Anti-Oedipalizing
Great Expectations:
Masochism, Subjectivity, Capitalism

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Dickens, in his infatuation with the orphan, anticipates Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, which argues against interpreting everyone's life experience in terms of the Oedipal conflict's family drama. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that such a model flattens the richness of experience by forcing everyone into the same mold, and they quote a motto for schizoanalysis—their replacement for psychoanalysis—from Antonin Artaud:

I don't believe in father

in mother,

got no

papamummy. (*Anti-Oedipus* 14)

Rather than psychoanalysis's repetitious Oedipalizing, Deleuze and Guattari posit that the "first task [of schizoanalysis] consists of discovering in a subject the nature, the formation, or the functioning of his [as opposed to the Oedipal] desiring-machines" (322). In *Great Expectations*, as in other Dickens novels, the central character is indeed without papamummy. Deleuze and Guattari's work encourages us to recover from Dickens's pre-Freudian works meanings that several decades of psychoanalyt-
ic criticism may have since Oedipalized out of existence. Anti-Oedipus, Deleuze’s Présentation de Sacher-Masoch, and Kathy Acker’s rip-off of Dickens’s novel (also titled Great Expectations), point to the peculiar way in which Pip’s subjectivity is constituted by masochism and to the societal implications of masochism in Great Expectations.

In a sense, this reading seeks to be postmodern, so I would like to turn briefly to “Dickens and the Genealogy of Postmodernism,” where Jay Clayton suggests that Dickens has been left out of American theoretical work on postmodernism, and that:

This absence contrasts notably with the prominent place of nineteenth-century European novelists and poets in the theorizing of postmodernism: think of Balzac in Roland Barthes; Hölderlin in Michel Foucault; Flaubert, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, and Valéry in a number of contemporary theorists; to say nothing of Hegel, Marx, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche. (181)

Clayton’s article makes some interesting observations on the uses of postmodern interpretation, but also makes some confused statements that merit cleaning up. In the quotation above, for example, Clayton assumes that Barthes and Foucault are theorists of postmodernism. However, as Andreas Huyssen persuasively argues, theorists of postmodernism in the United States have extensively drawn on French poststructuralists, but “poststructuralism is primarily a discourse of and about modernism” (Huyssen 207). Clayton himself cites Huyssen as a source to consult for clarification on postmodernism, but fails to follow Huyssen’s careful use of terms (Clayton 184). Neither does Clayton follow his own assumptions consistently; after implicitly stating that poststructuralists are postmodernists, Clayton goes on to say that J. Hillis Miller, Peter Brooks, and D. A. Miller are not postmodernists (182).

If Foucault is a postmodernist, however, it only seems logical to place the same label (for what it is worth) on D. A. Miller, since his “Discipline in Different Voices” is nothing if not Foucauld-ian. This point is minor but significant, since Clayton’s thesis is that Dickens has been somehow left out because, Clayton asserts, “the discourse of postmodernism excludes a range of historical questions that would seem to challenge its own highly distinctive mode of historical reference” (188-9). However, Clayton does not explain why this strategy excludes Dickens while embracing nineteenth-century continental writers. I do not intend to argue that Clayton slighted Miller in some way by failing to cubby-hole him with theorists of postmodernism; that sort of debate leads nowhere, and, in any event, other writers have presented arguments, which equal Huyssen’s in persuasive power, finding that poststructuralism is postmodernism’s theoretical expression. Fredric Jameson could head this list (see, for instance, Chapter 7 of Postmodernism). Rather, having drawn attention to the fact that Clayton’s essay should be read with caution, I would like to pursue Clayton’s assertion that “We must recognize that postmodernism is not the dawning of a new age but the realization of certain possibilities within Western society that were salient even in the time of Charles Dickens” (194, 195).

On the question of the postmodernity of poststructuralism, my own sympathies lie more with Jameson than with Huyssen, whom Clayton invokes. For instance, in “The Realist Floor-Plan,” an exemplary application of postmodern interpretive modes with nineteenth-century literature, Jameson lifts concepts from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s Anti-Oedipus and Roland Barthes’s “The Reality Effect” and demonstrates the sense of a new spatial order in a tale by Flaubert. Jameson understands Flaubert’s tale as a part of the enormous process of decoding on all levels [that constitutes] the bourgeois cultural revolution ("Realist" 373, emphasis dropped) and examines the ways in which it participates in “the retraining, the collective re-education, of a whole population whose mentalities and habits were formed in the previous mode of production, feudalism or the ancien régime” (374). Clayton remarks that Dickens’s work involves itself in a similar project:

Who has analyzed more critically than Dickens some of the dominant forms of consciousness in early capitalism . . . ? . . . But who has also contributed more insidiously to the internalization of the very disciplinary procedures upon which these institutions rely . . . ? (186)
Clayton's observation reflects a very Jamesonian assumption: that works of art always have, Janus-like, reactionary (ideological) as well as progressive (utopian) faces? In fact, one of Jameson's tenets in "The Realist Floor-Plan" and elsewhere is precisely that "postmodernism is not the dawning of a new age but the realization of certain possibilities" (Clayton 195). Capitalism fundamentally impacts those possibilities, and today—just as we find capitalism expanding in an unprecedented way (as Marx said it would) into all corners of the globe and even (according to Jameson) into the unconscious—we also find many features of Dickens's work more grotesquely represented in contemporary fiction, as Clayton also mentions (156-88). Thus, following Jameson and (more cautiously) Clayton, I will look at an avenue through which contemporary criticism can rescue Dickens from a particular modernist hermeneutic: Freud's Oedipal family.

Several critics note the element of masochism in Great Expectations, and reviewing their comments in light of Deleuze's study of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch proves enlightening. Pip's frequent self-reproach is a prominent feature of the novel, and Shuli Barzilai, in her article, "Dickens's Great Expectations: The Motive for Moral Masochism," remarks that:

It is a critical commonplace that the crux of Great Expectations is guilt. The plot unfolds, the settings change, the characters develop, but the sense of guilt is constant. J. Hillis Miller observes that in Great Expectations 'the Dickensian hero becomes aware of himself as guilty. His very existence is a matter of reproach and a shameful thing.' (Barzilai 45; Miller 251)

Unfortunately Barzilai attempts to construct "a series of equations in which seemingly opposed characters become interchangeable" (Barzilai 65)—a series that includes Miss Havisham, Estella, Pip, and Bentley Drummle. It is perhaps impossible to conceive of a compelling interpretation that could collapse so many characters into interchangeability, and in fact Barzilai's argument does not succeed. Barzilai asserts, for instance, in

Freudian fashion, that "For Estella, Drummle is not an alter ego, but rather an exteriorization of the function of the super-ego: the punishing, parental authority of conscience within the self" (66); however, I will argue later that Estella and Drummle are not at all the same person, but two very incompatible people.

Carol Siegel's interesting "Postmodern Women Review Victorian Male Masochism" approaches Great Expectations from the perspective of contemporary literature. She notes that "in Great Expectations, and a number of other Victorian novels, masochistic content is often explicit, [and] confessionally foregrounded rather than sublimated" (3). Siegel raises the perennial issue of the novel's two endings, and cleverly hypothesizes that when today's readers prefer the original, "unhappy" ending it is because "we are more comfortable seeing Pip receive undesired punishment than we are with the published ending's sly suggestion that masochistic pleasures can pulse in and out of a man's life" (4). Like Siegel, I will refer to the original, shorter ending as the unhappy one and to the longer, substituted ending as the happy one. My contention will be that the former puts an end to Pip's masochism, whereas the latter does not, since it allows Pip to exit with Estella, his torturer. The published ending presents their exit ambiguously; and allows, on one hand, the possibility that Pip and Estella will continue the love-hate relationship they have had so long, or, on the other hand, that they will institutionalize their relationship in marriage. Of course, marriage does not preclude the continuation of a ritualized masochism—as the Gargerys' marriage amply illustrates at the book's beginning. (The most famous example of masochism in married life remains, naturally, that of Leopold and Wanda von Sacher-Masoch.)

Kaja Silverman explores the nature of male versus female masochism at length in "Masochism and Male Subjectivity," and offers conclusions that lend support to Siegel's observation about our discomfort with the happy ending. Silverman remarks that "pathological masochism is almost by very definition a male rather than a female phenomenon" (36). Some degree of masochism in each sex is only natural; however, masochism threatens the masculine position, and can only be openly acknowledged in the female, in whom "[i]t is an accepted—indeed a requisite—element of 'normal' female subjectivity, providing a crucial mechanism for eroticizing lack and subordina-
tion" (36). While our culture valorizes the male sadist's virility, it sneers contemptuously at the "feminized" masochist. In the female context, though, "the woman's position within the symbolic order is already so subordinate that further degradation changes nothing" (62).

* In Présentation de Sacher-Masoch: Le Froid et le Cruel, Deleuze argues persuasively that masochism and sadism are not to be considered as two sides of the same coin, but as different realms of experience entirely. I will annex Deleuze's argument from time to time in order to elucidate the pre-Freudian masochism in Great Expectations. The novel opens with an account of Pip's earliest memories of himself as a thinking subject. Strangely, though, the language in which Pip presents this information seems given over to images of thingness, rather than to assertions of independent subjectivity. He terms this awareness: "My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things" (35, my emphasis). Pip's psyche, then, from his earliest memory, is of a passive nature, since "impression" implies a being acted upon rather than an active assertion of identity. Moreover, Pip does not declare an identity of himself, but of "things," and later, when taking food to Magwitch, says that "instead of running at everything, everything seemed to run at me" because of the mist (48). He further remarks:

This was very disagreeable to a guilty mind. The gates and dykes and banks came bursting at me through the mist, as if they cried as plainly as could be, 'A boy with Somebody-else's pork pie! Stop him!' (48)

In fact, Pip presents himself as a passive "thing" several times in the first pages of the novel. After a long catalogue of things he is aware of, Pip at last includes himself: "... and that the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip" (36). Again, the wording contains some curious displacements. As if to put his identity on the same level as that of the various inanimate phenomena he has catalogued, Pip refers to himself as a "small bundle of shivers"--reminiscent more of a sheaf of winter wheat than a small boy--and calls himself, in the third person, "Pip" rather than the more expected first-person "myself."

Other characters contribute to Pip's objectification. Pumblechook, for instance, greets Pip as "Sixpennorth of halfpence" (56)--an appellation that connects with an overall commentary on capitalism, which I will discuss later. In the opening scene, Magwitch, "licking his lips," declares, "You young dog, . . . what fat cheeks you ha' got . . . Darn Me if I couldn't eat em . . . and if I han't half a mind to!" (36). Pip again becomes the object of cannibalism in the holiday dinner scene during Mr Wopsle and Mr Pumblechook's discourse on Pip's resemblance to a pig:

'Besides,' said Mr Pumblechook, turning sharply on me, 'think what you've to be grateful for. If you'd been born a Squeaker--'

'He was, if ever a child was,' said my sister, most emphatically . . .

'Well, but I mean a four-footed Squeaker,' said Mr Pumblechook. 'If you had been born such, would you have been here now? Not you--

'Unless in that form,' said Mr Wopsle, nodding toward the dish. (58)

For Magwitch and Wopsle, Pip is a potential dinner-edible, rather than Oedipal--but for Mrs. Joe he is a "tickled frame" and a "connubial missile" (40, 41). Pip's relationship with his sister is, of course, extremely important in accounting for his understanding of himself, since she brought him up--by hand--during the formative years of early childhood. In one respect, this relationship anticipates Deleuze's argument in Présentation de Sacher-Masoch and makes it even more Deleuzean by shifting the role of "femme-bourreau" ("woman-torturer") from the oral mother to the sister--a shift which accords with Deleuze's later attempt in Anti-Oedipus to escape Oedipalizing structures. The shift does retain an element of the oral mother: Mrs. Joe brings Pip up by hand, which literally means only that she bottle fed him. Pip's recurrent use of the expression, however, strongly suggests, beyond milk, the element of masochism involved. The most humorous example of Pip's intentionally blurring the meaning
from the perspective of an adult reminiscence is surely when he confides:

Having at that time to find out for myself what the expression meant, and knowing her to have a hard hand, and to be much in the habit of laying it upon her husband as well as upon me, I supposed that Joe Gargery and I were both brought up by hand... I had a general impression that she must have made Joe Gargery marry her by hand. (39)

Mrs. Joe, then, was Pip's nurturer, although his avowal of being "undersized for my years, and not strong" (36) suggests, given her personality, that she may have withheld his milk as often as she gave it. Besides nurturing, she disciplined Pip with a rigorous application of Tickler, an external manifestation of her power as "femme-bourreau" and undeniable evidence of what Deleuze calls the masochistic "dénégation" that the woman does not lack a penis, that she lacks nothing (Présentation 29). Deleuze asserts that "it is an error to think that the masochist, as if by happy chance, meets a sadistic woman"; in fact, "[i]t is necessary that the masochist make the woman a despot." In this case, however, the sadist is rearing the masochist-to-be. And Mrs. Joe is truly a sadist of the first order; not only does she abuse Pip with Tickler, employ him as a connubial missile, and torment him psychologically, she also habitually "jammed the loaf [of bread] hard and fast against her bib—where it sometimes got a pin into it, and sometimes a needle, which we afterwards got into our mouths" (Dickens 42). Pip further speculates in regard to her "prevailing redness of skin... whether it was possible she washed herself with a nutmeg-grater instead of soap" (40). As Deleuze notes, in contrast to the masochist (who only ever takes one role), the sadist likes to be whipped as much as to whip someone else, and it is quite easy to imagine Mrs. Joe turning her violence and her "uncomfortable and unacceptable" cleanliness (Dickens 54) against herself. Georges Bataille's comments in Erotism on Sade's language are also of interest in respect to Mrs. Joe:

As a general rule the torturer does not use the language of the violence exerted by him in the name of an established authority; he uses the language of the authority, and that gives him what looks like an excuse, a lofty justification. (187)

As Deleuze puts it, "Sade's language is paradoxical because it is essentially that of a victim." Unlike Sade, Mrs. Joe does in fact use the language of the torturer as Bataille defines it, for she continually refers to herself as imposed upon and to her oppressed family as the oppressors, perhaps most humorously when Pip relates that his sister was not invited to Satis House:

[Mrs. Joe] asked me and Joe whether we supposed she was door-mats under our feet, and how we dared to use her so, and what company we graciously thought she was fit for... and then she asked Joe why he hadn't married a Negress Slave at once? (Dickens 126)

Of course, Pip's narrative always gives the lie to Mrs. Joe's euphemistic torture-speak. As the true "victim," it is his role to expose the violence that the torturer seeks to hide.

My point in looking at Pip's childhood is not to establish that Pip lacks subjectivity, nor that he is merely an object, but that from his earliest memories his subjectivity has understood itself in terms of objectification and subjection. As Deleuze says of the masochist's oral mother, "The mother is not in the least a term of identification, but the condition of the symbolism across which the masochist expresses himself." Herself a sadist, Mrs. Joe allows the infant Pip only the conditions for a masochistic understanding of being and subjectivity—an understanding that emerges as masochism per se, not in his relationship with his sister (over which he has no control), but in his relationship with Estella. Mrs. Joe's sadism provides Pip's formative consciousness a symbolic field in which he is always guilty and perpetually the object of physical and mental violence. After his sister is struck down, guilt inevitably continues to constitute Pip's understanding of himself and informs his masochistic relationship with...
Estella. As J. Hillis Miller remarks, in *Great Expectations* "the Dickensian hero becomes aware of himself as guilty. His very existence is a matter of reproach and a shameful thing" (251). I do not intend to imply that Pip picks up with Estella where he left off with his sister. There is some overlap between Pip's meeting Estella and Orlick's attack on Mrs. Joe; during this time Pip undergoes a transition from being the object of his sister's sadism to the subject of his own masochism.

Pip marks for us in his choice of words the day in which he moves into the realm of a masochism independent of his sister's sadism when, after his first visit to Satis House, he addresses the reader:

> Pause you who read this, and think for a moment of the long chain of iron or gold, of thorns or flowers, that would never have bound you, but for the formation of the first link on one memorable day. (101)

Made of iron and gold, thorns and flowers, the chains that bind Pip provide pleasure and pain. Although Pip insists at one point that he 'did not, even that romantic morning, invest her [Estella] with any attributes save those she possessed' (253), the reader may wonder whether, even from Pip's mature perspective, he is a competent judge of the degree to which he does (not) romanticize her. For instance, Pip recounts that, after his first visit to Satis House, he saw Estella 'pass among the extinguished fires, and ascend some light iron stairs, and go out by a gallery high overhead, as if she were going out into the sktj' (93, my emphasis), and frequently issues exclamations such as: "O the sense of distance and disparity that came upon me, and the inaccessibility that came about her!" (256). After being called "boy" (see, for example, 86) and insulted endlessly, Pip keeps coming back for more:

>'Am I insulting?' [asks Estella.]
>'Not so much as you were last time,' said I.
>'Not so much so?'
>'No.'
>She fired when she asked the last question, and

Although Pip does not feel that he idealizes Estella, she certainly answers, as she is, to an integral aspect of his personality: his masochism.

Delaueze asserts that the masochist generally does not find, by chance, a sadistic woman to fulfill his needs, but must make a woman perform a role in order to satisfy himself (*Présentation* 20). Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs* provides the classic example of the theatricality of masochism, but Delaueze notes that, nevertheless, "we want her [Wanda von Sacher-Masoch] to be sadistic, since Masoch was masochistic. But the problem is perhaps not properly posed thus." *Great Expectations* may seem at first to contradict Delaueze's extrapolations from Sacher-Masoch's work and Wanda's diary, since Pip's acquaintance with Estella comes about by chance. However, if we consider Miss Havisham, not as a surrogate mother (as critics drawing on Freud often interpret her), but as Pip's alter ego (a role usually reserved for Magwitch or Orlick), then the properly Masochistic schema reasserts itself at a formal level. Miss Havisham has made extreme masochism a way of life and has taken in Estella in order to make her a compatible partner for masochistic men—not, it is significant, to reproduce herself in miniature, but in order to form a sadist compatible with a masochist, who, like herself except in gender, will relive her experience of masochism. Miss Havisham is, in effect, a stage director for the tableaux Estella and Pip act out. Consider, for instance, the many questions she uses in order to prompt the couple to act their parts during one visit:

>'Do you find her much changed, Pip?' (256)
>'What? You are not going to say into the old Estella?' (256)
>'She was proud and insulting, and you wanted to go away from her. Don't you remember?' (256)
>'Is he changed?' (257)
>'Less coarse and common?' (257)
>'Is she beautiful, graceful, well-grown? Do you admire her?' (261)
"Love her, love her, love her! How does she use you?" (261)

In Sacher-Masoch's work, the masochistic man does his own stage-managing, but in Great Expectations, that role is displaced to Miss Havisham, who openly declares that she shaped Estella to be what she is:

'I adopted her to be loved. I bred her and educated her, to be loved. I developed her into what she is, that she might be loved. Love her!' (261)

Masochism rests, then, on a certain kind of act, on a certain kind of sham, which is nevertheless real enough for the participants, psychologically and physically. Miss Havisham's name suggests as much: have a sham. Thus, the hallucinations Pip experiences of Miss Havisham hanged can be read as his own fantasy of autoerotic asphyxiation, an old Sadean standby—for example, in Justine:

'This torture is sweeter than you may imagine, Thérèse,' says Roland, 'you will only approach death by way of unspeakably pleasurable sensations; the pressure the noose will bring to bear upon your nervous system will set fire to the organs of voluptuousness; the effect is certain ...' (Sade 675)

As I will show shortly, the theater of masochism is not unrelated to Pam Morris's thesis in Dickens's Class Consciousness that "imagery of shamming, counterfeiting, or forging is the master trope of the text, locking together the interconnection of money with criminality" (115).

If Miss Havisham is Pip's alter ego, what role does Magwitch play? Dorothy Van Ghent interprets Magwitch as a manifestation of Pip's sense of guiltiness. She astutely observes that in Dickens's world:

one simplex is superimposed upon or is continuous with another, and together they form the complex of good-in-evil or of evil-in-good. Pip carries Magwitch (his 'father') within him, and the apparition of the criminal is the apparition of Pip's own guilt. ('The Dickens World' 225)

Similarly, drawing on Lacan in her article, "The Dead Father," Dianne Sadoff refers to the "uncanny return of the presumably dead father to a primal scene of love and violence" in the novel's third stage (13). Like Van Ghent, I consider Magwitch a manifestation of Pip's sense of guiltiness. However, Magwitch, as an allegorical representation of the masochist's Guiltiness, is constitutive of Pip's sense of self; he does not father it. At the dawn of Pip's "impression of the identity of things," when Pip is "afraid of it all and beginning to cry," Magwitch/Guiltiness demands: "Hold your noise!" and threatens to eat Pip, unless he provides wittles of a more customary nature (35-7). In other words, Magwitch is a gnawing Guiltiness that tells Pip to stop blubbering and feed it. Like Mrs. Joe, who "consciously and deliberately took extraordinary pains to force herself into [a passion]" (142), and like Miss Havisham, who encourages, nurtures, and directs the growth of masochism, Pip feeds his sense of guilt instead of repressing it. Repression would be the more normal process in Freudian terms, but Great Expectations constitutes, with all its self-reproach, a literary autoflagellation that attests to Pip's masochism even as he writes.

Pip's move to London signals the second stage in his masochism. Daniel Cottom remarks that Pip's new name, Handel, emphasizes "the new process of acculturation to which Pip delivers himself" and that the new name allows Pip to remain unknown to Magwitch's emissary (Cottom 135; Dickens 248-52). The process of acculturation, of course, is supposed to result in Pip's transformation into a gentleman. However, Pip is not a real gentleman; he is only shamming, as his awkward lessons from Herbert attest. Pip's infatuation with Estella leads him to attempt to acquire gentility in an elaboration of an earlier fantasy that he shared with the reader, when, after visiting Miss Havisham, Pip concocted a wild story of Miss Havisham, a "tall and dark" woman, "sitting ... in a black velvet coach" where "Miss Estella ... handed her in cake and wine at the coach-window, on a gold plate. And we all had cake and wine on gold plates. And I got
up behind the coach to eat mine, because she told me to" (96-7). For Joe, the pièce de résistance is the four immense dogs that "fought for veal cutlets out of a silver basket" (97). Deleuze notes that "there is no masochism without fetishism"; for Pip, gentility is the fetish. Sacher-Masoch's whips remain discretely out of view (tucked under the coach seat?), but Pip's tableau differs little enough in spirit from those in which Sacher-Masoch's "femme-bourreau," draped in furs, demands that the masochist drink wine out of her shoe. Pip spends his time in London attempting to adapt or repress his masochism in order to have as a functioning adult what he was able to have as a fantasizing child. This process of sublimation finds spectacular expression in Miss Havisham's conflagration and nonspectacular (because more fully internalized) expression in Magwitch's hanging.

Kathy Acker's rip-off novel, _Great Expectations_, throws into sharp relief the difficulties Pip faces in this adaptation. Acker approaches her work through plagiarizing published works and appropriating the life experiences of people she has known. She remarks:

> I wanted to explore the use of the word I, that's the only thing I wanted to do. So I placed very direct, autobiographical, just diary material, right next to fake diary material. . . . I used pre-Freudian texts because I didn't want to deal with Freudian jargon. . . . You create identity, you're not given identity per se. (Hannibal Lecter 7)

Daniel Cottom observes that, as Dickens's novel ends, "The world of necessity yields to the world of probability, the world of violent trauma to the world of recuperation, the world of arbitrary mastery to the world of justice" (111). Acker wants to avoid that "bourgeois" story line, since:

> It's about ownership. . . . My world isn't about ownership. In my world people don't even remember their names, they aren't sure of their sexuality, they aren't even sure if they can define their genders. (Hannibal Lecter 23)

Notice the smooth transition Acker makes between property rights and gender identity. That Dickens's _Great Expectations_ is in some ways about capitalism is no secret, although the number of times the word "capital" actually appears in the novel may surprise a reader who has not paid attention to it in the past. Acker's work makes connections between Silverman's thesis on male masochism and Siegel's assertion that:

> Acker’s aggressive appropriations always involve feminist revision to emphasize the horror of a masochism which is forced into those who resist the deadening of emotion that Acker believes a phallocentric, materialistic society demands. (9)

Through her horrific representation of female masochism in the context of a plagiarized text whose original depicts the asymmetrical male manifestation, Acker implicitly demonstrates the reality of Cottom's observation that "A woman must be beaten for culture to be instituted" (Cottom 152) as well as the complementary thesis (Silverman's) that a man must beat, not be beaten. Acker's postmodern/late-capitalist text presents masochism in a more extreme fashion than Dickens's Victorian/industrial-capitalist narrative. In Clayton's words, Acker's work is "the realization of certain possibilities . . . that were salient even in the time [and work] of Charles Dickens" (195). These possibilities are very unpleasant ones indeed. Her rip-off novel's emphasis on the obligatory nature of female masochism reminds the Dickens reader that Pip's masochism is not compatible with the role an adult man is expected to assume. Pip finds himself in a double bind as he attempts to retain the experience of childhood masochism, since the adult world demands that he give up overt masochism in order to achieve material success and social integration. Similarly, Estella finds that her upbringing has not made her suitable for adult married life, and her marriage with Bentley Drummle violently acculturates her to the norms for womanhood.
Read together, Dickens's and Acker's versions of *Great Expectations* constitute an allegorization (in terms of sexual identity) of class conflict under capitalism. J. Hillis Miller argues that "the typical Dickens hero, like Pip, feels guilty because he has no given status or relation to nature, to family, or to the community" and that numerous characters, including Pip, try "to attain . . . movement up the social scale without incurring guilt for it" (252, 254). However, guilt does come with increased social status in Dickens's world, because "gentility" is "a mere expression of the impostures and injustices of society" and does not find justification for the exploitative power structure, on which its privilege rests, in any "natural right" (270n3, 252). "Pip finally accepts," Miller writes, "as the foundation of his life the guilt which has always haunted him: his secret and gratuitous act of charity to the escaped convict" (274). Miller finds that the "happy" ending is thus the more appropriate one, since it shows that "Estella and Pip are accepting their exile from the garden of false hopes" (278). As a critique of capitalism, then, Dickens's novel—especially as it can be read through Acker's novel—represents masochism as a deconstruction of the violence that an exploitative property system necessitates. Reading *Great Expectations* through Deleuze's *Présentation de Sacher-Masoch* points to this deconstructive element in masochism, in contrast to the different realm of sadism, which here aligns itself with the capitalist order. Pam Morris's thesis echoes Miller's:

Union with Estella as the daughter of Magwitch and Molly is a consummation of commonness, not of differentiating gentility. Together, they are represented walking away from a delusive Eden, shut off from common realities, taking friendship and desire out into the fallen world of work and suffering. (118)

In this respect Miss Havisham's name offers another interpretation: have is sham. Recall, for instance, Joe's reply to Magwitch's confession of having stolen food: "God knows you're welcome to it—so far as it was ever mine," returned Joe, with a saving remembrance of Mrs. Joe. 'We don't know what you've done, but we wouldn't have you starved to death for it, poor miserable fellow—'

"Would us, Pip?" (71). Thus, *Great Expectations* presents masochism on at least two levels: that of the individual subject's understanding of himself and that of class domination.

Notes

1 Huyssen even provides a listing of French theorists and their privileged literary sources (a fuller list than that Clayton offers), from which he concludes that:

we must begin to entertain the notion that rather than offering a theory of postmodernity and developing an analysis of contemporary culture, French theory provides us primarily with an archeology of modernity, a theory of modernism at the stage of its exhaustion. (208-9)

2 Yet, this reminds me of another frustrating point in Clayton's article, when he declares that Jameson "devoted two essays . . . to reconciling his advocacy of a contemporary culture that in his own account is parodic and schizophrenic with a teleological and developmental vision of history, which posits successive stages of capitalism" (192). First, the conflict referred to in Jameson's work does not exist between postmodern culture and an economic-historical teleology, but between postmodern culture and a specifically Marxist teleology. Second, to conflate Jameson with advocates of postmodernism (one thinks of Arthur and Marielouise Kroker) is a gross misrepresentation of Jameson's work. He makes clear in many places his position vis-à-vis "advocacy," as when he asserts:

this whole global, yet American, postmodern culture is the internal and superstructural expression of a whole new wave of American military and economic domination throughout the world: in this sense, as throughout class history, the underside of culture is blood, torture, death, and terror. (*Postmodernism* 5)

Jameson is a theorist and analyst of postmodernism, not an advocate.
This paper seeks to open a new avenue, though, not to brick up and seal off forever previous readings. Literary criticism is not, as scientific work is often considered, an empirical progress toward truth that renders past work outdated. On the contrary, literary readings enrich each other, even (perhaps especially) when they argue against each other. Readings such as those proposed by Dorothy Van Ghent or, more recently, Dianne Sadoff that appeal to the Oedipal drama incorporate a much broader vision of the novel than this paper may appear to credit them—or, in fact, than this paper will itself incorporate. Van Ghent's writings on Dickens are, in particular, extremely valuable and, coincidentally, make only a tangential allusion to Oedipus. I do not intend to reduce Pip to "a masochist" or to produce a comprehensive reading of Great Expectations—a Herculean task that would seem inevitably doomed to the failure of reductivity, although essays such that by J. Hillis Miller illustrate the remarkable degree to which an interpretation can form a part of a critic's "comprehension" of the world.

See the editorial note by Angus Calder that discusses the ambiguity of Dickens's wording (Dickens 496).

"L'erreur est de croire que le personnage masochiste rencontre, comme par bonheur, un personnage sadique" (38). All translations from Présentation de Sacher-Masoch are my own.

"Il faut que le masochiste forme la femme despote" (20, my emphasis).

In "Pip' and 'Property," Gail Houston remarks that the pins' location makes Mrs. Joe "literally the bad breast" (14).

"Le sadique n'aime pas moins être fouetter . . ." (Présentation 34).

"... le langage de Sade est paradoxal parce qu'il est essentiellement celui d'une victime" (Présentation 17).

"La mère n'est nullement terme d'une identification, mais condition du symbolisme à travers lequel le masochiste s'exprime" (Présentation 56).

"C'est que Wanda présente elle-même une image innocente. On la voulait sadique, Masoch ayant été masochiste. Mais le problème ainsi n'est peut-être pas bien posé" (Présentation 7).

J. Hillis Miller writes that Miss Havisham "wants to make certain that her betrayal will be the whole meaning of her life" and that she "changes her abandonment from a 'cruel fate' to a chosen role" (256, 257).

Philippe Ariès notes: "Death does not prevent the erection of the penis, commonly observed in hanged men, whence the belief in the sex-

ual excitement produced by hanging. In the eighteenth century, stories were told about certain aesthetes who pursued the pleasures of the initial phase of hanging, on the assumption that they could recover their balance in extremis, which was sometimes too late" (356).

"... il n'y a pas de masochisme sans fetichisme" (Présentation 30).

Acker notes that "To be guilty of plagiarism, according to the law, is to represent somebody else's material as your material. I haven't done that. I have been very clear that I use other people's material" (Hannibal Lecter 12-13).

For example: "What alone was wanting to the realization of a vast fortune, he [Mr. Pumblechook] considered to be More Capital" (Dickens 181).

Please keep in mind my suggestion that Magwitch be regarded as a manifestation of Guiltiness, so that feeding him is an act of affirmation of that guilt.

Works Cited


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What does it mean to be 'anti-Oedipus'? Is there something in Freud or in antiquity that prefigures in some way this curious and curiously inventive creation of France’s left-wing Nietzscheans?

To begin at the beginning, which is not in Oedipus Rex nor in any Schillerian 'age of Oedipus' (Rudnytsky 338), we must look at Freud himself, for his self-analysis in 1897 was the origin of the psychic 'complex' that was named for the King of Corinth (who, like Freud, was an answerer of riddles). It was by means of a look at his interior self, or by an act of 'insight', that Freud transformed the canonic work cited in the Poetics, the mythic drama of Sophocles, into the drama of everyman's psyche or, shall we say, the 'myth' of this drama's universality. The fatedness of Oedipus' acts became, in part, the fate of each of us. Human, all too human.

Freud noted the way the action of Oedipus Rex "can be likened to the work of a psycho-analysis" (Interpretation 295). Aristotle's ideas of recognition and reversal (or anagnorisis and peripeteia) still suggest, or always prefigured, the motifs, ways and motives of the Freudian 'cure' (Rudnytsky 337). One might say that after Freud's initial insight or 'recognition' in himself of the 'Oedipus complex' – that he cited in the letters to Fliess, then theorized in The Interpretation of Dreams – came a kind of 'reversal', not in the sense of the 'reversal' implicit in the diad, sadism/masochism, but rather like that of the diad, love/hate. In the Three Essays on Sexuality of 1905, Freud speaks of the reverse