

When looking at working class women, they still do not appear to be submissive to men, Mrs. Joe Gargery for example, appears to often have a mocking tone when speaking to her husband, and a very condescending tone when speaking to Pip. However, both of the males appear to be abused by her, which shows her dominance even though she works as a maid in the house.

My sister [...] had established a great reputation with herself and the neighbors because she had brought me up "by hand." Having at that time to find out for myself what the expression meant, and knowing her to have a hard and heavy hand, and to be much in the habit of laying it upon her husband as well as upon me, I supposed that Joe Gargery and I were both brought up by hand. (p. 12)

Pip's sister has clearly acted as a mother to him, which is what gave her the reputation of literally bringing up Pip by herself, as she possibly had to feed him when he was a baby. It may be suggested that Dickens used a double entendre when describing Pip to be brought up "by hand". Knowing this, we can assume that Mrs. Joe Gargery has had to discipline Pip as if he was her son, perhaps this is why she has a wax ended cane she calls the Tickler, which in itself would sound like a name of a toy. One may argue that Mrs. Gargery didn't get to experience childhood because of her brother, and finds escape in abuse of her brother and husband, as well as giving childish names to an object of cruelty. One may also suggest that the Tickler is personified, as the object is given a name which is even written with a capital letter, which adds authority to the object in itself as it is what keeps Joe and Pip from misbehaving.