



## THE INFLUENCE OF UPBRINGING ON CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN CHARLES DICKENS' "DAVID COPPERFIELD"

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**Abstract.** *In world literature, "Bildungsroman" is widely used as a specific genre aimed at describing the physical, spiritual and mental development of the hero from childhood to adulthood. This genre highlights the importance of the hero's upbringing during childhood and adolescence, his attitude to life, moral views and personal choices as they change and develop. In the novels of "Bildungsroman", upbringing is manifested as a personal principle of the individual and is formed in connection with the social environment, educational institutions and the barriers in society. Difficulties, internal conflicts and life trials spiritually sharpen the hero and help him become a mature person.*

*From this point of view, the hero is embodied as a learner, and the images he encounters on his life path are often shown in the role of educators. This article aims to analyze the role of upbringing and its importance in the development of the hero in the work of the English writer Charles Dickens "David Copperfield".*

**Keywords:** *Bildungsroman, Upbringing, childhood, worldview, interaction, personality, character, educator, mental growth.*

**Introduction.** "Bildungsroman" — that is, novel of formation— is one of the unique genres in literature that describes the development of the main character from childhood to adulthood. In such novels, the character and worldview of the main character are formed under the influence of various life experiences and social environment. In this works, from family (school, society) to spiritual values, the main factors in creating the foundation of the hero's personality are considered.

In the Bildungsroman genre, upbringing serves not only as a character formation, but also as an important factor in the formation of an active, strong-willed, independent person. Through relationships with parents, teachers and the environment, the hero learns life values, moral standards and the process of self-realization. Writers often describe the advantages and disadvantages of upbringing, showing that difficulties, mistakes and internal conflicts also play an important role in the development of a person. Sometimes, not the family or school, but the street, becomes the center of events as a place of upbringing. Because most orphaned characters have neither a family nor the opportunity to go to school.



Analyzing the influence of upbringing on the development of the personality of the hero in the Bildungsroman genre allows us to more deeply understand the process of the literary hero's spiritual growth, the process of having his own opinion and independently discovering his identity. At the same time, such works also show the social and cultural characteristics of a particular historical period, negative vices in society, and existing injustices. Therefore, the question of the role of upbringing in the formation of personality remains a relevant and scientifically important topic in the works of "Bildungsroman".

**Main Body.** One of the prominent representatives of English critical realism, Charles Dickens, made a sharp turn in the development of children's literature with his works, whose heroes were mostly orphan children, and whose themes were based on poor child's imaginations and hopes. It is worth mentioning that his novels such as "David Copperfield", "Great Expectations", "Oliver Twist", "Nicholas Nickleby" tell the story of the troubled lives of representatives of the middle and lower classes.

Literary scholar B. Hoffman, describing Dickens's works, quotes this sentence: "Orphans and orphanhood is everywhere in Dickens".<sup>121</sup>

Ch. Dickens in his novel "David Copperfield" features several examples of harsh educators. For example, David's stepfather, Mr. Murdstone, believes that it is necessary to raise children in a cold and unemotional manner, and the whip is the most suitable assistant for him. He also forbids his wife to pamper David and express her maternal feelings. He does not feel sorry for him at all when he uses cruel punishments. Frightened by this attitude, David unknowingly makes even more mistakes. This fear is more evident when he did his studies with his mother, because Mr. Murdstone and his sister staring at them, as if ready to give them a beating, which has a negative psychological effect on the boy. David expresses his feelings about them as follows:

"I could have done very well if I had been without the Murdstones; but the influence of the Murdstones upon me was like the fascination of two snakes on a wretched young bird." – "I would have done very well if it weren't for the Murdstones. But the Murdstones had the same effect on me as two snakes charmed by a young bird."<sup>122</sup>

From this passage it is noticeable that these images are depicted as predators, watching David's every move and waiting to pounce if he makes a mistake.

David's great-aunt also adheres to aristocratic discipline and takes her upbringing very seriously, but beneath her strictness, her good intentions, affection, and concern for the child's future are felt. David calls her "the principal magnate of our family."<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Hochman, Baruch and Ilja Watchs. Dickens: The Orphan Condition. – London: Associated University Press, 1999.

<sup>122</sup> Charles Dickens. Great expectations. Planet Ebook.com. (2008) P. 42-43.

<sup>123</sup> Charles Dickens. Great expectations. Planet Ebook.com. (2008) P. 5.



When David runs away to Mrs. Trotwood's house, she takes David in, although she does not like boys, and places him in one of the prestigious schools of that time. When Mr. Murdstone demands David's return, she does not give him the boy and shows her strong defensive power. An honest and kind western "lady" appears through this image. David learns from his aunt to fight for the truth, not to be afraid of oppressors. Thus, Mr. Murdstone and Mrs. Trotwood exhibit two different forms of harshness.

In the novel "David Copperfield" by Charles Dickens, both positive and negative characters appear one after another in the life of the main character and influence the development of events. In the form of the images such as, David's mother Clara Copperfield, the maid Peggotty, the maid's brother Daniel Peggotty, and the lawyer Mr. Wickfield, David enjoys the kindness and compassion of people with a generous and gentle nature. Despite her young age, Clara Copperfield tries to be a good mother to David, to raise him with her care, and to make him as intelligent as she can. However, after marrying Mr. Murdstone, she is powerless to cope with his strict disciplinary measures and cold views and cannot protect her son. The maid Peggotty is no less affectionate to David than Clara. Even after Clara's death, she continues to take care of him. Through this image, the author introduces human virtues such as not being indifferent to human fate, loyalty, and the ability to sympathize with someone else's pain.

Through the images of his stepfather Mr. Murdstone and his sister Jane Murdstone, and the headmaster of Salem House, Mr. Creakle and his wife Mrs. Creakle, David sees a cruel and cold attitude, while through Steerforth and his mother he witnesses the arrogance, conceit, and self-interest of wealthy families, and in the case of Uriah Heap, he witnesses cunning, baseness, deceit, and meanness. David learns a unique lesson from each of the above-mentioned characters, draws life conclusions. He develops a sense of hatred for negative vices, learns to fight for goodness, and defend the oppressed.

For example, in the following lines, which describe Mr. Murdstone's cruel attitude, we can see how ruthless the stepfather is and his evil upbringing:

I caught the hand with which he held me in my mouth, between my teeth, and bit it through. It sets my teeth on edge to think of it. He beat me then, as if he would have beaten me to death. Above all the noise we made, I heard them running up the stairs, and crying out -I heard my mother crying out -and Peggotty.<sup>124</sup>

It is evident that Mr. Murdstone beats David mercilessly. He believes that children should be treated with such harshness. He does not even allow his wife to show affection for David.

Later, with the support of his aunt, he studies at the "Doctor Strong" school and has the opportunity to receive a quality education. This school is described as a contrast to schools such as "Salem House", to which his stepfather sent him. Dickens shows the

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<sup>124</sup> Charles Dickens. Great expectations. Planet Ebook.com. (2008) P. 45





role of good education in human life using the example of the second school. Here there are all the conditions for children, and they are treated like human children.

**Conclusion.** In most cases, orphans were chosen as the main characters in Bildungsromans. The writers aimed to illustrate how the hero faced difficulties precisely because he was an orphan, how he grew as a person in the process of overcoming them, how he understood the world, learned from his mistakes, and finally became a successful person. At the same time, the description of the life of orphans, the conditions created or not for them, and the attitudes of various social representatives towards them also served to illustrate the socio-political environment of that time.

To conclude, as in other novels of this type, in “David Copperfield”, the main character does not bow to difficulties and injustices, does not lose his identity, honest heart. In fact, the Bildungsromans of Ch. Dickens have a didactic nature and allow to reveal the constructive and destructive mechanisms of society that affect the spiritual and moral formation of a person.

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