

Sadomasochistic Fantasy in Dickens's *Great Expectations*

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, who was always willing to talk about literature, life, or Lacan, and to my father, who taught me the very meaning of commitment and perseverance. I am truly lucky to have such brilliant and loving parents.

I would also like to thank Dr. Lisa S. Starks who has taught me so much about scholarship, integrity, and friendship. And I would like to recognize Dr. Jill McCracken and Dr. Milton W. Wendland for their priceless guidance and encouragement.

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Abstract

Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* is a perpetually repetitive sequence of abjection, mastery, and failure that contrasts with Victorian wish-fulfillment cinder fantasies. As an orphaned laboring boy from the marshes, Pip begins a failed attempt to compensate for his lack by possessing Estella, a love object who equally tortures and titillates. Thus, he enters into a fantasy that appropriates the Petrarchan mode of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* through masochistic disavowal, fetishization, waiting, and suspense, shaping *Great Expectations* into fantasy narrative that refuses resolution. As Pip attempts to refashion his identity from laborer to gentleman, he is forced to inhabit the space between past and present selfhood. The ensuing traumatic liminality contributes to a masochistic scenario where reminders of Pip's shameful past continually haunt him through frightening or disorienting portrayals of malfunctioning travel networks. Throughout my thesis, I claim that appropriations of Shakespeare's "Dark Lady" sonnets and representations of uncanny mobility cultivate Pip's humiliation and abjection while establishing the novel itself as a retelling of sadomasochistic fantasy.

Introduction

Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* begins with a confession: "As I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them... my first fancies regarding what they were like, were unreasonably derived from their tombstones" (9). The opening scene immediately suggests loss and desire, since Pip confronts parental absence by attempting to reconstruct his parents' likenesses through symbols of language: "The shape of the letters" of his father's epitaph give Pip "an odd idea that he was a square, stout, dark man with curly black hair," and the words "*Also Georgiana Wife of the Above*" present Pip with the impression that his mother was "freckled and sickly" (9). But the reconstruction of parental objects is the first of many ineffective attempts to compensate for lack throughout the novel. In contrast to Pip's hopes of legitimacy and fulfillment, his repeated failures in *Great Expectations* exhibit a sadomasochistic loop from abjection¹ to mastery and back again. Dickens develops this structure through appropriations of Shakespeare's "Dark Lady" sonnets along with uncanny representations of malfunctioning travel networks. In so doing, I argue that the retelling of Pip's abjection not only undermines his expectations but establishes the novel itself as an overarching sadomasochistic fantasy.

The primary exceptionalist narrative Dickens subverts is that of the Cinderella folk tale. The cinder narrative became highly popular during the mid-nineteenth-century and was

¹ I use "abjection" in the colloquial sense throughout this thesis, as opposed to Julia Kristeva's theoretical use of the "abject."

characterized by motifs such as an absent mother, a passive father, a period of subjection, a secret benefactor, a fetishized object, and the recovery of fortune and privilege. Jack Zipes argues that many Victorian authors like John Ruskin and William Makepeace Thackeray² used fairy tales as a means for conveying various social criticisms about class inequality³ and the exploitation of the young, “as well as personal conceptions of alternative, if not utopian worlds” (150-151). Despite having appropriated cinder motifs in his early novels, such as *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839), Dickens’s increasingly dark realism after the publication of *Bleak House* (1853) came into conflict with an expanding genre and critics who recoiled at his gritty depictions of poverty and violence. As Zipes observes, “underlying the efforts of the Victorian fairy-tale writers was a psychological urge to recapture and retain childhood as a paradisiacal realm of innocence. This psychological drive was often mixed with a utopian belief that a more just society could be established on earth” (153). The cinder narrative’s cyclical structure, from happiness to humiliation to happily ever after is perfectly suited to novels and short stories that prefer exceptionalist narratives. Yet these same stories, in Dickens’s view, obstruct any

² Zipes describes Ruskin’s tale *King of the Golden River* (1841) in which two brothers almost ruin their youngest brother because of their greed. The youngest brother, Gluck, resists their “cruel materialism of the Industrial Revolution” and helps to establish a utopian realm. Zipes also relates Thackeray’s story *The Rose and the Ring*. In this tale about “righteous moral rule,” a prince and princess “regain their kingdoms from power-hungry and materialistic usurpers” (151-152).

³ Though I mention the traversing of class boundaries in Victorian society, social class itself is not the primary focus of my argument here. Much has already been written about class conflict in *Great Expectations*, such as “Mimics, Counterfeits, and ‘Other’ Bad Copies: Forging the Currency of Class and Colonialism in *Great Expectations*” by Lauren Watson, an excellent investigation regarding the access to or denial of power through “mimetic hybridity,” becoming a “good” or “bad” copy of the privileged identity (493). Also of particular interest is Jerome Meckier’s *Dickens’s Great Expectations: Misnar’s Pavilion versus Cinderella* in which he argues that one of the primary reasons why Dickens wrote *Great Expectations* was to “bridge the widening gap between Haves and Have-Nots;” he explores this issue and others through appropriations of Cinderella and the anti-cinder tale, Misnar’s Pavilion (1). Similarly, Shuli Barzilai discusses Dickens’s use of appropriations to portray the intersection between class, gender, and power in “Spiders, Spinners, and Spinsters: Dickens’s *Great Expectations*,” except she is primarily concerned with appropriations of classical mythology and the occult.

meaningful social criticism and progress through the *mis*-appropriation of fairy tales whose inherent value is as fuel for imagination and wonder.

As an ardent defender of fairy tales, Dickens attacked those who used elements such as cinder motifs for political or didactic ends. In the October 1, 1853 issue of *Household Words*, for example, Dickens published “Frauds on the Fairies,” which satirically attacks George Cruikshank for turning whimsical fairy tales into pedantic narratives championing temperance and prohibition. As a further response to such misuse, Jerome Meckier argues, “Parodying Cinderella [in *Great Expectations*] enabled Dickens to assail several rival novelists” who appropriate cinder motifs in narratives that were “fobbed off on an all-too-credulous public as truthful social criticism” (2). In contrast, Meckier suggests “*Great Expectations* should be read as an irreverent revaluation of the many Cinderella stories in nineteenth-century fiction” (2). Thus, Dickens crafts a novel that appropriates the cinder tale as a foundational narrative element ripe for corruption. Pip imagines himself as a bedraggled pauper magically saved by the fairy godmother and bound for gentrification to become the “young Knight of romance and marry the Princess” (179), but like Shakespeare’s poetic persona in the “Dark Lady” sonnets, Pip’s experience is fundamentally characterized by failure: he is rejected by society, corrupted by wealth, cuckolded by his “princess,” and forsaken by his “godmother.” Upon this anti-cinder fantasy, then, Dickens layers appropriations of Shakespeare’s sonnets in order to establish the humiliation and abjection essential to Pip’s sadomasochistic fantasy.

Mobility, on the other hand, depicted through stagecoaches and cabriolets, emphasizes repetition, stasis, liminality, and mastery in order to reinforce the sadomasochism Dickens introduces through appropriations of Shakespeare’s sonnets. While the travel technologies appearing in *Great Expectations* would seem to guarantee physical and social mobility, they

occasionally appear within dreams and illusions that feature malfunctioning coaches that frustrate Pip's hopes and expose his anxieties. Furthermore, instances of doubling – physical copies that link or transfer identity – are directly linked to stagecoaches and the network in which they operate. Unconscious connections between foreign and familiar bodies along a travel system force Pip to recall the people and objects he associates with a history of moral corruption and poverty, resulting in disorientation and fright. In this way, they are uncanny, what Sigmund Freud describes in his essay *The Uncanny* as “that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar” (220). I argue, therefore, that travel network failure affirms the sadomasochism of Dickens's direct and indirect appropriations of Shakespeare's “Dark Lady” sonnets. Through a rejection of progress and an insistence upon repetition, these appropriations reflect the masochist's self-punishment and the sadist's misogynistic refashioning of the torturer. Consequently, the structure of *Great Expectations* subverts the popular Victorian cinder cycle, which endorses progress, hope, and exceptionalism, asserting itself instead as a sadomasochistic fantasy.

Sadomasochism and the Psychoanalytical Framework

My analysis of Pip's sadomasochism and the lack that fuels it are rooted in Freudian psychoanalytical theory. The works of Freud and those theorists who later expand on his framework, such as Jacques Lacan and Gilles Deleuze, serve as the basis of contemporary trauma and sadomasochistic theory. As such, they provide a useful means for understanding how Dickens portrays trauma and the fantasies that result. Any application of Freud's works, however, necessitates a theoretical patchwork of his texts, a function of his developing ideas and

the occasional contradictions that result. As Leo Bersani explains, “the psychoanalytical authenticity of Freud’s work *depends on* a process of theoretical collapse” (3). Therefore, I primarily draw from three of Freud’s essays in my discussion of sadomasochism: *Three Essays on Sexuality* (1905), *A Child is Being Beaten* (1919), and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920).

Freud initially establishes the dual relationship between sadism and masochism in *Three Essays on Sexuality*; although he later inverts the dynamic between them. Initially, Freud asserts that sadism is the primary drive since he determines that all sexuality is inherently aggressive. He explains, “The sexuality of most male human beings contains an element of aggressiveness – a desire to subjugate” (158). Freud then argues that masochism, in contrast, is “conditional upon suffering physical or mental pain at the hands of the sexual object” (158). However, what is most significant is Freud’s statement, “a sadist is always at the same time a masochist” (159). In other words, he asserts that masochism and sadism coexist in the form of sadomasochism. But in these early stages, Freud perceives masochism as a redirection of sadism onto the self, claiming, “It can often be shown that masochism is nothing more than an extension of sadism turned round upon the subject’s own self” (158). Masochism, then, becomes sadism turned in upon the subject.

Freud’s notion of sadomasochism further extends into the realm of elaborate fantasy in *A Child is Being Beaten*. Within this essay, Freud describes a series of beating fantasies that take various forms and consist of multiple phases. In the various dreams, subjects either begin by beating the “Child whom I hate” (189) before transforming into the beaten child, or the subject is beaten by a parent, the “object of love” (199). In any case, Freud surmises that “a sense of guilt is invariably the factor that transforms sadism into masochism” (189). Though Freud continues to consider sadism as the primary drive turning in on itself to forge sadomasochism, the fantasy

is clearly grounded in a traumatic fracture that foregrounds a desire for both mastery and abjection. Whereas Freud posits in *Three Essays on Sexuality* that sadism and masochism can occur together in the same individual, he establishes in *A Child is Being Beaten* that sadomasochism is crafted by the subject as a fantasy originating in shame.

Yet it is not until *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* that Freud addresses the repetition that complicates his previous theories related to the pursuit of pleasure. In this essay, Freud reverses his previous assertion that sadism is the primary drive and instead suggests that the origin for sadomasochistic fantasy rests with a sense of “castration” or lack. As he does throughout his theories, Freud speaks from a heteronormative male vantage point, what Kaja Silverman calls the “dominant fiction” (2) of an ideologically informed notion of sexuality and subjectivity. Described previously in *Three Essays on Sexuality*, the “castration complex” refers to a perceived loss of the female penis and the correlating anxiety of male penis loss (195). Artificial power within the dominant fiction later becomes represented symbolically as the “Phallus” in Freud’s male-centric paradigm, and Lacan clarifies that this sense of lack is universal rather than gender specific.⁴ In the case of the *fort/da* scenario in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud bases sadomasochistic fantasy on the unconscious desire of a subject to disavow that lack. Freud describes such disavowal in his observation of a male child playing with a spool, a scenario that gives rise to the *fort/da* formulation. The child unconsciously creates a masochistic scenario that replicates the event of his mother leaving him by casting away the small spool (*fort*). The child

⁴ Juliet Mitchell explains that Lacan’s “human object” is “created in the fissure of a radical split” (5). the Symbolic – a mirror image or language pronoun – establishes subjectivity through a misrecognition of the Self that allows the human object to identify with “others’ perception of it” (5). As Mitchell further explains, “Lacan’s human subject is not a ‘divided self’... but a self which is only actually and necessarily created within a split” (5). In Lacan’s reading of Freud, then, “castration” or “lack” is universal because, rather than happening to an existing male or female subject, it is exactly what constitutes either subjectivity in a way Marshall describes as “essential and precarious” (7).

then demonstrates mastery over the object by retrieving it (*da*). Freud explains, “At the outset he was in a passive situation – he was overpowered by the experience; but, by repeating it, unpleasurable though it was, as a game, he took on an active part” (16). Freud notes that throughout the child’s repetition of the game, the casting away occurs more often, suggesting a paradoxical relationship between pleasure and displeasure. The masochistic repetition fulfills what Freud terms the “death drive,” a fundamental urge to return to a prior state of being, represented in the *fort/da* formulation by the continual disavowal of the lost object, the mother.

Though Freud argues that sadism and masochism are correlative, Deleuze resists this association due to the contrasting desires of the sadist and the masochist. He succinctly defines this difference through terms of alliance, as he claims, “the masochist draws up contracts while the sadist abominates them” (20). Both Deleuze and Freud describe the sadist in terms of aggression and domination, but Deleuze elaborates that sadists engage in a kind of faithful infidelity that consists of “endless repetitions, the reiterated quantitative process of multiplying illustrations and adding victim upon victim, again and again retracing the thousand circles of an irreducibly solitary argument” (20). The masochist, in contrast, constructs his⁵ own abjection by “teaching” the torturer, thereby forming an alliance between passive and active elements. In either case, both the sadist and the masochist are in control of their own scenarios; the masochist’s humiliation is a desired effect, an essential component of the fantasy. While Dickens and Shakespeare clearly portray characters who display the urges of the Deleuzean contract-making masochist and contract-breaking sadist, they also unify these desires through the Freudian duality of sadomasochistic fantasy.

⁵ Deleuze’s paradigm is specifically male-centered.

Even so, Deleuze provides a basis for the components of what Lisa S. Starks-Estes calls the male masochistic scenario so common in Western culture and symptomatic of the dominant fiction Silverman describes (43). Founded upon Deleuze's male-centered, heterosexual dynamics, Starks-Estes describes this scenario as a "fantasy of female dominance and male submission" that is "deeply embedded in the erotic imagination of Western mythology, literature and art" (43). As evidence of this scenario, Deleuze looks toward Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's and the Marquis de Sade's literary portrayals of sadism and masochism to develop an analysis that argues, "Disavowal, suspense, waiting, fetishism and fantasy together make up the specific constellation of masochism" (72). Of these, disavowal and fetishism directly relate to the subject's Freudian lack. The masochist fetishizes an object that represents that lack in an effort to disavow it, and through this fetishism, Deleuze asserts, "The constant return to this object... enables him to validate the existence of the organ that is in dispute" (31). Such fetishization seems to exhibit a masochistic repetition that promotes stasis or "suspense" rather than progression. The male masochist desires to possess a fetishized object, yet he "teaches" the sexual object to postpone pleasure through a repetition that guarantees waiting and suspense. Thus, according to Deleuze, "At the same time as pain fulfills what is expected, it becomes possible for pleasure to fulfill what is awaited" (71). Waiting is essential to the masochist's pleasure, for pleasure results not from the pain itself but from the anticipation of fulfillment.

Despite the subject's obsession, it is not even the fetishized object that is truly desired, for it is simply what Jacques Lacan calls the *objet petit a*, a symbolic expression of desire itself (143). For Lacan and Freud, desire is rooted in lack, and Juliet Mitchell explains that Lacan uses Freud's *fort/da* formulation to support the notion that "desire only exists because of an initial failure of satisfaction" (6). But desire is unquenchable since lack is a fundamental component of

subjectivity. Because the subject is formed through a misrecognition of the Self through the Symbolic, an encounter with the Real is an impossibility; the subject can only inhabit the Imaginary. Satisfaction is then contingent upon a reconciliation with the Real, a fulfillment of lack. However, the original impossibility of the Real always results in frustrated satisfaction. Jacqueline Rose describes the resulting desire as the “‘remainder’ of the subject, something which is always left over, but which has no content as such. Desire functions as a zero unit in the numerical chain – its place is both constitutive *and* empty” (32). Consequently, desire is really a desire for nothing. Yet through a heteronormative fiction, Lacan asserts that a desire to fulfill lack fuels a pursuit of The Woman. Representing an ungendered and false object of desire, The Woman embodies the *objet petit a*, which is merely a fetishized symbol. As Kaja Silverman argues, fantasy turns a “desire for nothing” into a desire for something because “It posits a given object that which is capable of restoring lost wholeness to the subject” (20). The Woman then becomes a gendered symbol in the Imaginary realm as a woman portrayed in Shakespeare’s and Dickens’s Petrarchan scenarios. In her explanation of The Woman, Rose notes, “Lacan sees courtly love as the elevation of the woman into the place where her absence or inaccessibility stand in for male lack” (48). Thus, what is missing energizes an unfulfillable desire.

By using this psychoanalytical framework, I argue that Dickens uses uncanny visions of mobility and appropriations of Shakespeare’s “Dark Lady” sonnets to portray the novel as an utterance of sadomasochistic repetition and suspense illustrated by the *fort/da* formulation. The resulting development is a fantasy of stasis. The narrative persona⁶ simply repeats the

⁶ *Great Expectations* contains two distinct personas for Pip: the narrating /I/ and the past /I/. I use the phrase “narrative persona” when referring to the narrating /I/ and “Pip” when referring to the past /I/. The speakers of the sonnets are referred to as “Shakespeare’s persona” because, while occasionally posing as “Will,” the speakers are separate personas from the author yet convey a sense of reflective intimacy. Furthermore, since the sonnets do not make up a narrative sequence, they may represent varied speakers and scenarios.

sadomasochism in its retelling, and Pip is locked between the past and the present as he desires that which does not truly exist, denying himself access to the very networks that might permit those great expectations within his reach.

Early Modern Lovesickness and the Petrarchan Tradition

Though psychoanalytical theory was not developed until the late nineteenth-century, authors like Dickens and Shakespeare had long portrayed behaviors that were later linked to sadomasochism. Early modern Petrarchan poetry, with its overvaluation and lament, already acknowledged an unconscious system that affects perception, desire, and emotion. Writers understood that an exterior assault could have harmful ramifications for a vulnerable brain, whether due to dormant cognition or humoral imbalance. The idea that an unconscious mechanism might contribute to unreliable desire relates directly to the early modern conception of love melancholy. According to Starks-Estes, Thomas Aquinas developed a schema of “inward wits” and includes three main components: imagination, cognition, and memory (38). In a healthy subject, a perceived object would be “internalized” by the imagination, a process that could distort the object, yet the cognition would then act as a moderator, filtering the object through rational thought before it could embed in memory. Should the cognition become rendered dormant, either during sleep or as the result of sickness, the distorted image could bypass the cognitive safeguard and infect the memory. Consequences could present in a variety of ways, including a melancholy that Starks-Estes compares to symptoms of trauma in its “ceaseless repetition and anguish through recurring nightmares and terrifying apparitions of imagined or real events” (38).

This schema in which a cognition behaves as a gatekeeper or moderator of external stimuli is strikingly similar to Freud's conception of "perception-consciousness" in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. In his formulation, Freud describes the perception-consciousness as a shell that protects the interior "psychical systems" from exterior stimuli (24). Any malfunctioning or "fracturing" of this external shell results in traumatic experience becoming embedded in unconscious memory, which leads Freud to reflect that "*Protection against* stimuli is an almost more important function for the living organism than *reception* of stimuli" (27). While there is no direct line between early modern lovesickness and Freudian trauma theory, there is a broad theoretical heritage that links modern and early modern eras,⁷ demonstrating a conception of what Starks-Estes calls "inward wits" (38) well before formal theories regarding the unconscious were ever formulated.

Sadomasochism was also clearly evident within the Petrarchan sonnet tradition. Personas created masochistic scenarios in which they suffered due to a beloved's unavailability, yet lovers also engaged in a misogynistic objectification that reasserted their masculinity through possession and authority. Yet the Petrarchan tradition appropriates sadomasochism from an even earlier precedent – Ovid's tales of mythology and love that consist of obsession, pursuit, possession, and mastery, as when Apollo pursues the chaste huntress Daphne in Book 1 of *Metamorphoses*.⁸ Cupid pierces Apollo and Daphne with arrows "which operated at cross-purposes" (1.651), one a golden arrow of love and the other a leaden arrow of flight, prompting

⁷ Starks-Estes goes into great detail, tracing the link between Thomas Aquinas's "scheme for inward wits" (38) to Freud's trauma theory with its model for a perception-consciousness protective shell that shields the subject's ego from external stimuli (25). This connection leads Starks-Estes to assert that "characteristics of what we now refer to as trauma can be observed long before the modern notion of it was invented in the nineteenth century" (35).

⁸ Translated by Charles Martin. W.W. Norton & Company, 2004.

Apollo's desperate desire for Daphne. In the manner of sonneteers 500 years later, Apollo "praises everything that he can see – / her fingers, hands, and arms, bare to her shoulders – / and what is hidden prizes even more" (1.691-693), yet Daphne, who spurns all lovers to hunt alone in the fashion of the goddess Phoebe, flees from him. Apollo pursues, and Ovid depicts the chase through a violent conceit that compares them to hound and hare:

The one seeks shelter and the other, prey –
He clings to her, is just about to spring,
With his long muzzle straining at her heels,
While she, not knowing whether she's been caught
In one swift burst, eludes those snapping jaws,
No longer the anticipated feast;
So he in hope and she in terror race. (1.733-744)

In the reduction of Daphne to prey, Ovid not only establishes Apollo's masochistic scenario through his desire for that which, by her nature, will only reject him, but Ovid also creates a relationship between aggressor and victim through language that suggests not only pursuit and possession but violence and death because Apollo refuses to accept Daphne's denial, of which his manhood cannot abide. In this equation, Apollo seems to demonstrate Freud's sadomasochism as he equally revels in the sadistic hunt and his own masochistic love wound. Petrarch's appropriations of Ovidian myth, language, and landscapes, along with the *dissidio* of a conflicted persona and the desire for an overvalued love object, develop a sadomasochism that influences early modern sonneteers and playwrights like Sir Thomas Wyatt, Edmund Spenser, Sir Philip Sidney, Christopher Marlowe, and Shakespeare, leading Starks-Estes to claim, "By Shakespeare's time, the Ovidian narratives and images depicting sadomasochism – particularly

the masochistic scenario – were already deeply embedded in multiple layers and traces within the Western cultural imagination” (47).

Dickens clearly aligns *Great Expectations* with Petrarchan love from the very beginning of the novel, as the title immediately alludes to Sonnet 21 of Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella*, when Astrophil admonishes himself, “to my birth I owe / Nobler desires, lest else that friendly foe, / Great expectation, wear a train of shame” (6-8). Astrophil, also called Phip in Sonnet 83, asserts that his rank demands more than what his obsession permits, a conflict Dickens inverts in *Great Expectations*. The rest of the novel then loosely traces Sidney’s sonnet sequence as Pip/Phip pursues the unobtainable love object Estella/Stella who rejects him in lieu of a “Rich” rival – Drummle. Throughout *Great Expectations*, appropriations of the sonnet tradition link Pip’s cinder fantasy to early modern representations of courtly love, yet Petrarchanism is fundamentally at odds with the cinder narrative, despite the shared glorification of a mythologized past since Petrarchan poetry resists the satisfying closure that cinder tales promise.

Petrarchan poetry begins to frustrate the cinder fantasies of possession by emphasizing desire and denial. This frustration leads Cynthia Marshall to call the personas “martyrs to love” (58). Within Petrarchan poetry, desire is always triggered by an overvalued object, yet this overvaluation goes unrecognized and unchallenged. As the lover begins a process of dedication marked by glorifying the objectified woman and entering into a period of indeterminate waiting and suspense, he positions the beloved in a fantasy of continual inaccessibility. Thus, the lover orchestrates a scenario that guarantees abjection and humiliation. A contrast between the pleasure of expectation and the pain of rejection is captured within the beloved’s ability to simultaneously tantalize and torture by simply remaining aloof, marking her as extraordinary according to the lover’s own perception, imagination, and memory. So Marshall asserts,

“Petrarchanism fashions the beloved as a beautiful but cruel goddess, while lived experience may suggest that she is rather more familiar and ordinary” (66). The point, it seems, is the cultivation of a fantasy hinged on expectation and suffering. As Marshall explains, “The pleasure for both poet and reader consists precisely in the beloved’s denial, her cruelty, and the impossibility of satisfaction, as these simultaneously are suffered and provide occasions for poetic utterance” (67-68). This suspended displeasure in the service of a primary pleasure is in stark contrast to the fulfillment fantasies characterized by cinder narratives. Rather than enduring temporary pain only to recover lost riches, win the love object, and live happily ever after, Petrarchan sonnets frustrate any expectations because the lover is dependent upon endless masochistic repetition and stasis.

Dickens’s appropriations of Sidney and Shakespeare not only capitalize on earlier Petrarchan traditions that resist the exceptionalism of cinder narratives, but the appropriations also turn inward and examine the artifice of love. Because of the overvaluation of the love object as well as the hyperbolic characterization of Petrarchan desire with its “suffering lover, scornful beloved, oxymoronic passions, [and] obsessive complaint,” Marshall claims that sonnets appear “as an artificial genre, false either in the poets’ declarations of love or in their analysis of the experience” (57). Sidney explores this disconnect in Sonnet 6 of *Astrophil and Stella* when Astrophil promises to cast off what “Some lovers speak” (1), tropes such as “heavenly beams, infusing hellish pain, / Of living deaths, dear wounds, fair storms and freezing fires” (3-4), yet Astrophil repeatedly succumbs to the very artifice he attempts to cast off, employing Ovidian allusions and Petrarchan blazons, for example. Love and the language used to express it are continually seen as suspect throughout *Astrophil and Stella*, as Sidney uses the symbolic to simultaneously represent and undermine a Petrarchan fantasy of devout love.

However, it is Shakespeare who challenges the nature of love the most, as he does in many of his plays, including *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where love itself is a fantasy, something mutable and suspect. Like Sidney, Shakespeare also conveys the unreliability of lovers' devotions, as in Sonnet 138 when the persona confesses, "When my love swears that she is made of truth / I do believe her though I know she lies" (1-2), revealing the foundation of deceit on which their affair rests. The beloved lies in regard to her fidelity, and the lover lies by professing to believe her, so he concludes, "Therefore I lie with her and she with me, / And in our faults be lies we flattered be" (13-14). But while Sidney considers language as a flawed expression of love due to constraints of the symbolic, Shakespeare views language as a component of the beloved's infidelity and the lover's complicity in his masochistic scenario. The role of the persona in his own suffering becomes a central theme in the "Dark Lady" sonnets, for the self-aware persona repeatedly distinguishes between seeming and being, even while succumbing to the very desire he acknowledges as corrosive.

In contrast to earlier Petrarchan sonnets, Shakespeare's persona occasionally engages in sexual acts with the beloved, but when rejected or cuckolded, he lashes out sadistically. In response to his resulting emasculation, he calls her "tyrannous" (131.1), "covetous" (134.6), "black as hell" (147.14), and "cruel" (140.1). Accordingly, Christine E. Hutchins argues, "Shakespeare's Sonnets are an extreme example of an already established trend in English sequences toward increasing physicality, eroticization, and censure of the beloved, an ideal that in Petrarch remains staunchly spiritual, memorial, and celebratory" (560). While Dickens uses Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* to align *Great Expectations* with a Petrarchan tradition, his appropriations of Shakespeare exaggerate existing Petrarchan norms while introducing deeper psychological drives toward mastery and degradation that not only repeatedly interrogate the

artifice of love but also the unconscious drives that prompt such sadomasochistic fantasies. The result is a newly skeptical audience whose own inclinations toward cinder narratives are fractured by a Petrarchan sadomasochism based upon early modern notions of the mind.

Victorians and Travel Networks of the Unconscious

Dickens appropriates the Petrarchan sonnets with their love melancholy and sadomasochism during a time in which developing theories regarding the mind and body were increasingly approximating early modern conceptions of cognition. Victorians acknowledged a complicated relationship between the external and internal self just as the early moderns did, but throughout much of the early and mid-Victorian era, theorists struggled to reconcile the relationship between body and mind and to determine exactly what constituted the self in the first place. In this context, Victorian conversations concerning the body and mind were still largely spiritual, as the mind continued to include the notion of a soul. The central debate, rooted in Descartes's "mind-body dualism," gave rise to an opposition championed by contemporary physiological psychologists such as William Benjamin Carpenter, who argued for a theory of "dual-aspect monism." In this formulation, Jill L. Matus explains that the mind and body were not separate but "opposite sides of the same shield," as described by Carpenter (29), and recalls the protective barriers of both early modern and Freudian schemas.

Complicating the debate was the problem regarding how the material and the invisible might interact, but Victorians soon began imagining correspondences between the body and the mind in terms of modern technology. Matus notes, "Discoveries in the physics of light and electricity fueled the sense that the invisible could yet be material" (30), and this realization led

to assumptions not only about how the material brain might interact with the invisible mind but how one mind might interact with another, as in the case of mesmerism. A popular practice during the mid-nineteenth century, mesmerism consisted of the belief that certain gifted people could heal others through a kind of animal magnetism, a natural connection through an ethereal fluid between subject and object, that could permit the mesmerist to intervene within the psyche of the patient, what Matus calls “mental traveling” that “was able to surmount obstacles of time and space” (425). Though most often associated with healing practices, this kind of mesmeric invasion recalls the invisible ocular fluid that Starks-Estes describes as being passed between one person to the next through a look that early moderns believed could cause lovesickness (41).

Developing theories concerning the conscious and unconscious in the mid-nineteenth-century eventually led to the use of travel technology to explain how they interact. E.S. Dallas writes in 1866, for example, that “Between the outer and the inner ring, between our unconscious and our conscious existence, there is a free and a constant but unobserved traffic forever carried on. Trains of thought are continually passing to and fro, from the light into the dark, and back from the dark into the light” (I.207). Later in 1874, William Benjamin Carpenter additionally argues, “Our ideas are thus linked in ‘trains’ or ‘series’ which further inosculate with each other like the branch lines of a railway or the ramifications of an artery” (422). Though Victorians conceived of a divided or layered mind, it was not until 1860, the year that Dickens began writing *Great Expectations*, that Victorians started exploring the effects of trauma⁹ on memory within publications such as Forbes Winslow’s *On Obscure Diseases of the Brain, and Disorders*

⁹ While steam technology and complex road and rail networks offered helpful metaphors for understanding complexities of the mind, practical concerns also motivated the association between travel and trauma. Matus notes that railway accidents were quite common during the mid-nineteenth century, and “railway shock” became a common phenomenon. However, insurance companies only awarded claims to those who were visibly injured, causing a legal and medical quagmire. Due to their involvement in ascertaining injury, the medical profession eventually began more expansive research regarding railway shock (410).

of the Mind. Yet even these accounts amount to little more than case studies that fail to provide any meaningful investigation regarding trauma and unconscious memory. Matus explains that rather than the “censorship and edict against knowing” posited by Freud, Victorians perceived the duties of the unconscious as merely “custodial” (35), for theorists generally considered the unconscious as a repository of memory or an engine of psychological maintenance.

Despite this popular conception of the unconscious as “mechanical,” Dickens engaged in a form of therapy that prefigures psychoanalysis. As early as 1830, John Ambercrombie argued that trauma could be revisited by the subject through the unconscious constructions within dreams, hypnotic trance, and waking delusions that so intrigued the Victorian imagination (198-266). However, Matus observes that it was not until the mid-1860s – after the publication of *Great Expectations* – that “a medical concept of a psychic wound or injury began to percolate in Victorian Britain” through the work of Jean-Martin Charcot and others (86). Many of these advancements were related to practical concerns associated with railway travel. Matus notes that railway accidents were quite common during the mid-nineteenth century, and “railway shock” became a common phenomenon. However, insurance companies only awarded claims to those who were visibly injured, causing a legal and medical quagmire. Due to their involvement in ascertaining injury, the medical profession eventually began more expansive research regarding railway shock (84-85), yet representations of shock and altered memory were common in scientific journals such as the *Lancet* in the preceding years (94).

Rather than these late developments in shock and memory, *Great Expectations* is perhaps most influenced by Franz Mesmer, Marquis de Puysegur, and James Braid. Mesmer popularized the “animal magnetism” described earlier in this introduction, incorporating incredible notions of mesmeric fluid and elements of spiritualism. Puysegur then extended Mesmer’s practices by

introducing “magnetic sleep” during which there is an awareness of an alternate consciousness. Adam Crabtree argues that “until the emergence of the alternate-consciousness paradigm, the only category available to express the inner experience of an alien consciousness was possession, intrusion from the outside. With the rise of awareness of a second consciousness intrinsic to the human mind, a new symptom language became possible” (290). This new “symptom language” now suggested possibilities for an interrogation of an alternate consciousness, so Matus claims, “With the knowledge that the unconscious mind could know things and cause actions of which the conscious mind was unaware or which it did not intend came new possibilities for expressing mental disturbance” (40). James Braid then further adapted mesmerism for more clinical uses. Matus describes his application as the induction of “hypnotic states through the use of mechanical activity” (207), linking to it a physiological response and eliminating spiritual undertones. As such, Braid’s use of mesmerism most closely aligns with Dickens’s mesmeric practices.

Dickens perceived the visions experienced within trances as symbolic representations of trauma that can be located and confronted as a way to heal the traumatized subject, and he applied this theory in his practice of mesmerism, though, like Braid, Dickens discarded the notion of a mesmeric fluid. In Dickens’s practice of mesmerism, he interpreted the dreams or fantasies of his subject, often surmising that they were symbolic expressions of some earlier trauma, as in the case of Madame de la Rue. In a letter to Emile de la Rue on January 15, 1845, Dickens describes placing Madame de la Rue into a sleep before asking her questions about what she sees. He then attempts to analyze her visions – a crowd on a hillside, her melancholy brother by a window, and a “bad spirit” – to determine their source (152). Dickens considered these visions as representations of some kind of emotional or physical trauma. In his letter to Sheridan

le Fanu on November 24, 1869, he complains, “I cannot quite make up my mind, whether the phantom originates in shattered nerves and a system broken by Pain; or whether it is the representative of some great nerve or set of nerves on which her disease has preyed” (156). Considering the practices described in these letters, Matus suggests that Dickens employed a kind of early psychotherapy, as he was “working on the assumption that her altered state revealed aspects of personality and psyche that were hidden from her ordinary consciousness” (427). Dickens’s assertion that dreams and visions give access to the unconscious appears throughout *Great Expectations* as Pip’s specters reveal latent anxieties that fuel his sadomasochistic desire. Whereas functioning travel networks serve as a popular Victorian metaphor for efficient communication between a conscious and an unconscious mind, Dickens utilizes this metaphor to expose the repetition and stasis of a psyche traumatized by liminality. Existing in a transitory state between who he was and who he wants to be, Pip struggles with a split identity that refuses the disavowal of lack as well as the mobility and stability he desires.

As Pip fails to reconcile his dislocated and fractured self throughout the novel, portrayals of malfunctioning travel networks, due to their association with social mobility and democratization as well as the collision between the past and the present, become symbols of stasis that reflect Pip’s sadomasochistic fantasy. These broken travel networks appear in *Great Expectations* as dreams, specters, and doubles – elements that Freud associates with the anxiety, fear, and disorientation that characterizes his concept of the uncanny (244). Rooted in Pip’s lack, his uncanny visions reveal an unconscious fear that he will fail to occupy a “legitimate” place in society. Functioning travel networks represent an answer to a dislocation established in the first scene of the novel; they promise a mobility that might transport Pip away from his “low-lived bad way” (55) and toward his great expectations, but Pip’s visions of malfunctioning travel

networks reveal an anticipation of failure, as he is unable to reconcile his past dislocated self with his future legitimized identity.

While some scholars have assumed that Dickens's depictions of stagecoach travel suggest a nostalgia for a slow-moving, agrarian past, his novels like *Great Expectations*, which are set in the period immediately before railway travel networks were constructed in the 1830s, portray a time when travel had been made faster, easier, and more accessible. Stagecoach travel underwent tremendous modernization during the regency period, as coaches and roads were reengineered for greater efficiency and comfort. Jonathan A. Grossman notes that roads were given stronger, layered foundations that permitted drainage and resisted pitting, suspension was added to coaches, and horse breeding was improved, resulting in stronger and faster carriage horses (16-18). The fifty-year span between 1780 and 1830 saw significant advancements in stagecoach travel technologies, but the most important changes related to travel networks themselves. Stagecoach routes united the country because they were based upon reliable arrivals, departures, and exchanges dependent upon a newly synchronized time table. This new stage system leads Grossman to assert, "People were more than ever before tightly bound together in time as contemporaries, in both senses of the word" (25). Passengers on these travel networks shared space and time, resulting in a universalizing of experience and an intermingling of social class that encouraged social as well as physical mobility.

The result was a democratization of travel, which promoted the kind of political and social change that would define the mid-Victorian age. Through a dependable and efficient travel network that connected communities throughout England, passengers were at liberty to choose when and where they travelled within that network. Grossman notes that these roads "connect people by standardizing their interconnecting space" (34), and this enabled greater mobility

between social classes, what Grossman calls “merged circulation” in which “not just the road but the movement of individuals on the road is shared” (35). Therefore, characters in Dickens’s novels have access to a tremendous travel network that has every capability of helping them to achieve new and progressive experiences. *Pickwick Papers*, for example, is a travel narrative in which its characters are speedily whisked from one location to the next and from one community to the next, occasionally engaging in stagecoach chases or travelling expansive distances to satisfy the demands of honor and inclination. Even in *Nicholas Nickleby*, where travel over long distances is often completed on foot, Dickens associates stagecoaches with speed, convenience, and accessibility. Considering the technological advances of the regency and early Victorian eras, Stagecoach travel represented a mastery over interconnected space, which allows Dickens to utilize the disruption of such networks to denote masochistic repetition and stasis.

Since stagecoaches represent a technology that offers access to democratization and mastery, malfunctioning coaches – those that do not adhere to networks, offer shared space, or promote progress – construct masochistic abjection through the denial of what is desired. In its repeated failure, uncanny travel technology establishes both physical and social immobility, creating “the ‘frozen’ quality and the suspense” that Deleuze associates with masochism (34). As a metaphor for pathways between the conscious and the unconscious mind, as a technology that offers democratization, mastery, and progress, and as a representation of masochistic repetition and stasis, travel networks reinforce the sadomasochism Dickens appropriates from Shakespeare’s *Sonnets*.

***Great Expectations* and the Fantasy Narrative**

By combining appropriations of Shakespeare's "Dark Lady" sonnets and uncanny depictions of travel networks, Dickens crafts the entire novel into a sadomasochistic fantasy. I develop this argument by separating my discussion of his appropriations of Shakespeare's "Dark Lady" from his portrayals of travel. In the first chapter of this thesis, I argue that Dickens's narrative persona recalls experiences marked by humiliation and mastery, and in their retelling, Pip reignites a sadomasochistic repetition that mirrors the stasis that is often so explicit in Shakespeare's sonnets. Dickens particularly relies upon Shakespeare's "Dark Lady" sonnets and their acute emphasis on duality, possession, authority, and desire. I then argue in the second chapter that Dickens uses the suspense evident in uncanny depictions of travel to reveal the narrative persona's unconscious anxieties. Despite the ability of Victorian travel networks to encourage social mobility and independence, Pip's dreams, illusions, and other uncanny travel experiences deny those opportunities to him. This failure reinforces the stasis established by appropriations of Shakespeare's "Dark Lady" sonnets, and together these narrative elements construct the novel as a never-ending sadomasochistic fantasy.

Chapter One: Appropriations of Shakespeare's "Dark Lady" Sonnets in Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*

While Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*¹⁰ is noted for its many appropriations of Shakespeare's plays, few have written about Dickens's use of early modern sonnets. What little scholarship exists primarily deals with Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* and its contributions to the novel's title, characters, plot, and metafictional qualities.¹¹ Yet Shakespeare's "Dark Lady" sonnets¹² most directly influence representations of sadomasochistic fantasy within the novel. Despite many overlapping conventions – Sidney and Shakespeare both portray fruitless pursuit, represent the beloved's duality, and reassert masculinity through misogyny – Shakespeare particularly emphasizes sadomasochistic qualities such as overvaluation, fetishization, and control through specific elements that Dickens appropriates in order to destabilize assumptions regarding desire. Dickens then constructs a narrative structure based on the repetition and stasis within several of Shakespeare's sonnets, establishing *Great Expectations* as a perpetual sadomasochistic fantasy. Using a psychoanalytical approach, I argue that Dickens appropriates masochistic elements of Shakespeare's "Dark Lady" sonnets in order

¹⁰ The 1999 Norton Critical Edition of Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* is used throughout.

¹¹ Scholars like Jon B. Reed have attributed the title *Great Expectations* to Sonnet 21 in which Astrophil admonishes himself, "to my birth I owe / Nobler desires, lest that friendly foe, / Great expectation, wear a train of shame" (7-8), and Jerome Meckier has noted similarities between Phip and Pip, Stella and Estella, and Rich and Drummle with Meckier asserting, "Philip Pirrip's miserable pinings for Estella, who throws herself away on Bentley Drummle, parallel the harmful cravings of Astrophel (sometimes *Astrophil*) for Stella, a married woman" (249). Additionally, Reed argues that Dickens appropriates the metafictional qualities of *Astrophil and Stella* (656).

¹² The 2006 Folger Shakespeare Library edition of *Shakespeare's Sonnets and Poems* is used throughout.

to express the “disavowal, suspense, waiting, fetishism, and abjection”¹³ that Gilles Deleuze claims “make up the specific constellation of masochism” (72). Sadism then becomes a reactionary element within the lover’s fantasy as he lashes out in response to perceived emasculation. Together, sadomasochistic elements appropriated from Shakespeare’s sonnets corrupt Pip’s cinder narrative, thereby challenging the mid-nineteenth-century artistic sensibilities that conveyed nostalgia and exceptionalism.

When Dickens uses early modern sonnets to disrupt contemporary wish-fulfillment narratives, he participates in a characteristically Victorian trend. While seventeenth and eighteenth-century writers like William Davenant¹⁴ and Horace Walpole¹⁵ adapted and appropriated Shakespearean texts, nineteenth-century writers engaged in an ever-increasing obsession with Shakespeare, causing Robert Sawyer to assert that “Shakespearean ‘borrowing’ and cultural influence reached its summit during the Victorian period” (13). Such profusion of Shakespearean accessibility and repossession led George Bernard Shaw to coin the term “Bardolotry” to characterize the Victorian cult of Shakespeare. Writers, scientists, politicians, and businessmen alike attempted to capitalize on Shakespeare’s popularity. Francis Toulford adapted Shakespearean plays to burlesque performance,¹⁶ Shakespearean tragedies like *Hamlet*

¹³ Deleuze refers to “abjection” in the colloquial sense.

¹⁴ Davenant revived several of Shakespeare’s plays during the restoration era, including *Hamlet*, yet he erased any “profanity, scurrility, and obscenity” while also modernizing the language, according to Robert Hapgood (11). Davenant’s adaptation of *Macbeth* was particularly known for its spectacle, with its beloved operatic, flying witches.

¹⁵ Walpole uses Davenant’s *Macbeth* as a model when he creates his political satire “Dear Witches” for *The Old England: or, The Constitutional Journal* in 1743. This adaptation combines various witch scenes and incorporates the names of contemporary politicians. Throughout the text, Walpole attacks those involved in the political downfall of his father.

¹⁶ In response to Victorian Bardolotry, Daniel Pollack-Pelzner claims, “Victorian burlesques targeted the officiousness and pomposity of the mainstream versions of themselves” (402). Thus, Talfourd’s *Macbeth* replaces Shakespeare’s disturbing banquet scene with a comical song and dance to the tune of “Ole Dan Tucker.”

served as case studies for the emerging field of psychology, and the advertisement industry frequently looked to Shakespeare to lend *ethos* to newly developing commercial markets.¹⁷

Dickens himself created an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello the Moor of Venice* for the burlesque stage as *O'thello the Irish Moor*; and earlier novels like *Nicholas Nickleby*, which is dedicated to the famous nineteenth-century Shakespearean actor William Macready, not only appropriate locations, verses, and characters from Shakespeare's plays, but also they depict Shakespearean acting itself, often lampooning contemporary practices. Furthermore, Dickens even addresses Shakespeare's own appropriations and adaptations within *Nicholas Nickleby* as Nicholas asserts that "Shakespeare derived some of his plots from old tales and legends in general circulation" as he "brought within the magic circle of his genius, traditions peculiarly adapted for his purpose, and turned familiar things into constellations which should enlighten the world for ages" (594). Valerie Gager, in her catalogue of Shakespearean references in Dickens's writings, lists roughly one thousand entries that include the range of Shakespeare's plays and poems,¹⁸ and by her own admission, many more remain outstanding since she excludes character

Additionally, Banquo plays an instrumental accompaniment using two rib bones while the characters dance, and Macbeth sings,

No one asked *you* to come to supper!
Learn that Macbeth's not the chap---no,
To care 'cause an old fool pops up a trap---no;
For you, or your bones, I don't care a rap---no;
But out of that door head-first you slap go
So get out of the way, etc. (1.2)

The aim, according to Pollack-Pelzner is not to laugh at Shakespeare, but to laugh at the reverence that keeps one from laughing at Shakespeare (402).

¹⁷ Shakespeare was used to sell everything from soap, canned meat, and medicine. For example, an 1889 laxative advertisement in *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* featured an illustration of Charles Fechter in Elizabethan costume with the text, "To Beecham or Not To Beecham: That is the question. Methinks I have heard they are worth a guinea a box." Below the picture appears the text, "With apologies to our greatest poet, and our most renowned actor" (*Victorian Adverts*).

¹⁸ Gager notes direct references to Sonnet 73 in *Bleak House*; to Sonnet 111 in *Bleak House*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens's personal letters, and his collected papers; to Sonnet 141 in *David Copperfield*; and to Sonnet 144 in *David Copperfield* and his personal letters (352-363).

precedents or indirect references (248). As is the case with many Victorian writers, Shakespeare lives within and between the lines of Dickens's pages.

The borrowing and reshaping that characterizes appropriation and adaptation builds upon the structure, style, and reputation of a precedent, yet appropriation and adaptation are not truly synonymous. Thomas Cartelli contrasts these two methods of borrowing according to intent. For Cartelli, an appropriator "both serves and works in the interests of the writer or group doing the appropriating, but usually works *against* the avowed or assigned interest of the writer whose work is appropriated"; however, writers who create adaptations, according to Cartelli, "are interested merely in adjusting or accommodating the original work to the tasks and expectations of their readership or audience" (15). But this distinction through intent and effect often collapses adaptation and appropriation into one another, as these lines are often blurred, leading to ongoing debates about the relationship between these two methods of borrowing. Rather than focusing on intent or method, therefore, I will distinguish between adaptation and appropriation primarily based on Christy Desmet and Sujata Iyengar's assertion that it is a "difference in degree rather than kind" (7). As opposed to an adaptation in which a single work is typically reimagined, Dickens borrows from several Shakespearean plays and poems, developing a narrative style that is all his own by using several other precedents from a variety of genres like the exceptionalist Cinderella folk tale¹⁹ and Shakespeare's sadomasochistic Petrarchan sonnets, creating jarring contradictions that reflect complicated notions of desire and identity.

¹⁹ Dickens also subverts "Cinderella" through appropriations of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, which itself appropriates the "Princess of the Cat-skins" cinder variant, according to Dennis Welch (293). Zipes notes that fairy tales went from being virtually smuggled into England as exotic art (148) to becoming wildly popular and widely distributed collections published by Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm from the 1830s to the 1850s (149).

The intersection between lack, desire, and identity is introduced through contrasts associated with sadomasochistic abjection and mastery within *Great Expectations* and Shakespeare's "Dark Lady" sonnets. Lack and desire equally construct identity within these texts as the speakers²⁰ use abjection to establish clearly defined active and passive roles within sadomasochistic situations while asserting authority within the creation of a fantasy, such as when Pip's narrative persona compares his failing pursuit of Estella to courtly romance. In both Shakespeare's "Dark Lady" sonnets and *Great Expectations*, the division between lack and desire informs what Lisa S. Starks-Estes calls the male masochist scenario (43).²¹ Deleuze argues that the male masochist constructs a kind of contract with the abuser since he is a "victim in search of a torturer and who needs to educate, persuade and conclude an alliance with the torturer in order to realize the strangest of schemes" (20). Shakespeare's persona and Pip's past /I/ strike a similar bargain in which they are continually able to interact with their desired objects, but the lover creates a false persona for the beloved, overvaluing her in such a way that the abjection of the masochist is guaranteed. For instance, Pip reshapes Estella into a fairy tale princess, and Shakespeare's persona imagines the desired woman as an exotic yet faithful lover, but these are inherently flawed expectations that create a scenario in which a love object *must* disappoint.

Thus, Dickens's and Shakespeare's lovers typically emphasize contradictions associated with the beloved, so both Estella and the "Dark Lady" come to embody the pleasure and pain

²⁰ I generally refer to the speakers of these texts as Shakespeare's persona and the narrative persona. *Great Expectations* contains two different personas related to Pip: the narrating /I/ and the past /I/. I use "Pip" when referring to the past /I/. I refer to Shakespeare's persona because, while the speaker occasionally refers to himself as "Will," he is neither an actual representation of the author, nor necessarily the same speaker throughout.

²¹ As referenced in the introduction, Starks-Estes describes the male masochist scenario as "a fantasy of 'female dominance and male submission' that 'is deeply embedded in the erotic imagination of Western mythology, literature, and art' (43).

inherent in sadomasochistic fantasies. As such, the narrative persona's confession in which he states, "I stood looking at the house, thinking how happy I should be if I lived there with her, and knowing that I never was happy with her, but always miserable" (207), echoes Shakespeare's persona of Sonnet 131, who complains, "Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art" (1) before returning to his proclamation, "For well thou know'st to my dear dotting heart / Thou art the fairest and most precious jewel" (3-4). Once again this has little to do with Estella or the "Dark Lady"; rather, the masochist demonstrates mastery as he assigns these roles to the love object while simultaneously orchestrating his own subordination similar to the scenario portrayed in Sigmund Freud's essay *A Child is Being Beaten*. Freud describes a dream in which an authoritative figure punishes a child whom the subject hates. In the second phase²² of this fantasy, the subject himself becomes the bad child, constituting the masochistic situation (185). The punishment is designed and administered within the subject's own mind, at once placing him in a position of authority and subordination just as Pip's narrating /I/ and Shakespeare's persona equally shape their own expectations of love and fidelity but suffer because of this very fantasy, revealing them as both torturer and victim. This paradox is then further developed through imagery related to early modern lovesickness, also called "love melancholy," an affliction that equally incorporates passivity and activity.

Sidney and Shakespeare each express this duality by contrasting light and dark imagery, beginning with depictions of black eyes in *Astrophil and Stella*. Regarding Stella's eyes in Sonnet 7, Astrophil asks, "In colour black why wrapped she beams so bright? / Would she in

²² Freud describes this dream as undergoing three phases. In the first, a father figure beats the hated child. In the second, the subject becomes the child in question. In the third, an undetermined authority figure beats several children while the subject looks on. Freud also notes that "punishments and humiliations of another kind may be substituted for the beating itself" (185 – 186).

beamy black, like painter wise, / Frame daintiest lustre, mixed of shades and light?" (2 – 4). He later depicts Stella's beauty as a contradiction, describing her "miraculous power" (9) as an ability to "even in black doth make all beauties flow" (11). Similarly, Shakespeare's persona describes eyes that are "raven black" (127.9) and "nothing like the sun" (130.1) while also professing to his beloved in Sonnet 132, "Thine eyes I love, and they, as pitying me, / Knowing they heart torment me with disdain, / Have put on black, and loving mourner be" (1 – 3). In either case, dark eyes become objects that convey the lover's overvaluation of the beloved as her exotic features clash with beauty conventions of the age that give preference to fair skin, hair, and eyes.

The aesthetic contradiction implies a conflict between seeming and being as the lover's perception is out of joint with popular assessment. This opposition is clearest in the "Dark Lady" sonnets when Shakespeare's self-aware persona admits that he "put fair truth upon so foul a face" (137.12) and must "love what others do abhor" (150.11). The lover further complicates the relationship between sight, truth, and love when he traces his confusion to a physical source in Sonnet 148 when he complains, "O me, what eyes hath love put in my head, / Which have no correspondence with true sight!" (148.1-2). In Sonnet 137, Shakespeare's persona specifically blames Cupid for causing his eyes to "behold and see not what they see" (2), an accusation that corresponds to the personification of love previously mentioned in Sonnet 148. The lover's disconnect takes on a sadomasochistic quality as his eyes invite a cognitive dissonance that both pleases and punishes the persona through active and passive influences within his own mind. This duality takes on a psychophysiological significance during the early modern era. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, Starks-Estes explains that the eyes were considered access points for lovesickness, an affliction in which a *dormant* cognition allows phantasms

distorted by the *active* imagination to pass freely to and become embedded in memory (40 - 41). Similar active and passive attributes also exist within the sadomasochistic lover, whose imagination constructs an overvalued phantasm in place of the love object before submitting to a masochistic experience.

Unlike Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*, blackness and its sadomasochistic qualities quickly expand beyond the eyes and become more wholly and negatively associated with the love object within the "Dark Lady" sonnets. This extension is particularly evident when Shakespeare's persona complains, "nothing art thou black save in thy deeds" (131.13) and describes the beloved as "black as hell, as dark as night" (147.14); yet the lover continues to develop dualities inherent in lovesickness when he inverts the valuation of blackness, declaring, "Thy black is fairest in my judgment's place" (131.12) and "beauty herself is black" (132.13). The persona fetishizes blackness, alternately using it as a misogynistic symbol of feminine immorality and of the lover's blind devotion. In this way, tension between desire and displeasure as well as activity and passivity is simultaneously represented by the same attribute.

Though Pip does not fetishize blackness, Estella is associated with light and dark imagery to express sadomasochistic dualities that equally pull and repel the lover, and just as Shakespeare extends this imagery from the eyes to the whole body, Dickens further applies it to setting. When Pip works in the blacksmith forge, for example, pumping the bellows in the dark while Joe hammers to the tune of a work song, he recalls seeing "Estella's face in the fire with her pretty hair fluttering in the wind and her eyes scorning me, – often at such a time I would look toward those panels of black night in the wall which the wooden windows then were, and would fancy that I saw her just drawing her face away" (87). In this moment, Estella is both horrible and mesmerizing. The violence and elegance of the flames, the brilliance of the light within the pitch

blackness of the nighttime marsh landscape, and the ephemeral elusiveness of a specter within the enclosure of a window's wooden frame all recall Stella and the "Dark Lady's" duality as well as hints of early modern lovesickness. Pip's overstimulated imagination subordinates him, even in the absence of Estella's physical presence, by situating her as one who haunts and disapproves, as well as one who ultimately delays satisfaction. Therefore, Estella's appearance within the window frame and her eventual fading from it represent the very desire and denial that enables Pip's masochistic scenario.

Pip's past /I/ and Shakespeare's persona cultivate waiting as an essential component of sadomasochism, for they both endure pain while harboring an anticipation of fulfillment. Yet it is not erotogenic, what Freud describes in *The Economic Problem of Masochism* as "pleasure in pain" (161). Instead, here the masochist considers the delay of satisfaction and any discomfort that results as a necessary prelude to pleasure, so Pip revels in the impossibility of satisfaction, declaring that he loves Estella "against reason, against promise, against peace, against hope, against happiness, against all discouragement that could be" and instead submerses himself in a chivalrous fantasy in which he would "do all the shining deeds of the young Knight of romance and marry the Princess" (179). The repetition of "against" as well as the naïve fairy tale resolution reveals the willful ignorance and overvaluation that fuel Pip's fantasy and deny any progression due to sadomasochistic suspense. He reenacts the pageantry of courtly love, elevating his beloved and embracing the delay of satisfaction, a suspense that heightens his desire and promotes a continuation of his idealized fantasy. But Estella is more the unobtainable Petrarchan love object than the fairy tale princess since possession is not just postponed but impossible. She can only ever commit to Pip's rich rival, the detestable Bentley Drummle, yet

Pip continues to desperately wait for the realization of his fantasy, a masochistic obstinacy that rejects progression.

Stasis is less obvious within the “Dark Lady” sonnets because they do not develop a narrative sequence; nevertheless, some do convey a sense of waiting for the sake of a postponed pleasure. For example, Shakespeare’s persona in Sonnet 128 declares,

Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Whilst my poor lips, which should that harvest reap,
At the wood’s boldness by thee blushing stand. (5 – 8)

The lover looms, watching the keys brush his beloved’s palms as he waits for the song to end, for only at the conclusion of her performance can he have any hope of pleasurable fulfillment. That space of time is fraught with displeasure, however, as the speaker feels jealous of the instrument’s keys when he personifies them, creating a masochistic fantasy that accuses the love object of infidelity through her caress of the jacks. Thus, the lover illustrates masochistic waiting, displeasure, and suspense.

Dickens appropriates the erotic obsession with the beloved’s hands in Sonnet 128 in order to represent a disavowal through fetishization. Within Pip’s first meeting with Estella, he recalls the moment when she most emphasizes a lowliness he must then disavow. Upon Pip’s initial visit to the decaying Satis House, Miss Havisham, the jilted corpse bride, forces him to play the card game Beggar My Neighbor with Estella. As he loses repeatedly, the narrative persona recalls her disgusted exclamations when she disdainfully notes, “He calls the knaves, Jacks, this boy!” before pointing out his “coarse hands” (52). Afterward, the narrative persona characterizes Estella as cruel yet irresistible, establishing her as a love object that both tortures

and titillates. Pip, himself a jack or common fellow who wishes to “nimble leap” sexually and socially, fetishizes hands because they reflect those of the “Dark Lady,” representing his sense of lack²³ and desire. Whereas her hands are “sweet,” “gently sway’st,” and “walk with a gentle gate,” suggesting eroticism and gentility, Pip’s coarse hands only reveal his shame. As a result, they become a fetishized object as the narrative persona obsessively describes 450 uses of the word “hand” in the novel, according to Peter J. Capuano (187). Deleuze connects this kind of infatuation to castration anxiety, or lack, the split that Jacques Lacan describes as occurring upon the misrecognition of self during the mirror stage²⁴ of subject formation. Deleuze argues that fetishization is an attempt to disavow lack when he asserts, “The constant return to this object, this point of departure, enables him to validate the existence of the organ that is in dispute” (31). In this case, Pip associates hands with the shame related to his “low-lived bad way” (55) – a perception of lack attributed to his social class and familial loss – so fetishization becomes a means of disavowing his common origins.

Unfortunately, any attempt to erase the past only reinforces its significance. Pip’s fetishization of hands also has a moral masochism component, described in Freud’s essay *Economic Problem of Masochism* as “a sense of guilt that is mostly unconscious” (161). Pip continually associates hands with moral corruption as he describes Jagers repeatedly washing his hands like Lady Macbeth, whose spectral blood is a symbolic stain on her conscience. Likewise, Molly’s scarred wrists convey her traumatic experience as a woman accused of murder and as a confessor of infanticide. These associations of hands with crime and punishment are

²³ Lack is directly tied to desire since Lacan argues that one only desires what is missing. Juliet Mitchell explains that according to Lacan, “Desire only exists because of the initial failure” (6).

²⁴ Mitchell explains Lacan’s description of the mirror stage as the misrecognition of Self by “identifying with others’ perception of it” (5). This misrecognition establishes subjectivity. Deleuze, however, specifically addresses male-centered masochism and sadism.

rooted in Pip's childhood transgressions and loss. After meeting Magwitch in the cemetery where Pip's parents are buried, the convict appears as a parental figure through parallels with the ghost of Hamlet's father. Pip then steals and lies in order to assist Magwitch as an act of bonding, an unconscious effort to disavow parental absence, even while he consciously fears Magwitch's ridiculous threats. However, Pip's deceit results in a moral masochistic scenario where his super-ego constructs uncanny crying goblins, animated objects, personified livestock, and spectral noises that punish him through constant reminders of his original sins. Pip's later fetishization of hands and other uncanny experiences of his own creation make up the moral masochism that reinforces the humiliating notion that Pip is common and low.

Despite this abjection, Pip's sadomasochistic fantasy also has much to do with demonstrating authority through narrative control as a reaction to his loss of agency. Throughout the first stage of development in *Great Expectations*, Pip is completely dominated by his sister, Mrs. Joe, as he endures "punishments, disgraces, fasts and vigils, and other penitential performances" that make him "timid and very sensitive" (54), and he is additionally subordinated by Pumblechook and Wopsle, who seize every opportunity to chastise and humiliate him. Even Pip's socio-economic rise is orchestrated by an invisible hand, that of Magwitch the convict, which denies Pip any meaningful contribution to his own gentrification. But because Pip is the architect of his own fantasy, he is able to demonstrate authority by reducing Estella to an object and attempting to exert control through the construction of his own narrative despite its basis on a continual abjection that requires repeated attempts at mastery in response.

Pip and Shakespeare's persona each exercise authority in similar ways when they construct their own fantasies, choosing a love object who guarantees displeasure and situating her within repeated sadomasochistic scenarios that require passive subordination and active

control or aggression in response. These patterns recall Freud's *Fort/Da* formulation. Much like the child in the *Fort/Da* scenario, Pip's narrating /I/ and Shakespeare's persona are able to demonstrate mastery by crafting their own fantasies in which they repeatedly engage in casting away and retrieving their desired objects, establishing a sadomasochistic stasis.

Whereas Pip attempts to exercise authority as a response to a perceived absence of agency during his earliest stage of development, Shakespeare's persona provides no such origins for the lover's disavowal other than an omnipresent and universal anxiety associated with lack, yet he partakes in his own casting away through misogynistic sadism, providing a satisfaction that Leo Bersani describes as a "narcissistic gratification of exercising so much power" during the *Fort/Da* fantasy (58). Accordingly, the lover responds to the beloved's infidelity and rejections by mocking her appearance and behavior through the language of damnation, such as in Sonnet 147 when he calls her "black as hell" (14) or in Sonnet 144 when the devil embodies the love object's persona and hell represents her diseased genitalia. In an effort to regain authority, the masochist becomes sadistic, yet this is still the lover's object of desire, so what does it mean to continue to yearn for a body and mind so corrupt? The sadomasochist cannot escape humiliation even as he attempts to exhibit authority; thus, the duality of sadomasochism emerges, a dynamic Bersani identifies when he argues that "Mastery is simultaneous with self-punishment" (58). Like Shakespeare's persona, Pip's attempt at authority is actually contingent upon his abjection, for the casting away consists of transforming Estella into something she is not, the fairy tale princess, a metamorphosis facilitated by her physical absence, yet it is a fantasy that completely frustrates him.

Consequently, the quest for possession is elusive in both *Great Expectations* and Shakespeare's sonnets, particularly because sadomasochistic fantasy serves to prolong stasis

since every attempt at progression is met with equal abjection and failure. In this regard, Cynthia Marshall argues that the cycle of casting away and retrieving inherently rejects any resolution (71). None of the sonnets, for example, regardless of their misogynistic displays of dominance or amorous pleas for sexual consummation, end with any kind of fulfillment. Likewise, even when Pip engages in his most sadistic display, defeating Herbert Pocket in a homoerotic boxing match that results in winning Estella's kiss, he complains, "I felt that the kiss was given to the coarse common boy as a piece of money might have been, and that it was worth nothing" (75). Even in this instance when he appears to possess the object, it proves elusive and illusory. What, then, does the lover truly seek?

Despite their pursuit of a woman, the lovers do not actually desire the beloved. Since desire only occurs as a response to the missing thing, the *objet a* is nothing, an illusory object that stands in for the aim. Once that aim is accomplished, desire remains and requires a new objective.²⁵ This leads Starks-Estes to note, "It seems the subject does indeed want *objet a*; but, of course, desire for the object amounts to desire itself, for longing can never truly be satisfied, nor can any sexual desire" (102). In Lacan's formulation, the sexual object of desire is the ephemeral ~~The~~ Woman, not to be confused with the physically gendered female. "Woman" with "The" crossed out exists as the conceptualized object that disavows lack and is the aim of desire. According to Lacan, the desired woman becomes redefined within the masochistic fantasy as ~~The~~ Woman, the illusory *objet a* elevated to the place of the Godlike Other (151) and an overvaluation particularly associated with the masochism of Petrarchan poetry. Therefore, the masochist does not desire the sexual object but the symbolic disavowal of lack that is represented

²⁵ Lacan argues that desire can never be quenched because lack is an essential part of subjectivity. This leads Marshall to explain, "Desire persists as an effect of a primordial absence and it therefore indicates that... there is something fundamentally impossible about satisfaction itself" (6)

by ~~The~~ Woman who exists only in the masochist's psyche, a conflation of the *objet a* and Other. Since the love objects in Shakespeare's sonnets and *Great Expectations* merely represent the *objet a* that resists fulfillment, the lover pursues the love object in an endless stasis, a sadomasochistic fantasy in which the waiting never ends.

Yet readers often are tempted to interpret the ending of *Great Expectations* as a moment of closure. After all, Pip undergoes a period of cleansing during his third stage of development. After the tragic fire that kills Miss Havisham, disfigures Pip's hands, and results in his brain fever, Pip reunites with Estella in the final moments of the novel where he recalls, "as the morning mists had risen long ago when I first left the forge, so the evening mists were rising now, and in all the broad expanse of tranquil light they showed to me, I saw the shadow of no parting from her" (358). Readers are tempted to assume the best since the fire and illness suggest a cleansing of the fetishized object and afflicted mind, yet the "mists" and "shadow" seem haunting. The moments about which Pip reminisces – his departures from the forge – are instances that are pivotal in the origins of his sadomasochistic fantasy. The first time he leaves the environment of the forge leads to his initial traumatic and alluring encounter with Estella, and the night before his trip to London is marked by repeated nightmares²⁶ of stagecoaches that take him every place but where he wants to go (124), suggesting a denial of closure and of satisfaction.

Instead of a resolution, this ambiguous ending appears to be a re-ignition of a sadomasochistic fantasy that readers previously believed was erased in the third stage. Pip's final words, "I saw no shadow of parting from her" (358), do not express a concrete declaration of

²⁶ At the close of Pip's first stage of expectations, he recounts, "All night there were coaches in my broken sleep, going to wrong places instead of to London, and having in the traces, now dogs, now cats, now pigs, now men – never horses. Fantastic failures of journeys occupied me until the day dawned and the birds were singing" (124).

possession expected from the narrative persona who recalls past events. He does not say there “was” or “will be” no parting, only that he “saw no parting,” which amounts to no more than yet another hopeful fantasy mirroring the stasis of desire in Sonnet 129 where Shakespeare’s persona writes,

Mad in pursuit and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
A bliss in proof and [proved a] very woe;
Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows, yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell. (9-14)

The lover describes a sadomasochistic experience in which “bliss” and “woe” are both essential elements within a “joy proposed” that, like Pip’s prediction of “no parting,” amounts to merely a dream or fantasy. Furthermore, the endless stasis is alluded to in line 10 when Shakespeare’s persona begins with the past tense “had” before moving into present and future tenses, “having and in quest to have,” suggesting a refusal of closure, that past possession is somehow insufficient and requires a continuance of the fantasy. The sadomasochistic experience is then described in decidedly punitive terms with the reference to “this hell” in line 14, an image that, aside from its sexual connotations, also recalls a place where those who partake of forbidden desires are doomed to an eternal torment based on abjection and stasis.

By appropriating the sadomasochism of Shakespeare’s “Dark Lady” sonnets, Dickens establishes *Great Expectations* as a fantasy itself, a sadomasochistic loop that denies any sort of resolution. Such suspension of progress rejects the exceptionalism of an underlying cinder tale and emphasizes the desire and frustration endlessly repeating throughout Shakespeare’s “Dark

Lady” sonnets. *Great Expectations* is not simply a *bildungsroman*; it is a tragedy of stasis. Rather than overcoming an obsession, the biographical retelling constitutes a return to abjection and authority, a structure perceived only through the reader’s recognition of the sonnets’ sadomasochistic elements. In the Victorian age of Bardolotry, Shakespeare contributes to a dire warning about nostalgic obsession and false hope. His own corruption of the Petrarchan sonnet with his cuckolded lover, spiteful vitriol, and desperate compromises contributes to fashioning *Great Expectations* into a warning and a challenge. Dickens warns those who would recoil from the gritty realism of his previous novels: relinquish fantasies of exceptionalism and confront that which society would disavow.

Chapter Two: Trauma, Mobility, and Masochism in *Great Expectations*

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* is largely concerned with stasis. Appropriations of Shakespeare's "Dark Lady" sonnets convey a masochistic suspense that disrupts the cyclicity and exceptionalism of Victorian cinder narratives. This frozen quality also is evident in the very setting of the marshes as objects hung or anchored firmly in place transform into the uncanny, what Sigmund Freud describes as "that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar" (220). Rooted signposts point like judges toward the skeletal prison ships, and a limping convict transforms into "the pirate come to life" who approaches the gibbet to "hook himself up again" (12). Thus, the ordinary transforms into the extraordinary in order to convey Pip's fears, anxieties, and frustrations. These elements of uncanny stasis motivate Pip to pursue the social and physical mobility of his great expectations, leading to the second stage of Pip's development in which he migrates from the agrarian landscape of the old world to the urban landscape of the new. In order to access social opportunities afforded by a modernized, industrial world, Pip must navigate travel and social networks. However, collisions between the old and the new prove traumatic as Pip is unable to reconcile his dual identities: the "common laboring-boy" (55) of his past and the "Knight of romance" (179) of his future. Consequently, uncanny visions related to mobility, or immobility, persist to reveal private anxieties related to Pip's traumatic identity conflict.

Mid-nineteenth-century notions of shock, what would later be referred to as trauma, are most often associated with external cataclysm related to railway accidents²⁷ rather than internal fracturing such as Pip's, yet Dickens's contemporaries were able to recognize much subtler causes for psychological injury. According to Jill L. Matus in *Shock, Memory and the Unconscious in Victorian Fiction*, "Victorians were also attentive to other kinds of shocks to the mind which were less dependent on external cataclysm and more closely related to private, individual disruptions of consciousness and composure" (20). Physical shock and its consequences are well-represented within *Great Expectations*, such as when Mrs. Joe loses the ability to speak after a violent physical attack,²⁸ but Dickens also assigns symptoms to unnamed emotional trauma. Camilla Pocket, for example, complains of suffering "Chokings and nervous jerkings" that require treatment through a "ginger and sal volatile" concoction (70-71). She blames the tremors on thinking "with anxiety of those I love" (71), an ambiguous confession made clear only by acknowledging the Pockets' perfidy. One can only suspect that Camilla's affliction is truly the result of repressed anxieties associated with family politics. As such, Victorians were also likely to interpret Pip's traumatic symptoms as rooted in emotional as well as physical injury.

²⁷ Jill Matus notes in *Shock, Memory, and the Unconscious in Victorian Fiction* that insurance claims related to "railway shock" prompted further research related to shock and the unconscious (84-85).

²⁸ Dickens later experiences a similar traumatic symptom after his railway accident in 1865. Referring to Dickens's postscript to *Our Mutual Friend*, his personal letters, and his children's recollection, Matus writes in "Trauma, Memory, and Railway Disaster: The Dickensian Connection" that Dickens reportedly could not speak for two weeks after the accident and later developed tremors. She adds that upon railway trips, he was "in the grip of a persistent illusion that the carriage was down on the left side," and for years later, he would feel "sudden vague rushes of terror" (413). Dickens's short story "The Signalman," published in the 1866 Christmas edition of *All the Year Round*, is inspired by his own traumatic experience. In the story, a phantom appears as a harbinger of tragic railway accidents.

Rather than experiencing physical effects, Pip perceives the uncanny all around him as his mind communicates unconscious anxieties. As one lost in a dreamscape, the banal becomes horrific, creating a disorienting effect. Though the correlation between trauma and memory did not enter public discourse until the mid-1860s, earlier developments in mesmerism and hypnotism pointed toward underlying layers of consciousness in which hidden memories might be stored, retrieved, and interpreted. As mentioned in the introduction, case studies in the 1850s revealed individuals who underwent physical trauma and whose memory was erased, and Dickens later writes in a letter to Sheridan Le Fanu on November 4, 1869 of treating Emilie de la Rue whose “shattered nerves and a system broken by pain” resulted in manifestations of a “devilish figure” (156).

To explain the interaction between layers of the mind, physiological psychologists like George Henry Lewes began to utilize the language of modern technology, such as travel networks. Dickens then utilizes this analogy as he portrays unconscious memory penetrating conscious thought. Descriptions of travel networks become representative of Pip’s identity conflict throughout the novel and contribute to a narrative that is, in itself, a sadomasochistic fantasy. The narrative persona,²⁹ the present Pip, characterizes Estella and Miss Havisham in clearly unflattering ways, compensating for his masochism through sadistic mastery as he recalls the traumatic displacement of a past /I/. Upon his first visit to Satis house, for instance, Pip recalls being treated badly as “a dog in disgrace” (53) and correspondingly compares Miss Havisham to a “ghastly wax-work” (50) before describing her as “corpse-like” (52). Likewise, the narrative persona purposely crafts all representations of travel within the story, establishing

²⁹ Two separate personas related to Pip exist within *Great Expectations*: the present speaking /I/ and the past /I/. I refer to the speaking /I/ as the narrative persona and the past /I/ as Pip.

them as something more than reports of real experience. Instead, they exist within the same realm of imagination as the uncanny stagecoach dreams – “Fantastic failures of journeys” (124) – and childhood fantasies of resurrected pirates, crying goblins, or speaking cattle attributed to the past /I/. Therefore, recollections of hackney-coach excursions, descriptions of static landscapes, and dreams of grotesque travel equally act as uncanny barricades within social networks, impeding the economic and political mobility that developing travel technologies, such as stagecoaches and highway systems, promote. The resulting impression of immobility portrays a fractured subjectivity traumatized by shame and fear as the narrative persona’s uncanny depictions of travel reveal unconscious anxieties regarding dislocation, discovery, and acceptance.

The repetition of these anxieties plays a fundamental role in shaping the very style and structure of the novel. In his essay *The Uncanny*, Sigmund Freud muses that certain repressed anxieties may surface as recurring frightening elements (241). Various depictions of stagecoaches and other travel objects certainly become unsettling for Pip since they are simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar, mimicking the liminal space between past and present that Pip inhabits throughout his gentrification. Among the uncanny effects within *Great Expectations* are what Freud calls “doubling” (234). In this instance, Freud describes the appearance of characters who are identical in body, in thought, or in experience, so there is a “doubling, dividing, or interchanging of the self” (234). The effect, Freud suggests, is a recollection of “the sense of helplessness experienced in some dreamstates” (237). The narrative persona’s descriptions of doubling between Magwitch and the Jolly Bargeman convict or between Pip and the Avenger portray the disorientation of certain dreams and associate the resulting fright with frustrated attempts to reconcile dual identities. The novel itself emerges

from attempts of the narrative persona to construct a fantasy that masochistically simulates the absence of dream-state agency while paradoxically exercising authority through narrative control.

Pip's masochistic visions emerge as a result of the shame he associates with his common origins. This masochistic function of fantasy recalls William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in which uncanny visions of phantom daggers and indelible blood appear as agents of the "heat-oppressed brain" (2.1.51) riddled with guilt. According to Freud in *A Child is Being Beaten*, moralistic dreams can take several forms, but in each, desire and punishment is conflated within a moral masochistic fantasy that reveals anxieties about shame. Just as in the Freudian beating fantasy in which a dreaming subject punishes a past self as the "child *whom I hate*" (185), Pip becomes the Freudian beaten child within his own fantasy.

Pip's moral masochism is prompted when he breaks "social contracts" that bind him to Magwitch. The interaction between them triggers the revenge plot that results in Pip's wealth since Magwitch attempts to rectify an injustice by declaring, "I'll make that boy a gentleman" (241). Having committed forgery along with the Compeyson, a swindler of high social rank, Magwitch suffers a harsher punishment than Compeyson, who benefits from social privilege. By making Pip into a gentleman, Magwitch asserts mastery over an oppressive class system. The subversion of a social contract by which all class participants are bound – the defined roles and expectations within a hegemony – is meant as an act of liberation and empowerment, but Pip and Magwitch are equally locked in a prolonged game of forgery, or fantasy, that only reinforces stasis. Pip and Magwitch appear to enjoy physical and social mobility: Magwitch eventually travels to New South Wales, earns a substantial income from shepherding, and bestows that wealth upon Pip. Pip then becomes educated, moves to London, and mingles with high society.

But the source of Pip's wealth forever ties his gentrification to criminality and commonness, the very past Pip wishes to disavow, and Magwitch's mobility only ends with his return to Newgate Prison and, ultimately, his execution. Both Pip and Magwitch are locked in stasis, a suspension that, for Pip, is grounded in a moral masochism that first appears through his childhood recollections of the uncanny. For instance, after having stolen from Joe and his sister, Pip imagines a black ox with a "clerical air" to whom Pip "blubbered out" a desperate defense, and he describes cattle who greet, "Halloa, young thief" (19). Many of these initial illusions are bound to the agrarian landscape, a locale that contributes to Pip's feelings of humiliation and abjection in contrast to the characters associated with commerce or metropolitanism like Pumblechook, Wopsle, or Jaggers.

Other uncanny specters are rooted or suspended in the environment. The hulks that initially link Magwitch and Pip are perhaps the most impressive symbol of moral masochism within the marshes and represent the first depiction of malfunctioning travel technology in the novel. After Pip steals supplies from Joe and Mrs. Joe in order to help Magwitch escape the floating prison ships, he imagines an uncanny sign-post, an object rooted in the landscape that, "like a phantom," ushered him toward the hulks (19). These stripped and decommissioned vessels sit, anchored in the bay, continuously presiding over the marshes as reminders of crime and punishment. Pip corrupts a Biblical symbol of salvation by recalling, "By the light of the torches, we saw the black Hulk lying out a little way from the mud of the shore, like a wicked Noah's ark. Cribbed and barred and moored by massive rusty chains, the prison-ship seemed in my young eyes to be ironed like the prisoners" (36). By perverting the function of Noah's ark, Pip emphasizes aspects of sin and its erasure within the Biblical story, reframing it as a narrative about disavowing sins of the past without the hopeful component of salvation and new

beginnings. Instead, the hulks simply float motionless, suspended as punishing agents and presiding over the marshes as oppressive monuments of guilt.

Like the prison ships, the rest of the marshes confine and haunt Pip. Even the atmosphere itself creates a sensation of suspended captivity when he recalls, “I couldn’t warm my feet, to which the damp cold seemed riveted, as the iron was riveted to the leg of the man I was running to meet” (19). Once Pip constructs the cinder fantasy that fetishizes Estella and demands both suspense and mobility, the marshes figuratively become a poisonous landscape. As Pip becomes increasingly enamored with the life and lifelessness within Satis House, Pip’s antipathy toward the marshes and its working-class culture prompts the disavowal of Joe and Biddy, the only people within the novel who, besides Herbert, are capable of returning his love. Pip seems relieved, therefore, when he is able to escape. He soon travels by stagecoach to London, its scrupulously detailed street names contrasting with the marshes’ unmarked and unheeded pathways and juxtaposing an easily navigable road system with elaborate social networks. Unfortunately, the disorientation caused by Pip’s repeated movements between the marshes and London fuel his trauma.

Pip is both internally and externally dislocated as he attempts to disavow his past and construct a new, gentrified identity in the course of moving from the marshes to London. The result is traumatic liminality, a mental “fracturing” that occurs when one fails to reconcile divergent identities while in transition. Pip’s trauma is similar to forced displacements that occur due to environmental and political upheavals in which individuals must reconcile old and new identities as they physically inhabit new locations. Katrina M. Powell explains that though relocation entails starting and stopping positions, the displaced cannot inhabit either; instead, they must develop a “hybrid identity that incorporates both” (300). Sadly, Pip’s obsession with a

nostalgic cinder narrative rejects any attempt at fusing the past and the present, or starting and ending positions, because his fantasy is based upon the disavowal of personal history. As a result, Pip remains suspended in a traumatic liminal space throughout the novel, forcing repressed anxieties to surface as visions of uncanny mobility that undermine his exceptionalist fantasy.

Pip's pursuit of a masochistic cinder fantasy is essential to the construction and continuation of his fractured identity. Upon his first visit to Miss Havisham's Satis House, Estella degrades Pip and makes him believe he lives in a "low-lived bad way" (55). Pip reacts by feeling equally repulsed and tantalized. The more Pip is exposed to Estella and Satis House, the more he yearns for social advancement, causing him to condescend to Joe and Biddy. Eventually, Pip's desire stirs him to announce that he will become a gentleman *for* Estella (102), so he invents a nostalgic Cinderella fantasy in which he is the shining knight who rescues Estella, the princess. But by choosing Estella, Pip pursues an impossible love object. Miss Havisham has molded Estella into an avenger against heterosexual men, and her "cold, cold heart," according to Miss Havisham, makes Estella "stock and stone" (229), incapable of loving anyone at all. As such, Pip places himself in the male masochistic scenario,³⁰ suffering the abjection that constantly reminds him of the common boy he wishes to disavow and placing the potentiality of his gentrified self, the knight of romance, out of reach. Pip expects that his newfound wealth will permit a reinvention of identity through geographical, social, and economic mobility, yet Pip's cinder fantasy sabotages a "happily ever after" resolution because it ultimately denies any reconciliation

³⁰ Lisa S. Starks-Estes describes the male masochistic scenario as a widely appropriated trope in Western literature in which a male subject pursues an unavailable female love object in "a fantasy of female dominance and male submission" (43).

between his past and present selves while also rejecting any assimilation into a new socio-economic class.

Pip's desire to erase the past extends to all aspects of his childhood and denies any opportunity to reconcile his dual identities. Pip's attempt to disavow his common origins denies reconciliation because the act of erasure requires maintaining the distinct individuality of each identity as one is repressed and the other is embraced. Such attempts at erasure are essential to the internalization of traumatic experience, as Lisa S. Starks-Estes notes, "The subject suffering from trauma does not obsess about the event, but rather, about *forgetting* it. The forgetting itself fosters traumatic symptoms" (30). In contrast to modern trauma theory in which disavowal is an unconscious act, Pip's attempts at erasure often are conscious acts. However, their reemergence as uncanny experience, an expression of unconscious traumatic memory, does preclude modern notions of unconscious traumatic expression, as in cases of post-traumatic stress syndrome where repeated flashbacks or nightmares occur. In this regard, Pip's reaction to his anxieties actually amplifies their effect. While Pip dedicates himself to forgetting, his traumatic liminality is ensured. Pip must constantly encounter the very history he wishes to disavow, a past that he believes imperils his future, as uncanny visions embody grotesque confluences of his identities.

Stagecoaches recur as the primary traumatic objects associated with uncanny visions of colliding worlds and incompatible identities, becoming virtually fetishized by the narrative persona. As such, modes of travel in *Great Expectations* are not merely nostalgic; rather, they represent new opportunities – or failures to access those opportunities – within a shrinking world. Advances in technology merged social and transportation networks during the Victorian era. According to Jonathan H. Grossman, "As part of a public transport system, roads help connect people by standardizing their interconnecting space" (34). Thus, the travel network has a

democratizing effect on the social network as people from all classes move along the same routes and occupy the same space, what Grossman calls “merged circulation” (35), so it becomes the very symbol not just of physical mobility but social mobility, as well. Pip’s inability to access the travel network, therefore, also indicates a failure to navigate the associated social networks. In Pip’s case, these malfunctioning networks result from colliding social spheres as remnants of his old world attempt to intersect with the new, creating a traumatic liminal space.

Perhaps the most significant revelations of Pip’s trauma occur on the eve of his departure from the marshes. At this time, he has already begun the alienation of Joe and Biddy in an effort to eliminate his past and embrace the masochistic fantasy of his future. Pip’s most memorable dreams occur the night before his relocation and provide an uncanny representation of his present anxieties. In the dreams, Pip recalls, “All night, there were coaches in my broken sleep, going to wrong places instead of to London and having in the traces, now dogs, now cats, now pigs, now men – never horses. Fantastic failures of journeys occupied me until the day dawned and the birds were singing” (124). These dreams portray two essential fears: that he will be unable to traverse the social network and that his social rise is illegitimate.

As Pip’s stagecoach dreams undermine his ability to navigate the travel network, they also reject his ability to traverse the social network, rendering him incapable of fulfilling his expectations. This travel system, which is meant to serve the desires of individual travelers, taking them where they want to go along that network, takes Pip everywhere *but* where he wants to go and denies his agency. As Grossman reveals, “the public transport system works by subordinating itself to everyone’s individual purposes” (40), but for Pip, the uncanny portrayal of stagecoach travel in his dreams becomes the very thing he fears most. It is yet another symbol of stasis, taking him everywhere and nowhere, becoming the very representation of placelessness.

He is unbound, cut off from not only his past, but also his future, and the dreams reveal the ultimate masochism, an existence defined by eternal waiting. By creating a dream narrative in which travel equates to stasis, the hope for fulfillment is eliminated, and Pip is left with only endless waiting.

While some like Claire Slagter have argued that Pip's stagecoach dreams foreshadow his forthcoming condescension and disavowal as he ascends the social ladder (182), they also clearly reveal Pip's present fears of discovery and illegitimacy as a common boy who might never truly occupy a place in upper-class society. Within the dreams, the coach is alternately pulled by a variety of domestic animals with the exception of horses. It is important to note that among the technologies that advanced coach speed during this era was horse breeding. William Youatt and Walker Watson note in *The Horse: With a Treaty on Draught* that the coach horse was "as different from what he was fifty years ago as it is possible to conceive" (95).³¹ Therefore, the use of dogs, pigs, cats, and men to pull the coach not only diminishes the esteem of the traveler but subverts a central technology that made both the travel and social networks possible, further denying the navigation of either. These common animals, including the laboring man, further speak to Pip's central fear – that his Otherness will infect any attempt at progress.

The repetition of Pip's dreams in which he reenacts the same failed travel experience seems to simulate a suspension of time as he remains stuck within a chronological loop. Such a dream characterized by the protraction of time most certainly recalls the static position of Miss

³¹ *The Horse: With a Treaty on Draught* was first commissioned by the Society of the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge and was published in 1831. The third edition was later reprinted in 1861, the year that Dickens completed the serial publications of *Great Expectations*. This chapter uses the fourth edition, a revision by Watkins in 1866. According to the editor's preface, "The remarks on the "early history and the breeds of horse" are "nearly unaltered" in this edition; however, the section does include Watson's reflection that railway travel gladly brought an end to what was a "cruel and painful era" in which "suffering and torture" accompanied "the later years of posting, stage coaching, and the conveying of mails" (98).

Havisham. Pip already parallels her cinder fantasy, as both Pip and Miss Havisham purposefully construct a masochistic scenario rooted in a failing or failed pursuit of a love object. In her shame, Miss Havisham endures a self-induced stasis, a masochistic fantasy in which the moment of becoming, in this case the jilted lover, is expanded indefinitely, concluding only upon the consumption of her body when it is placed on the wedding banquet table upon her death. Since time is frozen within Satis House, Miss Havisham is disconnected from the social and transportation networks because, as Grossman claims, the synchronicity of time is exactly what connects one place to the next and one person to the other within travel systems (29). As a result, Miss Havisham is figuratively dead due to this severance from society as Pip describes her as a “skeleton in the ashes of a rich dress, that had been dug out of a vault under the church pavement” (50). Again, imagery portrays the body as landscape, reminiscent of Magwitch rising from the grave and of Pip’s parents and siblings who lie beneath the tombstones.

The narrative persona further constructs a psychic connection through the uncanny when Pip sees a spectral Miss Havisham with a noose around her neck, hanging from a balcony. Gilles Deleuze argues that this type of image is uniquely masochistic, as it symbolizes the displeasure of waiting (33). In his analysis of Masoch’s novels, Deleuze associates suspension, such as that portrayed through the hulks, the gibbet, and the hanging, with masochism when he explains, “This is partly because the masochistic rites of torture and suffering imply actual physical suspension (the hero is hung up, crucified or suspended)” (33). Told by the narrative persona and seen through Pip’s eyes, the hanging registers the masochistic parallel between Pip and Miss Havisham. The uncanny vision of immobility foreshadows Pip’s fate: the narrative retelling is Pip’s own version of the frozen Satis House since time is suspended in either case, enabling the subject – Pip or Miss Havisham – to take masochistic pleasure in fetishizing a failed pursuit.

Stasis within Satis House is more directly tied to stagecoaches when Pip tells Joe, Mrs. Joe, and Mr. Pumblechook the fantasy tale of his first visit. In it, he describes Miss Havisham sitting inside a “black velvet coach” as Estella serves her “cake and wine on gold plates” (57). He goes on to reveal that the coach is in Miss Havisham’s room, and he adds, “‘But there weren’t any horses to it.’ I added this saving clause, in the moment of rejecting four richly caparisoned coursers which I had had wild thoughts of harnessing” (57). In his own daydream, he invents a coach in stasis, but it is a vehicle that he clearly associates with society and good living, which makes sense for a boy who previously has been disconnected entirely from any network. However, he also recognizes Miss Havisham’s separation from these systems since she is frozen socially and geographically, confining herself to Satis House and her traumatic memories.

Eventually, Pip advances past mere fantasies of malfunctioning coaches when he finally begins his trip to London. But if Pip expects his hackney coach ride to signal his upward mobility, he is sadly mistaken. In the morning after Pip’s stagecoach nightmares, he describes in detail the hackney coach that would take him to the city. Pip immediately focuses on the qualities of the coach that remind him of his Otherness, recalling the coachman box, “which I remember to have been decorated with an old weather-stained pea-green hammercloth, motheaten into rags, was quite a work of time” (129). The vehicle’s dominant characteristic is that of decay, yet the narrative persona adds that the coach was “a wonderful equipage, with six great coronets outside, and ragged things behind for I don’t know how many footmen to hold on by, and a harrow below them, to prevent amateur footmen from yielding to the temptation” (129). Like many hackney-coaches of this era, Pip’s vehicle is a hand-me-down from a wealthy family, and it still bears those marks of luxury, though tattered and worn. The effect is a grotesque description of a soiled and worn out coach. The specter of status hints at Pip’s own

growing expectations and merges with his common origins. Pip then emphasizes a connection to anxieties expressed in his earlier dream when he describes that he “had scarcely had time to enjoy the coach and to think how like a strawyard it was, and yet how like a rag-shop, and to wonder why the horses’ nosebags were kept inside” (129). By adding the details of a straw-covered coach floor and feedbags stored beside the passengers, the narrative persona closely associates the past /I/ not only with common rural laborers, but with beasts of burden. Pip’s fantasy seems to crumble before it even begins, further emphasizing the forging of a masochistic scenario, a fantasy that frustrates because it is fundamentally based upon untruths and impossibilities.

Stagecoaches continue to appear within *Great Expectations* as places where traumatic liminality is reinforced and Pip’s cinder fantasy is subverted. Upon Estella’s arrival in London, Pip is tasked with escorting her to new lodgings, yet he strangely confesses, “I knew nothing of her destination” (202). Pip’s ignorance seems to reject any agency on Pip’s part, for he can only blindly follow demands given to him in the absence of such pertinent information. Upon meeting Estella, she becomes linked to Pip in their mutual subjection when she declares, “We are not free to follow our own devices, you and I” (202). The narrative persona chooses to specifically emphasize this point, creating a connection between his past /I/ and Estella, thus they travel together in the coach equally without agency despite the illusion of a freedom associated with their socio-economic status.

Their complicated identities are then further linked when the coach nears Newgate Prison, a location that causes Pip to recall memories of the convict and the floating hulks of his youth. Though Pip professes that his shame is directly tied to having visited the prison before, the associations with his childhood linger like haunting spirits. Similarly, Estella’s past is equally

tied to crime and punishment since her adoption by Miss Havisham was the result of her mother's imprisonment and trial. Though Estella is unaware of her origins, their personal histories reflect one another, yet Pip's knowledge of his origins complicates his navigation of social networks because he is forced to reconcile his past and his present, a conflict Estella escapes. Pip's repressed anxieties become central not only because Pip himself is the narrative persona but because Estella avoids any such need for reconciliation due to her ignorance concerning the circumstances of her birth.

The specter of Pip's traumatic past continues to haunt him through doubling – recurring images of decay, crimes of forgery, and reflections of identities – as Magwitch re-emerges through proxy characters. Pip initially encounters Magwitch in the first scene of the novel when the convict emerges from the graves and binds Pip in what becomes a revenge narrative, silencing Pip and transforming him into a device for “justice.” In this way, *Great Expectations* opens by appropriating Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, portraying the paternal specter who silences the son and seeks vengeance through him. And like Hamlet who is continually haunted by his father's ghost, a convict character double represents Magwitch's spectral presence and haunts Pip. In the first instance, a convict stirs his drink in the Jolly Bargemen tavern with the file Pip gave to Magwitch. Later, the same convict from the tavern reappears within the confines of a stagecoach returning to the marshes.

At first, the stagecoach seems the perfect representation of “merged circulation,” as it is an example of the mixing of classes within a transportation network. Within it are a family, a gentleman, Pip, and two prisoners, yet among these, Pip is undeniably tied to the convicts through uncanny doubling. Pip describes being deeply disturbed when he recalls,

It is impossible to express with what acuteness I felt the convict's breathing, not only on the back of my head, but all along my spine. The sensation was like being touched in the marrow with some pungent and searching acid, and it set my very teeth on edge... I was conscious of growing high-shouldered on one side, in my shrinking endeavours to fend him off. (176)

As Pip and the convicts arrive in the marshes, the narrative persona recalls, "Cowering forward for warmth and to make me a screen against the wind, the convicts were closer to me than before" (176), and he clearly describes uncanny feelings – fear derived particularly through the association of something at once familiar and foreign – when he reflects that "the coincidence of our being together on the coach, was sufficiently strange to fill me with a dread that some other coincidence might at any moment connect me, in his hearing, with my name" (177). Yet Pip is not able to locate exactly why he should feel such dread. He can only muse,

I could not have said what I was afraid of, for my fear was altogether undefined and vague, but there was great fear upon me. As I walked on to the hotel, I felt that a dread, much exceeding the mere apprehension of a painful or disagreeable recognition, made me tremble. I am confident that it took no distinctness of shape, and that it was the revival for a few minutes of the terror of childhood. (177-178)

As he does throughout the novel, Pip exists in a constant state of disorientation as he constantly struggles with reconciling his past and present, his reality and fantasy. Pip is rarely, if ever, able to separate the two, creating a traumatic cognitive dissonance that occurs because he inhabits the liminal space between each pole. Thus, his fears remain "undefined," though he does recognize some kind of connection to recurrence through a "revival" of "the terror of childhood." As an indistinct sensation, Pip seems to recognize the bubbling up of some kind of repressed anxiety

that takes the shape of uncanny dread due to confronting the convicts, what amounts to connections to his childhood through the reflection of a spectral “father,” Magwitch. Yet this encounter does little to set Pip aright by distracting him from his masochistic scenario. Instead, Pip seemingly recommits to his cinder fantasy until Estella marries Drummle and Magwitch reveals himself as Pip’s true benefactor, crushing Pip’s desires to disavow his common origins by directly linking his wealth and social advancements to crime and labor.

Despite Pip’s realization that his cinder fantasy is a false construct at the end of his second stage of expectations, the narrative persona continues the retelling as a sadomasochistic endeavor. Throughout, Pip never truly is able to reconcile his fractured identity, even in the conclusion of the novel when he seems to forgo his cinder fantasy, reconcile with Joe and Biddy, and settle into an economic partnership with Herbert. Despite outward appearances, Pip never truly disavows his past, remaining a bachelor in memory of Estella. And even when she does return, the narrative persona rejects closure, noting only that “I saw the shadow of no parting from her” (358) – a return to the previous masochistic scenario in which Pip attempts to possess a cold, uncommitted sexual object. This return to masochism within a narrative loop mimics the immobilization of frozen landscapes, suspended objects, and grotesque imagery. As such, Pip permanently resides in a traumatic liminal space defined by shame and desire, the result of a conflict between his common origins and gentrification.

Conclusion: Collisions and Consequences of Fantasy, Identity, and Privilege

Collisions between appropriations such as Shakespeare's "Dark Lady" sonnets and the Cinderella fairy tale, along with a disorientation associated with the uncanny, establish *Great Expectations* as the product of a speaker whose mind is in turmoil, trapped in masochistic stasis in which he is bound to endlessly repeat a personal narrative. An overarching fantasy emerges by considering the exchange between embedded precedents that convey delusions pertaining to love, revenge, and authority within a unifying framework. This fantasy, rooted in what Lisa S. Starks-Estes calls the male masochist scenario (43) with its corresponding sadism and melancholy, necessitates a reconsideration not only of objects and characters associated with trauma but of an intertextuality woven throughout the novel. In other words, establishing *Great Expectations* as sadomasochistic fantasy provides an opportunity to reevaluate the association between objects, characters, and the narrative persona, as well as to interrogate the exchange between appropriator and precedent within the text.

Applying psychoanalytical theory to appropriation studies is not new. Starks-Estes, for example, has examined trauma and sadomasochistic fantasy as it relates to Shakespearean appropriations of Ovid. Yet analyses of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century texts generally do not look beyond the appropriating object. Nick Groom, for example, notes that Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* conveys uncanny dreamscapes that "give voice to the repressed" (xxix) and Seda Arikian uses Lacanian psychoanalysis to explore Heathcliff's and Catherine's narcissism and sadomasochism within *Wuthering Heights* (1). Andrew Smith and Diana Wallace further note that feminist criticism of Gothic literature often employs Freudian psychoanalysis to

investigate the “Female Gothic”³² in relation to authority, masochism, repression, and affect (1-5). But while scholars have extensively explored how the literature of these eras often portray repressed anxieties associated with the uncanny, critics have not examined how precedent and appropriator interact within a fantasy narrative.

In *Nicholas Nickleby*, Dickens describes the artful exchange between two literary objects within an appropriating text as existing within a “magic circle” (598). The circular imagery portrays a relationship between appropriator and precedent, or even between precedents themselves, in which there is no beginning, no end, no point of access, and no position of power. Because of the exchange between the texts inhabiting *Great Expectations* and the fantastical elements already existing within them, such as the haunting specters of *Hamlet*, the decentering inherent in Dickens’s magic circle is already prone toward cultivating the disorientation of dreamscapes.

In addition, the location of appropriations within a text provides a sense of accessing not only what is visible but what is invisible. After all, many precedents reside in what is unsaid. Precedents like Shakespeare and Ovid, which already convey a sense of the hidden mind through their own depictions of trauma, fantasy, masochism, and the uncanny, further suggest evidence of unconscious thought as they operate beneath the textual surface of the appropriator, bubbling up only through close reading. Precedents, then, particularly those so often used during the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries, are particularly rich landscapes for portrayals of unconscious fantasy. When applied to texts that examine the trauma caused by social restriction,

³² Smith and Wallace trace the development of feminist criticism as it relates to Gothic literature, starting with the “umbrella term” attributed to Ellen Moers in 1976, “Female Gothic,” which has come to include several different approaches: gothic feminism, Feminine Gothic, lesbian Gothic, and Female Comic Gothic (1-5).

physical shock, displacement, or disorientation, appropriations provide tremendous opportunities for unmasking the depths of a narrative persona.

These connections between appropriator and precedent within fantasy narratives require further exploration. Of particular interest is not only how precedents interact within the narrative framework but how they interact with each other. A starting point is provided in Chapter 1 in which I discussed cinder narrative subversion through Shakespeare's "Dark Lady" sonnets, but other precedents also certainly play an important part in contributing to the narrative persona's fantasy. Though beyond my scope of study, the mechanism through which these textual objects merge or collide must play a fundamental role not only in understanding the function of precedents within the fantasy but in the deconstruction of characters and of the relationship between the narrative persona and the reader. I must wonder to what extent various precedents not only construct the overall fantasy narrative, but in what ways might they also disrupt that fantasy? Or if disruption is avoided, how is an equilibrium among textual exchange maintained? As it relates to Dickens's notion of the magic circle, one might suppose there are ways in which the circle is destabilized by privileging one precedent over another or privileging the appropriator over the precedent. The issue then becomes one of authority due to the dominant position of a particular text. Further research might illuminate to what extent these textual relationships play a role in the construction of *Great Expectations* as fantasy or even contribute to the disorienting effect of the uncanny.

Not only does literary exchange between precedent and appropriation pose important questions regarding the construction and maintenance of a fantasy narrative, but intertextualities also provide new opportunities to investigate how characters intersect within the novel. When readers accept that the text itself is a sadomasochistic fantasy, each character becomes an

element within the narrator's own psyche. Rather than reporting history, characters reflect the narrative persona by communicating repressed anxieties and emotions through their association with precedents. Conceiving each character as a psychological construct prompts new questions regarding shared appropriation and the intersection of traumatic fantasy. If a narrator constructs characters within a fantasy rather than within the mimetic recollections of a reporting persona, it might be possible to consider them as dislodged from independent construction and as inhabiting merged identities. The fusion between multiple characters might then occur throughout the novel and often result in a shared appropriation, that is, an appropriation explicitly assigned to one character and passed to another due to a parallel fantasy. Obvious examples relate to connections between Miss Havisham, Wopsle, Wemmick, and Pip.

I previously established Miss Havisham's masochistic scenario in Chapter 1 as she inverts gender roles, becoming the masochistic subject in contrast to Compeyson, who is the torturing love object. It becomes absolutely clear within her scenario that she creates her own masochistic fantasy, turning Satis house into a frozen and decayed *mise-en-scene* of her wedding day. As such, she is a perverse Cinderella, a princess whose prince not only fails to arrive but who swindles her of dignity, love, and money. Thus, Miss Havisham wastes away, wearing only one shoe and cursing all mankind. In itself, Miss Havisham's narrative directly appropriates the Cinderella tale in order to disrupt it. Because of her intersection with Pip's cinder fantasy, in both its construction and destruction, the two characters become additionally linked through appropriations of *Hamlet*, even though they are only explicitly attached to Pip.

Thus, the Cinderella and *Hamlet* appropriations collide not only in connection to Pip but to Miss Havisham, as well, positioning Estella as the torturing Petrarchan love object of Pip's sadomasochistic fantasy *and* as Miss Havisham's punishing agent of Shakespeare's revenge

tragedy. The two narratives mirror each other, and further investigation of other appropriations might even deepen these connections. If each character plays a major role within the fantasy, then the character and its related precedent might also parallel the narrative persona's own repressed anxieties and memories. In this respect, one might consider what this intertextuality says not only about Miss Havisham and her relationship to Estella but about Pip and his complicated need for disavowal, loyalty, and retribution.

Fantasy is again apparent as it relates to Wopsle and his performance as Hamlet on stage. In this performance, Wopsle acts the fool in a production he means to take seriously. To Pip and Herbert, Wopsle's *Hamlet* is merely a farcical burlesque, yet Wopsle deludes himself in order to maintain his integrity. Similarly, Wemmick's "castle" also becomes the setting for a burlesque performance in which he acts out those private desires usually repressed within professional spaces. While in the presence of Jaggers during working hours, Wemmick is subordinate and stoic, yet when he returns to his fantasy realm within his mock "castle," he is an affable king and guardian. In this way, both Wopsle and Wemmick are linked in that they both indulge in pretend royalty as performers upon diverse stages. Yet these characters again circle back to Miss Havisham and Pip whose cinder fantasies prompt performances – Pip as the gentrified "Knight of romance" (179) and Miss Havisham as the cinder princess frozen in time.

Hence, these characters continually seem to fold back upon one another, their fantasies merging along with their precedents. As these characters and their roles develop, they all operate within the larger framework of the overarching fantasy, so each character appears to exist as a reflection of the narrative persona himself. These individual threads then define the narrator, providing rich opportunities for connections between each character's psychological trauma and that of Pip. Therefore, the intersecting individual fantasies and related appropriations become

essential to the psychoanalysis of the novel's narrative persona, structure, and meaning. Exactly how these characters might merge requires further analysis and extends beyond my focus here.

Other first-person narratives in which the persona utilizes psychological appropriations to construct a grand fantasy likewise might fashion all characters as reflections of the narrator's own psychic image. Psychoanalysis and its applications to appropriations studies further apply to Dickens's other works, especially those that appear late in his career and increasingly portray the neo-gothic. Applied to Dickens's "The Signal Man," for example, the railroad worker and his associated visions might exist as constructs of the narrative persona's own mind and perhaps as a representation of the narrative persona's unconscious. Like the uncanny stagecoaches in *Great Expectations*, objects of trauma in "The Signal Man" could convey not just the repressed anxieties of the railroad worker but of the narrative persona who decidedly chooses what uncanny imagery to divulge and what early modern language he uses to describe traumatic memory.

The application of psychoanalysis to appropriations within a fantasy narrative poses important questions and opportunities related to character analysis, the exchanges between appropriator and precedent, and the construction of fantasy narratives. Such an approach not only presents the possibility of recognizing new complexities within Dickens's work but in other first-person narratives, particularly those that appropriate Shakespeare or other precedents that are uniquely "psychological" in nature through their portrayal of masochism, sadism, or the uncanny. When inherently psychological precedents are used within a first-person narrative, they facilitate a fantasy that unveils the hidden desire and repressed anxieties of the narrative persona. Certainly within Dickens's work, particularly his later novel and short stories, understanding the function of appropriation within a psychoanalytical framework is essential to unlocking the

relationship not only between textual objects but between narrator and character as well.

Therefore, we must consider how other works that seek to disrupt, unsettle or disorient might convey new meaning through a psychoanalytical approach that explores appropriations and their associated objects of trauma. In this way, we might better understand how appropriations interact within a circle of genius in order to uncover the depths of /I/.

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