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FOR THAT ONE CREATURE'S SAKE: POST-COURTLY LOVE IN *WUTHERING HEIGHTS* AND *GREAT EXPECTATIONS*

Bassel Atallah

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ABSTRACT

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Post-Courtly Love in *Wuthering Heights* and *Great Expectations*

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This thesis examines the representation of post-courtly love in two Victorian novels, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*. I define the post-courtly genre as literature from the nineteenth century that portrays the conflict between two ideologies of love, one that follows the courtly tradition of pursuing endless though unattainable love, and one that is expected to result in a marriage based on social Victorian values of domestic stability.

The Victorian realist novel aims to offer a study of how individuals function in society and how society can be positively and negatively affected by the actions of its individuals. My central argument is that *Wuthering Heights* and *Great Expectations* demonstrate this realism by portraying how courtly love conventions are at odds with the fictional worlds in which the novels are set. The social and emotional need for a physical union with his beloved will prevent the post-courtly lover from following the conventional trajectory of courtly love. This can lead to the emotional deterioration of the post-courtly lover, will hinder his social progress, and may even hinder the social progress of other characters within his community as well. The post-courtly lover will thus be obliged to adjust his approach to love in order to be capable of properly functioning in the social world, or be forced into isolation and alienation from the social community.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

"O what a wonderful thing is love, which makes a man shine with so many virtues and teaches everyone, no matter who he is, so many good traits of character!"—Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*

During the seventh century, a young man called Qays ibin Al-Mulawwah living in the Arabian Peninsula fell in love with a woman called Layla Al-Aamiriya. Qays was deprived of a union with Layla, and in his anguish retreated to seclusion and spent his days wandering the desert and writing poetry about his unrequited desire for Layla. This myth was popularized in the twelfth century by the Persian poet Nezami Ganjavi. In his English translation of Nezami's poetry, Rudolph Gelpke writes that Nezami "understands the three elements of [Qays]—his love, his insanity and his poetical genius—as three aspects of one, indivisible unity" (xiv). Qays was capable of functioning as a poet due to the fact that his love for Layla was never attained. If he had achieved physical union with Layla, he would not have developed the urge and desire to write his poetry. His improvement as a poet then went hand-in-hand with his frustration over his unrequited desire. But as a result, Qays spent his life in seclusion, becoming "a prisoner of love" and unable to return to society (Gelpke, 99).

This trajectory of endless love for a woman whom a man can never attain is an example of what later became known as 'Courtly Love,' a term used in literary discourse to describe the ideology of ideal love in Medieval Europe. In this courtly tradition, ideal love occurs when a man encounters a woman and deems her to be his 'romantic ideal', the only woman he is ever capable of desiring. His love for her will eventually become an obsession, and will define him as a person and influence all his future actions and

thoughts. In courtly love, Andreas Capellanus writes, the lover must "undergo all sorts of hardships, perform all sorts of absurd actions. For love of her he must become pale and thin and sleepless. No matter what he may do, or from what motives, he must persuade her that it is all done for her sake" (5). Qays undergoes this hardship, and it results in the creation of his poetry. For courtly love to occur then, the desire of the lover should remain unrequited, and this unrequited desire will in time lead to the ennobling of the lover. This ennoblement will make up for the difficulties the lover experiences from the years of frustration over his unrequited desire.

Irving Singer writes that Arabic poetry originates much of the ideology of courtly love that was later introduced to Spain and Southern France, and eventually culminates in the literature of the troubadours (34). Courtly love begins with "the worship of the female who is to be loved with an unrequited desire that purifies the lover's feelings and transmutes them into verse" (34). In the early courtly tradition, the woman served as a muse, a source of inspiration to be placed on a pedestal and who encourages and inspires art. In later generations, the woman no longer remained a source of inspiration and an object of worship, but becomes a beloved who returns the lover's passion. This type of courtly love didn't survive, and in later generations, most specifically in Italy, courtly love returns and the beloved "is once again made an object of poetic adoration, except that she now becomes more and more ethereal" (34,35). For experiencing this type of love, the price the courtly lover pays is that he never achieves a physical union with his beloved.

This ideology of love returned, but in a different form, at the end of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century as Romantic love. The divinity of Romantic

love, just as courtly love, lay in the act of loving rather than in the attainment of a physical union with the beloved, and the belief that endless love can lead to the ennoblement of the lover returned to the consciousness of the men of the generation. But whereas in medieval culture, ideal love was distinct from marriage and for true ideal love to occur the lover must never attain his beloved, a different ideology for marriage existed in the nineteenth century. In Victorian England, love was expected to lead to marriage, and marriage was required by individuals in order to be integrated within the social community. A marriage thus with a beloved was a required need for the lover in this post-courtly era. This marks a conflict that the post-courtly lover must undergo as he aspires to achieve endless ideal love in the courtly tradition while needing to attain a marriage with the beloved in order to achieve socially accepted Victorian domesticity. When deprived of a marriage with his beloved, the post-courtly lover is unable to follow the traditional trajectory of courtly love and seek out ennoblement as an alternative to his unrequited desire. Marriage is what he wants and needs, and the lack of union with his beloved will negatively affect his relation with society.

This thesis will examine this post-courtly love conflict in two Victorian novels, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*. My central argument is that the two novels demonstrate how courtly love conventions are at odds with the fictional worlds in which the novels are set. In the nineteenth century, realism was one of the goals of literature. The Victorian realist novel attempts to offer an honest study of the social experience that individuals undergo, and of how society can be affected by the actions of its people. The post-courtly love conflict that individuals undergo is an example of such a social experience. *Wuthering Heights* and *Great*

Expectations examine how the social and emotional need for a physical union with his beloved will prevent the post-courtly lover from following the conventional trajectory of courtly love. This can lead to the emotional deterioration of the post-courtly lover, will hinder his social progress, and may even hinder the social progress of other characters within his community as well. The post-courtly lover will thus be obliged to adjust his approach to love in order to be capable of properly functioning in the social world, or be forced into isolation and alienation from the social community.

By the end of this thesis, I will have demonstrated the conflict that existed in the nineteenth century between experiencing ideal love that follows the courtly tradition and achieving a marriage agreeable by Victorian conventions. With its interest in moral values and the importance of properly functioning in society, the realist novel attempts to show the failure of courtly love, and suggest how love could be pursued in a way fit for the survival of the characters in order for healthy and stable social progress to occur.

Chapter One will offer an overview of the history of courtly love from the medieval age to the nineteenth century. I will be defining the conventions of courtly love, and then discussing how those conventions were represented in the Petrarchan tradition, as the Petrarchan sonnet remains a quintessential representation of unrequited love in literature. Through a brief examination of the *Canzoniere,* I will discuss the Petrarchan model of the traditional trajectory a courtly lover takes in his pursuit of a romantic ideal. I will then examine how Romantic ideology in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century caused certain sentiments of courtly love to return and how those sentiments later conflicted with the Victorian social need for marriage. The post-courtly lover becomes unable to follow the traditional trajectory as represented in the Petrarchan tradition. I will

end the chapter by examining the conventions of the Victorian realist novel, and how due to those conventions the realist novel attempts to demonstrate the failure of courtly love to function properly in a realist social setting.

Chapter Two will examine *Wuthering Heights* in the context of the argument I develop in Chapter One. I will examine how Heathcliff and Catherine fail to function as post-courtly lovers in the novel's realist social world, and how their actions lead to their emotional deterioration and to the downfall of the characters with whom they interact. Only with a new love relationship that develops between Cathy and Hareton, one that abandons the excessive passion of courtly love, is domestic peace and social order restored to the Heights and the Grange.

Chapter Three will examine *Great Expectations* in the context of my post-courtly genre theory. I will argue that Pip as a post-courtly lover differs from Heathcliff. While Heathcliff's unrequited desires lead to his moral deterioration and turns him into a Gothic character, Pip's unrequited desire for Estella inspires him to achieve social improvement in hopes of eventually attaining a union with her. This path, however, instead of leading him to achieving social progress, results in weakening his social bond with Joe and Biddy and thus isolates him from the people who do care about him. Only by abandoning his obsessive desire for Estella can Pip achieve moral progress and attain happiness in his life.

CHAPTER ONE

THE POST-COURTLY GENRE

I. Courtly Love: Medieval Conventions

The term 'Courtly Love' first came into usage in literary discourse in 1883 by Gaston Paris, a French scholar of medieval romance literature. Paris used the term to describe the attitudes and perceptions of love that took place in Europe between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. In the courtly tradition, ideal love occurs when a man encounters a woman and deems her to be his 'romantic ideal': the paragon of grace, beauty, and virtue. He instantly falls in love with her, regardless of whether she loves him or is even aware of his existence. The man may either meet her or may just encounter her from a distance, but that encounter will be enough to make him love her and feel that he cannot love anyone but her for the rest of his life. He finds her to be unquestionably worthy of his devotion, and he is willing to spend his life supplying her with that devotion. His love for her will eventually become an obsession, and will define him as a person and influence all his future actions and thoughts.

Two important outcomes are necessary for this "ideal" love to proceed in the courtly tradition:

The desire of the lover should remain unrequited: Even if it is clear that social factors will prevent a marriage from ever taking place, the love that the lover feels for his romantic ideal must persist. The question of whether any form of physical union is ever possible between the lover and his beloved is irrelevant, and must not influence his love for her. In the courtly tradition, marriage and love were separate concepts, distinct and independent from each other. Marriage was a "phase of feudal business management" whereas love was a "purifying ennobling rapture" that is experienced by a man when he

meets his romantic ideal, regardless of whether an eventual marriage is possible or not (Hunt, 137). Marriage was about the acquisition both of the woman and the property and privileges that came with the marriage arrangement. Love was discouraged in such marriages "in order not to get in the way of dynastic arrangement" (Tuchman, 66). Ideal love, on the other hand, was about desiring the woman for her grace and virtues and worshiping her because she was the romantic ideal of the lover. The goal of the lover becomes to achieve "a union of hearts and minds and not of bodies" (Denomy, 24) because the lover believes that thus "union of souls is a thousand times finer in its effects than that of bodies" (Capellanus, 9). It is even preferable that he never attain her, because only in the spiritual union of hearts and minds can ideal love exist, and only in the lover's willingness to love her endlessly without the hope of ever attaining her can he prove that his love for her is ideal.

Unrequited desires should lead to the ennobling of the lover: Courtly love was less concerned with the relationship that develops—or fails to develop—between the lover and the beloved, and more with its effect on the lover who will most likely spend his life desiring a romantic ideal whom he will never attain. This ceaseless desire also came with difficulties and years of frustrations, but those difficulties were essential to the experience of true love as they led to an important outcome of unrequited desire: the ennobling of the lover, and the illumination and elevation of his character due to his "unending yearning and unsatisfied passion" (Hunt, 143). The lover is a better person because he is capable of desiring his romantic ideal even though she is unattainable to him. And even though he is aware of this unattainability, he is still willing to spend all his energy and time desiring her and worshipping her. This willingness and his capability to

love her and be obsessed and defined by his love for her will ennoble him and elevate him as a human being. It will also elevate his beloved to a superior position (Denomy, 20). The lover will be content with that because that is where he believes his beloved should be placed: on a pedestal far higher than where he, and all other humans, are placed. The merits and benefits of courtly love lie in this ennoblement, and the practice of courtly love then becomes a necessity for the improvement of a man (Denomy, 22). The benefits of ennoblement make up for the difficulties that will arise from the painful years of unrequited desires, and the frustration that the lover encounters during all those years are justified because he is eventually ennobled and improved as a human being. For these reasons, the practices and emotions of courtly love "could be undertaken only for a woman one could never marry" (Hunt, 134). The reward of the lover will be "the solace of every delight of the beloved except the physical possession of her" (Denomy, 24).

II. Literary Representation of Unrequited Desires: The Petrarchan Tradition

I discussed in my introduction the story of Qays and Layla as a notable pre-courtly example of the lover who after being deprived of a possible physical union with his romantic ideal retreats into seclusion and spends his days writing poetry about his romantic ideal and his unrequited desire. The lack of a physical union between Qays and Layla allowed him to meditate on the nature of love and on what it means to encounter and desire a romantic ideal. The outlet for this meditation was poetry.

A notable courtly model of this situation is the story of Francesco Petrarch. Petrarch, like Qays, is capable of functioning as a poet due to his ability of expressing his romantic ideal and his unrequited desire. As a young man, Petrarch encounters a young woman called Laura. He instantly falls in love with her and deems her to be his romantic

ideal. A marriage or any other form of physical union with her proves to be impossible, but he still loves her and his love soon grows to an obsession.

So far, this follows the standard tradition of courtly love. For our purpose, what is important to note about Petrarch is the way he becomes ennobled as a lover. By failing to achieve a physical union with Laura, Petrarch does not allow his love and desire for her to be wasted without serving a productive purpose. As Qays before him, Petrarch retreats to seclusion and composes love poetry about Laura and about his love for Laura. Whereas Qays falls into madness, Petrarch does not. Instead, his status as an esteemed humanistic scholar is established. The product of his unrequited love for Laura is *Il Canzoniere*, a collection 366 poems written over a period of many years.

The final end of courtly love is the ennoblement and improvement of the lover. With Petrarch, his improvement as a human being goes hand-in-hand with his improvement as a poet. He is able to function as a poet—he exists as a poet—due to the fact that his desire for Laura remains unrequited. While Petrarch does not originate the tradition of representing a romantic ideal through poetry, he becomes the inspiration that will lead to many imitations in centuries to come. Before we look at those imitations and particularly the presence of Petrarchan and anti-Petrarchan themes in the English literary canon, we need to examine a few distinctive features about the Petrarchan tradition that will be important when I later discuss the post-courtly genre.

We need first to ask: what was Petrarch's primary quest, to be a lover or a poet? What was of more importance for him, to attain Laura's love, or to write poetry? Did he even meet Laura, or did he encounter her from a distance? Was she as virtuous and graceful as he described her in his poetry, or did he make up those qualities in order to

transform her in his mind and imagination into a romantic ideal? Was he in love with her, or in love with his idea of her? And a more important question: was Laura real? Did she actually exist? Was she Laura de Noves, whom Petrarch met at the Church of Santa Clara, or was she a figment of his imagination? These questions are asked by David Young in the introduction to his English translations to the *Canzoniere:*

> what of Laura? She is so much the subject of the sequence, so powerful a presence, that we naturally inquire about the historical person. Was she really as good and beautiful as Petrarch portrayed her? Is his account of her his own projection, too unrealistic to have connection with the actual women? Did he, perhaps, as one of his contemporaries teasingly suggested, make her up? (Young, xxiv).

Throughout the *Canzoniere*, we receive many descriptions of Laura's grace and of Petrarch's love for her, but as Morris Bishop points out, "the descriptions of her beauty are never very detailed and specific, in the manner of modern realism" (63). Her physical presence seems far less important than her angelic virtues that Petrarch cannot stop admiring. Was she as angelic as he described? Is it realistic for anyone to be as angelic?

Whether he made Laura up or projected those virtues onto a woman he encountered once but never got to know, then we can see Laura as a hypothetical romantic ideal that Petrarch used as a means to experience unrequited desire so that he might achieve ennoblement and improvement as a human. If we do read Laura as a hypothetical romantic ideal, it becomes clear that Petrarch's quest as a poet surpassed his desires as a lover. His triumph as a poet is more relevant than his loss as a lover because "his main concern is not Laura but the laurel," the coveted poetic prize (Dubrow, 24).

Even if Laura was real and as divine as he made her out to be, Petrarch's goal still was to not attain her. In Sonnet 6 he writes, "My mad desire has gone so far astray / pursuing her, who turned away to flee" (1,2). It was this pointless pursuit that Petrarch wanted, because by a pursuit that does not result in the attainment of a woman, he becomes a courtly lover and then "falls into a long-lasting state of baffled love, pleading, reproaching, sighing, and writing poems" (Bishop, 75). He enjoyed more the study of his woes as a courtly lover, as he confesses in many moments in his *Canzoniere* sequence (Bishop, 83). In Song 37, he writes:

> And I am one of those whom weeping pleases;
> it seems I strive to make
> my eyes produce a family
> of tears to match the sorrows in my heart. (69-72)

This weeping is what inspires him to write this poetry, and the weeping continues throughout the years, well after Laura's death, as he describes in Sonnet 216,

> All day I weep; and then at night when most
> miserable mortals find repose, I find
> myself in tears and all my pains redoubled;
> that's how I seem to spend my life; just weeping." (1-4)

Petrarch did not only spend his life weeping; he spent it writing poetry as well. This is his approach to love, one that is "determined by a sense of poetic opportunity" (Singer, 142).

The first 266 poems are presumed to have been written while Laura was alive, and throughout those poems Petrarch describes the grace and virtues of the divine Laura and his woes as a courtly lover. The last 100 poems are presumed to be written after her

death as Petrarch both as a lover and a poet attempts to reconcile himself with the fact that his romantic ideal had died without his ever achieving a physical union with her, even though it may never have been his goal to attain it. From early in the sonnet sequence, he imagines that their love could only exist in a Heavenly sphere rather than a physical one:

> This work could only be imagined there
> in such a place as Heaven, not with us,
> here where the body always veils the soul; (Sonnet 77, 9-11)

When Laura dies, he has no doubt that she will be in Heaven in the afterlife:

> Twenty-one years Love held me in the fire,
> joyfully burning, full of hope and sorrow;
> then ten more years of weeping since my lady
> rose into Heaven and my heart went with her" (Sonnet 364, 1-4).

His focus then becomes on examining his own questionable divinity and his own relationship with God. By the end, he proves his virtues as a Christian by commending himself to God:

> "The day draws near, it cannot be far off,
> time speeds along and flies,
> Virgin unique, alone,
> conscience and death are stabbing a my heart,
> commend me to your Son, who is the true
> man and the true God,
> may He accept my last and peaceful breath (Song 366, 130-136).

The memory of Laura by the end is retraced and re-understood as a new resignation to God's will (Bishop, 73). Petrarch's ennoblement and improvement as a human being is complete as he finally attains a closer relationship to God, all as an outcome of his unrequited desire.

III. Representation of Unrequited Desires in the British Literary Canon

Since the Early Modern Period, English poetry had been influenced by the Petrarchan literary tradition. Thomas Wyatt translated many of Petrarch's sonnets into English, and composed some of his own for a romantic ideal that he himself would never attain—long believed to be Anne Boleyn—describing his desire, in one of his famous sonnets, as a "long love that in my thought I harbor/and in mine heart doth keep his residence" (1,2). As in the Petrarchan tradition, unrequited desire allows him to improve as a poet, and it brings him much pain and frustration as his romantic ideal teaches him how to both "love and to suffer" (5). By the end, the poet remains a courtly lover by continuing faithfully to love his unattainable ideal, and he states that "good is the life, ending faithfully" (14).

Another famous English poetic sequence inspired by the Petrarchan tradition is Phillip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*. Stella is Astrophil's romantic ideal, the "star" that guides him both as a poet and a person. As a courtly lover, Astrophil remains faithful to his love for Stella, and as in the Petrarchan tradition, he aspires to show his love through his poetry:

> Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
> That the dear She might take some pleasure of my pain:
> Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,

Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain,
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain:
Oft turning others' leaves to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sun-burned brain.
But words came halting forth, wanting Invention's stay,
Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Study's blows,
And others' feet still seemed but strangers in my way.
Thus great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes,
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite,
'Fool' said my Muse to me, 'look in thy heart and write.'

As in Wyatt and Petrarch, Astrophil's goal becomes to seek "fit words" to do justice to his romantic ideal, to the frustrations from his unrequited desire, and to his loyalty as a courtly lover willing to continue to love his ideal to gain a union of hearts and mind and not of bodies, proving, as Bishop wrote about the *Canzoniere,* that "long hopeless fidelity is the poet's best line" (83).

The Early Modern Period also saw sentiments of anti-Petrarchinism entering the literary canon, as the Petrarchan model of love was often questioned, especially the value of a love that is not pursued. William Shakespeare, in his sonnet sequence, often satirized the Petrarchan idealization of the romantic ideal as famously seen in Sonnet 130:

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;

If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress when she walks treads on the ground.
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

Shakespeare here steps away from Petrarch's idealization of the ideal woman who according to Petrarch is so divine that she becomes unattainable. In Shakespeare's sonnet, the speaker ridicules the notion of a superiorly beautiful woman, and claims that the physical features of his beloved are not as divine and angelically beautiful as Petrarch makes Laura out to be, and it is futile to compare her with the beauty of nature because the woman can only fail the comparison. But the lack of superior divinity in the woman makes her attainable. Despite her limited beauty, the speaker's love for his beloved still stands, whereas the Petrarchan speaker loves his beloved because of that superior nature.

Anti-Petrachinism is also evident in nineteenth century literature, and Victorian poetry also imitated, criticized, and sometimes recreated the Petrarchan model of ideal love. In Elizabeth Barrett-Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, the Petrarchan model is inverted as the Petrarchan voice is given to a woman speaker who elevates her male

lover, puts him on a pedestal and deems herself as not worthy of his desire. In Christina Rossetti's *Monna Innominata,* the female speaker satirizes the Petrarchan lover so dedicated to write poetry about his beloved that he never seeks to attain her. The beloved then has to wait indefinitely for a love that will never be consummated because the Petrarchan lover is too obsessed with following the literary and cultural tradition of ideal love that he neglects the human need for required desires.

These sentiments are relevant for Victorians because they are aligned with nineteenth century love conventions. Now I will discuss these conventions, and why courtly love, in its replication and recreation, proves to be an important literary and social model in the period.

IV. Post-Courtly Tradition: Love in the Nineteenth Century

Singer writes that the "Romantic concept of love is more closely linked to medieval ideas than to any that precede them" (22). In this section, I will examine how Romantic love came to be linked to the courtly tradition, and I will draw the differences that inevitably arose between the two love ideologies.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the growth of factories, the rise of the wealth of merchants, and a more educated society were among the social and political factors that led to "a benighted, bourgeois attitude summed up in the word "sensibility"—a hyper-emotional frame of mind, deeply affected by every event or thought" (Hunt, 297). The rationalists of the eighteenth century perceived seduction to be a social grace, whereas the sensibility that emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century led the men of the generation to consider "love as a mighty and noble goal in life" rather than as a product of seduction (Hunt, 298). The rationalists of the eighteenth century

"repressed their emotions and acted out their sexuality" while the romantics of the nineteenth century "restrained their sexuality and poured forth their emotions" (Hunt, 310). With the presence of this sexual inhibition, the typical romantic lover "prided himself on the ability to fall tumultuously and passionately in love and delighted in being demonstratively sentimental, melancholic, tempestuous, or tearful" (Hunt, 309).

The result of this attitude is a return to the sentiments of courtly love. The belief that a woman's love can improve a man returned to the consciousness of the men of the generation. Romantic lovers were advocates of idealism in love, which is why courtly love conventions, where the importance of experiencing love outweighs the quest of attaining desire, appealed to them. Love became "their greatest exemplar" and Romantics, just as courtly lovers, considered "the pursuit of love worthier than any other interest" (Singer, 285). The pursuit of ideal love needs an ideal woman, and so the men needed a romantic ideal just as the courtly lovers did in order to inspire them to be improved as men. Hunt writes,

> The reasonably well-off romantic did not need a woman-of-all-work as did his forefathers; he could therefore concentrate more on her value as a love ideal. Since however, she was supposed to be uneducated, demure, frail, and modest, she was fading out as a person and becoming something of a wraith. The medieval troubadour had met a similar situation by simply attributing the same divinity and perfection to any lady he loved. An analogous phenomenon took place in the romantic era: men sought an ideal woman rather than a real one, and pinned their ideal image on some

> girl of whom, because she had been so quiet and retiring, they knew very little (311).

The Romantic lovers were also seeking ennoblement through unrequited desires, one that Petrarch achieves by the end of the *Canzoniere* through a new union with God. Romantic ideology is preoccupied with the establishment of "oneness"—oneness with nature, and with God. To establish this oneness, the individual needs to be capable of loving without limits, whether it is the love of nature, the love of God, or the love of a woman. In the poetry of William Wordsworth, for man to begin discovering his identity, he needs to establish a close relation with the natural world. Northorp Frye writes that throughout Romanticism, there exists a "sense of antagonism to the city, as a kind of cancerous growth destroying the relation of man and nature" (Frye, 19). Man's elementary nature thus lies in the natural world rather than the urban word. We see that in poems such as Wordsworth's "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" where the speaker establishes oneness with the steep woods, lofty cliffs, and the green pastoral landscape. Years later, when the speaker is residing in the city, he finds contentment and pleasure by remembering his experiences of connecting with the natural landscape; the oneness he thus establishes with nature acts as a form of life-support, aiding him during troubled times in the city.

To establish this oneness, one needs to be capable of loving nature, and in turn of loving the God who created that nature. Singer writes,

> most Romantics thought that love enables us to know and appropriate the universe by means of endless yearning for oneness with another person, or with humanity, or with the cosmos as a whole [...] Through passion, and

> above all through love, one discovered what reason also sought—truths about the world that reason could only approximate but that feeling would establish as revelatory of the reality in which one lived (286).

Thus the Romantic quest of achieving understanding can be accomplished through the ability of unending love; romanticism concludes "that all occurrences of love were good, and perhaps equally good" (Singer, 291). In "On Love," Percy Shelley describes this type of love as "that powerful attraction towards all we conceive, or fear, or hope beyond ourselves, when we find within our own thoughts the chasm of an insufficient void, and seek to awaken in all things that are, a community with what we experience within ourselves" (473). It is "the bond and the sanction which connects not only man with man, but with every thing which exists" (473).

Given the conventions of sexual love at the time, and the Romantic value of endless love for the sake of achieving oneness with God and nature, it follows that the Romantic lover will pursue ideal love with the same energy that the Romantic poet pursues the love of God and nature: as a never-ending quest necessary to find one's identity in the world. For the courtly lover, to love a romantic ideal was to achieve ennoblement and improvement, and Petrarch and his followers connected that ennoblement with their improvement as poets. For the Romantic lover, to love a romantic ideal was to love God, no matter how imperfect or sinful the beloved might be (Singer, 291). What was necessary for the Romantic lover, just as it was necessary for the courtly lover, was "only to seek love itself, which is to say that the experience of love meant more to him than the attributes of any specific object" (Singer, 292). The divinity of

Romantic love and courtly love alike lay in the act of loving rather than in the attainment of sexual desire.

But when an individual fails to achieve oneness with God and nature through the act of loving, it results in the development of a dark side to this Romantic quest. Not all individuals are capable as Wordsworth of maintaining their innocence in the dark world of the cities simply by remembering their union with the natural world. That innocence is likely to be lost, to be replaced by what William Blake, in his famous poetry sequence, refers to as "experience." In *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, Frye writes:

> The child is the symbol of the state of innocence, not because he is morally good but because he is civilized: that is, he assumes that the world is protected by parents and that it is an order of nature that makes human sense. As he grows into an adult he loses this innocent vision and enters the lower world of experience. The innocent vision is then driven underground into the subconscious, as we now call it, where it becomes a subversive revolutionary force with strong sexual elements in it [...] If this force is released, it permeates the world of experience with its energy; if it is suppressed, it turns demonic (33).

By turning demonic, the character is no longer achieving a Wordworthian union with nature; he departs from that and loses that relationship and becomes isolated both from the social community and from a union with nature. The result is the creation of a Byronic Hero, an important literary convention in a genre that grew in popularity during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century: the Gothic.

Gothic literature is defined by Robert Miles as a "carnivalesque mode for representations of the fragmented subject" (3). Gothic literature is concerned with the fragmentation of the human soul, problems of self-conceptions, and "represents the subject in a state of deracination, of the self finding itself disposed in its own house, in a condition of rupture, disjunction, fragmentation" (Miles, 3). A murder or crime has been committed or is about to be committed, characters often live in isolation in a secluded dark mansion—the Gothic castle—separated from the social world and from all social convention. It is a genre that is "dominated by its setting. The major effect of this setting is to establish a sense of isolation for its protagonists and create situations beyond the social norms of generally accepted practices and behaviour" (Loe, 208). In that isolation, characters impose self-torture upon themselves, and often reach out to the supernatural to find peace and solace, or revenge.

In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein,* Victor Frankenstein is obsessed with transgressing the laws of nature by building a creature that defies death. He builds the creature from the fragmented parts of dead humans, and the result is a hideous being feared by all who see him, including his creator. The creature retreats to seclusion in the natural wilderness. He achieves a Wordsworthian relation with nature, and he attempts to find his identity through that relation. But that identity is not complete yet; as a Romantic lover, he feels that he is capable of endless love, and wants to project that endless love onto another being. After failing to be accepted by the social world, he pins his hopes on the creation of a woman built with the same deformities and who will be rejected by the social world just as he was. "For that one creature's sake," he tells his creator, "I will make peace with the whole kind!" (170). This creature is his romantic ideal.

Frankenstein's creature believes that with the creation of this Romantic ideal, he will find his identity and make peace with his outcast state and with his life far apart from the community of men. The romantic ideal, as in the courtly tradition, will be a path to ennoblement as it will bring redemption to the creature and help him achieve inner peace and be content with his unnatural state of being.

While Petrarch metaphorically creates the image of Laura as a romantic ideal not so he can attain her, but to love her endlessly and inspire him to write poetry, Frankenstein's creature wants to physically create a romantic ideal with the intention of attaining her as a companion. He wants to achieve physical union and establish eternal fellowship with her. In other words, he wants her to be his wife. With this desire comes the distinctive feature that will separate the representation of love in the nineteenth century from the courtly genre of the medieval times: the need for love to result in a physical union between the lover and the beloved.

I wrote earlier that in medieval culture, marriage and love were distinct ideologies, and for true ideal love to occur, marriage must not be possible. In the nineteenth century, a different perception of marriage existed, one that was prominent throughout the early century, and then become an essential social convention later in the century during the Victorian period. Marriage was considered to be the result of love and courtship and was expected from the men and women of the new generation. Love was supposed to culminate in marriage and the unmarried person, whether a spinster or a bachelor risked being left outside the community and the societal norm, which meant that marriage was not only the product of love, but also a means of integrating the lovers within the community. Also, in a world of growing industry and increasingly difficult

conditions of life, a happy domestic life with a close family was an emotional need desired by the young people of the new generation. As Steven Mintz writes, "in a world characterised by selfish greed and mean self-seeking, the love of a woman was a source of altruistic emotions and consolations that could be found nowhere else" (103).

The nineteenth century was also marked by a high production of what Ruth Bernard Yeazell refers to as literature of modesty: "a literature that sought to advise women on how best to get themselves chosen, men how best to choose, and both parties that an affectionate marriage was itself the most satisfying goal in life" (34). These expectations entered the consciousness of the men and women of the generation through the literature of modesty and through the rise of the courtship novel which dealt with the trials of a young woman who is initiated into the social world and courted by multiple men until she settles with the one man who will provide her with the love and marriage that she has come to expect for herself. This type of marriage, Thomas Loe writes, acts "as a confirmation of society's values" (206). Such novels existed in the eighteenth century with works such as Fanny Burney's *Evelina,* and grew in popularity in the nineteenth century with the works of Maria Edgeworth and Jane Austen.

The result was that men were expected to seek a love relationship that led to marriage, and women in turns expected to be sought by men to enter such a relationship. I referred earlier to the Victorian sonnet and its examination of anti-Petrarchanism. The idea of a Petrarchan lover keen on pursuing endless desire in order to write poetry but not actively seeking to attain the beloved does not appeal to the female speakers of Barrett-Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese* and Rossetti's *Monna Innominata.* Barrett-Browning's sonnet sequence calls for reciprocal passion and desire from her male lover,

and Rossetti's sequence criticizes the Petrarchan speaker who claims in his poetry to love his beloved but does not act to fulfill that love. Petrarch's weeping and attempts to achieve spiritual union with his beloved meant little if the love did not lead to marriage. Stephen Kern writes that "Victorians had less time to court and were more rushed toward irreversible, now-or-never decisions about a one-and-only lover" (403). So waiting for a lover to complete his weeping to start pursuing a woman was not a desirable option.

The medieval lover pursued ideal love that has to remain unrequited in order for him to be improved; the Victorian lover "thought this improvement through love was exclusively a product of wedded domesticity" (Hunt, 316). But the Victorian lover still believed that a woman's love uplifted and spiritualized man, and that belief, as I wrote earlier, was stronger in the nineteenth century than it had been since medieval times. This marks a conflict that will play a more prominent role in the later work of the nineteenth century: the conflict between achieving ideal love and attaining a marriage.

In this thesis, I will define the post-courtly genre as the literature of the nineteenth century that portrays the conflict between these two ideologies of love: a love that follows the courtly tradition of pursuing endless though unattainable love, and a love that is expected to result in a marriage based on social Victorian values. In the post-courtly genre, the lover aspires to achieve endless ideal love in the courtly tradition, but he also needs to attain marriage with his beloved in order to fulfill his emotional need and achieve socially accepted and expected Victorian domesticity.

Frankenstein's creature undergoes this post-courtly conflict in a pre-Victorian setting. As a Romantic lover, the creature aspires to achieving ideal love with his romantic ideal, but he also needs to achieve a physical union with her. The creature sees

De Lacey's family living in domesticity in the cottage, and learns about the mutually reciprocated love of Felix and Safie. He later sees Victor Frankenstein planning a wedding with Elizabeth. "Shall each man," he cries to his creator, "find a wife for his bosom, and each beast have his mate, and I be alone?" The creature then sees a physical union with another as a right to which he is entitled as her sympathies are "necessary to [his] being" (168). But the companion he demands is one created especially to be compatible for him. Even though he envisions the creature to be his romantic ideal, it is not courtly love that he seeks but a mixture of both the ideal love of the courtly tradition and of nineteenth century wedded domesticity. The union of souls that appealed to courtly lovers will be irrelevant for the creature if he does not attain a physical union as well. When deprived of this union, the creature is unable to follow the traditional trajectory of the courtly lover, for he does not find solace in ennoblement or improvement or writing poetry. Only revenge will give him solace. His revenge will drive him to crime and murder and will further isolate him and his creator. With this path he becomes a kind of Byronic Hero.

The Byronic Hero is a character "who is placed outside the structure of civilization and therefore represents the force of physical nature, amoral or ruthless, yet with a sense of power, and often of leadership, that society has improvised by rejecting" (Frye, 41). Qualities that commonly define the Byronic Hero include alienation, inward torment, remorselessness, and anguish. Frankenstein's creature is driven to become a Byronic Hero through his unrequited desires. "If I cannot inspire love," he tells his creator, "I will cause fear" (169). We can see a more notable example of a Byronic Hero in Byron's *Manfred.* Manfred lives in a Gothic castle, dark and brooding and completely

isolated from the social world. He is tortured from unrequited desires after the death of a loved one, Astarte. He invokes supernatural spirits and asks for oblivion or death but receives neither, and he continues to spend his days in self-torture, haunted by visions of the dead Astarte.

In the post-courtly genre of the early nineteenth century, the lover will not find gratification in ennoblement as the courtly lover, not will he compose poetry like Petrarch and his imitators, nor will he achieve oneness with God and nature through the act of endless love as the Romantic lover. The post-courtly lover wants and needs a physical union with his romantic ideal. Unrequited desires will drive him to find gratification through another means, such as becoming a Byronic Hero. Troubled by a dark past and unable to fit and belong to the community of people, he longs for human interaction and sympathy of another. This longing, when remaining unfulfilled, will turn him into a dangerous lover, one who reacts to his unfulfilled desire by becoming a mourner, a lamenter of the bitter present obsessed with lost bliss (Lutz, 37). His only redemption is in "finding a home in the beloved" (Lutz, 50), just as Frankenstein's creature believes he will be redeemed through fellowship and union with another creature. When unable to attain that beloved, the Byronic Hero may immerse himself in the supernatural realm, as Manfred does. Eventually, the Byronic Hero will know so much about the supernatural realm that it isolates him even further from the human social word (Lutz, 61). By the end, there may not be a resolution for the lover, nor will there be a return to accepted social conventions.

V. The Post-Courtly Lover in the Victorian Realist Novel

Poetry is valuable, Aristotle says, because it shows people "as they ought to be or [...] as they are capable of becoming" (Walder, 209). Poetry represents a certain philosophy of life; in Petrarch's poetry, the philosophy is of idealized love, of characters defined by only one characteristic: Petrarch is the eternal lover, and Laura is the divine beloved. The novel, however, arose in the eighteenth century as a medium "which could express a realistic and objective curiosity about man and his world" (Walder, 211). The novel, Emile Zola said, reacts against idealized forms of art and aims to show us the world in its natural form, even if that form is not beautiful and ugly and far departed from the ideal state (Brooks, 8).

Victorian literature was influenced by Romantic ideas and at the same time reacted against certain Romantic ideas—most importantly, the Romantic mistrust of eighteenth-century rationalization, a mistrust that many Victorians saw to be a path to isolation. Victorians were interested in eighteenth-century rational thoughts, but attempted to integrate them with Romantic ideas (McGowan, 2). But Victorian realism also avoided the excesses of Romanticism; while Romanticism offered a "private world of imagination divorced from all ties to reality" (McGowan, 21), Victorian realism aspired to achieve a stronger tie to reality. Ioan Williams writes:

> Nineteenth century Realist fiction in England is a form of Romantic art [...] It emerges from Romanticism by a process of natural development of central Romantic ideas under the influence of new social forces.[...] They saw the simple emotional needs of mankind as the only medium of self-fulfilment, and they stressed the sympathetic emotions at the basis of morality, which was especially important to them because it was the factor

> which allowed the individual to integrate emotional and spiritual elements of his own nature, and conform to social laws. Like the Romantic poets, they were basically suspicious of the analytical intellect, but they accepted it as a necessary qualification of the emotions, and a condition of proper understanding of the individual's place in the universe (xiii).

The result is an assimilation of Romantic ideas and values, "to make them the basis of a coherent view of life, including physical and metaphysical, psychological, moral and social elements" (Williams, 60).

From this assimilation grew the Victorian realist novel, which "reflected the new 'social morality' which put social economic ideas under the domain of a sentimental morality" (Williams, 116). This form was seen to be realistic because "it represents the actual state of society and embodies the idea of integrating social life on a moral basis. So it represents a step forward in the novel's history, demonstrating its capacity to deal with contemporary social experience and handle the widest economic and social questions" (Williams, 117). The realist novel has to be a study of society, of how people can function in society, and how society can and should be improved by the actions of its people. Romantic ideas and sentiments were still the ideal to be aspired towards, but they had to be integrated into life in order to lead the individual to a deeper connection with society, not to isolation and seclusion as is often the fate of the Byronic Hero in the Gothic novel.

Love is one of those human experiences ubiquitously explored in Victorian fiction. Barbara W. Tuchman writes that courtly love was "artificial, a literary convention, a fantasy [...] more for purposes for discussion than for everyday practice"

(68). The Victorian realist novel questions how this ideology of love can function if integrated into everyday practice. The Victorian realist novel aims to modify the Romantic conception of love, thus allowing it to unite the lover with the society in which he lives rather than alienate him from the world around him (Williams, 55-56). But the conflict of achieving ideal love while attaining a realistic union with the beloved still exists, as it did in the pre-Victorian era. With the growing importance of marriages and its effect on an individual's social status in the Victorian world, it becomes the desired quest for the character in the Victorian novel, as is the quest of pursuing ideal love as defined in the courtly and Romantic tradition.

The post-courtly lover in the post-courtly genre will attempt to initially follow the path of the courtly lover; he will deem a woman to be his romantic ideal, even if the woman is without the grace and divinity that usually captivate the courtly lover. Petrarch envisions grace and divinity in a woman he did not know, or who never existed; the post-courtly lover, in his quest to have a romantic ideal, may envision grace and divinity in a flawed woman who lacks them. This flawed woman will become a romantic ideal because he needs her to be one; he needs a romantic ideal in order to feel that he is capable of achieving endless love. To prove his love to be ideal, he thinks he is ready to spend his life loving her no matter how impossible it is to attain her. But the post-courtly lover will realize that he cannot be satisfied with endless unrequited love; the social status of marriages of the time and his emotional needs will make him desire a physical union. Thus, creating a romantic ideal as a figment of his imagination, as Petrarch attempts, is not an option for the post-courtly lover. The possibility of being ennobled and achieving

oneness with God through a spiritual union with the beloved will not appeal to him if he is deprived of a physical union with his loved one.

The need for ideal love and the need for marriage thus conflict when the post-courtly lover encounters a woman who will supply him with Romantic love but not with Victorian domesticity. The post-courtly lover then will dream of Victorian union and domesticity, and when that dream proves futile, the post-courtly lover will then either return to his Romantic roots and become a Byronic Hero, or will continue dreaming and hopelessly attempting to attain the union. In the realist novel, both paths become problematic for the post-courtly lover and to his social environment as well as they both lead the post-courtly lover to isolation and alienation from his community, and may even thwart the lives of others in that community, thus hindering social progress. The realist novel, with its interest in moral values and the importance of properly functioning in society in order to promote its growth, will attempt to show that failure, and suggest how love could be pursued in a way fit for the survival of the characters in order for healthy and stable social progress to occur. The post-courtly lover will thus be forced to adjust his approach to love, or be forced into more isolation so that other lovers in the community who are capable of making their love compatible with social conventions be able to love and grow in accepted Victorian domesticity.

In this chapter, I have briefly discussed two Gothic texts from the pre-Victorian era that represent the post-courtly conflict, and demonstrated how in both texts the post-courtly lover turns into a Byronic hero who does not achieve any social resolution and remains in isolation. In the next two chapters, I will discuss the post-courtly conflict in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* to study

what happens to the post-courtly lover later in the nineteenth century when the Victorian novel attempts to portray social realism.

CHAPTER TWO

ACHIEVING QUIET SLUMBERS:
Post-Courtly Love in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*

This chapter will examine Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* in the context of the post-courtly genre theory I developed in chapter one. I will argue that Brontë's text portrays how post-courtly love is at odds with the fictional world in which the novel is set. Heathcliff and Catherine fail to function as post-courtly lovers in the novel's realist social world, and their actions lead to their emotional deterioration and to the downfall of the characters with whom they interact. Only with a new love relationship that develops between Cathy and Hareton—a love relationship that does not follow the post-courtly convention—is social order restored to the Heights and the Grange. Drawing on Nancy Armstrong's reading of the conflict between romanticism and realism in *Wuthering Heights*, this chapter will consider how Heathcliff as a post-courtly lover cancels out Romantic notions of courtly love in order to allow for a different type of love relationship to exist. By the end of the chapter, I will have demonstrated how *Wuthering Heights* acts as a realist novel in its depiction of the manner in which Hareton's and Cathy's love relationship saves them from falling into Heathcliff's fate of becoming isolated gothic characters unable to function in a realist social world.

Wuthering Heights, although written during the Victorian era, has its roots in the early "Romantic Impulse," as Terry Eagleton claims (230). There has been substantial scholarship written about the tension between Romantic ideology and Victorian values in the novel. Steve Vine sums up well the debate concerning this tension when he writes that "Cathy and Hareton repeat the tensions of the earlier Cathy-Heathcliff relationship in a more socially accommodating form, as the novel moves from a Romantic-gothic to a

Victorian-domestic plot" (105). Though my argument is more concerned with the portrayal of love conventions in the novel rather than the conflict between Romanticism and Victorianism, I will have to begin my chapter by discussing this conflict since Romantic values, as I stated in the previous chapter, are directly linked to the perception of love at the time, and the social tensions created by Victorian values lead to the conflict of the post-courtly lover.

A question often asked in *Wuthering Heights* discourse: what is the best way to situate the novel's genre: as a Romantic or Victorian text? In her essay "Emily Brontë In and Out of her Time," Nancy Armstrong discusses the problem of attempting to situate Brontë as either a "Romantic reactionary who rejected the kind of fiction coming into vogue in the 1840s" or a novelist "aligning her work with the utilitarian tradition that gave rise to literary realists" (234). Heathcliff is often described as a Romantic figure and a Byronic Hero, but Armstrong also writes that Heathcliff has features besides those of a Romantic hero. These features, Armstrong writes, "have an economic and political logic all of their own and acquire their rhetorical force from the association between gypsies and the laboring classes, a conception of man that stubbornly resists idealization" (247). These features are best seen in the capitalistic manner in which Heathcliff acquires his wealth and secures the property of the Heights and Grange from Hindley and Linton. Armstrong then attempts to clarify the novel's problematic genre by examining how Heathcliff, instead of acting as merely a romance or a realist character, functions rather as a third category, a Romantic hero who "cancels out Romantic possibilities and reduces that system of belief to mere superstition" (245). With Heathcliff's self-inflicted failure as a Romantic hero, the novel then "proceeds according to norms and expectations that

are much more characteristic of Victorian realism" (245). The idealistic categories of Romantic discourse, Armstrong writes, eventually breakdown, and the Gothic devices that Heathcliff uses to define himself as a character become devices that act "to the service of realism instead of romance" (254). In the previous chapter, I related Romantic ideology to the return of courtly love tradition to the consciousness of men in the nineteenth century. Just as Heathcliff fails to prevail as a Romantic hero, so he fails to prevail as a post-courtly lover. The breakdown of Romantic discourse combined with the breakdown of courtly love conventions eventually lead to the rise of realism in Brontë's novel.

Before beginning to describe the love relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine, it is interesting to note that the novel is narrated by a character who is afraid of love: Lockwood. He departs to Thrushcross Grange after an incident with a woman whom he describes as "a real goddess in my eyes, as long as she took no notice of me" (3). Unable to tell this "goddess" of his love for her, he gains the reputation of being "deliberate heartless," which he finds to be undeserved (3). To escape this anguish he retreats to seclusion, "determined to hold [himself] independent of all social intercourse" (22). In the Heights he encounters Cathy to whom he also feels attraction, but again chooses to not act upon his feelings; instead he attempts to convince himself that "a sensible man ought to find sufficient company in himself" (19). He envisions himself to be a perfect partner for Cathy, later in the novel thinking that "a realization of something more romantic than a fairy tale it would have been for Mrs Linton Heathcliff, had she and I struck up an attachment, as her good nurse desired, and migrated together into the

stirring atmosphere of the town" (221). But Lockwood does not act on that feeling, and instead chooses to escape once again, this time from the Grange.

Lockwood in these instance acts as the type of Romantic lover I described in Chapter One: one who falls in love, but is too shy and intimidated to pursue his feelings. He is "afraid and ashamed of love," Martha Nussbaum writes, and although he has feelings for Cathy, he pretends not to because "to him the reciprocation of love is more terrifying than its non-reciprocation" (368). Even when he sees the vision of Catherine outside the window, he identifies her to Heathcliff as "Catherine Linton," even though he read "Catherine Earnshaw" on the wall of the room twenty times more than the name Linton (17). Identifying her as Catherine Earnshaw will make her an unmarried woman; as Catherine Linton, she is married and thus unattainable for Lockwood, which is how he seems to prefer women since it will prevent the pursuit of love. But Lockwood cannot be considered to be a courtly lover, because he responds to love by running away and attempting to forget about his feelings. Nelly narrates to him the tale of Catherine and Heathcliff, two Romantic lovers who do pursue their feeling, and who suffer the consequences when their love is thwarted. Lockwood, who returns to the Heights later in the novel without signs that he has changed his attitudes towards love, proves to be useless as a lover, and continues to be so by the end of the novel. He thinks he can save Cathy by marrying her, but he does not even attempt to pursue her. From this external narrative frame, the novel draws out the uselessness of a Romantic lover who is capable of feeling love but not willing to pursue a woman. Heathcliff and Catherine, on the other hand, are Romantic lovers who do act upon their feelings and desire, but to produce disastrous and tragic results.

I need first to draw out how Heathcliff and Catherine function as Romantic characters before describing their behaviours as Romantic lovers. Wordsworthian themes are evident in Nelly's description of their childhood and their close relationship with nature. Edward Chitham suggests that "the principal actors in *Wuthering Heights* feel similar emotions" to the ones "Wordsworth dwells on in "Tintern Abbey" and "The Prelude"" (43). The attachment the speaker of "Tintern Abbey" feels towards the steep woods, lofty cliffs, and the green pastoral landscape resonates in the attachment Heathcliff and Catherine feel towards the moors surrounding the Heights. Nelly comments on the way the two children shunned their domestic obligations and duties in order to spend time in the fields because it was "one of their chief amusements to run away to the moors [...] and remain there all day" (32). Their time together on the moors is their way of escaping the social reality of the Heights; Catherine escapes from Joseph's harsh disciplining, and Heathcliff escapes from his degradation under Hindley's hands. It is a situation where, as Eagleton writes, "bitter social reality breeds Romantic escapism" (226). Catherine's family members, and the rest of the household of the Heights, do not understand Heathcliff's and Catherine's desire to remain outdoors in the field, but for the two of them, their happiness comes from the time they spend together in the moors rather than their interaction with the domestic social world.

We see also a darker Romantic theme in the characterization of Heathcliff and his relationship to Catherine, one that is more in line with the Gothic tradition that I described in Chapter One. Nelly's first sighting of Heathcliff as a "dirty, ragged, black-haired child" who "repeated over and over again some gibberish that nobody could understand" (25)—a sighting that instantly installs fear in Nelly and makes Mrs.

Earnshaw "ready to fling it out of doors" (25)—reminds us of Frankenstein's first sighting of his creature, where Frankenstein exclaims that the creature's "jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds" (Shelley, 86). When the Lintons first see Heathcliff, they express disgust by his sight, claiming that "yet the villain scowls so plainly in his face; would it not be a kindness to the country to hang him at once, before he shows his nature in acts as well as features?" (34). A similar assumption of the correspondence between extreme monstrosity and internal villainy is made about Frankenstein's creature whenever someone encounters him. Heathcliff, like Frankenstein's creature, becomes the savage the social world is not willing to embrace.

In chapter one, I discussed the Romantic quest for unity and oneness with nature and God. This oneness is achieved through the capability of experiencing ideal and endless love. Frankenstein's creature is not capable of achieving this love because of his inability to interact with human females, so he demands that a romantic ideal be created just for him. Heathcliff also needs the experience of ideal love, so he attaches the values of a romantic ideal to the only woman available for him: Catherine. She then becomes his romantic ideal. He comes to believe they belong to each other and only to each other, and the idea of finding someone else whom he can love as he loves Catherine is impossible. As in the courtly tradition, his love for Catherine is exaggerated to a degree that it becomes an obsession: she becomes the solitary purpose for his existence. I discussed in Chapter One how the Romantic lover, in his quest to have a romantic ideal, may imagine fictional virtues to exist in a woman who does not possess those values, and we see that clearly in Heathcliff's case. Catherine is not Laura; she does not have the virtues and grace that Petrarch describes throughout the *Canzoniere*. Catherine is a problematic child

who chided Heathcliff more than anyone else in the household, but Heathcliff still held her up on a pedestal. Nelly recounts how Catherine's insolence had more power over Heathcliff than her father's kindness, how in return Heathcliff "would do *her* bidding in anything, and *his* only when it suited his own inclination" (29). She is the only woman available to him, and his reaction is to imagine her to be superior to all women, even though he does not encounter any other until he meets Isabella Linton. And even after encountering the Linton children, he still finds Catherine "so immeasurably superior to them--to everybody on earth" (35). His soul, Eagleton writes, comes to belong "not to that world but to Catherine; and in that sense his true commitment is an "outdated" one, to a past, increasingly mythical realm of absolute personal value" (233). He loves her as the courtly lover loved his romantic ideal. She may not be as divine as Laura, but she is his Laura, his Layla, his Stella.

A variation to the courtly love tradition then occurs in the novel. Not only is Catherine Heathcliff's romantic ideal, but he becomes her romantic ideal as well. As a Romantic character, Catherine is also in need of experiencing ideal love, so she imagines the values of a romantic ideal to exist in the only man available for her: Heathcliff. Catherine then comes to love Heathcliff more as an imaginative possibility than as a real person (Beversluis, 111). "She was too fond of Heathcliff," Nelly tells Lockwood early in the novel, "the greatest punishment we could invent for her was to keep her separate from him" (29). The "ideal" love is then shared reciprocally by both, whereas in the courtly tradition, it is usually only the male lover who believes that the female is his romantic ideal.

It was also a courtly convention for the male lover to not even know his beloved as a person, only as a figure to be loved. Heathcliff and Catherine know each other well, and the passion they share for each other is reciprocal. They grew up together, grew to be attached to each other, and each needs the other as a source of comfort in an otherwise troubled life. Catherine is Heathcliff's only source of gratification as a child; he only finds solace from Hindley's cruel treatment only in the time he spends with Catherine. Catherine, likewise, attaches herself to Heathcliff to "fulfill the emptiness in her own soul" (Goodlet). Catherine loves Heathcliff "because she must," writes F.H Langman, "it is the deepest impulse of her nature, it is "necessary." Through her feeling for Heathcliff, Catherine discovers her own identity, her place in the world—as he does through her" (76). Their attachment, and their need for each other, becomes the obsession that will define their existence, and will consume their lives. "They recognize in each other their humanity, their worth and dignity as persons, their right to be." Langman writes. "Only through this relationship can either of them feel the vital bond with existence, the sense of belonging" (78).

By believing they are each other's romantic ideal, Heathcliff and Catherine believe that they will achieve the unity and oneness that Romantics sought. But rather than achieving it with God and nature as Romantic lovers sought, their attachment to each other makes them believe that they will share that oneness with each other. "I am Heathcliff," Catherine claims in the most-often quoted line in the book (59). After she dies, Heathcliff cries, "I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!"(122). Their very being is founded on their relationship with each other. Heathcliff and Catherine believe they achieve that unity together, that they complete each other and

together form one being. Through their love to one another, "they seek identity even in, and beyond death; they strive to nullify natural law and merge in oneness, but a oneness that is personal, distinct, and unique—not abstract" (Polhemus, 169). They believe they can achieve this oneness only by being physically together, and not just by being spiritually connected, as was the case with the courtly lover and his beloved. This love is achieved by the mutual passion shared by the two of them, rather than the one-way passion felt by the traditional courtly and Romantic lover. To achieve this union, Heathcliff and Catherine are willing to "reject the "real world" if it denies them the love they want" (Polhemus, 181). Nelly says that they "both promised to grow up rude as savages" (32). They share the same Romantic imagination of Frankenstein's creature and believe they'd be happiest through a blissful life in the isolated wilderness where the lover and his beloved can, as Frankenstein's creature claims, be "cut off from the world" which will make them "more attached to one another" (Shelley, 170). Only there can the lover and beloved pursue their love in peace. Only as Romantics living a Romantic life can Heathcliff and Catherine be happy as lovers and achieve the unity they seek.

This Romantic life in the natural world of the moors is thwarted when Catherine is first introduced to the less Romantic but more socially domestic world of Thrushcross Grange. In Chapter One, I wrote of the conflict in the post-courtly genre between achieving an ideal Romantic love and attaining a socially accepted union. An analogue to this conflict in *Wuthering Heights* begins when Heathcliff and Catherine encounter the Lintons. Heathcliff and Catherine observe the lives of the Lintons through the windows, just as Frankenstein's creature observes the lives of the De Lacy family from outside their cottage. Describing his observation of the Lintons, Heathcliff tells Nelly, "Old Mr and

Mrs Linton were not there; Edgar and his sister had it entirely to themselves. Shouldn't they have been happy? We should have thought ourselves in heaven!" (33). By glimpsing the peaceful domestic life in the Grange, Heathcliff and Catherine already begin to envision a different life from one secluded in the moors: a life of Victorian domesticity. Catherine, who temporarily lives with the Linton, has the opportunity to change her manners, and does so. She returns to the Heights "instead of a wild, hatless little savage jumping into the house, and rushing to squeeze us all breathless [...]a very dignified person, with brown ringlets falling from the cover of a feathered beaver, and a long cloth habit, which she was obliged to hold up with both hands that she might sail in" (36). Before her visit to the Grange, Catherine "has seen no other world, and she looks upon the new one as an appealing alternative to the strangling addictive bond that she shares with Heathcliff" (Goodlett, 320). She begins to embrace this new world, and envisions a life more socially accepted than the one that she and Heathcliff imagined for themselves.

Catherine then finds herself courted by two men, Heathcliff and Edgar, and she has to decid e with which man she should pursue a relationship. I discussed in my previous chapter the courtship novel genre that grew in popularity during the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth century where a heroine has to make a similar kind of choice. The typical heroine of the courtship novel eventually chooses the man who loves her, whom she loves, and who will provide for her as a husband. Both Edgar and Heathcliff love Catherine; Catherine loves Heathcliff and not Edgar. But Edgar can provide for Catherine, while Heathcliff, who is socially inferior to Edgar, cannot. Edgar can provide a safe domestic life, while Heathcliff will live with her in the wilderness of the moors, just as Frankenstein's creature dreams of living with his beloved—the other

female creature yet to be built—in the wilderness of the north. As Frankenstein realizes that his creature would not be able to follow up on his Romantic vision and live in seclusion with his romantic ideal, Catherine similarly realizes that a Romantic life in seclusion with Heathcliff would not be so desirable. "Did it never strike you," Catherine tells Nelly, "that if Heathcliff and I married, we would be beggars?" (58). Catherine reasons with herself practically that marrying Edgar will make her "the greatest woman of the neighborhood" (55), whereas Heathcliff "does not know what being in love is" (58). "But there are several other handsome, rich young men in the world: handsomer, possibly, and richer than he is," Nelly tells Catherine, "What should hinder you from loving them?" (56). Catherine responds, "If there be any, they are out of my way," again opting for the pragmatic thinking, that Edgar is the only man of such qualities available for her, and it is unlikely that she will be courted by any other such man. She follows the action usually recommended by the literature of modesty of the time: marry an honourable man who loves her, will treat her well, and provide her with a reliable marriage.

Nelly asks Catherine, "Have you considered how you'll bear the separation, and how [Heathcliff will] be deserted in the world?" (58). Catherine responds that her decision to marry Edgar will not affect the love that she and Heathcliff share for each other. She tells Nelly:

> "My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I am Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as

a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being. So don't talk of our separation again: it is impracticable [...]" (59)

With these sentiments, Catherine conveys the conventions of courtly love. She will marry a man she does not love, and the desires of the courtly lover obsessed with her will remain unfulfilled. The lack of a union between them will not diminish their love, just as a lack of a union did not diminish the love of the traditional courtly lovers. As Catherine clearly states, she and Heathcliff will always be connected with spirit, just as the courtly lover was always connected to his romantic ideal. Heathcliff remains the courtly lover obsessed with his love for Catherine, while Catherine, just like Layla, Laura, and Stella, ends up in a marriage with another man. With this marriage, we return to the courtly conventions of ideal love: Catherine, the romantic ideal, will become a traditional beloved from the courtly tradition, set to be married to another man, and the lover is left to deal with his unrequited desire. Heathcliff will improve not by the courtly convention of "ennoblement" but by more pragmatic means since Catherine's marriage with Edgar will help Heathcliff "rise, and [be placed] out of [her] brother's power" (58). What needs to occur afterwards for the courtly love model to be completed is for Heathcliff to spend the rest of his life lamenting his unrequited love through verse in solitude.

It does not work out this way, however, and Catherine and Heathcliff find themselves unable to function in the traditional courtly roles of the ideal lover and beloved. I discussed in chapter one the importance of marriage as a necessary social convention in the nineteenth century; it was the quest of all lovers, unlike in the courtly tradition when love and marriage were considered independent of each other. Catherine initially believes to have solved the dilemma of being a post-courtly lover by marrying a

man she does not love over attempting to achieve a Romantic union with a man with whom she shares an obsessive love. Though she seems at the beginning to be content with acting as a traditional courtly beloved since it will attain her a socially acceptable marriage, Heathcliff is not content at all with her decision. He remains a post-courtly lover, wanting both to experience endless love and to achieve a union with his beloved. He has achieved Romantic love and endless yearning, but he fails to achieve a union with his beloved. He is then left alone, and now has to cope with his unrequited desires. If the courtly lovers felt that the lack of a union with their romantic ideals would only elevate them as people and lovers, Heathcliff reacts otherwise. Contrary to the courtly tradition, Heathcliff does not see himself as ennobled, and does not care about being illuminated or elevated as a character due to his unrequited desire for Catherine. He does not want to become a poet as Petrarch and Astrophil do. He will then, as I argued in chapter one, either continue to dream and hope for union with Catherine, or will follow the path of Frankenstein's creature and Manfred and become obsessed with his pain and frustration, and eventually indulge in anger and descend into the character-driven script of a Byronic Hero.

Heathcliff follows the latter path. He does not reject his Romantic impulse as Catherine initially does, but embraces it, and his reaction to Catherine's marriage remains true to that dark Romantic impulse. He will indulge his frustration by acts of destruction rather than in the representation of his love through poetry, or any other means. He reacts just as Frankenstein's creature does when deprived of his romantic ideal: he wants revenge, and he assures Catherine "if you fancy I'll suffer unrevenged, I'll convince you of the contrary" (81), just as Frankenstein's creature assures his creator: "I can make you

so wretched that the light of day will be hateful to you" (Shelley, 192). Heathcliff's frustrated passion, Bruce McCullough writes, "bears fruit in hatred which can find relief only in the destruction of everything at all connected with [Edgar and Hindley]" (60). Gothic literature is concerned with distortion of self and nature, and Heathcliff's love for Catherine becomes distorted and turns into hate and a desire for revenge. Revenge for Heathcliff becomes a distortion of love; the energy he was willing to put in as a Romantic lover towards his endless love will be used towards endless hate. Instead of pursuing love, he will pursue revenge instead. He will also seek his revenge on Catherine as well. Deborah Lutz writes, "the heroine herself stands as a figure for vengeance, and the dangerous lover believes that all avenging might be satiated if he can punish her sufficiently" (Lutz, 67). One of Heathcliff's means of punishing Catherine is to pursue, as she does, a loveless marriage. Though he does achieve union with Isabella, it is an unnatural marriage fuelled by hate, and he uses his cruelty to Isabella to punish Catherine and Edgar. As a post-courtly lover, a union with his romantic ideal is what he seeks, and when he does not attain her, he turns his capabilities of experiencing endless love into indulging in endless hate.

Heathcliff is not the only post-courtly lover in the novel. I wrote earlier that Catherine is also a Romantic lover who sees Heathcliff as her romantic ideal and dreams of achieving union with him before deciding to pursue a more conventional marriage. Goodlett writes, "According to 19th century custom, a woman was not complete unless she married successfully" (321). Catherine comes to realize that custom through her interaction with the household of Thrushcross Grange, and she chooses the man who will provide her with that successful marriage usually advised by literature of modesty. But in

the courtship novel, the heroine usually achieves that successful marriage with the man she loves. Catherine does not love Edgar, and though she initially convinces herself that a union with Heathcliff would not have been possible, she still finds herself desiring that impossible union, and thus her true desires remain unrequited. It becomes as though she never married in the first place; she remains the post-courtly lover obsessed with her romantic ideal and not satisfied with anything except achieving a union with him.

Catherine, like Heathcliff, becomes affected negatively by her decision and finds herself unable to function in the social realist world. Catherine's marriage to Edgar "tore their souls asunder as surely as if they had been one soul" (Braithworth, 179). Catherine is unable to live a harmonious married life. While she is aware that her choices were pragmatic from the point of view of the social conventions of her world, she claims that "in my soul and in my heart, I'm convinced I'm wrong!" (56). Even though she thought she could abandon her Romantic impulse, she discovers that she could not. She also cannot abandon her passion and desire for Heathcliff. Her mental, physical, and emotional health deteriorate, and all she longs for is the Romantic childhood she willingly gave away: "I wish I were out of doors! I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free; and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them! [...] I'm sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills" (91).

Catherine's health deteriorates until she dies. She remains unattainable for Heathcliff, but this time through death. "Will you forget me?" she asks Heathcliff before she dies. "Will you be happy when I am in the earth? Will you say twenty years hence, ``That's the grave of Catherine Earnshaw. I loved her long ago, and was wretched to lose her; but it is past. I've loved many others since: my children are dearer to me than she

was; and at death, I shall not rejoice that I am going to her: I shall be sorry that I must leave them!" Will you say so, Heathcliff?'" (115). He does not forget her, and does not love others, just as in the tradition of courtly love. But Heathcliff's reaction to her death has little else to do with the courtly love tradition. Petrarch celebrates Laura's death by writing the second part of the *Canzoniere* where he attempts to come to peace with God, and learns "to master his desire and take in the importance of focusing on the afterlife" (Young, xi). Heathcliff does not master his desire; he remains a tortured soul from the Romantic Gothic tradition. Wuthering Heights becomes his Gothic castle: a dark secluded mansion isolated from the social world. Lockwood comments that the location is "a situation so completely removed from the stir of society. A perfect misanthropist Heaven" (1). He discerns the house as a "dismal spiritual atmosphere" with "a quantity of grotesque carving lavished over the front" (2). Heathcliff becomes obsessed with this isolation, avoids social contact, and "keeps his hand out of the way when he meets a would-be acquaintance" (3).

Echoes of Byron's *Manfred* are evident here. Both Manfred and Heathcliff isolate themselves in their mansions, their souls tortured by the death of their beloved. In both cases, the desperation of their souls makes them reach out to the supernatural in faint hope of finding solace in a possible after-life reunion with their beloved. In Sonnet 281, Petrarch writes,

> Now I have seen her, in the form of nymph
> or other goddess, rising from the bed
> of this, the river Sorgue, here on its bank
> and treading its fresh grass, I swear, as if

she were a living woman, and her face

has shown me that she's truly sorry for me (9-14)

Manfred and Heathcliff also believe that they see visions of their beloved, but they do not experience Petrarch's solace by feeling that she is sorry for them. When Manfred believes that he sees an image of Astarte, he cries out: "Oh God! If it be thus, and thou art not a madness and a mockery, I yet might be most happy. I will clasp thee, and we again will be—" (Byron, 399). Upon another visitation, he cries out: "One word of mercy! Say thou lovest me" (Byron, 409). It is not her sympathy that he wants, but again a union.

Heathcliff also mourns the loss of his beloved and believes he sees her vision in faint hope that he can achieve the union that has eluded him while she was alive. He tells Nelly that "in every cloud, in every tree filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object, by day [he is] surrounded with her image! [...] The entire world is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exists, and that [he has] lost her" (235). When Lockwood claims to have seen the ghost of Catherine, Heathcliff is all too ready to accept it, and falls on the floor besides the window. "Come in! come in!" he sobs. "Cathy, do come. Oh do. Oh do – once more! Oh! my heart's darling! hear me this time, Catherine, at last!" (20). While she was alive, Heathcliff saw her as part of himself, that together they form unity as one being. He warns Catherine before she dies, "what kind of living will it be when you--oh, God! would *you* like to live with your soul in the grave?' (117). Edgar, who did not love Catherine as a Romantic lover, reacts differently to her death. Nelly says, "[Edgar] didn't pray for Catherine's soul to haunt him. Time brought resignation, and a melancholy sweeter than common joy. He recalled her memory with ardent, tender love, and hopeful aspiring to the better world; where he doubted not she

was gone. (133). Heathcliff did pray that Catherine's soul to haunt him, and assures her before she dies, "I won't rest till you are with me. I never will!' (92).

Not only is his life distorted but he attempts to distort the lives of everyone who lives in the Heights and the Grange. He is still pursuing revenge, and is determined that the next generation, made up of Linton, Cathy, and Hareton, live as wretched a life as he has. Heathcliff almost succeeds in doing so. Hareton is degraded by Heathcliff just as Heathcliff was degraded by Hindley, and Cathy is manipulated into a cruel marriage with Linton. After Linton's death, Cathy and Hareton seem destined to remain part of the distorted Gothic world of the Heights.

Here is where we start to see how *Wuthering Heights* comes to act as a realist novel. I wrote in the previous chapter that the realist novel is concerned with how individuals deal with their experiences in a way that will allow them to integrate positively into their social contexts. Lockwood, as a useless lover, escapes from his community each time he falls in love, and does not positively contribute to the lives of the people with whom he interacts. Heathcliff's reaction to his unrequited desires is to indulge in his dark Romantic impulses and become a Byronic hero. This leads him into isolation, and negatively affects the lives of the people around him, and as a result everyone is driven away from healthy social interaction and is forced to live a distorted and isolated life. The novel demonstrates the failure of the post-courtly lover to exist in a realist social world, and in the last three chapters, the novel suggests how a love relationship based on different conventions could lead to improvement of the social world of the Heights and the Grange rather than its decline. The love relationship that develops between Heathcliff and Catherine cannot realistically function in this world; Catherine

realizes that, but then cannot act upon the decision she made. The novel then suggests an alternative path to establishing a love relationship, one that can function properly in the social world of the novel, and can even lead to healthy and stable social progress. This occurs in the relationship between Hareton and Cathy.

Just as Heathcliff and Catherine, as young lovers, cannot function in the realist social world, Cathy and Hareton cannot function in the deteriorating Gothic world of the Heights. They need a change, and that change is achieved by growing to love each other differently from the manner in which Heathcliff and Catherine grew to love each other. As a child, Hareton is degraded by Heathcliff, and he seems destined to suffer a similar fate and become a Gothic character. Even Heathcliff remarks that "Hareton seemed a personification of my youth, not a human being" (235). But Hareton possesses a moral value that Heathcliff does not: forgiveness. While Frankenstein's creature and Heathcliff are bent on revenge—even Frankenstein himself eventually becomes driven by revenge—Hareton is not. This shows a key distinction between the ways Hareton and Heathcliff use their imagination. Realism in Victorian literature attempted to assimilate Romantic values so that they could be integrated into a moral social life. Heathcliff's imagination leads him to envision a secluded life with Catherine away from the social world, and when he is unable to achieve his vision, he proves to be unable of undergoing constructive imagination to envision how he could live without Catherine; he sees achieving happiness in life without her an impossibility, and uses his imagination to plot methods of revenge against Hindly and Edgar. Hareton, on the other hand, uses his imagination to achieve social integration rather than to construct fiction barriers to social integration. Hareton thus uses his imagination for constructive and healthy ends, and

envisions a life more socially appropriate than the way he lives. He dreams of education, of knowledge, and of becoming less of a ruffian and more of a gentleman. Despite all the harm done to him, Hareton's imagination allows him to achieve forgiveness and feel sympathy for Heathcliff, as seen when he defends Heathcliff and would rather Cathy "abuse him, as she used to, than begin on Mr. Heathcliff" (233). When Heathcliff dies, Hareton sits "by the corpse all night, weeping in bitter earnest" (244). This reminds us of Frankenstein's creature weeping over the death of Frankenstein. But Frankenstein's creature achieves that sympathy late in his story and only after indulging in vengeance; Hareton achieves it earlier, and this prevents him from descending into anger and allows him the potential to achieve social integration. The realist novel thus, which is concerned with achieving a moral view of life, shows how Hareton, who is "saved by the absence of hatred in his heart" (Watson, 89), avoids becoming a secluded figure like Heathcliff.

Cathy also shows moral values that differentiate her from Catherine. While Catherine was a troublesome child who rebelled against her father, and even accused him of not being a good man (30), Cathy is described by Nelly as an angel who cares about the members of the Grange household. "She must have had a warm heart," Nelly says of Cathy, "when she loved her father so, to give so much to me. (177). Cathy describes her idea of heaven:

> "[...] rocking in a rustling green tree, with a west wind blowing, and bright white clouds flitting rapidly above; and not only larks, but throstles, and blackbirds, and linnets, and cuckoos pouring out music on every side, and the moors seen at a distance, broken into cool dusky dells; but close

by great swells of long grass undulating in waves to the breeze; and woods and sounding water, and the whole world awake and wild with joy" (180).

The last phrase is what differentiates Cathy's perception of nature from her mother's: Catherine saw nature as a means of escape from social reality, whereas for Cathy it was a means to experience serenity and feel the world awake and joyful with her. Even Linton, raised by Heathcliff to be cruel, expresses to Cathy, "your kindness has made me love you deeper than if I deserved your love: and though I couldn't, and cannot help showing my nature to you" (184).

In addition to Hareton's ability to forgive and Cathy's kindness to others, they embrace social reality in a way Catherine and Heathcliff never do. Catherine believes that by marrying Edgar she can help Heathcliff improve in life. For Heathcliff, improvement means very little if he is not with Catherine. Hareton wants to improve, and not by ennoblement as was the intention of courtly lovers but by more socially realistic means: by gaining knowledge. "Mr Hareton is desirous of increasing his amount of knowledge," Nelly tells Cathy. "He is not *envious* but *emulous* of your attainments. He'll be a clever scholar in a few years.' (218). Cathy at first shows disdain towards Hareton, but her kindness emerges and she eventually offers Hareton friendship and tells Ellen, "I'll come and teach him to read it right" (228). Hareton's ambitions turn him into an apt pupil, and Nelly says, "His honest, warm, and intelligent nature shook off rapidly the clouds of ignorance and degradation in which it had been bred" (233).

It is with books that Cathy's and Hareton's affection and love for each other grow, not in the wild moors that Heathcliff and Catherine knew. Ellen states:

> The intimacy thus commenced, grew rapidly: though it encountered temporary interruptions. Earnshaw was not to be civilized with a wish; and my young lady was no philosopher, and no paragon of patience; but both their minds tending to the same point – one loving and desiring to esteem, and the other loving and desiring to be esteemed – they contrived in the end to reach it (229).

Cathy and Hareton embrace social norms to a certain extent rather than outwardly reject them, and they form a bond that will help them deal with the psychological and emotional wounds they have suffered under Heathcliff's hands. We can see this as a de-romanticisation process: moving away from Romantic values of finding connection to each other and to oneself through interaction only with the natural world, and into a concern with social and communal progress. It is not the 'ideal love' that is experienced by courtly lovers, or by Heathcliff and Catherine. Cathy is not Hareton's romantic ideal, and he is not hers. It is not a relationship that arises out of a need to achieve endless love, or the belief that theirs souls are one. It is a love that develops by the desire to share knowledge, and the need to improve their lives and be able to be integrated into social community. It is a relationship that fits within what Williams states to be a convention of the Victorian realist novel: "unless the individual accepts that Reality lies outside himself and reconciles himself to its pressure upon him, he can never build a firm basis for personal morality or happiness" (x). Cathy and Hareton accept reality and reconcile themselves to it by building their relationship, not based on intense obsessive passions, but on friendship and the exchange of knowledge.

Their relationship not only improves their lives, but also leads to the improvement of everything connected to the Heights and the Grange. It becomes their tool to save themselves and the other characters from continuing to be Gothic figures. Ellen finds it to be a new promising start for everyone. Even Lockwood notices that there is an improvement in the land, and he notices "by the aid of [his] nostrils; a fragrance of stocks and wall flowers, wafted on the air, from amongst the homely fruit trees" (222). The result, as Armstrong writes, is that "the structure of social relationships erected from the ruins of the old calls forth a cast of characters much more in line with Victorian norms and expectations" (252). These social relationships elevate Hareton and Cathy in a way that is contrary to the elevation of the courtly lover, and this follows the realist novel's purpose: to represent how moral values could be integrated into social life. Hareton and Cathy are not being ennobled as lovers. They are improving as people and may eventually be fit to live in the social world, and be capable of improving the lives of others as well.

Heathcliff, during the development of this new love relationship, grows even more isolated. Nelly relates that during Heathcliff's last days, "he solicited the society of no one more. At dusk, he went into his chamber. Through the whole night, and far into the morning, [they] heard him groaning, and murmuring to himself" (243). He does not even understand the new relationship between Cathy and Hareton, and tells Cathy that her "love will make [Hareton] an outcast" (233), little knowing that it is her love that will prevent Hareton and the Heights from remaining isolated from the world around them. Armstrong suggests that Heathcliff cancels out Romantic possibilities and that his Gothic attributes lead to the rise of realism. His attitude towards love also cancels out those

Romantic possibilities, and the Gothic distortion he installs in the Heights only further inspires Cathy's and Hareton's quest to change their lives, to become—as Nelly describes them—sworn allies, and make them realize that through loving each other they can improve their lives. "There is a strange change approaching," Heathcliff tells Nelly towards the end of the novel, "I'm in its shadow at present" (234). He realizes that as a Byronic hero and a post-courtly lover, he no longer has a place in this new social realist world forming in the Heights and the Grange. Since he was unable to adjust his approach to love, he becomes forced into further isolation to give room for a more realist approach of love to occur.

Heathcliff and Catherine cannot follow the love trajectory of the courtly tradition and achieve union while expecting to be able to live in the realist world. It is hinted towards the end of the novel that a relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine could exist in the supernatural realm of the afterlife. People around the moors believe that they see the ghosts of Catherine and Heathcliff roaming the land. Armstrong writes, "The persistence of forms of Romantic supernaturalism in the novel disturbs the otherwise conventional ending" (259), and Lockwood wonders about the unquiet slumbers taking place beneath the quiet earth. This further demonstrates that only in the supernatural world can a love between Heathcliff and Catherine function in the way they always believed it should function: intense, obsessive, and isolated from any realist social convention. Their union, Eagleton writes, "can be achieved only in the act of abandoning the actual world" (230). Only in death can their union as lovers exist.

The distinction between experiencing ideal courtly love and achieving physical union, and the conflict that occurs in the post-courtly genre when the lover seeks both,

becomes clear through the examination of Brontë's novel. The novel examines human behaviour in a realist social setting, and portrays how ideal love, with its reliance on literary and cultural tradition, has less influence over human behaviour than emotional needs and social conventions. In a Victorian world dominated by a need for marriage, the need for a physical union rather than the desire for ideal love has the final control on human behaviour. Romance based on the courtly tradition has to be put aside for characters to survive and be capable of integrating in a social realist world and achieving a moral and healthy life. In this social realist world bound by Victorian values, the novel shows that Cathy's and Hareton's relationship is the one that has the potential to function. I write 'potential' because it is important to note that by the end of the novel, Cathy and Hareton have not yet integrated into a larger social sphere than the world of the Heights and Grange. But the harm that have been inflicted on them has begun to heal, and they have already resisted falling into Heathcliff's state of Gothic isolation. In the next chapter, I will discuss Pip's struggle with post-courtly love and his attempts to integrate into a much larger social sphere than the world of the Heights and Grange: the elite community of Victorian London.

CHAPTER THREE

TRAIN OF SHAME:
Post-Courtly Love in Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*

The love plot in Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* is even more explicitly linked to courtly love conventions than the love plot in *Wuthering Heights*. The names of its two main characters, Pip and Estella, are commonly perceived as alluding to Phillip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* sequence: Estella standing for Stella, the star, and Pip standing for Astrophil, the star lover. The novel's title also alludes to Sonnet 21 of Sidney's sequence:

> Your words, my friend, (right healthful caustics) blame
> My young mind marr'd, whom Love doth windlass so,
> That mine own writings like bad servants show
> My wits, quick in vain thoughts, in virtue lame;
> That Plato I read for nought, but if he tame
> Such doltish gyres; that to my birth I owe
> Nobler desires, lest else that friendly foe,
> Great Expectation, were a train of shame.
> For since mad March great promise made of me,
> If now the May of my years much decline,
> What can be hoped my harvest time will be?
> Sure you say well, "Your wisdom's golden mine,
> Dig deep with learning's spade." Now tell me this,
> Hath this world aught so fair as Stella is?

Astrophil and Pip's great expectation, the "friendly foe," stands for their aspirations to attain the union of their beloved. It is a foe because it is the adversary that they have to endure before attaining their goal, but it is a friendly foe because they use it to their advantage, but differently. Pip's experience differs from Astrophil's; Astrophil is a courtly lover in the Petrarchan tradition; by not achieving union with Stella, he becomes a poet. His goal becomes to find "fit words" to describe the endless and unattainable love he feels towards Stella, and by looking "into his heart" he can find all the inspiration he needs to compose his poetry. The unattainable love thus works for his advantage as it leads to his improvement as a poet. Pip, like Astrophil, narrates his own tale, but through a *bildungsroman* novel rather than a poetic sequence. With that distinction, certain expectations arise about what the reader expects Pip to narrate about himself. A *bildungsroman*, especially one that comes in a Victorian text, is expected to deal with a narrator's social and psychological growth and maturation, which we find in Dickens's earlier novel, *David Copperfield.* We expect Pip to aspire for such maturation, and he does. As a Victorian realist character, Pip aspires to achieve social progress, but like Astrophil, he uses his endless love for Estella as an inspiration to achieve his quest. But Pip is also a post-courtly lover; his desire for Estella is not just a means to his goal, but a feeling he wants to consummate in order to fully complete his integration into the elite social community. He thus finds himself caught in a post-courtly love conflict: he loves Estella according to the courtly tradition, and he needs to attain a union with her according to Victorian customs. If not, his expectations will turn into "a train of shame" which will hinder his life-long quest of achieving social progress and finding domestic happiness in his life.

This chapter will thus examine *Great Expectations* in the context of my post-courtly genre theory. I will argue that *Great Expectations*, like *Wuthering Heights*, portrays how post-courtly attitudes are at odds with the fictional world in which the novel is set. But Pip as a post-courtly lover differs from Heathcliff. While Heathcliff's unrequited desires lead to his moral deterioration and turns him into a Gothic character, Pip portrays the second type of post-courtly lover I described in Chapter One: he continues to dream of attaining a union with Estella, and his dream inspires him to travel to London to become part of the social elite. This path, however, instead of leading him into a stronger bond with the London social community, results in weakening his social bond with Joe and Biddy and thus isolates him from the people who do care about him and about his happiness in life.

Drawing from Michael Kotzin's study of the influences of fairy tales on Dickens's novels, I will be examining how Pip's imagination leads him to believe that he is living a fairy tale life. Subsequently, using Robin Gilmour's essay on Pip's ambitions of improving in life as a mandatory experience within Victorian culture, this chapter will suggest that Pip's imagination interferes with his desire to improve in a socially realistic manner. The result is that he comes to imagine himself as a romance hero of his own romantic narrative where Estella functions as the unattainable beloved who will become attainable only after he completes his quest of achieving social progress. *Great Expectations* then portrays how the pursuit of post-courtly love in a Victorian setting is a type of fairy tale, and the romance hero's quest of achieving courtly love and Victorian union can be as improbable as a fairy tale character achieving his quest in a realist setting. The chapter will also draw on Margaret Flanders Darby's essay about Pip's

refusal to listen to Estella which results in his isolation from reality by remaining obsessed with his romantic fantasies. The chapter's final claim will be that unless Pip reconciles with social reality and readjusts his attitude as a post-courtly lover, he will never achieve the social progress and domestic happiness to which he aspires. Whether Pip achieves that happiness or not is unclear considering the ambiguous nature of the novel's ending, and the fact that two different versions of the novel's ending exist. Using Miss Havisham's ending as clear example of a lover's descent into moral and physical deterioration, this chapter will suggest that Pip and Estella, like Hareton and Cathy, show potential of being able to reconcile with the emotional harm done to them by walking away from the ruins left by Miss Havisham.

While Heathcliff's tension as a post-courtly lover arises from the conflict between realism and romanticism in *Wuthering Heights*, Pip's tension as a post-courtly lover arises from a conflict between realism and another literary convention that was highly influential in nineteenth century literature: the fairy tale. In his book *Charles Dickens and the Fairy Tale*, Michael C. Kotzin writes of the popularity of fairy tales during the nineteenth century. They were available to the Romantics who "applying their beliefs in the primacy of the child and the value of imagination, came to the defence of the tales" (13). The Romantics integrated fairy tale themes in their literature, and the Victorians, invested as they were in certain Romantic ideas, were also influenced by fairy tales and attempted to use them in more realistic ways than the Romantics (Kotzin, 19).

Charles Dickens, Kotzin writes, was "a descendant of the Romantics who prized the imagination [...] as a faculty that makes man happy and truly good, but who feared that it was in danger in the modern, utilitarian world" (40). While Wordsworth believed

that imagination was initiated by experiencing the natural world, Dickens "substituted for nature what Wordsworth saw as less effective but still helpful, the fairy tale" (40). When used consciously and unconsciously, fairy tales "served Dickens well in his attempt to render his perception of the world and man's experience in it" (45). In his usage of fairy tales, Dickens provided the Victorian novel "with a source of the fantastic which is more appropriate to it than the Gothic novel, more normal and more domestic, but which still adds mystery and magic, and which evokes universal joys and fears and the timeless world of dream" (49). Novels which used fairy tales could provide moral improvement and social correction, and Dickens was among the Victorian writers who were interested in the moral values of fairy tales which "could on the one hand provide the troubled Victorian with an escape into a happy, ordered world, and on the other help him work out an urge for violent self-assertion against people he unknowingly felt aggressive towards, including his social betters" (31).

Pip's problem is that he does not use the process of reading fairy tale literature as an escape into a happier world; he comes to imagine that his life is a fairy tale. I wrote in the previous chapter that Heathcliff uses his imagination to envision a Romantic life with Catherine in the natural landscape of the moors. Pip uses his imagination differently. James E. Marlow writes that Dickens learned from Romantic thought "that the imagination (or the "fancy," as he usually called it) was the faculty that made it possible to project one's interest into the future or, conversely, to interject future possibilities into present consciousness" (101). From the opening scene in the novel, Pip uses this imagination to create a story for himself and for other characters in relation to himself. He reads the inscriptions on his mother's tombstone and draws "a childish conclusion

that [his] mother was freckled and sickly" (1). Even his name is the result of his own creation, as Joe states that it is "a kind of family name what he gave himself when an infant" (70). Pip's desire to imagine a fictitious life for himself and for others, as Hilary Schor writes, "give[s] meaning to the story of self that Pip is trying to create" (543). Pip imagines that his story is functioning as a fairy tale. This usage of imagination proves to be as socially destructive as Heathcliff's usage of imagination (as opposed to Hareton's constructive and socially healthy usage of imagination that I explained in the previous chapter). In the realist social world, a fairy tale existence is as unliky to prevail as Heathcliff's vision of a Romantic life with Catherine in seclusion.

The typical fairy tale, Kotzin writes, "has a central character, usually an isolated, virtuous young man or woman who is often a youngest child. This hero confronts a villain, such as a cruel stepmother or a supernatural figure such as a giant, ogre, or witch. He may receive help from a supernatural being, such as some sort of good fairy. He usually is victorious over his adversary, achieves comfort and happiness, and sometimes gets married" (8). Pip, who is far younger than his cruel sister and feels isolated in childhood, comes to see himself as following the trajectory of a fairy tale character. He regards Magwitch as the villain and ogre from the wilderness, and when first summoned to visit Miss Havisham in Satis House, comes to regard her as the good fairy out to help him with his quest of social progress.

Pip as a young child, like Hareton, shows ambitions to improve. This desire to improve, Marlow writes, can be viewed as "the natural desire of every human to find a life situation in which one enjoys esteem, loving care, and scope for the development of personal potential" (99). This desire existed in Pip before he met Miss Havisham and

Estella; when Pip puts the effort to write a letter for Joe, Joe remarks, 'what a scholar you are! Ain't you?' and Pip responds: "I should like to be" (41). It then is clear, Anny Sardin writes, "had [Miss Havisham] never existed, or had he never met her, Pip's great expectations would have been just the same" (196). This desire of becoming a gentleman, Gilmour writes, "has a representatively positive element in the sense that it is bound up with that widespread impulse to improvement, both personal and social, which is a crucial factor in the genesis of Victorian Britain" (111). The novel becomes "a study in social evolution, a drama of the development of conscience and sensibility in a child who grows up in the early years of the nineteenth century" (Gilmour, 118). Pip's ambitions then become aligned within Victorian reality of finding one's identity and place in the social world through hard work and progress.

When Pip enters the world of Satis House, his quest to improve is entangled with his fantasy of being a fairy tale character. Unable to separate the two, he foolishly sees Miss Havisham as the fairy godmother who will help him in his quest of achieving social progress. But as I wrote in Chapter One, for Victorians social progress can only be completed with a successful marriage. Pip has two women in his life: Biddy who is not beautiful but is "pleasant and wholesome and sweet-tempered" and has "curiously thoughtful and attentive eyes; eyes that were very pretty and very good" (117), and Estella who has the opposite qualities of Biddy. Brenda Ayres writes,

> Estella is the exact opposite of an angel-in-the-house. Instead of submissive, she is wilful and domineering. Instead of gentle, kind, and tender, she is calculating, malicious, and hard. Instead of reserved, she is acrimonious. Instead of internalizing her suffering, as was expected of a

> good Victorian woman, she inflicts suffering on men. Instead of using her beauty and her inner qualities of strength to attract men for their own good, she attracts men for her own purpose (90).

Biddy will make a good Victorian wife for Pip, while Estella will not. Biddy is attainable for Pip, while Estella is not. But fairy tale lore dictates that the hero's prize is to achieve a goal that was once thought impossible within his reach. Biddy can be attainable for Pip without his achieving any social progress; when Pip tells her of his quest to become a gentleman, she responds "Oh, I wouldn't if I was you!" (119), because she realizes that it will not lead to his happiness. Estella, however, cannot be attainable for Pip if he remains the way he is, and she thus adds another reason why social progress should then be important for him: to attain a union with the unattainable woman. He then comes to desire to "be a gentleman on her account" (121). Estella then can act as the inspiration and the force that will fit right into his fantasy and motivate him to work hard.

To love the unattainable woman, Pip develops a love for Estella that fits within the courtly tradition. He turns her into his romantic ideal for the same reason that Petrarch turns Laura and Astrophil turns Stella into a romantic ideal: to inspire him to improve. While Petrarch and Astrophil need to love their romantic ideal to improve as poets, Pip needs to love Estella to achieve his social progress ambition. Laura, Stella, and Estella become devices for their lovers, a means to accomplish a goal. Petrarch forms his love for Laura in order to feel the pain needed to compose poetry; Astrophil loves Stella to experience the pain needed to look into his heart and find fit words to write; Pip loves Estella because he imagines her to be the goal he can attain, and the goal promised to him by Miss Havisham, after improving and becoming a gentleman.

Hillary Schor writes that Pip "casts his own story as a romance, with Estella as at once the beautiful, cold, distant 'light' of his existence and the reward of his trials; as he carefully positions her (the star by which he can navigate), so she must remain, in order for his story to have coherence" (541). In the romance story he creates for himself, he is designed to marry Estella, and she must remain unattainable in order for him to continue dreaming of achieving his goal one day. Consumed by this belief, Schor questions if Pip ever sees Estella, if he ever frees her "from her fixed place as the guiding light of his existence" (541). This romantic love Pip creates for Estella grows until he cannot differentiate "between himself and Estella, or between Estella and his 'fancies' about her" (Schor, 546). Pip then takes Estella "away from herself, swallows her up, makes her into his story" (Schor, 551). When Estella enters Miss Havisham's chamber, Pip sees her light coming "along the dark passage like a star" (54). When she walks in the dark hallways of Satis House, Pip imagines "pass[ing] among the extinguished fires, and ascend[ing] some light iron stairs, and go[ing] out by a gallery high overhead, as if she were going out into the sky" (58). David Holbrook writes:

> In the symbolism of the novel, Estella represents the capacity in the "object" to inspire us. As Goethe said, "Woman lifts us up." It is a principle of object-relations psychoanalytical theory and of the "new" existentialism that our perception of the world and our capacities to deal creatively with it are bound up with our experience of loving encounter, between ourselves and the mother, and ourselves and the "significant other." It is this that Pip realizes in his love for Estella (141).

Estella becomes not a person for Pip, but a symbol, the unreachable star, the object that he desires but must work hard to possess. Her value exists in Pip's idealization of her (Schor, 549). Instead of choosing the virtuous women, he chooses the flawed woman and imagines her to be virtuous. But as in the courtly tradition, he is in love with his illusion of his romantic ideal rather than with an actual person.

At many points throughout his narration, Pip expresses other sentiments that are taken right out of the courtly tradition. Andreas Capellanus describes the required relation between lover and beloved in the courtly tradition as the beloved being the cause of the suffering of the lover. The lover "speaks of himself as her slave—a form of slavery which does honor to him; he addresses the lady as "my lord" or "my master" and loves her even when she tortures him. He finds contentment when she rejects him and joy when she shows him any kindness" (Capellanus, 11). Pip continues to love Estella even when she mocks him and even when she "looked at [his tears] with a quick delight in having been the cause of them" (57). He admits that everything in their intercourse gave him pain (250), but yet he still loves her. Miss Havisham tells Pip that real love "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!" (223). Pip believes her, taking it as the required advice given by a fairy godmother, and devotes himself blindly to Estella despite the many humiliations he experiences under her hands.

Pip also finds himself resorting to another convention of courtly love: the frustration of the courtly lover, and this is a convention that Pip does not desire. We can

see many parallels between Pip's anguish and the sentiments Petrarch displays in the *Canzoniere*. Young describes the relation between Laura and Petrarch as the following:

> Sometimes she is kind to him. More often, she is stern, usually because he speaks to her inappropriately of his love. They see each other only occasionally, and these occasions become extremely precious to him. She sees him politely on the street, in passing, and he is enraptured. He sees her in a pageant. He encounters a group of her friends and asks after her, discovering that her husband has confined her to the house. He watches her meet Charles, the Holy Roman emperor. He sees her without gloves on her hands and wishes to keep a glove. She demands it back, but he cherishes the memory. He walks where she has walked and sits where she has sat, just so he can go on thinking about her beauty and her goodness. From time to time, as we have noted, he commemorates the anniversaries of their first meeting, reflecting with melancholy on how long and how fruitlessly he has loved her" (xxv).

Pip describes his relation to Estella in similar terms:

> Estella was always about, and always let me in and out, but never told me I might kiss her again. Sometimes, she would coldly tolerate me; sometimes, she would condescend to me; sometimes, she would be quite familiar with me; sometimes, she would tell me energetically that she hated me (87).

He looks at the grounds of Satis house and is instantly reminded of Estella, and memories of her also only act as a remembrance of how long he had fruitlessly loved her. In Sonnet

21, Petrarch writes to Laura, "I've offered up my heart, but you don't deign / to glance down from your elevated mind" (3/4). Pip writes that Estella was as scornful of him as if she had been a queen (52). In Sonnet 65, Petrarch prays that Laura should share the fire of his desires. Pip wonders when he would "awaken the heart within [Estella] that was mute and sleeping now" (227). In Sonnet 150, Petrarch sees his torment "doesn't please [Laura's] lovely eyes" (4). Estella pretends to not recall the memories of her childhood with Pip, and Pip states, "I verily believe that her not remembering and not minding in the least, made me cry again, inwardly - and that is the sharpest crying of all" (221). When encountering Laura after a long absence, Morris Bishop writes that Petrarch "hopped in vain to learn that she had missed him during his long absence. On the contrary, she received him with a storm of anger and prideful scorn" (246). When Pip encounters Estella after long absences, he is dismayed to learn that "she treated [him] as a boy still" (219). Bishop writes of "a blissful day when [Petrarch and Laura] met in the street and she saluted him kindly" (149). When Pip encounters Estella on the street and she calls him by his name for the first time, he treasures it (252).

Pip makes the same realization as Heathcliff: he cannot handle unfilled love since it does not lead to a physical union with his romantic ideal. Miss Havisham tells Pip to, "Love [Estella], love her, love her! If she favours you, love her. If she wounds you, love her. If she tears your heart to pieces - and as it gets older and stronger, it will tear deeper - love her, love her, love her!" (223). This model of endless love—one of the goals of courtly lovers—means nothing to Pip if he does not achieve union with Estella. Pip, just as Heathcliff, cannot function in this trajectory; again his emotional needs, and the social expectations of achieving marriage, influence his behaviour more than the literary

tradition of how a courtly lover should behave. The courtly lover's desire for his beloved could exist even if it is not reciprocal; the lack of reciprocal love for Pip, the fact that he, "trembling in spirit and worshipping the very hem of her dress; she, quite composed and most decidedly not worshipping the hem of [his]" (221), can in reality only hinder his quest for social progress. Petrarch and Astrophil need the anguish and frustration to write their poetry; Pip needs the anguish only temporary in order to be inspired to achieve his goal, but when his goal is not achieved and the anguish continues, it negatively affects him.

The first is that even though he may initially have believed that hard work would make him into a gentleman, his time in London is spent almost entirely idly as he waits for his great expectations to be bestowed on him. Instead of inspiring him to work, Estella inspires him to merely dream instead of pursuing any action which will result in the realization of his dream other than just waiting. The second negative effect is that it leads him to self-scrutiny that makes him resent everything connected with his childhood life. Bishop writes that Laura "served as the agent and stimulus for [Petrarch's] self-scrutiny" (155), and so Estella serves for Pip. While this self-scrutiny was needed for Petrarch so he could write poetry that analyzes his soul and self, for Pip his desire for Estella only makes him hate himself. He more often states what she makes him hate about himself than what she makes him love about her. He says that "her contempt for me was so strong, that it became infectious, and I caught it" (55). He had never been ashamed and troubled by his coarse hands, his common boots, but now they troubled him "as vulgar appendages" (57). She makes him believe that he was "much more ignorant than [he] had considered [him]self last night" and that he was "in a low-lived bad way"

(59). Pip looks at Joe and is disturbed by how common Estella would consider him (66), and as a result Pip isolates himself from Joe and Biddy who care more about him than Miss Havisham and Estella ever will. As Marlow writes: "By desiring Estella—and the safety from life for which he stood—Pip had severed his links to moral life. He had alienated himself from Biddy and Joe and from his own better nature" (101). In Petrarch's Sonnet 76, he describes his love for Laura as "[his] enemy / who always keeps [him] banished from [him]self" (3-4). For Pip, this enemy also leads him to be banished from himself, and ashamed of who he is.

The other negative effect of Pip's desire for Estella is that it blinds him to the social reality around him. Even though Pip's quest to achieve social progress and become a gentleman is aligned with Victorian realist thought, his actions do not reflect that reality. I wrote in the previous chapter of William's declaration that in the realist novel the individual has to reconcile himself to social forces around him. Pip fails at achieving that. Margaret Flanders Darby discusses how one of Pip's major flaws is that he never listens to Estella, and never notices how she changes as a character. Upon their first encounter, Pip casts her as his romantic ideal and fixes her into that role within his imagination. Throughout their many encounters afterwards, he "never reconsiders his initial impressions of her, and straight through to their last encounter, acts as though he has never listened to the woman he claims to love" (Darby, 215). Estella warns Pip that her heart is cold, and that it would be better for him to stay away from her, but he never listens. As Darby states, Estella "offers Pip a clear alternative to his self-casting as hero of romantic chivalry, a position that would be, if he would accept it, quite different from that of her other admirers" (221). Pip "fails to perceive her superior understanding of

adult manipulation of children, and he continues to treat her as if she had no more depth than the princess of romance. She offers the handshake of fellowship, but he insists instead on bestowing a chivalrous kiss upon that hand" (223). This obsession with his romantic fantasy runs throughout his narration until he finds that it has led to the failure of quest and ambitions.

He is so consumed with his fantasy that he does not even notice how far Miss Havisham actually is from being a fairy godmother. Her house which was made of "old brick, and dismal, and had a great many iron bars to it (50), and where Pip feels that "the cold wind seemed to blow colder there, than outside the gate; and it made a shrill noise in howling in and out at the open sides of the brewery, like the noise of wind in the rigging of a ship at sea" (51), is a Gothic mansion. Havisham turns it into one after being spurned by her promised lover, just as Heathcliff turns Wuthering Heights into a Gothic mansion. Pip describes Miss Havisham's room as:

> [...] the yellow light in the darkened room, the faded spectre in the chair by the dressing-table glass [...] I felt as if the stopping of the clocks had stopped Time in that mysterious place, and, while I and everything else outside it grew older, it stood still. Daylight never entered the house as to my thoughts and remembrances of it, any more than as to the actual fact. (117).

Pip observes the Gothic qualities, but it does not interfere with his fantasy. Instead he comes to believe that Miss Havisham "reserved it for him to restore the desolate house, admit the sunshine into the dark rooms, set the clocks a going and the cold hearths a blazing, tear down the cobwebs, destroy the vermin - in short, do all the shining deeds of

the young Knight of romance, and marry the Princess" (216). He listens to Miss Havisham whispering into Estella's ears, "break their hearts and have no mercy!' (88), but still believes that Estella is meant for him as a wife at the end of his quest.

He continues to ignore social reality around him throughout his narration, even when other characters warn him of his foolishness. Biddy tells him that Estella is "not worth gaining over" (121). Herbert explains it to him very didactically: Estella is "hard and haughty and capricious to the last degree, and has been brought up by Miss Havisham to wreak revenge on all the male sex" (164). He even admits multiple times the foolishness of his quest. He admits that he loved Estella "against reason, against happiness, against all discouragement that could be" (216). It is the same realization that Petrarch makes. Bishop writes that "reason told [Petrarch] to abandon Laura, to break loose from her agonizing scorn and seek the way to Heaven. But the second though immediately followed, that her very mistreatment was sweet. He returned to her therefore, well aware of the dangers to his peace and life" (249). And so does Pip return to his love for Estella, despite his awareness that it will not be for his advantage:

> I asked myself the question whether I did not surely know that if Estella were beside me at that moment instead of Biddy, she would make me miserable? I was obliged to admit that I did know it for a certainty, and I said to myself, `Pip, what a fool you are!' (122)

Not only does he isolate himself from Joe and Biddy; even in London he remains an isolated figure. The city of London is as strange and Gothic to him as Miss Havisham's house. He is "scared by the immensity of London" and has faint doubts "it was not rather ugly, crooked, narrow, and dirty" (150). Mr. Jaggers, whom Pip believes is

working as an agent for his fairy godmother, lives in a house that was "a most dismal place; the skylight, eccentrically patched like a broken head, and the distorted adjoining houses looking as if they had twisted themselves to peep down at me through it" and Mr. Jagger's chair "was a of deadly black horse-hair, with rows of brass nails round it, like a coffin" (151). Wemmick tries to teach Pip a valuable lesson about the importance of differentiating personal happiness from work, claiming to Pip that "the office is one thing, and private life is another. When I go into the office, I leave the Castle behind me, and when I come into the Castle, I leave the office behind me" (194). For Pip, work is something he needs in order to achieve domestic happiness, and he fails to realize that his romance fantasy will deprive him from achieving happiness in either.

Williams writes that *Great Expectations* "is not concerned merely to criticise organized society. It examines the nature of man and his position with respect to wider forces at work in life. Like so many of Dickens' novels it is concerned with the individual's vulnerability to exploitation through the affections" (150). Pip's vulnerability eventually leads him to fail in both quests; the discovery of Magwitch as his secret benefactor removes all hope of achieving social progress in London, and Estella's marriage to Drummle removes all hope of ever attaining union with her. Just as Heathcliff's failure as a character marks the failure of Romantic discourse in *Wuthering Heights*, the failure of Pip's fairy tale fantasy also marks a similar de-romanticisation process. Goldie Morgentaler writes:

> *Great Expectations* may appear to be a fairy tale, but it is a fairy tale turned inside-out. In fact, one of the novel's most obvious intentions is to overturn the fairy-tale plot of hidden identity. Traditionally, this plot

> depicts the lower-class hero as belonging biologically to a higher station than the one to which circumstances have assigned him. This is, in fact, the plot of Dickens's early novel *Oliver Twist* [...] by overturning the plot of hidden identity, *Great Expectations* constitutes a reassessment of *Oliver Twist*. But this reassessment goes beyond Pip's discovery that his sudden wealth allies him to the underworld rather than to the aristocracy. There is a concomitant reassessment of the very nature of that underworld and its relationship to the rest of society. Where *Oliver Twist* defines the genteel and the criminal spheres as distinct, contrary, and antithetical, *Great Expectations* maintains that the upper-class world of the gentleman is implicated in the criminal domain of the underclass, and that the relationship between the two, far from being mutually exclusive, is redolent of complicity and interdependence (14).

With the failure of a fairy tale fantasy in aiding Pip to achieve social progress, courtly love fails as well in allowing Pip to integrate successfully in the social realist world. This convergence between fairy tale conventions and courtly love reveals that in a social realist fictional setting, there is little difference between the courtly lover and the fairy tale hero. We can see then that the fairy tale acts as a variation of the courtly convention, equally implausible in a realist setting, and both lead their characters away from social progress. Richard Stang writes that realist fiction attempts to reveal how romance writers offered a distorted view of life (139). Pip's fantasy of being a romance hero fails him, and his constant denial throughout the narration reveal that "his love is both a selfish, vain effect of social conditioning and a more romantic kind of aspiration

for limitlessness" (Kucich, 243). Most importantly, Pip's failure reveals the failure of courtly love to function in his world. With the conversations between Pip and Estella, Darby writes that Dickens "questions the integrity of unrequited love" (215). Pip misconstructs the reality around him by imagining that his desire for Estella will eventually be consummated in a union and that he will triumph as a fairy tale hero. By doing so, Sadrin writes that Pip "forces his way into the wrong book and the wrong literary genre" (189). In order to find happiness in his world, Pip must embrace social realism and act as a realist character.

Williams writes that Dickens "imposed a moral framework which emphasises the importance of sentiment and affection and suggests that the will can be educated to allow the individual to control his character and destiny and achieve happiness. Domestic relations, social groups, and at times, society as a whole seemed to him to offer contexts in which this aim could be realised" (140). If Pip is to find this happiness in his life, then he has to function as a realist, as Cathy and Hareton do to find happiness in their lives. And just as Cathy and Hareton are capable of surviving due to their moral values, Pip has to likewise find moral values within him. It is expected that a *bildungsroman* will culminate with the growth and maturation of the narrator, and Pip reaches certain maturation. He displays kindness to Herbert by securing money from Miss Havisham to aid in Herbert's enterprise, and then cries in good earnest "to think that [his] expectations had done some good to somebody" (278). The train of shame he experiences when he feels ashamed of Joe reverses when Pip begins to feel ashamed of the fact that he once felt ashamed of Joe. Early in the narrative, he realizes that "it is a most miserable thing to feel ashamed of home. There may be black ingratitude in the thing, and the punishment

may be retributive and well deserved; but, that it is a miserable thing" (99). By the end, he acts upon that realization by reconciling with Joe and Biddy. Despite the pain he feels towards his failed quest of love, he admits that the "sharpest and deepest pain of all [was] that [he] had deserted Joe" (301). Just like Hareton, Pip proves his moral worth by his ability to forgive. In a novel that deals with revenge, Stanley Friedman writes that the value Pip "eventually comes to embrace is clearly forgiveness. He learns that his sister, before her death, asked his pardon, and his forgiveness is also sought by another erring mother figure, Miss Havisham. Overcoming his own pain, Pip readily forgives Estella, even without being asked." (419). Miss Havisham, who does not forgive, remains isolated, like Heathcliff, in her Gothic mansion until she dies there. Pip however escapes the fate of ending his life in ruins.

I have already compared Miss Havisham to Heathcliff, and we can also draw some comparison between her and Pip and well. Miss Havisham falls passionately in love with Compeyson, as Herbert tells Pip, and "she perfectly idolized him" and "was too haughty and too much in love to be advised by any one" (168). Miss Havisham as a traditional Victorian woman also desires marriage in order to be integrated in the social community. Stephen Kern writes that in the mid-Victorian period, "waiting for love was focused on a supreme "now-or-never" moment when the "one-and-only" would appear and make love happen" (11). Miss Havisham expected this moment to be the marriage with Compeyson. When she is deprived of this union, she does not follow the trajectory of the courtly lover, but rather as a Gothic figure, like Heathcliff. She becomes, as Kern writes, "a bitter parody of the bride-to-be she shows how passive, helpless waiting can turn passionate love into venomous hate" (13). This hatred will prevent her from ever

achieving social integration, and doom her into a life of solitude. While Heathcliff seeks vengeance on those he deems responsible, Miss Havisham seeks vengeance on men in general. Using Estella as a weapon, Miss Havisham will create the same sense of desolation in Pip, and all other men who will interact with Estella, as Heathcliff wants to create in Hareton and Cathy: by making them feel that love was deprived from them as it was deprived from her and turning them into isolated Gothic characters. Her failure to function as a courtly lover denied of love will, as in Heathcliff's case, lead to the decline of other characters as well. Her sorrow over what has occurred to her is not a personal grief that she holds to herself, but a motivation that drives her to prevent others in her social sphere to achieve social integration and domestic happiness

Miss Havisham's ending is clearly explained in the novel. She eventually becomes repentant over what she does, and asks Pip for forgiveness when he confronts her. "Until you spoke to her the other day," she tells Pip, "and until I saw in you a looking-glass that showed me what I once felt myself, I did not know what I had done. What have I done! What have I done!' (371). She dies from burn wounds when Satis House burns down, asking Pip for forgiveness with her last breath.

The ending of the novel, and Pip's fate, is more ambiguous. Unless Pip changes his attitude towards loving Estella, he will never attain happiness, and may eventually descend into isolation like Heathcliff and Miss Havisham. It is clear that Pip changes his perception towards Joe and Biddy, and towards living in the forge. He states towards the end of the novel:

> The June weather was delicious. The sky was blue, the larks were soaring high over the green corn, I thought all that country-side more beautiful and

> peaceful by far than I had ever known it to be yet. Many pleasant pictures of the life that I would lead there, and of the change for the better that would come over my character when I had a guiding spirit at my side whose simple faith and clear home-wisdom I had proved, beguiled my way. They awakened a tender emotion in me; for, my heart was softened by my return, and such a change had come to pass, that I felt like one who was toiling home barefoot from distant travel, and whose wanderings had lasted many years (444).

He assures Biddy that the "poor dream" of loving Estella, "has all gone by" (449). The original ending is less ambiguous. Pip knows that Estella underwent an unhappy marriage with Bentley Drummle, and is assured that "her suffering had been stronger than Miss Havisham's teaching" (454). A union between Pip and Estella is clearly unlikely if we consider this ending, as Estella assumes that Pip is married with a child, and Pip does not correct her error. Pip no longer desires a union with Estella—at least, we do not see any sign that he does. Pip then avoids Miss Havisham's fate of becoming hate-driven with revenge as the novel ends with a sad though wise maturation from both Pip and Estella.

But then what can we make of Pip's final encounter with Estella in the revised ending? Pip describes that "the freshness of her beauty was indeed gone, but its indescribable majesty and its indescribable charm remained. Those attractions in it, I had seen before; what I had never seen before, was the saddened softened light of the once proud eyes; what I had never felt before, was the friendly touch of the once insensible hand" (450). Estella calls for his friendship, and Pip assures her that they are friends. Then comes the ambiguous final line where Pip sees no shadow of another parting from

Estella. Does this symbolize that Pip will no longer function as a courtly lover and will thus not see a shadow when he does part from Estella? Or does it symbolize that Pip still believes in a fairy tale ending, and despite Estella telling him that they "will remain friends apart" (451) still believes that he and Estella will not be parted?

By the end, Satis House is in ruins, and this symbolizes Miss Havisham's life and her end. When she and the house burn, the legacy of hatred she was trying to leave behind burns with her. Pip demonstrates repentance and forgiveness in a manner Miss Havisham never expected, and her plans to turn Estella into a weapon against men backfire when Estella is hurt by Bentley Drummle. While Miss Havisham leaves behind her a history of pain and emotional wounds, the novel ends with Pip and Estella stepping away from Satis House, and that can be seen as a positive sign of their willingness to step away from this history, just as Hareton and Cathy step away from the pain and wounds Heathcliff attempted to inflict on them by changing the atmosphere of the Heights into a more socially-accommodating one. It also signifies their refusal to embrace Miss Havisham's choice of isolating herself due to her inability of achieving a union with the man she loved, and as in the ending of *Wuthering Heights*, Pip and Estella show the potential for a more positive future, whether they are together or apart.

Great Expectations, like *Wuthering Heights*, draws the distinction between experiencing ideal courtly love and achieving a Victorian marriage, and portrays the conflict that occurs in the post-courtly genre when the lover seeks both. In the courtly genre, Petrarch and Astrophil achieve the goal they seek by composing their poetic sequences. In the realist novel, the emotional needs and social requirement of the lover control his desires and choices more than literal tradition. For the post-courtly lover to

prevail in the social realist world, he must adjust his approach to love or be forced into isolation. By the end of *Wuthering Heights*, the relationship that Hareton and Cathy establish that is not founded on excessive passion is the one with the potential to function in the social world. Similarly, by the end of *Great Expectations*, any relationship that is established between Pip and Estella has to be founded on similar realist grounds and away from the excessive passions of courtly love if they are to reconcile with their emotional wounds, avoid the ruinous fate of Miss Havisham, and find a sense of morality and happiness in their lives.

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