

Great Expectations



CHARLES DICKENS, 1860

Contents



- Context
- A Bildungsroman novel
- Autobiographical events
- Plot
- Main characters
- Phillip's ambition and self-improvement
- Social class
- Suffering
- Important quotes
- Film adaptation and Cast
- Bibliography

Context: The Victorian Era



The novel is set between Christmas Eve, 1812, and the winter of 1840. The **Victorian Era** (1837-1901) was a time when there were a lot of **social changes**: the industrial Revolution transformed society. Although the differences between rich and poor still remained, many people left the countryside to get more opportunities in the cities.

Great Expectations: A Bildungsroman novel



The Bildungsroman is a type of novel that focuses on the educational, psychological and moral **growth** of the protagonist from childhood or youth to adulthood.

This happens with the main character of *Great Expectations*:
Phillip Pirrip.



Autobiographical events in the novel



In the novel *Great Expectations* there are many events from Dickens's life. Pip and Dickens share some aspects of their life , for example both have a job they don't like but at the end they achieve a material success in London.



Plot



Pip is a man who lives with his sister and her husband. One day he is sent to Miss Havisham's house to entertain her. Pip falls in love with her adopted daughter Estella. He wants to become a gentleman and one day an anonymous benefactor helps him to move to London and become what he wants. Finally he notices that he can not accept the money and that having a high social status is something unfair.

Characters: Phillip Pirrip



Phillip Pirrip also known as Pip is the **main character** but he also is the **narrator** of the story. He is immature, romantic and he is a good boy. He wants to **improve** in all aspects: moral, social, psychological. His main goal during the novel is to become a **gentleman** and finally achieve Estella's love.



Characters: Estella



She is the **female protagonist** of the story. Phillip is in love with her but she is taught by Mrs Havisham to break the hearts of all men. During the novel she is **cruel, cold and manipulative**. However, Dickens also wants to show the readers her **inner world** and she is a nice character in contraposition with the attitude Mrs Havisham has imposed to her.



Characters: Mrs Havisham



Mrs Havisham is also a very important character in the novel. The attitude she had and what she imposed to Estella is due to a **tragic event**, when she was going to get married the man did not appear so now she thinks that she has to **revenge** against all men in the world. At the end of the novel she finally **realized** the pain she caused.



Characters: Joe Gargery



Pip always feels **admiration** for his brother-in-law Joe. He is a very nice character that always tries to act in order to **benefit** the people who love, for example, Pip. However, he not always treats him as Joe deserves.



Pip's ambition and improvement



- This is a very important topic in the novel and it is also **related to the title: *Great Expectations***. Pip always wants to **improve** and to learn, he is very idealistic as he thinks he can achieve everything in life. He believes in **great expectations** as he believes in himself and wants to improve constantly.

Social class (I)



The theme of class in Great Expectations should be understood through the **social system of Victorian England**. At the beginning of the novel Pip wants to become a gentleman because he thinks that he would have more opportunities in life.

Social class (II)



However at the end of the novel he realized that **class distinction** is something **unfair** and is not compatible with their own moral thoughts.

Therefore, this is one of the most important things the main character learn through the novel.



Suffering



Suffering is also an important theme in the novel as almost all the characters suffer at some point of their life:

Pip: because he wants to marry Estella.

Joe: When Pip treats him in a cold way and abandon him because he want to achieve some materialistic success.

Miss Havisham: When Compeyson left her the day of their wedding.

Estella: She cannot act according to her real inner feelings.

Important quotes



Suffering has been stronger than all other teaching, and has taught me to understand what your heart used to be. I have been bent and broken, but - I hope - into a better shape.

Heaven knows we need never be ashamed of our tears, for they are rain upon the blinding dust of earth, overlying our hard hearts. I was better after I had cried, than before--more sorry, more aware of my own ingratitude, more gentle.

Important quotes (II)



Pip, dear old chap, life is made of ever so many partings welded together, as I may say, and one man's a blacksmith, and one's a whitesmith, and one's a goldsmith, and one's a coppersmith. Divisions among such must come, and must be met as they come.

I loved her against reason, against promise, against peace, against hope, against happiness, against all discouragement that could be.

Film adaptation



There are many film and theatrical adaptations. This is the last movie adaptation in 2012

which won the following awards:

- 2012: Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF): Official Selection.
- 2012: BAFTA Awards:
Nominated for Best Costume Design



Cast



- Jeremy Irvine: Phillip (Pip)
- Ralph Fiennes: Joe Gargery
- Helena Bonham Carter: Mrs Havisham
- Holliday Grainger: Estella



Bibliography



- http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/great_expectations_1947
- <http://www.filmaffinity.com/en/film636498.html>
- <http://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2612809-great-expectations>
- SparkNotes Editors. (2007). SparkNote on Great Expectations. Retrieved February 3, 2015, from <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/greatex/>
- <http://www.online-literature.com/dickens/greatexpectations/>
- Greatexpectationsnovel.weebly.com
- www.charlesdickensinfo.com
- www.vicgtorianweb.org