Charles Dickens, Great Expectations

Biography

- Date of Birth: February 7, 1812
- Date of Death: June 9, 1870
- Hometown: Portsmouth, UK
- Important Information Relevant to Great Expectations:
  - Dickens's father, John Dickens, was accustomed to debt and financial problems early in life, which would largely explain how and why *Great Expectations* and a lot of his other novels focus on poverty and the life of the poor. Furthermore, it appears that his main characters are sometimes stricken by a life of poverty, living in a lower class society, often times orphans. Being that Pip grew up into the realms of the lower class society, it may explain Dickens reasoning behind why he chose this path for Pip, as Dickens was obviously very accustomed to this lifestyle seeing as his father had such problems.
Furthermore, Dickens's father was very skillful and theatrical, which would largely explain Dickens use of the play *Hamlet* and Wopsle's role and involvement. However, February 20 marked the date that John Dickens was arrested for debt, which would account for Dickens frequent use of prisoners and the legal system, because soon after his entire family was sent to the Marshalsea debtor's prison (except for Charles and his older sister Fanny, who studied at the Royal Academy of Music). It appeared that these two were the only two doing something with themselves, and Charles was needed to work and pay off his father's debt (Benson). Charles would work strenuous hours, sometimes from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. and receive a mere six shillings a day. However, he worked hard and did not complain, seeing as he was in this position due to his father's problems.
Upon his families incarceration, Charles was basically on his own, hence his childhood memories are bleak and unhappy. It is often said these parts of his upbringing are the result of the many orphaned children in all of his books and would largely account for Pip's existence especially.

“...These cruel turns of fate--his humiliating enslavement to menial labor and his father's imprisonment and disgrace--would haunt Dickens for the remainder of his life. Abandoned children and orphans like Pip -- the hero of *Great Expectations* (1860-61; 1861) -- are everywhere in his work, and abandonment of course need not be literal to wound deeply and permanently” (Benson).

It is clear from his strenuous work schedule that Charles had a good work ethic and strived to succeed not to end up like his father, this may explain the driving force behind *Great Expectations* and why the main character Pip focuses on succeeding, because Dickens was so often told by his father that if he worked hard, he would succeed and escape the life of poverty that he was accustomed to.

While Dickens's father may have suffered from debt among other problems, it was said that he was still well-intentioned and very loving and caring for his children; Dickens grew up with a family of six children.
As for his mother, his feelings were ambivalent, which may explain Pip's lack of a real mother and Ms. Joe's role as a supplement. Furthermore, this could account for the lack of mother's in a lot of Dickens's novels. He did not appear to have much of a relationship with her at all.

"Take nothing on its looks; take everything on evidence. There's no better rule."

Important Quotes:
“Pip, dear old chap, life is made of ever so many partings welded together, as I may say, and one man’s blacksmith, and one’s a whitesmith, and one’s a goldsmith, and one’s a coppersmith. Divisions among such must come, and must be met as they come. If there’s been any fault at all to-day, it’s mine. You and me is not two figures to be together in London; nor yet anywheres else but what is private, and beknown, and understood among friends. It ain’t that I am proud, but that I want to be right, as you shall never see me no more in these clothes. I’m wrong in these clothes. I’m wrong out of the forge, the kitchen, or off th’meshes. You won’t find half so much fault in me if you think of me in my forge dress, with my hammer in my hand, or even my pipe. You won’t find half so much fault in me if, supposing as you should ever wish to see me, you come and put your head in at the forge winder and see Joe the blacksmith, there, at the old anvil, in the old burnt apron, sticking to the hold work. I’m awful dull, but hope I’ve beat out something nigh the rights of this at last. And so GOD bless you, dear old Pip, old chap, GOD bless you!” (224).

Significance of Quote: This quote takes place at the end of Chapter 27, after Joe has just visited Pip in London. Joe’s visit makes him feel awkward and out of place, because he realizes the disparity between him and Pip now that Pip is a gentleman. However, it is significant, because it further illustrates the kind-hearted man that Joe truly is. He never puts the blame on Pip for being nasty and cold to him, but tells Pip that it is part of nature and mentions the natural divisions (i.e. blacksmith, whitesmith, and goldsmith).
“I never could have believed it without experience, but as Joe and Biddy became more at their cheerful ease again, I became quite jealous.” (144)

Significance of Quote: Pip becomes aware of how Joe and Biddy are content with their own lives, though they may not be the wealthiest or very well-known. They do not possess the desire to achieve greatness through shallowness, which ultimately is what drives Pip to become a gentleman-to please the girl of his dreams, Estella. Devoting himself to winning the heart of a girl that is made of stone, he’s setting himself up for lots of anxiety and a lack of confidence.

“...There was no discrepancy of years between us, to remove her far from me; we were of nearly the same age, though of course the age told for more in her case than in mine; but the air of inaccessibility which her beauty and her manner gave her, tormented me in the midst of my delight...” (239)

Significance of Quote: This passage puts into perspective the imaginary barrier that Pip places between him and Estella, recognizing that they are actually very similar: they both were ruined by their childhoods as a result of having no parents. Childhood accounts for a lot of who Estella and Pip are. Pip kids himself about what type of person is desired, and Estella’s beauty is emphasized frequently to show how much she should be desired. It is through her striking beauty that Pip becomes determined to win her, though this is a big reason why he creates this divide between them.
"I [Pip] sometimes derived an impression, from his [Magwitch/Provis] manner or from a whispered word or two which escaped him, that he pondered over the question whether he might have been a better man under better circumstances" (456).

Significance of quote: This quote is significant because it asks whether or not a better childhood and bringing up produces a better person. This is important because this is a major question that could be asked of Pip as well as Estella. Would Pip have been a better gentleman had he been brought in a more gentlemanly way? And would Estella have grown to be nice and loving had she been reared in a loving and warm household? The answer to Magwitch’s question then is yes, because it is evident throughout the novel that the way one is raised and the circumstances under which one was raised does affect who the person becomes as they get older. But it is also important to understand, that one does not have to remain in that mold one’s entire life, but can work to change it and become better or worse, depending on the person’s choosing.

"Pip, dear old chap, life is made of ever so many partings welded together."

Themes:
• **Expectations:** Expectations could be another way of defining assumption. Early in the novel when Pip inherits these “great expectations”, it is assumed that Pip is going to grow up a changed man because he is going to be raised out of the lower class and he will become a better person for it. I find ironic that even after he comes under these “great expectations”, he is consumed by debt and he becomes someone worse than the Pip back at the marshes which shows the theme of expectations and how they are never met. The theme of expectations also applies to Estella. Estella is expected to wreak havoc on the race of man and to fulfill Miss Havisham’s revenge. Furthermore, expectations lead Pip to believe that he is the beneficiary of Miss Havisham and Pip expects that because of this, he will be married to Estella. Well as the novel progresses, we learn that you should expect the unexpected.

  "Young man, I am sorry to see you brought so low. But what else could be expected! What else could be expected" (474).

**Discussion Question:** Who plays the greatest role in shaping Pip’s expectations?
Time: Time is a widely used theme in all of Dickens' novels, especially in *Great Expectations*. It is most noticeable in the realms of Miss Havishman's house: Satis House. Miss Havishman was stood up moments before marrying the man of her dreams (or so she thought) at twenty to nine, thus all the clock in her house are "frozen" at that exact moment; a remembrance of such an awful moment that has caused her to turn into the person she is today. As a result of this moment, Havishman is stuck in the moment, having no clue of what time or day it is, and continuing to wear her wedding dress. For her, time is almost irrelevant, but is a key part of the text. It is used to show Pip's growth and progression from lower class orphan, to wealthy gentleman, changing him greatly throughout the novel. Overall, time is a significant factor in the novel, drastically affecting the lives of certain characters more than others.

"So unchanging was the dull old house, the yellow light in the darkened room, the faded spectre in the chair by the dressing-table glass, that I felt as if the stopping of the clocks had stopped Time in that mysterious place, and, while I and everything else outside it grew older, it stood still. Daylight never entered the house as to my thoughts and remembrances of it, any more than as to the actual fact. It bewildered me, and under its influence I continued at heart to have my trade and to be ashamed of home" (125).

Discussion Question: Why do none of the other characters in the novel not seem to be "stuck" as much as Miss Havisham? In other words, what slows her development as compared to somebody like Pip or Estella?
• **Social Status**: In Pip's strive for personal growth, he is self obsessively influenced by wealth and any symbol of wealth. Connotating self worth and admiralty with polished manners, clothes, beauty, intellect and speech-Pip finds pity in everything that was apart of his childhood years and looks down upon those deemed unfit by him as if he hadn't been there himself. Mrs. Havisham's wedding dress and fine jewelry are worn to cover up her serious internal problems, as if her possessions could make a person think otherwise. Estella's striking good looks serve her as a cover-up as well. In having Mrs. Havisham comment frequently on her beauty, Dickens is suggesting her only attribute. It is also revealed that Mrs. Havisham molded Estella into whatever she wanted-a beautiful, desirable, and well-mannered woman that would be envied because of her apparent envious status. This, in fact, only serves in making Estella a very cold figure with nothing to feel or say that is her own. The true morale of the story and breakthrough for Pip is that social status is unnecessary for good will.

- "I knew it was Joe, by his clumsy manner of coming upstairs-his state boots being always too big for him-and by the time it took him to read the names on the other floors in the course of his ascent . . . "Joe, how are you. Joe?" "Pip, how AIR you, Pip?" (219).

**Discussion Question**: How would have Pip's actions to become a gentlemen differed if he had known from the start of his journey that Miss Havisham was not his benefactor?
Crime/Guilt: Crime and guilt are two of the most prominent, if not the most prominent, themes recurring throughout Great Expectations. Pip is at first frightened by Magwitch in the marshes because of his shackles and his association with crime. Young Pip often feels guilty himself for helping out a prisoner, thinking the police will soon come to punish him. As Pip grows, he still reflects on the role crime has had on his life, thinking "How strange it was that [he] should be encompassed by all this taint of prison and crime; that in [his] childhood out on [his] lonely marshes on a winter evening [he] should have first encountered it; that it should have disappeared on two occasions, starting out like a stain that was faded but not gone; that it should in this new way pervade [his] fortune and advancement." (264). Towards the end of the novel, however, Pip realizes his guilt is unfounded as he comforts a dying Magwitch, proving that nobility on the inside is far greater than the shackles one may wear on the outside.

Discussion Question: Magwitch makes reference at the end of the novel as accepting the Courts rule, but also the Judgment of higher power. Throughout the novel, just who is it passing Judgment on these characters and how does that affect their development?

"It was now too late and too far to go back, and I went on. And the mists had all solemnly risen now, and the world lay spread before me"
The story takes place in the marshes of Kent and focuses on the main character Philip, or more commonly referred to as “Pip.” Pip is an orphaned, lower-class, little boy who lives with his overbearing sister and her husband, Joe, the village blacksmith. While Pip is certainly content living in the confines of his sister’s home, he can’t help but want more for himself after getting a glimpse of the upper class life during his first encounter at Miss. Havisham’s. It is at that moment that Pip realizes the disparity between himself and those above him. His main goal from then on is to become a gentleman, become fit for society, and of course-win over the heart of the beloved Estella. However, he realizes his dreams may come true when he finds out that he has received a great sum of money from an anonymous benefactor. It is then that he is taken to London and taught the real ways of a true gentleman by his best friend and companion, Herbert. Through this, Pip’s attitude and behavior change drastically towards everybody, notably Joe and Biddy, to fit the mold of what he thinks will let him win over Estella. In these occurrences, Pip meets several mysterious people that eventually end up being significant to later events in the plot. As always, Dickens has it so numerous characters are inter-related in several ways. While his journey progresses, he begins to realize that those that truly care for him have been there all along and that beauty and money are not as important as he once thought. Before it’s too late, the reader hopes Pip is able to mend ties with his loved ones back home and realizes to be happy with what he’s got.

The Infamous Double Ending!

One of the most intriguing aspects of Great Expectations is that two endings still survive in print. While most prints of the novel feature the ending we read, in which Pip sees a “shadow of no parting with Estella(A line that was also changed, from "saw no shadow of another parting from her", creating even more ambiguity), the first ending was much less ambiguous: a reflective Pip meets Estella once again, only to see the affect Miss Havisham had on her heart, and realizes she now suffers the same way he did. Pip then leaves her as a friend, and nothing more.
The now infamous second ending came about after Dickens paid a visit to fellow-novelist Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Lytton argued Dickens' original ending was disappointing and the readers would be unsatisfied. Dickens sent him the newly revised ending, which has been in print ever since. A great article in defense of the second ending can be found by students here. (Meckier, Jerome. Studies in the Novel, Spring 93, Vol. 25 Issue 1, p28, 31p)

Discussion Question: Does Dickens changing the ending to something more pleasing to the readers diminish his integrity as a writer?

"One man's a blacksmith, and one's a whitesmith, and one's a goldsmith, and one's a coppersmith."

Character List:

Pip: Philip "Pip" Pirrip, is the narrator and protagonist of the story. A unique aspect of Great Expectations is that we are really treated to two different Pips: The older, reflective Pip, telling us his story, and also the young Pip, whom the older version of himself encapsulates brilliantly, creating a sense that Pip is encountering many of these endeavors for the first time, just as the readers are. It is also no coincidence that Dickens chose a palindrome for his protagonist's name. The name Pip, and Pirrip, is a reflection of the development in character that Pip experiences: his humble beginnings as a boy who selflessly helps a convict, to the introduction of his Expectations and his change character for the worse, and finally to his realization to what his Expectations really are and his final shift back to the selfless, loving character he is at the beginning of the story. The biggest issue for Pip is his ability to know what is right and which decisions he makes, and yet still pressuring himself to make the wrong decisions (a quality that young Pip would probably have a hard time articulating. It is where the reader really gets a sense of older Pip's reflection of himself through his retelling of his tale).
I would not have gone back to Joe now, I would not have gone back to Biddy now, for any consideration: simply, I suppose, because my sense of my own worthless conduct to them was greater than every consideration. No wisdom on earth could have given me the comfort that I should have derived from their simplicity and fidelity: but I could never, never, never, undo what I had done. (323)

For now my repugnance to him had all melted away, and in the hunted, wounded, shackled creature who held my hand in his, I only saw a man who had meant to be my benefactor, and who had felt affectionately, gratefully, and generously, towards me with great constancy through a series of years. I only saw in him a much better man than I had been to Joe. (446)

Discussion Question: How does the older Pip narrating affect the overall narrative his younger self travels?

Estella: Estella was adopted as Miss Havisham's highly admired, but depressingly unattainable ward. Though all that meets-the-eye requirements reflect the upper-class: beauty, grace, and love, Estella is very cold, distant, and altogether unhappy with her current lifestyle. Her beauty is brought up countless times throughout the novel, as to suggest that beauty is her only real asset. Though Pip doesn't see this, he is blindly in love with her and sets about his life so as to attract Estella. Estella manipulates Pip into believing he's constantly unfit for civil society because of his upbringing, as a way to protect her true social position. As she creates an imaginary divide between herself and Pip, we learn Estella's real father is Magwitch. She knows little about the world, because she was hid from these circumstances as a child. Just as Pip had no real parents, neither does Estella.
"If you had brought up your adopted daughter wholly in the dark confinement of these rooms, and had never let her know that there was such a thing as the daylight by which she has never once seen your face—if you had done that, and then, for a purpose had wanted her to understand the daylight and know all about it, you would have been disappointed and angry?" (306).

Discussion Question: Which ending better suits the Estella that Pip has narrated for the reader?

**Miss Havisham:** Miss Havisham is the wealthy bachelorette who adopted Estella and is the assumed patron who has brought Pip into his "great expectations". She has a huge influence upon Pip's life because she is the sole reason he is obsessed with Estella and it is because of her (and Estella) that he strives to be a gentleman in the wealthy, upper class world of London. Miss Havisham owns the large mansion, called "Satis House", that is stuck in time; the time being when Miss Havisham was abandoned on her wedding day by her fiancé precisely at "twenty minutes to nine" (Dickens, pp. 80) and since that day has never "looked upon the light of day" (Dickens, pp. 182). Miss Havisham has no indication of time and of what day of the week it is since that event transpired, which is indicative of her character. 'I am tired,' said Miss Havisham. 'I want diversion, and I have done with men and women. Play' (Dickens, pp. 59). It is believed that since that tragic day, she has hated all of man and is plotting to get her revenge against men.
• “But I saw that everything within my view which ought to be white, had been white long ago, and had lost its luster, and was faded and yellow. I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress, and like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes. I saw that the dress had been put upon the rounded figure of a young woman, and that the figure upon which it now hung loose, had shrunk to skin and bone” (57-58).

Discussion Question: Does Miss Havisham truly find redemption?

Biddy: Biddy is portrayed as a stark contrast to Estella. She is generally well-liked by the reader and Pip, though both find it difficult as to why Pip doesn’t love her over Estella. Biddy is Pip’s teacher earlier in the novel, and is always a good listener and mentor to him. She is more established than Pip and suggests to the shallow way of Pip that it certainly is possible to be proud without great wealth or status. From time to time, mocking Pip’s fixation with materialism, wealth and status, Biddy knows that Pip has actually digressed.

• “Because, it is to spite her… I should think—but you know best—that might be better and more independently done by caring nothing for her words. And if it is to gain her over, I should think—but you know best—she was not worth gaining over.” (129)
• “Have you never considered that he may be proud?… He may be too proud to let any one tack him out of a place that he is competent to fill, and fills well and with respect. To tell you the truth, I think he is: though it sounds bold in me to say so, for you must know him far better than I do.” (149).

Discussion Question: In what ways would Biddy better serve as romantic interest for Pip, compared to somebody like Estella?
Joe: Joe is the definition of a lower, working class male in the novel *Great Expectations*. He is brother-in-law to the main character Pip and husband to the overbearing, abusive Mrs. Joe (Pip’s sister). While he is classified as the village’s blacksmith who strongly lacks a proper education and unrefined upbringing, he is without a doubt, one of the most kind-hearted characters in the novel that readers. He is constantly bossed around by his abusive wife, but continues to care for her and love her. In addition, while Pip and him share a bond unlike that of most brother-in-laws, but more as friends, he sadly loses that closeness once Pip pursues greater expectations. Joe is one of the few characters that remains consistent in the novel, regardless of the situation or certain occurrences. He lacks a strong voice at times, but his huge heart and willingness to work and make due with his given circumstances makes up for it.

- “Whatever I acquired, I tried to impart to Joe. This statement sounds so well, that I cannot in my conscience let it pass unexplained. I wanted to make Joe less ignorant and common, that he might be worthier of my society and less open to Estella’s reproach” (109).
- “By degrees she led me into more temperate talk, and she told me how Joe loved me and how Joe never complained of anything – she didn’t say, of me; she had no need; I knew what she meant – but ever did his duty in his way of life, with a strong hand, a quiet tongue, and a gentle heart” (284).

Discussion Question: Joe is constantly Pip’s anchor to what his real expectations should be. In what ways does Joe keep Pip grounded?

Mrs. Joe: Pip’s overbearing and abusive sister and Joe’s wife. Mrs. Joe is best characterized in the opening few chapters of the book, then later becomes a vegetable, lacking any real voice or sense of character. However, Mrs. Joe is clearly a woman with power in the household, which was uncommon in this time period. She is constantly on Joe and Pip’s case, antagonizing them for every little detail they do. She insists upon having a clean household and wishes for everything to be in order. She possesses a cane, which is called the “Tickler” and uses it on Pip and Joe to further signify her power in the household. However, all that negativeness aside, Mrs. Joe’s bite isn’t as bad as her bark. It is clear that Mrs. Joe is simply looking out for Pip and trying to raise him to the best of her ability, instilling good behavior on him.
• “My sister, Mrs. Joe, with black hair and eyes, had such a prevailing redness of skin that I sometimes used to wonder whether it was possible she washed herself with a nutmeg-grater instead of soap. She was tall and bony, and almost always wore a coarse apron, fastened over her figure behind with two loops, and having a square impregnable bib in front, that was struck full of pins and needles. She made it a powerful merit in herself, and a strong reproach against Joe, that she wore this apron so much. Though I really see no reason why she should have worn it at all; or why, if she did wear it at all, she should have not taken it off, every day of her life” (8).

Jaggers: He is one of the many mysterious, nameless characters that Pip meets early on in the book, and then resurfaces as an overly pertinent character, serving numerous roles in the novel. First, he is seen as one of the most important criminal lawyers in all of London. While he is certainly good at his job, he takes his duties as a lawyer far too seriously, largely drawing a fine line between work and play. He has a menacing persona that makes all of those around him absolutely terrified of him. In addition, he is seen constantly washing his hands obsessively after trials, which alludes to the fact that he is trying to rid (or cleanse) himself of criminal taint. However, he also serves as Pip’s so-called “guardian” and cares for him. It is Jaggers who first informs Pip of his great expectations and his rise to the upper class.

• “Though he called me Mr. Pip and began rather to make up to me, he still could not get rid of a certain air of bullying suspicion; and even now he occasionally shut his eyes and threw his finger at me while he spoke, as much as to express that he knew all kinds of things to my disparagement, if he only chose to mention them. […] There is already lodged in my hands, a sum of money amply sufficient for your suitable education and maintenance. You will please consider me your guardian” (139).

• “If anybody wouldn’t make an admission, he said, “Now I have got you!” The magistrates shivered under a single bite of his finer. Thieves and thief-takers hung in dread rapture on his words, and shrank when a hair of his eyebrows turned in their direction. Which side he was on I couldn’t make out, for he seemed to me to be grinding the whole place in a mill” (202).
Herbert Pocket: Like Jaggers, Herbert is one of the many mysterious characters that Pip meets early on in the novel, but is only characterized as the “pale, young gentleman.” Although it is Estella’s doing, Pip challenges Herbert in a fight at Satis House where the two first encounter one another. However, to Herbert’s dismay, he ends up losing to Pip and that is the last we see of Herbert for several years. It isn’t until Pip first learns of his fortune from Jaggers, that the two meet again in London where Pip learns Herbert’s true identity. The two instantly hit it off, becoming best friends throughout the novel. It is Herbert who gives Pip the nickname “Handel” and is able to successfully teach him the proper etiquette and mannerisms of a true gentleman. Herbert and Pip remain good friends throughout the novel, both proving to bring out the best in each other.

• “Herbert Pocket had a frank and easy way with him that was very taking. I had never seen anyone then, and I have never seen anyone since, who more strongly expressed to me, in every look and tone, a natural incapacity to do anything secret and mean. There was something wonderfully hopeful about his general air, and something that at the same time whispered to me he would never be very successful or rich. I don’t know how this was. I became imbued with the notion on that first occasion before we sat down to dinner, but I cannot define by what means”(177-178)

Abel Magwitch (Pip’s convict): The frightening criminal that terrorizes Pip in the cemetery as the novel opens. He is compelled, after Pip returns to him with food and supplies and shows kindness towards him, to become the secret benefactor of Pip. He travels to Australia, where he gains his fortune, and works with the lawyer Jaggers to get the money to Pip and to have him raised like a “gentleman”. He risks his freedom and life in the end on his journey back to England just to see the newly created “gentleman” Pip.

• “When one of ‘em says to another, ‘He was a convict, a few years ago, and is a ignorant common fellow now, for all he’s lucky,’ what do I say? I says to myself, ‘If I ain’t a gentleman, nor ain’t yet got no learning, I’m the owner of such. All on you owns stock and land; which on you owns a brought-up London gentleman?’”(321).

Discussion Question: Magwitch tells Pip he became a convict out of necessity to live, unlike Compeyson, who was pure evil. Do crimes committed out of dire need carry less guilt with them than other crimes?
Resources and Links

The opening sequence to the 1946 film adaptation, directed by David Lean. Notice the dark, gloomy tone that is similar to the marshes that open the story. This tone was lost in some later adaptations in favor of the more sensational. More fun facts and information about this adaptation of the movie can be found here.

The 1998 adaptation, directed by Alfonso Cuaron. While the structure of the story stays the same, some key plot elements are eliminated in order to focus on Finn (Pip’s new name) and Estella’s relationship. Click here to explore the IMDB page for this adaptation.

South Park, the animated show on Comedy Central, has long had a recurring character named Pip. While he served mainly as a background character for early episodes in the series, in season 4, episode 15, the show delves into Pip’s back story, and of course he is the same Pip from *Great Expectations*. The episode draws heavily on Lean’s 1946 film adaptation. Sadly, Pip’s life was lost in season 16, when he is killed by a rampant Barbra Streisand. The South Park episode “Pip-Great Expectations” can be viewed here.

Think you know your *Great Expectations*??? Come test your knowledge HERE.

Suggestions for further reading:

*Our Mutual Friend* by Charles Dickens  
Similar in sophistication to *Great Expectations*, Dickens’ final work also deals with the importance money can have on society.
The Metamorphoses by Ovid
This piece from antiquity provides great insight to the numerous allusions to the past throughout the novel.

Paradise Lost by John Milton
Importantly alluded to numerous times, including the end of the novel, Milton’s classic offers another take on loss, betrayal, and redemption. For Iowa students, a great scholarly journal article about the role of Paradise Lost in naming the novel can be found here. (Meckier, Jerome. *Dickens Quarterly*, Dec2009, Vol. 26 Issue 4, p249-258, 11p)
Shakespeare's Richard the Third
A protagonist who is somewhat similar to Pip. Can be seen as an anti-hero. Serves as a nice inter-text to the novel, especially considering Mr. Wopsle's penchant for soliloquies.

The King James Bible
Necessary as an inter-text to keep up with Dickens numerous allusions. For students: Great article about the Bible in the story found here. (Gribble, Jennifer. Dickens Quarterly, Dec 2008, Vol. 25 Issue 4, p232-240, 9p.)
References

All images on this page were found using Wikimedia Commons.

All page references refer to the Penguin Paperback edition. The information regarding the dual endings was found in the appendix section to the Penguin edition. All links to journal entries were found using Academic Search Elite.

All information pertaining to Charles Dickens biography can be found here. At the New York Public Library website.

This website was established Fall 2010 at the University of Iowa for Selected British Authors Before 1900 by Taylor Casey, Cristin Noonan, Michael Steffan and Nate Hopkins. All analysis and interpretation is the work of the people listed above.

Image Gallery

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Paradise Lost
Candlelit reading

Baby Havisham and Pip
Soggy Marshes