



### Images of Child's Abuse in the novel (Great Expectations)

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#### ABSTRACT:

This paper is an attempt to investigate the abuse of children in Charles Dickens novel (Great Expectations). The paper aims at identifying the reasons and types of abuse which children are subjected to, since the time of the writer up to this time. The paper also aims at drawing the attention of readers to the role of novels in tackling such issues. The paper findings have shown that, the abuse of children occurs against their will. Due to the lack of their awareness, and ability to avoid it, thus the researcher tries to figure out the oppression practiced on them. These oppressions spread according to the child's poor environment which is dominated by social materialistic classes, and paved the way to the birth of grudges and envies between children themselves or by elders. In addition to the domestic violence which occurs to the child due to drinking alcohol, and marital arguments, that lead to complex and disturbed formation in the child's personality, and affects his psychological and social behaviors in the future.

**Key words:** domestic, psychological, behavior, social

#### المستخلص:

هذه الورقة هي محاوله للبحث في صور إساءة معاملة الاطفال في رواية الآمال الكبرى للكاتب تشارلس دكنز، تهدف الدراسة الي معرفة اسباب و انواع الإساءات التي يتعرض لها هؤلاء الاطفال منذ ذلك الحين و الي يومنا هذا. كما تهدف الدراسة الي لفت إنباه القراء بدور الرواية في معالجة مثل تلك القضايا. لقد كشفت نتائج الدراسة ان إساءة معاملة الاطفال تحدث رغما عنهم لضعف وعيهم وعدم مقدرهم لتفادي هذا الأمر، لذلك يحاول الباحث التعرف علي الظلم و الاضطهاد الذي تمت ممارسته عليهم، هذه الاضطهادات انتشرت نسبة الي وجود البيئات الفقيرة للأطفال والتي تسيطر عليها الطبقات الاجتماعية ذات الطابع المادي مما يؤدي الي ظهور الاحقاد و الحسد بين الاطفال انفسهم او من قبل الكبار. كما توصلت نتائج الدراسة ايضا الي ان العنف المنزلي الناتج عن شرب الخمر و المشاكل الزوجية يؤدي الي تعقيد واضطراب في تكوين شخصية الطفل مما يؤثر في سلوكيات الطفل الاجتماعية في المستقبل

الكلمات المفتاحية: عائلي، نفسي، سلوك، اجتماعي

#### INTRODUCTION:

Literature is the mirror of society views and problems, it is human creativity dealing with the writer emotional Feeling and imagination in expressing the life experience. As defined by Cockshut (1993). One of these writers is Charles Dickens who was born humbly, as said by Georg Gissing (2001), and wore himself to a premature end in striving to find his title of gentleman on something more substantial than glory. He wrote more about

the importance of the child and parent-child relationships in his books. The child is important in Dickens's novels as a character; but Dickens's interest in and understanding of childhood are distinctively expressed in his characteristic adoption of the child's point of view. The vision of the world presented in Dickens, in its concrete immediacy, its Imaginative freshness and its



contact. With fairy tale, magic and mythology, is frequently that of the young child. This deployment of the child's point of view, which is seen as an important source of Dickens's insight into human life and society, this interest in the child is part of Dickens's deep concern with the confrontation and the resolution of the conflict and guilt that he finds in the parent-child relationship. Consequently he had to defend the rights of these children against any types of abuse. Georg Gissing (2001).

#### **Objectives of the study**

The study attempts to investigate the child abuse as depicted in Charles Dickens' novel (Great Expectations). Also the study attempts to highlight children issues and help, societies to look after them to be brought up properly, lastly the study tries to prove that, literature plays a vital role in dealing with social issues.

#### **Questions of the study**

- 1- What are the types of child abuse in the novel Great Expectations?
- 2- Do the types of abuse have a psychological impact on the child future?

#### **Significance of the study**

The study is intended to draw the attention of the societies worldwide whose children suffer the abuse or any kind of exploitations to reconsider treating those children carefully. The study is also of special importance to English S L students, because it helps them in understanding English language and its literature.

#### **Background of the novel**

The novel follows the life of Pip, an orphan who goes from being the unwanted ward of his forlorn sister to becoming a young man of means. However, when Pip learns who his benefactor is, he finds himself traveling down a road he never expected to take. Great Expectations is a story of a young man who wants more than what he is only to discover that what

he had was not so bad. Pip is playing in the cemetery in the marshes near his home. Pip is studying the graves of his parents when a convict surprises him. The convict turns Pip upside down, looking for food. After finding a piece of bread and eating it, the convict sends Pip home with orders to return in the morning with more food and a file.

Pip goes home and sets aside his own dinner for the convict. The next morning, Pip steals several food items his sister has set aside for Christmas dinner before going back to the cemetery to find the convict. Pip finds another convict before finding his own waiting for him. Pip gives him the food and file and tells him what he has seen. Later, at Christmas dinner, Pip is frightened of what will happen when his sister learns he has taken a pie she had purposely put away for her special guests. Just as his sister discovers the missing pie, a group of soldiers come to the door looking for a blacksmith to fix a pair of leg irons. After fixing the leg irons, Pip's brother-in-law, Joe, agrees to go with the soldiers to search for the missing convicts. Pip goes along. When they find the convicts, Pip manages to signal to the convict that he is not responsible for his being found. Later, the convict tells the soldiers and Joe that he broke into the blacksmith's house and stole some food, saving Pip from any punishment his sister might wish to exact on him.

Sometime later, Pip is told by his sister and Mr. Pumblechook, Joe's uncle, that Miss Havisham wants Pip to come play at her house. Miss Havisham is a rich, eccentric woman who lives in Rochester, the market-town near Pip's village. Mrs. Joe sees this as a chance for Pip to bring wealth and prestige on her, so she forces him to comply. Pip is taken to the gate of Miss Havisham's house for the first time by  
Mr.



Pumblehook, who is quickly turned away at the gate by Estella, Miss Havisham's adopted daughter. Pip is taken into the house and introduced to Miss Havisham, an older woman who wears her old wedding gown and has sealed the rooms of her house to remain the way they were the day her fiancée left her at the altar. Pip plays cards with Estella but is not ignorant to the way she looks down on him and the words of Miss Havisham, encouraging him to fall in love with Estella so that she might shatter his heart the way her own fiancée did hers. Pip suddenly becomes aware of his poverty and his harshness, becoming embarrassed and determined to better himself.

For the next year and a half, Pip continues to visit Miss Havisham, always aware of Estella's poor opinion of him. Finally Miss Havisham calls Joe to her and pays him what Pip has earned in his visits to her and sends him off to be apprenticed to Joe's blacksmith shop. For the next few years Pip works in Joe's blacksmith shop, but he is terribly unhappy. At night Pip studies books he has come across, hoping to better himself. One night, Joe and Pip come home to discover that Pip's abusive sister has been attacked, suffering a head injury that leaves her mentally altered. Joe arranges for a young girl, Bidly, to come and care for his wife in her infirmity. Bidly and Pip become good friends and work together in trying to further their education. Then one night a lawyer comes to the village and tells Pip that an anonymous benefactor has decided to bestow property on Pip and turn him into a gentleman.

Pip goes to London to study with a tutor, who happens to be a relation of Miss Havisham. In London, Pip becomes a good friend with a young man he once beat up in a boxing match at Miss Havisham's, a man by the name of Herbert Pocket. Together, Pip and Herbert create a great

amount of debt as they live the life of bachelors. At the same time, Pip befriends the clerk at his guardian's office and through him creates a partnership in a shipping company for Herbert. Estella comes back into Pip's life and Pip finds himself under the assumption that Miss Havisham is Pip's benefactor, having hope of making a match between him and Estella. However, when Estella falls in love with a fellow student who Pip deeply dislikes, he is heartbroken. Later, Pip learns that Miss Havisham was not his benefactor. Pip's true benefactor is Abel Magwitch, the convict he once gave food and a file to. At first Pip is horrified by this revelation and wants nothing better than to escape from Magwitch. However, Pip soon learns that Magwitch is being hunted by his partner in crime and in danger of dying should he be found to have returned to England. Pip decides to help Magwitch. However, their attempt to escape the country fails and Magwitch is arrested, sentenced to death, and dies of injuries received in his escape attempt, penniless. Pip finds himself without a benefactor and in great debt. Joe comes to his rescue, despite Pip's poor treatment of him over the past few years. Pip decides to return to Joe and marry Bidly but discovers that Joe has asked Bidly to be his wife. Pip goes overseas to be a clerk in Herbert's business. Pip works his way up to become a third partner in the business. After many years, while there, Pip finds Estella, newly single, and renews their acquaintance. Shmoop (2018).

#### Literature Review:

##### The concept of child abuse

Child abuse can be categorized into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Abuse and neglect can occur within the family, in the



community or in an institutional setting. The abuser may be someone known to the child or a stranger, and can be an adult, or another child. In a situation where abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, you should consider it a child welfare and protection issue for both children and you should follow child protection procedures for both the victim and the alleged abuser. The important factor in deciding whether the behavior is abuse or neglect is the impact of that behavior on the child rather than the intention of the parent/career. Tusla (2015:3).

Child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse. Ongoing chronic neglect is recognized as being extremely harmful to the development and well-being of the child and may have serious long-term negative consequences. Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties. The extent of the damage to the child's health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include the extent, if any, of positive influence in the child's life as well as the age of the child and the frequency and consistency of neglect. Neglect is associated with poverty but not necessarily caused by it. It is strongly linked to parental substance misuse, domestic violence, and parental mental illness and disability. A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent. This may become apparent where you see the child over a period of time, or the effects of

neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child once.

Some features of child neglect; Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision, Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding, Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation, Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture, Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age. Another type of child abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent and child are not considered emotional abuse. That occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognize because the effects are not easily seen. A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behavior becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent. Emotional abuse may be seen in some ways; Rejection Lack of comfort and love Lack of attachment, Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play), Continuous lack of praise and encouragement, Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child, Extreme over protectiveness, Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in



bedroom), Ongoing family conflicts and family violence. Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/ or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse Such as; Physical punishment, Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking, Pushing, shaking or throwing, Use of excessive force in handling, Deliberate poisoning, Suffocation and Female genital mutilation.

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography. Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and in some instances occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members. The safety of the child is paramount and at no stage should a child's safety be compromised because of concern for the integrity of a criminal investigation. In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that in criminal law the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. Any sexual relationship where one or both parties are under the age of 17 is illegal. Tusla (2015:4-7).

#### **Child abuse in Great Expectations**

After knowing the definitions and types of child abuse, the researcher wants to investigate the abuse that children were subjected to in the novel *Great Expectations*. As it mentioned above the

child Pip underwent a very hard childhood and came to suffer the more. Pip is naturally the most important character in the novel that the story was told in his words, Dickens innovated in creating Pip's character, because it is the voice with which he tells his story, Dickens makes his voice true human while also ensuring that it conveys all the information necessary to this work. Pip is a young child, and Dickens masterfully uses Pip's narration to evoke the feelings and problems of childhood. At the beginning of the novel, for instance, Pip is looking at his parents' gravestones, a gloomy scene which Dickens renders comical by having Pip ponder the exact inscriptions on the tombstones. When the convict asks him about his parents' names, Pip recites them exactly as they appear on the tombstones, indicating his youthful innocence and here appears one of the abuse to the child when the convict thought that Pip is from a wealthy aristocratic family that is why he treated him badly at the beginning.

The convict is not blamed, because later it appeared that he is innocent. Dickens meant not to reveal his crime to draw his readers' attention to think. What his fault was even if he is a thief. What is the reason that made him a thief?

"Hold your noise!" cried a terrible voice, as a man started up from among the graves at the side of the church porch. "Keep still, you little devil, or I'll cut your throat!" (G E 2)

The author wants to make readers imagine in such place and time a child alone and frightened by a man escaping from prison and looked fearful, not only that but also he threatens to kill the child.

"Oh! Don't cut my throat, sir," I pleaded in terror. "Pray don't do it, sir."

"Tell us your name!" said the man. "Quick!" "Pip, sir." (G E 2)





The man, after looking at me for a moment, turned me upside down, and emptied my pockets. There was nothing in them but a piece of bread.(G E 2)

"Now lookee here!" said the man. "Where's your mother?" "There, sir!" said I.

He started, made a short run, and stopped and looked over his shoulder.

"There, sir!" I timidly explained. "Also Georgiana. That's my mother." "Oh!" said he, coming back. "And is that your father left your mother?" "Yes, sir," said I; "him too; late of this parish."(G E 3)

As we noticed that Pip is horrified by the convict. But despite his horror, he treats him with compassion and kindness. It would have been easy for Pip to run to Joe or to the police for help rather than stealing the food and the file, but Pip honors his promise to the suffering man, and when he knows that the police are searching for him, he even worries for his safety. Still, Pip's self-commentary mostly emphasizes his negative qualities: his dishonesty and his guilt. This is characteristic of Pip as a narrator throughout *Great Expectations*. Despite his many admirable qualities the strongest of which are compassion, loyalty, and conscience Pip constantly focuses on his failures and shortcomings. To understand him as a character, it is necessary to look beyond his self-descriptions and consider his actions. In fact, it may be his powerful sense of his own moral shortcomings that motivates Pip to act so morally. As the novel progresses, the theme of self-improvement, particularly economic and social self-improvement, will become central to the story. In that sense, Pip's deep-seated sense of moral obligation, which is first exhibited in this section, works as a kind of psychological counterpart to the novel's theme of social advancement.

Pip, the young boy, suffered much abuse with his sister. His parents died earlier, and

his sister raised him by hand after his parents died, but she is very cruel and bad-tempered. See how Dickens describes her and her husband in the novel:

She was not a good-looking woman, my sister; and I had a general impression that she must have made Joe Gargery marry her by hand. Joe was a fair man, with curls of flaxen hair on each side of his smooth face, and with eyes of such a very undecided blue that they seemed to have somehow got mixed with their own whites. He was a mild, good-natured, sweet-tempered, easy-going, foolish, dear fellow,—a sort of Hercules in strength, and also in weakness. (G E 6)

Pip. She's coming! Get behind the door, old chap, and have the jack-towel betwixt you." (G E 7)

She always beats him, on one occasion Pip describes the abuse from his sister, that had a hard and heavy hand sometimes beats her husband as well " and that she was "much in the habit of laying it upon her husband as well as upon me. (G E 6). Later in the novel Pip informs us that his sister had wished him in a grave more than once.

"I soon found myself getting heavily bumped from behind in the nape of the neck and the small of the back, and having my face ignominiously shoved against the wall, because I did not answer those questions at sufficient length. (G E 64).

The author traces the life of Pip in order to let people think of the types of abuse, that his characters suffer. This conveys a message to all the parents or any person who looks after children to treat them well, or you'll destroy them. This cannot be seen in many ways in the novel.

"Where have you been, you young monkey?" said Mrs. Joe, stamping her foot. "Tell me directly what you've been doing to wear me away with fret and fright or I'd have you out of that corner."(G E 7).



"I have only been to the churchyard," said I, from my stool, crying and rubbing myself.(G E 7).

When reading *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens a few questions arouse within the reader. Pip and Estella face physical, verbal and emotional abuse. The effects of the abuse they suffered caused the reader to sympathize with them. One can find himself wondering if he would abuse his children, physically and or verbally to discipline them.

The child undergoes several types of abuse, for example, the young girl he likes, Estella, emotionally abuses Pip. She calls him boy, says that because Pip is habitually mistreated. he expects to be abused and is comfortable being abused, which is not the same thing as liking or wanting to be abused. Estella's cruelty fits his expectation of abuse, his sense of powerlessness, and his low self-confidence, so he is drawn to her.

Though she called me "boy" so often, and with a carelessness that was far from complimentary, she was of about my own age. She seemed much older than I, of course, being a girl, and beautiful and self-possessed; and she was as scornful of me as if she had been one-and-twenty, and a queen.(G E 63)

Estella too, is emotionally abused, Miss Havisham and her relatives influence her and teach her and essentially control her. Estella is poorly behaves, since she obeys Miss Havisham orders to lead men on. She sees herself as an object, since she only serves the purpose of attracting men and she is totally under Miss Havisham's control. It has been suggested that Estella hates herself, which is probably true because she only serves the purpose of looking attractive to lead men on and she exists in a way that Miss Havisham has molded her to be. Pip represents the effects

of physical abuse and verbal abuse. His sister's abuse causes him physical pain, but it also negatively affects his self-esteem. His only blood relative wishes that he were in a grave, this makes Pip feel unwanted and unloved. This caused him to stay away from everyone, to not get attached to anyone, except Estella.

Estella always abuses Pip, hurting his feelings and causing him to feel worthless. She calls him coarse and common, causing him to feel poor and unworthy of her so he hits himself and pulls his hair. Being abused caused him to take it one step further and abuse himself. When a person is constantly abused they expect to be abused and become comfortable being abused. This is the case with Pip. He is submissive to his sister causing him to feel powerless. Pip feels inferior to Estella so he submits to her and would do anything she says.

Estella represents the effects of emotional abuse and dominant parenting. She seems emotionless, conditioned to attract men and not fall in love with anyone. She is rendered nothing more than an attractive object.

Dickens thinks that, a child may fear doing anything new because he or she expects it to lead to physical abuse or criticism. This would cause the child to lose his or her sense of curiosity consequently stops trying new things and exercising their mind. That child may never achieve his or her intellectual potential.

The author may want to prove that, abuse plays a major role in the development of these problems. In bad cases of abuse children may run away from home to escape the abuse they experience at home.

#### **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis, the research obtained a number of findings, that



There are many types of abuse occur to the children against their will. They can be summarized as follows:

- (1) Children may be abused by their parents or any person if there is a domestic violence due to the following reasons; drinking alcohol, Mental illness of parents, marital arguments, and certain traditions or believes.
- (2) The death of the child's parents or any one of them subjects the child to the abuse like the case of the orphan Pip with his cruel sister.
- (3) Poverty and social classes lead to grudges or envy which, results in the abuse between children themselves as seen between poor Pip and arrogant daughter Estella.
- (4) Children of abusive parents tend to blame themselves for the abuse that is befallen upon them. Abused children also tend to absolve their parents of any blame or responsibility for the abuse they experience.
- (5) Child abuse plays a major role in the development of psychological problems in bad cases of abuse; children may run away from home to escape the abuse.

### Recommendations

It is strongly recommended that, the social writings should be taught to the students, so that they can develop their linguistic skills and be aware of dealing with social issues.

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