Great Expectations–Miss Havisham Essay, Research Paper

CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF MISS HAVISHAM

In the book Great Expectations, Charles Dickens created a very eccentric but interesting main character named Miss Havisham. Miss Havisham was introduced in the book by Pip. Pip was taken to her in her bedroom and described her as an old, yellowed woman with white hair, dressed in white satins, laces and silks, wearing a long white veil with bridal flowers in her hair. He described her room by saying, “But I saw that everything within my view, which ought to be white, had been white long ago,” which implied that everything was very old. Pip was immediately afraid of her.

Miss Havisham was a wealthy old lady who lived in Satis House, a large house with a brewery and gardens. When she moved there, it was in very nice condition. The brewery was run and everything was kept in good condition. She was engaged to marry a character who was called Compeyson but was jilted on her wedding day. When Miss Havisham received the letter from Compeyson saying that she was being jilted the time was twenty minutes to nine and Miss Havisham was in the middle of getting dressed for her wedding. She was so devastated that she stopped everything right then. All the clocks were stopped at twenty minutes to nine; the brewery was shut down, the wedding cake left to rot and all the windows were boarded up.

Miss Havisham?s life was ruined afterwards. She didn?t believe in love anymore, as she clearly stated when she told Pip, “I?ll tell you what 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!” Although she did not believe in love, she adopted girl to raise. Miss Havisham?s purpose was to raise her adopted daughter, Estella, without love so she could get revenge on men through her daughter.

Because Miss Havisham had no love in her, she had no respect for the feelings of others. She lead Pip to believe that she was his benefactress and when he found out it was not her, he went to visit her. When he told her he had found out who his benefactor was, she confessed to making him believe that she was his benefactress but then asked, “Who am I, for God?s sake, that I should be kind? You made your own snares. I never made them.” However, Miss Havisham does continue to give Herbert Pocket money to assure his place in the Clarriker firm and is sorry for the way she raised Estella and treated Pip at the end.

It is clear to the reader that Miss Havisham is the most eccentric but most interesting character who ever existed in literature. But it can’t be forgotten that she was one of the most important characters to the story. She was what kept the story going and kept it interesting because she was so unpredictable and her character was so original to literature.