



NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND
LITERATURE

GREAT EXPECTATIONS :
"A CRITICAL APPROACH"
A NOVEL BY CHARLES
DICKENS

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

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PREFACE

This graduation thesis has been written to be eligible for a BA. degree in English Language and Literature. When I read Dickens' greatest novel, Great Expectations in the third year 1994 - 1995 Spring Term of my University education it had great impact on me , thus I decided to choose and write on that novel also I carried out resarch on the nineteenth century England and English Society .

I would like to give my special thanks to Associate. Prof. Dr. Gül Celkan for giving guidance and advice in completing the graduation thesis .

Halil İrkım,
1997.

INTRODUCTION

Generally regarded as the greatest English novelist, Charles Dickens enjoyed a wider popularity than any previous author had done during his lifetime. His novels are one of the great forces in 19th Century Literature and an influential spokesman of the conscience of his age.

The Great Expectations one of the most heroic is Pip. Pip's aspiration to become a gentleman is fulfilled by his expectations of coming into great wealth.

When I read *The Great Expectations*, I noticed something attracted something in my mind in *The Great Expectations*. This was the reason why I decided to choose Dickens, *The Great Expectations* to do my graduation thesis on.

When they read my Thesis they will find very easy critics about the novel and High Victorian Period.

CHRONOLOGY OF CHARLES DICKENS

- 1812 Charles Dickens born at 387 Mile end Terrace, Portsmouth, 7 February.
- 1812 Napoleon attacks Moscow and retreats
- 1814 Dickens family moves to 2 Ordnance Terrace , Chatham , Kent .
- 1822 Dickens family moves to 16 Bayham Street .
- 1823 Dickens starts , charring cross . Dickens father sent to Marshalsea debtor's prison . The family take up residence there .
- 1824 Dickens goes to Wellington Academy due to his grandmother .
- 1827 Dickens goes to work in a law office , " Elis and Blackmore ."
- 1829 Falls in love with Maria Beadnell .
- 1832 Reform Bill passed . Dickens reports the debates
- 1835 Parliamentary reported to the "Morning Chronicle "
- 1833 1835 Contributes " Boz " sketches to the " Monthly Magazine " and the " Evening Chronicle ."

- 1836 Marriage to Catherine Hogarth, 2 April. Success
 with " Pickwick " Financial ease.
- 1837 Mary Hogarth dies, 7 May. Queen Victoria comes
 to the throne.
- 1842 Travels to America with Catherina.
- 1844 Visit to Italy
- 1850 Starts "Household words ". a weekly periodical
- 1855-56 Stays in Paris
- 1857 Buys Gad's Hill Place.
- 1858 Begins giving public readings, Marriage breaks
 up.
- 1867-68 Second visit to America. Lectures and readings.
- 1870 Dies at home, Gad's Hill. Buried in Poets
 Corner in Westminster Abbey.

THE LIFE OF CHARLES DICKENS

Charles Dickens was born on 7 February 1812 in Portsmouth the second of eight children. The town was an important Royal Naval dockyard and Dickens's father was clerk in Naval pay office. His father was careless with money and his income was not large, Dickens was soon acquainted with poverty and insecurity. In 1814 this family moved to London and then in 1817, to Chatham in Kent another Royal Naval dockyard town. Here he went to a small school and learnt to love books, in particular the novels of the eighteenth century. Among his favourites were *Robinson Crusoe*, *Tom Jones*, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and translations of *Don Quixote* and *The Arabian Nights*. It is of special interest for our study of *Great Expectations* that it was during this period of his life. After his father was imprisoned in Marshalsea debtors prison. When his father was eventually released, Charles was able to go to school for a few years until the age fifteen. He worked in a solicitors office in Gray's Inn, where he learnt shorthand and reported the events of law courts, eventually becoming a reporter for the *Morning Chronicle*. Many of his observations and character which appeared in later books were based on his experience gained during this period of law and Parliament.

BEGINNING OF LITERARY CAREER

In 1833 he began contributing stories and descriptive essays to magazines and newspapers ; these attracted attention and were reprinted as *Sketches by "BOZ"*. The same month he was invited to provide a comic serial narrative to accompany engravings by a well - known artist. Seven weeks later the first instalment of *Pickwick Papers* appeared. These were immediately followed by "The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick club" of which the publication in twenty monthly numbers began in April 1836. In this work Dickens suddenly reached the plenitude of his powers as humorist and achieved success and financial ease. "*Oliver Twist*" followed in "*Bentley's Miscellany*" and "*Nicholas Nickleby*" in monthly numbers. His next two novels "The old Curiosity shop" and "Barnaby Rudge" In 1842 he went to America , where he advocated international copyright and the abolition of slavery. He also edited "*Household Words*" in which *Hard Times* appeared 1857 to revive the flagging subscription.

He lived alone at Gad's Hill and was drawn into his new interest - dramatic readings of his works. Also he was an excellent actor and, supported only by desk and book, played all the parts.

On 8 June 1870 he had a stroke and died the following day of the age of only fifty - eight tended by Georgina , his wife's sister. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

MAJOR WORKS OF CHARLES DICKENS

NOVELS : The Pickwick Papers (1837), Oliver Twist (1838), Nicholas Nickleby (1839), David Copperfield (1850) Bleak House (1853), Hard Times (1854) A Tale of Two cities (1859), Great Expectations (1861). etc.

CHRISTMAS BOOKS : A Christmas Carol (1843), The Chimes (1845), The Battle of life (1846) etc.

STORIES : A Christmas Tree (1850), The Poor Relations Story (1852), Nobody's Story (1853) The Seven Poor Travellers (1854) etc.

HIGH VICTORIAN LITERATURE

(How did Charles Dickens influence the age ?)

John Ruskin who praised the sharpness of *Hard Time's* did so at the expense of Dickens's other novels which he seems to have found exaggerated in their representation of the contemporary world. It is a complaint which still surfaces from readers who admire strict verisimilitude or who respond best to fiction which has moved furthest from the roots of popular story - telling. When Dickens himself responded to the criticism, in a preface to "*Martin Chuzzlewit*," he drew a distinction between the long - sighted observer and the myopic one ;

" what is exaggeration to one class of minds and perceptions " he wrote, " is plain truth to another. " That " plain truth " consisted of shaping a highly diverse and multifarious vision of life into stories. Fiction became for Dickens a means of making sense of a disordered, increasingly anarchic world in which sanity and madness, banality and eccentricity, love and cruelty, coexisted and tangled with each other. His fictional shapes may often seem conventional, but they contain within them not an exaggerated vision but a sense that humanity cannot really be contained, let alone tidied and explained.

Dickens intensely funny early fiction, from the *Sketches By Boz* to *Martin*

CHUZZLEWITH, suggests the degree to which he was loosely but happily working in the literary tradition which he had inherited from Fielding and Smollet. His eighteenth century characteristics were evident from to first Sydney Smith who in 1837 recognised the extent to which

the soul of a third great artist, Hogarth, had "migrated into the Body of Dickens." Significantly though, he was also the quintessential artist of a new era the Victorian writer best equipped to transform the age's restless urban civilization into art. Dickens was a best-seller at a time when the term "best-seller" did not automatically imply second-rate fiction and a sensation -- craving public. He became an efficient exploiter of a popular market with *Pickwick Papers*, but in his subsequent thirty-three years of successful response to his public he never lost the ability to appeal to a vast range of readers from the highbrow to the semi-literate. Dickens' peculiar genius like Shakespeare's in an earlier period, renders him age. He is the foremost Victorian artist simply because he best reflects the complexity, the excitement, the fertility, and the often confusing abundance of contemporary England. Other writers deal more persuasively probing, or movingly with aspects of the age to which Dickens merely gestured (the life of the intellect, for example, or the condition of woman) but he has a totality and range and a freedom which eludes all but the greatest of artists.

If Dickens novels have struck certain critics as vulgar, random, inconsistent or simply as too prolix, it is because those are leading characteristics of the age itself. Dickens took a popular art form, the comic novel, and gave it a distinctive wit, energy, and variety. He is the artist of many voices but he is also, as T. S. Eliot recognized, an artist like Shakespeare who can with a phrase make a character as real as flesh and blood. His many voices are also the echoes of the contradictory and clamorous noises of the century.

Dickens was the first great writer to tackle the essentially modern problem of the discontents of an urban civilization. His London, unlike the great manufacturing

cities of the Midlands and North , had not suddenly boomed ; it had steadily expended as a commercial centre , a port , and the hub of government , the law , finance and fashion , to become the great metropolis the largest and richest , if not the most splendid , of European cities . Dickens drew his characters from the breadth of this social and commercial spectrum , but as his career developed his vision of the city become increasingly threatening . In *Pickwick Papers* , or *Oliver Twist* , or *Nicholas Nickleby* London is a city of stark contrast , but it can still be escaped ; in the later fiction , most notably in *Little Dorrit* and *Our Mutual Friend* , it is encroaching and unrelieved a microcosm of a weary , stale and unprofitable world in which the only hope for the future lies in individual regeneration .

Although the novels that succeed *Dombey and Son* (1847 - 48) are far more concentrated in their commentary on society they are also far darker gloomier than the stories which first established Dickens successful rapport with his readers . All of his novels , however share the same sense of fun and determining optimism . His plots are rarely tight- knit (though *A Tale of Two Cities* is distinctive here) but each tends to trace the destinies of his central characters and to move them towards an enlightened fulfilment . The traditional devices with which novels and marriage or a crock of gold , are not eschewed , but they become for Dickens an expression of a comic world - view in which dislocation and pain are answered by order and a modicum of happiness . This is not simply fortuitousness , sentimentality or a sop to indiscriminating readers but a way of coming to terms with confusion and a potential anarchy . The structure of Dickens narratives , from the relatively simple *Oliver Twist* (1837 - 38) to the masterfully, complex. *Bleak House* (1852 - 53) allow him to give full rein to individual eccentricity, to social and mental deviation,

even to murder and madness, while still moulding circumstances in to a kind of resolution. In the later fiction and especially in *Great Expectations* (1860 - 61) or *Our Mutual Friend* (1864 - 65) virtuous, or potentially virtuous, characters survive by the skin of their teeth, but the very fact of their survival suggests a positive assertive gesture in the face of the negatives of their environment.

It is this optimistic control which partly explains the nature of Dicken's so - called sentimentality and his lurches from high comedy and absurdity to the lachrymose. Largely because he was so close to this readers responses through the nature of the monthly - part serialisation of his novels he readily responded to what he felt they wanted of him. Death - bed pretty simpering but in incorporating such elements of popular contemporary culture into his novels he has continued to embarrass certain of his twentieth - century readers. His own period of acute unhappiness as a child seems to have given him a special sympathy with the sufferings of children and a sensitivity to happy, nuclear families (especially when gathered around a Christmas hearth). His individual ideal of womanhood developed yet again from existing literary stereotypes, seems also to have determined his homeward looking, upward - pointing domestic angels from Rose Maylie to Agnes Wickfield and Esther Summerson. These are aspects of Dickens work which require a sympathetic understanding of the culture of his age in order to be given their proper context. *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840 - 41) his tribute to saintly girlhood, having once briefly reigned as his supreme novels, is now perhaps his most misunderstood. His death - beds especially Neil's unconscionable time a'dying, having once been hailed as rivalled only by Shakespeare's tragic ends, are only just receiving the kind of sympathy which they require of readers alert to Dicken's emotional range and variety.

Having reacted violently against "Victorianism" twentieth-century culture has been disinclined to allow Dickens not simply Homeric nods, but also the passages of sentiment which are integral to the nature of his art.

In one vital area of the immediate background to Dickens work, the theatre, we are however, beginning to recover a fuller sympathy. Dickens was steadily drawn to the stage both as an actor and a dramatist and as a reader of his own novels. He had once contemplated becoming a professional actor and as the Thespians and would-be Thespians of his fiction vividly suggest, he retained a sure grasp of the artistic mannerism and performance. He was also pulled by the steady magnet of Shakespeare and by the taste of his contemporaries for Melodrama. Much of his dialogue, particularly his passionate and amatory dialogue, can be readily related to the kind of expression found on the Victorian stage. His readings from his novels, which became so notable a feature of his career, also indicate the degree to which his novels are *preferable*. His observation of character like that in the novels of the eighteenth century which he so admired or in the drama is largely external; he interprets the inner life, like a dramatist, through action and speech rather than by an analysis of thought and motive.

To say that Dickens is a novelist in the dramatic tradition of Shakespeare and Johnson is not to imply that he was a playwright *mangue*, but to note that he was able to choose the art of the novel over that of the theatre. The novel of his time had triumphed as the supreme art-form of the age, but for Dickens it was also a medium which related to the immediacy and effect of a performance in acknowledging the relationship between reader and writer, and between performer and audience.

Dicken's creative career ended dramatically enough with his *Mystery of Edwin Drood* left suspended and unfinished at time of his sudden death in 1870. There have been many attempts to finish the novels and to solve its mystery, not least among them being theatrical ones. Perhaps the only contemporary of Dickens with sufficient flair to unravel its threads satisfactorily was his former portage, Wilkie Collins. Collins somewhat huffily declined to do so, perhaps because he was vexed by the fact that Dickens had been imitating the kind of novel that he had made distinctively his own. Collins (1824 - 89) remains the greatest English master of the mystery story, the unrivalled exponent of what was known in the 1860 as the Sensation Novel.

The Woman in White which had been serialised in *All the Year Round* in 1860 is a *tour de force*, both a disturbing treatments of insanity and a clever narrative structure. It also contains Collins finest villain, Count Tosco, an Italian with a murky background in secret political societies and a habit of playing discern certainly with his white mice. *The Moonstone* (1868) has a yet more sophisticated series of narrators, each adding clues to wards the unfolding of the mystery and it shows an interest in the unconscious mind under the influence of drugs which may well have inspired Dicken's plot for *Edwin Drood*. Collin's middle novels, most memorably *No Name* (1862) and *Armadale* (1866) , though scrupulously plotted, suggest that he was not always at home with the serial form and the expensive narrative. His characters, and his often flat style, do not quite sustain the dramatic intensity which marks his best work.

THE VICTORIAN PERIOD (1832 - 1900)

THE VICTORIAN NOVEL

In the romantic period, poetry was the most important literary form. In the Victorian Period, the novel became the most popular and important form, in Britain and all over the world.

This was partly because of the success of the novels of sir Walter Scot. His great series of Waverley Novels, published between 1814 and 1832 became best sellers all over the world. They created a fashion for the series novel, published in monthly parts. This fashion went on for most of the rest of the century when the novels were later published in volume form, usually in three volumes, sometimes called triple - decker novels, readers borrowed them from libraries. Then, with the novels of Charles Dickens, a social concern with the problems of the society of the time enters the novels.

Charles Dickens wrote thirteen novels between *Sketches by Boz (1836)* and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* published in the year of his death 1870. In *Oliver Twist (1837-38)* and *Nicholas Nickleby (1838 - 39)*, he writes of the social problems of young boys like Oliver and Nicholas. He wanted education for all children. and showed his readers the kind of problems children had in the cities, where poor people had no chance to share in the success of the nation. Dicken's novels often tell the stories of victims, and he made his readers aware of many of the problems of Victorian Society.

In the meantime Dickens went on to write novels which criticised society in a more general way. *David Copperfield*, is his most positive novel about growing up. This novel was based in part on Dicken's own childhood and his success. But when he came to write another partly autobiographical story, *Great Expectations* there is a sense that the ending will not be so happy : there is a feeling of disappointment that hopes will not be met, and that the earlier ideals have been false. Even the title is ironic the expectations or hopes of Philip are certainly not great in the way they were for David in the earlier novel.

Hard Times, is described as a novel 'for these times' and is a 'state of the nation' novel. It shows the worst sides of the new industrial society of the Midlands of England, with contrasts between the terrible education systems of Mr. Gradgrind who wants only 'Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but facts,' and the circus of Mr Sleary, which represents the imagination.

Dickens, is also known for his historical novels like *A Tale of Two Cities* (1839) about the French Revolution, and for Christmas stories, like *A Christmas Carol* (1843)

The philosophy of the time was led by the writings of the Scotsman Thomas Carlyle. He wrote *On Heroes* (1841) , *Past and Present* (1843) and *The French Revolution* (1837). Carlyle criticised in particular, the 'laissez - faire' economy because it encouraged a situation in which, payments of cash became the 'sole nexus', between man and man. He writes with sympathy about the industrial poor and the need for freigher democracy, although in his later life that sympathy became weaker.

One of the most important authors encouraged by Dickens was Elizabeth Gaskell. *Mary Barton* (1848) and

North and South (1855) are particularly clear in their social concerns. Mrs. Gaskell was also the biographer of Charlotte Bronte, one of three sisters who all wrote novels.

Jane Eyre (1847) by Charlotte Bronte was immediately successful, and it is still one of the most famous novels about a woman. Jane controls her own life, and through all her difficulties and problems, becomes more independent. This is a great difference from the role given to women such as Pamela or Clarissa in the novels of Samuel Richardson a century before.

Withering Heights (1847) by Emily Bronte is quite different - it is a novel of passion, an early psychological novel. The oldest Bronte sister, Anne wrote *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) also with an usual central female character and involving complex relationships and problems. All three Bronte sisters faced these kinds of problems in the novel with unusual courage and directness and together they changed the way the novel could present women characters : after the Brontes, female characters were more realistic less idealized, and their struggles became the subject of a great many novels later in the nineteenth century.

George Eliot's fiction *Scenes of clerical life* (1857- 58) was a collection of three stories ; this was followed by her first novel, *Adam Bede* in 1859. She was already writing about conversational women's themes, such as having a drunk husband and being an unmarried mother. In her later novels she writes about the whole of society, especially in *Middlemarch* (1871 - 72) which many people consider to be the greatest novel in the English Language.

William Makepeace Thackeray and Anthony Trollope are two other important names in the history of the Victorian

Novels. They are quite different, however. Like Dickens he wrote for magazine, and was known as a comic writer, before he began writing his more serious novels. *Vanity Fair* (1847 - 48) is one of the best known novels of its time. It is a view of all of society around the time of the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 at the beginning of the century.

Trollope wrote more than fifty novels writing about Ireland and a kind of corruption and evil which Dickens also showed in his later novels. *Orley Farm* (1862) and *The way we Live Now* (1875) are among the best known of Trollope's novels.

The detective story was another genre of the novel which became popular. The most famous fictional detective is, of course, Sherlock Holmes. As the century proceeded, there were many problems, in society, in religion and in politics. The publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in 1859 caused in many writings of the time. Perhaps Thomas Hardy is the novelist who best reflects the problems of the last years of the nineteenth century. Many of his novels caused offence, and they were even burned in public, and not bought by the private libraries.

The tone of Hardy's novels is tragic. His novels show a part of the movement of the century. Most of Hardy's writing is set in the fictional area of Wessex, in the south - west of England. He shows the older truths of the country and the conflict between the traditional and the modern in the move from country to city. The major novels of Hardy include *The Return of The Native* (1878) *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1866), *Tess of The D'urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1896).

SUMMARIES OF THEMES

AN EXPLORATION OF THE MAJOR TOPICS AND THEMES IN THE NOVEL.

EXPECTATIONS

Dickens begins the story in Kent, and in the time of his childhood between about 1810 and about 1830. His hero is an orphan, Pip, who gives food and a file, stolen from his home, to a convict who has escaped from a nearby prison-ship but is soon recaptured. He receives a strange invitation to wait upon a rich lady in the neighbouring town, Miss Havisham, who was jilted on her wedding day many years ago, and has since lived cut off from the light of day. He visits her often, and becomes infatuated with her beautiful ward, Estella, a girl of his own age, whom Miss Havisham has reared to be cruel and distant, as her revenge upon the male sex. The visits cease when, at fourteen, he is apprenticed to his friend and foster-father, Joe Gargery the blacksmith. Then, four years later, he learns that he has "great expectations" from a mysterious benefactor, who wishes him to be educated as a gentleman. He believes that he owes this to Miss Havisham, and that she intends him to marry Estella.

He goes to London for his education, and snobbishly neglects his childhood friends. He lives idly and unhappily, constantly snubbed by Estella. When he is twenty three, his true benefactor appears. Dicken's "tragi - comic conception" is this : that Pip owes his fortune to the convict he befriended on the marshes, who has grown rich in Australia. Pip slowly conquers his snobbish aversion from the convict, Magwitch, and tries desperately to save him from the punishment which he has earned by coming back. Magwitch is finally retaken, and dies undersentence of death, but Pip has learned his lesson and is a changed man.

MONEY

A major aspect of many of the characters' aspirations has to do with the acquisition of wealth. Wemmick's concern to lay his hands on "portable property" is perhaps the extreme example , but Pip's aspiration to become a gentleman is fuelled by his expectations of coming into great wealth. However, Pip's wealth and his joy in it turn to dust when he discovers its true source and he fails to follow Wemmick's injunction to acquire Magwitch's "portable property" : the notebook containing the details and deeds of his fortune.

For example Joe's attitude to money is very clear. He willingly accepts the money due to him for the apprenticeship of Pip, but reflects the suggestion offered by Jaggers of making a profit by agreeing to release Pip so that Pip might pursue his expectations. He obviously feels that the money Pip is given by the mysterious benefactor acts as a barrier between them, largely because it changes Pip.

GENTLEMAN

The acquisition of wealth is clearly associated in Pip's mind with the status of "gentleman". Within a short time he is elevated from the position of a black smith's boy to companion of a beautiful girl, and then to become a person of great expectations. The lure of money and a girl of education and "breeding" lead Pip adopting a life style which takes no account of the true mark of gentleman. His clothing, the acquisition of the Avenger, his feeling that Joe was not a suitable acquaintance for him in London, his anguish at Magwitch's manners, all highlight the false understanding he has of what makes a gentleman. What do other characters consider to be the mark of gentility?

The question "What is a gentleman?" is central to the novel's concerns and therefore to Pip's expectations. Drummle was born to be a gentleman, but is not one - why? Herbert Pocket has both the temperament and breeding of a gentleman but has no money and little in the way of real prospects - does that make him less of a gentleman? The snobbery that various characters demonstrate in their dealings with each other is a particular feature of a mistaken view of gentility and one that Pip is very much guilty of in his attitude towards Joe. The gradual changes that occur in Pip's character enable us to follow his emerging awareness of what actually makes a gentleman and finally provides the answer to the question, "can Pip become a real gentleman?"

GUILT AND REDEMPTION

A particular feature of Pip's life are the feelings of guilt which pervade his early life and which affect his later relationship with Joe. They connect various strands of his life: guilt for the theft of food and a file for Magwitch; guilt for his lies about what happens at Satis House ; guilt for his rejection of Joe in the middle stages of the novel. It is Magwitch who provides the money to turn him into a gentleman. It is Joe who stands as a nagging reminder to Pip's conscience.

Redemption for Pip's actions comes about only when he has learned the true values of love, friendship and money, and the falseness of social aspirations, pretensions and snobbishness. He is , in fact, redeemed when he becomes a true gentleman. In that redemption he given back to Magwitch all that Magwitch had ever hoped for, plus the news that his daughter is alive and loved by Pip. To miss Havisham he gives for giveness and great comfort at the end off bitter life. To Joe he gives the Joy of knowning that his Pip is a true gentleman at last.



THE PLOT AND STRUCTURE

The plot of *Great Expectations* is both complicated and in some ways difficult to believe. The opening coincidence by chance there come into Pip's life both Magwitch and Miss. Havisham two people linked together by Estella, Magwitch's daughter and Miss Havisham's adopted daughter, might seem to put too great a strain on our credulity. That Magwitch should become wealthy in Australia and on his return after so many years, attract the attention and hatred once again of Compeyson seems somewhat unlikely. Also even more difficult to accept is the device Dickens uses to save Pip from being murdered by Orlick -- the letter accidentally dropped by Pip and picked up by Herbert. But the story so well written, so full excitement and interest so circumstantially convincing, that it doesn't seem to matter that we are asked to believe in such extraordinary events, and in fact, one's final impression is of the amazing ingenuity of Dickens' invention.

He achieves this by his use of realistic detail, the give little stone lozenges in the churchyard, for example: by humour as in the description of Pip turned upside down and shaken by the convict; by excitement in such incidents as the note received by Pip from Wemmick with its brief message, "Don't go home" and by suspense in our continual anxiety as to whether Magwitch will escape his pursuers.

There is also , of course the cleverness of keeping the reader and Pip in ignorance of the ' growing coincidence ' , until it comes as a surprise very late in the story .

As we have seen , it was written as a serial , and it was vital , therefore that Dickens should keep the interest of his readers from week to week , The end of each weeks instalment in this Macmillan Students Edition is marked with an asterisk so that you can see how successful Dickens was in doing this it is sometimes said that this need to have cliff - hanging situations at the end of each instalment weakened the novel but it could be as easily argued that the challenge posed to the writer brought , out the best in Dickens and that part of the books appeal lies in the way he responded to it , Look at the ends of chapters 42 , 44 and 46 , for example and you will understand why thousands of readers rushed buy the next weeks number of *All The Year Round* .

By the time Dickens come to write *Great Expectations* , in 1860 he had been writing fiction for about twenty - five years and he had learnt the need for careful structuring of his story . Some of his earlier novels had been criticised as shapeless and it is true that he had written them with such speed and so little experience that there had been little regard for pattern or development . Now , however he gave his story a definite from . It is divided into three almost equal parts , each marking a different ' Stage of pip's Expectations ' .

Stage 1 taken us up to Pip's departure for London full of expectations and believing Miss . Havisham to be his ' fairy godmother ' . Stage 2 covers his life in London up to the return of Magwitch and the shock of his discovery that it is to the convict , not seen since the beginning of Stage 1 , that he owes everything . Stage 1 began with Pip helping Magwitch ; in Stage 2 Magwitch has unknown to Pip, begun to help him and in stage 3 Pip is helping Magwitch again. The third stage, so packed with drama, takes us through to Magwitch's arrest again, and his death, to Pip's illness and his return to ask Joe and Biddy to forgive him for his post conduct, and then to the finding again of Estella many years later, a solitary figure amid the ruins of Satis House.

Her presence there ties the end of the novel to the beginning when we first saw her a pert, proud and pretty young girl. The three stages also serve to mark Pip's development from a frightened and cruelly frightened little boy, to a proud snobbish, and insensitive young man, and then to a fully grown mature person who has learnt kindness and humility through suffering.

There has been much critical controversy about the end of the story. The original ending is given in this edition as note 1 of chapter 59 , and it will be understood from this that Estella, was not to have finished hand in hand with Pip , but was to have married a doctor after the death of her bully of a husband , Drummle .

Pip and she meet for a moment in a London street and from her face, voice and touch Pip is given the assurance 'that suffering had been stronger than Miss. Havisham teaching and had given her a heart to understand what my heart used to be'. But Bulwer Lytton another writer and a friend of Dickens, objected to the sadness of this, and Dickens wrote the ending we now have. Some critics think that this is too sentimental, romantic and out of keeping with what the tone of the closing chapters and the inner logic of the story require.

Others have argued, just as conclusively that the original ending is too moralistic, too contrived and out of keeping with the story's inner logic. Perhaps we should ask ourselves whether it really matters. Doesn't the story end for most purposes when Pip returns to the forge after those eleven years in the East and meets the new young Pip where we, the readers, first saw him in the opening chapters? Where there was darkness there is now light, where there was the anger and bullying of Joe's first wife there is now the sweetness and kindness of Biddy, and although we end where we began we have all changed -- Pip through suffering, we the readers through our experience of Dickens' vision of human life.

WHAT THE STORY IS ABOUT

The novel is primarily about Pip's expectations and it is because of these that he hopes to become a "gentleman" in the future. And also impress Estella. Becoming a "gentleman" for Pip means having money, good clothes, a servant and the admiration of those not so well-off as himself. He had learned however that these are just a veneer, that true "gentlemanliness" has nothing to do with money but a great deal to do with friendships and loving-kindness. Joe Gargery for all his lack of social graces is the true gentleman in the novel, he is loyal and kind as a friend long-suffering and forgiving in his human relationships and constantly generous. Also, he is symbol of love and he finds the perfect mate in the gentle and devoted Biddy.

Then, Pip's kindness to the starving convict on the wind-swept marsh softens Magwitch's character so that he is filled with love for that terrified little boy. Also, hate too is present in the story. We see at the beginning in the hatred which exists between Magwitch and Compeyson and in Miss Havisham's hatred of all men.

Here we see how easily love can become hate and Miss Havisham's learned lesson to Estella to break men's hearts is an example of hate begetting hate. Also, we see in Mrs. Gargery's cruel treatment of her husband and brother and the confrontations between Joe and his wife armed with the ironically named Tickler, is the meeting of love and hate.

Another main subject in the novel is criminal . There are two criminals in the story , Orlick and Compeyson . Orlick is a murderer whose malice seems to emerge from an almost motiveless evil . His faith in humankind does not blind Dickens to his kind of absolute wickedness , his liberalism is tempered with realism . Compeyson's crimes are not just those of swindling , stealing , and forging . Compeyson's fate , by contrast , is to be drowned in the dark of waters of the Thames Estuary . Another name of criminal is Magwitch . He is drawn into a life of crime by poverty and harsh social conditions . When Magwitch becomes wealth in Australia his money is of value to him only because he had sees it as way of thanking Pip and making him a ' gentleman ' .

In ' Great Expectations ' the gentleman criminal , first in the person of Compeyson is seen to get a lighter sentence than Magwitch due to his appearance yet in reality his is the greater crime . One of the great ironies of the novel is that Pip's expectations are dependent upon a criminals money .

MAIN CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL

BIDDY:

In *Biddy*, Dicken's presents Pip with an attractive example of the good sister, like Georgina, who has all the feminine virtues except erotic attractiveness. Pip cannot love her romantically Pip uses her as a confidante because she is wise, patient and warm. She is also truthful and realistic and prepared to reproach Pip for his sometimes thoughtless words and actions. She is also an orphan, but unlike many of the other orphans she would not appear to have any expectations. Consider how she helps Pip and Joe to read; with the latter the teaching is not done with any attempt to make Joe better or different but to give him the enjoyment the ability to read would bring.

ESTELLA:

Estella - Miss. Havisham's adopted daughter - is used by her as a means of taking revenge from men. She is beautiful, arrogant young girl. She is brought up to have cold indifference to all human feeling and the attentions of the opposite sex. Her name comes from the Latin for a star. She remains cold and despite all Pip's attempts to get close to her. Also, years later Pip is to discover that Estella is the daughter of Magwitch.

MISS. HAVISHAM :

Brought to Satis House in ' Rochester ' for the entertainment of Miss . Havisham , an eccentric semimad spinster who stopped her wedding day . Shortly she no longer lives in the real world . The images of decay and death which surround her give the clues to the effects she has on both Pip and Estella . Estella is imbued with an attitude towards men that will cause her great unhappiness and Pip's belief that Miss. Havisham is responsible for his expectations is cruelly fired by her . She does her best to ruin both lives before . She finally realises the enormity of the selfishness of her actions .

MR. JAGGERS:

Jagger's is the overbearing but respected lawyer who , for much of the novel is the key figure in all the mystery surrounding Pip. His determination to keep what he knows to himself, neither to confirm nor deny anything , is essential to the success of the story. He knew the secret of Estella's mother and administered Miss Havisham's desires in respect of Estella.

JOE :

In the form of his sisters husband, Joe this orphan is provided with amiable, loving but ineffectual father who cannot protect to him from his wife . Like John Dickens Joe has a good heart . Apprenticed to him of the blacksmith's forge, Pip was ahead of him the prospect of a working - class life , with a heart potentially as glowing fulfilling and stable as the found in the middle - class or low - class households.

MRS. JOE :

Aggressive, unmaternal and unwifely, Mrs Joe glories in martyrdom whilst displaying social pretensions. She has got black hairs and eyes. She was tall and bony and almost always wore a coarse apron, fastened over her figure behind with too loops and having a square impregnable bib in front, that was stuck full of pons and needles. Also, she is not very educated woman , we understand this by her speech.

MAGWITCH :

Estella is daughter of Magwitch, the convict whom he had fed in the churchyard cemetery Magwitch mistakenly believes that he is fulfilling an honourable role by helping the little boy who fed him in the cemetery to become a gentleman.

The ultimate model for the good heart is Joe (one of Dickens self - christenings in his correspondence with Mary Boyle) who unites with Magwitch in the New Testament patriarchy of the novel to become the ultimate good father the combination of Jesus and Jehovah of love and power and of power redeemed by love. In the end, Magwitch dies so that Pip may be reborn into a truer more realistic sense of human values and class structures into self-reliance and self-respect.

ORLICK :

Orlick does not aspire to be a gentleman he does show some considerable interest in Biddy. He was no real threat to Pip's ambitions here, such as they were, but then did Pip give to Biddy the same intensity of emotion that he gave to Estella. Orlick shows some sharpness in his arguing for a half - day holiday when Pip was allowed time off from the forge and in his summing up of Mrs Joe's Character. But his insolence, brutishness and savagery especially in his attacks on Mrs. Joe and Pip are the moments for which we remember him most.

PIP :

The main character Pip is a projection of his childhood feelings of isolation and parental betrayal. He is a survivor, though, whose punishment for outliving his infant siblings and parents is a strong sense of guilty and confusion. Dickens reduces romantic emotion to its class basis, dramatising the shabby contortions through which Pip feels himself

compelled to wriggle up to respectability . Arrogant snobbish and insecure he values becoming a gentleman more he values Joe's good heart and his love. His contacts with Miss Havisham and Estella and his " great Expectations " create aspirations where lead to snobbery and false moral values which outweigh his finer instincts. This means he is , in a sense a victim of immaturity conceit and romantic illusion that he retains the sympathy of the reader.

End of the novel Pip becomes seems to be a man saddened by a learning experience and displaying only a modest optimism about the future.

WEMMICK :

Wemmick illustrates one way of surviving in a society as hard and uncaring as the one he inhabits in London. His business and private lives are kept in watertight compartments and, as we get to know him better, we discover that there is much more to him than at first seems possible. He helps Pip in many ways, noticeably with the attempt to save Magwitch, the setting up of Herbert in business, and in offering Pip hospitality in his home , which combines fantasy with the reality of true warmth and family love.

CHARACTERISATION

There are many different and complex characters in "Great Expectations." Now we will research these characters about which characters are minor and which characters are Major in Great Expectations novel.

In Great Expectations he gives us ten major characters (Pip , Joe , Mrs Joe , Biddy , Magwitch , Estella , Miss. Havisham , Jaggers , Wemmick and Herbert) , fourteen minor characters (Clara Barley , Compeyson , Drummle , Orlick , Startop , Molly , Mr and Mrs Pocket , and Sarah , Trabb , Pumblechook , Wemmick's father , Wopsle , and his great - aunt) and a host of what might be called 'walk on' parts such as Trabb boy and the sergeant who comes with his soldiers to the forge.

It is , of course, Pip is most major character in the story . He is there from the beginning to the end, and he is in a special relationship to the other characters because the story is told by him. Also Pip is drawn of remarkable skill, and the change are cleverly charted as he makes his pilgrimage from a little boy lost and cruelly abused through the period in London. When he abandons his trice friends in his aspiration to be a "gentleman" and impress Estella.

In most of Dicken's novels we are given at least one character who may be regarded as the norm of goodness the standard against which other characters must be measured and judged. Joe is such a norm and being such he remains unchanged character throughout the book.

It is not easy create a believable and interesting good character , but dickens was completely successful with Joe who never becomes so saintlike as to be unacceptable. Biddy is not so fully drawn but she too is a norm of goodness and we find her like Joe, wholly believable. Joe's first wife with her aggressive irritability, Miss Havisham with her obsessive almost maniacal , hatred and in especially Estella who is coldness contrasts with Biddy's warmth and underlines one of the book's major themes.

Magwitch, in spite of everything being against him, will emerge as one of the good characters in the novel but we saw at the end. When we first meet Magwitch to see how very carefully Dickens give us clues that he is more sinned against than sinning that he is material. Magwitch may appear in convict's clothes but we learn that appearances are deceptive and that Magwitch in those clothes has more claim to our sympathy than Pip dressed up as a gentleman.

Another character who deserves particularly close attention is Wemmick who is shown as having a dual personality . In the office and when he is with his boss Jaggers, he is shrewd, taciturn , calculating and coldly impersonal. But at home his face softens and he is full of warmth and shows in his relationships to the "Aged Parent" that he is loving and generous son. Thus we know that Wemmich character is not an unacceptable inconsistency of characterisation. Also he has two personalities and Wemmick acts as a counterbalance to the many idiosyncratically single - minded minor characters in the novel.

Of these minor characters it may be said that they are all characterful, that is that they are all very personal, immediately recognisable, and often unforgettable because of some unusual quality or strange mannerism. Some of the very important minor characters like Bill Barley are no more than rapid sketches drawn with great conciseness and economy.

Bill Barley and Mrs Pocket's characters have little more to offer than the amusement of their weaknesses and eccentricities. Pumblechook is more fully described and we are entertained by him but he is flat character, the embodiment of a pompous, incentive hypocrite. In Pumblechook we see his dislike of the pompous and the hypocritical because he feels very strongly about the kind of viciousness which Pumblechook represents that we feel strongly about Pumblechook and even though we never expect to see someone just like in the flesh.

CONCLUSION

Several critics have judged *Great Expectations* to be Dicken's greatest novel. It is easy to see why. He tells an ingenious and engaging story and locates it in two areas which fascinated him - around Rochester in Kent and in Central London. Places within these areas, such as the Churchyard at Cooling, Newgate Prison and Barnard's Inn, are graphically described and there is a strong sense of atmosphere. The story contains mystery, surprise, suspense, excitement and irony and it is written with what has been called a 'command of word, phrase, rhythm and image'. The central character, Pip, is so convincingly and sympathetically drawn that he holds the interest of the reader throughout, and he is supported by a remarkable collection of other characters. Miss. Havisham, Magwitch, Wemmick, Mr. Pumblechook and many others, are imaginative creations of genius. They may seem unusual the eccentric but they are possessed of a vitality which delights us and makes them completely acceptable, and very memorable. Finally, the novel is more than just an entertainment.

It is concerned with important matters of behaviour and asks questions which stimulate thought and discussion. How ought money to be used? What are the qualities of a true gentleman? What should be our attitude towards criminals? What qualities make for justice and happiness? Ought we to exploit other people? These are just a few of

the subjects about which Dickens was pondering as he wrote *Great Expectations* , and his concern for what is right and what is wrong provides and richness of texture which , with its other qualities means that a century and more after it was first written we can still enjoy and profit from our reading of it .

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