

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION'S MONSTROUS INTERCHANGEABILITY: THE  
CHARACTER OF PIP AS AN INDUSTRIAL REIMAGINING OF FRANKENSTEIN'S  
CREATURE

by

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(Under the Direction of RICHARD MENKE)

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* as a reimagining of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and situates its argument in conversation with the work of Iain Crawford and Jay Stubblefield, critics who have previously discussed *Great Expectations* and its ties to *Frankenstein*. Taking the discourse in a new direction, in this thesis I argue that *Great Expectations*' reimagining is based in much deeper concerns than previously suggested. I contend that the Industrial Revolution is at the heart of Dickens's novel. Examining the character of Pip, I argue that interchangeability, consumerism, and the interplay of capitalism, objectification, and charity are at the forefront of this reworking of Shelley's novel. In demonstrating that the Industrial Revolution is an integral influence on the themes and concerns expressed in *Great Expectations*, this thesis ultimately suggests the Industrial Revolution's influence on non-industrial novels is more widespread than previously recognized.

INDEX WORDS: Industrial Revolution, *Great Expectations*, *Frankenstein*, Nineteenth-Century Literature, Charles Dickens, Mary Shelley

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In the 1980s and 1990s, Iain Crawford and Jay Stubblefield explored Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* as a reimagining of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Beyond the work of these two critics, discourse in this area has been woefully absent, leaving the larger implications of these texts' relationship and connection to the Industrial Revolution unexplored,<sup>1</sup> thus meriting revisitation and further analysis. In this thesis, I will return to the idea of *Great Expectations* as a reimagining of *Frankenstein*, and suggest that this reimagining is based in much deeper concerns than previously suggested. I will argue that the Industrial Revolution is at the heart of Dickens's reimagining of *Frankenstein*. Interchangeability, consumerism, and the interplay of capitalism, objectification, and charity are at the forefront of this reworking of Shelley's novel, though creation also remains a central concern. In order to explore *Great Expectations* and its intersection with *Frankenstein* and the Industrial Revolution, I will focus on the character of Pip and explore some of the ways in which the influence of the Industrial Revolution makes itself known.

Crawford and Stubblefield center their respective analyses almost exclusively on the results of Pip's (and Estella's) status as creations, either in terms of the responsibility incurred, or religious and communal ties. While there are vast differences between each critic's analysis and my own, the act of creation is still a major focus. Both critics draw their conclusions from the outcome—the final state—of Pip and Estella, while leaving the preceding motives and methods

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<sup>1</sup> Though Jay Clayton's *Charles Dickens in Cyberspace*, and Kath Filmer's "The Specter of the Self in *Frankenstein*" do acknowledge the connection between the two works, they do not read or discuss *Great Expectations* as a reimagining of *Frankenstein*.

of creation largely unexplored.<sup>2</sup> For Crawford, “where Shelley's work posits an ideology of assertive individual self-reliance in a godless world, Dickens’s text emphasizes the values of human community and, especially, of submission to divine grace” (625). He focuses on the way in which the relationship between Pip and Abel Magwitch is resolved, without delving into the nuances of the work’s two differing endings. Crawford mentions the motives and methods of Pip’s creation, but only in order to help establish the similarities between *Great Expectations* and *Frankenstein*. Stubblefield, writing in direct response to Crawford, thoroughly disagrees with Crawford's reading, arguing instead “what Dickens most sharply revises is Shelley's portrayal of the relationship between creator and creature—especially in terms of accountability, complexity, and immediacy” (232). For Stubblefield, the reactions and responsibility shouldered by Pip—the ultimate results—are the most important revisions made by Dickens. But, before reactions and results, there must be motives and actions. While Crawford and Stubblefield help shed light on the way that *Great Expectations* reimagines *Frankenstein*, their work does not take into consideration a major undercurrent of influence that affects the novel: the Industrial Revolution. I argue that the Industrial Revolution plays an integral role in Dickens’s reworking of Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. By examining Pip’s creation, consumerism, and objectification, I will trace the ways in which he becomes an organic cyborg<sup>3</sup> and interchangeable part informed by the Industrial Revolution—a creature of the capitalist system of industrialized Britain.

Here it is useful to establish up front the overt textual connections between *Frankenstein* and *Great Expectations*. As Crawford points out, Dickens was certainly aware of Shelley’s

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<sup>2</sup> Here, I want to clarify that while both Crawford and Stubblefield include Estella in their analyses, from here onward I will speak only of their engagement with Pip, as the constraints of this thesis do not allow me to explore and reevaluate Estella’s character in sufficient depth.

<sup>3</sup> In using the term cyborg, I subscribe to the definition set down by Donna Haraway that “a cyborg is... a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction” (149). I use the term “organic” cyborg in order to highlight the psychological rather than physical nature of Pip as a cyborg. In his case, the organic human body is programmed to act as a machine.

novel; the second edition of *Frankenstein* was included in a series of novels known as *Bentley's Standard Novels*, a series that Dickens owned (626). Additionally, there are two places in *Great Expectations* where *Frankenstein* is directly referenced. The first occurs once Pip arrives in London and employs the boy he dubs the Avenger. Pip relates that “after I had made the monster... and had clothed him... I had to find him a little to do and a great deal to eat; and with both those horrible requirements he haunted my existence” (Dickens 169). The second allusion is much more concrete. Horrified by the revelation of his true situation, and his true benefactor, Pip describes his feelings in terms of Shelley's novel, observing that “The imaginary student pursued by the misshapen creature he had impiously made, was not more wretched than I, pursued by the creature who had made me...” (253-254). This second allusion is much easier to recognize; and though the overt references are confined to these two instances, the themes of, and similarities to, Shelley's novel are present throughout—though they are now bound up with the industrial concerns of consumerism and objectification.

Of course, it is hard to pin down precisely “when” the Industrial Revolution began, and doing so would be of little value; instead, it is more useful to ascertain when the Industrial Revolution began to work its way into literature as an influence. As E.J. Hobsbawm observes, “the repercussions of this revolution [the Industrial Revolution] did not make themselves felt in an obvious and unmistakable way... until quite late... certainly not before 1830, probably not before 1840... It is only in the 1830s that literature and the arts began to be overtly haunted by that rise of the capitalist society...” (44). The starting date(s) that Hobsbawm suggests helps illustrate the fact that as an influence, the Industrial Revolution enters literature after the original publication of *Frankenstein* (1818) and barely encompasses the date of the reprinting (1831). By the time of *Great Expectations'* publication however, the Industrial Revolution's influence is

easily recognizable in literature.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, this passage from Hobsbawm acknowledges the ties between the Industrial Revolution, capitalism, and literature. The Industrial Revolution haunts British literature and not just in the “industrial” novels that overtly focus on the lives of those with industrial occupations, such as *Hard Times*. One of the purposes of this thesis is to uncover how even Victorian novels that are not overtly focused on the Industrial Revolution are still deeply influenced by it. The revolution sparked many changes in all aspects of life. The foremost changes in Britain during this time include the introduction of unions (1824), railroads (1825), photography (1827), the Great Reform Bill (1831), the New Poor Law (1834), and the Factory Act (1847). Notably, these new laws and inventions center around industry, and the management of people in connection with industry; these changes began to affect the way people lived and thought, thus in turn affecting and informing literature and ideology.

One way of perceiving the growing impact of the Industrial Revolution on literature is through the use of specific words and expressions. Advances in technology affected the way humans were spoken about, and thought about as well. Thomas Carlyle describes the Victorian era as “the Mechanical Age,” in which “men are grown mechanical in head and in heart, as well as hand” (31, 37). Additionally, the works of Marx and Engels delve deeply into this shift, observing that the working class is only “an appendage of the machine” (341). Marx, in his own work *Capital*, also goes into great detail as to how “the individual himself is divided up, and transformed into the automatic motor of a detail operation...” (481). Closer to the realm of Dickens, throughout the 1850s, the journal *Household Words* published essays by Harriett Martineau regarding the relationships between humans and machines which, along with the

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<sup>4</sup> From Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Mary Barton* to Dickens’s own “industrial” novels such as *Hard Times*, the Industrial Revolution was a palpable force in British literature by the time *Great Expectations* was published in 1861. Though outside the scope of this thesis, it is worth noting that some critics also read Shelley’s *Frankenstein* in connection to production, the Industrial Revolution and factories, most notably Elsie B. Michie and Warren Montag.

works of Charles Babbage, Marx, and others, “addresse[d] new forms of identity emerging from the fusion of human and mechanical systems” (Katabgian 18). Dickens himself wrote a piece called “The Individuality of Locomotives,” in which, intriguingly, he uses the individuality of locomotives to argue for the individuality of “the finer piece of work called Man” (184). But it is not just Dickens’s non-fiction work that connects humans and machines; a clear example of industrial thought informing the portrayal of people in Dickens’s fiction occurs in *Our Mutual Friend*, which directly followed *Great Expectations*. When Mr. John Podsnap gives his opinion of what Eugene Wrayburn should have done with Lizzie Hexam, the working-class girl who saved Wrayburn’s life, Podsnap declares:

What the man in question should have done, would have been, to buy the young woman a boat and a small annuity, and set her up for herself... you speak of that annuity in pounds sterling, but it is in reality so many pounds of beefsteaks and so many pints of porter. Those beefsteaks and that porter are fuel to that young woman's engine. She derives a certain amount of power to row the boat; that power will produce so much money; you add that to the small annuity; and thus you get at the young woman's income. (795)

The idea of people as machines is quite clear. The young woman in question is a machine, and only requires the correct fuel. Feelings, for Mr. Podsnap, play no part in the workings of Lizzie Hexam. As with a machine, one puts fuel into her, and gets power out. While Mr. Podsnap is certainly not one of the most likeable characters in the novel, he is not alone in his treatment of humans as machines.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Dickens’s portrayal of Mr. Podsnap is meant as a critique of the tendency to treat people as machines. Podsnap’s character and Dickens’s treatment of him serves to further underscore the concerns of the Industrial Revolution and its effects seeping into novels not normally considered “industrial” novels.

Let us bring this ideology of person-as-machine to bear on *Great Expectations*. Here too, there are passages that draw parallels between humans and machines, mirroring the shift in language brought about by the Industrial Revolution. Describing people in mechanical terms is only a small step from *treating* them in a mechanical way as well. Pip is not just treated in terms of a machine—in fact, he is seen as simply an interchangeable *part* of a larger capitalist machine; he is treated as an organic cyborg. My examination of this industrially informed creature is organized into an investigation of Pip's creation, consumption, and objectification.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Throughout, I use this term as closely related to the Marxist term reification, though with a broader range of meaning.

## CHAPTER 2

### METHODS AND MOTIVES: PIP AS CREATION

The influence of the Industrial Revolution is present from the beginning of Pip's creation. Stubblefield argues that Dickens's reimagining is focused primarily on complicating the relationship of creator and creature, while also focusing on "accountability, complexity, and immediacy" (232). Certainly, in the making of Pip, there is an inversion of the process of creation. However, there is more to this complication than simply the themes of responsibility that arise out of it; deeper analysis uncovers the ideological undercurrent that informs the specific nature of the complication. In this section, I will examine Pip's creation at the hands of others in order to argue that Dickens's reimagining of the creation process, both in terms of methods and motives, reflects concerns of the Industrial Revolution, such as interchangeability.

Unlike Victor Frankenstein's creature, who is composed of separate parts that come together to form one individual (one could even say the creature's intense individuality is his problem), Pip starts as an individual, who is then slowly transformed into a non-individual—a part in some other individual's plan. In fact, he becomes an interchangeable part—rather than a unique or integral one—in the plans of three individuals: Abel Magwitch, Miss Havisham, and Herbert Pocket. Pip comes to the realization that he is only a part, a portion of a product, in someone else's plan in a rather abrupt and somewhat traumatic way. Both in terms of the creation process and the motives of creation, Pip's situation is a reversal of Frankenstein's creature's, and through this change Pip's status as a creature of the Industrial Revolution becomes involved with the prospect of interchangeability.

There is a definite inversion that occurs with the creation of Pip in terms of methods and motives. Motives demand attention first, as they lead directly to the creation of Pip. Unlike Frankenstein's creature, Pip is created with a specific and motivated purpose in mind. In Shelley's novel, as we learn from Frankenstein's account of himself, his creation is merely an experiment, an exercise in bestowing life. The creature in other words, is created without any specific individual purpose in mind for what he might do after being created. His sole function rests in his creation—which is perhaps why things fall apart for both creature and creator once Frankenstein succeeds. As Frankenstein reflects,

My operations might be incessantly baffled, and at last my work be imperfect: yet, when I considered the improvement which every day takes place in science and mechanics, I was encouraged to hope my present attempts would at least lay the foundations of future success. (55)

From this passage, we see that Frankenstein's mind and motives are set on scientific progress. He has no thought for what purpose his creation might have—or what purpose it might serve after its animation. True, Frankenstein does have happy visions of his creation as “a new species [that] would bless me as its creator and source” (55), but this is hardly a fully-realized life's purpose for his creation; it is merely a single action. Science and progress, as well as the wish to exercise a power for the sake of exercising it, are at the heart of Frankenstein's motives of creation; he has no thought for the purpose of the thing he is attempting to create. Frankenstein, in other words, is not product-oriented. Neither—in spite of some of his experiences with difficult teachers during his studies—is he intent on bestowing life simply to prove others wrong; Frankenstein is neither product-oriented in his attempt, nor is he motivated by a need for revenge. Magwitch's mindset towards his creation is very different.

Dickens's novel shows a definite shift in motivations for the creation of Pip. The creation of Pip is, first and foremost, Magwitch's reaction to experiences at the hands of the British upper class—a reaction that is then sustained by Magwitch's continued experiences with the upper class in Australia. Throughout his life, Magwitch's situation goes from bad to worse, and he always receives the larger share of the blame for the concerted crimes of his partner Compeyson and himself. Magwitch is conscious of this inequality, and is further aware that the reason for his partner being given more lenient sentences is Compeyson's ability to appear as a gentleman, or at least a person who acts in a genteel way. Magwitch articulates his consciousness of the importance of looks when he relates his court experiences, mentioning, "What a gentleman Compeyson looked, wi' his curly hair and his black clothes and his white pocket-handkercher [sic], and what common sort of wretch I looked" (262). Magwitch is well aware of the importance of appearances, and his own inability to look like a gentleman. In other words, he knows he has the wrong outer casing for functioning as a gentleman. Furthermore, he is also sensible of how those appearances directly translate into his and Compeyson's treatment by British society, and the English court system in particular.

Along with the change of purpose, there is also an inversion of results, in which Pip lives up to his "creator's" standards; he is a successful product. Magwitch's awareness of his inability to look the part of a gentleman is an important element in his motives to "create" his own gentleman. He understands that the creation of a gentleman cyborg is necessary. Having realized the importance of appearances, Magwitch is later delighted by Pip's, seeing it as the full confirmation of his triumph in making a gentleman. He exclaims, "Look at you, dear boy!" and later, "Look at your linen... look at your clothes; better ain't to be got!" (241). Magwitch continues to understand the importance of looks, and then happily appreciates these features in

Pip. His product is a successful one, one that alerts us to the class tensions present in Pip's creation. However, looks are only a contributing factor in what motivates Magwitch to create Pip.

Revenge is also a central factor in Magwitch's creation of Pip; the motivations of the creator are changed from the scientific (as discussed previously), to the personal and the vindictive. While Magwitch does not mention revenge as his motive when he recounts his own life and his dealings with Compeyson, this motivation is easily recognizable in his first encounter with Pip. In raptures over his creation, Magwitch says "We'll show 'em... Pip; won't us?" And again, in a longer monologue, "blast you every one, from the judge in his wig, to the colonist a stirring up the dust, I'll show a better gentleman than the whole kit on you put together!" (248). At the height of his triumph, Magwitch gleefully names those that he is going to surpass and put to shame with his created gentleman—with his organic cyborg. In seeing Pip as the equal of the upper class—or as better than them—Magwitch also in consequence sees the upper class as machines, but as ones that are inferior to his own newly-produced model. Pip is Magwitch's revenge-inspired triumph against the upper class.

Though constructed, Pip is not purely a machine; he is what I have termed an "organic cyborg." His creation at the hands of Magwitch is a product-oriented one, but one that also reflects Magwitch's status as a member of the generation straddling pre-industrial and industrial Britain. Pip is a creation of Magwitch, but he is a creation that is informed by Magwitch's sheep farming. Or rather, it is Magwitch's approach to creation that is informed by his profession. While he is attempting to create a machine of sorts, he is approaching the creation of his organic cyborg through the lens of his non-industrial profession or what we could call a "pre-industrial" profession. Noticeably, it is also this profession of sheep farming that fuels a large sector of

industrial factories in Britain. Magwitch was formed in a world largely before the Industrial Revolution; so while he operates within it, his methods of creation are based upon what he does know. The Industrial Revolution strengthens and advances the possibility of viewing people as tools of commerce, and it is only one step further for those in commercial professions to start treating humans in terms of the tools of their profession as well.

Magwitch treats Pip like a sheep, the economic machine that underpins his own success. As a man of an earlier generation, it is not surprising, perhaps, that he would rely on what he already understands, while attempting to create an organic cyborg programmed to function as a gentleman. He has raised Pip much like a sheep, giving him all he needs, and making sure he is only given time for leisure. As Pip points out, “I have been bred to no calling, I am fit for nothing” (256). He has been bred, like a sheep, to do nothing but act as an ornament.<sup>7</sup> While Magwitch’s literal sheep are bred and raised for, presumably, their wool like most of the sheep in Australia, Pip—the prize sheep—is raised and exhibited in London as the culmination of Magwitch’s success. It is not unthinkable that Pip may even be wearing clothing made from the wool of Magwitch’s other sheep. Magwitch focuses on Pip’s clothes and appearance, and uses words like “grewed” and “brought-up” (241-242), underscoring the relationship between Pip’s creation and the management of sheep. Magwitch proudly looks at his creation the same way he would a fine sheep—as something to show off in all its splendor.

Pip’s own personality could also be described as quite sheep-like in the way he unquestioningly allows himself to be shepherded and brought up into the trade-less gentleman that he becomes. Though his appetite may be like a wolf’s, as Orlick points out, Pip’s unquestioning and blind behavior also aligns him much more closely with sheep. Additionally,

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<sup>7</sup> By ornamental, I mean that Pip is akin to a prized show-sheep of sorts, raised specifically to impress, rather than to eat.

though wolves are known for their appetites, sheep are also capable of destruction; the overgrazing and environmental devastation of Australia caused by sheep in the nineteenth century is an all too pertinent example (Isenberg 145). Like the animal that underscores his creation, Pip is a possession, one that belongs to Magwitch. The sheep farmer states multiple times that Pip is his property, saying he is “the owner of such” (242); unlike Frankenstein, Magwitch takes full responsibility for his creation—and not only responsibility, but total ownership as well.

However, there is a space of time in which Pip is free from the oppression of the knowledge of his ownership. While he is in the process of creation, metaphorically roaming the pasture (London), Pip is free to do as he likes. This developmental portion of Pip’s life—the stage at which Pip is unaware of his status as creature—is also “haunted” (44) to use Hobsbawm’s word, by an industrial influence. With the rise of the Industrial Revolution, there is the rise of the consumer.

## CHAPTER 3

### APPETITE: PIP AS CONSUMER

Magwitch's creation of Pip is an active one, but one in which Pip remains unaware of his position for quite some time; now having examined what motives underlie Pip's creation, I will examine Pip's unwitting participation in his creation process, as well as the repercussions of this compliance both for himself and for others. During this time, Pip becomes a consumer. In this change from producer (as a blacksmith's apprentice) to consumer, Pip slowly hollows himself out, removing his own agency, family, and the other integral parts of his person.<sup>8</sup>

Simultaneously, Pip also imbibes Magwitch's gentleman programming. I will examine Pip as a consumer, and draw parallels between his acts as a consumer and the effects of his appetite, and the rise of consumerism in Britain and the effects of industrialization. In this section, progressing beyond the scope of Crawford and Stubblefield's concerns, the work of Martin J. Wiener,<sup>9</sup> Tamara Ketabgian, and Anna Kornbluh becomes more central to my argument. I widen my scope in this section, examining concerns of British culture, the Industrial Revolution, and finance in relation to Pip.

Pip's abandonment of his own agency and family has results that in some ways mirror the general societal shifts caused by the Industrial Revolution. With mass production came mass consumerism which resulted in the objectification of people as consumers, and the exploitation

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<sup>8</sup> For an in-depth exploration of agency, individuality, and determinism in connection to the Industrial Revolution, see Catherine Gallagher's *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction*.

<sup>9</sup> Wiener's work *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1880*, a work that forms much of the basis of this section sparked a response from W.D. Rubinstein in his work *Capitalism, Culture, and Decline in Britain*, which rejects the "cultural critique" (1) pursued by Wiener. Conscious of this divide in opinion among scholars, I still subscribe to the cultural critique as presented by Wiener.

of people and the environment. Both Pip and British society fail to recognize the full implications of such ravenous consumption until the dire consequences start to reveal themselves. In this section, I trace Pip's loss of agency, the consequences his lifestyle has for himself and those around him, and the ways in which these actions and consequences have parallels at the larger scale of British society. I will not attempt to draw direct one-to-one comparisons between Pip's actions and British society, but rather show how his actions can be interpreted as congruent with trends informed by the Industrial Revolution.

Once Pip embarks unwittingly down the path set for him by Magwitch, he becomes a consumer, and all other considerations fall by the wayside. Pip's status as a consumer is observed and acknowledged by more than just his friends. With Pip, we may see both his creation and the arc of his life as holding striking parallels with trends in Victorian society especially in terms of his consumerism. Here again, we can trace the undercurrent of the Industrial Revolution, even in his unwitting creation at the far-off hands of Magwitch.

With the rise of the Industrial Revolution British citizens welcomed a host of new things into their lives—railroads, major construction projects, and a multiplicity of new inventions that made every-day life easier. In a way, this ease is deceptive, and masks the true cost and consequences of these newly available, often cheaply available, products—much in the same way that the true consequences of Pip's acceptance of sponsorship are masked. Well-off British citizens with disposable income were seduced by the new and widely available goods; at the same time, other people—people concerned with the production of goods—became seduced by their ability to make more money by exploiting both people and the environment, without a care for the consequences of their actions.

First let us take into consideration Pip as seduced by money. Pip started off as a poor and often-abused boy, destined for a future as a blacksmith. Here, at the beginning of the novel, Pip is part of a pre-industrial apprenticeship system. It is during his apprenticeship that he is exposed to a different sort of life, and a different set of comforts. His general contentment with his life and trajectory as a future blacksmith is shattered by his visit to Satis house and his introduction to luxury items. Later, Pip laments “It is a most miserable thing to feel ashamed of home...,” “it was all coarse and common...,” and “The change [to now feel shame] was made in me; the thing was done. Well or ill done... it was done” (86-87). While these laments can, as most of what Pip says, be taken as futile objections to the ways of the world, or more precisely to the *reality* of his situation, his objections can also be read as a prescient acknowledgement of the later consequences of his choices.

Pip is seduced by money; he is seduced by an entire lifestyle of comfort and convenience. These comforts and conveniences do not sate Pip, but rather drive him to look for a greater level of comfort, and to become a consumer. He is directly identified as a devourer by the other blacksmith apprentice Orlick, who likens Pip to a wolf—seeing him as a voracious consumer who has managed to supplant his own attempts in the same direction (316-317). He recognizes Pip as consumer, and also sees the way in which Pip becomes defined by his appetite—Pip takes advantage of every opportunity he can get in his small town, and then having consumed these opportunities, he moves on to London to “consume” entertainments, fine clothes, and food.<sup>10</sup>

Pip’s will to consume is one of the factors in his own eventual reification, both as an object of Magwitch, and as an object of Miss Havisham. His desire to consume leads him along a

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<sup>10</sup> This consumption of goods aligns Pip closely with the transformation of the bourgeoisie and consumption of foods in the nineteenth century, an apt parallel that brings us full circle to the treatment of people as machines, a metaphor that became common during the second half of the century, especially during the Great Exhibition and the feeding of the masses of attendees (Rich 45,150).

breadcrumb trail of comforts until, figuratively speaking, he is caught in the trap. From his place as a small interchangeable part in Miss Havisham's plans, Pip goes on to become the hollowed-out husk into which Magwitch loads his gentleman program. Here it is interesting to note that through his constant consumption of goods and comforts, Pip becomes hollow—a vessel, free from individuation. It is, in turn, this vessel that Magwitch uses for his own plans. In consuming all he consumes, Pip destroys his own agency and input in his future. Literal destruction through the consumption of goods was also a major concern during this time.<sup>11</sup>

Similar to the way Pip is tempted to accept anonymous sponsorship because of its attendant material advantages, the British consumer during the Industrial Revolution is tempted to consume all the new and cheap goods available without considering the consequences. In participating in this consumer culture, they also became objects—objects which factories and business people profit from. As will be discussed shortly with Pip, the leap from consumer to object is not a hard one. While consumers must be catered to, they are little more than sheep that must be shepherded into spending their money as directed. Even to read *Great Expectations* would have originally required one to act as a consumer; one would have had to buy the publication, or obtain it through someone who had. Additionally, as one would have read *Great Expectations* in its original form, the reader would have been confronted with bids for their money through the advertisements published along with the installments of *Great Expectations* in *All Year Round*. Even as one reads about Pip's consumption of goods—and his eventual objectification—the reader is also in turn encouraged to consume. However, that is not to suggest that Dickens is encouraging people to consume indiscriminately; rather, he is encouraging them to consume a certain kind of “good” (in both senses of the word). While the periodical's purpose

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<sup>11</sup> Serious bodily damage and/or death could result from simply eating or drinking things considered staple parts of an English diet (“The Victorian Home”).

is to be purchased and consumed, Pip's actual story presents a caution against the unquestioning consumption of goods.

The environmental and social toll of the Industrial Revolution is also mirrored in the breakdown of Pip's social relations, further supporting the Industrial Revolution as an influence on *Great Expectations*. Instead of a pieced-together creature that becomes an individual, Pip is created through the deterioration of his familial ties, and the corrosion of his individuality apart from his role as consumer. Here we see another reversal, in which the creature (Pip) regresses away from agency and individuality rather than towards it. In consuming without awareness of the greater implications, Pip destroys much of his own agency and ability to direct his own future. Through his consumption, he steals from his future.

One can easily draw parallels between Pip's situation and the situation into which British Victorians put themselves. Through the creation of factory towns, pollution of all kinds became an exceedingly large problem. Children from the larger cities were often tricked into becoming indentured workers in factories, often dying of a condition called "cotton flue," as discussed in many autobiographies and memoirs of the time, such as that of Robert Blincoe (Brown 113-127).<sup>12</sup> Literally, Britain was stealing or diminishing its future (i.e. its younger citizens). Many such as Blincoe, even reference the Roman myth of Saturn devouring his children as a metaphor for Britain's treatment of children (Brown 110). Further instances of stealing from Britain's future emerge in the episode of the BBC documentary series *Hidden Killers*, in which historian Suzannah Lipscomb explores how children suffered as a result of individuals and institutions' pursuit of profits. The death toll due to practices such as the cutting of bread with plaster of

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<sup>12</sup> The Broadview title *Factory Lives*, edited by James R. Simmons Jr., provides a wealth of information on working class lives through its supplementary materials and collection of autobiographies by working-class people in Britain during the nineteenth century.

Paris, adding borax to remove the smell (but not the bacteria) from bad milk, and adding metal filings to tea, reached into the thousands throughout the Victorian era (“The Victorian Home”).

Just as lives and families were thrown away by the factories and food providers in pursuit of wealth, so too does Pip throw away—abandon—his friend and father figure, Joe. Joe, the husband of Pip’s abusive sister, is the closest thing Pip has to a loving father and family. However, Joe is abandoned by Pip in pursuit of wealth. Looking back on his treatment of Joe, Pip remarks “it was for the convict [Magwitch]... that I had deserted Joe” (243). Joe becomes just the first steppingstone towards money. Joe, in spite of his care for Pip, merges into the rest of the crowd of human beings that Pip associates with, and then moves away from, in order to gain his goal. Estella puts this trend into words for Pip, observing that “Since your change of fortune and prospects, you have changed your companions... necessarily... what was fit company for you once, would be quite unfit company for you now” (182). Joe joins the ranks of the Finches of the Grove, Herbert’s father, and others as a no longer useful item that Pip has used, and then abandoned. Though selfish and incorrect as to whom Pip should show gratitude, the words of Mr. Pumblechook still ring true that Pip has a “total deficiency of common human gratioode [sic]” (352). However, Pip slowly comes to realize this fact for himself.

Much like with the environmental and social toll, the true damage of which was not fully realized until a later date, so too the full extent of the social and personal damage done to Pip is only felt once he is fully enmeshed in Magwitch’s own plans. However, it is not so much the toll as the embarrassment that is initially evident. “The Big Reveal,” the moment Magwitch arrives and announces himself as Pip’s benefactor, is the moment at which Pip realizes in horror what his consumption of goods has truly cost him. Though perhaps the Victorians never had—other than the Great Stink—an epiphany in which they realized what their consumption was causing,

the parallels between Pip's behavior and British societal trends remain—though as we shall see, Pip reveals a greater grasp of the implications of his situation than his societal mirror. As Martin J. Wiener observes, “It is a historic irony that the nation that gave birth to the industrial revolution... should have become embarrassed at the measure of its success” (5). In effect, England becomes embarrassed of the thing that brought about its prosperity. Much like Pip, English society “[adopted] a conception of Englishness that virtually excluded industrialism” (5). Similarly, Pip excludes Magwitch from his definition of a gentleman, as can be seen in his struggle to dress Magwitch as a gentleman, but also through his own rejection of Magwitch's money. In Pip's struggles with Magwitch, we can see the same discomfort and embarrassment that Wiener explores between Victorian society and the Industrial Revolution. Embarrassed by the machinations that lead to their comfortable lifestyles, both reject the means to their higher positions. However, Pip's horror, as we shall see in the next section, goes deeper than just an embarrassment at the economic machinery that underlies his prosperity.

Here, I would like to add a brief note about Pip's consumption of others rather than his use and abandonment of others, and of the attempted consumption of one person in particular. While luxuries and wealth are noteworthy considerations in Pip's decision to leave blacksmithing behind, the prospect of Estella—as luxurious object—is an important one. Pip, much like Frankenstein's creature, goes in pursuit of a companion. Even here, the reenvisioning takes on industrial connotations through Pip's misreading and objectification of Estella. Unable to “make” his own companion, just as he is unable to “make” his own friends as a consumer rather than a creator, Pip misreads Estella as an object and advertisement. While at first Pip mistakes her for an advertisement for a more luxurious lifestyle, he soon conflates her with the means to achieving that lifestyle, and even as a product created specifically for himself.

Through the criticism of both his hands and his boots as functional objects, we can see the beginnings of Pip's transformation from a productive individual with a craft, to decorative object. At first, Pip is made to feel shame at his appearance, and this shame leads him towards his attempts at upward social mobility. While Kornbluh interprets Estella as "[signifying] Pip's confusion of finance and feeling..." (59) in her reading of *Great Expectations*' relationship with capital and finance, I suggest instead that Pip responds to Estella's contempt as if it is a type of advertisement narration, and then reads her as a product and remedy.<sup>13</sup> Pip voices his shame, saying that "her contempt for me was so strong that it became infectious, and I caught it" (52). Further, he addresses his shame for the specific items of his person that Estella is critical of, saying "I took the opportunity of being alone in the court-yard, to look at my coarse hands and my common boots. My opinion of those accessories was not favourable. They had never troubled me before, but they troubled me now, as vulgar appendages" (53). It is significant that Pip is ashamed specifically of his hands and his boots. His hands are rough because he uses them for work; Pip's hands indicate his status as a producer rather than just a consumer. Similarly, Pip's boots are a source of shame because of their sturdy functionality.

Pip's shame rests in his status as something other than a pure consumer; his boots and the criticism they receive, hinge on appearance and usefulness, but here a certain difference emerges. Estella describes Pip's boots as "thick" (52), whereas in turn Pip describes them as "common" (53). Pip takes Estella's original criticism, and immediately begins to translate it through his concerns about his societal status. While "thick" may denote common or clunky boots, it also implies functionality and serviceability. In saying the boots are thick, it seems a criticism of their status as functional, rather than decorative, objects. However, Pip translates this criticism of his

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<sup>13</sup> Susan Walsh in her article "Bodies of Capital: *Great Expectations* and the Climacteric Economy" (89-90) and Tamara Ketabgian in *Realizing Capital* (53-62) both touch upon Estella as a kind of enticement in economic terms, but do not read her as an advertisement formed by Pip's misreading of her.

boots into a criticism of his class status. Not wanting to abandon Joe in his first longings towards wealth, Pip wishes that “Joe had been rather more genteelly brought up, and then [he] should have been so too” (53). Here, as of yet, Pip has not forsaken his original social ties in his desire to be a gentleman; in this passage, Pip actually puts Joe first, wanting a higher station for Joe. However, Pip’s own wants are close behind, and he seemingly only desires a higher station for Joe so that he can also be well brought up as a result of Joe’s standing. At this point in the novel, Pip’s wishes do not exclude Joe. However, as we know, Pip does eventually abandon Joe in his pursuit of wealth and comfort.

Estella is the first one to truly make Pip aware of his inferiority, and Pip misreads her as the antidote rather than simply the *herald* of his lower class conditions. In some ways she can be seen as a cause of his pursuit of wealth, as Kornbluh suggests, and Pip himself articulates, “Truly, it was impossible to dissociate her presence from all those wretched hankerings after money and gentility...” (Dickens 182). Pip sees her as an antidote to his terminal class status, while simultaneously objectifying her. Estella’s criticism functions in a way similar to advertisements; Pip who, of his own admission, clarifies that his appearance and clothing “had never troubled [him] before...” (53), is now deeply troubled by them and looks for a way to remedy this trouble. I do not mean to suggest that Estella advertises herself to Pip, but rather that Pip mistakes her for an advertisement and remedy, instead of as just the “narrator” of his situation.

Much like a commercial, Estella instills a need in Pip, but in truth she only acts as the voice for this advertisement of an upper class lifestyle. By voice, I mean either the text or audible voice in an advertisement that alerts us to our hitherto unknown need. In this case, if Estella was literally voicing her unintended advertisement she might ask, “have coarse, disgusting, clumsy

hands? Wear thick common boots?” in order to create the initial need or insecurity. Estella, much like the narrator of an advertisement, creates an insecurity and need in Pip that he then wishes to fill. However, Estella as advertisement is a category created entirely by Pip’s misreading of her. Estella is content to simply create insecurity and offer nothing further. She does not suggest a course of action, viewing Pip as entirely incapable of social improvement. Once insecurity and dissatisfaction are awakened, these feelings spread to other items besides Pip’s appearance; soon, his newfound discontent spreads to his home life as well, as succinctly summed up in his observation that “it is a most miserable thing to feel ashamed of home” (86). Pip is made to feel ashamed, but also prompted by his shame to seek another lifestyle in consequence. While Estella causes this shame and misery, Pip sees Estella and her social standing—as a well off and wealthy individual—as the remedy for his insecurities.

By seeing Estella as the product that he must acquire, Pip objectifies her and spends a great number of years in the pursuit of this product. Soon he is even convinced that she is a product created—or at least destined—specifically for him. Hints at Estella’s objectification are also present in Pip’s conversation with Magwitch, who declares “They [any girl Pip fancies] shall be yourn, dear boy, if money can buy ‘em” (242). While Pip is repulsed by the idea, his own actions are only a circuitous version of the same method towards gaining Estella. For Pip, the acquisition of wealth and a higher social standing are only means to gain the true redemptory object: Estella. However, when, like British society, he is confronted by the origins of his prosperity, he rejects it. Pip spends and consumes, all in pursuit of the actual product he wants. In his pursuit of the ultimate object, Pip consumes, but more importantly, allows himself to be consumed.

## CHAPTER 4

### INTERCHANGEABLE: PIP AS OBJECT

Pip is complicit in his objectification, but unwittingly so. Magwitch has chosen him as the receptacle for his gentleman program and Pip, through his acts as a consumer, unknowingly makes himself the perfect housing—the correct hardware for the software. In this section I draw parallels between Magwitch’s actions, and concerns expressed in nineteenth-century critical social writings, particularly those concerned with the relationship between different classes, such as the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Additionally, Kornbluh’s work, *Realizing Capital*, now comes to the fore, with its exploration of Pip as not strictly a person, but as “an institution of a person” (63). In her work, Kornbluh examines *Great Expectations* in terms of finance, but also draws connections between Marx’s work, and realist novels published contemporaneously with it. Using Kornbluh’s analysis as a starting point, I examine how *Great Expectations* demonstrates some of the same dynamics described by nineteenth-century social critics of the Industrial Revolution and the exploitation of the proletariat especially in the relationship between Magwitch and Pip. In this discussion, I explore the reification of Pip, and contend for the importance of understanding the reader’s potential implication in this objectification, especially in connection to Pip’s shock at the revelation of his benefactor. In this section, I argue that Pip becomes an interchangeable part in the larger machines of Magwitch, Miss Havisham, and Herbert Pocket’s personal agendas, and that Pip’s status as an interchangeable part links him with the ideals of Industrial Revolution. Finally, I examine how

Pip's status as an interchangeable part ultimately allows for both his objectification, but also his recovery from his fall in status accompanying the death of Magwitch.

Magwitch's own means to his revenge upon the upper class—his creation of Pip— involves his own willing exploitation of the proletariat by means of his wealth. My object is not to analyze Pip's creation or reification in terms of a particular school of Marxist thought, but rather to examine the way that *Great Expectations*, a realist novel, reflects the reification of the lower class in a way that is consistent with philosophical ideals of Karl Marx whose writings are contemporary with *Great Expectations*. In other words, I mention Marx's writings to draw connections between work directly focused on the effects of the Industrial Revolution, and fictional work that is informed by the revolution though not directly focused on it. In this way, I approach the topic from a standpoint similar to Kornbluh, who approaches “the first volume of *Capital* as a Victorian novel in order to approach anew its insights into finance capital” (19), I instead treat *Great Expectations* as a novel that critically explores capitalism and class dynamics in terms very similar to those treated contemporaneously by Marx in a more overt fashion. In this way, the Industrial Revolution shows itself as a major contributor to the concerns *Great Expectations* displays.

True to the theory of class dynamics outlined by Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto* (342-45, 349-53), the moment Magwitch attains wealth he begins to use it to exploit others. In fact, the root of his exploitation of Pip does not begin with his attainment of wealth, but within his own imagination, with simply the prospect of wealth. Magwitch lays out these origins of his design clearly for both the reader and for Pip, saying “I swore that time, sure as ever I earned a guinea, that guinea should go to you. I swore arterwards, sure as ever I spec'lated and got rich, you should get rich” (240). Even before Magwitch gains his wealth, he begins to

make plans for how he will exploit others. Though at first his actions may seem selflessly generous, anything apart from Magwitch's own wants and plans is not consulted. In other words, Magwitch's plans rely on the use of Pip as a blank slate—or receptacle—for Magwitch's plans and money. Pip himself is not important to Magwitch except in so far as he can function as a piece of property.

It is important to note that when Magwitch “creates” Pip, Pip does not function as an individual unit; instead, he operates as a single part in Magwitch's overall plan to create a gentleman. Pip is only the interchangeable shell for Magwitch's creation, one that Magwitch chose out of convenience rather than deliberation or search. As he admires his handiwork—his created gentleman—Magwitch exclaims, “I says... I'll make that boy a gentleman! And I done it. Why, look at you dear, boy! Look at these here lodgings o'yourn, fit for a lord! A lord? Ah! You shall show money with lords for wagers, and beat 'em!” (241). Like some proud purveyor of his invention at the Great Exhibition, Magwitch declares, “Look at your linen... Look at your clothes...” and again, “how good-looking you have growed!” (241). There is never a point at which Magwitch recognizes Pip's right to ownership of his own person. His confidence in his ownership is unshakeable. Even at the novel's denouement, the mortally wounded Magwitch tells Pip, “It's best as a gentleman should not be knowed to belong to me now” (332). Magwitch never once doubts his ownership.

Along with Magwitch's assumption that he owns Pip, he is also quite certain that, like a shepherd, he can get Pip to do whatever he wants him to. Magwitch declares that Pip “*shall* show money with lords for wagers, and beat 'em!” and further, that he “*shall* read... [books] to me, dear boy!” (241; emphasis mine). Rather than being content to say Pip *could* beat lords, Magwitch makes it clear that he intends to make Pip do so. Pip is given no choice in the matter.

There are many ways in which Magwitch could have phrased his excitement looking forward to his future experiences with Pip, and out of all of these nearly infinite options, he chooses to make it clear in no uncertain terms that Pip *will* do what he is told. Not only will Pip obey, but Magwitch encourages Pip to do so in silence. Reassuring the thunderstruck Pip, Magwitch says, “Don't you mind talking, Pip... you can't do better nor keep quiet, dear boy” (241). Pip's words do not matter, only his looks and gentlemanly capabilities do. While Magwitch's insistence that Pip shall read to him may seem to counteract his silencing of Pip, it further reinforces it. In reading to Magwitch, Pip will not be forming his own words, but acting as a conduit for the thoughts of others, thoughts that are verbalized for the entertainment of someone else. At no point does Magwitch take into consideration Pip's personal plans or aspirations.

Pip is raised—programmed—and then harvested for the purposes or enjoyment of others. Magwitch has come back to “stand by and look at you...” and “to see my gentleman spend his money *like* a gentleman. That'll be *my* pleasure” (248; emphasis in orig.). Here his profession also informs his treatment of Pip. In effect, he is coming back to harvest Pip's accomplishments as a “brought-up London gentleman...” (242)—Pip's accomplishments being his metaphorical wool. Magwitch does not want to kill Pip, but rather wishes to harvest Pip's intellectual fleece. More literally, Magwitch does clothe himself in Pip's actual clothing upon arrival; he asks for Pip's “gentleman's linen” (243). As mentioned above, he is impressed by Pip's actual clothing as much as he is by his mental clothing; to Magwitch, Pip is a sheep that has grown a double coat, one mental and one physical, and he intends to harvest both. Yet, amidst both these coats, Magwitch has no regard for Pip as a person—it is only the things that Magwitch has given Pip externally *and* internally that he admires.

With Magwitch's return, Pip finally realizes his position as an object. Pip's narration underscores the fact that he now understands that he has been commodified. He describes Magwitch looking at him "with an air of admiring proprietorship..." (250), an action that alerts us at once to both Magwitch's view of their relationship, as well as Pip's consciousness of Magwitch's view. As proprietor, one must have a business or an object to purvey; Pip is that object. We may note that Magwitch admires his creation, and seems to have an emotional attachment to Pip. Indeed, he is undeniably emotionally involved with his creation. However, he is emotionally involved with his *creation*, his organic cyborg, and not necessarily with Pip. Pip as a person does not seem of much interest to Magwitch, who is content to admire his own handiwork, detail to his creation how he (Pip) was created, before proceeding to lay out before him the direction he has chosen for the rest of his creation's life.

Unlike Victor Frankenstein, Magwitch has definite plans for his creation, and does not entertain the idea of his creation's reluctance to perform for even a moment. I choose the word *perform* deliberately here, because it is the way Pip is designed to function: he is there to perform the part of a gentleman for the enjoyment of his creator. Magwitch's view of Pip as a product is easily masked by his enthusiasm—which tends to make him more sympathetic—but also by his wealth.

At first, we may be tempted to overlook the way in which Pip is treated, based on our own programming. In other words, the capitalism involved, and the reader's own participation and involvement in capitalistic structures, can easily mask the monstrous nature of Pip's creation and objectification. Pip is constructed by Magwitch, through the use of money, and created to use money; Pip is given fine clothes and as much money as he wants. What person has not dreamed of being wealthy enough to buy whatever they desire? The seeming positivity of Pip's

status as a creation of Magwitch masks the substantial drawbacks of Pip's situation, especially in terms of his agency in his own past, present and future.

Magwitch compromises Pip's agency in the past before he can even be said to have had full agency of his own. As a small child of seven, Pip meets Magwitch in a graveyard, and is told to bring him food to eat, and a file to break his chains. Pip does exactly as he is told, stealing from his family to do so. Magwitch also compromises Pip as a young man in the "present" of the novel.<sup>14</sup> Pip must live in a particular city, and live in a particular way. Even though Pip believes he is living how he chooses and in the way he wants, in reality, he is being raised for a specific purpose from a distance by Magwitch and his money. Perhaps most disturbing of all, is that Pip's agency in the future is *also* compromised by Magwitch. Pip's creator makes this reality apparent even in his initial speeches to Pip. As previously discussed, *shall* becomes an operative word for Magwitch; whenever he speaks of Pip's future, he describes what he (Pip) *will* do, not what he *can* do. There is no can or could for Magwitch, only a single future which he has laid out before Pip through his use of money. While, of course, there is always *some* level of choice left to humans until the moment of death, Pip's choices in life are confined by Magwitch to a certain set of possibilities—in short, his present and future are effectively restricted by Magwitch and his money.

Money, and especially the acquisition of money, is generally considered a good thing; this mindset is what clouds both the readers' and Pip's judgment. Blinded by the prospect of money, Pip allows himself to be turned into a gentleman "bred to no calling... fit for nothing" (256). Enticed by money, he is lured into a deceptively easy way of life before having his true situation revealed to him. His true situation is, from Pip's point of view, that of a decorative but useless object. In defining his own uselessness, Pip bases his definition off of his inability to

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<sup>14</sup> What I consider the "present" is Pip's time spent in London up until the point of Magwitch's arrival.

exert his own agency, or accomplish anything of his own design. This same inability to exert agency is seen elsewhere as well. Tellingly, Herbert Pocket later makes Pip into a new useful object. Additionally, Pip, when speaking to Miss Havisham, gives up his agency even in the area of friendship by saying that “they made themselves my friends” (269). By describing his acquisition of friends in this way, Pip removes himself from even the ability to “make” friends.

Though at first it may seem that Pip has been created individually and with great care, rather than on an assembly line, this is not the case. It is important to understand and keep in mind the distinction between Pip as a person, and Magwitch’s product. Pip is merely a *part* of Magwitch’s final product (which is essentially an organic gentleman machine), and not the actual product itself. Of course, through Pip’s phrasing, descriptions of events and facts, it is easy to start viewing him as the actual final product. Pip’s body is merely the housing—the outer casing—of Magwitch’s true creation, and he is a casing chosen for convenience and for his non-individuality that allows him to function as a generic part. Pip is chosen for no special merit, but simply because he was present and did as he was told from the start. So while Pip is a product, he is only an interchangeable part of Magwitch’s greater design.

Having seen how Pip’s present and future are compromised by Magwitch, let us return to the concept of money as an intrinsically a good thing. The audience may be tempted to view the acquisition of money and a rise in society as unobjectionable, and see Pip’s horror as somewhat ridiculous. Indeed, Pip’s initial density when it comes to the true identity of his benefactor *is* hilarious; but the intentionally humorous framing masks the seriousness and legitimacy of Pip’s reaction. The reader may wonder, “Who cares who’s supporting his comfortable life, as long as he has the money and gets to have fun?” This mindset belies some serious implications. At a basic level, of course, it assumes that Pip holds the same values and wants as the reader. And at

first, Pip does seem to hold these values. However, once he discovers the true base of his fortunes, he is locked in complete horror. In dismissing Pip's reaction as simply pedantic or childish disappointment, we potentially dismiss the legitimacy of Pip's feelings. Pip, with the appearance and explanation of Magwitch, has discovered that he is nothing more than a construct for someone else—the housing for someone else's plans and aspirations.

In discounting Pip's reaction as childishness brought about by the disappointment of his own plans, we ignore the seriousness of his situation and also implicate ourselves in Pip's objectification. Certainly, Dickens presents Pip as pedantic and childish, but this framing is precisely what can cause us to dismiss the fact that Pip also has legitimate grounds for being horrified. His shock and despair can be read as rooted in something deeper than just surprise and a sense of wounded pride. What has Pip, in effect, found out about himself from the appearance of Magwitch? In Pip's own words, "All the truth of my position came flashing on me; and its disappointments, dangers, disgraces, consequences of all kinds, rushed in in such a multitude that I was borne down by them and had to struggle for every breath I drew" (240). Pip is shaken to the core by the revelation, and rightly so. However, the reader is prompted by the narration to feel some amount of glee tinged with vindictive triumph, having known all along that Pip was wrong in his assumptions about his benefactor and their intentions.<sup>15</sup> Magwitch's appearance and their first conversation enforce a sense of comedy, as Pip still does not at first understand his position. Even when Pip finally understands, he goes so far as to ask Magwitch "was there no one else?" (241). Surprised, Magwitch replies "who else should there be?" (241). Only the reader and Pip are aware of the sheer magnitude of his error in his assumptions about his benefactor. In asking who else there might have been, Magwitch highlights Pip's total lack of evidence for his

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<sup>15</sup> The juxtaposition of the enforced secrecy surrounding Pip's benefactor and Pip's own absolute (and entirely unsupported) conviction as to the identity of the benefactor is what first alerts and then continues to hint at Pip's error throughout the novel.

previous convictions. Pip's continued disbelief in the face of all the evidence is played for its full humorous effect, allowing the reader to respond with amusement and even glee to the fact that Pip was indeed wrong all along. This glee, much like the belief that upward mobility is intrinsically good, can mask some important implications.

The reader can easily become complicit in the objectification of Pip because of the way the text sets up the revelation of Pip's situation. Through the novel's many hints that Pip's assumptions are wrong—such as Estella and Miss Havisham's comportment towards him directly after his rise in station—the reader is tempted to discount the seriousness of Pip's reaction to Magwitch's revelation. Further, the reader's own status as a member of capitalist society serves to mask Pip's plight. As mentioned previously, the reader may ask “Who cares who's supporting his comfortable life, as long as he has the money and gets to have fun?” Additionally, the reader may also be tempted to gloss over the legitimacy of Pip's horror because Dickens sets him up as an unlikeable and exasperatingly dense character. At the point of Magwitch's revelation, the text prompts the reader to interpret Pip as naïve because of his assumptions, but also because of his repugnance to Magwitch and his wealth. And though the reader is prompted to respond in this way, the underlying implications are still present.

A similar horror on the part of Pip, and glee on the part of the reader, occurs when Pip must come to terms with his second objectification. In addition to willfully—though unwittingly—being objectified by Magwitch, Pip also allows himself to be objectified by Miss Havisham. His objectification by her predates Magwitch's objectification of him, because it is direct and immediate. Instead of influencing Pip from afar, Miss Havisham invites Pip into the inner sanctum of her house. Curiously, it is in a house named Satis House, a name that Estella points out is “Latin... for enough” (49), that Pip first becomes *dissatisfied*. Further, Estella states

that there is a kind of legend that “whoever had this house, could want nothing else” (49). While it is worth noting that it is in this house that Pip begins to feel that nothing he has is quite enough, there is a further interpretation that goes beyond a curious observation.

Estella certainly speaks about the house itself, but when Pip’s actions, and especially Pip’s objectification of Estella is taken into consideration, we can also read the phrase “this house,” as Estella speaking of her own body, or foreshadowing how her own body becomes viewed as the ultimate prize or object by which many of the characters measure their success. Miss Havisham is unsatisfied because she cannot wring love from a creature she has created *not* to love, and Pip remains unsatisfied because he cannot attain Estella either physically or emotionally. In light of the fact that Pip later conflates Estella with what he needs to be satisfied, it is noteworthy that here she speaks to him directly of the possession of a house causing ultimate satisfaction. Yet, as we find out after Estella’s marriage to Mr. Drummle, even possession of Estella through marriage does not gain one Satis House—or any true satisfaction in having gained Estella. Estella may be the guiding star of Pip’s aspirations, but this occurs because of Pip’s objectification of her, and through his multiple conflation of her with advertisements, objects, and states of being such as success or fulfillment.

Pip, once his status as Magwitch’s creation is revealed, also in turn realizes his objectification by Miss Havisham. Through Pip’s narration we understand he is an interchangeable part of a greater plan. The greater plan in this instance is the creation of Estella. Pip bitterly articulates:

Miss Havisham’s intentions towards me, [were] all a mere dream; Estella [was] not designed for me; I only suffered in Satis House as a convenience, a sting for the greedy relations, a model with a mechanical heart to practise on when no other practice was at

hand; those were the first smarts I had. But, the sharpest and deepest pain of all... [was] that I had deserted Joe. (243)

Here, Pip realizes multiple things in quick succession. The two foremost realizations are his social relations and his reification. While at first he is concerned with himself, he then delves deeper into his feelings and articulates what he finds most reprehensible about his actions: the neglect of his familial ties. One may be tempted to read Pip's remorse, as Kornbluh does (60), as still implying that if Estella had been the real prize, then forsaking Joe would have been justified. I suggest instead that at this juncture Pip realizes not that he has made a failed investment, but rather that he has objectified himself and hurt others in the process. It is an acknowledgement of his own actions and an instant of lucidity.

While Pip partially understands his position as an objectified tool, he still fails to realize the smallness of himself—in short, at this stage, he fails to realize he is a component of a greater machine. Pip refers to himself as “a model with a mechanical heart to practise on when no other practice was at hand...” (243), a description that identifies him as an object, but ignores the fact that even though he may be a “whole” object in and of himself (a model), he is only a part of Miss Havisham's larger social machinations; that greater machine in this instance is Miss Havisham's revenge: Estella's creation. Pip is like a single part in the assembly line machinery of another machine within a factory. Here, he functions as part of the construction line for another organic cyborg, Estella. However, to continue our focus on Pip, we can observe how he is both simultaneously aware, and still unaware of his place as a small object in Miss Havisham's larger machine of creation. His place as an interchangeable part in Miss Havisham's plans is further recognizable if one examines the way in which Pip was originally chosen, and the experiences of his friend Herbert.

Not only is Pip an interchangeable part, but he is not even Miss Havisham's first choice as a part. As Herbert explains to Pip, Miss Havisham had originally attempted to use Herbert in her machine instead. Herbert describes his visit as "a trial visit" (139). But Herbert does not prove the right fit for Miss Havisham's plans, and she asks about for any boy that Mr. Pumblechook might know instead. Pip is not chosen for his individuality, or even as perhaps a remarkable non-individual; he is simply chosen through convenience. Unlike Herbert, who is a fighter both literally and figuratively, Pip is passive. He puts up with both the physical and mental abuse Estella heaps upon him, and does not attempt to fight back. In a way, one could characterize him as absorbent. Without a fighting spirit or seeming will of his own, Pip fills the position of the generic boy Miss Havisham required.

While the above passage provides insight into Pip's awareness of his objectification and place as a part, the most revealing and intensely aware passage in the text occurs near the end of the novel when Pip falls into what he describes as a fever. During this fever, he relates in detail that

I suffered greatly, that I often lost my reason, that the time seemed interminable, that I confounded impossible existences with my own identity; that I was a brick in the house-wall, and yet entreating to be released from the giddy place where the builders had set me; that I was a steel beam of a vast engine, clashing and whirling over a gulf, and yet that I implored in my own person to have the engine stopped, and my part in it hammered off; that I passed through these phases of disease, I know of my own remembrance, and did in some sort know at the time. (343)

Even though Pip is intent on seeing himself as deprived of reason during his illness—and indeed I do not mean to suggest that what he sees is a literal *physical* reality—he is in some ways at his

most lucid, especially in terms of his own place in his social relations. In this dream he finally sees himself as simply a part, and even names himself as such. His place as a small element in a larger structure is visually articulated, and shows a change from his earlier understanding of himself as a single and complete object as he did when describing himself as a model—quite literally a dummy—for Estella to practice on. In this dream, Pip’s two incarnations root themselves in the parts he plays in the plans of Miss Havisham and Magwitch.

At first in the fever, Pip sees himself as part of a “house-wall,” suggesting that he may be in a domestic setting. However, the term “house” can be read as referring to a generic building. The use of the term “house” instead of “home,” also suggests that the building in which he is a brick may not be a residential one. The building, in light of the later mention of an engine, can be interpreted as possibly an industrial one. Reading the building in this way links Pip’s place as a brick with his place as only a housing or *part* of a housing for the creation of other things. Interpreting Pip as part of a manufacturing house ties him closely with his place in Miss Havisham’s schemes, where he is only a tiny piece that plays an entirely passive role in Estella’s creation.<sup>16</sup>

The second stage of the dream easily connects to Pip’s place as Magwitch’s creation. The second image Pip discusses is that of an “engine” (343), another structure that remains ambiguous; we are not told what kind of engine it is. Like the house in which he saw himself as a brick, the engine could be interpreted as many possible machines. The engine is describe as “whirling,” and Pip as a “beam” (343), but these hints are so vague as to leave us unable to settle for certain what kind of engine it actually is. Further ambiguity comes from the use of the word “engine” which at the time could have meant a number of different inventions or machines.

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<sup>16</sup> As a small piece of a larger machine, one may be reminded of Marx’s observations in *Capital*, that workers are “parts of a mechanical apparatus of a machine,” the “organ of [a] partial function” (499, 458).

However, what is certain is that once again Pip sees himself as a part of a greater structure, one with industrial connotations. And while Pip's hallucinations place him as only a component, Pip is, again, able to see himself as a single unit *within* the greater structure—in this case, as a beam in an engine.

Unlike in the first instance, where we can easily interpret Pip's place as one of simple support (and of delineating outside and inside), his actual purpose in the second image is less intuitive. There is no obvious function to a "beam" (343) in an engine. Beams do not always function as support, especially in engines, and the vagueness of the actual type of engine itself leaves us with little by which to guess the engine's purpose, much less Pip's exact function.

In both cases, there is ambiguity in the purpose of the overall structures themselves. Neither the identity of the building nor the identity of the engine is revealed. Both instances support an industrially based interpretation of the images as referencing the ties between Pip and his life as created by Miss Havisham and Magwitch. This fever imagery also links the novel in a much more concrete way to the contemporary social writings of its time concerned with the relationship between humans and industrial machines. What little can be ascertained with reasonable certainty is the industrial nature of the building and the engine. Even within these structures, Pip still appears—functions—as a whole and individual element. The fact that he still sees himself as a single and entire element, even within these structures, is an important element of his situation.

Pip's awareness that he is only a single feature in either of these machines is significant in that it shows that he as an individual is separate from the goals of both Magwitch and Miss Havisham, and that he is also separate-able. While he does not seem to have dreams or larger plans outside those that are forced upon him, Pip does at least have his own thoughts and will—

he is a thinking, moving individual in the barest sense. Though he is a brick and a beam, Pip also tells us “I implored in my own person to have the engine stopped, and my part in it hammered off” (343). This passage underscores Pip’s awareness of himself as a part, but also shows a glimmer of something resembling individuality in the supplication to be hammered off. In addition, the scene finally shows a level of self-assertion towards something that he desires purely of his own volition. In asking to be separated from the machine, Pip at once shows us that on some level he is capable of personal agency, and—though he is ultimately directionless on his own—he still has the will to separate himself from a position that he does not care for. In this supplication, we can see hints of individualism in the sense that he both sees himself as a part, but also is able to articulate his wish to be separated from the larger structure he is a part of.

Due to Pip’s serious illness, his mention of wanting to be hammered off may at first seem like a death wish. However, I read this wish for separation instead as an important assertion of Pip’s individuality and, at some level, his own agency. While he may be a part of a larger industrial engine, in seeing himself as only a part, *instead of as the machine itself*, the novel allows room for reading him as having agency and usefulness outside of the various vengeful functions into which others have put him. He is not inseparable from the plans of Magwitch and Miss Havisham. Instead, as only a part—a part that can sue for its own separation—we can catch a glimpse of a sense of self and individuality that supports his recovery. While he was trained to be a single-function machine by both Miss Havisham and Magwitch, Pip’s status as an individual—and also as an individual part—allows him ultimately to undergo a type of industrial retraining. Though Pip is broken down and hammered off through his illness, he convalesces—comes together—into a new function.

However, this new functioning position is also steeped in capitalistic deterministic overtones. While Pip is able to sue for his prolonged separation from the machinations of others, it seems only possible in his dreams. Recovering from his ordeal, he simply falls prey to another creator: Herbert. Herbert, upon first meeting Pip in London, describes himself as “A Capitalist—an insurer of ships” (144). In fact, he capitalizes on the capitalism of others. It is Herbert, then, who repurposes Pip after his fall. Because he and Pip are friends, it would appear that there is more than pure capitalism involved. However, the personal ties may only serve as an easy way for Herbert to find an easily interchangeable “clerk part” for his capitalistic machine.<sup>17</sup> Here, we see a shift from Pip as a part in a system in which the means of production are elsewhere (in Australia), to one in which he is directly involved in the capitalistic process. Pip starts as a clerk in Herbert’s company, and slowly works his way—in true capitalistic fashion—upwards in his new place in the “engine.” In Pip’s life, he is constantly at the will of others, even once Herbert employs him. Pip lives with Herbert, and has no place of his own; just as he previously lived in the housing provided by the money of Magwitch, he now lives in housing provided by his new capitalistic manager. While Pip does rise from his original station, it is only ever through becoming a small easily replaceable part in the schemes of others. Yet there is a difference between Pip’s appropriation by Magwitch and Miss Havisham, and his appropriation by Herbert.

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<sup>17</sup> By “personal ties,” I only mean Herbert’s acquaintance with Pip, and not Pip’s long-secret charitable acts towards Herbert’s endeavors.

## CHAPTER 5

### CODA: PIP AND FORMS OF CHARITY

Throughout *Great Expectations*, charity becomes inextricably connected to capitalism and objectification. This connection begins not when Magwitch designates Pip as the recipient of his wealth, but when Pip invests his money secretly in Herbert Pocket's endeavors. This act of charity ultimately ensures Herbert's success and as well as Pip's continued circulation in the capitalist system. While Kornbluh reads Pip's charity in terms of an investment, arguing that "Pip's 'one good deed' perpetuates Herbert's economic confusion... thus interven[ing] in the models of interiority..." (51), I read it as connected to Pip's status as creature; Pip is created and re-created continually to function as an interchangeable part in the schemes of others. What is important about Pip's charity is that it both ensures his continued recirculation in the capitalist system, but also provides a possible critique of the capitalistic system via its reliance on outside un-earned capital to realize success, whether it be donations of money, or land taken by force. In this coda, I focus on Pip's capitalistic function under Herbert, and how it is softened by awareness, social ties, and charity.

This time, Pip is aware of his purpose and the motives of his employer from the beginning. In this awareness a fresh sense of self-determination allowed him. Previously, Pip was used without the motives and goal of his user being fully evident to him. With Herbert however, he has been aware of this friend's goals from the start. In this position of clarity, there are no visions of horror or a wish for release as occurred previously. Additionally, Pip can now take on a level of self-assertion and rise through the hierarchy of the company to become "third

in the firm...” (355). Aware of his purpose, he can freely choose for himself whether he wishes to cooperate or not. Social ties, no doubt, play a part in his rise through the ranks of the company, if only as an incentive to work hard for the success of his friend. Social ties bind Pip more firmly into the capitalistic system, but also make such a position seem enjoyable. While Herbert gets what he wants in terms of labor, he also contributes to an emotionally based and mutually-beneficial relationship with Pip. In this final capitalistic relationship, a level of mutual understanding and respect prevails rather than the systematic domination previously experienced. Pip maintains his individuality through an informed involvement with his friend’s company at a personal rather than purely professional level. There is the sense that although his future is still driven by others, they are others that he knows and cares for.

Charity further serves to soften and complicate Pip’s final situation; additionally, the issue remains whether we should read charity as triumphing over capitalism or being consumed by it. Pip’s one “uncapitalistic” non-consuming act saves him from utter ruin, but this same act cements his place in capitalism and allows capitalism to thrive. Mr. Wemmick, a clerk with a strong business sense, councils Pip strongly against funding his friend’s endeavors, saying “pitch your money into the Thames...and you know the end of it. Serve a friend with it, and you may know the end of it too—but it’s a less pleasant and profitable end” (221). This advice is free from the personal involvement that Pip has with Herbert. In going against the council of others, and especially that of the financially savvy Wemmick, Pip ultimately ensures his own place in the capitalist system. The successful capitalistic enterprise of the book depends on charity, just as Pip’s mostly happy professional situation at the end of the novel does. As with social ties, charity performs a softening function in the area of capitalism. These bonds of charity give the reader

the impression that successful capitalism occurs through the goodness of others—a species of “moral” capitalism.

Conversely, we can also read capitalism as an ultimately destructive and—by itself—unsustainable system that requires charitable infusions from an outside source. Capitalism only succeeds through the individual consent of those whose livelihoods are already assured by the labor of others and free from personal exertion—i.e. the upper class. Here, referencing the ideals of Marx as produced roughly contemporaneously with *Great Expectations*, we can easily distinguish a critique of capitalism as succeeding because of the upper class’s exploitation of the working class in order to produce the highest profit. However, as we see from the fate of Pip and Magwitch, this type of capitalistic objectification only leads to the eventual ruin of those involved with it. In a way, this intrinsic infeasibility of capitalism in *Great Expectations*—when only supported by the exploitation of the working class—suggests the infeasibility of capitalism itself when it is without community and social ties. Big business proves itself incapable of the flexibility<sup>18</sup> needed to survive, and topples in favor of a small-sized business model, one which requires social ties for success. Yet does the success of Herbert’s business speak rather to a destruction of charity, or a taking advantage of charity in the name of capitalism?

The role of charity is important to take into consideration, as its interpretation makes a vast difference in understanding *Great Expectations* as a critique of capitalism. Capitalism in the novel ties directly to the industrial undertones that have been the object of this paper to uncover. As victim or weapon, the idea of charity—or personal emotional attachment in business decisions—makes all the difference. Charity is used both by the capitalist Herbert, but also by the creature made by the capitalistic domination of Magwitch: Pip.

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<sup>18</sup> Or perhaps it is more precisely, as Martin Wiener argues, that it is people’s views towards business that did not allow for industrial big business, and that “by the later nineteenth century...the new industrial system was looking less and less morally or spiritually supportable” (82).

Capitalism victimizes Pip's charity just as Pip himself is recirculated into capitalism. When Pip chooses to give instead of consume, his new action is immediately produced for the consumption of someone else. Pip's charity is taken and consumed for the sake of setting up a capitalistic enterprise. In this way, charity is robbed of its usual purpose to help the less fortunate, and is used in order to attain more money so that in effect, the charity may ultimately allow for the exploitation of others by those who have profited. The act of charity is thus appropriated into the machine of profit. However, it is important to acknowledge that charity to the "poor" rather than to the capitalist serves almost no better function, as it can leave poor and those of the working class dependent, while perpetuating the lack of social infrastructure needed to reach better living conditions without the charity. Charity, in Pip's case, is directed into a more "successful" route in terms of the rise in station it produces; but as we have seen, a rise in station is not intrinsically desirable, and wealth leads to the potential exploitation of others: the weaponization of charity.

The weaponization or subversion of charity shows itself in the workings of Pip's friend Herbert. First, the money Pip gives him as charity is used to fund Herbert's company, and later allows him to offer a job to Pip. This job offer can be called charitable, as it ensures a better financial situation for Pip, and stems in part from the emotional ties that the two young men have. However, Herbert weaponizes charity through his offer of the job. Unlike the simple charity of money, Herbert's generosity enables Pip to improve his overall situation; however, this improvement relies on Pip's willingness to work hard for the capitalistic enterprise of another. Through this job offer, Herbert subjugates another worker to his own capitalistic schemes. This charity also leads to Pip's third "creation" at the hands of another. Herbert repurposes Pip as a part of his capitalistic enterprise, once again entering him in the system as an

interchangeable part. Pip has been, as he wished in his dream, removed from the machinery in which he had been placed. But he now reenters a similar machine of his own choice.

Though charity can be weaponized in favor of recruiting willing workers to capitalistic enterprises, charity can also be mobilized *against* such a system as well. The importance of charity in the success of the two major businesses in *Great Expectations*, Herbert's and Magwitch's, also helps unearth the flaws of capitalism and question the viability of such a system in the first place. Pip's charity is a large factor in the success of Herbert's enterprise; without that original and continued monetary support, Herbert might not have been able to start his business, or continue in it. If we think of Magwitch's own successes, we see that they were not purely built on hard work, but on the exploitation and ruining of a land and cultures. His capitalistic endeavors rely on what could be seen as the opposite side of the charity coin—theft. The importance of an outside resource for the success of capitalism points out the problem of the system—it lacks viability or self-sustainability.<sup>19</sup> Capitalism as portrayed in the novel succeeds only through charity or through theft.

Taking into consideration Herbert's enterprise as the only capitalistic success, the text advocates for what could be called a “moral” or “consensual” capitalism, built on the willing charity of others. Herbert's capitalistic endeavor—importantly enough—does not directly exploit people or environment, but other capitalists instead; Herbert's company is a shipping insurance company. Herbert's company ultimately succeeds because of the charity of others, and his weaponized charity ultimately succeeds because of the straightforward communication—unlike Magwitch's—that accompanies his offer. Charity and transparency unite to raise both Pip and

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<sup>19</sup> The novel's treatment of the unsustainability of capitalism bears parallels to Marx and Engel's observation that capitalism relies on “conquest of new markets, and... through the exploitation of old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented,” (340) leading us to perhaps consider what further implications can be drawn from the novel's treatment of unsustainability.

Herbert from their original social positions, and—though enmeshed in capitalism—it is done knowingly and on their own terms rather than at the machinations of others.<sup>20</sup>

Regardless, this seemingly socially and environmentally “sustainable” type of capitalism depends on charity to continue functioning, and in doing so it brings to the fore the fact that capitalism of itself is not self-sustainable; something must be exploited. Ultimately, without the influx of capital from outside the system, it can only consume itself instead. This self-consumption returns us to the creation of Pip, who, in functioning as a single-unit gentleman machine, consumes or attempts to consume everything around him. However, when Magwitch arrives, there is a contradiction of social programming similar to that which Wiener traces through English society. Pip’s gentleman’s honor prevents him from continuing the other portion of his gentleman programming, which is to consume. Pip’s downfall is also due to his inability to function outside of his given programming and accept money from a known convict. Once he cannot consume outwardly, he can only consume inwardly instead. Now, unable to function within his programming, Pip’s body consumes him in a fever. After this full meltdown, Pip is repurposed by the charitable but capitalistic Herbert.

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<sup>20</sup> Though I interpret Pip and Herbert’s relation somewhat ambivalently, it is worth noting that this “moral” capitalism still leaves important community ties behind. As Pip himself admits near the end of the work, he has not seen Joe and Biddy for eleven years because of his work with Herbert.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

This examination of the intersection of *Frankenstein*, *Great Expectations*, and the Industrial Revolution opens new venues of inquiry, and leaves us with fresh questions. Because of the scope of this thesis, the way Estella's creation can be read in terms of a reimagining of *Frankenstein*—especially her link to the potentials of mass production, and the translation of Victor Frankenstein's fears with the original secondary creature—is left unexplored. Such an exploration, also taking into consideration Estella's full awareness of her objectification—in contrast to Pip's delayed understanding—remains an unexplored but inviting area of analysis. However, further analysis of Estella is only one of the many areas that open themselves to further investigation. What of the retro-reenvisioning of *Frankenstein* as the more naturalistic imagining of creature creation? And what of the further implications Pip's creation has in the realms of individualism and determinism? Further, the fact that even novels not categorized as “industrial” novels contain a wealth of textual evidence for the influence of the Industrial Revolution, leaves us with a multitude of possibilities for fresh analysis.

Pip's journey from child to fully realized part of industrial machinery in British society has many twists and turns, ones that uncover further relations between *Frankenstein* and *Great Expectations*, but also between the Industrial Revolution and a larger body of literature than previously acknowledged. Revisiting the discourse headed by Crawford and Stubblefield uncovers rich veins of research and implications on multiple levels. Realist novels that do not directly focus on the industrial boom in Britain during the nineteenth century still contain

important traces of the Industrial Revolution and its effects, lending further nuance to our understanding of the interplay between literature and its milieu. Furthermore, as seen in the relationship between Pip and charity, these traces can also encompass subtle critiques and commentaries of the elements that haunt nineteenth-century British literature.

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