The Industrialized City of *Great Expectations*?

Pip’s journey from the marshes to the city

Dennis Persson
Table of contents

1. Having great expectations to British urbanisation 3
2. New Historicism 6
3. Analysis/Discussion 9
   3.1 Making a living in the countryside 9
   3.2 Living the good life in the city 17
4. Conclusion 28
5. Works Cited 30
1. Having great expectations to British urbanisation

No more low wet grounds, no more dykes and sluices, no more of these grazing cattle – though they seemed in their dull manner, to wear a more respectful air now, and to face around, in order that they might stare as long as possible at the possessor of such great expectations – farewell, monotonous acquaintances of my childhood, henceforth I was for London and greatness: not for the smith’s work in general and for you (139-140).

Imagine living in a country that was going through a major societal change, where factories and cities began to expand as they never had before. These circumstances are what Pip in *Great Expectations* got to experience during his journey from living on the countryside all his life and then travelling to the great city of London.

Pip was a poor orphan boy who lived on the British marshes. He received a small fortune from a secret benefactor and took the chance to go to London in order to start a new and wealthier life. The industrialisation period in Britain came with many societal changes, such as an increased urbanisation of the newly industrialized cities and the emergence of a new social class. The British population that lived on the countryside thought it would be more beneficial to move into the city. The cities became more and more industrialised, in order to obtain better employment which paid more in wages than agricultural labour. Pip was tossed into the industrialised environment in British society that brought forward a new social class, bourgeoisie. This social class consisted of people in the upper middle-class that had more extensive education and saw economical fortune and a higher level of education as
successes in society. After leaving the marshes in the English countryside and then experiencing life in the city in an upper middle class environment, Pip seems to adapt well to this higher middle-class and its way of living. He begins to feel repulsed about having come from a lower standard of living. Therefore, the focus of this thesis is not on Dickens but on the protagonist of *Great Expectations*, Pip, and how he symbolizes the urbanization in Britain. The people that began urbanising the cities saw this as a new way of earning a fortune through a larger possession of property, such as mansions and other financial resources.

In order to interpret Pip and his development, it is vital to understand in which societal context *Great Expectations* was written. There have been several interpretations that claim that *Great Expectations* is a reflection of Charles Dickens’s own experiences. Peter Ackroyd says that *Great Expectations* is “a novel in which he is engaged in exorcising the influence of his past by rewriting it” (881). In contrast, Phillip Collins argues in his article *Charles Dickens and Industrialism* that Charles Dickens’s attitude towards industrialism in his novels is that industrialism was both something positive and negative, that he “saw both the good and the bad in it” (660).

In *Great Expectations*, Dickens addresses the urbanisation of the British population during the industrialisation period by using Pip as metaphor. However, in order to understand Pip’s journey from an agricultural society to an industrialised city, it is important to understand the society during the period when *Great Expectations* was written. So it becomes necessary to understand the historical context and its historical texts, both literary and non-literary texts.

To compare literary texts with non-literary texts is a central praxis within New Historicism as a literary theory offers a wide variety of tools for us readers to use in order to understand the conditions under which Pip’s experiences are set.
This thesis has already presented reasons to why people from the rural communities would move into the cities and how this phenomenon relates to the novel *Great Expectations*. The next part of the thesis is the theoretical framework and that will consist of an in-depth definition of New Historicism, according to H. Aram Veeser, and how this theory will be used in the analysis section of this thesis. This section will be a combination of result and analysis. In order to see the different aspects of urbanisation, I will compare Pip’s period in the countryside as a labourer during his apprenticeship to his travels to Miss Havisham and to London, and how he becomes a part of the bourgeoisie. I will compare Pip’s life as labourer on the countryside with his life in the city as part of the upper middle-class. This comparison is made in order to see the different aspects of the urbanization of British cities, such as the city inhabitants’ attitude towards those in the countryside and how this affected Pip’s own attitude.

This thesis will compare Pip to other characters in the novel in the different parts of Pip’s life, in order to see a clear argument of how Pip is used as a metaphor. During his time on the marshes, characters such as Joe Gargery, Biddy, Miss Havisham and Estella will help show the attitude that Pip had towards the labourer-class. In order to see a clear change in attitude the same will be done to Pip’s time in London; he will be compared to Mr. Jaggers and Mr. Wemmick. At the end of this thesis, it will become clear how Pip feels about his time living in the city. Also, Estella is a central character in Pip’s life, due to the fact that she is the one that comments on Pip’s social class during his visit at Miss Havisham’s.
2. New Historicism

A clarification of how New Historicism will help to interpret the novel and journey that Pip does from the countryside to the city is needed before going into the analysis section of this thesis. It is unclear when New Historicism began to appear in literary analysis, but it became a coined term within literary analysis through the American critic Stephen Greenblatt. There are many interpretations of what New Historicism is, but a focus will be placed on the definition of it according to H. Aram Veeser in this thesis. One example as to how New Historicism can be defined is, as Barry discusses and tries to clarify in simple terms, “a method based on the parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts, usually of the same historical period” (166). This thesis will accordingly analyse the actions of Pip and his journey with the usage of historical non-literary texts that were written during the same period in British society. This is a central praxis for New Historicist readers. However, in order to understand what New Historicism is it is necessary to pursue further definitions of this theory.

A more in-depth definition is pursued by H. Aram Veeser in his book *The New Historicism Reader*. Veeser’s definition of New Historicism is defined through five points. However, this thesis will only focus on three aspects that are relevant for the subject at hand.

The first aspect of New Historicism that Veeser presents is “that every act is embedded in a network of material practices” (2). Veeser tries to show that the New Historical reader needs to know and understand the historical context and its social practices. The New Historical reader must “step into history in order to understand” (15) when interpreting a literary text. The industrialisation in Britain came with new social and material practices in the new way of living.

The second aspect is that understanding the historical context in New Historicism becomes important because it is how we as readers can interpret the literary texts. In order to understand what Pip’s actions in *Great Expectations* really mean, we need to understand the
social practices of the bourgeoisie class in *Great Expectations* compared to the social practices in the countryside later on in the thesis. Veeser continues by pursuing that readers of New Historicism must ‘understand’ not just the social practices but the fact that literary and non-literary texts can interpenetrate over a great historical divide (16). *Great Expectations* was written during the British industrialisation, a significant historical event in British society. Therefore, this aspect can be useful in analysing what was written during this important event in British history.

The third relevant aspect that Veeser makes is “that a critical method and a language adequate to describe culture under capitalism participate in the economy they describe” (2). He argues that “progress from status to contract demands that all goods and even personal traits be alienable, marketable, and perpetually up for sale” (19). This aspect becomes important for the discussion surrounding Pip’s personality and attitude towards the countryside when moving into the city.

For this thesis, Veeser’s arguments and points will be used in the analysis of the social class in Pip’s transition from a labourer to a bourgeoisie in *Great Expectations* because it helps to explain Pip’s change in attitude towards his way of living on the countryside, before he went to London.

New Historicism appears to be most useful as a literary theory for this thesis because Veeser argues that “NH [new historical] studies of the nineteenth- and twentieth century texts indicate an important shift within the NH’s “poetics of culture”, which is now committed to showing that capitalism and market relations metabolise all of art as well as life” (Veeser 3). The importance of capitalism for this thesis becomes very significant due to the fact that one of the reasons for Pip leaving the marshes is that he wants to make more wages so he can become a gentleman in order to impress Estella. I believe also that it is important to discuss
capitalism in *Great Expectations* when talking about the attitudes of both the countryside and city. The countryside wanted more in order to succeed and become wealthy while people in the city who already were wealthy wanted more in order to stay wealthy.

This thesis will therefore contain an analysis of elements of capitalism, such as the bourgeoisie class and Pip’s experience with this social class during his own urbanisation into the city.
3. Analysis/Discussion

3.1 Making a living in the countryside

The British countryside, or the marshes as it is referred to in *Great Expectations*, during the nineteenth century adapted agriculture and manual labour in their way of living. Pip describes the surroundings that he was living in on the very first page of the novel:

Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things, seems to me to have gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such time I found out for certain, that this bleak palace overgrown with nettles was the churchyard. (1)

Later on in the novel, another description that concerns the solitude of the marshes:

‘I am not acquainted with this country, gentlemen, but it seems a solitary country towards the river.’

‘Most marshes is solitary’, said Joe. (71)

What I argue is what Pip describes here; that the countryside Pip was living on represented a dead place, which was bleak and had no future for him to live in. The agricultural way of living could no longer provide a good standard of living.

The migration from the countryside to larger towns and cities became more attractive to country-dwellers with industrial cities that kept growing. The need of labourers in businesses grew, as well as increased possibilities to commute with the improved infrastructure. The cities had a more varied range of employment opportunities and had possibilities for improved wages as well. In 1833, a textile factory worker would earn 33 shilling and 8 pence per week (Baines 433).

The population in the rural communities still chose to work according to a long British tradition of agriculture (Mingay 10) and other professions that required manual labour.
Despite this, agriculture had become more ‘industrialised’ with new technology that could perform traditional hand-labour such as handloom weaving. From 1798 to 1831, the wages a handloom weaver received dropped from 30 shillings to 5 shillings and 6 pence. The wages dropped to almost 1/6 in 33 years from how the wages were in 1798 (Gaskell 376). As Pip wanted progress and fortune in his life, he realized that the wages that were paid in the countryside would not benefit him. However as I will depict, the wages was not the only reason for Pip to move to the city. Pip also wanted to be something more than what he was pre-determined to become, he wanted to fill an emptiness that he had inside himself.

Veeseer’s argumentation that “every expressive act is embedded in a network of material practices” (14) helps to show that the industrialisation’s need for people who worked with steel, or black-smiths as in Great Expectations, became significantly larger in the cities. In 1851, there were 112,000 blacksmiths (Mingay 124) amongst the rural communities, which suggests that this was a hand-craft which that had great importance amongst the inhabitants of the rural communities. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that this was a countryside profession that Charles Dickens wanted to illuminate the importance of for the British rural communities. In Great Expectations blacksmith is the only profession in the countryside that is depicted in the novel.

However, as we will later see in this discussion and in Great Expectations, blacksmiths still had an important function in society and were also quite well-paid at this point in time, even though industrialization and urbanisation had begun to change British society. The industrialization offered an alternative that presented itself for inhabitants in the countryside; the agricultural labourers could change their craft into becoming factory workers and maintain the machines, but this transition was also filled with challenges. Hartwell discusses that the industries would have made this transition without political revolution and
to the industries beneficial advantages (Hartwell 401). This transitional period in Britain demanded intensified industrial labour even though the new industrial technology and its machines in the factories demanded less labour per unit of production (Hartwell 400). What the factories lacked was the environmental knowledge that the industrial environment slowly killed the labourer that worked there. This issue was made clear during parliamentary debates where the labourers’ work situation was described:

The other is the old, the often-repeated, and as often-refuted, argument that the work is light. Light! Why, no doubt, much of it is light, if measured by the endurance of some three or four minutes. But what say you, my Lords, to a continuity of toil, in a standing posture, in a poisonous atmosphere, during 13 hours, with 15 minutes of rest? (Hansard 355-356)

So, as labourers in British factories risked their own well-being in order to get paid large wages. How this connects to Pip in *Great Expectations* is to exemplify of what work-pace the cities demanded of their labour-force and Pip when they arrived to the cities. In the countryside, as I have shown in the passage with the sergeant and Joe, it was the blacksmith who decided the amount of time for his work to be carried out, not the sergeant telling Joe his time-limit. The cities were more fast-paced than Pip had been used and the quote above shows what the consequences of that pace were. The work hours were longer and no time to rest which took its toll on the labourers. This notion of a personal cost in order to succeed is something we see Pip experiencing in the city-life. Even though labourers would risk their own life by working in factories, British rural communities became more open to external influences and therefore industrialization could tie the rural areas more to the national economy (Healey and Ilbery 13). As these external influences began to come to the marshes, the rural communities began to see the light or a re-birth of the countryside and its future which seemed dead and uncertain.
The marshes of the rural community that Pip lived in were depicted as having a constant mist and this mist had a double meaning in Pip’s perspective. The mist reflected not only the landscape where he was living but also his inner emotional landscape as well. The mist becomes important because it seems that this mist puts Pip in an almost a dream-like state:

On every rail and gate, wet lay clammy; and the marsh-mist was so thick, that the wooden finger on the post directing people to our village – a direction which they never accepted, for they never came there – was invisible to me until I was quite close under it. Then, as I looked up at it, while it dripped, it seemed to my oppressed conscience like a phantom devoting me to the Hulks. (14)

Since the mists made it impossible to see on the marshes, Pip felt lost and had no clarity of what was to become of him in the future. He believed that he would stay on the marshes for the rest of his life. The mist possessed an indication of a larger and oppressive force, and that it diverted people from coming to his village also existed in Pip’s mind at this point in time. This large oppressive force made the countryside inhabitants, such as Pip, survive the increased dependence on industrial technology in the villages. The quote above depicts a ghostly quality of the marshes. Here I argue that the countryside can be considered as something dead. The last sentence of the quote refers to the countryside as the phantom that devotes Pip to the Hulks, a sort of emptiness. So I argue that Pip knows that so long as he stays on the marshes, he will always feel empty inside. Therefore, Pip as well as the British population needed to go into cities to provide for their family by finding work that paid larger wages. As previously discussed, the wages began to increase for factory workers and drop for the professions that were previously largely based on manual labour. However, besides making increased wages, I believe that Pip needed to fill his heart with purpose which he felt
that he could not find on the marshes but in London. So, people were not supposed to move to the villages but migrate from them in to the cities instead. I believe that during Pip’s time on the marshes, he was uncertain of what is to come in his near future. It is reasonable to argue that Pip represents the inhabitants of the countryside in their uncertainty of what the consequence of the urbanization to the cities would be. They knew that they would earn more in the city but at what personal cost? Therefore, Pip’s “misty” state of mind raises hopes along with uncertainty for what the consequences would be for his continuous life on the countryside.

How important was the labour and professions that were performed in the countryside? As previously discussed, an agricultural society existed, but there was another important labour or profession that was carried out in the countryside and was regarded as a respected craft. The profession in question was that of the blacksmith and his craft. To be a blacksmith or an apprentice to one was something people traditionally took pride in since it was labour that required knowledge and skills that took a life-time to master. The blacksmith that Pip was an apprentice to was named Joe Gargery. One night, Joe Gargery and Pip got a visit from a group of soldiers that required reparations to a pair of hand-cuffs:

You see, blacksmith, said the sergeant, who had by this time picked out Joe with his eye, ‘we have had an accident with these, and I find the lock of one of’em goes wrong and the coupling don’t act pretty. As they are wanted for immediate service, will you throw your eye over them?

Joe threw his eye over them and pronounced that the job would necessitate the lightning of his forge fire, and would take nearer two hours than one… (27)

A mentionable symbolic point of view in this quote, connected to Pip’s inner landscape is the hand-cuffs. He is locked up with the hand-cuffs that symbolises his foreshadowing future in
the countryside. However if he feels locked up by these symbolic hand-cuffs, would not becoming a blacksmith be the solution then? I believe that Pip did not realize that his future by moving to the city not only would be his solution to his inner landscape but also his demise to it as well. Therefore one could ask, what importance did the blacksmiths have in the rural communities?

Being a blacksmith and having the skills they possessed were appreciated even by the King’s service. During the time of urbanisation, this type of manual labour did not require a higher level of education so the skills were passed down from generation to generation. Pip was to learn Joe’s skills as a blacksmith by being a future apprentice to Joe. Pip discussed his apprenticeship to Joe as “when I was old enough, I was to be apprenticed to Joe, and until I could assume that dignity I was not be what Mrs. Joe called ‘Pompeyed’ or (as I render it) pampered” (39). It can be assumed that Pip here fears that Mrs. Joe does not consider Pip mature or tries to make Pip realize the privilege of being an apprentice in a craft that was considered to be important to the rural community that they lived in. However, Pip also feels privileged to be considered as an apprentice since the premium that needed to be paid to the blacksmith was not available to him until Miss Havisham’s fortune enabled Pip to pay it to Joe (Newlin 117).

Pip’s fear of not feeling mature can be seen as a natural part of what was expected of being a black-smith and what attributes, both physical and mental, that blacksmiths were required to possess. In the opening of a poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow from 1841 called The Village Blacksmith, Longfellow describes the usefulness of blacksmiths in the rural communities during the nineteenth century:
Under the spreading chestnut-tree

The village smithy stands;

The smith, a mighty man is he,

With large and sinewy hands;

And the muscles of his brawny arms

Are strong as iron bands

..... (Newlin 124)

Pip did not possess these physical and social characteristics so he felt almost like he would disappoint Joe during his apprenticeship. These social practices connect back to what Veeser writes; that social practices are important to interpret a literary text with New Historicism. We see that the social standing and practices of being a blacksmith were not applicable to Pip. The social standing of a blacksmith is not as subordinate to the higher social classes as it normally can be interpreted. The blacksmiths during the nineteenth century had, as Bentley argues, a far higher economic and social position than farm and factory workers (100). Pip would have had a well-paid profession if he had stayed behind and finished his apprenticeship with Joe, the blacksmith.

A blacksmith being the predetermined occupation for Pip seemed to be something he was content with until he recalled Estella’s comments about the small size of his hands and then he believes that he is miserable with his current status in life (Newlin 114):

As I went along, on all I had seen, and deeply revolving that I was a common labouring-boy; that my hands were coarse; that my boots were thick; that I had fallen into a despicable habit of calling knaves Jacks. (60)

Pip’s feelings of being humble towards an apprenticeship with Joe as a blacksmith turned into despising the notion of being a labourer-boy after meeting Estella and Miss Havisham at Satis House, the mansion that Miss Havisham lived in. Estella became an important influence on
Pip after their first encounter as he heard Estella’s opinion about him being a labourer-boy. She introduced him to the notion that as he belonged to a lower social class, he does not have the same worth as she does or a say in matters. Pip believed that the only way for Estella to accept him and having deeper feelings for him would be if he became wealthier and belonged to the higher middle-class such as the bourgeois. I argue that Estella represented the attitude of how the bourgeois class felt about the labourers on the countryside. She represented a superior attitude towards a boy that came from the countryside and belonged to a lower social class. She felt that Pip did not belong to or was to socialise with the same group of people as she did. She depicted this superior attitude by making Pip feel that the only he could be accepted by Estella was by possessing a substantial financial fortune or a large amount of property. Estella’s comments about Pip being a common labourer shocked Pip and made him realized something that he never felt before. He felt that he was not of the same worth as another human being. I will later show in this thesis how this will not be the case as events developed between Estella and Pip, especially after Pip’s return to the marshes after his stay in London and him becoming a gentleman. When Pip received notice that he was off to London, he was excited to leave the misty and cold marshes and make a name for himself in London: “And the mists had all solemnly risen now, and the world lay spread before me” (152). Not only to perhaps get a better turn in life but also to gain acceptance from Estella and then her heart.
3.2 Living the good life in the city

I fell asleep recalling what I ‘used to do’ when I was at Miss Havisham’s; as though I had been there weeks or months, instead of hours: and as though it were quite an old subject of remembrance, instead of one that had risen that that day.

That was memorable day to me, for it made great changes in me. But it is the same with any life. Imagine one selected day struck out of it, and think how different its course would have been (67).

Pip begins to travel outside his rural community, first to visit Miss Havisham or later to move in to London and work for Mr. Jaggers at his law office. As a result of his visit to Miss Havisham, a wealthy old lady who lives in solitude in her mansion, Pip has been able to experience an entire new way of life. From having had lived on the marshes in the English countryside and then experiencing village life in an upper-class environment, he seems to have adapted himself to the ‘new’ way of living and started to feel repulsed by having lived in a lower standard of living. Critic against this argument would that Miss Havisham did not symbolize vitality or expansiveness. However, Estella had this symbolism of vitality and expansiveness. If we look what Miss Havisham represented, she was depicted more of something old and static, as she was depicted in her wedding gown throughout the novel. I argue that Estella living with Miss Havisham represents rejuvenation towards the old society. As I have argued in this thesis that Estella represents the city, I also argue that Estella living with Miss Havisham points towards that the British society was in dire need of rejuvenation.
Pip’s journey to the city, where the surroundings were quite different from those of the marshes, meant new experiences, even for those who lived there. Pip’s encounter with Mr. Wemmick, who depicted London as a dark and criminal place, follows thus:

‘Is it a very wicked place?’ I asked, more for the sake of saying something than for information.

‘You may get cheated, robbed and murdered, in London. But there are plenty of people that do that for you.’ (161)

Pip’s expectations of what London would be like were here thwarted by Mr. Wemmick but I would argue that Mr. Wemmick was right in his depiction of the London that Great Expectations portrayed. London at this point in time was in chaos with a large amount of criminals running around in the city. The status of criminals was at the bottom of the social status hierarchy. When Pip waits to see Mr. Jaggers for the first time in the city, he decided to go for a walk around the block. During this walk he runs into drunken people and other suspicious individuals. Pip here gets the first-hand experience of criminal behavior and the even lower social class than he was in on the marshes. According to In The Night Side of London from 1858, J. Ewing Ritchie gives the following figures of criminal statistics for 1856:

It appears that in all 73,240 persons were taken into custody, of whom 45,941 were males, and 27,209 females; 18,000 of the apprehensions were on account of drunkenness, 8160 for unlawful possession of goods, 7021 for simple larceny, 6763 for common assaults, 2194 for assaults on the police; 4303 women were taken into custody as prostitutes. (Jackson 63)

My already stated argument, that Pip’s expectations of what London was supposed to be like were somewhat crushed in relation to the description of the dream he had entertained on the marshes; that London would be an exciting and wonderful place to live in, is strengthened
here. Reality caught up with Pip at this point, and London was not as wonderful as he had originally thought. He had expected to come into London, as Raymond Williams suggests, “to be taught, to learn: to submit personal facts, the incidents of a family, to a total record; to learn evidence and connection and altering perspectives” (343). Pip’s possibilities to stay in London are great due to the fact that his secret benefactor has left a small fortune to him. As we can see in the following account of living in London in the 19th century, London had a larger appeal to people that were wealthy:

Such hospitalities are much more expensive than in the country---partly because London attracts chiefly the richer families. London business is more lucrative, at least to those who stand their ground. It is also well understood that the social advantages of London life are for those only who can live at a certain rate.

(Life in London)

So here, Pip can create the future that he wanted when he lived back in the marshes, due to the fact that he possesses the economical requirements that were needed in order to have a normal standard of living in London.

After coming into London, Pip starts to lose his connection to the marshes where he used to live. Speaking of the contrast between countryside and the city, it can be argued that novels such as *Great Expectations* try to depict this contrast in order to show that we must not lose our emotional upbringing in order to find success or fortune in life. Nineteenth-century literature depicts the countryside with more emotion, getting into contact with nature more than what one would do in the city. By making Pip travel to London and adapt an alternative opinion against the people on the countryside, Dickens tries to depict how we as humans can lose our sense of emotions in order to provide income and food for our families or to keep it all for ourselves. The importance and pride in one’s labour were no longer appreciated, only
how large one’s economic fortune and power were in society. Raymond Williams talks of his own experience with moving from the countryside into the city, that where he once as a boy ran on an open field, later in life when he returns, there are now roads where lorries drove in order to go to different factories (341). Williams argues that the relations between country and city are not absolute but active and continuous. The relations between country and city are not just that of ideas and experiences but also relations of situation and power (344). Pip is of the opinion that if he receives a better job in the city he will gain more power. So as he is in a situation where he is only an apprentice, he feels that he will not have much power in the British society. In *Great Expectations*, Pip puts his emotional state up for sale, as Veeseer says about capitalism metabolizing life, in order to succeed in life (3). Therefore, Pip let capitalism run his life by surrendering his appreciation for the labour that he performed in order to build up his financial future and security. One must subdue one’s emotions towards oneself and the people that are around.

Therefore, Pip begins to alter his former humble opinion of being an apprentice to a blacksmith and starts to consider that the apprenticeship in question has been holding him back from something greater:

’Biddy’, said I, with some severity, ’I have particular reasons for wanting to be a gentleman.’

‘You know, Pip; but don’t you think you are happier as you are?’

’Biddy,’ said I exclaimed, impatiently, ‘I am not at all happy as I am. I am disgusted with my calling and with my life. I have taken to either since I was bound. (120)

The notion of “being a gentleman” that Pip touches upon here refers to moving up in a hierarchical social ladder in British society which became available through his acquaintance
with Miss Havisham. Pip considered that Miss Havisham was his patron, and saw her making him a gentleman. However, the power of patronage and extensive possession of property were needed to be considered a gentleman, and Pip had no real possession of property. The urbanisation of the British population led to social as well as economical changes. Perkins argues that “the most profound and far-reaching consequence of the Industrial Revolution was the birth of a new class society” (165). A new social class that began to emerge in British society was the bourgeois class. This commercial higher middle-class in the nineteenth century, based on capitalism and connection to industrialism, began to emerge more and more and was described as “the genuine depositories of sober, rational, intelligence and honest English feeling” by Lord Brougham in 1830 (Wohl 277). Pip is tossed into this bourgeoisie class and the social environment with higher social status then he had before. This upper middle-class consisted of people who had a higher level of education and saw economical fortune as being successful in society.

From *Great Expectations*, we as readers are not allowed to learn from Mr Jaggers, who was one of Pip’s benefactors, what kind of property or amounts that Pip’s fortune consisted of. There was no indication whether any property was included in Pip’s fortune. However, since Miss Havisham was Pip’s patron and her possession was a great mansion, his social standing as a gentleman would still be considered valid. A great mansion was the symbol of landed power. To see what power meant in this context, we must explore the culture in which it is meant to be interpreted in (Greenblatt 74). The cities during the Industrial Revolution shifted focus and fortune could only be measured in material possessions or also “that civiliza-tion could be measured in, even achieved through, coal or cotton” (Wohl 275). During the industrialisation period, power was conceived as something that only could be measured by the financial resources a person had. Even the size of a
person’s home could be legitimate as a sign of power. The mansion’s importance as a sign of power was shown in Great Expectations by Miss Havisham’s mansion and Mr Jagger’s as well. The mansion became an aristocratic resort for leisure and sport but also a place for political gatherings (Mingay 32). Therefore, I argue that Pip was considered a gentleman through him being patronized by Miss Havisham.

Through his affiliation with Mr. Jaggers, Pip also learned of the way Mr. Jaggers treated his clients, who often were common people of a lower social status:

‘We thought, Mr. Jaggers----‘one of the men began, pulling his hat.
‘That’s what I told you not to do’ said Mr. Jaggers. ‘You thought! I think for you; I don’t want you to find me. Now I won’t have it. I won’t hear a word.'

(157)

These clients had only the importance that they were supposed to pay for the service that Mr Jaggers provided for them. An emotional tie did not exist, only professional and financial ones.

This is a clear example of how the bourgeois and upper-class citizens belittled the common people, due to the fact that the bourgeois had higher level educations or more financial resources. The bourgeoisie argued that the common people were incapable of defending themselves. As Pip spent a large amount of time with Mr. Jaggers, he absorbed this new way of looking at people of a lower social status from Mr. Jaggers since Pip now belonged to a new higher social class of people himself. His attitude towards the countryside had become more revolted, even more so than when he had visited Miss Havisham. He had found his place in the city along with his fortune as something that he would never had
achieved if he had stayed in the marshes and continued his apprenticeship with Joe, the blacksmith.

It becomes evident that Pip has embraced a new perspective and a new way of living upon his return to the marshes after living in the city. He rather stays at the Blue Boar Inn, which is the inn in the marshes, than at Joe’s. He also bought new custom-tailored clothes and frequented the stores along the main street. Pip has shown that his journey from the countryside into London was beneficial for him, because it helped him to evolve as a human being. Despite his repulsed emotions for the inhabitants of the countryside, he proved that the urbanisation of the industrialisation and moving into the city was a positive decision in life in order to secure one’s financial future and to succeed with his personal pursuit of happiness. Pip lost his desire for Estella even coming to the city since now it was not to secure his feelings for Estella but to gain financial security.

However, this optimism that one’s fortune can be made in the city turns into pessimism in the end for Pip. When he realizes that his secret benefactor was Magwitch, the criminal he met at the graveyard and helped from his handcuffs at the beginning of the novel, he doubts himself now because of the continuous use of his fortune. He does not want Magwitch’s money, however Magwitch tries to convince Pip that his personality alone is not enough to win Estella’s heart but that money will help to achieve it. Magwitch argues that “they shall be yours, dear boy, if money can buy’em, Not that a gentleman like, so well set up as you, can’t win ’em off of his own game, but money shall back you” (305). Here we go back to the notion of capitalism that characterised the reasons for the urbanisation and that money can buy happiness.

So now Pip’s emotional state turns back into being more pessimistic in the later parts of the novel. Pip realizes that “I thought how miserable I was, but hardly knew why, or how long I had been so, or on what day of the week I made the reflection, or even who I was that
made it” (311). Pip starts to go back to the former state of mind that he was in before he went to the city. He does not think that he is happy as he thought he would be in the city. He tries to reconnect with his former feelings and thoughts of Estella. As earlier discussed, Estella and Pip’s first encounter described how Estella saw Pip as a common labourer-boy. This encounter made Pip determined to become a gentleman in order to win Estella’s heart. Her attitude towards Pip is hypocritical when we find out what her origin is. In the later part of the novel, it is revealed that Miss Havisham has concealed the truth that Estella is the daughter of Magwitch, the criminal who gained a large fortune abroad while escaping from the law. Therefore, the fact that she criticised Pip in their first encounter, claiming she will never love him because he is only a common labourer-boy, became ironic since Estella is the daughter of the man that belongs to a social class which was even lower than that which Estella despises. In fact, by saying what she does, she despises herself and her origin. Pip’s desire to go to London and pursue his career is solemnly based on the fact that he wants to be a gentleman so that Estella can accept him as a person of equal class and then fall in love with him. He later returns to the marshes he once left for his attempt to succeed in the city. He has given up his financial resources because he did not want any more money from Magwitch. When Pip return to the marshes, he begins to reflect on what really matters in life:

‘The purpose was, that I would go to Biddy, that I would show her how humbled and repentant I came back, that I would tell her how I had lost all I once hoped for, that I would remind her of our old confidences in my first unhappy time...and indeed I am as sorry, Biddy, and have as much need of a hushing voice and a soothing hand’. (447)

Here, Pip regrets how he treated Biddy and saying to her that he felt that he did not belong in marshes and that he was meant for something greater in the city. So, what Pip originally thought was something that would change his life ultimately made him go back to the same
bleak and misty place and to an even poorer financial situation that he started out from. The surroundings that he lived in before Pip left for London had changed from when he left:

There was no house now, no brewery, no building whatever left, but the wall of the old garden. The cleared space had been enclosed with a rough fence, and looking over it, I saw some of the old ivy had struck root anew, and was growing green on low quiet mound of ruin. (458)

I argue that the urbanisation that Pip represents had affected the countryside and its surroundings similarly to what is described in the passage above. Buildings and the industry in the countryside such as breweries did not last because people left in order to move to the city. So, the urbanisation destroyed the countryside because if people did not live on the countryside, it could not survive. Buildings were torn down and only ruins remained. The mist that symbolised Pip’s state of mind had also returned amongst these ruins:

A cold silvery mist had veiled the afternoon, and the moon was not yet up to scatter it. But the stars were shining beyond the mist, and the moon was coming, and the evening was not dark. I could trace out where every part of the old house had been, and where the brewery had been, and where the gates, and where the casks. I had done so, and was looking along the desolate garden, when I beheld a solitary figure in it. (458)

Pip became reminded yet again of the large oppressive force which he felt before leaving for London. Now, he saw the effects of him leaving the marshes for the city. The effects were the decay of his native surroundings; therefore I argue that Pip’s journey to the city left the marshes more vulnerable for desolation and that the urbanisation to the cities that Pip represents desolated the countryside. At the end of this passage, Pip saw a solitary figure in the mists which I argue is the large oppressive force that he has struggled with both before going to London and now when returning home. It turns out in the novel that this solitary
figure is Estella. So, the large oppressive force that Pip has struggled all his life with is the girl he fell in love with but was not accepted by at first.

During this encounter, they both get confronted by their past. Pip discusses how the light that Estella’s eyes illuminated now was darkened by sadness:

The freshness of her beauty was indeed gone, but its indescribable majesty and its indescribable charm remained. Those attractions in it I had seen before; what I had never seen before was the saddened softened light of the once proud eyes; what I had never felt before was the friendly touch of the once insensible hand.

(458)

The urbanisation that Pip represents has experienced that moving to the city was not the positive experience that it first presented itself as. Connecting back to Hansard’s comments in his parliamentary debates that work is the light, but that after having experienced the work that the city offered, Pip returned with broken dreams and felt for the first time that Estella and he were now equals. So, the reason for the countryside’s decay was that the city did not consider the countryside important enough to invest in. Therefore, the countryside slowly died when the cities expanded and the population began living in the city instead of the countryside. I believe that this sense of equality is due to the fact that Estella now knows that she is the daughter of Magwitch, a former criminal, and Pip has lost his fortune, which puts them on equal ground for the first time ever, but at the end of the novel.

The ending of *Great Expectations* did not exist at first. Charles Dickens added the last chapter in *Great Expectations* as Dickens explained, so “the story will be more acceptable through the alternation” (Appendix, Dickens). I argue that the encounter between Pip and Estella in the last chapter was added in order to make the countryside and city realise that no part could survive without each other and they should consider themselves equal. I believe that this was done also by Dickens in order for him to not criticise the urbanisation that
occurred during the period of industrialisation. As Collins argues, that Dickens saw that “industrialism was a mixture – of pollution, “ruin and decay”, and promise of better things” (Collins 655). Another reason for adding the ending chapter of *Great Expectations*, I believe, was because the mists that Pip lived in needed to be lifted. The troubled relationship between Pip and Estella became more optimistic by them coming to terms with the fact that they need each other and have strong influences on each other as well.

So, as I have argued, Pip represents the urbanisation in *Great Expectations* by depicting how moving into the city did not only represent more wages to be earned and a higher social status but that it also came at some personal cost in order to procure those wages and that the urbanisation had an negative effect on the countryside.
4. Conclusion
The time period in British society when this novel was written brought on new discussions about social classes, and where people should go to live or work. Dickens wrote *Great Expectations* to address these discussions through depicting a poor little orphan boy, Pip, and show readers how a little boy from the British marshes could gain a new status in society by receiving a small fortune and then moving to the city. But moving in to the city, Pip lost himself on the way because of his troubled relationship with Estella, who was the one that first denied Pip due to his lower social standing as, according to her, he was only a common labourer-boy.

By analyzing *Great Expectations* through H. Aram Veeser’s definition of New Historicism and reading non-literary texts from the nineteenth century parallel to the novel, I have shown that Charles Dickens does use Pip as a metaphor for the urbanisation during the period of industrialisation.

Firstly, Dickens depicts Pip as a boy that had no fortune and had to make a living by being an apprentice to Joe, who was a black-smith. This profession symbolizes the hard-working population on the British countryside which had a tradition of agricultural profession and culture. However, as Pip received a small fortune and an offer to go to London, he did not hesitate. In doing so, he begins to alter his attitude towards the hard-working mentality of the British countryside. Instead, he begins to think that the apprenticeship held him back from something greater.

Secondly, Pip’s experience in London also made him realize that perhaps the dream of London as a happy and joyful place caught up with him. Mr Wemmick’s opinions opened up his mind to the fact that London was not the exciting place that he imagined it would be. What this thesis has also shown is the hope that industrialisation and people’s decision to move into the cities had less of an emotional thought behind it. People knew that sometimes opinions about people in a higher social class and feelings about going to the city to work had to come
second to putting food on the table for their family. However, the people that were already in a position of wealth and had a higher level of education, the bourgeoisie, protected their fortune by also setting their emotions aside and tried to protect their fortune or increase it.

Thirdly, Pip’s troubled relationship with Estella depicts how he wanted to change into a gentleman in order to gain acceptance from her, since Pip was not of the higher social class that Estella was. At the end of the novel, Pip was even poorer when he returned to the marshes after living in London because he gave up his fortune by denouncing his secret benefactor.

This led to Pip reconnecting with his former thoughts and feelings towards Estella. When they met again, their attitude toward each other was more equal since they both realized that one is not better than the other. Pip has through his experiences gone from being poor to rich and back to poor by chasing a dream of a better future in the city that turned out to be a dark, criminal and not so pleasant place to live as Pip first thought. Throughout this thesis there have been instances where Pip represented what the urbanisation was; a chance to pursue increased wages by moving into the city and create a future with greater expectations of what is to come.
5. Works Cited

Primary text 

Secondary sources 


