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### Class Structure in Great Expectations: Dictate Your Own Fate

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## Class Structure in Great Expectations: Dictate Your Own Fate

### Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

The formation of class structure is often dependent upon a set of criteria that reveals divisions between individuals. The old model of class ranking within England during the nineteenth century favored a rigid structure reliant on occupational differences. A new model began to take shape during the end of the century that relied on the morality and character of individuals. The new model provided the opportunity for mobility and achievement of new roles through self-determination. Charles Dickens' Great Expectations portrays both models of class structure within the nineteenth century through the story of Pip Pirrip. Pip struggles to categorize others and himself due to the societal shifts that occurred in England during the nineteenth century. He instead discovers his own way of determining his identity and placement within society through dictating his own fate. The novel demonstrates the problems of inequality and exactitude that exist with enforcing a rigid hierarchical classification system, and embraces a new model of social classification that is reliant upon self-determination and the ability to achieve status by actions rather than birth.

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English Language and Literature

### Comments

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English 420

Professor Uman

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Class Structure in *Great Expectations*: Dictate Your Own Fate

The formation of class structure is often dependent upon a set of criteria that reveals divisions between individuals. The old model of class ranking within England during the nineteenth century favored a rigid structure reliant on occupational differences. A new model began to take shape during the end of the century that relied on the morality and character of individuals. The new model provided the opportunity for mobility and achievement of new roles through self-determination. Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* portrays both models of class structure within the nineteenth century through the story of Pip Pirrip. Pip struggles to categorize others and himself due to the societal shifts that occurred in England during the nineteenth century. He instead discovers his own way of determining his identity and placement within society through dictating his own fate. The novel demonstrates the problems of inequality and exactitude that exist with enforcing a rigid hierarchical classification system, and embraces a new model of social classification that is reliant upon self-determination and the ability to achieve status by actions rather than birth

From the beginning of the novel, Pip can be understood as an individual confused by the concepts of class and hierarchy. This confusion stems from his lack of knowledge about his parents' lives and social standing. At the introduction of the novel, the reader

finds Pip, a young boy at the time, alone in the graveyard examining the headstone of his deceased parents. He discloses that he had never met his parents; thus, he constructs his own ideas about their personalities and appearances through the shapes and messages on their gravestones. It becomes evident in this scene that Pip relies on observation to guide much of his knowledge about life. As an adult, he reflects on this scene and admits to his misinterpretation of the engraved text explaining, “I read ‘wife of the Above’ as a complimentary reference to my father’s exaltation to a better world” (38). Pip misreads the hierarchical relationship between his parents by thinking that the term “above” refers to status rather than the placement of the names on the gravestone. This bit of confusion can be understood as reinforcing his being as something of a blank slate in terms of understanding and using social roles properly. Peter Brooks argues, “it is important to note how this beginning establishes Pip as an existence without a plot” (100). The idea that Pip has no story is reinforced in this scene because he does not have a personal past that is made known, and the reader is only aware of his current state and status.

Pip’s confusion about class structure and definition brings about the possibility for his story to be one of self-discovery and self-definition. The fact that he is a blank slate creates an internal desire for him to find out more about himself. Due to the identities of those around him, Pip understands that because others in society are associated with jobs or ranking that he should also have a means through which to identify himself. This creation of self can only happen if he becomes aware of the identities that exist within society, and selects which specific role he desires to achieve. In order to achieve an identity, Pip will encounter and overcome obstacles that will ultimately enable him to achieve the expectations he creates for himself. However, he

must educate himself about society as a whole in order to reach this point of achievement. His exposure to various identities and old structures of class hierarchy is the primary force that enables him to create expectations for himself. Pip's inability to understand social class ranking and properly use terminology reflects class ambiguities that existed throughout much of the nineteenth-century in England.

Nineteenth-century England experienced a great deal of change in terms of social class distinctions and terminology. The early 1800's sparked the creation and use of terms relating to a rigid social structure. Geoffrey Crossick explains that the terminology associated with the social structure during this time period tended to be dependent upon the individual's career or primary means through which he or she made a living. The National Society or the Anglican Educational Organization used terms relating to class in their 1838 discussion of education explaining, "The education of the tradesmen and farmers and other persons standing in a similar relation to the class more usually designated 'poor'" (Crossick 30). Crossick describes the use of terminology from the early 1800's as reliant upon the income and education level of the individual. He further details that families tended to be of the same classification that they were born into and kept their dedication to family owned businesses or trades. This automatic determination of social class within families shows that there was not much room for shifts in class during this time period. Crossick argues that class terms became more prevalent by mid-century (32). The increase in defining classes can be understood as a result of an increase in the need to specify the expansion of groups when discussing social categories.

The mid-1800's brought about new language and criteria to consider when naming different classes. According to Crossick, in the early to mid-1800's the term

'middle class' was frequently used for a large population and referred more to individuals displaying morality and appropriate thought than simply a social group (31). In other words, the social groups were not of the largest concern to society; what did matter however, was the way that the people conducted their lives. Crossick discloses that the individuals that were members of the middle class were the base of the society and tended to possess an understanding of appropriate behaviors and manners in their culture. He suggests that a shift took place in the later end of the mid-nineteenth century and into the later portion of this time period that placed morality at an even higher priority in classifying people socially (33). Members of society that belonged to higher-ranking positions were then viewed as people who conducted their lives as the culture and government saw fit.

Much of the literature published in the later portion of the nineteenth century reflected the government's ideas about classifying the people of England. *Manners and Rules of Good Society or Solecisms to be Avoided* published in London and New York in 1887 by a "Member of the Aristocracy" contains specific guidelines for people to follow when interacting with others. The sturdy, thick, hard covered book outlines how to conduct appropriate behavior in various settings. The book's audience appears to be wide reaching due to the varying topics included within it. It contains thirty-five chapters ranging in discussion from the definition of etiquette to how to elicit behaviors such as walking, driving, and riding. The fact that the aristocracy found it necessary to publish such a book speaks volumes about their perception of society. A strong sense of morality during this time period was seen as a way to become a member of the upper classes. Morality is generally reflected in good behavior. Therefore, publishing this book

demonstrates the idea that being born into a position of high class is no longer sufficient, but that any individual can be taught to act as a member of the high class. The author explains in his “Introductory Remarks,” “It is precisely this knowledge that gives to men and women the consciousness of feeling thoroughly at ease in whatever sphere they may happen to move, and causes them to be considered well bred by all with whom they may come in contact” (xiii). With this explanation of the purpose for the book comes the idea that any member of British society can be viewed as “well bred” or of a higher class than they may have initially occupied. There is an increased importance for members of society to be able to act appropriately within a variety of settings due to the expansion of classes under new criteria.

The beliefs, as reflected in the text, at the end of the 1800’s emphasized the morality and character of individuals. Crossick describes this portion of the time period as, “a world where moral designations seemed vital to social description” (33). He communicates the belief that society could not discuss social descriptions without consideration of morality. The tremendous shift that took place from the early 1800’s to the end of the century was clearly reflected in these shifts of definitions. According to Crossick, by the end of the 1800’s, middle class distinction had become far too unclear for use in defining an individual as a result of the continuous shifts within society (34). The transformation of class terms and definitions creates an ambiguity in discussing the time period as a whole. Charles Dickens’ nineteenth-century novel *Great Expectations* reflects many of the ideologies associated with Crossick’s article pertaining to the definitions of the time period. Different class models of the time period can be viewed in the solidarity of classes as well as the fluidity that accompanies Pip within the novel.

Pip's sister and brother-in-law's position within society are a reflection of the lifestyle he is to experience if he were to remain with his family based on the concepts of the early nineteenth-century class structure. He is born without knowledge of his parents, but lives in a home where he was brought up by his sister and brother-in-law, Joe. Due to his presence in their house, he is on the path to become a blacksmith apprentice of Joe Gargery. This concept of inheritance derives from the early structural idea that once a family is classified by a certain position or job title through their familial roots then they will maintain that.

Through the character of Joe, Pip is able to view his future if he were to maintain within the parameters of the rigid class structure and the ideologies that accompany it. He views himself as an equal to Joe despite his position as a blacksmith because that is the position that Pip is next in line to take on. This equating of status between him and Joe is clear from the casual language and structure of the conversations between the two characters. Pip inquires about Joe's level of education, specifically his spelling capabilities, "How do you spell Gargery, Joe?" (41). Joe's reply demonstrates his lack of education, "I don't spell it at all" (41). The fact that Joe is uneducated suggests that it is unnecessary to be educated in order to maintain the role that he inherited. The short statements uttered by Joe suggest that he is not of many words, nor that he knows many words to express himself with. The simplicity of Joe's character and his language makes him an easy character for Pip to connect with, and equate himself with. These characteristics make him easily understood as a representation of Pip's future. Pip's opportunity to play at the Satis House enables him to observe a upper class lifestyle. He begins to develop expectations contrast to this idea through his exposure to the upper



class at the Satis House. He begins to evaluate himself based on the opinions and perceptions of others, as he was initially unaware of such differences. As the novel progresses the reader can identify an increase in Pip's consciousness and critical evaluation of social roles due to his exposure to other characters.

Dickens uses the characters that Pip encounters in his youth to suggest that the rigid class structure of the early 1800's is problematic. Pip's visits to the Satis House and his interactions with Estella and Miss Havisham remain as constant reminders of his position within a working class family in British society. He is initially introduced to the life of the upper class through his frequent visits to Estella and Miss Havisham. There is a clear difference between Pip and Estella in both their level of education and the priority they place on manners. Upon their first series of interactions, Estella refers to Pip as "boy," which demonstrates Estella's thoughts that she is not only above Pip, but that she feels that she can define him without knowing his exact age. Throughout many of their interactions, Estella demonstrates a sense of entitlement through her language that communicates her position as being greater than his. Estella responds to Miss Havisham's commands for her to play with Pip, "With this boy! Why he is a common labouring-boy" (55). Estella's word choice in describing him demonstrates the way that the other characters perceive him, and suggests that outside of Pip, social roles are a concern to others. Her statement also furthers the idea that affairs, even small ones such as playing, should be class specific. She establishes her role as occupying a position within the upper class through her belittlement of Pip and her placing emphasis on their differences; specifically, she makes them known by pointing out their different ways of thinking. She points out the differing definitions they use for the names of cards as if his

terminology is something to be ashamed of. He admits, "I had never thought of being ashamed of my hands before but I began to consider them a very indifferent pair" (55). This is a defining moment where he clearly begins to acknowledge his differences from others around him and the priority that is placed on status by others.

Hands can be understood as the physical element that assists in distinguishing between members of upper and lower classes. Peter J. Capuano attributes the discussion of hands, such as the one made by Pip, within Dickens' work as a means to further emphasize differences between classes (187). Capuano evaluates the symbolism associated with hands throughout history. He explains that hands are the indicators of social status, and those of low class rank often have hands associated with animals. Specifically, he details that members of the working class tended to have "large palms and short fingers interpreted not only as indicators of a propensity to handle shovels, pickaxes, and barrows, but as signs of animality itself" (192). The structure and appearance of hands reinforces the ability to differentiate between classes by focusing on physical elements of an individual. Within the novel, Estella makes reference to Pip's hands exclaiming, "And what coarse hands he has!" (Dickens 55). Her attention to his physical appearance suggests that it is indicative of his identity, as she uses observation to gauge her perception of him. As he spends more time at the Satis House, he not only begins to understand differing ideologies, but also the physical differences amongst individuals that contribute to one's position in society. He also becomes surrounded with negativity while providing his services at the Satis House with the discovery of these thoughts sparked by the outbursts of Estella.

Pip is constantly reminded of the traditional structure of social class through his low standing and lack of mobility during his experiences as a young boy at the Satis House. Estella's upbringing from Miss Havisham causes her to adopt ideas that relate to the old style of thought reliant upon the rigidity of social classes, and as a result, act on them. During Pip's first experience at the Satis House, it is communicated through the language used by the residents that he has little flexibility and commentary in terms of behaviors, mannerisms and discussions within the house. Estella and Miss Havisham speak in commands whenever they talk to Pip. He recalls Estella's demands, "I have a sick fancy that I want to see some play. There, there!" with an impatient movement of the fingers of her right hand; 'play, play, play!" (54). This persistency and description of mannerism suggests that she maintains control over Pip and his actions. Estella's comments to him tend to be punchy and direct without much flowery elaboration. She often appears as unemotional and pushy. Pip even decides to make his decisions about life based on the way that she perceives him as a result of her role as an intimidating figure of authority. Due to his role as a lesser being in comparison to Estella and Miss Havisham, Estella will not pay much attention to Pip and only makes demands of him. He discloses, "I want to be a gentleman on her account" (156). The power she has over him initially drives his expectations for himself and his desire to please her because it seems like the appropriate thing to do in the setting of the Satis House, and therefore in life to gain a new position. Estella's demanding nature appears as a support for her thoughts that she is entitled to make decisions for not only herself, but for others. Pip experiences this type of controlling relationship derived from class differences with each of the characters he encounters in the Satis House.

Miss Havisham reinforces the persona of the upper class individual under the rigid class structure model through embodying a similar, demanding persona and self-entitlement as that of Estella. She commands, “Estella, take him down. Let him have something to eat, and let him roam and look about him while he eats. Go, Pip” (56). In this specific command Miss Havisham even goes as far as telling him when he can eat and all the actions he is allowed to exhibit while doing so. This extreme control of bodily functions, such as vision and hunger, is as a result of the arrogance and entitlement that accompanies her high-ranking role. Miss Havisham further reinforces the tenets of a rigid structure in discussing the lack of association that should accompany two members of different classes.

She reminds Pip and Estella of Pip’s inability to have a relationship with Estella only moments after meeting him. She provides Estella with permission to do one action with Pip, “You can break his heart” (55). Rather than be open to the idea of the two engaging in a relationship of any type she immediately shuts down the thought of it before it arises. This immediate denial coincides with the idea that individuals of differing classes should not date or in this case, be any more than play mates. The inequality and lack of mobility between classes during the early 1800’s echoes this idea with the preservation of the rigid structure.

The rigidity of both the demands from Pip’s masters at the Satis House and behaviors he is required to enact attribute to the negative behavior he engages in. He is constantly being commanded to do various tasks, and he has his behaviors and speech hindered with these commands. He loses any freedom of movement or voice when he enters the Satis House. While he is there he begins to only do things that he is told to do.

When he is confronted by the pale young gentleman and commanded to fight, he acts out and engages as he is told to. Despite the understanding that fighting can be viewed as barbaric or animalistic behavior, Pip engages in it anyway knowing that it is morally incorrect behavior. As he explains, “I never have been so surprised in my life, as I was when I let out the first blow, and saw him lying on his back, looking up at me with a bloody nose” (85). This willingness to adopt poor behavior can be understood in his position at the Satis House as a lesser being, and a puppet of sorts. The Satis House and those individuals he encounters there bring about the ideas of inferiority and barbarism associated with lower ranking classes in the eyes of Miss Havisham and the upper class members. Ultimately, the destruction and negativity that goes along with Pip’s actions and overall experience through his interactions with Miss Havisham and Estella at the Satis House can be viewed as a symbol for the understanding that the rigid class structure is a negative social implication.

Dickens’ descriptions of the Satis House and the demolition of it later in the text further symbolize the destruction of the old and rigid model of class in the 1800’s. Estella elaborates on the name meaning of the Satis House during Pip’s first visit, “Its other name was Satis; which is Greek, or Latin, or Hebrew, or all three—or all one to me—for enough” (51). The relevance of naming the house in translation “Enough House” suggests that largeness of the house was just enough for the wealthy owners initially. The idea that a large house is only enough suggests that a bit of greed is associated with the owners of the house, and the economic status of the upper class members that now occupy the house. Estella and Miss Havisham can be understood as having characteristics that fit this mold.

The Satis House can be understood as a symbol for Pip's youth and beginnings. The plot structure of the novel assists in demonstrating which factors drive Pip to achieve his expectations for himself. Since the Satis House is the place where Pip initially discovers his expectations, as he returns to the house throughout his path toward his expectations and it remains primarily the same, he will continue to be driven toward these expectations. According to Peter Brooks, "the returns always bring his regression, in Satis House, to the status of the coarse and common boy" (100). His returns remind him not only of his expectations, but the inferior position that he occupied during his time in the house. With these frequent returns, the reader can identify the persistence within Pip and the desire to overcome the ways of his past. Brooks argues that throughout the course of the novel, "Each return suggests that Pip's official plots, which seem to speak of progress, ascent and the satisfaction of desire, are in fact subject to a process of repetition of the yet unmastered past, the true determinant of his life's direction" (100). Pip's dissatisfaction with the way his journey is unfolding causes him to return to the place where he discovered his dissatisfaction initially, and these returns serve as a motivator. It is only toward the end of the novel that a swift turn takes place and suggests a downfall of the reminders of the past. The fire that takes place within the Satis House further serves to critique the role of the members that dwell within the home and the home itself.

It is ironic when Pip returns to the Satis House and Miss Havisham catches on fire, only to lose much of her speech. Her speech is a means through which she controlled Pip and now that she is wounded, she can no longer speak commands to him. Additionally, upon his return to the Satis House in the final sections of the novel he returns to find that, "There was no house now, no brewery, no building whatever left, but

the wall of the old garden” (458). The place that symbolizes the control and wealth of the upper class as well as the ideologies of the old model of social class no longer exists. This is significant in that it evokes the idea that this rigid model of social class is corrupt due to the poor treatment of the lower class by the upper class, and that it should no longer exist. By the end of the novel, it is clear that elements relating to a rigid class structure induce much of the negativity that surrounds Pip and his experience growing up around the Satis House. However, the Satis House serves as the catalyst in driving Pip’s expectations for himself. Due to the unfair treatment he receives from the upper class members, he finds himself desiring their lifestyle in order to escape the belittlement and inferiority he experienced.

The Satis House is the driving force that influences Pip’s expectations for himself. Pip’s experience as an inferior individual within the Satis House causes him to desire a new position within society. His ability to experience and observe the lifestyle of the upper class causes him to break from his role of inferiority, and achieve a position of higher standing. Due to his desire to change the conditions of inequality and class based prejudice at the Satis House, Pip creates a new model of social class for himself founded on the basis of self-determination. Stephen Greenblatt suggests that “self-fashioning,” or the creation of oneself, is dependent upon institutional influences and the lifestyle of the individual. Based on this idea, it is clear that the influential figures within the Satis House assist in Pip’s creation of himself. Greenblatt argues that there is not one specific path for the individual to take in order to achieve their “new self,” but those who self-fashion simply achieve it on their own. The fact that there is not one linear path or pattern for the individual to take in order to achieve their desired place in society suggests that it is

primarily based on the individual and their level of determination. Dickens constructs Pip as a character with expectations for himself. In doing so, he also creates a character who possesses a great deal of self-determination that he uses to achieve these expectations. According to Robin Gilmour, “The story of Pip is the ‘classic legend of the nineteenth century’” (118). Pip can be understood as the new type of class structure based on the idea that each individual can determine what position they occupy in society.

The role of Pip as main character and narrator supports the idea that he is in the position to decide his own path in life. Dickensian critics such as Sean Grass and Keith Easley argue that Pip’s “self-authoring” is further support for his ability to decide his own fate. Grass reads *Great Expectations* as an autobiography of Pip in which, “his narrative centers upon a profound anxiety regarding his self-authorship and the way in which written narrative necessarily entangles the subject in power relations rooted in production and exchange” (635). The view provided by Grass supports the idea that because Pip is both the main character and in a sense the author of his own story, he contradicts ideas of the control that others have on him and his story. He outlines the story of his own pursuits in his own way that furthers the control he has over his fate and the retelling of the events that he undergoes. The power he possesses over his own story can be understood as a reflection of his power to determine his own path in life.

Pip’s power to decide his own fate is solidified by his position as the author of his own story. Keith Easley explains the control Pip has over himself arguing, “He can [establish grounds for self desire] because through a process of objectification whereby he sees others in himself and himself in others, he achieves the non coincidence between his older and younger selves” (179). Pip can understand himself from the experiences he



has with other characters in finding his own place, as he “tries on” the identities of others in different positions from him. Easley explains, “The knowledge that gives Pip the power to act decisively for the first time is intimately associated with a growing sense of himself as the object of others’ perception, rather than solely as a subject living outwards from within himself” (194). From this idea, it can be understood that the experiences and knowledge that Pip gains in experiencing different roles in his youth is what gives him the ability to recognize what he needs to become in order to achieve his own expectations and in turn, the status he wishes to embody. By placing Pip in the position that enables him to dictate which elements of the story to include and the way to include each, it creates the opportunity for him to create a support system from the audience. Pip’s story places him in a role of vulnerability from the very beginning of the novel, as he is an orphan. This plays on the sensitivity of the audience and sparks the opportunity for a sympathetic reaction. As a result of sympathetic feelings, the audience roots for Pip on his quest for identity and wants him to achieve his expectations. This rooting for him further suggests that self-determination is the way to achieving what the individual desires, even if it means shifting social ranking. The concept of self-authoring and the achievement of his expectations reinforce the success of the self-determining ideology created by Dickens’ text.

Throughout the course of the text, Pip is the only character who freely moves throughout various occupations. His mobility in shifting identities furthers the idea that he disproves the traditional class structure that is based on rigidity. At the introduction of the novel, Pip is immediately seen adopting a different role than the one he is to inherit as a blacksmith. Rather than occupying the identity or position to arise from his

apprenticeship, as he should under the ideas of the early nineteenth century, Pip takes on the role of the criminal. He embodies the job of the criminal in order to survive. The behaviors he commits while under the identity of the criminal are essential for his survival. Pip smuggles a piece of bread into his pants during mealtime and is then forced to execute tasks while still concealing the bread from Mr. and Mrs. Joe. He details the struggle he experienced while attempting to stir pudding explaining, “I tried it with the load upon my leg (and that made me think afresh of the man with the load on his leg)” (11). The load refers to the ankle bracelet worn by the criminal. Pip freely adopts this lifestyle of the criminal and is able to do so without facing any repercussions from society. The temporary adoption of roles assists Pip in exploring society in order to create himself. He gains another opportunity, contradictory to the traditional rigid structure of society that challenges traditional society and enables him to shift out of his predetermined path in life.

Pip’s ability to make something of himself was provided by the benefactor rather than given to him through familial ties and a predestined career path. In comparison to the structure of the early 1800’s, the new shift in class definitions represented by Pip’s opportunities supports the ideas of the later portion of the century. The reliance on morality to ensure a higher position in class can be understood as provided through Pip’s education. The contradiction of the old social structure is furthered by the idea that Pip is simply given the two things that previously defined high status individuals: money and education. The idea that Pip only has to gain an education in order to demolish his predestined role entirely contradicts the rigid structure that was previously prevalent in British society.

The increase in emphasis on morality during the mid 1800's further provides support for the idea that the individual can educate oneself in order to achieve a desired status. Peter Parley's *What to Do and How to Do It; or Morals and Manners Taught by Examples* published in 1844 serves as a guide for educating individuals on appropriate moral behavior. The book contains 34 chapters about exhibiting characteristics such as charity, humility, courage, self-reliance—perseverance, and a chapter titled, "Do not be discouraged by Difficulties." The brown hardcover book dons an image of a male seated in a chair surrounded by young individuals who appear to be looking in his direction for guidance. The image on the cover communicates the intent of the novel to suggest that people should act a certain way based on the way that they perceive the actions of others. This book is significant in that, it explains how to overcome barriers and persevere, which are two characteristics that Pip embodies in order to achieve his status. It can be gathered that since the book contains guidelines for these criteria that they are a reflection of the change in the time period from the rigid structure of social class reliant on an individual's birth status, to a society that enables the individual to achieve their own status of desire.

Pip's opportunity to become educated as a gentleman provides him with the opportunity for mobility to the upper class that most middle and lower class individuals do not have the chance to obtain on their own. A shift occurs from when Pip begins playing at the Satis House to when he is confronted with the opportunity to become a gentleman. Initially, he is clueless about the ranks of individuals and possesses no specific desires in terms of achievements in life. However, once provided with the opportunity after being in the Satis House and adopting expectations for himself, he

begins to progress toward his self-expectations with determination. In order to fully occupy a new position in society Mr. Jaggers explains he, “should immediately be removed from his present sphere of life and from this place, and be brought up as a gentleman—in a word, as a young fellow of great expectations” (130). This cleansing of his previous identity to adopt a higher standing one suggests that there is a possibility for mobility amongst social classes. Simply being educated can cause a shift in the role that a person can occupy in society. There is no longer a need for the entire family to be of education and money. If given the opportunity you can be mobile. Since it is necessary for Pip to be educated in order to further fulfill his role that stems from wealth, he can reap the benefits of expanding his morality and manners. In being able to speak to and interact with other individuals, he possesses a great persona that is flexible. This flexibility in terms of interactions causes him to be an individual of strong influence.

Pip’s attitude of self-determination comes through in his process, and is a necessary characteristic in becoming a gentleman. Although he still keeps his attitude of being an individual who does what he is told, he ultimately reaches a point where his expectations and persistency start to pay off. He explains the achieving of his expectations, “I had the great satisfaction of concluding that arrangement. It was the only good thing I had done, and the only completed thing I had done, since I was first apprised of my great expectations” (395). This arrangement he refers to in this passage is the setting up of the meeting between himself and the Skiffins, his accountant and her brother, who he was to pay on his own. He holds brief moments of doubt where he feels he will not reach the level of happiness as he wishes to as he nears the successful adoption of his new identity. Pip discloses, “I was so doubtful of myself now” (443). His

doubt exists as an indicator of the negative influences he realizes surrounded his relationships and sense of self as he began to move through his role as a gentleman and take on the opportunities and requirements that coincide with such. It is only at the end of the novel that Pip's self-determination overpowers his submissive behaviors of following command and enables him to achieve the happiness and status he had sought out initially.

The end of the novel solidifies the celebration of Pip's self-creation and the collapse of the old model of social hierarchy by placing him in a role where he has achieved his expectations. Despite initial inequalities and issues he had faced as a child at the Satis House, his self-determination carries him through the novel and ultimately enables him to achieve peace with the Satis House at the conclusion of the novel. This is shown in his joining with Estella at the end of the novel. Pip explains, "I heard of her leading a most unhappy life, and as being separated from her husband, who had used her with great cruelty" (458). Estella's unhappiness provides the opportunity for Pip to take action and bring about expectations for her as she did for him. However, her unhappiness also suggests that in the end, Pip's ideas and lifestyle are more successful than her life as it has taken a turn toward the path of destruction. Estella's unhappiness is symbolic of her dissatisfaction with her position in life and symbolic of the dissatisfaction regarding the old model of class structure. Pip's success in finding a balance between his new life with the achievement of his expectations and his old life with the relationships he had in his youth serves to demonstrate the new model of class structure based on self-determination. It is clear in Pip's conversation with Estella that his expectations begin to pay off as he states, "I work pretty hard for a sufficient living, and therefore—Yes, I do well!" (459). This statement proves the idea that with self-determination it is possible for him to

achieve things that were not directly available to him before. The concept of hard work can be understood as a new determinant of status by the end of the novel. Pip's ability to achieve closure with Estella is crucial to putting his life at a position that is peaceful as he determines their friendship and the destruction of their inability to be friends based on class differences.

The state of the Satis House at the end of the novel is symbolic of the new model of social structure. The house has been destroyed by the time Pip returns at the end of the novel, and all that remains on the estate is plant life. The replacement of the strong building structures with plant life serves to reinforce the destruction of the old ideologies of class structuring based on rigidity. It is significant that plants are all that remains aside from one wall because plants are able to grow and take on new appearances. This idea connects with the new model of self-determination in that the individual can grow into a new identity than the one they were born as. Plant life is constantly changing depending on the weather and conditions. The same can be said for the individual. Thus, the plants represent the new model of mobility and self-determination that coincides with Pip's actions.

Charles Dickens' novel *Great Expectations* serves as a platform for demonstrating issues with social class structure. He produces images of a society prevalent within England at the time and critical of the rigid social structure of the early nineteenth century. These portrayals tend to end in corruption or destruction that evokes the idea that there are issues with the way that society is run with the restriction of social interactions, mobility, and attitudes within upper class classification. His ability to be at peace with the Satis House grounds and Estella at the end of the novel reinforces the idea that morality is

a more modern indicator of the self worth of an individual, and that mobility is possible with self-determination. The end scene at Satis House enables the story to come full circle and show the two contrasting social structures through the shift in events at the Satis House with the members of a higher class.

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