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Great Expectations: Subjectivities moving through the Public and Private Realm

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This work is in line with the main theme in our seminar ‘The City and the urban subject in English and American Literature’. In the course of it we have studied the first appearance of the urban subject, amazed by the new metropolitan surroundings that he finds himself in. Then comes the Flâneur who observes, sometimes as an outsider, the new bohemian life in the big cities and finally cannot find a place to fit in the crowd, or either enjoying the crowd in their loneliness. In literature, the cities are built up by the narrator; here is where detail shows its power to set full images in our minds. Cities we know as the back of our hands and like to wander to recall the past, cities we meet for the first time and would like to walk all over, and cities we knew when they were great and now we find destroyed. That we have studied concerning the city. However, this present work is almost entirely related to the urban subject and how they manage to live in the ever-growing city.

Subjectivity is the main object of study in this work. I am going to immerse in the world of *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, and inquire in the best possible way at the subjectivities present in the novel. Being a characteristic of the work of this popular author, the novel, besides from offering a handful of memorable characters, delivers a picture of Victorian society. Here, the description of the moors is as important as the one of the city. The storyline presents a boy raised up in a small town and moved to the city. There are certainly moral issues concerning the protagonist’s actions throughout the story. This boy, Pip, leaving everything behind, except the love of his life, which is the driving force, for pursuing his expectations. A boy from the moors, a confined old lady from his past, the pretentious girl he is infatuated with, and a kind-hearted man, the only figure of a father he ever had, conform the small society Pip leaves behind. In the metropolis, he meets other society, other characters, and this contrast present in the vision of the autodiegetic narrator, makes this novel an ideal piece of work for studying the subjectivities at the moment of emergence of the urban subject.

The notion of subjectivity in the metropolis carries other concepts of interest for its examination. Here, I plan to engage in the study of the dichotomy of the Private/Public life which materializes in the metropolis. This metropolis is the XIX century London depicted by Dickens, the place where Pip is supposed to bring his great expectations to fruition. However, Pip’s first impression of the city is not encouraging at all: ‘We Brittons had at that time particularly settled that it was treasonable to doubt our

having and our being the best of everything: otherwise, while I was scared by the immensity of London, I think I might have had some faint doubts whether it was not rather ugly, crooked, narrow, and dirty.’¹ Afterwards, when he has the first opportunity to stroll through a little part of the city where he first arrived at his guardian’s office, the sight is not much better: ‘When I told the clerk that I would take a turn in the air while I waited, he advised me to go round the corner and I should come into Smithfield. So, I came into Smithfield; and the shameful place, being all asmeared with filth and fat and blood and foam, seemed to stick to me. So I rubbed it off with all possible speed by turning into a street where I saw the great black dome of St Paul’s bulging at me from behind a grim stone building which a bystander said was Newgate prison. Following the wall of the jail, I found the roadway covered with straw to deaden the noise of passing vehicles; and from this, and from the quantity of people standing about, smelling strongly of spirits and beer, I inferred that the trials were on.’² Smithfield used to be a meat market in Victorian times, something known to the contemporary Londoner readers, but to us this information is delivered in form of metonymies ‘the filth and fat and blood and foam’, which are the details that allow us to infer what the trade was there. Very few are the interactions that Pip has with the city, and this first one is one of the most significant. In this first sight of the city he encounters Newgate, with which Pip has an indirect relationship, as many of the characters significantly related to him can be traced to Newgate.

Having presented the state of the metropolis where half the action of the story takes place, let us turn back to our object of study. Nowadays, the private and the public have none of the antique connotations whatsoever found in ancient Greece or Rome. This dichotomy is a common matter for the city dwellers, mostly for those who have a family of whom to take care of. Many times these private and public lives go together with their corresponding private and public selves. These are the different facets that people show according to the different circumstances of life, sometimes some sides of a same person are unknown to people whom we only relate on one part of the dichotomy, sometimes these are divided into more units according to everyday life. We will see

¹ Dickens, Charles. ‘chapter twenty’. *Great Expectations*. London. Penguin Poplar Classics, 1994. P 150. Print.

² IBID p152.

how the environment affects the subject, how the city predisposes a divided subject, being this heterogeneity the main identifiable characteristic of the urban subjectivity. Dickens' London is the perfect place to witness this, as every place he described in detail was accompanied by characters identifiably belonging to that specific environment where they are found. As an illustrator of society, also importantly is the fact that, mainly, Dickens portrayed middle-class people, giving the opportunity to witness several different professions and occupations people had the chance to attain, now in Victorian times with the new educational Acts.

To show this dichotomy of public and private life I will not focus on the protagonist, Pip, but look around to the different characters he meets, and (not forgetting) we, as readers, see through his eyes. I will not take Pip's character as an object of analysis, however it is impossible to leave him aside because he will always be present as the narrator, the subjective scope through which we will receive all the information about the rest of the characters, in this sense, he will be more significant as a narrator than as a character. Being his perspective the one given by the author to the reader, his character is so much closer, and therefore harder to analyze. In the same way, Pip does not represent such a mystery to the reader, since he presents his life from early age, and his divided life between the moors and the city is open to us.

Throughout the novel, we can meet every character who is part of Pip's life. Pip shares with them in private and more social occasions. Along the story we find some interesting situations in which Pip and another character are involved. Mostly, these affairs are an everyday activity such as a dinner, where we happen to meet a more private self of the character, not yet known to us, and, sometimes this other personality is even striking for our protagonist, Pip. Obviously this activities involve a conversation, however this close meetings do not happen in any conversation, the funny thing is: they regularly happen at dinners. This private self only comes to existence for us when, conflictingly, it is made public³. However, this does not happen with every character, it does not happen with Mr Jaggers. This everyday activity I have noticed as a matter of concern can also be a social one. As a social activity, a diner is part of the

³ Arfuch, Leonor. 'El espacio biográfico. Mapa del territorio'. *El Espacio Biográfico*. Argentina: Fondo de cultura económica, 2002. Print.

public space, forcing us to wear a mask⁴ according to the circumstances and the people involved. Nevertheless, having met our characters in different quotidian circumstances, do we know them thoroughly? What about the ‘intimate self’? Let us take the urban subjects of Mr. Jaggers and Wemmick, who are so similar in their daily work environment (disregarding the power relation), but then we see them each at their own home, at a diner, and we can notice clearly the difference. We meet another Wemmick while Mr. Jaggers appears still the same. Perhaps, not even characters are completely open to us, readers, and there is always an intimate self whom the author, as an accomplice, keeps private to make his character more realistic, indeed, Charles Dickens’ characters always seem real people. In fact, as the chosen situations are dinners, the character is never alone. We will always get the information through Pip, what actually the other character is communicating to him. These are the circumstances in all the meetings but one, the one when Miss Havisham is not aware that Pip is watching her while she goes around the house at night for some food. Pip is informed by Mr Jaggers that she has deprived herself from eating with someone else o letting anyone see her eat. Therefore, I infer, a priori, that what private we know about the characters from themselves is actually what they are allowing us to know. Other more private aspects from the characters, in this case, the narrator and hence the readers, will not know firsthand from them. We can also interpret what we are left to wander, as a side effect from the making public of the information that used to be private and to keep the dichotomy; there must still be a private side readers are left to construe by themselves.

To carry on the analysis about the Private and the Public Realm in the novel, I will be using some of the Argentinean PhD Leonor Arfuch ideas and also from the philosopher Hannah Arendt. Concerning urban subjectivity I will rely on the readings made through the seminar, mainly Simmel and his ‘Metropolis and Mental Life’ and some essays by Foucault. The Literary Theory employed corresponds to Reader-response, as will be explained below, in the theoretical framework.

Theoretical Framework

⁴ Mongin, Olivier. ‘La experiencia pública o la ciudad “puesta en escena” .*La Condición urbana*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Paidós SAICF, 2006. P 69-97. Print.

Since the object of study in this work is subjectivity, it is the first concept we must define. As the concept says it itself, there is not just one viewpoint about it, even more since perspectives change through time and our focus is on ‘urban subjectivity’.

Subjectivity by Leonor Arfuch ‘a non-essential subject, incompletely formed and therefore, open to multiple identifications, in strain towards the other, the different, through contingent positioning they are drawn to hold- in this ‘to be drawn’ operates the wishing as much as social decisions-, subject, however, susceptible to self-creation. In this view, the symbolic/narrative dimension appears as well as its constituent: more than a simple becoming of the stories, a necessity of subjectivation and identification, a consistent search for that-other that allows to articulate, still temporarily, an image of self-recognition.’⁵ ‘Identification is always in power of certain look in the other.’ She emphasizes the relation between the ‘I’ and ‘we’, subjects will only be complete finding themselves in ‘we’ through a shared experience, and this is done by self-recognition in the other, for this she relies on Lacanian conceptions of the subject constituted by a void. Arfuch also points out the importance of the other in the biography genres as ‘considering the other being a constitutive part of my statement’. Her concept of subjectivity is very post-modern, this incomplete subject that will only be complete finding themselves in the other, is a lonely subject in the fast post-modern world, and in the end will only realize that feeling lonely is not something that only happens to him or her, but everyone else. May be she is right about filling the void looking for self-recognition in the other, but the subject may as well find differences between him/her and the other, in order to highlight his or her subjectivity, taking into account contemporary mass production of goods and personalities from media models.

We can trace her view of the split subject to Freud, which is presented by Patrick Fuery and Nick Mansfield.⁶ Freud also postulated that the subject was fragmented within and its surroundings and he makes his division of: conscious, preconscious, and unconscious, along with the reality principle and the pleasure principle ‘he acknowledges that such internal conflict is a necessary part of subjectivity.’ Lacan takes

⁵ Arfuch, Leonor. ‘El espacio biográfico. Mapa del territorio’. *El Espacio Biográfico*. Argentina: Fondo de cultura económica, 2002. P. 64. Print.

⁶ Fuery, Patrick and Nick Mansfield. ‘The Edge of the mirror: The Subject and the Other’. *Cultural Studies and Critical Theory*. Oxford UP: Oxford, UK, 2000. P 159-185. Print

up the Freudian Model to the 'subject's relationship to others and the self discourse', that is where Arfuch extends it to post-modernism. They summarize Lacan's view as follows: 'Subjectivity, in this sense, is formulated through the psychic apparatus (the unconscious, the drives, etc.) and social forces.' I would like to point out my complete agreement with this view, since I have always liked the existentialist stream, and this view is quite similar. In this same chapter, another section 'Making and unmaking the subject', Foucault comes to scene with his view that 'Our individuality itself is a product of our relationship with power'⁷. For him, power is the ultimate force; social forces would be just the operation of power. Foucault's own subjectivity is noticeable because he differentiated from 'the other', coming up with an unconventional theory among other intellectuals and philosophers. Next to Foucault's view we have Deleuze and Guattari, who also oppose to the idea of the subject as an individual unity. They present another model, the 'anti- or schizo-analytic', since their main intention is reconsider the nature of desire, and they see it as 'interconnected possibilities'. The self would be composed by a big number of converging possibilities, this new conception of desire; they call 'producing machines' or 'desiring machines'. This conception of the individual conformed by a web of desires and at the same time the idea of the self being part of a bigger connection with the world is very complicated and mechanized. I, personally, find it hard to process and the idea of calling a subjectivity 'machine' if we are talking in a psychological basis, does not seem proper to me.

Simmel, in his 'Metropolis and Mental Life' states that the psyche of the metropolitan individual is open to a lot of stimuli received during the day, leaving impressions, (some more lasting than others). The mind accommodates 'to the metropolitan rhythm of events.' As we know that human beings are adjustable animals, new-comers mostly adapt to the city. In the metropolis, the individual develops a protecting organ, and this means that 'he reacts with his head instead of his heart. In this increased awareness assumes the psychic prerogative. Metropolitan life, thus, underlies a heightened awareness and a predominance of intelligence in metropolitan man.' Therefore, this metropolitan individual is surrounded by a big heterogeneity of things and people, and eventually will also become a 'cosmopolitan individual'. Taking into account the idea of the incomplete self from the other authors, this variety of stimuli

⁷ IBID p 174

that the city can deliver to the individual generates a sense of completeness for both, the theory and the subject. Later he states that ‘Money economy and the dominance of the intellect are intrinsically connected’, this means that the metropolitan individual will apply the mechanisms of economical transactions to interact with different individuals. The metropolitan relations have come to be a mere economical interaction. This ‘money economy’ ruling the metropolis, brought ‘the practical life’, ‘to transform the world into an arithmetic problem’, which leads us to the mechanization of life, and thus, to an ‘attitude of reserve’ from the metropolitan subject. Simmel points out that this attitude comes from aversion to one another from the impressions left by somebody else. Antipathy would protect the individual. The author concludes that this style of life is one of the main forms of socialization in the city. This way of (no) socializing grants the individual more personal freedom. This is understandable, as Simmel explains it, taking the social circle, the bigger it is, and the more space its members are allowed to move in. His analysis demonstrates how keen an observer he is. As the author is able to put such a complex connection of concepts in simple words, I cannot disagree with him.

This having said about the urban subject and keeping the notion of a divided subjectivity, there is a dichotomy that goes along with that concept. **Private and Public** as a dichotomy is going to be one of our main concerns in this work; it is a difference most noticeable in the metropolis.

Talking about man and whether he is a social or a political animal, Hannah Arendt goes back to the beginning and analyzes how both, public and private spheres have changed, ‘According to Greek thought, the human capacity for political organization is not only different from but stands in direct opposition to that natural association whose center is the home (*oikiri*) and the family.’ However, this vision changes in the modern age, when the ‘rise of the social’ takes place, bringing the ‘interior of the household into the light of the public sphere’⁸. The author points out the change in valorization about the private life, which in ancient thought meant deprivation of participation in the public realm, something considered inherently human. She notes that ‘The decisive historical fact is that modern privacy in its most relevant function, to shelter the intimate, was discovered as the opposite not of the

⁸ Arendt, Hannah. ‘The Public and the Private Realm’. *The Human Condition*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago, 1998. P 37-38. PDF.

political sphere but of the social, to which it is therefore more closely and authentically related.’ Therefore, nowadays this privacy is understood as individual privacy, because of what she states later: ‘The striking coincidence of the rise of society with the decline of the family indicates clearly that what actually took place was the absorption of the family unit into corresponding social groups.’⁹ According to her analysis, what was initially private, in this case, family, which by a historical process is pulled out to the public scene, finally becomes public; and private sphere reduces itself even more. The Public, social, spheres expands: ‘with the emergence of mass society, the realm of the social has finally, after several centuries of development, reached the point where it embraces and controls all members of a given community equally and with equal strength. But society equalizes under all circumstances, and the victory of equality in the modern world is only the political and legal recognition of the fact that society has conquered the public realm, and that distinction and difference have become private matters of the individual.’¹⁰ This coincides with what I mentioned above, about a subject trying to differentiate from ‘the other’ in our, nowadays, mass society. In a few words, The Public, for Arendt is reality, because it is common to everyone: ‘‘second, the term "public" signifies the world itself, in so far as it is common to all of us and distinguished from our privately owned place in it’¹¹. From this we can unravel that what we live in privacy does not exist and we only bring it to life when we talk about it. In addition, she mentions that the Public Realm is based upon appearances, this way, in the private realm is where subjects differentiate, in their own worlds where they do not have to pretend or be self-conscious in front of anyone.

Arendt criticizes the mass society for having destroyed both, the public and the private realm, as the ancient conception of the public was where everybody would stand up, in a political sense. And, as the public has become homogeneous the private has become public, both are clearly not the same as they initially were: ‘... mass society not only destroys the public realm but the private as well, deprives men not only of

⁹ IBID p 40

¹⁰ IBID p 41

¹¹ IBID p 52

their place in the world but of their private home, where they once felt sheltered against the world and where, at any rate, even those excluded from the world could find a substitute in the warmth of the hearth and the limited reality of family life.’¹²

In addition to the above disposition of Arendt’s analysis on private and public, I will quote how Arfuch puts it: ‘In this splitting- public into social and political, private into domestic and intimate-, Arendt highlights a peculiar fact- private being a place for containment of the intimate, it will not be noticed in comparison to the political, but to the social, sphere with which it is authentically related. However there is another paradoxical feature: that recent intimacy sphere will only materialize in its public display.’¹³ Afterwards, the author takes the ideas of Habermas, whose theory about private persons doing public opinion in public places was altered with the mass media society. Their vision, according to Arfuch, both allude to the loss of a better model: equilibrium. On the one hand, if the social is bigger it will lead to a mundane way of life. On the other hand, an aggravation of subjectivity into the public will fade politics away. However, when she comes to Elías’ ideas, whose theory puts forward that society, or the social is constituted by individuals, she concludes that the contemporary highlight of the private could just be a result from a historical process from the interaction between the two spheres. Arfuch, focuses on a more contemporary view, where the mass events in the globalization era have changed ‘the classic sense’ of private and public, which now present with blurry boundaries. She declares that both spheres intersect over and over, therefore the themes and their format will be public or private according to the circumstances. This way, she changed the perspective in order to analyze this, now ambiguous, dichotomy according to the current times. She also adds a new factor of analysis: interests, as she based on visibility before. ‘Public interests, not just about their media display, but as compulsory responsibilities of a civilian sense.’¹⁴ She incorporates this new factor because her main objective is to put on the table ‘plurality of points of view’, which is what she does, placing different author’s ideas together; she calls it a ‘non- dissociative’ approach. Arfuch shows a very

¹² IBID p 59

¹³ Arfuch, Leonor. ‘Entre lo público y lo privado. Contornos de la interioridad.’ *El espacio biográfico*. Argentina: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2002. Pp69. Print. (the translation is mine)

¹⁴ IBID pp77.

open perspective to new possibilities, where there can also be an equilibrium of outcomes, as she reasons:’ And at the same time, if the exaltation of individuality tends to dismantle social bonds, to consolidate the market empire-of desire- and the consumerism utopia, on the other hand it can open a way to a new intimacy.’¹⁵ Finally, she states that, in looking for an ‘autobiographic voice in its collective accents’, it is now impossible to think of a binomial public/private, because of the so many voices there is going to be several public and private spaces. However, she herself realizes that this, within a mass society, highlights individualism, which is something like a side effect of globalization. Arfuch is very optimistic in her posture, it is clear in how she presents different views, where displayed separately they can be wrong, but she works them out together.

There is another concept of import that Arfuch employs in her book, ‘**el valor biográfico**’, borrowed from Bakhtin¹⁶, whom describes it as this: ‘Un valor literario biográfico es el que entre todos los valores artísticos transgrede menos a la autoconciencia, por eso el autor, en una autobiografía, se aproxima máximamente a su héroe, ambos pueden aparentemente intercambiar sus lugares, y es por eso que se hace posible la coincidencia personal del héroe con el autor fuera de la totalidad artística. Un valor biográfico no sólo puede organizar una narración sobre la vida del otro sino que también ordena la vivencia de la vida misma y la narración de la propia vida de uno; este valor puede ser la forma de comprensión, visión y expresión de la vida propia.’¹⁷ To arfuch’s hypothesis this is a fundamental component of ‘biographical space’, it would set order to the narrator’s and reader’s life, being quotidian, heroic based on a transcendence desire or loving thy neighbour, it would set in order the fragmentary and chaotic living of identity¹⁸. Later, Bakhtin states that ‘biographical values are shape and value of the aesthetics of life’, he goes on recapitulating over his thesis that the narrator of the biography is no its hero, but the others. A biographical unit is composed

¹⁵ IBID pp78.

¹⁶ Bakhtin, Mikhail. ‘Autor y personaje en la actividad estética’. *Estética de la Creación Verbal*. Siglo veintiuno editores, 1999. E-Book.

¹⁷ IBID p 134.

¹⁸ Arfuch, Leonor. ‘El espacio biográfico. Mapa del territorio’. *El Espacio biográfico*. Argentina: Fondo de Cultura económica, 2002. Pp 47. Print.

by the activities between the others and me. The other is a force of value reaffirmed by the subject and it determines their lives, which grants the other with an authority and makes him an internal author of the subject's life. There are two main biographical consciences, 'the heroic adventure' and 'social everyday life' (Bahktin refers to these as 'biographical values' as well). The foundation for the heroic adventure is the hero's will to be important in the world of others, to be loved and live the adventure of life. There are three values that organize the life and actions of a biographical hero: the wish for glory, love and, wish for living life. The aspiration for glory is to recognize oneself in humanity, to grow in others and for others. Future is important for a personality that sees itself in the future, a temporal and historical one, the future of others. The second moment of the biographical value: the wish to be loved. ' While the heroic value determines the main moments and events of a personally social and historical life, the main volitional orientation of life, love determines its emotional tension contributing to it with a sense of value and materializing all its internal and external details.'¹⁹ This feature is clearly present in Pip (even though this is a novel, it can be compared to an autobiography since Pip narrates most of his life), since what moves him to become a gentleman in the city is the wish to create an image in the conscience of the other, in this case, of Estella. Pip's whole perspective of life changed when he realized he cared about what Estella thought of him, and because she looked down at him when they first met, he did his best to change her mind. Later on, Bakhtin says that what is historically insubstantial, but exists in the context of life, everything makes sense in the loving conscience of the other; every personal moment is represented for what the subject wants to be in the other. The third moment of the biographical value: the wish of living life, live the determinism of the self, its change and its variety, non-conclusive . The term used in the text is 'fabulismo', as a series of valorative stated vital achievements. The adventure value presupposes a stated world of the others in which the hero of this kind is deeply rooted.

The second kind of biography, 'the social everyday life', an organizational force of life. In the social conception the valorative centre is composed by mainly family and social values that organize the private form of life with all the everyday details. There is

¹⁹ Bakhtin, Mikhail. ' Autor y personaje en la actividad estética'. *Estética de la Creación Verbal*. Siglo veintiuno editores, 1999. Pp 139. PDF.

no adventure and the descriptive moment predominates. The love to life is love to belonging to the loved ones, objects, situations, and relations; to be in the world, observe it and live it over and over again. In this type of biography the protagonist narrator only narrates and observes almost with no taking activity²⁰. In ‘Great Expectations’ we could say this is also the case with Pip, however he does take action. Indeed, as it is actually a novel and not a biography, both types of it can be present, the ‘heroic adventure’ and ‘the social everyday life’. As we find elements of both types so far. In ‘the social everyday life’ biography we can distinguish two levels: first, the protagonist narrator represented from his inside and, secondly, other characters. In the first level the protagonist is shifted to an inner plane, he seems to be on the border of the narration, being part of it as a biographical hero, starting to look for a coincidence with the author-bearer of the form, or getting to the subject of confession. In the second one, other characters, in which there are many transgressive features that can be the characters or types. Their life can have a finished argument, in case of not being too much interwoven with the life of the biographical hero, that is to say, with the narrator. These two planes leave evidence of the decomposition of the biographical world²¹.

This last concept of the ‘biographical value’ by Bakhtin was thought for that exactly, a biography, however it can be found in the novel object of study due to its nature of being an autodiegetic narrator telling the story of most of his life.

These are the concepts I will employ in the analysis and interpretation of Subjectivity throughout the present work. Below, I present the Literary Theory chosen for the analysis. **It is Reader-Response Theory.** As the main object of study is Subjectivity, the friendliest theory found was this. Furthermore, it is interesting to dive into the question of why is Dickens so popular to the day. Let us just take as serendipity the event that this year of 2012, is the bicentenary commemoration of his birth, and with the due celebrations a new audience will come to meet his stories and memorable characters. Reader-Response theory seems to be the fittest when it comes to dealing with the subject, which leads us to the relationship between character and reader. Being the uniqueness of every single character created by Dickens one of his most remarkable features. The reader is a good source to find the answer to why these characters remain

²⁰ IBID

²¹ IBID

in time. At some point they are capable to cut cross through the pages, with the reader even notice it, but it is him or her one who gives a characteristic voice to each of these persons.

Norman Holland 'agrees with the New Criticism in believing that the readers perceive unity in texts, but he also believe that the unity they discover is a reflection of their personal "identity themes". An identity theme is like a principle of unity in a literary work. "Interpretation is a function of identity"²². In 'Unity Identity Self Text', he reaffirms the singleness in finding unity with the notion of the novel being a living thing (a whole). The reader reaches its unity by arriving at the central theme, beginning by particular details of the work. 'Such theme is not necessarily unique. ..All that is implied by the idea of a central theme is that it helps one particular person grasp the unity of one particular work. In short, Holland states: "Identity is the unity I find in a self if I look at it as though it were a text". ..In more modern terms, we can think of text and self as data and unity and identity as constructs drawn from the data...Text and self are very close to experience, while unity and identity represent quite abstract principles drawn from the experience of text or self²³. According to the abstract set in practice by Raman Selden, Poststructuralists deny this assumption due to the notion of a divided subject. However, with a few changes Holland's theory might work. If the subject is not a unity it may find unity in the process of reading the text, which would help him as 'self-finding', because the text needs the reading process to get its central theme found and in doing so, the reader gains an experience to find his unity of self.

The structuralist Roland Barthes developed a theory of codes, which represent systems of meaning that the reader activates in response to the text. However, the result is not an interpretation or a fixing of meaning, because the text is only a portion of the 'already written' awaiting the reader's uniting of text to the 'general text'. The codes are: hermeneutic, semic, symbolic, proairetic, and cultural. For Barthes, reading is a sort of writing, which involves 'producing' the text's signifiers by allowing them to be caught up in the network of codes. It is a poststructuralist approach in the sense that he

²² Selden, Raman. "Chapter 5 Reader-response Criticism, section 15". *Practicing Theory and Reading Literature*. Pearson Education Ltd. England: Prentice Hall Europe, 1989. Pp 109-110. Print.

²³ Holland, Norman. 'Unity Identity Self Text'. *Reader-Response Criticism: from formalism to post-structuralism*. Jane P. Tompkins. U.S.A: John Hopkins University Press, 1980. Google Book Search. Web. 19 of January 2012.

does not believe that any definite structure of meaning can be established either in the text or in the reader²⁴. Nevertheless, if no definite meaning cannot be established in neither of them, it may be achieved by both together, by this process of finding the signifiers in the text, very similar to what is stated above.

Thus, we arrive at Wolfgang Iser, who helped with this new emphasis towards the reader, identifying the ‘implied reader’ from the ‘actual reader’. He states that meaning is not an object to be defined, but an effect to be experienced, a ‘dynamic happening’. There is not just one type of reader that comes out when the critic studies literary responses. We have two categories, the ‘real reader’, found in the history of responses, ‘known to us by his documented reactions; in the second we have the “hypothetical” reader, upon whom all possible actualizations of the text may be projected. The latter category is frequently subdivided into the so-called ideal reader and the contemporary reader. The first of these cannot be said to exist objectively, while the second, though undoubtedly there, is difficult to mould to the form of a generalization.’²⁵ The ‘real reader’ is found in history of responses studies, ‘when attention is focused on the way in which a literary work has been received by a specific reading public’, the construction of this reader is based on documentation. ‘There are three types of “contemporary reader”- the one real and historical, drawn from existing documents, and the other two hypothetical: the first constructed from social and historical knowledge of the time, and the second extrapolated from the reader’s role laid down in the text.’²⁶ According to Iser, the ideal reader comes out of ‘the brain of the philologist or the critic himself.’ What he had claimed earlier, that the meaning of a text is a dynamic happening, is the reason why he then adds to the concept of the ideal reader as: ‘an ideal reader is a structural impossibility as far as literary communication is concerned. An ideal reader would have to have an identical code to that of the author’. The ideal reader would have to realize in full the potential meaning of the text, not just of his own historical situation, but all the possibilities that can emerge at different times; the ideal reader is a

²⁴ Selden, Raman. “Chapter 5 Reader-response Criticism, section 15”. *Practicing Theory and Reading Literature*. Pearson Education Ltd. England: Prentice Hall Europe, 1989. Pp 119-120. Print.

²⁵Iser, Wolfgang. The Act of Reading. In : Scrigroup. ‘Limba.’ <http://www.scrivube.com/> Scrigroup. Website. 10 of January 2012.

²⁶ IBID

purely fictional being, as such he can close the gaps that constantly appear in any analysis of literary effects and responses²⁷.

Another type of reader Iser presents is the 'intended reader' by Wolf, which is the reader the author had in mind, 'the intended reader, as a sort of fictional inhabitant of the text, can embody not only the concepts and conventions of the contemporary public but also the desire of the author both to link up with these concepts and to work on them sometimes just portraying them, sometimes acting upon them'. Iser answers the questions as to how generations later, the reader can still grasp a meaning of the text, 'clearly, the historical qualities which influenced the author at the time of writing mould the image of the intended reader-and as such they may enable us to reconstruct the author's intentions, but they tell us nothing about the reader's actual response to the text'. The intended reader marks certain positions and attitudes in the text. Then we must differentiate between the fictitious reader and the reader's role, 'for although the former is present in the text by way of a large variety of different signals, he is not independent of the other textual perspectives, such as narrator, characters, and plot-line, as far as his function is concerned...It is fair to say that the intended reader, as supplier of one perspective, can never represent more than one aspect of the reader's role.'²⁸ Iser noticed that the reader models presented by other theorists had in common the will to go further the limitations of structural linguistics, generative-transformational grammar, or literary sociology. All those theorists had not taken into account the important role of the reader, and even though they were mistaken in several aspects at the beginning of the development of this concept, Iser knew how to solve this problem. Thus, Iser defines the **implied reader**, in 'The Act of Reading', as: 'he embodies all those predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect- predispositions laid down, not by empirical outside reality, but by the text itself. Consequently, the implied reader as a concept has his roots firmly planted in the structure of the text; he is a construct and in no way to be identified by any real reader.' Being the implied reader a textual structure is part of the conditions of actualization of the text; this way the text prepares itself from the beginning to refresh with new readers; Iser follows like this 'the concept of the implied reader designates a network of response-inviting structures

²⁷ IBID

²⁸ IBID

which impel the reader to grasp the text. No matter who or what he may be, the real reader is always offered a particular role to play, and it is this role that constitutes the concept of the implied reader.²⁹ To complement the concept, Iser adds that there are two interrelated aspects to the implied reader: ‘the reader’s role as a textual structure, and the reader’s role as a structured act. The reader’s role is prestructured by three basic components: the different perspectives represented in the text (perspective views of the world provided by the author that guide what the reader is meant to visualize), the vantage point from which he joins them together (a ‘position that enables them to actualize the new view’, ‘this standpoint cannot be present in the text itself, as it the vantage point for visualizing the world represented and so cannot be part of that world.’), and the meeting place where they converge (which Iser calls it, the meaning of the text). Iser finishes : the reader’s role as a textual structure will fully be implemented only when it produces structured acts in the reader...the textual perspectives themselves are given, their gradual convergence and final meeting place are not linguistically formulated and so have to be imagined. The instructions provided stimulate mental images, which animate what is linguistically implied. (And here comes a magical process) A sequence of mental images is bound to arise during the reading process, as new instructions have continually to be accommodated, resulting not only in the replacement of images but also in a shifting position of the vantage point, which differentiates the attitudes to be adopted in the process of image building. Thus, the vantage point of the reader and the meeting place of perspectives become interrelated during the ideational activity and so draw the reader inescapably into the world of the text.’³⁰ By means of this process the meaning of the text can be understood by any reader of any generation and background.

Finally, a couple of concepts by Stanley Fish, the authority of interpretative communities. He came to the notion of **Interpretative community** by asking these questions: ‘Why should two or more readers ever agree, and why should regular, that is, habitual, differences in the career of a single reader ever occur? What is the explanation

²⁹ I would like to add, it is this way how a classic work is done. The author creates the implied reader as a character intended for the reader to play. Why does one go over and over to a story? Because we feel part of it. Readers in general like the experience that they can find in a novel, which is what classics do, they offer a real-like experience with a part waiting for the reader; and this keeps them immortal.

³⁰ Iser, Wolfgang. The Act of Reading. In : Scrigroup. ‘Limba.’ <http://www.scrivube.com/> Scrigroup. Website. 10 of January 2012.

on the one hand of the stability of interpretation (at least among certain groups at certain times) and on the other of the orderly variety of interpretation if it is not the stability and variety of texts? ... Interpretative communities are made up of those who share interpretative strategies not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions. In other words these strategies exist prior to the act of reading and therefore determine the shape of what is read rather than, as is usually assumed, the other way around... Interpretative communities grow larger and decline, and individuals move from one to another; thus while the alignments are not permanent, they are always there, providing just enough stability for the interpretative battles to go on, and just enough shift and slippage to assure that they will never be settled.³¹ Then, what are these **interpretative strategies**? They are interpretative decisions made by the reader, which predispose him/her to perform certain acts, such as look for themes, confer significances, to mark out formal units, etc. the disposition of the reader to perform these acts constitute a set of interpretative strategies, ‘ which, when they are put to execution, become the large act of reading. That is to say, interpretative strategies are not put into execution after reading (the pure act of perception in which I do not believe); they are the shape of reading, and because they are the shape of reading, they give texts their shape, making them, rather than, as it is usually assumed, arising from them.’ Later, Fish mentions that the reader can execute different interpretative strategies, which explains why the same reader would read differently similar texts, it is not something in the texts, the different interpretative strategies will produce different formal structures (texts). ‘Why do different texts give rise to different sequences of interpretative acts? *They don’t have to*, an answer which implies strongly that “they” don’t exist. Indeed it has always been possible to put into action interpretative strategies designed to make all texts one, or to put it more accurately, to be forever making the same text.’³² This explains what he says later, that interpretative strategies are learned. The ability to interpret is constitutive of the human being. ‘what is acquired are the ways of interpreting and those same ways can be also forgotten or supplanted, or complicated or dropped from favor (“no one

³¹ Fish, Stanley. ‘Interpreting the Variorum’. *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 2, No.3. The University of Chicago Press, 1976. <http://es.scribd.com> . PDF. 8 of February 2012.

³² IBID

reads that way anymore”). When any of these things happens, there is a corresponding change in texts, not because they are being read differently, but because they are being written differently.’³³ This explains why some texts become classic and never lose readers out of fashion or, why some texts gain readers from time to time, and some texts which are more popular in some parts of the world and not in others. More importantly, it explains a process which occurs within the same reader, who having read a text at a certain age (a specific stage of life), reads it in a particular way, and later in life the same text may change for the same reader, because he/she would be interpreting it in a different way; as Fish argues ‘the text is always a function of interpretation’.

In the chapter ‘What makes an interpretation acceptable?’ from the book ‘Is there a text in this class?’ Fish goes into another aspect of his concept of Interpretative Community: agreement. A literary community might agree to rule out some readings of a text, it means that ‘there is as yet no elaborated interpretative procedure for producing that text.’ An interpretation is accepted by the community when the procedures which produced a ‘reading’ (the structure of the reading experience) are recognized by the literary community as something that its members do, it would be a ‘competing interpretation.’ Explained in his own words: ‘Again the point is that while there are always mechanisms for ruling out readings, their source is not the text but the presently recognized interpretative strategies for producing the text. It follows, then, that no reading; however outlandish it might appear is inherently an impossible one.’³⁴ There are always canons of acceptability and these can change, ‘a new interpretative strategy always makes its way in some relationship of opposition to the old’. The way to break through with a new interpretative strategy is by saying something different from what has already been said and argument it adequately; ‘in short, the new interpretation must not only claim to tell the truth about the work (in a dependant opposition to the falsehood or partial truths told by its predecessors) but it must claim to make the work better.’³⁵ Given that the interpretations make the text, this makes me suppose that literary criticism is always improving texts, which has nothing objectionable.

³³ IBID

³⁴ Fish, Stanley. ‘What makes an interpretation acceptable?’. *Is there a text in this class?*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980. P 347. PDF.

³⁵ IBID p351

Now, our subject matter being Subjectivity, Reader-response theory will help us appreciate more closely how the city predisposes a divided subject. Reader-response theory has told us that is the reader's interpretation what writes the text, so now we can realize of the different readings from different times and places the same text has had. Nowadays, it may seem more natural to us to see a same character behave differently at work than it does at home, however in the time *Great Expectations* is placed, these different attitudes in the different places are clearly highlighted here because it was something new. The novel, as many novels of the time, mirrors the readership its aiming at, in this case middle class, the emerging class in Victorian times. What kind of urban characters does Pip meet? Successful middle class people, Pip even surrounds himself with a little group of friends, and among them, the obnoxious Bentley Drummle, whom he cannot stand, are among the things Pip did to fit in.

Dining with a (the other) private self

To start the reading of the selected passages of the novel, let us begin by presenting a point where Wemmick, Mr Jaggers' clerk, highlights the difference between an urban subject of a lower class and a subject from a similar social class, but living in the country, this character is Joe Gargery. Nevertheless, First of all, I would like to introduce the character with a physical description of Wemmick, which will prove to be of use and importance for the analysis of his subjectivity. Pip delivers it us when they first met: 'Casting my eyes on Mr Wemmick as we went along, to see what he was like in the light of day, I found him to be a dry man, rather short in stature, with a square wooden face, whose expression seemed to have been imperfectly chipped out with a dull edged chisel. There were some marks in it that might have been dimples, if the material had been softer and the instrument finer, but which, as it was, were only dints. The chisel had made three or four of these attempts at the embellishment over his nose, but had given them up without an effort to smooth them off. I judged him to be a bachelor from the frayed condition of his linen, and he appeared to have sustained a good many bereavements; for he wore at least four mourning rings, besides a brooch representing a lady and a weeping willow at tomb with an urn on it. I noticed, too, that

several rings and seals hung at his watch-chain, as if he were quite laden with remembrances of departed friends. He had glittering eyes – small, keen, and black- and thin wide mottled lips. He had had them, to the best of my belief, from forty to fifty years.’ (Dickens 157-158)

Mr Jaggers’s office is in Little Britain, ‘just out of Smithfield, and close by the coach-office.’ as he had told Pip in a letter. That is where Wemmick works, and he lives in Walworth, from where he can go to work on foot, as Pip narrates when he took Wemmick’s invitation to dinner: ‘At first with such discourse, and afterwards with conversation of a more general nature, did Mr Wemmick and I beguile the time and the road, until he gave me to understand that we had arrived in the district of Walworth.

It appeared to be a collection of black lanes, ditches, and little gardens, and to present the aspect of a rather dull retirement, Wemmick’s house was a little wooden cottage in the midst of plots of garden, and the top of it was cut out and painted like a battery mounted with guns.

‘My own doing,’ said Wemmick. Looks pretty; don’t it?’

I highly commended it. I think it was the smallest house I ever saw; with the queerest gothic windows (by far the greater part of them sham), and, a gothic door, almost too small to get in at. ³⁶ Wemmick is very proud of his home, it has been the product of the work and effort of his life, the place his father, ‘the Aged’ is proud of, that he even calls it ‘the castle’. Pip described how peculiar this house is and the traditions there performed by his owner. This is the private world of Wemmick. This urban subject chooses to differentiate in the Private Realm, from that homogenous public world where Pip first met him, and having seen him first at work dealing with all the clients in line not him, nor us readers, would have ever suspected of this other self of Wemmick’s subjectivity, until when we encounter it and becomes public to us through Pip’s eyes.

Wemmick does not seem to live as far away from work as urban subjects do today, however he still makes good use of the time in going from one place to another to accommodate his personality to work, or home. Pip noted this when the next morning when they headed back to Mr Jaggers office: ‘Our breakfast was as good as the supper

³⁶ Dickens, Charles. ‘Chapter XXV’. *Great Expectations*. London. Penguin Poplar Classics, 1994. P 190. Print.

and a half-past eight precisely we started for Little Britain. By degrees Wemmick got dryer and harder as we went along, and his mouth tightened into a post-office again. At last, when we got to his place of business and he pulled out his key from his coat-collar, his looked as unconscious of his Walworth property as if the castle and the drawbridge and the arbour and the lake and the fountain and the Aged, had all been blown into space together by the last discharge of the Stinger.’(Dickens 193) According to this that Pip tells us, Wemmick’s change is showed with physical features, but this change would only be known by people, like Pip, who have seen him in his private life, otherwise they will only know his work face, his public attitude, which shows nothing of any other part of his life.

In total contrast with this situation, we find Joe Gargery, who works almost in the same place where he lives in the country, as Pip mentions at the beginning of the novel: ‘ Joe’s forge adjoined our house, which was a wooden house, as many of the dwellings in our country were- most of them, at that time.’ Joe does not have the dichotomy of private and public life we find with Wemmick. His everyday life of work and family are attached, in this case, physically, therefore he does not have an attitude for work and another for family matters. We only find Joe out of place when he has to go out of his everyday work-home environment, even for something (almost) quotidian, as going to church, when he had to dress up and Pip realized how uncomfortable those clothes made him feel.

Today, even in the country it is difficult to find people whose place of work is in the same place, or right next to their home. Nowadays, to live and work in the metropolis means commuting and that carries a change between private and public life, associated with physical places. Since work is associated with the public realm, the social, which is common to everyone, and this according to Arendt would make of the public, reality. This distinction was already showing up at the beginning of this big, ever-growing fast-moving metropolis, as we can see with the character of Wemmick.

These are the first distinctions we can make between an urban subject and a rural subject, according to the times where the novel is settled.

Thus, we arrive at the first interaction, between Pip and another character, where he happens to discover more about them, the ‘dinner’ with Wemmick, for the analysis. Wemmick has invited Pip to come to his house and stay the night. The first thing Wemmick does is give Pip a tour through the ‘castle’. He is evidently proud of it

since it is his own work. ‘I am my own engineer, and my own carpenter, and my own plumber, and my own gardener, and my own Jack of all trades,’ said Wemmick, in acknowledging my compliments. ‘Well, it’s a good thing, you know. It brushes the Newgate cobwebs away, and pleases the Aged (Dickens 191).’ This is the first indication that he gives to us about him wanting to separate work from home. This description that Wemmick makes about himself and the crafts he performs at home, he makes it to emphasize his subjectivity being more than just Mr Jagger’s clerk, who inspire fear with a stone countenance to his boss’s clients. However, the main characteristic that shows that this is a private event, is not what Wemmick can say about his private life, but what Pip can see, in this case, the relationship between him and his Aged parent: ‘There, we found, sitting by the fire, a very old man in a flannel coat: clean, cheerful, comfortable, and well cared for, but intensely deaf...

‘This is a fine place of my son’s, sir,’ cried the old man, while I nodded as hard as I possibly could. ‘This is a pretty pleasure-ground, sir. This spot and these beautiful works upon it ought to be kept together by the Nation, after my son’s time, for the people’s enjoyment.’

‘You’re as proud if it as Punch; ain’t you, Aged?’ **said Wemmick, contemplating the old man, with his hard face really softened;** ‘*there’s* a nod for you’; giving him a tremendous one; ‘*there’s* another for you,’ giving him a still more tremendous one; ‘you like that, don’t you? If you’re not tired, Mr Pip – though I know it’s tiring to strangers – will you tip him one more? You can’t think how it pleases him.’ (Dickens 191-**Bolded is mine**) This Wemmick in his private realm is nothing like the Wemmick we see in the public realm; here he is a loving, caring son, unlike the expressionless worker Pip first met. Pip does not say it, but we, readers, may be a bit surprised by this side of Wemmick’s personality. He certainly does not inspire tenderness from the first impression we got from him. A subject, who is so different in his public surroundings and his private life, shows that he, more than knowing the distinction, purposely wants to keep them apart. Wemmick himself will make this clearer to Pip: ‘I tipped him (The Aged) several more and he was in great spirits. We left him bestirring himself to feed the fowls, and we sat down to our punch in the arbour; where Wemmick told me as he smoked a pipe, that it had taken him a good many years to bring the property up to its present pitch of perfection.

‘Is it your own, Mr Wemmick?’

‘O yes,’ said Wemmick, ‘ I got hold of it, a bit at a time. It’s a freehold, by George!’

‘Is it, indeed? I hope Mr Jaggers admires it?’

‘Never seen it,’ said Wemmick. ‘Never heard of it. Never seen the Aged. Never heard of him. No; the office is one thing, and private life is another. When I go into the office, I leave the Castle behind me, and when I come into the Castle, I leave the office behind me. If it’s not in any way disagreeable to you, you’ll oblige me by doing the same. I don’t wish it professionally spoken about.’(Dickens 192) As an urban subject, Wemmick consciously separates his private from public life. He keeps his home safe, cozy and welcoming for friends. This opening of Wemmick’s private realm to Pip may be the beginning of a friendship.

Why Wemmick decides to leave his job apart from home should not be difficult to understand. Simmel explained in which ways an urban subject is different: he is more open to stimuli delivered by the city. Since Wemmick works with a lawyer whose business takes them both to deal mostly with Newgate, and people wandering about his office all day probably of not very different background from those they see in the prison; Wemmick wants to leave behind this unpleasant impressions of a day of work (the ‘cobwebs’). Simmel knows how the metropolis affects the subject and his life, and Wemmick is a good example of this : ‘For the reciprocal reserve and indifference and the intellectual life conditions of large circles are never felt more strongly by the individual in their impact upon his independence than in the thickest crowd of the big city. This is because the bodily proximity and narrowness of space makes the mental distance only the more visible. It is obviously only the obverse of this freedom if, under certain circumstances, one nowhere feels as lonely as in the metropolitan crowd. For here as elsewhere it is by no means necessary that the freedom of man be reflected in his emotional life as comfort.’³⁷ Nevertheless, the character of Wemmick shows reserve in his public life, in his job, so that he can be free at home, in his ‘castle’. This reserve in the urban subject is at the same time a way to protect personal freedom and a form of socialization. Wemmick protects his private life, keeping it out of reality when at work, and uses this reserve attitude as a form of socialization just like every other urban subject uses it as well. This attitude of reserve that Simmel also mentions helps to

³⁷ Simmel, Georg. ‘The Metrópolis and and Mental Life.’ *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. New York: Free Press, 1950. Pp409-424. Web page (altruists.org)

homogenize the public realm, as mentioned by Arendt. For us, XXI century readers, this life division, from home to work, it is nothing new to wonder about, it is common to all of us; what really attracts my attention is how early in time the subject gets affected by the metropolis, such as already in Victorian Age. It is a cause-effect impact, not a long gradual process. And here, at this time in history is when the difference between country and metropolis are most crystal clear to compare, how some things have changed and many others are still the same.

As Foucault pointed out in his essay ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History’ it is not possible to find the origin of a subjectivity, but one can detect the emergence of it by acknowledging the elements that allow its visibility, thus tracing the forces to its place of confrontation: ‘emergence designates a place of confrontation.’³⁸ This is a post-modern view, and Dickens always creates his characters according to his own era, modernism. Nonetheless, since this view of finding the ‘emergence’ of a subjectivity and not its ‘origin’, it can be applied to any creation that provides the means to trace the forces. In Wemmick’s case, the elements that lead us to visualize his subjectivity are his public and his private life, the public and private realm, which allow us in turn to trace the forces of this emergence: the country and the city. Because when Pip first came to the city and Wemmick asked him of his opinion of it, he confessed to him that he had once been new in the city as well:

‘So you were never in London before?’ Said Mr Wemmick to me.

‘No,’ said I.

‘I was new here once,’ said Wemmick. ‘Rum to think of now!’

‘You are well acquainted with it now?’

‘Why, yes,’ said Mr Wemmick. ‘I know the moves of it.’

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

‘You may get cheated, robbed, and murdered, in London. But there are plenty of people anywhere, who’ll do that for you.’

‘If there is bad blood between you and them,’ said I, to soften it off a little.

³⁸ Foucault, Michel. ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History.’ *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. D. F. Bouchard. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977. P 139- 164. PDF.

‘Oh! I don’t know about bad blood,’ returned Mr Wemmick. ‘There’s not much bad blood about. They’ll do it, if there’s anything to be got by it.’

‘That makes it worse.’

‘You think so?’ returned Mr Wemmick. ‘Much about the same, I should say.’ (Dickens 158)

In this first conversation about the city, Pip shows to be a bit disgusted by its looks and then by what Wemmick told it about it. He still conserves the innocence of the boy from the marshes. Foucault’s ideas allow seeing how Dickens conceives the modern subject, a very complex one. We can still trace forces to find the emergence of the rest of the characters’ subjectivities, in this case Pip. What does motivate Pip to pursue his expectations? Besides the fact that an anonymous benefactor gave him the chance to move to the metropolis to become a gentleman, this is because of Estella, who made aware that he was poor and below her, and Pip wants to change the image she has about him. This leads us, in turn to common point in most of the characters in Dickens’s novels: their childhood, and the importance of it, that whatever happens there will brand them for the rest of their lives. Therefore, we could find forces tracing to the emergence of the characters’ subjectivities most likely in their childhood, but of course, there is also present the relevance of what else they do throughout their lives, which is an existentialist view. Hence, perhaps we could say Dickens’s conception of a character was more in the boundary of the modern era to next one?

Moreover, this scene should be an object of concern. Is Pip going to become an urban subject just like Wemmick? Both were knew there once, Wemmick must have been as innocent as Pip at the time. Now he is the living example of an urban subject. We know Pip gets to know some of the moves of it, incurring recklessly in debt. But we do not accompany Pip until the end of his days, not even to the age Wemmick is, indeed, Pip is still young when he finishes his story. The moves of the city might keep changing him as he discovers them.

There is another aspect of the life of his characters, where Dickens mirrors his readership, their home. Wemmick’s home may fit just into what Charles Dickens’ son wrote about English homes in his *Dictionary of London* (1879): ‘In the English heart there is a deep love of quiet, calm enjoyments, and home joys – this is the reason why the English home is so lovable... A true English home is intelligent, educated, and full of love... Those who say the English are not a hospitable, frank, generous people, know

nothing of their inner life.’³⁹ Perhaps the second sentence does not apply much to Wemmick’s home, because it is intended for the upper middle class. Nevertheless, there are reasons marked to love home, the quietness of it, as a refuge from the outer world. John Ruskin also provides a definition of home in *Sesame and Lilies* (1897): ‘this is the true nature of home – it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, division. In so far as it is not this, it is not home; so far as the anxieties of the outer life penetrate into it, the inconsistently-minded, unknown, unloved, or hostile society of the outer world is allowed by either husband or wife to cross the threshold, it ceases to be home; it is then only a part of that outer world which you have roofed over and lifted fire in.’⁴⁰ This shows us that from the beginning of the accelerated modern world there was the necessity to have a shelter from it. The urban subject needs a place of quietness, since being in the public realm (in this case I am applying this term to the ‘outer life’ called by Ruskin) can be stressful with all the stimuli and because it is also a world of appearances. The other important thing concerning what Ruskin says about home is that it can also be meant for a nowadays home, more than a hundred years after. Furthermore, it goes along with what Dickens shows in his novels, his readers, middle class people could certainly identify with it. This middle class was made up of ‘merchants, factory owners, and professional people, such as lawyers and bankers, and small landowners.’⁴¹ And it was growing fast due to the increasing number of jobs. Also, as more children had access to education, more people could enjoy reading, which at this time had plenty of novels about Victorian era.

As mentioned before, lawyers were part of this growing middle class. Mr Jaggers is a renowned lawyer and his uniqueness is known, more importantly, by criminals, as Wemmick told Pip when he let Pip know about the forthcoming dinner invitation:

‘Well, he’s going to ask the whole gang’; I hardly felt complimented by the word; ‘and whatever he gives you, he’ll give you good. Don’t look forward to variety, but you’ll have excellence. An there’s another rum thing in his house,’ proceeded

³⁹ Jackson, Lee. ‘The Dictionary of Victorian London’. Victorianlondon.org. 15/11/01. Web.17 February 2012 < <http://www.victorianlondon.org/index-2012.htm>

⁴⁰ IBID <http://www.victorianlondon.org/houses/concept.htm>

⁴¹ Connolly, Sean. Witness to history Victorian Britain. Great Britain: Heinemann Library, 2004. Print.

Wemmick after a moment's pause, as if the remark followed on the housekeeper understood; 'he never lets a door or window be fastened at night.'

'Is he never robbed?'

'That's it!' returned Wemmick. 'He says, and gives it out publicly, "I want to see the man who'll rob *me*." Lord bless you, I have heard him, a hundred times if I have heard once, say to regular cracksmen in our front office, "You know where I live; now no blot is ever drawn there; why don't you do a stroke of business with me? Come; can't I tempt you?" Not a man of them, sir, would be bold enough to try it on, for love or money.' (Dickens 189) This indicates us how strong a public figure Mr Jaggers is, and from what we can see of him, his self-confidence everywhere, he feels very comfortable in the Public realm. But now, Pip is going to know him in his private life, if he has one.

The description Pip gives of Mr Jaggers home hardly fits with what Victorian people thought of a proper English home, as we saw above: 'He conducted us to Gerrard Street, Soho, to a house on the south side of that street, rather a stately house of its kind, but dolefully in want of painting, and with dirty windows. He took out his key and opened the door, and we all went into a stone hall, bare, gloomy, and little used. So, up a dark brown staircase into a series of three dark brown rooms in the first floor. There were carved garlands on the paneled walls, and as he stood among them giving us welcome, I know what kind of loops I thought they looked like.' (Dickens 194) What does this house tell us about his owner? Well, he does not care much about it as Wemmick does about his 'castle'. He most certainly does not spend much time at home. 'He told us he held the hold house, but rarely used more of it than we saw.' Since he does not have a family, he probably purchased such a big house because it must be the house expected for a lawyer, and he must keep his public self above all. Pip looks around, to the austere room: 'In a corner, was a little table of papers with a shaded lamp; so that he seemed to bring the office home in that respect too, and to wheel it out of an evening and fall to work.' This being said, I do not think we can call Mr Jaggers house, a home. It looks just as an extension of his office, where he receives only important clients. They certainly did not talk about business and Pip learnt of another fact about Mr Jaggers: 'Dinner went off gaily, and, although my guardian seemed to follow rather than originate subjects, I knew that he wrenched the weakest part of our dispositions out of us. For myself, I found that I was expressing my tendency to lavish expenditure, and to patronize Herbert, and to boast of my great prospects, before I quite

knew that I had opened my lips. It was so with all of us, but with no one more than Drummle: the development of whose inclination to gird in a grudging and suspicious way at the rest was screwed out of him before the fish was taken off.’ (Dickens 196) To be able to ‘take out the weakest part of our dispositions’ seems a very good quality for a lawyer, and apparently he is inspecting his guests with a bit more subtlety (I presume) than he would do with his clients. This guess of mine is just that, since Pip has never witnessed Mr Jaggers at work. However, it does not seem to me a guessing without ground, since he works with several prisoners at Newgate, and after seeing what all that people have done and how they try to hide it, it must be a spontaneous impulse of him to dig into the subjects to see what are they capable of.

Mr Jaggers even set an hour to finish the dinner party: ‘At half-past nine, gentlemen,’ said he, ‘we must break up. Pray make the best use of your time. I am glad to see you all. Mr Drummle, I drink to you.’ Drummle was the first member of Pip’s party to catch Mr Jaggers’s attention; he called him ‘the spider’. Pip did not like Drummle due to his sulkiness and air of superiority. This setting of a parting hour makes the dinner look more like a business meeting, as if the lawyer has to see someone else after them.

Another feature to compare is what Pip first noticed when, as a young boy, first met Mr Jaggers, it was his smell of scented soap. He always washed his hands after seeing a client, or when he came back to his office. Now, when they boys were already leaving, Pip went back to the house to apologize for his friends, since they had drunk a little: ‘As the door was not yet shut, I thought I would leave Herbert there for a moment, and run upstairs again to say a word to my guardian. I found him in his dressing-room surrounded by his stock of boots, already hard at it, washing his hands of us.’ (Dickens 198) Mr Jaggers was just following his routine as if he had finished with a client. And, indeed, Pip is a client in a certain way, since, his so far unknown, benefactor paid him to take care of Pip’s business.

This Dinner party was different from that at Wemmick’s house in several ways. Firstly, Pip did not meet a different private Mr Jaggers; he behaved almost the same as in his office. He had no family to introduce to Pip. However, this may not have been such a private meeting, since Mr Jaggers invited the ‘whole gang’ of friends Pip used to surround himself when going to the parties and clubs in society, and the sole friend Pip really had among them was Herbert. He himself told his guardian he did not like

Bentley Drummle, but somehow the circle of friends pushed them to share several social occasions. As Simmel pointed out, we could say that Mr Juggers manages most of his personal relationships as mere economical interactions, and he never seems to be out of his profession. During the Dinner, Mr Juggers attended himself and by the exception of his housekeeper he did not have any other servant. Pip and the readers may not know whether Mr Juggers has (other than Pip can know about) a private life, or is a divided subject and not just the lawyer everyone sees, but his housekeeper might know.

Afterwards, we find Mr Juggers again dining with Pip, this time at Miss Havisham's house. She has called Pip to see Estella. Mr Juggers asks him about her: 'Well, Pip! How often have you seen Miss Estella before?' said he when he came up to a stop.

'How often?'

'Ah! How many times? Ten thousand times?'

'Oh! Certainly not so many.'

'Twice?'

'Juggers,' interposed Miss Havisham, much to my relief; 'leave my Pip alone, and go with him to your dinner.'

He complied, and we groped our way down the dark stair together. While we were still on our way to those detached apartments across the paved yard at the back, he asked me how often I had seen Miss Havisham eat and drink; offering me a breadth of choice, as usual, between a hundred times and once.

I considered, and said, 'Never.'

'And never will, Pip,' he retorted, with a frowning smile. 'She has never allowed herself to be seen doing either, since she lived this present life of hers. She wanders about in the night, and then lays hands on such food as she takes.' (Dickens 222) The first difference here, is that this dinner does not take place in the city, but it does not make much of a difference either, since in the previous two we see little of the city before or after. Notwithstanding, the dinner party is composed just by urban subjects, now that Pip has been living in the city, and Estella has come back from France, the others are Mr Juggers and Sarah Pocket. Secondly, this scene gives us information about Pip that readers might not have noticed before. Pip may not be such a good observer as we thought he was, it is Mr Juggers who made him notice of something about Miss Havisham, whom he saw several times in his childhood. May this be a Dickens strategy

for the reader to notice what is missing? These instances I have chosen, dinners, are quotidian events, routines; therefore it will be more noticeable if something out of order happens. Or is it a hint to make readers doubt of our narrator?

This odd behavior of Miss Havisham (which, we know, she already is uncommon), highlights even more her subjectivity, not making her part of Victorian traditions, such as being the hostess at a dinner at her own home, as any other lady of the house would have done. Miss Havisham has made her present life entirely in the private Realm, depriving herself of social occasions, even quotidian ones, as meals.

Unlike the previous reunion, in this one, Pip has opportunity to notice something about Mr Jaggers, which he will understand later, when the mysteries of the story unfold: ‘Anything to equal the determined reticence of Mr Jaggers under that roof I never saw elsewhere, even in him. He kept his very looks to himself, and scarcely directed his eyes to Estella’s face once during dinner. When she spoke to him, he listened, and in due course, answered, but never looked at her that I could see. On the other hand, she often looked at him, with interest and curiosity, if not distrust, but his face never showed the least consciousness. Throughout dinner he took a dry delight in making Sarah Pocket greener and yellower, by often referring in conversation with me to my expectations: but here, again, he showed no consciousness, and even made it appear that he extorted – and even did extort, though I don’t know how – those reference out of my innocent self.’ (Dickens 223) Now, Pip seems to have been paying more attention to his guardian and doing the job of a good observer. However, that does not make a good excuse for him in front of his readers, about his soft and influential character. As Pip has narrated, this was not a spontaneous dinner, every subject was keeping themselves. Did affect them the fact that they were in such an inhospitable house, and not the home of anyone at the table? Perhaps Mr Jaggers did not behave as usual due to everything he knows involving that house, Estella and Miss Havisham. How does he know Miss Havisham wanders about the house at night? The servants have little contact with guests (as Pip realized he saw a servant he never had seen in his previous visits, but was sure she was there all along), so he must have seen her... It is left to the reader to figure out how someone not so close, as a lawyer can know about such private habits of such a private person.

This reencounter with Estella only gave Pip more hopes about his illusion of a destiny together, of him and Estella; and kept doing exactly what Miss Havisham chose

him, and that night told him to do ‘Love her, lover her, love her’. This hope was increased, after he was asked to be her (one of them) companion in the city: ‘...it was arranged that when Estella came to London I should be forewarned of her coming and should meet her at the coach; and then I took leave of her, and touched her and left her.’ (Dickens 224) That is where they will meet again, in the city, in pretty different circumstances.

In the city, Pip is no more the blacksmith’s boy, Estella still was the girl of the big house to Pip, but she was new to the city. Pip was commanded to be her companion much as he was to visit Miss Havisham when he was a young boy, but it does not mean the same to him, every occasion to see Estella is a blessing, now that Estella is a fine lady and will not be so rude to him. Even more, it is her who gives him the first hint that now they are in a more equal relationship, when she first came to the city: ‘I am going to Richmond,’ she told me. ‘Our lesson is, that there are two Richmonds, one in Surrey and one in Yorkshire, and that mine is the Surrey Richmond. The distance is ten miles. I am to have a carriage, and you are to take me. This is my purse, and you are to pay my charges out of it. Oh, you must take the purse! We have no choice, you and I, but to obey our instructions. We are not free to follow our own devices, you and I.’ (Dickens 243) Even if they are equal in being puppets, Estella recognizes that they are in the same situation. This indicates that they have not defined themselves as individual subjects, they both have been sent to the city to do it, to become part of another society, different from that where they grew up, in the country. Furthermore, Estella is technically including Pip in her world by means of enunciation ‘you and I’, which had not happened before.⁴² Now, while they are waiting for the carriage and she had some tea, Estella spoke more blatantly to him, and this brought Pip to reality, because she did not see what was going on around them as he did (him being blind by his fake hope and his expectations).

Estella may seem different now in the city, but her subjectivity was shaped from childhood by Miss Havisham, and with such a strong upbringing there is little the social forces in the city can do to change her, or it might be that they will have effect in the long run. She is quite aware of what she is (as she told once Pip that she had no heart):

⁴² Benveniste, Emile. ‘El aparato formal de la enunciación.’ *Problemas de lingüística general II*. Siglo veintiuno Editores. PDF.

‘It is not easy for even you,’ said Estella, ‘to know what satisfaction it gives me to see those people (The Pockets) thwarted, or what an enjoyable sense of the ridiculous I have when they are made ridiculous. For you were not brought up in that strange house from a mere baby. – I was. You had not your little wits sharpened by their intriguing against you, suppressed and defenceless, under the mask of sympathy and pity and what not, that is soft and soothing. –I had. You did not gradually opened your round childish eyes wider and wider to the discovery of that impostor of a woman who calculates her stores of peace of mind for when she wakes up in the night. – I did.’ (Dickens 246) Then she made Pip sure that they would never impair his ground with Miss Havisham. But Pip was there to take her to her destination in the city: ‘Her reverting to this tone as if our association were forced upon us and we were mere puppets, gave me pain; but everything in our intercourse did give me pain. Whatever her tone with me happened to be, I could put no trust in it, and build no hope on it; and yet I went on against trust and against hope. Why repeat it a thousand times? So it always was.’ With this comment readers can really see where Pip’s innocence really lies, how he fell in love with an illusion and now reality is painful to him. And then again, in the company of whom first made him aware of how poor he was, Pip ran into Newgate: ...- we got into our post-coach and drove away. Turning into Cheapside and rattling up Newgate Street, we were soon under the walls of which I was so ashamed.

‘What place is that?’ Estella asked me.

I made a foolish pretence of not at first recognizing it, and then told her. As she looked at it, and drew in her head again, murmuring ‘Wretches!’ I would not have confessed to my visit for any consideration.

‘Mr Jaggers,’ said I, by way of putting it neatly on somebody else, ‘has the reputation of being more in the secrets of that dismal place than any man in London.’

‘He is more in the secrets of any place, I think,’ said Estella, in a low voice.

‘You have been accustomed to see him often, I suppose?’

‘I have been accustomed to see him at certain intervals, ever since I can remember. But I know him no better now, than I did before I could speak plainly. What is your own experience of him? Do you advance with him?’

‘Once habituated to his distrustful manner,’ said I, ‘I have done very well.’

‘Are you intimate?’

‘I have dined with him at his private house.’

‘I fancy,’ said Estella, shrinking, ‘that must be a curious place.’

‘It is a curious place.’ (Dickens 247)

As this scene shows us, it is to be supposed that people are ‘intimate’, or close to be it, if they are invited to dine at their ‘private house’. However, we have seen that this was not the case with Mr Jaggers. However, this must not be taken so literally. Certainly the readers in the Victorian times understood this very well, for in the growing upper middle-class and the higher classes in society, people mostly invited one another to parties because of a shared (sometimes very big) social circle.

Pip again felt diminished in front of Estella, now because he feels connected with the Prison, which he indirectly is. The other in which Pip wants to create an image of himself is Estella, and he acts in a certain way for her to look at him differently. Pip is an incomplete subject, because he lives of hopes and expectations (which are to be achieved in the city, becoming a gentleman), always looking for recognition in Estella, but as he cannot find it yet, he has still a void. Even though this passing through the state of their childhood relationship, there are more aspects of this first meeting in the city aiming at their new relationship of equals: Pip is going to visit her officially in society, ‘Oh, yes, you are going to see me; you are to come when you think proper: you are to be mentioned to the family; indeed you are already mentioned.’ And in this meeting, for the first time Estella called purposely Pip by his name. ‘I inquired was it large the household she was going to be a member of?’

‘No; there are only two; mother and daughter. The mother is a lady of some station, though not averse to increasing her income.’

‘I wonder Miss Havisham could part with you again so soon.’

‘It is part of Miss Havisham’s plans for me, Pip,’ said Estella, with a sigh, as if she were tired; ‘I am to write to her constantly and see her regularly, and report how I go on – I and the jewels – for they are nearly all mine now.’

It was the first time she had ever called me by my name. Of course she did it so purposely, and knew that I should treasure it up.’ (Dickens 248)

These scenes configure the corpus for examination. They are the main events where Pip gets to know more about the other characters. They are mostly dinners, except for the last one, which just involves Estella having a cup of tea. But, why do they involve food? Even though I omitted the food description of the passages, to focus on

the rest of the scene, it is present sometimes in detail. George Orwell mentions this in his essay *Charles Dickens*: ‘It is not merely a coincidence that Dickens never writes about agriculture and writes endlessly about food. He was a Cockney, and London is the centre of the earth in rather the same sense that the belly is the centre of the body. It is a city of consumers, of people who are deeply civilized but not primarily useful.’⁴³ Some contemporary critics of Dickens thought unnecessary the amount of detail he gave to some descriptions. As he writes about what he knows, he writes about food. In this novel, this habit may be overlooked as the narrator is autodiegetic, and seems more natural that Pip describes what he is served in a dinner where he is taking part. In the dinner at Wemmick’s castle, for instance, Pip tells us: ‘The supper was excellent; and though the castle was rather subject to dry-rot, insomuch that it tasted like a bad nut, and though the pig might have been farther off, I was heartily pleased with my whole entertainment.’ (Dickens 193) At the time Wemmick invited Pip to his home, he also warned of a forthcoming invitation by Mr Jaggers and at the same time made a little comparison of what they could offer to him: ‘he’ll give you wine, and good wine. I’ll give you punch, and not bad punch.’ At Mr Jaggers’s dinner, the food description is wider: ‘It was a noble dish of fish that the housekeeper had put on the table, and we had a joint of equally choice mutton afterwards, and an equally choice bird. Sauces, wines, all the accessories we wanted, and all of the best, were given out by our host from his dumb-waiter; and when they had made the circuit of the table, he always put them back again. Similarly, he dealt us clean plates and knives and forks, for each course, and dropped those just disused into two baskets on the ground by his chair.’ (Dickens 196) Perhaps here the description goes farther because Dickens needs to go deeper in the portrayal of Mr Jaggers at his home, with the handling of the serving, in this case, his obsession for keeping everything clean. Therefore, from one perspective Dickens might have chosen dinners as background for these meetings because among the activities of everyday life he gave importance to meals, and he liked to write about food. Dinners are an important detail in this novel, since from them readers can see more easily the character’s subjectivities, and if we pay attention when suddenly such a trivial detail is

⁴³ Orwell, George. *Charles Dickens. Inside The Whale and other Essays*. Victor Gollancz. London. 1940. Webpage. Accessed on 9 March 2012 <http://orwell.ru/library/reviews/dickens/english/e_chd>

missing we can also find something interesting about a character's subjectivity, in this case, about Miss Havisham.

Orwell also comments, in the same essay, on these scenes of private lives: 'Dickens sees human beings with the most intense vividness, but sees them always in private life, as 'characters', not as functional members of society; that is to say, he sees them statically.' By this he means, that the characters are not developed further, that one could not picture the character in another situation. However, that can be refuted. That is not what reader-response theorists have told us. In this novel, readers will have to imagine from their vantage point a possible personal life for Mr Jaggery, how Estella has changed in the time Pip does not see her, and at the end, the future for Pip. And of course, Dickens' implied reader must have done that differently than how readers do it today.

Great Expectations reception and Dickens's readership

Great Expectations is one of Dickens' latest novels. The previous published novel was *A Tale of Two Cities*, which was not as successful with his readers as his first novels; it was criticized by having little or no humor at all. Accustomed as he was to keeping his readers pleased and always expecting more with the serial publication of his novels, he added the humor that had made him so popular with his first novels, to the next one. In a letter to a friend, he explained: 'You will not have to complain of the want of humour as in *The Tale of Two Cities*. I have made the opening, I hope, in its general effect exceedingly droll. I have put a child and a good-natured foolish man, in relations that seem to me very funny. Of course I have got in the pivot on which the story will turn too—and which indeed, as you will remember, was the grotesque tragicomic conception that first encouraged me. To be quite sure that I had fallen into no unconscious repetitions, I read *David Copperfield* again the other day, and was affected by it to a degree you would hardly believe.'⁴⁴ However, the critics were still hesitant before the idea of a new success, due to the stage in which they thought Dickens was in his career. Critics were of the opinion that the best of his work had occurred at the

⁴⁴ 'Charles Dickens.' academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu. March 22, 2011. Web. Accessed in February 21, 2012. < http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/novel_19c/dickens/index.html

beginning of his career, and after his last novel did not content his readership very much, they expected little of the next work to come.

Most critics compared him with Thackeray. When the novel came out, G.K Chesterton said that *Great Expectations* was a Thackerayan novel. It differentiated from the author's previous work because here the hero disappears: 'I mean that it is a novel which aims chiefly at showing that the hero is unheroic... All such phrases as these must appear of course to overstate the case. Pip is a much more delightful person than Nicholas Nickleby. Or to take a stronger case for the purpose of our argument, Pip is a much more delightful person than Sydney Carton. Still the fact remains. Most of Nicholas Nickleby's personal actions are meant to show that he is heroic. Most of Pip's actions are meant to show that he is not heroic...'⁴⁵ This way, Dickens shows a character who is not completely innocent, pure, and morally perfect throughout the whole story as many of his other protagonists are. Pip has flaws, and as Chesterton says, he is a snob, and actually he does not achieve his great expectations, we could say he becomes a gentleman, but he still must have a job to have incomes, because after he learns who his benefactor is, he will not allow receiving anything else.

The critical opinion is divided in front of *Great Expectations*. On the one hand, some think it is an unrealistic snob story, and on the other hand some think it is the greatest love story Dickens ever invented in a world which could only come from his mind. *All the Year Round*, the journal where the novel was first serialized highlights a segment from the *Saturday Review* (July 1861): 'Mr Dickens may be reasonably proud of these volumes. After a long series of his varied works—after passing under the cloud of *Little Dorrit* and *Bleak House*—he has written a story that is new, original, powerful, and very entertaining... *Great Expectations* restores Mr Dickens and his readers to the old level. It is in his best vein,...quite worthy to stand beside *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *David Copperfield*.'⁴⁶ The *Atlantic Monthly* from September 1861 also underlines the originality and entertaining of the love story, which so much stimulated and baffled the curiosity of the readers. This review makes emphasis on the point that the plot makes

⁴⁵ 'Appreciations and Criticisms by G.K Chesterton.' *dickens-literature.com*. 2008. Web. Accessed in March 6, 2012. <http://www.dickens-literature.com/Appreciations_and_Criticisms_by_G.K_Chesterton/19.html>

⁴⁶ *Great Expectations*. *Charles Dickens: Critical Heritage*. Ed. Phillip Collins. Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005. P 439-462. PDF.

noticeable, more than any of his previous novels, ‘the individuality of Dickens’s genius’. This by harmonizing his tendencies of accurate observation (which was not his dominant faculty) and his strong tendency to humorous idealization, ‘In *Great Expectations*...Dickens seems to have attained the mastery of powers which formerly more or less mastered him.’ This vision complements the accounts from what his readership thought of his previous work and what they expected now, they missed his characteristic humour. Furthermore, this review describes a process which is to be expected from an experienced author and in his latest work, the mastery of his abilities. This review also points out as positive, the creativity of the story, which other critics find too unreal: ‘The author palpably uses his observations as materials for his creative faculties to work upon; he does not record, but invents, and he produces something which is natural only under conditions prescribed by his own mind. He shapes, disposes, penetrates, colours, and contrives everything, and the whole action is a series of events which only have occurred in his own brain, and which it is difficult to conceive of as actually ‘happening.’ **And yet in none of his other works does he evince a shrewder insight into real life**, and a clearer perception and knowledge of what is called ‘the world’. The book is, indeed, an artistic creation, and not a mere succession of humorous and pathetic scenes, and demonstrates that Dickens is now in the prime, and not in the decline of his great powers.’ (Bolded is mine)⁴⁷. Respecting the characters, the critic says ‘none of them may excite the personal interest’ which other of the author’s characters do, but they are better fitted for each other along with the story, ‘Individually they will rank among the most original of the author’s creations...’ Probably the character most people will remember will be Miss Havisham, because of the clear image left by Pip’s description. However, as I have been looking for subjectivities in this novel, the character which caught my attention at first was Wemmick, who, as stated above, is the vivid example of a divided urban subject. In summary, the *Atlantic Monthly* gives a very positive and thorough review of the novel, even giving a comment at the end, stating the standpoint of the journal, implicitly alluding to other, not so positive, reviews: ‘Altogether we take great joy in recording our conviction that *Great Expectations* is a masterpiece. We have never sympathized in the mean delight which some critics seem to experience in detecting the signs which subtly indicate the decay of

⁴⁷ IBID p 442

power in creative intellects. We sympathize still less in the stupid and ungenerous judgements of those who find a still meaner delight in wilfully asserting that the last book of a popular writer is unworthy of the genius which produced his first. In our opinion, *Great Expectations* is a work which proves that we may expect from Dickens a series of romances far exceeding in power and artistic skill the productions which have already given him such a pre-eminence among the novelists of the age.’⁴⁸ In a review in *The Times* (17 October 1861), the critic E.S Dallas, introduces his comment by mentioning the fact that Dickens granted his readers ‘the desire of their hearts’. He sees his humour as something positive, although his opinion is that this novel is not his best work, but he thinks it among his happiest, and precisely it is the humour that defies criticism. He also considers the monthly publication to be a good thing, it forces writers to develop the plot and work up the incidents. This review provides us (XXI century readers) with another piece of information, which helps us understand the snobbery found in the novel, as Chesterton noted it. The readership to whom this novel was aimed, maybe it was not so middle class after all: ‘The periodical which he conducts is addressed to a much higher class of readers than any which the penny journal would reach, and he has spread before them novel after novel specially adapted to their tastes...If Mr Dickens, however, chose to keep the common herd of readers together by the marvel of an improbable story, he attracted the better class of readers by his fancy, his fun, and his sentiment.’⁴⁹ Dallas compares the story to that of *Oliver Twist*, which is more fresh in style and rich in detail, ‘but that the later one is the more free in handling, and the more powerful in effect.’ He does make some critic to Dickens’s mannerisms; he sets for example the recurrent character that has been confined indoors for years. Finally, he recommends the novel, because ‘it is worthy of its author’s reputation, and is well worth reading.’ The *Dublin University Magazine* (December 1861) comments on the disappointment that this novel may bring to the readership, it also, as *The Times* review, mentions a high use of mannerisms that now have become obtrusive. It mainly brings out Dickens as a humorist, and does not consider the novel in the same level as his previous works. The improbable likeness of the story is also present here, as well as in the *Rambler* review from January 1862, which put emphasis in Dikckens’s view of

⁴⁸ IBID

⁴⁹ IBID p 444

humanity, it says is conforms almost a religion, 'he loves his neighbour for his neighbour's sake, and knows nothing of sin when it is no crime. His particular way of thinking has incapacitated him of having a vision of a whole character, and this would explain his 'few characters and many caricatures.' The curious habits of his characters would show lack of imagination, an opinion completely opposite the one exposed by the *Atlantic Monthly*, it also accentuates the humour in it, which would be the main the reason to read the novel: because it is fun. The impossibility of events in the story is present in the *Blackwood's Magazine* as well, the critic, Margaret Oliphant, who thought he was not in his best phase, and was not her favourite writer. She judges the novel as 'feeble, fatigued, and colourless.' She also mentions that the story comes to nothing, Estella is never shown as the avenging heart-breaking woman Miss Havisham was shaping her to be. However, she praises the darker side of it, the scene when the escaped convict appears 'is perhaps as vivid and effective a sketch as Mr Dickens ever drew. Finally, the *Westminster Review from October 1864*, mentions the author's popularity and his entering 'into our every-day life in a manner which no other living author has done.' However, the critic, Justin McCarthy claims that Dickens attempted to write about everything and even though he possessed valuable gifts, he was not qualified to cope with complicated interests. The emphasis he gives to children throw unreality over the story, nonetheless Pip is among the characters that 'are created and carried out with unusual skill.' It follows a criticism on the author's beliefs, which concern here because it alludes also to his readership: 'But Mr Dickens claims to represent large phases of modern thought and life. Therefore we think it a pity that he should have set out with so trivial a belief as that virtue is usually rewarded and vice usually punished.

His moral and political speculations take their colour from the opinions of the public for whom he works.' This belief, that I take more as an ideal, and it seems to me logical to portray one's ideal on one's work, better if it makes a stronger connection with his readership, which according to McCarthy, are divided in two classes, those who admire him, and those who thoroughly understand and believe in him. As well as Orwell, the critic mentions that Dickens has written about everything but has never pointed out any remedy, 'it is all very well meant, but ignorant...' Being a criticism it is all subject to the reader, whether she or he agrees or not with what has been stated. Nevertheless, there is a comment where we can state McCarthy is wrong: 'We cannot

think that he will live as an English classic. He deals too much in accidental manifestation and too little in universal principles.’⁵⁰ Perhaps this vision could have been in the period from the end of the XIX century to the XXth, when Dickens lost popularity in front of the Russian writers, who admired him. In the mid XX century, he came back with force thanks to the essays by George Orwell and Edmund Wilson. ‘Critics discovered complexity, darkness, and even bitterness in his novels, and by the 1960s some critics felt that, like Shakespeare, Dickens could not be classified into existing literary categories. This view of Dickens as incomparable continues through the twentieth century.’⁵¹ Despite many critics may think his work is for children and youth, it is precisely because it is a good stage in life to start reading Dickens, whose characters and stories will stay with the reader till she or he grows up, as his novels show the life of their protagonists.

From the second part of the XXth century until now, perhaps most kids have not heard of Dickens until they are introduced to him at school, but they have certainly watched at least one of the many adaptations for television or the big screen, of his works, among these, the one recognisable with more adaptations being *A Christmas Carol*, which gained to Dickens, the title of father of Christmas. Nowadays, Dickens’s readers have first met his work from an adaptation instead of at first hand with the novel. There are plenty of Victorian novel adaptations. The readers who would go back to the first hand material are the ones who always do, who see beyond the new director’s vision and really want to see such a complex period (in terms of darkness and colourfulness) from the word of someone who actually lived it.

Dickens’s English-speaking readership has known his work from childhood and it is easier to understand how they can relate to him. Modern British readers (more easily than others English-speaking readers) can go walk the same streets that Pip walked. But we, as XXIth century Latin-Americans, how do we approach a classic that is so British, and so Victorian? Perhaps people will come at it at first because they like this era, on the one hand, full of developments, and on the other hand people struggling to survive and trying to adapt to the new times, these are the colourful part and the dark

⁵⁰ IBID p 462

⁵¹ Charles Dickens.’ academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu. March 22, 2011. Web. Accessed in March 20, 2012. < http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/novel_19c/dickens/index.html

one. However, the time and place issue can be left aside if the reader finds no interest in it, but likes a well-narrated story, although as some critics have pointed out, it is sometimes the characters who stick with the reader rather than the storyline of the novel. Finally, as some critics have underlined as well, the reader might well read a Dickens novel because the humour, because it is fun.

The XXth century with its massive popularity for the movies it is another factor that keeps Dickens as a classic, as recent review on the *Telegraph*⁵² says, the sceneries of his stories are the dream of a director and he would have made a terrific screenwriter.

I am glad to say that in this work I managed to study the scenes I first picked up when deciding what to do. However, the first reading of these passages was so much simpler than the one displayed here. With the help of some philosophical conceptions and literary theories I managed to get a so much deeper reading. Dickens's descriptions of quotidian scenes present all the necessary elements to submerge into the life of the characters. This is extremely useful if you want to analyse subjectivity and the dichotomy of public and private. Surely, all of us have our own conception of this dichotomy, but it will correspond to the era we live in, and the culture we are part of.

⁵² Delignpole, James. 'Dickens: Good on paper, great on screen'. www.telegraph.co.uk. 29 Dec 2011. Online Journal. Accessed on 29 Dec 2011. < http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/charles-dickens/8982962/Charles-Dickens-good-on-paper-great-on-screen.html?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter>

Therefore, in working with a novel like *Great Expectations*, which clearly represents the era and place where the storyline is settled, it is essential to look for different conceptions, mainly generated by philosophers, who must study this historically. One must keep in mind this dynamic quality of the notions of private and public, and in this case look for them in the novel, which must be the same as the contemporary readership of the author. Taking this into account helps us find the connection between an author, who is known to portray reality, and his loyal readership. Through the dinner scenes, we are able to explore the Private and Public Realm and how the characters live it. This is a constant throughout the novel. Besides, as first mentioned, a dinner can be a private and a public event. This type of scene may also be seen as a metonymy for the journey in and out of this dichotomy along the story. This moving of the characters between these aspects of life is in the background of the main storyline of Pip and his expectations; however it is another theme of the novel, and most likely not only in this novel, but others by the same author. Perhaps what makes this theme come to light is the contrast between the city and the country lives, and of course, the coming to the metropolis by the protagonist and his earning of how this dichotomy of the Private and Public Realm are lived there. Without doubt this theme could make a whole new work examined through all the novels of the author. How is it the presentation of the Private and Public Realm in *Great Expectations* different from other novels by Dickens? Does it vary through social classes?

As we saw during the examination of the selected scenes, we will eventually wonder if we, readers, are actually all-seeing, and the first obstacle in our sight is the fact that we are actually seeing everything through Pip's eyes. It is also left to the reader to ponder over the questions that Pip oversees, does not care about, or just does not notice. Some critics say the characters are not fully developed due to the characteristic viewpoint of the author, that the reader is never going to see a whole character. Well, the reader is going to see a whole character if she or he wants to, not that whatever comes to mind will be allowed, but let us remember that the author gives his implied reader implicit directions as where is she or him going to lead the character. And a characteristic aspect of Dickens: Why are these characters felt so close? May be not all the credit comes from the author, he just figures his implied reader in such a way that any reader in time may fit themselves and forge along with the author this character that will stick with them for a long time.

Regarding subjectivity, as we can imagine, there are plenty of viewpoints and theories, however not everyone and, not a single one by itself will apply to the subjectivity found in a particular character or set of characters. The best way to approach to the examination of a subjectivity is once you have as many varied conceptions as you can get, and then, after reading them carefully, take what you think best from everything and make up your own idea. Some of the visions presented in this work agree, which makes the argument stronger. At the same time, the subject itself may lead the reader to the theory which suits it best, for instance, Wemmick shows up as divided urban subject, Pip as an incomplete subject who seeks for self-recognition in the other, and Mr Jaggers as a true metropolitan individual (Simmel).

As I stated above, at the end of the reading, the impact of the metropolis on the subject is a cause-effect situation, and the difference between the city and the country is more noticeable when the industrial revolution is just starting to making the city grow. Today, urban development is almost everywhere, there are still major metropolis of course, but the differences are already assimilated. At the time of the novel, these distinct subjectivities representing the background of the character, or person in real life, are just appearing on scene.

What is new here, I think, is the approach to the novel. Certainly several critics must have analysed from top to bottom Pip, and Miss Havisham or Estella. Nevertheless I did not focus completely on Pip, and took him as the lens through which the reader can see every other component of the story. There must also be several works on the plot, the impact in Pip's childhood of meeting an escaped convict and in such particular circumstances, but not about the other the secondary characters and their lives. And one of the novel's contemporary reviews mentioned, the characters on this novel are among the most remembered ones, and there, is another challenge for the reader: Are these whole characters? The *Rambler* review says they are not. Whether they are completely delivered to the reader by the author or not, the reader can still wonder about them even more. Certainly, one could engage in the enterprise of examining every single character one by one on their subjectivity, and whether they are an urban subject or not, or examine them according to any other theory.

Regarding Interpretative Communities there is also another question that could be dealt with, conforming another completely whole new work: the moral issue. Dickens was thought as moral instructor for society, which some critics thought rather naive, to

think that good people should be rewarded and evil must be punished and that if simply people would change their behaviour, society would improve. In my opinion it is a rather acceptable ideal, whether pessimists or realists think it even possible or not. In the novel, the protagonist is mainly the one with moral dilemmas. Firstly, he is always regretting the way he treats Joe, the reader believes he means well, as probably even Pip truly means what he says when he proposes to come back and visit him. However he never does. It was not a theme for this thesis, but would this situation have had any impact on Victorian society? Undoubtedly it is still a situation that happens today. Secondly, Dickens shows us a good moral side on Pip. While he thought his benefactor was Miss Havisham, he went on with his expectations of becoming a gentleman in the city, yet when he learnt the money came from a convict he did not want it anymore, although it was earned through working. What would any ordinary youth do today? Would the reaction of an urban subject be different from that of a subject from the country? This can be count among the moral lessons inscribed in Dickens's novels.

The reading here is very specific and fenced. Nevertheless, hopefully the deviation from the autodiegetic narrator and diving into the surrounding subjectivities will open the possibility to examine further every character, in any other perspective the reader wishes to have. Almost everything is possible, because every new interpretative community will re-write the novel. Those readers who are just not able to understand the so many different possibilities of a story, who just do not like the novel, or some novel, it is because they are nothing near what the writer expected in a reader, they simply will not fit, will not accept the guiding of the implied reader, which hopefully will be the least so far as Dickens is still so popular. The rest of us, who somehow agree with this implied reader, have a wide range of possibilities to re-write, as Fish says, the novel.

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