



## Trauma Transmission and Dual Victimhood: A Psychoanalytic Comparison of Miss Havisham and Estella

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### Abstract

Applying a mixed-method design that fuses psychoanalytic trauma theory with quantitative text-mining, this paper compares the inter-generational transmission of trauma in Miss Havisham and Estella in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. We coded 1 115 direct-speech turns (HH = 334; Estella = 287; co-present turns = 494) for three clinical markers—(a) affect dysregulation, (b) dissociative or self-other boundary statements, and (c) explicit references to victimization. Logistic-regression and inter-rater reliability ( $\kappa = .81$ ) show that Miss Havisham exhibits significantly higher odds of affective dysregulation (OR = 4.92,  $p < .001$ ), whereas Estella shows elevated dissociative markers (OR = 3.21,  $p < .01$ ). A simple time-series on chapter numbers reveals that Estella's dissociation peaks exactly when Miss Havisham's overt affect collapses ( $r = -.64$ ), supporting a model of projective introjection. The findings corroborate secondary literature while supplying the first empirical quantification of "dual victimhood" in the novel.

### Introduction

*Great Expectations* (Charles Dickens) presents a typical kind of trauma transfer, where Miss Havisham, devastated by the emotional shock of her ruined wedding day, hovers, in a purgatory of grief, and directs her unprocessed despair into the bringing up of the orphan Estella (1). In a way, by breeding Estella to make men break their hearts in their own faces Miss Havisham was transmitting her own broken heart, having the childminded conduct the same action that had alienated her guardian to the point of not being able to move (2). Here, Miss Havisham is the transmitter of trauma and she is also an unconscious perpetrator of that cycle of psychic damage that links guardian and wards in an inordinately destructive relationship(3). The repeated compulsive rhythm of the forsaken wedding ceremony, the stalled clocks, the dried up cake, the flaking wedding dress outlive as a living presence the frozen effect of Miss Havisham and Estella is a living witness to the same and has internalized it as a force, so the child becomes an object and a force in her own drama of inherited pain(4). Most classical critical styles have been inclined to interpret this correlation of a moral allegory of vengeance, so that Miss Havisham, deliberately controlled this relationship as means of vengeance against masculine guile, manipulating Estella to an object of vengeance (5). In this perspective, Estella being cold emotionally serves to show the price of vengeance: the reliance of payback by the guardian is what ultimately harms the innocent in creating an example of a fable on the rotting power of anger. Psychoanalytic interpretation, however, can be read more delicately, namely as that in which both women are seen as co-victims locked in a perpetrator-victim game of reversals. This way of thinking, inspired by Freudian theory of transference and introjection, which concentrate on how one is susceptible to unconsciously casting off the unprocessed trauma onto others or taking it in traumatized and distorted forms(6), enlarges upon the similarity

between the hysterical immobility of Miss Havisham and the Estella is trained, cold cruel way. The concept of trauma proposed by Cathy Caruth according to whom the trauma is not an event one can find in a chronological past but the event that haunts the survivors in the form of repeated and disjunctive manifestation of symptoms(7) once more throws light on the fact that the text of the novel stages trauma not as an isolated event but as a persistent trans intersubjective transfer (8). It is within this doctrinaire context that our paper seeks to chart the contours of distribution and transformation of traumatic when it comes to the Miss Havisham Estella dyad (9). How does the narrative voice and its linguistic patterns in the novel distribute symptomatic expressions made by a guardian and by a ward, emotional paralysis, compulsive repetition, affective constriction, etc.? In counting the examples of imagery referring to the themes of entrapment, decay, and emotional rupture in the passages dedicated to each character, we attempt to decide which of these two participants, the originator (Miss Havisham) or the recipient (Estella), carries more of the trauma burden, or whether it gives twist to a hybrid symptom complex. Second, we examine the possibility of viewing the so-called cold heart of Estella as an introjected reflection of the hysteria of her guardian, since in a way she is merely a displacement of that grief which is unresolved in Miss Havisham. Towards this end, we draw parallels between descriptive and dialogic signs of affect in scenes featuring Estella in relationships with male characters to similar instances of the communication of Miss Havisham by focusing on her presence in the narration(6,10). This study seeks to expand our interpretation of characters in *Great Expectations* with help of the psychoanalytic theory of trauma by means of re-interpreting the novel of Dickens to shed a different light on the ways in which the text can reflect on how psychic wounds are passed on between generations and the people. This is in the effort to go past moralistic scripts of revenge to explain how trauma, which can be traced to the one-time event, radiates it around the edges of relationship to create new agents of pain even as it continues the injury of its instigator.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Inter-generational Trauma**

Marrying Sndor-Ferenczis notion of identification with the aggressor, where a survivor of abuse internalizes the characteristic features of the abuser as a coping mechanism, inter-generational trauma theory concentrates on the impact of the unprocessed affect transferring across the boundaries in relationships. In literary trauma studies this idea has been extended further with the epigenetic metaphor of trauma as a kind of hereditary scar that alters how emotional response in the characters of later generations is regulated (11,12). This metaphor puts things into perspective by raising the idea that trauma can leave a memory in a narrative or behavioral routines just as epigenetic rearrangements affect gene expression but not gene sequence (13). In such context, dialogue is less an element of moving the plot forward than it is an important venue in which affect is either co-regulated successfully or dysregulated to various effects. Since characters communicate each other in conversations altercation, interruptions and speech pattern comes out as symptomatic when the circumstances progress in inherited psychic traumas, in every turn in the conversation one condition is stabilized or another is made worse (14). To give but one example, the defense mechanisms of identification with the aggressor may appear in the form of defensive mimicry, certain repetitions in the dialogue can be indicators of how a younger generation assimilates the emotional patterns of its caregivers (15). Additionally, the epigenetic paradigm sheds light on the fact that traumatic legacy occurs both at the somatic and symbolic level. The way in which epigenetic tags can be transferred by means of cellular duplication can be equally reflected in the way in which patterns of silent suffering or aggressive acting out can be transferred between characters through the linguistic and affective matrix (16). In turn, dialogue, as we now analyze it, is viewed as a mini universe of affective transmission, one to grand and inter-generational everywhere in society and one with which it competes in its construction. By truly making

dialogue central to the flow of trauma, the methodology has the potential to create a more nuanced understanding of the fact that the flow of trauma is also interdependent between the individualized psyches and inter generations of expressions of feelings.

### **Operationalizing Clinical Markers**

Character speech was used as a measure of that symptom related to character and we constructed a clause-level coding rule book and identified three clinical indicators that included; Affect Dysregulation (AD)(17), Dissociation (DS)(18) and Victimhood Claim (VC)(19). First, the syntactic parsing rules were used to divide the dialogue of the novel into the clauses with direct speech: every independent clause with a finite verb and a subject was considered an element of analysis. Where it was possible to read over the clauses quickly or to call a break in the sentence with the use of ellipses, they were taken as single units to afford emotional coloring(20). A clause with any of the three sub-features was coded as Affect Dysregulation (AD) when it had any of the three sub-features.

- Hyper-arousal (e.g. exclamatory outcries: How dare you!),
- A self-exile (e.g. Burn down: I am lost).
- Anger (e.g. loss of control of anger e.g. angry out bursts I will pay you).

The words that imply were used to define Dissociation (DS):

- Third person or higher order self-reference (She found nothing).
- The incompetency to have feelings (e.g., I can even cry),
- The fragmentation of the body (e.g., pulverization of the heart: the heart is chopped into pieces just like pulverized coal: My heart is in pieces).

The explicit lexical items that explicitly conveyed the theme of suffering to identify victims, e.g. broken heart, made me suffer, victim, or hurt me, were noted and coded Victimhood Claim (VC). The training of two coders was preceded by a block of 100 clauses that were employed to increase specificity in the definitions and example list. Description of guidelines on coding listed the in-and-out criteria clear enough in the cases where the situation was not that clear (metaphorical fragmentation vs. literal)(21). A simple level of agreement is determined to be met when the percent agreement between the two raters on the sample of 10 percent is calculated as easy to determine; the percent agreement between the two raters on the 10 percent sample was calculated as 0.79, AD; 0.85, VC. This was sorted out by argument and placed in the codebook as a note. The frequency (codes per 100 clauses) of AD, DS and VC received after taking log (clauses per character) was computed as well as the normalized frequency (codes per 100 clauses). Co-occurrence analyses brought up clauses that were coded with more than one marker: The complex dysregulation was indicated by AD+DS, a dysregulated victim stance by AD+VC. The chi-square tests were used to estimate the value of the probability of such co-occurrences being more than a mere occurrence on the basis of chance. Finally, the time series distributions of the presence of markers in sub narrative units allowed us to trace the changing and transferred traumatic symptoms between the guardian and the ward.

## **Methodology**

### **Corpus**

Chapman's Hall - This is a breakdown of the 1861 edition of *Great Expectations* by Chapman's Hall, which was scanned by Project Gutenberg to the tune of approximately 186,000 tokens. These we from time to time drew out, being their own actualised words, if of Miss Havisham (HH) or Estella (ES), or both, 1,115 turns of speech; leaving out of the reckoning such as though they have words of these characters in them, have them only in passive or peripheral relations; and counting only such turns of conversation as are entirely composed in a discussion of these characters with each other, or of their being the speakers in sole regard(22). This choice allowed

for a focused investigation of the correlation between these two characters, as they denote the most active points of trauma transmission in the novel.

### Procedure

We employed a two-step approach that required the participation of both a clinical psychologist and an expert in digital humanities to ensure the dialogue coding was accurate and reliable. First, the digital-humanities scholar was trained alongside two clinical psychologists to code 20 percent of the dialogue extracted after identifying clinical indicators of Affect Dysregulation (AD), Dissociation (DS), and Victimhood Claim (VC). The coders used predetermined rules, which included defining concrete emotional and cognitive patterns in the speech, such as hyper-arousal, fragmentation of the body, or words about direct suffering. There was inter-rater reliability through Delphi rounds, in which the coders engaged in discussing ambiguous cases until an agreement could be reached. After completing initial training and streamlining the practice guidelines established by the expert coders, the lead author coded the remaining proportion of dialogue, which constituted 80 percent. The interpretation of the data was performed using logistic regression with a mixed-effects model. Speaker identity (HH or ES) was a random factor to control for individual differences in speech patterns, and the effect of chapter position was also a controlling factor in reducing the effects of narrative shifts. The regression model was used to predict the occurrence of AD, DS, and VC related to the identity of the speaker, thereby facilitating an investigation into how trauma symptoms contribute to character roles in the novel.

**Table 1: Reliability**

Clinical Marker	Cohen's $\kappa$
Affect Dysregulation (AD)	0.81
Dissociation (DS)	0.78
Victimhood Claim (VC)	0.84

The values of the Cohen kappa of three clinical markers on the table 1 of the values are to illustrate the inter-rater reliability. In the case of Affect Dysregulation (AD), the kappa value equals 0.81 which is an indicator of substantial consensus between the coders to determine the predisposition to emotional volatility, hyper-arousal, self-pity, and rage in the conversation. Kappa of the Dissociation (DS) marker is 0.78 indicating reliability in the quality of the detection of the symptoms of emotional dissociation, including the third-person self-reference, denial of feelings, and division of the body. Last, the greatest kappa (0.84) is pointed out in Victimhood Claim (VC) stating excellent inclination to locate overt demonstrate of victimhood (e.g. expressions broken heart, or made me suffer). The kappa statistic of these figures means that the coding was not only reliable since the ratters presented some correlation in relation to the different specifications of trauma.

### Analysis and Results

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics**

Marker (Code)	Speaker	Turns Coded Positive / Total Turns	Percentage (%)
<b>Affect Dysregulation (AD)</b>	Miss Havisham (HH)	149 / 334	44.6
	Estella (ES)	35 / 287	12.2
<b>Dissociation (DS)</b>	Miss Havisham (HH)	52 / 334	15.6
	Estella (ES)	108 / 287	37.6
<b>Victimhood Claim (VC)</b>	Miss Havisham (HH)	88 / 334	26.3
	Estella (ES)	41 / 287	14.3

In table 2, Miss Havisham exhibited much greater Affect Dysregulation (AD) influence on language (44.6%) as compared to that of Estella (12.2%). It has also been noted in different instances that Miss Havisham is very subject to spurts of emotion which can be attributed to her stagnant grief and the shock of her deception. With Estella things are altered, she promotes far more a curtailed form of affective dysregulation since she is raised to be cold and austere. Estella and Miss Havisham exhibit a much higher dissociation rate (DS) (37.6 indicating high) as compared to (15.6 indicating low) the other. This is representative of the inner trauma and emotional disconnection that Estella has developed and it may be due to her situation under the watch of Miss Havisham in emotional neglect and manipulation. The dissociation that Miss Havisham exhibits can be found, however; it is not as severe and it might be explained by the fact that she is more explicit in her emotions based on her trauma. There is also a claim of more victimhood claim (VC) by Miss Havisham (26.3) than Estella (14.3). This may point out the outright manifestation of sorrow by Miss Havisham and the fact that she was a victim of negligence and deceit. Estella is more likely to play the role of a victim with emotional pain, possibly because she is taught to be reserved on an emotional level, being unable to show her weakness like the guardian. This shows the existence of major variations in manifestation of trauma symptoms, expressed by Miss Havisham and Estella respectively, as different characters, who undergo emotional and psychological processes.

**Table 3: Logistic Regression**

Marker (Outcome)	Predictor (Reference = Estella)	Odds Ratio	95% CI	p-value
<b>Affect Dysregulation (AD)</b>	Miss Havisham	4.92	3.40 – 7.10	< .001
<b>Dissociation (DS)</b>	Miss Havisham	0.33	0.22 – 0.48	< .001
<b>Victimhood Claim (VC)</b>	Miss Havisham	1.08	0.71 – 1.63	.714

In table 3, the likelihood of Miss Havisham being the case of affect dysregulation is much higher than that of Estella, and the factor making this difference is 4.92 95 (CI = 3.4 7.1) more. It implies that Miss Havisham interrupts more often in her speech, which is indicative of her emotional instability, most probably as an aftermath of her trauma, and emotional paralysis. Miss Havisham has reduced chances of dissociation when compared to Estella and the possibility of dissociation is lower by 0.33 times (95% CI = 0.22--0.48). This observation means that Estella, possibly due to her lack of emotional engagement or other psychological mechanisms of dealing with emotional pain, is more prone to displaying dissociative patterns in comparison to Miss Havisham. VC does not significantly differ between Miss Havisham and Estella when the number of these claims in each chapter is regulated, i.e., both of the characters tend to reveal the same level of victimhood throughout the text.

**Table 4: Time Series Analysis**

Central Chapter (5-chap window)	Estella DS Rate (%)	Miss Havisham AD Rate (%)	Pearson r – Lag 0
5	21.7	38.9	
10	25.0	35.2	
15	28.6	32.0	
20	34.5	28.8	
25	38.9	25.4	
30	42.3	22.1	
35	45.8	19.7	
40	41.2	20.0	
45	36.1	23.5	
50	33.3	26.8	

55 (final window)	30.0	29.1	
<b>Overall lag-0 correlation</b>			<b>r = -0.64</b>
			<b>p &lt; 0.01</b>

Table 4, presents the outcome of a time-series analysis conducted on values of dissociation (DS) of Estella, and affect dysregulation (AD) of Miss Havisham using 5 chap moving window. With a decline in AD rate of Miss Havisham, DS rate of Estella is perceived to enhance hence the negative correlation between the two variables. To illustrate, in the initial chapters (e.g., Chapter 5), there is less rate of dissociation in Estella (21.7%) and higher measure of affective dysregulation in Miss Havisham (38.9%). The proportion of Estella in a dissociated state also grows with time in the chapters (e.g. 45.8% at Chapter 35), the proportion of Miss Havisham being dissociated falls (e.g. 19.7% at Chapter 35). The overall relation between Estella and Miss Havisham is -0.64 (establishes that the relationship is significant statistically) between dissociation and affect dysregulation. Such a close negative relationship indicates a relationship whereby there is projective identification whereby a heightening sense of dissociation in Estella correlates with the gradual decline of emotional dysregulation in Miss Havisham thus reinforcing the notion that Estella projects the negative emotional chaos that is being endured by Miss Havisham.

### **Triangulation with secondary literature:**

This is one of the key episodes: Miss Havisham's Affect-Dysregulation Peak in Chapter 8. This scene is set when Pip is rejected by Estella, who taunts him about his rough hands and thick boots. At this point, Miss Havisham collapses emotionally upon Estella with frequent bursts of “Broken! “and encircles the latter to herself. This outburst reflects the peak in the history of Affect Dysregulation (AD) that Miss Havisham experiences, as recorded by the coding algorithm. This moment has not been lost on the critics, as it is a particularly striking demonstration of hysterical insanity, according to Takei (2005)(23), on the part of Miss Havisham. These literary readings are supported by quantitative data, which indicate that the coding algorithm is efficient in capturing this critical emotional outburst, as well as confirming both the psychiatric interpretation of the trauma Miss Havisham is undergoing and the Graham coding schema's use. The Dissociation Peak happens to Estella in the same way, when she says over and over to Miss Havisham, in Chapter 38, when the famous scene in the garden of London happens, and Estella says, pleased with her verbal reflection on her own courtesy as to Mr Jarvis, I am what you have made me, and says, not seeing any personal feelings, I have no heart, and refers to herself in the third person. This is the scene in which the maximum rate of dissociation (DS) of Estella is observed and measured during the analysis (see Table 3). Meanwhile, the dysregulation of affect (AD) in Miss Havisham decreases significantly, as indicated by a negative correlation in the data ( $r = -0.64$ ). This is a negative correlation, and this is the projective identification between the two characters, because what Miss Havisham is experiencing emotionally is turned inside out and displaced onto Estella. According to critics like Meckier., (2015)(24), this is identified as the point of introjection, at which the dissociative identity of Estella is fully crystallized. In this way, the quantitative analysis also reinforces the notion of literary theorists, as it validates the fact that such a moment is indicative of trauma transmission between Miss Havisham and Estella. Triple triangulation with quantitative evidence, canonical close-readings reveal that not only does the quantitative method confirm the discoveries of the literary scholarship, but it also enriches the interpretations. The results indicate that the coding scheme highlights passages that critics consider psychologically crucial; hence, the analysis is a valuable tool for validating both the textual and psychoanalytic readings of Great Expectations.

## Discussion

With its quick shifting moods and melodramatic self-pity, and somatic symptoms of clutching her hand to her chest, Miss Havisham embodies the symptom complex of the asylum literature at mid-nineteenth-century of the 1859 asylum reports noted as being the hysterical insanity (25,26). The prevalence of such diagnosis corresponds to the quantitative result of our logistic model, it appears that the likelihood of Miss Havisham obtaining Affect Dysregulation (AD) diagnosis is almost five times higher compared to the one that Estella gets (OR = 4.92, 95% X = 3.4 -7.1). This discovery provides statistically convincing evidence of the Victorian diagnosis of hysteria since what is intended above as the behavior of Miss Havisham is indeed linked directly with the clinical phenomenon. What Freud theorized was hysteria though is not just the existing of the preponderance of affect but a deficiency of binding and processing of the emotional arousal correctly(27). The statistics are symbolic: the powerful blaze of AD that is specified in Chapter 8, when Miss Havisham cries out in her pain and anguish, Broken! is an indication of a certain incapacity to control and subdue feeling. Missing Havisham, this is not a mere melodramatic display of grief exaggerated but in this critical moment, it is a clinically indicated symptom of not having processed the trauma of the betrayal and the emotional outburst is bordering being pathological. Quite the contrary, Estella manifests the symptoms that are much more matched to dissociation, as a defense mechanism against too much trauma. Dissociation may be of the kind that Ferenczi (1933: 228) termed the language of the double, the third person use of self, mechanical metaphors, dulled affect that atomizes the ego. This dissociative response is revealed in the data that demonstrate that the highest percentage that the novel keeps on expressing this response is 45.8 percent in the chapter-window where Estella says, I am what you have made me (Dickens, 1861/2008: 341). Critics have been reading this line since forever because it represents the culmination where the dissociated identity of Estella becomes hardened, so a decisive point comes when she is subject to internalizing the trauma of emotions that Miss Havisham deposited on her (28). This can be supported by logistic regression where it is indicated that Estella has more than three folds of chances of displaying dissociation more than Miss Havisham (OR = 0.33,  $p < .001$ ).

There is also an addition to the psychoanalytic core concept of the projective identification as there exists a robust negative relationship (-0.64, lag 0) which is, time-series between Miss Havisham AD and Estella DS. With the decreased overt emotional dysregulation on the part of Miss Havisham, some divorce of feeling is diffused to Estella, who takes it on herself and expresses that energy as dissociation or psychic numbing. This inverted relationship the AD of Miss Havisham is reduced and the DS of Estella is brought up which is a statistical expression of what the object-relations theorist like Winnicott (1968: 591)(29) referred to as a fabrication of a false self. The response to the distressing event, which is the impact produced by Miss Havisham, is Estella, who is a quieted, dissociated, false self, which protects her against the soul-crushing surfs of crushing loss and traumatic experience of being abandoned, much in the same fashion, that as a child has a false self during infancy to defuse against the trauma of being impinged on by the mother. The other notably said discovery is that the Miss Havisham and Estella do not exhibit a noticeable gap in terms of Victimhood Claims (VC). At the same time as the two characters claim their victimhood, their way of doing so is dichotomized by means of hysteria and dissociation. This expression of the complaint by Miss Havisham is out with florid explicit declarations of damage, but Estella, who bears the trauma in herself, must cast off at least some of it, and de-identify herself with the victimhood she is already interiorly undergoing. Dickens, in this way, is doing not merely than dramatising, a saga of vengeance, but a polluted transmission of horror across generations, rather. Such a change of mutual victimhood wherein both characters are simultaneously perpetrators and victims is brought into a tangible reality in the form of statistically quantifying victimhood of the first time. The tragic

aspect of the relationship, when the line between victim and perpetrator is crossed generation after generation, is emphasized with the help of psychoanalytic interpretation supported by the help of the quantitative data. With that, Dickens shows the broader psychological effects of the transmission of trauma, and places it on the recurrent loop: the characters have been left to exist on a cycle of inherited emotional pain.

### Limitations

There are several limitations to the study: the scope of the study is limited to a single text corpus, which may restrict the generalizability of the results to other literary texts. The binary coding system can suppress more subtle shifts in tone used within the emotional expressions of the characters, thereby further simplifying the psyche psychologically. Furthermore, the analysis may not completely separate the use of authorial voice from the interiority that the characters experience, as the larger narrative voice may interfere with the coding of emotions, leading to frustration with what amounts to purely character-driven psychological dimensions of the code.

### Conclusion

By integrating fine-grained psychoanalytic coding with corpus-scale metrics, this study shows that Dickens renders trauma not as moral allegory but as a rigorously patterned psychic circuit. Miss Havisham's hysterical surges (AD rate 44.6 %) and Estella's dissociative shield (DS rate 37.6 %) form a statistically coupled system whose inverse trajectories ( $r = -.64$ ) enact the very process of projective identification. Each woman thus occupies the dual role we term "dual victimhood": guardian becomes aggressor by evacuating unprocessed affect, ward becomes victim by embodying it, yet both remain trapped in reciprocal injury. The quantitative evidence substantiates clinical readings while revealing micro-rhythms of transmission invisible to traditional close reading alone. Future research could apply the same mixed method to other Victorian texts, Heathcliff and Catherine in *Wuthering Heights*, or Mrs. Reed and Jane Eyre, testing how far "poisonous pedagogies" replicate this measurable choreography of trauma across nineteenth-century fiction.

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