

ALIENATION AND LONELINESS IN GREAT EXPECTATIONS-CHARLES DICKENS

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ABSTRACT

Charles Dickens gives much importance to wealth and that could be understood as the destiny of the alien man. There are a few characters who are obviously orphans like Mrs. Joe, Magwitch, Estella and Pip who all had to face the harsh realities of lonely life. However the way in which these characters respond to life is quite different. Pip during his childhood stood despicable and forlorn in the very grave where his family was buried. Pip always believed that his mother is resting somewhere above in heaven.

Pip was threatened with dire consequences and possibly death by his sister. The same happens with convict Magwitch. Another character Orlick who lived in the town and not so good a person made an attempt to kill an adult Pip. The only pal that Pip had on the marshes was Joe Gargery. Pip had very few friends. Estella was in the hands of an old woman named Havisham who was a pervert and hated all men folk. She instructed Estella to hate all relationship with the men folk. Havisham succeeds in making Estella play with Pip's life just like a cat playing with a mouse. Possibly Estella would have preferred an intimate companion but that was not the purpose for which she was hired by Havisham. Once Magwitch narrated his own Childhood experiences to Pip as to how he roamed on the streets of London, forlorn and careless. That was the reason which made Magwitch turn into a criminal. Mrs. Joe is another rude character. Surprisingly she had no female friends. She was Pip's care taker and the wife of Joe. She was very violent and hostile to everyone. Mrs Joe's way of getting along with others was quite contrary to the way in which Pip mingled with others in Society. Mrs Joe created her own difficulties in life and there was a quest to identify her in the world. Jagger too was aloof from others but almost was like the custodian of Law without any humanity.

KEYWORDS: Aloof, Pervert, Custodian, Forlorn

INTRODUCTION

Charles Dickens gives much importance to wealth and that could be understood as the destiny of the alien man. There are a few characters who are obviously orphans like Mrs. Joe, Magwitch, Estella and Pip Who all had to face the harsh realities of lonely life. However, the way in which these Characters respond to life is quite different. Pip during his childhood stood despicable and forlorn in the very grave where his family was buried. Pip always believed that his mother is resting somewhere above in heaven. Pip was threatened with dire consequences and possibly death by his sister. The same happens with convict Magwitch. Another character Orlick who lived in the town and not so good a person made an attempt to kill an adult Pip. The only pal that Pip had on the marshes was Joe Gargery. Pip had very few friends. Estella was in the hands of an old woman named Havisham who was a pervert and hated all men folk. She instructed Estella to hate all relationship with the men folk. Havisham succeeds in making Estella play with Pip's life just like a cat playing with a mouse. Possibly Estella would have preferred to have an intimate companion but that was not the purpose for which

she was hired by Havisham. Once Magwitch narrated his own Childhood experiences to Pip as to how he roamed on the streets of London forlorn and careless. That was the reason which made Magwitch turn into a criminal. Mrs. Joe is another rude character. Surprisingly she had no female friends. She was Pip's care taker and the wife of Joe. She was very violent and hostile to everyone. Mrs Joe's way of getting along with others was quite contrary to the way in which Pip mingled with others in Society. Mrs Joe created her own difficulties in life and there was a quest to identify her in the world. Jagger too was aloof from others but almost was like a custodian of Law without any humanity. He never slackened his caution as if he would be taken to task if he softened a bit or reacted wrongly. Inspire of Pip offering him a cordial hand he decided to stay away and admired the rich but cunning Bentley Drummle for knowing what he needed and being successful in getting it. Pip comparatively had many friends though most of them are alienated characters. He was not willing to leave London to be with Joe and Bidy or to take up the offer of Herbert Pocket's to work in his firm. Pip finally realizes when all his expectations get defeated; there was no other path on which he could tread upon. He was happy that he had at least two great chums who were very affectionate and do not bother much about Pip's social status. Pip cleverly inches out of his alienation and loneliness into a world full of friends who love and share. Pip wades his way through several ups and downs of life but in the end manages to amass a huge wealth of knowledge. This was in fact not the intention of Pip at the beginning. He understands that it is a much greater wealth than the inheritance from a benefactor.

There is soul searching quest for identity. As a child Pip was very frail and quite tiny in size. He was an orphan who stayed with his sister and learnt how to avoid his sister's curses and abuses. He also faces the insults of Mrs Joe, Uncle Pumble Chook, Mr. Wopsle, Estella and those related to Miss Havisham. Pip was terribly afraid of Miss Hvisham when she ordered him to play a game and she watches him and realizes that he is too miserable to play anything. Pip was cringing to get away and live elsewhere in the city where he could establish a new identity as a gentleman. Indeed from his first day in London he was addressed as Mr.Pip and treated well. He finds that though he is not wealthy he wasted a lot of money on expensive clothing, decoration for his apartment. He also gives a job to a servant boy whom he called the avenger. What is Pip fighting against? Is it poverty to which he was a relative? Even he finds himself in an embarrassing situation when Joe calls him 'Sir' on his visit to London. The clothes worn by Joe and the manner of his speaking embarrassed Pip. Magwitch too mortified Pip. However Pip realizes that he was the beneficiary and Magwitch was his benefactor who was responsible for his rise in status. Pip does not want to be seen by the old Magwitch as he feels that he does not fit into his world. Magwitch travelled all the way to London by risking his life. Unfortunately Magwitch could not wield any influence on Pip to change his decision of getting rid of Magwitch. Pip frequented the village just to see Estella and the old woman Miss Havisham. He also expected a good treatment at the hands of shop keeper Trabb and Trabb's boy who had once sneered at Pip. Pip had almost forgotten Joe. Later he feels ashamed of himself for such an act. He expressed his regrets for what he had done to both Joe and Magwitch. He hated Havisham so much but later he altered his affections when he finds her on death bed and plants a kiss on her forehead. Pip suffered a lot and faced all kinds of agony in his mind and heart. Miss Havisham also shows a change of heart as she offered some financial assistance to make Herbert Pocket establish himself in business. A realization dawns upon Miss Havisham that she had ruined a lot of her time on hatred and vengeance. Pip learns lessons from the mistakes committed by others. Wemmick who had a lot of respect for his old father and shared the care of his old father with Pip at least on one occasion, ironically when Pip had avoided any contact with Magwitch Pip was beside Magwitch during his last days just like Wemmick who took a good care of his own father. Incidentally Pip was also attended by Joe when he was on the verge of death. Finally Pip gets back to the marsh to propose marriage to Bidy and to thank Joe but surprisingly he found that they were already married. Pip requested Joe to

pardon him before he regrouped with Herbert Pocket Jr. to earn his way in the world and to compensate Joe by helping him clear off some of his debts. Pip ultimately takes charge of his future and reaps the pleasure of his family love and friends, knowing pretty well that they were his real treasure. At first he was a pauper, then got transformed into a man of leisure class, and in the end became a middle class worker. Pip was confident of his position in the world by understanding the real happiness and his worthiness of self.

CONCLUSIONS

The important theme in 'Great Expectations' is the strength that sympathy has to change human nature. Dickens proves this Idea when Pip undergoes a tremendous change in his treatment of his Benefactor, Magwitch. Pip began hating and even tried to avoid Magwitch, but in the end is completely reformed. Pip was terrified and the very sight of Magwitch was so repulsive to him many years later When Magwitch re enters his life. Pip thinks of him as a wild animal: "the abhorrence in which I held the man, the dread I had of him, the repugnance with which I shrank from him, could not have been exceeded if he had been some terrible beast."(P.773) He is afraid to be with him all alone and after Magwitch goes to bed. Pip locks himself in his bedroom. Even the way of Magwitch's behavior of eating infuriates him, 'like a hungry old dog' (P.779) The moment Pip learns more about Magwitch the grip of fear slowly fades away. He also learns that Magwitch had suffered great injustice and wretchedness.

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APPENDICES



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