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Nicolas Tredell, *Charles Dickens: David Copperfield/Great Expectations*, paperback, 220 pages, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. ISBN 978-1137283238; £16.22.

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Nicolas Tredell's *Charles Dickens: David Copperfield/Great Expectations* is an excellent addition to Palgrave's *Analysing Texts* series. In this series, designed for students and other interested parties, scholars seek to focus primarily on classic texts' literary and linguistic devices—how they work, and how they work on us. Privileging close textual analysis in this instance means attending consistently to details like sentence structure, tenses, repetition, diction and vocabulary, dialogue and description, dialect and 'Standard English', grammatical modes like the interrogative and imperative, imagery, and intertextuality (with a particular emphasis, especially appropriate when it comes to Dickens, on Biblical and Romantic influences and echoes). As models of such attention, the instances here are exemplary, and will help readers engage with Dickens in greater depth and detail. Give or take the odd typographical error (as with speech marks on pages 58–9 and 104), the extracts analysed are reproduced in full, and the analyses themselves are characterised by clear prose and lucid signposting: this is a very user-friendly book. Tredell is rightly enthusiastic about Dickens and brings this enthusiasm to bear on key themes and tropes in Dickens's work, such as families and gender, characterisation, revelation and plotting, deaths and transformations. As the author of many more of these kinds of books, and, equally notably, as editor of a guide to criticism on Dickens, Tredell is well placed to compare and contrast the novels. Moreover, the texts in question work really well together, which is hardly surprising since they are both *Bildungsromane*, set in the 1820s, and very similar: the later threatened to echo its predecessor so much that, as Tredell notes, Dickens reread *David Copperfield* when writing *Great*

Expectations, to avoid telling the same story twice (167). Tredell's examples cleverly move readers through the texts from beginnings to endings, but also between the texts, setting up juxtapositions and signalling evolutions in Dickens's fascinations and style.

The analyses are complemented by a potted biography of Dickens, a shorter survey of the historical and cultural context and a sample of critical views. This material is all useful and valid, though perhaps the series' editors might consider other ways to integrate (rather than separate) such contexts from the texts (and their analyses) in question. At several points, in each chapter's section on 'Suggested Work', Tredell invites his readers to 'Explore how [two particular passages from the texts] may be linked with wider cultural and social contexts' (31). This is a great way to build on what readers will already have learned, and to encourage them to develop their own original analyses with less scaffolding. Indeed, as noted, Tredell provides some of those contexts later in the book. But it might be a bit of a challenge for readers to do this themselves at only thirty pages into the work, when the first such invitation comes. This is not at all to suggest Tredell ignores the interplay of text and context. Indeed, as one might expect from an author who has written on English 'Marxist' critics such as Raymond Williams there is in Tredell's analyses of both novels a sustained interest in issues of social difference, not to say conflict, akin to Dickens's own 'concern with social division', in a world where 'class, money and ultimately prison and the law combine to keep each person in their place' (53, 132). Given the way that Dickens—like Austen—is still all too often popularly contained in a cosy and depoliticising mode of analysis, showing how 'differences' are marked even at the level of language as in the discussion of characters' use of 'Standard English' is crucial, especially in a text devoted to engaging with a broad readership (37, 28).

Nonetheless, for readers of *The Literary London Journal*, often informed by and contributing to an academic discourse that is concerned to historicise cultural production and consumption, there may have been more that could have been said about how these texts interrelate with the material realities of the urban spaces their author and his characters found themselves in. London does not really feature in the analyses, has no section in the critical biography, and is mentioned briefly (but most substantially) in reference to another work: '*Two Cities* proved popular and it can be related both to the potential unrest in the London of Dickens's time and to the "Indian Mutiny"' (166). But how and why, exactly? To answer such questions, one might refer instead to a work like Jeremy Tambling's *Going Astray: Dickens and London* (2009).

The drive for clarity is absolutely to be commended and replicated, though it does perhaps become a little repetitive: each chapter recounts what it has covered, and then there is a summary of what each chapter covered later in the book. Equally, perhaps a glossary of key terms might further augment the volume's pedagogic value. That said, as a concise guide to these novels, and their author, this would take some beating.

Work Cited

Tambling, Jeremy. 2009. *Going Astray: Dickens and London* (Harlow: Pearson)

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