

Identity Crisis and Class Difference in Charles Dickens' 'Great Expectations'

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Abstract : In Victorian era, the society had been surrounded by extreme class ranking in order to identify the people of the classes and to intensify power relationships due to the growth of industry in Charles Dickens's (1812-1870) *Great Expectations* (2003) in which he illustrates the clash and dichotomy in the 19th century London. The classes in Victorian period have socially divided the population into two parts, the lower and the upper class of the community. In such a panopticon society, the major character Pip was the best example of the working class who was under the domination of violence, malice, and abuse of Miss Havisham as a member of the ruling class in order to take revenge on her failures. The conflict and disunity represented in vindictiveness and the sense of revenge applied by Miss Havisham against his victim Pip, made him experience alienation and eventually suffer from identity crisis. This paper considers New Historicism based on the theories of the French critic Michel Foucault (1926-1984). The social concept, panopticism, was called after the panopticon society, basically elaborated by Foucault in his book *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and he considers the panopticon as a sign of punitive community of surveillance. This paper evaluates the problems of a dual society to show that the people of the lower class are under the domination of capitalist society.

Keywords : class, identity crisis, violence, panoptic society, domination

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