

Satire in "great expectations" by charled dickens essay sample

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How does Dickens criticize life during the Victorian times in the novel “ Great Expectations”? Dickens uses satire to show the reality during Victorian times. What are three aspects of society, which Dickens satirizes? Three aspects of society, which he satirizes, are family, the class system and education.

The first aspect of society, which Dickens satirizes, is the family. In Mrs. Joe’s household, it is evident that she is in control and Joe truly dreads her. This is ironic because during the 1800s, the husband usually empowers the wife. Also, Dickens criticizes child abuse in the Pocket family as well as Mrs. Joes’s. In the Pocket family, the children are uncared for and put in the possession of un-pitiful nurses. The children have to rely on each other for love and safety. In Mrs. Joe’s household, child abuse is shown through the way Mrs. Joe’s treats Pip. She beats Pip with the “ tickler”, a cane which is used for punishment purposes, and also shows no love for him. Dickens’s criticism of family is clearly shown in this novel.

The second aspect of society, which Dickens satirizes, is the class system. Dickens usually portrays sophisticated people with negative qualities and common people with good qualities. Estella is an example of a sophisticated person with negative qualities. Estella is proud and cruel as shown through Pip’s remark, “ I think she is very proud” (55). On the other hand, an example of a common person is Joe, who is portrayed to be a loving and kind character as revealed through Pip’s comment, “ he [Joe] was a mild, good-natured, sweet-tempered, easy-going...dear fellow” (6). Also, Dickens

illustrates how people strive to be higher up the class system. For example, Mrs. Joe uses Pip as an object when she carelessly sends him to Miss Havisham's in hope of gaining money and becoming richer. The flaws of the class system are criticized throughout the novel.

Finally, the third aspect of society, which Dickens satirizes, is education. The satire of education is revealed through Dickens's ironic view that characters like Mr. and Ms. Hubble, people who have an education, display negative characteristics. People like Joe, who do not have an education, exhibit positive characteristics. Joe is shown to be kind as demonstrated by Pip's observation, " he [Joe] was a mild, good-natured, sweet-tempered, easy-going...dear fellow" (6). Mr. and Ms. Hubble are portrayed to be negative as shown through Pip's statement, " My thoughts were further distracted by the excessive pride of Mr. and Mrs. Hubble, who were surpassingly conceited and vainglorious."

In conclusion, Dickens's criticism of family, the class system and education is evident throughout the whole novel. Rare authors like Dickens should be appreciated because they help point out the faults in today's society, which leads to the correction of these faults. Dickens satirical tone is crucial in understanding why the character Pip is the way he is in this novel.