

Great expectations  
why does pi



“ Pip changes from an innocent child to a character consumed by false values and snobbery.” Explore the major incidents in Pip’s childhood that contribute to this change.

Pip’s transition into snobbery is, I believe, a steady one from the moment that he first meets Miss Havisham and Estella. Even before that Pip started to his fall from innocence when he steals from his sister to feed and free “ his” convict. But that was not easy for young Pip as his conscience played on him as he heard the floor boards screaming in vain attempts to alert Mrs. Joe. It is obvious that Pip was not comfortable doing this deed for “ his” convict as he thought for a while before taking the pork pie, which was so appreciated by Magwitch.

At Satis House it is almost straight away made clear to him from Estella’s language, both body and spoken, that she considers him to be inferior. It is here that, he is for the first time introduced to a girl whom he is later to fall madly in love with. It is here that he is referred to only as boy. It is here that he forms his “ Great Expectations”.

From these experiences Pip finds out about what he considers polite society, but Satis House is a place where society is anything but polite. This is exemplified by Estella’s blatant lack of regard for Pip’s feelings; she points out to him for the first time his faults such as his “ coarse hands.... thick boots” and the fact that he is nothing but “ a common labouring boy”. This not only points out Pip’s own faults but also leads to his awareness of Joe’s.

Estella is the main incident in Pip’s life that ultimately leads to his obnoxious and contemptible behaviour in the future. This is because of his love for her,

even after their first encounter he describes Estella as “ very pretty” yet “ very insulting”. Unperturbed by this description, Estella continues her disgraceful treatment of the young and impressionable boy when she feeds, and treats him as if he were an animal, continuing to address him like an animal, she does not bother to learn his name, still referring to as boy.

She also confuses him; when he fights with the young Herbert Pocket he is permitted to kiss the beautiful young girl, but then she slaps him, knocking him back and shocking him.

A heartbroken, man-hating, miserable woman, and an emotional cripple help form pip’s “ Great Expectations”. How can this not be one of the major influences on the impressionable young boy? Each encounter that Pip endures with these women contributes to his change; each time Pip visits Miss Havisham and Estella he is belittled, treated as inferior and constantly looked down upon.

The incident, at which the changes Pip has foregone become the most evident, is when Joe visits Miss Havisham and is referred to as an embarrassment by Pip. At this point in the novel, Pip loses a lot, if not all, of the sympathy that the reader has for him. Pip, at this point is no longer an innocent child, and he is well on his way to becoming the character consumed by false values and snobbery that the reader comes to know as the adult Pip, whom is disliked by the reader and by himself at a later date.

If Pip never met Miss Havisham and Estella, and Magwitch still became his benefactor, what kind of a person would he be? Is a question that I found myself asking. I believe that he might not have been quite so consumed by

snobbery, but I do not believe that he would have been innocent as it was Magwitch who lead to Pip's loss of innocence when he forced the boy to steal for him. Yet without a doubt the major incidents that lead to the formation of the " gentleman" that Pip becomes took place at Miss Havisham's house in the company of Estella.