

# 『大いなる遺産』 — エステラの物語 *Great Expectations* as a Story of Estella

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## Preface

It is well-known that many of the characters in the works of Charles Dickens (1812–70) are orphans or children who receive little love from their parents. English literature abounds with orphan stories, from *Tom Jones* (1749) by Henry Fielding (1707–54) to the *Harry Potter* series (1997–2007) by J. K. Rowling (1965–), and some of Dickens' works also fit in this tradition. One feature of orphan stories is that they give writers a good basis for Bildungsroman. The most notable example among the works of Dickens is his semiautobiographical novel, *David Copperfield* (1849–50). Readers feel sympathy for the orphaned protagonist as he grows up through various hardships, and they share his happiness when he becomes an adult and gets happily married.

Another important feature of orphan stories is that they can provide a good setting for describing complex emotions felt by children who have suffered from a lack of parental love. *David Copperfield* includes an interesting example of this type of character — the fatherless James Steerforth, who cannot turn back even when faced with considerable danger because of his weak “super-ego,” the necessary mental restraint in human mind that Sigmund Freud said is developed by the father's discipline. In *Great Expectations* (1860–61), however, we see another character of the same type, Estella, who grew up without any love by parents or relatives around her and lives with a rich adoptive mother in a large house called “Satis.” James Steerforth and Estella have both grown up without their fathers' discipline, and Estella's adoptive mother Miss Havisham is as harmful to her as spoiling Mrs. Steerforth is to James.

Saka has already applied Freudian psychoanalysis to some characters of *David Copperfield* in “*David Copperfield* as a Psychological Pilgrimage.” This paper offers a new perspective by applying analyses based on Freudian psychology and a newer psychological theory called “attachment disorder,” advocated by John Bowlby (1907–90), to Estella as a means of interpreting *Great Expectations*.

## 1. First Appearance of Estella

Estella first appears in the house of a mysterious old woman, Miss Havisham in Chapter 8, when Pip calls at the Manor House, or “Satis” for the first time with Mr. Pumblechook.

A window was raised, and a clear voice demanded “What name?” To which my conductor replied, “Pumblechook.” The voice returned, “Quite right,” and the window was shut again, and a young lady came across the court-yard, with keys in her hand.

“This,” said Mr. Pumblechook, “is Pip.”

“This is Pip, is it?” returned the young lady, who was very pretty and seemed very proud; “come in, Pip.” (55)

Pip then enters the house, leaving Mr. Pumblechook outside, and Estella tells him about the deserted brewery and the house's name. Although they have a conversation, there seem to be no intimacy between them.

Though she called me "boy" so often, and with a carelessness that was far from complementary, she was of about my own age. She seemed much older than I, of course, being a girl, and beautiful and self-possessed; and she was scornful of me as if she had been one-and-twenty, and a queen. (56)

Estella does not even tell him her name, and Miss. Havisham is the first one to utter it when ordering Pip to call her back to the room after she has left.

Before she[Miss Havisham] spoke again, she turned her eyes from me, and looked at the dress she wore, and at the dressing-table, and finally at herself in the looking-glass.

"So new to him," she murmured, "so old to me; so strange to him, so familiar to me; so melancholy to both of us! Call Estella." (59)

Miss Havisham's words sound like a spell drawing Pip into the cobweb of the dark world of her broken spirit. It is quite easy to see that the name Estella was derived from the Latin word "stella," a star. Called by Pip, she "answered at last, and her light came along the long dark passage like a star" (59). Pip and Estella begin to play cards, and she mocks him for calling the knaves Jacks.

"He calls the knaves, Jacks, this boy!" said Estella with disdain, before our first game was out. "And what coarse hands he has. And what thick boots!"

I had never thought of being ashamed of my hands before; but I began to consider them a very indifferent pair. Her contempt was so strong, that it became infectious, and I caught it. (60)

Pip views Estella as very proud, very pretty, and very insulting, but he cannot resist her influence. He is literally enchanted by her. She, however, displays no emotion toward him. After they go out to the garden, Estella gives him some food as instructed by Miss. Havisham.

She came back, with some bread and meat and a little mug of beer. She put the mug down on the stones of the yard, and gave me the bread and meat without looking at me, as insolently as if I were a dog in disgrace. I was so humiliated, hurt, spurned, offended, angry, sorry...that tears started to my eyes. The moment they sprang there, the girl looked at me with a quick delight in having been the cause of them. (62)

Miss Havisham has raised Estella to exact vengeance on men by attracting boys and hurting them with cruel treatment. Thus, in a sense, Estella is fulfilling her mission very faithfully here. She seems, however, to act cruelly not out of a sense of responsibility but for the sadistic pleasure of bullying Pip to tears.

Escorting him out of the garden, she tries again to provoke him.

She gave me a triumphant glance in passing me, as if she rejoiced that my hands were so coarse and my boots were so thick, and she opened the gate, and stood holding it. I was passing out without looking at her, when she touched me with a taunting hand.

"Why don't you cry?"

"Because I don't want to."

"You do," said she. "You have been crying till you are half blind, and you are near crying again now."

She laughed contemptuously, pushed me out, and locked the gate upon me.(65)

## 2. Second Appearance of Estella

A week after his first encounter with Estella, Pip visits Satis again.

...my hesitating ring at the gate brought out Estella. She locked it after admitting me, as she had done before, and again preceded me into the dark passage where her candle stood. She took no notice of me until she had the candle in her hand, when she looked over her shoulder, superciliously saying, "You are to come this way to-day," and took me to quite another part of the house. (79)

The same cold Estella ushers Pip into a room where several of Miss Havisham's relatives wait to give Miss Havisham birthday greetings. After waiting there for some time, Estella calls him, saying, "Now, boy!" (82)

On the way to the room where Miss. Havisham waits, she stops and begins asking Pip questions.

"Am I pretty?"

"Yes; I think you are very pretty."

"Am I insulting?"

"Not so much so as you were last time," said I.

"Not so much so?"

"No."

She fired when she asked the last question, and she slapped my face with such force as she had, when I answered it. (82)

Estella's conduct here is quite startling and it teaches Pip and the readers what kind of a girl she is. She asks again.

"Now?" said she. "You little coarse monster, what do you think of me now?"

"I shall not tell you." (82)

He refuses to disclose his opinion and says he will never cry for her again, but he cries inwardly; "...I was inwardly crying for her then, and I know what I know of the pain she cost me afterwards" (82).

Though Estella has a cold heart, the anger she shows before slapping him reveals her excitable temperament she inherited from her parents. Her lack of empathy and the cruel joy she takes in Pip's pain highlight the defects of her personality.

After meeting with Miss Havisham, Pip encounters a boy in a dismal corner of the garden. This boy asks Pip:

"Who let *you* in?" said he.

"Miss Estella."

"Who gave you leave to prowl about?"

"Miss Estella."

"Come and fight," said the pale young gentleman. (90-91)

Although Pip does not notice it, this young gentleman, Herbert, challenges him for Estella. Pip fights him without knowing the reason for the fight and defeats him. When he goes into the court-yard where Estella is waiting, he notices something different about her: "...there was a bright flush upon her face, as

though something had happened to delight her” (93). Then she says to him, “Come here! You may kiss me, if you like” (93).

Seeing this violence excites Estella and she gives herself to Pip as a trophy for winning. This scene reveals two very important dimensions of Estella’s character: she does not cherish herself and gives herself away as if she were a thing, and she is unconsciously attracted to violence. The former attitude can be explained by the attachment disorder theory, and the latter by Freudian psychology.

### 3. How Was Estella Reared?

Estella’s parents and her childhood are kept secret from Pip and readers until she decides to marry the notorious villain, Bentley Drummle. After learning that Estella intends to marry this man in chapter 44, Pip meets Mr. Jaggers on the street and is invited for dinner. He notices the housekeeper, Molly, moving her fingers in a peculiar manner: “...a certain action of her fingers as she spoke arrested my attention” (390). The premonition soon becomes a conviction: “...when I had passed by a chance swift from Estella’s name to the fingers with their knitting action, and the attentive eyes. And I felt absolutely certain that this woman was Estella’s mother” (391).

Unable to restrain his desire to know about Estella’s childhood, Pip visits Wemmick to learn more about this mother and daughter. Wemmick tells him that Molly was tried for murder and acquitted with a clever defense presented by Mr. Jaggers, and that Mr. Jaggers “tamed” this beast-like young woman and made her the housekeeper of his house.

Pip next visits Satis and meets Miss Havisham hoping to learn how she adopted Estella in her infancy. Miss Havisham is compassionate with him because his affectionate speech to Estella on his previous visit moved her, and she tells him how she adopted Estella. After being betrayed by the man she was going to marry, Miss Havisham decided to adopt an orphan girl and asked Mr. Jaggers to find such a girl “to rear and love, and save from my fate” (400). Her first intention in adopting a girl was not to make her a monstrous girl with a cold heart: “...when she first came to me, I meant to save her from misery like my own. At first I meant no more” (399). However, Miss Havisham tells Pip, her intentions were gradually diverted:

“But as she grew, and promised to be very beautiful, I gradually did worse, and with my praises, and with jewels, and with my teachings, and with this figure of myself always before her a warning to back and point my lessons, I stole her heart away and put ice in its place” (399).

Thus, Miss Havisham reared Estella to be a cold, heartless girl. Miss Havisham says that Estella was 2 or 3 years old when she came to Satis.

After telling Pip this story, Miss Havisham’s dress catches fire in the hearth and burns up. Pip gets serious burns on his arms while trying to help her and then returns home to be attended by Herbert. While Pip was visiting Satis, Herbert had a long talk with Provis, whose real name was Magwitch, and he acquired a great deal of information about Provis’ wife and daughter, which he relates to Pip. Provis had a wife with no legal status when he was young and they had a daughter between them. Provis loved this daughter very much. He, however, was acquainted with another woman, who was about ten years older than Molly, and Molly became terribly jealous of the woman. Provis and his wife came to live separately, and the daughter, who was three years old, was in Molly’s hand after that. On the evening of the murder, she appeared before Provis with burning jealousy against his lover and said she would destroy the daughter so that he would never see her again, and then she vanished. Hearing this story, Pip realizes that Estella’s father was Provis. Provis believed that Molly killed his daughter, but the girl survived and was adopted by Miss Havisham.

Needless to say, Pip then rushes to visit Mr. Jaggers to verify that he brought Estella to Miss Havisham. Mr. Jaggers discusses the process of bringing Estella to Miss Havisham as an anecdote involving anonymous people, making no concrete admissions. He tells the story of a lawyer defending a suspect in a murder case who had a daughter. The lawyer had seen so many children of criminal parents live miserable lives. Therefore, when a rich lady who wanted to adopt a young girl asked him to find one, the lawyer convinced the murder suspect to give up her child and leaving her care to the lawyer. As the lawyer knew everything about her crime, she could do nothing but to agree.

These are the facts of Estella's infancy. Estella's mother, Molly, was a very violent woman and probably killed her husband's lover. Out of anger at her husband, Magwitch, she also threatened to kill Estella. Thus, the probability that she was violent towards Estella in her infancy is quite high. Estella's coldness and her tendency to be absorbed by violence suggest that her childhood was suffused with violence.

#### 4. Attachment Disorder

The theory of attachment disorder concerns the relationship between maternal love and the psychological development of children. The following is a summary of the theory based on *Attachment, Trauma, and Healing*.

Until the first half of the 19th century, experts in behaviorism believed that children were “blank slates” to be shaped by their environments, and they advised parents not to hug or kiss children, or let them sit on their laps because these acts only create demanding and needy children.

However, in the mid-1900s, Bowlby's study of antisocial children and adolescents led him to recognize the importance of the attachment between infants and their mothers. He found that his antisocial subjects had experienced early mother-child separation in some way or other and concluded that this separation had caused these “affectionless children” to function poorly in society. He also found that disturbing attitudes on the mother's side, if regularly shown, could be the cause of mental separation and prevent children from forming attachment to their mother. Presumably, this applies in the case of Molly and Estella. Bowlby claims that this kind of attachment disorder causes 1. a lack of empathy, 2. conduct disorders, 3. inability to give and receive affection, and 4. attentional deficits.

Estella's character does not show any sign of the symptoms 2. or 4, but the symptoms 1. and 3. are quite evident especially in her conduct towards Pip when they are children.

Henecy Sumiko, a Japanese social worker, identifies the notorious serial killer Ted Bundy (1946-89), who killed more than 30 young women and girls in the most cruel and diabolic ways, as someone who suffered from an extreme attachment disorder. Estella's inclination toward violence and her inability to love indicate that she has a serious attachment disorder. For the first three years of her life, she was raised by a violent mother, Molly, who threatened to kill her just to torment her father, Magwitch. Then she was adopted by Miss Havisham, who attempted to shape her into a weapon to torment men—an instrument of Miss Havisham's vengeance against men in the world. These circumstances prevented Estella from ever forming lasting attachments with anyone around her. Thus, attachment disorder explains her character quite well.

#### 5. Estella's Marriage—Repetition Compulsion

Estella grows up to be a beautiful young lady and decides to marry a notorious scoundrel, Bentley Drummle. Pip hears the rumor of her marriage and goes to Satis to confess his love for her:

“I know. I have no hope that I shall ever call you mine, Estella. I am ignorant what may become

of me very soon, how poor I may be, or where I may go. Still, I love you. I have loved you ever since I first saw you in this house.”

Looking at me perfectly unmoved and with her fingers busy, she shook her head again. (362)

Dickens uses the word “unmoved” three times to describe Estella’s attitude toward Pip in this scene. Estella continues as follows:

“It seems,” said Estella, very calmly, “that there are sentiments, fancies—I don’t know how to call them—which I am not able to comprehend. When you say you love me, I know what you mean, as a form of words; but nothing more. You address nothing in my breast, you touch nothing there.” (362)

The word love can touch nothing in Estella because there is no such thing as love in her heart. In chapter 38, Miss Havisham begins to blame Estella for her coldness, but Estella retorts without slightest agitation:

“Mother by adoption, I have said that I owe everything to you. All I possess is freely yours. All that you have given me, is at your command to have again. Beyond that, I have nothing. And if you ask me to give you what you never gave me, my gratitude and duty cannot do impossibilities.”

“Did I never give her, love!” cried Miss Havisham, turning wildly to me. (304–305)

Estella’s mother, Molly, may have taught her violence, and her adoptive mother Miss Havisham taught her vengeance, but no one ever taught her love.

Pip, therefore, wonders why Estella chooses to marry Drummle.

“You would never marry him, Estella?”

She looked towards Miss Havisham, and considered for a moment with her work in her hands. Then she said, “Why not tell you the truth? I am going to be married to him.” (363)

Hearing this confession, Pip wrongly concludes that Miss Havisham forced Estella into marriage, but Estella denies it:

“Why do you injuriously introduce the name of my mother by adoption? It is my own act.”

“Your own act, Estella, to fling yourself away upon a brute?”

“On whom should I fling myself away?” she retorted, with a smile. “Should I fling myself away upon the man who would the soonest feel (if people do feel such things) that I took nothing to him? There! It is done. I shall do well enough, and so will my husband. As to leading me into what you call this fatal step, Miss Havisham would have had me wait, and not marry yet; but I am tired of the life I have had, which has very few charms for me, and I am willing enough to change it. Say no more. We shall never understand each other.” (364)

Thinking she can change her life through marriage, she decides to marry a man who is likely to ill-treat her. Estella, raised until the age of three by a violent mother, thus intends—unconsciously—to return to a life with a violent person. Such conduct is consistent with the notion of “repetition compulsion” in psychoanalysis that horrible experiences repeat in the minds of the people who had them (flash-back), or that people who went through a horrible situation unconsciously attempt to fling themselves into similar situations. A daughter of a violent father marrying a violent husband is a typical

symptom of repetition compulsion. Freud tried to explain why people tend to engage in such self-destructive conduct by introducing the notion of “death drive” in his essay “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” (1920). This theory helps illuminate Estella’s enigmatic marriage.

Estella cannot love or understand love because she did not form attachment with her mother, and she marries a violent man like Drummle because her death drive makes her unconsciously attracted to him, compelling her to put herself into violent circumstances again. Estella’s life can thus be seen as a psychoanalytic tragedy.

## 6. Pip Changes Estella

After confessing her plan to marry Drummle, Estella says to Pip, “You will get me out of your thoughts in a week” (364).

Hearing this, Pip passionately proclaims his love for her:

“Out of my thoughts! You are part of my existence, part of myself. You have been in every line I have read, since I first came here, the rough common boy whose poor heart you wounded even then ... You have been the embodiment of every graceful fancy that my mind has ever become acquainted with... Estella, to the last hours of my life, you cannot choose but remain part of my character, part of the little good in me, part of the evil. But, in this separation I associate you only with the good, and I will faithfully hold you to that always, for you must have done me far more good than harm, let me feel now what sharp distress I may. O God bless you, God forgive you!” (364–65)

These words provoke the following reactions in Estella and Miss Havisham:

...while Estella looked at me merely with incredulous wonder, the spectral figure of Miss Havisham, her hand still covering her heart, seemed all resolved into a ghastly stare of pity and remorse. (365)

Miss Havisham holds her hand over her heart as Pip proclaims his love for Estella because his words remind her of her feelings for the man whom she wanted to marry when she was young.

The text tells us that the words only provoked “wonder” in Estella, but these words mean more than Pip or Estella realizes: this is the first time that Estella receives real love from anyone on earth. Although she seems to be too old to receive treatment for the attachment disorder, Pip’s words give Estella some self-esteem and make it possible for her to believe her life is still worth living. However, it is not until she has undergone a great deal of hardship that the real value of his words is realized. In the novel’s last chapter, Pip and Estella meet again by chance after a long separation in the yard of the deserted garden of Satis:

“Estella!”

“I am greatly changed. I wonder you know me.”

The freshness of her beauty was indeed gone, but its indescribable majesty and its indescribable charm remained. (483)

She seems to be ashamed of herself for the change. This kind of attitude could never be seen with her before. Later in their conversation, she says:

“I have often thought of you,” said Estella.

“Have you?”

“Of late, very often. There was a long hard time when I kept far from me, the remembrance of what I had thrown away when I was quite ignorant of its worth.” (484)

She continues:

“But you said to me,” returned Estella, very earnestly, “ ‘God bless you, God forgive you!’ And if you could say that to me then, you will not hesitate to say that to me now—now, when suffering has been stronger than all other teaching, and has taught me to understand what your heart used to be. I have been bent and broken, but—I hope—into a better shape. Be as considerate and good to me as you were, and tell me we are friends.” (484)

Now we can see that the words of Pip’s prayer for her still live in her mind as a kind of love or attachment, giving her strength to persevere through life’s hardships and teaching her the value of life. Here, as the story ends, she appears to have overcome her mental disorders and achieved a kind of redemption.

### Conclusion — Possibility of Love and Empathy

Dickens wrote two versions of the ending of *Great Expectations*. Rosenberg writes, “Nothing in *Great Expectations* has generated more heat than Dickens’s decision to rewrite the conclusion of the novel, with the result that he left critics with two endings to fight over” (491). Dickens wrote the first version of the ending, which Rosenberg calls “the unhappy ending” (491), and showed it to his fellow writer Bulwer-Lytton before submitting the manuscript to the publisher. Bulwer-Lytton, however, was not satisfied with the unhappy ending and advised Dickens to rewrite it. Dickens then wrote “the happy ending” to which readers of the novel are generally accustomed. Dickens’ biographer, John Forster and many of Dickens’ critics seem to prefer the unhappy ending.

When we read the work, however, as a novel of Estella’s psychological development from a young woman suffering an attachment disorder to a woman capable of love and empathy, the rewritten version appears more consistent. This work, of course, has various aspects, and Estella’s development is only one of them. Considering, however, that she was the primary force motivating Pip to become a gentleman and that both versions end in the reunion of Pip and Estella anyway, the revised and prolonged version is more effective, especially in fully depicting how Pip’s words facilitate Estella’s mental development.

*Great Expectation* is ultimately Pip’s story, but Estella inspires him and drives the story forward. In the rewritten version, these orphan children, Pip and Estella, return after long journeys to Satis on the same day and are spiritually united. This gives the novel a kind of cyclic form and tells us their spiritual journeys have come to an end at Satis, “Enough House” (56), where it all began a long time ago.

### Note

This English paper is written by Saka based on Mana Miyazawa’s Japanese paper (“Pip to Estella: Aichaku-shogai Riron ni yoru Hikaku Bunseki” [“Pip and Estella: An Comparative Analysis Based on Attachment Disorder Theory”]. A Graduation Thesis for the Department of British and American Language and Culture. Nagano Prefectural College, 2018). Saka has revised Miyazawa’s paper by shifting the main point from comparison of Pip with Estella to Estella’s disorder and development that leads to “the happy ending” of the story, adding some new information, citation and viewpoints in the course of the revision.

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