

# The Theme of the Quest of Fatherhood in Charles Dickens's Novel *Great Expectations*

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## Abstract

This research depends on the critical analysis method for the main events and characters in the novel. It assumes that the novelist Charles Dickens, in *Great Expectations*, like in his other novels, keeps on his attack on some specific abuses and injustices in the social system in England during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From the early beginning to the end of the novel, there is a parallel and simultaneous quest. The central character, Pip is an orphan boy who needs and unconsciously searches for a father, and the convict Ebel Magwitch who has lost his daughter, is looking for fatherhood. The fate of the orphan child is very strangely linked to the chased fugitive criminal. The paper consists of a general introduction about the novelist and his remarkable career followed by three sections: the first section briefly reviews some of the previous studies about the novel, the second explains the main characters and the plot of the novel, the third discusses the main hypothesis of the research and a conclusion which summarizes, briefly, the findings of the research.

*Keywords:* Charles Dickens, Victorian Novel, The quest for Fatherhood.

## Introduction

There is hardly any doubt that the English novelist Charles John Hoffman Dickens (1812-1870) has an achievement in the fiction scene of English, and world literature. His name is always associated with many very famous (classics) in the literary history such as: (*Oliver Twist* (1839), *David Copperfield* (1850), *Hard Times* (1854), *The Tale of Two cities* (1859), *Great Expectations* (1860) and other novels. He is well known to students and scholars of English Literature and he is considered by many literary historians as one of the notable writers of the realistic trend in the English novel.

Like all of Charles Dickens's novels, and as the custom at that time, *Great Expectations* appeared in a serial form before its publication in 1861. The sequential narrative in periodicals requires that the novelist resorts to certain narrative techniques decorated with suspense, excitement and many sudden turns to attract the reader's attention from the early beginning. Through its gradual

progress, the plot reveals many interesting secrets and hidden, complicated relationships between the huge number of characters in the novel. Moreover, its symbolism presents Dickens's moral vision which is based mainly on the eternal conflict of good and evil.

As it is known about him, Charles Dickens waves the plot of his novel carefully in an elaborate and fabric narration holding its variant and long branches tightly. But the long, interesting narration does not preclude following the central theme of the novel. The novelist continues and confirms his belief that Victorian Society, and its institutions result a lot of suffering to common people. Moreover, the loss of one -or both- parents, is one of its most important manifestations.

### **I. Review of Literature**

It is of great difficulty trying to overview the critical studies and researches on Dickens and his career. As for his novel *Great Expectations*, it had been noticed as one of the great works in the nineteenth century. A great deal of attention on it will be found in early studies and critical works. In fact, a reappraisal of the novel -in periodicals of that time- began almost immediately after its full publication in 1861 and in books like George Gissing's *Charles Dickens : A critical Study* 1808 and John Foster's : *The Life of Charles Dickens* (London:1872).

Some early important twentieth century critical works about the significance of Dickens's novels in the Victorian literature should be mentioned, such as George Orwell's *Dickens, Dali and others* (London: 1946), Barbara Hardy's *The Moral Art of Dickens* (London:1955) and the most important reference for students and researchers of the English novel : Walter Allen's *The English Novel* (London:1952).

Recent academic studies about Dickens's achievement and influence on other novelists were of great value for the purpose of studying Charles Dickens's works in general and *Great Expectations* in particular like Professor John Bowen's *Challenging Perceptions of Dickens* (University of York 2006). Bowen is a leading Dickens scholar, he had published an edited collection and more than fifty articles on Dickens and his career.

This research benefits from the aforementioned works on the novelist and the novel and depends on some other works that will be mentioned in the references for the purpose of proving and supporting the hypothesis put forward. However, by its own method, this research tries its best to have a modest contribution and an addition amid the enormous research efforts on the works of the great novelist: Charles Dickens.

### **II. Plot and Main Characters**

The central character Pip, is an orphan, he lives in a village with his sister and her husband, a blacksmith. In Dickens's distinctive, ironic style, Pip, the narrator, describes his sister and the way she raised him:

"My sister, Mrs. Joe Gargery was more than twenty years older than I, and had established a reputation with herself and the neighbors because she had brought me up "by hand".

Having at that time to find out for myself what the expression meant, and knowing her to have a hard and heavy hand, and to be much in the habit of laying it upon her husband and as well as upon me."

The opening scene of the novel is very significant to the main assumption of this paper : While Pip was alone in the graveyard where his father and mother buried, suddenly, a strange man springs up, pulls Pip and threatens him violently asking for food and an iron instrument to unlock his irons. Pip obeys and brings a piece of cake, a bottle of wine and an iron instrument in the morning but the horrible man is soon rearrested by the police. However, the criminal doesn't tell the police about Pip's help by claiming to have stolen the items from the blacksmith's workshop himself.

Although his living is , to some extent, is secured, it is so clear, from the beginning of the novel, that working in the blacksmith's workshop in the village doesn't fulfill the boy's grand dreams. Dickens designs the character of the orphan boy, Pip, to be in an urgent need for a real custody. There is a wealthy lady, Miss Havisham, an eccentric dowager who is one of the most remarkable female characters presented in Dickens's works as it will be discussed later in this paper. She puts on the same, old wedding dress, keeps all the wall clocks around her at a fixed time, and sits in front of an old table that once had been prepared for a wedding banquet.

In pip's family, it had been suggested that it is better for the boy's future to be introduced to Miss Havisham. So, Uncle Pumblechook suggests to take him to play at the house of the wealthy lady. This visit will have a profound impact on the little boy's future life. In the big house, he is introduced to Estella, an attractive girl who is an adopted daughter of an enchanting beauty. Estella "was very pretty and seems very proud" ( p.57). According to Miss Havisham's advice, the girl treats Pip scornfully. But he loves her and becomes full of the dreams of wealth to join her social position. Hence, the boy's great expectations begin, he innocently dreams and imagines that Miss Havisham wants, to help him becoming a gentleman in order to marry Estella, but he has disappointed to know that the lady, after a period, suggests that it is better for the boy to work as a blacksmith laborer with Mr. Joe.

So, Pip starts his work life reluctantly. At the same time he keeps trying to learn writing and reading with the help of his neighbor, the village girl, Biddy. At the same time, a clash occurred with his fellow, naughty worker, Orlick. A strange incident happens when, after the clash between the two boys, an unknown person assaulted Mrs. Joe violently and she becomes disable. She tries to speak and make some signs, however Pip accuses Orlick of the attack.

A sudden turn occurred in the narration when a strange offer and news came to the poor family: a secret benefactor is ready to guarantee Pip's education in order to become a gentleman. It is the lawyer Mr. Jaggers who announces the astonishing offer: "that it is the desire of the present possessor of that property that he be immediately removed from his present sphere of life "(p.164). With a great

happiness, Pip thinks that he will soon fulfill his old dream. He can think of nobody but Miss Havisham to pay for his living and education and that the old woman wants to guarantee his marriage with Estella in the future, simply because he knows no one in his neighborhood, other than the wealthy lady who can bear such a generous offer.

With great excitement and happiness, the young villager, starts his life in London. He meets two friends: Herbert Pocket, a student and Wemmick, an assistance to the lawyer, Jaggers. The two men will accompany and help him in his entrance to the new environment. According to his new society of ( gentlemen), Pip gradually shows and feels shame towards his relatives and past friends including Mr. Joe, yet he can't quit thinking about Estella. Besides his formal education with tutors, Herbert gives him instructions to behave and live as a gentleman. At the age of twenty – one, according to the sponsor's recommendation, Pip begins to receive a regular salary depending on his income. He is now financially free to spend money anywhere and even to help his friend Herbert in business. However, the two friends incur some debts. As for the village news : Pip's sister, Mrs. Joe dies and Pip, sadly attends the funeral.

It is time for the second and most important sudden turn in the narration : A man sneaks into Pip's apartment in London, Pip remembers him: the fearful criminal, whom he met at the opening scene of the novel. The man reveals the most dangerous secret which will affect Pip's whole life and thinking: the source of Pip's money is not the rich lady, Miss. Havisham. The criminal tells Pip that he felt pity and sympathy by Pip's innocent help, so, he decided to return the favor by securing Pip's future.

From this point on, the ambiguities of the novel are being successively revealed. Pip is greatly astonished, but he believes that it is his duty to support Magwitch in return since the man is wanted and chased by the authorities and the other criminal, Compyson. Another complicated secret has been revealed, too. Pip discovers that Compeyson was Miss Havisham's fiancé who ran away after cheating her leaving her almost mad. But the most shocking secret, for Pip, is that Magwitch is Estella's father. The lawyer Mr. Jaggers has arranged , secretly, the little girl's adoption by the rich lady Miss Havisham and the latter raised her to scorn and torture men , just to avenge her tragedy. Pip was only a toy for Estella to act scorn and hatred. Miss Havisham was completely happy seeing Estella's skill, in playing on the poor boy's emotions.

The coming days, Pip begins to discover the kind and noble side in Magwitch and begins to arrange his affairs. Before Magwitch's try to flee, Estella marries a rich arrogant: Bentley Drummle. Pip goes to Miss Havisham's house. Pip is astonished when the old woman shed a lot of tears confessing that she had ordered the little girl Estella to deceive him. However, Pip shows forgiveness, but, a terrible accident happened when the fire catches the lady's dress and burns her and the whole room. Pip hurries to save her, she doesn't die but badly burn. Before death, she shows a lot of repentance and keeps asking Pip for pardon.

Pip and his friend Herbert decide to support Magwitch run abroad and soon they arrange for the secret purpose. Their plan is to steal at night in the

river on a boat , then in a cargo ship. Suddenly, the police storm the scene accompanied by Compeyson, and the two rivals involve in a frightening struggle in the river. Compeyson dies by drowning while Magwitch is rearrested by the police, imprisoned and sentenced to death. Consequently, Pip loses his fortune. Magwitch feels calm accepting his fate. Pip feels seriously frustrated ; the village blacksmith, Joe comes to look after him and to pay all his debts. The two men become friends again. Joe conveys the village events: After death, Miss Havisham left her wealth to her relatives, Biddy has taught Joe reading and writing. After Joe's departure, feeling completely alone, Pip travels to the village deciding to ask Biddy for marriage, but, it is too late, for Joe has preceded him.

Due to the great disappointment and frustration he suffers, Pip leaves England and migrates to work with his close friend, Herbert, in trade. Many years later, he returns. He looks like a grown man now and has passed the ordeal. Out of curiosity and nostalgia, he goes to the site of Satis House that was once Miss Havisham's luxurious palace. Only a trace of it remains. In a highly touching scene, in the old garden where he used to play in his childhood, he meets, by chance, Estella. She, too, seems to have had her share of pain and suffering. Her wealthy husband, Drummle, proves that he is an arrogant villain who treated her violently before his sudden death because of a horse kick. Pip finds that the kind and beautiful woman in front of him now has nothing to do with that cruel and arrogant girl. Leaving the garden together, both of them realize that it is their fate to meet again and never separate.

As a matter of characterization and narrative technique, Pip plays both roles of the central character and narrator, so, it is his opinions and judgments on other characters and events that shape the reader's perception of the novel. The events of the novel are told several years after their occurrence. Thus, the researcher have to differentiate between the narrator's voice and the character's performance in the novel. Dickens shows much skill in distinguishing the narrator from the central character, conferring the narrator Pip with plainness and wisdom. Moreover in this task, Dickens clarifies Pip's ( the character) feelings about the different events in the plot. This professionally designed distinction is well noticed early in the novel, in Pip's childhood, where the narrator Pip satirically comments on his childish behavior, but at the same time gently delivers the story to the reader

When analyzing Pip's personality, it becomes clear that his most important characteristics are: romantic immaturity and idealism in addition to an innate goodness. Pip's great target is to develop his entity for further progress in education and society. His strong wish to climb up the social ladder and to win Estella springs from the same source like the wish for learning reading and writing and his great fear of punishment because of mistakes. When he comes to understand the real meaning of hunger and oppression, in recounting the events, Pip comments on his past life sharply and satirically. He is noticed as "rarely giving himself credit for good deeds but angrily castigating himself for bad ones." Whereas Pip who participates in the action is directed by his natural morals to understand the surrounding events and environment from a limited scope. This results into "his tendency to oversimplify situations based on superficial values leads him to behave

badly toward the people who care about him." Later, in his youth, Pip learns to behave as he thinks an educated man is supposed to act, which causes his cold and snobbish treatment of his brother-in-law, Joe when he visits him in London. The following passage is highly significant in depicting the extent of disappointment and bitterness that Joe feels because of Pip's arrogant and proud:

" Pip, dear old chap, life is made of ever so many partings welded together, as I may say, one man's a blacksmith, and one's a whitesmith and one's a goldsmith, and one's coppersmith... I'm wrong in these clothes... You and me is not two figures to be together in London. You won't find half so much fault in me if you think of me in my forge dress, with the hammer in my hand, or even my pipe... I'm awful dull"

(p.236)

But the other side of Pip shows that he is honest and kind. These features reflect many noble acts (like in helping Magwitch at the beginning and secretly lending Herbert money for business and his natural love for his friend and relatives). The main core of Pip's self-realization is considered as the tray of exchanging his good qualities with the search for the ideal.

The careful reader can notice that, shortly after visiting the luxurious palace and getting to know Miss Havisham and Estella, Pip's wishes for self-development largely affects his innate simplicity. When he receives money, he believes that his wishes turn to be real and he immerses himself the luxury life. But, knowing the real source of money confuses Pip's peaceful feelings towards the situation. His realization of respecting the criminal Magwitch in addition to Estella's marriage to the wealthy arrogant Drummle forced him to understand that class is not the crucial thing in man's life. He learns that he has done a great mistake when he behaves as a snob and injures those who are sincerely close to him. When he has perceive these lessons, Pip becomes enough wise to narrate and comment on the rest parts of the novel.

Critics notice that the female counterpart, Estella, is considered as Dickens's "first convincing female character." Being an orphan, she is also involved in a search for a father. Estella is a totally contradictory character. Since her childhood, she had been taught by Miss Havisham to scorn men and "break their hearts" however, Estella has succeeded in attracting the boy, Pip. Not any kind of a charming angel, Estella is proud and selfish. Even if she embodies Pip's early wishes of high class life, Estella is born, to a lower class family than Pip; as he himself discovers before the end of the novel, for her real father is of Magwitch, the fugitive criminal and her mother is also accused of a crime.

Life in the wealthy palace doesn't satisfy the little girl, Estella who is detached from her father and mother. Once more she suffers and becomes a victim by her new family. Instead of receiving good upbringing by a kind-hearted father like Magwitch, her fate was to grow out of the hatred and malice of Miss

Havisham, who projects her own complexities and grudge for men on the little girl and offends her natural tendency to show her own emotions. Moreover, she marries the wealthy villain, Drummle, who persecuted her, instead of her childhood mate, the plain villager: Pip, who adores her deeply. By designing such events, the novelist uses the episode of Estella's adoption to confirm the theme that comfortable life and pleasant appearance do not necessarily relate to social status, for she might be happier, although poor, with her real parents.

Although she shows vanity and arrogance in her behavior, Dickens affirms the truth that Estella is kind and good at heart. Dickens reveals Estella's real character, which helps to justify the reason of Pip's fondness. Estella continues to insult Pip, but she doesn't intend to get rid of him; she tells him many times that she has "no heart"(p.370). Later in the events, Estella's failed marital life with Drummle leads her to encounter a tragic end like Pip. Out of the suffering, she comes to follow her real soul and at the end of the narration she has become a completely new person unlike the previous, immature one. She frankly confesses this remarkable transformation "Suffering has been stronger than all other teaching . . . I have been bent and broken, but—I hope—into a better shape"( p.373).

It is too important for the purpose of this research, to analyze the role and character of Miss. Havisham. She is an eccentric, almost mad, rich lady who spends most of her life in a semi-dark room, but she proves to be a notable character in Dickens's works. Her personality is bound to a specific, painful incident: her being deceived and neglected by a fraud man ( the criminal Compyson) who promised to marry her. All the preparations for the wedding party are done and the bride herself was ready and fully adorned in her white dress, waiting for the groom who never comes. Since that actual time, she vows to keep all the details in her life: her dress, her table, her shoe, as well as her broken heart, without any change. She takes Estella to her house and teaches her how to scorn and belittle men. Miss Havisham and her close relatives live in suffering due to her vengeful mind. She doesn't comprehend that her wicked plans and behavior will destroy the life and future of Pip and Estella as well. However, her final regret is a noticeable shift in her character. After many years of cruelty and hate, she understands that her malicious act , which causes a great disappoint to Pip, does not differ of that of Compyson, and instead of personal satisfaction she achieved only suffering. So, she asks Pip for pardon confirming "an important theme in the novel that bad behavior can be redeemed by contrition and sympathy."

### III. The Hypothesis of the Research

In most of his novels, Dickens shows much blame to the class system of being responsible of most of the human miseries. Here, in *Great Expectations*, he continues to explore the differences in life style among members of the society. He closely depicts the wealthy, the public citizens, the villagers in addition to the homeless and criminals as being one of the remarkable reasons of the lost fatherhood. Social distinction is a fundamental issue in the thought of the novelist, so, it occupies a distinguished position in this novel, too. Pip comes to think that fortune and social appearance does not trump love, sincerity and dignity.

Moreover, he understands that social position is not necessary connected to man's inner value: Estella's husband, the wealthy Drummle, is a scoundrel of no morals at all, while Magwitch, a homeless criminal, is a generous man of high inner values. The novel examines and portrays the class system which appeared in England after the Industrial Revolution. Dickens "generally ignores the nobility and the hereditary aristocracy in favor of characters whose fortunes have been earned through commerce."<sup>7</sup> The narration reveals "that the source of Miss Havisham's fortune was made from her father's brewery that is still connected to her manor." The novelist clearly attributes the miseries of the poor to the privileges of the rich under the class system and assures the idea of great expectations and individual-improving in case of fathers' or mothers' absence .

Charles Dickens also believes, and expresses in his novels, that the law system in Victorian England is largely affected and directed by the social one. The treatment of criminal cases and symbols is presented in the narration and embodied in the criminal characters and the wicked tricks of the corrupt lawyer, Jaggers. The images of crime and justice institutions control many parts of the novel and become an outstanding reference of Pip's own conflict and attempt to match his good nature and values "with the institutional justice system and his search for a father." Pip learns to look beyond social class to live in happiness and satisfaction, as a result, the symbols of the law and authorities become, for him, false standards of morality that Pip doesn't trust. He feels greatly afraid of Magwitch, in the beginning, and feels guilt for helping a wanted criminal. But, later, he realizes Magwitch's kindness and ignores his position as a convict. This means that Pip, ordinarily and secretly accepts Magwitch's role in his life as a confidential substitute of his dead father. Pip, motivated by his loyal feelings, supports Magwitch to challenge the authorities. So, Pip, in learning "to trust his conscience and to admire Magwitch's kind character, he has replaced an external standard of value with an internal one."

The law system in each society is the mechanism which society has established to secure its own members. Theoretically and intuitively, the law protects all people: the rich and the poor, the ignorant and the educated, the old and young people. The novelist, often sheds his bitter satire on the legal institutions of the Victorian Age. Law is distorted to secure the interests of the powerful against the helpless, and children in particular. In the first scene of the novel, the chased criminal Abel Magwitch is depicted as "a man who had been soaked in water, and smothered in mud, and cut by flints, and stung by nettles and torn by briars" (p.2). It is easy to conclude that the novelist carefully draws the symbol. It is because of certain injustices that a man appears in such a dreadful condition. His story, the reader knows that, since his birth, it was his destiny to grow up as a criminal because of severe hunger and inhumanity of the ruling class. When Mr. Jaggers is narrating to Pip how he took the little girl, Estella from her mother and deliver her to Miss Havisham to live in her house, he states his attitude towards his own action. Mr. Jaggers also informs the reader that children were abused and harshly treated in courts and prisons, so that, ( selling) the little girl, Estella to the wealthy



Miss. Havisham, is a kind of salvation instead of life among prisoners, in Jagger's opinion. Dickens designs a highly effective scene to satirize, bitterly on the law system and its representatives. During Magwitch's trial, there were other thirty two convicts, all of them sentenced to death. "They are herded together, surrounded by legal officials, and by a large crowd of people who have come to watch the show. The judge gives a pompous, moralistic speech, singling out the already dying Magwitch as a scourge to society" (p.488 ). It is also clear that Dickens, here, "explicitly condemns a public situation which abuses its authority. He is equally resentful of the inhumanity of man to man."

The critic Paul Davis noticed that Dickens, intentionally and skillfully designed the scared meeting between the orphan child, Pip and Magwitch. It occurs when Magwitch, the criminal, makes a sudden appearance in the very beginning of the novel while Pip is out in front of his parents' tombs "on the marshes one cold Christmas Eve. Magwitch is a criminal escaped from a prison- ship. He is tied in leg irons, cold, hungry , desperate." For the innocent child, this man "is everything that a weak and passive, child fears in the adult world; its capacity for wicked deeds, the brutality of its emotions, its strength and violence and extreme egoism, the threat of being utterly outcast and utterly alone" Pip literally obeys the fearful man and brings food and an iron instrument for fear of his life. For the first time, it looks, for the reader, that it is the end of the terrible episode. But such is not the case, for this first meeting with the chased criminal will led to lea other serious episodes in shaping Pip's future life along with a trail of prisons and criminals and crimes , till the second appearance of Magwitch in the narration many years later.

The most fantastic stoke in Pip's life comes with the appearance of Mr. Jaggers, with the happy news which will enable Pip to fulfill his "great expectations". An unknown person An anonymous person offers, generously to secure the boy's future. The most significance of this happy transfer is that Pip will be on equal social position with Estella. Like in dreams and fairy tales and old theatre: someone, most probably, a night or a good witch appears to solve the sophisticated problem. The boy from the village is destined to the young, beautiful princess. "In this way" says the critic Sylvia Bank "the shape of the story as a fairy tale is confirmed. We have Magwitch, the terrible ogre, Miss Havisham, a widely eccentric godmother; Estella, an attractive princess; and a sudden magical transformation from a miserable poverty in the village to a complete richness in London.

"The opening chapters of the novel", added the critic Sylvia Bank, are "the most poignant ones, which describe the atmosphere in which Pip grows up."The little, plain boy, is merely "a small bundle of shivers"(p.3). The touching scene blends with horror with the criminal's attack on the boy. As for the second scene, it shows the boy's house and family and the small celebration of Christmas in which the boy feels disturbed by his sister's and her guests' remarks in addition to his previous sense of guilt. The boy meets Estella for the first time in the next chapter who calls him coarse and common. Dickens knew very well that "in children there

is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt as injustice" and remembering his past life, Pip himself states the fact: "Within myself, I has sustained, from my babyhood, a perpetual conflict with injustice." (p.170) The atmosphere of the first stage of "Pip's expectations is predominantly that of depression, alienation, and isolation.

The sense of guilt is also dominant in the novel. Pip is raised by his elder sister who sincerely tries to play the role of his dead mother but doesn't success. It is clear that her constant anger overwhelmed the passion of motherhood, besides, she hasn't had children. When he was an innocent child, Pip is treated, by his sister, as if he were guilty. Later, as a young man, Pip discovers that his wide wishes are, in fact, restrictions "the taint of prison and crime"(p.140) . In London, when he arrived, he noticed the gloomy gate of the prison, the crowd of criminals and agents at the door of Mr.Jaggers' office. And above all, his great shock in discovering that the source of his fortune and education is not the admirable lady Miss Havisham but the chased criminal Magwitch who binds him and his lover, Estella.

Charles Dickens devotes a lot of space, in the narration to depict "the sufferings of people, and the feelings of imprisonment, isolation, and loveliness". Those elements, according to the critic John Bowen, are "remarkably symbolized by Pip's childhood decayed house in the village, the prisons, the unjust treatment of the weak by the strong." In addition, Pip's humiliation by Estella and his bitter feelings is one of the clear elements of the tragic tone of the novel. The whole thinking and behavior of the major characters is shaped by the need of, and quest for, fatherhood, protection, sincerity and the "distortion of love into revenge and emotional greed." All Pip's complicated actions and moral beliefs tend to be completely alter as he pursues his quest for his lost father. Consequently, the great dreams fortune and happy life seem to be elusive .

From another point of view, some critics consider "Pip's journey through life, after he has been introduced to Miss Havisham's house, as a snob's progress."<sup>17</sup> When entering the grand house and seeing Estella, he soon begins to think that her manners of living, are the most perfect and he begins to look at himself and his family as a mere villagers. The source of his family's income, Joe's forge, now seems to him a piece of shameful dirt. Joe's (dull) appearance makes him feel greatly embarrassed. When the lawyer announced the generous- secret offer for him, he was confident that it is Miss Havisham who wants him to join Estella in a plan for his and the girl's future. Assuming that, and full of dreams of happiness, on his last day in the village, he decides to (delete) his past memories, especially and – ironically - the fearful meeting with the criminal that evening, but he comforts himself with the thought that the criminal was dead in prison .

It is noteworthy in the research that the novelist, Dickens describes Pip's life in London in a tone of a bitter satire. Pip now leads a luxury life and spends money without any kind of effort. Dickens, here, doesn't deny the crucial role of finance. Nothing but money enables Pip to join gentlemen of the upper class, and

to peruse education. However, it is also clear, to the reader, that Pip becomes to live as a mere parasite with an empty futility spending money on clothes and pleasures .

The critic Jenny Hartley sees that, during his years of wealth, Pip "lives in a world of make-believe and self-depiction, restless, aspiring, discontented, feeling guilty because of his proud treatment of Joe", and at the same time suffered by his thoughts for Estella whom he failed to join. In such an environment of falsity and unfulfilled hopes, the most shocking fact is revealed: that the source of his fortune, and education, is the chased criminal whom he had met in the village many years ago.

It is also should be mentioned that "at the heart of many novels of Dickens lies what may be called moral conversion."<sup>19</sup> This moral conversion consists in a turning from self-regard to love and social responsibility. The central character is changed by understanding his own defects and its causes and sources. Knowledge and reconsideration make him ready to initiate a new course of life. Although environment, and circumstances may play a certain role in the change and improvement, but the central character achieves the will and the strength to identify and distinguish his personality .

It had been achieved, through research, that a large part of the interest, in the events of the novel, lies in this moral transfer or "the change of heart." Pip's strange life journey in this novel is a notable example of moral progress. His character is marked by a notable defect or weakness, but this defect does not hide the whole activity of the character. He enjoys a realistic and thoughtful mind the thing which adds a kind of strength to his weak physical appearance. The novelist plans that the direct cause of Pip's change from a selfish, ingratitude arrogant man to a kind , humble person ( as he naturally and initially was) is his discovery of the real source of his fortune and his re- evaluation of Magwitch.

When (in chapter 39) Pip realizes that "it was for the convict, guilty of I knew not what crimes, that I had deserted Joe"(p.336), he reflects a great feeling of sorrow and regret. Here he revalues "one particular instance of pride and ingratitude; what he has to learn is generalized and renewable morality. He has to revalue his defects, not an isolated example of them." Magwitch's crucial effect is that of a good man who disregards false arrogance and snobbery. Much like a spoiled child, is really given something to feel sorrow and cry about. Pip has felt terribly ashamed at Joe's ignorance and humble appearance, and so he is obliged into the irony of having to accept Magwitch who has generously paid for Pip's living and education. Then Pip "becomes involved in Magwitch's past and future, and Magwitch himself is given dignity and sympathy." Both he and Pip replace fear and violence into kindness and love. It is due to Magwitch's reappearance that Pip reconciles himself , developing a new mind based now on an appraisal of the convict's gratitude and an understanding of his own debt; "When I took my place by Magwitch's side, I felt that that was my place henceforth while he lived. For now my repugnance to him had all melted away" (p.456). Magwitch clarifies and

removes the sense of arrogance and snobbery in Pip's personality, then puts Pip in the right direction for himself and towards the happy end that satisfies the reader playing the part of the moral opposite. In the court, Pip holds the convict Magwitch's hand, and the audience "pointed down at this criminal and that, and most of all at him and me"(p.488). The long quest has reached an end, and the warm sense of fatherhood dominates the scene.

### Conclusion

Critics and historians of English Literature believe that the novelist Charles Dickens was a pioneer of realism in the Victorian novel, the thing which explains his preoccupation – in most of his novels- with monitoring human pains and sufferings in his society as they appear in various manifestations such as unemployment, hunger and homelessness. Dickens considers the Victorian society – with its class distinction and injustice – as being responsible for much of these pains and sufferings.

This important and favorite theme for Dickens is renewed in *Great Expectations*. The central character, Pip is an orphan who lives in a remote village in extreme poverty. His feeling of loneliness and lack of protection prompts him to search instinctively for someone who takes the role of a father in his life. In a very genius and professional way, Dickens plans to meet the orphan child with the stalking criminal, Ebel Magwitch, who had lost his daughter due to his imprisonment and he, too, searches for someone to play the role of a son in his life.

The events of the novel proceed with an interesting and elaborate plot in which many episodes and minor plots appear along with a huge number of characters. But Dickens grabs all the threads with his usual skill and remarkable style. After years of suffering and pain, Pip becomes a mature gentleman. He fulfills his great expectations and reunited with his lover Estella, the missing daughter of Magwitch.

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## موضوعة البحث عن الأبوة في رواية تشارلز ديكنز *آمال عظيمة*

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### الملخص

يستخدم هذا البحث منهج التحليل النقدي و يفترض أن الروائي الإنكليزي تشارلز ديكنز في رواية *آمال عظيمة* , كما في رواياته السابقة , يواصل هجومه على مساوئ و عيوب النظام الاجتماعي في انكلترا في القرن التاسع عشر. و منذ بداية الرواية حتى نهايتها هنالك بحث متواز و غير تلقائي. فبطل الرواية ( بب ) صبي يتيم يبحث لا شعوريا عن أب بينما المجرم الطريد ( ايبل ماكويتش) الذي فقد ابنته يبحث عن الأبوة التي فقدها هو الآخر بسبب السجن .

يتكون البحث من مقدمة عامة عن الروائي و أهم أعماله تليها ثلاثة أجزاء : الأول استعراض موجز لأهم الأعمال النقدية و الدراسات الأكاديمية عن الروائي و الرواية موضوع البحث و الثاني يستعرض احداث الرواية و شخصياتها الرئيسية أما الجزء الثالث فيناقش الفرضية العامة للبحث ثم الخاتمة التي تلخص بإيجاز ما توصل اليه البحث.

**الكلمات المفتاحية :** الرواية الفكتورية، تشارلز ديكنز ، البحث عن الأبوة