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Charles Dickens's Search for an Image of Ideal Women – A Case Study of Florence Dombey in *Dombey and Son*

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the dual images (mother and teenage girl) embodied in Florence Dombey from *Dombey and Son* (1846-1848). It will employ Freud's theory of creative writers and daydreaming to analyze Florence Dombey from *Dombey and Son*. Based on the novel, Florence cannot be named a mother because she is just a teenage girl, but her thoughtful actions and consideration for others remind people of her mother image. Dickens infuses his own life experience in the depiction of this little girl and creates within her an ideal mother image, which shows his subconscious search for maternal love and his protection for children.

This thesis contains five chapters. The introduction provides background information and literature review related to Dickens's childhood, his relationship with his mother, and his desire for an ideal mother, as well as introduces the theoretical framework to be used in the present discussion. Chapter 2 focuses on Florence's image as a child. The illustration will be done from five aspects: Florence's simplicity and silence, Florence's real status in her family, Florence as a loved and protected child, Florence's interaction with Walter as a child, and Florence's awareness of her own child identity. Chapter 3 looks at Florence's image as a mother. This chapter will discuss in detail Paul's attachment to Florence, the reverse parent-child relationship between Mr. Dombey and Florence, Florence's mother image as opposed to that of Mrs. Skewton, and Florence's romantic association with Walter. In Chapter 4, the discussion focuses on Dickens's own life experience and applies Freud's theory of creative writers and daydreaming into analyzing Dickens's creation of the dual images

of Florence Dombey. Finally, the Conclusion will summarize the key concepts to be discussed in this thesis, as well as offer an explanation behind Dickens's creation of Florence Dombey.

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