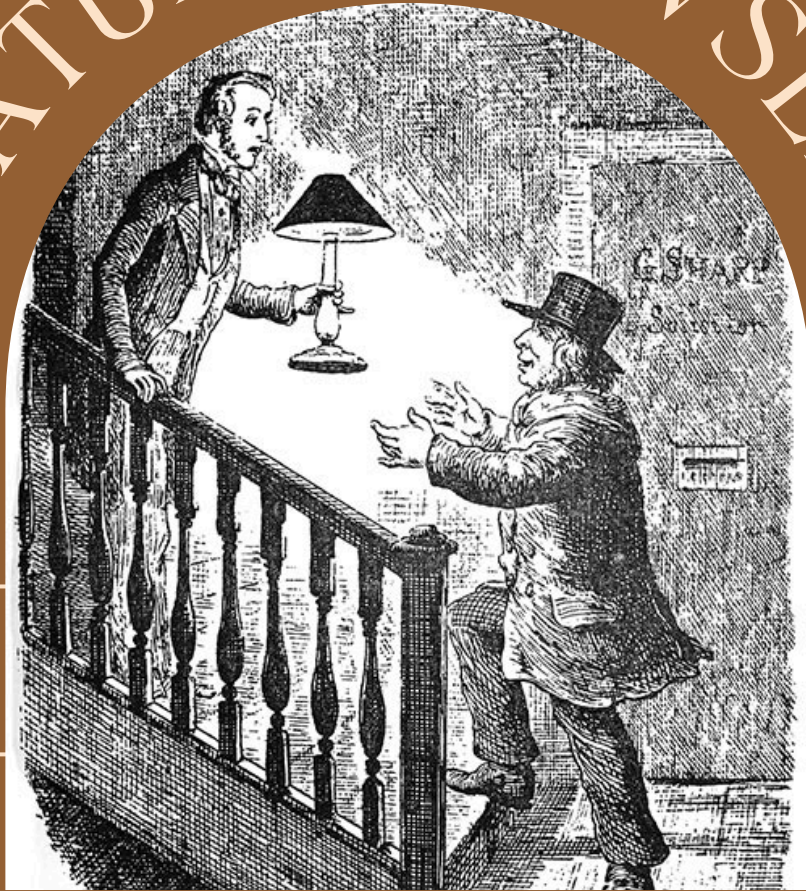


DRAMATURGY NEWSLETTER

VOL

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GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Join us in exploring the life and times of Charles Dickens and the world and history of his classic novel.

READ ALONG WITH US

This is our final installment of *Great Expectations*, which was originally published in weekly installments in the magazine *All the Year Round* from December 1860 - August 1861.

CHAPTERS 54-59

RECONSIDERING THE ENDING

Initially, Dickens concluded the novel with a different ending. However, due to pressure from his publisher and a desire for a more optimistic conclusion, he revised the final chapters to offer a glimmer of hope and redemption.

The original ending is as follows:

“One day, two years after his return from the east, I was in England again—in London, and walking along Piccadilly with little Pip—when a servant came running after me to ask would I step back to a lady in a carriage who wished to speak to me. It was a little pony carriage, which the lady was driving; and the lady and I looked sadly enough on one another. “I am greatly changed, I know, but I thought you would like to shake hands with Estella too, Pip. Lift up that pretty child and let me kiss it!” (She supposed the child, I think, to be my child.) I was very glad afterwards to have had the interview; for, in her face and in her voice, and in her touch, she gave me the assurance, that suffering had been stronger than Miss Havisham’s teaching, and had given her a heart to understand what my heart used to be.”

What do you think of this original ending?

What is gained and what is lost as you compare the two?

Which ending do you prefer?

GREAT ADAPTATIONS

The 1946 film adaptation, directed by David Lean, is perhaps the most critically recognized film version. In 1999, it was declared the 5th best British film of all time by the British Film Institute. This version was inspired by a 1939 stage adaptation written by Alec Guinness, who also plays Herbert Pocket in the film.



GREAT EXPECTATIONS (1946)

From 2007 to 2016, there was a Charles Dickens-focused theme park in Kent, England called “Dickens World.” Its main attraction was a *Great Expectations* themed boat ride that took riders through the sewers of London and featured animatronics of some of the book’s characters. Watch a video of this ride from 2008 below.

DICKENS WORLD BOAT RIDE

MEMORY

Our production is a memory play, a style of production in which the lead character narrates the events by drawing from their own recollections, creating a highly subjective story. Our narrator speaks to the audience with an adult voice, but then enters the action as a child. Our script and abstracted production design reinforce the emotional resonance of memory by essentially inviting the audience into Pip's mind.

Memories are not always concrete, and can have disproportionate emotional weights. Researchers who study memory have observed the phenomenon of “flashbulb memories,” where an individual or group experiences something so vivid (usually a traumatic event) that the moment is recorded in a particularly vivid way, and can impact the way we remember other things, as well. The more we rehearse memories to ourselves, the more powerful they become. But as we emphasize certain qualities of a memory, it can also change over time.

How do you see the above ideas manifested in *Great Expectations*?

How does the form of a memory play enhance and / or challenge our creative goals and the audience's experience?

NEIL BARTLETT: ADAPTER & PLAYWRIGHT

Neil Bartlett is a highly respected playwright and director who is known for adapting classical works for the stage. He was Artistic Director of the Lyric Hammersmith in London for ten years and has worked at the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and many other famous institutions. In addition to this adaptation of *Great Expectations*, which originally played at the Bristol Old Vic in 2013, he has developed adaptations of Dickens classics *A Christmas Carol* and *Oliver Twist*.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE
ABOUT NEIL BARTLETT](#)



CHAPTER & SCRIPT ANNOTATION

Need to find the chapter that matches your scene?

[FIND IT HERE](#)