Discuss The Presentation Of Childhood In Great Expectations And Cider With Rosie Essay, Research Paper

Childhood is portrayed in many ways in both Great

Expectations and Cider with Rosie. The ways in which the authors, Charles

Dickens and Laurie Lee portray this are different and similar in many ways.At the beginning of Great Expectations by Dickens,

the main character Pip is seen as typically childish where his imagination can

run away with himself and he jumps to stereotypically childish conclusions. For

instance early on in chapter 1:?My first fancies regarding what they were like, were

unreasonably derived from their tombstones. The shape of the letters on my

fathers grave gave me an odd idea that he was a square, stout, dark man, with

curly black hair.? This shows just how childish Pip is in making decisions

and conclusions on such very simple and broad evidence. Another quote that

shows Pips childishness with his extremely lively imagination is later on in

chapter 3: ?It was a rimy morning, and very damp. I had seen the

damp lying on the outside of my little window as if some goblin had been crying

there all night.? And:?It seemed to my oppressed conscience like a phantom

devoting me to the hulks.? Both of these quotes show how childishly Pips imagination

works. This can be compared to the opening chapter of Cider with Rosie in which

Laurie Lee?s imagination runs away with him in a similarly childish fashion:?Each blade tattooed with tiger skins of sunlight. It was

knife edged, dark, and a wicked green, thick as a forest and alive with

grasshoppers that chirped and chattered and leapt through the air like

monkeys.? These descriptive metaphors and similes are quite dark and brooding images

such as some of Pips were in great expectations. Therefore both authors are showing

childhood as quite a scary daunting time as well as a time when you have an

extremely active imagination. Laurie Lee has written about childhood in Cider

with Rosie as he saw it because it is an autobiographical novel that describes

his childhood during the war. Laurie Lee portrays his childhood and growing up

with the growing up of the nation. The reason that Lee portrays this time of

his life as scary and daunting is because it is also a scary and daunting time

for Great Britain during the Second World War. Charles Dickens portrays childhood as a scary and hard time for his own

reasons. Dickens had quite a bad childhood with his dad being in prison and

himself living in the Victorian times when children were treated poorly and

were worked extremely hard. Dickens wanted other people to understand the

hardship that he had been through and was quite self-obsessed with his harsh

childhood. He decided to tell people about this through the novels that he

wrote and in the example of Great Expectations, Pip was the character that

would reflect on Dickens childhood. Dickens shows Pips childhood as a time where you are extremely guilty for

the things that you have done and that you are always paranoid that bad things

are going to come of you because of it. Pip is almost obsessed with his guilty

thoughts and fear of imprisonment. The theme of guilt and imprisonment often

occurs in Great Expectations. These are shown in things that Pip sees and his

vivid childish imagination. Part of the reason that Pip feels very guilty and

that Laurie Lee does not really recall his guilt is that Pip is very much a

person who has feelings and is very much a self obsessed child. Whereas Laurie

Lee is more detached from his own thoughts and more interested in the world

around him. This is one of the differences in the way that the two authors

present childhood.Another difference in the way that the authors portray

childhood is that Laurie Lee makes his childhood a beautiful childhood whereas

Pip?s is more dark and gloomy. Lee does this in the style of his writing, which

is very poetic and flowing. This is due to the fact that before Laurie Lee was

a writer, he was a poet. This means that the way he portrays childhood is

poetic and almost beautiful. In great expectations, however, Dickens sets

gloomy scenes such as the beginning scene in the graveyard and the scenes in

the marshes. Another difference is the way that guilt is portrayed

along with childhood in both of the novels. Dickens shows childhood as a time

when you were constantly guilty for the things you had done and the paranoia of

being caught was immense. He probably done this because as a child Dickens?s

father had been taken to a debtor?s prison because he could not afford to look

after his family. This may have made Dickens feel guilty as a child and he

decides to show this through Pip. A passage that shows this guilt is:?It seemed to my

oppressed conscience like a phantom devoting me to the hulks.? ?? This shows Pip feels guilty and is paranoid because

his mind thinks that a signpost is telling him to go to prison. Laurie Lee

however does not see childhood as a time of guilt but more of a carefree time

where you don?t have to feel guilty. A line on page 45 of Cider with Rosie

shows this:?And exhaled our last guiltless days.? However Laurie is not always guiltless, like pip he has a

moment in the book where he felt guilty and paranoid of the consequences of his

actions. This is shown on page. 47 in the line:?That the summons to the big room, the policeman?s hand

on shoulder, comes almost always as a complete surprise, and for the crime that

one has forgotten.? Lee realises that he cannot do things such as hit

people because they are of a different race. Lee is scared of the punishment

that he will receive and is paranoid about when he will be found out. This is a

lot like the character Pip in Great Expectations who spends his whole childhood

feeling this way. This means that there is a strong link between childhood and

guilt.