

How does charles dickens create characters



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

I have been studying the life of Charles Dickens and the times of the Victorian era that began with the coronation of Queen Victoria. Charles Dickens was born on February 7, 1812 in Portsmouth. His parents were John and Elizabeth Dickens. Charles was the second of their eight children; he later left school at the age of twelve because his father ran up a big debt which he could not pay.

His father John Dickens got thrown into Marshalsea prison and he remained in jail until the debt was paid off, this meant Charles Dickens had to work in a blacking factory making shoe polish. Children working at the blacking factory had to clean machines this meant the children could have got crushed so it was very dangerous for Charles Dickens to work in that factory.

Charles Dickens at the age of 16 was able to leave his family; he hated his parents very much, many heroes in his novels are orphans or characters who have been a victim of what he has experienced or what he has seen, "Oliver Twist" a book involving the brutality of poor laws, vice and crime in the London underworld and "Hard Times" is another book about the treatment people got working in factories these are examples of what he has seen and what he has experienced.

Then later on in that year he became a clerk of an attorney in a law firm. Charles Dickens in 1831 became a journalist; most of his job was attending law courts where he became known for his quick and accurate courtroom reporting, he then got interested in social injustice / treatment of the poor; he thought this was rubbish and that there were loads of hangings happening for little petty crimes.

Charles Dickens began his career by writing short stories "Sketches By Boz" in 1836 and some of his other stories were released in chapters in a popular magazine which was out every month or week "Oliver Twist" released in monthly parts Jan 1837 - Mar 1839 and "The Pickwick Papers" released Mar 1836 - Oct 1837, were some of his other stories. Charles Dickens sprung to fame with the stories he wrote.

Charles Dickens also had a long term relationship with Maria Beadnell he wrote to her: "I never have loved and I never can love any human creature breathing but yourself. although she was the daughter of a rich banker which he could not marry because she was wealthy and he wasn't. Charles Dickens then met Catherine Hogarth and got married in 1836 he was married to her all his life and they both had ten children together. Charles Dickens other profession was touring around Europe and reading extracts from his stories, he was also a great speaker this made his reputation even bigger and more popular. He toured America in 1867 and England in 1870 unfortunately before he died he could not finish "The mystery of Edwin Drood".

Charles Dickens died in June 9th 1870 and he was buried in Westminster Abbey. "Great Expectations" is the novel that I have analysed and I have been trying to find out what makes the characters so vivid and effective. My essay will now analyse Magwitch, Pip and Miss Havisham to determine why they are so memorable. In the novel when Magwitch first appears we don't see him but we hear him, his voice is described as "terrible" this means it is not a normal every day voice it is a voice that has been affected by the ordeal he has been through.

He actually says "keep still, you little devil, or I'll cut your throat!" This shows Magwitch sounds threatening and is also scared that he might get caught because in the novel it is written that he "cried a terrible voice". Magwitch also shows scary behaviour by picking up Pip and turning him upside-down and then shaking him while emptying his pockets. "Turned me upside-down, and emptied my pockets".

When Magwitch shook Pip a piece of bread dropped out of his pockets. Magwitch then eats the piece of bread "ravenously" this is similar to a large dog eating mouthfuls of food and watching for danger, while he was eating the piece of bread he put Pip on a tombstone "I was seated on a high tombstone, trembling" this suggests he puts Pip on a "high" tombstone so he won't escape out of his custody and also Pip was "trembling" this showed that Magwitch's scary behaviour had worked and it had frightened Pip.

Another example of Magwitch being frightening is when he lies to Pip about having a friend with him who is compared to Magwitch is that Magwitch is an angel "There's a young man hid with me, in comparison with which young man I am an angel" and also when Magwitch lets Pip go he orders Pip to say "Lord strike you dead if you don't" this puts Pip in fear of God and Pip thinks there is no one else more powerful than God.

Magwitch scares Pip by saying the things he said and by making Pip say what he was told to say all these things will stay with Pip forever which means he won't tell anyone about Magwitch. Magwitch, in the novel, also has an outlandish appearance, for example when Magwitch emerges he is described as a "A fearful man, all in coarse gray, with a great iron on his leg" this

shows a Magwitch has escaped from prison because he was "in coarse gray" and he also had "a great iron on his leg" this is what prisoners would wear in those times and the chains would be what they kept him, in on the ship.

Another example of Magwitch's appearance is when he is described as going through all the obstacles before reaching the graveyard: "A man who had been soaked in water, and smothered in mud, and 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 shows he has been through a great deal from jumping overboard, to swimming ashore, to dragging himself up the beach, to being cut and stung by nettles and flints.

By the time he is at the graveyard, he is exhausted and near death, the listing also shows what Magwitch has been through and this creates an unusual but outstanding vision of Magwitch. Magwitch a convict in need of help is described by Charles Dickens as a heartless, greedy, exhausted, and angry and an empathetic or sympathetic character, Charles Dickens makes Magwitch sound so feeble and exhausted that the dead people are going to pull him in "He were eluding the hands of the dead people, stretching up cautiously out of their graves, to get a twist upon his ankle and pull him in" this is also the reason why he reacts to Pip so angrily.

Magwitch redeems his character by not actually killing Pip but by letting him go "Goo-good-night, sir", he gets Pip out of trouble when he gets caught and tells Pip's Sister's husband Mr Joe Gargery that he stole the pie, brandy and file. Later on Magwitch is not mentioned for the next 25 years but then

he compensates for Pip by making Pip into a gentleman when he is released from prison by turning into a sheep farmer in New South Wales Australia, this was the major act of redeeming Magwitch.

Magwitch becomes wealthy and mentions that he never forgot Pip's generosity. Magwitch comes back to England to see Pip, he risks his life just to see Pip this also makes him a sympathetic character. Another character that I will be analysing in "Great Expectations" is Miss Havisham. Charles Dickens depicts Miss Havisham in an eccentric way, she is not exactly a believable character, but is certainly one of the most memorable creations in the novel.

Firstly her appearance is remarkable and what she did to become like the way she is. When she emerged in the novel she is dressed in rich materials – satin, lace and silks. All her clothes and shoes were white. She also had bridal flowers in her hair, her hair was also white. "She was dressed in rich materials – satins, and lace, and silks, all of white. Her shoes were white. And she had a long veil dependant from her hair, and she had bridal flowers in her hair, but her hair was white".

Charles Dickens describes her in a way, so we immediately know that she is unusual especially when she is wearing bridal flowers and her hair is white, furthermore that day was not her wedding day and she is wearing her wedding dress which makes us think is she a factual character? "The brightness of her sunken eyes" You could not see any brightness or colour but only the brightness of her sunken eyes gave colour this shows her eyes were the only living thing alive in the room.

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. " This gives the impression that Miss Havisham lost so much weight that her skin had shrivelled and also that the dress that she wore had once fit her. Miss Havisham is also eccentric by doing unpredictable things. This is defined by one single tragic event in her life. She was jilted on her wedding day and she was determined that no one will break her heart again.

The unpredictable things she did were when she got frozen in time. " Her watch had stopped at twenty minutes to nine" this was the time when a message that she received told her that she was jilted. Another example of Miss Havisham frozen in time was when she nearly had all her wedding clothes on but only had one shoe on and she didn't put the other shoe on because at that moment she got the message that she was jilted and from that moment on she never changed her clothes or put the other shoe on " she had but one shoe on and her veil was half arranged".

When Pip first saw Miss Havisham he tells us how he feels about Miss Havisham and her figure. " Some ghastly waxwork at the fair" this suggests she is more like a wax work figure than a human figure. He is also scared to look in her eyes; he thinks she might cast a spell on him " Avoiding her eyes" The background of Miss Havisham is quite eventful. She was jilted on her wedding day, she stopped the clocks, and she never changed her clothes and lived her life in a dark mansion with the entire curtains drawn.

When she was jilted she vowed to hate and destroy every man's life if it was possible, she started off with adopting Estella and training her up to hate and

use men or boys, Estella was a weapon to Miss Havisham to use to achieve all revenge on men. Estella's first victim was Pip. Miss Havisham paid Pip's Sister Mrs Joe Gargery to let Pip play with Estella, Estella then used him and bullied him while flaunting her beauty he was used like a lab rat to test out Estella's ways " She denounced me for a stupid, clumsy labouring- boy".

Miss Havisham also has members of the Pocket family visiting her every year on her birthday to make sure if she is alive or whether they can get there inheritance. At the end of the novel Miss Havisham redeems herself by doing many things. Miss Havisham like Magwitch feels sympathy and remorse for what she done to Pip and Estella. She asks for forgiveness and does not receive it. We do feel a bit of sympathy because her childhood was not normal because of her rotten half brother Arthur, he also tells us what Miss Havisham's childhood was like.

She does get some redemption when she tries to explain her plan was imprudent and she feels immoral and dire. She then begs for forgiveness when Pip tells her that he's fallen in love with Estella and she doesn't like him because Estella's heart is broken. Immediately after, Miss Havisham dies after talking to Pip. This reinforces the novel's theme when you be in guilt you can get forgiveness or redemption. If you show remorse you can achieve forgiveness. My last character that I will be analysing in this essay is Pip. I will explain why he is an empathetic character, what is his position in the novel and the personality of Pip.

Pip is an empathetic character because he shows feelings; he is considerate and also compassionate. The first thing that makes him an empathetic

character is that Pip is an orphan, who lost both of his parents and his five little brothers. Charles Dickens makes Pip as an orphan, many heroes in Charles Dickens novels are orphans such as Pip, David Copperfield and Oliver Twist. This reflects Charles Dickens' life of how he lost his parents and became what he wanted to be, he was also an expert in this as he experienced this himself.

At the beginning of the story Pip is eight years old and is all alone in a graveyard; therefore feel sorry and concerned for him. It is very clever how Charles Dickens writes in a mind of an eight-year-old "The shape of the letters on my father's gave me an odd idea that he was a square, stout, dark man, with curly black hair" an eight-year-old boy would come up with an idea like that if they never saw their parents, Charles Dickens makes this idea as it was authentic and it is also effective thinking the shapes and letters of the grave stone were like the person who is buried underneath that gravestone.

Charles Dickens makes the graveyard sound intimidating but also the surrounding area "The dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes". "That the low leaden line beyond was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea" this shows the churchyard is surrounded by marshes which if you take a wrong step you could drown and die, the marshes also lead to the sea which is also dangerous because you might drown from the high current, get swept by the tides or the whirlpool can also kill Pip.

The most overt reason that we feel poignant for Pip is the way Magwitch treats Pip. The way Magwitch talks to Pip is violent and the words he used aimed to scare Pip and children his age. Magwitch threatens Pip in a way which nobody will say to a child never mind a child that is eight years old “ Keep still, you little devil, or I’ll cut your throat! ” and “ After looking at me for a moment, turned me upside-down, and emptied my pockets” this also shows that Magwitch is physically violent; another quote showing Magwitch threatening Pip’s life is “ I’ll have your heart and liver out”.

Furthermore we feel sympathy for Pip because the only person he is related to that is alive is Mrs Joe Gargery which is his sister but acts as a mother figure to Pip. She is mean to him and beats him. She once bet him with a cane for coming home late. Later on in the novel Mrs Joe Gargery dies, from that moment onwards his life turns much better although his sister was not the only person who treated him badly there was Miss Havisham and Estella who were cruel to him also.

When Pip went to Satis house and met Estella for the first he was made to play cards with her while Estella was insulting Pip “ Her contempt was so strong, that it became infectious, and I caught it” or “ A look of supreme aversion”. The final reason why Pip is such a memorable and appealing character is that he makes us want to know two significant things about his life the first is will he end up with Estella and the second is who is providing Pip with all the money and expecting “ Great Expectations” of him all this makes you want to read on to find the answer to these nail-biting questions.

Pip in the novel is orphan with both of his parents dead and his five little brothers. His life slightly changes when he goes to Satis house to play with Estella, soon after his sister dies Mrs Joe Gargery and is told someone expects "Great Expectations" of him and is sent to London to meet Mr Jaggers a lawyer and Mr Wemmick his assistant. He than shown where to live which turns to be sharing rooms with Herbert Pocket which he fought in Satis House and won. Over the next few years he lives his in enjoyment and turns out to be a gentleman.

Pip later returns to see Miss Havisham and realises Estella has returned from France and finds out she is going to move to London to meet important people as any lady should and she is soon courted by Bentley Drummle. This was all part of Miss Havisham's plan to break his heart. Pip later than visits Miss Havisham again to tell her how angry he is now he knows the truth because Miss Havisham led him on so he thought she was giving him the money but it was Magwitch.

Then he finds out the Bentley Drummle is engaged with Estella and storms out of the room while slamming the door, the burning log rolls down and sets Miss Havisham on fire despite his best attempts, she is killed. When Pip is twenty four and has been living his wasteful life as a wealthy young man in London, one stormy night a rough looking man comes to Pip's door looking for Pip. It turns out to be the convict that Pip helped as a child and finds out his the person giving him all the money to provide for Pip becoming a gentleman and the wealthy life he has had so far. Magwitch the convict did this out of gratitude for saving his life.

However, in returning to England he was risking execution. Pip agrees to go back to Australia with Magwitch but they get caught, by being pointed out by the person who betrayed Magwitch in the first place which was Compeyson. Compeyson and Magwitch had a fight, Compeyson dies and Magwitch is badly hurt, he later dies. Pip finds out Estella has divorced from Bentley Drummle and finds Estella in Satis house she says she will probably stay in Satis house pip sees her turning her in to another Miss Havisham and he pulls all the curtains down and lets light in the house and they both leave hand to hand not as a couple but as friends.

I can now conclude that that Charles Dickens creates characters that are both memorable and striking by using techniques which have a great effect on the novel and on the character. He describes the characters as they were authentic and in front of him picking out every detail " She was dressed in rich materials - satins, and lace, and silks, all of white. Her shoes were white.

And she had a long veil dependant from her hair, and she had bridal flowers in her hair, but her hair was white", he also makes the characters do unpredictable things like Miss Havisham wearing half her wedding clothes sitting with the curtains drawn for many years or when Magwitch ends up giving all his money to Pip , in the real world a convict might have killed Pip or maybe would not even think about redeeming himself by doing all the things he did; admitting to Mr Joe Gargery that he stole the file and food this got Pip out of trouble .

Charles Dickens gives you the power to read on to find the answer to many questions for example; who is giving the money to Pip and is Pip going to

end up with Estella? Charles Dickens also uses the surroundings to show the genuineness of each character; for instance we see Magwitch at the churchyard and the marshes; the setting is fearful and bitter and so is Magwitch the way that he acts towards Pip. Miss Havisham in her house, all dark, old and all the food and decorations rotting away just like Miss Havisham herself day by day.

The way Charles Dickens describes the settings reflects the characters' feelings, this is what makes it such an effective opening. The settings of where each scene is set and the actions that happen there, echo what the characters are feeling. Last of all, the appearances, the scary behaviour and the redemption of Magwitch and Miss Havisham and of Pip as an empathetic character all make the characters memorable and striking while they are also vivid and unforgettable, making it a realistic novel with a real impact on the reader.