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Poverty and Self-Improvement in Charles Dickens'
Great Expectations

*An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for a
Master's Degree in Literature and Civilisation*

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Dedications

I would like to dedicate this simple work as thanks to my mom and to one of the greatest sisters Ro and Gnina, my brother Oussama and my passing father, I'm a grateful son just as you were dad, Ilyes, Abdou, Ayoub, Anes, Mouha and Adel the great for sure you know what and how it is brothers Last but not least Yasser and Walid, bless you little brothers go for your dreams as teach said 'people's dreams never end'. Finally Chemso or Chmiso, we started together man and here we are ending it together. Five years of greatness I can't ask for more.

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Abstract

Motivation and self-improvement are always significant cases containing many theories and ideologies. The ability to move from one situation to another, regardless of the harms and problems one may face, can the human change his destiny, or is destiny a final stage of life? Many questions can be asked. Charles Dickens wrote this masterpiece of work to prove that nothing is impossible and that you cannot win without losing. It is said that the most remarkable victories require tremendous sacrifices. Through this current study, we try to understand whether a single person could use the one-life chance to change his whole life and examine the extent of the sacrifices to achieve what can be called the impossible.

Keywords: Industrial Revolution, Social Structure, Poverty, Sacrifice, Motivation and Self-Improvement

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General Introduction

“Suffering has been stronger than all other teaching, and has taught me to understand what your heart used to be. I have been bent and broken, but – I hope -into a better shape...”

Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens is still considered to be the greatest novelist of the Victorian era; his childhood, the way he was raised, and all the experiences that he gained in life made him one of the greatest writers of that time. Dickens lived a life full of pain, poverty and mistreatment, he was writing about the truth of the Low classes at that time, and he gave a full view of the pain and racism that existed at that time the fact that led to the emergence of a new style of writing. This novel

Great Expectations was considered to be one of Dickens’ masterpieces that reflected life reality at that time. The novel was written according to his life experiences and knowledge. The main character in the novel had a sad and hard beginning. Orphan and poor, he was mistreated by his family and people. Dickens’s narration was very close to perfection because he was writing by sentiment and feeling.

Turning the situation from a loss to a success is much more challenging. Both of them, Dickens and the character Pip in that novel, share the same definitions of poverty and failure in love. However, at the end of the journey, they succeed to win the battle. Dickens became a writing legend, and Pip became what he always wanted to be. The mixture of events, happiness and sadness, and the contradiction in this novel made it one of the greatest novels ever written.

The topic discussed in the current study is motivation and self-improvement. Through this work, we tried to understand what inspires a man to take the risk to change his whole life for the better. Being born poor and climbing the social ladder to the top is nothing less than a miracle, if you were born in the 19th century. In *Great Expectations*,

Charles Dickens tackled the idea mentioned perfectly; as he used his main character Pip to describe a great story of someone who challenged all the drawbacks to achieve his goal of becoming a noble at a time when doing such a thing was considered almost impossible.

This extended essay attempts to provide answers to the following questions:

- ❖ What motivates Pip to leave poverty and improve his life conditions?
- ❖ What are the consequences of Pip's new social status?

The hypotheses formulated are as follows:

- ❖ It is human nature to seek financial wealth and social status especially during the Victorian era where living conditions were characterised by hardship and misery.
- ❖ Pip had to sacrifice his social relations and family connections to fit the new conditions of becoming a rich person.

The work is divided into three main chapters; the first chapter, "Historical Background", is an introductory chapter that tried to display the life conditions of Victorian society and the role of literature in illustrating lower class peoples' sufferings. The second chapter, "Poverty as a Motivation", dealt with Pip's harsh experience with poverty since the day he was born and his struggles to find a place among upper class bourgeoisie despite his unfortunate conditions. The last chapter, "Sacrifice and Self-Improvement", pointed out Pip's personality shift and the devastating consequences of a willing change.

As for the methodological aspects used in order to fulfill this inquiry, qualitative research was used in order to examine the data collected for a better understanding of the sources and information. As for the references used, a mixture of both primary and

secondary resources was used in conducting the research among which the novel *Great Expectations*, books, articles and educational websites. The seventh edition of MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers was used in the works cited section, in-text citations, and some methods of writing.

Chapter One

Historical Background

Introduction

The most significant achievement needed some vast sacrifices. Like all the nations, Britain's history was not full of joy and happiness. The revolutions that occurred in Britain touched all the factories and fields, resulted from a significant movement from the simple farmer to the first leader. Science and inventions were the light that paved the way to one of the greatest revolutions in history. Yet, many sacrifices had been made especially from the lower classes to maintain such an evolution. In his novel *Great Expectations*, Dickens portrayed poverty and lower social class struggles to survive, revealing at the same time the dark side of a shining era.

1.1 Origins of the Industrial Revolution

In the eighteenth century, a series of inventions transformed the manufacture of cotton in England and gave rise to a new mode of production -- the factory system. Moreover, the agricultural revolution produced a renaissance and a series of events that were the cornerstone for the emergence of an industrial revolution. Among other factors are the loans provided by banks to non-aristocratic business people to finance their private projects directly.

We believe that the main factor was the transfer of power from the queen to the council, most of the reasons that created opportunities and led to the outbreak of an industrial revolution and allowed the people to impose their ideas with funding from the treasury. We do not forget that the labour force was beyond reasonable, so we see that the migration to the cities helped the owners of the small companies to exploit the workers in an efficient manner that helped create and develop the industry.

Furthermore, the artisan and the worker used to rely on a few simple primitive means in their work (power of water animals and manual personal skills...), but in return, these

operations cost a lot of money and time. Some difficulties began to ease with the beautiful invention of John Kay's 'The Flying shuttle'. This machine made the ability to reduce a massive amount of the manual craft possible. A breakthrough came when a Lancashire entrepreneur Richard Arkwright devised a simple but remarkable spinning machine replacing the work of the human hands, and a water farm made it possible to spin cotton yarn more quickly and in more significant quantities than ever before.

The main features involved in the Industrial Revolution were technological, socioeconomic, and cultural. The technological changes included mainly the use of new basic materials, chiefly iron and steel. The use of new energy sources, including both fuels and motive power, such as coal, the steam engine, electricity, petroleum, and the internal-combustion engine, the invention of new machines, such as the spinning jenny and the power loom. All that permitted an increased production with a smaller expenditure of human energy which entailed increased division of labour.

1.2 British Society during the Industrial Revolution

By the beginning of the Victorian period, the Industrial Revolution had created profound economic and social changes. Hundreds of thousands of workers had migrated to industrial towns, where they made up a new kind of working class. Wages were meagre, hours very long—fourteen a day, or even more. Employers often preferred to hire women and children who worked for even less than men's families and lived in horribly crowded, unsanitary housing.

London's population overgrew during the 19th century the fact that caused significant problems with overcrowding and poverty. Disease and early death were common for both rich and poor people. Victorian children failed to have as many toys and

clothes as children do today; many of them were homemade. Several authors in their famous books described life in Victorian society accurately.

1.2.1 Social Structure

Due to the industrial revolution, Britain witnessed the birth of social classes divided into three classes (upper, middle, and lower class), in addition to the underclass that appeared later on. The upper class was by legacy a Royal Class. Many Aristocrats failed to work as for hundreds of years. Their families had been gathering enough money for every generation to measure an expensive life. However, there had been a variety of noblemen who managed large industries like mining or shipping. In terms of education, those who belonged to the wealthy families got the most effective tutors to produce Education; the fact that they represented the royal class gave these people an advantage in everything they could easily buy and afford expensive stuff like clothes, etc.

On the other side, middle-class people also owned and managed vast business empires. At the very start of the Victorian era, the middle-class population was limited to some. However, the industrial revolution within the mid-century of the age caused drastic changes in the standard of living of the Victorian middle-class people. These revolutions opened the doors for more job opportunities and earning a good living standards. This, in turn, had a positive impact on kids' education.

Furthermore, the lowest among the social hierarchy were the labourers. This class remained remote to the country's political progress and was hostile to the opposite two classes. It was further categorised because of the unskilled workers. Due to the revolution, the economic workers got jobs, thus improving their living conditions. However, the unskilled workers placed below the skilled ones remained unemployed and susceptible to exploitation. Lack of cash resulted in a negligible food supply. For a few working families,

the living conditions were so pathetic that they required their children to figure in bringing home some extra income to survive.

1.2.2 Child Labour

The term –child labour‖ generally refers to children who work to produce a good or a service which can be sold for money in the marketplace regardless of whether or not they are paid for their work. A –child‖ is usually defined as someone dependent upon other individuals (parents, relatives, or government officials) for his or her livelihood. The exact ages of –childhood‖ differ by country and period.

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Great Britain became the first country to industrialize. Because of this, it was also the first country where the nature of children’s work changed so dramatically that child labour became seen as a social problem and a political issue. Children of poor and working-class families had worked for centuries before industrialization – helping children to work was first documented in the Medieval era when fathers had their children spin thread for them to weave on the loom. Children performed various tasks that were auxiliary to their parents but critical to the family economy.

The family’s household needs determined the family’s supply of labour, and –the interdependence of work and residence, of household labour needs, subsistence requirements, and family relationships constituted the ‘family economy’‖ (Tilly and Scott, 12). The greed of the factory managers was so great, and this alone was a significant motive for making it reasonable to exploit children in jobs that even adults might not be able to do. We may mention a group of reasons that made the exploitation and employment of children very demanding. The children were very obedient, mainly from the working class. They were required to work to support their families. In addition to their small wage,

they worked around 14 hours a day in dirty and hot places. They were not even provided with proper clothing gear or training.

1.3 Victorian Literature

Moved by the terrible sufferings resulting from severe economic depression in the early 1840s, writers and men in government drew increasingly urgent attention to the conditions of the working class. Victorian literature, then, was characterised by the struggles, progress, and triumph of the working class during the industrialisation of England. This era witnessed notable authors including Charles Dickens, the Bronte Sisters, Oscar Wilde, H.G. Wells, and Mary Shelley; all of whose works are still studied today. Their narratives and characters were at the forefront of modern storytelling as they faced expanding technology and political and social changes. The stories of the Victorian literary era are full of universal themes that modern readers can still connect with, such as finding a purpose or a place in the world, seeking love, understanding technology and science, feeling nostalgic for a time gone by, and finding happiness in an ever-developing world.

The years 1837-1901, in which Queen Victoria reigned, were highly influential in the development of modern literature; the period absorbed the early-nineteenth-century works of the Romantics and the satirical novels of Jane Austen and, in the legacy left behind by the Victorian novelists, paved the way for the creation of twentieth-century Modernist texts. The era saw great change and upheaval in numerous momentous events, such as the scientific publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and the steady expansion of the British Empire. These influential factors worked their way into the period's writing.

The novel became the leading form of literature and realism the predominant literary genre, evident in the trendy works of Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy.

The events and changes made the writers and novelists tend to more realistic and modern literature. We can say that the Victorian era was the main period that paved the way for a new golden age of literature. All this was caused by the intellectual revolution of the readers, whose leading cause was the industrial revolution.

1.3.1 Industrial Revolution Impact on Literature

The change in British literature in the Victorian era was manifested by moving from imagination and feelings to a more accurate and realistic world. We find that most writers and novelists compete to narrate the real bad life of the marginalised class. The events of the books and novels revolved around the social problems of both genders, male and female. Their books dealt with topics similar to the real daily sufferings of the British people.

Consequently, literature movements and advances were necessary during the industrial revolution because they told aloud the stories of industry workers, families and the oppressed of how they thought of the injustices they faced. Bold authors like Charles Dickens had used their craft to depict the harsh working conditions in child labour, education and the effects on family values. Because of their voices, the society and government began to change their laws to help children and women , in particular, in changing their harsh living conditions during the industrial revolution.

Conclusion

Realism art movement of the nineteenth century was a dramatic shift from the exotic and poetic Romanticism that dominated the art world in the decades prior. Literary realism, in particular, introduced a new way of writing and a new generation of authors whose influence can still be seen in American literature and English literature to this day. We can say that the Victorian era was the main period that paved the way for a new golden age of

literature. All this was caused by the intellectual revolution of the reader, whose main cause was the Industrial Revolution.

Chapter Two

Poverty as a Motivation

Introduction

Ambitions and desires to improve one's life might be considered the central theme in Dickens' novel *Great Expectations* because from the beginning, we could notice the main character Philip Pirrip (called Pip), on his way to his "great expectations" and great future. Despite the clarity of Pip's primary influence, we could realise that the genuine desire for success was his internal struggle with himself. The rejection of the lived reality led to the beginning of a fundamental change in Pip's life. In the current chapter, we tried to investigate the protagonist in this story and all the stages of his life, from his childhood to his sufferings as adult, to clarify his deep reasons for change.

2.1 Pip's Harsh Life Conditions

Pip was an orphan who belonged to a poor working-class family. He received his upbringing from his sister, who hardly deserved the title of sister. Pip's view of society and his direct environment had changed due to the abuse he was subjected to: "My sister was a difficult woman She did have a heavy hand that she used on me and Joe freely." (Dickens, 11) Pip's saying explained the daily abuse he was subjected to. Directly as if he was saying that being beaten was part of his sister's daily work.

Great Expectations, like most of Dickens' novels, did not begin with a description of the perfect bliss of childhood, "the period when the world and the self are identified, and the parents are seen as benign gods whose care and whose overlooking judgement protect and justify the child." (Miller, 251) Fear and insecurity always lurked in Pip's mind making him a „morally timid“ helpless child. The early years of Pip's life were fraught with wretchedness, misery and suffering, even if the family was not steeped in extreme poverty. Pip lived in his inner world with endless fear because of his constant feeling of guilt for things he did not do. He was just an innocent boy subjected to all these pressures from his

abusive sister. This indicated the size and impact of the act at the beginning of the formation of the child's life.

Pip's sister, was a stern, nagging and overbearing woman who treated him most roughly, disregarding the effects of her ill-treatment on an vulnerable mind. She constantly scolded and rebuked Pip, sometimes coming down heavily on him for minor or no lapses. Pip, orphaned at a young age, never received selfless motherly love, care, or sympathy from his sister. She occasionally reminded him, always sarcastically, of the immense sacrifice she had made in raising him 'by hand': "Even if I Hadn't stolen from my sister I couldn't have been more uncomfortable sitting there with them." (Dickens, 16)

The insecurity the child felt and unhappiness caused by his family, all the expressions Pip uttered were evidence of the difficulty of his life and childhood. The psychological deprivation and isolation that he was exposed to on the part of his sister and her friends was the beginning of a change in his thinking and rejection of his reality. Poverty and the family factor in Pip's life could be a significant reason for changing the direction of his life and building up a better future away from his dark reality. Pip, finally, realised that his family would have kept him away from spotted poverty but would not bring him closer to wealth.

2.1.1 Social Status

The beginning of the journey was challenging for Pip, especially in the psychological aspect, despite his hatred of his standard of living and the class in which he grew up, it was not easy for him to start a new stage with such ease. His departure meant saying goodbye to his loved ones and friends and facing a new world that was not easy for him: "I was leaving behind my childhood home and Joe. I wished I had asked him to walk with me... I

started to cry... I was too far from the village I knew my new world was before me.”
(Dickens, 55)

One of the most vital themes in *Great Expectations* was Pip's relationship with Joe Gargery who offered unconditional love and attention to Pip, but this latter grown callous and had to relearn the value of Joe's friendship. Pip did not know that his entry to London to realise his dreams of becoming a nobleman would cost him a lot. Pip's discovery of his great desires made him look at his life from an abhorrent angle. He became disgusted with his life and his poverty, and turned into a reticent person who was ashamed of his place in the eyes of the nobles and the rich, from the behaviour of his family, his clothes and his appearance.

Money could change anybody, and Pip was no exception. When Pip was poor, he truly wanted to be a gentleman. He had great expectations for himself. Pip felt embarrassed that his family had no money. Pip's pride corrupted him and blinded him till he realised the price paid for letting money rule his life the fact that cost him the loss of his friends, family, and parts of himself to be a "true gentleman". It was a compelling novel of guilt, desire, ambition, greed and reconciliation and finally realising the actual value of money, friendship and love. Pip did not reach what he wanted despite everything he had achieved and succeeded in it: “I was too cowardly to do what I knew to be right as I had been too avoid doing what I knew to be wrong.” (Dickens, Back Cover)

Pip learned that his friend's need for money did not leave him idly but prompted him to consider helping his friend. This indicated the sincerity of Pip's noble feelings and his sincere personality; all of these qualities were bequeathed to him by his friend Joe: “They agreed to offer Herbert a job and later make him a partner. I finally felt my expectations had done some good for someone.” (Dickens, 82) The moral theme of *Great Expectations*

was straightforward. Affection, loyalty, and conscience were more important than social status, wealth, and class. Dickens set the topic and showed how Pip learnt this lesson. He mainly explored ideas about ambition and personal development. This idea became the novel's thematic focus and a psychological mechanism that contributed significantly to Pip's development.

2.1.2 Consequences of Poverty on Pip's Ambitions

First of all the fact of being an orphan, Pip did lose his wings as a child, the family that could protect him, most of his time, Pip used to visit the graveyard in the church where his mother and father and brother were buried. Pip lacked parental affection that would have given him self-confidence. Mrs Joe Gargary physically and emotionally abused her brother, treating him as if he had insisted on being born in defiance of the laws of reason, religion, and morality and emphasising how much she despised her job as his surrogate mother. Pip's personality was deeply harmed by her animosity, which caused him to be shy and outraged person: "My sister's bringing up had made me sensitive." (Dickens, 69)

Pip always received that cold action from his sister and never felt that he was part of her family. But there was her husband, a kind man who truly loved him as his part of his family. He was a blacksmith; he was from a low-income family. As a child, this made him touchy about people's Behaviour toward him. Joe did not have the opportunity to go to school to learn." "...gave me the bread and meat without looking at me, as insolently as if I were a dog in disgrace. I was so humiliated, hurt, spurned, offended, angry, sorry..." (Dickens, 64) The feeling of loneliness and of the Discrimination never left pip mind because it was everything that he received from his careless sister.

A tough childhood was typical for a child living within the Victorian period, and that was on the condition that a baby survived till childhood, as infant mortality rates were

extremely high. This was often an experience Pip knew well, as all five of his brothers were dead, buried within the graveyard at the start of the book alongside his parents. Pip and his sister were the sole survivors.

If a toddler did survive, he or she would expect a lifetime of child labour as education was not compulsory, and even people who visited school had to handle plenty of penalties. Pip would sooner or later be the apprentice of a blacksmith. It usually became „survival of the fittest“ within the Victorian length. The government did not give benefits or help, so there was little danger of an orphan making something of him like Pip did, something that ought to be pretty surreal to Victorian society.

The Victorian duration also became very capitalist, a very individualistic ethos of an economic system that made human beings accept as accurate with it is their fault in case you were in poverty, similarly playing on why people could not pull themselves up from the dust within the manner Pip would do. The condition of the poor at that time was not adequate for them to learn or live in dignity. Dickens showed how life was very hard for the lower class; the reflection of his society specified that the living conditions in the Victorian era were challenging: “In the little world in which children have their existence whosoever brings them up, there is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt as injustice.” (Dickens, Chapter8)

2.2 Love as a Motivation

Pip's desire to create a strong personality, ultimately reflecting his childhood and upbringing, was just an idea in his head until he met Estella. Her boldness and cold heart made him look at himself from an angle that showed his helplessness and poverty: “ He“s just a common working boy ”, “ This boy has very rough hands, and his boots are very thick.” Estella“s harsh words, which appeared to be more than just ordinary, greatly

impacted Pip's heart and psyche. In these moments, Pip realised that it was difficult to get what you wanted without making great sacrifices for self-improvement and development.

“I was led outside... Estella threw some bread and meat on the ground for me like a dog, I was hurt and I cried a lot”. This was how Pip explained his frustration with the behaviour of Estella, the charming girl who made it clear to him that his standard of living was not up to her. Pip's desire to reach a higher level was not hidden even from his closest acquaintances: “I think she is wonderful and I want to become gentleman for her.” Here Dickens explained in his novel that the hidden motive for Pip's desire to change and create a strong character with high potential was more his admiration and love for Estella.

Estella's actions caused Pip to dislike himself as a person. He started to judge himself and his social background cruelly. Estella did this because she had been raised to think less of those around her. From a different point of view, we could find that Estella's behaviour impacted Pip and made him change his character. Perhaps Pip became feigned in some way. As a psychological and an emotional impact, Pip was ready to do anything to win Estella's heart: “I loved her against reason, against promise, against peace, against hope, against happiness, against all discouragement that could be.”

2.3 Similarities between Pip's and Dickens' Lives

Like Pip, life did not give Dickens that many opportunities as it was known about the Victorian era and its social classes. Although his father was a likeable person, he had many debts. At the age of twelve, Dickens was kicked out of school and worked in a shoe-blackening factory in London to help his imprisoned father repay his debts. Over time, Dickens wanted to do the impossible to change his life for the good.

At the age of sixteen, Charles Dickens became a disciple of a law firm to study law, but soon gave up and learned shorthand to become a reporter in court. Dickens said, “we

need to be ashamed of our tears.” Duo to his difficult life experiences, the connection that Dickens gave to his characters in the novel made him one of the elite writers and authors of the Victorian era.

Dickens wrote *Great Expectations* during the most challenging period of his life. He was in the divorce with his wife Catherine, on the top of that, his child was running up gambling, and his daughter hitched a man whom Dickens did not like. All this was on his intellect as he began to type in. We could notice through the novel that Dickens put it all together showing how the person could make from the lowest cause a motivation of his upcoming success.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we tried to clarify the idea of how Pip lived within his family and how his direct environment treated him. We found that both psychological and emotional life of Pip were very bad, meaning that he grew up in conditions that did not help him creating a strong personality. Thus, his individuality underwent quite a complicated development that was profoundly influenced by the setting where the protagonist came from.

Chapter Three

Sacrifice and Self-Improvement

Introduction

Nothing comes for free; that is what life taught us. In all the stories that showed us that self-development and self-improvement do not come for free, Dickens gave us an exact copy of the meaning of sacrifice. In the end, it was impossible to fly high without giving up the distance of the payload, even if it was essential. The idea that sacrifices are a part of the route to contentment was constantly demonstrated in Charles Dickens' novel *Great Expectations*. Pip, the main character, was a prime example since he made numerous sacrifices to achieve what he considered to be the ultimate happiness. In the story, Charles Dickens emphasised the idea that sacrifices must be made to be truly happy, even if the conclusion may not always be as intended.

3.1 Pip's Self-Improvement

It all began with a phrase uttered by just a girl from a rich family to a boy who belonged to a class between poverty and moderation. Perhaps as readers, we could find that Estella's speech did not need all this scrutiny, but for Pip, it meant a lot. For an innocent child, social class could be a serious obstacle to progress in the life. After only one meeting with Estella, Pip started losing sight of what was truly important in his life; he completely shifted his focus from friendship to social status.

In the quest for high-importance things, sacrifices must happen to the dearest of possessions. Pip did not have much money in the first place. He had nothing in general, but his relationship with Joe and their values meant a lot to Pip. When is a sacrifice – and particularly self-sacrifice – called for? This question turned out to be challenging to answer, for it tended to arise when values conflict, and hence the answer to it depended on how conflicts of values were resolved. Pip's love for Estella was the primary motive that

led him to reach his goal and transform from poverty to the noble class. We could comment that the effort expended was very significant, but it was for a wrong reason:

I knew to my sorrow, often and often, if not always, that I loved her against reason, against promise, against peace, against hope, against happiness, against all discouragement that could be. Once for all; I love her none the less because I knew it, and it had no more influence in restraining me, than if I had devoutly believed her to be human perfection. (Dickens)

This deep passage of Pip's speech could not be considered as mere lines, but rather this was a great intent. The writer showed us that the boy was ready to do anything to win Estella's heart. For him, compromises in principles and values were of no importance, for love made him a blind man.

Besides, Pip lived in the harshness of his sister and had no parental love, no education, no family and no money or Wealth. He felt that he had no value in society the fact that pushed him to stand up for himself to take his place as a famous wealthy man. Pip's living conditions were the other motive for him to make the right move toward the upper class. He had already been fed up with being the underdog in British society. Pip wanted no more blacksmithing, no more debts, and no more illnesses. Pip was a brilliant boy; all the poorness he was living in did not stop him thinking that it was time to change. He took that all to his advantage and decided to go further in his life. However, Pip went out to risk it all by taking place with the next class in society.

3.2 Pip's Sacrifices

It appeared to us through the story that Mr Joe was the godfather of the boy Pip, so he taught him the principles that Joe always carried with him. However, over time, Pip was no longer that innocent child who did not know the meaning of evil or rejection: "I hope

you will not stop him from coming since you are a gentleman now.” (Dickens, 71) This message from Mrs Biddy explained that she and Joe were aware that Pip had changed a lot, and he was no longer that child who loved Joe and his family, he had become intolerant and refused their presence, he became an arrogant man who hated their low living standards.

The first thing that would come to the mind of a reader of these lines was that this was a man’s answer to his enemy, but the truth was that this was a direct and honest answer that Pip wished to address to Mrs Biddy: “I have to say I was not really looking forward to him coming. If I could I have paid to have him stay away.” (Dickens, 71) Pip’s words made it clear to us that he sacrificed his feelings and the principles of brotherhood that he had for Mr Joe. Pip abandoned his modest home and occupation, leaving behind a loving bond with Joe.

3.3 Impact of the New Social Status

When Pip became adult, the first thing he did to achieve his goal, was to ensure that his friend Herbert had the required funds to establish a business. However, he went through a phase where he became a snob, felt ashamed of Joe, said hurtful things to Biddy, and flaunted himself in front of his new wealthy pals. But, in the end, he returned to being an honest and pleasant young man who had learned from his own mistakes: “I would like you to help my friend become a partner in his company. I started myself paying for his two years ago and I told him It was a secret from him.” (Dickens, 95) Pip's help for his companion and his eagerness to achieve his dream was not just a coincidence or an apparent act. Pip's effort indicated the presence of much goodness in his heart, awareness and an ability to give without return.

Pip's new social status made him change his behaviour a little. Going back to the past when Estella mistreated him, what he said to Mr Joe and his frustration with his poverty and dissatisfaction with reality, all of these were direct causes of the formation of the psychological conflict that Pip was in; Pip was a character that combined anger, friendliness, rejection, acceptance, contentment, and indignation. His hideous behaviour with Mr Joe, the only man who gave him love and affection and was everything to him, showed the wrong side of Pip whereas his diligence in fulfilling his friend's dream and helping him to work by providing money and support was an indication that there was much goodness in Pip's heart, and it was also an indication that Pip was still faithful to his old values and principles.

Growing up in an austere environment surrounded by his rude sister's insulting and others' making fool of him, which made him feel self-abased and caused him to have a negative attitude to life. From this angle, we might excuse Pip's negative behaviour, as his past dramatically affected his future. We could understand that vanity controlled Pip's power of words and deeds and moral judgment at that time. He had become a so-called gentleman many times, especially when he went wrong he had always thought about Joe. Whenever thinking of Joe, Pip always had a sense of guilt and remorse.

On the other side, Dickens' masterpiece represented to us a struggle that had always existed between the rich and the poor. The aristocracy saw the poor and the middle class as not having the luck to advance, while the other classes saw them as exploiters and tyrants. Most novelists had shown us that the rich did not possess spiritual and psychological wealth. In most of the stories, we found that the middle and the poor were mainly the ones characterised by generosity and benevolence to some extent.

In Pip's deep inside, the meanings of chivalry, duration, generosity and appreciation of effort were inculcated since his childhood. Being born into a rich family without principles was completely different from the pursuit of wealth while you carried a lot of true nobility in your blood. This was the missing part common among the aristocrats and the nobles in general: "I decided to sleep in the forge which made Joe very happy. I was happy with myself for offering to do it." (Dickens, 80) Pip's offer was a grand gesture that illustrated Pip's humility. It never occurred to Mr Joe that this gentleman would decide to sleep in the room where he used to sleep as a child. Pip reacted to Mr Joe's delight at his offer. In answer to our question, was Pip no longer appreciating where he grew up? Expressing happiness over people's happiness was clear evidence of a person's kindness and high level of morals.

In general, Pip's ultimate dream was permanently attached to pleasing Estella to get her love. Although Estella broke his heart when he was young and continued the same way in his old age, Pip's feelings for her remained the same: "In a word, I was too cowardly to do what I knew to be right, as I had been too cowardly to avoid doing what I knew to be wrong." Pip's admission of his failure to manage his feelings was a reaction to his rejection of his reality. The goal he wanted to reach made him drop some of his core principles. Pip's desire to obtain Estella in any way possible made him rely a little on the aristocracy's actions. A conflict resulted in him between a difficult right and an illusion that he could not give up, so he began to see that the working class was one of the reasons for Estella's rejection of him.

The conflict between the noble and middle classes was considered to some extent a conflict of ideologies, transactions, and convictions. On the one hand, the aristocracy considered the suffering of the poor as part of the reality that should be accepted, while on the other hand, the middle class believed that the situation in which they lived was not fair.

Ethics difference was the chief aspect that novelists refused to mention, on the contrary, Dickens symbolized it in his novel to demonstrate the fact that nobility was what a man carried within his sense of generosity, love, and help for people.

Pip struggled to categorise others and himself due to the societal shifts in England during the nineteenth century. Instead, he discovered his way of determining his identity and place within society by dictating his fate. (Upham, 1) The effect Estella had on Pip was such a huge one. It was the beginning of a change and a comprehensive transformation in Pip's psyche. From that moment on, Estella's belittling of Pip made him understand the difference between classes and how the aristocrats view the lower classes. Estella's word choice in describing him demonstrated the way that the other characters perceived him, and suggested that outside of Pip, social roles were a concern to others. Her statements also furthered the idea that affairs, even small ones such as playing, should be class specific. (Upham, 7)

Faults did not appear but rather revealed; the amount of frustration experienced by Pip was enough to draw signs of eternal sadness on his face. Was his bitter reality and his low standard of living blamed on him or his deceased parents, or did fate determine human suffering? These were the worst psychological experiences that Pip went through, and they increased the flame of psychological conflict within him. Pip was able to understand the meaning of class differences and that the levels were not close. Pip was exposed to the highest levels of rejection and oppression from the person he always aspired to get his heart. The frustration was a reason for the beginning of a great ambition toward a better tomorrow.

3.3.1 The Cost of Individuality

There was no doubt that Dickens's *Great expectations* was a masterpiece, a true picture of a society rooted in cruelty, where the idea of gentlemanliness, however laudable in principle, was one based on illusions; a vision of a world in which our actions were determined by our pasts, by the opportunities we'd had, and by the language, we had learnt. The Victorian era showed us the true meaning of the level of society and the prevailing ideas that had long dominated it. The low standard of living, the suffering of individuals, and the management method made the rich richer and the poor poorer. In the presence of individuals who rejected reality, a new intellectual revolution had to erupt. Dickens was among the leaders of such a revolution. By the time *Great Expectations* was published, the middle-class respectability norm was well-established among the nobility. For this reason, being a respectable member of the middle class was a purpose to be achieved, especially for the lower class.

Pip fell into the group category that rejected his living reality, for many different reasons that prompted him to try to save himself and reach the top of the pyramid alongside the higher class and the aristocracy. At the first opportunity, he did not hesitate and took the first step, leaving behind many principles, primarily friendship and love. Pip took the individualist approach in managing the remainder of his life and accepted a new world he did not know in the centre of the ancient city of London, raising the ceiling of challenges and his hidden goal to reach the highest and improve his level, making arrogance enter his heart that was full of good before.

Pip's high hopes were intimately linked to independence, a desire for knowledge, and gentility, but his illusions were much linked to the unreachable Estella. Pip recognised the value of money and aspired to be a gentleman. Through time, he had been set free from

his erroneous notions of gentility. In *Great Expectations*, the transformation of Pip's prospects could be observed in line with his changing social environment, which resulted in a great conflict between Pip's individualistic traits and social norms.

The idea of becoming a gentleman occupied Pip's mind at the expense of conforming to dominant social norms. As Pip wanted to become a gentleman, he adopted middle-class manners and moral values with a subservient attitude. Hence, the social order gradually suppressed Pip's sense of individuality. The change became clear and manifested in Pip, once he got used to the high life, his goals became more refined, far from what he used to be. This realism that Pip chose kept him little by little away from his loved ones and family. Pip turned into a man, all of his goals were to reach a class that was hostile to the class in which he was brought up, and the result was inevitable.

Conclusion

Eventually, with all that was mentioned previously, it was clear that Pip had a strong personality and persona that led him towards building a solid future self, since all those hardships that he had to go through, hardships that would bring any other young guy down and make him hate his life, made him better. Opinions differed about Pip, but we agreed that the circumstances in which Pip lived, his sufferings, his life story, and everything he went through formed a personality that possessed a lot of maturity and goodness within it, despite the presence of some gaps. As Pip himself said, "Heaven knows we need never be ashamed of our tears, for they are rain upon the blinding dust of earth, overlying our hard hearts", a saying that showed us exactly how hard it was to face those problems, yet having the right mindset helped Pip, as he used them as fuel to motivate his will in order to become not only a rich man but rather a whole gentleman, joining the higher class of society.

General Conclusion

Poverty and self-improvement are two words that logically cannot be related, but by reading this novel and analysing these two subjects, we suggested that it could be the only escape that the protagonist Pip needed to make that significant move. Through the novel *Great Expectations*, Charles Dickens provided a real illustration of the huge sacrifices and sufferings of a lower class man in challenging his own tough living conditions.

Through our research, we tried to understand how poverty could be a significant motive for Pip to become an upper class nobleman. The protagonist was eager to change his life by neglecting all his morals to get money and become a gentleman to impress a girl that never loved him. In addition, through analysing the theme of poverty in the novel, we tried to clarify how much courage a person needed to take it upon him to change his situation and refuse his miserable conditions as Pip did. However, in the end, without knowing the heavy consequences of such a deep change, Pip discovered that nothing is worth it.

As far as our hypotheses are concerned, both were confirmed; poverty could be a real motivation for pip to get what he wanted in changing his life forever. Pip's conviction of changing his way of life came up in rejecting the poorness, the diseases and the ideological thoughts of the working class. He never felt comfortable with himself, and when he mingled among the wealthy, he decided to live the new privileged life and deny his previous one. He improved, he succeeded to become a gentleman through adapting all upper-class behaviour and habits, but in the end he failed to preserve his morals and loved ones and thus he lost his way.

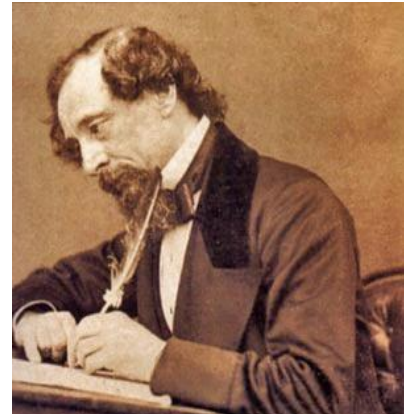
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Appendix I: Charles Dickens Biography

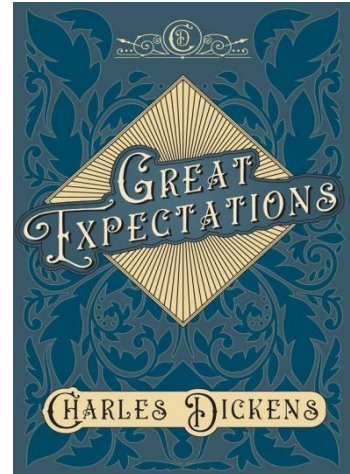
Charles Dickens was an English writer and social critic. During his lifetime, his works enjoyed unprecedented popularity. He is now considered a literary genius because he created some of the world's best-known fictional characters and is regarded as the greatest novelist of the Victorian era. His novels and short stories enjoy lasting popularity. Dickens was born on February 7, 1812 in Portsmouth, on the southern coast of England. His father, John Dickens, was a naval clerk who dreamed of becoming rich and his mother, Elizabeth Barrow, aspired to be a teacher and school director. But the family's financial situation had grown worse because John Dickens used to spend money dangerously beyond the family's means. Consequently, John was sent to prison for debt in 1824, when Charles was just 12 years old. After his father's imprisonment, Charles Dickens left school to work in a factory. Despite his lack of formal education, he edited a weekly journal for 20 years, wrote 15 novels, five novellas, hundreds of short stories and non-fiction articles, lectured and performed extensively, was an indefatigable letter writer, and campaigned vigorously for children's rights, education, and other social reforms. Dickens's literary success began with the 1836 serial publication of *The Pickwick Papers*. Within a few years he had become an international literary celebrity, famous for his humor, satire, and keen observation of character and society. His novels, most published in monthly or weekly instalments, pioneered the serial publication of narrative fiction, which became the dominant Victorian mode for novel publication. Dickens was regarded as the literary colossus of his age. His 1843 novella, *A Christmas Carol*, remains popular and continues to inspire adaptations in every artistic genre. *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations* are also frequently adapted, and, like many of his novels, evoke images of early Victorian London. His 1859 novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, set in London and Paris, is his best-known work of historical fiction. Dickens's creative genius has been praised by fellow writers—from Leo Tolstoy to George Orwell and G. K. Chesterton—for its realism, comedy, prose style, unique characterizations, and social criticism. On the other hand, Oscar Wilde, Henry James, and Virginia Woolf complained of a lack of psychological depth, loose writing, and a vein of saccharine sentimentalism. The term *Dickensian* is used to describe something that is reminiscent of Dickens and his writings, such as poor social conditions or comically repulsive characters. He died on June 9, 1870 of a stroke. He was buried in Poet's Corner at Westminster Abbey. Thousands of mourners came to pay their respects at the grave and throw in flowers.



Source: <https://www.myenglishpages.com/english/reading-charles-dickens-biography.php>

Appendix II: Synopsis of *Great Expectations*

Pip (Philip Pirrip) narrates the tale from an unspecified time in the future. He grows up in the marshlands of Kent, where he lives with his disagreeable sister and her sweet-natured husband, the blacksmith Joe Gargery. While visiting his family members' graves in the churchyard, the young Pip encounters Abel Magwitch, an escaped convict. Pip brings him food and a file, but the fugitive and Compeyson—his former partner in crime and a supposed gentleman who is now his enemy—are soon caught. Later Pip is requested to pay visits to Miss Havisham, a woman driven half-mad years earlier by her lover's departure on their wedding day. Living with Miss Havisham at Satis House is her adopted daughter, Estella, whom she is teaching to torment men with her beauty. Pip at first cautious, later falls in love with Estella, who does not return his affection. He grows increasingly ashamed of his humble background and hopes to become a gentleman, in part to win over Estella. However, he is disappointed when he instead becomes Joe's apprentice. Several years later a lawyer named Mr. Jaggers appears and informs Pip that an anonymous benefactor has made it possible for him to go to London for an education; Pip believes that the money is from Miss Havisham, who does not dissuade him of the notion. Once in London, Pip is taught to be a gentleman by Matthew Pocket and his son Herbert, the latter of who Pip met years earlier at Satis House. Also receiving instruction is the slow-witted and unlikable Bentley Drummle. The increasingly snobbish Pip is later horrified to discover that his mysterious benefactor is Magwitch. Not only is Magwitch in danger of being arrested, Pip's social standing is threatened. Pip reveals the situation to Herbert, and it is decided that Magwitch and Pip should leave England. Before departing, Pip visits Satis House, where he confronts Miss Havisham for letting him believe she was his patron. He also professes his love to Estella, who rejects him. Knowing that Drummle is pursuing her, Pip warns her about him, but she announces that she plans to marry him. Pip subsequently makes several startling discoveries, notably that Magwitch is Estella's father and that Compeyson was Miss Havisham's lover. He also grows close to Magwitch, whom he comes to respect. As Pip and Magwitch attempt to leave London via a boat, the police and Compeyson arrive. The two convicts end up fighting in the Thames, and only Magwitch surfaces; Compeyson's body is later recovered. The injured Magwitch is arrested, convicted, and dies awaiting execution. A despondent Pip is arrested because of his debts, but his failing health prevents him from being jailed. Joe subsequently arrives and nurses Pip back to health. Joe also informs him that Miss Havisham has died. After Joe leaves, Pip discovers that his brother-in-law has paid all of his bills. Pip later accepts a job offer at the Cairo branch of Herbert's firm, and he enjoys a simple but content life. After more than 10 years away, he returns to England and visits the place where Satis House once stood. There he encounters Estella, who is now a widow. As they leave, Pip takes her hand, believing that they will not part again.



Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Great-Expectations-novel-by-Dickens>

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