Chapter 1

An Awakening to the Quest for Identity

This study relates the quest of identity in *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens. Pip, the main character narrates his life experience. He is confused about his own life. It means, he is uncertain about his identity. He is not certain about from where did he come, and where is his destinations. He lost his parents in his early life and is brought up by his sister. The entire novel is about his journey from childhood to the last stage where we can realize that he found his identity. Does not his journey from the uncertainty to the great expectations of his life signify his quest for identity? Does not the title *Great Expectations* bear the optimistic value that give rise to existential quest in Pip's life?

Pip is the narrator of the novel and within his expression states a convincing of true evolution of character from simplicity, superficiality to the authentic self reliance. Pip from an innocent child grows after and learns about the abuses of the society. He also acknowledges the class and discrimination prevailing in the society. he realizes social hypocrisies, snobbishness. So, at the turning point of his life he is healed by the realization of truth as well as his future. An unknown boy at last sees his future with his great expectation. He also realizes the value of love and the truth about the society. He ultimately is reformed and nurtured by himself, becomes a mature and a new man that shows his real identity. Thus, the study bears its own value in its essence.

The novel can be, thus, read as a text on existentialism that comes through the right knowledge by realizing the society in its true essence. The approach of existentialism to its study will be a great value in placing it at the novel that describes its knowledge about the quest of identity.

The objectives of this study are thus to discuss about the tenets and features of existentialism. It also shows how these features are explored in the novel from the Victorian period as well.

This research study focuses on the existential features in relation to the identical quest. So, the philosophical tool will be existentialism that found expression in various philosophers like Kierkegaard, Sartre and Camus. The philosophy of existentialism will be, therefore be the theoretical modes for the research. Several materials related to *Great Expectations* its criticism, book reviews and entire resources will be major sources in this study is primarily applied and its approach is qualitative research.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized in such a way that each part becomes a step of ladder to lead of to the final destination. The first chapter "An Awakening to the Quest for Identity" touches upon the subject matter, problems, hypothesis of the study. This novel *Great Expectations* has not been touched yet from the perspective of existentialism. "The Review of Literature" shows the past researchers and research gap proving that the existential quest in the novel is a new and untouched area that needs a touch of novelty. Likewise, the second chapter "Tenets of Existentialism" talks the philosophy, trends and tenets of existentialism especially discussing the ideas of Kierkegaard, Sartre and Camus. The third chapter "Exploration of the Existential Identity" studies the tenet features, themes and ideas of existentialism as explored in the novel *Great Expectations*. The final chapter "Revelation of the Existential Quest" summarizes the ideas and arguments expressed in this thesis.

A Brief Synopsis of *Great Expectations*

Great Expectations is the story of an orphan boy Pip, adopted by a

blacksmith's family, who has good luck and great expectations, and then loses both his luck and his expectations. Through this rise and fall, however, Pip learns how to find happiness. He learns the meaning of friendship and the meaning of love and, of course, becomes a better person for it.

The story opens with the narrator, Pip, who introduces himself and describes a much younger Pip staring at the gravestones of his parents. This tiny, shivering bundle of a boy is suddenly terrified by a man dressed in a prison uniform. The man tells Pip that if he wants to live, he'll go down to his house and bring him back some food and a file for the shackle on his leg.

Pip runs home to his sister, Mrs. Joe Gragery, and his adoptive father, Joe Gragery. Mrs. Joe is a loud, angry, nagging woman who constantly reminds Pip and her husband Joe of the difficulties she has gone through to raise Pip and take care of the house. Pip finds solace from these rages in Joe, who is more his equal than a paternal figure, and they are united under a common oppression.

Pip steals food and a pork pie from the pantry shelf and a file from Joe's forge and brings them back to the escaped convict the next morning. Soon thereafter, Pip watches the man get caught by soldiers and the whole event soon disappears from his young mind.

Mrs. Joe comes home one evening, quite excited, and proclaims that Pip is going to "play" for Miss Havisham "a rich and grim lady who lived in a large and dismal house."

Pip is brought to Miss Havisham's place, a mansion called the "Satis House," where sunshine never enters. He meets a girl about his age, Estella, "who was very pretty and seemed very proud." Pip instantly falls in love with her and will love her the rest of the story. He then meets Miss Havisham, a willowy, yellowed old woman

dressed in an old wedding gown. Miss Havisham seems most happy when Estella insults Pip's coarse hands and his thick boots as they play. Pip is insulted, but thinks there is something wrong with him. He vows to change, to become uncommon, and to become a gentleman.

Pip continues to visit Estella and Miss Havisham for eight months and learns more about their strange life. Miss Havisham brings him into a great banquet hall where a table is set with food and large wedding cake. But the food and the cake are years old, untouched except by a vast array of rats, beetles and spiders which crawl freely through the room. Her relatives all come to see her on the same day of the year: her birthday and wedding day, the day when the cake was set out and the clocks were stopped many years before; i.e. the day Miss Havisham stopped living.

Pip begins to dream what life would be like if he were a gentleman and wealthy. This dream ends when Miss Havisham asks Pip to bring Joe to visit her, in order that he may start his indenture as a blacksmith. Miss Havisham gives Joe twenty five pounds for Pip's service to her and says good-bye.

Pip explains his misery to his readers: he is ashamed of his home, ashamed of his trade. He wants to be uncommon, he wants to be a gentleman. He wants to be a part of the environment that he had a small taste of at the Manor House.

Early in his indenture, Mrs. Joe is found lying unconscious, knocked senseless by some unknown assailant. She has suffered some serious brain damage, having lost much of voice, her hearing, and her memory. Furthermore, her "temper was greatly improved, and she was patient." To help with the housework and to take care of Mrs. Joe, Biddy, a young orphan friend of Pip's, moves into the house.

The years pass quickly. It is the fourth year of Pip's apprenticeship and he is sitting with Joe at the pub when they are approached by a stranger. Pip recognizes

him, and his "smell of soap," as a man he had once run into at Miss Havisham's house years before.

Back at the house, the man, Jaggers, explains that Pip now has "great expectations." He is to be given a large monthly stipend, administered by Jaggers who is a lawyer. The benefactor, however, does not want to be known and is to remain a mystery.

Pip spends an uncomfortable evening with Biddy and Joe, then retires to bed. There, despite having all his dreams come true, he finds himself feeling very lonely. Pip visits Miss Havisham who hints subtly that she is his unknown sponsor.

Pip goes to live in London and meets Wemmick, Jagger's square-mouth clerk. Wemmick brings Pip to Bernard's Inn, where Pip will live for the next five years with Matthew Pocket’s son Herbert, a cheerful young gentleman that becomes one of Pip's best friends. From Herbert, Pips finds out that Miss Havisham adopted Estella and raised her to wreak revenge on the male gender by making them fall in love with her, and then breaking their hearts.

Pip is invited to dinner at Wemmick's whose slogan seems to be "Office is one thing, private life is another." Indeed, Wemmick has a fantastical private life. Although he lives in a small cottage, the cottage has been modified to look a bit like a castle, complete with moat, drawbridge, and a firing cannon.

The next day, Jaggers himself invites Pip and friends to dinner. Pip, on Wemmick's suggestion, looks carefully at Jagger's servant woman -- a "tigress" according to Wemmick. She is about forty, and seems to regard Jaggers with a mix of fear and duty.

Pip journeys back to the Satis House to see Miss Havisham and Estella, who is now older and so much more beautiful that he doesn't recognize her at first. Facing

her now, he slips back "into the coarse and common voice" of his youth and she, in return, treats him like the boy he used to be. Pip sees something strikingly familiar in Estella's face. He can't quite place the look, but an expression on her face reminds him of someone.

Pip stays away from Joe and Biddy's house and the forge, but walks around town, enjoying the admiring looks he gets from his past neighbors. Soon thereafter, a letter for Pip announces the death of Mrs. Joe Gragery. Pip returns home again to attend the funeral. Later, Joe and Pip sit comfortably by the fire like times of old. Biddy insinuates that Pip will not be returning soon as he promises and he leaves insulted. Back in London, Pip asks Wemmick for advice on how to give Herbert some of his yearly stipend anonymously.

Narrator Pip describes his relationship to Estella while she lived in the city: Pip finds out that Drummle, the most repulsive of his acquaintances, has begun courting Estella.

Years go by and Pip is still living the same wasteful life of a wealthy young man in the city. A rough sea-worn man of sixty comes to Pip's home on a stormy night soon after Pip's twenty-fourth birthday. Pip invites him in, treats him with courteous disdain, but then begins to recognize him as the convict that he fed in the marshes when he was a child. The man, Magwitch, reveals that he is Pip's benefactor. Since the day that Pip helped him, he swore to himself that every cent he earned would go to Pip.

"I've made a gentleman out of you," the man exclaims. Pip is horrified. All of his expectations are demolished. There is no grand design by Miss Havisham to make Pip happy and rich, living in harmonious marriage to Estella.

The convict tells Pip that he has come back to see him under threat of his life,

since the law will execute him if they find him in England. Pip is disgusted with him, but wants to protect him and make sure he isn't found and put to death. Herbert and Pip decide that Pip will try and convince Magwitch to leave England with him.

Magwitch tells them the story of his life. From a very young age, he was alone and got into trouble. In one of his brief stints actually out of jail, Magwitch met a young well-to-do gentleman named Compeyson who had his hand in everything illegal: swindling, forgery, and other white collar crime. Compeyson recruited Magwitch to do his dirty work and landed Magwitch into trouble with the law. Magwitch hates the man. Herbert passes a note to Pip telling him that Compeyson was the name of the man who left Miss Havisham on her wedding day.

Pip goes back to Satis House and finds Miss Havisham and Estella in the same banquet room. Pip breaks down and confesses his love for Estella. Estella tells him straight that she is incapable of love -- she has warned him of as much before -- and she will soon be married to Drummle.

Back in London, Wemmick tells Pip things he has learned from the prisoners at Newgate. Pip is being watched, he says, and may be in some danger. As well, Compeyson has made his presence known in London. Wemmick has already warned Herbert as well. Heeding the warning, Herbert has hidden Magwitch in his fiancé Clara’s house.

Pip has dinner with Jaggers and Wemmick at Jaggers' home. During the dinner, Pip finally realizes the similarities between Estella and Jaggers' servant woman. Jaggers' servant woman is Estella's mother!

On their way home together, Wemmick tells the story of Jaggers' servant woman. It was Jaggers' first big break-through case, the case that made him. He was defending this woman in a case where she was accused of killing another woman by

strangulation. The woman was also said to have killed her own child, a girl, at about the same time as the murder.

Miss Havisham asks Pip to come visit her. He finds her again sitting by the fire, but this time she looks very lonely. Pip tells her how he was giving some of his money to help Herbert with his future, but now must stop since he himself is no longer taking money from his benefactor. Miss Havisham wants to help, and she gives Pip nine hundred pounds to help Herbert out. She then asks Pip for forgiveness. Pip tells her she is already forgiven and that he needs too much forgiving himself not to be able to forgive others.

Pip goes for a walk around the garden then comes back to find Miss Havisham on fire! Pip puts the fire out, burning himself badly in the process. The doctors come and announce that she will live.

Pip goes home and Herbert takes care of his burns. Herbert has been spending some time with Magwitch at Clara's and has been told the whole Magwitch story. Magwitch was the husband of Jaggers' servant woman, the Tigress. The woman had come to Magwitch on the day she murdered the other woman and told him she was going to kill their child and that Magwitch would never see her. And Magwitch never did. Pip puts is all together and tells Herbert that Magwitch is Estella's father.

It is time to escape with Magwitch. Herbert and Pip get up the next morning and start rowing down the river, picking up Magwitch at the pre-appointed time. They are within a few feet of a steamer that they hope to board when another boat pulls alongside to stop them. In the confusion, Pip sees Compeyson leading the other boat, but the steamer is on top of them. The steamer crushes Pip's boat, Compeyson and Magwitch disappear under water, and Pip and Herbert find themselves in a police boat of sorts. Magwitch finally comes up from the water. He and Compeyson wrestled for

a while, but Magwitch had let him go and he is presumably drowned. Once again, Magwitch is shackled and arrested.

Magwitch is in jail and quite ill. Pip attends to the ailing Magwitch daily in prison. Pip whispers to him one day that the daughter he thought was dead is quite alive. "She is a lady and very beautiful," Pip says. "And I love her." Magwitch gives up the ghost.

Pip falls into a fever for nearly a month. Creditors and Joe fall in and out of his dreams and his reality. Finally, he regains his senses and sees that, indeed, Joe has been there the whole time, nursing him back to health. Joe tells him that Miss Havisham died during his illness, that she left Estella nearly all, and Matthew Pocket a great deal. Joe slips away one morning leaving only a note. Pip discovers that Joe has paid off all his debtors.

Pip is committed to returning to Joe, asking for forgiveness for everything he has done, and to ask Biddy to marry him. Pip goes to Joe and indeed finds happiness -- but the happiness is Joe and Biddy's. It is their wedding day. Pip wishes them well, truly, and asks them for their forgiveness in all his actions. They happily give it.

Pip goes to work for Herbert's' firm and lives with the now married Clara and Herbert. Within a year, he becomes a partner. He pays off his debts and works hard. Eleven years later, Pip returns from his work overseas. He visits Joe and Biddy and meets their son, a little Pip, sitting by the fire with Joe just like Pip himself did years House that night to think once again of the girl who got away. And there he meets Estella. Drummle treated her roughly and recently died. She tells Pip that she has learned the feeling of heartbreak the hard way and now seeks his forgiveness for what she did to him. The two walk out of the garden hand in hand, and Pip "saw the shadow of no parting from her."

Review of Literature

Different critics have examined the novel *Great Expectations* from different perspectives since it has been studied, analysed and interpreted.

Charles Dickens experienced more than one significant change in social status; he went from being a Navy officer's highly literate son to a desperate factory boy to the most celebrated author in England. A. N. Wilson quotes Walter Bagehot, stating that at Dickens' death, the novelist's influence over the entire nation was unparalleled by any other Englishman (336). Yet despite his widespread popularity, Dickens always struggled to be accepted by the elitist aristocracy, a conflict mirrored somewhat in the social aspirations of Dickens' protagonist Pip. Dickens' father was born of illiterate servants, but his mother was the daughter of a Navy pay officer. As a result of his father's "marrying up," Dickens' social status was something approaching middle class. Yet this established place in the social strata was terrifyingly challenged in 1824 when Dickens' father was sent to debtors' prison and young Charles was forced to work in a blacking factory so as not to be a burden to his family. Suddenly, the young Dickens saw all his long-cherished hopes of becoming a well-educated gentleman vanish into the evil smoke of the factory. The great expectations and identity itself of the sickly little boy who loved to read were severely and horrifyingly challenged. Of this time in his life, Dickens wrote to his friend John Forster:

> No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I . . . felt my early hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man, crushed in my breast. The deep remembrance of the sense I had of being utterly neglected and hopeless; of the shame I felt in my position; of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that, day by

> day, what I had learned, and thought, and delighted in, and raised my fancy and my emulation up by, was passing away from me, never to be brought back any more; cannot be written. (Forster 22)

Dickens would never forget his terrifying brush with poverty, and to the end of his life he relieved its torment. Forster reproduces a statement in which Dickens discusses the permanent distortion of his identity caused by the factory experience: "My whole nature was so penetrated with the grief and humiliation of such considerations that, even now—famous and caressed and happy—I often forget in my dreams that I have a dear wife and children—eve n that I am a man—and wander desolately back to that time of my life" (Forster 22). In these lines, we also see the echoes of the quest of identity of Pip.

Although his servitude in the factory lasted only three months, the young Dickens was not to know that he would be released so soon from his torment. He was never to forget his hopeless feelings of entrapment in a seemingly futureless existence, and it is understandable that he spent the rest of his life driven by a powerful ambition to become "learned and distinguished," a position far removed from that of the blacking factory boy.

One of the critics James Topham overviews:

> *Great Expectations* is one of the most famous and much-loved novels by the great master of Victorian prose, Charles Dickens. Like all of his great novels, *Great Expectations* has Dickens's brilliant use of character and plot—along with an incredible sensibility and sympathy for the way that the British class system was constructed in the nineteenth century. (22)

The novel centers around a poor young man by the name of Pip, who is given the

chance to make himself a gentleman by a mysterious benefactor. *Great Expectations* offers a fascinating view of the differences between classes during the Victorian era, as well as a great sense of comedy and pathos.

The novel opens in an exciting vein. Pip is a young orphan who lives with his sister and her husband, Joe. When he is still a young boy, news arrives that a man has escaped from the local prison. Then, one day when he is crossing the moors near his house, Pip comes across the convict in hiding Magwitch. Upon threat of his life, Pip brings food and tools to Magwitch, until Magwitch is recaptured.

Pip continues to grow up, and one day is taken by an uncle to play at a rich woman's house. This woman is the fabulous Miss Haversham who had been hurt terribly when she had been left at the altar and, though she is an old woman, still wears a tatty old wedding dress. Pip almost meets a young girl who, though she kisses him, treats him with contempt. Pip, despite the girl's cold treatment of him, falls in love with her and desperately wants to be a man of means so that he might be worthy to marry her.

Then, Jaggers (a lawyer) arrives to tell him that a mysterious benefactor has offered to pay for Pip to be made into a gentleman. Pip goes to London and soon is considered a man of great possibilities (and is, therefore, embarrassed by his roots and his former relations).

Pip lives a young swell's life—enjoying his youth. He comes to believe that it was Miss Haversham who is providing him with the money—to prepare him for marrying Estella. But then, Magwitch barges into his room, revealing that he is a mysterious benefactor (he escaped from prison and went to Australia, where he made a fortune). Now, Magwitch is back in London, and Pip helps him to escape once again. In the meantime, Pip helps Miss Haversham comes to terms with the loss of her

husband (she is caught up in a fire and eventually dies). Estella marries a country bumpkin with money (even though there is no love in the relationship, and he will treat her with cruelty).

Despite Pip's best efforts—Magwitch is once more caught, and Pip can no longer live as a young gentleman. He and his friend leave the country and make their money by hard work. In the final chapter (one that Dickens rewrote), Pip returns to England and meets Estella in a graveyard. Her husband had died, and the book hints at a happy future for the two of them.

Novel depicts the differences between the classes, and how money can corrupt. The novel makes clear that money cannot buy love, nor does it guarantee happiness. One of the happiest—and most morally correct—people in the novel is Joe, Pip's sister's husband. And, Miss Havisham is one of the richest (as well as the most unhappy and loneliest). Pip believes that if he can be a gentleman, he will have everything he wants from the world. His world collapses and he realizes that all his money has been based on Magwitch's dishonest earnings. And, Pip finally understands the true value of life.

The novel has some features of Dickens' greatest characters and one of his trademark convoluted plots. The novel is a fantastic read and a wonderful morality tale. Full of romance, courageousness, and hope—*Great Expectations* is a brilliant evocation of a time and place. Here's a view of the English class system that is both critical and realistic.

Great Expectations works on a number of levels: as a critique of Victorian society and as an exploration of memory and writing. However, it is perhaps more importantly a search for true identity. During the course of the novel, Pip comes to realize that his “great expectations”—social standing and wealth—are less important

than loyalty and compassion. *Great Expectations* was also noted for its blend of humour, mystery, and tragedy. In the original ending of the work, Pip and Estella were not reunited, but Dickens was persuaded to write a happier conclusion.

Like Dickens, Pip wants desperately to leave his blue-collar blacksmith job behind and become a learned and distinguished gentleman. Written in a semi-autobiographical style, *Great Expectations* tells Pip's story, but at various times it also tells Dickens', and as a result Dickens made sure to re-read his more directly semi-autobiographical novel *David Copperfield* before writing *Great Expectations*, to avoid repeating himself. During his childhood in the blacking factory, Dickens always held himself aloof from the other boys, because he considered them the common sort of people who actually belonged in a blacking factory. In an autobiographical fragment, Dickens wrote of his fellow workers: "Though perfectly familiar with them, my conduct and manners were different enough to place a space between us. They, and the men, always spoke of me as 'the young gentleman'" (qtd. in Forster 28-29). Dickens, like Pip, seems to have desperately longed to be better than his early surroundings. Having lived throughout his life in the lower, middle, and upper class, however, Dickens himself came to realize that being a gentleman involved deeply held moral values, not just education, money, and reputation. Pip, however, is forced with great difficulty to learn that great expectations and money are not the sum requirements for being a true gentleman.

In the strictly class-conscious Victorian England, despite the growing rise of the middle class, men like Dickens, who wanted to be more than they were, were mocked by the landed aristocracy. Noted scholar G. K. Chesterton describes Dickens' difficulties:

> When people say that Dickens could not describe a gentleman, what

> they mean is . . . that Dickens could not describe a gentleman as gentlemen feel a gentleman. They mean that he could not take that atmosphere easily, accept it as the normal atmosphere, or describe that world from the inside . . . Dickens did not describe gentlemen in the way that gentlemen describe gentlemen . . . He described them . . . from the outside, as he described any other oddity or special trade. (125)

Although Dickens might have wished to be a born gentleman, it seems that his minimally middle-class birth may have been a great artistic asset. Critic Robin Gilmour discusses the differences between Dickens and his greatest literary rival,

> William Makepeace Thackeray, who was of more genteel birth than Dickens, and therefore was able to describe gentlemen "from the inside." But Dickens, it seems, had the distinct advantage over his competitor, for Dickens' outsider status "gave him an insight into the Victorian pursuit of gentility, and the r ole of the gentleman in the structure of nineteenth-century society, which a born insider like Thackeray could never have." (107)

Despite the talent and insider knowledge of his rival, Dickens is far more widely read by the common man today than the more elitist Thackeray. Dickens' fixation with the idea of the gentleman was one common to his society in general. Gilmour writes, "Dickens shared to the full in the Victorian ambivalence about the relative claims of inherited and acquired status . . . Dickens was capable of asserting his qualities as a self-made man as well as his claims as a gentleman's son" (108). Although not the son of landed aristocrats, Dickens was minimally able to assert status gained through good birth. In the new age of industrial tycoons and oil barons, however, wealth and

status began to have less and less to do with birth, and more and more to do with talent and hard work. If being a gentleman was a matter of external wealth, education, and accomplishments, then Dickens did in fact attain gentleman status. But Dickens was wiser than perhaps the average gentleman, and he realized that a true gentle man was not so much rich or educated but kind and respectful to everyone.

One of the great difficulties in Pip's search for identity in a Victorian context is the question of what makes a true gentleman. The Era of Victoria saw a change in the socioeconomic status of certain members of the populace. For hundreds of years, the citizens of England had been more or less consigned to be who they were born to be. Dustmen begat dust men, and dukes begat dukes. Yet with the tremendous technological and industrial innovations that began occurring during the 1800s, some Englishmen obtained the opportunity to alter their fate. As the poor English protagonist of the medieval film *A Knight's Tale* so aptly said, "A man can change his stars." Although a dramatic reversal of fortune such as William Thatcher experienced in the film would have been wildly improbable in his own fourteenth century, by the Victorian era, such a thing, while not common, were at least slightly more likely. A. N. Wilson writes:

> The Victorian era was the period of the most radical transformation ever seen by the world. Before [the Victorians] major industrialization was confined to a few towns in Britain. After them the whole world was covered with railways and factories; and the unstoppable rise and spread of technology would continue into the age of Silicon Valley. (1)

With the coming of the Industrial Revolution, imperialism, and tremendous advancements in science and technology, common working men began to have access

to economic advancement. Untitled, new money citizens were not viewed in the same way as old money, titled aristocrats— but during the Victorian Era a strong middle class composed of originally working class people began to arise. Terry Eagleton writes, "The landed aristocracy increased in material strength and social standing throughout the nineteenth century, but at the same time the relative importance of agriculture and the wealth of the landed class in relation to other classes suffered a sharp decline" (5-6). Here we can find the echoes of class struggle.

Gilmour explains the significance of the novel's historical setting by evoking the earlier period so deliberately, and in particular by reminding his readers of the brutal way in which a primitive society treated its criminals, Dickens is able to show the complex origins of the Victorian preoccupation with refinement and gentility— how the desire to become a gentleman was not just a snobbish aspiration out of one's class, but was also a desire to be a gentle man, to have a more civilized and decent life than a violent society allowed for most of its members.

> The Victorian idea of the gentleman was in part a reaction against an old world of tragic and shocking violence. In a world of exhibitionist public hangings, humiliating pillories, overcrowded prisons, and extremely harsh punishments for minor offences, many people of the Victorian lower classes longed, like Eliza Doolittle of a slightly later time, for a "lovely" life in which bare survival was not their highest concern, and their basic needs were comfortably met. For Pip, survival had been a part of his life for as long as he could remember. Gilmour states that "Mrs. Joe's system of bringing up by hand is sanctioned by a primitive rural society, and it is harsh, unjust, brutalizing and morally diminishing." (130)

Throughout his childhood, Pip is physically and verbally abused by Mrs. Joe. Her friend Mr. Hubble, who unlike Dickens does apparently believe in original sin, calls Pip "naturally vicious" (26), and except for Joe, the other adults in Pip's life generally treat him as little better than an animal. Pip even "considers himself a young monster" (58) after he lies to Joe about the visit to Miss Havisham's house. Upon meeting Magwitch and stealing food from Mr. and Mrs. Joe, Pip himself becomes a perpetrator of the violence of the lower class.

One ironic aspect of Pip's disillusion, however, is the fact that even had he known all along that Miss Havisham was not his benefactor and even if he had loved Biddy, not Estella, he might well have ended up becoming the same kind of gentleman that he did in fact turn into. Dabney notes:

> Pip dreams of marrying a beautiful lady whom he loves to distract ion and living happily ever after on an unearned income. This is a standard dream . . . it is the achieved ambition of a majority of all the heroes of all the novels written in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. (136-37)

Pip is the consummate class-conscious Victorian gentleman, and he values the same external things that his society values, neglecting the importance of Samuel Smiles' internal qualities of nobility. Here Dickens' brilliance is displayed exquisitely: in making Pip like so many other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novel heroes but allowing Pip's dreams to be smashed and severely disrupting his fairytale ending, Dickens creates a character that is much more realistic than other heroes such as Mr. Darcy, Wilfred of Ivanhoe, or Charles Darnay. Because Pip never really encountered any true gentlemen in his life other than Joe and Herbert— and both of these men were poor and struggling to survive—Pip did not readily have access to a model of

true gentleness. Lacking this sort of guide, Pip had only society and its shallow external standards and his obsession with Estella to guide him. Joe was far too coarse in his manners, birth, and upbringing, and Herbert was far too poor and hardworking to present to Pip viable models of generous, sophisticated gentlemen. As a result, Pip's story takes a turn for the better when his deeply flawed ideas of a gentleman are completely destroyed.

The devastation of Pip's illusions is in some ways similar to Estella's disillusionment. Raised without authentic lover empathy, Estella's identity never included much kindness or compassion. However, Dabney says that "Dickens constructs . . . a purgatory for Estella" (146).

In her abusive marriage to Bently Drummle, and through this torment Estella finally realizes, like Pip, that she has been proud and selfish, basing her identity upon meaningless externals rather than internal priorities.

When Pip and Estella are confronted by great suffering and the destruction of their illusory values, only then is the opportunity for any kind of redemption possible in their lives. Faced with the reality of their value distortions, each is challenged to re-form his or her identity in correlation with kindness and humility. For Pip, being expected to show gratitude and friendship towards Magwitch becomes the turning point in his shallow existence. After attempting to help Magwitch escape the country, Pip finally comes to empathize with the convict, and he tells the reader that

> in the hunted wounded shackled creature . . . [was] a man who had meant to be my benefactor, and who had felt affectionately, gratefully, and generously, towards me with great constancy through a series of years. I only saw in him a much better man than I had been to Joe. (332)

Only once Pip finally comes to terms with his selfish love of money and prestige at the expense of his humanity is he able to show great loyalty and love to Magwitch, humble himself before Joe and Biddy, and obtain a sort of works-based absolution from his guilt. For Estella, the turning point takes place outside of the story, as she is terrorized and abused by Drummle. She tells Pip that "suffering has been stronger than all other teaching" (358), and has clearly been changed for the good as a result. Once the identities of Estella and Pip are thus brought to crisis, the two are then afforded the capacity for rebuilding their souls, and re-forming their identities into that which is more humble and compassionate.

Throughout the trials and frustrations that Charles Dickens experienced in his quest to become a Victorian gentleman, the author came to believe deeply in the necessity of holding an accurate perception of one's life priorities. Like many Victorian society members, Pip's moral and socioeconomic values have an external, social, romantic, and monetary slant, and his idea of the nature of a true gentleman is deeply flawed. When Pip's expectations and very identity are shattered by the appearance of Magwitch and his inescapable relationship to violence near the end of the story, Pip is prompted to come to terms with the hollow and false identity that he has constructed for himself, based upon flawed premises of what was truly valuable in life. It is only when Pip's gentleman identity is inadvertently destroyed by Magwitch, its patron, that Pip is able to begin to understand his need for the internal values that define a true gentleman. Estella's soul, scarred as it was being formed, is similarly undone by her abusive husband Bently Drummle outside the pages of the book, and it is only after this suffering that she, too, is afforded the opportunity to construct a new identity for herself based upon qualities of true nobility.

Chapter 2

Tenets of Existentialism

Existentialism as a philosophical concept has been in vogue only in the recent years. In the wake of the II world wars most of the countries of the world experienced agonising problems. Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, Camus, etc. Are some of the prominent figures of using existential philosophy. In 1950 A.D. Some Orthodox Christians register their protest against existentialism which they denounced in unequivocal terms has unbiased individualism, vagary and subjectivism.

The die-hard existentialists however did not subscribe to the view that it is the philosophy of pessimism and negation. It is they strongly emphasize, the philosophy of hope amidst the encircling gloom and will leaf humanity from Inferno to Paradiso. We all know that life now a days has become alarmingly insecure. There industrial revelation, the race for armaments, large scale manufacture of nuclear weapons and the greed of the political tycoons and satraps have shaken the very foundation of human existence. Mouthful words like democracy and communism have not brought human on earth. As civilization has advance culture has disgracefully declined. Millions of people have lost their lives. Due to poverty, despair and the sense of alienation have terrified sensitive souls like a specter. Man finds himself in a vail of tears –an alien world, a darkling plain. Cities are deserted. The world is in a state of chaos, fragmentation and disintegration. Man is on the age of the abyss. Existentialism offers to explore the whole man. It disowns the science and myth of objective consciousness. An existentialist imagine himself to be a physician by trying to be actively involved in the treatment of his patients.

First existentialist philosopher Kierkegaard wrote critical texts on organized religion, Christendom, morality, ethics, psychology, and the philosophy of religion,

displaying a fondness for metaphor, irony and parables. Much of his philosophical work deals with the issues of how one lives as a "single individual", giving priority to concrete human reality over abstract thinking and highlighting the importance of personal choice and commitment (9). He was against literary critics who defined idealist intellectuals and philosophers of his time, and thought that Swedenborg, (10) Hegel, (11) Fichte, Schelling, Schlegel and Hans Christian Andersen were all "understood" far too quickly by "scholars". (12)

Kierkegaard's theological work focuses on Christian ethics, the institution of the Church, the differences between purely objective proofs of Christianity, the infinite qualitative distinction between man and God, and the individual's subjective relationship to the God-Man Jesus the Christ, (13) which came through faith. (14-5) Much of his work deals with Christian love. He was extremely critical of the practice of Christianity as a state religion, primarily that of the Church of Denmark. His psychological work explored the emotions and feelings of individuals when faced with life choices. (2)

Kierkegaard's early work was written under the various pseudonyms that he used to present distinctive viewpoints and to interact with each other in complex dialogue(16). He explored particularly complex problems from different viewpoints, each under a different pseudonym. He wrote many up building Discourses under his own name and dedicated them to the "single individual" who might want to discover the meaning of his works. Notably, he wrote: "Science (17) and scholarship want to teach that becoming objective is the way. Christianity teaches that the way is to become subjective, to become a subject" (18). While scientists can learn about the world by observation, Kierkegaard emphatically denied that observation could reveal the inner workings of the world of the spirit. (19)

Some of Kierkegaard's key ideas include the concept of "subjective and objective truths", the knight of faith, the recollection and repetition dichotomy, angst, the infinite qualitative distinction, faith as a passion, and the three stages on life's way. Kierkegaard wrote in Danish and the reception of his work was initially limited to Scandinavia, but by the turn of the 20th century his writings were translated into French, German, and other major European languages. By the mid-20th century, his thought exerted a substantial influence on philosophy, (20) theology, (21) and Western culture. (22)

Existentialism is an important philosophy. It is usually said that we are self conscious beings, and this is truly what an existential being is one who is self conscious. Yet , it is not always vivid what it means most existentialist opine that man is free and Jean-Paul Sartre also agrees with this view. " I am condemned to be free. This means no limits to my freedom can be found except freedom itself, or if you prefer that we are not free to cease being free". (567)

The word existence is the key concept in Existentialism. It has a deep sense. The existentialists use this term to refer specially to human existence. There is general belief that only s concrete thing can exist. Existentialists also support this view and describe man as a concrete individual capable of being an existent. They consider that to be an existent one should be capable of being conscious. In this sense, man alone can exist. Soren Kierkegaard was the first person who used the word existence in a religious sense.

> His main interest is the possibility of man's self-realization. He advocated rationality as a means to interact with the objective world (eg. In the natural sciences), but when it comes to existential problems, reason is insufficient. "Human reason has boundaries". (49)

Existential sociologists challenge the long established notion that Kierkegaard is an irrationalism. He argues against objectivity and his administration of individuality and subjectivity can be distilled from his recently translated concluding unscientific postscript to philosophical fragments. According to him, "truth is subjectivity". It is a fundamental issue for existential sociology because a suitable understanding of Kierkegaard's epistemology is the key that illuminates the study of his social theory.

Kierkegaard's position can be clarified by calling the former "Scientific Knowledge" and the better existential knowledge. Scientific knowledge strives for objectivity. It contains proportions from the natural and social sciences, all these areas of study which aim at objective truth. Existential knowledge is subjective, the knowledge of human existence.

Soren Kierkegaard is generally considered to have been the first existentialist philosopher, though he did not use the term existentialism. He proposed that each individual—not society or religion—is solely responsible for giving meaning to life and living it passionately and sincerely, or "authentically". Existentialism became popular in the years following World War II, thanks to Sartre who read Heidegger while in a POW camp, and strongly influenced many disciplines besides philosophy, including theology, drama, art, literature, and psychology.

More so the dispute between Jacobi and Hegel brought out an even more precarious relationship between the role of the senses and what could be considered to be a 'certainty of knowledge' about life ahead. Predictability and lawfulness was to be experienced or rather to be approached at another level of conceptual perception and thus Hegel maintained the senses could not be a source of truth. Consequently he denied as well poetry and over looked thereby the main carrier of wisdom. At the same time, those who did not negate the senses, they realized ever more that if the

senses are not spoken to in a way that people can understand the language being spoken, there would be no validity being given to the 'common sense'. It started throughout Europe with translating the bible first into English to prevent people there from falling victim to the Pope in Rom and was followed by someone like Martin Luther whose bible translation lay the ground work for the unification of Germany.

Much later Marx would bring this to a point when he stated in the introduction to his dissertation that language has to bring together categories of productivity and creativity, for otherwise people could not address each other in such a language which was capable of addressing the '*human self consciousness*'. That term 'self consciousness' became a crucial turning point in what had been already a problem in the philosophy of Kant, namely his constant reference to the concept of the 'self' without defining it very clearly (Adorno). And Kant knew about the contradictions between finite space and time and infinite space and time. To structure the disposition of man's thoughts in a way that could overcome these contradictions meant struggling with the '*infinite sense*' revealed by the timeless non existence of any borders which could mark the end of the universe. There were none. How then to project man's thoughts into the future when there was this open gap in his knowledge?

Rebellion in Camus's sense begins with a recognition of boundaries, of limits that define one's essential selfhood and core sense of being and thus must not be infringed—as when a slave stands up to his master and says in effect "thus far, and no further, shall I be commanded." This defining of the self as at some point inviolable appears to be an act of pure egoism and individualism, but it is not. In fact Camus argues at considerable length to show that an act of conscientious revolt is ultimately far more than just an individual gesture or an act of solitary protest. The rebel, he writes, holds that there is a "common good more important than his own destiny" and

that there are “rights more important than himself.” He acts “in the name of certain values which are still indeterminate but which he feels are common to himself and to all men” (The Rebel 15-16).

Camus then goes on to assert that an “analysis of rebellion leads at least to the suspicion that, contrary to the postulates of contemporary thought, a human nature does exist, as the Greeks believed.” After all, “Why rebel,” he asks, “if there is nothing permanent in the self worth preserving?” The slave who stands up and asserts himself actually does so for “the sake of everyone in the world.” He declares in effect that “all men—even the man who insults and oppresses him—have a natural community.” Here we may note that the idea that there may indeed be an essential human nature is actually more than a “suspicion” as far as Camus himself was concerned. Indeed for him it was more like a fundamental article of his humanist faith. In any case it represents one of the core principles of his ethics and is one of the tenets that sets his philosophy apart from existentialism.

True revolt, then, is performed not just for the self but also in solidarity with and out of compassion for others. And for this reason, Camus is led to conclude that revolt too has its limits. If it begins with and necessarily involves a recognition of human community and a common human dignity, it cannot, without betraying its own true character, treat others as if they were lacking in that dignity or not a part of that community. In the end it is remarkable, and indeed surprising, how closely Camus’s philosophy of revolt, despite the author’s fervent atheism and individualism, echoes Kantian ethics with its prohibition against treating human beings as means and its ideal of the human community as a kingdom of ends.

Chapter 4

The Exploration of Existentialism

Quest for Identity

Great Expectations is a story about identity specially of the protagonist, Pip. The novel begins with Pip's announcements "I called myself Pip and came to be called Pip." And many lines later that "my first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things (9) was formed during the story's opening events with Magwitch in the grave yard on Christmas eve. Pip is not only fully lacking in a positive bestowed identity, but he is also show on defined that he really names himself. As a result, Pip's journey to finding his true character involves continuous struggle and conflict and contains many missteps and failures. Throughout the course of Dicken's novel of transformation Pip must claim his identity through recognizing the difference between morally induced guilt and socially induced- shame, and coming to accept the loss of his illusions and the love of forgiveness of those whom he has wronged and been wronged by, regardless of whether his redemption ends up being more social or moral in nature.

In spite of his belief in moral virtue Dicken's substitutes the more religious concepts of sin for the more secular idea of crime in his novel. All the human beings should concern with helping the poor, proactively discouraging crime and giving to the needy. Although Pip's life vividly does not involve the original sin, nonetheless possesses and incredibly guilty conscience. The sense of guilt is an inheritance of a collective social and metaphorical "sins of the father" and to some extent, fits with Dickens' views of evil originating in society rather than individuals. This vague hypothesis, however, fails to take into account any special wrong doing that Pip has actually committed over the emotional abuse he has suffered. Pip's guilt is different

from his shame, both of which suffer him daily. Pip confuses the two, however, and his social shame resulting from the abuse his suffered at the hands of his sister, her friends, and Estella and Miss Havisham comes to over shadow his actual guilt for trying to assume a shallow gentlemanly identity at the expense of his real friends like most children, young Pip was utterly unable to retain or even begin to form a healthy identity in face of his orphaned state and the violent physical as well as emotional abuse by most of his caregivers in his life. So his identity is defined from the first by shame.

Pip feels ashamed a simply being a life worthless and unloved as a result Pip says:

> On the present occasion, though I was hungry I dared not eat my slice. I felt I must have something in reserve for my dreadful young man. I know Mrs. Joe's housekeeping to be of the strictest kind, and that my larcenous researches might find nothing available in the safe . Therefore I resolved to put my hunk a bread-and –butter down the leg my trousers. (17)

His sister constantly reminds him that she brought him up by "hand," yet simultaneously implies that Pip was not worth the up brings. When he has been to visit his parents grave in the churchyard without informing her Pip is appalled by his sister's outraged reaction. He recounts the conversation: Mrs. Joe asks, "who brought you by hands ?" 'you did,' and I . 'And why did I do it, I should like to know!' e exclaimed my sister. I whimpered, 'I don't know .' 'I don't !' said my sister. I would never do it again." (14)

From his earliest years, Pip is raised to believe that he is utterly valueless as a person. Despite Joe 's kind assurances of Pip's value, Mrs. Joe is a far more powerful

and dominating figure in Pip's life, so she is the one Pip listens to, not the kindly but powerless Joe. Pip, in such a way, becomes an unwitting accomplice to the destruction of his still forming identity. Watkins cites a relevant care study by Karen Horney in which the patient articulates the self destruction of an emotionally abused person's identity:

> How is it possible to loose a self? The treachery, unknown and unthinkable, begins without sacred psychic death in childhood- If and when we are not loved and are cut off from our spontaneous we says... It is a perfect double crime …not just the simple murderer of psyche, that might be written off but the tiny self also gradually and unwittingly takes part. He has not been accepted for himself as he is …Therefore he must be unacceptable. He himself to learn to believe it and at last even takes it for granted. He has truly given himself off. (10)

Pip's identity is distorted from his very earliest year having no parents or even parents substitutes to instill him a positive identity, and having the only the loving but passive Joe to tackle with his abusive and powerful sister's violence, Pip's identity as stamped initially with the insidious marks of negative values.

Yet prior to his ultimate identity transformation, when he first encounters with Estella, Pip suddenly commences to in envision a self-worth paradigm which is supposes may afford him foundation upon which to construct a positive identity. Watkins states that emotionally deprived child who is raised to believe in "badness" or worthlessness may find the lack of love so intolerable that unconsciously he decides to destroy his bad self and make a new self that will be loved and accepted." (8)

Upon first being introduce to the wonders of the upper class through his primary visit to Satis House, Pip suddenly starts to dream of an identity he might one day achieve that could bring him social acceptance: the identity of the gentleman.

Because of his conscious looking for his social acceptance, the gentlemanly identity that Pie begins to build in earnest at eighteen as he inherits a fortune is an identity that solely prioritized on external social mores. The adolescents nowadays seem careful to wear the most stylish that is expensive designer cloths, be seen at the most popular hangouts, and own the most advanced devices as i-pods, cell-phones and laptops. Neil Howe and Bill Strauss explain that for major consumer corporations today marketing is aimed almost exclusively at children and their parents creating a child-centered consumer economy" (284).

In upper class circles, teens are expected to engage in all the correct musical, sporting, or academic opportunities such as orchestra, soccer, or Ivy League educations. But here in the novel Pip hardly gets bread and butter. He is served in a dog style by miss Havisham and Estella. From this we can easily notice a miserable living style of the protagonist in the novel. Human nature in the Victorian society was similar in that attainment of respect from one's peers meant that in his tortured quest for personal value Pip would have to obtain the proper education, spend the right amount of money, be seen at famous locations living socially acceptable inhabitation accommodation, and we are all smart clothes and having belongings. Pip, in this way, seems to be trying to be accepted by his society and to convince himself that he did in fact possess genuine worth as an individual as he looked to society's acceptance to validate his worth. In permitting social views of power to determined his values, Pip moves further away from establishing a real identity and genuine relationships.

Dickens is right in identifying that society at large requires to be redeemed,

but since he rejects the Christine paradigm of original sin, he must look to purely social crime to find the root case social evils. Criminals such as dishonest and the cruel, but no excessively malevolent Compeyson or the disloyal vengeful and uncouth but otherwise honorable Magwitch ,and crimes such as great, self-centeredness, false piety, and materialism are the social and abstract, rather than personal and religious misdeeds inhabiting the Dickens world, and this terrestrial sphere consequently perceives itself.

Identity Transformed

Great Expectations is a story about identity, specifically the identity of the protagonist Pip and the origin, distortion, and transformation of his identity and the resulting clarification of the relationship between himself and the world around him. *Great Expectations* begins with Pip's announcement in the second sentence of the novel, "I called myself Pip, and came to b e called Pip," and several lines later that, "my first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things" (9) was formed during the story's opening incident with Magwitch in the graveyard on Christmas Eve. Pip's name, emphasizing the concept of growth, is extraordinarily fitting. Unique names often characterize their possessors in literature: Peter Pan, for example, another orphan boy, has a name appropriately reminiscent of the Greek god Pan, a god of nature and nymphs. As an abused orphan, Pip is not only completely lacking in a positive bestowed identity, but he is also so undefined that he actually names himself.

Consequently, Pip's journey to finding his true character involves great struggle and conflict and contains many missteps and failures. Throughout the course of Dickens' novel of transformation, Pip must learn to claim his identity through recognizing the difference between morally-induced guilt and socially-induced shame, and coming to accept the loss of his illusions and the love or forgiveness of

those whom he has wronged and been wronged by, regardless of whether his redemption ends up being more social or moral in nature.

> Despite his belief in moral virtue, Dickens substitutes the more religious concept of sin for the more secular idea of crime in his novels. Critic Dorothy Van Ghent theorizes that "the Dickens world requires an act of redemption". (166)

However, this redemption does not involve the Christian idea of original sin. In Dickens' literary paradigm, Van Ghent explains, individuals and society itself are in need of social redemption: all of society should concern itself with helping the poor, proactively discouraging crime, and giving to the needy. Although Pip's life apparently does not involve original sin, he nonetheless possesses an incredibly guilty conscience. Van Ghent goes on to state that Pip's perpetual sense of guilt is an inheritance of a collective social and metaphorical "sins of the fathers" (166-67), and in some way this fits with Dickens' views of evil originating in society rather than individuals. However, this vague hypothesis fails to take into account any specific wrongdoings that Pip has actually committed or the emotional abuse he has suffered.

Pip's guilt is different from his shame, both of which haunt him daily. Pip confuses the two, however, and his social shame resulting from the abuse he suffered at the hands of his sister, her friends, and Estella and Miss Havisham comes to overshadow his actual guilt for attempting to assume a shallow gentlemanly identity at the expense of his true friends. Gwen Watkins writes, "In few children is the young s elf so developed that it can sustain its 'first feelings' against the disapproval, perhaps the condemnation, of those it loves and needs" (8). Like most children, young Pip was utterly unable to retain or even begin to form a healthy identity in the face of his orphaned state and the violent physical and emotional abuse perpetrated

by most of the caregivers in his life, so his identity is defined from the first by shame.

Pip feels ashamed of simply being alive, and worthless and unloved as a result. His sister constantly reminds him that she brought him up "by hand," yet simultaneously implies that Pip was not worth the upbringing. When he has been to visit his parents' graves in the churchyard without informing her, Pip is appalled by his sister's outraged reaction. He recounts the conversation: Mrs. Joe asks, "Who brought you up by hand?' 'You did,' said I. 'And why did I do it, I should like to know!' exclaimed my sister. I whimpered, 'I don't know.' 'I don't! ' said my sister. 'I'd never do it again" (14). From his earliest years, Pip is raised to believe that he is utterly valueless as a person.

Despite Joe's kind assurances of Pip's value, Mrs. Joe is a far more powerful and dominating figure in Pip's life, so she is the one Pip listens to, not the kindly but powerless Joe. In this way, Pip becomes an unwitting accomplice to the destruction of his still-forming identity. Watkins cites a relevant case study by Karen Horney in which the patient articulates the self-destruction of an emotionally abused person's identity: How is it possible to lose a self? The treachery, unknown and unthinkable, begins with our secret psychic death in childhood—if and when we are not loved and are cut off from our spontaneous wishes . . .

> It is a perfect double crime . . . not just the simple murder of a psyche, that might be written off [but] the tiny self also gradually and unwittingly takes part. He has not been accepted for himself as he is . . . . Therefore he *must* be unacceptable. He himself learns to believe it and at last even takes it for granted. He has truly given himself up. (10)

Pip's identity is distorted from his very earliest years. Having no parents or even

parent substitutes to instill in him a positive identity, and having only the loving but passive Joe to combat his abusive and powerful sister's violence, Pip's identity is initially stamped with the insidious marks of negative worth. It is not until Pip goes through achieving conventional social acceptance and then deliberately choosing social rejection that he is able to form a positive identity and see his actual worth.

Yet prior to his ultimate identity transformation, when he first meets Estella, Pip suddenly begins to envision a self-worth paradigm which he supposes may afford him a foundation upon which to build a positive identity. Watkins states that an emotionally deprived child who is raised to believe in his "badness" or worthlessness "may find the lac k of love so intolerable that unconsciously he decides to destroy his 'bad' self and create a new self that will Dickens is correct in recognizing that society at large needs to be redeemed, but since he rejects the Christian paradigm of original sin, he must look to purely social crimes to find the root of societal evil. Criminals such as the dishonest and cruel, but not excessively malevolent Compeyson, or the dishonest, vengeful, and uncouth but otherwise honorable Magwitch, and crimes such as greed, self-centeredness, false piety, and materialism are the social and abstract, rather than personal and religious misdeeds inhabiting the Dickens world, and this terrestrial sphere consequently perceives itself as needing a social rather than a religious conversion. The idea of social redemption, especially for the poor and abused, appealed to Dickens. In *Great Expectations*, much of Pip's tremendous shame stems from his haunting sense of worthlessness: as a result of Mrs. Joe's abusive upbringing, he feels almost that he has committed a crime merely by being born. He states, "I was always treated as if I had insisted on being born, in opposition to the dictates of reason, religion, and morality, and against the dissuading arguments of my best friends" (24). Pip's "crime" in being born is clearly not a moral

transgression, however. Watkins explains that for unloved children in Dickens' works, the crime of being born is an enormous source of anguish. In examining this problem, Watkins postulates that, "Dickens may have been trying to convince himself that 'the crime of being born' was a social one and that therefore it could be forgiven, and the innocent little criminal redeemed, by society" (111). Characters like Magwitch and Orlick are viewed by Dickens as unfortunate products of their society, and not really morally deficient human beings. Pip's materialism and snobbishness, as well as the shame he feels as a result of being badly mistreated by his society, are according to Dickens effects of destructive social expectations rather than moral failure.

The Victorian novel, almost by definition, required some kind of conversion or change of heart. From Eliot's Daniel Deronda to Dickens' Scrooge, from the remorseless Dorian Gray to the horrific Mr. Hyde, from Kurtz of *Heart of Darkness* to Mr. Rochester of *Jane Eyre*, dramatic transformation occurs repeatedly. However, the various kinds of conversion are not always from worse to better, and can be of any variety from economic to moral to social or romantic.

> Oftentimes, though, the Victorian literary transformation is positive. Barbara Hardy explains that "The typical conversion of the great Victorian novel is not a religious conversion but a turning from self-regard to love and social responsibility". (27)

Pip's self-defining love for Estella was as self-destructive and illusory as it was desperately impossible. He loved Estella with a love that was "against reason, against promise, against peace, against hope, against happiness, against all discouragement that could be. Once for all; I loved 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" (179). Hopelessly bound to Estella with emotion rooted in the unmet needs of childhood which Estella could never possibly fulfill, Pip was illogically and unbearably in love with an illusory idea that could never become reality. J. Hillis Miller writes, "Pip's love of Estella is by its very nature a self-deception, because it is a love which is based in its own impossibility. It depends in its innate nature on the fact that it can never be satisfied" (265-66). Pip's fictional search for love was likely born from Dickens' eternally unrequited search for romantic happiness in his own real life . Watkins theorizes that Dickens may have spent all his life emotionally as the "rejected child seeking desperately . . . for the mother he never had," and that this tragic emotional warp w as responsible for Dickens' constantly unfulfilling relationships with women (24-25).

Pip, without Dickens' knowledge, even, may have spent his life until the end of the novel searching for a woman to replace the "mother he never had," as not only did Pip not have an actual mother, but also his surrogate mother (older sister) was abusive, the opposite of what a mother should be. As a result of the emotional abuse that both Dickens and Pip received from their mother figures, both grew up used to relationships with women that were neither fulfilling nor healthy. Forster, Dickens' longtime friend and biographer, reproduces an autobiographical fragment written by Dickens, in which the great Boz explains the details leading to the end of his employment in the blacking factory, possibly the most damaging experience of Dickens' life. Dickens states that while his father was agreeable to his leaving the factory, he remembers with undying resentment his mother's opposing feelings: "I never shall forget, I never can forget t hat my mother was warm [eager] for my being sent back" (qtd. in Forster 32).

In other writings, Dickens continues to clarify the fact that he harbored almost

nothing but ill feelings toward his mother. Having such damaged mother-son relationships, for both Dickens and Pip, in attempting to escape their maternal abuse, these victims rejected their damaged mother-son relationships by settling for whatever crumbs of emotional satisfaction they could derive from demeaning or unsatisfying romantic relationships rather than attempting to forge healthy give-and-take bonds with others. Watkins surmises that for Dickens, "perhaps betrayal and loss were so strongly associated with his pattern of love that he needed them as much as he needed the love" (24). Certainly no on e *needs* betrayal, but for those that have been emotionally abused, sometimes they have grown so accustomed to betrayal that they are uncomfortable living without it.

Pip's fairy-tale identity is based on his desires to escape the lies of the abuse he has suffered and be found a valuable and meaningful human being in a highly class-conscious society. He has come to define himself by Estella and by socio-economic expectations. Estella is a part of Pip's very soul: some time after he realizes that Miss Havisham never meant him for Estella, Pip exclaims passionately:

> You are part of my existence, part of myself. You have been in every line I have ever read since I first came here, the rough common boy whose poor heart you wounded even then . . . You have been the embodiment of every graceful fancy that my mind has ever become acquainted with. The stones of which the strongest London buildings are made, are not more real, or more impossible to be displaced by your hands, than your presence and influence have been to me, there and everywhere, and will be. Estella, to the last hour of my life, you cannot choose but remain part of my character, part of the little good in me, part of the evil. (272)

With the coming of Magwitch, Pip realizes that both his dreams of being a respected society man with education, manners, and money and also his dreams of possessing Estella are unalterably disrupted. He realizes that his identity has been based upon the unrealities of myth and illusion. He is not a male Cinderella, Estella is not to be his bride, he has completely misunderstood what it means to be a true gentleman, based his social identity upon things of external rather than internal significance, and he has lost the kindness and integrity he once had in rejecting his true friends for the sake of his illusions. Pip, like all of Victorian society and Dickens himself, has been living in a world of rosy expectations and blithe impossibilities. Yet unlike Dickens, who was never truly happy because he never discovered how to be content with attainable things, and unlike some prominent Victorians, especially those consumed with imperialism, Pip manages in the end to construct an identity that is grounded both in reality and in genuine love.

Pip's identity is reconstructed through love. When Magwitch returns from Australia to England and Pip is first confronted with the repulsive but pathetic and loving convict, the young man is horrified and disgusted. Magwitch represents not only an unwelcome and criminal problem in Pip's life, but also the utter destruction of his previous identity. Shaken and distraught, Pip wanders about attempting to make sense of the wreckage of his life and to decide how on earth to go on. Eventually, however, a change comes over Pip. In one of the last chapters of the novel, Pip has decided to take Magwitch safely out of England and help him escape to a foreign country. In doing so, Pip will be leaving his friends, his social realm, and his money behind him. But on the morning of the escape attempt, Pip says that instead of worrying about where he would end up or how long he would stay there, that all he cares about is "Provis's [Magwitch's] safety" (322).

In all likelihood, Pip's emotional evolution from despising to loving Magwitch was heavily influenced by his prior experience with forgiving Miss Havisham.

After Miss Havisham has deliberately misled Pip to believe for years that she is his benefactress, she asks to see Pip one last time. Pip, still in awe of this wealthy but reclusive paragon of society who was born to things he could only dream of, returns to the house where his dreams of a great identity were first born and distorted. During the visit, Miss Havisham reveals her own limited redemption as she desperately explains her final realization of how badly she has hurt and distorted both Pip and Estella's identities and begs for Pip's forgiveness. Miss Havisham's redemption becomes a part of Pip's as he forgives her. A hint of the dramatic reversal in Pip's snobbish and illusory life is evidenced in his speech to her: he explains to her that in his life "there have been sore mistakes . . . and I want forgiveness and direction far too much to be bitter with you" (297).

In humbly coming to identify with and forgive one of his foremost tormentors, Pip begins to recognize and forgive what is distorted within himself, and realize his transforming identity in relation to the world around him. With enough years, tragedy, and distance between them, Pip at last is able to see himself as a valid entity separate from the powerful, damaged old woman, and comes, as John Henry Cardinal Newman advises, to begin to be a man who "never inflicts pain" and is able to identify with everyone (1041) because he is finally able to see his own faults in clear enough perspective that he can be emotionally detached enough to truly care for others.

From this position of a humble, separate identity grounded in the realistic knowledge of his own faults and illusions and an understanding of the distance

between himself and others, it is a short step for Pip to become Magwitch's closest friend. Pip resolves to leave everything behind him to help Magwitch escape, then faithfully refuses to leave the dying old convict throughout his subsequent trial, imprisonment, and death. In finally coming to accept Magwitch, the symbol of all that he has desperately been trying to escape socially and economically for so many years, as his friend rather than his enemy, Pip at last is able to become a true gentleman with a clearly defined identity that is founded in reality rather than fairy tales. Pip's identity transformation is completed when Joe forgives him, tends him through his illness, and pays off all his debts.

Although Pip is unable in the end to return home permanently, marry Biddy, or become a blacksmith again, these sad difficulties add to the novel's realism and do not detract from Pip's identity restoration. The ultimate question of the story, however, is in the ending. The two endings each present a picture of two different types of redemption. Urged by Edward Bulwer-Lytton to change the unhappy original ending of the novel so that Pip and Estella would finally end up together, Dickens surprisingly listened to his friend and changed the ending of the novel. Bulwer-Lytton was a literary critic who devised standards for great literature, and Edwin Eigner states that "as regards to *Great Expectations*, Dickens was probably urged to forego what his friend [Lytton] considered a fashionable unhappy ending, designed to gain immediate popularity, and encouraged to substitute for it a conclusion more in keeping with what looked in 1861 like the time-tested rules of English narrative romance" (107-8). The controversial multiple endings to the novel have given rise to many questions. Critics argue that a happy ending does not fit with the rest of the novel, which is in some places almost unbearably sad, and that Estella has been so cruel to Pip that he is better off without her. The novel is more realistic and better

artistically if Pip and Estella remain forever apart, they say.

One ending presents a more social and secular view of redemption, while the other ending displays a more moral perspective. Critics have argued for decades about the believability of the revised ending: the general consensus is that Dickens should have persisted with the first ending and that the second ending does not fit with the tenor of the book. However, there are a few notable exceptions to this. One of the foremost critics in the majority camp, George Gissing, opines that had not Dickens changed the ending of the novel as per Bulwer-Lytton's advice, that *Great Expectations* would have been "nearly perfect," and that since the entire novel was written in a "minor key," the tragedies and lessons of the novel would have stood out in sharper relief had not Lord Lytton suggested a happier ending (627-29).

Famously acerbic George Bernard Shaw also disliked the lighter ending, stating that *Great Expectations*' "beginning is unhappy, its middle is unhappy, and the conventional happy ending is an outrage on it." Shaw thought the idea that "anyone could ever have been happy with Estella [was] positively unpleasant," and that because no one could live "happily ever after" with the icy Estella, the second ending was overly sentimental and unbelievable (638). For most of the novel, the emotionally abused Estella is cruel and nearly heartless towards Pip and completely ruthless towards all other men; however, Shaw's reading does not consider the idea that Estella may have been drastically changed by suffering, so much so as to become a different and possibly much better person. In both endings, she has changed enough that she extends true sympathy to Pip, in any event. In the first ending, however, Pip must make do merely with Estella's shared social empathy; in the revised ending, Pip and Estella finally may be able to enjoy the happy reward of forgiveness and humility.

An unusual perspective that is nonetheless favorable towards the first ending is Christopher Ricks'. The critic writes that in the second ending the awfulness of Miss Havisham's destruction of Estella is "made hollow by this softening of Estella" (673), but he seems to overlook the fact that Miss Havisham has been forgiven for her misdeeds, however terrible, and that as a result it would seem permissible for Estella to have broken free from Miss Havisham's abuse and to have found genuine forgiveness herself. Although as Herbert tells Pip, Miss Havisham may have raised Estella as cruel and unfeeling so that she could "wreak revenge on all the male sex" (139), in the end Estella has certainly overcome this emotional distortion to some extent, finding either a social or moral redemption, depending on the different versions of the novel's ending.

With its extensive details of London middle and upper-class society, its treatment of crime and criminals, its pictures of education and abuse, and countless other facets of Victorian society, *Great Expectations* contains a great deal of realism; yet it does not seem as though the realism is marred or the meaning distorted by a final and permanent reunion between Pip and Estella in the book. By the end of the story, both Pip and presumably Estella have suffered and changed so much that they are completely different people from who they once were. In this way, while they could never have previously attained a healthy or realistic relationship, by the end of the tale they have both presumably changed enough that while probably never destined to be completely happy (years of constant, distorting abuse do not wear off so easily), it certainly seems possible that both Pip and Estella are now capable of finding some measure of realistic, respectful happiness with each other, as they are each finally able to assess the other for who he or she truly is. Their identities have finally been formed and transformed, and the results are hauntingly lovely.

This later version of redemption is more complete than that contained in the novel's original ending. In the first ending, Pip merely finds peace in working hard and hearing Estella's expression of empathy for him one afternoon from a carriage window. In this ending, Pip has lost everything but his friends Herbert, Biddy, and Joe, finds some satisfaction in honest labor, and receives a measure of vindication from Estella's confession of her abuse at the hands of Drummle. Yet this redemption, although perhaps more realistic than that of other novels such as A Christmas Carol, is less-satisfying and even perhaps less grand artistically, for if after everything Pip has suffered through and learned at the end he only receives a more realistic identity involving a little peace and a little vindication, the reader may be left feeling that the entire core of the story was not worth the tragedy that Pip experienced.

If, however, one accepts the second ending, and believes in the most optimistic interpretation possible of it, Pip and Estella's identities and relationship have been so drastically changed that it seems entirely appropriate for them to finally end up together. The difficulty here is that because Estella's transformation occurs off stage, it is difficult to gauge the depth of her growth. Also, in Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, the witchy female protagonist is tamed through the well-intentioned emotional abuse of Petruchio, and all's well that ends well. By contrast in *Great Expectations*, however, Estella apparently experiences character reformation through badly-intentioned and brutal physical abuse. This mechanism does seem an unlikely vehicle to bring about redemption, but the women of Dickens' novels were not generally changed for the better in any other way. The second ending, if perhaps more fantastic, is certainly more satisfying than the first, and contains a more complete view of redemption for both Pip and Estella.

Angst-ridden and brilliant, Charles Dickens lived an unhappy life that was the

result of abuse, rejection of God's supernatural power, and poor choices. Although achieving phenomenal wealth and fame in his lifetime, Dickens was never satisfied, and eventually worked himself to death for the applause of his audiences. A man with fabulous expectations that were realized economically but never emotionally, because he could never quite come to terms with his weaknesses and form a unified and healthy identity of his own, Dickens achieved literary greatness, but never true happiness. In one of his most significant works, *Great Expectations*, the protagonist Pip manages to achieve in his life what Dickens never did, for despite being abused and deceived by almost everyone around him from his earliest years, being encouraged to form great and illusory expectations, being handed large sums of money for which he was nearly unaccountable, and being rejected by the one great love of his life, Pip manages in the end to come to terms with his eventually shattered false identity and form a more realistic, secure, humble, and compassionate self-definition. Pip becomes a vicarious savior as his internal qualities finally match his external reality, and he finds contentment in residing there. He might never live a completely happy life, but in the revised ending he at least has probably achieved the two things he sought most all along, to marry Estella and to be a true gentleman, and these would seem to be accomplishments worth all the pain and tragedy it took to get Pip there.

Chapter 4

The Revelation of the Existential Quest

The novel *Great Expectations* is a semi- autobiographical story by Charles Dickens. The story is narrated by young Pip an orphan, the protagonist of the novel who regularly seeks for his self or quests for his identity. His ambitions is to be a is to be a socially acceptable to gentleman. In course of his destinations, he suffers a lot of hardships and adversities such as fear, hunger, frustration, hopelessness, social abuses, criminality, domination, chaos, confusion, poverty, alienation, fragmentation, mental disorder, terror, panic, illusion, etc. To combat these situations or feelings the hero struggles through his life. He longs to finds his own identity.

Initially Pip runs away from terror of Magwitch when he visits graves of his family members in the Church Yard. There he encounters within ironed man who tries to murder him. The man ask him about his name. Than the narrator introduces himself by calling Pip. Pip is raised up by his sister and her husband Gargery, a blacksmith. Later on he goes to London and earns a lot of wealth. He upgrades himself and maintain his social and economic status that lure a beautiful and charming widow Estella. Estella who behaved Pip in doggish style changes her attitude and perceptions towards Pip and falls in love with him. It depicts that of fallen character is loved and respected by beautiful lady due to his wealth and social status. We can clearly notice that both inner and outer changes are necessary for human beings. Had Pip not improved himself and Estella not changed her internally, the unity between Pip and Estella could not have been possible. It become possible as they both realized their own guilt and understood each-other. Thus the novel depicts a true picture of human nature and a Victorian society of England.

The novel reveals the quest of identity of the main character Pip. The title

itself bears the existential nature. The words "Great Expectations" reveal the optimistic attitude for the coming future. With great expectations, the main character starts a new quest in the journey of his life when ultimately he makes himself. He becomes a matured person, realizes his own personal identity. He also understands the social norms and values. Pip also wants to break free from the social bondages. He knows the real value of pure love of Estella. His journey from nothingness to the attainment of success at last gives him a new identity of respected man not only in the society, but also in his own standing. Above all, he is a self-made man.

Works Cited

Camus, Albert. *The Rebel Resistance, Rebellion and Death*. Trans. Justin O'Brien. New York Vintage International, 1995.

Chesterton, G. K. *Criticisms and Appreciations of the Works of Charles Dickens*. London: J. M.Dent & Sons, 1911.

Eagleton, Terry. *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës* . New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1975.

Forster, John. *The Life of Charles Dickens*. Ed. Ernest Rhys. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1927. 2 Vols.

Glimour, Robin. *The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981.

Howe, Neil, and Bill Strauss. *Millennials Rising: the Next Great Generation*. New York:Vintage-Random House, 2000.

Kierkegaard, Soren. Thomas H. Croxall, Glimpses & Impressions of Kierkegaard 1959 James Nisbet & Co. Ltd. From "Recollections from Home" by Henriette Lund. P. 49.

Sartre, Jean Paul. Human Self- Consciousness. Existentialism is a Humanism, Trans. Carol Macomber, New Heaven; Yale, 2007.

Watkins, Gwen. *Dickens in Search of Himself*. Totowa: Barnes & Noble Books, 1987.