BROWNING AND DICKENS: RELIGIOUS DIRECTION
IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the
Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Karen Marie Zeske, B.A.
Denton, Texas
December 1991

Many Nineteenth century writers experienced the withdrawal of God discussed by Miller in The Disappearance of God. Robert Browning and Charles Dickens present two examples of an effort to provide new religious direction during an era of great change. The heroes presented in "Fra Lippo Lippi" and Great Expectations model effective alternatives to accepting God's absence. Conversely "Andrea del Sarto" accepts the void the other two heroes shun.

In analyzing these works, one will discover that stagnation and complacency are evil while striving moves one closer to the absent God. The religious nature of Browning's and Dickens' works underscores the need for spiritual guidance for the Victorians.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I. CHANGE IN VICTORIA'S ENGLAND.................................1

II. DELINEATION OF BROWNING'S HERO..............................27

III. DICKENS'S PRESENTATION OF THE
      VICTORIAN HERO............................................44

IV. THE NEW HEROES' QUEST FOR THE
      DISAPPEARING GOD...........................................57

WORKS CITED..................................................................71
CHAPTER I

CHANGE IN VICTORIA'S ENGLAND

Many nineteenth century writers experienced "the withdrawal of God and the consequent impoverishment of man and his surroundings" (Miller, The Disappearance of God 99). Robert Browning and Charles Dickens present two examples of an effort to provide new religious direction during an era of great change. The heroes presented in "Fra Lippo Lippi" and Great Expectations model effective alternatives to accepting God's absence: Browning depicts Fra Lippo Lippi, and Dickens offers Pip as examples of Victorian individuals fruitfully striving toward God; conversely Andrea del Sarto's stagnation outlines the source and perpetuation of man's alienation from God. In analyzing these three works, one will discover "just as stagnation and complacency are the worst evils, so the best man is the one who tries for the most, suffers most, and fails most" (142). The striving, such as that by Fra Lippo Lippi, transforms the strivers's life into an admirable one or enhances an already admirable condition, as one's chances of knowing God increase. Browning presents an example in Fra Lippo Lippi of the constant motion necessary while seeking God in his
life and poetry as does Dickens in Pip. In Great Expectations Pip emerges a hero because he never relinquishes his quest to better himself; although at times Pip's vision is clouded or deluded, effort exists when the crucial judgments arise. The social and historical conditions of Victorian England produce a climate in which two writers of two distinct genres, poetry and the novel, offer a means of dealing with changing times. Browning establishes the worthiness of a goal through his characters who display admirable goals consistent with the poet's values. The quest results in a significant existence even if the goal is not achieved. The study of three areas suggests new direction in religion offered by Browning and Dickens and noted by Miller and Trilling. First, the relevant social, historical, and industrial changes affecting the Victorian equilibrium of norms and ultimately of religious beliefs are reviewed. Second, Browning's poems "Fra Lippo Lippi" and "Andrea del Sarto" provide a field of study displaying a hero striving to face the disappearing God while another character waits dormant. Third, Great Expectations proffers a character living the life of the Victorian and experiencing a relationship with God similar to that of many other Victorian people. The conclusion underscores the religious nature of Browning's and Dickens's contributions.
Because the reign of Queen Victoria surpassed sixty years, narrowing the qualifiers to one or two characteristics or events provides an inadequate picture of the times. Consequently while searching for multifarious characteristics, the length of the period makes commonalities more difficult to identify. Hence, diversity was a notable characteristic of the age. A series of transformations occurred that are linked with the dawn and development of science and technology: industrialization, the rise of the middle class, "the gradual breakdown of the old hierarchical class structure, [and] the building of great cities." Because of these spiritual and material changes, the nineteenth century writer’s feelings of segregation and destruction was possibly the norm (Miller, The Disappearance of God 4). Because Victorian life was so diverse, a resulting problem of the age arose for individuals seeking consistency in their lives. Thus, the altered patterns of the Victorian people moving to the city and of factories replacing farms evoked a necessary yearning for what both Browning and Dickens offer: a consistent approach to life while seeking God.

An understanding of the changes plaguing Victorians illuminates the void that they felt and the consequent need of feeling God's presence when He seems most absent. Of the multitude of changes challenging Victorian society, a notable adjustment included "the ancient social order of the
countryside" yielding to the new town, which was based on mass production and the mechanization of the factory (Reader 15). New factory jobs developed, and people were no longer tied to the land for their livelihood. As a condition of taking a risk by traversing from the traditional economic and social setting, Victorians accepted the instability accompanying the changes. In Great Expectations Dickens presents a young man making those changes and shows how Pip deals with this lack of continuity. Browning also displays Fra Lippo Lippi's successful efforts to deal with changes in his life. Fra Lippo Lippi moves from the secular life to the religious life at age eight. The change results in a child's denouncing worldly values: pride, greed, palace, farm, and banking houses. In the Houghton edition of the text Lippo acknowledges "'Twas not for nothing--the good bellyful, The warm serge and the rope that goes all around." (ll. 103-104) After changing from child to religious man, the monk bows to the desires of others. Fra Lippo Lippi maintains an agreeable relationship with superiors most of the time, yet as he matures, he follows independent personal goals as well. Individuals aspired to attain happiness and equilibrium, but many things hampered the quest. Dickens offers examples of the unsatisfactory conditions of society; Pip pursues his ideal happiness by becoming a gentleman, but
the specific difficulties Pip encounters show the hurdles to be overcome.

Wealth, or lack of it, was a notable obstruction in moving from one class to another. In the early 1800’s the distribution of wealth was extremely imbalanced. As Dickens’s novels display, "a small minority owned almost everything, while the masses owned [almost] nothing" (Tingsten 29). Landowners benefited from the Corn Laws, but the majority of the people suffered from abnormally high prices. Because of the inequity in the rural system of ownership and labor, the masses fled to the cities where they thought the possibility existed to control their own economic destiny. Ironically, the people originally deriving a living from the land had less control over their economic condition once they moved to the city. Life in the city provided an aura of business and living in the throng of the masses, yet in reality

In building a private world around themselves man and beast have gradually cut themselves off from God, until, in the end, they cannot even remember that there is anything but their own petty circle lotted out of infinite space. Within that narrow sphere they revolve endlessly, like animals in a cage, and ultimately their lives may stagnate for want of fresh air, as Andrea del Sarto suffocates in the circle of his own perfection.
The city promises opportunity and involvement but actually fosters alienation and isolation. Pip is an instance of the migration from the village to the city. He experiences feelings of loneliness and lack of control while living in London. Pip has less control after moving to London because Mr. Jaggers and Pip's unknown benefactor control the purse. Similarly, the Victorian factory worker maintained little control over wages and working conditions; this limitation contributed to the feelings of frustration and ineffectiveness. Two phases of progress and change ensued during the Nineteenth Century. The first step included changes regarding industrialization and urbanization while the second phase of change emerged as a response to the first set of changes. Reforms were needed because rapid growth without sufficient planning resulted in miserable conditions for the new city dwellers.

"The English belief in progress constantly expressed by statesmen, professional philosophers and economists, men of letters and journalists" was generally optimistic as progress benefited most (Tingsten 23). Although progress for some meant dangerous factory conditions and deplorable city dwellings, the negative aspects of the economic boon were eventually addressed. For example, two notable Victorians, Bentham and Gladstone, believed in progress.
Things had turned out well up to now and would continue to do so...impling faith in the possibilities open to the man of action rather than in the realization of some plan, doctrine, or process formulated through philosophic speculation. (Tingsten 23)

Andrea del Sarto is an example of the person who fails to live up to his potential, whereas Fra Lippo Lippi provides an example of an individual striving to realize his potential; the man of action has unlimited possibilities open to him. Pip also succeeds in *Great Expectations* when he takes a course of action rather than waiting for his benefactor to identify himself. When Magwitch reveals his role, Pip continues to formulate plans. Thus, when an individual's position changes, Browning and Dickens provide encouragement because if the person influenced by change unremittingly advances, he is in God's grace and simulates the life of God as God continually renews and surpasses Himself (Miller, *The Disappearance of God* 153).

Victoria, the appropriate ruler for eager, energetic people, appeared to be a model of hard work and motion. On January 27, 1835, shortly before she was crowned ruler of Great Britain, Victoria was noted saying, "I love to be employed; I hate to be idle" (Tingsten 74). This ruler lived by the same drive as her subjects.
Because changes occurred during Queen Victoria's reign, the effect of the changes must be considered to employ Browning and Dickens as examples in dealing with the era's pressures and changes. Discomfort of the gentry accompanied shuffling of societal classes. At the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, the majority of the people lived in the countryside. The pattern of English agriculture was fairly new during Victoria's reign and consisted of three tiers: "gentry owned the land; the farmers rented it; the labourers worked it" (Reader 38). The "upper classes of society had an outlook that belonged to the past rather than the future, to the country rather than the town" (37). The upper class benefited from the system of getting money for the work others did, so they desired no change in the system or social scale. Victoria's reign of sixty-four years was the time of the emerging middle class (10), however, and the gentry could not curtail social upheaval. The middle class development provided a vehicle for the energies of the Victorians. Browning, a member of the middle class, was familiar with the attitudes of this social class. The middle class emerged from the lower classes as the poor strived to obtain what the gentry were born owning. Primogeniture limited options for the younger sons of gentility, who previously were forced into the military or clergy to earn a living. New avenues were opened to many second sons with the Industrial Revolution. The effort of
striving for the life of the upper class (Reader 132) was fueled by the "central creed of the middle classes: that individual effort, backed by austerity of life, would propel any man, no matter what his origins, to success in this world" (Reader 114). Browning gives a knowledgeable literary voice to the ideas guiding the middle class. The dates of Browning's two poems considered here coincide with the establishment of the middle class. Browning's devotion to playwriting spanned ten years (1837-1847) and "Andrea del Sarto" and "Fra Lippo Lippi" were written in 1855. Thus, the middle class is well-established when Browning presents the stagnant painter Andrea and the lively painter Lippi and Dickens creates Pip. "Andrea del Sarto" states, "My words are nearer heaven, but I sit here" (l. 87), fortifying the notion that to approach God, one must be active, rather than merely contemplative. The philosophy necessary for the middle class to emerge from structured class society clashed with the traditional social system, where every man knew his place and stayed there. The fact that those individuals of the middle class ignored tradition emphasized the need for the bridging class. Pip and Lippi emerge as a new brand of hero capable of clarifying the issues confronting the Victorian people during this time of change.

An additional change in class structure affected the lower class. Because of the new jobs and skills necessary to perpetuate new technology and mechanization, lower class
Victorians actually consisted of two separate groups: the working class and the poor. The working class included skilled workmen such as masons, carpenters, engineers, and boilermakers (Reader 92). "The poor," including unskilled men without regular trade, often became street folk: street sellers or working peddlers (73). Changes in class structure provided uncertainty for Victorians. One could no longer depend on class stability. Consequently, people with the newly distinct class structure of Great Britain must address both the positive and negative effects of changes occurring in their nation. Both Browning and Dickens confront the changing class structure and its effects: Lippi is living on the streets in poverty before he is found by the monks, and Pip must make two changes in social class which affect many areas of his life.

Before cities can effectively grow, many conditions necessarily exist. In Victoria's England the growing gulf between the lower and upper classes created a desire to change. The desire to change social classes or locale was common in Great Britain during the Nineteenth Century. Ease of travel emerged as a second factor augmenting growth. Travel to the cities for both permanent residence and visiting increased because of railroads (56). Later individual transportation was affordable because of the introduction of the motor car and bicycle in the last two decades of the century (Reader 156-57). The new modes of
travel ensured the continuance of change in social structure; thus, mobility was important in Victorian England. Extreme instances of stagnation occur infrequently. "Andrea del Sarto is tormented by the silver-gray passivity of his life, and is very much aware of what exists outside his sphere" (Miller, *The Disappearance of God* 139). Browning emphasizes the importance of mobility when Fra Lippo Lippi resorts to the streets, but Andrea del Sarto, a motionless character, chooses a static condition: the faultless painter remains isolated in his rooms.

Avenues of communication opened during the earlier years of the era with the penny post. Late Victorians were able to employ the telephone and typewriter to stay in contact with others (Reader 158). These improvements made personal separations easier, and industrial development provided a means of livelihood for those who left the countryside. Reader notes that the Industrial Revolution generated "the physical separation of classes" (68). The gentry remained in the countryside or fled to the suburbs of the large cities; the working class and poor travelled hopefully to work in the cities. The 1851 census marked the first time in Great Britain's history when more people lived in the towns than in the country. By 1901 the difference was astounding: 25,000,000 people lived in cities and 7,500,000 lived outside the city limits (57). Tingsten points out a fact that is often overlooked: a population explosion
during Victoria's reign resulted in growth from twelve million Britons in 1811, less than half the population of France, to thirty-seven million in 1901, equal to the population of France (25). Miller presents the city as "the literal representation of the progressive humanization of the world. And where is there room for God in the city," the secular aspect of life? Life as presented in the city is the equivalent of a Godless dwelling (The Disappearance of God 5). So as the numbers of people in cities increase, the feeling of God's disappearance intensifies, and the need for the poet's and novelist's vision magnifies.

The Victorian period is significant because Great Britain excelled in nearly every area of growth: "territorial expansion, technology, power as a nation, prosperity, political systems, and poetry (Tingsten 17). A variety of effects resulted from growth in Britain. For example, if we consider Andrea del Sarto to be a displaced Victorian, then it is significant that he feels pressure to keep his faithless wife happy, to avoid Paris lords, and to produce paintings to earn money. Pip experiences the debilitating effects of pressure when suffering under Estella's spell and while dealing with newly acquired wealth. The effects of increasingly rapid change necessitate a new guiding principle in Victorians' lives. Browning's suggestion for finding God presents a guiding path for individuals such as Pip, who cannot adjust to
radical change. Browning offers the guidance through characters who display admirable goals consistent with the poet's philosophy: establish an admirable goal and employ valid efforts striving toward that goal. The striving--the motion--provides a means of filling the spiritual void resulting from the growth of cities and changes in norms. Dickens utilizes a similar plan for salvation when Pip loses control of his wealth and personal relationships, falling into debt and alienating Biddy and Joe. Pip begins the redemptive process when he embraces Magwitch during Magwitch's last days. To complete the redemption Pip sets two goals: assisting Herbert in his quest for business as a purely selfless act and finding employment suitable for living within Pip's means. Once Pip establishes these two goals and works toward their achievement, the hero takes affirmative action towards redemption, thus moving closer to an elusive God. In The Disappearance of God, Miller notes both poets and novelists explore city life and its significant emblems, noting the increasing frequency of the city as subject in poetry and "that poets tend to see the city as a vast agglomeration of bricks and people" (4). Yet life in the city is even more important for the novel, which might be defined as the art form called into being to deal with the conditions of urbanized life. (4)
Enticements for city dwellers augmented the industrialization process. Factory production induced lower prices for clothing and shoes (Reader 96). Sir Robert Giffen reported that from 1842-1872 prices and wages both increased, but by the mid 1890's, wages improved minimally while prices of goods fell significantly, enhancing the quality of life the city dweller could attain. Another industrial improvement besides increased wages was the creation of new jobs: the railroad provided jobs for its building, maintenance and operation (93), Parliament established a police force, and new professions emerged with industry's development. Telegraph services began in 1851, providing women with employment from the beginning of their operation (159). The types of job opportunities and numbers of people employed by these jobs created changes in the work force and on the homefront. The changes affecting every facet of Victorian society left many with an uncertain outlook. New class structure, new means for obtaining money, and new physical surroundings contributed to a paradoxical feeling of positive changes causing both exciting opportunities and uncertainties, exhilarating some and confronting others. Again, Fra Lippo Lippi and Pip offer examples of how uncertainty can be tempered. When changes cause discomfort and uncertainty, these characters set a goal and strive toward achieving that goal. The striving moves one closer to God because "God exists in two
places in relation to the world. He is self-sufficient perfection of pure being but he is also everywhere immanent in his creation" (Miller, The Disappearance of God 110). Miller asserts that "in both modes God is a vital energy, not a pure spirit" without any earthly aspect (110). The application of energy while dealing with changes draws man closer to God during a period of flux. Fra Lippo Lippi's goal is to pursue God while on earth; Pip establishes the goal of righting the wrongs committed while becoming a gentleman in London. The uncertainty of Fra Lippo Lippi's struggles between body and spirit and the Prior's demands and Pip's sins are dispelled with the action of pursuing goals and making reparations. Both heroes work toward goals and increase the possibility of meeting God.

One well-known result of the Victorian Era was the formation of the middle class. The middle class rose from poverty while employing the ethics well-established by the new class as the key to success in Victorian times. Religion forbade cards, dancing, theatre and drinking (Reader 137) perhaps because vices came between a man and his work. The middle class man strove for gentility and could only move toward the goal through hard work. Not born into wealth, the new middle class had to earn both wealth and respectability. Many middle class men sought professions because professional status resulted in "marriage between gentility and trade" (126). Pip
exemplifies the desire to wed the trades to gentility when the blacksmith seeks Estella's hand. Of course, Pip knows the wedding can take place only if he changes social status. The change from country to city dwelling provided the vehicle for the middle class to emerge.

To suggest that everyone supported the new class structure is in error. One example displays that some Victorians, notably select members of the gentry, did not embrace mobility of the classes but preferred the old system, where an individual remained in the class to which he was born. Ellenberger identifies a group of approximately thirty-five acquaintances and relatives called "The Souls" (134). Starting in 1834 and enduring for several decades, this group existed as a clique (144) composed of aristocratic members; the exclusive club exemplified the desire among the wealthy for distinct social classes. Thus, "The Souls" provide an example of the aristocracy's objection to a new social order. The existence of the middle class lessened the gap between the lower and upper classes, so the aristocracy, exemplified by "The Souls," continued to exclude the middle class from its social structure. Pip encounters individuals, such as Drummle, who desire to exclude Pip from the class of gentlemen to which Drummle was born and Pip aspires.

Religious freedom emerged in England during Victoria's reign when punishment for participation in certain religious
practices was forbidden (Tingsten 33). Although historians vary in their assessment of religious practices in the Nineteenth Century, and uncertainty shrouded religion and morality (34), an "ideal type" religious man evolved: he was the middle class Victorian, both industrious and successful, believing in advancement of man, the Ten Commandments, and AN AFTERLIFE (35). This ideal earthly man, however, revealed the "consciousness of a contradiction between Christian doctrine and the active, competitive pursuit of self-interest, the problem of serving both God and Mammon" (35). Neither Browning nor Dickens endorses the prototype of the middle class. Dickens displays a distrust for organized and obsessive religion in Great Expectations. Pip pursues material wealth and social status; subsequent bouts of guilt attest to the conflicts which Pip's quest for money and position introduces. Fra Lippo Lippi deals with inner conflict as well. The monk must serve the Prior, but the artist must include a realistic approach along with his spiritual vision. The turmoil in Pip and Lippo exemplifies the turmoil experienced by many Victorians. Biographers and writers of the Nineteenth Century have noted that many Victorians identified their duplicity of desiring the fruits of both spiritual and the material worlds and suffered from uneasy consciences. "Dickens, Thackery, and Trollope give satirical and bitter descriptions of the effort to have the best of both worlds," the worlds of the body and the spirit
(Tingsten 35). For the majority of the working classes, however, religion was not as influential as for the middle class. The majority of the working classes in towns and the country did not subscribe either formally or informally to pious activity. Dickens highlights the lower class’s lack of religious participation in *Great Expectations*. The hypocrisy evident in Mrs. Joe’s actions and Uncle Pumblechook’s deeds, for instance, presents a clear message that observance of a formal religion was not a priority. Browning comments on a flaw the Prior exhibits in "Fra Lippo Lippi." The Prior says of Lippo,

"Lose a crow and catch a lark.
What is at last we get our man of parts,
We Carmelites, like those Camaldolese
And Preaching Friars, to do our church up fine
And put the front on it that ought to be!"

(11. 137-140)

The church represented by the Prior emphasizes material gains and recognition by peers resulting from the friar’s superior paintings.

Browning suggests that religious leaders do not always inspire the common man, and in fact are driven by the elements religion is designed to conquer: greed, envy, jealousy. Browning and Dickens present and support a plan for finding God in the void created by industrial, societal, and demographic change. Browning presents Fra Lippo Lippi
as an admirable character having goals consistent with the poet's: paint for the love of painting, not to elicit envy from religious rivals or to earn money.

Why would the poor stray from a foundation which typifies the Victorian people? During the Industrial Revolution the working class and poor had no time or energy to devote to religion. Their effort concentrated on making it through another work day and keeping the family alive. The conditions of housing and the work place extinguished any hope of providing better surroundings for the family. The length of the work day eliminated leisure or personal development. The troubles stemming from cities' growing too quickly caused urban areas and their poor inhabitants to generally forego spiritual growth.

The Victorian Era developed many troubles as a result of its many changes. The imperfections of the newly formed cities induced a second round of changes based upon reform. The cities emerged as the sites of these problems because new manufacturing towns grew with such speed that they lacked government (Reader 60). The number of people increased without proper planning of housing, sewage, or schools. The poor relied on factories, the emblem of industrial life (76), not religious doctrine. For the working class and the poor, reforms surfaced as a necessity during the 1800's. A significant challenge was avoiding urban deaths; cholera and smallpox threatened all until the
1880's (60-61). Housing, privies, and water supplies were inadequate (79), causing the spread of disease and death. Specifically the new industrial towns of the North and Midlands were grim: overcrowded houses lined narrow streets, and piles of refuse lay everywhere. Two rooms, a garret and maybe a cellar, composed each individual dwelling with twenty people usually living in each unit and one hundred and twenty individuals using one privy (Rooke 33).

Inadequate working and housing conditions eroded the strength of the working class. Horrendous conditions led to the spread of disease beyond the individual's control. Rouke cites a Commissions Secretary Report from 1842 in which Edwin Chadwick notes more than fifty-seven percent of children born in Manchester died before turning five (36). In addition to cholera, typhoid, tuberculosis, and diphtheria spread because of unsanitary conditions, rickets and diseases of malnutrition were also common. If the mother worked, the children were often looked after by older children or given "Godfrey's Cordial," an opium and treacle combination, to sedate them. In 1844 a great number of children died as a result of Godfrey's Cordial (Reader 86). Children and their fate seemed gloomy during the period of growth and industrialization. Considered miniature adults, children received no tenderness and the mind and creativity remained undeveloped (Adrian 5). In many novels Dickens paints a bleak picture of the urban child. In particular
Great Expectations notes the plight of the orphan: a child without parents was at the mercy of relatives. In "Fra Lippo Lippi" the child is at the mercy of the church.

No child of any class avoided condemnation. The middle class child was reared with feelings of guilt, a byproduct of organized doctrinal religion. Stern discipline in dissenting and evangelical families whose "gloomy theology made all children to be a swarm of little vipers" resulted in the sensitive child's suffering guilt and shame because he was born (Adrian 2-3). Evidence of the power of guilt emerges when the painter Lippo feels enough pressure from the Prior to paint as the superior orders most of the time; Lippi is aware of what pleases the Prior and Lippo Lippi pleases him. In this manner Fra Lippo Lippi assuages any potential feelings of guilt for painting a few pieces as he himself desires.

Inability to care for the family intensified the problems resulting from lack of spiritual guidance. Some individuals in the lower classes ignored responsibility for children. At times individuals abandoned offspring (Adrian 5), leaving the children to roam "singly or in packs, huddled for warmth, devouring spoiled fruit and vegetables from Covent Garden Market, begging, stealing, lying, cursing, and plundering." The struggle to survive left these abandoned and orphaned children destructive and cruel, void of emotional strength. These dejected castaways,
forced to keep moving, attained "a face rounded and smoothed by some half dozen years, but [also] pinched and twisted by the experience of life" (Adrian 7), a picture of Dickens's Magwitch and Browning's Lippi. Both the state and some parents abused and ignored the children they were not prepared to take care of.

Poor children that stayed with their parents were commonly utilized for the parents' advantage. Children's belongings were sold for alcohol; young ones were sent to beg; mature daughters were prostitutes (8). If these steps were not taken, the child was probably employed in the factories or mines, ideal for children because of their size. Working in cotton mills and coal mines was common and cruel labor for children (Adrian 10). The conditions in factories were dangerous for child and adult alike, increasing lung diseases and accidents resulting in loss of joints, hands, and limbs (Rooke 40). Days spanning seventeen hours provided little leisure; with barely enough energy and health for work, the Victorian poor had little chance of demanding reform or enhancing the spiritual growth of the individual. "But over England as a whole, poverty was making industrial workers restless, [since] the golden promises of life in the towns had been broken" (28). The poor as well as those outside the class did eventually rally for reform as the barbarous poverty of the industrial towns was the result of too much change in too little time.
Crowded into cheaply and flimsily built houses, the poor grew from mere discontents to a ferocious and choral entity never possible in the expansive countryside. Uprisings and demonstrations evolved in the 1830's and 1840's (28); the demand for reform was heard.

During the first half of the Nineteenth Century the "factory question" primarily concerned industrial working hours. In 1829, 1825, and 1833 Parliament passed restrictive laws (Tingsten 215), with the Reform of 1832 marking "the complete breakthrough of liberal ideas in English politics" (169). The time for change is acknowledged in Dickens's first novel _Pickwick Papers_ (1837) and Queen Victoria's initial address to Parliament (Collins 3). Reforms were made not only for factory working conditions, but for other facets of British life as well. The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 tried to keep the poor out of prison; "able-bodied paupers" entered the workhouse in an effort to survive rather than be incarcerated, since the majority opposed the workhouse because it was worse than prison (Rooke 22).

Improvements in education of the masses received some attention. Ragged schools were developed for that class of children who by their poverty and vice were excluded from the numerous educational establishments in the cities; the schools provided an alternative to the mines and factories (Rooke 50). Reader notes that no schools existed to teach
the trades; therefore, if the middle class family sent sons to traditional schools, they grew to disdain their source for making money and making what the country needed for its economic growth and existence (117). Thus, the middle class formed proprietary schools in the 1830's which covered the entire social, religious, and educational range of the middle class. Girls were finally provided for educationally (124). Other important changes include compulsory education evolving in 1880 and free education emerging in 1891 (101). By the completion of Victoria's reign, education had roots in all classes of the society. Reforms in working conditions, education and housing assisted the Victorian individual in striving to better his life.

Overwhelmingly the emergence of the middle class and the evolution of industrialization influenced the period of Victoria's reign. The era of reform and change involved a novel intermingling of classes. Browning's roots are middle class, and he deals with the individual man in his work. Dickens struggled in the lower class during his early years, and he was familiar with the quest to better oneself. An era of change challenges religious stability, and both literary figures sought a religious philosophy in which their characters could commune with God. When other components of one's life are questioned and changed, the examiner might scrutinize formal religion. Browning and Dickens search for a relationship between man and God and
body and spirit necessary in the new age of uncertainty. An approach such as Sir Andrew Agnew's was not the needed approach. He introduced eight major Sabbath Bills from 1833-1838 designed to "suppress such things as Sunday trading, travelling, labour, recreation, nonreligious meetings, and 'above all, the enormous evil of the Sunday newspapers'" (Pope 49). The Sabbath Bills were never able to pass and showed "the receding tide of a nation's piety" (51).

Browning does not lack faith in God's existence, "but he finds it impossible to approach Him directly;" the poet feels God has withdrawn (Miller, The Disappearance of God 99). As shown in Miller's work, the poet struggles consistently with the inability to meet God (99). Consequently, in a time of uncertainty and change, Browning offers a means to achieve personal success: strive for a worthy goal and one moves closer to God's realm. Man alone among God's creations "is unfinished and incomplete and is constantly driven to go beyond himself in the hope that he may see God face to face." Browning and Dickens object to those accepting the status quo because they consequently fall into a trap from which there is no escape (140). When he enumerates the various problems of the age, Dickens informally recapitulates Browning's approach to waning religion, yet in Great Expectations he omits a direct reference to God. The decisions made by Pip, especially at
the end of the novel, support a claim that Dickens desired to provide a spiritual vehicle void of formal doctrine for the people of the 1800's. After highlighting the challenges of changing from one social realm to another, Dickens provides a plan for Pip and others like him. Fra Lippo Lippi and Pip model behaviors leading them and, potentially, Victorian readers closer to a God one can no longer know or approach. Dickens and Browning recognize the spiritual uncertainty of the changing age and offer an approach the common man may employ. The uncertain individual of the 1800's can now follow the example of other fulfilled characters, namely Pip and Fra Lippo Lippi. Because Pip draws several faithful readers in the serialization of Great Expectations in All the Year Round, Dickens offers the example of Pip to a significant audience. At the time Browning pens "Fra Lippo Lippi," the poet's popularity is not widespread. However, fourteen years later Browning's success is established. As both Pip and Lippo Lippi earn an extensive audience, the new heroes present readers with "a sense of the complexity and depth of ordinary men and women" (Miller, The Disappearance of God 129). Browning "shares with his century and ours an inability to believe in the existence of the old kind of hero who stands head and shoulders above the multitude" (129). Victorian society demands figures such as Pip and Fra Lippo Lippi with whom they can identify.
CHAPTER II

DELINEATION OF BROWNING'S HERO

Robert Browning's life (1812-1889) spanned the majority of Victoria's reign. The man and the poet "expressed the energy, the joy in striving, the acquisitive spirit of his age" (Houghton 163). Offspring of a family of businessmen, the self-taught Browning is a product of the "urban middle class" (163). Contact with school being brief and unsatisfactory, Browning finished school at age fourteen opting to study at home (Pottle 6), using the home library at Camberwell, despite leaving some areas of the poet's education barren (4). Left to discover his own tastes, Browning rejoiced in Pope's Homer, Byron, Scott and Shelley (Houghton 163); the poet delved into the works of these great writers, Browning's first sources of poetical inspiration. The poet's mother once remarked, "It is Robert's way to see things as passionately as other people feel them" (Armstrong 17). The intensity continually attributed to Browning and his poetry also characterized other Victorians, marking Browning as an apt presenter of a plan to lessen man's alienation from God by emphasizing the notion of striving.

Margaret Willy describes a young Browning:
To be and know all—tasting every experience human existence could offer, and leaving no avenue of the passionate heart and mind unexplored; this was Browning's aspiration at twenty. (160-161)

The attitude Willy pays tribute to extends throughout Browning's lifetime. In his pursuit of Elizabeth and in his quest to decipher the questions of the age, enormous energy drove the poet. "Browning's ethic of aspiration could easily be vulgarized into a glorification of a competitive society" (Houghton 169), but he chose an ethereal subject, the spirit/mind relationship with emphasis on humanity's spiritual struggles, as well as a subject concerning the material, which emphasizes the earthly aspect of the body's struggle with the spiritual. Thus, Browning is a representative voice to proffer an example of religious guidance centering upon a dynamic individual who is not discouraged by failure. To avoid failure Miller suggests

To live in the realm of imperfection and change, the intermediate area between beast and God, is to live in a place where all remains in doubt. This painful uncertainty is the very sign that one is still on the way toward God. (The Disappearance of God 140)
If one's life is bland or one is bored, that person is off track. To "crystallize our lives," preventing a change from good to bad, results in our dissolving and living in a world void of growth (140-41).

Although Browning was not hailed for his involvement in societal reform like Dickens, he was aware of the problems of the age. One supreme question of the age was "What is to be the relation of mind and spirit?" Browning addresses the question in several works. Armstrong notes the poet's concern: "Browning trusted that given time, the problems of civilization would solve themselves" (19). However, he was not as confident that man could solve his inner conflicts.

Several of Browning's poems show examples of man's quest for both mind and spirit. In particular "Andrea del Sarto" exhibits a failure in man's venture for unity of the spirit with both the body and the mind while "Fra Lippo Lippi" displays triumph. Andrea recognizes that other artists "Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me" (l. 84); the faultless painter acknowledges to his wife that "incentives come from the soul's self . . . Why do I need you?" (ll. 134-35). The question indicates Andrea's awareness that he is spiritless. The painter needs Lucrezia because he has no spirit as incentive. Fra Lippo Lippi credits God with everything: "--The beauty and wonder and the power . . . changes, surprises,--God made it all!" (ll. 140-41).
The monk realizes his creative power originates in his union with God, his union of body and spirit. Unlike Andrea, Fra Lippo Lippi needs only the world that God provides to goad his creative powers. Browning possibly chose two artists in life's struggle because "as a man Browning was even more fascinated by art in the making than in the finished result" (Willy 155). These two artists embody different approaches to art in the making, displaying the reality that the process of making art intrigued Browning more than the finished product (155). Again, the process or motion weighs most heavily when evaluating an item's worth; the struggle, the work, and the means for attaining that end were important. Browning's analysis of men's spirits, "revealing weaknesses as often as strengths, fostered no illusions concerning life" (Armstrong 14). Browning gives as realistic a picture of man as Dickens does; the poet, however, emphasizes the internal forces, not solely man within society. Dickens considers man within his society, but he, too, addresses the individual struggle one must win. Both writers display a quest for an equilibrium representing peace within a changing world. Browning's struggles involving changes within society and within the individual force the reader to conclude that his 'selfhood' must be defined as the failure to have any one definite self, and as the need to enact, in imagination, the roles of
the most diverse people in order to satisfy all
the impulses of his being. To be such a self was,
in Victorian England, a shameful and reprehensible
thing, and it is not surprising to find that
Browning should hide it by various means—even, in
part, from himself. (Miller, The Disappearance of
God 105)
Browning's approach for maintaining equilibrium of the self
within an era of change provides an example for Victorians.
An individual can achieve equilibrium while striving for a
goal when one employs an honorable goal and means for
achieving the goal. The motion of striving is a form of
equilibrium because the result of striving for meaningful
goals couples man in equilibrium with God. As noted, Miller
equates stagnation with an absence of God. Thus, moving
toward a goal, not becoming complacent, creates an
equilibrium of constant motion. The condition of being in
equilibrium with God is what Browning and Fra Lippo Lippi
search for.

Conversely, the painter models one who is a failure as
both artist and man striving for equilibrium. Andrea's
perfect craftsmanship enables him to reproduce exactly what
he sees. But, because his success is merely mechanical, his
failure to strive for perfection of artistic spirit is
complete and weighty (Dowden 191). Andrea admits, “Ah, but
a man’s reach should exceed his grasp, Or what’s a heaven
for?" (11. 97-98). The tragedy within the poem is that Andrea knows he fails. The man realizes what must be present to confirm the whole man and the whole artist. Having Lucrezia as mate results in a spiritless painter. She embodies physical perfection: eyes and mouth; yet Andrea exclaims, "Had you with these the same, but brought a mind!" (1. 126). Lucrezia embodies the emptiness of Andrea, the inability to be whole. The wife superficially appears the perfect mate, but she is the source of Andrea's stagnation. The painter chooses his wife as his goal, an unworthy goal, lacking the spark of aspiration. The physical perfection of Lucrezia lacks equilibrium because equilibrium suggests two forces jockeying for position until both forces are satisfied. Andrea's satisfaction with Lucrezia's physical beauty as a goal is the failure of the artist. He does not strive for either perfection in art or physical beauty in his art; these unworthy goals lack substance necessary for substantial striving so equilibrium can never be achieved. The painter acknowledges his choice of a life unfulfilled at the poem's conclusion: "Because there's still Lucrezia,--as I choose." (1. 266) Andrea chooses the perfection of a beauty he does not work to attain. This acquisition of perfection results in stagnation. Andrea does not reach beyond his grasp. At times it seems that Andrea wants to strive for more than mechanical perfection, but the spiritless painter lacks the means, the effort he must
invest. MacCarthy notes, "it is evidence of his genius that he does aspire, though he could not take the means of attaining" (118). Andrea del Sarto knows what he wants, but he is not willing to strive to attain it. Because copying is easy and appreciated by many, he does not need his spiritual side to survive on the surface. However, Browning shows that form without spirit is useless. Browning's selecting a moment late in Andrea's career shows the artist in despair concerning his own artistic future. The poet's goal entails presentation of one's life consolidated for easy review, so Browning often does this "when a man looks back over his life" (Miller, The Disappearance of God 126). Here Browning reveals Andrea's most painful sense of failure, his recognition that the ease and perfection with which he accomplishes his effects are the exact signs of his limitations in artistic power and vision (Dooley 45).

Andrea's uninspired perfection in art occurs because he worships an evil woman (MacCarthy 20) who monopolizes all of his concentration. Andrea executes every decision based upon its impact on Lucrezia. Fowler says that "one of the ironies of the poem is that Andrea del Sarto can transfer the blame for the nullity of his own failures to his wife for lacking a soul" (37). Erickson additionally notes that Andrea blames his failure on God.
Not only does he excuse himself by thinking of Lucrezia's superficiality, he also feels that God controls all of man's actions and suggests that by ruling too much God has prevented him from achieving the fame he had hoped for. (55)

The faultless painter fails to take responsibility for his own failures. James Fotheringham notes that Andrea del Sarto's "clear self-consciousness and technical mastery are good as means; but the gain is lessened when they become ends." No progress emerges because there is no spiritual effort (417).

Browning uses a seeming paradox in the poem while Andrea talks to Lucrezia noting that at least twenty artists in the same town dream, strive and agonize to do what he does without effort and without fault.

--You don't know how the others strive
To paint a little thing like that you smeared
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat.--
Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,
(I know his name, no matter)--so much less!
Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am judged.

(11. 73-78)

"Less" refers to natural ability. Because the other artists must work harder on their art, the finished product constitutes "more" striving.
Andrea desires to attain unity of body and spirit, yet he believes he is fated to remain spiritless. Through Andrea the reader can understand Browning's psychology.

"Andrea, in attempting to persuade his wife that her search for freedom is fruitless, asserts that both are 'fettered fast'" (Martin 143). Andrea sends the faithless wife away, but he knows she will return. An endless pattern emerges as Andrea appears to need his wife, yet he knows she lacks inspiration because of her faithlessness. The painter believes the failure of their relationship and his failure as a painter are predetermined (143). For Browning this surrender to fate equates with giving up. Andrea tries to bow out of all difficulties by claiming he cannot do anything about them. Andrea stays in his own room hiding from the French court and all people. "As living, interacting agents, human beings have no real presence for Andrea; the only human plurality he can conceive is that of repetition or replication" (148). At a time in history when travel extended beyond boundaries and free trade encouraged international economy, Browning presents a failing painter who understands his identity to be self-contained. Although Browning does not consciously address the comparison, an analogy could be drawn between art and the economy. The choice is the same for the nation as for the painter: "submit the whole self to the marketplace and a social system in which all exchange is subject to the alienation of
a market economy, or withdraw" (Martin 148). Britain meets
the challenge, yet Andrea isolates himself.

Browning acknowledges his stance in public affairs by
showing Andrea's choice to isolate himself as being the
wrong one. Andrea del Sarto's weakness expresses itself in
the surrender of the spirit to the body; the artist is too
weak "to exercise the self-sacrifice necessary to the
attainment of any aim" (MacCarthy 110). MacCarthy further
explains that sacrifice is the necessary element for
existence, yet sacrifice alone is not enough. Its function
and pleasant nature depend on the goal for which the
sacrifice is made. Andrea del Sarto erred because he
renounced "his human and artistic ideal" (11). Edward
Dowden reminds the reader that Browning does not endorse art
which is indifferent to the means, or that "things spiritual
do not require as adequate a sensuous embodiment as they are
capable of receiving from painter's brush or poet's pen"
(192). The unity of body and spirit is the pinnacle of
fulfillment. Nothing else will suffice. The dramatic
presentation of "Andrea del Sarto" can be looked at as the
struggle between body and spirit. Lucrezia represents the
body and Andrea wants to possess spirit. He loses the
spirit as he loses individuality and renown as a painter
because he relinquishes all for Lucrezia. The painter
realizes his loss and resigns himself at the end of the poem
to live a spiritless life because he will not live without his wife even though she is not faithful.

In Andrea's monologue clues are given to show that Lucrezia is a faithless wife. When Andrea speaks to Lucrezia, he asks, "You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?" (1. 4). The painter recognizes a lack of spirit in the interview: the wife daydreams and does not listen to her husband while Andrea begs for a smile, adding, "If you would sit thus by me every night I should work better" (11. 205-06), indicating Lucrezia is not present each evening. In her absence she is with the cousin, her lover, yet Andrea knows this and still accepts Lucrezia as a wife. Hence, Andrea can never attain unity of body and spirit because he gives up his spiritual life for his faithless wife. The wife's absence symbolizes Andrea's absence of spirit and ultimately the painter's inability to strive for any worthwhile goal. As Andrea's only goals include keeping his wife in isolation with him and painting to keep her satisfied monetarily, the goals are not admirable, but selfish, and these goals do not propagate striving, but stagnation. Ultimately union of body and spirit does not occur without the yearning of spirit.

On the contrary, Lippo quests for knowledge of body and spirit united. Fra Lippo Lippi's monologue and his dwellings during the two parts of the day represent the duality of his existence. During the day Fra Lippo Lippi
remains inside Cosimo d'Medici's house on the corner, painting endlessly within the house of his patron. Fra Lippo Lippi tells the guards who have stopped him on the streets late at night, "I've been three weeks shut within my mew" (l. 47), and the painter must escape to the realm outside the edifice. "Browning has an inexhaustible plentitude of created forms inside his own spirit, but only in a latent state;" the exterior world provides Browning and Fra Lippo Lippi with stimuli for the spirit (Miller, The Disappearance of God 116). The dynamic quality of Lippi's life enhances his quest for the absent God. Browning needs others to stimulate and perpetuate the journey.

The striving artist remains dedicated to his art, yet he is not a one-dimensional man; Fra Lippo Lippi seeks intermingling with other people and change. The reader cannot fail to notice the monk's justification for his nightly wanderings; Fra Lippo Lippi tells the guards his story, which displays Lippi's exposure to both the lower classes and the cloistered class of the religious. His mother died when he was a baby, and his father followed six years later; Lippo was left in the streets a year or two to fend for himself. An aunt took him to the convent, and his choices were to starve or to be a monk. The choice of words that Fra Lippo Lippi employs indicates the tone of his participation at eight years of age. He notes, "they made a monk of me," (1.97) not "I became a monk." Lippi was
passive. What makes Fra Lippo Lippi a sympathetic figure is the way he responds to his situation. The monk could have resigned himself to a life different from the one he desired. However, Lippo allows the fathers to discover his talent, and then he uses it wisely. The Prior demands he paint the spiritual dimension of his subjects:

Your business is not to catch men with show,
With homage to the perishable clay,
But lift them over it, ignore it all,
Make them forget there's such a thing as flesh,
Your business is to paint the souls of men-

(11. 179-183)

Lippo Lippi does paint the spiritual component of men, but he is realistic, also. Men have bodies united with spirit, and Fra Lippo Lippi demands that he paint the arms and legs as well as the spiritual component in one's total being. The painter asks,

Why can't a painter lift each foot in turn,
Left foot and right foot, go a double step,
Make his flesh liker and his soul more like,
Both in their order? (11. 205-208)

Both Fra Lippo Lippi and Browning believe one can "take breath and try to add life's flash, And then add soul and heighten them threefold"(ll. 213-14). The spirit enhances the body three times its solo state. The flash of life originates in the spirit, not the flesh. As a result of the
Prior's restrictions, Lippo sees church as "a trap restraining the legitimate aim of art which is to call attention to the significance and complexity of common life—to provide new perspectives" (Stevens 22).

Because of Fra Lippo Lippi's bravery in painting the duality of body and spirit, Dowden suggests the painter "with his outbreaks of frank sensuality is far nearer to Browning's kingdom of heaven than is the faultless painter; [Fra Lippo Lippi] presses with ardour toward his proper goal in art" (192). Browning believes those who know God are directly involved with Him through their striving. The monk loves painting and loves aspiring to completion, not necessarily perfection, of his work. Miller notes that Browning believes it is impossible to reach God in one motion

for Browning pictures God himself as continually going beyond his own infinity to reach an infinity of a higher power. Browning's universe is expanding, but his deity too is an expanding God, and makes a perpetual "progress through eternity." (The Disappearance of God 111)

Armstrong presents the position that love and God are synonymous—the only premise upon which hope can be based (13).

Armstrong links the equally dependent relationship between God and love to Browning's reference to love in "Fra
Lippo Lippi." The only Latin word Fra Lippo Lippi can construe is "amo" which means "I love." Evidently the monk loves life and people. His lifelike drawings display his zest for life and for God simultaneously. The painter's religion emerges from his paintings displaying the duality necessary for complete life. The theology of Fra Lippo Lippi is that God exists "in the midst" of his creation; Lippo himself is not a complete self when contrasted with God's entire sphere. Lippo recognizes his need for God and the monk's inability to exist without God's realm. "He is a shy and insignificant part of the scene, a lowly creature of God, and yet he is simultaneously the creator of an entire heaven, including God" (Martin 159). Again, Fra Lippo Lippi's participation in life makes him a creator. In Lippo's eyes, the artist approaches God as a result of his travail (257), his striving.

Near the conclusion of his monologue Fra Lippo Lippi states, "This world's no blot for us. Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good: To find its meaning is my meat and drink." (ll. 313-315) This anti-Puritan statement says much about Lippo's view of his time on earth as Lippi rebels against a life void of action. Predeterminism smacks of resolving oneself to an inevitable course. For Fra Lippo Lippi life is important. Goodness exists, and an individual must live it to the fullest. Pursuing life is one's nourishment. The monk pursues life on the nighttime streets
of Florence. He paints as the Medici want most of the time, but as a vivacious being, he must pursue his vision occasionally. Lippo paints his view of the total picture of body and spirit. The artist presents a monologue offering a theology within which Browning projects, by analogy, a "power greater than the poetic self through his community of Men and Women" (Martin 159). While the monologue often is considered an opportunity for speaking and operating within a contrived situation, the monologue is also an exercise of interaction in an actual society that Browning called the British public. For the monologue to work, all elements—setting, tone, character—must remain intact and intermingle (159). Fra Lippo Lippi's success as a man and painter revolves around his interaction with others. The artist must be out on the streets at night to continue striving toward his God, that power greater than the poetic self. As a contrast to Andrea del Sarto, who waits painfully inside walls as his wife leaves him alone, Fra Lippo Lippi's interaction with others exists as a badge attesting his striving for results. Miller promotes two ways to know another: either make oneself passive and receptive and let the individual reveal itself, or "fight one's way to its center, assaulting its secret places and taking it by storm." Browning's method is the latter (The Disappearance of God 117-18). Fra Lippo Lippi lives that philosophy, and Andrea del Sarto miserably exists outside of hope or desire
to know another including God. Art redeems in "Fra Lippo Lippi" and condemns in "Andrea del Sarto" (Stevens 23).

"Growth and power of the soul is the proper test of the results of life" (Fotheringham 225). Andrea del Sarto's stagnation attests to his spiritless state. Because the faultless painter has no spirit, he is lost. The spirit guides the body, providing an optimistic earthly goal; this ascending effort ensures purity of the human aspect of life and provides substantial activity (MacCarthy 8).

Conclusively, Browning's poem "Fra Lippo Lippi" expresses a hope for those willing to invest the spirit in interactions with others.
CHAPTER III

DICKENS’S PRESENTATION OF THE VICTORIAN HERO

While considering the impact of social change within an era, one might survey Charles Dickens’s novel Great Expectations, which provides insight into the Victorian class structure, life in the city, and the struggles accompanying quick change. Dickens’s hero Pip begins the novel as a lowly orphan, a blacksmith of the working class, who develops a goal seemingly far beyond his reach. Throughout the three stages of the novel, Pip becomes a member of the coveted gentry class but then returns to a state of poverty and no rank. By novel’s end the hero emerges as a part of the new middle class. The process which Pip survives displays much about the qualities of the social classes in the 1800’s.

As Pip strives to lift himself from his position at the forge, one recognizes a goal not worthy of the striving. Not until the end of stage three does Pip accept Magwitch for what he is; then Pip’s striving and honorable goal become worthy.

The first idea presented to the reader in Great Expectations is that Pip has no idea of his identity. The
child of seven rests in a churchyard and notes, "I give Pirrip as my father's family name on the authority of his tombstone and my sister" (Dickens 9). The orphan's proof of belonging originates on a tombstone and is reinforced by an overbearing, grudging older sister. Doubt sensibly clouds any belief that he belongs. Miller notes the typical Dickensian hero exhibited in Pip experiences no link to the community or to family. Society ignores or throws the orphan into the streets "to beg or starve or be taken care of by foster parents in an impersonal way" (Charles Dickens 252). The majority of the novel unfolds before Pip realizes that Estella is as much an unwanted, manipulated orphan as he; Magwitch, Estella, and Pip experience a lack of identity. The young man searches for his identity in his desire to be a gentleman because he thinks that he will know who he is once he belongs to the gentility. "Self" at the beginning of stage one is "the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry" (Dickens 10). Before half of stage two concludes, Pip transforms into the snob of his dishonorable goal. Chapter twenty-seven provides an example of the extent to which Pip sinks. Joe visits Pip in London; the contrasts between the two render the meeting uncomfortable. As Joe worries about the placement of his hat and Pip fervently sighs relief because Drummle's absence allows Pip to save his reputation, Pip's
desire to move up the social scale at all costs becomes apparent.

Pip's desire for a better life is not an unworthy goal. How he expects to attain that goal and his reasons for obtaining the rank of gentility remain questionable. Because the Dickensian hero lacks social standing at the novel's beginning, the position he obtains evolves from his striving, not the help of others (Miller, Charles Dickens 252). However, Pip does not exert effort to become a gentleman. His only effort is desiring the affection of Estella and then wishing he were a gentleman so he could win her as if she were a prize. Pip earnestly tells her, "You are a part of my existence, part of myself" (Dickens 391). "Pip in his relation to Estella achieves the only kind of definiteness, it may be, which is available to man: the definition of a desired future self" (Miller, Charles Dickens 266). Pip desires to be a gentleman solely to win Estella; thus Estella is directly linked to Pip's identity. The former blacksmith's apprentice wishes fervently for Miss Havisham to make his wish come true. "He might have rejected the whole structure. But no; he accepts the situation, and simply 'expects' to move from one status to the other" (262). With this warped goal and selfish reasons for striving to motivate him, the hero should not expect to achieve his goal admirably. Dabney describes Pip's
ambition to marry a beautiful lady and live as a gentleman as "anarchic and amoral" (137). When Pip becomes accustomed to his gentlemanly status and income, anarchy surrounds him. Pip ignores any advice and becomes deeply in debt. With a substantial debt and reluctance to face his true status, the hero acts without sound moral judgment. The refusal to accept morality and the good life of the country creates a significant rift between Pip's former and current lives as Pip displays when he shuns Joe in Chapter twenty-seven. Pip's discomfort with the goodness of Joe represents the changed priorities of the orphan. Pip cannot return to the village because he has embraced the ways of the city. Pip's change of locale represents the change in social class enacted during the 1800's. For Victorians a move from the village to the city provided a means for entering the middle class as more lucrative opportunities existed in the new cities characterized by industrial growth and a need for new skills which accompanied mechanization.

Through Pip's goal-seeking and subsequent wretchedness, the reader discovers hints of the fancy of effortless prosperity, and the disastrous gulf between established and new urbanity, the village's simple goodness and lifestyle and the false merits of the middle classes, and finally significant human bonds versus meaningless links with money-seekers and people interested only in social position (Roll-
Hansen 200). Smith writes that the major theme of *Great Expectations* is "money as the key to gentility," and he believes many examples of the destructive effect of money exist in the novel (173). In Chapter twenty-seven the reader witnesses the destruction of the relationship between Joe and Pip. Some months have passed and Pip becomes "Mr. Pip." Joe concerns himself about the placement of his hat; Pip wishes Joe would not visit. Pip admits as adult narrator, "If I could have kept him away by paying money, I certainly would have paid money" (Dickens 237-38). Joe does arrive, out of place, awkward and regretting the trip. From this point on, the reader's sympathy decidedly rests with Joe (Roll-Hansen 206), although we see him only briefly after this scene: at Mrs. Joe's funeral, again in London nursing Pip, and lastly on Joe and Biddy's wedding day and with their children. Joe remains the hopeful guide and example for the hero until the novel's conclusion. Pip's betrayal of Joe in Chapter twenty-seven prepares the reader for the moral struggle within Pip when Magwitch returns to London. In initially abandoning Joe, it is not the desertion that causes Pip to feel guilty, but the "way" the abandonment has occurred. Pip gives up Joe for a convict (Smith 178). The message the hero gives is that guilt lies not in the desertion, but in the result of the desertion. Now Pip loses both his dream of gentility and Joe, the
representative of all goodness. As of this meeting "the hero becomes a symbol of the social restlessness of the age" (Roll-Hansen 200). What one must give up to achieve a higher social status seems costly. Pip alienates himself from both classes.

Later in the novel Pip discovers the extent of the price paid for his gentility. The unveiling of his benefactor's identity fully reveals the severity of Pip's betrayal of Joe. The hero must come to terms with his own actions and the motivation for the acts. Before Pip can accept what he has become, he must sink to the lowest depths of poverty and social rank, losing everything he deems important. The ultimate humbling realization becomes Joe's payment of Pip's debt to keep him from going to jail.

The first instance of Pip's slow reversal occurs the night of Magwitch's return to London in Chapter thirty-nine (Hill 132). The stormy night symbolizes the stormy state of Pip's spirit. The gentleman lives with constant guilt concerning his treatment of old friends and his spending debt. Until the appearance of Magwitch, the problems prove minute compared to the inner turmoil Pip experiences when the convict reveals his identity and role in Pip's current status. Smith notes

In the young Pip's agonizings over Magwitch we see Dickens's recognition, for the first
time in a character who is to carry the novel’s entire moral weight, of a kind of original sin. (171)

Pip the child struggles with feelings of guilt for things he does not understand or have influence over. Thus, other characters expect Pip to take responsibility for the sins of other people. Others remind Pip the child he is "naturally vicious." Mrs. Hubble commiserates with Mrs. Joe about the agony Pip aroused in her. Jaggers assertively predicts Pip will "go wrong somehow" as all boys do (Hughes 89-90). The moral struggle Pip enters when Magwitch appears produces the cleansing action of the wayward gentleman. When Magwitch arrives and Pip realizes he lost his great expectations, the conditions exist for his entrance into the human world (Hill 127).

With his faith in children generally and Pip specifically, Dickens suggests that hopefulness exists for all mankind. Agreeing with Hill concerning the loss, Miller adds that

Pip’s acceptance of Magwitch is not only relinquishment of great expectations; it is also the replacement of these by a positive assertion that he, Pip alone, will be the source of the meaning of his own life. (Charles Dickens 274)

Pip replaces his former unworthy goal of simply becoming a
gentleman and marrying Estella with a new, worthy goal. Pip realizes "true gentility" can only exist within a selfless concern for those around him—an accurate description of Joe Gargery (Adrian 90). Both surrogate fathers, Magwitch and Joe, exert effort to fully return Pip to a state of spirit which enables the hero to return to equilibrium. The human spirit is the fighting zone for good and evil (Smith 171). The entire last stage enacts the battle waging within Pip's spirit.

The pinnacle of Pip's battle for control of his spirit's direction surfaces during Magwitch's escape attempt. Until this point Pip focuses his concern on his loss of social position and hiding the fugitive. During the organized flight from London, tenderness characterizes all Pip does. Neither apprehension nor fear motivates the hero any longer. Nancy Hill includes the setting of the escape as an essential part of the climax suggesting that Pip senses a link with the past as he rows Magwitch:

It is the topography of Pip's life—and, most likely, of our own lives. Not the wild, open seas of boundless possibility, but a world of "stagnation and mud" in which one makes what way one can. (Hill 134)

This setting reflects the spirit of Pip. The difference between the marsh being the graveyard of stage one or a
shaper of spirit is the course of action taken in our world. "Meshes," the village version of the word 'marshes,' have two definitions: (1) "confining, imprisoning" or (2) "meshing with the rest of humanity." One's direction in life depends on one's choice (134). Pip's choices after receiving news of great expectations imprison him as seen in his resulting snobbishness. Magwitch's arrival and disclosure give Pip another chance to join humanity. Pip finally progresses in his vision of humanity and himself because he sees the goodness in those around him. Miller agrees with this assessment noting that after the escape attempt, a "transformation" occurs for both men. Thereafter Magwitch thinks only of Pip and not of the "society" he despises, and Pip displays concern for the man who gave up his life for an orphan (Charles Dickens 276). The convict replies amiably to the judge upon his sentence, "My Lord, I have received my sentence of death from the almighty, but I bow to yours" (Dickens 491). Magwitch observes a few days later, "you've been more comfortable alonger me since I was under a dark cloud than when the sun shine" (Dickens 493). Pip stays with the convict until the benefactor's death and then falls seriously ill. Adrian believes that Pip's subsequent collapse and coma are a "symbolic death of the character created by Magwitch. Gone are false pride, shame over a humble background, and his ambition to be a gentleman" (90). When Pip awakens, he finds Joe as his caretaker, and Pip
"fancied I was little Pip again" (Dickens 501). The fallen hero has the chance to begin a new life.

With another chance to be a true gentleman, Pip is able to choose an honorable goal to replace his unworthy one. Previously Pip accepts the easy route to becoming a gentleman—without working but instead waiting for something to happen. When Pip commences appreciating the genuine Magwitch, he begins to disregard the system of the social classes. Pip holds the criminal's hand regardless of the whispers and stares, and regulations delegated by Pip's position in society are ignored; Pip finally recognizes the spirit of gratitude which caused Magwitch to become his benefactor. As Magwitch's past is disclosed by Magwitch himself and during the proceedings of the trial, the benefactor increasingly depicts a vision of a victim of society's ills than an individual with malicious intent (Barnes 22). Magwitch's background parallels Fra Lippo Lippi's story about his childhood. Both are orphans but take different roads in life. Had Lippi chosen the life of the streets, the monk could have been the convict. But Fra Lippo Lippi decides to strive for something rather than merely resign himself to his fate. Pip learns to emphasize the good aspect of an individual rather than the negative characteristics of the lowest class of people. "Coming to recognize their shared humanity, Pip also comes to admire Magwitch for accepting the responsibility of his own life"
Magwitch ponders whether he could have been a better man under better circumstances but does not fool himself. Pip learns this by the novel's end also. Rather than ignore his first social position, forge life, the hero accepts and incorporates the past into the present (133). Pip concentrates on the good of his past life: his renewed relationship with Joe and his friendship with Herbert. Herbert's companionship leads Pip to do "the only good thing I had done" (Dickens 500). The repenting hero asks Miss Havisham to finish an investment in a shipping company that Pip secretly started for Herbert. The end of the novel covers a large span of time without much detail, but the reader, aware that Pip emphasizes the good elements in his life, accepts Pip's new attitude as a new direction both in Pip's life. Pip corresponds with and visits Joe and Biddy; the hero becomes a clerk for Herbert's firm, no longer looking to get something for nothing. Thus, Pip builds his future on the good that comes from his great expectations. The young hero's "suffering and severely reduced expectations do not embitter him, but increase his empathy." In Chapter forty-nine Pip's final visit to Miss Havisham results in his "compassionating her" (Hill 127). Pip repeatedly displays his compassion for Magwitch. Roll-Hansen disagrees with some critics who attest to Pip's rebirth noting, "We should therefore get a distorted picture of Dickens's hero if we insisted on his spiritual and moral
regeneration" (225). The critic concedes Pip survives his tribulations and becomes a more sympathetic person, but is not reborn allegorically (225). Admitting the novel contains significant acknowledgement of "Christian ethics" and ideals, especially in stage three (225), Roll-Hansen hints that some experience involving spirit takes place. For instance, Pip's association with the condemned Magwitch resembles the Apostles' association with the persecuted Christ. Also, when Magwitch dies, Pip is reminded of the two Biblical men who went up into the Temple to pray. At this point Pip asks for mercy on the sinner. I propose Pip considers himself the penitential sinner as well.

One thing Pip does accomplish is substituting his undesirable goal of attaining wealth and gentility for an admirable goal to live according to hard-working principles. Pip's new goal involves starting with his present status and working hard to make some headway. The "meshes" for Pip is the clerking position in the East. Because Pip moves toward more than an isolated existence both with Magwitch and Herbert, Pip's striving redeems him from his fallen state as Magwitch's gentleman.

The three stages of the novel Great Expectations parallel Pip's physical and moral growth. Stage one presents Pip's innocent boyhood and leads to the revelation he is to become a gentleman. Stage two depicts Pip's experiences as a young gentleman corrupted in his early
manhood. In stage three Pip's great expectations are replaced by a "mature sense of life" (Barnes 20). The journey taken by Pip offers hope one can correct the erroneous path in life one has chosen. Hope for a new beginning, a new, acceptable goal, contributes to happiness. Pip salvages the unity of his body and spirit.
Both Browning and Dickens possess abundant energy for each project or interest. Both poet and novelist transfer this energy to a character of positive force. Browning's quest for the marriage of the spirit and the body presents the scenario for his painters. Dickens similarly shows Pip undergoing a quest for unity in his search for identity. From the moment Pip meets Estella and Miss Havisham in Chapter eight until he finally accepts Magwitch at face value, Pip is similar to Andrea del Sarto. After Pip's reversal during stage three, he admirably resembles Browning's Fra Lippo Lippi. Pip and Fra Lippo Lippi take journeys; Andrea del Sarto does not. The odyssey establishes heroic qualities Victorians can embrace because during a time of change, one must journey to meet the challenges change provides. Not all change leads to an opportunity for religious experiences; however, in "Fra Lippo Lippi" and Great Expectations change seems to be worked out to offer a positive result: filling a void during an era when God is elusive. Browning's character Lippi believes in God and establishes his goal: to 'get to God.' The paradox of the situation includes realization that one
cannot reach the goal of meeting God, but the frustration experienced in unsatisfied questing is "the chief testimony to God's existence" (Miller, The Disappearance of God 145).

Imperfection and incompleteness are closer to God than anything finished, for God himself is in a way incomplete. Though he is perfect, he is constantly adding new perfection to that perfection. (154)

The effect of change on the hero Pip emerges clearly when comparing Pip's and Andrea's dependence on women. The early Pip has no identity. Pip's illusionary identity is linked to his relationship with Estella. The emptiness of Pip's existence is established, yet the reader must remember that Pip as mature narrator is older and wiser than Pip, the hero. A limitation of first person narrator is that we see Pip as he sees himself, receiving information and perceptions without the tempering of others' experience (Barnes 28). Pip understands his helpless, imprisoned state with Estella, yet during the course of events, Pip does not understand fully the impact of his lack of identity. The lack of experience and knowledge is part of Pip's salvation. Andrea also chooses, though more consciously, to base his existence and identity on Lucrezia. Andrea chooses to submit his spirit to his body. The painter loses his spirit because he willingly merges his identity with that of his wife. The failure intensifies because Andrea is aware of
his loss but resigns himself to living a spiritless life. Pip is also aware of the hopelessness of his devotion to Estella, recognizing that he depends on her for his identity and desires a better life only to win her as a prize. Sacrifice eludes both Andrea and the unrepentant Pip as a means of achieving the righteous end.

Fra Lippo Lippi realizes that in the quest for unity of body and spirit, success depends on interaction with others. The monk cannot stay in the Medici palace forever because he will stagnate and "as soon as we try to crystallize our lives, even in a good acquisition, we begin to dissolve, and quickly become nothing" (Miller, *The Disappearance of God* 140). When Pip dreams of being a gentleman and trains for the status of gentleman, periods of stagnation arise. The snobbery and isolation from Joe and Biddy continue until he finally accepts the real Magwitch. Pip is a failure until he accepts Magwitch, the convict, because he refuses to interact with humanity. When Pip loses his great expectations, he is forced to associate with all classes of humanity, not just his class of choice. Pip sees the good in others as Fra Lippo Lippi sees the good in all life. The painter recognizes the good in the flesh as well as the spirit. The unity of spirit and flesh surpasses either isolated aspect of being. The Pip of the second half of stage three builds his future on the good in his life and strives for betterment without regard for social class.
Lippo seeks the good in life while interacting with the real world, not the contrived, pious world imposed upon the monk. Thus, the wiser Pip of the waning chapters of *Great Expectations* is similar to Fra Lippo Lippi in the quest to experience life. The common element in Pip's and the monk's strivings is a transcendence of selfishness. The lure of a higher rank in society, the aristocracy, and false piety contains the regard for self. Because Pip and Fra Lippo Lippi eventually shun these erroneous positions, they offer an example of worthy striving for worthy goals. The abandonment of self-interest replaced by an awareness of the world and others in it provides an opportunity to pursue religion. The difficulties encountered by Pip and Fra Lippo Lippi formulate the condition promoting aspiration.

The same characteristics that Fra Lippo Lippi possesses also characterize Pip. Pip secures a worthy goal when he abandons the identity of a gentleman imposed upon him by Magwitch. Pip's new goal is rejuvenation of his friendships with Biddy and especially Joe. Pip chooses to accept the good in his life, his relationships with Joe, Biddy, and Herbert, and to strive to make a life with what he has. When the orphan decides to work with Herbert in the East as a mere clerk, Pip acknowledges his desire for and the importance of the struggle. The struggle is important to establish the worth of any goal, and Pip now realizes this. During Pip's rejuvenation, he becomes most like Fra
Lippo Lippi. Each character formulates his own identity, a fusion of all components of body and spirit.

Browning seeks, as Shelley, Shakespeare, and Dante did, "the truest statement within his reach without ulterior cares" (Fotheringham 59). Dickens admits

Whatever I have tried to do in life,
I have tried with all my heart to do well.
What I have devoted myself to, I have devoted myself to completely. Never to put one hand to anything on which I could throw my wholeself, and never to affect depreciation of my work, whatever it was, I find now to have been my golden rule. (Forester 52)

The quest for each writer entails an undying search for truth, a religion.

The question of religion's role in the individual's life, the topic of man's relation to God, varies in scope because of the social issues and circumstances of the Victorian Era. For example, the introduction of Charles Darwin's theories and Newman's Oxford Movement provide much material for debate. Much literature written in the 1800's illuminates the status of life on earth (Fotheringham 8). The involvement of literature in human endeavors and an increase in the exposure of the public to the novel was significant. A change in attitude toward the genre of the novel occurred in the 1830's. Working-class readers and
critics noticed Dickens, and Chartist writer Ernest Jones made the genre more applicable than the novels of Walter Scott (Murphy 340). Hence, the working class audience began to embrace the novel as a useful form of literature. Dickens and Carlyle wrote to raise social awareness concerning the injustices of British society. The emphasis on the problems of industrialization and social change leads one to believe that many were struggling with the changes wrought by mechanization and the emergence of the middle class. When struggle pervades a society, many seek religion and God for guidance. During the time of need in the 1800's, religion was also undergoing changes. The middle class devoutly attended church and observed its guidelines, but other classes, especially the poor, did not bother.

Browning addresses religion and uses religious jargon by referring to the New Jerusalem, nearing heaven, and by using Biblical references in "Fra Lippo Lippi"; conversely Dickens ignores religious jargon in Great Expectations while addressing religious concerns. I propose that outward appearances imply Dickens has little concern for man's spiritual development, but Dickens works through social themes to uncover and expose spiritual ills. Browning too sets his successful painter within society to show the need for dealing with struggles of man in society in preparation for man approaching his God. Fra Lippo Lippi's dialogue displays his adeptness while convincing the guards not to
inform his superiors of his wanderings. Lippo can adroitly conduct himself on public streets; thus, he is ready to approach God because the monk has successfully maneuvered the changes, unexpected occurrences, imperfection, and incompleteness incumbent in a human life. Accepting the transient nature of man with his need for motion enables one to better understand a God who is incomplete in his perfection. As long as the struggle is not self-centered, striving will bring one face to face with God because the emphasis lies with God, not self.

Although Browning as poet shows little interest in the political affairs of his own age and country, his dialogues often take place in the industrial city, the new dwelling for humanity. Fra Lippo Lippi represents individuals within the city sorting out and dealing with individual concerns. Browning confronts social conditions through individuals. Therefore, Browning's interest is in presentation and analysis of an individual character, but that character is confronted with society. Fra Lippo Lippi succeeds because he desires to be in the throes of society. Andrea fails to approach God due to his isolation. How the character deals and interacts with society is the key. Dickens's concern is the same, but his approach is different. Dickens presents a society filled with evil and watches a character deal with it. Ultimately both writers are concerned with an individual confronted by society. How each deals with the
conflicts within society indicates the character's readiness
to deal with the spiritual struggle of man. Browning has
confidence that society will take care of itself. The
preservation of the individual concerns Browning, and after
ten years of studying playwriting, the understanding of the
technique of the monologue gives the poet the frame of mind
for "psychological analysis and the interest in history and
phases of thought" (Houghton 164). The dramatic monologue
assumes an awareness on the part of the author
of the relativity, the arbitrariness, of any
single life or way of looking at the world.
On the other hand, Browning believes that value
lies only in energy, vitality, 'life', intense
engagement in a finite situation. (Miller, The
Disappearance of God 108)
The finite situation includes Andrea del Sarto's argument
with his wife and Fra Lippo Lippi's being caught in the
streets at night.

Within these two monologues Browning implies that the
only significant evil is inaction; therefore, "what exists
for human beings is only the inexhaustible multitude of
various lives which have been lived or can be lived" through
re-creation (108). Although Dickens seems excessively
concerned with the reforms of society, he leaps from the
concerns of the macrocosm to the troubles of the individual
embodied in Pip. In Great Expectations the ills of society
are underscored, but Dickens then displays how the problems on a societal scale can thwart the individual. Thus, each writer's essential concern deals with problems addressed on the individual level. Fra Lippo Lippi and Pip quest for an identity distinct from, yet dependent on their society and their surroundings; their identities must lead them toward an understanding of God.

Industrialization and the emergence of the middle class foster the society both Dickens and Browning experience. The uncertainty of change from rural to urban life, farmer to factory, provides both a vehicle to prove oneself and to fail. Although "Fra Lippo Lippi" and "Andrea del Sarto" are set in renaissance times, Browning addresses through them the problems of the individual in Victorian times: lack of striving and conplacency with social class. Before industrialization and the changes incumbent upon it, the farmers believed they would remain indebted to the landed gentry. Poor farmers did not strive to improve their condition because no reason for their effort existed. Pip's initial desire to become a gentleman without any effort also exhibits the inappropriate means to an end. Instead, the Industrial Revolution provides the vehicle for striving; the people of the lower class now have a means for improving their lives. The creed of the middle class is that individual effort coupled with austerity leads to success.
Both Browning's and Dickens's championing of the individual derives from this attitude.

Between 1820 and 1845, polity, law, government, and society were reformed. The "new conscience" and "new humanity" were employed (Fotheringham 65). Although changes in the poor working and housing conditions were inadequate, many were working for reform. Reforms included assistance for debt-ridden individuals, changes in factory safety conditions and hours worked, and educational opportunities for a greater number of children. Dickens held notable optimism and a belief in human nature; the hope held by many people of the Victorian period inspired both Browning and Dickens. The vehicles were provided for individuals to better themselves, and many took advantage of these opportunities. The poet depicts two artists, one embracing life and the other fleeing it. The novelist shows an individual desiring a change in social position but employing dishonorable means. Dickens provides the second chance to choose the correct means for striving that is required.

Both writers provide examples of traversing toward God during an era void of religion. Browning's poetry contains religious overtones, yet personally Browning avoided formalizing his spiritual beliefs. Dickens seems to scorn religious practices in the description of the Christmas Day preparations and attending church. Pip notes
Mrs. Joe was a very clean housekeeper, but had an exquisite art of making her cleanliness more uncomfortable and unacceptable than dirt itself. Cleanliness is next to Godliness, and some people do the same by their religion. (Dickens 30)

While watching the frenzied preparations of Mrs. Joe for this one occasion, Pip realizes the participation in organized religion often soils the intent of the worship. Maybe one would benefit more by not adhering to religious guidelines. Dickens then abandons the mockery of religion, but not of religious interests. Ultimately Pip is a religious man. Diction indicates Pip's awareness of the spiritual aspect of his life; conscience, guilt and forgiveness are often employed in the characterization of the repentant Pip.

Browning states "I felt unwilling to put on any of the liveries of the sects," yet one critic insists that there is no doubt both Elizabeth and Browning were religious. Browning's optimistic outlook originated in his trust in an All-Powerful and All-Knowing Father (Armstrong 12). Carpenter notes Browning "finds theology, so far as he finds it at all, through life" (205). Browning opposes the activity of many spiritualists, for Browning--and "he found an ally in Dickens--such supernatural manifestations were a monstrous hoax" (Willy 182). Although these displays were
unconvincing for Browning and Dickens, they both shared a fascination with the morgue and therefore the dead. (Elliott 210). A hint of Dickens's philosophical ideas were set down in a letter to his son written when the younger left for Australia. The novelist advised "never take a mean advantage of anyone in any transaction and never be hard upon any people in your power" (Simons 19). The advice of the penitential Pip could be the same. The suggestion is similar to the golden rule; some would label Dickens's concerns religious in nature because they emphasize otherness, not selfishness.

Miller's The Disappearance of God classifies the era of Browning and Dickens as a time when approaching God was impossible. "The city is the literal representation of the progressive humanization of the world:" (5) After the process of humanization, can God exist with man in the city? A confined Lippi will not meet God because he cannot search for a state of equilibrium. The painter, and hence the poet, must reach his potential relationship with God through interaction with others (117). Erikson reiterates the need for Browning's prideful men to struggle for cognizance in the sights of individuals and the divine (48). "According to Christ and to Browning, to love another is to love God, and to sin against another is to sin against God" (47). Pip attempts to find solace within himself through Estella. When that endeavor fails, the hero must mingle with society
seeking the fulfillment of his potential. Pip first establishes the "pattern of the return" when he returns to the forge from London, and the convict with two one-pound notes appears. After that encounter a series of returns begins (Brooks 513), yet Pip cannot remain in the village. The hero must return to the world different from his past so Pip can continue his spiritual journey. The alternation between two different establishes the tempo and setting of the whole novel as it does for "Fra Lippo Lippi." "Each return brings Pip new insight to the truth of his position." The alternation between city and village suggests "reality will shatter the veil of self-deception" (Hagan 178). The process of return works for Pip in his journey for truth. Hardy does not qualify Pip's conversion as religious but as substituting selfish motives with concern for society (49). I would argue that turning one's vision outward would propagate a religious experience barring the mysticism both Dickens and Browning shun. In isolation a religious experience may by a hoax. Dickens's hero changes after seeing Joe as a contrast to his own character (Hardy 52). Joe's caring for the debilitated Pip despite Pip's past actions goads Pip to reform his own erring attitude. Dickens uses the goodness in Joe as an example of the Victorian hero Pip strives to be. Dickens and Browning acknowledge a distinction between man and the rest of God's creatures: only man has the capacity to consider boundaries
and remain aware that the confines in any given situation cannot restrain all beings (Miller, The Disappearance of God 139). Victorians are aware of the void between man and God, and some strive to fill that void with a God existing outside human limits. Pip and Fra Lippo Lippi belong to the new brand of hero who reaches beyond his grasp toward a relationship with God, a unity of body and spirit.


Hardy, Barbara. "The Change of Heart in Dickens's Novels."


Roll-Hansen, Diderik. "Characters and Contrasts in *Great*


