A Comparison Between Charles Dickens Life And His Work “The Great Expectations”

Author’s Biography

“Suffering has been stronger than all teachings and has taught me to understand” Charles Dickens wrote “The Great Expectations” based on his own life experience, which had lots of ups and downs.His father, John Dickens was imprisoned and put to death because of debt. While writing this book, Dickens clinged to his past memories as a child. This book simply tells us that no matter what the circumstances are, we can still be happy and that we all deserve to be happy, and we will rise up and continue going on and not giving up, nothing in life is ever easy. We should fight for what we want because nothing in this world will ever be free

Charles Dickens was born in Landport, Portsmouth in United Kingdom on February 7 1812 to husband and wife John and Elizabeth. He had 8 siblings and only 6 reached adulthood. He and his family moved to Chatham, Kent in 1816.

At the age of twelve, his father, John Dickens was sent to a prison because of his debts. He had to work at an early age to help provide for his family and was forced to drop out of school (Charles Dickens Info). One article stated that “He felt abandoned and betrayed by the adults who were supposed to take care of him. These sentiments would later become a recurring theme in his writing” (Biography of Charles Dickens).

According to an information from his biography, Charles Was able to go back to school after receiving family inheritance Which helped his father pay of his debts. At the age of fifteen, in 1827, he had to drop out of school to work as an office boy. However he became a freelance reporter and found a journalistic career in 1831 that gave him a lot of opportunities. He became a reporter for a London Newspaper in 1832 and started contributing impressions and sketches to other newspaper companies (Charles Dickens Biography). An article provided an information that tells that he adopted the soon to be famous pseudonym “Boz” and published his first piece, Sketches of Boz in 1836 (Dickens: A Brief Biography).

According to another information from Charles Dickens biography, He first fell inlove with Maria Bednell when he worked at Morning Chronicle; however, they did not end up together. He quickly recovered from being heart broken after he met Catherine Hogarth, his wife. They got engaged in the year of 1835 and was married a year later right after he published his first piece of fiction. Over the years, Dickens grew unhappy with his wife and found love again on the young actress named Ellen Ternan which led to Charles’ and Catherine’s breakup.

According to an article from BBC, Catherine accused Dickens having an affair because he bought a bracelet for Ellen that was accidently delivered to the Dickens household, but he denied the accusation and they were never again on pleasant terms until she died in 1879, twenty years after their separation (The forgotten wife of Charles Dickens). According to an article, Dickens died on June 9, 1870 (Britannica) Dickens had completed the novel Our Mutual Friends, but left The Mystery of Edwin Drood unfinished because of his death due to mild stroke symptoms at the age of 58 at his hometown in Kent, England and was buried in Poet’s Corner

at Westminster Abby (Charles Dickens: novelists)

A Literary Analysis On The Great Expectations

One day a little boy named Pip was at his parents gravestones when a convict suddenly appeared in front of him and threatened to kill him if he does not go back to his house and fetch him some food and a file for the shackles on his legs Pip then runs home to his adoptive sister and step father, Mr and Mrs Gargery. Mrs Gargery is an angry nagging woman who constantly reminds him and his step father how hard she worked just to bring up their family from poverty. Pip steals food and a pork pie from the shelf and a file from Joe's forge to hand it over to the escaped convict whom he watched the next day being caught by guards and brought back to his prison, the event soon disappeared from the young child's mind.

Mrs.Joe came home one evening, quite excited and tells Pip that he would be playing for "Miss Havisham" the old rich grim lady who lives at the old dismal house. Pip was brought to the satis house the next day where he meets Estella, a very pretty girl around his age.

Years passed by quickly as it is Pip's fourth year of apprenticeship and was sitting in the pub with Mr.Gargery when he was approached by a stranger named Jaggers who was a lawyer. Jaggers then explained to Pip and Mr.Gargery that Pip is to have "Great expectations" because he will be given a large budget monthly, The benefactor however, does not want to be known.

He then was invited to London to live in Bernard's Inn, Where he will live for the next five years. He was invited to a Dinner party where he was constantly being nagged and insulted By people as to where he came from. He took a break from the Place and later on received a letter letting him know that Mrs Joe Gargery has passed away Years go by and Pip is still living a wasteful life as a young rich man in the city. He meets the convict once again and tells him all of his struggles and problems in life. Lots of years passed by again and Pip came back to Mr.Joe and Biddy only to meet a little "pip" they had named after him. He saw Estella and had a long talk which led up to them starting a relationship and lived happily ever after.

The Great Expectations Character Analysis

Pip (Philipp Pirip)

Pip is the protagonist and narrator of great expectations. Pip is a young orphan boy who was raised by his sister and brother-in-law. Pip is passionate and romantic but somewhat unrealistic and tends to expect much more than he should. Pip has a powerful personality and wants to improve himself both morally and socially.

Estella

Miss Havisham's beautiful little girl, Estella is one of Pip's unattainable dreams throughout the whole novel. He loves her passionately but Estella usually feels cold towards Pip and shows him that she is uninterested in loving him but instead interested in breaking his heart and constantly reminds him that she is heartless.

Miss Havisham

She is a wealthy old woman who lives in a manor called the “Satis house”. She is manic, old and is often referred to as insane because of her personality. She wears the same dress over the years and keeps the decayed food that was being eaten away by rats and spiders. Her fiancé left her minutes before her wedding, she was left broken at the altar and decided to think that all men are cruel and deserves to have their hearts broken so she uses Estella as her revenge weapon.

Biddy

A simple kindhearted country girl. Biddy befriended Pip when they were attending school together. After Mrs.Joe is attacked and becomes paralyzed, Biddy moves into Pip’s house and takes care of her. Biddy represents the total opposite of Estella. Biddy is plain, kind, moral and is somewhat like Pip.

Abel Magwitch (The Convict)

Abel Magwitch escapes from prison at the beginning of the story and terrorizes little Pip at his parents gravestones but little did he know that little Pip would be able to change his heart forEver and because of Pip’s kindness He devoted to make fortune and bring Pip into the upper social class and becomes Pip’s secret “benefactor”.

Joe Gragery

Pips brother-in-law and the villages blacksmith, Joe stayed with Pip and his abusive wife (known as Mrs.Joe) solely out of love for Pip. Joe’s goodness makes him one of the stories most sympathetic character in the book. Even if he is uneducated and unrefined it doesn’t hold him back for his love to Pip but suffers silently whenever Pip treats him coldly.

Symbolism

The Satis House

The Satis House is grim and depressing. Miss Havisham, the owner was left at the altar by her fiancé minutes before the wedding starts. The house symbolizes Decay, Frustration and utter disappointment and a memory which clings unto the past. This house also symbolizes Pip’s disappointment as he realizes that he wont be able to be with the person he wants because Miss Havisham, does not want Estella to mend hearts but to break it and leave it shattered into pieces.

The Mists

The mist surrounding Pip’s town symbolizes mental vulnerability and confusion. Pip’s developmental encounters occur here. In the novel, Pip runs through the mist frightened just to steal food and a file from his house to hand over to the convict. In fact, Pip was unsure and felt terrified of what the convict might do to him. Pip was totally uninformed of how much he would be able to change the heart of the convict. Pip also doubts whether he should leave his hometown for London but little did he know that in London, he will be able to achieve the life he

used to dream about all the time.

Leg Iron

The Leg iron also symbolizes as a hindrance to reaching your dreams. Pip regards the village as a prison he tries to break out from as he grows up. His hometown and its people is symbolized as a hindrance to him from reaching or attaining his dreams.

Themes

Ambition and Self-Improvement

The theme is quite simple: Affection, Loyalty and Conscience are more important than Social Advancement, Wealth and Social class. At heart, Pip was an idealist whenever he conceives something better than what he already has and immediately desires to improve more. When he saw the Satis House he longed to be a wealthy man and one day be able to live in a house like Miss Havisham's and when Pip realized that he could not read, he strived hard so that he could be able to read. Pip's desire for self improvement is one of the main sources of the novels title , because he believes in the possibility of his advancement in his life and has "Great Expectations" for his future.

Social Class

Dickens explored the system class of people in England ranging from the most wretched criminals (Abel Magwitch) to the middle class (Mr and Mrs. Gargery) to the richest (Miss Havisham). The theme "Social class" is central to the ultimate moral of the book. Pip's realization that wealth and class are less important than affection, loyalty and inner worth. Pip realized that Social advancement in life has nothing to do with someones inner worth and one's real character.

Conclusion

Charles Dickens The Great Expectations shows us that despite all the hard and tear jerking difficult circumstances one can face in this world, we people can still find ways to rise up and be optimistic, creative and persevering. The Great Expectations is indeed a spectacular book because it serves as a reminder that giving up is never an option but instead we should be optimistic and creative to find ways to solve our dilemmas

Works Cited

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