The Portrayal of Miss Havisham's Body

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Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku

Preddiplomski sveučilišni studij Anglistike (dvopredmetni)

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Zadar, 4. rujna 2022.

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1. Introduction

Great Expectations (1861), often described as a gothic masterpiece, undoubtedly belongs among Charles Dickens's most renowned works, and is widely acclaimed and still very much discussed among literary theorists. One of the reasons why this Victorian novel is still relevant in Victorian discourse can undeniably be attributed to one of Dickens's most eccentric characters and her many idiosyncrasies – Miss Havisham, who provides an inexhaustible source for psychiatric and psychological diagnostic evaluations. In most texts, such as in "Miss Havisham and Victorian Psychiatry" written by Akiko Takei, "Lunacy under Lock and Key" by Manon de Beijer, and "Victorian Domestic Disorders: Mental Illness and Nature-Nurture Confusion" by Margaret Burke Laird, Miss Havisham's peculiarities are primarily associated with lunacy – she is often referred to as a prototypical madwoman. It is important to note that Charles Dickens, who, like many of his contemporaries, understood the plights of the mentally ill, described "mental illness as a 'terrible calamity'" and advocated treating patients with humanity (Beveridge qtd. in de Beijer 17). Furthermore, he advocated moral treatment "with the minimal use of standard medical techniques and mechanical restraints" (Takei 1). Dickens's literary work is a reflection of his interest in mental illnesses, and his portrayal of madness unveils the fact that he had a sympathetic view of the mentally ill (de Beijer 17); many of his characters are "eccentrics", or even "mad", but the story usually provides a reason why they became mentally ill in the first place (Beveridge qtd. in de Beijer 17), and this is also very much apparent in his portrayal of Miss Havisham. Even though madness is generally acknowledged as the primary cause of Miss Havisham's aberrations, her "illness was . . . incomprehensible to most Victorian readers because it was difficult to distinguish between eccentricity and insanity" (Takei 3). In order to distinguish between the two, this paper intends to assess Miss Havisham's condition from a different perspective. One

of the discourses that will be relevant in this context is the one on anorexia nervosa and the fact that it is one of the first female mental disorders that was diagnosed in the 19th century (Showalter 127), and that its emergence can be greatly attributed to cultural beliefs of the era (Chou 192). Taking this into consideration, the paper will attempt to determine whether Miss Havisham's eccentricity and peculiarity can be attributed to an eating disorder.

2. Who is Miss Havisham?

Miss Havisham, in the novel already an elderly, eccentric, and wealthy spinster living in a decaying mansion, was marked in her youth by a traumatic event; against all warning signs, she foolishly accepted her lover Compeyson's advances and was jilted by him on their wedding day. As a result, she self-imprisoned herself in Satis House, a place where time virtually stopped at twenty to nine. Although Satis House was once a rather handsome manor, it now lies ravaged by mould, thick layers of dust, and crawling vermin that gnaw at this grief-stricken heap of decay that serves as a safe shelter for the sorrowful lady who desperately wanted to exclude herself from society, determined to never overcome the consequences of the traumatic event that happened in her youth. In the "Introduction" to *Great Expectations*, Dr. John Bowen notes that Miss Havisham was, in fact, "the victim of a terrible trauma, which she condemns herself to repeat day after day, night after night, alone and friendless" (Bowen qtd. in de Beijer 18). This trauma has prompted her to adopt and raise a girl called Estella, with the sole purpose of using her adoptive daughter as a weapon for seeking revenge on all men. The fact that sunlight never reached the rooms of Satis House, that the wedding feast was rotting for decades, and that Miss Havisham never changed from her wedding dress which turned into a yellowish shade of white, could potentially indicate the decay and withering of her own body and mind.

Since it would be insufficient to focus solely on the scarce descriptions of Miss Havisham's body from the novel, this paper will also take into consideration her relationship with food and potentially erratic behavioural patterns in order to provide insight into her condition.

3. The Portrayal of Miss Havisham's Body

Miss Havisham could definitively be considered one of Dickens's most peculiar characters, which becomes even more pronounced when one considers the portrayal of her body. So how did Dickens portray Miss Havisham's body? The majority of the descriptions come from the novel's protagonist Pip, who seems to be frightened by her ghoulish appearance. During their encounter at Satis House, Pip doubts the possibility that such a figure should exist in reality:

> I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress, and like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes. I saw that the dress had been put upon the rounded figure of a young woman, and that the figure upon which it now hung loose had shrunk to skin and bone. Once, I had been taken to see some ghastly waxwork at the Fair, representing I know not what impossible personage lying in state. Once, I had been taken to one of our old marsh churches to see a skeleton in the ashes of a rich dress that had been dug out of a vault under the church pavement. Now, waxwork and skeleton seemed to have dark eyes that moved and looked at me. (Dickens 52)

This paragraph is especially important in that it represents Pip's and Miss Havisham's first encounter; one that will leave a long-lasting impression on him. Pip perceives Miss Havisham as a skeletal figure whose frame has shrunken to a withered state, and as a less-than-human wax figure with hollow eyes (all of which could be an indicator of malnutrition).

Furthermore, he sees her as a witch, an ageing woman with walking abnormalities. In chapter XI, he says that she had a "crutch-headed stick on which she leaned, and she looked like the Witch of the place" (Dickens 77). Moreover, in chapter VIII, Pip also compares her to a corpse, saying that her demeanour during his and Estella's play, was "corpse like" (55).

In addition, throughout the novel one can observe instances of spatial decline and the decay of household items, that is, Miss Havisham's belongings, which are portrayed as decomposing: "Without this arrest of everything, this standing still of all the pale decayed objects, not even the withered bridal dress on the collapsed form could have looked so like grave-clothes, or the long veil so like a shroud" (Dickens 55). In this paragraph, Dickens also draws attention to Miss Havisham's corpse-like clothes, which become the central trait of her otherworldly physical portrayal. Therefore, it can be argued that the almost terror-like sensation that Pip experiences during his first encounter with Miss Havisham becomes even more pronounced once he starts giving attention to her clothing. In chapter XLIV, Dickens also refers to "the spectral figure of Miss Havisham…" (Dickens 334). This could be Dickens's way of drawing attention to her alarming thinness, and even serve as an accentuation of her non-human characteristics. In the article "Lunacy under Lock and Key: A Comparison of the Portrayal of Madness in Victorian and Neo-Victorian Fiction", Miss Havisham is described as "a fantastic creation, a being who has once been human" (Slater qtd. in Beijer 292), while in the "Introduction" to *Great Expectations* Bowen adds that Miss Havisham lives on the edge of society and humanity, almost resembling a vampire (x). As we have seen, the authors generally agree with the notion of Miss Havisham representing a corpse-like, emaciated, less-than-human figure.

Furthermore, Dickens often implemented the adjectives "ghostly" and "ghastly" to portray Miss Havisham's body, further accentuating her otherworldliness. For example, in chapter XX, Dickens delineates: "her own awful figure with its ghostly reflection" (Dickens

277). However, this is not an isolated instance. In chapter XXI, he describes Pip's acute anxiety upon seeing the spectral figure of Miss Havisham, "going along in a ghostly manner, making a low cry" (Dickens 208). Just as Dickens used these adjectives to portray her movements, he used them to accentuate her frightful appearance: "Though every vestige of her dress was burnt, as they told me, she still had something of her old ghastly bridal appearance…" (Dickens 368). It is important to emphasise that Dickens was not the only author who drew a comparison between the frighteningly wasted figure of the corpse and emaciation; this issue has also been explored in some other Victorian novels. For example, in Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley*, the characters Miss Ainley and Miss Mann are associated with the wasting of the body and strict self-denial: "Miss Mann, for instance, 'exercised rigid self-denial' and simultaneously endures 'slow-wasting . . . sufferings' that leave her 'corpse-like'" (Silver 92). Similarly, in *Great Expectations*, Miss Havisham's gauntness is emphasised several times throughout the novel, for instance: "I could feel the muscles of the thin arm round my neck swell with the vehemence that possessed her" (Dickens 219).

Moreover, as observable in the quotation above in which Dickens draws attention to Miss Havisham's "grave clothes" (334), it can be argued that her attire has an important role in the portrayal of her outer appearance. To illustrate, her thinness is even more pronounced through the eccentric clothes that she is persistently wearing, but which obviously do not fit her anymore. It can be argued that Dickens purposefully employs such clothing to accentuate the almost decaying state of Miss Havisham's body: "she in her once white dress, all yellow and withered; the once white cloth all yellow and withered; everything around in a state to crumble under a touch" (Dickens 81). Additionally, when it comes to the description of her outer appearance, it is important to mention that Miss Havisham wore once white, bridal clothing, lace, ribbons, and jewellery: "She was dressed in rich materials—satins, and lace, and silks—all of white. Her shoes were white. And she had a long white veil dependent from

her hair, and she had bridal flowers in her hair, but her hair was white. Some bright jewels sparkled on her neck and on her hands, and some other jewels lay sparkling on the table" (Dickens 52). It can be argued that such attire, especially white colour, is not chosen coincidentally. In the 19th century, such clothing was connected to female weakness and invalidism. For example, in the book *Victorian Literature and the Anorexic Body*, the author Anya Krugovoy Silver gives an example of a Welsh girl Sarah Jacob, who was known for the fact that she allegedly lived without food from 1867 to 1869, and who was dressed by her parents in such attire to highlight her weakness and fragility: "Moreover, the great attention that Jacob's family gave to dressing their daughter in ribbons, lace, jewelry, and even a white bridal wreath indicates that they understood her weakness and invalidism, demonstrated by her lack of appetite, as closely connected to a hyperbolic femininity" (Silver 44-45). This description can be applied to Miss Havisham in the sense that white colour was potentially used by Dickens to emphasise her gauntness and the fragile state of her emaciated body.

Furthermore, the unconventional and bizarre appearance of Miss Havisham is illustrated through another description provided by Pip: "but I saw everything within my view which ought to be white, had been white long ago, and had lost its lustre, and was faded and yellow. I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress, and like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes" (Dickens 52). In Victorian literature, decay was a recurring motif; generally, it symbolised the decomposition of old, traditional ideas and a way of thinking and a general predilection for liberal ideas and tendencies (Khanna). Likewise, in *Great Expectations,* Dickens proposed several aspects of decay; that of nature, people, and society, and in order to depict this, he used the colour yellow repeatedly throughout the novel (Khanna). Yellow is mostly used when describing Satis House and some of the characters, all of which exhibit certain features of dilapidation and decay (Khanna). This is primarily noticeable when it comes to the descriptions of Miss

Havisham; the use of faded, yellow colour can, along with decay, be understood as a potential indicator of an illness. Everything that looked beautiful and white once, has turned into an unsightly shade of yellow; her clothes, her complexion, and her spirit (Khanna). The comparison with withering flowers that turn yellow and eventually die possibly insinuates the fact that no living being can sustain their life without satisfying their primary needs; sunlight for plants, and food for animals and humans.

In summary, this chapter aimed to provide a detailed description of Miss Havisham's outer appearance, with an emphasis on her body and her clothing. As mentioned, Miss Havisham is considered a particularly distinct and unique character, and this distinctiveness is achieved to a great degree through Dickens's portrayal of her body. She is often described as a skeletal figure with sunken facial features, and the repeated employment of adjectives such as "ghostly" and "ghastly" in her descriptions highlights her otherwordliness. Furthermore, it may be argued that Dickens deliberately used white and yellow colour when describing Miss Havisham's attire, since it draws attention to her weakness and fragility, as well as decay and illness.

4. Miss Havisham's Relationship with Food

As we have seen, the great majority of the descriptions of Miss Havisham were focused on her similarity with a corpse, waxwork, skeleton, ghost, etc., on her oversized clothes which emphasise her thinness, and on the specific use of colouring which accentuates her unhealthy complexion and potentially indicates a certain illness. In order to gain a deeper understanding of her unusual state mentioned in the chapter above, this chapter will focus on Miss Havisham's relationship with food, and in an effort to do so, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the relationship between Victorian women and some female characters in Victorian literature, and food.

Victorian women were usually seen as highly spiritual beings, and in order for them to comply with this ideal, they were expected to disguise every facet of their corporeality, which was, to a great degree, concerned with meal times and eating (Silver 9). For nineteenth-century women, meal times were in fact just a means of exhibiting their incorporeality through a reduced appetite and a particularly slim body (Silver 9). According to Victorian standards, an ideal woman is one who "eats little and delicately" (Michie qtd. in Silver 9), and her identity as a profoundly pure and spiritual being is under a constant threat of her physicality (9). Brumberg claims that appetite is in fact "a barometer of a woman's moral state" (179). In the article "The Appetite as Voice", Chou also argues that the more a woman was able to control her body and appetite, the more she was considered a spiritual and moral being (Chou 208).

Since literature usually provides an insight into the circumstances of a particular time period, and, since authors often mirror the reality and struggles of their contemporaries, one might argue that literature has an important role when observing and analysing the everyday life and habits of 19th-century society. Although it is not completely clear to what degree the portrayal of a woman's body in Victorian literature actually represents real nineteenth-century women, such discourses most likely affected their behaviour (directly or indirectly), and they provide insight into the relationship between eating, class, and femininity (Silver 10). Prototypical Victorian heroines, such as Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre, Charles Dickens's Little Dorrit, and George Eliot's Dorothea Brooke are characterised by pale, slender, and fragile bodies, which are almost always accompanied by a small appetite (10). In Victorian discourse, such representations of the female body usually epitomize pure, ethereal women devoid of all traces of sexuality (10). This, however, was not the only view of women in Victorian discourse. At the same time, they were characterised as being potentially aggressive, angry, and having an insatiable sexual desire (10). Since plumpness symbolised

hunger, desire, and impulse, self-control and restrictions were a crucial part of the life of Victorian women, especially when it comes to appetite, and a slim body was a symbol not only of purity, but of self-discipline as well (10).

Furthermore, the practice of fasting seems to have had an especially important role for Victorian women. Fasting, which was a common practice among women at that time, was regarded as a particularly feminine behavior, since food refusal illustrated great self-discipline and the rejection of carnality (Silver 12-13). Women limited their food intake for various reasons, such as bodily, religious, social, or spiritual (Chou 212). Fasting was considered a reflection of self-discipline and control over women's appetites and desires, as well as a way of stifling any kind of temptation and enticement of their bodies (Chou 209). A slender body also served as a class marker, and class and sexuality were commonly intersected in Victorian discourse; for example, a robust milkmaid's body was an indicator of moral impurity (Silver 13).

Since different kinds of food were believed to have different effects on one's mood and sexual desire, they were usually categorised as either "female" or "male". Women were advised to eat only such foods which would assuage their sexual desire, since eating other foods was considered improper and potentially hazardous for their health. Overly salty and spicy foods, as well as meats, were not allowed; instead, women were suggested to follow a very bland diet (Silver 45). Even the consumption of such bland foods was considered awkward for women, since the mere act of eating was associated with bodily functions such as digestion and defecation (Silver 46). The fear of bodily functions among Victorian women was also one of the reasons for their limited food intake – this was especially prevalent among upper-middle-class women, who were particularly concerned with "good taste" (Brumberg qtd. in Chou 200). As it has already been mentioned, a nineteenth-century woman was seen as

a highly spiritual being, and any indicator of her corporality (such as hunger and the act of eating) could be observed as awkward, embarrassing, or even inappropriate.

Victorian women did eat, but generally, in rather insufficient quantities, and malnutrition, which was in fact an essential segment of female beauty, was ubiquitous among a portion of the female population (Chou 195). Additionally, young women were often told that overindulgence in food often leads to certain undesirable physical characteristics, such as broken blood vessels on their noses, blemishes, thickening of the lips, which also causes them to crack and lose their red colour, and they were also considered to have a certain superanimal facial expression, which was considered an indicator of their primary instincts (Brumberg qtd. in Chou 199).

When it comes to Victorian children's literature, girls were often praised for controlling their appetite and limiting their food intake; therefore, denial in that sense was also an indicator of femininity (Silver 52). Moreover, an ideal Victorian girl is able to suppress her appetite in situations where others around her are hungry, since, for her, feeding others is an act of charity and generosity, and therefore more important than feeding yourself (Silver 55).[1]

Feeding others seems to be an important aspect of the portrayal of a prototypical, ideal woman in Victorian literature, especially when it comes to Dickens's heroines. Silver states that Dickens's female characters are depicted as naturally self-disciplined and nonindulgent, concerned with feeding others, and rarely seen eating (82). Miss Havisham is, similarly, never seen eating, and it can be argued that she also exhibited a rather peculiar interest in feeding others. There are a few instances from the novel when Miss Havisham indirectly feeds Pip:

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[1] For example, Silver mentions "Little Kate's Great Feast" from 1860, in which the girl called Kate voluntarily gave up her food in order to feed a poor girl whom Kate encountered: "I have not had anything to eat. Well, well! Yet it seems to me as if I had never before had a feast I so much enjoyed" (*Girl's Birthday Book* qtd. in Silver 55).

"Estella, take him down. Let him have something to eat, and let him roam and look about him while he eats. Go, Pip" (Dickens 56).

This, however, is not an isolated instance. In chapter XII, Pip describes how he was fed in an almost "dog-like manner": "When we had played some half-dozen games, a day was appointed for my return, and I was taken down into the yard to be fed in the former dog-like manner" (81-82). However, Miss Havisham's reasons for feeding Pip were quite different; they can rather be associated with her wish to humiliate him: "I was so humiliated, hurt, spurned, offended, angry, sorry—I cannot hit upon the right name for the smart—God knows what its name was—that tears started to my eyes" (Dickens 57). As it was mentioned above, prototypical Victorian female characters were, like Miss Havisham, particularly interested in feeding others, but, unlike her, who was feeding Pip as a means of humiliating him, other female characters from that period used the act of feeding others to express kindness, charity, and generosity. Therefore, this facet of Miss Havisham's behaviour displays a shift from the archetypal Victorian woman and her relationship with food.

Furthermore, when it comes to Miss Havisham's relationship with food, what is particularly striking are the numerous descriptions of her bridal feast, or, in other words, food that was prepared for her wedding day, but which, after being jilted by Compeyson, remained untouched, and was left to rot for many years:

> An epergne or centre-piece of some kind was in the middle of this cloth; it was so heavily overhung with cobwebs that its form was quite indistinguishable; and, as I looked along the yellow expanse out of which I remember its seeming to grow, like a black fungus, I saw speckle-legged spiders with blotchy bodies run home to it, and running out from it . . . I heard the mice too, rattling behind the panels, as if the same occurrence were important to their interests. But the black beetles took no notice of the

> agitation, and groped about the hearth in a ponderous elderly way, as if they were short-sighted and hard of hearing, and not on terms with one another. (Dickens 76-77)

Moreover, the rotten bride-cake, as well as the mouldering table, are often mentioned throughout the novel. For instance, in chapter XIX, Pip recounted how he saw Miss Havisham "standing in the midst of the dimly lighted room beside the rotten bride-cake that was hidden in cobwebs" (Dickens 144). There is another instance of Pip mentioning the rotted cake in the same chapter: "She was then just abreast of the rotted bride-cake" (Dickens 143). Elsewhere in the novel, that is, in chapter XXIX, the mouldering table is mentioned once again: "The old wintry branches of chandeliers in the room where the mouldering table was spread had been lighted while we were out, and Miss Havisham was in her chair and waiting for me" (Dickens 218). Miss Havisham also refers to what once was a bridal feast as a "heap of decay": "On this day of the year, long before you were born, this heap of decay . . . was brought here. It and I have worn away together (Dickens 81). It can be concluded that all of these descriptions clearly emphasise the apparently disagreeable link between Victorian women and food. The portrayal of the mouldering bridal feast sheds light on Miss Havisham's abnormal relationship with food and her eating aberrations, and the day when that "heap of decay" was first brought into the room and left untouched could signify the onset of her disordered eating patterns.

As for Miss Havisham's eating habits, she is never actually seen eating in the novel, not only by us readers, but by other characters as well, because she never allowed that to happen, which is clearly depicted through Jaggers's conversation with Pip:

> While we were still on our way to those detached apartments across the paved yard at the back, he asked me how often I had seen Miss Havisham eat and drink; offering me a breadth of choice, as usual, between a hundred times and once. I considered, and said, 'Never.' 'And never will, Pip,' he retorted, with a frowning smile. 'She has never allowed herself to be seen doing either, since she lived this present life of

hers. She wanders about in the night, and then lays hands on such food as she takes. (Dickens 221)

This conversation could provide food for thought, since it is not completely clear why Dickens decided to include the fact that Miss Havisham is never seen eating, and could be a potential indicator of certain underlying causes of such behaviour. So far it has been argued that Dickens constantly compares Miss Havisham's body to that of a decaying corpse, a wax figure, which could potentially refer to her unnatural skin tone, and to a witch, who is often portrayed as an ageing woman with a shriveled and sagging body. As argued, De Beijer and Bowen also draw attention to her less-than-humaneness and vampire-like portrayal, emphasizing her unnatural thinness (20; x). Miss Havisham's emaciation is also emphasised through her relationship with food which is almost non-existent, except for her inclination toward feeding other protagonists, for the purpose of humiliating them. Taking all of these examples into careful consideration, it can be argued that Dickens draws attention to her unhealthy relationship with food. From these descriptions, it cannot be clearly determined whether Miss Havisham avoided food because of the previously mentioned reasons, such as bodily, religious, social, or spiritual (Chou 212), or because she was particularly concerned with good taste (Brumberg qtd. in Chou 200). Furthermore, there are no indications that Miss Havisham aspired to retain, as Silver writes in relation to Victorian women in general, her hyperbolically feminine image (Silver 44-45). There is no clear, resolute motive for her unusual relationship with food, therefore, the paper intents to investigate whether Miss Havisham suffers from anorexia nervosa.

5. Anorexia Nervosa in the Victorian Era

The previous chapter aimed to provide an overview of Miss Havisham's relationship with food, as well as the general eating habits of women in the 19th century. As mentioned,

the depiction of Miss Havisham's unusual relationship with food and almost non-existent eating habits imply that she might have been suffering from an eating disorder, or, more precisely, anorexia nervosa. However, in order to determine whether Miss Havisham actually suffered from anorexia nervosa, it is essential to investigate her erratic behavioural patterns mentioned in the novel in relation to its symptoms and causes.

To begin with, anorexia nervosa was initially diagnosed in 1873 by two physicians; Sir William Withey Gull and Charles Lasegue (Silver 1). The fact that anorexia was first diagnosed in the 19th century was most likely no coincidence. Silver claims that certain ideologies around that period enabled the existence of this eating disorder (27). As already stated, food restriction was, in fact, "implicitly connected to the larger cultural validation for self-control" (13). Furthermore, according to costume historians and the sartorial evidence from the 19th century, Victorian women were particularly concerned with looking beautiful (28). It is important to mention that the ubiquitous corsets were a "visible marker of the culture of anorexia"; they perfectly depict the obligation imposed by the culture of that time for women to be slim, as well as the way women succumbed to that beauty standard (36). Like fasting, corset-wearing represented a woman's control over her body and her necessity for self-regulation (36). An additional factor that could have contributed to the occurrence of eating disorders in Victorian women was the fact that normal health was considered overly masculine and dangerous; therefore, "proper" women were weak, ill, and helpless (Dijkstra qtd. in Silver 44). Furthermore, many theorists believed that anorexia nervosa in adolescent girls arose due to their rejection of sexual maturity that accompanies their changing bodies, and since hunger for food symbolised hunger for sex, they refused to acknowledge it (Tolman and Debold qtd. in Silver 52).

When it comes to Dickens's writing, his female characters' slim and frail bodies were usually associated with their selfless personality, as well as their lack of sensuality; in many

cases, he in fact romanticised starvation and hunger (Silver 81). Similarly, his young female characters are never overweight, and their lack of appetite depicts a lack of sexual desire and selflessness (82). For instance, in Dickens's novel *The Old Curiosity Shop*, the death of the character Nell is not described in detail, but after a strenuous journey, she was unable to recover her strength, and she ultimately starved to death, and, throughout the novel, this starvation is depicted as an indicator of her selflessness (Silver 84). Furthermore, through the portrayal of the female body in most of Dickens's novels, he suggested that a woman's body is naturally abstinent (82).

5.1. Miss Havisham and Symptoms of Anorexia Nervosa

According to the 4th edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* published by the American Psychiatric Association, "the essential features of Anorexia Nervosa are that the individual refuses to maintain a minimally normal body weight, is intensely afraid of gaining weight, and exhibits significant disturbance in the perception of the shape or size of his or her body" (583). Furthermore, their body weight is well below expected for their age and height (583). Anorexia nervosa has two following subtypes: the restricting and the binge eating and/or purging type. (585). The restricting type of anorexia nervosa is characterised by weight loss "accomplished primarily through dieting, fasting, or excessive exercise", while the binge-eating/purging subtype is diagnosed "when the individual has regularly engaged in binge eating or purging (or both) during the current episode" (585). Moreover, "most individuals with Anorexia Nervosa who binge eat also purge through self-induced vomiting or the misuse of laxatives, diuretics, or enemas" (585). As mentioned in the chapter "The Portrayal of Miss Havisham's Body", throughout the novel, Miss Havisham was often described as an extremely thin woman; a skeletal, undernourished figure, with clothes loosely hanging on her gaunt body, all of which are clear indicators that

she was severely underweight for her age and height, as the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* emphasises (583).

For patients suffering from anorexia nervosa, weight regulation is most often achieved through food intake reduction (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* 584). First, an anorexic person might begin excluding only foods which they consider to be high in calories, but after a while, they might establish an extremely restrictive diet, consisting only of a few foods (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* 584). When it comes to Miss Havisham, she clearly exhibited food intake reduction; as observed in the conversation between Jaggers and Pip in chapter XXIX, Miss Havisham was never seen eating in the novel. Naturally, she had to consume food to survive; the consumption was, however, most likely highly limited.

An additional method that patients with anorexia nervosa employ to promote weight loss is excessive exercise (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* 584). There are a few instances from the novel that indicate that Miss Havisham was quite restless and that she had an inexplicable desire to move frequently and exercise, for instance: “Miss Havisham was taking exercise in the room with the long spread table, leaning on her crutch stick” (Dickens 143). Additionally, even though Miss Havisham was physically weak, she insisted that Pip walked with her around the room for a prolonged period of time:

> She looked all round the room in a glaring manner, and then said, leaning on me while her hand twitched my shoulder, “Come, come, come! Walk me, walk me!” I made out from this, that the work I had to do, was to walk Miss Havisham round and round the room. Accordingly, I started at once, and she leaned upon my shoulder, and we went away at a pace that might have been an imitation (founded on my first impulse under that roof) of Mr. Pumblechook’s chaise-cart. She was not physically strong, and after a little time said, “Slower!” Still, we went at an impatient fitful speed, and as we went,

> she twitched the hand upon my shoulder, and worked her mouth, and led me to believe that we were going fast because her thoughts went fast. (Dickens 77)

Furthermore, Pip also stated that "Miss Havisham and I had never stopped all this time, but kept going round and round the room" (Dickens 79). However, it seems that brisk walking was too vigorous of an exercise for Miss Havisham; sometimes, she was unable to continue. Therefore, Pip had to use something similar to a wheelchair to push her from behind:

> On the broad landing between Miss Havisham's own room and that other room in which the long table was laid out, I saw a gardenchair—a light chair on wheels, that you pushed from behind. It had been placed there since my last visit, and I entered, that same day, on a regular occupation of pushing Miss Havisham in this chair (when she was tired of walking with her hand upon my shoulder) round her own room, and across the landing, and round the other room. Over and over and over again, we would make these journeys, and sometimes they would last as long as three hours at a stretch. (Dickens 86)

The tiredness that follows Miss Havisham's sudden rush of energy could also be a potential symptom of anorexia nervosa. According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, physical examination of patients suffering from anorexia revealed that certain general medical conditions can be associated with this eating disorder, including excess energy and lethargy (586).

Additionally, what is particularly important to mention is the fact that, according to the findings of physical examination of anorexic patients, some individuals exhibit yellowing of the skin, which is associated with hypercarotenemia (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* 586). As stated, yellow colour was often associated with certain diseases, and in chapter XI, Miss

Havisham described herself as “yellow skin and bone” (Dickens 78), which could, indeed, point toward her showing symptoms of hypercarotenemia.

Moreover, according to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, those suffering from anorexia nervosa employ a wide range of methods for observing and estimating the size of their body, and this includes weighing, measuring specific body parts, and the persistent use of a mirror (584). In the novel, there are a few mentions of Miss Havisham’s “looking-glass” and her sitting in front of it by her dressing table, looking at her reflection in the mirror: “Before she 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” (Dickens 54). This is not an isolated instance; in chapter XVII, Pip mentioned: “So unchanging was the dull old house, the yellow light in the darkened room, the faded spectre in the chair by the dressing-table glass…” (113). Furthermore, Miss Havisham’s looking-glass is mentioned twice in chapter VIII: “It was a dressing-room . . . But prominent in it was a draped table with a gilded looking-glass, and that I made out at first sight to be a fine lady’s dressing-table” (Dickens 52). Consequently, the reason why Dickens decided to repeatedly mention mirrors when describing Miss Havisham and her room might not be a coincidence. The fact that Pip mentions her mirror in almost every encounter with Miss Havisham might imply that this object was quite prominent in her room and of great importance to her and that she probably spent a significant amount of time in front of it, observing her appearance.

Furthermore, it is important to emphasise that in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, American Psychiatric Association claims that some additional symptoms usually associated with this eating disorder include “concerns about eating in public, feelings of ineffectiveness, a strong need to control one’s environment, inflexible thinking, limited social spontaneity, perfectionism, and overly restrained initiative and emotional expression” (585). As previously mentioned, Miss Havisham was not seen eating once in the novel, because she

actively prevented that from occurring, as Jaggers said: “She has never allowed herself to be seen doing either, since she lived this present life of hers. She wanders about in the night, and then lays hands on such food as she takes” (Dickens 221). Therefore, the fact that Miss Havisham never allowed to be seen eating in public might be a potential symptom of anorexia nervosa. Furthermore, according to the article “Shame, Pride and Eating Disorders” written by Kenneth Goss and Steven Allan, one of the earliest studies that investigated shame and eating disorders (reported by Frank in 1991) found that there is a significant degree of guilt and shame about eating in those suffering from an eating disorder (Goss and Allan 304-305). As previously mentioned in the chapter “Miss Havisham’s Relationship with Food”, Miss Havisham had quite an interest in feeding others, but not for the same reasons as a prototypical Victorian woman, whose reasons for feeding others were to nurture, and express kindness and generosity. As already argued, Miss Havisham was potentially feeding Pip to humiliate him. This could be associated with the symptom of anorexia nervosa mentioned above; the guilt and shame Miss Havisham herself might have experienced about eating might have been projected onto Pip. In Miss Havisham’s mind, eating may be a shameful act, and making others eat might be perceived by her as a perfect tool for humiliation.

Additionally, when it comes to anorexia nervosa, “obsessive-compulsive features, both related and unrelated to food, are often prominent”, and many individuals suffering from this disorder are generally engrossed in thoughts about food (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* 585). Therefore, the fact that Miss Havisham willingly kept a rotting bridal feast from decades ago and that she had a peculiar interest in feeding Pip might not be a coincidence.

As we have seen, Miss Havisham exhibited various symptoms, such as reduced food intake, extremely thin figure, excessive exercise, oscillations in energy levels (sudden rushes of energy followed by lethargy), yellowing of the skin, frequent use of a mirror, concerns

about eating in public and obsessions related to food (in this case, keeping rotten food on the table for decades), all of which can potentially be symptoms of anorexia nervosa.

5.2. Causes of Miss Havisham's Eating Disorder

If Miss Havisham did in fact suffer from anorexia nervosa, there are a few factors that could have instigated it. To begin with, along with the repression of a woman's sexual desire and rejection of maturity, literary theorists such as Silver and Gubar argued that denied appetite in women can also stem from the repression of love. Thus, for instance, in Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley*, the question of whether Caroline Helstone suffers from anorexia nervosa arises because of her transformation from a healthy, optimistic young girl to a sorrowful and severely gaunt invalid due to the unrequited love from her cousin Robert Moore (Silver 88). In the novel, Caroline suffers not only because of Robert's capricious feelings, but also because of her inability to express her discontentment with such behavior for her fear of losing Robert's and her own respect, since "a feminine lover can say nothing" without losing both (Brontë qtd. in Silver 88). In Susan Gubar's article "The Genesis of Hunger, according to 'Shirley'", she argues that Caroline is chastised by the narrator because she loved without being asked to do so; therefore, she cannot say anything, she can only suffer in silence (Gubar 8). Brontë included in the novel: "You expected bread, and you have got a stone: break your teeth on it, and don't shriek because the nerves are martyrized; do not doubt that your mental stomach—if you have such a thing—is strong as an ostrich's; the stone will digest" (Brontë qtd. in Silver 88). She suggested that Caroline's stomach, which is even able to digest a stone, is similar to her mind, which has the power to overcome the negative feelings that accompanied her cousin's rejection (Silver 88). Moreover, she proposed that a woman's ability to repress ought to be something to take immense pride in, since it symbolises the

power of a woman's mind; a strength similar to Caroline being able to silently crush a stone in her stomach (Silver 88).

The depiction of hunger and repression in *Shirley* mentioned above is very much applicable to Miss Havisham. As stated, Miss Havisham was jilted on her wedding day by her lover Compeyson, and this event represents the onset of her erratic behavior, peculiar relationship with food, and disordered eating patterns. Like Caroline, Miss Havisham also experienced rejection from her lover, but in a much more severe manner. Arguably, her state can be greatly attributed to her failed romance, that is, being cruelly rejected and tricked by the man with whom she was blindly in love. Furthermore, Miss Havisham's description of what true love is suggests that she was entirely devoted to this man, and it possibly suggests that her perception of love towards a romantic partner, her adoptive daughter, or towards herself, might be substantially skewed: "'I'll tell you,' said she, in the same hurried passionate whisper, 'what real love is. It is blind devotion, unquestioning self-humiliation, utter submission, trust and belief against yourself and against the whole world, giving up your whole heart and soul to the smiter—as I did!'" (Dickens 219).

Additionally, Silver claims that, in Charlotte Brontë's novel *Villette*, "Lucy's love for Graham is a central locus of appetite images in the novel, for Brontë consistently describes their correspondence by using tropes of hunger" (Silver 101). While waiting for his scarce letters to arrive, Lucy was wondering whether "animals kept in cages, and so scantily fed as to be always on the verge of famine, await their food as I awaited a letter" (Brontë qtd. in Silver 101). Furthermore, Silver draws a comparison between the cage and Lucy's body, which Graham did not find beautiful enough to love, claiming that her soul is like a hungry bird within a cage (Silver 101). Additionally, the imagery of a soul imprisoned in a body is often used in literature that is concerned with anorexia, usually to portray the hatred of an anorexic woman toward her own body (Silver 101). Lucy being shut up in the attic of the Pensionnat,

described as “excessively hungry”, could symbolise her imprisonment within the walls of the house, starving for love (Silver 103). This, again, can be inferred as a metaphor for being trapped within her own body, unable to escape its femaleness because of gender and class restrictions, as well as due to the numerous demands of her body, including the need for food (Silver 103). Furthermore, upon waking up at La Terrasse after her breakdown, Lucy described herself as “spectral; my eyes larger and more hollow, my hair darker than was natural, by contrast with my thin and ashen face” (Brontë qtd. in Silver 100). In this example and throughout the novel, Lucy’s emaciation represented her emotionally repressed and loveless life (Silver 100). The notion of a hungry bird locked in a cage and Lucy, who was starving for love while shut up in the attic, can be associated with Miss Havisham’s self-imprisonment within the walls of Satis House, being metaphorically hungry for Compeyson’s love, and being literally hungry since the descriptions of her body imply that she was very much emaciated. Like Lucy, Miss Havisham experienced life without love, characterised by the suppression of a multitude of negative emotions.

Moreover, according to some approaches to the treatment of adolescents with anorexia nervosa, their faulty sense of self often stems from a problematic relationship with their parents, in most cases, their mother, and the inadequate sense of self usually originates from the lack of nurture and respect for the child’s needs (Lock and Le Grange 43). Miss Havisham did not have an estranged relationship with her mother, this relationship was in fact nonexistent, since her mother passed away when she was just a baby: “Miss Havisham, you must know, was a spoilt child. Her mother died when she was a baby, and her father denied her nothing” (Dickens 164). Although she was spoiled by her father, one could argue that the lack of a motherly figure in her life could have also potentially contributed to her state. Furthermore, Silver suggests that “anorexia grows out of suppressed emotions like guilt, fear, and anger that a girl experiences because of her passive position in the home” (Silver 5).

While a passive position at home was most likely not the cause of such feelings in Miss Havisham's case, she undoubtedly experienced them regularly , especially guilt and anger; perhaps because of not listening to all the warning signs regarding her former lover and because of being so ruthlessly rejected, and had to repress them for an extended period of time.

In addition, having experienced such rejection, that is, being left on her wedding day, was undoubtedly quite a traumatic event for Miss Havisham; one that left severe consequences on her mental health. Therefore, Manon de Beijer claims that Miss Havisham changed significantly after being abandoned by her lover Compeyson, and was left with a "bad illness" (Slater qtd. in de Beijer 18). Furthermore, Brumberg states that the onset of anorexia nervosa can be associated with both environmental influences and certain individual factors; a major trigger being frustrations, "such as inappropriate romantic expectations, blocked educational or social opportunities, struggles with parents" (Brumberg qtd. in Chou 192). It can be argued that Miss Havisham was coping with at least two of those frustrations; inappropriate romantic expectations and blocked social opportunities (since being a spinster who was deserted on her wedding day gave her an identity of a social outcast). Her inappropriate romantic expectations, however, were most likely the biggest cause of her frustrations, just as being abandoned by Compeyson was the most traumatic event of her life. According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, the onset of anorexia nervosa may be triggered by a stressful event in a person's life (587). Therefore, it may be argued that this very event was one of the main causes of Miss Havisham's illness. Brumberg also added that the mere subject of marriage could be a source of great stress for a young woman, which in some cases can trigger anorexia nervosa (Brumberg qtd. in Chou 196). Likewise, in Timothy Brewerton's article "Eating Disorders, Trauma, and Comorbidity: Focus on PTSD", the author claims that for clinicians who are dealing with the diagnostic process and treatment of

patients with eating disorders, trauma history and psychiatric comorbidity are unavoidable (Brewerton 285).

An additional potential cause of Miss Havisham's condition might be her isolation from society, which is an issue comprised of several facets. Firstly, it can be argued that her isolation stems from the fact that she is a spinster, and in the Victorian era, spinsters were in a way seen as a social surplus, a burgeoning issue in society that had to be resolved. Accordingly, in the article "The Social Position of Spinsters in Mid-Victorian Britain", Michael Anderson stated that the "spinster problem" was widely discussed in the periodical press and the pamphlet as a very significant social issue with various social responses (Anderson 378). He also claimed that, around that time, "spinsters in old age were the residuum who failed to marry in a society in which the assumption was that all women should expect to marry" (Anderson 392). Furthermore, women in the 19th century were expected to fulfill their natural duties of motherhood and tending to their husbands, and, as spinsters were unable to do so, they were expected to artificially create their life purpose, though their existence would always be an incomplete one (Greg qtd. in Anderson 379). In addition, there were a few categories of spinsters; while many spinsters were employed and were making a significant contribution to the business, there were also unemployed spinsters, in most cases the daughters of substantial businessmen, county families, or respectable independent professionals (Anderson 381). As we know, Miss Havisham belonged to the latter category, since she was a very wealthy, unemployed spinster, and the daughter of an affluent brewer, as explained by Herbert in the novel: "'Miss Havisham, you must know, was a spoilt child. Her mother died when she was a baby, and her father denied her nothing. Her father was a country gentleman down in your part of the world, and was a brewer" (Dickens 164). Furthermore, Herbert stated that "Mr. Havisham was very rich and very proud. So was his daughter" (Dickens 164). As we know, spinsters in the Victorian era did not have a particularly

favourable position in society, and this might be the reason why Miss Havisham lived on its margins. In the article "Miss Havisham and Victorian Psychiatry", the author Akiko Takei explained the social stigma around spinsters on Miss Havisham's example: "Miss Havisham is not sexually immoral, but desertion on the wedding day in the Victorian social climate causes her an irrecoverable social stigma in addition to agony" (Takei 8). Furthermore, in the book *The Female Malady*, Elaine Showalter stated that "women who reject sexuality and marriage (the two were synonymous for Victorian women) are muted or even driven mad by social disapproval." (Showalter qtd. in Takei 8). However, while Miss Havisham was most likely ostracised from society due to her marital position, there is also the possibility that she willingly excluded herself due to her condition.

Consequently, according to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, "many individuals with Anorexia Nervosa manifest depressive symptoms such as depressed mood, social withdrawal, irritability, insomnia, and diminished interest in sex" (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* 585). Social withdrawal being one of the symptoms associated with anorexia nervosa is particularly relevant in this context, since Miss Havisham lived in almost complete seclusion from society for decades. Even Satis House is isolated from the rest of the village: "Satis House itself is also removed from the village in which it stands. It is physically removed from the rest of the village society. So through the house she removes herself from adults and their society in every way possible" (de Beijer 20). This complete seclusion, however, most likely exacerbated Miss Havisham's delicate mental health, and Pip explained this as follows: "But that, in shutting out the light of day, she had shut out infinitely more; that, in seclusion, she had secluded herself from a thousand natural and healing influences; that, her mind, brooding solitary, had grown diseased, as all minds do and must and will that reverse the appointed order of their Maker, I knew equally well" (Dickens 364-365). Miss Havisham was unable to overcome her trauma in such a surrounding that does not promote

healing; therefore, she succumbed to her heartbreak that made her rot from the inside, just like her clothing, wedding feast, and Satis House itself did. De Beijer also stated that Miss Havisham purposely avoids adults and prefers the company of children (de Beijer 21). As Silver claimed, some psychiatrists associate food refusal in anorexia nervosa with the fear of sexual maturation, since anorexia mostly occurs in adolescent girls (Silver 5). This could also potentially indicate that Miss Havisham, whose onset of her peculiar illness began most likely in her late adolescence, refused food partially because of her fear of reaching sexual maturity, and being surrounded by children while avoiding adults might have alleviated this fear by only ostensibly protecting her from sexual maturation.

Finally, Miss Havisham's symptoms may stem from her endeavor to demonstrate her will's strength and to seek control over her life through her ability to repress her appetite. As Brontë suggested above, repression is the main indicator of a woman's strength of mind (Silver 88). Similarly, to those suffering from anorexia nervosa, focusing on controlling what can be controlled, that is, food intake and weight, provides a sense of reassurance that they have at least some form of identity; in this way, anorexia and identity become closely intertwined (Lock and Le Grange 43). A research "Dimensions of control and their relation to disordered eating behaviours and obsessive-compulsive symptoms" conducted by Froreich et al. revealed that "ED and OCD symptom severity were positively associated with external locus of control, negative sense of control, feelings of ineffectiveness, and fear of losing self-control, and were negatively associated with sense of mastery" (Froreich et al. 5) Furthermore, in the article "Shame, Pride and Eating Disorders" it was noted that "dieting helped individuals to feel more successful and in control" (Cooper et al. qtd. in Goss and Allan 305). When it comes to Miss Havisham, she most likely perceived herself as unable to control her life, primarily concerning her marital status and her position in society, so she

attempted to establish control over one area over which she actually had power, and that is her appetite.

In summary, various potential causes could have encouraged Miss Havisham's anorexia nervosa-like symptoms, and those are the overall repression of feelings such as love, sadness, anger, and guilt, the lack of a motherly figure, the traumatic event of being deserted on her wedding day, almost complete isolation from the society, fear of reaching sexual maturity, and the attempt to establish control over her life. As argued, all of the issues mentioned above contribute to the incidence of anorexia nervosa.

6. Conclusion

When taking everything into careful consideration, it can be argued that Miss Havisham did indeed suffer from anorexia nervosa. There are several factors that support such an argument. Firstly, there is the conspicuous portrayal of Miss Havisham's body in the novel, that is, an extremely thin, skeletal figure with sunken facial features, and yellow skin. Secondly, it is also important to emphasize her idiosyncratic relationship with food – not only was Miss Havisham never seen eating in the entire novel, but she was also feeding others solely as a tool for humiliation, which can be understood as a shift from the archetypal Victorian woman, who rejoiced in feeding others, even at the cost of having to give up her own meals, since it was considered as a token of her unselfishness, compassion, and benevolence (Silver 55). In addition to the other causes mentioned, such as suppressed emotions, isolation from society, and the attempt to gain control over her life, the trauma of being jilted on her wedding day was most likely the most significant factor that contributed to its occurrence. As mentioned, anorexia nervosa was first diagnosed in the 19th century, and there were certain cultural presuppositions that made its existence possible (Chou 192). According to the cultural beliefs of the Victorian era, women are naturally weak and sickly

(Dijkstra qtd. in Silver 44), and, above all, naturally abstemious (Silver 82); since food refusal displayed rejection of their corporeality and considerable self-discipline (Silver 12-13), malnourishment, which was also an important segment of a woman's beauty, became a pervasive issue among the female population (Chou 195). Almost two centuries after anorexia nervosa was first diagnosed, it is now estimated that its long-term mortality rate is over 10% (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 588), which makes it the most lethal of all mental disorders (Arcelus et al. 728). The importance of examining this issue on the example of the novel *Great Expectations* and Miss Havisham is in the fact that it can provide a different, yet valuable, insight into the early diagnosis of anorexia nervosa in the Victorian era, and the aforementioned cultural factors and beauty ideals that encouraged it.

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8. THE PORTRAYAL OF MISS HAVISHAM'S BODY: Summary and key words

This paper is concerned with the question of whether the character of Miss Havisham from Charles Dickens's novel *Great Expectations* suffers from anorexia nervosa. Anorexia nervosa was first diagnosed in the 19th century, and certain ideologies of the period are thought to have encouraged the incidence of this eating disorder in a portion of the population, particularly young women. Investigating this issue on the example of Miss Havisham can provide insight into this disorder from the period when it was first diagnosed. Although Miss Havisham was frequently analysed and discussed by literary theorists, she was generally regarded as a "madwoman", while other, specific mental illnesses were not as widely examined. Therefore, due to the peculiar portrayal of her body and erratic behavioural patterns, the paper focuses on the possibility of Miss Havisham suffering from an eating disorder, or more precisely, anorexia nervosa. In order to investigate this issue, the paper first presents a brief, general overview of Miss Havisham's life; secondly, it moves on to the portrayal of her body; thirdly, it examines Miss Havisham's relationship with food; then, it provides an overview of anorexia in the Victorian era; subsequently, it focuses on Miss Havisham's behavioural aberrations in relation to the symptoms of anorexia nervosa; and finally, it discusses the potential causes of Miss Havisham's eating disorder. It has been concluded that Miss Havisham was indeed suffering from the restrictive type of anorexia nervosa and that the primary cause of her illness is the trauma of being abandoned on her wedding day.

Key words: Victorian literature, *Great Expectations*, Charles Dickens, Miss Havisham, eating disorders, anorexia nervosa

9. PRIKAZ TIJELA GOSPOĐICE HAVISHAM: Sažetak i ključne riječi

Ovaj rad propituje boluje li gospođica Havisham, lik Dickensovog romana *Velika očekivanja*, od anoreksije nervoze. Anoreksija nervoza prvi je put dijagnosticirana u 19. stoljeću, a smatra se da su određene ideologije toga vremena potaknule pojavu ovog poremećaja kod dijela populacije, posebice kod mladih žena. Istraživanje ovog poremećaja na primjeru gospođice Havisham daje uvid u okolnosti zbog kojih je prvi put dijagnosticiran. Iako su književni teoretičari često analizirali i raspravljali o gospođici Havisham, ona se uglavnom smatrala „luđakinjom", dok se druge mentalne bolesti nisu toliko detaljno proučavale. Stoga, s obzirom na svojstven prikaz njezinog tijela i nepravilne obrasce ponašanja, ovaj rad usmjeren je na mogućnost da je gospođica Havisham bolovala od poremećaja u prehrani, ili točnije, od anoreksije nervoze. Kako bismo istražili ovu problematiku, ovaj rad prvo daje kratak, opći pregled života gospođice Havisham; potom prelazi na prikaz njezina tijela; zatim ispituje odnos gospođice Havisham s hranom; nakon toga pruža pregled anoreksije nervoze u viktorijanskom dobu; slijedom toga usredotočuje se na aberacije gospođice Havisham u svezi sa simptomima anoreksije nervoze; i, naposljetku, razlaže moguće uzroke poremećaja u prehrani gospođice Havisham. Zaključno, rad prikazuje kako je gospođica zaista bolovala od restriktivnog tipa anoreksije te da je glavni uzrok njezine bolesti trauma koja je nastala kada ju je Compeyson ostavio na dan vjenčanja.

Ključne riječi: viktorijanska književnost, *Velika očekivanja*, Charles Dickens, gospođica Havisham, poremećaji u prehrani, anoreksija nervoza