Pip’s Kinetic Space in Great Expectations

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Abstract

Dickens’ Great Expectations was a delicately structured novel, with memorable characters and profound thoughts. Pip’s kinetic space was made through his life in his sister’s family, visits to Miss Havisham’s and life in London. Pip’s movement was not static, changing from one state to another, which demonstrates that Pip was a docile body, disciplined by the social conventions of British society.

Keywords: Great Expectations, Pip, kinetic space, discipline

1. INTRODUCTION
Charles Dickens was a household name for the Chinese, and his Great Expectations has an enduring fascination in the world. Great Expectations was first published in his weekly magazine All the Year Round between December 1860 and August 1861 (Bowen, V). When he wrote Great Expectations, Dickens “had been at the top of the literary tree for the best part of a quarter of a century” (Bowen, V). Great Expectations, unlike other works of Dickens, “is a brave and dangerous book, in which Dickens takes great risks with the material that had endeared him to the world and with some of the most cherished beliefs and ideals of modern society, in particular the belief in progress and the ability of an individual to shape his or her won destiny” (Bowen VII).

2. The Body and Kinetic Space
Corporeal narratology will discuss how narratives use the body to shape or discuss space. “It is impossible to tell stories without taking account of the bodies at work within them” (Punday 120). “This is especially the case with settings, since a space only becomes a setting when something is located there” (Punday, 120). In approaching narrative setting as a matter of the movement between spaces, Daniel Punday treats narrative as a tissue of actual and possible movements and spaces.

The kinetic space is put by Daniel Punday in his book, Narrative Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Narratology, which is built on the thoughts of possible worlds. “Possible worlds are built from the various materials collected by the mind. Mental activity comprises two types of elements: some involve truth-functional and fact-defining propositions while some others do not. Among the former are ‘thinking that p.’ ‘hoping that p,’ ‘ntending that p.’ Among the latter are emotions, subjective judgements, and fleeting perceptions before they are turned into knowledge.” “Narrative concerns primarily human (or human-like) action, and action is determined by the mind’s involvement with external reality” (Ryan 110, 111).

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Daniel Punday’s treatment of kinetic space is based on a helpful summary of modal structure of possible worlds offered by Marie-Laurie Ryan.

To form the image of a world, propositions must be held together by a modal operator acting as common denominator. In the literal sense of term, a possible world is a set of propositions modalized by the operator of the so-called athletic system: possible, impossible, necessary….Lubomir Doležel enumerates the following systems of modalities:
(1) The deontic system, formed by the concepts of permission, prohibition, and obligation.
(2) The axiological system, which is assumed to be constituted by the concepts of goodness, badness, and indifference.
(3) The epistemic system, represented by concepts of knowledge, ignorance, and belief.

The epistemic system determines a knowledge-world (K-World), cut out from the general realm of perceptions; the axiological system determines a wish-world (W-World), extracted from subjective value judgements; and the axiological system determines an obligation-world (O-World), dictated by social rules of behavior (Ryan 111).

In Great Expectations, The novel shapes Pip’s kinetic space by narrating Pip’s life in her sister’s home, experiences in Miss Havisham’s and life in London.

3. A Typology of Pip’s Kinetic Space
In Great Expectations, Punday said the graveyard setting at the beginning of the novel is positioned against a horizon of perceived space that is seen to be corporeally accessible; a space that he looks out onto in order to develop ‘expectations’-in some sense, the exemplary response to the kind of moving, kinetic space (124). In this novel, Pip’s kinetic space includes three worlds; they are K-world, W-world, and O-world.

3.1 Pip’s K-World
“A K-World is realized in T/AW if it consists exclusively of known propositions; it is possible with respect to T/AW if it comprises known and believed propositions” (P114, Ryan).

Pip shapes his K-World mainly through physical access. Pip came from a lower middle class, living with his sister, Mrs. Joe, never seeing his father or mother. Mr. Joe was a self-employed artisan and craftsman of the traditional type. They were in constant danger of falling into dire poverty. When Pip had the chance to go and play in Miss Havisham’s, Mr. Joe hoped his fortune would be changed, not be Pompeyed.

After Pip’s first return from Miss Havisham’s, Mrs. Joe and Mr. Pumblechook were eager to know about Miss Havisham and Miss Havisham’s. Miss Havisham lived in uptown, a landowner, holding her own estate, living a life of seclusion. Mr. Pumblechook, the tenant of Miss Havisham, was a small tradesman, and every time he went to Miss Havisham’s, he was taken up to the outside of her door, standing ajar (Dickens 56). Mrs. Joe was “very curious to know all about Miss Havisham’s, and asked a number of questions” (Dickens 54). Pip told them his pretended experiences in Miss Havisham’s, and they were amazed at black velvet coach, gold plates, and four large dogs, “fighting for veal-cutlets out of a silver basket” (Dickens 56). They were eager for upperclass life.
Social convention plays a role in defining Pip’s access to his K-world. Although the nineteenth century of Britain experienced great changes in this era, it had a clear “social structure” (Rubinstein, 281). At the summit of Britain’s social structure were its great landowners, who certainly remained the country’s most powerful, and probably richest men (Rubinstein, 281). “At the very apex of the landed class were the wealthiest landowners, mainly the great titled aristocrats” (Rubinstein, 281). Other classes, like the lower middle classes still struggled for life. They were eager for upperclass life. In this novel, Mrs. Joe wanted Pip’s fortune could be changed by his visits.

The first visit to Miss Havisham’s made a great influence on Pip, and he deeply revolved what Estella said to him. He was ashamed of his coarse hands, and thick boots. He complained that his brother-in-law was not born decent. He knew he was common laboring boy, living a lower life. He had complicated thoughts during his way home.

Ryan said the K-world of characters includes a prospective domain, representing their apprehension of the tree of possible developments out of the present situation(116). Ryan also put: “The prospective domain of a character’s K-world is of crucial importance in the formation of goals and the elaboration of plans” (116).

Pip’s chase for money and gentility was due to his life environments and experiences in Satis world. Pip’s K-world is of crucial importance in the formation of his life goals.

3.2 Pip’s W-world
Pip’s W-world is accessed physically, perceptually and imaginatively. Dickens creates a tension between imaginative, perceptual, and physical access to the Miss Havisham’s. Pip’s W-world was mainly shaped by his desire for Estella’s love. “A desired state is typically the possession of a certain object. A desired action is an intrinsically rewarding activity such as making love, eating, or playing games” (Ryan 117). His meeting with Estella creates both an unfulfilled W-world requirement and a K-world conflict, since he wants to posses her and does not realize her true identity.

Estella was a pretty girl when Pip first met her, looking down upon him. The first time when they played cards, Estella denounced him for “a stupid, clumsy labouring boy” (Dickens 50). Estella was “proud and insulting”, and Pip “wanted to go away from her” (Dickens 193). But, He was taken hold by her; Pip admitted that he loved Estella because “she was irresistible”(Dickens 191).

Pip had a great fancy that he would be the host of the desolate house, and marry Estella. For him, Estella was “the inspiration of” what he did, and “the heart of” what he did (Dickens. 190).

When Estella came home from France, Pip’s desire for Estella was intensified. She had a great change. “She was so much changed, was so much more beautiful, so much more womanly” (Dickens, 193).

Pip was so injured by Estella’s indifference to him, “I verily believe that her not remembering and not minding in the least, made me cry again, inwardly, and that is the sharpest crying of all” (Dickens 195).

When the unexpected visitor came back from then new world to see Pip, he knew the truth.
“Miss Havisham’s intentions towards me, all a mere dream; Estella not designed for me; I only suffered in Satis House as a convenience, a sting for the greedy relations, a model with a mechanical heart to practise on when no other practice was at hand” (Dickens 267).

A W-world stands in a neutral relation to T/AW-the character judging the state of T/AW acceptable-if the nonrealization of the desires does not lead to dysphoric situations (Ryan 118). In the end of the story, when Pip went back to visit “the desolate house” (Dickens 190), he saw Estella, who still held her majesty and charms. They communicated heartedly, and they both confessed that they were friends, and would continue friends apart (Dickens 399).

3.3 Pip’s Obligation-world
The obligation-world, or O-world of characters, is a system of commitments and prohibitons defined by social rules and moral principles (Ryan116). Pip’s O-world is mainly through physical access.

Mr. Jaggers, a lawyer in London, was instructed to deliver a secret contract to Pip. Mr. Jaggers told Pip he would succeed a property and be brought up as a gentleman. Pip was immediately removed from the wild marshes, and “the world lay spread before him” (Dickens 132). He began to pursue his gentility, which had been deeply rooted in him since the first visit to Miss Havisham’s.

When Pip came to London, he had a high expectation of his coming life. To his disappointment, he lived in a dismal place, Barnard Inn.

At Barnard Inn, Pip began to keep himself decent, decorating the room in an unnecessary way and starting a boy, with nothing to do.

He “had a taste for reading, and read regularly so many hours a day,” no longer an illiterate man. He read fictions, and would held communication on Capital with Herbert.

Pip was advised to attend certain places to know the rudiments of the society. Pip would attend some clubs in London. With Herbert, they had put themselves down for election into a club called The Finches of the Grove (Dickens 225).

When he was settled down, Pip began to apply himself to his education. The first class for Pip was about eating. Herbert taught him some etiquettes “in London it is not the custom to put the knife in the mouth-for fear of accidents-and that while the fork is reserved for that use, it is not put farther in than is necessary. It is scarcely worth mentioning, only it’s as well to do as other people do. Also the spoon is not generally used over-hand, but under” (Dickens 146,147).

When first visiting Mr. Pocket’s house, Pip dined with Mr. and Mrs. Pocket, together with their friends. When dining, Pip said nothing, and kept watch on his company manners. He was “attentive to his knife and fork, spoon, glasses, and other instruments” (Dickens 157).

When in London, Pip got acquaintances with different people, which largely broadened his view, taking a deep insight into London life, especially “the life of the genteel middle-classes” (Bowen XIII). Mr. Pocket, Pip’s tutor, had been educated at Harrow and at Cambridge, where he had distinguished himself (Dickens 157). Pip called him a gentleman. Mrs. Pocket was “the only daughter of a certain quite accidental deceased Knight” (Dickens 155). She is “of so aristocratic disposition” (Dickens 157).
Mr. Jaggers was a solicitor in London. Traditionally the older, socially prestigious professions comprised the Anglican clergy, the law, army and navy officers, perhaps some university professors, and more highly regarded physicians (Rubinstein 286). Mr. Jaggers took a decent work with decent pay.

Since commitments derive from interpersonal contracts, O-worlds are interactive and mutually dependent (Ryan117). Pip’s great expectations derived from his interpersonal contracts between him and the unknown patron, and his O-world is interactive and mutually dependent. Pip’s patron was Abel Magwitch, “I have been informed by a person named Abel Magwitch, that he is the benefactor so long unknown to me (Dickens 275).” Abel Magwitch was “making a gentleman” (Dickens 265). Pip was chosen to succeed some property under the condition that he was brought up as a gentleman.

Abel Magwitch suffered a lot in the new world, but Pip was a great recompense to him. When Magwitch came back to see the boy, he was very satisfied with what he saw. Pip was a noble man to him, “his lodgings, his watch, a gold’un and a beauty: that’s a gentleman’s. A diamond all set round with rubies; that’s a gentleman’s, his linen; fine and beautiful; his clothes and his books.” Pip was “a brought-up London gentleman” in his mind (Dickens 264,266). He was greatly comforted with such a new Pip.

A person or character’s O-world is satisfied in T/AW if all the obligations have been fulfilled, and none of the interdictions transgressed (Ryan116).

Pip’s O-world is satisfied, because his obligations have been fulfilled for him in the Great Expectations. When Pip was on his “one-and-twentieth birthday,” he got “a handsome sum of money” from his unknown benefactor. He is “very desirous to serve a friend.” “This friend…is trying to get on in commercial life, but has no money, and finds it difficult and disheartening to make a beginning. Now, I want somehow to help him to a beginning.” The whole business was “so cleverly managed, that Herbert had not the least suspicion of my hand being in it” (Dickens 240,247).

Although Pip’s great expectations are unfulfilled (BowenVII), Pip’s O-world is satisfied in that he was not only greatly self-enhanced, but helped others. His gentility was achieved. “To help Herbert was the only good thing I had done, and the only completed thing I had done since I was first apprised of my great expectations” (Dickens 342). Many years went round, he “worked pretty hard for a sufficient living” (Dickens 399).

4. Conclusion

The relations among Pip’s kinetic space are not static, but “change from state to state” (Ryan 119). The prospective domain of a character’s K-world is of crucial importance in the formation of goals and the elaboration of plans (Ryan 116). With W-world unfulfilled, Pip’s K-world and O-World are compatible with the society. Actually, What Pip experienced demonstrates that Pip was a docile body, disciplined by the social conventions. The body’s position within this narrative space has to be understood primarily through the way it is defined by that social space (Punday 119). “In every society, the body was in the grip of very strict powers, which imposed on it constraints, prohibitions, or obligations” (Rabinow 180). Pip suffered a “subtle coercion” (Rabinow 181), which obtains “holds upon it at the level of
the mechanism itself—movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body” (Rabinow 181). Pip’s first visit to Satis House and meeting with Estella had a profound effect on him. Since then, money and gentility rooted in him. When in London, Herbert Pocket teaches Pip some etiquette rules: “…excuse my mentioning that society as a body does not expect one to be so strictly conscientious in emptying one’s glass, as to turn it bottom upwards with the rim on one’s nose” (Dickens 147). Pip “applied himself to his education” (Dickens 167). “For the disciplined man, as for the true believer, no detail is unimportant, but not so much for the meaning that it conceals within it as for the hold it provides for the power that wishes to seize it” (Rabinow 184).

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References