

Charles dickens – pip's problems come from arrogance

[People](#), [Charles Dickens](#)



**ASSIGN
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Charles Dickens' Great Expectations is the tale of one character's troubled journey of self delusion in the pursuit of false ideals. Pip, the book's protagonist, is a morally good and honest boy corrupted by the glitz and glamour of nineteenth century bourgeois society. Although Pip's arrogance and pretentiousness ultimately creates a great deal of problems for him, it would be inaccurate to claim that they are the central causes of Pip's troubles.

Instead it is the lack of affirmation and self-worth he experiences in his early childhood that instigates his downward spiral of morality and must be blamed for the cause of his problems. Fortunately, Pip is able to eventually realize the nobility of humble characters such as Joe and understand the importance of values such as compassion in gaining true gentility. Primarily, Pip's lack of self-confidence and lowly impression of himself are the most notable aspects of his early childhood.

Under the tyranny of Mrs Joe, Pip is constantly made to feel inferior and has his self-esteem destroyed with snipes such as " in a low reproachful voice (she said) " Do you hear that? Be grateful. ". Not only is he physically abused in the household having been " brought up by hand" but also there is clearly a lack of adequate love and affirmation in his childhood years, reinforced with the absence of a mother and father. Though Pip is able to find some refuge in his friend and father figure Joe, it seems hardly enough to build his self-worth.

As well as this, he must contend with the obnoxious and overtly pretentious Mr Pumblechook. The Christmas dinner scene in which Pip is constantly

patronized by the mean-spirited adults in his life is almost a parody of disparagement. Harbours this sense of inferiority, Pip's visit to Satis House evokes in him the fantasy of reinvention that ultimately brings about his downfall. The supercilious Estella, encouraged by Miss Havisham, mocks Pip's "coarse and common" ways, further playing on his lack of self-worth and eating away at his self-confidence.

The highly impressionable young boy, fuelled by this inferiority, sees the glamour of Satis House as his only chance of 'bettering' himself. It is here he forms the illusion that becoming a gentleman consists of merely assuming the outward trappings of gentility - an illusion that will ultimately create a great deal of trouble for him. He is caught up in the allure of Estella's beauty and her lifestyle, yet fails to see that beneath this exterior lies a loveless and heartless world. Therefore it is Pip's dissatisfaction with himself combined with the influence of his visit to Satis House that is the fundamental source of his problems.

This being said, once he is given the financial means to live out this fantasy his priggish arrogance further distances him from his true and honest childhood values. Debt, bad company and a wasteful lifestyle are the troubles that come with his obsession to uphold the gentlemanly facade he has created. Most notably, his pretentious treatment of Joe, "If I could have paid money to keep him away I would have paid it," denies him association with this noble character and in turn denies him the ability to realize the importance of the values he stands for.

Likewise there is the manner in which he patronizes Biddy " You never had a chance before you came here, and see how improved you are! " The rejection of these noble characters prevents him from being able to gaining true 'gentility'. As Pip himself incredulously states after helping Herbert " to think, that my expectations had done some good to somebody," for his expectations combined with his arrogance had succeeded only in creating problems for him.

While Pip's ability to learn the importance of humility is vital to his redemption, it is his return to compassion and good heartedness that rescues him and allows him to become a better person. Although initially Pip's motives for protecting Magwitch are entirely selfish, attempting to maintain his own credibility in London, he begins to develop a sense of concern for the old man, as his childhood value of compassion is gradually reinstated. This compassion becomes the first step towards obtaining true gentility.

From there the loss of his fortune and his symbolic illness in which Joe appears selflessly nursing him back to health and paying off his debts provides Pip with a vital lesson in fellow feeling. Pip can finally understand the nobility of characters such as Joe, Biddy, Clara and Wemmick (Walworth). He embraces the simple lives of these characters and also learns humility, by leaving to work for Herbert in Egypt, living an earnest and hardworking life. After years of such a humble lifestyle, Dickens rewards his protagonist with the love of Estella, who has likewise come to understand the importance of " a good Christian Heart. Therefore, the central cause of Pip's problems was

clearly the result of years of self dissatisfaction caused by a lack of love and affirmation. This self-worth was dealt a mortal blow upon his arrival at Satis House, the consequence being Pip's fantasy of re-invention that ultimately leads him to much of the troubles in his life. His boorish arrogance manages to create further problems for him and it is not until his rediscovery of the importance of compassion and fellow feeling that he is able to become a true gentlemen.