

Subverting Gender Roles in Dickens' Great Expectations through the Lens of Feminism

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ABSTRACT: This paper investigates the subversion of the gender stereotypes in Charles Dickens' Great Expectations from the feminist perspective. Analyzing the representation of the female characters in the novel (Estella, Miss Havisham, Mrs. Joe Gargery, Biddy, and Molly) who demonstrated resistance to Victorian ideals, it emphasized them by the actions over the novel. It additionally that explores how these characters are breaking from established gender roles through their active defiant and re-negotiation of gender roles, as viewed from a feminist theoretical perspective. Miss Havisham is an example of the complexities of social outlier- a woman who lives differently from everyone else and Estella in particular challenges traditional gender norms by refusing to pursue romantic relationships and by being, on the contrary, cold and unsentimental. Dominant personality of Mrs. Joe Gargery. The image of the ideal mother role is challenged by Molly, and female emancipation through education and intellectual interests is signified by Biddy. It brings attention to the ways in which these characters act and tell their story in ways that go against the grain of gender norms, thus exposing the limitations and inequalities of women in Dickens' world. It does this through feminist literary theory and a detailed analysis of the text. The researchers will look at how these subversions have enhanced knowledge of gender norms and dynamics in nineteenth century literature, and highlight the importance of feminist theories in literary works and interpretations.

Introduction

Charles Dickens was another popular English writer, and one of the most prolific writers of all time in the nineteenth century. His belief was that much of the solutions to the problems of the world lay in writing. His characters' brooding mood, the mystery and plot curves of his stories kept his audience hungry for more. Both Dickens' colourful characters and the complex social context he evokes resemble Dickens' own society in many ways, as the Industrial Revolution brought about changes such that the working classes had sordid working and living conditions. This challenge faced by a young child faced Dickens. In the Victorian time, it was

to be a woman's duty to look forward to her role as a mother and manager of the household. At that time society didn't think about a girl's education, but wanted her to have abilities such as sewing and cooking. The notion of "separate spheres" came to mean that men were viewed as being physically strong and emotionally tougher for working away from home- and women as physically and emotionally weaker but morally superior, better suited to work at home and raise children as a moral responsibility. Traditionally women juggled childcare with helping their husbands with their jobs. Conducted business record keeping, customer service and farm work activities. But since the industrial revolution and the shift from agriculture labour to industrial labour the balance changed. Gender is subverted in activities that may involve extremes of gender performance or a shift in gender. It focuses on applying the rules of the father against them, re-contextualising norms. Charles Dickens challenges Victorian society's norms in *Great Expectation* through introducing characters of opposite genders that deviate from them. Although Pip is a man, women, such as Mrs. Joe, Miss Havisham, Estella, Molly and Biddy, are all important characters that upset the gender rules of the times. Mrs. Joe's strength and dominance flaws the expectation that society has of a female figure. Miss Havisham defies social norms through her eccentric behaviour and her defiance of family norms. The curing of Estella's emotional attachment to Darcy, and the harmful effects shown by the standards of society on people shows through her whole character reared by Miss Havisham. When Molly leaves behind the limitations imposed on her as a girl and takes her own route, they are disproven. While other characters made up of women may have a less traditional, if relevant, role, Biddy is more of a traditional, traditional woman, except that Biddy plays that role up. She represents thoughtfulness, intellect, and self-improvement and provides a different viewpoint in the novel. The word "feminism," means "feminine qualities or character" and comes from the French philosopher Charles Fourier in 1837 as "féminisme" but is seldom used in this capacity today. Over time the meaning of this shifted to "proponent of equality for women" and it came to be closely linked to the suffragist movement for women's right to vote, before becoming an active voice for women's rights in the twentieth century. Over time the term acquired the sense of "one who advocates equality for women," and by the beginning of the 20th century it was allied with the movement for women's suffrage. Feminism has broadened over the years to address a wider spectrum of problems of woman equality and 'woman's rights'. Indeed, Feminism is one of the oldest movements in the history of the world which seeks to eliminate discriminatory practices towards women and promote equality. There is no fixed definition, but feminism could be viewed as a concerned and collective action towards resolving problems of

inequality regarding gender. They are not always categorized as “waves,” rather than discussing feminist perspectives individually they are sometimes grouped together to build a sense of the evolution of feminist perspectives and activism over time. This distinction between waves brings into some clarity the various emphases, approaches, and historical contexts of the many feminist movements. Through the characters of women in Great Expectation that challenge and/or defy the conventional gender roles, Dickens examines the limitations and inequities of that era for women.

Objective

The aim of this research work is to discuss how traditional gender roles have been attacked by feminine characters in Charles Dickens' novel Great Expectations in Victorian England. The aim of this study is to show that there was an intrinsic injustice and discrimination within the representation of the gender stereotypes at this time through discussions on how the novel undermines and challenges these gender stereotypes. Besides, this research aims at a form of interpretation, cracking the prevailing rules of Victorian society by analyzing how gender roles were invalidated in Great Expectation despite the society being a part of a larger context of feminism.

Methodology

The research approach used in this thesis is analytical research, which is clearly demonstrated by the way the characters of female role in the novel "Great Expectations" has not revealed the traditional roles that females play, but on the contrary, the novel reveals the features of female characters in the novel who is able to reverse that situation, which is later analyzed from a feminist perspective. The selected analytical research methodology that has been used in this research article includes critical thinking skill and evaluative assessment. Meanwhile, descriptive research design adopted and used while conducting this study. This thesis has been based on the main text source, Charles Dickens' Great Expectations. Besides this, the author collects data from multiple sources related to this topic. Secondary sources are used for the collection of information which includes various documents, journal, articles, online archives, e-libraries and internet. All these resources and information have been effective and useful in conducting this research.

Discussion

Miss Havisham: An Unconventional Woman

Neo-feminism is a feminist position that advocates the supremacy of women, and rejects traditional gender roles. In *Great Expectations*, one of the main characters, Mrs. Havisham symbolizes a complex character in the role of a woman. That after being dumped on her wedding day, she is a strange and mysterious character, who is still stuck in the past, wearing her wedding dress and all of the clocks in her home having been stopped at the very moment of her terrible mistake. Despite higher levels of attachments, in the current culture there is a total assumption to “move on” from a thing, even though the loyalty and love towards certain franchises and sequels shows attachment to deeper levels. Doubtless Miss Havisham enjoyed all advantages at the time of her birth. Her parents lavish (stuff) her. Mrs. Havisham's failure to come to terms with her traumatic past could be considered a rejection of the conventional role woman fulfil as the spouse and mother. For those in romantic relationships, it is an all too familiar experience to experience sadness and heartbreak after a break-up. Such emotional turmoil can often lead to a profound sense of unhappiness that appears insurmountable. Nevertheless, Miss Havisham, a character of great resilience in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, resolutely defied succumbing to despair. But she decided she would seek retribution against the male sex, which she believed to be the cause for her anxiety, through further wrongs, similar to the one she had done. A feelingless and malicious adult, raised from childhood with a willingness to carry out a vendetta, Miss Havisham raised a child who was thought to be an orphan at the time to the ends of heaven. It can be justified from Pip's words in *Great Expectations*. As Pip thinks about the relationship of Miss Havisham with Estella, a young orphan in her charge, he draws parallels with the encounters he has had with various girls throughout his life. Pip compares the encounters that he has with girls from his past, and for him, the most striking one is with Estella, Miss Havisham's orphaned child. Miss Havisham takes pride in teaching Estella how to confuse, fascinate and repulse Pip, viewing him as a type of all men. Estella's attempts to break men's hearts will be a form of retribution for Miss Havisham's heartbreak. Sadly, Miss Havisham does not feel remorseful for causing Pip any pain in such a manner. Also, when we played at cards Miss Havisham would look on, with a miserly relish of Estella's moods, whatever they were; and sometimes, when her moods were so many and so contradictory one of the other, that I was puzzled what to say or do, Miss Havisham would embrace her with lavish fondness, murmuring in her ear, as though to break her heart, something that sounded like, “Break their hearts, my pride and hope, break their hearts and have no mercy!” Miss Havisham turned this young girl, Estella, into a woman

deeply lacking in romantic sensibility, and consuming in bitterness. Estella was deliberately trained to entice all men she could to be lovers, setting a passionate fire in their hearts, but then being cruel and violent until the flames died down. Unwittingly Miss Havisham entices Pip into this quirky experiment. It gave the "angoroso" lady great "joy to see Pip overcome by the magic of Estella's eyes. And Miss Havisham's attempts to act- a mannerism of her rich soul- gave hope to the broken heart yearning for revenge that year. Miss Havisham challenged the accepted gender roles because she used Estella to get revenge on the patriarchal society. She did not go on with her life, but became stronger and more vengeful. She demonstrates that women can exact revenge if they so choose. Miss Havisham is associated with the figure of "the other" because she embodies a refusal to conform to the mainstream genders and expectations and could be likened to the concept of Simone de Beauvoir. The Second Sex discusses the question of women as the object in relation to men rather than as independent beings in a book. Literate, charismatic, and untrammelled by societal norms, Miss Havisham challenges the gender norms that colonial society imputes onto people who refuse to accept them. The story of a woman's life focused on marriage and motherhood is upended by Miss Havisham's rejection of marriage and her unwillingness to get over being dumped. From her unending state of sadness and dwelling in her crumbling mansion together with her dead son, she is rejecting the traditional social values and norms that define a woman's worth through marriage. The 2005 release of its subversion is in confirmation of de Beauvoir's insights regarding women's value being determined by their ability to perform traditional women's roles and that women are often characterised by their relationship to men. The Second Sex is a book by Beauvoir that argues for the importance of women's value and the need to challenge patriarchy. Miss Havisham's character reinforces this idea by breaking away from stereotypical Russian women norms and highlighting the constraints imposed on women due to their societal expectations. Her negative reaction to the oppressive forces which hamper women's agency and autonomy could be seen as a radical opposition to the norms. By using the philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir, which emphasizes the concept of gender as a self-defined entity, the persona of Miss Havisham's in the novel may be analysed to deepen understanding of how she opposes the patriarchy and disrupts the social norms that she is alterative to. Her role encapsulates characteristics of women who do not conform to a certain role, unlike other women who do conform; she reflects the otherness of women and the implication of gender constructs that hinder women in achieving liberation.

Estella: A Manufactured Socialite

The physical allure was a gift in Estella's possession but she didn't use it to pursue a good and fruitful romantic life. Rather, she was educated in the use of her charm, as he learnt to use it to break many hearts. She marries finally to Bentley Drummle but they do not become happy. Her childhood is not natural; the result is that she comes out as an arrogant and inhuman girl. She often shows the real Jojo, however, but never comes across as tender or empathetic, which she does tell Pip in so many words. She isn't very warm at all, which may be partially due to genetics. Estella feels condescending towards Pip- like a brilliant and gorgeous woman- to Pip say, "You must know," said Estella, condescending to me as a brilliant and beautiful woman might, "if it has anything to do with my memory (Dickens 226) Mommy, Molly, a house servant for the lawyer Jaggers, murdered a rival for Pip's love, demonstrating that she has no heart as well. In addition to this, because of his long and winding history of crime, Magwitch was a cruel and violent man. She was too generous for Pip, but it wasn't as if she wouldn't be a little kinder if she weren't the mother who is going to be important for getting across this key point. In Chapter 38, Estella reveals that she was purposely raised not to experience love, so she never learned how to love. She Says, "When have you found me false to your teaching? At times when have you found me unmindful of your lessons? When have you found me giving admissions here," she touched her bosom with her hand, "to anything that you excluded? Follow this example and be just to me. Who showed me to be a proud child? Who has said a kind word to me for learning my lesson?" Estella's revenge against men is usurped her roles, and she acts in a robotic manner. She displays mystery personality and takes control of manhood. She created models for other "feminine" qualities by establishing a powerful female presence. Estella was in total a mysterious lady and after the end of the novel, it's also unclear what was her real essence. The Laura Mulvey theory 'the male gaze' relates to how women are often depicted as passive objects of desire, for men to enjoy, in visual media. The theory, can be used in the context of Estella in the novel Great Expectations. From her youth, Estella is coached by Miss Havisham to use men as weapons to wield against them for her revenge, in particular to break their hearts. This reinforces the idea that men are to be enjoyed exclusively by women, and consequently the impression who is Estella as a desired object through all the story. Apart from Mulvey's theory there might be a bigger stance taken on feminist theory which can be applied in the examination of Estella's character. Her journey could be read as an indictment of the limitations imposed on the ability to follow a traditional path when it comes to gender roles, as well as society's expectations of women. Estella's objectification is finally denied by the author, highlighting her autonomy as

well as the possibility that women can overcome the limitations imposed on them by society. Estella's defiance of conventional gender norms by evaluating her character within the context of the male gaze theory and feminist viewpoints can be seen in the novel. Finally, she accepted the limitations imposed by the objectified role and asserted her own agency, revealing the ability of women to challenge and effectually defy cultural norms and regain their autonomy and self-determination.

Mrs. Joe Gargery as a Dominating Character

In Charles Dickens' novel *Great Expectations*, Mrs. Joe Gargery is described as having a controlling personality. Her interactions with other characters, for instance, Pip, Mr. Joe Gargery, and Orlick, were full of rigorous devotion to social conventions and a need for control, all of which revealed her dominant nature. Mrs. Joe's domineering approach is one part of her controlling personality. She is a dominant character over her younger brother Pip as well as her husband, Joe Gargery. She wants them to obey her commands without asking questions, and she often reminds them of her superiority over them. This is evident in her strong expectations for their behaviour and rigid restrictions, as well as in her propensity to reprimand and berate them when they fall short of her expectations. Because of Mrs. Joe's treatment of Pip, Pip considers himself the superior of her. She attacks him relentlessly, beating him to make sure she's in control. As a result Pip loses his nerve and becomes less assertive and is under her control. According to Mrs. Joe Gargery, in Chapter 2 of *Great Expectations* "It's bad enough to be a blacksmith's wife (and him a Gargery) without being your mother." (Dickens 11) The nature of their relationship also shows Mrs. Joe's authority over Mr. Joe. She is represented as the more forceful and authoritative spouse, frequently acting as his advocate and taking responsibility for domestic issues. Mr. Joe is contrasted with Mrs. Joe as being more passive and obedient, giving Mrs. Joe the upper hand in their relationship. Finally, Mrs. Joe dominates her encounters with Orlick, the domestic helper. Besides taking his place, she looks down on and despises him. She wants to keep him in her control, and still despises him and speaks ill of him for it. Overall, Mrs. Joe's domination over Pip, Mr. Joe, and Orlick is demonstrated by her aggressive demeanour, her tight-lipped actions, and the terror she inspires in those around her. The intricacies of her connections with these characters are shaped by her character's position as an authoritative and controlling figure in the story. Finally, Mrs. Joe Gargery's controlling nature is evident from her assertive personality, her need for control, and how she relates to the other characters. Her dominant tendency adds her character to her, however all of this behaviour too shows the drawbacks, which creates a challenging and irritating situation for all involved. Mrs. Joe

Gargery's bossy and dictatorial personality is one of her most noteworthy traits. She is portrayed as a severe and nasty person who frequently uses physical force to exert control over Pip and her husband, Joe. This authoritarianism can be understood as a reflection of the repressive social systems of the time, when women were expected to uphold control over their homes and conform to their social norms. It's crucial to remember, though, that Mrs. Joe Gargery's actions are not entirely the consequence of her own volition. She was tougher than they need to be because she's had her own little problems and frustrations. She's had some of her own, and she is held accountable for it. She may have found herself unhappy and resentful as soon as she was wed to Joe, a good-natured, simple blacksmith. Pip is the bane of her existence because he is a constant reminder to her of all the things that she envisions herself doing but isn't. Despite her stern attitude, Mrs. Joe Gargery has some glimmers of tenderness and vulnerability. Her attitude towards Pip's welfare, despite how she treated him, happens to be much more loving and worried. Her intricacy highlights the inner struggles she faces and gives her character more dimension. In *Great Expectations*, in chapter 2, she says, "I didn't bring you up by hand to badger people's lives out." (Dickens 16) Additionally, it is possible to see Mrs. Joe Gargery's persona as a critique of the restrictions imposed on women in Victorian society. She is frustrated and bitter because she lacks knowledge and opportunities for personal development. The constraints of society which thwart women's potential are criticized by the portrayal of her character. Mrs. Joe Gargery is, finally, a complicated character from *Great Expectations*, who embodies the qualities of an authoritarian and a vulnerable personality. All the traits of being a dictator belong to the women of the society she's in; all the weaknesses and fragilities she has are her own, and are what a Tybalt and Juliet should expect to encounter. Dickens gives a critical analysis of the restrictions placed on women in Victorian society through her character. Mrs. Joe Gargery, a controlling sister and wife, challenged traditional gender roles by treating people badly. She is not soft-hearted and kind towards the male characters, but treats them as rude and cruel. She is given a prominent place in the book. Through her aggressive personality. Betty Friedan's "The Feminine Mystique" challenges the limited roles that society assigns to women in the home and ideas of femininity. This idea may be used to describe Mrs. Joe in the book. The character of MRS. Joe is to represent the challenges and limitations of conforming to gender-specific roles and norms as well as pressure that women can feel. In describing Mrs. Joe, writer and diminishes, above all, the conception of a caring woman giving her all. She seems like an uncivilized, brusque individual who is always ready to give a hard kick, giving off a New York attitude. She appears as a rude, demanding individual who often threatens to grab a servicing by the balls and

never gives up. Her personality is arranged to contravene the notion that women ought to take a passive and subservient part in the home. In addition, Mrs. Joe's discontent with her circumstances and desire for more are similar to the ideas presented in Friedan's "the feminine mystique." This idea alludes to the unhappiness felt by women who are constrained to the roles of mother and wife, as well as their yearning for satisfaction outside of conventional home responsibilities. This unhappiness is embodied by Mrs. Joe's character, which also stands in for the frustrations of women who feel restricted by societal standards. Mrs. Joe's character might be examined in light of feminist theory more broadly, in addition to Friedan's theory. Her character commentaries the difficulties and pressures that women face in the context of cultural norms. Mrs Joe's aggressiveness and discontent could be seen as a response to her constraints as a woman in a male-dominated society and the absence of agency she experiences.

Biddy as a True Gentle Woman

The character of Biddy in the novel *Great Expectations* could be considered in various ways as the ideal female character. Biddy was like a good country girl, with a big heart, who was compassionate. She was Pip's best friend when they first started going to school. Biddy relocates to Pip's house to care for Mrs. Joe after she is assaulted and becomes disabled. Biddy is portrayed to us as Estella's complete opposite for most of the book. She is a simple, good, moral, diligent, and truthful young lady. She complements Pip better as well because they are in the same class. According to Pip in *Great Expectations*, "Biddy, who was the most obliging of girls, immediately said she would, and indeed began to carry out her promise within five minutes." (Dickens 83) As she continually demonstrates empathy and understanding for others, Biddy's benevolence is clear throughout the entire book. She always has time to offer help and assistance to those seeking assistance regardless of their lifestyle or social and economic status. Biddy's caring nature is most apparent in her interactions with Pip as he makes his journey in this story. Biddy is as well as kind she has a morals compass and discernment of what is correct and incorrect. She embodies traits such as loyalty and honesty that are important aspects of her personality. Biddy's decision not to go to extreme lengths – who would want to be dishonest or deceptive just for her own sake- is a good example of something that she was never willing to do for any reason other than because it would be just. Biddy is a well-rounded and admirable character, due to her intelligence and curiosity. Education is the way in which she achieved her success, and she has no time not to seek to be a better person. Biddy is an inspiration to others because of her craven and thirst for knowledge, and her dedication to personal growth, making her a role

model for young women. The whole description is intended to demonstrate that Bidly, in many respects, is the opposite of Estella; bodily ordinary but nice and good, pretty, sweet and thought-proof and attentive. She's a little bit too nice to be true, to be honest. She eventually falls in love with Pip as well, but he just pays her enough attention to express that he wishes he could just make himself fall in love with her right away. As Pip says in Chapter 12, "Why it came natural to me to do so, and why Bidly had a deep concern in everything I told her, I did not know then, though I think I know now." (Dickens 110) Two opposing characters that reflect various facets of womanhood and social expectations are Estella and Bidly in the novel *Great Expectations*. Estella exemplifies a more unusual and complex feminine character since Miss Havisham brought her up to be cold-hearted and cunning. She is described as being beautiful, but is also cold and emotionless. Estella is an individual who is convinced of her supremacy and has been instructed to break men's hearts. This portrayal challenges the ideals of feminine and reinforces the effects of one's social and upbringing on who one is. Bidly, on the other hand, embodies a more conventional and loving feminine figure. She treats Pip, the main character, with kindness, compassion, and support. Bidly is portrayed as being smart and diligent, taking on the role of a teacher, and exhibiting a strong sense of accountability. Her persona typifies the idealized Victorian woman as well as her domestic virtues. Her intelligence and curiosity make her a well-rounded and admirable character. Her education is the result of her own drive for learning, and her quest for new opportunities to improve her. Bidly is a role model to others for her love of learning and desire to better herself. The differences between unusual femininity and traditional femininity are accentuated in the comparison between Estella and Bidly. While Bidly more closely conforms to conventional gender roles, Estella questions cultural conventions and expectations. Their dissimilar personalities and actions help the novel's investigation of gender dynamics and cultural expectations. Overall, Bidly's character epitomizes the traits of the ideal female character. She is an attractive and generous lady, she has a kind heart, good character in studying. Bidly is a very strong female character in *Great Expectations*, who values good deeds, helping people and self-development. As Bidly is a stereotypical feminine character the role is extremely easy. She is quite unlike the other female characters in Victorian England. There, she is able to sabotage/gamble the part of the gender. She's a true feminist and example! She is high on levels of kindness, soft speaking, logic and intelligence. Mary Wollstonecraft, a renowned feminist philosopher, was an advocate for women's intellectual and personal freedom in her publications, particularly *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. This viewpoint may be used to describe the book's character, Bidly. Bidly stands

for the opportunity for development and progress via learning. She exhibits intelligence, curiosity, and a drive to study despite coming from a lowly family. The idea that women's tasks are limited to the domestic realm and that their value is based entirely on their capacity to fulfill conventional gender roles is contradicted by Biddy's quest for knowledge. Wollstonecraft advocated women's education so that they would develop intellectually, broaden their minds and be independent. Biddy embodies this in the way she actively seeks to develop herself and her education. Additionally, Biddy's persona emphasizes the transforming potential of education for women. She is able to stand up to societal norms in her academics and personal development and becomes a confident and capable person. Biddy's rebellion is in the feeling she has to make her own way and ignoring the limited roles traditionally assigned to women. Biddy is another example of a feminist who believes in empowerment through knowledge as a character in *Great Expectations*. She builds her knowledge and skills, challenging entrenched gender norms which restrict women's roles to domestic work, and asserting their independence. Portrayals of Biddy emphasize the importance of education as a way to women's freedom and empowering them to assume their intellectual and personal autonomy.

Molly: The Veiled Penitent

In Charles Dickens' novel *Great Expectations*, Molly, also referred to as "The Woman," is a complicated and mysterious figure. Despite having a scant amount of time in the story, she has a huge impact on the plot and the growth of other characters. She is initially presented as an enigmatic and unsettling character connected to the dreary and gloomy Satis House. She is referred to as a "wild beast tamed" and is frequently seen donning a black veil, which heightens the mystery surrounding her. Her unattractive physical attributes, such as her scars and untidy hair, add to her captivating persona. Her relationship to the main character, Pip, is one of the most important facets of Molly's personality. The fact that Molly is Estella's mother makes her an important link in the intricate web of connections in the book. Another intriguing aspect of her character is the history she has with the powerful and cunning Miss Havisham. The main purpose of Molly's presence in the narrative is to shed light on Estella's childhood and the factors that contributed to the creation of her icy, cruel personality. Molly, who was a victim of violence and cruelty herself, provides readers with an insight into the brutal realities of Estella's early existence. Although Molly doesn't say much, her actions reveal a lot about who she is. When she fights Pip after their run-in at Satis House, it is clear that she is Estella's fiercest defender. In addition to demonstrating her fortitude and courage, this action also illustrates how much she cares for her kid. In addition, Molly's

persona acts as a representation of the negative effects of cultural norms and gender inequality. Her traumatic history and the wounds she carries physically and psychologically are an example of the injustices women in Victorian society had to endure. Molly is a fascinating and interesting character in *Great Expectations*. The novel's other layers of richness and depth are due to her enigmatic presence, her relationship with Estella and her sad history. The character of Dickens is a vehicle for the discussion of issues of abuse, of what people are expected to do, and of the long shadow of previous tragedy. One of the most intriguing characters in this book is Molly, Estella's mother. She was found guilty of a murder that was extremely unusual for the 19th century. Her persona displays the negative side of a woman's personality. As Estella's mother and Jaggers' housekeeper, Molly's persona has a low place in society. Her performance brings to life the diverse oppressions faced by women when they meet and clash with their identities. Scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term "intersectional feminism" to recognize that women's lives are shaped by more than just their gender; race, class and ethnicity also play a role. Further, Molly's ability to go through and fight her situations is a testament to a woman who is oppressed by multiple oppressions. While a disadvantaged woman is generally considered as a passive victim, Molly has demonstrated courage and tenacity against her disadvantaged background. Molly's character is in line with the thinking of intersectional feminism which emphasizes the special circumstances of women who hold multiple identities which are subject to oppression. Through the lens of a multi-faceted feminist perspective on Molly, this work examines her life across the intersections of various identities, as they are encountered in *Great Expectations*. It places a greater focus on the importance of understanding and tackling the intersectionality of gender, race and class in the interpretation of women's experiences. It also stresses the need for social justice movements that consider the compound oppression of marginalised women.

Conclusion

This article explores how feminism is used to critique gender stereotypes in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. The novel emphasizes women's restrictions in the Victorian society through the characters of the women, such as Estella, Miss Havisham, Mrs. Joe Gargery, Biddy, and Molly. The essay emphasizes the relevance of feminist theory to criticism, and contributes to the study of gender issues in the literature of the nineteenth century. It emphasizes how crucial it is to look at, challenge, and promote gender equality in society.

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