REVIEW PAPER

CHARLES DICKENS' DISPLAY OF SOCIAL SPACE AND CLASS HIERARCHY IN GREAT EXPECTATIONS

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ABSTRACT

In Victorian era English society social class was based on an inflexible system built around an individual's profession, their familial ties, and other cultural elements such as behavior. This system means that moving up the social ladder was difficult for anyone who was not born into an upper-class family. However, when the Industrial Revolution came, 19th century society witnessed drastic changes since suddenly, economic opportunities presented themselves and social mobility became something that viable. In Great Expectations Charles Darwin finds an excellent opportunity to present to readers the realities of the inflexible Victoria era social structure. Through the different characters included in the novel, the author paints a picture of the cultural, social, and psychological factors that separated the different social classes in early English society. Each of the characters were carefully crafted to give the audience as much insight into the physical and psychological dimensions of social classes as possible.

Keywords: Social space, class mobility, Victorian society, social class, education, stratification

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

STRUCTURE OF CLASS AND SPACE IN CHARLES DICKENS'S GREAT EXPECTATIONS
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INTRODUCTION

In Early English society, social class was defined by profession and family backgrounds. Respectable members of society had to be born into upper-class families or have some ties to such families. However, in modern society, social status is a much more complex matter since it is a combination of many different factors (Bećirović & Polz, 2021), including an individual's morality and character. The Industrial Revelation and all developments that followed from it disrupted the rigid structures of Victorian society and provided new opportunities for people in lower social classes to advance into higher classes by taking the initiative and working hard to improve their lives and living standards. In *Great Expectations,* Charles Dickens uses his main and supporting characters to provide a glimpse of how life in Victorian society was and how social stratification and class mobility were played out in this early inflexible society (Upham, 2012). Since the society in the novel was modelled after Victorian society just before the Industrial Revolution, it offers an excellent opportunity to compare elements of social class and class mobility between this early society and today's modern society. Before embarking on this discussion, it must be understood that social class exists on three dimensions – physical, psychological, and social spaces – and the social space is born from the intersection of the physical and psychological dimensions (Tang & Liu, 2015; Bećirović & Akbarov, 2015). It is within the social space that the psychological and physical components of class interact and shape an individual's place and approach to life. Moreover, in the novel, Dickens defines the physical space along the lines of financial wealth and social power. The novel also makes it clear that, in Victorian society, social class was determined by an individual's wealth, level of education, and living standards, making class stratification and class mobility central themes throughout the novel (Tang & Liu, 2015). In other words, social stratification is depicted as the classification of members of society into different groups depending on factors such as income, educational achievement, and professional occupation. Under such a system, individuals within the same social class share several similarities and are more likely to interact with members of the same class than those of other classes. Following the Industrial Revolution, one of the most significant changes in English society was that advancement from one social class to the next became more viable than it was in the Victorian era.

Since Dickens addresses societal issues that are both sensitive and serious, his novel has received praise and criticism in equal measure. The best evidence of this division among scholars can be seen in the fact that Pip – the main character – has been characterized in different ways depending on the reviewer in question. For instance, there are those scholars who consider Pip to be an impostor: a snob who has purchased his gentleman status with money instead of earning it (House, 1942; Chesterton, 1989). According to other critics, Pip is a symbol of social mobility and what it takes to advance in society. These scholars consider Pip's experiences and his development throughout the text to be the perfect depiction of social mobility and the evolution of democratic societies (Tocqueville, 1856). That the same character can be interpreted in many different ways speaks to Dickens' ability to construct characters with whom different audiences could relate. Like Pip, many of the other characters in the novel have deeper meanings that go beyond their surface experiences to address concepts of social constructs and the different spaces to which people belong. Through the novel, Dickens shows the different dimensions of social space. The physical dimension is represented by the move from the marshes of Kent to London, while the psychological dimension is expressed in how different characters think about their lives and places in society. Dickens makes it clear through the characters that the social space influences social mobility differently for different people. Furthermore, the novel sheds light on the impact of personal attributes and ambition on social mobility and achievement. Since the novel addresses many aspects of social stratification and advancement, it is an excellent candidate for analysis to understand how different eras compare to one another in the way society is structured and how it operates.

This article purposes to present a critical analysis of Victorian society as presented in *Great Expectations* and compare it to modern society. Lv (2016) notes that the novel represents a valuable literary work that addresses components of social pace and class, societal stratification, and social mobility as they relate to Victorian society and its transformation to English society as it is known today. Therefore, the analysis will be conducted by examining elements of the class system, spaces, and mobility as depicted in the novel in modern society. Furthermore, the analysis will also examine the various themes Dickens brings up within the text (such as education and morality) and their asso-

ciation with social class and mobility. In examining class stratification from multiple angles, the author will be able to present an exhaustive discussion of the similarities and differences between modern and Victorian societies. It must be appreciated that this thesis is intended to be more than a simple review of the novel. Instead, the author intends to borrow and incorporate literature from a multitude of sources to develop a comprehensive analysis of how modern and Victorian societies compare in as far as social stratification and mobility are concerned. This paper will, therefore, present a critical analysis of Dickens' Great Expectations paying special attention to the theme of social class and how it is related to concepts such as criminal behavior, education, and ambition. The author will examine the social class and mobility from Charles Dicken's perception of Victorian society as presented in the novel then compare it to modern society.

CLASS AND MOBILITY IN GREAT EXPECTATIONS

An individual's social status and position in society are ultimately a function of class systems. These systems adopt simple measures to classify members of a society into different social classes. Some of the common standards used for categorization included financial power, educational attainment level, and affiliation with political or other influential individuals. As a result of such classification, members of a specific social class gain a sense of familiarity accompanied by feelings of superiority or inferiority depending on the class one is assigned. Conversely, class stratification is responsible for keeping individuals from different social classes separated depending on their relationship to power and influence. Therefore, class systems and class stratification allow for the division of society into different groups based on factors such as socioeconomic status, lifestyle, cultural background, religious affiliations, and race (Tang & Liu, 2015; Delić & Bećirović, 2018). Even in modern society, factors such as education and wealth continue to play a key role in dictating an individual's social status (Bećirović & Akbarov, 2016). Today, a child born into a family where the parents are doctors, lawyers, or engineers has better odds than one born to parents who are peasant farmers. This reality is embodied by the stark contrast between Estella and Pip: although they were both born into poverty, the fact that Estella grew up in a wealthy household – under Miss Havisham – meant she had the opportunity to grow up into a beautiful, educated upper-class woman with whom Pip was infatuat-

ed (Johnston, 1992). Through this example, Dickens gives his audience insight into how the unequal distribution between those in the upper class and the bourgeoisie serves to maintain societal structure and facilitate class stratification. Tocqueville (1856) notes that this type of class stratification was a critical element of Victorian society and revealed itself in the physical and psychological dimensions of social class. The difference between Satis House and Joe's dwellings represents the psychical space differences between the upper and lower classes. On the other hand, Pip's move to London upon joining the elite social class proves that there is a psychological component to social class. In other words, in his mind, Pip knew that he could not really belong to the upper class unless he could move from the marshes. Also, the dynamics between Joe and Pip change after Pip moves to London because they now belong to different social classes. Instead of referring to Pip by name, Joe starts calling him "sir," a title associated with the upper class.

As a concept, "space" refers to an indication of position as determined through an object's expression of proximity, vicinity, or distance in relation to something else. When used within the context of class systems, space refers to the psychological, physical, and social characteristics associated with specific social classes. Physical and social spaces are often considered the same since social space refers to the intangible web of relationships that occur within physical spaces (Hall, 1996). In other words, the social space is inherently a product of the physical space in which an individual finds themselves. The psychological space, on the other hand, defines that worldview that shapes an individual's internal thought processes and beliefs as well as their outlook of the world. This space can be subdivided further into open space, oriented space, and feeling space (Gilmour, 1994). Therefore, the main function of social stratification is to organize members into specific social classes and instil in them feelings of superiority and inferiority so as to propagate the existing class structure.

Although physical resources such as money can improve one's social space (think Pip's move from Kent to London), there is a need for development in the psychological space for the individual to be fully convinced that they have achieved their desire of joining the upper class. Essentially, among the bourgeoisie, everyone has their beliefs and perceptions of what it means to belong to the upper class, and they will not feel like they

have succeeded in climbing the social ladder until they are living the life they imagined. This complex association between the physical, social, and psychological spaces is visible in Pip's character in *Great Expectations* (Astuti, 2018). When the audience is fast introduced to Pip, Dickens makes it evident that he thinks very little of his life under Joe's roof. These feelings of inadequacy are exacerbated when he meets Miss Havisham and Estella for the first time and is intimidated by their wealth. Due to the class difference between Estella and himself, Pip concluded it was impossible to pursue her until he was in the same social space (Tang & Liu, 2015). Therefore, to get to the psychological space he associated with the upper class, Pip pursued education, changed his way of clothing, and even his living standards. Through Pip's development, Dickens shows that the three spaces are intertwined. As Waters (1997) notes, Dickens shows that effective communication skills and a good education were critical to being accepted as a member of the upper class since they ensured that one could act as expected of their class. For instance, as the characters show, those belonging to the upper social classes were expected to look down upon the lower classes (Miah, 2014). At the very first opportunity, the reader will realize that Pip started to look down upon Joe since he had now climbed the social ladder and joined the upper class.

While analyzing the book *The Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, it is evident that there is an opposing view in terms of space. The two main opposing spaces are that of the village, which is referred to as the marshes, and the city in London. These two locations can be referred to abstractly as rural vs. urban. For example, the Joe's Forge, Jolly Bargemen, and Pumplechook's house illustrate life in the village. Life in the marshes is presented by limekiln and the hulks. The urban paradigm is reflected by the Thames River, the Pocket household, Jagger's office, Barnard's Inn, and Wemmick's house in Walworth. These examples prove a clash between the urban and the rural setup, further demonstrating the social stratification in society. The dual nature of the narrator can also further illustrate the concept of space and the difference in social class.

A close analysis of this text gives a negative connotation to the marshes. For example, the wetlands are considered dark and dusky when Pip ventures into them. Another illustration of the marshes being dusk or negative is illustrated by Pip's feelings while in the village. The author demonstrates that Pip will always feel at home while in the town hence personifying the concept of space in the village. The word triumphant is also an indication that Pip does not feel happy in London and is finally relieved to go to the village where he is always happy. Dickens paints a grim and gloomy picture of the marshes as seen from Pip's perspective using such phrases as, "it is dark once again, a melancholy wind blows, and the marshes are very dismal and oppressive" (Dickens, 1992). This image is further justified when the author creates an impression of Pip leaving everything behind on his trip back home. This illustration indicates the social space between life in the village and the urban center in London. Moreover, it reveals that Pip crosses from one social class and moves to the following social class.

The physical environment provides the medium within which social interactions and task performance occur, determining how the social and psychological spaces interact. The implication is that when people meet in their physical settings, they act in ways consistent with the social norms applicable in that setting and in accordance with their worldview as it is shaped within their psychological space. Christoph (2009) acknowledges that psychological space acts as a buffer between the individual and their physical environment, which is critical in shaping social interactions between different people as it allows for the identification of each other's motives and intentions. Moreover, it is this same relationship that allows an individual to be aware of their environment and how it shapes their actions.

In the novel, the audience is introduced to Herbert when Pip is still a boy, and the two meet later after Pip moves to London, where he becomes a gentleman. During their first encounter, they develop a rivalry and end up fighting over Estella (Upham, 2012). However, when they meet again later in life, they develop a good friendship now that they both belong to the same social class and even end up living together. Furthermore, Herbert played a critical role in shaping Pip's path to gentleman status, but the latter's habits eventually proved harmful to both of them as they accrued large debts due to their lavish lifestyles. Another character who embodies upper-class behaviour is Wemmick, who is first introduced to Pip in Mr. Jaggers' office. The narrator explains that the character's demeanour in the office and at home was completely different. Wemmick was a serious and professional person

in the office but warmer and more approachable in his home. From these examples, it is evident that the upper class was made up of educated, wealthy, and high-status individuals (Tang and Liu, 2015). Collectively, the novel makes it clear that the upper and lower social classes differed significantly in both psychological and physical dimensions. A critical look at Pip and Estella's dynamics is sufficient to illustrate these differences. Since Estella had grown up in an upper-class Victorian household, she had learned to despise and look down upon people who did not fit within her social class, such as Pip, who lacked quality education.

The author also creates the aspect of space by the term bar, which is repetitively used in his illustration (Parkinson, 2010). The bar is a physical border between the outer world and inside the bar in the sense that you can only go through the bar upon getting permission from the owner Miss Havisham. In addition, the concept of space is also contrasted by the lighting inside the bar and that outside. The quality of the light inside the bar is dark, while outside, it is bright. In this case, it symbolically indicates the change in space due to the lack of objects and the lack of wind blowing. Miss Havisham is also reported to be having other private rooms like the secret chambers, an indication of the difference between the outside world and the inside of the bar. The author also sees and draws the concept of social space when Pip enters Satis house. It is said that Pip falls in love with a house, and he is willing to adapt and bring the notion that he is familiar with such kind of a surrounding. Satis house represents houses in London existing in the rural village, indicating a higher social order in society. The author uses this house to illustrate a direct contrast between the higher social class, who have wealth, and the lower social class, who lacks wealth, education, and aspirations. In this case, the author brings out the idea of civilization vs. uncivilization and translates it into the form of inner space versus finite space.

As the name suggests, Victorian society refers to English society under Queen Victoria's reign, whereas modern society as it is today is largely built around life after the events of the Second World War. Based on depictions of Victorian society as presented in *Great Expectations,* it is plausible to conclude that modern society provides better opportunities for those in the lower social classes. The reason is, unlike its earlier counterpart, modern society is not very hung up on social status and class

stratification. As Magdalena (1999) correctly states, in Victorian society, material possession and physical presentation – clothes and jewellery – were the main determinants of social status as opposed to modern society's adoration of an individual's personality and character as crucial indicators of social class. The novel makes it evident how an individual's class shaped their psychological space. Characters such as Mrs. Joe and Pip show that in the Victorian era, those in the lower class aspired to achieve the success of their upper-class counterparts but also envied the elites' position.

On the other hand, those in the upper social class were expected to look down on those in the lower classes with disgust. Dickens (1992) shows just how important social class was in determining people's behaviour toward each other. Sole because Pip and Estella belonged to different social classes, Pip was in despair since his class did not allow him to pursue someone like Estella, while she was rude and demeaning to him because he was from a poor background. Furthermore, due to the rigid class system, those in the upper class were not interested in uplifting people from lower social classes. This reality can be seen in how Miss Havisham preferred enrolling Pip for an apprenticeship under Joe instead of sponsoring his education. Ironically, when Pip becomes a gentleman and moves to London, he becomes rude and dismissive to Joe and his sister despite the fact that they were the ones who brought him up (Menezes, 2012). In today's world, it is easy to find people from different social classes living in close proximity without cases of those higher up the social ladder explicitly discriminating against their counterparts at lower levels (Dervić & Bećirović, 2019). However, in Victorian society, the rigid class stratification meant that the upper classes made every effort to separate themselves from those in the lower classes and make it absolutely clear that they did not belong with them.

Social mobility refers to upward or downward movement along the social ladder that comes as the result of an individual experiencing change in one of the many dimensions of socio-economic well-being. As a result of such a change, they end up either climbing up or falling down the social ladder. While upward mobility is desirable, downward mobility is stressful and undesirable due to the significant hit in social status that comes with it. In many cases, social mobility takes place over several generations within the same family. Puji and Thoyibi (2018) refer to this phenomenon

as intergenerational mobility, which involves social changes over different generations within the same family. For instance, among immigrant families, it is common for second or third-generation immigrants to be the ones to complete higher learning and secure better jobs than first-generation immigrants. On the other hand, intragenerational mobility occurs over the course of one generation's lifespan and can be upward or downward (Witzleben, 2018). An example of such a scenario would be an individual working hard and building wealth in their early years and squandering it in late adulthood. In the novel, Dickens shows how wealth influences social space and facilitates class mobility when Pip uses his newly-acquired wealth to move to London and improve how he presents himself (Tang & Liu, 2015). His new place in society changed his perception of himself and his self-worth as he leveraged his physical space to attain the gentleman status for which he longed. The fact that the London elite accepted him only after he had learned to present himself as a gentleman reinforced his beliefs about the value of a solid physical space.

In modern society, social mobility can be the result of any number of different factors, including technology, population changes, environmental factors, or social institutions (Bećirović, 2012). As an example, following the Industrial Revolution, technological advancements have led to the reshaping of the economy by creating new jobs while making others obsolete. *Great Expectations* provides readers with an opportunity to identify the differences between class stratification in the Victorian era and modern society (Eagleton, 2018). Through characters such as Miss Havisham and Magwitch, Dickens makes it clear that material possessions were significant indicators of social status regardless of how they were earned. Lest some drastic change happened (such as crime or being sponsored), it was hard to move up the social ladder. Through the lives of the blacksmith (Joe) and his wife, the reader is brought to terms with the realities of poverty during the Victorian era. These lower-class members of society had to work hard to improve their education and build wealth so they could advance within society. However, for many of them, joining the family business or trade meant the end of their ambitions since it locked them into the social class into which they were born (Upham, 2012). A critical analysis of the novel shows that this is the fate that waited Pip were it not for Magwitch, who supported his dreams of being a gentleman.

Meanwhile, there is a general perception of space in London, especially by the look of Barnard's inn, which is referred to as a dingy collection of shabby buildings encompassed with dust and decay. The author tries to explain that the outlook development of the space in London in Jagger's office is hopeless. The author can also contrast Jaggers Lair's character, which is seen to be ambiguous shroud and darkly, and compares this to Miss Havisham's dwelling back in the village. In contrast, Wemmick's office illustrates an attitude of an efficient private lawyer. Wemmick is a middle-class man who has to work hard to attain social class and improve his living standards. Wemmick is willing to go and dine at Jagger's home yet cannot access the Walworth Castle due to its privacy and professional nature. In this case, the author tries to bring out the differences between the profession and life. Further, the author is trying to illustrate that the Walworth house is impenetrable due to the difference in social class and social space. Wemmick can juggle between the two social classes, leaving him a middle-class gentleman who has to hustle his way up.

Role of education and wealth in moving to the higher class

People who are well educated tend to put their knowledge in action hence acquire wealth and power. Due to the knowledge acquired, one can secure good jobs that provide a higher pay thus one can be able to climb to the next social life (Sinanović & Bećirović, 2016). Power is acquired through knowledge and wealth, which is among what differentiate social classes in the society. A stable reinforcement can be acquired when one is able to understand their rights and the distribution of resources' hence education plays a major role (Selboe, 2010). The unequal distribution of financial and educational sub-spaces is a huge factor in the formation of social spaces. However, there are other factors like interactions with intellectual people and avoiding people with undesirable personalities. The people from lower class lack in the resources required to interact with the intellectual people and avoid the criminal class actively. The intellects and the people from higher classes enjoy a special social space which is unable to be achieved by the people from lower class due to lack of physical and psychological space development (Bourdieu, 2018). After getting education and money, Pip managed to find his social space in the upper class even though the prevalent tradition was that the class was defined by birth and stayed that way. The rigid Victorian So-

ciety would never let anybody switch their class just by getting education. However, the modern society provided this privilege to anyone who is willing to put in effort for developing his social space. If the industrial revolution and democracy had not been evolved at that time period it would have been hard for Pip to move between classes due to the rigidness of the traditional society.

Effect of morality in the class of a person in the modern society

Morality is a critical factor that affects a person behavior and on how one interacts with others. Dickens has described the behavioral changes which occur due to social mobility. Initially Pip was a moral, warm and honest character when he belonged to the labor class. The visit to the Manor House brought various changes in his values and ambitions. After moving to London and gaining an upgraded social space, Pip's behavior totally changed. The new structure allowed the people to switch their class (Mills, 1970). Although it is not shown that the system is totally changed but the inflexibility of the traditional system was not there. This allowed Pip to move from labor class to the higher educated class. The movement from upper to lower class is also described by Dickens when Pip loses his wealth and faces a shortfall. Pip even switched his class to lower criminal class by helping Magwitch's escape.

Class stratification the center was moral character of a person which was developed through education. The modern society offered a way for the common people to get educated and move to higher classes. The labor class is a lower class but *Great Expectations* states that there is another class, even lower to that known as the criminal class (Nakajima, 1993). Pip's benefactor Magwitch was also a criminal but due to the physical and social power moving in the higher classes. Pip judged him for his criminal activities and was of the view that morality and loyalty are more important than wealth (Upham, 2012). In this scenario people like Magwitch can be considered in the lowest criminal class. Pip was also involved in criminal activities when he facilitated his benefactor's transportation to another country.

Importance of social mobility in the development of the social space which enables one move to high class

Hence, through inter-generational mobility, many families have been able to rise to the high class since there is change in occupation. Upgrading of the occupation affects the social space and increases the mobility rate from one generation to another. However, after the industrial revolution and transformation of the society, the moral character and values started to gain significance for class definition. The modern society considers that the moral character and the nature of a person have great impact on the class definition. The Victorian Society was inflexible and did not allow people to move between the classes. The modern society allowed the social mobility which provided the opportunity for moving from one class to another (Upham, 2012). This opportunity of social mobility enabled Pip to move from the labor class to the higher class. Dickens has described in detail the characteristics of the prevalent Victorian class system having the lowest criminal class and the higher class of rich. The genesis of the modern society and its norms are also described during the process of Pip's transformation from lower class into the upper class. The difference of the Blacksmith house and the Manor house has beautifully painted by Dickens to show the importance of physical space and property in the class definition of a person (Morris, 1991). The character Estelle treated Pip with a harsh attitude which made him realize that he was being treated like a common person. He developed affection for Estelle but was aware that he is not able to pursue her because of his physical and social space. Another important point is that Pip also discovered that Estelle was not born into the elite class rather her parents belonged to criminal class and was not a real daughter of Miss Havisham (Haque, 2018). This is when he realized that it is possible to fit in into a higher class on the basis of one's physical and psychological space just like Estelle. It became clear in his mind that in order to get the affection of Estelle it is essential for him to become a gentleman. This comparison made him realize that his social identity is too common and physical resources are essential for improving his social class.

How to eliminate the lower class from the society through collective social construction

Even though He found out that Estelle does not originally belong to the elite class rather her

parents belonged to a criminal class. Other than Pip if any other characters mobility is shown that is the character of Estelle. After becoming the member of the higher class her behavior became arrogant. Upon arriving London, he felt and thought complexes and sense of inferiority in different areas which compelled him to work on those areas (Kurtuluş, 2013). Pip's brother in law, Joe, and his sister both raised him but after becoming a gentleman he begins to be uncomfortable around them. He was even uncomfortable and unsure when he was attending her sister's funeral. Although he had moved into the higher class but he was in a state of confusion and stress in the process of finding the right way to behave during his social mobility.

The automatic assumption of class by birth and other hindrances made the movement within classes a difficult phenomenon. Pip realized that in order to get a higher social space he needs to get education and earn more wealth. He is the only character which manages to move from one class to another successfully (Nica, 2005). If it were not for the social mobility of the modern society, Pip would never have moved from his class to the upper class. He started to be ashamed of his family and felt uncomfortable around them after becoming a gentleman of the high class. It must also be noted that Pip was only able to perform this transformation from an unexpected benefactor (Miah, 2014). If it was on his family or his chosen career path it would have never happened. Due to this benefactor Pip was able to get education which enabled him to roam within the higher class. The common people were not able to change their class easily on their own in the Victorian society (Upham, 2012). Having seen how Victorian society was structured, it is time to look some of the lessons that can be learned on how to build lower social classes and alleviate them from poverty. Some of these approaches include providing them with adequate education and employment opportunities since these have been shown to be among the main drivers of social mobility. Moreover, promoting equity in workplaces and promoting community health and welfare will also go a long way in facilitating social class mobility.

METHODOLOGY

The scope of this study is very wide, evidenced by the number of research questions and hypotheses. As a result, to ensure the coherence and relevance of the study, a textual analysis will be conducted. Note that apart from rhetorical analy-

sis/criticism, other approaches to textual analysis like content and interaction analysis can be conducted. However, rhetorical analysis will be the main approach since the research will be done through a spatial lens (Astuti, 2018). Where applicable, other approaches to textual analysis will be considered, especially if they have more potential in answering the research questions in an easy and robust manner.

Since this study is basic research that tries to explain the class stratification and social mobility, the rhetorical criticism approach will be taken for different research questions (and hypotheses), but the results will be discussed collectively (Morris, 1991). The basic concepts for this study are inspired by the constructs and spaces which are described in *Great Expectations.* While its time of publication renders its content culturally irrelevant from a modernist perspective, the novel documents and marks an essential transition in the social spaces that led to the emergence of the modern civilization as we know it.

The goal of the study is to present a critical analysis of the novel within the contexts of social class and social mobility. To achieve the objective, the researcher will present answers to the following research questions:

- How can class system and class stratification be defined from Dickens's perspective?
- What does social mobility mean?
- What are the different dimensions of social space?
- Are there any differences between Victorian and modern societies?
- How do education levels and wealth influence social mobility?

Data Sources and Search Strategy

Note that it is essential that any claims made during the rhetorical analysis of Dicken's *Great Expectations* be corroborated by external high-quality sources. Yet, rhetorical analysis lacks neither a systematic framework that aids the researcher to look for high quality sources nor an adaptable search strategy. Therefore, the framework for systematic literature reviews is adapted, if only to help find corroborating papers in the body of knowledge and ensure it is of high quality. For instance, the search for papers will be done with the following databases: Academic Search (EbscoHOST), JSTOR, and Sociological Abstracts. Other websites will in-

clude Web of Science, Social Science Research Network, and the Google Scholar. Hosting of papers from these databases offers a diverse set of journals and their inclusion in the literature search process will result in the collection of the most relevant papers on the subject matter. The higher the diversity of papers to be subjected to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the more the researchers gain the autonomy to only consider the highest quality papers.

On the other hand, the search strategy will be strategic by using terms like: Class and social segments of society, social space as physical and psychological space, social mobility in Victorian Society in *Great Expectations*, and social mobility in the modern day compared to Victorian Society. Note that this is not the exhaustive list of the search terms. Instead, the search strategy will continuously be evolved depending on the features of the specific database, the research question in mind, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria (Chesterton, 1989). As a result, each research question of hypothesis will have its own customized search strategy. While such an approach would be time intensive, the benefits of finding and using high-quality sources to corroborate my textual analysis outweigh the losses.

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS/CRITICISM

The rhetorical criticism was conducted in two steps. First, the research questions and hypotheses outlined above were used to analyze the text *Great Expectations*. As a result, different types of rhetorical criticism (as well as other approaches to rhetorical analysis) were used depending on the research question. These included, but not limited to historical criticism, oral histories, historical case studies, feminist criticism, and social movement criticism, among others. Research questions like "How can social mobility through development of social space allow a person to move to a higher class?" were answered through social movement studies using Kip as the example and corroborated by other sources found in literature. Other approaches like historical criticism were valuable to the research process, especially since it was highly compatible with the planned approach of using spatial lens to read and achieve the objectives of this research.

Assuming that each research question or hypothesis was a minor study that contributed to the whole thesis, a rhetorical research method was chosen to assess and critique the relevant parts in Dicken's *Great Expectations.* After analyzing the relevant passages in the novel, their implications were evaluated relative to the purpose of the research question or the answer to the specific hypothesis. Lastly, a consistency check was done to establish whether the existing literature corroborated or were inconsistent. If the implications were corroborated by the existing body of knowledge, consideration were made on how the implications filled the existing gaps in the literature (Ioana, 2008). On the other hand, if the implications were inconsistent with existing high-quality literature, an attempt was made to provide reasons why. Furthermore, the inconsistencies pointed out gaps in literature, thus providing recommendations on where future research could investigate to advance the state of knowledge on the subject matter.

The second step was to write a critical paper, which was the content covered in the results and findings. Note that rhetorical criticism was not the only approach to textual analysis. Depending on the validity of the arguments and the contributions towards answering a research question, other approaches like content and interaction analysis and performance studies were used where applicable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study confirms that there exists a conceptual correlation between class as a social segment of a society and the strength of division between these classes is the class stratification with its social space, as the combination of physical and psychological space. Class stratification is the process where the society appears separate from such that people have access to resources and power. Class system can be described as an aspect of categorizing a group of people with certain statuses in the society. In class system the phenomenon is permanently determining the relationship of this group to other groups.

From the original concept, space is considered an empty area geometrically enclosed with line limits. This was noted traditionally through the Aristotelian school which facilitated space according to this evidence of science (Bourdieu, 2018). However, with the advent of courtesy and logic a new definition of space arose and it entered the reign of absolute and it is observed that space came to dominate and it was said to be containing, 'all sensors and all bodies'.

Philosopher Kant defined space as a tool of knowledge which is different from empirical sphere. On the other hand, Platonism argues that space is mental and therefore borrowing the ideal of space from mathematical concept to the field of philosophy. Philosophy also views space from literary and ideological concepts (Kerbo, 2009). Space can therefore be viewed as mental or social and therefore it lacks a bridge between the two. According to Henri Lefebvre integration of spiritual and dialectical of materials can be used in a multi-dimensional way to define space. Space is also observed to be concrete, abstract, realistic and representational.

The findings of this research validate the hypothesis of the main differences between Victorian society and modern society. Research findings confirms that Victorian society did not allow for social mobility while the modern society does. The Victorian age borrows its name from Queen Victoria who existed between 1837 and 1901. During the Victorian era, there were three main classes. They included the upper class who thrived in riches. The middle class existed but were fortunate to have access to a few resources here and there (Toadvine, 2007). The lower class were the less fortunate group. The upper class did not work at all because many of their families and ancestors had enough money for them. On the other hand, the lower class lived the worst life because their families were big and whatever they worked for was never enough and for this reason it was difficult to move from one social class to the other and those who are able to move had to do it through Victorian stereotypes but still it was considered the best chance that they ever had as ordinary society's citizens (Tang & Liu, 2015). On the other hand, the modern world has quickly evolved and people especially women have more rights compared to the Victorian era. The modern era has more opportunities, jobs, and the equality between men and women has been reduced thanks to technology.

Social mobility is basically the movement of the social position of individuals or groups in a society for a given period of time. Social mobility is encompassed with changes in wealth and social statuses. It also extends to changes in health status, literacy education, classes, and ethnic groups of countries (Mašić et al., 2020). The current world has made it easy for individuals to move from one social status to the other. While comparing the industrialized open systems to the pre-industrial society it can be concluded that the closed class systems had a low social mobility. In this case people belonging to this societies were mainly confined in their ancestral occupations and their societal status was mainly prescribed through birth statuses. On the other hand, the modern society has allowed moving from one class to another through achievement of positions which are basically gained through merit or achievements. Open system therefore allows for mobility between one different social class to the other. In this case and individual can either move up or down the class depending on the statuses of their achievement (House, 1942).

Education and wealth are considered some of the factors that determine mobility of and individual or groups of people through social classes. Education and wealth are sources of power (Mašić et al., 2020) and once immersed allow for navigation through higher social classes. Other factors that affect social mobility include poverty, public health problems, low rate of unionization, and inability to access 'superior schools' within the economy.

Most linguists argue that Dickens moral outrage and his constant attacks on the society's institution on their values are still relevant to today's modern world. Critics who basically were the Marxist hailed and described him as a subversive, rebellious, and revolutionary man. The Marxist did not necessarily argue in favor of Dickens even though they were aware of the subversion or revolutionary thrust that the Dickens' novels created (Grass, 2012). According to Dickens, individuals within the society have to bear the burden of facing their own flaws in order to enlighten themselves in this flawed society. In today's world, crime, illiteracy, domestic violence, poor prison conditions, and poor work conditions are some of the factors that are still present yet existed during the Victorian era. Today such factors are seen as government or social organization problems that can be improved consequently helping in developing the status quo of an individual or group. In relation to the novel, Pip is seen to be actively involved in business pursuits and this reveals his moral standards when he and Herbert succumb to the temptation of dining expensively at the Finches and Bernard's Inns which consequently increased and worsened their debt statuses (Upham, 2012). The aspect of morality can also be seen in Pip's false values grounded in snobbery. Eventually, Pip comes to his senses and assumes a real and honest life as he finally tries to establish himself while in Egypt in Herbert's firm. When Pip finally went to his native home in England, he realised the value

of his friends Bid and Joe. It is through this concept that it is realized that some people in the society rise through social cadres through snobbery while striving to create better living standards for themselves. Dicken portrays Pip as an individual who engages in business but is later freed from poverty and ultimately humbled by life experiences. It can therefore be revealed that transformation in the society is possible and upward mobility is worth it, but through hard work and consistency.

Dickens deconstructive forward-thinking voice is more relevant to us in this modern world as he lamented and bled through the tone and fragmented Victorian society that was full of flaws and abuses in terms of morals. In today's world people who are debt-ridden can be compared Pip. The current mortgage crisis in America and China is a good example. In the past, it was observed that the banks could lend generously meaning that the borrowers were in a position to benefit when the prices kept rising but as the prices dropped the foreclosures forced the Americans out of their homes and consequently leading them to the streets with no protection (Pettitt, 2001). It is this pride of ownership which is likened to the age-old ideals and the *Great expectations* that has been instilled to us by the society which is the cause of poor morality. The crisis in mortgage in America and currently in China can be related to the *Great expectations* and ideals that we belong to a higher place in life. Even though times have changed and now our computers are used to store written records it is very clear that Dickens message reveals a lot of flaws in the society because of the misplaced values and changes that people undergo in the society as they struggle to emerge victorious. Fortunately, enough this modern world allows for quick social mobility compared to the Victorian era. However, these same factors are the main causes of injustice and inequality in the current world.

There are two class lifestyles according to the concept of a social space. These lifestyles are for the upper class which are distinctively demanding. These demands are in form of resources. The rich in the society have high the economic capital and this can be manifested in their lifestyle which is basically involved with a high quest in taste, excitement, and bodily orientation (Morris, 1991). Meanwhile, the rich in terms of culture are more ascetic and intellectual orientated in terms of lifestyle in order to manifest themselves (Ali et al., 2020; Dervić & Bećirović, 2020). This group of people have high demanding resources that requires symbolic mastering culminated by a taste of canonized legitimate culture with more cosmopolitan popular items. On the contrary, many studies reveal that the lower classes are usually inactive and disengaged and the evidence can be seen through the distinct tastes. Bourdieu's model of social class reveals that these two classes will always strive to attain status quo. It is this development of collective social space that easily eliminates the lower classes especially due to the differences in tastes (Jarness et al., 2019)

CONCLUSION

In *Great Expectation* different ways of the construction and development of social space is highlighted. The use of class stratification is described in both the Victorian society and the Modern society. Dickens has painted the time period when the Victorian society was fading and the modern society was starting to develop in London. In the Victorian Society, the class and class stratification had a strong impact. There was lack of social mobility and the class of a person was maintained to be the one that person is born with. The construction of social class is related with the physical and psychological space along with the cultural and social values. The difference in physical spaces of the lower and the higher class is described through the life of the Blacksmith house and the Manor house. It has been shown that traditionally the people with wealth were considered as the higher class while the people with low economic incomes belonged to lower classes. There is no intersection between the physical space of the higher class and the lower class. Similarly, the psychological space is also described by Dickens and the way it influences the way people from different classes behave with each other. The lower class is associated with the ignorant and backward behavior while the higher educated class is known for its arrogance. Pip when belonged to the labor class felt a sense of inferiority upon interacting with the members of the Manor House. An intellectual subspace is also mentioned in *Great Expectations.* Dickens has also described the construction of social space and how it facilitates the class stratification. The traditional society of London was divided into various classes from the lowest criminal class to the high elite class. There was no room for the people to move from one class to another and had to stick with the class they were born with. There were minimum opportunities for the lower class to develop their social space. The character of Pip manages to move from one class

to another and successfully achieves social mobility. It has been shown that this phenomenon was not possible in the conventional society but the modern society provided people with this opportunity. It was shown that Pip managed to move into the higher class by achieving education and wealth. Another significant aspect which has been described in the *Great Expectation* is that the people from lower class were kind hearted and warm but the people from the higher class were mostly arrogant and rude. Even Pip turned harsh and unfriendly towards the lower class even his sister and her husband. The variance of social class construction in the Victorian and modern society are clearly illustrated in the novel. The way social mobility was allowed in the modern society especially after the industrial revolution is also explained in detail by Dickens. This paper contributes widely in the field of philosophy and psychology as it relates to social behavior and morality in the society. However, there exist some gaps that require future studies. It is recommended that more research be conducted on factors like corruption which have found their way in the modern commodity and being viewed as a solitude way of upward mobility through the social classes (Parkinson, 2010). Studies are also to be conducted on the effect of gambling as a factor affecting social mobility and social stratification.

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