

In what ways does dickens create effective images of people and or places? essay ...

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



In the novel *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, various techniques were employed to enhance the story. This essay will concentrate on Chapters 1, 3, 8 and 11. I believe that these chapters' best illustrated Dickens's use of setting, characterisation and atmosphere. In chapters 1 and 3, Dickens described the setting of the marshes and Magwitch. In chapters 8 and 11, Dickens describes Miss Havisham's place of residence (Satis/Manor House) and also provided a concise description of Miss Havisham herself.

The first chapter that I will be discussing is chapter 1. In this chapter, Dickens effectively uses a range of techniques to create an eerie and mysterious scene, and further on in this chapter, he managed to create a dangerous atmosphere when Magwitch is introduced to the novel for the first time. For example, Dickens described the marshes as "overgrown with nettles." This evokes a feeling of mystery. It also suggests that the marshes were abandoned and unwanted, especially by Pip.

Magwitch is introduced early into the novel by giving orders and controlling Pip. This is very symbolic because throughout the story, Magwitch is constantly, in some way, controlling Pip. For example, by providing Pip with money as his anonymous benefactor, he effectively leads Pip to London and has made Pip who he is today. These immediate orders give the reader a definite feeling of danger and uncertainty as this new character has been introduced so promptly and abruptly into the novel and into Pip's life. "Keep still or I'll cut your throat!" are examples of such orders, which were forced on Pip by Magwitch at their first meeting.

“ A man started up from among the graves.” This quotation is symbolic of prison ships otherwise known as “ Hulks” as later on in the story, the reader learns that Magwitch had previously escaped from a prison ship. Here, Dickens is attempting to express to the reader that the conditions in the prison ships were so poor, that you might as well be dead. Dickens might have been protesting on behalf of his father who was imprisoned for not paying debts. The word “ started” emphasises that this new character in the novel will provide or have a new beginning, the latter proving to be correct.

Dickens then continues to describe Magwitch as “ A fearful man, all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg.” This description is characteristic of a convict. The adjectives “ fearful” and “ coarse” force us to believe that Magwitch is a terrifying, dangerous and somewhat deadly character making the readers feel very sympathetic towards Pip and his current situation pertaining to the convict at the mysterious graveyard.

Dickens then continues to describe Magwitch as shown on the following quotation. “ Lamed by stones, and cut by flints, and stung by nettles and torn by briars; who limped, and shivered and glared and growled: and whose teeth chattered in his head.” This description of Magwitch is conflicting to the description previously provided of Magwitch by Dickens. This description of Magwitch now encourages the reader to sympathise with him after being informed of the horrible circumstances that the convict went through in order to reach the bleak, frightening, and eerie graveyard. I feel that this description is particularly effective because it is structured as a list using repetition of the word “ and” which aids the reader in understanding the

ordeal that Magwitch went through. I feel that structuring this description in list form is a successful technique because it clearly emphasise each separate injury that Magwitch had sustained. The words “ growled” and “ whose teeth chattered in his head” are comparisons that Magwitch is making to a dog. This is also referred to in chapter 3 in the manor in which Dickens describes the way that Magwiche eats as “ sharp sudden bites.”

This description provided by Dickens was obviously narrated by the older Pip looking back on the event. The quotation previously mentioned demonstrates that Pip now understands how pitiful and helpless Magwitch was although the younger Pip was frightened of the convict at their first meeting.

Even though Magwitch does make an attempt to frighten Pip by threatening him and informing him of the imaginary man who would tear out his heart and roast his liver. It is obvious that from the moment that he finds out about the fact that Pip’s parents are dead, he changes his stature and his attitude towards Pip. “ Oh, said he, coming back.” As shown by the words “ coming back” Magwitch now feels sympathetic towards Pip as he also lost a loved one (his daughter, Estella). Although she is not dead, Magwitch would have still felt the misery and pain of having lost a member of his family.

It seems that every time Pip enters the mist and the marshes, something dangerous or life threatening always happens. The first time that Pip enters the marshes, Magwitch temporarily kidnaps Pip and threatens him with his life. Later on in the novel, he is kidnapped by Orlick and is nearly murdered

in the marshes. Pip also goes through the marshes when he travels to London shortly after receiving his fortune from his anonymous benefactor. This alerts the reader that this apparently positive development in his life may have dangerous consequences for Pip.

In chapter 3, when Pip re-enters the dangerous eerie marshes, the latest description we are given of Magwitch since chapter is of him “ hugging and limping-waiting for me” “ as if he had never left all night.” This immediately evokes a very sympathetic image of Magwitch which is also contradictory to the original description of Magwitch offered by Charles Dickens. Saying that Magwitch as “ waiting for me” is sympathetic towards Magwitch as Charles Dickens makes it seem that Pip is Magwitch’s only friend and that Magwitch is unwanted and unloved.

“ His eyes looked so awfully hungry, too, that when I handed him the file and he laid it down on the grass, it occurred to me he would have tried to eat it, he would not have seen my bundle.” I feel that this quotation gives Magwitch animal attributes. The fact that Dickens suggests that Magwitch would eat something that is not real food also introduces sympathy towards Magwitch and what he has been reduced to as a result of his of his ordeal.

“ He shivered all the while, so violently that it was quite as much as he could do to keep the neck of the bottle between his teeth, without biting it off.” Here, Magwitch is described as shivering. This adjective is effective in creating sympathy for Magwitch the extent at which Magwitch is shivering is shown by the latter part of this quote.

“ He was gobbling a meat-bone” this is obviously characteristic of a dog as the relationship between a dog and his bone is well known by all. Magwitch is once again given animal attributes by Dickens in the same paragraph. “ Even stopping his jaws – to listen.” The word “ jaw” is characteristic of s dog.

Later on in this same chapter, Dickens says that “ I noticed a decided similarity between the dogs’ way of eating and the man’s” The likeness “ between the dogs’ way of eating and the man’s” is referred to many times in the same paragraph. Initially, he describes Magwitch as taking “ sharp, sudden bites” which is similar to that of a dog. Subsequently, he describes Magwitch of snapping up his food, another characteristic of the manor in which a dog eats. “ He looked sideways here and there as he ate”

In chapter 8, Dickens describes Satis house as “ old” and “ dismal” These particular adjectives could easily be applied to the owner of the house, Miss Havisham herself. The author also describes the house as having “ a great many iron bars to it.” Here, Dickens is making an obvious comparison between Satis house to a jail. There are many examples of this, for example when Dickens describes the windows as “ rustily barred.” There is also repetition of the word “ barred.” This word is being repeated to inform the reader that this word is not only being used to refer to the house, but is also very symbolic of Miss Havisham, as by abandoning all people she has effectively “ barred” everything and everyone else from her life and surroundings. Similar to how Dickens describes the brewery,” Nothing seems to have gone on for a long, long time.”

When Pip was taken into Miss Havisham's room, Dickens once again uses very descriptive language to create an eerie, mysterious setting. The room is only lit by candlelight, which is typical of a sinister setting. It is obvious that from the surroundings and the nature and state Miss Havisham's clothes that she has attempted to stop time since she discovered that her fiance had abandoned her at the altar, minutes before she was to be married.

Miss Havisham as if she is still waiting for her fiance at the altar and still, after so much time does not realise that he will never come back. She uses Estella to seek revenge on the whole of the male race just because of that one person left her at the altar. This makes you think that Miss Havisham believes that it was not her fiance's fault as a person, but was his fault because he is a man. Miss Havisham is definitely in denial about the whole ordeal. She is still wearing her wedding dress and in some ways is still preparing for her fiance wedding.

Miss Havisham has stopped all clocks and watches and does not wish to know the time. This is evident as when Pip is about to tell her, she says "There, there! I know nothing of days of the week; I know nothing of weeks of the year." There seems to be a contrast between her and the rest of the room although Miss Havisham would like to think they were one and the same, growing old together. The rest of the room was barely lit by candles. However, Dickens uses repetition of the word "white" although the rest of the room is dark. The wedding dress could be also compared to Miss Havisham, "old" "withered" and "out of use."

In Dickens' time, Miss Havisham represents a person who has too much money and does not know what to do with it. Dickens is also trying to inform to the readers of this story that money will not and cannot buy happiness. This is proven later on in the novel when Pip verbally attacks Miss Havisham and is furious about what she did to Pip concerning this relationship with Estella.

As you can see Dickens was a very skilled author who used various devices to create deliberate effects to enhance the quality of the story. He also uses his range of techniques to generate imagery and other effective literary devices.