

# How does dickens create sympathy for pip? essay sample

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



'Great expectations' is a novel written during and set in the Victorian era, a time in which status, class and money were extremely important and where a discrepancy between the rich and poor was evident. The novel follows the ill-fated life of the protagonist in the novel, 'Pip'. Dickens writes in such a way that each character is a subject of either sympathy or scorn. Dickens implies that Pip is a subject of sympathy through his use of guilt and suffering. Dickens also uses powerful vocabulary to create a poignant image of Pip and his surroundings. The story itself is narrated by middle aged Pip and Dickens intentionally uses him so that we see the story through the perspective of Pip as a child and an adult. Dickens even uses Pip's name as an indication of his stature and future actions, 'Pip' could be seen as a small apple seed that grows into a large tree. As well as 'pirrip', a palindrome, being conceived as the word 'rip' placed symmetrically symbolising his character ripping into different personalities as he grows. Our first impressions of Pip are that he is a timid but remorseful boy.

We can see this from where he is first found, by his parent's gravestone. Dickens has us sympathising for Pip as we discover he is an orphan and the fact that he is exposed to death and tragedy from a young age. Pip's reaction to his surroundings merely perpetuates his faint-hearted approach "the small bundle of fears growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry was pip". This enhances Dickens main aim of initiating sympathy for Pip, and this, consequently, lasts for the novels entirety. Dickens cleverly uses pathetic fallacy to emphasize and magnify Pip's emotional states and unconscious sentiments. At the same time, the weather also foreshadows momentous changes in Pip's life and augments the reader's sympathy for Pip. This is first

done in the church graveyard “ That this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard”.

Dickens creates a gloomy scene by using unpleasant, intimidating nouns and adjectives such as ‘ nettles’ and ‘ bleak’ that reflect Pip’s mood and broaden our sympathy for him. As a child, Pip is pitied by the reader because of his situation as the younger brother of Mrs. Joe, by whom he is constantly tormented. Mrs. Joe’s treatment of Pip is not only unjust, but it influences Pip’s view of himself and establishes in him a sense of guilt for merely existing. Pip is constantly feeling guilty and suffering because he is led to believe that his life causes nothing but grief and evil to those around him. Mrs. Joe uses threats of punishment and accusations of ingratitude to keep Pip silent and well-behaved: “ I tell you what, young fellow; I didn’t bring you up by hand to badger people’s lives out. It would be blame to me, and not praise, if I had. People are put in the Hulks because they murder, and because they rob, and forge, and do all sorts of bad; and they always begin by asking questions. Now you get along to bed!”

In this example, Pip asks a harmless question and Mrs. Joe replies in a heated fashion. She makes implications that Pip will end up like the people in the hulks that are killed ‘ and they always begin by asking questions’ if he continues to question her; this in effect, frightens Pip and leaves us sympathizing for Pip as his curiosity is executed. Mrs. Joe is not the only character who enjoys the harassment of young Pip; Pumblechook, Wopsle and the Hubbles torment him endlessly during Christmas Dinner. “ They seemed to think the opportunity lost if they failed to point the conversation

at me, every now and then, and stick the point into me. I might have been an unfortunate little bull in a Spanish arena, I got so smartingly touched up by these moral goads.” Dickens has us sympathising for Pips situation with the way that Mrs. Joe treats him and with the dialogue she uses towards him. One vivid incident of Mrs. Joe’s unjustifiable treatment towards Pip is near the start of the book, where he is caned with ‘Tickler’. “ She sot down and she got up, and she made a grab at Tickler, and she Ram-paged out.

That’s what she did.” Mrs. Joe gives the cane entitlement by naming it Tickler, with an ironic twist. This ironic name shows a more evil side to Mrs. Joe as it suggests that she enjoys hitting Pip with the cane. Dickens uses personification as well ““ hah’ said Mrs. Joe, returning Tickler back to his station” treating the cane as a person. Dickens writes as if to say that Tickler is of higher status than Pip. This stern punishment was quite common during the Victorian era; Parents took their children seriously and punished them swiftly. Dickens however, expresses his concerns about child abuse by giving the reader a harsh image in their head of Pips abuse and making them sympathize for Pip’s scenario. Another powerful way that Dickens produces sympathy is with the way that Pip describes himself in the third person, using emotive vocabulary ‘ and there in a small bundle of shivers was Pip.’

Pip describes himself as an undersized, feeble boy and we pity this image that Dickens has put into our heads as Pip is perceived as vulnerable. Our sympathy is again increased and contained when Pip meets the somewhat frightening Miss Havisham and steps inside her lonely, dilapidated abode. Pip’s already dire situation is once again worsened by Estella and Miss

Havisham's cruel and menacing comments towards him. ' " Don't be ridiculous, boy; I am not going in." And scornfully walked away, and – what was worse – took the candle with her.' They arouse our consideration through the way in which they interact, both with each other and with Pip, making him feel much more ignorant than he had considered himself to be before. Dickens uses Miss Havisham and Estella as tools to evoke sympathy for Pip throughout his encounters with them. We are shown similarities between Dickens' early childhood memories and the protagonist's inability to defend himself against the injustices he discovers throughout the early years of life.

Dickens successfully creates a sympathetic mood through a range of techniques, including an exquisite use of emotive dialogue, sophisticated imagery and symbolism. He explores and brings original themes such as fear, loneliness, luck, classism, social justice, humiliation, and humour, which are cleverly incorporated into his writing to bring an uplifting mood to an otherwise dark and disturbing tone. From beginning to end, Dickens generates sympathy for Pip in some shape or form. But why did Dickens see it so important to create sympathy for Pip? Maybe he was trying to reform society after witnessing the way adults treated children and from the way he was treated as a child. By writing a book showing some of the ways adults treated children, he may have hoped to open the eyes of the Victorian public and change the way children were treated. By Nathan Barnes