

***Great Expectations:* Democracy and the Problem of Social Inclusion**

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INTRODUCTION

“The reappearance of Mr Dickens in the character of a blacksmith’s boy may be regarded as an apology to Mealy Potatoes” (50)—George Bernard Shaw’s famous comment on *Great Expectations* (1860-61) is worth reconsidering. In *David Copperfield*, the English identity which David the writer propagates throughout the nation and the empire is constructed by excluding the “common men and boys” (216) in the factory, with whom young David shuns mixing. Eleven years later a “common” boy returns to Dickens’s world as a protagonist. The plot of *Great Expectations* centres on how a boy of working-class origin becomes a “gentleman.” The inclusion of the working-class protagonist in the category of gentleman, which represented “a cultural goal, a mirror of desirable moral and social values” (Gilmore 1) in Victorian England, indicates an ideological shift in the construction of an English identity in Dickens’s novels.

Early critics such as G. K. Chesterton and Humphry House call Pip a snob (Chesterton 383, House 156), for he is not a born gentleman but a gentleman whose status has been bought with money. His progress represents the class mobility of the mid-Victorian age of “great expectations,” in which even the poor working classes could dream of success and become wealthy enough to aspire to rank. Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in 1856:

[I]f we follow the mutations in time and place of the English word “gentleman” [. . .] we find its connotation being steadily widened in England as the classes draw nearer to each other and intermingle. In each successive century we find it being applied to men a little lower in the social scale. [. . .] Thus its history is the history of democracy itself.

(201)

The mobility of the notion of the gentleman was the mobility of society itself, a

society in which the classes intermingled and which was becoming more and more “democratic.” As Tocqueville writes, the history of the gentleman is characterised by the continuous process of including the classes below who had formerly been excluded from the category. The liberal history of democracy is also the inclusionary process of redefining a citizen and extending suffrage. Both of them are, however, at the same time marked by systematic marginalisation and exclusion of various groups of people. In *Great Expectations*, while an inclusionary impulse can be found in Pip’s incorporation into the category of gentleman, this exclusionary impulse is most clearly manifested in the characterisation of Magwitch, who is destined to die and be expelled from the text at the end of the story. The purpose of this essay is to examine the tension between these conflicting impulses at work in the novel.

The tension reflects the diverse demands of society in the period in which the novel was written. Inclusion and exclusion are based on differences, which have the potential for mobilisation in a variety of forms such as gender, race, and class. My interest is in how the difference in class is mobilised, and how, why, and to what extent, the working classes are allowed to enter the social and political body of the nation as legitimate members in the world of the novel. In the Victorian era, the mobilisation of class took place in relation to the racial Other in two main ways. The need to conquer and rule people of different races and cultures in the colonies whom Victorians regarded as inferior inflated the general feelings of the superiority of the British race as a whole, and the position of the working classes was elevated as a result. There was, however, also a persistent fear of the working classes who were often regarded as savage, and marginalised as such. The fear was especially strengthened when the spectre of democracy, which for Victorians literally signified the rule (*cracy*) of the mob (*demos*), emerged. Furthermore, an anxiety about degeneration started to catch the imagination of Victorians in the latter half of the century. Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* published in 1859 problematised the notion of human beings as distinguished from other lower species in the animal kingdom. Though Darwin was cautiously reticent on the subject of human beings, the implication of the evolution theory is that all the creatures on the earth, including human beings, are not in a static condition but in a continuous process of evolution through mutation, divergence, and transformation, and that there is a possibility of degeneration as well as of progressive evolution. According to Nancy Stepan, it was considered that “the incorrect mingling of classes, or ethnic groups, would produce a social chaos that would break the traditional boundaries between groups” (105), and the aversion to “impurity of blood” was reactively transformed into the drive to marginalise the lower classes and draw the line of demarcation between “them” and “us.”

Great Expectations was written in the years in which the Reform Bill submitted by the Derby government in 1859 activated the debate on democracy more than at any time since the passage of the first Reform Act in 1832. Whether by coincidence or not, the history of democracy was directly related to the history of the gentleman, for these were also the years in which the discussion on gentlemanliness was reactivated by the publication of Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help* in 1859. I will examine *Great Expectations* against the background of these debates on gentlemanliness and democracy. House argues that "the ultimate English democrat" can be found in "Orlick, the soured 'hand' turning to crime because of his inferior status [. . .] a man who in another novel might well have been the leader of a no-Popery mob or of physical-force Chartists" (158). Pip, who is bound to Orlick in an ego/alter-ego relationship, is also the representative of the English democrat and "the soured hand," but he is ultimately transformed into a "gentleman" and incorporated into the mainstream of the power structure. At the same time there is a character such as Magwitch, who is marginalised first by transportation to the penal colony and then by death. In examining the process of inclusion and exclusion, I will cite several passages from John Stuart Mill's political writings, *On Liberty* (1859), *Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform* (1859) and *Considerations on Representative Government* (1860), because, although Dickens and Mill's political positions were often opposing, as was exemplified in the case of the Eyre controversy, it is still possible to trace a certain amount of influence of English liberalism on Dickens's writings. In this essay I will re-read *Great Expectations* alongside the liberal tradition of Victorian political thought.

I

The beginning of Pip's narrative in the churchyard scene shows the profound sense of alienation of a vulnerable young orphan child. His "first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things" is gained on "a memorable raw afternoon" (3) on Christmas Eve with his dead family in the churchyard, not with his living family. He is not given a proper place in this world, being an outcast, a "small bundle of shivers" (4) growing afraid of the hostile world surrounding him. For him, there are only two places which are considered to be proper to go to: one is the churchyard, and the other, prison. In other words, his alternatives have been reduced to either death or life in prison. He has been bound to prison, the symbol of power and oppression, ever since birth. He is allowed to live, but on condition that he is perpetually under the control of power.

Pip is positioned on the periphery of the power structure in a triple sense in that he is a child, he belongs to the working class, and he lives in a small rural village located literally on the margin of the metropolitan centre. In the Victori-

an era, both the child and the working classes were often associated with another group of people who were marginalised into the outermost circle of the power structure, that is, the racial Other. Bill Ashcroft analyses the way in which the trope of the child is used to represent the colonial subject in order to justify subjugation, exploitation, and paternalism, and argues that the link between infantilism and primitivism comes from the idea of literacy and education as a defining factor which separates both the child and the primitive from the civilised (186). The supposed lack and need of education are also what separate the working classes from the upper classes. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the link between the child, the working classes, and the racial Other was further reinforced by Darwinian anthropology which postulated that races are ordered according to a hierarchy of the developmental stages of civilisation. These three groups were considered to be those who had not fully attained the maturity of civilisation and were marginalized on the periphery. Pip's immaturity on the scale of civilisation is indicated by various animal metaphors; he is called a "young dog" by Magwitch (4) and a "young monkey" (9) by Mrs. Joe, and is treated as if he were "a dog in disgrace" (62) by Estella. He is subject to other people's rule and exploitation because of his immaturity just as the colonial subject is in the colony.

As a child, Pip is subjugated by the despotic power of his sister, uncle, and other village people, who claim authority over him. Mrs. Joe has brought him up "by hand" (7 *passim*). She beats him with Tickler, makes him drink Tar-water, and inflicts other physical and mental punishments upon him. In common with other people, she constantly cross-examines him and puts him under surveillance. Her despotism is compared to that of an autocratic Indian prince when Joe says, "I don't deny that your sister comes to the Mo-gul over us" (49). Pip has no power to oppose, and liberate himself from, Mrs. Joe's tyrannical sway and claim his independence. Joe is the only person who offers him protection and care, but his protection is limited and sometimes totally ineffective, because, although Joe is physically an adult, mentally he is also a powerless child, "a larger species of child," and "no more than [Pip's] equal" (9), as Pip puts it. Joe and Pip have been "both brought up by hand" and are "fellow-sufferers" (8).

In the liberal tradition of Victorian political thought, despotism was considered to be the most adequate mode of governing the Eastern countries, especially India. John Stuart Mill, for example, set the criteria for the application of the principle of liberty on the basis of the degree of "maturity" in the development of civilisation, and excluded India from the group of countries capable of governing themselves democratically by means of representative government for the reason that the people there were not mature enough for the application of the

principle. Uday S. Mehta refers to this strategy of exclusion as “the strategy of civilizational infantilism” (75). In *On Liberty*, Mill wrote:

It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to say that this doctrine [of liberty] is meant to apply only to human beings in the maturity of their faculties. We are not speaking of children or of young persons below the age which the law may fix as that of manhood or womanhood. [. . .] For the same reason we may leave out of consideration those backward states of society in which the race itself may be considered as in its nonage.

(69)

“There are,” Mill also wrote in *Considerations on Representative Government*, “conditions of society in which a vigorous despotism is in itself the best mode of government for training the people in what is specifically wanting to render them capable of a higher civilization” (567).

The metaphor of “Mo-gul” is, therefore, a metaphor of the absolute power which Mrs. Joe exercises over Joe and Pip, who are considered too immature to govern themselves. Pip is not allowed to maintain sovereignty “over himself, over his own body and mind” (*On Liberty* 69), being deprived of his own free will or even the free use of his limbs, as he recounts: “Even when I was taken to have a new suit of clothes, the tailor had orders to make them like a kind of Reformatory, and on no account to let me have the free use of my limbs” (23). Besides Mrs. Joe, there are Miss Havisham and Estella, further despots whose many insults subjugate him and mentally torture him. By showing him the unattainable world of refinement, they awaken his class consciousness, and make him aware that he is just “a common labouring-boy” (60) with coarse hands and thick boots.

Although he is a passive and helpless victim of despotism, Pip has a strong sense of injustice:

Within myself, I had sustained, from my babyhood, a perpetual conflict with injustice. I had known, from the time when I could speak, that my sister, in her capricious and violent coercion, was unjust to me. I had cherished a profound conviction that her bringing me up by hand, gave her no right to bring me up by jerks. Through all my punishments, disgraces, fasts and vigils, and other penitential performances, I had nursed this assurance.

(63)

His anger is against the irrational exercise of power by his sister, but this anger which has been growing within him since babyhood makes him more sensitive to the injustice of society as a whole than any other people in the story. Mrs. Joe is, in Joe’s words, “given to government” (48) of Pip and Joe, and the violence she inflicts on them in the small world of the home reflects the violence

the actual government inflicts upon the weak in society. Pip's experience of "punishments, disgraces, fasts and vigils, and other penitential performances" corresponds with that of Magwitch, another example of an orphan in the story:

"I've been locked up, as much as a silver tea-kettle. I've been carted here and carted there, and put out of this town and put out of that town, and stuck in the stocks, and whipped and worried and drove."

(346)

Pip's early encounter with Magwitch makes him aware of the existence of the inhuman institutionalised power of the nation which oppresses the poorest and weakest. His freemasonry sympathy towards Magwitch arises when he sees the soldiers, together with Pumblechook and others, enjoy themselves drinking wine while waiting for the handcuffs for the fugitives to be ready. In the criminal who is being persecuted, Pip sees a mirror image of himself—an outcast who is victimised by the arbitrary exercise of power.

Although Pip feels fellow feeling towards his "fugitive friend" (33), it is also true that he can define his identity only by the process of excluding Magwitch as the Other. As Anny Sadrin contends, Pip's identification with Magwitch is "quite plainly the expression of his fear of meeting a similar fate" (65). "I felt fearfully sensible of the great convenience that the Hulks were handy for me," Pip writes, "I was clearly on my way there" (15). His sympathy towards Magwitch is, in this respect, a typical "Victorian sympathy," which, according to Audrey Jaffe, "involves a spectator's (dread) fantasy of occupying another's social place" (8). Jaffe argues that Victorian scenes of sympathy mediate and construct middle-class identities in the spectator's "continual oscillation between images of cultural ideality and degradation" (4). Magwitch is the embodiment of Pip's own "potential narrative of social decline" (Jaffe 9) and the image of what he might become, and thus functions as a negative self against which his identity is constructed. His craving to receive an education and become a "gentleman" stems from his need to differentiate himself from the lowly criminal and identify himself with the cultural ideality of refinement embodied by Estella.

Pip's craving for education stems also from his desire to liberate himself from the despotic rule of his oppressors and become independent. To know is to have the power to control, but in despotism, knowledge is monopolised by authority. Miss Havisham and Estella's supremacy over Pip depends not only on their wealth but also on their supposed superiority in intelligence. After his first visit to Satis House, Pip thinks, "I was much more ignorant than I had considered myself last night" (65). Education is the only means for the oppressed to subvert the power structure. Miss Havisham instinctively knows the danger of the subversion of power which will result from Pip receiving an education, and for

this reason she does not offer him any help with his learning and “seem[s] to prefer [his] being ignorant” (95). Joe also knows the subversive potential of education and is content to subjugate himself to his wife and remain illiterate: “she an’t over partial to having scholars on the premises [. . .] and in partickler would not be over partial to my being a scholar, for fear as I might rise. Like a sort of rebel, don’t you see?” (49). The plain contented life of “plain contented Joe” (108) results from the total resignation of power to the “government.” Being rebellious at heart, Pip cannot be uncritical and unquestioning of the “government” as Joe is, and he is inevitably “restlessly aspiring” (108).

Pip’s rebellious spirit turns not only into aspiration but also into aggressiveness, which is revealed in his brutal alter egos such as Orlick and Drummle who act out his desire for revenge against his oppressors. His aggressiveness, however, is most clearly manifested in a fight with “a pale young gentleman” (90), Herbert Pocket, in which he regards himself “as a species of savage young wolf or other young beast” (93). This fight episode is inserted in Pip’s narrative contrapuntally with another fight in the marsh, in which Magwitch fights against Compeyson, a sham gentleman, “like a wild beast” (324). Both Herbert and Compeyson are representatives of the social group which has power on its side, while Pip and Magwitch represent the socially subversive feelings of class injury and *ressentiment*. The potential danger of their aggressiveness to the social constitution of the nation is suggested in the fact that Pip views his act not as a personal offence but a crime committed against England:

Without having any definite idea of the penalties I had incurred, it was clear to me that village boys could not go stalking about the country, ravaging the houses of gentlefolks and pitching into the studious youth of England, without laying themselves open to severe punishment. (93-94)

Without knowing precisely where his guilty conscience comes from, young Pip intuitively recognises the menace of the social rebellion by the dissatisfied labourers. He knows very well that he is one of dangerous *demos*, a wild beast, who needs to be curbed and tamed.

II

According to Mill, as the principle of liberty was not applicable to the people of backward states, the only choice which those people were allowed to make was not a choice between despotism and democracy but “a choice of despotism,” that is, a choice between a “good” and a “bad” despot (*Considerations* 568). Mill thus justified the colonial rule of the East India Company as benevolent despotism which was far better than the Eastern despotism of a native Indian monarchy. The best instrument available to liberate the people from the yoke of

the Eastern oppressor was the counter-despotism of the Company. Dickens also defended the British government in India in a speech on 9 February 1858, saying, “whatever its faults [it] had proved immeasurably superior to any Asiatic rule” (*Speeches* 247). According to Mill, what made occidental despotism superior to oriental despotism was its perfect mastery of knowledge about the people whom it governed. “[I]t is quite certain,” he wrote, “that the despotism of those who neither hear, nor see, nor know anything about their subjects, has many chances of being worse than that of those who do” (*Considerations* 568). The political and administrative control of the government of India was maintained by the strategy of systematic surveillance and “recording.” As an examiner of correspondence of the East India Company, Mill boasted in the House of Lords in 1852:

All the orders given and all the acts of executive officers are reported in writing. [. . .] [There] is no single act done in India, the whole of the reasons for which are not placed on record. [. . .] [N]o other has a system of recordation so complete.

(qtd. in Bhabha, *Location* 93)

If Mrs. Joe corresponds to the bad despotism of an Indian autocrat, then Jaggers is analogous to the benevolent despotism of the British government working under a perfect system of inspection and recordation. Pip’s movement from the small backward village to London, namely from periphery to metropole, does not mean liberation from despotism but only subjugation to a new kind of despotism which has superimposed itself upon the old one. Jaggers has “an air of authority not to be disputed,” and “a manner expressive of knowing something secret about every one of us that would effectually do for each individual if he chose to disclose it” (136). While Mrs. Joe and Pumblechook’s cross-examination is always unsuccessful, Jaggers’s does not fail to elicit the truth from Pip. Thus at the dinner party, Pip thinks, “he wrenched the weakest part of our disposition out of us” (213). Jaggers is the invisible supervisor in the central observation tower of the Panopticon, whose control extends even beyond the confines of “Little Britain” to the Great Britain and the British Empire; he is, as Wemmick says, “[d]eep . . . as Australia” (199). The despotic rule of Jaggers is unshakable. He prohibits people from thinking and tells them to follow him blindly surrendering their free will: “‘We thought, Mr. Jaggers—’ . . . ‘That’s what I told you not to do,’ said Mr. Jaggers. ‘You thought! I think for you; that’s enough for you!’” (167). There is no room for an individual to question or to be critical of the system with which he/she is enmeshed.

Jaggers’s power is indicated in his ability to tame the “wild beast” Molly, which is, in Wemmick’s opinion, “very uncommon,” considering “the original wildness of the beast, and the amount of taming” (202). The anecdote of the

taming of Molly is apparently inserted with the purpose of producing a contrapuntal effect to the story of the taming of Pip, another “wild beast.” However, while Molly is tamed by the overwhelming power on Jaggers’s side gained through his mastery of detrimental knowledge of her past, in Pip’s case the process of taming is much more complex and the exercise of power is much more subtle. Pip is given money to purchase new suits and shoes—the first step to transform “a wild beast” into a gentleman of refinement, and, as he is assimilated into the consumerist culture of London gentility, he gradually loses his aggressiveness and the *ressentiment* which had been hidden deep in his heart. His “perpetual conflict with injustice” (63) is in a state of truce in an easy life of extravagance and luxury as a gentleman. Writing on the relations of culture and power, Antonio Gramsci argues that cultural domination works by consent and can precede conquest by force (57). The containment of the labouring boy’s *ressentiment* is most effectively accomplished by his cultural assimilation into consumerist society.

However, while the text presents Pip’s transformation into a gentleman as a merely superficial change through the purchases of luxury, it also suggests that along with the transformation at a surface level, another transformation is going on at a deeper level, that is, a transformation into a “true gentleman,” who is, in Smiles’s definition, “honest, truthful, upright, polite, temperate, courageous, self-respecting and self-helping” (240). Pip is put under the guidance of Mathew Pocket and his son Herbert to receive an education, the primary aim of which is to refine his tastes and manners. In spite of his moral degradation into a dissipated life as a gentleman, he retains his passion for learning; he writes, “through good and evil I stuck to my books” (204), and “I had a taste for reading, and read regularly so many hours a day” (313). We do not know anything about what he has read or how his reading affects his mind, except that he has certainly read some Shakespeare. The emphasis on his “taste for reading,” however, has the effect of making his moral regeneration after the reappearance of Magwitch more plausible, for the capacity for learning is related to moral worth of character to a certain extent. Both savage Orlick and brutal Bentley Drummle are characterised by their low intellect; Orlick seems as if “he should never be thinking” (112), and Drummle is “half a dozen heads thicker than most gentlemen” (203). Joe’s illiteracy, on the contrary, does not result from the limitation of his intellectual capacity but just from his obedience to his tyrannical wife. His education is “yet in its infancy” (46) at the beginning of the story, but he eventually learns how to read from Bidley after Mrs. Joe’s death.

Education was what Mill most respected when he considered the qualification for suffrage. It was for him an indicator of the capacity for acting for the benefit of others as well as one’s own, and almost equal to one’s moral worth. He, for

example, wrote, “a person who cannot read, is not as good as, for the purpose of human life, one who can. A person who can read, but cannot write or calculate, is not as good as a person who can both” (*Thoughts* 323). This emphasis on individual self-development is one key to understanding Mill’s concept of citizenship. He was not a democrat. He was well aware of the danger of the tyranny of the mass lacking in education, which was for him the requisite to participate in the process of political decision making, and he wrote, “in political speculations ‘the tyranny of the majority’ is now generally included among the evils against which society requires to be on its guard” (*On Liberty* 62). He considered the individual as “a progressive being” (*On Liberty* 70), and thought that society could be improved only in the hands of highly-cultivated and morally aware individuals. The promulgation of education was the safeguard against the tyrannical sway of the mass and also the sign of the progress of civilisation. Pip’s passion for learning is bound up with this impulse of, and belief in, progress and improvement, both personal and social, in mid-Victorian England. The progress of the labouring boy in literacy and learning is a part of the large-scale process of social evolution.

III

Magwitch, however, is excluded from this universal process of progress and improvement. Of all social groups, criminals and convicts are among those who have always been positioned on the outermost margin of the body politic. In an unsigned article entitled “Convicts, English and French,” which was published in *Household Words* on 24 February 1855, the writer discussed how the ever-increasing number of convicts and ex-convicts in England should be dealt with. When this article was written, the days of transportation were virtually over, and convicts were already becoming a part of past memories. Transportation to New South Wales was abolished as early as in 1840, and, as the free settlers came in large numbers enticed by the dream of success either as farmers in the bush or gold miners, the presence of convicts came to be openly resented, and even the word “convict” itself was stigmatised by the 1850s (Litvack 109). By the time the article appeared, there was no place left on the earth for convicts. The writer of the article says:

The British public knows very little of what becomes of convicts [. . .]. We can’t have them continually sailing up and down the seas in quest of a colony which will take them in. We would rather not have them walking about Regent Street, with bludgeons, pitch-plasters, chloroform sponges, and slip-knotted handkerchiefs in their pockets. They are an eyesore to us even in Woolwich or Portsmouth yards, skulking among the frank, jovial, open-faced men-of-war’s men and the smart stalwart soldiers. We grumble against the pet prisons, the horticultural show-houses of rascali-

ty, the menageries of crime.

(86)

Convicts were regarded as sub-human creatures, a species apart, with whom “the British public” shunned mixing, and whom they were willing to get rid of. Though the main action of *Great Expectations* is set within the first twenty-five or thirty years of the nineteenth century, people’s ill feelings towards convicts in the fifties and sixties are reflected in various scenes of the novel. The two convicts with whom Pip happens to share a coach on his way back to his village were looked on by the great numbers of spectators on the street “as if they were lower animals” (227), and one gentleman in the coach said vehemently “that it was breach of contract to mix him up with such villainous company, and that it was poisonous and pernicious and infamous and shameful” (227). For Magwitch, England is not a place in which he is allowed to stay, and, as Leon Litvack argues, throughout the novel he is depicted as an “outsider longingly looking in upon a world he can never enter” (105). As a convict, he can never be assimilated into European civilisation: “from head to foot there was Convict in the very grain of the man,” and he has “a savage air that no dress could tame” (337).

Pip can become a gentleman only after he dissociates himself from Magwitch by refusing to accept the money which Magwitch had earned for him in the colony. Through the renunciation of the wealth which has made him a gentleman in appearance, he can become “a true gentleman at heart” (181). Magwitch’s deathbed words to Pip, “I’ve seen my boy, and he can be a gentleman without me” (447), are ironically true. Pip can be a “gentleman” without Magwitch, or more precisely, he cannot be a gentleman with his convict father.

This transformation into a “true gentleman” is the final stage of Pip’s inclusion in the body of the nation. Pip is endowed with liberty, being emancipated from Jaggers’s oppressive exercise of power, as is shown in the following dialogue between the two:

“As we are going in the same direction, Pip, we may walk together. Where are you bound for?”

“For the Temple, I think,” said I.

“Don’t you know?” said Jaggers.

“Well,” I returned, glad for once to get better of him in cross-examination, “I do *not* know, for I have not made up my mind.”

(388)

Pip has been a silent listener and passive object for cross-examination by other people for the most part of the first two volumes, but in the last volume he is turned into an eloquent speaker and active cross-examiner. He thinks for himself and tries to unveil the secrets concerning his “poor dream” (411). He wins a

victory over Jaggers and reveals the limitation of the latter's power of surveillance when he discloses the secret of Estella's parentage and of Wemmick's Castle. Liberty from the tyrannical exercise of power and the freedom to act upon one's own will are what Mill defended as necessary for "human beings in the maturity of their faculties" (*On Liberty* 69). He wrote, "In the part which merely concerns himself, his independence is, of right, absolute. Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign" (*On Liberty* 69). Liberated from Jaggers's despotic rule, Pip is able to become a true "free-born Englishman."

Pip's subversive feelings are entirely contained after he is recognised as a mature member of society. Pam Morris argues that Magwitch's own discourse of his life story restores the original bondage between Pip and Magwitch grounded in "commonness" (117), by which she means common "fundamental physical needs of hunger, warmth, and creature contact" (109). At this stage, however, Pip's fellow feeling and sympathy towards Magwitch essentially differ from the emotions experienced in his childhood in that there is no longer a sense of injustice. Even though Pip's sympathy becomes stronger and stronger towards the end of Magwitch's life, he does not question the justice of society which has driven Magwitch into the criminal world, and which finally punishes him with death. Pip does not feel *ressentiment* and accepts society as it is, for he has already conformed to English society. He is no longer the marginalised outcast as he was at the beginning of the story. Pip's new class position is confirmed by his career as a colonial businessman in the East, where, in House's words, "gentlemen grow like mushrooms" (156). A "common labouring boy" (60) from the periphery has been transformed into a gentleman in the central metropolis, and he now becomes an agent to diffuse English norms and the gospel of improvement to the remotest periphery of the empire.

The act of inclusion is necessarily accompanied by an act of exclusion, and social bodies such as the nation based on collective allegiance are constructed through a continual discursive process of redefining the boundary separating insiders and outsiders. Homi K. Bhabha writes:

The "locality" of national culture is neither unified nor unitary [. . .]. The boundary is Janus-faced and the problem of outside/inside must always itself be a process of hybridity, incorporating new "people" in relation to the body politic, generating other sites of meaning.

("Introduction" 4)

Great Expectations exemplifies this process of hybridity and the unstable and dynamic nature of the body politic of the nation.

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