

# Where Does Pip Migrate to? Unexpected Parallels in Lloyd Jones's *Mister Pip* and Adamson's *Mr. Pip*

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This article explores the neo-Victorian novel *Mister Pip* (2006), written by Lloyd Jones, and Andrew Adamson's adaptation for the cinema, *Mr. Pip*, which was released in 2012. We trace connections between these works and the Victorian novel *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens (1861). Indeed, the novel and the film can be regarded as ways of (re)discovering and (re)recreating the Victorian novel. More specifically, we look into the parallelisms that can be established between Dickens's character Pip and the different characters in Jones's novel and Adamson's film as we explore the intertextual ties that allow the reader to make journeys between contexts which are geographically, temporarily, and culturally distant. We also analyze the metafictional elements in *Mister Pip* and *Mr. Pip* in order to account for the self-reflexive aspects of these works. We show the ways by which the metafictional strategies employed by the narrative voice reveal the writing process. Jones's novel and Adamson's film tell stories of migration of different sorts (migrating into the past, migrating geographically, migrating socially, and migrating culturally among others). In the following pages we reflect on these migrations in the hope that we can answer the question "Where does Pip migrate to?".

*Mister Pip*, the novel by New Zealand writer Lloyd Jones was first published in 2006. Six years later, the film adaptation *Mr. Pip* was released. New Zealand film director, producer and screenwriter Andrew Adamson was responsible for the script and the direction of the film. The novel and the film narrate Matilda's childhood spent in Bougainville, an island in the Pacific Ocean, in the 1990s when the characters' lives are affected by a brutal civil war. During such hopeless times, Matilda, a thirteen-year-old black girl, is introduced to Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*, a novel which fascinates her, and which shapes her life and the fates of the people around her. Through constant references to this 19<sup>th</sup> century novel, both Jones's text and Adamson's film can be perceived as "self-consciously engaged with the act of (re)interpretation, (re)discovery and (re)vision concerning the Victorians" (Heilmann and Llewellyn, 2010: 4). Matilda and many other inhabitants listen to, analyze and turn to the Dickensian novel looking for hope or distraction. The literary text, as a result, becomes a means to escape from the horrors of the war.

This paper is organized in two parts. The first seeks to examine *Mister Pip* as a neo-Victorian novel that goes back to 19<sup>th</sup> century England in order to shed light on the present in a journey that allows the reader to draw connections between two very distant contexts, both temporally and geographically. This analysis purports to explain how *Mister Pip* turns out to be a “hybrid combination displaying unexpected parallels and a productive dialogue across and about temporal barriers”, to borrow the words used by Gutleben (2022: 1) in his description of the neo-Victorian poetics of exhumation which resuscitates the past and blends it with the present. The second part analyzes the film adaptation *Mr. Pip* and explores the connections between the novel and the film and how the film version sometimes reflects, and other times diverts from the written text.

Given the common ground that can be established between neo-Victorianism and Postmodernism, attention is also given to the ways in which the metafictional strategies employed by the narrative voice reveal the writing process. Following Patricia Waugh, a metafictional text draws attention to its own status as an artefact posing questions about the relationship between fiction and reality (1984: 2). Therefore, given the development of several events which are intertextually connected to Pip’s narrative, it can be claimed that text is self-reflexive. Above all, the text reflects on its literary nature when the metafictional frame is revealed: Matilda, no longer a child in Bougainville, discloses that she has written the whole text as a therapeutic means to overcome depression.

### ***Mister Pip* by Lloyd Jones**

Jones’s novel opens with an epigraph by Umberto Eco: “Characters migrate”, which refers to the idea that some characters leave the page and seem to acquire a life of their own outside the texts where they were “born”. If that is so, where does Pip go? Pip, the Dickensian orphan character, abandons his hard life in a country village and sees his “great expectations” materialize unexpectedly. He leaves behind poverty, an abusive sister, and a blacksmith apprenticeship in order to receive a gentleman’s education and large sums of money in the city. *Great Expectations* narrates Pip’s migration from the country to London, as well as “from one social level to another”, as Mr. Watts, the character of the teacher in *Mister Pip* explains to his students on the South Pacific Island. As a *bildungsroman*, the Victorian novel describes how he finally grows up to become a wealthy gentleman.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Lloyd Jones forces Pip to migrate once more, from Victorian London to the isolated Bougainville, Papua New Guinea. Indeed, as the novel unfolds, unexpected parallels can be drawn between Pip and several characters suggesting the possibility that Pip inhabits each of them, thus blending past and present. In this context, it becomes difficult to determine where exactly Pip migrates to since he seems to temporarily slip inside the skin of Matilda, Matilda’s closest friend, her teacher, and her father.

Pip is introduced to Matilda and her classmates by Mr. Watts, the last white man living in Bougainville. Mr. Watts, who is himself fascinated by *Great Expectations*, starts reading the novel aloud in class one chapter a day, in a routine that captivates his audience. It is interesting to note that Mr. Watts is not a trained teacher, but he decides to occupy the teaching post and share the little knowledge he has with the children after the former teacher flees the island in the face of the impending civil war. Still, one thing he is certain of: *Great Expectations* is “the greatest novel by the greatest English writer of the nineteenth century” (Jones, 2007: 22).

Matilda considers Pip her friend after listening to the first chapter: “I felt like I had been spoken to by this boy Pip. This boy who I couldn’t seem to touch but knew by ear. I had

found a new friend” (24). Their similar circumstances draw them close: they are both children, they know about death, they have both lost their fathers and Pip also lost his mother and most of his siblings. There are also some similarities in their upbringing: Pip is raised by a strict sister and Matilda’s mother, the village priest Dolores, is quite harsh and controlling as well.

Although imperceptible to her senses, Pip becomes real to Matilda. His strong presence in Matilda’s life turns him into a real companion. She wants to tell her mom about him, she writes his name on the shore, she considers him dearer to her than some of her relatives, a fact which makes her mom jealous. She even tries to imitate Pip’s efforts to discover more about his own father. Matilda confesses: “Encouraged by Pip’s example I tried to build a picture of my own dad. I found some examples of his handwriting. He wrote in small capital letters. What did that say about him?” (26).

Like a true friend, Pip provides Matilda with safety and certainty, both of which are rarities on the island, as its peaceful daily life is interrupted by the arrival of “redskins” in helicopters, who attack the islanders in savage ways again and again. If Matilda considers Pip a friend, it is because he becomes truly alive for her, to such an extent that she can feel his breath. In other words, the Dickensian character is reborn in very vivid terms. Pip becomes alive again when poetically recontextualized in the 1990s war-torn Bougainville. Gluteben (2022) refers to this process as a renaissance which brings the past back to life in an operation that is characteristic of neo-Victorian narratives.

However, Pip and Matilda do not “remain friends” as the Victorian character slips inside Matilda’s skin and they seem to become one. As events unfold, the parallelism between Matilda and Pip gradually becomes more noticeable to the reader and to Matilda herself, who decides to “perceive and interpret her life in the light of the Dickensian prototext” (Colomba, 2017: 277). Matilda’s determination to merge with Pip does not let readers miss a reference to *Great Expectations* as she constantly makes the parallels explicit.

Despite the striking differences between them, the narrative voice directs the reader’s attention towards Pip and Matilda’s shared features. For instance, they both become close to an adult figure, Miss Havisham and Mr. Watts respectively, two powerful characters who are willing to lend them a hand when necessary. One day, as Matilda is walking to Mr. Watts’s home, she feels as nervous as Pip on his way to see Miss Havisham. Matilda writes: “As I made my way there, I felt a bit like Pip approaching Satis House” (Jones, 2007: 134). This passage encourages a parallelism between Miss Havisham and Mr. Watts, an identification which is reinforced by Matilda later in the novel, when she discovers that Mr. Watts, like Miss Havisham, is stuck in time as he is forced to repeat the Queen of Sheba ritual in order to comfort his beloved Grace.

Both Pip and Matilda are embarrassed when visited in their own environments by the people who have raised them. Joe, who misses the child, visits Pip in his new flat in London and his mere presence upsets Pip, who disapproves of his clothes, his language, and his manners. Likewise, Matilda is ashamed of her mother when she visits the classroom in order to share her religious knowledge with the children. Although she criticizes Pip’s behavior, she ends up making the same mistake. “I was already ashamed by her words, but I also knew her anger didn’t really have to do with Mr. Watts’ own religious beliefs or lack of. What made her blood run hot was this white boy Pip and his place in my life” (Jones, 2007: 79). In vain Dolores seeks to impose her religious worldview on Matilda and remains reluctant to accept her daughter’s engagement with Mr. Watts and *Great Expectations*, a book which, as far as she knows, can provide her daughter with examples of immoral behavior.

The literariness of Matilda's interpretation of the world around her allows John Thieme to call *Mister Pip* "a wonderful work of metafiction" (Thieme, 2007: 55. The narrator's account of events shows awareness of the literary context and intertextuality becomes a metafictional strategy whose frequent and playful use allows us to place this novel in the intersection between neo-Victorianism and Postmodernism.

Although this is most easily appreciated in the first half of the novel, as Thieme suggests, unexpected parallels between the Dickensian world and Matilda's contemporary world do not cease to emerge. Even at desperate times, Matilda identifies her misery with Pip's misfortune and his great escape from it. When facing death during the flood, she clings on to *Great Expectations*, which becomes, once again, a source of hope as she sees Mr. Jagers in the log that keeps her alive: "What would you call a savior? The only one I knew went by the name of Mr. Jagers. And so it was natural for me to name my savior, this log, after the man who had saved Pip's life" (217). The naturalization of the equation between a log and a literary character is an instance of the playful tone characteristic of many postmodern works (Bentley, 2008 and Finney, 2006, among others) In this case, the intertextual reference provides some comic relief, possibly drawing a smile on readers' faces.

The log is not the only Mr. Jagers on the island. Reading the novel gives Matilda tools to reinterpret her own past and she finds another Mr. Jagger in the Pacific Matilda writes "The Mr. Jagers in my father's life was his boss, a mining engineer, one of the many contracted." (150) He was the one who gave her father the job that got him out of Bougainville before the civil war broke out. In the light of the violent events that unfolded, this man is now perceived as his savior. However, this view is not shared by Dolores, who despises her husband's boss for triggering his transformation into a white man.

Thus, towards the end of the book, Pip seems to have migrated into Matilda's father, not only because they are both saved by Mr. Jagers, in Matilda's view, but also because they abandon their own family. Very much like Pip, who does not go back to his strict sister, his dear Joe or patient Bidy as he becomes a gentleman, Matilda's dad does not return to Bougainville. Matilda often thinks of his migration, which is again paralleled to Pip's in her mind: "Away from class I found myself wondering about the life my dad was leading, and what he had become. I wondered if he was a gentleman, and whether he had forgotten all that had gone into making him." (55)

However, this parallelism is only ephemeral given that Mr. Laimo is not ashamed of his daughter, despite his nearly complete transformation into a white man, as Matilda sees it. On the contrary, he is proud of all the achievements of his "champ" as he likes to call her. Clearly, he has left the island and its customs behind, not his family.

There is another unexpected parallel still to be discussed: Pip can also be found within Mr. Watts, whose identity also blends with Miss Havisham's, as mentioned above, and with Mr. Dickens, as Mr. Watts refers to the celebrated Victorian author. Mr. Watts is introduced as a mysterious character who habitually walks around the island carrying his wife posing as Sheba. This ritual puzzles Matilda and the rest of the villagers for years.

At first, the only similarity between Pip and Mr. Watts seems to lie in the sound of their nicknames: Pip and Pop Eye, but it is later discovered that Mr. Watts creates himself anew, just as Pip reinvents himself in London and enjoys being called Handle. Since Mr. Watts migrates from Australia to Bougainville for his wife's sake, he needs to recreate himself in order to fit in an indigenous society. He is an outsider on the island in the same way that Pip is an outsider in London society when he gets there. Gradually, Mr. Watts's emotional isolation vanishes as his

bond with the local people becomes stronger. Despite racial, religious, and cultural differences, he shows respect for the local culture when he invites every parent to teach the local children at school. He attentively listens to explanations on topics as varied as the color blue, braids and killing octopuses. Towards the end of his life, the whole island seems moved by his story as they are all summoned to listen to his compelling narrative.

Another feature shared by Pip and Mr. Watts is that they both become objects of Matilda's devotion and affection as she tries to enter their souls and become closer to them. This is how Matilda explains her determination to relate to them: "He had given us Pip, and I had come to know this Pip as if he were real and I could feel his breath on my cheek. I had learned to enter the soul of another. Now I tried to do the same with Mr. Watts" (59).

Her will to bond with Mr. Watts and Pip is still ardent even as an adult. Once she is physically away from Bougainville, she goes back to her dear friends. On the one hand, she reads and rereads *Great Expectations* so fervently that she becomes a scholar on Dickens. She also tries to learn as much as possible about Mr. Watts. As she is still puzzled by all aspects of his life, but mainly about his ritual walk wearing a red nose and pulling Grace in a cart, she visits Mr. Watts's first wife, and she can recover interesting bits and pieces of his life in order to write about him.

The metafictional tendency present in the novel is evidence of how neo-Victorian fiction needs "to transform the Victorian conventions within their contemporary narratives" as stated by Louisa Hadley (2010: 29). Textual self-reference can be perceived in Matilda's revelation of her writing process, more precisely, when she proudly refers to her ability to literarily recreate the person she admires, even before she discloses all the details about her text. "I have found I can reassemble Mr. Watts at will and whenever I like, and my account so far" (Jones, 2007: 204). As she can recreate him, she is no longer shocked nor devastated by his loss. Now, as an adult, she can find comfort and hope in writing, as she could find them while reading during her childhood.

Her account of Mr. Watts builds a literary character who can be considered an enigma. His chameleonic ability to change from one social role to another renders him both mysterious and worthy of love, respect and admiration, as he attempts at providing them with whatever they need.

Otherwise, Mr. Watts was as elusive as ever. He was whatever he needed to be, what we asked him to be. Perhaps there are lives like that – they pour into whatever space we have made ready for them to fill. We needed a teacher, Mr. Watts became that teacher. We needed a magician to conjure up other worlds, and Mr. Watts had become that magician. When we needed a savior, Mr. Watts had filled that role. When the redskins required a life, Mr. Watts had given himself. (246)

Mr. Watts's death is here interpreted by Matilda as an act of heroism and self-sacrifice, which is achieved when he assumes Pip's identity and surrenders himself to the "redskins", who feel threatened by Pip's charisma and cannot understand he is not an actual person. In other words, the parallel between Pip and Mr. Watts brings tragic consequences. This view coincides with Janet M. Wilson's: "Mr. Watts's punishment for identifying himself as Mr. Pip in an attempt to save the villagers from being massacred is to be shot and fed to the pigs" (2012: 226).

Just as Matilda can bring Mr. Watts back to life, Mr. Watts can bring *Great Expectations* back to life. By blending the events in which Pip takes part with events from his own life, he can be paralleled not only with him but also with the novelist. He is as creative as Mr. Dickens because he rewrites the canonical text in the speeches delivered in installments, night after night, to the rambos and the rest of the population of the island, who seem to be spellbound. As pointed out by Gutleben (2022), in neo-Victorian fiction, the Victorian past is resuscitated, and a fresh breath can be felt coming out of it.

Similarly, Mr. Watts's students rewrite *Great Expectations* after the destructive fire started by the "redskins", and the canonical novel is also brought back to life. Remembering an incident, a word, an image becomes a source of joy, and proof of the text's vitality. It also gives the children a purpose, a mission to accomplish while their region is being torn apart by civil war. By bringing back the past – the canonical text in this case –, the narrative voice shows how the past "continues to be re-worked, legitimated, and preserved for posterity" (Kholke & Gutleben, 2010: 22).

The Dickensian text is re-worked through the children's rewriting in class and at home, in Mr. Watts's oral narrative and Matilda's novel. Past preservation for posterity is also identified as a neo-Victorian concern by Kate Mitchell, whose statement on neo-Victorian fiction fits the analysis of Jones's text. Here, *Great Expectations* is offered "as a cultural memory, to be remembered, and imaginatively re-created, not revised or understood" (2010: 7).

The final exposure of the metafictional frame becomes the biggest re-creational act, when the willing suspension of disbelief is shattered after confirming that the character herself has been writing all along. Matilda needs to re-live her childhood engagement with *Great Expectations* while writing to overcome depression and heal herself.

Surprisingly, "even after undergoing so many brutal events, Matilda does not associate Dickens with negative experiences" as pointed out by Rafal Liczkowski (2017: 241). On the contrary, all throughout the account of her childhood, Matilda focuses on friendship, comfort, and relief. They are brought to her by Pip and his memory. Nostalgia, then, becomes "a creative tool for remembering the past and mapping present identities", as stated by Ann Colley (quoted by Mitchell, 2010: 6). Once again, she needs to reassert her identity in the light of Pip's, just as she did as a child: "Pip was my story, even if I was once a girl, and my face black as the shining night. Pip is my story, and in the next day I would try where Pip had failed. I would try to return home" (Jones, 2007: 257).

### ***Mr. Pip, the film***

Like all films which are based on books, *Mr. Pip*, written and directed by Andrew Adamson and starred by Hugh Laurie, offers a reading, an angle and an interpretation of Jones's novel. As Khalid Alqadi points out, "Whereas in literature the reader fills in the blanks himself, imagining the space and the characters, cinema provides the audience with ready-made characters, in blood and flesh, and a definite outline of space" (2015: 42). Consequently, in the film version, the question of where Pip migrates to may be thought to have slightly different answers, which we explore in this section.

The identification between Matilda and Pip is a central element in the film, and the main events that contribute to this identification – Matilda's introduction to the book in class, Mr. Watts's rendering of the novel aloud, Dolores's displays of disapproval of the book and its morals, Matilda's protection of the book, and the inscription on the beach – are all present in the film version. However, the subtle processes by which the two characters seem to blend on

the pages of the novel, are presented rather differently here. In *Mr. Pip*, rather than a ubiquitous, all-pervasive presence, Pip is presented “in the flesh” as an imaginary friend that is conjured up at different times, sometimes in scenes where Matilda bears witness to events in Pip’s life and other times when he comes to inhabit her world.

Adamson realizes a series of interesting interpretative and cinematic choices for the character of Pip. For one, the Pip that Matilda imagines is black, though in the context of the novel she knows perfectly well that the character in Dickens’s *Great Expectations* is white, which is one of the reasons why her mother shows such resistance against the book. In the film, Pip – like all the other characters from Dickens’s novel – has the physiognomy of the islanders, and this is yet another way to materialize the deep connection between the two characters. Despite being black, Pip appears in English settings (a London city street and the cemetery, among others) although the streets are sandy and there are palm trees. Also, Pip wears English clothes but the colors are the striking vibrant colors of the island. The combination of elements from both cultures shows that this hybridization is a deliberate choice and not a product of Matilda’s ignorance of English white culture.

Pip appears in the film for the first time when Mr. Watts begins to read from *Great Expectations* in class. Matilda can see herself watching the scene where Pip encounters the convict, who is also black in Matilda’s mind and who will become Pip’s benefactor later in his life. In this first encounter, Matilda is wearing a dress after the English fashion of the time, her hair is up and she is contemplating the graves of Pip’s five dead siblings. The boy appears behind a tree and tells her about the tragedy of losing them so young. In the middle of the conversation, the convict comes running towards Pip, who tells Matilda to hide in what constitutes his first display of protection towards her. While the convict makes his demands, Matilda hides behind Pip’s father’s grave and seems to become aware of the loss they have in common. She is brought back to reality by a question from the class about the meaning of a word in the text, and she seems to emerge from behind the desk as Matilda, the character in her apparent daydream emerges from behind the tombstone. After this encounter, Matilda’s strong identification begins to take form and she wants to tell her mother all about her new friend. Matilda and Pip meet again shortly afterwards, as the convict is arrested and sent to Australia in exile. This entails the second knot in the chain of events and situations that bring them together: “My father is also in Australia”, she tells her new friend.

From that point onwards, Pip becomes a friend, confidant, and savior who will pop up at different points in her life and narrative. In time, Matilda’s appearance in these imaginings becomes more and more European in her attire and the way her hair is done. It is interesting to note that this transformation mirrors the change in Pip’s predicament and personality, and he finds himself living a new life in London. In a new spell of imagination, Matilda runs across Pip in the sandy streets of the London of her imaginings and finds him cold and distant. Pip goes by a new name now and is on his way to meet Estella, the woman of his dreams. In this section of the film, the plot is taken by the idea of identity and Mr. Watts tells the class: “No other person, in all of the world’s history has used your voice to say your name. It only belongs to you and no one can take that away from you”. These words echo Matilda’s own crisis of identity, torn between her mother, a central figure in the life of the village and her father who has fled to Australia looking for better prospects and has been living like a white man since. After her mother is raped and brutally murdered on the island, Matilda goes to Australia and moves in with her father. This dramatic change in circumstances is shown in the film almost without any conflict and we can see Matilda be examined by a white doctor, take a plane, meet

her father after years and look at the house and its objects only in mild surprise. She sleeps in her bed soundly (although she has slept on the floor her whole life) and we see her get out of her father's truck in a school uniform and shoes as she arrives in a school full of white teenagers in the following scene, all of which she seems to take in her stride.

Pip appears again standing next to Matilda and sharing the grief with her as her mother is murdered by the "redskins". The scene is quite different from the other encounters in that it only lasts a split second and neither Matilda nor Pip say a word. In the scene, both characters are standing on the beach, looking out to the sea and for once Pip's clothes are sober and light-colored. Shortly after, we see Matilda lying on the floor of her hut looking at the pictures of her father while Pip tries to get her attention. In silence, Matilda rejects him. As spectators we understand that she blames him for Dolores's and Mr. Watts's deaths. However, Pip redeems himself when, sometime later, he saves Matilda from drowning in the ocean. Though in Jones's novel it is Mr. Jaggars that Matilda sees in the log she holds onto, in the film version it is Pip that appears once again to protect her. This marks the sudden shift of fate by which, like Pip's, Matilda's circumstances change and she finds herself on her way to Australia and her father.

Pip appears for the last time when Matilda travels to London after learning that Mr. Watts has left her half of his apartment in that city, in a turn of events which is different from Jones's novel. Once in London, she visits emblematic places related to Dickens and *Great Expectations* and she meets Mr. Watts's white wife, Joan Watts. Like in the novel, during this visit, Matilda gets to know a different Tom Watts, one who was an actor and who fell in love with a black actress he shared the stage with. These discoveries about Mr. Watts and Grace show a new parallelism with Pip. For the first time the mystery behind Mr. Watts's previous life outside the island is revealed and Matilda has a new understanding of the transforming migration that led him to Grace's island, Bougainville. At the same time, we discover a new Grace as well, one that was an actress for a living and that, as Joan Watts recalls, "was always laughing". Joan also learns something during the encounter as she hears that Mr. Watts, whom she remembers as a weak man and a coward, was, in Matilda's own description, "always a gentleman".

In the midst of these revelations, Pip appears in front of Matilda one last time. This time, unlike all the others, Matilda is wearing her own clothes and Pip admits that, for him, Mr. Dickens was a teacher who lived on an island in the South Pacific. They embrace and the story seems to come full circle with Matilda making amends and finding peace with Pip. She cries in his arms while Mr. Watts's voice reads a passage from the Dickensian novel that he read to the class when she was still a child: "Heaven knows we need never be ashamed of our tears, for they are rain upon the blinding dust of earth, overlaying our hard hearts. I was better after I had cried, than before – more sorry, more aware of my own ingratitude, more gentle" (Dickens, 2002: 157). The scene is transformed and Matilda and Pip are back in London as she sees him off. Matilda is in her very English garments and hair once again while Mr. Watts's voice keeps reading from the novel: "We changed again, and yet again, and 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" (157). It is their goodbye.

Another identification that is only suggested in the film is Matilda's transformation into a writer, something she has in common with Mr. Dickens. This transformation begins when Mr. Watts's volume of *Great Expectations* is lost, after which Matilda begins to re-write the story in a notebook and though she is not shown as a professional writer in the film, writing has become a transforming force in her life.

As Matilda becomes close to Pip, Mr. Watts comes to be identified with Dickens. The connection makes perfect sense, as Mr. Watts brings Pip to life for the villagers. So, in a violent scene where the officials from Papua New Guinea start asking questions about Pip in the thought that he might be a rebel, one of them asks Mr. Watts whether he is Dickens, to which the teacher's answer is "Yes". At this point, his identification with Pip is not made explicit in the film. It is not until later, when Mr. Watts is having an intimate conversation with Matilda about life and literature that he confesses that *Great Expectations* allowed him to change his life and reinvent himself. This scene seems to hint at Mr. Watts's identification with Pip, who makes a new life for himself and this connection between the two characters is confirmed at the end of his life when he is about to be executed. When the soldiers come back to the island, determined to find what they think is a rebel that goes by the name Pip, the teacher assumes his identity and quotes the beginning of the novel: "My father's family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So, I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip" (Dickens, 2002: 3). Mr. Watts is immediately shot dead, cut into pieces and fed to the pigs. Pip's migration into Mr. Watts is complete and the price is his own life.

In the first part of this paper, we suggested that, within the context of Jones's novel, Pip can also be seen as migrating into Mr. Laimo, Matilda's father. However, as Gualda (2011) points out, a film cannot be a mere copy of its literary counterpart, but is an autonomous, independent art form which retains its own characteristics and motivations. As it is, this identification is considerably less direct in the film as there are no explicit references to any connections between Mr. Laimo and *Great Expectations*, even if he has made a radical change in his life and circumstances. It is almost as if, in the context of the film, all the identifications between the characters and the novel seem to go back to Matilda's island.

### **Closing remarks**

The analysis of Pip's migration into 20<sup>th</sup> century Papua New Guinea allows us to find a multiplicity of satisfactory answers to the original concern of this paper: Where does Pip migrate to?

It can confidently be said that, within Lloyd Jones's novel, Pip migrates into Matilda's "imaginary" friend, but also into Matilda herself. In addition, Mr. Watts and Mr. Laimo are definitely other possible destinations. Like other postmodern works of art, Jones's novel does not provide readers with a definite answer to this question. It rather invites readers to reflect upon migration and how it triggers unexpected parallels between the past and the present, between 19<sup>th</sup> century characters and 21<sup>st</sup> century characters. Indeed, through these parallels, *Great Expectations* is recreated by Lloyd Jones and rediscovered by Mister Pip's readers and Mr. Pip's audience.

When one considers the novel and the film, we can see that the past interacts with the present as the whole novel is re-worked and re-remembered for posterity with every creative retelling of Pip's misfortunes and adventures. In other words, despite the differences between Lloyd Jones's novel and Adamson's film, *Great Expectations* is resuscitated by both through the characters of Matilda, her classmates and Mr. Watts, Matilda's own Mr. Dickens. This is consistent with neo-Victorian poetics of exhumation which raises "the problem of creating newness out of oldness, life out of death" (Gutleben, 2022: 15). Pip is given a new voice as he wanders through the Pacific and faces hardship once again, but now in 20<sup>th</sup> century Papua New Guinea.

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