to gain access to information, those who formerly felt incapable of action now began to feel more empowered. The English world was becoming an empathetic one, and as reflected in Wesley's observation, this empathy was something new and something that was growing rapidly.

The concern was not solely confined to only one's fellow man, but also the brutes and beasts of the Earth. Harriet Ritvo, in her book, The Animal Estate, relates that before the eighteenth century "people perceived themselves to be at the mercy of natural forces" (3), but between the early eighteenth and late nineteenth centuries "animals became significant primarily as the objects of human manipulation" (2). This shift in thinking reflected a society that was ready to grab the proverbial "bull by the horns"² and exert its dominion over the natural world instead of cowering in fear at the unknown and awesome

¹<http://www.oxfordreference.com.central.ezproxy.cuny.edu:2048/views/ENTRY.html?entry=t285.e179&srn=1&ssid=425245733#FIRSTHIT>

² Interestingly enough, the phrase's meaning seems to have changed during this time as well. Originally it was meant to put in harm's way, but in 1873- H.B. Tristram used it as a phrase denoting "stepping up" and seizing control.

powers of nature's beasts. While such power to command led to violent acts against the lower animals, Ritvo also explains, "Once nature ceased to be a constant antagonist, it could be viewed with affection and... thus sentimental attachment to both individual pets and the lower creation in general became widespread in the first half of the nineteenth century" (3). Given this, the English world began to perceive animals in a new light, and such a perspective led to the issue of the treatment of non-human animals to find its place in the conversations of the day.

As animals and humans became more thoroughly connected, the topic of animal treatment also became increasingly present in artistic endeavors. An early example of this, and forty years before John Wesley's statement, William Hogarth produced four engravings entitled "The Four Stages of Cruelty." According to Phillip Hallie, the intention of these plates was to emphasize "the waste of life must be prevented" (33). While the artist was more attentive to warning against the human condition of depravity, the fact that the first two stages involved extreme cruelty to animals brought attention to the suffering of creatures not generally viewed with much sympathy. Through shocking scenes, Hogarth intensely depicted the abject and debased condition of man. His efforts did not illustrate an empathetic and virtuous model to follow, but pursued a methodology that taught with terror. The culmination of the scenes displays his main "threat: be cruel to those who are... weak, and you will in turn be a victim of cruelty" (31). By including the abuse of animals in the travels of one who is doomed to ruination, Hogarth did exactly what Ritvo says concerning man bringing nature under his control, but he showed the other side, where evil and corruption reside.

Through his work, Hogarth attempted to affect the behavior of his fellow man. As enlightenment increased, so did the means to dictate what was socially acceptable. If people were demonstrating cruelty then many believed such abusers must be stopped. While laws against abuse became more prevalent in the early to mid nineteenth century³, organizations pursued education as a more effective means of change. With Queen Victoria's endorsement in 1840, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals gained the "Royal" label. This flourishing organization's "strategy envisioned kindness slowly trickling down to the lower orders from their increasingly humane superiors, [and] the obvious tactic was some sort of educative process" (Turner, 44). Through the patronage of the wealthy, the Society hoped to provide insight about what it considered a societal problem, and thus reform the larger portion of the Victorian world. As humanity became more emotionally linked with the natural world, crimes against animals could not be ignored, and as in Hogarth's work, the insights about various topics "were echoed in literature and art" (Ritvo, 3). While in 1751 the artist's depiction was a more hellish and romanticized vision, Victorian Realist literary works began to incorporate themes associated with the social movements of day.

It is not an unknown fact that social concerns figured prominently in the works of Charles Dickens. The author broached subjects from educational mismanagement to the fundamental inefficiency of debtor's prisons in his novels, while in his own life he spoke out against London slums and founded Urania Cottage, a refuge for fallen women. The author's concern for the plight of the populace made him, what his good friend, and contemporary, Wilkie Collins called, "the people's author" (Pykett, 3). It was this wide

³ Laws were difficult to enact in the early years of the nineteenth century. As Ritvo notes, "Every attempt to extend humane legislation encountered resistance and even ridicule" (128).

inspection of humanity that reflected the author's remarkable ability to probe unseemly subjects while also make the works palatable and amusing. Dickens' sensitivity to a wide variety of issues also included a marked presence of influential animal characters in his works. In an entry entitled "Cat Stories" in his weekly periodical, All the Year Round, Dickens wrote, "There is unquestionable more in the minds of all animals than they ordinarily get credit for" (312). With his unique ability to probe the human condition in its myriad forms, Dickens also understood that such a condition was also often bound up with animal existence. Be it Grip and Barnaby in Barnaby Rudge, Lady Jane and Krooks in Bleak House, or Bull's-Eye and Bill Sikes in Oliver Twist, humans of various compositions were often made more intriguing and unique by their animal associates.

If one looks into Dickens' life it will not come as a surprise that he found one species in particular useful in his works. His friend, legal consultant, and biographer, John Forster said, "Dickens' interest in dogs was inexhaustible, and he welcomed with delight any new discovered trait in their character" (ny times). He owned a number of dogs over the course of his life and often included anecdotes about them in his personal letters to friends and family.⁴ The animal never seemed to be out of the author's sight or mind, as Peter Ackroyd notes in his biography on Dickens, "as the author moved from house to house, he obsessively carried certain objects to place on his writing desk, including a bronze image of a dog fancier, with the puppies and dogs swarming all over him" (178). Such an image is playful, and its presence at Dickens' epicenter of creativity speaks to how the author's interest in the animals influenced his writing. Whether it be the characters in the novels and stories whom these creatures affect, or us, the readers, who stand outside and witness the themes and motifs such interactions help to illuminate,

4 Fields, James T. "Some Memories of Charles Dickens." *The Atlantic*. August 1870.

one cannot overlook the presence of the four-footed and furry in the works of Dickens. They are present to work as integral components of plot, but also to flesh out certain human characters as those men and women interact with their canine counterparts.

Dogs in Dickens serve as vehicles to provide insight concerning human characters. They permit answers in the face of unanswerable questions, and they permit the unclinking of mysteries that would make Inspector Bucket envious. Canines provide a crucial link between what Dickens wanted to say about the conditioning of one's character, and how controlling forces can influence the outcome of a personality. Additionally, viewed through a Darwinian lens, Dickens' inclusion of dogs takes on a new role, as the canine-human connection often illustrates the "struggle for existence". Howard Fulweiler comments on how Dickens and Darwin "Both attempted to construct a coherent picture of a complex pattern of phenomena" (71), and in Dickens' world such a picture would prove incomplete without dogs.

One manner in which canines proved useful for Dickens was to analyze the subject of social conditioning. In his essay, "The Dark World of *Oliver Twist*", J. Hillis Miller explains "there is no acceptance of the doctrine of original sin in Dickens' anthropology. Each human creature comes pure and good from the hand of God and only becomes evil through the effects of an evil environment" (56). In *Oliver Twist*, the predominant concern is Oliver's shaping, a character who is, from the outset, adrift without an anchor, and as Miller mentions, "Oliver's desolation is the absence of a primary human requirement" (30). Oliver's travels allow him to mingle with the most abject and the most benefitted segments of society. He is fortunate to end in the

Brownlow home, reconnecting with a hazy past that was in danger of never coming to light if some of the seedier characters in the novel had their way.

Barbara Hardy notes that Oliver Twist, and Dickens' subsequent novels, is "bent on pursuing [the] subject [of] the relationship of the individual to his environment" (30). While Oliver often receives the reader's sympathy, the persona of Bill Sikes is an easy target for antipathy. He is brutal, vile, and abject in all of his machinations. Throughout no part of the text does he exhibit any compassion, and it would be easy to cast him off as a Hogarthian "waste of life"; however, doing so would treat the symptom and not the cause. A character as brutal as Bill Sikes requires a bit more effort to explain as to what made him so wicked. There is no moment of insight concerning Sikes' history, and thus we may defend him in relation to Hillis' argument because Sikes is never permitted a back-story. Irving Kreutz explains that in the novel, "Both Fagin and Bill Sikes go their dreadful way without any gesture from Dickens to answer for us the question of why they do what they do" (332). However, Kreutz misses a crucial point for conjecture in discovering Sikes' reasoning.

While the reader is not privy to the villain's past travels as clearly as with Oliver, much can be construed from Sikes' four-footed counterpart who not only serves as a marker of the man's cruelty, but also as an extension of the man himself. Among all of Dickens' canine characters, Bull's-eye is the most intensely shaped by his human partner, and the dog's presence permits the reader to draw a conclusion concerning Sikes' past. During their initial conflict, Dickens informs us that Bull's-Eye's behavior is out of the ordinary; "Dogs are not generally apt to revenge injuries inflicted on them by their masters; but Mr. Sikes's dog, having faults of temper in common with his owner, and

labouring, perhaps, at this moment, under a powerful sense of injury, made no more ado but at once fixed his teeth in one of the half-boots" (138). The author fashions Bull's-eye's ruffian nature as a product of Bill Sikes' conditioning. In this scene, Dickens illustrates a point that is representative of Darwin. Howard Fulweiler observes, "The Darwinian account is an intricate pattern of mutual relationships conducted in a chaotic environment by individuals seeking their own advantage" (51). There is no question of the chaos involved in Sikes's and Bull's-eye's environment, and Bull's-eye's response to his master's abuse reflects such a world as it is simply an act of the most basic self-preservation. Each struggles to determine the outcome, and as Fulweiler notes, seek his "own advantage". The dog's behavior is simply a reflection of the chaos "of a society that makes criminals" (Hardy, 35), and such is also the environment Bill Sikes has inhabited for an unknown period of time.

Grace Moore points out, "While for the Victorians the city was the epitome of civilization and progress, cruelty to animals had become a sign of the metropolis's savage underbelly and a dangerous reminder of the perils of backsliding" (204). The location of Sikes and Bull's-eye is in such an underbelly as they inhabit "a dark and gloomy den," and often experience chaotic and uncertain scenarios as when Sikes first enters the narrative and is almost hit by a pot of beer. Darwin states, "it is notorious that each species is adapted to the climate of its own home" (506), and therefore Sikes exhibits a "vital aspect of human nature [that] does not really belong in cities" (Scholtmeijer, 143) considered such markers of Victorian sophistication. The same can be said of Bull's-eye when Dickens deems the dog's temper as one that occurs "under a powerful sense of injury." Temple Grandin, in her book Animals in Translation, explains, "Animals who

live in highly stressful conditions are more prone to aggression than animals living in reasonably calm conditions" (147). It is without question that Bull's-eye's environment is particularly stressful and such tension, given Grandin's point, leads to the animal lashing out in an effort to preserve itself.

Dickens presents a similar response to a stressful environment when in David Copperfield, David lashes out against the abusive punishment of Murdstone. In the early portion of the novel David's new stepfather intends to get acquainted with the boy by explaining his philosophy on conditioning. By relating to David, "If I have an obstinate horse or dog to deal with... I beat him" (48) Murdstone exhibits the same aggressive approach that Sikes does in dealing with Bull's-eye. Murdstone, at this point, is attempting to assert himself as the alpha-male in the Copperfield household and sees in David a threat, or in Darwin's words "a variation" to his own desired order. Eventually, it comes to pass that Murdstone attempts to enact such a technique, and in response David reacts as an abused dog would and bites him. According to dog training methods, Murdstone and Sikes employ the "positive punishment" technique "which can be threatening and fear-provoking in animals, sometimes leading to defensively aggressive behavior" (47). The men's choice of shaping makes their subjects uncontrollable. Fortunately for David he is no dog and is removed from the volatile environment while Bull's-eye's dependency on Sikes speaks to the entrapment characters find when they are stuck on the fringes.

While Bull's-eye is individualized and, in turn, his presence in the novel is elevated, his plight is also deepened due to his dependence on Bill Sikes. Andrew Miller says, "Much depends, in the forming of our emotional response to the lives we are not

leading, on whether those possibilities were shaped by our own agency or by the circumstances in which we found ourselves" (121). With David, the response to his current circumstance is adverse, but he finds himself free from Murdstone in the long run because of this act. Bull's-eye, on the other hand, is able to respond to Sikes' abuse; however he will always come back to his abuser. The difference between the two situations, other than the issue of species, is the amount of time David and Bull's-eye spend with their aggressor. David's relationship to Murdstone is relatively short-lived, while Bull's-eye's, apparently, has been from a young age. Much like Oliver has the opportunity to escape, so does David as each has not spent a long period of time in the brutish environment. As children, their forms are not defined and therefore corruptible influences are more easily negated. However, the dogs in Dickens' novels are at the mercy of their masters and are fully dependent on the kindness or brutishness of their human masters. While we can cheer for David and Oliver to assert themselves and determine their own fate, our attitude towards an animal is always somehow shaped by the quality of their master.

This matter is what "complicates our compassionate response to [Bull's-eye's] abuse" (204) as the dog is evidently brutalized by Sikes, but at the same time Bull's-eye also does his master's bidding. After receiving clear instructions to fasten himself onto Oliver's throat if the boy "speaks ever so soft a word" Bull's-eye "eyed Oliver as if he were anxious to attach himself to his windpipe without delay." In this instance, Bull's-eye clearly understands his role, and the better he fulfills such a purpose, the more Sikes will "regard the animal with a kind of grim and ferocious approval" (145). The more ferocious the dog is the more accolades it receives from its master, and the reinforcement of such

behavior is valuable in training dog or human. This same type of valued behavior we witness when Sikes sets Bull's-eye on Nancy. The dog's intense ferocity makes him a valuable resource for Bill, but because the dog is a tool for evil the reader's response to his character is negative.

In Little Dorrit, Dickens offers another illustration of animal utilization, or lack thereof. With Gowan, there is a failure to recognize an animal's ability, and this fault permits Blandois eventually to dispatch of the useful animal. In his essay "The Comedy of Survival in Dickens' Novels," Richard Barickman states that "all Dickens' characters... must contend with societies whose rituals are often pretences" (128). As opposed to the outright culpability of Bill Sikes, the villainous Blandois, attempts to veil his character, but finds such masquerading difficult in the face of canine espial. At the outset of the novel, Monsieur Blandois works to convince his fellow prisoner, John Baptist, that he is of a certain pedigree, "A gentleman I am! And a gentleman I'll live, and a gentleman I'll die! It's my intent to be a gentleman." Blandois' insistence that maintaining such a status is his "game" and he will "play it out wherever [he goes]" (47) speaks of a person who is working to win something, and through the disguise of a "gentleman" he aims to attain such a prize. In Darwin's view, such behavior functions as a "deviation of structure", as the man works to wheedle his way out of his present condition of life. Shortly after Gowan's adamant decree to John Baptist he begins "addressing the opposite wall instead, [which] seemed to intimate that he was rehearsing for the President, whose examination he was shortly to undergo" (48). The act of playing a game, or a part, speaks of a person who seeks to benefit from what Dickens observed in

A Tale of Two Cities: “every human creature is constituted to be that profound secret and mystery to every other” (Book 1, Chap. 3).

Through his relentless portrayal of himself as a gentleman, Blandois exemplifies what Ortega y Gasset claims is quite normal in that "man is impossible without imagination, without the capacity to invent for himself a conception of life" (98). Albeit Blandois is underhanded and conniving, his methodology is not unfamiliar. The fact that what separates man from the other animals is his intellect and creativity, and therefore when a human attempts to benefit themselves such assets of character can be called upon in various manners. However, while humans possess such qualities, we also lack some of the more basic functions that help wild animals survive. In her review, "Sensory stimulation as environmental enrichment for captive animals", Deborah L. Wells notes, "Many... studies undertaken have shown sensory stimulation to result in changes in the biological functioning of animals in a manner suggestive of enhanced physical and/or psychological welfare" (8). The fact that animals receive so much information simply from sensations makes them adept lie detectors, and as much as a character like Blandois can hoodwink prisoners and Presidents, he is no match for the alert sensibility of Lion.⁵

When Blandois' and Gowan's painting session is interrupted the narrator provides numerous physical details that mark an alteration in Blandois' state of being. At this time Gowan should recognize Blandois' subtle changes, however it appears the painter lacks the observational skill required to be much of an artist. Gowan however does emphasize Blandois' inscrutability as he notes the model could take on the guises of anything from

5 Currently, dogs work in a variety of these unmasking roles, and one role in particular is in the military. A dog's role in combat is to find explosives or people hidden inside buildings, or as a "combat tracker"-- a canine who is specially trained to sniff out individuals and then follow their trail. A dog factored into the recent raid that led to the killing of Al-Qaeda leader, Osama bin Laden.
http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/05/science/05dog.html?_r=1

"a distinguished noble waiting to save his country" to "a murderer after the fact". At the latter description, many of Blandois' seemingly imperceptible movements can be codified according to Darwin's analysis of fear in his work, The Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals. The whiteness of his hand demonstrates "the contraction of the small arteries of the skin... due to the vasomotor centre being affected," while "the hands are alternately clenched and opened, often with a twitching movement" thus explaining the shaking hands Blandois attempts to hide with his cloak as well as veiled laughter. In addition to his hands, his mustache has a damp appearance which corroborates Darwin's observation of "the marvelous and inexplicable manner in which perspiration immediately exudes from [the skin]" (1507). The pinnacle flaw in Blandois' disguise however is in his eyes. The expression of guilt Darwin noted in his young child was marked "by an unnatural brightness in the eyes" (1493), and so too Little Dorrit, "Once attracted by [Blandois'] peculiar eyes, she could not remove her own" and following this locked gaze Little Dorrit trembles. Lion, "whose head she caressed in her hand" had to have felt such a tremor and interpreting the gesture as a fearful one, launches himself at the object of his lady's fright. At this point Lion picks up on the nervous energy of a creature about whose protection he cares.

In a different situation (like Bull's-eye's), Lion's behavior would be deemed acceptable and even meritorious by his master. However, the instance turns into a commentary on man's ability to control the animal when Gowan becomes enraged and physical towards his dog, and it is Gowan's inability to control that most likely elicits the tempestuous response. Warning the dog, "Get you into that corner and lie down... or I'll take you out and shoot you" (546) his words foreshadow an incident from Dickens' own

life when, in 1865, he was forced to shoot one of his own dogs, Sultan. Edgar Johnson relates how the animal "proved fiercely unmanageable" and after attacking "a little girl... Dickens decided he would have to be shot" (516). When these two animals go beyond the yoke of their masters trouble ensues, as Scholtmeijer says, "The civilized mind by definition wants its animals under control" (67). The actions of Lion and Sultan both transgress the boundaries of a civilized society. Such behavior requires consequences, and so when these animals move out of that realm they must be reined in by force or eliminated.

As our response to Lion is marked with pity and we feel more condemnatory towards Bull's-eye, Dora's usage of Jip also shapes the animal's character in our view. Between David and Dora there exists a muted struggle for power, with Dora often achieving the upper hand. Jip, whom Moore refers to as Dora's "alter-ego," is the canine Dickens uses so amusingly to demonstrate the "preservation of favourable variations and the rejection of injurious variations" (Darwin, 469-70). Natalie Rose, in her essay "Flogging and Fascination," asserts that "Dickens develops a rhetoric of fascination to describe dynamics of interpersonal influence and the difficulties of asserting individual identity" (518). When David implores Dora to be practical about money concerns she tactfully steers his attention away by telling him, "Oh, do kiss Jip, and be agreeable" (575). All at once David relinquishes his "graver character" as he tells the reader, "It was impossible to resist kissing Jip... as she directed the operation, which she insisted should be performed symmetrically, on the centre of his nose" (575). Dora's tact in controlling David emanates from her controlling Jip, and her use of Jip helps Dora eliminate

behavior in David which she finds disagreeable and thus "makes boys into dogs rather than men" (Rose, 520).

Dora's subtle conditioning is something to be admired as she identifies the tools at her disposal: her cute girliness and her dog. Sikes acts in a similar manner when he employs Bull's-eye to guard Oliver and threaten Nancy while Gowan fails miserably in utilizing his animal's nature. The behavior reflects Darwin's belief that man "has great power of adapting his habits to new conditions of life. He invents weapons, tools, and various stratagems to procure food and to defend himself" (822). The dogs of Dickens often times function as a utilitarian device, as the human characters identify a desired effect and institute their animal counterparts to attain such ends. Dickens himself employed his own pack of dogs for the specific purpose of warning and guarding when they accompanied the author on his routine walks throughout the English countryside: "[The dogs] earned their keep by providing early alarm against the tramps who in the mild weather found the Gravesend Road their natural route between Rochester and London" (495).

While the world was becoming more informed regarding nature and therefore positioned animals under such a yoke, reputed dog trainer Cesar Millan points out "most anthropologists believe that dogs' habit of barking to warn of potential dangers was one of the most important things that early man found useful in his canine companions" (262). Therefore, when Jip sounds the alarm against David the animal simply employs a tactic that dates back thousands of years, and simply provides another example of canine behavior as being useful to determine threats. When the dog "showed his whole set of teeth, got under a chair expressly to snarl, and wouldn't hear of the least familiarity" (417)

Jip demonstrates his antagonism for what he conceives to be the intruder, David. Through the dog's eyes, David threatens and thus is one of those injurious variations any organism desires to reject. However, unlike Bull's-eye or Lion, Jip lacks the stature to engage in a physical struggle and therefore defers to flight instead of fight. In this situation, the dog acts as a weak sentry, seemingly ineffective at protecting his property against this intruder. In a different way however, Jip does manage to sound the alarm enough to stop David from "indulging [his] passion by dwelling on [Dora's] image". Jip's tenacity brings forth an image that contrasts with the idealized picture David has of Dora. With this early erasure of the idealized image, David's new picture portends a more troubling vision of a woman's aggression. Jip's barking and baring of teeth foreshadows a looming conflict as Dora's passive-aggressiveness attempts to overthrow "the pet-like status of wives who are perceived as "owned" or "controlled" by their husbands" (Surrige, 16).

Both Bill Sikes and Dora Spenlow are moderately successful due to the outright loyalty of their animals, while Lion's loyalty is lost on Gowan. An ability to use animals helps to provide effective tools to accomplish desires, but the devotion of the animals also points to a self-destructive manner of being. Essentially Bull's-eye, Jip, Lion and the rest of Dickens' dogs are slaves, and each of the dogs is at the mercy of their masters. Ivan Kreilkamp says in relation to dogs in *Great Expectations*, "Their identity and ethical status are fundamentally unstable and dependent, in a manner that Dickens's novel powerfully evokes" (81). The truth is that all dogs exist in this form as the common phrase in animal rescue circles is, "There are no bad dogs, only bad owners". As much as Bill's influence creates a weapon in Bull's-eye, and Gowan's ignorance manifests in his brutish thrashing of Lion, Dora manages to foster a temperament in Jip that could be

similarly displeasing. While it would be unfair to align Dora with Sikes and Gowan as another "bad owner," Dora's conditioning of Jip makes the dog a symbol of the indulgence David tries so hard to manage. All of the instances portray Rene Girard's "triangle of desire" as the dogs become more than just an object. Dora and Bill view their animals in the same light, and while Gowan misses the quality in Lion, all three animals shape the views of those characters who are threatened by the animals. The domestication of these dogs produces in them modes of functioning, and such behavior produces various effects, both for the humans and for the animals themselves.

One only needs to refer to Bull's-eye to witness such uncertainty of a dog's life. While he is constantly kicked and threatened by Sikes, the dog is incapable of liberating itself from such an abusive relationship. The dog's dependence speaks of Miller's observation that "Movement in the Dickensian labyrinth is always inward and downward toward the center, and never outward toward freedom" (49). There is a continuous pulling downward in the lurid dependent relationships of Dickens' novels and the extreme loyalty the dog possesses for its master marks the utter destructibility such a bond can have. When Sikes flees the scene after Nancy's murder, he reckons the dog will alert people of his presence, "it would not be forgotten that the dog was missing, and had probably gone with him. This might lead to his apprehension as he passed along the streets" (431). Implicating that man and dog have become synonymous, Dickens again positions Bull's-eye as an extension of his master. This technique also depicts Sikes' complete isolation, as he is yet again, prepared to dispose of the only creature upon which he can depend. Both are on a downward spiral, and Bull's-eye's eventual destruction, while essentially self-inflicted, can be directly linked to Sikes' influence.

Considering Bill, Gowan, and Dora as "bad owners" would possibly state the truth, however the moniker would fall short of questioning what made them such people. While the reader may hold a negative feeling towards the likes of Gowan and Dora in relation to their treatment of the dogs, it cannot be compared with the emotional response one has for a character like Bill Sikes. As the formation of the dogs' characters has been so prominent up until now, Bull's-eye also helps to decipher the past of his owner. Bull's-eye's condition can transfer quite easily onto his Sikes' personality. The dog's struggle for survival breeds a desperate personality that works to live at all costs, but Dickens also notes how the violent characteristics emanate from the human owner. Given the fact that we have no information about Sikes' or Bull's-eye's upbringing it is not too much of a stretch to say Bull's-eye functions as Sikes' offspring. As a progeny of Sikes, Bull's-eye inherits an explosive temperament, or as Grace Moore says, "Bull's-eye is contaminated by Bill's evil" (204).

The link continues when one analyzes the similar features between the two. Sikes is portrayed often as a dog, as Dickens has him "growling" out his first three lines in the novel. His "broad heavy countenance with a beard of three days' growth, and two scowling eyes, one of which displayed various particoloured symptoms of having been recently damaged by a blow" match well with Bull's-eye's shagginess, a "face scratched and torn in twenty different places" (119). The similarity between their features figures prominently as both characters continue to descend into the depths of despair. Grace Moore notes that after his murder of Nancy "Bill is so alienated from metropolitan morality that by the end of the novel he has moved beyond mere cruelty to become an animal himself... with Dickens's illustrator George Cruikshank accentuating his

degenerate appearance in the text's accompanying engravings". She goes on to explain that Bull's-eye seems to have come to embody his master's regressive traits by staying loyal to him, since [Cruikshank's] drawings of the dog become increasingly ape-like in the final plates" (204). The parallel between master's and beast's physical metamorphoses depicts the type of effectual shaping Dickens keeps hidden from us concerning Sikes' past. All one has is the present, and while such degeneracy is appropriate considering the villain's actions, there is also a tinge of sympathy for a man who has seemingly been cursed from the very beginning.

As an extension of Sikes, Bull's-eye is also considerably one-dimensional. His form is so hardened that it is almost impossible to detect any divergence from such a mould. Only when the dog waits "with a wistful look" for his master to awake does the reader get any insight that Bull's-eye's character may encompass something other than violence. Moore notes that "Bull's-eye here is almost unrecognizable in his behaviour... [his] conduct is highly feminized in this scene, which reveals the depths of his attachment to and dependency upon his master" (208). Despite all past maltreatment, the dog still sits by and protects. The degree of loyalty Bull's-eye possesses for his abusive master speaks to a bond that has been solidified by time. Such behavior intimates a moment when Bill and Bull's-eye first crossed paths, and a relationship, while violent, that has caused each participant to become dependent upon one another.

While all thought regarding the beginning of Bill's and Bull's-eye's relationship must be inferred, Dickens does produce a moment of meeting between human and dog in Dombey and Son. As Jip represents indulgence, Bull's-eye illustrates primitivism, and Lion demonstrates perceptivity, Diogenes provides humanity in a novel that can

sometimes appear so bleak. As, Bull's-eye, Jip, and Lion are largely formed, so too is Diogenes. In fact, the animal could serve as model of "what if?" for Bill Sikes as Diogenes is taken out of his desperate former existence and provided with comfort, care, and nurturing. With his entrance into the narrative the dog acts as a figure far removed from the wealthy world of *Dombey and Son*. As "a great hoarse shaggy dog, chained up at the back" (209), Diogenes enacts the same role found in Murdstone's dog: to guard. Again, Dickens presents a dog enacting a utilitarian purpose, and like the other dogs Diogenes fulfills a purpose; this time protecting assets in the students of Dr. Blimber. While initially frightened of the animal, young Paul "had made it his business even to conciliate" this animal instead of simply regarding him in a manner that reflects what Perera would call, "*Dombey's* financial thuggery" (609). Paul's consideration for the animal speaks to what Jane Smiley says was Dickens' feeling about "the ways in which class and money divide humans from one another are artificial and dangerous" (36). By providing us with this information about an introduction, Dickens highlights two notable points: the first being that Paul is distinctly different from his father, and the second is how a dog's initial personality can change due to external influences.

Shortly before he dies, young Paul requests that Diogenes' care be considered. Such a last request also takes place in *Barnaby Rudge* when Hugh asks if anyone will take his dog before he meets his fate on the scaffold. The reader is informed that "Diogenes was the dog: who had never in his life received a friend into his confidence, before Paul" (228). In this instance, Paul transcends the world that has ignored the "weakest and the meekest in society" (Smiley, 36), and surely stands outside the economically stoic existence of his father. With Paul's death, Dickens appears to remark

that Paul cannot survive in a world so cold and unfeeling, especially given the fact that he is supposed to fit snugly into such a mindset in being part of the firm "Dombey and Son". As Barbara Hardy notes, Dickens creates "several angelic children... who embody virtue" (29), and Paul's concern with the care of a dog, to whom no one else has shown any compassion, presents a figure who not only exhibits love, but who also does not give into the social constructs of an inhumane world.

If social conditioning was ever so fatally flawed in terms of child-rearing, little Paul's abbreviated life serves as a stark, yet melodramatic, example of what happens when an overbearing parent places all their hope in offspring. The senior Dombey emphasizes a cold and sterile existence, which has the simple purpose of accumulating and then gripping wealth. Young Paul cannot live in such a way, and his treatment of a cast-off cur illustrates such a break. Ritvo notes that in the Victorian age, "Manual after manual warned that a careless choice of pet could signal the owner's lack of distinction and discrimination" (91). Paul's choice of Diogenes is not laced with ulterior motives as we have with Sikes or Dora. This "old fashioned" boy places much more emphasis on reaching out and giving to those less fortunate as is also the case when he convinces his father to loan a sum of money to Solomon Gills. Paul's inability to grow hard and functionary makes him a character whom Andrew Miller would say is nailed to himself (118), and therefore like Christ, cannot exist in such a world and must die.

Paul's death brings a blight upon the novel that threatens to cast the narrative down into despair. Florence's loneliness is heart-wrenching as "she crouche[s] upon the cold stone floor outside [her father's room], every night, to listen even for his breath" (276). In his book, Charles Dickens and the Romantic Self, Lawrence Frank compares

Florence to Sleeping Beauty in that, “[Florence] finds herself incarcerated in an enchanted castle, cut off from time itself” (39). Her pathetic figure becomes completely remote due to her father’s frigidity and the effect of living in such a cavernous and unpopulated home. The reader's response is absolute pity for the poor creature who simply yearns for love, but is closed out due to the conditional qualities of a mechanistic father. It is a moment where one is cast down, quite literally in Florence’s case, and Dickens creates a scene of torment right before he turns the narrative about face and provides joy and illumination.

Dickens creates such a contrast when first Mr. Toots, the bumbling, mumbling former peer of little Paul, appears and provides levity. Toots is also a figure who finds use in a dog as he presents Diogenes to Florence as a means to reenter the Dombey family. Ironically, Toots' present of the dog works against him as after the animal bonds with Florence; Diogenes "suddenly took it into his head to bay Mr. Toots, and to make short runs at him with his mouth open" (280). Again, a dog perceives an ulterior motive, and while Toots is completely non-threatening, Diogenes' immediate loyalty to his beneficent master reminds one of Jip or Lion and their intention to identify human pretences.

While the dog provides protection to his mistress, his antics are more humorous than anything else. The highly energetic Diogenes "dived under all the furniture, and wound a long iron chain that dangled from his neck round the legs of chairs and tables, and then tugged at it until his eyes became unnaturally visible” (265). According to a recently published study, "interacting with friendly animals [is] conceptualized as [a] means of reducing the chronic stress physiology caused by loneliness, anxiety, and

depression, as well as decreasing the physiological stress responses caused by acute stressors" (Friedman, 165-66). It appears as though Dickens would agree to such a study as he permits Diogenes to play a crucial role in rescuing Florence from her bleak existence. Acting as an emotional barometer, Miss Nipper sees "Florence so alive to the attachment and society of this rude friend of little Paul's" (282). In Diogenes the reader gets an animal who is on the verge of lacking a narrative, as Kreilkamp would say, but due to the influence of kind characters the dog is raised up and presents an example of "how human values should be made to triumph over the 'dismal swamp'" (Fulweiler, 54) of a selfish mentality.

In the end, among all the canine characters discussed, Diogenes is the only one to survive the course of the novel. Dickens even made it a point to revise the novel as "it struck him that he had forgotten to say a final word about ... Diogenes, "so he wrote to Forster and requested, "Will you put [Diogenes] in the last little chapter?" (Johnson, 334). The scene Forster included highlights the important notion of the strengthening bonds found through the passage of time. The "white-haired gentleman" the "two children" and the "old dog" all mark a period has passed in the novel of which the reader is not privy. Growth and companionship develop in Dombey and Son like in none of Dickens' other novels. This final scene is important as it permits the reader to indulge in a "happily ever moment," however, and more importantly, the moment illustrates longevity. As Lyn Pykett observes, Dombey and Son's "future is only assured when the Firm is softened and feminized. Only then can it trade with moral authority" (109). This moral authority ensures the solidification of family in Dombey much like the disintegrating and then harmonizing witnessed in the Peerybingle house in Dickens' Christmas story, "The

Cricket on the Hearth." In both, Diogenes and Boxer are permitted to enjoy a final presence along with the human characters, and it is the animals' simple company that signifies the "human values" have triumphed over the "dismal swamp".

The worlds in these novels present a wide array of spectrums, and exhibit Charles Dickens' concern with the wide, diverse, and unpredictable world. As chaotic and even barbaric an environment as Sikes' may appear, the seemingly comfortable situations of the other novels include their own elements of "dog-eat-dog". Whether the struggle is to simply maintain a mortal existence or establish meaningful connections, Dickens' works are all concerned with what it means to be human. Through his use of dogs, Dickens was able to represent these seemingly disparate segments of society in a unified fashion. In each, life adapts and exists according to the controlling structure which potentially makes "human lives... squeezed in ever tighter yet unconceptualized strictures upon will and desire" (Pykett, 144). While dogs like Bull's-eye, Lion, and Jip are squeezed, arranged, and formed in a manner we may find debilitating and disheartening, a character like Diogenes permits us to exhale, as this rabble-rouser is permitted to upset the fancy furniture and Victorian decorum. As controlling as Dickens aimed to be, his dog and other animal characters speak to a more natural desire to unfetter one-self from social norms and realize the maximum potential of each day. In effect, the author did just this as his exhaustive work ethic created some of the most dynamic, transcendent, and probing works of art and such creations could not have found existence without a lust for life so often reflected in canine

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