Dickens Essay, Research Paper

I m here to tell you a little about myself and my “favourite child,” David Copperfield.(Page 158) I wrote many novels in my many years as a writer, some were more popular than David Copperfield, some were are considered better books than David Copperfield, but I believe that it is by far my most treasured work. When I wrote David Copperfield I was filled with and imaginative energy that wouldn t subside until I was finished. I would hope that if people remembered me for just one of my works that that work would be David Copperfield.

David Copperfield is a work of fiction that I loosely based on my life, like how I worked at a very young age.(Fielding 42) I changed some situations in David s life to the way that I would have happened in my life, while others are almost exactly the same as mine. My experience as a child laborer really affected me and I never talked about it other than in this novel. My wife and children don t know of my earlier experiences. David like myself is a writer and had a complicated life. His father like mine was caring but careless with money and this affected his childhood. David became very popular as a writer as I did and in the end he lived happily ever after, as for me I don t know how all of this will end for myself. (Dickens 332) I believed that putting myself in the novel as David contributed to its “truthfulness and power as a novel.” (Davis 90)

When I started on David Copperfield in 1950, I tried to create “a world both recognizable and magical that is filled with suspense, humor, deeply felt emotion, and tenderness.” (Weitzner 92, 100) I created a dream world that anyone can relate to in one form or another. When I wrote David Copperfield I held my inventive capacity on the stern condition that it must master my whole life, often have complete possession of me, and for months together put everything else away from me. (Hoff 2)

I wanted to expose the pitfalls of the Victorian society. Thus, in David Copperfield, I protested against the sexual mores of my age that condemned “fallen” women- unmarried women who had affairs or gave birth to illegitimate children. I also showed the misery of life and the conditions of a child laborer in the time period and how this effects him as he grows. (Tomlin 63). I criticize the antiquated legal institution of Doctors’ Commons in a few passages. I also devote a chapter to satirizing prison reform. (Smith 113)

David Copperfield is told entirely during his adult life, David has an extraordinary memory, his account of his childhood is so concretely realized that readers may forget that he is remembering the events and not telling them as they happen. (Davis 90) I wanted to write the story from a childhood and an adult perspective, so to combine the innocent child s perspective with that of the narrator who knows that his innocence and security will pass.(Harris 325) I tried to create characters, “who vary from the comic charm to monstrous hypocrisy, from adroit professionalism to selfish impotence, from fanaticism to honorable limitation,” to surround David. (Price Cover) I tried to create a world so real that the characters were “company” for thousands of people who lived with them. (Hoff 24) I wanted middle-class families in their cozy parlors to look forward to reading my latest book, admiring the sentimental scenes and moral messages. In poorer neighborhoods, people might gather in groups, breathlessly listening to it being read aloud; they might laugh at the broad comedy and gasped at the thrilling suspense. (Richetti 249)

When I wrote, I tried to leave things open to interpretation, so the reader could perceive David s misinterpretation of a situation through his innocence and see a guileness that can be both comic and touching. (Page 161) I also wanted to show the value of self-denial and, and patience, the quiet endurance of unavoidable ills, and the strenuous efforts against ills remediable. (Tomlin 249) I wanted it to posses a simplicity that is understandable by every little person who reads my novel. (Page 162)

Some critics would have you believe that my writing doesn t have any real significance or that it is not profound enough to be a masterpiece. (Price 69) David Copperfield may have some of the same themes as other masterpieces, but I want the critics to remember me not for the story but for the words that I use to create that story and that the power of self creation is through language. I believe that my vivid account of child and adult life in Victorian society constitutes it s place in Western literature.

According to Irving Singer, my art is to sport according to the rules of the game, and to do things for the sake of doing them, rather than for any ulterior motive. (Singer 211) I don t have a reason to write I just write because I can t help it.

I would just like to end my letter today by suggesting that anyone interested in a book about the Victorian society pick up David Copperfield. The vivid account of life and my style of writing will captivate any reader. As I said before David Copperfield is my “favourite child” and I believe that it will be yours as well. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Charles Dickens