

Marriage and the Social Contract in British Romantic Discourse

by

Robert David Shakespeare

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

David Shakespeare

Abstract

This thesis investigates non-domestic discourses of British Romanticism to argue that there is no “outside” of the domestic; its key constituents, family and the marriage that legitimizes that family, are absent presences in the period’s political writings, philosophical poetry, and gothic fiction. A central occupation in the thesis is an analysis of the significance that the wedding ceremony has on cultural, political, and textual levels. Following the Marriage Act of 1753, marriages would only be recognized as legal if they followed the state’s prescriptions, among which were the requirements for parental consent, public banns read for three consecutive weeks prior to the wedding, and authorization of the marriage by an officially licensed clergyman. The increased state control over what constitutes a valid marriage invites the parallel I draw between the marriage contract and the social contract, supported by the conventional analogy between family and state. My argument positions marriage and family as among the most overlooked ideas in Romantic-era discourse because of the rhetorical sublimations, transpositions, and narrative delays of literal marriage.

In my first chapter, I investigate political texts of the period, chiefly *Reflections on the Revolution in France* by Edmund Burke and *Rights of Man* by Thomas Paine. My second chapter investigates the substitutions and displacements of literal marriage in texts by William Wordsworth and Lord Byron. Two major gothic novels of the 1790s, Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk* and Ann Radcliffe’s *The Italian*, represent variations of the interrupted wedding ceremony in my third chapter, and I close with a conclusion featuring the novels of Jane Austen.

I argue that remarriage constitutes a key to understanding representations of marriages that occur after the Marriage Act of 1753: remarriage to the same person is a way for couples to ensure that their vows are more personally meaningful, and, through repeated iterations, more

significant than the legal mechanisms required by the state. If the analogy between the state and the family is conventional, then this conclusion has a potential application to political theories that consider the renewal of popular consent necessary to the validity of a government.

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to my wife Jodi and my son Oscar—my two dreams come true.

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Introduction

“I require and charge you both (as ye will answer at the dreadful day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed), that if either of you know any impediment why ye may not lawfully be joined together in matrimony, ye do now confess it; for be ye well assured that so many as are coupled together otherwise than God’s Word doth allow, are not joined together by God, neither is their matrimony lawful.”

He paused, as the custom is. When is the pause after that sentence ever broken by reply? Not, perhaps, once in a hundred years. And the clergyman, who had not lifted his eyes from his book, and had held his breath but for a moment, was proceeding: his hand was already stretched towards Mr. Rochester, as his lips unclosed to ask, “Wilt thou have this woman for thy wedded wife?”—when a distinct and near voice said—

“The marriage cannot go on: I declare the existence of an impediment.” (Brontë 376)

I began work on this dissertation with the question of why a significant number of well-known British Romantic-era texts feature a couple who, on the point of being legally married, were interrupted in the middle of their ceremony, the feast that follows, or on their wedding night. Examples come from diverse sources: John Keats’s *Lamia* and *Otho the Great*; Charles Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer*; Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*; Walter Scott’s *Marmion*; John Polidori’s “The Vampyre”; Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk*; Ann Radcliffe’s *The Italian*; and, perhaps most famously, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. Although, as

the last example demonstrates, the interruption does not always occur at the moment of marriage, the number and variety of these instances challenge Jane Eyre's speculation that "[n]ot, perhaps, once in a hundred years" does one hear something breaking the silent pause. Why does such a heretofore unremarked situation appear with such frequency during the Romantic period?

In the argument that follows, I analyse and compare concepts from Romantic-era discursive practices to propose an answer to that question. I shall argue that although non-domestic texts appear to sublimate the importance of marriage for other concerns through displacements or substitutions, there is no "outside" of the domestic; rather, political tracts, philosophical poetry, and gothic fiction all rely on the importance of marriage, even if they ostensibly marginalize it. In doing so, Romantic authors' representations of the meanings of the nuptial lexicon—marriage, matrimony, and wedding are the most prominent of these—displace the importance of marriage.

I develop a response to the question of the interrupted wedding ceremony in an argument that finds changes to the practice of marriage enforced by the 1753 Marriage Act to be among the most significant causes of this fictional motif. The Act, also known as the Hardwicke Marriage Act, brought state control to the requirements of a legitimate wedding in England; prior to its inception, as I outline, there was a greater variety of practices based on which a couple who cohabited could be identified as "married." The interrupted wedding ceremony is an attempt to overcome the state's involvement in the otherwise private affairs of a couple: couples who reiterate their vows after an interruption affirm their commitment to their partners, despite the legal superfluity of such renewals. With this basis for my argument in place, I begin with a consideration of the relationship between the state and the individual, which examines the role of marital metaphors and analogies political theorists use in developing their contentions. Two

major theorists of the period, Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine, make few explicit connections between statecraft and the family, overturning a long tradition of British political discourse that does unite the two concepts. I argue that Burke and Paine offer opposing models for thinking through the structure of a state, and, since their implied connections between state and family are so intimate, a wedding ceremony. Whereas Burke's emphasis on the origins of something, such as a state, suggests the importance of a single ceremony, Paine contends that a state requires continual renewal in order to validate its authority. I argue that, by extension, marriages can be valid either through their inception at the wedding ceremony, or through their on-going practice.

While Burke's and Paine's writings are conspicuous for the absence of overt references to the marital lexicon, the poetry and private writings of William Wordsworth and Lord Byron frequently employ such terms in unexpected ways. Wordsworth seldom writes of literal marriage in his private letters or public verses, but in some of his canonical poems, he uses an idiom of marriage to describe a union between the mind and the world, a connection that became central for the theories of Romantic critics like M. H. Abrams. Byron, in contrast, writes of literal marriages with relative frequency in texts intended for both private and public audiences, but he is apt to disparage the idea of marriage by freighting it with indifference or hostility, or expanding—and thereby eliminating the exclusivity of—the married couple to include other members.

In the gothic fiction of Matthew Lewis and Ann Radcliffe, portrayals of wedding ceremonies end with couples triumphant in their protracted attempts at matrimony. In *The Monk*, however, I argue that spouses end up wed to different people than the ones to whom they initially pledged themselves, while *The Italian* more closely resembles a domestic novel in part because the concluding marriage occurs between the same two people who initially attempted to wed

each other. Their successful wedding is a dramatization, I assert, of the kind of renewal of commitment necessary to maintain independence from state involvement in the private relationships between a husband and a wife.

In Ruth Perry's recent publication, *Novel Relations*, she contends that

[t]he family is the intermediate term between the individual and society.... Yet cultural critics assessing the social construction of gender or any other dimension of individual identity often leave out the family, and place the individual directly in the field of immense national forces, such as imperialist ideology of new class formations, without acknowledging the intermediate shaping influence of the family. (13)

Perry's study examines a number of British fictional texts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to argue that "the biologically given family into which one was born was gradually becoming secondary to the chosen family constructed by marriage" (2). While Perry's argument centres on, as she indicates, the family and its structure, mine focuses on the role that marriage plays in constructing the family. After all, if we accept Perry's claim that "the chosen family" was becoming more important to a person than "the biologically given family into which one was born," and that more significantly, family was "constructed by marriage," then an examination into the meanings of marriage is a necessary scholarly undertaking. Although Perry's argument is generally convincing, it is potentially complicated by narratives that feature an interrupted wedding ceremony. These texts, which are prominent in my thesis, contest any idea of constructing a family through a wedding as a straightforward process.

Marriage, as an institution, and in relationship to portrayals of domesticity in fiction, has drawn critical attention in recent decades. Emerging as one of the most influential studies of

these years is Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, which takes a similar kind of theoretical approach to the fiction of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as I do with my more focused Romantic-era texts. Armstrong's historicist methodology examines the contemporary political elements involved in the apparently apolitical writings of domestic fiction of her period, which serves to distinguish the ostensible separateness of domestic fiction as a distinct category of writing. This kind of division, Armstrong contends, "helped to create the illusion that desire was entirely subjective and therefore essentially different from the politically encodable forms of behavior to which desire gave rise" (9). Armstrong writes of "narratives which seemed to be concerned solely with courtship and marriage" (5) as if human desires "were independent of political history" (5), and declares that domestic fiction, with its "repeated pressures to coax and nudge sexual desire into conformity with the norms of heterosexual monogamy affords a fine way of closing a novel and provides a satisfactory goal for a text to achieve" (6). My study, in contrast, focuses more specifically on the role of the wedding as the required element in making a marriage legitimate. The texts that I examine reveal that just as marriage is a contestable idea, so too is the wedding ceremony that establishes that marriage. Where assumptions about family emerge in the writings of Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine, for instance, I analyse the political purposes behind those assumptions, revealing the foundations of matrimony should not be viewed as a simple legal obligation, as indeed they are not by authors who explore the possibilities of unusual weddings and marriages in their fictional narratives.

I differ from Armstrong's political analysis of the social contract with a more specific focus: whereas among her discussions of the social contract is the far-reaching claim that "fiction might have worked in concert with other, very different kinds of writing to produce a new form

of political power,” I focus on consent to the contract (Armstrong 35). I contend that the parallels between a contract involving the state and its citizens and one uniting two potential spouses both require the consent of the separate parties in order to reach an agreement. In some cases, the consent might be voluntary, as when people are free to choose for themselves, but in others, it might be more subtly coercive, as when the weight of the past strongly influences their decision. My arguments run counter to Armstrong’s positing of the “conformity” that aligns with “the norms of heterosexual monogamy”: I conclude that reiteration of marital vows is an act of independence, and that the multiple attempts at wedding in narratives with an interrupted ceremony challenge the possibility of “a satisfactory goal for a text to achieve.” Even when these texts conclude with a successful marriage, the repeated attempts mean that it is not a singular goal but instead the repetition of a process of which the completed wedding is but one instance.

Seldom do the Romantic authors examined here depict marriage as a failure, which, Jennifer Golightly argues, is the case for a number of female authors writing in the 1790s; these include Charlotte Smith, Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Inchbald, Eliza Fenwick, and Mary Hays. In line of thinking that is similar to Perry’s, Golightly begins her book, *The Family, Marriage, and Radicalism in British Women’s Novels of the 1790s*, by recognizing that a person’s conjugal family may have a more important role in a person’s life than the one into which he or she was born: “Specifically, these writers depict the conjugal family as the site for a potential reformation of the prejudices and flaws of the biological family, the latter of which serves as a basis for perpetuating society’s ills” (2). Golightly departs from Perry’s claims, however, with regard to some of the more positive outcomes of weddings chosen by two consenting adults. Instead, she argues that,

What is most striking about these depictions [of marriage] is their ultimate failure. Marriage, for many of these novelists, was an institution they perceived as inextricably related to (male) concerns about property and inescapably patriarchal under the marriage laws of late eighteenth-century British society. (Golightly 2)

Golightly's argument has much to admire in it, but her selection of authors and texts leads her to necessarily different conclusions than I reach. The texts that I present are examples of a broad range of discourses, including political treatises, letters, journals, poetry, as well as novels, authored by male and female writers. As these texts represent facets of the issues concerning interrupted wedding ceremonies, I find that virtually the opposite result occurs to those in Golightly's selection. That is, instead of depicting marriage as a failure, these works depict marriage, in most cases, as so sought after that a couple makes repeated attempts at successfully completing a wedding. A qualification might be added, however, that given the conclusion of, for instance, *The Monk* and *Beppo*, a binary opposition of weddings into "failures" and "successes" does not reflect the complications depicted in those texts. In the case of *Beppo*, the title character reunites with his wife in marriage, but it becomes a non-exclusive union because of the liaison Laura formed in his absence, which is one kind of complication to the binary opposition of marriages as successes or failures. Agnes and Raymond suffer through much and undergo transformations before they can finally marry, while Ellena's initial ambivalence to marriage with Vivaldi implies that perhaps the interruption at their first attempt was fortunate, from her point of view. I follow Armstrong's argument, to a point, when I conclude that Radcliffe's *The Italian* is a gothic novel that bears a strong affinity to domestic fiction, but I differ from Armstrong's ideas about marriages as narrative closure.

Some of my examples, however, feature marriages that end in premature death. Wordsworth's *Home at Grasmere* and *Peter Bell* both describe several marriages, which, although they are not at the heart of those poems, form a significant subtext. Wordsworth's speakers in those texts present marriages in which one person has died; perhaps an unremarkable fact in itself, but these poems are notable because neither celebrates domesticity in a literal sense. Instead, these "broken" marriages contrast with Wordsworth's lexicon of matrimony that he uses when describing a union between the mind and the world. This metaphorical marriage was crucial in developing concepts about Romanticism in the mid-twentieth century by some very influential critics, prominent among them M. H. Abrams in his *Natural Supernaturalism*.

In developing his argument for that book, Abrams investigates the similarities to the biblical rhetoric of marriages to argue that the major Romantic authors substituted, rather than replaced, Christian ideas about the world (25-27). But Abrams draws on lines in Wordsworth's *Home at Grasmere*, which have another context, unremarked upon by Abrams; as the title *Home at Grasmere* implies, it, is a potentially very domestic poem. It is ironic that, given the associations with domesticity, Wordsworth writes of "minds / Once wedded to this outward frame of things" and intends to "chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse" (*Home at Grasmere* 999-1000; 1003). This substitution of literal marriage with a metaphorical one might have been at the heart of the image of a Romantic poet as an isolated genius. The idea suggested in Wordsworth's poetry here might be, as Frances Ferguson writes, characteristic of a wider kind of Romantic discourse, which seeks to establish the consciousness of an individual:

For Malthus and Wordsworth both, a Romantic consciousness emerges in reaction to the proliferation of other consciousnesses, or rather to the claims of other consciousnesses—for example, women's—on the individual. Solitude comes to be cultivated as a space for

consciousness in which the individual is not answerable to others, and the waste landscape becomes the site of value because one can make it a peopled solitude, anthropomorphizing rocks and stones and trees, without encountering the pressures of a competing consciousness. (*Solitude* 114)

That notion of Romanticism as arising from solitude and waste that Ferguson writes of has also been challenged by Jeffrey N. Cox, who asserts that,

Romantic literature was created in circles such as the Bluestockings, the Lakers, or the Cockneys, that it arose on the pages of weeklies and on the stages of theaters, that it engaged collective problems and sought to resolve those problems through communities created through acts of embodied imagination.... (150)

The idea of the Romantic poets as solitary figures, labouring in isolation, also finds a counterpoint in Jon Mee, whose book *Conversable Worlds* points out that “circles [of readers and talkers] were part of a world where reading and interpretation were not concluded by an encounter between solitary reader and singular text, but were often experienced as part of an ongoing process of conversation with others” (23). A similar line of argumentation also features in various forms in the essays collected by Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite in *Romantic Sociability*. In their introduction, the editors write, “[i]f the sociable occupies the position of the other of a solitary or interiorised Romanticism, this is partly because there has been no critical tradition of representing a Romanticism in which sociability is a value” (Russell and Tuite 4).

All of these critics aim to trace the social connections between figures of the Romantic period and establish, in most cases, not only the connections between well-known authors but also among the populace as a whole: for Russell and Tuite, their “own definition of ‘Romantic sociability’ [does not] aim to focus solely on the sociability of literary circles but [recognises] its

fluid interplay with other modes of sociality within British society as a whole” (19; cf. Mee 9). In contrast, I focus not on the wider issues surrounding social networks of the Romantic period but instead on marriage as depicted in writing. For example, Keats (who never married) in his occasional remarks about matrimony in letters to family and friends foregrounds a substitution of something extraordinary, such as the sublime in nature, for something domestic. Keats, as we shall see, defamiliarizes not only notions of what it means to be married but also customary understandings of solitude. The texts that I examine in my chapter on canonical Romantic authors provide evidence for my challenge to the conventional idea of the Romantic artist as a solitary genius. Whereas the emphasis of critics like Ferguson, Cox, Russell, and Tuite is often on the wider networks with which these authors had involvement, I oppose traditional understandings of a solitary artist through my investigation of their written depictions of domestic attachments. Byron and Wordsworth often challenge understandings of literal marriage as something to which people aspire, either through denigrating it as Byron often does, or substituting a female partner for “Nature,” as in the case of Wordsworth.

If there are many scholars whose lines of argument are distinct from mine, there are a number whose ideas have been foundational in the development of my position. The most immediate influence is a recent analysis of marriage in the Romantic period by Eric C. Walker, *Marriage, Writing, and Romanticism*. In significant ways my argument differs from his, which focuses on the texts of Jane Austen and William Wordsworth, and especially after the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. And whereas my dissertation examines the abilities and rights of people to speak for themselves in a wedding ceremony, Walker posits the notion that “Romantic writers in general confront a new outrage, the impossibility of writing about anything other than marriage” (3). I am not inclined to agree with this last generalization since his case

rests largely on the works of two canonical authors, but my dissertation takes as its examples works that nearly all pre-date 1815, so I do not immerse myself in a detailed opposition to his claim.

Walker's study and mine differ for focusing on writing and speaking, respectively. All of my examples are from written documents, but whereas Walker argues that Romantic authors cannot write "about anything other than marriage," among my central ideas is the role that people have in speaking for themselves, either in political arenas to select or approve of their leaders, or in marriage ceremonies where they must verbally pledge themselves to another person. In both the political and the personal spheres, I contend that reiteration of these speech acts is necessary to confer legitimacy, and, as this concept implies, the political aspect of marriage is a central concern in my argument. But I follow Walker's use of Stanley Cavell, contending also that marriage is about re-marriage: that it is something that must occur again and again, through performative actions, in order to gain its legitimacy.

STANLEY CAVELL'S CONCEPT OF REMARRIAGE

The claims in this dissertation draw substantially on Cavell's theory of remarriage, chiefly as he articulates it in his book *Pursuits of Happiness*. The concept emerges out of his argument for a genre of a small number of Hollywood films that first appeared between 1934 until 1941, which he calls the comedies of remarriage. They include *It Happened One Night*, *The Philadelphia Story*, and *The Lady Eve*. In the context of my argument, discussion of these films and Cavell's application of his theoretical genre are not relevant, but the explication of how he infers the existence of this short-lived genre is important and will now be sketched in brief, followed by a discussion of how I intend to apply the term to my argument.

One of Cavell's examples, *The Philadelphia Story*, closes with Tracy Lord accepting the proposal of marriage made by her ex-husband, Dexter Haven. In doing so, she rejects another, new suitor, in order that she might reconcile with and wed, for the second time, her former husband, thus enacting what Cavell calls "remarriage." Here, the same two people wed at the close of a narrative, even though they have already been legally married. Another of Cavell's examples is *The Lady Eve*, in which one spouse acts under a different identity: Charles Pike, having married Jean Harrington, eventually finds himself on the threshold of matrimony for a second time with Jean, but this time as she is disguised as the title character, and the two admit to each other that they are already married. What distinguishes Cavell's definition of "remarriage" from the idea of re-marrying, or becoming wed to one person after already being wed to a different person, is that the same two people who have already pledged to be together in a legal ceremony express their intention to do the same thing again. As Cavell writes of Old Comedy, one of the genres he cites as a distant ancestor of the remarriage genre, "the drive of the plot is not to get the central pair together, but to get them *back* together, together *again*" (1-2). The emphasis he places is on the repetition of the marriage act, not its singular instance.

More specific texts that Cavell finds to be predecessors of his film genre include Shakespeare's late work, *A Winter's Tale*, which has obvious elements of a remarriage plot (19). The second major text, however, is more unexpected since it is more conventionally categorized as a tragedy: Ibsen's *A Doll House*.^[1] The end of this play is significant for its representation of the marriage that Nora claims to have had with Helmer, referring to him as a "stranger":

NORA: you neither think nor talk like the man I could join myself to.

...

NORA: I can't spend the night in a strange man's room.

...

HELMER: Nora—can I never be more than a stranger to you?

NORA: Ah, Torvald—it would take the greatest miracle of all—

HELMER: Tell me the greatest miracle!

NORA: You and I would both would have to transform ourselves to the point that— Oh, Torvald, I've stopped believing in miracles.

HELMER: But I'll believe. Tell me! Transform ourselves to the point that—?

NORA: That our living together could be a true marriage. (194-96)

Cavell quotes the play's conclusion more extensively than I have here, but these fragments are sufficient to demonstrate the point he wants to make about remarriage. Nora “discovers that her eminently legal marriage is not comprehensible as a marriage” (Cavell 22): on reaching this conclusion, she refers to Helmer as a “stranger,” not a husband, and repeatedly calls him this. Instead, she would only consider herself married to the same man if a sea change would make them married to each other. Although Nora leaves no possibility for that occurring in the drama, this conversation is demonstrative of what remarriage entails: a renewal of commitment between two people so that they can authentically live together as spouses. Although legally married, Nora does not see herself as a wife because their relationship has depended for its legitimacy on the initial act of marriage, which Nora discounts. Instead, Cavell implies, it takes more than a state-sanctioned ceremony to make people husband and wife. Remarriage is something that does not occur in Ibsen's play but does in the films that Cavell identifies as participating in his genre, and, as I will argue throughout my thesis, appears in variations among diverse texts of the Romantic era.[2]

Remarriage, then, is about a repetition or reiteration of commitment between spouses. Throughout my argument, I adapt the concept to include instances where couples are and are not legally married but repeat their pledges of devotion on multiple occasions. What, then, is the difference between courtship and marriage? And why do I employ the idea of remarriage as opposed to simply marriage? In response to the first question, I argue that some of the authors treat pledges of commitment between spouses like a marriage; indeed, this was theoretically possible for couples prior to the imposition of the Marriage Act of 1753. The bill's proponent was Philip Yorke, 1st Earl of Hardwicke, and the bill, which came into force on 25 March 1754, is often referred to as the Hardwicke Marriage Act.[3] The proposal of the bill and its successful passage reveal a cultural concern over what constitutes a marriage in the period; the prescriptions detailed in the law's clauses are indicative that, among the major concerns of the English government and its supporters, unusual marriage practices were considered to occur too often. I shall discuss this law and its implications below, but for the moment, suffice it to say that one of the reasons for its inception was because a person might have claimed to have married someone through an exchange of promises though that someone denied that fact. Depending on one's situation or point of view, then, pledges made by someone during courtship could be seen as binding a person into marriage. As for the second question, remarriage as Cavell classifies it is almost exactly what occurs in *Beppo*, and it is the strongest explanation for the interrupted wedding ceremony we find in *The Italian*, which concludes with the same two people who attempted to wed previously in the narrative. Walker, as I discuss in my conclusion, adapts Cavell's term to the situation in which Jane Austen's Anne Elliot finds herself: "*Persuasion* casts the question of marriage as the question of remarriage" (Walker 49). Following Walker's lead of considering marriage "as remarriage, as repetition," I contend that because of the possibilities

available in pre-Hardwicke times, what it means to be wed can be challenged, and that repetition of the marriage is a constituent element in the cases for which I shall argue (Walker 49). In this way of continually renewing one's relationship to a spouse, one is able to avoid the situation that Nora and Helmer find themselves in, of waking up to discover that they have been living with someone, under the name of marriage, that they knew, but only in the sexual sense.

Another significant concept that I employ throughout this project is that of a second attachment, which I also attribute to Walker's argument, but I have developed in a different register for my purposes. The phrase appears in reference to the relationship between Jane Austen's Anne Elliot and Frederick Wentworth: no other, second person could replace him in her thoughts and feelings, and it is him she marries at the novel's conclusion (32; see also Walker 49). Walker explores the possibilities of second attachments in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Persuasion* before concluding that "not only are second attachments possible but there are nothing but second attachments" (50). Although I agree, generally, with his assertion that "there are nothing but second attachments," since my study approaches the question of remarriage using a wider variety of textual examples than Walker's, I trace out the different kinds of second attachments across my range of texts.

Broadly, I identify two kinds of second attachment; one kind appears in *Peter Bell* and *The Monk* and features a kind of serial monogamy, where a character marries a second person, different from the one to whom he or she was first intent upon, if not actually engaged or married to. The other kind of second attachment is where, like the example of Anne Elliot and Frederick Wentworth, the attachment is more of a reattachment: a relationship flourishes between the same two people who were initially involved, romantically. I find this kind of second attachment appears in texts that participate in the genre of domestic fiction; not only does one find it in the

pages of *Persuasion*, but it also constitutes the relationship shared by Vivaldi and Ellena in *The Italian*. Their wedding ceremony, although initially interrupted, achieves successful completion when they wed the same person to whom they once promised themselves. There are exceptions to these general categories, notably Byron's *Beppo*, but the issue of second attachment forms a crucial qualification to the question of remarriage.

J. L. AUSTIN'S PERFORMATIVE UTTERANCES

In addition to Walker and Cavell, another major thinker to figure significantly in my argument is J. L. Austin, whose highly influential *How to Do Things with Words* develops a theory of performative utterances.[4] I invoke Austin because of my interest in the ability of a person to speak for him or herself at a ceremony, or whether someone else will speak for that person. At Jane Eyre's wedding, for instance, although Richard Mason interrupts the ceremony, in a sense, he speaks on behalf of the culture's laws that prevent a man—Rochester—from being married to two wives simultaneously. In many of the marriages that I analyse in the course of my argument, the question of who speaks will become crucial; as I shall argue for *The Monk* and *The Italian*, part of what makes them Gothic texts is that the weddings cannot occur without permission from a dead hand that represents the influence of the past in some form or other. Consequently, one of the crucial elements for my argument is the question of whether people are able to speak for themselves at a wedding ceremony, which is one of Austin's chief examples of a performative utterance.

Here is his description of the exchange of words at a wedding : “the utterance ‘I do’ (take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife), [is] uttered in the course of a marriage ceremony. Here we should say that in saying these words we are *doing* something—namely, marrying,

rather than *reporting* something, namely *that* we are marrying” (12-13, Austin’s emphasis). One of the factors complicating this seemingly straightforward exchange of words is that a person has to be in a certain situation in which a performative utterance can be made to be meaningful: we must, for instance, be at a marriage ceremony (13), be the “proper person” to marry and have the “‘capacity’ to perform it”; “a marriage with a monkey,” for instance, would be “mockery” (23-24). In some cases, there are ways to “effect marriage by cohabiting” (Austin 8). Yet, as we shall see from historical studies of pre-Hardwicke marriage practices, questions can be raised about whether words or deeds constitute a marriage. The Romantic period’s many fictional representations of weddings and marriages that I have selected as both exemplary and exceptional texts also question what it means to be “married.”

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MARRIAGES AND INHERITANCE

It will be useful briefly to survey the historical situation of family relationships in preparation for what is to come in the first chapter on Burke and Paine because, throughout their writings, these authors make many assumptions about the family without being explicit about its composition, structure, or significance. I will focus on the relevant elements of family and marriage for Burke and Paine and the contemporary writers to whom they refer, which is often the relationship between father and family, and the role that inheritance has to play. The relationship between father and inheritance should be clear, but their application to my project might not be. I argue that for Burke, and for several of the dramatizations of marriage in the gothic novels I discuss, the role of the past, represented by a “dead hand,” is very influential. Behind this authority of the past, Burke implies, are ancestors who would have been anxious about their family name and property in the future; since marriage could produce legitimate

children and transfer property through inheritance, the question of who marries whom could be a potentially very important issue; for instance, this is clearly a concern for Vivaldi's father in *The Italian*, as I illustrate in Chapter Three.

As the eighteenth century progressed, more and more depictions of the family in Western art displayed an expression of tender emotions, as subjects gazed at each other with greater frequency than they were seen to look out directly at viewers, reports Joanne Bailey ("Family" 24). However, she is quick to assure readers that these altered depictions did not imply that a leveling between father and family was occurring; he was still the head of the household, but the mutations in the representation suggest that the ideology of domesticity was shifting leading up to and throughout the Romantic period ("Family" 24). Among these changes are the ones contended for by Lawrence Stone, who argues that the idea of a companionate marriage between husband and wife was taking root in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in a variety of discourses (*Family* 325ff). In companionate marriage, a couple was meant to be joined together in affection, rather than merely through their legal obligations to one another. Bailey writes similarly of the alleged power of domestic relations to justify the support with which a couple was supposed to provide to each other: "the purpose of th[e] language of 'domesticity' at the turn of the [nineteenth] century seems to have functioned in similar ways to sensibility in the second half of the eighteenth century, as a concept that sustained a notion of family, representing safety and security in a changing world" (*Parenting* 196). This might be part of the explanation for Burke's and Paine's taking for granted the family structure; if domesticity was more important than in previous years, it was so because it was both more unstable in meaning and more acceptable in theory.

Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* also foregrounds the importance of domesticity and family at the turn of the nineteenth century, and like Burke and Paine, she also takes the family as something automatic and assumed. This assumption might relate to her bias about her own social position; for instance, she admits that her primary focus will be on "those [women] in the middle class, because they appear to be in the most *natural* state" (75, emphasis added). Wollstonecraft refers throughout her text to a woman's duties to her family as central, and consequently why women are most in need of being improved to the height of their capacities. In fact, she makes a claim that would be, perhaps, counterintuitive to her readers: one of the reasons women need to be educated is to promote best the survival of descendants and the preservation of their "paternal inheritance" (117). She argues this point by imagining a woman, whose powers of judgment had not been developed, who would not know how to act or what to do if her husband dies and leaves her the charge of their children; if she accepts an offer of a second relationship with a mercenary man, without knowing how to protect herself or run the estate properly, the second husband might make off with the family fortune (117).

Although for the upper classes, especially landowners, the eldest son and heir was the crucial person in terms of inheritance, this does not seem to have been the case for the middle classes, however, according to Mary Abbott: "the middle classes, who followed aristocratic fashions in other respects, rejected primogeniture" (99).[5] She offers three reasons for the middle-class departure from the aristocratic tendency to favour the eldest son with the bequest of the family property: first, that equal division among several children might have served as a reaction against the practices of the disliked aristocracy; second, that as farmers and tradesmen came to occupy solid positions in the middle classes, they might have continued their practices of

distributing wealth amongst all of their children; and “[f]inally, the division of family fortunes may have been an insurance against the high casualty rates among professional and business men. Whereas landed wealth was secure, at least until the 1870s, middle-class men lost fortunes at an alarming rate” (100-01). Having one’s family wealth more evenly distributed helped ensure that families might not risk losing everything in market collapses or business failures. So while they did not practice primogeniture, the middle classes believed inheritance to be just as important as the landed classes did; they simply meant to preserve the forms of wealth within their family in the best possible way. For landowners, this would mean maintaining sizable estates by bequeathing those estates to a single person. In the case of the more diverse property of the middle classes, however, this would mean avoiding, so to speak, putting all one’s eggs in the same basket, if possible. Whatever the cases of actual practices, bestowing property on a younger generation through inheritance was something that was part of family traditions.

Abbott also makes explicit the connection between inheritance and marriage, in writing that heirs were expected to marry and produce their own heirs to continue the family line; many younger sons in aristocratic families would not necessarily marry (54-56). If this was widely true, then it seems all the more reason that the question of what constitutes a marriage would be under scrutiny because the pressure placed on the heir to fulfill his duties would be substantial, and the choice of a wife would become important enough to merit the implementation of an act of parliament designed to prevent minors from wedding without the consent of their guardians. Regarding the age of the potential spouses, the pertinent clause in the Hardwicke Act reads,

That all Marriages solemnized by Licence ... where either of the Parties ... shall be under the Age of Twenty one Years, which shall be had without the Consent of the Father of such of the Parties, so under Age (if then living) first had and obtained, or if dead, of the Guardian or

Guardians of the Person of the Party so under Age ... shall be absolutely null and void to all Intents and Purposes whatsoever. (176)[6]

Clearly, the ability to control their children and the inheritance that would be bestowed upon them was among the foremost concerns of parents who supported the act since they would not have wanted to see their children make, from their point of view, ill-considered matches.

PRE-HARDWICKE MARRIAGES

The Hardwicke Marriage Act required marriages to be made public to be legal and official, indicated by the injunction to publicize banns three successive weeks before the ceremony, to “solemnize Matrimony in ... a Church or Publick Chapel,” and to solemnize “all Marriages ... in the Presence of Two or more credible Witnesses” (173, 175, 178). Prior to the act, in theory, at least, two people could be wed without an official ceremony or even, in some cases, without witnesses, depending upon the local community’s customs. There were, in some regions, betrothals that were a kind of “little wedding”: spousal partners would leave others to live together to the exclusion of other people; their union would later be solemnized in the presence of the whole community in a “big wedding” (Parker *Informal*, 16). These instances would have made the question of a marriage’s origin highly debatable; for example, if there was no solemnization in the presence of witnesses, but community members knew about the couple’s cohabitation, would that establish the beginning of their legally married life together, or would that only commence at the public ceremony? Drawing on the work of J. R. Gillis in his description of these occasions, Stephen Parker writes that such questions were becoming easier to answer by 1750 because “the system was fragmenting” by this time. Gradually, there

developed a “movement ... towards clandestinity in solemnising the marriage or even against solemnising at all so that the earlier informal stage became also the final stage” (Parker 16).

Although the number of people married through unusual methods is unknown, what Parker calls “informal” marriages existed both prior to and following the enforcement of the Hardwicke Act. He points out that a problem faced by many communities was how to ensure that a man provided for a woman and child, once she became pregnant and gave birth. In these cases, reports Parker, there was

what we might call processual marriage; in other words where the formation of marriage was regarded as a *process* rather than a clearly defined rite of passage.

Recent evidence suggests that in many cases consent to intercourse and consent to marriage were not separated analytically and were perhaps deliberately blurred in some communities. (19)[7]

The practice must have been relatively widespread because “[b]y 1753, laymen in general, and especially lawyers and judges, had become exasperated by the cases before the courts brought by women who had been seduced and impregnated on promise of what proved to be unenforceable contracts” (Stone *Uncertain*, 22). While such a situation may appear to be very foreign to us today, and does not occur in the majority of fictional representations of marriage in the British Romantic period, the question of whether a man and woman were married because of pregnancy is a crucial question for Agnes and Raymond, as well as Marguerite and her first consort in Lewis’s *The Monk*. As Frances Ferguson contends in an argument about Samuel Richardson’s fiction, intercourse, even if nonconsensual, and marriage may have been more closely connected than we might want to admit, and certainly were so in the cases of Hebraic and Saxon law

(“Rape” 99; 102; 92). These cases all potentially undermine the idea of a marriage that is the result of an exchange of vows in the presence of witnesses and an official.

Two more oddities, both from “marginal” but no less important cases, should be noted with regard to pre-Hardwicke marriages, in order to establish how much they could depart from what we might expect a marriage to be. The first is the case of “Welsh monoglots, dissenters and catholics, [where] the simple exchange of consents before a credible witness was sufficient and, if it mattered, had some recognition in civil law” (Parker 23-24). This practice suggests that even when the appropriate words that bind a couple together are spoken, they might serve as a mere gesture to satisfy state requirements; the couple might base the validity of their marriage on terms other than those imposed by the state’s official. In the case of Welsh speakers, for instance, “[i]f the local bishop decided that marriages should be conducted in English then they would be incomprehensible to many participants” (Parker 23). Austin declares that one has to be the proper person in the proper situation in order for the words of marriage to be meaningful, but here Parker lists people who might, for one reason or another, regard the marriage officiated by the state as superfluous because it was conducted in terms with which they did not use, understand, or agree. It would be the couple’s own determination to be married that would be meaningful, creating a potential disparity between what the state and the individuals count as a marriage.

The second instance of what must seem like an unusual practice to us comes from Scotland, where people believed that “[c]onsent made a marriage ... the consent of two people wishing to marry. The marriage did not have to take place in church, nor at any particular time of day or night, nor even before witnesses, for it to be valid, but the consent of freely contracting parties did have to be proved” (Smout 206).[8] This might be because for the Scots, “[t]he

essence of marriage is ... seen as the simple exchange of consent: the priest blessed the sacrament of marriage, but the couple themselves performed it, and could have done so without his presence had they chosen" (Smout 211). Scotland was a separate jurisdiction, unaffected by the Hardwicke Marriage Act, so it was a place to which couples might resort for their clandestine marriages, even after the act's enforcement.

If some examples of marriage in Scotland and Wales seem to be extraordinary and remote from English experience, I would first note the assertions of historian Stone, who reports that in England, among the

large numbers of persons ... living together in situations of varying uncertainty [were] [s]ome of the poor [who] undoubtedly set up customary unions, which were strictly illegal but were accepted by the neighbours [and] ... some, of all classes, [who] were tied by unwitnessed verbal contracts whose legal standing was becoming increasingly dubious. (*Uncertain* 16)

Examples of "uncertain" marriages are also applicable because in many fictions of the Romantic period, narratives occur in foreign settings, as is the case with three of my major texts: *Beppo*, *The Monk*, and *The Italian*. The authors of these works have diverse views of the countries they represent, and differing reasons for presenting them as "others" to their British audiences. They were not likely attempting to replicate with legal precision the customs of the countries they depict, so much as exploring the possibilities of fiction. As Perry reasons, it is not that texts "hold up a mirror to nature" but instead that "literature is one way to think about life, to cope with problems that have no solution" (5). She continues this rationalization for a discussion of fictional texts that represent a pressing issue for the reading public: "The fiction that a society produces and consumes offers the literary critic an opportunity to interpret which published

versions of reality are satisfying to the popular imagination” (5). Furthermore, as the examples from the male Romantic poets indicate, through their substitutions of domesticity for the sublime through the language of matrimony, the question of what constitutes a wedding and a marriage is very much being contested in this period. In the examples that I shall present, I will take seriously the questions of what constitutes a marriage for these authors and their characters: is an exchange of promises sufficient to make a couple married, as is the case for Lewis’s inset poem, “The Brave Alonzo, and Fair Imogin”? If a woman becomes pregnant with a partner to whom she is not married, should that constitute a marriage, as in the case of Marguerite, or Agnes and Raymond? Is a couple still married even after one spouse has been absent for years and changed his identity, as in *Beppo*’s case? Does the silent, “mock marriage” of Vivaldi and Ellena constitute a wedding since it is in the presence of a witness (Hoeveler 108)? We can ask these questions because the conditions for marriage prior to and following the Act made these cases debatable: did they constitute a wedding or not? I posit that the opposition between a single ceremony and reiteration allows for raising doubts about their validity as marriages. Collectively, these instances of remarriage demonstrate that a couple believes its renewal of pledges constitute a literal marriage more meaningfully than the single ceremony made into a legal requirement by the Hardwicke Act. However, the many instances of remarriage that I present convey diverse meanings, as well; I shall argue that what brings *The Italian* closest to participating in the discourse of domesticity is that its remarriage occurs between the same two people who set out to be wed in the first place, and that couple is exclusive of the rest of the world.

THE MARRIAGE ACT OF 1753

It seems likely that much impetus for the Hardwicke Act came from parents who were angered by the clandestine marriages their children were carrying out, letting the family inheritance pass into undesirable, and potentially unapproved, hands, precisely one of the issues that Burke returns to again and again throughout his text. Eve Tavor Bannet makes this much clear: “[t]he government called it [i.e. the Act] a ‘Bill for the Better Preventing of Clandestine Marriages,’ and emphasized that it was designed to prevent rich heirs and heiresses of good family from being seduced into clandestine or runaway marriages with their social or economic inferiors” (94; see also McKeon 124). It was possible to have a marriage arranged through a Special License, granted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which allowed for the practitioner and participants of the marriage ceremony to ignore the regulations of time and location. This would have allowed members of the upper classes, who were the primary users of Special Licenses, to be wed in private (Outhwaite 130). Whether because of the evidence of some isolated cases that received great attention when the couple followed one of the unusual practices described above, or whether informal marriage was a more widespread phenomenon, as census data indicates to have been the case in some towns, lawmakers thought that there was a problem with private ceremonies in Britain in the middle of the eighteenth century and decided to rectify it through a parliamentary act (Bannet 101).

A Special License could be obtained with relative ease by powerful people until 1758, when the government decided to take measures to curtail the number of grants that were issued (Outhwaite 130-31). Parker suggests that the Marriage Act of 1753, then, came about because marriages prior to 1753 could be performed by people of questionable circumstances; the “trigger ... that could draw together and orchestrate concern ... was provided by Fleet

marriages” (37). “Fleet marriages” were one of the popular practices for clandestine marriages prior to 1753. These ceremonies were conducted by clergymen in the area of the Fleet Street prison, which incarcerated people for debt. But, records Parker, “[b]ecause accommodation was insufficient, those prisoners who could give security for their appearance when summoned were permitted to take lodgings nearby. One class of prisoner likely to be trusted was clergymen” (37). These Fleet marriages were, writes Samuel Pyeatt Menefee, often unscrupulous:

Fleet marriages, held in London in an ecclesiastical ‘no-man’s land’, avoided the heavy taxes levied on official church weddings. Exploitation often resulted in under-age, drunken or otherwise ill-starred unions.... The practice also encouraged bigamy and false marriages for the purpose of seduction. Practitioners were not above back-dating ceremonies. (13)[9]

These measures chronicled by Menefee are suggestive of the flexibility under which marriages could be performed, and allude to the potential uncertainty about validity of marriages, prior to the passage of the Act. “The record for ‘Fleet marriages’ seems to have been held by John Gainham, who ... united 36,000 couples while in prison from 1709 to 1740” (Murstein 225). The Act attempted to forbid marriages made outside of its regulations, such as the Fleet ones, by threatening unofficial practitioners with its most overtly punitive measures: transportation “to some of His Majesty’s Plantations in America, for the Space of Fourteen Years” was the punishment in store for anyone prosecuted successfully for officiating at a wedding ceremony without proper authority. The law requires that an official of the Church of England perform the ceremony in order to authorize it, and any marriage conducted outside of the authorized space of “a Church or such Publick Chapel” would be considered “null and void to all Intents and Purposes whatsoever” (Outhwaite 176). The severity of the sentence of fourteen years’

transportation demonstrates how disreputable and dangerous to their families those in favour of the Act held clandestine marriage to be.

The Marriage Act, in its final form, contains nineteen clauses, of which the most relevant for this thesis specify the requirements of a person's minimum age for marriage, the authority of the official performing the ceremony, and the use of a register to record the details of the wedding. As noted above, people desiring to wed had to be over the age of twenty-one to marry of their own volition; if either potential partner were under this age, they would require "the Consent of the Father of such of the Parties, so under Age (if then living) first had and obtained, or if dead, of the Guardian or Guardians of the Person of the Party so under Age, lawfully appointed" (Outhwaite 176). Following the Act's enforcement, weddings could only be made official after banns had been announced in the parish where the marriage was to occur for three weeks prior to the wedding. The ceremonies had to be conducted by an authorized official in an Anglican church or sanctioned chapel, "in the Presence of Two or more credible Witnesses, besides the Minister who shall celebrate the same" (173-74; 178). Despite the fact that an Anglican clergyman was required to perform the ceremony in an ecclesiastical building, marriages came under the scrutiny of the state. Lord Hardwicke was hostile to the church, according to Parker, who conjectures that the necessity of marriages in churches or chapels was a concession to ensure the bill's passage (47). The requirement that most clearly reveals increased state involvement was the official listing of all marriages in special registers designed for the purpose of recording the pertinent information about the couple (177-78). In this clause, the Act is even explicit about the kind of paper to be used and the spacing of the lines in the register, which must have been in order to prevent the kind of manipulation that records were subject to

when handled by the clergy working in the area of the Fleet prison, such as back-dating ceremonies (Menefee 13).

Other clauses in the Act include the exemption of the Royal family, Quakers, and Jews (Outhwaite 179-180). Although the Act's measures must have caused significant alterations to the marriage system in England and Wales for the large majority of people, these exceptions to the law are not the only ones detailed in its clauses. For instance, although the age requirement was twenty-one for both individuals, this necessity was overlooked if one, or both, was “a Widower or Widow” (176). Minors could be exempt from the age requirements in other cases, too, such as when the parent or guardian from whom the consent was expected was judged to “be *Non Compos Mentis*, or may be in Parts beyond the Seas, or may be induced unreasonably, and by undue Motives to abuse the Trust reposed in him, her, or them, by refusing or with-holding his, her or their Consent to a proper Marriage” (177). Couples desiring to wed but barred because of such circumstances were “to apply by Petition to the Lord Chancellor, Lord Keeper, or the Lords Commissioners of the Great Seal of Great Britain” to have their case reviewed (177). In addition to these powerful figures, the Archbishop of Canterbury had authority to grant a “Special Licence” that could, for instance, validate a wedding performed in a place other than a church or chapel (175).

With all of these instances of exceptions from the law, I mean to indicate that while the Act intended to eliminate the “great Mischiefs and Inconveniences [that] have arisen from Clandestine Marriages,” it could not presume to standardize wedding practices into a single form (173). There remained a number of cases where exceptional circumstances would permit a marriage that was irregular but legal. The relevance for my argument is that, despite the state’s attempt at imposing some control over the requirements of a valid marriage, lawmakers left some

of the conditions open to debate. The fictional examples in this dissertation explore some of the possibilities of unusual marriage practices or understandings of the terms of marriage.

From some points of view, however, the Act appears to have been passed with the best of intentions. For instance, the bill indicates “all Marriages shall be solemnized in the Presence of Two or more credible Witnesses, besides the Minister who shall celebrate the same; and that immediately after the Celebration of every Marriage, an Entry thereof shall be made in such Register” (178). Drawing on witnesses would make it easier for individuals and the law to verify whether two people were, in fact, married. People would also have had the benefit of not being committed to hasty marriages. Reading of banns was required, making all marriages public and imposing a delay between engagement and wedding. Consequently, when banns were read and parents’ approval solicited, a couple had time to consider whether they were in fact going to make a good match for each other. And “[u]nlike political sovereignty, marriage had always demonstrably been based on some form of consent; hence it was always plausible to conceive it in contractual terms. Moreover, the express consent of both parties was deemed requisite by most early modern writers on marriage” (McKeon 124). William Blackstone sums up a similar point in his *Commentaries on the Law of England*: “the parties at the time of making it [i.e. the marriage] were, in the first place, *willing* to contract; secondly, *able* to contract; and lastly, actually *did* contract, in the proper forms and solemnities required by law” (1.433).

Opposition to the bill came from numerous and diverse sources. As suggested above, the necessity of recording the marriage in the official register subjected a private relationship to not only public scrutiny, but to the possible observation of the state. This will be an important consideration in my argument: the regulation of marriage through the Hardwicke Act’s impositions makes what might once have been a private and individual matter into a more public

one. I shall argue that remarriage provides an opportunity for a couple to avoid the state's intrusion because repetition of an act or pledge diminishes the importance of the initial iteration. In agreeing to repeat their vows of devotion to each other, a couple regains some of the privacy of their relationship. Whereas a marriage gains an official status that can be verified in civil records, only a couple knows whether they are committed to each other.

Some opponents of the Marriage Act argued that the bill could only damage the lives of women and children; anyone who had been wed through a private commitment prior to the passing of the act was considered “a whore and her children bastards” and unscrupulous husbands were no longer responsible for providing financial support for them (Bannet 96). Proponents of the Marriage Act were not arguing that the moral obligations or the vows between the two parties were negated; instead, the legal implications of the marriage became invalid (Bannet 107). These two positions should offer some indication of what was at stake through the Marriage Act, whose implications were vast, and much could be said about the way that it changed the lives of men, women, children, and parents.

As Blackstone summarized it, marriage made husband and wife one person under the law (1.442); this mathematical oddity can be explained by stating that when a man and woman alter their “identities” to become a married couple, the husband is responsible for—and has the privileges of—his wife's possessions as well as her legal being. For instance, “in trials of any sort, they [i.e. husband and wife] are not allowed to be for, or against, each other ... principally because of the union of person” (1.443).[10] This virtual elimination of women from legal and political debates as something taken for granted might account for a part of the reason that women and wives are not present to a large extent in the political discourses of Burke and Paine,

although Wollstonecraft's political discourse was among the most vociferous in expounding rights for women, both single and married.

What is chiefly of interest here is that supporters of the bill make the political connection between marriage and the state, largely ignored by Burke and Paine, absolutely explicit and central: a change to the way marriages were solemnized was in the best interests of the state. Bannet observes, "[t]he Marriage Bill of 1753 was one of the first fruits of the burgeoning discipline of political economy. It represented the best contemporary thinking about how to manage population in order to increase Britain's wealth"; she goes on to comment that it was believed that if marriages were not legal, the population would decline, meaning a reduction in the number of labourers. She quotes F. Douglas's *Reflections on Celibacy and Marriage* of 1771: "without marriages, the population would every year decrease; and agriculture, trade and manufactures could not be carried on" (97). A wealthy nation required a large population to create goods that could be traded abroad to increase the riches of that nation, concepts later codified in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (Bannet 97). This is one of several reasons why the state has a direct interest in the way that marriages occur, complicating the relationship between the private and the public spheres.

A theoretical change effected through the Act's passage is the role that the speech act had in the new marriage ceremony. As I have outlined above, Austin's example suggests a way in which a man and woman may enter into a state of marriage, if certain conditions are met. However, as the practice of informal or customary weddings illustrated by historians of marriage indicates, prior to the act, the necessary conditions were variable. In some cases, people cohabiting could have marriages that were "simultaneously illegal and valid" (Smout 205). Admittedly, Smout writes this phrase in reference to Scottish practices, explaining that such

marriages were “illegal, because to be married except before a Church of Scotland clergyman was technically an offence ... [but] [i]n practice such acts [i.e. laws] had long fallen into disuse” (205). However, the additional evidence from Parker indicates that the practice of cohabitation that virtually constituted a marriage was wider than official documents recognize. The Hardwicke Act would have made these instances of cohabitation not count as marriages because the proper conditions, sanctioned by the state, had not been met.

The Hardwicke Act enforced the importance of explicit words to be spoken in the presence of a Church of England official, making the meaning of a literal marriage unambiguous. In other words, post-Hardwicke marriages that followed the law’s requirements relied on a single performative utterance to declare a wedding, thus making the speech act and the person or persons who authorized it more crucial than it had been before. Despite the enforcement of the law, people still avoided its prescriptions and continued with their own customs if they desired: after the Act came into force, “the real game of cat and mouse between law and social practice now began in earnest because the law had stamped a uniform and inflexible definition of marriage” (Parker 47). Couples residing together in informal marriages did not rely on any such official declaration of a single performative utterance; instead, their whole marriage was a performance. If they did not continue to say the words that would keep them united, such as promises of devotion, expressions of affection, and agreements for divisions of labour, as well as performing the actions that accompanied these words, such as physical intimacy, fulfilling their duties to maintain their household, and most importantly, dwelling together, their marriage’s validity would be, perhaps, difficult to justify in the couple’s eyes, as well as the judgment of the community.

BREACH OF CONTRACT

The importance of contracts in pre-Hardwicke marriage arrangements raises the question of what sort of actions were available to people, and what sort of actions they could take, when someone made a promise of attachment that pledged marriage, but that person did not follow through on his or (sometimes) her promise. In fact, “Hardwicke’s Marriage Act of 1753 accelerated the change in the nature of the action [i.e. breach of promise cases].... By abolishing the legality of betrothals, Parliament left jilted lovers with no remedy except the common law” (Frost 15). If, as in some cases, a marriage could be arranged through an exchange of pledges without witnesses, what sort of recompense did a person have when his or her partner no longer pursued the marriage, or, as in a number of cases, wed someone else? This is an important but underdeveloped line of inquiry, as Rebecca Tushnet points out: “The general neglect of premarital relations stands in sharp contrast to the careful attention scholars have paid to other moments in the marital relationship” (2584).

The practice of suing for breach of contract emerged in England in 1703, when law courts and the presiding judges “ruled that since a marriage contract in the present tense was binding in ecclesiastical law, a suit for damages for breach of promise was sustainable in common law” (Stone *Road*, 86). Scholars of the issue seem to point to the financial concerns of these cases as being a significant consideration,[11] which is understandable, given that it is possible to measure these in some degree. That is, in some notable cases, people sued for breach of contract if the engagement and promise of marriage carried on for some time, and the person rejected other potential suitors who might have been able to increase his or her fortune. This certainly was the case for the largest settlement on record, reports Stone, which was in 1747 against a clergyman who never made good on his promises while the lady to whom these were made was

known to have rejected a gentleman suitor who might have increased her fortune and manner of living significantly (*Road* 91). There is evidence that jilted women were not the only victims of such underhanded practices; men were sometimes pursued by women who were later proven to be schemers (*Stone Road*, 88). Most of the men, however, who sued for damages were awarded only a nominal amount by the courts (*Stone Road*, 89-90).

Not all of the suits, however, arose from people intent on financial compensation: “By the 1760s men and women were bringing actions in assize courts for damages for the ‘non-performance of a marriage-contract,’ rather than for specific pecuniary loss” (Frost 15). It should be observed, however, that even if financial compensation was the desired result of the suits, other elements of a person’s character were at risk, especially in the case of women. As Saskia Lettmaier puts it:

The position of a nineteenth-century breach-of-promise plaintiff ... was a vexed one. She was putting herself forward as the nineteenth-century dream of an angel in the house at the same time as she was actively pursuing a contractual claim in a public legal forum with the ultimate object of obtaining a pecuniary award.
(95)[12]

In the case of women who were physically intimate with their suitors prior to marriage but faced a tarnished reputation if the promise to wed was not kept, the outlook could be bleak. Alice Browne observes that,

The Magdalen Hospital [in London, for the care of “fallen” women] was founded very soon after the passing of the Marriage Act of 1753. There is no direct connection between the two events, but one effect of the Marriage Act was to

make it harder for seduced women or their families to push men into marriage.

(145)

Breaches of promise, then, could be complicated cases with various things at stake. In the examples of marriage throughout my dissertation, however, there are perhaps two possible instances of broken promises, but no attempts in court to seek compensation for such actions.

The first possible exception is the case of *The Monk's* Agnes, but she only believes herself to be thrown over when Raymond becomes entangled with the Bleeding Nun. Not knowing of his whereabouts, she commits herself once again to the convent to which she was already destined.

A second exception from the same novel might be Alonzo, who returns from the grave to reclaim the woman who promised to wed him. In this case, however, I shall argue that it is debatable whether they were betrothed or unofficially wed; judgement depends on whether we situate this couple as a pre- or post-Hardwicke one. In other cases, however, spouses are not jilted and pursue their beloveds in very determined ways: Vivaldi must confront the Inquisition and his parents before he is able to wed Ellena at the conclusion of the novel.

There had been several “attempts to regulate clandestine marriage” prior to the passage of the 1753 Marriage Act (Parker 41). It took until this time for the social and cultural conditions to reach the point that lawmakers and their allies were able to pass the law. Among its immediate effects was the elimination of Fleet marriages by way of threatening its practitioners with the severe punishment of transportation for more than a decade. However, it was still possible for people to escape the law’s injunctions if they elected to do so; clandestine marriages would have been simply more difficult to obtain than in the past. As the law describes itself, its purpose was to “*better* prevent clandestine marriages,” rather than completely eradicate them. Moreover, as

the texts that I investigate reveal, the question of what constitutes a marriage could be just as debatable as it was prior to the law's enforcement.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

In my first chapter, I examine two of the Romantic period's prominent political texts, Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* and Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*. In these tracts, marriage is a necessary but overlooked way of regulating social relationships in a state. However, the relative lack of critical discussion about domesticity in the texts of Burke and Paine should not deter anyone from pursuing such an analysis; indeed, some of Burke's core arguments about the state and its preservation through private property and inheritance derive from his fundamental assumptions about the family through which this inheritance passes. Burke takes the family as a naturally given social composition; he also posits the close relationship between the family and the state, seeing the former as a model for the latter. He writes, for instance, of bequeathing property to future generations:

In this choice of inheritance we have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood, binding up the Constitution of our country with our dearest domestic ties, adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections, keeping inseparable, and cherishing with the warmth of all their combined and mutually reflected charities, our state, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars. (30)

This inseparability between "our state" and "our hearths" implies a fixedness, or at least a correlation between the two. While the basic form of the English government did not alter from the Act of Union in 1707 until the creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in 1801, as Perry's argument shows, the concept of family shifts and is unstable in the same period.

And since the legal constitution of marriage changed within Burke's lifetime, even he should have been able to see that marriage, far from being a natural state, was, in fact, a cultural one. Similar remarks may be made for Paine's *Rights of Man*, which does not feature an explicit, prolonged discussion of marriage or the family, but necessarily, as a reply to Burke's *Reflections*, invokes the same assumptions about them.

Analogies between the family and the state have been traced by a number of critics, such as the excellent and extensive work by Michael McKeon; these similarities were common in English political discourse long before the time of Burke and Paine (McKeon 113). The two revolutionary-era thinkers departed from a tradition that can be traced back at least to Robert Filmer and John Locke; in their important seventeenth-century political tracts, theories of the state are tied to family and marital considerations. Contemporaries of Burke and Paine, Wollstonecraft and William Godwin are two examples of writers who offer at least some explicit discussion regarding the relationship between family and state, however marginal, as in the case of Godwin, that examination may be. Burke's and Paine's omissions are revealing because, although one may pretend to ignore the role that marriage and family have in relationship to the state, these two apparently domestic ideas are a fundamental part of the state's constitution. Correspondingly, the domestic concerns of the family were, since the passing of the Hardwicke Marriage Act in 1753, wrapped up in the spectre of the state rather than being the private ceremonies between two individuals that they could be prior to the Act's passage.

While they do not feature an extensive discussion of marriage in their political tracts, Burke and Paine offer two models for thinking about how weddings might be performed. The former has a theory of the state, and by implication, of the family, that foregrounds the importance of originary words and actions. The result of such thinking would have us conclude

that a particular moment in the past could be identified as a foundational one for the beginning of a state, or a family. In this model, an appeal to the origin serves as authority for decisions made in the present and future, and the Hardwicke Marriage Act sought to do that with the domestic lives of men and women. It attempted to use the state's authority to institute a formal, legally binding origin to establish a beginning of the relationship between a husband and wife. Prior to its passage a man and a woman might, in theory at least, cohabit for years in a virtual marriage without their relationship being treated, legally, as marriage.

In contrast, Paine's theory of the state questions the possibility of a single and determinable origin for the state, or, by extension, the family. His emphasis is not on the authority of the past, but rather he submits a challenge to the supposed power of the "dead hand" that attempts to guide the courses of the present and future. Paine's call for a continual renewal of the constitution of the state, or through implication, I argue, the constitution of a family, is to reiterate the words and actions necessary to compose a marriage. One should not assume that a marriage should remain intact because a couple once underwent a ceremony that made their relationship legally recognizable to the state and other citizens. Instead, applying Paine's line of thinking about the social contract to the marriage contract, not only is it difficult to establish when a couple's relationship began, but such questions are impertinent: making repeated commitments to one another in the present should be the grounds on which a couple continues living together. In this way, we might see Paine's theory for a domestic relationship in relation to Cavell's concept of "remarriage," in which a couple who is already married, or once was and then divorced, ends a narrative by making an agreement to marry again, either virtually, as in the case of *The Lady Eve*, or legally, as in *The Philadelphia Story*; in some cases, the couple's legal marriage makes such an exchange of pledges superfluous from the state's point of view.

A very curious substitution, rather than omission, occurs in some of the period's major lyric poetry, which will be discussed in Chapter 2. Some of the major arguments from the middle of the twentieth century about the constitution of Romanticism focus on the syntheses of oppositions sought in the poetic discourse of the period's canonical authors. These resolutions of antithetical things, such as the world and the mind in William Wordsworth's case, or heaven and hell in William Blake's, feature the rhetoric of marriage, but the critics formulating these arguments did not draw attention to the metaphorical marriages depicted by these authors. Consequently, it long went unremarked that some of the canonical Romantic texts displaced the domestic lexicon of marriage with more abstract and philosophical meanings. I argue in my second chapter that, for the canonical Romantic poets, whenever marriage is represented in literal terms, it is a kind of unfortunate bondage between spouses, whereas its figurative representations are desirable for the potential union they enable with the spiritual world.

My argument focuses on the two examples of Wordsworth, who is perhaps the most prone of the six major male Romantic authors to use marriage metaphors, and Lord Byron, who, in contrast to Wordsworth, rarely makes metaphorical use of marital terms. While Wordsworth's philosophical poetry displaces marriage as a union between husband and wife, elevating instead the relationship the poet has with his surroundings, Byron denigrates domestic relationships in some amusing epistolary remarks to friends and relatives. In neither of these kinds of writing do the authors celebrate domestic relationships between husband and wife, but their narrative poetry does represent marriages, even approaching what Cavell means by remarriage, demonstrating again the manifold meanings and uses to which the terms of wedding and marriage have been put in the Romantic period.

Wordsworth's expression of a marriage between the mind and the world was in the foreground of M. H. Abrams's argument in *Natural Supernaturalism*. For Wordsworth, marriage can immortalize a poet by granting access to a numinous sphere, but ends with mortality for human couples. Marriage that ends with death is a structure that also features in his poem of remarriage, *Peter Bell*, which focuses on an episode in the life of a serial monogamist whose rough living seems to have contributed in no small way to the death of his several wives. For Wordsworth, literal marriage ends in death, in contrast with the potential for metaphorical marriage to bring a kind of immortality to the poet.

Byron's poem of remarriage, *Beppo*, enacts a very different kind of reunion between spouses. The title character's prolonged absence leads his wife, when she has the opportunity, to take a consort in the form of a wealthy count, only to have Beppo return and reclaim her as his wife. In taking the necessary steps to reaffirm each other as legal spouses, the couple enacts a kind of remarriage, but Byron's dramatization of Cavell's theory is unusual, if not unique, in retaining the count in the couple's relationship, challenging the notion of what it means to be a married "couple" and, by implication, unsettling the idea of what it means to be married. Whereas Wordsworth's literal marriages were a kind of bondage in the material world and set the poet free in the immortal world, Byron depicts literal marriage as a union of husband and wife through a tether that cannot be broken. Despite their reunion after long years apart and altered identities, Laura and Beppo's relationship differs from other forms of remarriage by including a third party, the Count, who enjoys closeness with both Laura and Beppo.

In his personal writing, Byron writes to friends and relations about his views on marriage, which are, for the most part, mercenary in character, seeing marriage as a legal bond between a man and a woman though not necessarily based upon mutual amorous feelings. Instead, as I

demonstrate, Byron's emphasis in these letters is on the contractually necessary arrangements between husband and wife.

Desire is one of the many ways in which one might approach the question of marriage as it is represented in the discursive practices of the Romantic period, but I focus largely on the foundation of the marriage, the wedding ceremony. My concern is chiefly about the power of individuals to speak for themselves, or whether others speak for them, which became a serious concern for couples who wished to marry, following the official enforcement of the Hardwicke Marriage Act. The wedding ceremony forms a pivotal role in two gothic novels of the period, Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*, and Ann Radcliffe's response to it, *The Italian*, the subjects of my third chapter. The latter novel features the period's best example of the interrupted wedding ceremony. An interrupted wedding ceremony, I argue, is a motif wherein someone uninvited and unwanted appears unexpectedly to interrupt, delay, or cease the ceremony in progress. *The Italian* offers the best instance since the couple gets right up to the point of completing the ceremony that would constitute their legal wedding when the villain's henchmen storm into the church and disrupt the proceedings. What is striking about this ceremony is that, like Jane Eyre's, not only is there an interruption at the very moment the necessary words are going to be exchanged to make the couple legally wed, but the same couple marries again, successfully, at the close of the novel.

My final chapter, then, turns to the gothic novel, and engages with its closeness to domestic fiction, with its displacement of houses for horrors, as Kate Ferguson Ellis argues in *The Contested Castle*. My argument for these two gothic texts is that the "dead hand" used to form states, or families, that Paine objected to in his *Rights of Man* returns to play a significant role in the marriages featured in *The Monk* and *The Italian*. I first analyse Lewis's novel, which

features many marriages in diverse representations, but I suggest that Lewis makes the sanctity of these weddings secondary to the often grisly details that accompany the narrative of the title character's escapades. Instead, Lewis portrays marriage as sometimes comic, or, more frequently, perilous. A large part of the danger derives from the dead hand, made literal in the figure of the Bleeding Nun that pursues and entangles Raymond, while he believed himself acting on his betrothal to Agnes.

In *The Italian*, the dead hand is not quite so literal as to manifest itself in the form of a ghostly apparition, but its approval is still required in order for the couple Vivaldi and Ellena to wed at the novel's conclusion. After an examination of the novel's relationships between parents and children, I propose that Radcliffe allegorizes what Jacques Lacan would later insist is the importance of the name of the father in determining kinship relations (65-66). In a sense, Vivaldi and Ellena, prevented from wedding in their first attempt, are not able to speak for themselves in marriage. Instead, their successful attempt follows the revelation of the identity of Ellena's father to Vivaldi's father; when he discovers that she descends from a social class he deems suitable to wed his own descendent, his son, the marriage can at last be solemnized. Like the conclusion of *Jane Eyre*, *The Italian* ends with the same two people marrying each other who had once tried to, which, as I shall argue, is different from the instances of married couples in *The Monk*. In their successful wedding, Vivaldi and Ellena engage in a version of Cavell's remarriage. Radcliffe's dramatization of the interrupted wedding ceremony therefore demonstrates the ideal situation in which a married couple should find itself, exchanging vows to each other on multiple occasions in order to verify the validity of their union between them, instead of relying on a single act whose authority derives solely from its state-sanctioned origin.

In arguing for the importance of reiteration of the words and actions that constitute marriage, this dissertation responds to the motif of the interrupted wedding ceremony in Romantic-era fiction. The larger aim is to explore the polysemy inherent in the marital lexicon, as represented in a variety of the period's non-domestic discourses. Central to the argument are the ideas that marriage is among the most significant terms of the age and that, even as authors appear to occlude the domestic, it manifests itself in unexpected ways.

Chapter 1: Placing the State in the Bedrooms of the Nation

INTRODUCTION

The chief political theorists of the revolutionary period, Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine, do not discuss the role marriage plays in social formation, nor the state's relation to marital law, in explicit terms. What is striking about these discursive lacunae is that from at least the time of John Locke marriage was arguably of fundamental importance to political theories of the state and its formation. And the writings of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, contemporaries of Burke and Paine, also feature sustained commentary about the relationship between marriage and the state. The arguments of Burke and Paine, relating to the constitution of the ideal state, provide my first examples of how metaphors of marriage and family are conspicuously deployed in the discourses of Romanticism.

From the late seventeenth century onward, English political thinkers advocated for a social contract of some kind. A contract, the *Oxford English Dictionary* tells us, is “[a] mutual agreement between two or more parties that something shall be done or forborne by one or both” (1a.). This strict definition suggests neither under what conditions a contract is to be formed, nor how it is to be enforced. But throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in addition to the implications for the arrangements of state power, “contract” could, and did, refer to an agreement to marry (*O.E.D.*, sense 3).

In this chapter, I explore the roles that marriage, family, and their metaphors play in the political theories of Burke, Paine, and their contemporaries. Prefatory to that analysis, I discuss the concept of contract theory and the social contract as formulated by the prominent political thinkers from the late seventeenth century; these concepts connect family and marriage with the state. I then turn to Burke and Paine for an examination of their contrasting models of social

contract. The two models that Burke and Paine advocate, respectively, are a one-time establishment of a permanent contract, and a renewal of a contract, not based on past precedents, whenever necessary. These two contrasting arrangements for a social contract between the members of the state can be applied analogously to the social contract between those family members who are united through a similar pledge of commitment: husband and wife. Burke's argument relies on the authority of the past to determine the power of the state and the necessity for preserving it and its institutions, which include the laws that protect private property through inheritance. Although Burke's discussions of family are minimal, I extract the implication that family derives from a single past point of origin, the marriage contract, and follows, through inheritance, a single trajectory into the future. Conversely, Paine's model for a social contract, as one that continually renews itself as required by need, means that renewal of vows, rather than reliance on past origins, is the necessary element to bind a family together.

My discussion of Burke and Paine begins with a brief treatment of political thinkers of the seventeenth century, Robert Filmer and John Locke. These two theorists of the state are representative of a tradition that integrates questions of the state and the family in a more explicit and coherent form than Burke and Paine take up. The latter two do not explicitly analyse the role of the family in their theories of the state, but I contend that the assumptions they have about family structure underlie their broader arguments about property, inheritance, and the kinship relations that control these through time. Since Burke relies so much on the authority of the past to develop his claims, after I present the work of Filmer and Locke, the next major section of the chapter focuses on Burke's concept of origins. This is one of the crucial elements of my argument, as the debate between Burke, Paine, and, to a lesser extent, Godwin, involves their different understandings of origins. One of the ambiguities that the Hardwicke Marriage Act

intended to resolve is the difficulty of determining when a marriage begins. Although the commencement of such a relationship might seem to be unambiguous on the surface, given that some pre-Hardwicke couples were declared married in the absence of official requirements it is possible that their initial promises to each other served as a pledge of commitment. The period's fiction explores the possibilities of unusual engagements and weddings, and in at least one case—that of *The Monk's* Agnes—we learn that characters might be pledged to an institution, the church, even prior to their birth by their parents. Consequently, the question of whether an ordinary promise should serve as a binding one is a key point of debate in the texts of these political writers, and, as my examples and analyses demonstrate, the question of origins is crucial for Burke and Paine.

Proceeding out of this discussion of Burke's concept of origins, my chapter then turns to the question of inheritance. If one accepts the origin of something as definitive, it is important to preserve the respect for that origin through successive generations and possible attempts to thwart that origin's influence. Marriage provides a legal foundation for understandings of the family in the late eighteenth century and afterwards, and inheritance is the method through which one can preserve, and add to, the original property of the family. Inheritance is a significant concern for Burke, and to a lesser degree for Paine, and although they do not make the connections between inheritance and marriage explicit, I develop my argument from their assumptions. Integral to the question of inheritance is the possibility of usurpation, when someone seizes something that might not have been intended to become his or her possession by the initial holder. This general definition of usurpation is one that both Burke and Paine would agree upon, but the difference in their understanding of the term is that whereas Burke thinks that anyone claiming power not authorized by past, legitimate statesmen is a usurper, Paine believes

that anyone holding power that has been assumed, rather than delegated by living people, is a usurper (Burke 49-50; Paine 238). The opposing views of whether power derives from the authority of past prescriptions or contemporary agreements forms the backbone for one of the most fundamental issues of my study: the ability for people to speak for themselves at a wedding ceremony. It might seem that people give their consent voluntarily when wedding each other, but the role of parents or ancestors might bear a strong influence on a couple's decision to pledge themselves to each other in matrimony.

I conclude the chapter by noting the rhetorical similarities between Godwin's *Political Justice*, Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, and Paine's *Rights of Man*, emphasising the importance of repeated performances of marriage vows to validate spouses' commitment to each other according to the latter two authors. I contend that Godwin's arguments are similar to Paine's, since both of them advocate for the necessity of performative utterances as essential to people's independence. By this I mean that each person should be able to speak for him- or herself, and I extract the implication that marriage is one of the most important places for this to occur. Although this claim may appear to be at odds with Godwin's opposition to marriage, a more careful scrutiny of his opinions reveals that his resistance to marriage has more to do with the single action that binds one man and one woman together for the entirety of their lives, without recourse to alter their marital state. While Godwin's and Paine's ideal form of marriage offers individuals the opportunity to speak for themselves at every instance, Burke's argument, in contrast, coincides with the dramatized examples of *The Monk* and *The Italian*: together, these instances imply that marriages requiring others to speak for the couple rely on the dead hands of the past to authorize them.

PAST THINKERS: ROBERT FILMER AND JOHN LOCKE

Marriage metaphors connecting the family and the state or society date back to at least the early seventeenth century in England.[13] However, the concept of a social contract that employs analogies to marriage for support becomes widespread with the arguments of John Locke and his followers. In his response to Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, Locke's theory of the state, and the relationship the state has to the family, would prove influential. As Filmer's title suggests, his text argues for a form of government shaped by a powerful male figure who, as in Burke's text, derives his authority from past precedents. Burke, in contrast to Filmer, is not so dependent on the authority of antiquity and scripture to justify his claims, but they are similar thinkers in positing that government authority derives from its origins. Locke's advocacy for a more democratic form of government, wherein monarchs require the people's consent for their legitimacy, places his thinking in a liberal tradition to which Paine would later subscribe. Of one's obligations to a monarch, Locke writes,

though submission to government be every one's duty, yet since that signifies nothing but submitting to the direction and laws of such men as have authority to command, it is not enough to make a man a subject, to convince him that there is regal power in the world; but there must be ways of designing, and knowing the person to whom this regal power of right belongs; and a man can never be obliged in conscience to submit to any power, unless he can be satisfied who is the person who has a right to exercise that power over him. If this were not so, there would be no distinction between pirates and lawful princes.... (54)

In contrast to Locke's call for subjects to accept the "regal power" of a monarch if the person is "satisfied" with that person's "right to exercise ... power over him," Filmer argues in

favour of a more authoritarian ruler whose power over the state is akin to what he believes is the father's power over the family and household.

Filmer's primary argument contends that, due to the essential qualities of fatherhood, men descending from Adam were to be rulers over their families: "I see not then how the children of Adam, or of any man else, can be free from subjection to their parents" (12).

Although Filmer refers to "parents" in this quotation, his text never draws attention to Eve as counterpart to Adam. This sovereignty over one's family extends to leadership of the nation:

To confirm this Natural Right of *Regal Power*, we find in the *Decalogue*, That the Law which enjoyns Obedeience to Kings, is delivered in the terms of *Honour thy Father*, as if all power were originally in the Father. If Obedience to Parents be immediatly due by a Natural Law, and subjection to Princes, but by the Mediation of an Humane Ordinance; what reason is there that the Laws of Nature should give place to the Laws of Men? As we see the power of the Father over his Child, gives place, and is subordinate to the power of the Magistrate. (23-24)

Here Filmer joins domestic and national subjection, under a single figurehead, the father. He refers only once to the role of a wife, in differentiating her from servants:

The Community of Man and Wife, differs from the Community of Master and Servant, because they have several Ends. The Intention of Nature, by Conjunction of Male and Female, is Generation; but the Scope of Master and Servant, is preservation: so that a Wife and a Servant are by Nature distinguished.... (35-6)

Filmer is describing Aristotle's viewpoint rather than his own here, but even this brief and biologically determinist statement does not indicate the place of women in his system of thought. There is no discussion of how men and women are to live together, to raise children, or even

whether they need be wed. Perhaps Filmer assumes all of these things and did not feel compelled to write about them, but these omissions inform John Locke's response to his tract.

Using scripture where necessary to refute Filmer's biblically grounded claims on their own terms, Locke demonstrates the weaknesses of his antagonist's argument. Responding in kind to Filmer's conjunction of family and state being both subject to the rule of a patriarchal male, Locke develops the idea that unions of the family and unions of the state are analogous. The key concept that he deploys is a contract or compact. In his *Two Treatises on Government*, Locke refutes Filmer's claims by underscoring the importance of having a woman as part of any marriage, which Filmer takes for granted throughout. An instance of Locke's reasoning occurs when he refutes the claim that children are subject to their fathers alone, an attack that draws on Filmer's citation of the Decalogue for authority, quoted above:

I think, nobody will say a child may withhold honour from his mother, or, as the Scripture terms it, "set light by her," though his father should command him to do so; no more than the mother could dispense with him for neglecting to honour his father: whereby it is plain, that this command of God gives the father no sovereignty, no supremacy. (41)

Far from Filmer's centrality of the male patriarch is Locke's avowal that a father has no special supremacy, and his gesture toward parental equality and recognition that both father and mother should be honoured by their children (44). Locke writes of the clarity of scripture in referring to the words from God to Adam and Eve, together, which therefore implies that they must be husband and wife, together with dominion over the land as lord and lady:

The words are, 'And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish,' &c. They then were to have dominion.

Who? even those who were to have the image of God, the individuals of that species of man that he was going to make; for that *them* should signify Adam singly, exclusive of the rest that should be in the world with him, is against both Scripture and all reason: and it cannot possibly be made sense, if man in the former part of the verse do not signify the same with *them* in the latter; only man there, as is usual, is taken for the species, and *them* the individuals of that species: and we have a reason in the very text. (23)

Locke makes a distinction in the second treatise between the various roles that a person may have, thereby separating a little the conjunction of husband and wife in the *First Treatise*:

the power of a magistrate over a subject may be distinguished from that of a father over his children, a master over his servants, a husband over his wife, and a lord over his slave. All which distinct powers happening sometimes together in the same man, if he be considered under these different relations, it may help us to distinguish these powers one from another, and show the difference betwixt a ruler of a commonwealth, a father of a family, and a captain of a galley. (101)

However, the entry into a condition of citizenship or marriage occurs through the same operations of the social contract:

Conjugal society is made by a voluntary compact between man and woman; and though it consist chiefly in such a communion and right in one another's bodies as is necessary to its chief end, procreation; yet it draws with it mutual support and assistance, and a communion of interests too, as necessary not only to unite their care and affection, but also necessary to their common offspring, who have a right

to be nourished and maintained by them, till they are able to provide for themselves. (133)

Becoming a husband or wife has the chief end of producing children, to whom the couple owes support and protection until an unspecified time when those children can care for themselves, at which point the marriage may, theoretically, end (134-5).[14] Thus, for Locke a marriage is intended to generate future generations for individual families as well as, by extension, the state. Caring for each other, as well as those children, expressed in the phrases “mutual support” and “communion of interests,” is also necessary for a married couple. These common emotional ties and practical goals may help to sustain the marriage throughout its existence, but here I want to emphasize the initial establishment of the marriage contract. In originating a relationship of man and woman through marriage, the crucial point for Locke’s view of contract theory is that the contract can be entered into voluntarily and consequently, when husband and wife are no longer bound together to raise their children, it can, theoretically, be dissolved:

the father, who is bound to take care for those he hath begot, is under an obligation to continue in conjugal society with the same woman longer than other creatures, whose young being able to subsist of themselves before the time of procreation returns again, the conjugal bond dissolves of itself and they are at liberty, till Hymen at his usual anniversary season summons them again to choose new mates. (134)

Although lengthier in time than other creatures, the contract between husband and wife is not inherently perpetual and is valid for a period of time so long as it is useful. This is a point that, as we shall see, Burke and Paine disagree upon, and it becomes important again when considering the role of contracts with marriage. Another key disagreement between the Romantic-era figures

is whether one might be able to enter into contracts of one's own will, and this is a major element of the argument of my dissertation.

Voluntarily agreeing to enter into a relationship with another, or multiple others, is in fact characteristic of the way that Locke views the social contract on a large scale, between individuals and the state. "Nothing can make any man so [i.e. part of a commonwealth/society]," he asserts, "but his actually entering into it by positive engagement, and express promise and compact" (154). The terms that Locke uses here replicate the conditions of the ones expressed to enter a marriage arrangement: the agreement must be explicit, voluntary, and based on one's present words—a speech act—and future intentions.

The speech act is a crucial element of the union between either members of the state or a married couple. In describing how words can produce a noticeable change in the world, J. L. Austin argues for the performativity of some phrases, when uttered under the appropriate, or correct, conditions. As noted in my introduction, one of his prime examples is "the utterance 'I do' (take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife), as uttered in the course of a marriage ceremony. Here we should say that in saying these words we are *doing* something—namely, marrying, rather than *reporting* something, namely *that* we are marrying" (12-13, Austin's emphases). In Locke's theory, entering into the state of matrimony or the state of citizenship in a liberal society (as opposed to subjection to a monarch) require the same kind of performative utterance: a voluntary and expressed willingness to change one's condition from one state ("single" or "unmarried") to another ("married").

Locke's text is therefore a crucial document on the yoking together of individuals into marriage or into a nation through a social contract. Although such connections had been made before, with the analogies proffered by the likes of James I,[15] Locke's combination of two

modes of thinking into a more unified one through his articulation of contract theory is vitally important for my map of similar analogies nearly a century later.

Although Locke's foundational text on the social contract relies heavily on analogies between the family and the state, such comparisons seem to have virtually disappeared from view in the writings of Burke and Paine. Both of these writers use metaphors related to the family, but the absence of discussion of social contract through marriage metaphors is significant. That is, while they both employ metaphors of the family to make their arguments, and both authors refer to a social contract, they do not join these metaphors together with marriage. This is curious because many of their arguments rely on an understanding of the family that they do not make explicit. Burke, for instance, never makes clear how he defines the family unit. He takes for granted a certain model of the family without questioning the origins of that structure, or comparing his version of the family with other possible familial arrangements which had been prominent only a few decades prior to his *Reflections*. Ruth Perry plots the alterations that the term "family" undergoes during the course of the mid-eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century. At the beginning of this crucial era of the modern period, a family could include anyone within one's household, whether he or she bears a biological relation to the "head" of that household or not, such as servants and distantly-related kin (15-17; 22-24). By the time of Jane Austen, family meant the people with whom one had chosen to live, often through marriage (3). One of the most important elements of Burke's argument is his defense of private property, which is bequeathed to subsequent generations through inheritance. Inheritance passes property from one generation of a family to another, and thus family becomes central to Burke's argument, yet he never defines the family in explicit terms. Paine makes similarly rare references to a married couple, although its role is implied in several key sections of his argument. The

authors of these discourses take marriage for granted while leaving it a term that they do not define explicitly, and the absence of such explicit definition in their texts reveals an anxiety about what constitutes marriage.

BURKE'S *REFLECTIONS* AND REPRESENTATIONS OF FAMILY

Burke's advocacy for a particular brand of conservatism is universally acknowledged, but what makes him fascinating for an exploration of the marriage debates at the time is the way that he relates his argument in defense of the monarchical state to concepts that themselves pertain to the way in which marriages are conducted. Furthermore, given the contextual metaphors that illustrate the connection between the state and the family, as presented, for instance, by Michael McKeon, Burke's discourse can be seen as an expansion of those analogies, but crucially, he does not speak explicitly of marriage except in a few small instances, and even there as a secondary aspect to the question of property and inheritance.[16] For example, he writes: "when the nobility which represented the more permanent landed interest united themselves by marriage (which sometimes was the case) with [the newly monied landowners], the wealth which saved the family from ruin was supposed to contaminate and degrade it" (96). Here marriage is an incidental element, with his main point relating to the treatment of wealth and family fortune, with brief reference to marriage, the necessary act that would, in this case, bring new wealth into the family from a previously unconsidered source.

How can it be that Burke assumes so much about the family without considering its origin, if indeed the legitimate family originates in marriage? The support of origins is what he chiefly relies upon to defend the English government as it was in his time, and the French government prior to the revolutionary attack on Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette. And unlike the

major Romantic poets, Burke does not employ marriage metaphors, although he does employ metaphors of domesticity—namely, those of home and family.

One of the rare direct comparisons between the family and the state that Burke offers occurs in one of his discussions of the elements that the people of Britain have inherited from their ancestors; “liberties,” writes Burke, are to be “claim[ed] and assert[ed]...as an *entailed inheritance* derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our posterity” (29). An entail is also called a fee tail,[17] and is designed to ensure that possessions are bequeathed, by the will of those who initially hold them, to the descendants they intend. Usually, Burke believes, a family would wish to retain, if not strengthen, its property to its descendants, which he reveals when he considers the “advantages [that] are obtained by a state ... [and] locked fast as in a sort of family settlement, grasped as in a kind of mortmain forever” (29). Whereas Paine, as we shall see, represents the “dead hand” as a terrifying grasp of the past on the wills of the present, Burke endorses the use of a “mortmain,” which “was a legal device,” explains J.G.A. Pocock, “to render possession perpetual” to ensure that a family and state would retain their power (Burke 221, n. 23). A further instance where Burke parallels the family and the state occurs shortly thereafter as he continues to defend the instrument of inheritance to secure possessions within a group:

In this choice of inheritance we have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood, binding up the constitution of our country with our dearest domestic ties, adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections, keeping inseparable and cherishing with the warmth of all their combined and mutually reflected charities our state, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars. (30)

Burke yokes the composition of the state and domestic relationships together here specifically through the advantages that inheritance confers on them. It is also an instance of connecting the immaterial state (“our frame of polity”) with a bodily image (“blood”), a relationship that he uses in other instances, as I discuss below. This paragraph serves as one of the only occasions in which Burke explains rather than assumes a connection between the state and the family, and his remarks on the basis for the family’s structure are scarce, as well.

Although Burke offers little direct discussion of marriage and family composition, his rhetoric offers a glimpse of what he considers to be the “natural” state of the family, with a man, woman, and child together to the exclusion of, or at least without representation of, other relations. His portrayal of the French royal family is perhaps the only reference to an actual family in the *Reflections*. In that passage, Burke foregrounds the three roles that he believes people should have in two descriptions surrounding the infamous passage that describes the attack on Queen Marie-Antoinette. These three roles are biological, familial, and political. The first of these refers to the queen’s escape: “when this persecuted woman had but just time to fly almost naked, and, through ways unknown to the murderers, had escaped to seek refuge at the feet of a king and husband not secure of his own life for a moment” (62). The second imagines the feelings of King Louis XVI after the capture of the royal family:

As a man, it became him to feel for his wife and children, and the faithful guards of his person, that were massacred in cold blood about him; as a prince, it became him to feel for the strange and frightful transformation of his civilized subjects, and to be more grieved for them, than solicitous for himself (65-66).

In both of these quotations, the multiple identities of Burke’s protagonists converge in the same individuals. In the above quotation, a woman seeks shelter by hurrying to someone to whom she

is both subject, her king, and married, her husband. Burke makes a similar union of identities when stating that Louis XVI has the proper feelings for his wife, child, and subjects. The statement about his political responsibility as sovereign, an instance of the third role, emphasizes these distinctions. Whereas he feels for his citizens “as a prince,” it is “as a man” that he relates to wife and child. Burke demonstrates what he believes to be the natural relationships that males should have in this statement. Claudia Johnson argues for the role of sentiment in Burke’s narrative of revolution,[18] but with regard to this passage, I wish to emphasize the work of constructing the nuclear family performed by Burke’s rhetoric. This second quotation especially is the strongest example of how Burke does not make elaborate claims for what he believes the family to be, but rather assumes throughout that the family has a certain composition, that as part of the identity of mature men, they should be husbands and fathers, and women should have husbands. Although he conjoins the relationship between state and family, as in these two passages, and he concerns himself greatly, as we shall see, with the question of origins of the state, he does not at all discuss the origins of the family. That is a category of human relationships that he takes as being always already present in the world.

This assumption about the naturalness of the relationships between men and women as husbands and wives forms one side of Burke’s representations of the family. Another aspect of his thought takes the form of metaphors of family to depict political relationships. There are several key instances of this metaphorical deployment. The first comes early, when Burke attempts to justify the prudence of the men who devised the peace of the Glorious Revolution. The immediate instigation of Burke’s *Reflections* was Richard Price’s pamphlet *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country*, which grew out of his November 1789 sermon. Against Price’s claim that citizens had a right “to cashier them [i.e. the governors they selected] for misconduct” (Price

30), Burke counters that those who established peace at the time were prudential in their caution and assertive in their attempt to resist future violence:

all this guard and all this accumulation of circumstances serves to show the spirit of caution which predominated in the national councils in a situation in which men irritated by oppression, and elevated by a triumph over it, are apt to abandon themselves to violent and extreme courses; it shows the anxiety of the great men who influenced the conduct of affairs at that great event to make the [Glorious] Revolution a parent of settlement, and not a nursery of future revolutions. (24)

Here is another combination of state and family but in a different register from the assumptions about the French monarchs, seen above. This passage stresses the sort of endorsements of patriarchy that one can find throughout Filmer's text. Although the lexicon of family is slight here, it is telling that Burke equates the work of the political leaders ("great men"), whose aim was to bring peaceful conditions and renew a continual succession of rulers to the British throne, with "a parent." Just as Locke refutes Filmer by insisting that Adam could not alone have been a father without the involvement of a female partner, so too could we question Burke's assumption that "great men" alone can make, or be, "parents." Also notable in the passage, and connecting Burke's thought to Filmer's, is the emphasis placed on a parental figure as one who could control behaviour and establish peace. This parent is set in contrast to the "nursery," which introduces an association of children and infants with nurses—that is, women who are possibly unrelated to this hypothetical, metaphorical family through marriage. So for him, whereas the role of the (male) parent is to prevent future calamities through heavy-handed leadership, "violent and extreme courses" might result in "future revolutions" instigated by children brought up in the care of women unrelated to the family. In other words, when children are cared for by women

who are not legitimately part of the family through marriage, they pose a greater potential threat, and the women who nurse them are more threatening as well. Ultimately, then, this passage, although short on references to the family, assumes an analogous relationship between leaders of the state and parents as rightful rulers of the political or family units, and disruptive revolutionaries with children and their caregivers, who are possibly unrelated to the family.[19]

Another example of a slight but telling use of family metaphors occurs when Burke forecasts a disagreeable future for the French republic. In a comparison to “the declining policy of Rome,” Burke writes to his French correspondent,

when all the good arts had fallen into ruin, they [i.e. the ancient Roman political leaders] proceeded, as your Assembly does, upon the equality of men, and with as little judgment and as little care for those things which make a republic tolerable or durable. But in this, as well as almost every instance, your new commonwealth is born and bred and fed in those corruptions which mark degenerated and worn-out republics. Your child comes into the world with the symptoms of death: the *facies Hippocratica* forms the character of its physiognomy, and the prognostic of its fate. (161)

While the metaphor of the body has featured in some recent Burke scholarship,[20] more pertinent to my argument are the implications suggested by the metaphor of the child without parents, suggested through the use of the passive voice, “is born.” It is possible that this is not a familial metaphor, for one need not be a member of a family to give birth to a child, but the absent mother is just as striking if that is the case. The address to the recipient of the *Reflections* is indicative of the similarity Burke’s thinking shares with Filmer’s because this passage brings us once again back to the territory of the *Patriarcha*. The implication is that strong, male rulers

who follow a hierarchy are needed to preserve the state. They are rulers who are given absolute authority because of divine right, without consideration that others, like women who can give birth, are necessary for the state's survival. Indeed, the erasure of women is notable in this quotation because the rhetoric is heavy—pregnant, even—with motherly metaphors: this commonwealth, or child, “is born and bred and fed,” at least two activities of which require the active involvement of a woman whose body has changed to engender and care for a child after sexual intercourse with a man. So once again the family is a spectre that haunts Burke's political metaphors: it is a unit of people that is assumed to exist despite his elision of the implications of their existence.

In representing only fathers and children, with mothers only implied subtly, there is a further analogy between the composition and rulership of the state and of the family. This slightly more developed example comes earlier in the text than the previous two instances I have selected. A probable cause for its extended character is the aggression Burke imagines to be directed against the father from his offspring:

we have consecrated the state, that no man should approach to look into its defects or corruptions but with due caution, that he should never dream of beginning its reformation by its subversion, that he should approach to the faults of the state as to the wounds of a father, with pious awe and trembling solicitude. By this wise prejudice we are taught to look with horror on those children of their country who are prompt rashly to hack that aged parent in pieces and put him into the kettle of magicians, in hopes that by their poisonous weeds and wild incantations they may regenerate the paternal constitution and renovate their father's life. (84)

The passage invokes a few diverse lexicons for its metaphorical work; there is, for instance, the religious idea of consecrating the state, and approaching a wounded father with “pious awe.” But more significant are the connections between the father as supposed head of the family household and father as head of the state. In this quotation, we are given a dramatic scene where the father is someone who is venerable, and therefore deserving of the respect Burke believes is due to a patriarch. The argument disregards for the moment a method that might salve the state’s “wounds” to offer instead a melodramatic picture of dissection and supernatural resurrection at the hands of questionable agents, whose medicine is a contaminant and whose words are disordered. The occult image depicted by Burke takes the religious terms that I noted above and inverts them so that they stand for a parody of religion. And the “children” who attempt such preservation of the father, and therefore the family, have clearly gone awry in their upbringing, although once again Burke omits the presence and role of the mother (and wife?) in such a family. Instead, an imagined male serves in the dual gender role of “parent” who is both head of the family and the state.

In these several ways does Burke equate the role of family and state: occlusion of the mother and wife, despite her physical necessity to produce children; elevation of the father as the most important part of the hierarchy, whether that is of the family or state; and images of offspring who are sickly, revolutionary, or, as the final passage suggests, wicked. This imagined family of august father, absent mother, and terrible child is generally in keeping with his view of the state. The constitution formed and agreed upon once, and for all time, should be revered, the physicality that is necessary for the production of future generations should be ignored, and the issue of any reproduction between the parents are always to be viewed as potential threats to the security of the state. The irony of these portrayals is that at the same time Burke represents

offspring as unworthy imitations to succeed a great patriarch, he defends the importance and necessity of inheritance. A possible explanation for this paradox is that with his fixation on origins and resistance to change, he does not consider that the processes of preserving the inheritance of one generation to another involve marriages that produce legitimate offspring.

This concoction of the faulty English state is also at odds with Burke's portrayal of the French royal family's distress. In the two passages that describe their suffering at the hands of the mob, the father is someone who tries to maintain dignity in the face of rebellious children (although these are, in those cases, not his own biological heirs), but the wife and mother is inscribed with an overdetermination of physicality: she is represented as exhausted, frightened and desperate. She narrowly escapes from "the most splendid palace in the world, which they left swimming in blood, polluted by massacre and strewed with scattered limbs and mutilated carcasses" (62). The dramatic presentation of this scene has much to do with Burke's rhetorical method of rousing his audience with emotional appeals[21] and with, as Claudia Johnson argues, his self-conscious representation of his own sensibility (3-5). It is a tragic representation meant to arouse very different sympathies than the pains the father faces in the imagined English family, and these differences in representation can be classified as generic differences.

David Duff theorizes two opposing ways in which we might navigate through a text of mixed genre, like Burke's *Reflections*. On the one hand, there is "smooth mixing," which features generic elements that are not especially striking because they seem to be relatively harmonious (178-79). Duff's examples for this kind of mixing include the novels of Jane Austen, which contain letters, romantic comedies, and the novel of manners, or Burke's *Reflections*, which contains instances of "Old Testament prophecy, the Miltonic sublime, Scriblerian satire, chivalric romance, elegy, georgic, aphorism, tragic theatre, and street spectacle" (181; 188). In

these works, the whole appears to be seamless and diverse generic elements do not strike readers as being especially notable. On the other hand, there is “rough mixing,” which presents elements of different genres merely juxtaposed with each other that do not seem to form harmonious wholes (178). The best instance of this from the Romantic period, Duff claims, is Blake’s *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, which features examples of prophecy, poetry, maxims, et cetera, and is separated into sections through subtitles (181-82).

Duff argues that the two kinds of mixing involve political motives. Mixing is a metaphor from chemistry, as when thinkers like Burke use a metaphor from chemistry, a political “experiment,” to describe the French Revolution (Duff 141; Burke 69-70). Consequently, Burke accused his enemies, like Price, of mixing their texts just as the French revolutionaries were mixing the composition of the state (Duff 187, Burke 10). Burke could defend himself from possible attacks of hypocrisy because he mixes his “letter” smoothly, which makes its composition of diverse generic components subtler. Although the *Reflections*, then, is mixed more smoothly than other texts, it still contains different generic elements, and these different elements serve different ideological purposes.[22]

We can account for the differences in Burke’s visions of the family through the different generic representations he employs. In the case of the French royals, Burke’s text participates in the genre of tragedy[23] to exhibit his sensibility and his sense of loss and outrage. Since tragedy is traditionally the genre to represent a fall from greatness of aristocratic figures, it is the ideal vehicle for Burke to convey the fate of those whose politics and power he admires.[24] In contrast, the English society that Burke imagines in the latter two passages I have quoted participate in the gothic genre. There one might find a child come into the world “with the symptoms of death,” (Burke 161) as occurs in the case of Agnes in *The Monk*, or a

dismemberment, as in the case of Petrus Borel's "Andreas Vesalius, the Anatomist." In my chapter on the gothic novel, I shall argue that marriage is perilous for the heroines in *The Monk*, just as it is perilous for women who also face a kind of textual violence in the political arguments of the period, especially those of Burke. Their absence in his analogies and metaphors demonstrates a willed erasure of them from the familial and national narrative that he depicts, while one mother he does represent, Marie-Antoinette, is threatened with physical danger. In Burke's text, then, the two generically diverse passages feature different compositions of the family because they serve different ideological ends. Depending on the effect that he aims to produce, he can either remove or insert a woman, whose role varies depending on the genre employed. In the tragedy, the inclusion of wife and mother aids in making the sense of loss more poignant, evoking greater sympathy from his readers. Yet the England that revolutionaries change beyond recognition is a horror scene for Burke, but not one that is horrifying for any violence done to the wife and mother. She is unnecessary because Burke's real alliances are with the conservative state advocated by Filmer, with a father as head of the household. Burke thereby opposes Locke's view of the social contract doing service for both the state and the family; in each case, all one needs is a patriarch.

BURKE ON ORIGINS AND INHERITANCE

Excepting Marie-Antoinette, mothers are absent from Burke's dramatic scenes of violence to the fathers of the state and home but are a necessary part of his concept of the family since, at minimum, through the biological reproduction that they engender, society is able to continue forward through time and develop itself. To achieve development while maintaining stability, in both domestic and national spaces, families and citizens must rely greatly, Burke

emphasizes, on inheritance. Inheritance is crucial for the writings of Burke, and essential in making a connection between the social contract applicable to members of a state and members of a family. This is because in Burke's argument, the state's constitution is something inherited from previous generations that established it, and it becomes the duty of the descendants to protect that inheritance, or else accept that they cannot change it since it has been entailed. Similarly, previous generations of family members established a family, its reputation and fortune, and if those two elements are to be preserved in the future, the descendants of the original patriarchs needed to respect the desires of their ancestors and elders. Since property was traditionally linked to a family's wealth, marriage necessarily controlled who held possession of that property, so in Burke's view, a family would have to be chosen through a highly selective process that would exclude any potentially undesirable members to maintain both family and property.

For Burke, as with other writers of Romantic-era discourse, inheritance is a polysemous word, and can apply to the passing of wealth, land, title, traits, laws, and other qualities, from one generation to another, though property, broadly understood, is really the issue that he is bothered about.[25] As Frank O'Gorman writes, Burke thinks "[p]roperty was not to be regarded as a mental construct. It was, in practical terms, the bulwark of the social order" (108). In Burke's sense, the scale of property is wide, depending on his particular usage: it can either be a transmission within a family, from parent to children, or from one set of lawmakers in a generation down to the citizens of that nation many generations later. Burke believes that "human beings must accept inherited social practices," writes Noel Parker, "and surrender to the mysterious forces and obligations which maintain social life" (162). Burke frequently appeals to the power of the originary law or custom in building his argument for preserving the English

constitution and government. The explanation for this appeal to origins is that, in Burke's view, society should maintain as many of its initial qualities as possible to preserve the social order.

The significance of an origin is also crucial in a discussion of marriages and wedding vows: does the desire and ability for a person to marry another derive from his or her own will, or from a parent, who is, in some cases, deceased? Burke's text does not discuss marriage explicitly, but marriage is the foundation of what is essential to his argument: a legal marriage provides the foundations for a legitimate family and therefore inheritance. Burke would support arguments in favour of having parents make marriage arrangements for their children, as part of the inheritance that is being passed along. For Burke, once a settlement has been made or a contract agreed upon, it is fixed for all time; there is a single origin for subsequent inheritance. In contrast, Paine rejects the idea of there being a single origin, and argues that there must instead be a continual renewal of the contract for it to have any legitimacy. Paine implicitly rejects the idea of inheritance because for each new generation, there is a necessity of beginning again. If the state and marriage can be connected through analogy and contract theory, Burke and Paine offer two ways to understand a marriage: is it to be settled once in an exchange of vows that is meant to last for all time, or is it necessary for a marriage to be continually renewed? Although not inspired directly by Paine's argument, authors of the Romantic period who dramatize remarriages in their work fall into his line of thinking, a line of thinking also present in Locke, that marriage is a voluntary agreement that must be willingly and explicitly entered into by the parties and can have validation only as long as they continue to agree to the terms and conditions of the contract. This is why the ideal marriages in Romantic poetry, as well as gothic and domestic fiction, must undergo a second attachment; the idea of remarriage, as we shall see in greater detail below, crosses generic forms and political sympathies. The couples who enjoy

remarriages would reject the notion of a marriage contract created in a single moment to last for all time.

Burke, however, implies his support for this very idea of marriage as settled once and for all throughout his text. An origin for him is necessary to ensure that the social contract has consistency, stability, and legitimate authority. “Burke’s contract, then,” writes O’Gorman, “is quite different to the logical construct of other writers. It is permanent, binding and unchangeable. It also has a moral sanction, since duties, arising from the contract ‘arise from the relation of man to man, and the relation of man to God, which relations are not matters of choice’” (115). Despite this view of Burke’s disdain for mutability, O’Gorman would challenge my contention that Burke’s thinking relies on the question of origins: “His [i.e. Burke’s] idea of contract and his idea of the state of nature led him to the conclusion that government and its obligations were not determined by its origins but by the nature of man and his moral duties. Indeed, he considered discussion of the origins of government futile” (115). I disagree with this claim for a couple of reasons. First, I think that in Burke, the origin and “nature” are closely related terms: Burke, for instance, writes that the state follows “the method of nature” (30) and that he cannot feel the same way about the French Revolution as Paine can because such sentiments are not, for Burke, in “the *inborn* feelings of [his] nature” (65, emphasis added). How did Burke acquire a “nature” that is “inborn”? “Nature” and “origin” are synonymous here. The second reason for my disagreement with O’Gorman is that Burke continually reverts to some undefined point in the past in his appeals and gives it authority, as in his reference to the “old settled maxim,” “never entirely nor at once to depart from antiquity” (88). So contrary to O’Gorman’s point, the origins of family and state are continually being invoked, although not analysed, throughout Burke’s *Reflections*.

Without a clear origin, one would have to look elsewhere to find authority, and that could eventually lead to a breakdown of social order as Burke believed was the case in France. Here is one example of activity in France where Burke sees deviance from origins as cause for socio-political mayhem:

I have taken a view of what has been done by the government power in France. I have certainly spoken of it with freedom. Those whose principle it is to despise the ancient, permanent sense of mankind and to set up a scheme of society on new principles must naturally expect that such of us who think better of the judgment of the human race than of theirs should consider both them and their devices as men and schemes upon their trial. They must take it for granted that we attend much to their reason, but not at all to their authority....

I can never consider this assembly as any thing else than a voluntary association of men, who have availed themselves of circumstances, to seize upon the power of the State. They have not the sanction and authority of the character under which they first met. They have assumed another of a very different nature; and have completely altered and inverted all the relations in which they originally stood. They do not hold the authority they exercise under any constitutional law of the State. They have departed from the instructions of the people by whom they were sent; which instructions, as the assembly did not act in virtue of any ancient usage or settled law, were the sole source of their authority. (144-45)

The passage contains many references to authority yoked together with a source or origin of some kind. Burke refers to his political opponents as people who “despise the ancient, permanent sense of mankind,” which is an odd phrase since “ancient” is a temporal term, implying

something of the distant past, whereas “permanent” suggests timelessness and immutability. By contrasting himself with his enemies in this way, he demonstrates that his own belief is of humanity as having essential, unalterable qualities, if not *being* essential and unalterable. This essentialism continues in his claim that he will *never* change his mind about them: having once judged them based on his “view,” Burke no longer believes it necessary to consider alterations to their character or activities as necessitating a new conclusion about them.[26] This way of thinking is always going to promote itself as thinking “better” of its own, universalized, judgement, and to reject the ideas of those who desire “to set up a scheme of society on *new* principles.”

It is also worth noting here the reason that Burke includes the word “voluntary” as part of a disdainful attack on his political opponents: against Locke (and Paine), Burke believes that a social contract should not be an arrangement that one voluntarily enters into. Instead, social contracts should be, Burke believes, obligatory, and he argues that people with the least power have the most to lose by rejecting a contract whose entry is voluntary rather than required:

Society requires not only that the passions of individuals should be subjected, but that even in the mass and body, as well as in the individuals, the inclinations of men should frequently be thwarted, their will controlled, and their passions brought into subjection. This can only be done *by a power out of themselves*, and not, in the exercise of its function, subject to that will and to those passions which it is its office to bridle and subdue. (52-53)

The meaning of this passage is somewhat elusive since it first calls for both individual and group (“the mass and body”) wills to be controlled, but Burke believes that “only...*a power out of themselves*” can do this. If everyone in the state helps to form the body of the state, who is then

left outside of that society to dictate the direction of the will? Burke seems to assume here that society and rulers are distinct entities. This may be because he assumes, and depends upon, the unblemished moral character of the powerful, and he believes that “those in power have an obligation to do right by their citizens or subjects” (Byrne 113). The obligations relate to the reason Burke defends private property so forcefully: “essentially he [i.e. Burke] was saying that rich people ought to have power so that they could protect their wealth from the envy of the poor. In the process, however, they would also protect lesser forms of property, and thus benefit society at large” (Fasel 84).

Thus, Burke’s notion of the social contract, whether national or individual, is deeply informed by his patriarchal views. In the first case, society’s “betters” (who receive such status through inheriting their positions and wealth) have a duty to provide some benefits to those who are not as fortunate because with wealth and power comes a strong sense of morality. In the second case, it is in order to preserve a family’s best interests and inheritance that a child’s marriage partner should be decided upon, or at least approved of. In neither case would the wills of those in dependent positions be considered to be free to make a voluntary choice. But Burke’s logic is circular: the powerful became so through these very social arrangements, and the result of such deals maintains the powerful in their position to repeat the cycle, and anyone who acts against such compacts is a threat to the authority of the powerful.

In the above quotation, Burke writes that the authority the radicals have assumed is meant to come from “any constitutional law of the State”; “the people by whom they were sent”; or “any ancient usage or settled law.” Now, deviating from the mandate of their supporters is a serious concern, as it involves speaking on behalf of others, an issue to which I shall later turn. However, as the revolutionaries are contesting the power of the state, the first source of authority

would not seem to apply to them, and we might wonder why the final phrase could apply here. In what sense would a law that has been “ancient” or “settled” apply to their contemporary situation? Burke’s dislike for their changing from “the character under which they first met” assumes that when one group takes power, the first time it assembles, its direction and values should be settled for the duration of its existence. He does not take into account that the circumstances under which the people first met and those under which they now meet might be entirely different, and it is only reasonable to depart from their initial intentions. The emphasis on origins as conferring authority and legitimacy is clear, and alterations without that authority are to be seen as deviations. The importance to my argument is that such examples of Burke’s rhetoric serve as further evidence of his construction of an origin or foundation of something on which to bestow authority and legitimacy, rather than taking its present and continually evolving constitution for the source of its authority and legitimacy. That “something” for Burke is ostensibly the state, but as I am arguing, his metaphors and his post-Lockean position imply that he is also referring to the composition of the family and to the role of legitimate marriage as securing an original legitimacy.

This sort of analogy between the state and the family emerges in yet another instance of Burke’s insistence on authority that relies upon its origin for its source of power. Here, he combines the origin of the constitution and the origin of the body:

All those who have affections which lead them to the conservation of civil order would recognize, even in its cradle, the child as legitimate which has been produced from those principles of cogent expediency to which all just governments owe their birth, and on which they justify their continuance. But they will be late and reluctant in giving any sort of countenance to the operations

of a power which has derived its birth from no law and no necessity, but which, on the contrary, has had its origin in those vices and sinister practices by which the social union is often disturbed and sometimes destroyed. (145)

Burke deploys the metaphors of body and birthing, and the stress he lays on legitimacy here implies his respect for the institution and issue of marriage. In this passage, in contrast to others, his ideas recall those of Locke: a couple joins voluntarily in marriage for the purpose of procreating and producing children for whom they must care, just as a person voluntarily enters the state. The words and phrases he employs in advancing his comparison range from the negative (“birth from no law and no necessity”) to the hostile (“those vices and sinister practices”), yet he here again reveals that he takes marriage and the legitimate children which it can produce as a given, “natural” condition; children born out of wedlock are both unlawful and the result of evil deeds.

And just as a legitimate child is the result of a legitimate marriage, so too is the government, as a metaphorical child, the offspring of legitimate origin. Locke’s analogy holds for Burke in this quotation: disturbances to the social union are the result of “vices,” just as a disturbance to a marriage, or at least a “proper” one, can also be seen as a vice. A child or government formed in the state of vice, on the merit of that originary conception, can never redeem or alter itself to become legitimate or tenable. Rather, it should always be marked, thinks Burke, with the stain of illegitimacy. The role of marriage is crucial as an absent presence in this analogy: an illegitimate child is the offspring of a couple who have not been officially wed. Post-Hardwicke, it was not possible for anyone in England to be wed other than through the state’s legitimizing sanctions. State authorized marriages ensure that children who are born of them are indeed legitimate, and therefore not a risk to the state’s power. Illegitimate children, those born

outside wedlock, Burke's rhetoric emphasizes, are threatening to government and social union. Consequently, the single origin of either a state's constitution or of a marriage is crucial in determining what subsequent generations will be able to inherit from it; state or marriage are stamped forever with a "birth" mark.

These bodily metaphors continue to intertwine with the arguments about the state and its legitimacy in Burke's rhetoric. Occasionally, such contentions create a paradox: "[c]orporate bodies are immortal for the good of the members, but not for their punishment. Nations themselves are such corporations" (123). Here, nations are "corporate bodies"—a curious term for someone concerned with origins to make since at the root of the word "corporate" is a "body." A nation, as Burke conceives it in this passage, is a body of bodies, a figurative expression that suggests wholeness or totality of people. But it is a metaphor that emphasizes their physicality, too, as opposed to referring to the nation as composed of "hearts" or "minds." Also significant in this quotation is the word "immortal," suggesting that the "body of bodies" that is the nation is unchanging, or at least undying. The idea of an undying body that haunts future generations is one of the instances where Burke's text gestures toward the gothic. This rhetoric of the undead is something that returns in Burke's work and moreover, as we shall see, in Paine's reconfiguration of the relationship between the originators of a state and its subsequent citizens.

But Burke offers more instances that combine the family and the state in another passage that takes a turn toward the gothic genre:

We must always see with a pity not unmixed with respect the errors of those who are timid and doubtful of themselves with regard to points wherein the happiness of mankind is concerned. But in these gentlemen [i.e. of the Assembly in France]

there is nothing of the tender, parental solicitude which fears to cut up the infant for the sake of an experiment. In the vastness of their promises and the confidence of their predictions, they far outdo all the boasting of empirics. The arrogance of their pretensions in a manner provokes and challenges us to an inquiry into their foundation. (146)

Burke relies on the “foundation” of “pretensions” as a way of determining an answer for the existence of something. Thus, rather than challenge the aims of the French Assembly in terms of its present actions, Burke’s thinking turns to inquire about its origins, as if an answer to that question would satisfy concerns about its inherent composition and constitution. We also have in this passage another instance where Burke compares the state (or at least the French revolutionaries) to a family; expecting “tender, parental solicitude,” he finds none, and expresses his repugnance for the radicals through a more awful scene than one finds in the pages of gothic horror narratives.[27] As in the previously quoted passage, this one conjoins the issue of a marriage, a child, with the issue of a state assembly, a new republic. Marriage thus serves as a metaphor that sanctifies the state since “experimenting” with its composition is compared with violence against the result of the end for which marriage was intended: in Locke’s view, procreation. Burke demonstrates again in this quotation that, however slight their presence, family and marriage are powerful metaphors for his argument as well as being connected to the state through originating circumstances. While he argues throughout that the British constitution as it was in his time derives from “the glorious Revolution” (4), Burke’s nostalgia for “the age of chivalry [that] is gone” (66) suggests that he has in mind some indefinite point in the medieval period when England formed its national character and constitution, and through slow accumulation of new ideas and assimilation of alterations to that constitution, reached the

admirable state in which Burke found it. The notion of Burke's nostalgia for the Middle Ages finds a challenge from C. B. MacPherson, who, in an attempt to find consistency in Burke's thought, writes,

in everything he [i.e. Burke] wrote and did, he venerated the traditional order. But his traditional order was already a capitalist order. He saw that it was so, and wished it to be more freely so. He had no romantic yearning for a bygone feudal order and no respect for such remnants of it as still survived.... (5)

To make this point, however, MacPherson cites as evidence Burke's 1780 *Speech on Economical Reform*, and must concede that it is "in one of his [i.e. Burke's] flights of rhetoric he inveighed against the age of 'sophisters, oeconomists, and calculators' ... he allowed himself to forget his own quite valid claims as a political economist" (5). That Burke "allowed himself to forget" about his distaste for a traditional order may be symptomatic of more than being in a "flight of rhetoric";[28] it seems that Burke is doing something akin to the gothic novels of the Romantic period and before by dressing the modern world in the costumes of the Middle Ages. Could we not also suggest, against MacPherson's arguments for a unity of thought, that Burke's character and opinions change with the drastic and virtually unprecedented events of the French Revolution? For despite Burke's advocacy for authority deriving from origins, his own views underwent alteration from a support of the American rebellion to the fear of a British revolution.[29]

PAINE'S CHALLENGES TO BURKE

Thomas Paine rejects Burke's insistence on a state whose power is unchanging and granted authority in its beginnings. Rather, Paine takes Burke on his own terms and exposes how

impossible it is to rely on an origin.[30] Although initially dismissive of Burke's ideas about hereditary rights as "nonsense" (167), and "on the principle that each generation possessed sovereignty," writes David A. Wilson, "he [i.e. Paine] simply dismissed a full quarter of Burke's book...." (69), Paine nevertheless continues his case against Burke at a more sophisticated level. Paine rejects Burke's concept of government by writing that "Mr Burke talks about what he calls an hereditary crown, as if it were some production of Nature; or as if, like Time, it had a power to operate, not only independently, but in spite of man; or as if it were a thing or a subject universally consented to" (172). What is important here is not only the attack on Burke's assumptions about "Nature," but also his challenge to Burke's assumptions about government: while Burke implies that there is no visible and identifiable human agency responsible for government, in fact there is, counters Paine.

In the tradition of Locke's liberalism, Paine maintains that a government's power must be approved of by the choice of the people. Without such a sanction, the assumed power of a state is, in effect, a usurpation: "All delegated power is trust, and all assumed power is usurpation" (238). The notion of usurpation is a crucial area of difference between the thinkers, and this form of unauthorized seizure is important to my argument because of its implications for inheritance, through family, as well as the authority for people to act for themselves. In Burke's case, a usurpation disrupts, among other things, an otherwise unbroken chain established between a family's patriarchs and their descendants; Paine, however, rejects this idea by rethinking the idea of private property.

About usurpation, one of Burke's statements reads,

if you follow their [i.e. Price and his followers'] rule, the king of Great Britain, who most certainly does not owe his high office to any form of popular election,

is in no respect better than the rest of the gang of usurpers who reign, or rather rob, all over the face of this our miserable world without any sort of right or title to the allegiance of their people. (13)

In addition to the negative association of usurpers with gangs of robbers, usurpation for Burke means a disconnection between a ruler and his people. The implication is that such a ruler has not been authorized by the original constitution or inheritance to derive or deserve “the allegiance of their people.” If the state is analogous to the family, this statement implies that someone wrongfully seizing the inheritance of the originary patriarch would be disrupting the family unit, which intends to bequeath power and property from one generation to another through offspring that have been made legitimate by state-sanctioned marriage.

Paine’s concept of what it means to usurp has a different inflection:

What is government more than the management of the affairs of a Nation? It is not, and from its nature cannot be, the property of any particular man or family, but of the whole community, at whose expence it is supported; and though by force or contrivance it has been usurped into an inheritance [of the monarch], the usurpation cannot alter the right of things. (193)

Burke’s passage above implies that usurpation is a disruption to the chain of family inheritance, as a way of maintaining power through legitimate children with a particular birth order. In contrast, Paine makes the opposite argument: any person who inherits, he implies, is a usurper because local inheritance itself disrupts the ideal relationship between government and governed.

Paine argues that the agency that manages the nation is composed of members of the entire community. This presents difficulties of its own, which Paine is not able to explain

sufficiently,[31] but his theory is more inclusive than Burke's and aims at the notion of people speaking for themselves. The importance of being able to speak for oneself in the voluntary contract with a state, or a marriage, is crucial, but the notion of inheritance can potentially remove that opportunity to make a voluntary contract. Inheritance, in which something passes down from one generation to another, and which is a potential way for a patriarch to control his children, derives its power from the authority of the originary source, and that ensures that property descends to the "correct" person, as deemed by that source. If that chain is not broken, then the opportunity for people to speak for themselves, in Paine's—and Locke's—idea of a social contract, cannot fully manifest itself. Indeed, Paine's idea for rejecting the importance of one's forebears in important decisions "owed something to Locke's conception of consent, by which no man was held to have a right to bind his children or posterity in a compact" (Claeys 87).

Since Burke depends on origins as the most important element in the composition of the state, he relies on hereditary succession and decries the "the evils of inconstancy and versatility" (84). Burke's view of authority, then, relies on sanction from a previous generation, and this can hurt those who are seeking to wed. His concept of the state and family would endorse the marriage that concludes *The Italian* because it requires the assent of fathers to deem that the wedding of Vivaldi and Ellena is appropriate, even though one of those fathers—Ellena's—is dead.

WHO SPEAKS?

Paine consistently challenges the dead hand's interference with what he assumes to be the political desires of the living through the mechanism of inheritance at the level of the state. I

would argue that his opposition to the influence of the dead hand could extend to the level of the family, too:

When Mr Burke attempts to maintain, that the English Nation did at the Revolution of 1688, most solemnly renounce and abdicate their rights for themselves, and for all their posterity for ever; he speaks a language that merits not a reply, and which can only excite contempt for his prostitute principles, or pity for his ignorance. In whatever light hereditary succession, as growing out of the will and testament of some former generation, presents itself, it is an absurdity. A cannot make a will to take from B the property of B, and give it to C.... (175)

Flatly rejecting the notion of inheritance of any kind on the grounds that all people are individuals who have the right to speak and act for themselves, Paine implies that the family and the state must continually decide for themselves the nature of their composition. In response to Burke's notion of a compact between the dead and the as-yet-unborn, Paine writes,

Those who have quitted the world, and those who are not yet arrived at it, are as remote from each other, as the utmost stretch of mortal imagination can conceive: What possible obligation, then, can exist between them; what rule or principle can be laid down, that of two non-entities, the one out of existence, and the other not in, and who never can meet in this world, the one should control the other to the end of time? (93)

It is clear that while Burke argues for hereditary monarchy supported by a parliament acting on established and fixed laws whose origin has been determined long before the existence of their users, Paine defends the idea of having representatives speak and act for themselves. And this is the key element that, I argue, relates to the way that marriage ceremonies are to be performed: are they to be predetermined by the pronouncements of an elder generation, or may they be spoken between living people who are to be wed? Paine writes,

I am contending for the rights of the living, and against their being willed away, and controuled and contracted for, by the manuscript assumed authority of the dead; and Mr. Burke is contending for the authority of the dead over the rights and freedom of the living....

The laws of every country must be analogous to some common principle. In England, no parent or master, nor all the authority of parliament, omnipotent as it has called itself, can bind or control the personal freedom even of an individual beyond the age of twenty-one years: On what ground of right, then, could the parliament of 1688, or any other parliament, bind all posterity for ever? (92)

This passage is crucial for my argument through its alignment of masters and parliament with parents. There is a deliberate conjunction, and perhaps even equation, between the publicly powerful and those who are privately powerful, linking the state and the family in such a way as to give this discourse, as I have been arguing, a powerful subtext. Paine accuses the state of intrusion on the private couple's affairs, and appears to confer the authority of members of the community that verifies the wedding and legally makes the couple bound, in some sense, "for ever." [32]

A pledge that binds people for life and beyond is a theme in Burke's text. To give Burke his due, he wished for the improvement of the state, and professed to desire a balance between learning from the past and looking to the future, remarking that "[a] disposition to preserve and an ability to improve, taken together, would be my standard of a statesman" (138). However, what is of especial concern with Burke's defense of inheritance is the manner in which he speaks for others, and on behalf of others:

A spirit of innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper and confined views. People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors. Besides, the people of England well know that the idea of inheritance furnishes a sure principle of conservation and a sure principle of transmission, without at all excluding a principle of improvement. (29)

As we have seen above in reference to the nation as a body, Burke takes upon himself the ability to speak for all English people, when in fact it is clear that the interests he advances are solely for the benefit of the propertied classes. True, property is not exclusively what Burke is concerned about, as he writes also of “the patrimony of knowledge” (88) and the composition of the state, but these are also instances of property in Burke’s view since they belong to the constituents of the nation. Burke is very clear on the importance that property has in maintaining society, though he does not acknowledge that some people do not have it: “The power of perpetuating our property in our families is one of the most valuable and interesting circumstances belonging to it, and that which tends the most to the perpetuation of society itself” (45). His use of the pronoun “our” implying a collective group of undefined extent but also a proprietary group of which Burke is a member (and arguably, as member of parliament, co-owner?) resonates throughout many of his statements about inheritance and the preservation of the past.

On the surface, it seems easy to guess that Burke is speaking for an amorphous ruling class—whether powerful through money, land, political influence, or other means. Yet a more careful consideration of his position suggests that it is difficult to know for whom he is speaking. For instance, he writes “[w]e wished at the period of the [1688] Revolution, and do now wish, to derive all we possess as *an inheritance from our fore-fathers*” (27-28, Burke’s italics). Who is

this “we”? Burke cannot be included as a part of it himself unless he is one of his ghosts haunting the nation. But this suggestion makes light of a very serious issue: Burke uses the power of his authority to speak for a group of people with whom he cannot literally have been associated since he was not living at the time of the Glorious Revolution, but who seem to be people, both then and now, who benefit from having an inheritance from patriarchal structures. Whereas other statements that speak for “the people of England” might be said to be an observation derived from his understanding of a number of influential English people, in using the first-person plural pronoun, Burke unquestionably places himself both as member of the group and speaker on their behalf.[33]

It is when people do not speak out in public that the laws of the past generation are permitted to continue into the present and future; making a connection between the theoretical political sphere and domestic concerns, one might say the same of couples who wed. If the influence of the past is too strong to overcome and the partners are engaged to other people by their families, and against their wishes, it can be difficult for a couple to achieve happiness through marriage. Paine is clear about the reason that people living may be inclined to follow the desires and prescriptions of the deceased, as expressed through their laws and wills, written or spoken:

It requires but a very small glance of thought to perceive, that altho’ laws made in one generation often continue in force through succeeding generations, yet that they continue to derive their force from the consent of the living. A law not repealed continues in force, not because it cannot be repealed, but because it is not repealed; and the non-repealing passes for consent. (94)

This passage indicates that the laws enshrined in the past have their effects continued in the present merely from inactivity. As an antidote to this, Paine recommends employing an on-going renewal of words that continually avow one's own subjectivity in relation to other people. A renewal of vows on this model characterizes marriage, for it emphasizes a voluntary entry into a contract. Jack Fructman, Jr. reminds us that Paine is thinking very optimistically in calling for a continual renewal of the state. In making claims such as these, Fructman writes, "Paine was interested in polemic here, obviously, and not reality. Even in the eighteenth century, it was very difficult to overturn a government whenever the people (or some segment thereof) simply found it time to do so" (226). Fructman's point is obvious: only under extraordinary conditions did western European states "renew" themselves entirely in the eighteenth century. But such may be the case if one considers the representation of marriage. If it was well-nigh impossible to renew a public, social contract in reality, in fiction, Romantic authors could freely depict ideal marriages as ones that are renewed continually, but are not easy to overturn legally, as Fructman notes about governments in the above quotation. And it is certainly possible to bring marriage partners together often to remake their pledges to each other, even if it is not possible to bring everyone in the "body" of the state together to make a formal agreement.

BURKE'S SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

Having established himself as a capable and willing authorial speaker on behalf of many others, Burke places himself in a position to pronounce on the composition of a society. As he fundamentally believes in a theory of democracy, he thinks of a society as a coming together between different people. The point of contention, however, is who constitutes a person, and which persons are equal under the law:

Society is indeed a contract. Subordinate contracts for objects of mere occasional interest may be dissolved at pleasure—but the state ought not to be considered as nothing better than a partnership agreement in a trade of pepper and coffee, calico, or tobacco, or some other such low concern... As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born. Each contract of each particular state is but a clause in the great primeval contract of eternal society, linking the lower with the higher natures, connecting the visible and invisible world, according to a fixed compact sanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all physical and all moral natures, each in their appointed place. (84-85)

Burke clearly takes the social contract very seriously, dismissing those who would align it with the more banal interests of commercialism, as he elsewhere scorns those who would transfer his sacred property into transferable—and disposable—paper money (168). This passage brings together Burke's ideas of a permanent, unchanging human nature (itself an illusion) with other intangible elements, such as moral natures and the "invisible world." Part of this might be due to the Enlightenment views of humanity for which Seán Patrick Donlan argues. Donlan writes that Burke's point is that "society" has broader connotations than what some might believe is a state or a nation, so he wants

to deny that the language of 'contract' is sufficient to understanding or articulating the complexities of human community and history. For Burke, 'society', that is the civil or civilised society, was an entity wider than state or nation. It was the felt sociability and lived associations of men, plural and

corporate, enveloping all social practices and institutions. While these were based in natural human dispositions, they were not insignificantly altered by culture and historical circumstance. (75)[34]

Donlan emphasizes the “sociability,” “associations,” and “dispositions” for which Burke advocates dismissing economic relationships between people and nations as unimportant and instead to focus on the immaterial bonds that ensure the almost inherent harmony of society.

The view that de-emphasizes material in favour of the immaterial relates to a second interpretation, which is to view a latter part of Burke’s quotation, which refers “to a fixed compact sanctioned by the inviolable oath,” as alluding to Burke’s belief in the power of Christian faith in God as an authority that positions individuals in a great chain of being. But the role of family is present for James T. Boulton, who sums up Burke’s view on this point as the depiction of “a universe whose pattern is divinely ordained; to be ‘natural’ in the sense of a nation’s acting as a family is to carry out the divine plan” (113). In this thinking, Burke returns us again to Filmer’s musings, where the power bestowed to patriarchs derives from a supreme being that confers power on all subsequent generations through inheritance from a single individual. The irony is that the British state largely benefits from, and arguably could not have been as successful and liberal as it was, were it not for the British empire, composed of just those “partnership agreement[s] in ... trade.” And if there is something that is to be inherited from one generation to another, it is not merely a link between “lower and higher natures,” but very strongly involves “some other such low concern” as the raw materials that create wealth for a family to bequeath down through generations. Given Burke’s defense of private property, it is curious, but perhaps not surprising, that he minimizes the very things and system of exchanges that makes private property possible.

Although in Burke's construction the social contract blends atemporality and fixedness, it is meant to affect the lives of those who have not even been born. While not in the foreground, Burke's considerations of the family form a crucial subtext to his work, resurfacing whenever he finds it convenient to deploy those terms in the service of appeals to pathos. His casual references to the generational structure formed by the deceased, the living, and the not-yet-born recall his assumed but unstated understanding of family composition and inheritance. The reason for this is, if the *Reflections* is a defense of property, one has to consider what will become of property when those who own—if not occupy or use—it are no longer living: it continues down the family line to the successors. For Burke, this system is a metanarrative that can serve whatever he chooses to invoke: at a macro scale, where the “family” consists of all British people, the nation is that property; at a micro scale, it is the land owned by one family passing from father to son, and continued through the offspring produced through legitimate marriage.

It is here that Burke's concepts of the state, namely his views of inheritance, those who possess power, and those who speak for the “body” of the people, relate most closely to the question of marriage laws and practices. In Burke's thinking, things are as they ought to be when someone speaks for those who have not been born, by the power of controlling property through inheritance. Such inheritance could be dependent on whether one marries according to the wishes of one's parents, living or deceased; this situation of inheritance and speaking for one's descendants forms a legal bond analogous to the concept of the state. And while the notion of marriages arranged or prevented by parents no longer alive, as I have portrayed it here, might seem positively medieval to someone in the Western world's middle classes, it was not medieval but Romantic, and such dramas were being played out in the fiction of the period, even if these

are set in a more distant past: the situation that I have described is exactly that faced by Ellena di Rosalba in *The Italian*. Burke's text appears to have very little to say about marriage because he takes it as a natural and given ritual and social position for adults to be in, but I am arguing that, far from this near-sighted conclusion, the text connects in a very strong way with the discourses concerning how people were to be married.

PAINE'S PERFORMATIVES

Paine's views on how words acquire meaning through reiteration can help readers to infer how marriage receives its social meaning. Some words, for him, are signifiers with too many signifieds, thereby making them meaningless, or at least invalid. Consequently, words need to have some reference to the social world to have at least a narrower range of meaning achieved through experience and qualities. As an illustration of this point, consider a remark about the idea of a hereditary crown: "It has none of [the] properties [of being either of Nature or able to operate without human intervention], but is the reverse of them all. It is a thing in imagination, the propriety of which is more than doubted, and the legality of which in a few years will be denied" (172-73). The only thing about the notion of a hereditary monarchy that is "real" is its existence in the imagination of people. Laws are other things that potentially refer to something non-existent: a marriage, for instance, is not something that is available to be seen, though the ceremony may be. The implication is that, for Paine, a marriage should have a relatively fixed meaning^[35] conferred on it through its essential character as well as the connotations it takes on through its experience, or, more broadly, its history. But to ensure that it does not become a meaningless signifier, and thus of no use even to the Romantic poets who want to resolve their antitheses by using it as a term of harmonious union, its meaning must be constantly reiterated in

order to retain it as a signifier that has an understandable and relatively limited range of signification. And one might suggest that this is where the titles that Paine takes issue with have gone awry: through performances that have detracted from their meanings, a title like “Duke” no longer refers to a dignified member of the nobility, but has become a name for a potential parasite known for acts of selfishness, laziness, and other forms of contempt towards society. His examples of these titles are not plentiful, so analysis of his meaning requires some educated guessing here, but those titles that he does suggest are all inherited, aristocratic ones that have had their original meanings that conferred respect and leadership eroded: Count, Duke, and Earl. In contrast, other “titles” such as “a Judge and a General” derive their associations from occupations, that is, what one does, not what one has inherited (132). Admittedly, inheriting a certain level of income or social class would enable someone to become a judge or general more easily than others, but the title requires effort to acquire, which is not the case for the inherited titles he lists. In those cases, so long as one is presented as the legitimate child of a parent who holds the rank and survives that parent, the title is conferred onto him or her, although once again, Paine writes exclusively of males and their titles, without referring to a countess or duchess.

The performatives that maintain the meaning of words that, in turn, create and maintain laws, then, require a continued definition of them by their users to retain their viability. This brings us to a social contract for society, but one that is very different from that conceived of by Burke. For Paine, there is no such thing as an “eternal society” or a partnership between people who can no longer speak for themselves because deceased or those who cannot speak because they are not yet born. Far from it: for Paine, even if those who created laws to govern society

were to return from the dead into existence, new laws would have to be created, and the ones in place could not be taken for granted (224).

Laws are not even required for an effective society to function harmoniously since Paine believes that governments artificially supplant regulations that humans derive ultimately from nature (216):

The mutual dependence and reciprocal interest which man has upon man, and all the parts of a civilized community upon each other, create that great chain of connection which holds it together. The landholder, the farmer, the manufacturer, the merchant, the tradesman, and every occupation, prospers by the aid which each receives from the other, and from the whole. Common interest regulates their concerns, and forms their law; and the laws which common usage ordains, have a greater influence than the laws of government. In fine, society performs for itself almost every thing which is ascribed to government. (214)[36]

Here, Paine's emphasis on actions performed out of necessity for survival and community reject the essentialism that Burke's paternal institutions of aristocracy, government, and inheritance and advocate for a society that "performs," or exhibits certain qualities, rather than that it "is," or has those qualities as an inherent part of its essence, and continues to be across generations, a move that Paine marks not least by the fact that he even uses the word "perform."

The contrast between drawing one's character from a fixed essence rather than a malleable existence recurs in another notable statement from Paine:

men are all of *one degree*, and consequently ... all men are born equal, and with equal natural right, in the same manner as if posterity had been continued by

creation instead of *generation*; the latter being only the mode by which the former is carried forward; and consequently, every child born into the world must be considered as deriving its existence from God. The world is as new to him as it was to the first man that existed, and his natural right in it is of the same kind.

(117)

In this passage, there is identification of the origin of man, but at the same time, Paine admits, through his suggestive distinction between creation and generation, that each person must perform for and by himself as for the first time, rather than relying on his source of existence to provide for him actions to be taken and rights to be had.

This passage refers to children being born without making an explicit indication of their biological origin, parents. This is not a singular instance, either, since like Burke, Paine writes of children who inherit their fathers' positions without making explicit reference to the family or the marriages that brought them about. It is obviously possible that children may come from an unmarried couple, but the context of inheritance within which Paine situates his statements about children make it clear that he has some version of a family, though perhaps not a modern, nuclear one, as the subject of his thoughts. For Paine, hereditary government, especially in the form of hereditary monarchy is, contrary to Burke's view of it as a stable institution, discontinuous and malleable since its structure permits the promotion of children (who become monarchs) above men (who are "ordinary" citizens) (225). In such circumstances, Paine questions, "[w]here is the propriety of calling such a lad the father of the people?" (235).

This question, while challenging Burke's defense of hereditary government, employs the same metaphors that make family and state analogous, at least as far as the "heads" of them are concerned. Paine's use of the family as a way to disagree with his opponent's viewpoint reveals

that he also believes a married couple is taken as given or natural as a cornerstone to the state's embodiment. Consequently, although politically opposed to Burke, Paine infuses his rhetoric with similar assumptions about the family; and although both of them are concerned with the origin of the state and origins more generally, neither of them question or investigate the role that marriage has for laying what they believe are *a priori* foundations. Yet in extrapolating from their arguments about the existence of the state, one can draw out political concepts for the ostensibly more private concerns of marriage. Since for Burke marriage is a way of regulating property that has been in the hands of a certain class of people for many years, it would be necessary for parents to prescribe the actions of children, analogous to how the state's leaders are prescribed through the role of hereditary monarchies. For Paine, however, since the state is composed of a social contract between different people that needs constant renewal with each generation, we can assume that marriages are to be arranged by people's own desires in choosing their spouses and speaking for themselves the words that perform their nuptial union, rather than having those words spoken for them. And before Paine is dismissed for being an impractical thinker who does not consider how couples who do not inherit wealth from their parents should maintain themselves in the economy, we might recall his extensive discussion of commerce, outlining how the finances of the nation might be dealt with (265ff.). In fact, when exploring the possibility of tax reform, he makes an assertion that could be applied just as well to the contract that initiates a state as to marriage: "There is, therefore, no power but the voluntary will of the people that has a right to act in any matter respecting a general reform; and by the same right that two persons can confer on such a subject, a thousand may" (318). In terms of the analogy likening the power of the state and the family, Paine offers a very different version from his predecessors who favoured monarchial rule. Instead, he suggests that if the family and state are

to be equated in terms of their composition, they might have the same origin: a contract between two or many more people to determine the power and legal status of each.

WILLIAM GODWIN ON MARRIAGE AND THE STATE

Paine's advocacy for a social contract that derives its authority from a continually renewing process involving at least two people resonates with another political text that, unlike the work of Burke and Paine, makes explicit the question of marriage. However, William Godwin's consignment in *Political Justice* of marriage's role in society to a late appendix of the second volume suggests that the importance of discussing marriage directly is, at best, a marginal concern for thinking about society. Godwin's statements are perhaps best-known, controversial as they are, for the calm and suddenly presented assertion that "[t]he abolition of marriage will be attended with no evils" (454).[37] After relatively little discussion, Godwin concludes that marriage in the form available to his contemporaries, the one that is still present for us,[38] is faulty for a few reasons. The first is that it contravenes his notion of a hypothetical "perfect man," who does not "need" society, but indulges in it as "a luxury" (4.337.6.160/161). Since no one person can perform all of the actions required to stay alive and healthy for an indefinite period of time, one must enter into some form of a social contract with other people, even if the solitary figure denies the attachment and assistance of the other people. A second reason is that Godwin's ideal for communion between two (or more) people is that it is peaceable. He admits that no one is happy all of the time, but instead of allowing one's temper to become uncontrollable and thereby create a rift between the two people, one should avoid cohabitation as a way to ensure that if one's passions ever develop beyond mildness, they might be cooled independently, in time, and without having a victim of one's wrath. Finally, Godwin insists "that

marriage, as now understood, is a monopoly, and the worst of monopolies” (4.338.6.207-08).[39] The reason for this somewhat bizarre claim is that he believes that any man who “possesses” a woman “by despotic and artificial means” claims rights to her, to the exclusion of all others, exercising a selfishness that is undesirable.

However well-known these arguments might be, I am chiefly interested in the alignment of Godwin’s rhetoric with Paine’s in advocating a state of marital existence constituted by its repeated vows and acts of commitment. The passage in which he describes the “habit”[40] for being married is worth quoting at length:

The habit is, for a thoughtless and romantic youth of each sex to come together, to see each other for a few times and under circumstances full of delusion, and then to vow eternal attachment. What is the consequence of this? In almost every instance they find themselves deceived. They are reduced to make the best of an irretrievable mistake.... They are led to conceive it their wisest policy to shut their eyes upon realities, happy if by any perversion of intellect they can persuade themselves that they were right in their first crude opinion of their companion. The institution of marriage is a system of fraud; and men who carefully mislead their judgments in the daily affair of their life, must always have a crippled judgment in every other concern. (453)

This excerpt from his argument features the same rhetorical terms indicating permanence that Burke’s did, with its expectation of “eternal” attachments, having to live with “an irretrievable mistake” and the importance of the origin (“their first crude opinion of their companion”) in determining the relationship’s importance. In contrast to Burke, Godwin decries this permanence; for him, what is crucial, by implication, is quotidian existence: judgments are

necessary to be made “in the daily affair[s]” of a person’s life. In other words, a continual performance is what a successful marriage requires, and this is exactly what Godwin subsequently proposes: “It is a question of some moment whether the intercourse of the sexes in a reasonable state of society would be promiscuous, or whether each man will select for himself a partner, to whom he will adhere, as long as that adherence shall continue to be the choice of both parties” (4.338.6.225/226). He concludes, “our judgment [is] in favour of marriage as a salutary and respectable institution, but not of that species of marriage, in which there is no room for repentance, and to which liberty and hope are equally strangers” (4.339.6.225/226 [3.19-24]). Ironically, what is necessary for a lasting relationship is the absence of the law that seeks to bind individuals to each other; instead, so long as each person continues to elect to live with his or her partner, the relationship should continue; this model allows for the repentance of poor decisions and permits the possibility of happiness, even if it requires additional work. Under Godwin’s proposal, people cannot simply consider themselves married because they have legal documents to prove it, or because they spoke of their devotion to each other, post-Hardwicke, in a public ceremony. Just as Paine advocates with regard to the laws and the constitution, Godwin proposes that one must continually renew one’s commitment to another in order to maintain the relationship.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have argued for the importance of the analogous relationship between the family and the state. Although this connection was an old one to the Romantics, few critics have explored the role that marriage plays in the creation of that family. For political theorists, marriage was something that was taken for granted, when mentioned at all, although Burke’s

argument about the changes issuing from the French Revolution makes much of the importance of family to the state. He believes that families are needed to maintain the property that belonged to their forefathers, and akin to that, the body of English people is needed to maintain the constitution that was created by the forefathers of the nation, at points of time that include the medieval period and the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Astonishingly, though, he makes this argument without reference to the importance of marriages and weddings, which are necessary to preserve the legitimate family, even though they are not necessary to preserve the human species through biological reproduction. While one might excuse Burke from this element in his discussion on the grounds that his concern is for public activities of government and citizens, such an argument downplays the importance of the political, public role that marriage acquired as a consequence of the Hardwicke Marriage Act. The passing of that bill by Parliament effectively ensured that there would be witnesses to the declarations between a couple to live together as husband and wife. Note that these need not have been the *original* troths: those might have been an entirely private matter, an exchange of vows that would have made them legally married under the circumstances prior to the modifications that Hardwicke brought.

In other words, the Hardwicke Marriage Act, economic and political corollaries aside, pretended to establish an origin for a couple's pledge to live together, and while such a ceremony would indeed have been the origin of new identities for them—husband and wife—it could not have been the origin of their relationship or even, potentially, their domestic life together. George Knightley and Emma Woodhouse are long testing each other's prospective suitability for domestic living together before any actual proposal comes. Rather, when they take a second turn in the garden, Emma seizes the opportunity to make herself officially the fiancée of her long-time though long-unacknowledged suitor. And the second turn is most important as a motif in

Austen for brides choosing their husbands. A second time implies reiteration, something that must be done over and over again, just like a performance.

Paine envisions the conception and development of the state through performance, in contrast to Burke; however, he is similar to his opponent in omitting an extensive discussion of marriage in his text. We might also suggest that he is like Burke and so many others who share the belief in a connection between the family and the state. If so, then Paine's argument that society requires continual renewal of its contract, a constant reiteration of what it means to belong to society, is analogous to the theory of remarriage, where those who live together are required continually to renew their pledges, ensuring that they perform the duties and pleasures of husband and wife. Godwin's argument illustrates that performance is more important than the law, but his utopian ideals could not be realized by the characters in the fictions I discuss.

Chapter 2: Marriage, Domesticity, and the Isolated Artist of Romanticism

INTRODUCTION

Reflections on the Revolution in France and *Rights of Man* illustrate the ways in which French-revolutionary era thinkers eschew marriage while at the same time reinscribing the force with which it legitimizes a regressive model of family. In contrast, the canonical poetry of the major male Romantic figures deploys the nuptial lexicon to such an extent as to challenge the meanings of the very words associated with marriage as a union between a man and a woman. This chapter explores some of the transfers, adaptations of, and possible deviations from, the nuptial lexicon by the male poets who were, until relatively recently, at the centre of studies of Romanticism. In particular, I shall examine the meanings of marriage conjured up by two contrasting figures, Wordsworth and Byron in their journals, letters, and poems. The meanings of wedding and the related lexicon of marriage in the works of these two authors are varied and sometimes at odds with each other. Byron and Wordsworth are known to be antithetical thinkers, but in the case of marriage, they are similarly dismissive in their discourse, if for different reasons. One of the major uses to which Wordsworth puts the terms relating to marriage is to describe a synthesis between antithetical things, a move that Byron also makes on one notable occasion.

If the works of Burke and Paine were over-represented as Romantic political discourse, at least until the 1980s, so too was the poetry of the six major male figures of the Romantic period, Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, and Byron, as Romantic poetry. The marriage metaphors that these poets use helped mid-twentieth century literary critics to articulate the concept of Romanticism and how a Romantic artist differed from previous authors, but the significance of marriage metaphors in particular has been heretofore unrecognized. These critics

did not make explicit the metaphors they were using to develop their arguments, and consequently, in formulating a concept of Romanticism, they replicated in their criticism the terms the Romantics themselves used, as Jerome McGann argues in *The Romantic Ideology*. The consequence is that significant critical attention to the displacement of a vocabulary of domesticity by the major male Romantic poets is due. These male poets employ the terms of domesticity when describing nature, thereby replacing the literal meanings of a domestic vocabulary with those of, broadly speaking, the sublime.

The principal example of how this substitution of terminology occurs in both criticism and poetry derives from the influential thesis of M. H. Abrams, who argues that the Romantic figures secularize, rather than replace, Christian ideas (*Natural Supernaturalism* 13). My investigation of the evidence Abrams presents to support his argument and the conclusions he draws leads into a discussion of the so-called canonical Romantic poets and their representations of marriage. I shall here follow the example of Abrams and consider Wordsworth's metaphoric use of marriage to describe the solution to the antithesis of the mind and the world, especially as it appears in *Home at Grasmere*. I also explore that poem's apparent denigration of the home as the voyeuristic speaker relates the situations of three "broken" families. Then I will turn to one of his longer narrative poems, *Peter Bell*, that features remarriage, not in the way that Cavell intends—to the same person—but focusing instead on a kind of serial monogamist. I then compare Wordsworth with an author who was certainly not a serial monogamist, although he famously carried out a series of liaisons, Lord Byron. Byron's life experiences informed his very different outlook on marriage as an institution and practice, but he occasionally produces statements in poetry that are not dissimilar to Wordsworth's. Many examples of how Byron

represented weddings and marriage derive from his private journals and letters, but I close with an extended discussion of his poem of remarriage, *Beppo*.

My argument for this chapter is that, although divergent in their writings about marriage, Byron and Wordsworth have in common a vision of marriage as a kind of bondage when literal but more freeing when metaphorical. In Wordsworth's case, marriage can be depicted as a mortal union between people that ends in the death of one or both of them, in contrast with the poet's potential for immortality, granted through solitary composition. The literal marriages portrayed in *Home at Grasmere* and *Peter Bell* have all ended in death in one way or another, whereas the celebration Wordsworth speaks of near the conclusion of *Home at Grasmere*, as noted by Abrams, is of metaphorical matrimony. Another example of metaphorical marriages between a male poet and something sublime occurs, in a different register, in letters by John Keats. I present these texts along with commentary on the different inflections of solitude that Wordsworth and Keats evoke through their metaphorical marriages. Byron, in contrast to Wordsworth and Keats, writes of marriage in quite mercenary terms, but akin to them expresses his belief that marriage can be a kind of chain that unites two people legally, if not emotionally. Consequently, a marriage between two people might not be the ideal arrangement, if one is going to follow one's emotional and physical desires. His *Beppo* expresses both the notion of marriage as a bondage that holds two people together and the possibility of having a third party involved, who can please both husband and wife. Its expression of remarriage is unique in comparison with other texts I study in this dissertation: its reiteration of vows between two people who are the same but have undergone transformations places it closer to the narrative fiction I discuss. However, the inclusion of a third party represents a challenge to the idea of marriage as something shared exclusively by two people that one finds in those same narratives.

M. H. ABRAMS AND MID-CENTURY CONCEPTS OF ROMANTICISM

Abrams derives his thesis concerning the Romantic secularization of Christian ideas in large part from Wordsworth's metaphorical use of the word "wedded" in what the poet calls a "*Prospectus* of the design and scope of the whole poem" that is *The Excursion*. Abrams remarks that this nuptial metaphor is not unique but rather "a prominent period metaphor" (Abrams 27, see also 21; Wordsworth "Preface to the Edition of 1814" 2, italics in original). Here are the lines:

Paradise, and groves
Elysian, Fortunate Fields--like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic Main--why should they be
A history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was?
For the discerning intellect of Man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple produce of the common day.
—I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse
Of this great consummation ("Preface to the Edition of 1814" l. 47-58)

These lines appeared initially, in slightly different form, near the end of *Home at Grasmere*, which was not published during Wordsworth's lifetime.

Paradise, and groves
Elysian, fortunate islands, fields like those of old

In the deep ocean, wherefore should they be
A History, or but a dream, when minds
Once wedded to this outward frame of things
In love, find these the growth of common day?
I, long before the blessed hour arrives,
Would sing in solitude the spousal verse
Of this great consummation (996-1004)

Before discussing these examples in detail as part of my discussion of *Home at Grasmere*, below, it is worth offering a brief outline of how the displacement of domesticity and matrimony for sublimity in Romantic writing occurred by considering some key statements of influential critics. I might begin with another instance of this displacement of domesticity for sublimity in Wordsworth's writing: "And know we not that from the blind have flowed / The highest, holiest, raptures of the lyre; / And wisdom married to immortal verse?" (*The Excursion* 7.534-36). Here, the superlative raptures, together with the grandness of "wisdom" connects with "immortal" poetry, which are all instances of the sublime. Connecting these ideas to the verse that will preserve them for all time is a term that, in its more prosaic uses, refers to the union between a man and a woman as husband and wife. Wordsworth employs a marital lexicon in these more ordinary senses in some of his writings, but I shall turn to those instances later. First, a discussion of Abrams's arguments about Wordsworth's metaphorical uses of the terms for marriage will help to introduce and contextualize the conjunction between literal and non-literal in his poetry.

Abrams, the "grandfather of contemporary Romantic studies," according to Jane Stabler (283), is a crucial figure in the history and development of Romantic criticism partly for the influence that he has over contemporary and subsequent debates about the character of

Romanticism. Even at the time of publication, contemporary reviews recognized the significance of his argument in his book of 1973: L. J. Swingle, for instance, writes that, “[a] major portent is the appearance of M. H. Abrams’ study *Natural Supernaturalism*, which promises to exert influence on the direction Romantic studies will take in the next few years” (361). But the emphasis placed on metaphorical marriage in *Natural Supernaturalism* was apparent in arguments Abrams made before its publication.

Jon Klancher writes that Abrams’s essay “English Romanticism: The Spirit of the Age,” presented in 1962 to the English Institute, can be seen as marking the official beginning of serious and widespread studies of Romanticism (78). Abrams’s essay for that session adopts a political focus, asserting that when critics think about Romanticism, or the “English Romantic movement, they usually ignore its relations to the revolutionary climate of the time”; for confirmation of this statement, he points to a 1962 essay collection, *Romanticism: Points of View*, that barely mentions the French Revolution (“English Romanticism” 29). At the time, writes Klancher, the 1962 session surprised readers because political readings of the Romantic authors had not been undertaken for about twenty years (79).

In *Natural Supernaturalism*, Abrams contends that the secularization of society occurred through a process of adapting biblical images and metaphors by the Romantic poets (13), Abrams presents evidence demonstrating how authors saw themselves as poet-prophet-visionaries (29; “English Romanticism” 44). Some poets, Wordsworth among them, believed themselves to be divinely chosen and divinely inspired to present an image of the mind to a select audience (Abrams 21-22). The story that Wordsworth and other contemporary writers tell is based on a Christian model of narrating the world’s history that looked forward to “[a] new Earth and new Heaven” (Coleridge, “Dejection” l. 69). This Christian view contrasts with

classical narratives, which Abrams catalogues as either “primitivist,” wherein there is perceived to have been a golden age once, though it now has passed, and the world has been in general decline since then; or cyclical, wherein the world continuously proceeds through ages from good to better to bad to worse and back to good, without end (34). Abrams’s study presents Romantic authors as thinking that there would be a renewed world ahead of them that will bring redemption. This was not a new idea for Abrams, who argued much the same thing more than five years earlier at the English Institute, where he spoke of the Romantic belief that “from present evil a greater good” would come, “from which will emerge a new man on a new earth which is a restored Paradise” (“English Romanticism” 46). Furthermore, he reports that a renewed world was not new to the Romantic authors but had some precedents in those eighteenth-century poets who included rhetoric reminiscent of the Book of Revelation (38).

What is significant for the Romantics, Abrams, and most of all the present investigation, is the emphasis Abrams puts on the role that a marriage has in the union between the numinal and the phenomenal. Using the metaphor of marriage to describe such a union is not a rhetorical move that Abrams invents; it appears in Romantic writing, in the lines from Wordsworth, previously quoted, for example. Another notable instance is the phrase quoted from Coleridge’s “Dejection” above, which is preceded by the lines “Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power, / Which wedding Nature to us gives in dow’r / A new Earth and new Heaven” (l. 67-69). Abrams certainly approves of this metaphor, using it extensively in *Natural Supernaturalism*. Indeed, he is so fond of it that it is not the first time for him to do so: in the English Institute essay, he describes the renewal of earth:

And the restoration of Paradise, as in the Book of Revelation, is still symbolized by a sacred marriage. But the hope has been shifted from the history of mankind

to the mind of the single individual, from militant external action to an imaginative act; and the marriage between the Lamb and the New Jerusalem has been converted into a marriage between subject and object, mind and nature, which creates a new world out of the old world of sense. (59)

Given that he adopts the lines of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and other Romantic authors to make his point, it is clear why McGann, in *The Romantic Ideology*, takes issue with his position as merely replicating arguments made by the Romantics themselves.

Critics prior to Abrams identified a tendency of Romantic authors to represent unions between disparate elements, and *Natural Supernaturalism* may be seen as emerging from this context. For instance, René Wellek contends, “[w]hat is called Romanticism in England and on the Continent is not the literal vision of the mystics but the concern for the reconciliation of subject and object, man and nature, consciousness and unconsciousness to which we have returned several times” (129-30). Here are three binaries that the Romantics sought resolution to, or, in Hegel’s terminology, a synthesis. And it is in “Hegel and Schelling and their kind” that we first find “formulations [wherein] Romanticism is governed by a sense of the inadequate fit between the real and the apparent, heaven and earth. It is thus governed by struggle (between body and soul, content and form) and by desire (for something always still to come)” (Simpson 9).

Thus, the problem that Abrams aims to (re)solve is not new, but what he does differently from other critics, and in some accord with the Romantics themselves, is to stress this point about the synthesis in the form of a marriage. Consider three examples, one prior to, another roughly contemporary with, and the last post-dating his argument. First, in an essay called “The Wordsworthian Profundity,” G. Wilson Knight identifies the same lines that Abrams does from

the preface to *The Excursion* in discussing “[t]he best single key to Wordsworth’s life-work.” However, though noting that “[m]arriage metaphors are powerful,” Knight leaves that issue aside and refers to “[p]oetry [as] the language of the higher integration, and the fusion metaphorically throws up a *sacred structure*” (1-2, emphasis in original). The two things to note here are that his word for the union is “fusion,” not “marriage,” and that he describes the “structure” in very broad terms, as merely being “sacred.” The essay continues on to discuss the relationship between the natural and the maternal, with the corresponding development of the child Wordsworth describes himself as, in *The Prelude*, focusing on the sublimity of his encounters with nature. For instance, after quoting from the episode of the stolen boat and the “black and huge” peak that frightens him (1850 *Prelude*, l. 1.378), Knight writes that “[i]n terms of such awful imaginations the fusion of mind and inanimate matter is most powerfully accomplished” (8). Again he prefers to describe the union as a fusion, rather than a marriage; despite the “power” Knight claims such metaphors carry, marriage is left out of his argument.

Next, Northrop Frye seconds this idea about the fusion of nature and the human mind but in different terms:

For Wordsworth, who still has a good deal of the pre-Romantic sense of nature as an objective order, nature is a landscape nature, and from it, as in Baudelaire’s *Correspondences*, mysterious oracles seep into the mind through eye or ear, even a bird with so predictable a song as the cuckoo being an oracular wandering voice (“Drunken Boat” 21).

This statement appears to be more specific than Abrams’s characterization of the process of amalgamation; there is recognition that the phenomena of the outer world enter through

particular sense organs, “eye or ear,” and there is a verb that gives a metaphor for how the process occurs, by seeping.

My final example of the fusion of nature and mind comes from Harold Bloom, who also avoids using marriage metaphors when discussing unions between opposites: “Wordsworth’s prophecy, and Blake’s, was overtly against dualism; they came, each said, to heal the division within man, and between man and the world, if never quite between man and man” (“Internalization” 7). And later in the same essay, he writes,

In the covenant between Wordsworth and nature, two powers that are totally separate from each other, and potentially destructive of the other, try to meet in a dialectic of love. ‘Meet’ is too hopeful, and ‘blend’ would express Wordsworth’s ideal and not his achievement, but the try itself is definitive of Wordsworth’s strangeness and continued relevance as a poet. (10)

In the first quotation, he acknowledges that there is indeed a rift between Wordsworth and the world that surrounds him, though he does not use the metaphor of marriage, and the lexicon in the longer quotation is similarly not nuptial, but rather biblical, or perhaps sacramental, (“covenant”) and philosophical (“dialectic”). Oddly, Bloom’s suggestions of different words here indicate a struggle to identify a way to classify the union, even though Wordsworth himself supplies the most telling metaphor: marriage.[41]

Abrams embraces the term marriage, and not fusion, arguably because of the metaphorical fields in which he situates his argument. Whereas fusion is a metaphor from chemistry, marriage may be more closely related to expressions that unite antithetical entities in Christian thought. Abrams acknowledges the “concept of marriage as a form of covenant” in regard to the relationship between God and the chosen people of the Bible, but he also remarks,

“[t]he result of these complex developments is that Christianity [...] has often employed *sexual union* as its central symbol for the crucial events of Biblical history” and other church sacraments (*Natural Supernaturalism* 46, emphasis added). Although a marriage might need to be sexually consummated to make it legal, the identification of only one element—sexual union—of a marriage, whose literal meanings are polysemous, including social, legal, economic, political, and companionate bonds between two people, suggests that Abrams has left much room for exploration. It is also a very pressing question because, as Eric C. Walker asks, “[w]hen the words for marriage become divorced from marriage, what language remains for the postsacramental pair?” (14). In other words, if marriage, especially in the theory of the speech act espoused by Austin, relies on certain discursive practices to render it intelligible and meaningful within a context where audiences will understand it, but those words no longer signify the meanings familiar to those audiences, how can literal marriages be represented in a meaningful way? Romantic poets often substitute abstract or inanimate objects for humans when writing of figurative marriages, thereby broadening the scope of what it means to be married. Walker’s question seems to suggest a dilution of the specific constituents of literal marriage.

In what follows, I will present evidence from the writings of Wordsworth and Byron from a diversity of sources, including the imaginative poetry and prose that Abrams and other critics have focused on, but also from their personal writing in journals and letters. There are widely divergent attitudes toward marriage in the writings of the six major male Romantic poets. Despite such variety of viewpoints in the evidence, I contend that whenever real marriages can be expressed in metaphorical terms, so much the better for these poets: marriage metaphors allow for the expression of multivalent discursive conjunctions. For instance, in contrast to the examples from Wordsworth, above, Shelley uses the metaphor of marriage as a sinister trope to

close his “Lines Written During the Castlereagh Administration.”[42] The metaphorical possibilities of marriage, however, stand in sharp contrast to the representations of actual marriage; these are more often than not portrayed as instances of bondage, with metaphors of being “chained” emerging on multiple occasions.[43] This view of marriage as a tether that unites two people until one of them dies informs the Romantic poets’ representations of remarriage, which are quite different from Cavell’s formulation, although in different ways for Wordsworth and Byron. In contrast to Cavell’s idea that one “marries” the same person “again” in different circumstances because one is so devoted to him or her, in the case of *Peter Bell*, remarriage means a series of marriages after the eponymous character has abused his wives; and in the case of *Beppo*, the eponymous character reunites with his wife, but Byron’s poem includes a third party in the marriage and stresses the relationship between the people in the ménage who are not legally wed.

WORDSWORTH: INTRODUCTION

“William Wordsworth ... seems to have disappeared into marriage but appears never to write about it” explicitly, instead composing “a body of marriage verse” that he “fleetingly assembled in 1820 in a collectively bound volume dispersed even at the moment it is joined together” as Walker argues (3; 14).[44] My focus is on his poems that represent or invoke marriage in a much more overt way than in the poems that Walker extensively describes. The poem of remarriage, as noted, is *Peter Bell*, while the poem that Abrams uses for his thesis is *Home at Grasmere*.

Wordsworth wrote little explicitly about marriage and family in his letters and displaced an account of his first family, Annette Vallon and her daughter with him, Caroline, in his poem

about the growth of the poet's mind: "What must have been the most traumatic experience, the relationship with Annette Vallon and the birth of their child, is pushed to the margins [in the *Prelude*], replaced by deeply affecting imaginative experiences amongst the Alps or on Snowdon" (Gill *A Life*, 38). The details of this first family are very limited, and scholars have only been able to speculate about his thoughts and feelings, conjectured from his writings, as well as those of his sister Dorothy, and wife, Mary Hutchinson. His wife and family were aware of this other, first family that he had in France, and William made two trips to the continent in 1802 and 1820, with the purpose of visiting Annette and Caroline in the company of first Dorothy and then Dorothy and Mary (Gill *A Life*, 207-08; 340). Stephen Gill suggests that William and Mary both held affectionate feelings toward his French connections, from what little evidence is extant (*A Life*, 299).

Although the documentary evidence is slight, Wordsworth's continued interest and involvement in his first family suggests that this relationship was a kind of tether on the poet, drawing him back to the continent on more than one occasion, over a span of nearly two decades. The fact that he involved his legitimate family in their affairs demonstrates how open he considered relationships with them to be. Since Wordsworth, unlike Byron, left no written record of his thoughts or feelings about the woman who was once his lover and their illegitimate daughter, we can only speculate about whether he was drawn to them because of guilt, a lesser feeling of responsibility, regret, fondness, love, or something else. However, as we shall see, an extended "family" like the Wordsworths and the Vallons is somewhat akin to the relationships of Byron, in life with Teresa Guiccioli or in art, depicted in the poem *Beppo*. Admittedly, the comparison between Byron's and Wordsworth's liaisons with women unmarried to them only goes so far: Teresa Guiccioli did not bear a child conceived with Byron, nor did he invite his

English family to meet her. Otherwise, marriage in these instances is a tie that unites parties and the couples cohabit with people who are not part of the exclusive, married couple, thereby transferring the literal meaning out of the term, of there being a legally binding relationship between two people that has at least a little basis in their affections.

Wordsworth's extended family includes not only his continental connections, but also, living with his wife and sister, his domestic life is somewhat similar, structurally, to these, if not entirely romantically. There seems to have been at least some degree of romantic intimacy between Dorothy and William; some of her journal entries describe their activities in a tone that is "unquestionably, profoundly sexual" (Gill *A Life*, 203).[45] Dorothy and William were certainly close to each other, and she knew that his marriage to Mary would make her second-most important in his life (Gill *A Life*, 205). She expresses real anxiety about her brother's wedding in a letter written to her old friend, just a few days before the ceremony:

I have long loved Mary Hutchinson as a Sister, and she is equally attached to me this being so, you will guess that I look forward with perfect happiness to this Connection between us, but, happy as I am, I half dread that concentration of all tender feelings, past, present, and future which will come upon me on the wedding morning. (377)

Dorothy was hysterical on the morning of the wedding, following William's act of placing the wedding ring, intended for his bride Mary, onto Dorothy's finger; she did not attend the ceremony (Gill *A Life*, 211; D. Wordsworth *Grasmere Journals*, 126). Clearly, Dorothy, and to some extent William, felt tremendous angst about the wedding ceremony that was going to make for an official rupture in their relationship together, which had been, to the point of William's decision to wed Mary Hutchinson, if not after, a very intimate one.[46] The wedding

ceremony itself seems to have been the source of the discomfort, and William's mock marital presentation of the ring can only have exacerbated their feelings, even if it was symbolic of the kind of life—cohabitation—the three of them would share in the future. The exchange of rings is an instance of a performative action that could not be felicitous because of the incest taboo, imposed by culture, and because of the absence of the proper authorities to sanctify the wedding, following the legal regulations enacted by the Hardwicke Marriage Act. Although it cannot be regarded as an official marriage between William and Dorothy, the cohabitation of the three of them stretches the idea of a marriage being exclusive to a couple. And the continued relationship with people with whom one has committed an intimate action is a recurring theme of the poets in this chapter: marriage, when occurring in the “real” world, is a kind of bondage from which one cannot escape “for better for worse”; one forms relationships with others to which one continues to return (Church of England, n. pag.).

WORDSWORTH: HOME AT GRASMERE

What does the title *Home at Grasmere* convey?[47] To most critics of the poem, home refers to a dwelling place, but their tendency is to situate that home in relationship to nature, not domesticity. For instance, following the ecological turn of Wordsworth criticism,[48] Sehjae Chun writes,

Wordsworth views the rural community in *HG* in light of the relationship of its residents to the environment and reads ecological values in the rural residual community. No less significant, his strategy of reading ecological values informs his multifaceted engagement with the realities of England's rural communities, as an effort to critique the detrimental effects of dominant industrialism. (152)

The ecocritical movement does much to enlighten us about Wordsworth's—and other Romantics'—attitudes toward nature. In *Home at Grasmere*, although Wordsworth writes of “home” as the vale of Grasmere, “this sublime retirement” (l. 723), there are also many instances in which he invokes domestic spaces. So while it would be difficult to refute Chun's claim here, it seems remarkable that a poem about the home has been read more in relation to the environment than to domesticity.

I shall argue that the poem employs the domestic vocabulary of home but unsettles the idea of family through the selective representation of families who live in Grasmere, all of whom are missing a spouse. The widows or widowers can obtain consolation from their children or memories, but they are often unhappy. Like the families depicted in *Home at Grasmere*, Wordsworth's own underwent a rupture with the death of a parent and spouse. It caused Wordsworth and his sister significant grief when their mother died of pneumonia, and “[t]he effect of her death upon the family was immediate and destructive....” (Gill, *A Life* 18). This was in large part because of the ensuing separation of the siblings, causing Dorothy and William to be apart for nine years (Gill, *A Life* 18), and William resented his uncle, Christopher Cookson, for the treatment he and his brothers received during the course of their upbringing under his care; William went to the point of refusing to attend the funeral for Cookson (J. Williams 22). In contrast to the personal grief and the losses represented in the poem, the bachelor poet reclaiming the land dreamt of since his childhood speaks of being solitary with great relish, as when he exults in his achievement of occupation of the land:[49]

This solitude is mine; the distant thought

Is fetched out of the heaven in which it was.

The unappropriated bliss hath found

An owner, and that owner I am he. (83-86)

The tone is triumphant here and the emphasis is on possession; from the opening of the poem until a few lines after these, the poetic persona focuses on himself and his “solitude.” However, in a few lines following these ones, the speaker complicates the notion of being solitary when he introduces readers to the companion sharing his cottage, his sister “Emma” (98). She and the speaker could not “could not bear / To live in loneliness” and he delights in their reunion, as well as the expectation of beloved visitors, even as he embraces solitude (175-76; 864-70). Part of the poem’s project is to think through the meanings of these different inflections of what it means to be solitary or alone; I shall argue in what follows, especially the passage that contrasts these terms, the speaker cultivates a union with nature that reaches a climax in the “marriage” near the poem’s conclusion.[50]

Despite Emma’s presence and the anticipation of visitors, these others are easily forgotten through the speaker’s focus on himself throughout the text. An instance of this apparent preference for being alone occurs when he thinks of being protected by the valley:

Embrace me then, ye Hills, and close me in,
Now in the clear and open day I feel
Your guardianship; I take it to my heart;
'Tis like the solemn shelter of the night. (129-32)

If Emma is with him here, there is no mention of her, and the pronouns are all first-person singular ones. The imagery of being “close[d] ... in” by the hills, instead of representing suffocating, is intended to reveal the poet’s delight at having a comfortable and salubrious place in which to dwell. This enthusiasm may be because “*Home at Grasmere* is a work concerned

with Wordsworth's decision to settle in a particular place at a particular time," writes Sally Bushell, who continues:

Although the poem is superficially a celebration of that choice, a hymn of gratitude to Grasmere itself, darker undercurrents run through it—in terms of uncertainties as to whether it was the right decision to make, the pressure it puts upon the Poet-narrator to write; the Poet's identity within the valley, and the nature of his self-definition as Poet. (398)

Being in solitude at home, then, even with its attendant difficulties, seems ultimately preferable to the unfortunate conditions of those who have loved and lost. Additionally, since this is the poem from which Abrams derives a version of the lines about being wedded to nature, I argue that Wordsworth displaces the conventional idea of marriage by expressing it as ideal when between man and nature, but bearing unfortunate consequences when meant in the literal sense of a union between husband and wife. The reason for this disparagement relates to Wordsworth's development of a poetic self that he believes will continue on in some kind of afterlife; this statement is a version of Abrams's thesis, of course, but my addition is that such a "marriage" is preferable to literal ones between man and wife, which can only end in grief and loneliness; such lives do not continue after death.

In the poem's opening, the speaker establishes Grasmere as the place that he has much wished for since he "was yet a School-boy"; it is a kind of return to home for him (2). In the middle of the poem, the poet describes the people who will be his neighbours and proceeds to tell their stories. There are three of these anecdotes, and none of them can be considered especially happy narratives of matrimonial living. Wordsworth attempts to persuade us otherwise, though, when relating the middle story, of

a Father [who] dwells
In widowhood, whose Life's Co-partner died
Long since, and left him solitary Prop
Of many helpless Children. (535-38)

Although this beginning seems like it is going to describe an unfortunate situation, Wordsworth wants us to believe that is not the case; instead, he tries to extract some goodness out of their circumstances:

I begin
With words which might be prelude to a Tale
Of sorrow and dejection; but I feel,
Though in the midst of sadness, as might seem,
No sadness, when I think of what mine eyes
Have seen in that delightful family. (538-43)

At first, it appears that Wordsworth is going to call for charity to help a family who must subsist with a sole provider and “many helpless Children.” Instead, however, there is no cause for dismay because the family appears to be happy. Part of the reason that one need not fret over this household is because the children are not, in fact, helpless after all: the cottage exterior is nicely arrayed thanks to “a hardy Girl, who ... [is] Companion of her Father, [and] does for him ... The service of a Boy” (574-78). Perhaps more useful than the rose-trees admired by the voyeuristic speaker (566-67) is what he spies when looking through the cottage window at night: someone working the spinning wheel and therefore producing something they can use themselves, or something that can be exchanged for other goods to help the family survive, a skill—spinning—she learned from her father (594-604).

In this case, “family” here does not include a living mother and wife, so the man of the cottage must be content with his role as father, not as husband; he has for a “Companion” a daughter who must perform the role of a son; the father himself “not gay, but they [i.e. his daughters] are gay, / And the whole House is filled with gaiety” (605-06). Given the living conditions at the time, it is understandable that Wordsworth makes the best of the situation as he sees it by colouring it in a positive and relatively joyful way. Yet why is the man not happy when the rest of them can be? The description of this cottage’s dwellers is not substantial, so there may be other reasons, but the most evident is that the loss of his wife saddens him. But this family is “delightful” and their story is not “of sorrow and dejection” (540). The unnamed man’s life is not solitary since he has his daughters, but neither is it happy, and he is different from them because, among other reasons, he had, but no longer has, a spouse. The point that I want to make in this instance is that Wordsworth takes a potentially unhappy situation, made so through the death of the man’s wife, and frames it as a happy one: the daughters are merry despite the loss of their mother. This is one illustration of a domestic situation that Wordsworth includes in a poem about home, and it is a home that shelters a family that is, in a sense, broken.

This portrait of a family with a departed member would be unremarkable if it was singular, but it seems like part of a pattern that Wordsworth establishes, for immediately after it, he presents yet another family. This one, the third in the set of domestic sketches, begins in an opposite fashion to the one of the father and daughters. He points to a nameless woman’s “little grove of firs,”

Just six weeks younger than her eldest Boy, [which]

Was planted by her Husband and herself

For a convenient shelter which in storm

Their sheep might draw to. (610; 613-16)

This opening suggests a companionate married couple, working together even shortly after she gave birth to their child, to provide a shelter for animals that may have, in turn, provided them with wool, milk, or meat. After she explains to the poet that the sheep did indeed use the spot in winter, however, the domestic scene turns suddenly tragic: “She then began / In fond obedience to her private thoughts / To speak of her dead Husband....” (618-20). Contrasting with the couple is the “grove, now flourishing, while they / No longer flourish; he entirely gone, / She withering in her loneliness” (640-42). This description of family is the slightest of the three homes that the poet depicts in *Home at Grasmere*, but here again is a family with a departed member, and the widow who can now only be consoled by her children. What is more notable about this family is the contrast that Wordsworth makes with his own “solitary” condition, although he is together with his sister. The widow is left “withering in her loneliness”—a metaphor for natural decay to contrast with the “flourishing” of the grove—while the poet explains that it is “a task above [his] skill” to describe her plight (643). Conversely, “the silent mind / Has its own treasures,” reflects Wordsworth, before declaring to “Emma,” the name given in the poem to the persona of his sister, “We are not alone, we do not stand, / My Emma, here misplaced and desolate....” (643-44; 646-47).

This is an odd opposition: on the one hand, the widow is alone, for she has no husband with her anymore, but on the other hand, in terms of her married life, she has “her private thoughts” and memories of him. Reflecting on their lives from outside is the poet, who has never been married and thinks here about the “treasures” of “the silent mind,” and later indicates that the “Theme” of his great work will be “On Man, on Nature, and on human Life, / Thinking in solitude” (958-60). In terms of matrimony, then, until his own marriage, Wordsworth (or his

poetic persona) is alone, and anticipates solitary reflection, not the apparent dialogue that the widow apparently yearns for with her deceased husband. The lonely widow seems to feel anguish at the thoughts of her lost husband, whereas the poet, who is together with his sister, appears to relish the idea of the solitary mind and its reflections. In an argument by Frances Ferguson in relation to “Tintern Abbey,” she writes that Dorothy’s presence “is his [i.e. Wordsworth’s] acknowledgement ... that the self is already socialized” (127). It seems to be a version of what Keats’s rhetoric, as I shall explain below, expresses as a difference between being alone, which is apart from other people, and being solitary, a word that suggests isolation from others but is used in ways that mean kinship with nature or imagined but absent people. Wordsworth places himself in a similar position to the widow in having a socialized self that can have a dialogue with another person who is to the world silent; in the speaker’s case, it is Emma to whom he often directs his thoughts. The difference between the poet and the widow is that for her, marriage ended with the loss of her husband, whereas for the speaker, matrimony is a way of resolving antithetical positions.

The relationship between Wordsworth’s persona and Emma is curious; they share a domestic relationship yet are not married. The speaker makes an explicit comparison between himself and his sister and two swans known to have been “[c]onspicuous in the centre of the Lake” (331). The poet conjectures that these birds have died, but what is striking about the passage is his assumption that the two swans have gone together in “[o]ne death” (357). Unlike the human couples in his village, whose union is broken by death, leaving one of them to live on in grief, the partners that cannot be married—because of the incest taboo in the case of the speaker and his sister and because they are animals in the case of the swans—die together. Emma and the poet form “a solitary pair like the [swans]” (341): both humans and swans came

“to live / Together here in peace and solitude” (326-27). This comparison with the swans reflects the contradictory account of solitude that we find throughout the poem: at times, it appears to refer only to himself, as when he talks about coming to settle in the valley he pined for in his youth, when in fact he means both him and his sister. On other occasions, the self in solitude refers directly to a single person, and especially the speaker’s poetic self.

This reverence for solitude in Wordsworth’s work is unexceptional, for it is constitutive of the myth of the solitary Romantic genius that his works in part fostered through expressions such as these, and in part derives from representations of the male Romantic authors by critics Abrams, Bloom, and Frye, among many others. What is particularly interesting is the relationship between solitude or being solitary, and being among others, and especially with a spouse. The examples above from *Home at Grasmere* suggest this kind of relationship: a person who was once married but no longer is because of a deceased spouse is not alone, but retains some form of companionship. In the first instance of Wordsworth’s wedded neighbours in the poem, the opposite is true: a man whose comfortable and happy circumstances become distressing when he has an affair with the family’s maid, and he then becomes solitary though still married.

The speaker goes to some pains to indicate the irony of the man’s reversal of fortune, depicting comfortable circumstances at some length. The man never had to leave home to seek a living or employment but could remain in “his Native Valley” as “A Shepherd and a Tiller of the ground” (472; 479). His idyllic situation is complemented by his gentle and “Studious” character, salubrious body and mind; he receives the admiration of his neighbours and enjoys “Years safe from large misfortune” “with his consort and his Children” (474-84). This narrative thus opens like those that depict the other families, where the pleasant introduction does not

suggest the tragedy that follows. It seems surprising that the speaker places part of the blame for the man's rash action(s) with the servant girl on his wife, but that seems to be the only conclusion one can reasonably draw: "Yet in himself *and near him* were there faults / At work to undermine *his happiness* / By little and by little" (487-89, emphases added). Although the speaker initially praises the man's wife for being "Active, prompt," and overall the busiest housewife in the valley, he quickly retracts these compliments to say that there was little actual merit in her work and that she was not careful in the domestic economy of the house (489-95). Together with the man's occasionally careless, free, and easy ways, "These joint infirmities, combined perchance / With other cause less obvious, brought decay / Of worldly substance and distress of mind,..." to the couple (498-500). The speaker represents this distressing condition of finances and of mind as the direct cause of the man's dalliance with the servant, attributing, significantly, his wife's role in his downfall by including her "overlaboured purity of house" (494) as part of their "joint infirmities." This hypocritical depiction both marginalizes the role of the wife and implicates her in the "lawless" (506) actions of her husband. The only thing more we learn of the man's wife is that she seems to try making the best of their straitened circumstances, continuing to smile, like his children (510-11). The man ends up, because of his liaison with his servant girl, feeling inconsolable and alone, while at the same time still married. The speaker tells us neither of the affair's length, nor of the girl's inclinations, but among the factors that make it a transgression is the fact that his pursuit of her is "lawless." From this detail, I would argue that this is more evidence for the idea of marriage as an unfortunate condition between two people imposed by the state's law. If the couple were not legally wed, the man might be able to, probably at great distress to his family, run off with his servant. Instead, he ends his days in grief and loneliness, although still married. His loneliness differs greatly from

the speaker's; whereas the poet's solitude is treated as a boon, the man in this narrative "died of his own grief" and "could not bear the weight of his own shame" (531-32). This marriage ends with the man's death, brought about by his distress at having violated or "broken" marital "ties" with his wife through a liaison. As with the other cases of literal marriage in the neighbourhood that the speaker parades for us, this one ends in death after a period of increasing guilt, felt keenly in his loneliness.

How can someone be both married and alone at the same time? In the writings of the major Romantic figures, the clearest expression of such a relationship derives from two letters by John Keats, the only one of the six major male Romantic poets not to have married. Keats writes, in a long letter of October 1818, to George and Georgiana Keats:

Notwithstand[ing] your Happiness and your recommendation I hope I shall never marry. Though the most beautiful Creature were waiting for me at the end of a Journey or a Walk; though the carpet were of Silk, the Curtains of the morning Clouds; the chairs and Sofa stuffed with Cygnet's down; the food Manna, the Wine beyond Claret, the Window opening on Winander mere, I should not feel—or rather my Happiness would not be so fine, as my Solitude is sublime. Then instead of what I have described, there is a Sublimity to welcome me home. The roaring of the wind is my wife and the Stars through the window pane are my Children. The mighty abstract Idea I have of Beauty in all things stifles the more divided and minute domestic happiness—an amiable wife and sweet Children I contemplate as a part of that Beauty.... I melt into the air with a voluptuousness so delicate that I am content to be alone. These things combined with the opinion I have of the generality of women—who appear to me as children to whom I

would rather give a Sugar Plum than my time, form a barrier against Matrimony which I rejoice in. I have written this that you might see I have my share of the highest pleasures and that though I may choose to pass my days alone I shall be no Solitary (*Letters* 239-40).

This quotation is similar to the lines from Wordsworth's *Home at Grasmere* in its unusual claim for the idea of what it is to be solitary, since there is a distinction between terms that might, in other contexts be synonymous, being "alone" and being "Solitary." He articulates a preference for the insubstantial instead of the physical through his "abstract Idea . . . of Beauty," but he claims to become one with this virtual immateriality through two words—"melt" and "voluptuousness"—that paradoxically imply sensory objects. The second notable element in this passage is his infantilization of women, made explicit rather than metaphorical, and confirmed through the offer of an actual sweet instead of the more abstract "time" that he possesses; all of these seem to form a material impediment—"a barrier"—to the possibility of being wed.

The key part of this letter for my argument is the similarity between Wordsworth's union of the mind and the world through a wedding and Keats's deposition of a human marriage partner, preferring Nature instead. At the opening of the quotation, Keats aligns domesticity with sublimity and solitude, displacing a potential domestic, female partner with the masculine power of the sublime. The sublime—single, great, and masculine—contrasts with a possible domestic happiness that is "divided and minute." The masculine power of the sublime is also suggested in the curious connubial relationship that he proposes: "[t]he *roaring* of the wind" replaces a flesh-and-blood wife. Although the apothecary-turned-poet is from a very different social background than Lord Byron, this particular characterization of a spouse may be said to participate in the same genre of ribald marital discourse that we shall see in Byron's writings: women can be

powerful, but shrewish. Of course, there is no woman here at all: domestic space becomes occupied by Nature, which will ensure that Keats will not be “solitary,” although “alone.” And again like Wordsworth, although less central to my argument, is the replacement of flesh-and-blood children for ones who are, if the metaphor is taken seriously, remote and ethereal.

The next relevant letter is addressed to the same couple nearly one year later, and in it Keats writes, “I am becoming accustom’d to the privations of the pleasures of sense. In the midst of the world I live like a Hermit. I have forgot how to lay plans for enjoyment of any Pleasure. I feel I can bear any thing,—any misery, even imprisonment—so long as I have neither wife nor child” (*Letters* 399). Once again, this is a good quotation for someone looking to assert the idea of the isolation of the Romantic artist, but what is particularly interesting for my purposes is the confidence with which Keats boldly claims to be able to survive “any misery, even imprisonment” while he is not married! We might applaud Keats for not wishing to cause undue stress on a potential wife. However, the comparison is rather extreme, and taken together with the previous letter and his lack of engagement to Fanny Brawne, it is very suggestive of someone hostile to having a family life.

Although the comparison between the two male figures seems apt, solitude for the two of them has different connotations. For Keats, there is a kind of zeal at the potential of being alone, and the rhetoric in the examples above is more suggestive of domesticity than is the case with Wordsworth’s marriage metaphors. Keats clearly substitutes wives and children for natural objects in what appears to be, evident from his tone, a celebration of uniting with nature. Wordsworth, in contrast, calls for a union with some part of the outer world beyond the domestic sphere. As when invoking Milton in order to find “fit audience ... though few” (*Home at*

Grasmere 972) for his poetry, Wordsworth's marital metaphors seek a relationship with a broader world or "society" than Keats does.

Consider this kind of move that Wordsworth makes in *The Excursion*, where he writes that when he "reconverted to the world; / Society became [his] glittering bride, / And airy hopes [his] children" (3.724-6). Here we have a family set up in metaphorical terms, with practically non-existent offspring and an abstraction of a large group of people for a wife. Another formulation of being both solitary and among a crowd appears in *Home at Grasmere*:

Then boldly say that solitude is not
Where these things are: he truly is alone,
He of the multitude whose eyes are doomed
To hold a vacant commerce day by day
With that which he can neither know nor love,
Dead things, to him thrice dead, or worse than this,
With swarms of life, and worse than all, of men
His fellow men, that are to him no more
Than to the Forest Hermit are the leaves
That hang aloft in myriads—nay, far less,
Far less for aught that comforts or defends
Or lulls or cheers. Society is here:
The true community, the noblest Frame
Of many into one incorporate.... (*Home at Grasmere* 807-20)

Among *Home at Grasmere*'s "core issues," writes Raimonda Modiano, are "Wordsworth's attraction to and fear of solitude; his need for and difficulty in finding a community, complicated

by the abandonment of Coleridge that his move to Grasmere necessitated....” (484). In the lengthy passage, he inverts common ideas about “community,” finding it in a virtual isolation rather than with other people; although Emma is a constant presence and the speaker looks forward to a visit from friends and family, much of the poem occludes their presence, making them easy to forget and focus instead on the solitude the speaker finds necessary to complete his task (864-70; 959-60). The speaker is keen to present solitude as distinct from being alone, although both ideas encompass separation from other people. The imagined man is alone if separated from “[h]is fellow men” whereas the speaker is surrounded with “society” and “[t]he true community” that are the natural elements surrounding him, described in the passage that precedes this one (766-806). With this passage in mind, Hugh Honour’s statement that, “[b]efore the nineteenth century loneliness had generally been regarded as a misfortune, but the Romantics made a cult of it,” is very compelling (256). The preference suggested in these lines for a relationship with Nature instead of a marital partner offers good evidence for critics arguing for the Romantics’ celebration of the sublime and the solitary genius.

In one such example, Peter Larkin asks, “Is *Home at Grasmere* the starting point of a spiritual journey, or an arrival after ‘life’ in the sense of being the station of a man in mental repose, with principles made up, that is, a man in secondary relation to himself?” (108). Larkin presents the question about the poem’s content and purpose here in terms of an either/or, and both of them suggest that its aim centres on a solitary individual, or at least one for whom interaction is not with other people, least of all a marriage partner. Wordsworth was unmarried when composing the early drafts of the poem, of course, so in a work that aims to explore the relationship between the self and home, and that is largely autobiographical, it is understandable that he avoids representing himself with a wife. But the remarkable thing about this poem is that

such personal circumstances do not occlude his employment of the nuptial lexicon to represent such a union.

Here, again, is the crucial passage:

Paradise, and groves
Elysian, fortunate islands, fields like those of old
In the deep ocean, wherefore should they be
A History, or but a dream, when minds
Once wedded to this outward frame of things
In love, find these the growth of common day?
I, long before the blessed hour arrives,
Would sing in solitude the spousal verse
Of this great consummation.... (996-1004)

Markus J. Poetzsch has recently argued that Wordsworth invokes a “quotidian sublime” of the seemingly ordinary, and this passage offers some evidence for his thesis.[51] Here, the extraordinary becomes ordinary, or the result of the “common day,” in Wordsworth’s phrase. But it is also worth highlighting that in this quotation, there is a petition, using the marital lexicon, for a union between the poet’s mind and something ethereal or numinous (Abrams 27). In other words, a discourse of domestic marriage between two people is replaced by one representing a union between the poet and something intangible and sublime. One might counter that Abrams’s thesis is long outdated by now, but as assessments by other critics I presented demonstrate, it is vastly influential. Decades after *Natural Supernaturalism*, at least one discussion of *Home at Grasmere* and marriage abstains from commentary on literal domesticity. Its author, Anthony J. Harding, tries to revise our ideas about Romanticism and the numinous: “‘Home at Grasmere’

re-energizes the metaphor [of sacred marriage] by secularizing the apocalypse to which it was applied. The poem thus marks Romanticism's decisive turn away from transcendence and towards the here-and-now" (109). Harding's explanation for the use of marital metaphors implicitly acknowledges the "power" that Knight suggested, while conceding the "impossibility" of using the term in its literal sense: "'Marriage' with Nature is impossible, taboo—as marriage with Dorothy would have been—yet it is the only way to reaffirm the commonality of origin while preserving (on the biblical model) different roles for the two partners" (Harding 116).

Home at Grasmere best exemplifies the ambivalent, even contradictory, uses to which marriage is put in Wordsworth's writing. The poem, in sum, features contrasting representations of marriage. The first examples are of marriage in a literal sense, in the service of depicting Wordsworth's new neighbours. But unless there are a grand total of four dwellings in the vale of Grasmere, it is extremely odd that Wordsworth presents only narratives of cottagers whose marriages have, through death, dissolved. It is important that these are not people who have left their spouses—although in the case of the first man, this may be somewhat true—so that Wordsworth does not have to suggest that marriage does not "work." In fact, it serves a very useful purpose, but, I am arguing, that purpose is a metaphorical one in that it represents a valuable union between a solitary individual—whose very solitude makes a "community"—and the world surrounding him. Marriage is thus an ideal when uniting two distinct entities that come in contact with each other, while at the same time, marriage in the real sense is something temporal, ending in death, which may not be true of the everlasting places—"Paradise, and groves / Elysian"—the mind can access when it "marries" them.

For Wordsworth, marriage in reality is a temporal connection that will end with the death of a spouse; in comparison with the pleasures of the independent, solitary mind, it is bondage.

This worldly union stands in contrast to the eternal benefit one gains from a mind that lives on after the body is no longer. In making such a transfer between the meanings associated with the terms of marriage, Wordsworth at once bestows reverence on the idea of marriage at the same time that he disparages it for its way of uniting mere mortals.

WORDSWORTH: *PETER BELL*

In Wordsworth's poem of remarriage, *Peter Bell*, the ruffian Peter "had a dozen wedded wives" (l. 250), one of whom, "A sweet and playful Highland Girl" (1078) suffered such maltreatment in his company that she died before their child was born (1091-1105). *Peter Bell* illustrates some instances of a man transferring a matrimonial relationship with a female partner to one with nature. It is not an exceptional poem, but it may be exemplary because this transfer from domestic partner to nature characterizes much of the marital discourse in the letters and poetry of the major Romantic poets.

In *Peter Bell*, although the speaker cannot account for why any of Peter's wives were attracted to him (257-60), there is an ironic affinity between the speaker and the eponymous potter. While the former patronizes or flirts with one of his auditors—the speaker is almost certainly a male—referring to her as "pretty Bess" and "pretty little Bess" (731; 756), Peter also employs honeyed phrases to endear himself to his victims (1093). This is broadly suggestive of the kind of masculinity at work in the poem: men can take liberties in their words to women with impunity. Although readers are likely to respond emotionally to the death of his Scottish wife and her unborn child, the speaker tells of the incident without commentary, returning to the primary narrative of Peter and *his* repentance, suggesting emotional detachment from her in contrast to the several instances of building suspense before explaining the strange sights and

sounds that Peter finds in this episode. More specifically, the only instance in the poem that approaches a diegetic representation of a wedding is the relationship between Peter and this long-suffering woman. Peter “Had pledged his troth before the altar / To love her as his wedded wife” (1094-95). While he sweats and aches while recounting the episode of her unfortunate death (1121), Nature has a greater influence on his thinking and behaviour. His vocal expression of his transgressions comes after realizing his solitary position in the wild instead of recalling to his mind the treatment of his marriage partners:

And Peter hears the rustling leaf,
And many a time he turns his face,
Both here and there, ere he can find
What 'tis which follows close behind
Along that solitary place.
At last he spies the withered leaf,
And Peter's in a sore distress:
“Where there is not a bush or tree,
The very leaves they follow me—
So huge hath been my wickedness!” (816-25)

The speaker initially separates Peter from Nature, remarking that Nature was not symbolic for him as it might be taken to be for others (214-20), and its influences, however enchanted, did not affect him (231-35). But these descriptions emerge as disingenuous because Nature *does* affect him, shaping his character and features, which in turn become like Nature:

Though Nature ne'er could not touch his heart
By lovely forms, and silent weather,

And tender sounds, yet you could see

At once that Peter Bell and she

Had often been together. (261-65)

This verse is notable because it follows immediately upon the revelation of his twelve wives, who appear to have had no influence on him. However conventional in such poetry, by ascribing a female pronoun to Nature, Wordsworth displaces the influence of a human wife and, in one sense, “weds” Peter to Nature since they “Had often been together.” The ambiguity of this phrase does not exempt the possibility of marriage since in one of the places Peter has been, Scotland, a marriage could be verified if it could be proven that a man and a woman lived together as husband and wife for a reasonable period of time (Smout 207). Peter remains untouched by a domestic relationship that involves living people; if there is any domestic relationship that serves to alter his behaviour, it is his pathos expressed at the discovery of the drowned man’s family and their distress. But while Peter might be sympathetic at the fragmentation of a domestic family through the loss of a husband and father, that sympathy does not prompt him to action on their behalf, excepting his aid in the recovery of the body to the family. Despite his inclination to marriage, he does not propose to fill the void of the missing husband in this family. Instead, the Ass serves the family more than Peter in subsequent years (1311-15); Peter moves on and we might conclude that he is once again “together” with Nature at the narrative’s closing. If this poem is about the transformation or reformation of a miscreant, it does not clearly indicate how that alteration of character will occur in Peter with regard to his domestic situation. There is no suggestion that he will remarry yet again and be kind to his wife; instead, the poem reifies the sympathy that one might receive from Nature as opposed to a human wife.

Peter Bell might be considered as a poem of remarriage in the sense that the protagonist weds different women as suits his purposes. It does not feature a contract between the same partners that must be continually performed in order to achieve legitimacy, as Paine's view of the state implies. Nor is that remarriage one that emerges out of the interrupted wedding ceremony as in *The Italian*. Instead, there is a displacement of female companionship in a domestic situation for a relationship with "Nature," which proves to be more influential on the male protagonist than a woman. The sole instance of Peter coming to reconsider his life and his treatment of women is ambiguous and narratively slight. By slight, I mean that in a poem of more than thirteen hundred lines, a mere forty-five of these describe the girl who became his wife, her pregnancy, and death "of a broken heart" (1105). And while the remembrance of her stings "his heart" "more than all" (1076), the small number of lines devoted to describing her and Peter makes the reason for his remorse ambiguous. Is it that he badly treated a girl who had "many a good and pious thought" (1086)? Does he feel guilty for being responsible, however indirectly, for the death of his wife? Or is it that he caused the death of a potential child? Since he does not express repentance about any other wife, and we are not told that any of his other wives were pregnant, it seems most probable that his remorse is more the consequence of his injustice toward a child than toward his wife. Indeed, he recalls the pathos of the Highland girl's final words, "My mother! oh! my mother!" (1120), emphasizing the break between parent and child more than between husband and wife. And given that the poem's primary plot re-enacts this helpless petition, when the deceased father's little girl "Cried out, like one that's in a dream, / 'My father, here's my father'" (1184-85), it seems that the emphasis is on the breaking of a parent's bond with a child, rather than that between two married partners, although those

sentiments are also present both in the wife's reaction to her dead husband, and Peter's guilt for his Highland lass.

Peter Bell differs greatly from *Home at Grasmere*, but the two Wordsworth poems feature some similarities in terms of their representations of marriage. The latter poem sketches out more of the poet's own intentions for development and poetic aims, whereas the former's main plot is more prosaic. The speaker of *Peter Bell*, after a flight of fancy in an imagined boat, accuses the craft: "you quite forget / What in the world is doing" (109-110) and therefore turns to an homey tale of a man who, through the course of the poem, comes to repent his past behaviour. So while the lofty ambitions present in *Home at Grasmere* are not quite so in *Peter Bell*, we might compare the two texts' invocations of a world of human grandeur, presented as counterpoints to the representations of domestic relationships between men and women in them. In both poems, marriage terminates in death, whereas the speaker of *Home at Grasmere* has in mind a poem "Of the individual mind that keeps its own / Inviolable retirement, and consists / With being limitless" (969-71) and *Peter Bell*'s speaker has the potential for extraterrestrial travels and visions. Marriage is, by implication, a limitation that shackles one person to another until one of the spouses dies; what is really worth celebrating, for Wordsworth, is the potential of the human mind to engage with, if not marry, the Natural world that surrounds it. With this possibility, metaphorical marriage helps the poet achieve transcendence, leaving couples who are literally married to mortality.

BYRON: INTRODUCTION

Wordsworth did marry Mary Hutchinson on 4 October 1802, and later Byron amusingly wrote that the only things that the future poet laureate gained out of matrimony were the loss of

his hair and good humour (*Letters* 3.206). Such comments as this one are perhaps typical of a certain genre of writing about marriage that has as an ancestor representations of shrewish wives complaining about and belittling their husbands, as the figure of Noah's wife is portrayed in the Mystery plays of medieval England. Byron is certainly the best exemplar of such remarks among the major Romantic figures, and I now turn to him for a counterpoint to Wordsworth's views on the subject of matrimony. Byron is a different case from Wordsworth in that many of his stated views of matrimony are extant in letters to his friends and relations.[52] In these, he is seldom tender about the idea, and in general, expresses either mercenary or caustic opinions about either the prospect of his own marriage or marriage as a way for two people to cohabit. He also differs from Wordsworth and other Romantic poets, in that he seldom puts the terms of matrimony to metaphorical use, and there is only one notable instance in his canon to invoke a metaphorical marriage that commingles material and immaterial things.

In this part of the chapter, I shall begin with an analysis of that example of marriage as a synthesis for the combination of material and immaterial. I then turn to the more substantial rhetoric of marriage that appears in Byron's letters. Here I shall contend that it is an unfortunate fettering of a couple rather than a celebration of intimacy, and he often infuses his rhetoric of matrimony with capitalist terms of trade, seeing the legal arrangement between husband and wife as a mercenary agreement. If marriage is a legal arrangement for Byron that binds a couple together, regardless of sentiment, there are alternative forms of relationship that allow for the effusion of one's tender emotions. Byron once found himself in such a situation, not entirely dissimilar to Wordsworth's extended family of wife and sister, when he acted as a kind of appendix to the marriage of the young Teresa Guiccioli and her husband. His remarks about being a cicisbeo in that family lead me into the final section of the chapter, on a fictional

representation of a married couple with such an extension, *Beppo*. In that poem, Byron expresses a kind of remarriage that Cavell describes, but unlike the remarriage in *The Italian*, Beppo's comes with an additional person. Although dissimilar to Wordsworth in expressing minimal representations of metaphorical marriage, Byron turns out to be similar in his written explorations of the meanings of marriage; both authors test its boundaries for defining the relationship between a couple. Such a displacement serves to undermine the meaning of what it is to be married.

Byron's representation of a metaphorical marriage occurs in the second Canto of *Don Juan*, when Haidee helps the eponymous hero recover from the shipwreck, and the two of them begin to develop intimate feelings for each other. The narrator describes a "wedding" between them using the rhetoric that synthesizes the material and immaterial in the style of Wordsworth and Keats. This is a bit surprising since Haidee can be described as representing physicality; Caroline Franklin, for instance, observes that "[f]rom the time she is introduced, when 'the small mouth / Seem'd almost prying into his for breath' her sensuality is specifically portrayed as life-giving" (39; II.113.897-898). The narrator's description of Haidee is in physical terms (II.116-18), as is her hall, "a shrine for the senses" (III.61-78). But Haidee is not all physicality; the poem occludes this possibility in making an "association of Eros and Nature," and perhaps especially in the character of Haidee, who is not only "Nature's bride" (II. 202. 1609) but also "Passion's child" (II. 202. 1610; Beatty 110). Or, as Marilyn Butler puts it,

Don Juan is, as the title indicates, a poem in praise of sexuality, its beauty and its naturalness; it is a poem written against the sexual taboos enjoined by official religion. Its most attractive character, Haidee, inhabits a kind of Eden, but sexuality already exists there, and is natural and good. (137)

The world in which Haidee lives may seem otherworldly, and she may be a representative of immaterial Nature, but at the same time she is a natural person. Given Haidee's position as representative of both the physical and the ethereal world, it seems appropriate that the narrator describes her "marriage" with Juan in rhetoric that synthesizes the two realms. *Don Juan* is a satire that often parodies contemporary literature and people, but there is no evidence that this passage is a parody of specific lines by other Romantic poets. Instead, since Byron presents Haidee as an embodiment of the two realms, it seems appropriate that the "wedding" between Juan and Haidee occurs in non-literal terms.

Here, Byron, like the other Romantic poets, invokes Nature and Solitude as part of the attachment, first in writing that "Haidee was Nature's bride, and knew not this" (II. 202. 1609), and then, of the union,

And now 'twas done—on the lone shore were plighted
Their hearts; the stars, their nuptial torches, shed
Beauty upon the beautiful they lighted:
Ocean their witness, and the cave their bed,
By their own feelings hallow'd and united,
Their priest was Solitude, and they were wed:
And they were happy, for to their young eyes
Each was an angel, and earth paradise. (2. 204)

The stanza is complicated through Byron's depiction of the "witness" and a "priest," who, because they are personifications and not persons, suggest more of a pre-Hardwicke than post-Hardwicke marriage. Their union is solemnized "by their own feelings hallow'd" following the "plight[ing of] / Their hearts," which means, in fact, that they were not "wed" in the post-

Hardwicke sense at all: there is no exchange of words, at least none that the speaker reports in this stanza; it appears that only looks and feelings are exchanged. This exchange is similar to the union in Wordsworth's passage from *Home at Grasmere* and the Preface to the *Excursion* where the mind weds the "outward frame of things" and the poet "sing[s] in solitude the spousal verse" (996-1004; l. 47-58). Without exchange of speech acts, there can be no marriage, unless one radically reshapes what constitutes, here, a spiritual marriage. It is also similar to Keats's letter about joining with the wind and stars: social roles occupied by flesh-and-blood people are not necessary to perform a wedding because Nature displaces humanity. Admittedly, Byron's verse depicts two human beings wedding, not a human and something ethereal, so there is a difference between his representation of marriage and his contemporaries'.

Their silent, metaphorical marriage is in keeping with the narrator's earlier revelations of Haidee's "constancy," which was unspoken:

Haidee spoke not of scruples, ask'd no vows,
Nor offer'd any; she had never heard
Of plight and promises to be a spouse,
Or perils by a loving maid incurr'd;
She was all which pure ignorance allows,
And flew to her young mate like a young bird;
And, never having dreamt of falsehood, she
Had not one word to say of constancy. (II. 190)

This passage complements the description of their "wedding" in establishing Haidee's silence on the question of commitment. Her innocence has not provided her with the discourse needed to make the statements required in a state-sanctioned wedding.[53] Byron challenges the

post-Hardwicke regulations that emphasize the importance of words uttered in the presence of witnesses to make a couple legally united, but Juan and Haidee are wed from nature's point of view, a metaphorical marriage that might be a literal one, when the narrator reveals her pregnancy (IV. 70. 553-54). In Canto Three, the narrator states unequivocally that "Haidée and Juan were not married" (III. 12. 89), suggesting that in this case, Byron acknowledges the importance of literal proceedings of marriage over figurative ones: only a literal marriage would serve to bond the couple together indefinitely; without that detail, their metaphorical marriage is solely between them, without meaning in the wider world. To treat man and woman as husband and wife, even on account of her pregnancy, would require the acceptance of the community, and this they do not have: Haidee's father returns and challenges their relationship (IV. 35. 278ff.). The return of the father to prevent a child from acting on her wishes is suggested in the political discourse, sketched out in the first chapter, and will return again in the next chapter on the gothic novel.

Some characteristics mark Byron uniquely, such as being "[a]n only son left with an only mother" (*Don Juan*, I.37.295). Grouping him with, or having him speak for, all aristocratic views of marriage in the period would be erroneous. Nevertheless, a number of Byron's views on marriage are akin to aristocratic ones of eighteenth-century Britain, where marriage to heirs and heiresses might help families facing financial distress or ruin recover their fortunes, as when he represents it as a commercial exchange between spouses in his letters and, to some degree, in *Beppo*. Marriage might have also been a duty required of someone who had a peerage and an estate to maintain (or, as in the case of his great uncle William Byron, destroy) (Marchand 7). Although Byron's mother, Catherine Gordon, was a wealthy heiress who could trace back a distinguished lineage, her son's position grew significantly when he became the heir of a title on

his deceased father's side (Marchand 15-16; 10). And, as we have seen in the case of Burke's arguments, marriage is the unspoken institution that permits the very possibility of inheritance. Byron's view of marriage as a legal arrangement that need not have emotionally uplifting qualities is one that persists throughout Byron's letters and in his later poem *Beppo*.

BYRON: LETTERS

Byron's private writing more commonly expresses anti-conjugal thoughts. The relationship between his life and his written output is strong, and it is sometimes difficult to separate the two. "In writing his own story," observes Paul Douglass, "and seeming to live what he wrote, he made it impossible to discuss his work apart from his life" (7). Nevertheless, there are some themes that appear more bluntly in his letters to friends than in his poetry. Lord Byron expresses his views on marriage in several letters to Lady Melbourne and his male acquaintances. Throughout the letters, he vacillates between being "saved" through marriage and strongly disliking the idea. Byron's personal life and the torments that he inflicted on spouse, lover, and offspring are, as with all the major Romantic figures, well known, and, as with them, there is no need to rehearse all of the details; instead, I present key selections from his letters with pertinent references to his own marriage and his notions about the idea in general.

Although Byron's distaste for marriage is pervasive in his letters, there is evidence of his expectations about its benefits, for instance, when he writes to Lady Melbourne that only marriage, and a quick one, can save him (Vol. 2.218). Byron is not more explicit than this, leaving what it is he might be saved from ambiguous, but the context of the letter suggests that the most immediate thing from which he needs rescue is his relationship with Lady Caroline Lamb, who, at the time of this missive to Lady Melbourne, was irritating him with continued

epistles. His hopes for Lady Melbourne's assistance, however, in abetting his escape from Lady Caroline, are curiously expressed: "If through your means, or any means, I can be free, or at least change my fetters, my regard & admiration would not be increased, but my gratitude would" (2.195). Not only does Byron see his current relationship with Lady Caroline as one that shackles him in chains, but he recognizes that by engaging in a different relationship, he might be no better off, only changing those "fetters." As I have suggested, this metaphor of being in chains when married, or at least in a protracted relationship, is one that recurs throughout the marital discourse of the six major male Romantic poets.

Byron's matrimonial complaints are not of the same kind as Wordsworth's and Keats's are, but Byron can be grouped in with them for the promise of immaterial reward that a wedding would bring him. Whereas Wordsworth experiences marriage between the mind and the world, akin to Christian views of "the marriage between Christ and the heavenly city, his bride" (Abrams 42), Byron also anticipates an alteration to his unmarried state in the lexicon of Christian spirituality, writing again of "salvation" in a later diary entry:

A wife would be my salvation. I am sure the wives of my acquaintances have hitherto done me little good.... That [Lady Juliana Annesley?] won't love me is very probable, nor shall I love her. But, on my system, and the modern system in general, that don't signify ... and, if I did not fall in love with her, which I should try to prevent, we should be a very comfortable couple. (3.241)

Even if this is Byron's cynicism emerging in an ironic use of "salvation," he is still using a word loaded with Christian connotations. This idea of living in companionship, rather than in romance, seemed to be one that appealed to Byron. This entry places Byron as an example of the kinds of changes that were occurring throughout the eighteenth century, as Lawrence Stone argues in *The*

Family, Sex, and Marriage in England 1500-1800. There, Stone describes a typical relationship between the highest levels of the aristocracy as one where the husband would often seek sexual satisfaction with any number of persons as he pleased, making the marriage bed solely a place where legitimate children might be conceived (391), and the wife would also “indulg[e] in widespread adultery” (392). The partners in this upper level of society would have little emotional connection to each other, in contrast with the lesser gentry; there the aim was to bond with a partner of one’s choice for the mutual benefits of companionship (392). Given that Byron’s marriage was arranged by Lady Melbourne—a maternal figure to her niece—and his bride was selected, apparently, as more suited to his temperament than Lady Caroline, it seems that Byron may not have followed the class conventions for aristocrats, at least as far as Stone’s system goes. When reflecting on a possible marriage to his eventual wife Annabella Milbanke, he writes, “[a]s to *Love*, that is done in a week, (provided the Lady has a reasonable share) besides marriage goes on better with esteem & confidence than romance, & she is pretty enough to be loved by her husband, without being so glaringly beautiful as to attract too many rivals” (2.199). The concept of a companionate relationship appears again when Byron writes of his belief that “we must end in marriage,” and he would enjoy living in the country, though this pleasant situation would not bring connubial bliss to his spouse, for in the same letter, he goes on to imagine that he might live there and be “kissing one’s wife’s maid” (3.100-01). There is a sense, in these select letters, that part of Byron thinks positively about marriage, and he even mentions “matrimony and its concomitant blessings” (1.254), one of which might be his daughter, whom he laments over in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*:

My daughter! with thy name this song begun—

My daughter! with thy name this much shall end—

I see thee not, I hear thee not,—but none

Can be so wrapt in thee; thou art the friend

To whom the shadows of far years extend.... (III. 115. 1067-71)

His youthful bet with some companions that he would never marry—a wager on which they did not fail to collect when the wedding came (notes on *Letters and Journals* 4.222; 4.256)—is consistent with other sentiments, such as this remark at the end of 1808, written to his half-sister Augusta Leigh: “[w]hen I stated in my last [letter], that my intercourse with the world had hardened my heart, I did not mean from any matrimonial disappointment, no, I have been guilty of many absurdities, but I hope in God I shall always escape that worst of evils, Marriage” (1.180). This rhetoric, of the kind one might expect to find from a young aristocrat who believes that the world is all before him, may also have been intended to impress the half-sister, with whom he would later have an intimate relationship, with feelings of admiration for him since “he wanted Augusta, with her grand connections, to see him as a dashing—even cynical—man of the world” (Eisler 100).

This cynicism may also have been part of the aristocratic view of marriage that he cultivated for his persona. When forced into thinking about failing to escape that evil, he can be quite mercenary about it, claiming that he would marry for a high enough price (2.62). And shortly thereafter, he continues the same sentiment, writing to Robert Charles Dallas, “by the bye *I shall marry if I can find any thing inclined to barter money for rank, within six months*” (2.75). This quotation reveals a striking expression of someone thinking cold-heartedly about matrimony—the comment a sort of afterthought, indicated by the “by the bye,” and includes the words “thing” and “barter.” The marketplace diction recurs again in his letter to John Cam Hobhouse: “I mean to marry, prudently if possible that is wealthily, I can’t afford anything to

Love” (2.84). This may be because, as Douglass declares, Byron’s “financial problems had become more and more pressing, annoying, and finally maddening” (13). But the distinction here between marriage and love as two separate and apparently mutually exclusive categories somewhat complicates the notion of the companionable relationship. Stone’s argument that love came to replace marital union for other, often financial, reasons is difficult to apply to Byron but helpful in explaining and situating his views in context; he was caught in a time of change as a member of the upper classes, and thus marrying for love was an idea gaining in popularity (and reality) among the culture at large while aristocrats still maintained mercenary reasons to be wed. Since love might be, and was, in Byron’s case, homosexual or heterosexual, platonic or sensual, he appears to be resigned to living with someone out of convenience and financial relief, without expecting, if the quotation to Hobhouse is earnest, to have any kind of love to accompany and, might one say, soften it.

His other witty comments vary from being expressions of aversion to strong misogyny, as in the following two examples. First, in a letter to Augusta Leigh, he ends by proposing to have her visit him:

Pray can’t you contrive to pay me a visit between this & Xmas? or shall I carry you down with me from Cambridge, supposing it practicable for me to come.— You will do what you please, without our interfering with each other, the premises are so delightfully extensive, that two people might live together without ever seeing hearing or meeting,—but I can’t feel the comfort of this till I marry.— In short it would be the most amiable matrimonial mansion & *that* is another great inducement to my plan,—my wife & I shall be so happy,—one in each Wing (2.86).

Although Byron considers not seeing one's wife to make for a happy marriage, the separation from one's husband in domestic quarters, especially if the marriage is the consequence of family or personal pressures and alliances, might be a desirable situation for a woman too and was typical for matches that began or became unhappy (Abbott 64). This is what Elizabeth Bennet imagines for Charlotte Lucas after her marriage in *Pride and Prejudice*, that Mr. Collins "must often be forgotten" (140) in order for her friend to be so apparently content in her new home. So while this part of his witty invitation to Augusta may not be misogynistic, a letter to Hobhouse is, even if it is also droll: "I must marry, you know I hate women, & for fear I should ever change that opinion, I *shall* marry" (2.127). It is difficult to respond to this pithy remark, because like many of his others, the tone is so ambiguous: if meant entirely seriously, at least at this point in time, then he must have harboured a strong distaste for women that he anticipated would not alter with a close companionship with one. The key terms of this interpretation—and Byron's original quotation—are unclear: since his sexual and friendly relations do not seem to support such an assertion, what exactly he means by "women" seems more like a metonymy for their domestic companionship and what that would represent in social terms. Furthermore, his notion of what "marriage" entails here seems different than in the letter quoted to Hobhouse, above, because here he suggests that he expects a different or additional and unwanted "return" on his "investment": he seems aware that he will get more out of a wife than her wealth, and consequently that marriage means more than signing a contract and sharing bank accounts.

As for his own wedding to Annabella Milbanke, who once rejected his proposal (Eisler 373), his descriptions are almost equally caustic. In two letters to Lady Melbourne, in addition to wondering what sort of gifts his friends and relatives are going to present him with, he writes to her, "[w]e were married yesterday at ten upon ye. Clock—so there's an end of that matter and

the beginning of many others.... Lady Mil[bank]e was a little hysterical and fine-feeling—and the kneeling was rather tedious—and the cushions hard—but upon the whole it did vastly well” (4.249), and shortly afterward, “I got a wife and a cold on the same day” (4.251). Here Byron represents the minute details whose importance to the actual ceremony and its symbolism are, to say the least, very slight. All of the emotion, according to him, comes from a woman’s hysteria; even his own illness draws no further emotional remark and is lumped in (a zeugma that indicates contrast or parallel?) and acquired with his bride. This description would be irreverently comic in relation to discourse that treats marriages as sacred, or as the ostentatious commercial venture of today (e.g. bridal magazines and television programmes), but his dismissal of the event is revealing: the ceremony for him is not the important element; instead, it is an on-going process, which concludes one thing and leads into others, without end. Another notable facet to his representation of the continuation of events is the absence of causation: marriage does not, or will not, lead to anything especially, only to many other matters, whose relationship to the event of the wedding will not necessarily or actually be manifest. In this case, he appears to be articulating a form of Cavell’s notion of remarriage, where pledges to maintain a couple are necessary to renew the relationship. If remarriage requires multiple renewals, then a single wedding ceremony cannot be as important as it would be in a relationship that did not work as remarriage. That would turn us to the kind of thinking espoused by Burke, where a single origin determines the relationships of everything that follows. Instead, a remarriage, as I have argued, is like Paine’s concept of needing to continually renew the contract to account for alterations and changes in circumstances. Byron’s description of his wedding, represented by the very casual statement, “so there’s an end of that matter” de-emphasizes the importance of the

original wedding and recognizes that the marriage can only be continued if they can live together through “many others,” of which the wedding is only a “beginning.”

I should now conclude with a discussion of his thoughts about his own marriage. These sentiments were caustic enough for him to write the short epithet for his publisher John Murray on the sixth anniversary of his marriage to Annabella:

Ode on the 2d. January 1821

Upon this day I married & full sore

Repent that marriage but my father's more.

—

or

—

Upon this day I married and deplore

That marriage deeply but my father's more. (8.86)

And in other correspondence to Murray, he is likewise not so enthusiastic, making the distinction between the “end” of one thing “and the beginning of many others” more striking: “[y]ou talk of ‘marriage’—ever since my own funeral—the word makes me giddy & throws me into a cold sweat—pray don’t repeat it.—Tell me that Walter Scott is better—I would not have him ill for the world—I suppose it was by sympathy that I had my fever at the same time” (5.204). It is notable here that not only is Byron so pessimistic about his marriage, calling it his funeral, but in a homosocial move, he quickly shifts his publisher’s attention away from his wife to his concern over Scott and the fever that Byron can only assume he had at the same time, possibly a result of the “cold” he got on the same day that he wed his wife. The same homosocial bond between men would lead one of his early, reliable biographers, his friend Thomas Moore, to excuse Byron and

help create the twentieth-century views that the author of *Childe Harold*, *Don Juan*, and other works was among a category of people unsuited for domesticity. “The truth is,” writes Moore,

I fear, that rarely, if ever, have men of the higher order of genius shown themselves fitted for the calm affections and comforts that form the cement of domestic life. ‘One misfortune (says Pope) of extraordinary geniuses is, that their very friends are more apt to admire than love them.’ To this remark there have, no doubt, been exceptions,—and I should pronounce Lord Byron, from my own experience, to be one of them,—but it would not be difficult, perhaps, to show, from the very nature and pursuits of genius, that such must generally be the lot of all pre-eminently gifted with it; and that the same qualities which enable them to command admiration are also those that too often incapacitate them from conciliating love.

The very habits, indeed, of abstraction and self-study to which the occupations of men of genius lead, are, in themselves, necessarily, of an unsocial and detaching tendency, and require a large portion of allowance and tolerance not to be set down as unamiable. (200)

Here we have the “truth” of the matter, for Byron and the other Romantics who were believed by contemporaries to be, or would later be recognized as, geniuses. Moore does double duty in this passage, in first broadly suggesting that Byron is of “the higher order of genius” who find domestic life uncomfortable but also an exception to this general rule. So while Moore acknowledges the thesis that a solitary class of artists, whose rejection of social niceties and need for tolerance from others—including spouses, one must suppose—is necessary, he is also anxious not to curse Byron for posterity by lumping him in with these outcasts. One could read

the exemption from Pope's assertion by saying that Byron is someone who is both a genius and loved by his friends even if he is not suited to domestic life. This would suggest a similar distinction to the one that Byron makes between affections felt for people one cares for, and the obligations involved in marriage.

Marriage to his wife, for instance, did not change Byron's opinions regarding matrimony when considering others. In Italy, about cavorting with one of his lovers, Teresa Guiccioli, he would write to Augusta Leigh, "[i]f Lady B[yrone] would but please to die—and the Countess G[uiccioli]'s husband—(for Catholics can't marry though divorced) we should probably have to marry—though I would rather *not*—thinking it the way to hate each other—for all people whatsoever" (8.234). The relationship that he maintained with Countess Guiccioli was that of a *cicisbeo*, which the *Annual Register* of 1773 describes as an "appendix to matrimony" (*O.E.D.* "cicisbeo," meaning 1). It is a term that describes a married woman's male escort to public places, and thus carried on with the knowledge of her husband; in this case, Teresa was nineteen years old, in mourning for the loss of "her mother, older sister, and her own four-day-old infant son," while her husband the count was middle aged and had been twice widowed (Eisler 623). Silvana Patriarca reports that scholars debate the origins and character of *cicisbei*, which is what one might expect of a role that is marginal, being neither "official" husband nor exclusive paramour: "While some claim that this peculiar institution of Italian aristocratic society in the early modern period was enshrined in marriage contracts, others question this claim and see it as a primarily eighteenth-century custom of the nobility...." (399). With the countess, Byron enjoyed an alternative to marriage, though one about which he had reservations. He expressed his doubts about being in this relationship with her in a letter to Hobhouse: "I should not like to be frittered down into a regular *cicisbeo*. What shall I do? I am in love—and tired of

promiscuous concubinage—& have now an opportunity of settling for life” (quoted in Eisler 624; see also 625). He objects to the idea of being “frittered down,” a term that means, “to break or tear into pieces or fragments,” suggestive of a potentially fragmented subjectivity where part of him would fulfill the role of a *cicisbeo* (*O.E.D.* meaning 1a.). At the same time, however, that his word choice recalls being “fettered,” in the “chains” of matrimony that Byron and other Romantics elsewhere express, he also indicates a desire to settle for life after many affairs. This desire suggests that perhaps it is more the notion of being a “regular,” as opposed to an extraordinary, liaison, to which he demurs. This figure of *cicisbeo* emerges again in Byron’s poem of remarriage, *Beppo*.

BYRON: *BEPPO*

Beppo is a poem that comes close to fitting with Cavell’s definition of the term remarriage: a married couple becomes estranged and then reunites after being separated for years. However, there are several complications to the ostensibly felicitous conclusion to Byron’s poem that make it distinct from the representations of remarriage in Lewis and Radcliffe. The chief among these is Laura’s relationship with the Count, begun after waiting some time for her husband, presumed deceased, to return. The poem’s ambiguous conclusion suggests that this “second marriage” is not rejected, but rather integrated as part of the remarriage of Laura and her lawful husband, Beppo. *Beppo* is a different text from other ones featured in this chapter in that its terms are almost entirely material: there is no significant element of spirituality present. It is an important document to present, however, because of this view of remarriage as something that approaches a domestic narrative without fully participating in it because of its choice to include a third party in the marriage instead of celebrating the

married couple as a couple. Part of this difference can be accounted for by one of its purposes as a cross-cultural comparison that sustains the speaker's attention for much of the poem.

I will argue for this poem, in line with my argument for the chapter, that Byron stresses a real, legal marriage as a way to bind two people together over a period of time. It is not necessarily an ideal that will make them happy through the years, nor do they even need to cohabit with each other, but the strength of the bond is the important part. The ambiguous ending of the poem does not indicate whether this bond is an unfortunate one or not; however, the narrator's implication that Beppo ends on better relations with the newly joined third party, the Count, than with his wife gestures in that direction (stanza 99. ll. 787-88).

In exploring the issues that surround the question of marriage in the poem, I distinguish myself from many other critical interpretations of it. Perhaps most frequently, *Beppo* draws attention to the question of cultural relationships that Byron plots out, especially in his many comparisons between Britain and Europe, and particularly life in Venice.[54] Others use the poem in discussions of Byron's life, referring to how the story of the relationships between husband, wife, and lover was narrated to Byron by the husband of a woman with whom Byron himself was in the midst of an affair at the time. In this line of criticism the poem has also been useful to those critics wishing to map out Byron's life and relationship to his own estranged wife, Annabella Milbanke.[55] Still others refer to the position of *Beppo* within Byron's poetic oeuvre, with its *ottava rima* stanzas and substantial digressions, as a forerunner to Byron's second masterpiece, *Don Juan*. [56] Among these is one of the foremost Byron critics, Jerome McGann.

As I have noted, Byron is unlike the other male Romantic poets in that he tends not to make comparisons between being wedded and the union of ethereal or supernatural things. Nevertheless, as much as McGann may have wanted to distance himself from critics he accused

of replicating “the Romantic ideology,” in his earliest book, *Fiery Dust*, he too invokes the same kind of rhetoric as Abrams. The book closes with a detailed discussion of *Beppo*, which, writes McGann, features the major elements of *Don Juan*, but in being more compact than the later epic, is easier to discuss within a chapter. The following sentences make Byron seem almost akin to Wordsworth in interpreting the world, just as a comparison between McGann and Abrams is, I believe, not unjust:

From the very beginning he [i.e. Byron] tried, like all Romantics, to wed the divine and the natural orders, and eventually he decided that the two could only be fused if this world were regarded as a paradise. To achieve a state of infinite capability we must not move beyond the natural but into it.... Constantly the poem [i.e. *Beppo*] forces us to define terms and ideas like ‘paradise,’ ‘beauty,’ and ‘love’ in the specifics of a mortal order, for to Byron it is their corporeality which imparts a spiritual value to these things. (290-91)

An attempt to bridge the distance between “corporeality” and “spiritual value”; “infinite capability” and “the natural”; “this world” and “a paradise” through the same marriage metaphor of “wed[ding] the divine and the natural orders” firmly recalls the Romantic ideology propounded by Abrams: marriage is the ideal and appropriate metaphor for a union between natural and supernatural. But it is not one that is suggested, or sustained, throughout the *Fiery Dust* chapter, for McGann concludes that “In *Beppo* it [i.e. decadence] is Byron’s image for connecting heaven and earth....” (299). McGann’s marriage metaphor is, however, one that supports much of the argument up to that point, as he sees the poem as a vehicle through which Byron attempts to reconcile the perceived duality of material and immaterial: “to him [i.e. Byron] the man of flesh and blood should not be divided into spiritual and physical. It is not enough to assert the union of body and soul. Whenever man is conceived as an amalgam of

higher and lower powers a sense of internal division necessarily follows” (294). I point to these passages as a contextualization and reference point for my own argument about the poem, which focuses on the more literal sense of marriage that *Beppo* depicts. Somewhat unexpectedly, interpretation of duality sends critics to resort to marriage metaphors, while a poem that features an actual marriage, a liaison, and reconciliation between husband and wife does not seem to merit significant discussion.

Indeed, W. Paul Elledge’s article “Divorce Italian Style” is perhaps the only recent argument to consider the role that marital relationships play in *Beppo*’s narrative—and style.[57] Elledge reads motifs and metaphors for marriage and reattachment running throughout the poem, from its digressions to the role of the gondolas: “if the crafts, like spouses, frequently (perhaps necessarily?) depart their moorings, equally frequent returns to them betoken disrupted, not broken, ‘relationship,’ separation without estrangement” (36). When one can read seemingly disparate objects as metaphors for marriage, dalliance, and reattachment, it is easy to see how remarriage is a central preoccupation of the poem. First, though, it is necessary to establish *Beppo*’s primary elements; like the later *Don Juan*, the digressive aspect of the poem is substantial, and the plot relatively slight, in terms of discursive representation.

That plot focuses on a woman, whom the narrator decides to call Laura, claiming not to know her actual name,[58] whose husband—the eponymous character—is lost for some time at sea, but she continues her life, attending public events, such as Carnival, where the narrative is set, with a Count who acts as her consort. His role and title are the subject of some discussion by the poet, who refers to him at various points as a “Cavalier Servente” (40. 313), “vice-husband” (29. 232), “supernumerary slave” (40. 315), the Spanish term “Cortejo” (37. 291), as well as “cicisbeo” (37. 289). The reason that Laura consorts with someone other than her husband is

because he is believed to be lost at sea, and the speaker compares her to a forsaken princess, Ariadne (28. 224). In a remarkably rapid conclusion, where “the process of re-assimilation is comically accelerated” (Cheeke 113), at Carnival Beppo appears as the Turk he became while away from his home, and is reunited with his wife, remaining friends with the Count, who seems to retain his position as Laura’s consort.

Among the “primary functions” “of works such as *Beppo* and *Don Juan*” is “that of showing the world to the British, and the British to themselves as the world sees them” (Jones 43). Consequently, there are relatively few discussions of the marriage or elaborations of the characters of Laura, Beppo, or the count, with most of the stanzas being taken up with cultural comparisons. Among the slender details about the married couple in the poem, a few points are notable: first, while Beppo fulfills an important structural position within the narrative, his characterization is very minimal; second, the characters within the poem exhibit a series of shifting identities; and third, although this poem features a reunion between two married characters who resume life as husband and wife, the marriage’s “inclusion” of a third party is a narrative of remarriage that we might expect from Byron, based on his personal experience with Teresa Guiccioli.

Although Beppo is the title character, the garrulous narrator does not inform his readers of that point, or, for non-Italian speakers, of the meaning of the title until the end of the poem’s first quarter. It is not quite accurate to state that Beppo is introduced almost as an afterthought because arguably, the main plot of the poem only begins a few stanzas earlier. The information initially provided about him, however, is slight: he is the husband of Laura—whoever she really is—and was a merchant who travelled frequently, and was sometimes quarantined because of such travel, before being lost at sea. Apart from these facts, we know only that

He was a man as dusky as a Spaniard,
Sunburnt with travel, yet a portly figure;
Though coloured, as it were, within a tanyard,
He was a person both of sense and vigour—
A better seaman never yet did man yard.... (26. 201-05)

The text thus is not interested in questions about the courtship or conjugal relationship between Beppo and Laura: it is not possible to conjecture the reason for their relationship or the kind of husband Beppo was, although we learn that Laura seemed to be a devoted wife (25. 197-98).[59] Social position, occupation and ability, skin colour and physique are all we learn about him when he is first introduced, leaving us also to wonder why Laura would hurry to accept him as husband upon his return. This characterization provides surprisingly few details in comparison to the Count whom Laura takes, we are told, “*chiefly to protect her*” (29. 232). The Count’s talents and influence produce four stanzas of description intended in part to contrast him with the eponymous character: “as an authority on all aspects of Italian culture that qualify as the ‘highest’ expressions of European life, the Count is the antithesis of Beppo” (Ogden 130). The narrator concludes the sketch with a remark of admiration: “No wonder such accomplishments should turn / A female head, however sage and steady—” (35. 273-74). Laura and the Count, “on the whole,... were a happy pair, / An happy as unlawful love could make them ... Their chains so slight, ’twas not worth while to break them....” (54. 425-28). As Drummond Bone writes, “Laura believes her husband dead, but cannot be sure, and is making the best of her uncertainty” (14).

In short, the narrator depicts Laura and her consort as a companionate match, despite their presumed differences in social class. He takes the position of Beppo, structurally and emotionally, a position that Byron's narrator sympathizes with:

With scarce a hope that Beppo could return,
In law he was almost as good as dead, he
Nor sent, nor wrote, nor show'd the least concern,
And she had waited several years already;
And really if a man won't let us know
That he's alive, he's *dead*, or should be so.

36

Besides, within the Alps, to every woman
(Although, God knows, it is a grievous sin)
'Tis, I may say, permitted to have *two* men;
I can't tell who first brought the custom in,
But 'Cavalier Serventes' are quite common,
And no one notices, nor cares a pin;
And we may call this (not to say the worst)
A *second* marriage which corrupts the *first*. (35. 275 - 36. 288)

Here, the narrator's imposition of the conditional terms that Beppo is "*almost* as good as dead" and "he's *dead*, or *should be* so" reveal that Beppo is not, in fact, deceased and he still remains, if in no other way, legally wed to his wife. For Beppo, however, their marriage is more than a mere technicality when he confronts the Count after Carnival and forcefully insists that Laura remain his wife. After the Count threatens Beppo to make him cease pursuing Laura and himself,

Beppo replies: “‘Sir,’ (quoth the Turk) ‘’tis no mistake at all. / ‘That lady is *my wife!*’” (88. 704 – 89. 705). Beppo is here emphatic in tone, represented by the italic font, and the categorical claim that there has been “*no mistake at all.*” Their marriage has been a bond that has remained despite his long absence and her involvement with another man; Beppo is clearly put off by neither fact, but sees it as a relationship that still has meaning. Among the many contrasts the narrator makes between Britain and continental Europe, he suggests that the relationship between the Count and Laura may be considered “[a] *second* marriage which corrupts the *first.*” This designation, and the characteristics of the two relationships, foreground the question of what it means to be married. Such a liaison “taints, debases, adulterates, yes, but does not invalidate or annul that prior union even while in most respects duplicating it” (Elledge 37-38).

In this poem, Byron dramatizes the idea that a marriage, when actual and legal, does not necessarily have to be companionate; marriage is legally binding and endures separation of the parties, regardless of distance or time. The Count, as “vice-husband”, has a kind of “second marriage” that is not legally binding, but has many of the elements one would expect of a marriage: intimacy and, possibly, at least a degree of cohabitation. Such a representation by Byron is suggestive of a dichotomy between marriage and companionate relationships.

The example of Beppo’s marriage with Laura suggests that marriage’s most important quality is its longevity and perseverance in the face of a lengthy separation, loss of intimacy, and introduction of a third person. Following this example, marriage for political and financial reasons, made binding through legal ties, seems to be the ideal circumstance for which to wed. This view is consistent with Byron’s letters that stress the mercenary benefits of being wed over the ones where a couple can share domestic space together. In *Beppo*, Laura shows some devotion to her husband, as noted, but Beppo appears to be often absent on trading journeys, so

relating to each other as companions seems to be of little importance. In contrast to their legal but distant relationship is the Count's relationship with Laura; he is an unlawful companion although present for her; and since no one seems to mind, least of all Beppo, who has made no attempt to contact his wife, their relationship may be viewed favourably, although it is not a marriage. With Byron, then, we see a reflection of his personal desires for a companionate relationship that is not actually marriage but presents an emotional attachment that is beneficial, apparently, to the three people involved.

However, this outline of the strengths and weaknesses of marital relationships does not do justice to the complexity with which the identities of the marital partners are represented. The identities of the characters are uncertain throughout the narrative's telling: the narrator refers to the Count by his title and Beppo's wife by a pseudonym, and most significantly, Beppo undergoes an apparent series of alterations. Although he uses the nickname for the Italian Guiseppe, the narrator introduces him by comparing his appearance with that of a Spaniard. When he reappears at Carnival, a time and place of unfixed identity since most people are dressed to appear differently than they would otherwise (3. 17-21), he is likewise presented first in terms of colour. From the initial "duskiness" of the Spanish, he becomes "the colour of mahogany" (70. 553) when named as a Turk. Although Laura does not seem to recognize him at first, she quickly changes her mind on no more proof than his word that she is his wife (89. 705). After the Count calls for Beppo to speak his claims in private, so as to avoid a public scandal,

Laura, much recovered, or less loath

To speak, cries 'Beppo! what's your pagan name?

Bless me! Your beard is of amazing growth!

And how came you to keep away so long?

Are you not sensible 'twas very wrong? (91. 724-28)

It is possible that she does not take the weight Beppo loads onto marriage with the same gravity as he does. Given her humorous response, it would seem that she is not overly concerned with which person is her legal husband. Alternatively, one might find that despite the fact of Beppo's absence lasting for at least six years (53. 419), Laura seems to recognize him in spite of his costume, darkened skin colour, and appearance. It seems likely that either his voice or features must have been sufficient to mark him as the same man she had once married and with whom she had lived. What may appear as changes to his outward characteristics and practices are not enough to deceive his wife when once she has a close look at him.

But beyond—or “inside”—the outer appearances is a more substantial alteration. Changing his nationality and religion was a significant adaptation of his identity to fit the life of his recent past, for these alterations are substantial enough that he has “to reclaim / His wife, religion, house, and Christian name” (97. 775-76). Both Laura and Beppo seem to acquiesce to the attempted erasure of the changes in his identity. To repair his identity, “[h]is wife received, the patriarch rebaptized him” (98. 777). The first case, with the sexual implications of a wife who “receive[s]” (Ogden 130), requires an action, while the “rebaptism” involves more of a performative action, in Austin's sense. It is a matter of repeating the action of naming him officially in the eyes of the church, an action that allows for his full reintegration and restoration to Venetian society. By analogy, this point stresses the importance of marriage as a legal framework more than a companionable state: in order for Beppo to return to his roles of homeowner/occupant, husband, and Christian, he must regain the legal but essential ties that make him so, and that are more critical to his identity than his wife's trust and acceptance. As I noted earlier, many recent critics pursue the question of cultural representation and

transformation; for instance, Stephen Cheeke finds Laura's question, "'And are you *really, truly*, now a Turk?'" (92. 729) the crux of the poem: "Is such a process of acculturation possible? Can travel, and prolonged absence from home, and sustained intercourse with an alien culture, change the nature of the self?" (113). Although this is an important issue the poem addresses, for my purposes the question of identity can be related to the issue of marriage. Thus, whether Beppo has "really, truly" altered his character, personality, indeed the whole of his identity is not especially significant to either Beppo or Laura, who both seem to intend to benefit from the legal arrangement that bound them once and will apparently do so again.

The remarriage that concludes the poem has a flippant tone that implies that Beppo's absence of many years is not going to cast a shadow on their future relationship, as Laura's inquisition of him suggests. This close connection between them recalls their earlier relationship, where the details of Beppo's private life with Laura are not as significant as his legal relationship to her. The narrator has told us that Beppo lived in a culture where men may have "[f]our wives by law, and concubines 'ad libitum'" (70. 560), and Laura appears concerned—understandably—about this very point after asking about his possible cultural transformation. However, this worry is instantly deflated through Laura's comic series of queries and exclamations:

With any other women did you wive?
Is't true they use their fingers for a fork?
Well, that's the prettiest shawl—as I'm alive!
You'll give it me? They say you eat no pork.
And how so many years did you contrive
To—Bless me! did I ever? No, I never

Saw a man grown so yellow! How's your liver? (92. 730-6)

Byron here conveys Laura's anxious tone through the self-interruptions, short phrases, and alternating questions and comments. However, it does not seem that she is very concerned about whether he married someone else, even if we are to suppose that he gestures silently in order to answer the question of wives. She is no more concerned about that possibility, nor does she see it as a threat to her own marriage, than she is concerned about how Turks consume their meals. Laura does not concern herself with a threat to the emotional and companionable relationship with her legal husband, for that is all he is to her. Her acceptance of him and his restoration of name and identity, however, do not mean that all's well that ends well. Indeed, "[t]he *envoi* is apparently constrained by a lack of space – it is accidental. It does not mark an end, but an accidental stop. It is the opposite of a full-close," remarks Bone, who pursues this point with the assessment that the poem finishes with "a last line which highlights the indefiniteness of 'somehow', and ends about as inconclusively as possible with the word 'begun'" (17). Elledge also comments on the striking inconclusiveness of *Beppo*'s finale:

restitution remains incomplete, compensation partial; and that impoverishment as the dark underside of separative gain modifies the poem's otherwise prodigal advocacy of freedom within relationship to part, wander, and return. . . . tension and irresolution persist at the end. It is hard to imagine a more definitive picture of ambivalence toward association than the composite one we find, wherein Laura and her husband are 'sometimes' divided, Beppo and the Count 'always' united.

(47)

I agree with both Bone's and Elledge's insights and would argue that they support a variation of the idea of remarriage. My next chapter will argue that the gothic fiction of the period concludes

with a second wedding, or with a first that follows a very long engagement. But *Beppo* does something different. Not only is there another person intimately involved in the marriage, raising questions about the status of a married “couple,” but also just as a remarriage calls for repetition, so too does the inconclusive ending of this poem suggest that a reiteration of the performatives that unite a couple will be necessary. Will Laura remain married to her husband? The line indicating that “Laura sometimes put him in a rage” (99. 787) suggests a relationship between them that continues in “his old age” (99. 785). Given that Beppo claims Laura as his wife (89. 705) after long years apart, it seems as though the marriage will survive. The contrast between husband and wife’s apparent quarrels, though, and Beppo’s friendship with the Count, opposes the idea of the companionate marriage, even as it implies that to continue their legal union, a renewal of pledges to each other, however distant in time, requires a Byronic version of remarriage.

Ultimately, then, *Beppo* demonstrates that the legality of marriage creates a union of some duration that remains intact even when the partners endure a long separation from each other, it is a kind of “matrimonial tether” (18. 142) that binds together two people, a binding that places greater emphasis on their financial and social positions than on their mutual attraction or amiability. In this poem, at least, Byron suggests that if one is seeking agreeable companionship, it is best found outside of marriage.

CONCLUSION

Byron is thus quite different from Wordsworth and Keats in representing marriage: it is to him largely a commercial venture rather than a sacred union, it is something continuous that extends beyond the ceremony—though not into the afterlife—and his poem *Beppo* seems more

at home among texts that dramatize reattachments or remarriage. Byron is often anti-conjugal, too, in writing, famously, to Murray about his continuing work on *Don Juan*, in which he records a moment of indecision concerning the fate of the eponymous hero: “I had not quite fixed whether to make him end in Hell—or in an unhappy marriage,—not knowing which would be the severest” (8.78). He also expresses anti-matrimonial ideas in the poem “To Eliza” from *Hours of Idleness* (1807), where the speaker asserts first, “Still I can’t contradict, what so oft has been said, / ‘Though women are angels, yet wedlock’s the devil.’ (15-16), and later,

But though husband and wife, shall at length be disjoin’d,
Yet woman and man ne’er were meant to dissever,
Our chains once dissolv’d, and our hearts unconfin’d,
We’ll love without bonds, but we’ll love you for ever (33-36).

So Byron, like his contemporary Percy Bysshe Shelley, seems to advocate for love in domestic relationships but rejects, like Shelley, marriage as bondage, represented through the metaphor of chains, an idea supported through his choice of the word “wedlock.”

The diverse writings of the male Romantic authors unite in their general hostility to a literal marriage whereas figurative marriage is an ideal, impossible goal in which the very best possibilities can be united, whether it is Keats and solitude, Wordsworth and Nature, or Blake and spiritual opposites.[60] Byron’s dislike of Wordsworth is widely known, and the two poets certainly have little in common with each other. Nevertheless, their matrimonial discourses can be said to have a modicum of affinity in the broad sense of being, in general, hostile to the idea of marriage as an institution, or as marriage as the best way to have a companionable relationship. Their poems of remarriage are very diverse, but they too share the commonality of

being very different from the remarriage narratives in the gothic fiction of the period, to which I shall now turn.

Chapter 3: Marriage in the Gothic Novel

INTRODUCTION

Chapters 1 and 2 explored representations or telling omissions of marriage and the post-Hardwicke wedding ceremony in political and poetic discourse of the Romantic period. Yet marriage and the wedding ceremony that, post-Hardwicke, legitimizes it through legal means, seldom emerge in literal representations. In the prominent political discourses of the period, Burke and Paine assume a society in which marriage occupies an unacknowledged, central role through its prescriptions for the family, inheritance, and, metaphorically, the relationship between the ruler of a state and his subjects. In the poetic discourse that helped to develop influential ideas of what constitutes Romanticism, conversely, marriage and weddings feature all too prominently, but in rather unexpected ways. While Wordsworth, Keats, and Byron celebrate the idea of a marriage as something productive when metaphorical, when they represent it as something literal, marriage becomes a kind of unfortunate bondage.

In this chapter, I begin with one of the most notorious Gothic texts, Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* and then move on to discuss Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*. My point of departure for this chapter is that unlike Burke, Paine, Wordsworth, and Byron in the representations of weddings, marriage, and remarriage that they make—or avoid making—Lewis and Radcliffe do not turn marriage into something metaphorical; the literal manifestation of it is very much central to their plots. While marriages have an important role in concluding the novels *The Monk* and *The Italian*, the approach each author takes in representing them is different. Both feature a version of Cavell's idea of remarriage in the sense of having the same couple make multiple pledges to each other as part of the legitimization of their marriages. Unlike Cavell's examples from Hollywood films, though, these couples do not, for the most part, actually wed in the first

instance. In terms of the Hardwicke Marriage Act, the pledges that the couples exchange would be akin to a pre-Hardwicke marriage, where an exchange of vows is sufficient to confer legal status on the married couple, so long as the communities with which they interact accept such verification of the marriage. In contrast to these marriages and Cavell's examples, the marriages in *The Monk* and *The Italian* cannot be legally solemnized unless there are witnesses and the proper authorities, making the marriages of the characters in these novels like post-Hardwicke marriages. The weddings are like J. L. Austin's examples of performative language, which require not only the correct words to be spoken, but spoken under a set of circumstances that are necessary for the marriage's felicitous completion (12ff.). This tension between the exchange of pledges and the legitimate ceremony is responsible for the motif of the interrupted wedding ceremony that, I argue, recurs across the period's gothic literature.

The interrupted wedding ceremony often means that a couple has their first attempt at marriage interrupted by the presence of someone uninvited, and always unwelcome, who disrupts the proceedings. The couple, should they wish to pursue their relationship and become a married couple, are therefore forced to repeat the ceremony in order to reach a successful completion. There are many variations on this motif, and it appears in several genres. Sometimes the interruption occurs at the actual wedding ceremony, while at other times there are disruptions that affect the newly married couple or others associated with the ceremony. Some prominent examples of this motif in Romantic-era literature include Coleridge's life-in-death *Ancient Mariner*, who prevents the wedding guest from attending the nuptials of his kin; Polidori's *Aubrey*, who tries in vain to prevent his sister from wedding the vampyre Lord Ruthven; Maturin's Father Olavida, who "dropped dead in the attitude of pointing to" the "awful stranger" who appears at Donna Ines's wedding feast (35); Charlotte Dacre's *Irene*, who believes she will

be marrying her beloved Orlando but becomes “the *wife of the tomb*” when the priest reveals himself as Death in “The Skeleton Priest; Or, The Marriage of Death” (ll. 133-44); Apollonius’s banishment of Keats’s Lamia, which also brings his pupil Lycius’s death (ll. II. 310-11); the return of Scott’s Edgar “Ravenswood[, who] had more the appearance of one returned from the dead, than of a living visitor” (321); and probably the most famous instance of the period, Victor Frankenstein’s creation who threatens, ““I shall be with you on your wedding-night!”” before murdering his creator’s new bride (116, 34).

This list is fairly representative of the diversity of works in which the motif of interruption or disruption is present. Some instances, such as that of Scott’s *Bride of Lammermoor*, have the unexpected guest appear at the signing of the marriage contract, not at the ceremony at all; and in others, such as Polidori’s “The Vampyre,” the interrupting party plays a completely ineffectual role in attempting his disruption. I suggest, however, that one commonality among the examples I have listed is that, in some way, death is made a part of the wedding, or of the feast or night that follows. This, I believe, is a crucial element in the motif of the interrupted wedding ceremony, at least in its manifestations in Romantic-era gothic literature.

The Monk features a number of wedding ceremonies: one imagined, some narrated briefly, some informal, some postponed, some briefly narrated, and some positioned as a kind of climax in the characters’ lives. For Lewis, however, these various domestic concerns are not as vital for his story as those scandalous events that concern the title character. In contrast, *The Italian* places the attempts at marriage at the centre of the narrative, which is another element that makes Radcliffe’s text a more active participant in the period’s domestic fiction than Lewis’s text with its thrilling horrors. *The Italian*’s marriage between Vivaldi and Ellena is Romanticism’s interrupted wedding ceremony *par excellence* because, more remarkably than

any other instance, it foregrounds the importance of the actual ceremony and the exchange of vows. The interruption, perhaps more than any other until *Jane Eyre* half a century later, comes at the crucial moment when the couple is just on the verge of pledging themselves to each other in the presence of witnesses. A question of legality emerges and Vivaldi and Ellena, just like Rochester and Jane, must repeat the process at the close of the narrative. In this way Vivaldi and Ellena's story is unique: unlike the other interrupted wedding ceremonies of the period, this one involves the same two people who are at the threshold of being legally wed but, due to the ill-timed arrival of strangers to prevent the ceremony, they must repeat the process at the conclusion of the novel.

I will focus on these two major novels of the period to argue for two related, major claims along with a third, smaller one. My first contention is that these gothic novels show that the dead hand, and more specifically, the dead father, is necessary to sanction a couple's marriage, and my second assertion is that whereas marriage in Lewis's text features couples who have made second attachments, Radcliffe's novel is akin to Cavell's formulation of remarriage, where spouses marry the same people they intended to initially, and this characteristic makes its politics closer to those advocated by Paine. My third point, to be discussed first, is that generically, although these novels are both gothic, *The Monk* better exemplifies that genre than *The Italian*, which participates more closely than *The Monk* in the genre of domestic fiction.

To elaborate on these points with specific examples, remarriage in *The Italian* means that once Vivaldi begins to pursue Ellena's hand in marriage, and she accepts his proposal, reluctantly at first and then willingly, they pursue their intentions until they are finally and officially wed. Their remarriage, necessitated by the initial, interrupted attempt, finds the same two people married who first desired to be wed. In Lewis's novel, however, there are several

reattachments where characters marry different people than the ones to whom they were initially attached. Alternatively, in the two more complicated cases, the characters marry different versions of the same person to whom they first pledged themselves. These more complex cases are those represented in the inset poem, “The Brave Alonzo, and Fair Imogine,” and the very long engagement of Raymond and Agnes.

When the dead approve of, or at least remove their objections to, the union of a couple, the couple can complete the wedding ceremony that was interrupted earlier in their narrative. The major example from *The Monk* is the Bleeding Nun, who torments Raymond until the exorcism releases her, thereby freeing him from his obligation to her and allowing for his eventual marriage to Agnes. In *The Italian*, the spirit of the dead is not as literal, although I do contend that Radcliffe allegorizes the name of the father, as Lacan would conceive of it, in bringing the couple’s wedding to fruition. It is necessary for Vivaldi’s father to know the identity and social position of Ellena’s deceased father before he will permit the couple to wed. From this evidence, I conclude that a significant feature of the representations of marriage in the Romantic period’s gothic literature is the approval of the dead hand.

GENERIC CONSIDERATIONS

Both *The Monk* and *The Italian* thus exhibit this gothic element, but because Radcliffe’s novel offers remarriage of the same couple, it is slightly closer to being a domestic novel than Lewis’s text. As I shall discuss in my project’s conclusion, although gothic literature is arguably replete with interrupted wedding ceremonies, the motif appears also in domestic novels.[61] However, in the domestic novels of the Romantic period, such as Jane Austen’s fiction, the heroines wed men of their choosing without the involvement of the dead.[62] The role of the

dead in sanctioning the marriages marks *The Italian* as a firm participant in the gothic genre, with some slight participation in domestic fiction's conventions. Domestic fiction and the gothic feature some common themes, as influentially suggested by Kate Ferguson Ellis in *The Contested Castle*. She contends that, like the emerging domestic novel, "the Gothic, too, is preoccupied with the home. But it is the failed home that appears on its pages, the place from which some (usually 'fallen' men) are locked out, and others (usually 'innocent' women) are locked in" (ix). While her generalization of heroines being locked in is more appropriate, in the case of Radcliffe, to the captivity of Adeline in *The Romance of the Forest* or Emily in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Ellis's broad thesis that the home is at the centre of Gothic plots is a compelling one.

Marriage is, after all, one significant way in which a dwelling or house becomes a home; one does not really consider the seaside cottage where Schedoni's henchman Spalatro lives to be a "home." But through their marriages, women and men can expect to dwell together in a shared space, that might house a few more occupants, such as servants, and be something that offers comfort to the family. Ellis cautions, though, that "[t]he safety of the home is *not* a given, nor can it ever be considered permanently achieved. At best it must be restored by women's *activity*, not only within its walls but outside in the world as well" (xvi). This is an important point, for it emphasizes the necessarily active role of the heroines in the face of threats and uncertainties that figure prominently in Gothic fiction. It also marks the home as a site of conflict; Burke draws on the rhetoric of these domestic terrors in depicting the attack on Marie Antoinette at the same time he expresses his indignance at its unsettling of his view of the natural order (see also Johnson 5). For the purposes of my argument regarding remarriage, Ellis's claim underscores the

necessity to repeat one's declarations of fidelity to one's partner in order to be hopeful that the home will be relatively safe, at least "within its walls."

Yet the quotation, and Ellis's argument in general, also open up the question of how homes establish themselves. She writes that in Radcliffe and Lewis, the male villains "rebel against the feminization of the home" by "either usurp[ing] the castle or try[ing] to destroy it from the outside" (xiv). But while her discussion of Lewis's novel is extensive, and her few comments about *The Italian* are convincing, *The Contested Castle* offers little interpretation of that Radcliffe novel. One reason for this lacuna may be that while there are homes that feature within its pages, such as Vivaldi's family home and Ellena's home with her aunt, much of the action occurs in spaces outside the home, such as the ruins in which Vivaldi and Paolo are detained, the Italian landscape across which many of the characters journey in flight or pursuit, or the chambers of the Inquisition, in which Schedoni's crimes and identity come to light. What *The Italian* and *The Monk* highlight is the path that couples take in order to reach the shared space of a home. Revising Ellis's contention, I argue that this path requires the continued activity from both men and women, and specifically, the willingness to commit to another person whom one will treat as a spouse. And the continuous activities of pledging oneself to another person are necessitated by the authors' staging of the interrupted wedding ceremony, a motif that is best exemplified in *The Italian*.

While comparisons between the two texts are plentiful,[63] the novels differ in their representations of marriage and weddings. Radcliffe's novel features common themes of the gothic novel, such as transgressions and their punishment(s), but not all of its trappings, such as plots within plots or supernatural elements, as in *The Monk*. But in representing a marriage plot at its core, *The Italian* is closer to a domestic novel while still being a participant as a gothic

novel. This is what I argue is crucial about Radcliffe's revision of Lewis's text: in representing an image of domestic life, Radcliffe emphasizes that marriage and its performance—since there are two attempts,[64] only one successful—are at its heart. For heterosexual couples, in these works of prose fiction, marriage is something to be aspired to, and the completion of a narrative. Thus, the interrupted wedding ceremony in *The Italian* brings the gothic not only closer to the concerns of the domestic sphere, but also represents marriage as a repeated—and conclusive—part of the narrative of that sphere.

Although they engage in significant concerns about domesticity, *The Monk* and *The Italian* are more firmly participants in the gothic genre than domestic fiction. Nancy Armstrong's argument regarding domestic novels applies to these gothic novels, to an extent. The understanding of genres most applicable here is Heather Dubrow's analogy that likens genres to colours: they are distinct entities, yet it is difficult to say when one runs into another (28-29), or Derrida's assertion that texts participate in genres without belonging to them (224). With these models in mind, I agree with Armstrong's broad claim that domestic fiction in eighteenth-century Britain promoted an ideology in which marriage and domesticity became desirable to men, and her thesis can apply to *The Monk* and *The Italian*: marriage is what Raymond, Lorenzo, Vivaldi, and, as we shall see, Schedoni, all desire. Her qualification, however, that the new kind of woman created through the emerging discourses of the domestic sphere was valued for her "qualities of mind" does not seem entirely applicable in the instances of these two gothic novels (4). "Of the female alone," writes Armstrong, "did it [i.e. domestic fiction] presume to say that neither birth nor the accoutrements of title and status accurately represented the individual; only the more subtle nuances of behavior indicated what one was really worth" (4). Unlike Darcy and his growing fascination with Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*, for instance, Radcliffe's hero

is captivated by the physical attractions of his future wife the moment he meets her. After the “secret manuscript” prologue, the main narrative begins thus:

It was in the church of San Lorenzo at Naples, in the year 1758, that Vicentio di Vivaldi first saw Ellena Rosalba. The sweetness and fine expression of her voice attracted his attention to her figure, which had a distinguished air of delicacy and grace; but her face was concealed in her veil. (5)

This opening represents one of the many parallels between *The Monk* and *The Italian*; although this one, unlike many of the latter novel’s revisions or implied criticisms of Lewis’s text, is a similarity rather than a difference.[65] The heroes of both novels gaze on the female subjects who become their desires: *The Monk* opens with Lorenzo’s attempt to penetrate Antonia’s veil. Raymond becomes attracted to Agnes, when he sees her, as he tells Lorenzo: “At the Castle of Lindenberg I beheld for the first time your Sister, the lovely Agnes. For me whose heart was unoccupied, and who grieved at the void, to see her and to love her were the same” (129-30). In another instance, subsequent to the discovery of Antonia’s murder, Lorenzo must find himself another potential bride, and he finds himself, while viewing “the Procession of Nuns by torch-light” for “the Festival of St. Clare,” gazing lustfully on the woman whom he will marry (294):

Lorenzo gazed with tranquillity upon the remainder of the show [i.e. the Procession]. Now appeared its most brilliant ornament. It was a Machine fashioned like a throne.... The summit was covered with silver clouds, upon which reclined the most beautiful form that eyes ever witnessed. It was a Damsel representing St. Clare: Her dress was of inestimable price, and round her head a wreath of Diamonds formed an artificial glory: But all these ornaments yielded to the lustre of her charms. As She advanced, a murmur of delight ran through the

Crowd. Even Lorenzo confessed secretly, that He never beheld more perfect
beauty.... (348)

Lorenzo is “enchanted” with Virginia for “her tender concern for the suffering Nun,” but considering that Virginia has virtually no role in the plot, merely replacing the murdered Antonia as Lorenzo’s bride, it is safe to say that this initial display of her body is what Lorenzo finds most desirable about her, not her “qualities of mind” (395). Armstrong’s thesis about domestic fiction, then, helps distinguish the genres of gothic and domestic slightly; both attempt to solve the ideological problem of representing marriages desirable to their reading audiences, but using different generic conventions to achieve their purposes. In the case of *The Italian*, however, part of Radcliffe’s revision of *The Monk* is that, although the sight of Ellena is enough initially to allure Vivaldi to pursue Ellena’s hand in matrimony, hundreds of pages and greater intimacy between them are required before she agrees to marry him, more willingly than at their attempt near the Lake of Celano. This is part of what makes *The Italian* participate in the genre of domestic fiction, while still remaining primarily gothic, since, as I argue, its use of the interrupted wedding ceremony demonstrates that a couple cannot be successfully wed unless the presence of the dead father, a metonymy for the marriage laws of England, consents.

THE MONK: MARRIAGE AS PERIL

The Monk’s interrupted weddings are complicated instances of remarriage; they include the dream of Lorenzo, the inset poem of “Alonzo the Brave, and Fair Imogene,” as well as the very protracted engagement of Agnes and Raymond. Aside from these interrupted weddings, Lewis represents marriage in *The Monk* as either comic or perilous, with examples coming from both serious and amusing characters. The comic weddings emerge through the undesirable

second attachments of two women, Leonella and Marguerite. In this way Lewis's novel also diverges from what Cavell contends is remarriage; in all of the cases in *The Monk*, the remarriages are between two different people, even when it seems, as in the case of Raymond and Agnes, that they are the same. Whereas a remarriage that foregrounds the necessity of renewing mutual pledges of love and devotion between a couple is central to domestic fiction of the period, Lewis's representations of remarriage are akin to Wordsworth's in *Peter Bell*: they are better instances of serial monogamy than continuous devotion between partners.

The first examples I shall present are the attachments of the only character to be played for fun throughout the novel, Leonella. In the novel's opening pages, she meets and becomes attracted to Don Lorenzo's friend Don Christoval, whose homosocial bond with his companion leads him to stage some amorous feelings toward Antonia's aunt while Lorenzo tries courting her niece. Christoval's feigned affections leave him in a potentially awkward position when she reveals her beliefs about how far his desires go when they converse. Leonella does not provide Christoval with the opportunity to clarify his position, repeatedly interrupting him:

'I rather wish you not to make your proposals just at present.'

'My proposals? I assure you, Signora....'

'Oh! Signor, I believe that your assurances of impatience are all very true; But really I must desire a little respite. It would not be quite so delicate in me to accept your hand at first sight.'

'Accept my hand? As I hope to live and breathe....'

'Oh! dear Signor, press me no further, if you love me! I shall consider your obedience as a proof of your affection....' (22-23)

Don Christoval has no intention of pursuing the relationship any further, expressing his distaste for the incident to Lorenzo: “I obligingly make a few civil speeches which mean nothing, to the Aunt, and at the end of an hour I find myself upon the brink of Matrimony! How will you reward me for having suffered so grievously for your sake?” (23-24). Leonella is foolish for thinking that Christoval’s “civil speeches” and offer to accompany her and Antonia home (22) indicative of a wish to marry, when he is quite clear that his offers meant “nothing.” Although it is clearly not marriage that Christoval has in mind, Leonella forms an attachment in her mind, believing for an extended period of time that she has a suitor, if not a fiancé. The narrator presents Leonella’s delusions about Christoval’s intentions for private amusement—Antonia’s (34)—and public mirth—the crowd gathered around the gypsy (37).

After much hopeful anticipation of the return of Christoval, Leonella finally abandons that potential relationship for the actual one she contracts while away from Madrid, with “[a]n honest Youth of Cordova, Journeyman to an Apothecary” (246). The narration of this event is very brief: “She soon consented to make him the happiest of Mankind. She wrote to inform her Sister of her marriage” (246). And Leonella virtually disappears from the novel following this alteration to her personal circumstances: aside from a brief paragraph in which she appears again in Madrid, only to leave it “with all diligence” (343), we only learn of her that “her nuptials were far from pleasing Antonia” (311). Given that Antonia’s character is one for whom we are meant to have sympathy because of her youth, beauty, relatively helpless position in the world, and brutal rape and murder, together with the early presentation of Leonella as a foolish old spinster hoping in vain to capture the hand of a young nobleman, it seems that Lewis finds her marriage both trivial, for the slight attention it merits in the narrative, and dangerous, for had Leonella not wed, she might have returned to Madrid to act as protector to her niece.[66]

The second instance of a marriage that is classified as comic but is actually dangerous is the case of Marguerite. After the partner who helped her conceive and raise two sons was slain by bandits and she thrown in with that same group of brigands, she describes what befell her to Don Raymond and his companions:

‘What was my consternation when informed . . . That I must give up all hopes of ever rejoining society, and consent instantly to accepting one of their Band for my husband! My prayers and remonstrances were vain. They cast lots to decide to whose possession I should fall; I became the property of the infamous Baptiste. A Robber, who had once been a Monk, pronounced over us a burlesque rather than a religious Ceremony: I and my Children were delivered into the hands of my new Husband. . . .’ (123)

Although she declares that the ceremony is a comic form—burlesque—such a statement is ironic because the wedding may only be considered as darkly comic. Subsequent to her second marriage to a different man than the one she was initially married to, Marguerite’s life becomes difficult, if not dangerous, with her husband, a murderer. The choice of husband by casting lots to determine him is a parody of the discourse of mercenary marriages of convenience, arranged between families, but it is a parody in the sense of being critical, not comical. At least in the cases of arranged marriages, there is a small element of choice; if there were no choice, one would end up with a marriage arranged the way that Marguerite’s is. In her situation, if the lots were cast fairly, there is not only no choice for the woman, but also none for the man. Neither person is suited for the other in domestic life. Just as in their domestic life where Marguerite finds Baptiste’s robbery and murder loathsome, so too does he find her an unsuitable marriage partner for her continual scowling (100). She would rather be out of the marriage, but she has

remained with Baptiste until the point when she seizes on a potential opportunity to escape with the arrival of the disguised Raymond and his companions. Since she needs Raymond's assistance in being able to dispense with her husband, it might have been out of fear that she stayed with him. If Baptiste discovered her attempting to flee from him, he might have brought a swift reprisal about, enacted through his network of bandits and their allies.

Support for my thesis that the permission of the dead is necessary in order to sanction a marriage comes with the murder of Baptiste. The spirit of her first partner does not intervene in her wedding to Baptiste and has, in fact, no role in the narrative beyond being responsible for helping her to conceive children and demonstrating that Marguerite is a devoted woman who accepts the choices she makes. However, Marguerite's second attachment, the forced marriage, never develops to a great length in the narrative since she and Raymond are able to terminate Baptiste's life. The murder seems justified since Baptiste is an assassin himself and threatens to murder Marguerite's children should she attempt to escape from him (124). Together with Leonella's marriage, Marguerite's suggests that marriage is a potentially dangerous affair in the world of *The Monk*.

Marriage as peril is the way that Lewis represents the interrupted wedding scenes, as well. The first one occurs when Lorenzo dreams of marrying Antonia, shortly after their initial meeting, when, "before He had time to receive her, an Unknown rushed between them" (28). This "Unknown's" violations of Antonia, and Lorenzo's failure to protect her, are shortly followed by the collapse of the cathedral and the end of the dream. The marriage ceremony, even when imagined as a potential sign of happiness, is marked first by interruption and then by destruction. A second interrupted wedding ceremony occurs within the inset poem, "Alonzo the Brave, and Fair Imogine" (313-16). Antonia reads this text while sitting up late, awaiting the

arrival of her Aunt Leonella, an arrival that does not occur until it is too late, as Antonia's consciousness is interrupted by the poison with which Ambrosio drugs her. The final interrupted wedding of this novel does not occur at a ceremony, but instead may be considered a very long engagement. It is the most complicated one of the novel, and occurs between Agnes and Raymond, who promise to wed each other but face a long delay and many difficulties before they can finally exchange vows.

Before turning to a full discussion of these interrupted weddings, I will demonstrate how Lewis relegates them to secondary importance in his novel, a move that further confirms *The Monk* as being closer to gothic than domestic fiction. I shall argue for the role of the plot first and then discuss the relationship of the inset texts, such as the poetry, to that primary plot. These two aspects are, as we shall see, interrelated to a high degree, but for clarity's sake, I shall discuss the plot first. The novel is subtitled "A Romance" and as in the romance(s) of *Don Quixote*, Lewis essentially asks his readers, as Cardenio does there, to "[b]e not weary...of listening to these digressions" (Cervantes 166). The plot of *The Monk* is composed significantly of digressions, which introduce different characters and have them represent differing transgressions, although the structure of the overall narrative and the significance of the transgressions are quite distinct from Cervantes's fiction.

THE MONK: NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

I shall now discuss the novel's composition of digressive narratives that sometimes relate to the primary narrative, which is the undoing of the apparently holy Ambrosio: he is the novel's antihero, and although the narrator refers at times to other protagonists as the reader's heroes (e.g. Lorenzo, 29, 30), the narrative structure does not bear this out. The novel's complicated

portrayal of relationships between characters and multiple plot threads are suggestive of what Adam Roberts characterizes as the tendency for Gothic literature to exhibit “a restless fluidity of situation” (22). The narrator manipulates scenes and points of view throughout the novel, and this arrangement of perspectives is a sign of what is central to its constitution; for instance, although Don Raymond begins to inform his friend Don Lorenzo of the adventures that befall him while disguised as Alphonso d’Alvarada through direct speech (92-94), the narrative style obscures first the novel’s narrator, who disappears following the transition to the “History of Don Raymond, Marquis de las Cisternas,” to be replaced by Raymond, who is himself obscured when the inset stories begin (95ff.). The narrator disappears, and in effect, the long “history” that Raymond unfolds to his friend becomes an inset tale, which itself features several inset tales,[67] such as those of Marguerite and the story of the Bleeding Nun. And each of these layers challenges what it is that constitutes an independent narrative: although “the Great Mogul” (167), who helps to exorcise the spirit of Beatrice de las Cisternas, tells of his voyages and sufferings to Raymond in only one paragraph, does that narrative constitute a tale or a character history, the life Ambrosio led up to the point where the narrative begins? Despite all of these inset tales, histories, and explanations, some of which seem superfluous[68] or at least unnecessarily lengthy in terms of the purpose they serve, there is still a frame tale, narrated by the novel’s editorial figure.[69]

If the tradition of the eighteenth-century English novel features a single character at its centre, even if there are multiple digressions, *The Monk*’s place in that tradition is secured by having Ambrosio at the centre of the narrative trajectory. Similarly, the (shortened) titles of *Pamela*, *Roderick Random*, *Roxana*, *Tom Jones*, and especially *Tristram Shandy*, are evidence that, in this tradition of novels, one character is at the centre of the narrative, even if there are

multiple other subplots and digressions at work that are tenuously connected with the primary narrative. Lewis, of course, is not a direct heir to this tradition, referring to his eponymous antihero by his social role and religious title, rather than by his name. In Radcliffe's further revision to this convention, she seems to be revising Lewis's novel in this aspect as well: although her definite article "the" gestures toward a single individual, the fact that this person is unidentified is significant. In naming her text after the nationality of nearly *all* the characters in the novel, she both breaks from the conventions of referring to a single, identifiable person and highlights the irony of naming a novel for a single character when it features multiple plots that revolve around multiple characters. A further irony, though, is that although Radcliffe's title potentially refers to any of the characters within the frame tale, the plot focuses much more centrally around the hero Vivaldi and heroine Ellena: very little of the text diverges from attention to the fate or trials of these two characters.

This is, I argue, a further revision of Lewis's text by Radcliffe: while Lewis foregrounds lurid sensationalism, Radcliffe does not feature any of the extreme violence that he does. While critics have noted that there is no supernatural element in Radcliffe's novels, only the supposed supernatural,[70] she also foregrounds domestic relationships in the novel far more than Lewis does. The plot of *The Italian*, despite its greater length than *The Monk*, is much more unified: once we get to the primary narrative the English traveler reads, we follow what is essentially the courtship (or persecution) of Ellena by Vivaldi, and the novel's climax is the wedding that joins them together. After this event, nothing of significance, let alone a return to the frame tale, occurs, foregrounding the importance of marriage in Radcliffe's novel. In *The Monk*, marriage is also significant since a desire to wed drives many of the characters, though importantly, not the title character. Yet Lewis's novel does not conclude with the wedding of the "secondary"

characters; instead, the narrator takes us to the final punishment and destruction of the novel's antihero, which suggests that, as the title indicates, the novel has been primarily about Ambrosio after all. In making this narrative decision, Lewis's novel deliberately decentralizes the importance of marriage in the plot of the novel, making it a clearer participant in the genre of the gothic novel, rather than one in the genre of the domestic novel.

One might wonder about the place of Agnes, who appears to set things in motion by cursing Ambrosio after he rejects her supplication. Is she not the novel's heroine? In a sense, yes, of course: much of the narrative focuses on her, as she is punished by powerful people who believe that her plan to elope and her unexpected subsequent pregnancy violate what it is that makes those people powerful. In the first instance, the Baroness Lindenberg also forms a romantic attachment to Raymond and is furious with Agnes for allegedly stealing his affections away from her (136-37); in the second, the Prioress believes that her convent will suffer shame at having a pregnant woman discovered within (48). Her story runs, like Ambrosio's, throughout the novel, and arguably more than his does since she appears in parts narrated by the other characters. However, although she has an ostensibly large part of the plot, her voice is relatively small; she only speaks for herself at length to explain the details of circumstances that readers and other characters are familiar with; and her tale, too, is an inset narrative (402-17). Ambrosio never speaks for himself, except when the narrator gives voice to his thoughts, as occurs after his triumphal discourse to the audience assembly at the Capuchin church (40). Indeed, when he gives vent to his vanity, we learn about his pompous character and suspect that his arrogance, at odds with the humility of his profession, will be tested. Agnes might curse him (48-49), but the seeds of his downfall have already been planted through the development of his character over time and Matilda's arrangement of the portrait of herself as the Madonna to appear in his room

(80-82). In sum, *The Monk* features as its central narrative and central figure Ambrosio with many other digressions that help to flesh out that plot through the interaction of the characters and their plots. Such is Lewis's notion of mimesis: a character cannot be a central character or an antihero without other characters around who are *not* central or antiheroes; characters need each other to aid in drawing out their qualities.

The way these characters interact, through the inset narratives, leads me to my next point of discussion for this novel: the relationship of the inset poems and narratives to the main narrative. Lewis is quite traditional in following romance conventions of placing quotations, whether actual, fabricated, or erroneous, at the heads of his chapters. One finds these, along with inset poetry, in other romances, such as *The Romance of the Forest*, which advertises itself on the 1791 title page as being "Interspersed with Some Pieces of Poetry." But Lewis might be unique in having his inset poetry relate closely to the prose of the novel; for instance, in *The Romance of the Forest*, poems such as "To the Visions of Fancy" (35) or "Night" (81-82) aid in shaping the mood and mind of the heroine who performs them and help to colour the tone of the scenes in which they appear, but they contribute nothing to the novel's plot. This is not the case with *The Monk*, whose inset narratives frequently comment on the action; for instance, Lorenzo's dream of his marred wedding with Antonia features a repulsive assailant who "torture[s] her with his odious caresses," a "Monster [who] plunge[s] into the Gulph," and the collapse of a religious place (28). The events of the novel follow this prediction when Ambrosio rapes his sister and is later dropped by the devil into a mountainous landscape. Thus, while some details of the dream differ from the actual events depicted in the novel—it is, for example, St. Clare's Convent, not the Church of the Capuchins, that is destroyed—many parts of Lorenzo's dream come to pass. The same occurs with the gypsy's dolorous prediction to Antonia regarding her terrible fate (38),

where the words, if vaguer, are more generally consistent with the events that unfold throughout the novel. This is not always the case, however, as the same fortune-teller implies, without saying explicitly, that Leonella will not marry (37), which is not the case. The small detail that the gypsy does not say with certainty that Leonella will *not* marry may be the key to the connection between the inset narratives and the primary plot: when promises are made, they are expected to be kept.

There are very few predictions made in the narrative of *The Monk*, but for further evidence of this claim regarding “promises,” consider the role of another inset narrative, whose lesson has little to do with its auditors’ aspirations but has much to do with the fate of Antonia. When Theodore hopes to reach Agnes in her state of confinement, he serenades the nuns with “The Water-King” that features a lustful, evil spirit who wishes to win a maid for himself, in yet another instance of a perilous marriage within the pages of *The Monk*. The title character consults “his Mother-witch” for advice, and “She formed him like a gallant Knight” (l. 7, 14) so that he can dupe the Maid into marrying him and carry her off into his underwater lair, making her disappear from the world. The final stanza offers the following warning:

Warned by this Tale, ye Damsels fair,
To whom you give your love beware!
Believe not every handsome Knight,
And dance not with the Water-Spright! (77-80)

Since Theodore is addressing the nuns—ostensibly—and Agnes—intentionally—this ballad makes an odd choice since the nuns are not best classified as “Damsels fair” who would anticipate bestowing their love on handsome suitors. And since Theodore is a companion and friend to Raymond, he is not trying to warn off Agnes from selecting an improper match, either.

However, the story of the Water-King and his bride does parallel the story of Ambrosio and Antonia in a number of ways: he seeks the assistance of a supernatural being who aids him to disguise himself as an attractive person; in his case, though, attractive by appearing as a helpful confessor. And he brings about her destruction; Antonia is a “damsel” who must use caution when making alliances. Robert Miles writes that “[u]p until *The Monk* inset narratives tended to offer a foreboding counterpoint to the main action, with the central threat to the heroine realized among her subsidiary doubles” (*Gothic Writing* 169), and I am suggesting that this use of inset narratives continues with these short, self-contained poems to foreshadow future events that will befall the more primary characters.

Antonia, of course, does not consent to Ambrosio’s desires as the bride in “The Water King” does, but the idea of poetic narratives commenting on the prose narrative involving the primary characters can apply to Lewis’s representations of marriage, as well: once a couple makes a pledge to wed in a wedding ceremony, it is only death that can part them. Leonella, for instance, never formally explains her intention to marry Don Christoval, and she ends up wed to someone else; Marguerite’s marriage is forced by the murder of her first domestic partner; and Agnes and Raymond make promises to wed each other and they succeed in doing so at the novel’s conclusion. This kind of thinking where a promise, once made, must be kept, relies on the origins of the marriage to confer its legitimacy; it is a concept that Burke articulates, as well. In contrast, the remarriages of Radcliffe and Austen demonstrate that one cannot make promises and assume their potency and currency. It becomes necessary to renew one’s commitment to a spouse in order to mark a marriage as legitimate.

The Monk: Interrupted Wedding Ceremonies

Another of the novel's interrupted weddings, Lorenzo's nightmare about wedding Antonia, reveals a similar pattern of transgression and the presence of something supernatural and terrible, even if we cannot firmly classify it as "dead." The interruption that breaks the imagined ceremony between Antonia and Lorenzo comes when a monster, whose "Mouth breathed out volumes of fire" arrives at the moment of, or causes, the church's collapse (28). Plunging into an abyss, the intruding monster would likely end up being dead, if it was not already so. The fact that, amid the church's collapse, the monster takes Antonia's virginal "white Robe" and disappears into a gaping hole while Antonia herself plans to meet Lorenzo "'above'" foregrounds several of the events to occur throughout the course of the novel. And it also suggests that, once again, because the dead do not approve of the marriage, it cannot occur in the gothic novel. The marriage that finally comes to Lorenzo is a second, different attachment, after facing the pain of losing the woman he had initially hoped to wed, and is thus not an instance of remarriage in Cavell's sense of the term.

Lewis's implied maxim about keeping promises is one of the touchstones throughout the novel. When Antonia reads "Alonzo the Brave, and Fair Imogine," she learns of a woman who invites the ghost of her lover to appear at her wedding should she choose a second, different lover (314, l. 16-21): unlike many other instances of the interrupted wedding ceremony, in this case, the guest should not be unexpected. This particular poem, read at that moment, offers little consolation to the distressed Antonia. If anything, it can be said to contradict the main narrative: Antonia reads this while waiting for Leonella and her husband, a man she chose after fancying herself on the threshold of marriage to Don Christoval. But the overall function of this narrative poem is to reinforce the important ideas of the novel, and, for my argument, the importance of

second attachments in Romantic-era narratives of marriage. It is worth recalling that in *The Monk*, Leonella marries an apothecary after pledging herself to Don Christoval; Lorenzo marries Virginia after hoping to wed Antonia; and while Raymond marries Agnes, he first plighted himself to her as Alphonso d'Alvarada. These are all second attachments to different people, and they are, at least as far as this novel informs us, successful. In Imogine's case, however, the situation is more complicated: she makes a *different* attachment with the rich Baron, but she makes a *second* attachment to her *first* lover, Alonzo.

Early in the poem, Imogine responds to his fears that she will turn him away for another suitor by claiming that Alonzo has insulted her:

‘Oh, hush these suspicions,’ Fair Imogine said,

‘Offensive to Love and to me!

For if ye be living, or if ye be dead,

I swear by the Virgin, that none in your stead

Shall Husband of Imogine be.

‘If e'er I by lust or by wealth led aside

Forget my Alonzo the Brave,

God grant, that to punish my falsehood and pride

Your Ghost at the Marriage may sit by my side,

May tax me with perjury, claim me as Bride,

And bear me away to the Grave!’ (313-14; ll. 11-21)

In this outrageous pledge of commitment, Imogine informs her lover in two different ways that she agrees to marry him. The second of these ways is all the more striking because, while most of the poem features stanzas of five lines, this promise occurs within one of only two of the

poem's six-line stanzas, and the other is a virtual repetition of these lines (ll. 62-67) making the crucial point of the narrative clear. Although there is no explicit vow in Alonzo's preceding speech, his reappearance as the Skeleton Knight at the wedding feast of Imogine and the Baron indicates that he was willing to consider himself betrothed by her words. That is, their initial pledges functioned very much as a pre-Hardwicke wedding ceremony, and despite the presence of the priest to bless the baron and Imogine, the poem demonstrates that the first attachment has legitimacy. This is, in Cavell's terms, a remarriage, but it is unique in being not at all a happy one, at least so far as Imogine is concerned; the Skeleton Knight torments her spirit after he tells her that it was "to punish thy falsehood and pride" and to "tax thee with perjury [and] claim thee as Bride" (ll. 64, 66).

In effect, this remarriage illustrates one possible outcome of marriages arranged prior to the 1753 Hardwicke Act. Problems could arise in cases where one spouse wants to deny and/or abandon his or her promises to marry, while the other spouse wants to pursue or continue the marriage. If there are no witnesses to verify the couple's married status, disagreements might only be settled by force, as in this case. It is particularly important here that Lewis represents this interrupted wedding with the return of a dead spirit, for he literalizes the role that the dead hand has in sanctioning a marriage. The return of the dead to claim a spouse because of a promise made while living suggests the power of pledges from the pre-Hardwicke Marriage Act and is akin to Burke's veneration of an ordinary action to determine legitimacy. The example of the characters in this poem shows a promise, once made, is one that should be kept, and not even death can prevent someone from keeping it. In making this conclusion, it appears that this incident favours ideas that Burke would endorse; however, if it does so, it is a situation that is made the more complicated by its form of remarriage. This dramatization of Alonzo coming to

“claim” his bride again is suggestive of Paine’s theory of legitimating the authority of a legal arrangement through its repeated performance.

In the aspect of its repeated, performative qualities, the relationship between Alonzo and Imogine is similar to Radcliffe’s depiction of the remarriage of Vivaldi and Ellena. Both sets of characters require the approval of the dead hand to sanction the wedding; in the case of Imogine, Alonzo does not consent to the wedding Imogine has with the wealthy Baron on the grounds that he is already wed to her. In the case of Vivaldi and Ellena, his father demands that his son marry someone who holds an equal social position as determined by birth, and Ellena’s dead father, as I shall argue below, in effect gives his sanction for the wedding between the young couple to proceed.

THE MONK: THE (RE)MARRIAGE OF AGNES AND RAYMOND

The final interrupted wedding for consideration in this novel, and its most complicated instance of remarriage, emerges from the relationship between Raymond and Agnes. He first plighted himself to her as Alphonso d’Alvarada, and, in that guise, pledged himself to the Bleeding Nun. There are thus two cases of false identity, situations that pose incredibly thorny difficulties to anyone marrying like this, pre-Hardwicke. Without credible witnesses, who would subsequently be available for verification? Further problems could arise if true promises are made by or to someone, but that person’s identity is later discovered to be different than the one he or she assumed when the promise was made. Such a situation would cause difficulties in establishing who is married to whom. The exchanges that Lewis represents in the long courtship of Raymond and Agnes demonstrate that marriage is perilous for both bride and groom, as she

faces extended difficulties, and he must have an exorcism performed to rid himself of an evil spirit, which are all consequences of these informal, or pre-Hardwicke, pledges.

It takes some reading between the lines to contend that the delays between Agnes and Raymond constitute an interrupted wedding *ceremony*, even a pre-Hardwicke one, since they do not speak explicitly of marriage in their conversations together. After confessing to Raymond her love for him, Agnes demurs when he suggests that she escape the Castle of Lindenberg with him: “Instead of seducing me to an action which would cover me with shame, strive rather to gain the affections of those who govern me” (132). This “action” that “would cover [her] with shame,” being unnamed, must be conjectured by the reader, and could refer either to clandestine marriage or sexual intercourse without an extended relationship. Her encouragement for him to befriend her protectors suggests that she insists on an extended connection as married couple.[71] A second possible indication that they are agreeing to wed each other occurs when yet another instance of mistaken identity emerges. After the Baroness discovers it is not she whom Raymond was allegedly courting, the couple must make plans to flee her wrath. The terms in which Agnes supplicates to Raymond for her safety imply that she is willing to cast her lot with his when making their plans for escape: “I rely upon your love, upon your honour!” (148). Although there might not be an explicit pledge to marry here, what other choice would Agnes have if she were to avoid staining her honour when travelling and living in the company of a young man? We might also take as evidence Raymond’s reminder to her in the letter he sends to arrange “for the second elopement of Agnes” (207), which urges her, “Remember that you had promised to be mine, long ere you engaged yourself to the church” (46).[72]

Agnes’s determination to rely upon and wed Raymond is an act of independence for both of them. If Raymond has his father’s permission to wed Agnes, he does not disclose this fact, but

since his father is titled and wealthy (95), he would probably be concerned with the person to whom his inheritance is, eventually, to pass. If his father's consent is of any consequence to Raymond, he does not let Lorenzo, or anyone else, know of its importance to him. Agnes is more resistant than Raymond to the wishes of her parents since she actively rebels against them; she does not want to live the life of a nun in a convent and is brought, through her romantic and physical entanglement, to be close to Raymond against the will of her parents' substitute, her Aunt Rodolpha. This kind of clandestine relationship and possible marriage is one that the Hardwicke Act would have sought to eliminate. As with other instances of marriage in this novel, Lewis's attitude seems to be ambivalent toward the Marriage Act. On the one hand, it appears as though the opposition to their courtship by the parental substitutes Donna Rodolpha and Dame Cunegonda places their wedding as a transgressive one against parental inclinations; however, for neither of the two elder women are we meant to have much sympathy, so Lewis seems to endorse the idea of having a clandestine marriage carried out without the necessary legal apparatus of the Marriage Act. On the other hand, their courtship is so riddled with difficulties that even if they can overcome or ignore their parents' desires, they cannot wed without approval from the dead, which stands as a kind of opposition from an elder generation. In any case, since they do eventually wed near the novel's close, they can be said to have a wedding that is interrupted by many different events that are perilous to them.

Although it certainly would not have been very pleasant for Raymond to be haunted by a legendary ghost, it is Agnes upon whom greater suffering is inflicted by all of the delays. Her disappointment at Raymond's disappearance is unfortunate, and her subsequent commitment to life in a convent is, while a consequence of this first action, of her own choosing. However, Agnes is a "victim of monastic cruelty" (396), and when the prioress administers the poison and

she apparently dies, she suffers “the greatest agonies” (402). The difficulties she faces are greater and more complicated than those narrated about the other characters who suffer an interrupted wedding, but Agnes’s fate follows the same structure as theirs. She transgresses the law mandated by a person in power and faces punishment for doing so through forcible confinement, poison, solitary captivity, and having the heart-breaking misfortune of nursing a dead infant. Her final wedding to Raymond can only be completed when those in power are dead. Although the authority figures who enact the laws may be gone, the novel implies that the laws themselves remain in place, and a marriage must be sanctioned by them, rather than permitting Agnes and Raymond to have their pre-Hardwicke marriage, where making promises to another individual in private or becoming pregnant might have constituted a wedding.

There are conflicting promises made throughout the novel, which seems to confirm that in this gothic novel, nuptial vows contracted in the style of pre-Hardwicke promises do not have the authority of promises made before witnesses and a priest, as indicated by the law.[73] Agnes vacillates between which vows to live by, depending on her need. In supplication to Ambrosio early in the novel, she tells the monk that “[l]ong before I took the veil, Raymond was Master of my heart: He inspired me with the purest, the most irreproachable passion, and was on the point of becoming my lawful husband” (47). Although a valid statement, this assertion is also conflicts with her proclaimed vow to the church, which she told Raymond about earlier in the narrative: “Wilfully did I contract my engagement with heaven; I cannot break it without a crime. Then banish from your mind the idea of our being ever united. I am devoted to religion; and however I may grieve at our separation, I would oppose obstacles myself, to what I feel would render me guilty” (186). The pangs of conscience that she feels after she consummates her

relationship with Raymond also lead her to invoke a pledge to religion when she furiously denounces him:

I looked upon you as my Friend, my Protector: I trusted myself in your hands with confidence, and relying upon your honour, thought that mine ran no risque. And 'tis by you, whom I adored, that I am covered with infamy! 'Tis by you that I have been seduced into breaking my vows to God, that I am reduced to a level with the basest of my sex! Shame upon you, Villain, you shall never see me more!

(187)

Upon discovery of her pregnancy, however, she reverts back to referring to him as her husband in order to escape from the vows that she, at the same time, admits to having made to the church: “I have taken my resolution: Procure a dispensation from my vows; I am ready to fly with you. Write to me, my Husband!” (190). With these words, she accepts the contract she made with him through an exchange of words and consummated in an act of sexual intimacy, which equates to a pre-Hardwicke, private marriage, although one that could not be proven by witnesses who, in the absence of seeing the exchange of vows, could testify to their dwelling together as husband and wife.

A further complication is that Agnes had been pledged to life as a nun by her mother in exchange for her continued good health, and being a nun is a condition of life to which her father acquiesced when she was first born (130). This instance of a prior pledge made by a parent recalls Burke's ideal form of statecraft and family, wherein an elder generation confers property and principles upon a younger generation through inheritance. In Burke's theory and the world of the novel, as in this example of Agnes's mother and father, parents have a more important role in speaking for their children; a child in such a system must either agree to the will and the world

her parents have created for her, or she must, like Agnes, struggle against her family's wishes. A further instance of this intervention by paternal figures on behalf of children occurs when Lorenzo arranges to release her from her vows to the convent. In this case, it is necessary for him to plead for a papal dispensation through the assistance of his uncle, the Cardinal-Duke of Lerma (177). Even in Lewis's inaccurately depicted Catholic Europe, the papacy would be responsible for ensuring that Agnes remains a nun once she had verbally committed herself to be one through her vows, or even before that, depending on the kind of arrangement her parents made with the church.[74]

The power of the Catholic Church and its laws plays a significant role in determining the outcomes for the protagonists, although individuals within those institutions can manipulate those legal conditions for their personal benefits. It is the law that the Prioress invokes when condemning Agnes to suffer, but she also rejects the papal Bull Lorenzo presents to her in his appeal to free Agnes (220). This transgression indicates the fullness of her arrogance since the Bull's source is the highest power in the Catholic Church, the Pope. That the Prioress lies to Lorenzo about his sister's death, incarcerates her and refuses her supplications, even at the birth of her child, and is later trampled to death by an angry mob, suggests that readers are intended to dislike her, and reprehend her support of the letter of the law in this case. However, the Prioress will invoke the law when it suits her. When inciting the crowd to action, Mother St. Ursula explains the Domina's penchant for strict regulations:

St. Clare's rules are severe: But grown antiquated and neglected, many of late years have either been forgotten, or changed by universal consent into milder punishments. The penance, adjudged to the crime of Agnes, was most cruel, most inhuman! The law had been long exploded: Alas! It still existed, and the

revengeful Prioress now determined to revive it.... The Prioress in exaggerated colours described the offence of Agnes, and scrupled not to propose the revival of this almost forgotten law. (351)

What is notable here is that it is what Ursula initially describes as a “rule” of the convent is quickly changed by her to the more authoritative “law,” a word that connotes a more serious punishment for transgressions. Additionally, as if it were not enough for her to invoke a law, it is one that has been created by those who are no longer living, given that it had been “long exploded” and “almost forgotten.” The Prioress, then, with her enforcement of rules where it suits her to achieve her own ends, means to punish Agnes so that she might appear respectable to Ambrosio and the public. This aggression of the Prioress contributes in large part to the perils of Agnes’s long-delayed marriage.

On the one hand, it is possible to argue for an analogous relationship between the elders of a family and the elders of the church since they can both be referred to as “mothers” and “fathers.” The parallel might be carried forward if we think about inheritance in a wider sense of bequeathing not only life and wealth but ideas and values on the younger generation. On the other hand, this relationship cannot be seen as being too similar since the church’s “mothers” and “fathers” are not biologically related to or responsible for the younger generation. In a sense, the parental figures of the church may be considered “false,” a point I shall later return to in my discussion of Radcliffe’s villain Schedoni, because they are not literally mothers and fathers capable of biological reproduction and caring for a literal family. But the analogy between literal parents and metaphorical ones is difficult to ignore because of the structural relationships they bear to each other. Agnes’s biological parents, for instance, have long been absent from her life, leaving her to be raised by her aunt, her governess, and perhaps most of all the nuns in the

convent. In the situation in which Agnes finds herself with the Prioress, the role of the dead “mothers” in creating injunctions that would punish Agnes is at the forefront of her transgressive marriage.

Agnes and Raymond’s married life is not an unqualified “happily-ever-after” one; rather, it is so only in comparison with that which they suffered in their early time together:

The remaining years of Raymond and Agnes, of Lorenzo and Virginia, were happy as can be those allotted to Mortals, born to be the prey of grief, and sport of disappointment. The exquisite sorrows with which they had been afflicted, made them think lightly of every succeeding woe. They had felt the sharpest darts in misfortune's quiver; Those which remained appeared blunt in comparison. Having weathered Fate's heaviest Storms, they looked calmly upon its terrors: or if ever they felt Affliction's casual gales, they seemed to them gentle as Zephyrs which breathe over summer-seas. (420)

It is somewhat odd that Lewis groups Lorenzo and Virginia with Raymond and Agnes, but although the former couple’s relationship is not portrayed as having the strains on it that the latter couple’s did, they were caught up in the tumult of the riot and suffered in sympathy through Agnes’s much more difficult ordeal. Although they eventually find relative happiness together, Agnes and Raymond endure much hardship, which they attribute both to the hand of fate and the role of parental institutions. Raymond, speaking to Lorenzo, says that had the latter been able to intervene, ““from what misfortunes should both Agnes and myself have escaped! Fate had ordained it otherwise!”” (95) and that ““[t]he superstition of the Parents of Agnes, aided by her Aunt's unfortunate passion, seemed to oppose such obstacles to our union as were almost insurmountable”” (137). Agnes is more pessimistic about the outcome of their transgressions,

telling her betrothed when he comes, in disguise, to speak to her in the convent's garden, "'we must part! Insuperable Barriers divide us from each other, and on this side the Grave we must never meet again!'" (185), and more curiously, the narrator echoes this sentiment at the opening of Volume 3, Chapter 1: "All the researches of the Marquis de las Cisternas proved vain: Agnes was lost to him for ever" (281).

The latter statement seems final, but the fate of Raymond and Agnes turns out to be otherwise, unless we conclude from this statement, and Agnes's expectations, that "Agnes" dies and is "reborn." Technically, after she "dies," Raymond does not meet Agnes "on this side the Grave," as she says. We are told that he makes a similar promise: "As for Raymond himself, He wished for nothing more earnestly than to join Agnes in the grave" (344). She also tells him, after becoming enraged with herself and him for their sexual intimacy, that he will never see her again, and in fact, he does not, until after they are reunited following the adventure in the crypt. Does Agnes then have two identities, one prior to and the other after her virtual death?

This possibility fits with Jesse M. Molesworth's argument that the novel parades extensive doubling, including events, objects, and people. One such example of this doubling is Marguerite's stabbing of Baptiste and the stabbing of the Baron of Lindenberg by the Bleeding Nun. In some of these instances, Molesworth remarks, it is difficult to tell the original from the copy, which "no doubt has to do with the design of Walpole's [i.e. as initiator of the Gothic genre in eighteenth-century English literature] project, which by intermingling old and new, obsolete and modern, openly mocks the search for origins and authenticity" (406). An example of these undecideable origins and copies comes in the case of the portrait in Ambrosio's cell: is Matilda the origin or the copy of this image? (414). Miles notes the novel's more generalized use of unstable identities, writing "[w]hat *The Monk* finally contests is the system of justice that

relies upon notions of fixed identity” and indeed the narrative presents many instances that double the characters (“Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis” 54). In the case of Agnes, Molesworth mentions the possibility of there being two Agneses in the sense of her living out someone else’s previous life: “As much as the Bleeding Nun in her ghostly capacity twists the present plot into the reenactment of an anterior plot, so too her own double, Agnes, is haunted—despite her best attempts to escape—by the captivity plot that seems more citational than authentically her own” (416).

The Monk is, as Gary Kelly remarks, a novel where “what is repeatedly refused is repeatedly returned to,” and one of the instantiations of this may be the repeated attempts for Raymond to wed Agnes, broken when the second instance becomes different from the first (Kelly 55). If there are two Agneses, then Raymond’s wife is his “second” attachment, and he becomes unique in the novel for having a remarriage that is similar to that explained in Cavell’s terms. It is similar to, but not the same as, Cavell’s formulation of remarriage because while the other characters who wed end up with different partners from the ones with whom they start, Raymond and Agnes are lovers initially and marry at the novel’s conclusion after being apart for a lengthy period. They dramatize the renewed pledges that constitute a remarriage. However, if Agnes is in fact a “different” person, then the couple becomes similar to the other couples in book, and that pattern of doubling is part of what makes this a gothic novel. Domestic novels tend to feature remarriage between the same couple; in a text that does not foreground the role of domesticity, like *Peter Bell* also, remarriage becomes a kind of serial monogamy.

Just as Agnes pledges herself to the church, so too does Raymond pledge himself, between his initial contract with Agnes and its final fruition in legal marriage, to someone else. Only when he is able to rid himself of the presence of his other “wife,” the way is clear for him

to marry Agnes. In this case, the other fiancée is Beatrice, the Bleeding Nun. In keeping with the double identities that Molesworth identifies in the novel, Lewis has Agnes feign to be the Bleeding Nun, only to have the real Bleeding Nun appear and flee with Raymond, who is unaware of his companion's identity until he has already promised himself to her. As he relates the tale to Lorenzo, he recalls his unknowingly supernatural pact:

‘Agnes!’ said I while I pressed her to my bosom,

Agnes! Agnes! Thou art mine!

Agnes! Agnes! I am thine!

In my veins while blood shall roll,

Thou art mine!

I am thine!

Thine my body! Thine my soul! (155-56)

Never mind that the Bleeding Nun's name is Beatrice, not Agnes; for her, this promise is more than satisfactory as marriage vows, and she continues to “spook” him until “the Great Mogul” performs the exorcism. She even repeats the identical words back to him (160-61) to validate their connection to each other. Raymond needs to perform the specified acts to release her from the curse under which she struggles, in order to release himself from her hauntings and be able to marry Agnes.

This is the major generic feature that I am arguing for in the gothic literature of the Romantic period I am discussing: when there is an interrupted wedding ceremony, it must be sanctioned by the dead if the couple is to have a chance for happiness together. If the dead, even the metaphorical dead, as in the case of Scott's Ravenswood or Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, do not approve of the wedding, it will not occur, or, as in *Frankenstein*, it will end disastrously. If

the dead do not approve of the wedding, the implication is that there is something problematic about it. In the case of Agnes and Raymond, their provocation of Agnes's guardian and playful invocation of a cursed spirit represent transgressions of the social order of the novel. This relationship between social transgression and disregard for the dead is the reason for the interrupted wedding ceremony in gothic fiction, and most especially in *The Italian*. In that novel the young couple initially plans to elope, unbeknownst to their parents, and they are prevented. When the identity of Ellena's father emerges, it is as though the dead give their approval; it is certainly this revelation that removes the scruples regarding the legality of their wedding held by Vivaldi's father. While *The Italian* may be situated closer to the domestic genre than the gothic one because it eschews the supernatural and because it features a remarriage between the same couple, it remains gothic because of the need for Ellena's dead father to approve. In contrast, the domestic novels of the period, as we shall see, dramatize remarriages without the necessity of approval by the dead.

THE MONK: CONCLUSION

The Monk's political agenda is ambiguous, but Lewis seems to have been classified as a more radical and daring author by contemporary reviewers, who believed that Radcliffe was suitable for conservative thinkers and readers. I want to conclude my discussion of *The Monk* with a political point that begins with a brief overview of contemporary reactions to the novel in order to respond to the accounts of the reactions and position the novel between the poles of Burke and Paine. First, L. Andrew Cooper reports,

The fact that most of *The Monk*'s detractors praise Lewis's talents as a writer while trying to contain his influence with their legal and aesthetic condemnations

underscores the precedence of political over artistic concerns in the ‘aesthetic’ evaluations of Gothic novels and of novels more generally. (27)

A similar point is made by Vartan P. Messier, who notes that,

In contrast to Radcliffe, Lewis is considerably more daring and strives to break established boundaries of content and form, as well as the conventions of morality and accepted political ideologies. By making unprecedented use of transgressive elements, his strategy is one of unconcealed, unadulterated shock and horror. (39)

Meanwhile, Radcliffe’s fiction met with approval from “conservative critics and reviewers generally [, who] found Radcliffe to be a highly readable author, who stood out from her contemporaries in terms of both the skill and the morality that her work displayed” (Watt 110).

Conservative readers of the French revolutionary period might have been hostile to *The Monk*’s political agenda,[75] but I would argue that the role that domesticity in general, and marriage in particular, play within gothic novels of the Romantic period, seems to approach Burke’s representation of the ideal state, or family. For Burke, a constitution or family established by members long deceased, should receive the respect of the descendants who have benefitted by the inheritance from their ancestors. In contrast, the period’s domestic fiction may be more akin to Paine’s challenge to this need for ancestral approval. I therefore want to close with *The Monk* by contending that although Lewis’s novel contains many shocking elements whose appropriateness for “polite” society may be questionable, when one considers the analogies between state and household established by the political discourse of the period, it is Lewis who turns out the conservative, deferring to authority’s wishes. His one instance of a remarriage in Cavell’s sense, where Alonzo returns from beyond the grave to (re)claim his bride, further validates this conservatism since the renewal of vows, although in line with Paine’s

liberal argument, results in a most unfortunate conclusion, at least as far as Imogene is concerned. In contrast, Radcliffe's suggestion that if Vivaldi and Ellena are going to enjoy a happy life together, they had better be sure that they can promise themselves to each other on more than one occasion.

THE ITALIAN: INTRODUCTION

In Radcliffe's novel, there are several questions to ask about the interruption to the young protagonists' marriage. If they finally wed at the novel's completion, why does the narrator have the couple get all the way to the altar before their first attempt at marriage abruptly ends? Susan C. Greenfield thinks that the disruption to the ceremony comes "as if by an extraordinary projection of Ellena's wishes not to marry" (81); this statement, however, does not provide a reason for the couple's last-minute detention. Additionally, why does Radcliffe have the villainous monk Schedoni send in his underlings to apprehend the couple with a forged document for their arrest? The novel explains that informants to the Inquisition may remain anonymous (244), meaning that he might have informed the Inquisition himself, while in disguise; he might, therefore, have had the agents of the Inquisition make the arrest of Vivaldi. This is, after all, what Schedoni arranges in the end. There are, of course, a few simple answers to such lines of inquiry: the henchmen arrive not only to prevent Vivaldi from dishonouring his family by wedding the low-born Ellena, but primarily to kidnap his bride, which the Inquisition might not allow; furthermore, one might suggest that the apprehension of the couple comes in the middle of the wedding ceremony because, at that point, it seems as though the tide is turning in their favour, so close are they to fulfilling their goal.

These uncomplicated answers are plausible, and it would be tempting to accept them and not consider the issue to be greatly significant, if this novel's ceremony were an isolated case. But given the small constellation of contemporary narratives that also dramatize interrupted wedding ceremonies, I suggest that the issue is more complex than the above possible answers might suggest. It is thus necessary to address what makes the motif of the interrupted wedding ceremony problematic in *The Italian*. The wedding in this novel cannot be enacted until the proper authority figure sanctions it, but that figure derives power not exclusively from his autonomy but from a league with the legacy of the dead and presumptions about governing the lives of the living. To make the argument that there is a necessary connection between the living and the dead in order for the marriage of Vivaldi and Ellena to proceed successfully, I draw especially on queer theories of the gothic novel and then turn back to the issue of social class and political power struggles.

Social and political conflicts feature significantly as a background to the novel's representation of the relationship between the bride and groom. Kari J. Winter finds that "inter-class love threatens the state as much as treason" (99), an assessment validated by the claims of Vivaldi's mother: "The woman who obtrudes herself upon a family, to dishonour it,... deserves a punishment nearly equal to that of a state criminal, since she injures those who best support the state" (Radcliffe 168). However, it is only because of a perceived, rather than an actual, class conflict that the Marchesa and her confessor persecute the heroine. The novel's final discoveries reveal that there never was a difference in social status between Vivaldi and Ellena, and the class issues are therefore "elided" (Hoeveler 107). In the end, the revelation of Ellena's "true parentage does not bring wealth with it, but merely enables her to marry Vivaldi without crossing class lines" (Ellis 124).

These class concerns are an important characteristic of the period's gothic fiction, and form part of the reason for the interrupted wedding ceremony in this novel; they are related to other prominent issues of gothic literature and political discourse of the period, inheritance and the relationships between parents and children. It is in these affiliations that I detect the possibility of homosexual relationships that contribute to the development of the heterosexual ones. The latter, manifested through the culminating wedding ceremony between Vivaldi and Ellena, should not be assumed or considered exclusive on generic or other grounds; as many critics have noted, Radcliffe's representation of the relationships between same-sex characters permits, or even encourages, readings where homosexuality may be a very reasonable possibility. In what follows, I shall present first the critical discussion that suggests the grounds for close female relationships and then call for the possibility of reading the male relationships of the novel similarly. The alignments between men who are not related will help me return to the issue of social class, for it is through their suggested intimacy that the characters discover Ellena's fatherhood and permit the wedding between her and Vivaldi.

THE ITALIAN: SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

Brenda Tooley identifies the descriptions of the convent of Santa della Piéta as “‘utopian’ (explicitly a model community, a description of a well-governed, stable, self-sufficient society)” (45). Although there is a potential conflict in the convent between the group and the individual attempting to define her selfhood, Tooley remarks that “convents also turn out to be safe havens in which family connections are restored, family narratives reconstructed, safety and narrative closure achieved” (51-52). Whereas the mystery of Ellena's parentage forms a considerable

source of anxiety for the characters in the “outside” world of the novel, when “inside” the convents, those relationships can be uncovered in safety.

While Tooley does not read the family connections among the female characters in the convent as suggestive of possible same-sex relationships, an article by Greenfield hints at their possibility. Greenfield’s article argues for the potential of a homosocial relationship between women in *The Italian*, especially because “the heroine develops strong relationships with maternal characters—relationships that protect her and undermine male control” (74). Although she hints at the possibility for women’s same-sex relationships in the convent, Greenfield does not develop that idea in detail. Instead, she finds that Ellena develops affection for the maternal figures around her, who include her guardian Bianchi, her mother Olivia, and even her enemy, the Marchesa, for whom the young heroine unknowingly weaves a robe (Greenfield 78). Ellena’s refusal to marry Vivaldi for a significant period of time also makes her similar to the Marchesa because both check the fulfillment of his sexual desires (78). Through analysis of Radcliffe’s use of veil imagery in the novel, Greenfield demonstrates a bond between women that she hesitates to denote as lesbian only because she is aware of the difficulties involved in applying contemporary theories of sexuality to eighteenth-century texts, so it may more safely be labeled as a homosocial relationship than a homosexual one.

George E. Haggerty’s argument resonates with Greenfield’s, as he asserts that in *The Italian* the women relate to each other through “an erotics of loss”: “[u]nbeknown to both, Olivia is the mother that Ellena lost to ‘death’ in childhood, and Ellena is the child that Olivia lost when she fled her murderous brother-in-law’s incestuous violence and jealousy” (*Queer Gothic* 32). This relationship forms the attachment that mother and daughter have to the exclusion of Vivaldi, prompting the latter to ask his beloved “do I then hold only the second place in your

heart?” when he parts Ellena from Olivia (Radcliffe 135). Much of the drive towards the marriage that concludes the novel occurs at Vivaldi’s instigation, and Radcliffe’s narrator reveals many more of his torments over the sake of his quest to wed his beloved than we see in Ellena. The impression one gets of her existence is that she must do what she can in the patriarchal world to survive without parents, and part of this survival, endorsed by her guardian Signora Bianchi, involves marriage with a man who can care for her. The problem that she sees, at least until the end of the novel when the identity of her father comes to light, is that Vivaldi may only be able to care for her emotionally and not provide the necessities of living a safe and comfortable life, if his marriage contradicts the wishes of his parents who could then cut off any inheritance he might receive. It is quite reasonable for Ellena to turn to those who can possibly provide her with arguably more emotional protection—because maternal—and offer the physical protection that comes in the form of the convent; her relationships with the other female characters is more understandable than Vivaldi’s doubts allow.

Despite the suggestive homosocial relationships that occur among the principal female characters in this novel, the importance of female communities and female same-sex desire, at least so far as the primary narratives are concerned, comes to an end with the concluding marriage. Claudia L. Johnson and Greenfield both see the interrupted wedding as a middle point in the novel, with Johnson arguing that

The Italian is constituted by two distinct movements which together make the narrative as a whole incoherent: first, a progressive drive to assail the insolence and callousness of the old regime, and to celebrate instead tender domesticity promised by the marriage of Vivaldi and Ellena; and second, a reactionary drive

to defend authority and validate its efficacy, which renders everything established in the first instance pointless. (123)

Greenfield's reading is a variation of this statement but makes the role of sexuality more explicit. For her, the novel enacts a symbolic change from feminine veils that were both identities and disguises among the convents to the phallic cowls of monks that dominate the second half of the novel, which occurs chiefly amid the chambers of the Inquisition (82). With this shift in imagery in the background, the novel's concluding half is about Ellena's forced acceptance of heterosexuality (81) and entry into what Jacques Lacan calls the symbolic order (Greenfield 83). Greenfield's argument raises the question whether gothic narratives, regardless of the possibilities they create for same-sex female desire, can ever escape from the power that male figures have, who dominate the heroines sexually or by capturing their property. With this enquiry in mind, I intend to direct the next part of my argument into a different but related area of investigation by considering Haggerty's question, "[w]hy is Gothic fiction always already queer?" ("Horrors" 33).

More than thirty years ago, Janet Todd sought an answer to this question, before Haggerty formulated it in this way. Her main evidence for a response to the question was the relationship between Vivaldi and Paulo, as, for instance, the hero shows tenderness towards his servant even when angry with him:

"Paulo!" rejoined Vivaldi earnestly, "do you love your master?"

"Love my master!" said Paulo resentfully, without allowing Vivaldi to finish his sentence, "Have I not gone through fire and water for him? or, what is as good, have I not put myself into the Inquisition, and all on his account? and now to be asked, 'Do I love my master!' If you believe, Signor, that any thing else made me

come here, into these dismal holes, you are quite entirely out; and when they have made an end of me, as I suppose they will do, before all is over, you will, perhaps, think better of me than to suspect that I came here for my own pleasure.” (358)

As the narrative does not suggest that the Inquisition threatens to torture Paulo, let alone make “an end” of him, we might wonder whether Paulo did not indeed follow Vivaldi closely “for [his] own pleasure.” Todd writes that, after this exchange, even “[w]hen the separation finally comes, the guards have to drag Paulo [sic] from his master as if they were parting two lovers” (“Posture” 35). She goes on to state that at the novel’s conclusion, the love that Ellena bears for Vivaldi seems inferior to that of servant for master, whose reconnection “overshadows the reunion of hero and heroine” (36).

Subsequent to Todd’s contentions, critical interest turned to questions of female queerness staged in the novel. As I have outlined above, Greenfield and Haggerty are among the critics who explore the role that female homosexuality plays in *The Italian*. But if queerness takes such a dominant form in gothic fiction, it is striking that critics have addressed the possibility of male homosexuality in the novel only in very brief accounts. After all, as well as the convents full of nuns, there are communities of monks that have a strong presence in the novel; furthermore, as Todd identified, there is a fairly intimate relationship between Vivaldi and Paulo, the latter of whom is willing to risk torture to be in the presence of the former in the dungeons of the Inquisition. The two spend a significant amount of time together, as when Nicola di Zampari locks them in a chamber at the ruined fortress of Paluzzi, causing them to be, at least temporarily, “buried alive.” For Sedgwick, “‘live burial’ is the name of a conventual punishment that is popular in Gothic novels” but can have other meanings as well (*Coherence* 3). If being faced with live burial in a convent can lead to the possibility of acting on same-sex

female desire, what would convince us that there is no such possibility of enacting a homosexual male relationship between Vivaldi and Paulo?

THE ITALIAN: HOMOSOCIAL/SEXUAL TRIANGULATIONS

If the implications of these statements can be taken as a sign of strong affections, then how close might we consider Vivaldi and Paulo's relationship to be? I am not aware of anyone seriously treating this question beyond Todd's exploration of it more than thirty years ago. Yet in the interim, Sedgwick published *Between Men*, in which her example of George Eliot's *Adam Bede* demonstrates that her argument is not applicable exclusively to male-authored works; and she briefly acknowledges *The Italian* as being "possibly" a gothic novel that could fall into her category of novels where one man persecutes another (*Between* 91). Clearly, then, the persecution occurs between Schedoni and Vivaldi, the first set of males who occupy opposing positions in the homosocial triangle.

Diane Hoeveler's analysis of the novel in her book *Gothic Feminism* argues that *The Italian* demonstrates a projection of the wishes of the younger protagonists, and uses the structures of the Oedipal conflict in her triangulations of father, mother, and child. However, as I will be arguing more exclusively about the male figures than Ellena, and for reasons that I hope will be clear at the end of my argument, rather than adopting Freud's Oedipal triangles as Hoeveler does, I prefer instead to adopt Sedgwick's homosocial triangles. Sedgwick's formulation of this structure of conflict derives from her comparison of men's relationships with each other to women's. The theory has Adrienne Rich's concept of a lesbian continuum in the background, where

the term *lesbian continuum* ... include[s] a range—through each woman’s life and throughout history—of woman-identified experience, not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman. [...and it] includ[es] the sharing of a rich inner life, the bonding against male tyranny, the giving and receiving of a practical and political support, ... we can also hear it in such associations as *marriage resistance*. (Rich 648-49, Rich’s emphasis)

With Rich’s concept in mind, Sedgwick ponders why this arrangement of desire has been formulated to the exclusion of men:

The apparent simplicity—the unity—of the continuum between ‘women loving women’ and ‘women promoting the interests of women,’ extending over the erotic, social, familial, economic, and political realms, would not be so striking if it were not in strong contrast to the arrangement among males. [...] But why not? Doesn’t the continuum between ‘men-loving-men’ and ‘men-promoting-the-interests-of-men’ have the same intuitive force that it has for women?’ (*Between* 3)

Sedgwick’s book provides a theory and examples that take this possibility seriously. She begins by adopting René Girard’s “schematization of the folk-wisdom of erotic triangles” for her analysis, which finds that “the bonds of ‘rivalry’ and ‘love,’ differently as they are experienced, are equally powerful and in many senses equivalent” (21). The reason for this is that “the choice of the beloved is determined in the first place, not by the qualities of the beloved, but by the beloved’s already being the choice of the person who has been chosen as a rival” (21). Under

these conditions, a woman in the triangle becomes little more than what Claude Lévi-Strauss and subsequently Gayle Rubin call “traffic” between men (16).

The reason that we would not consider Vivaldi and Paulo as rivals for Ellena is not only because of their class differences. E. J. Clery points out that while the sublime and beautiful in Radcliffe’s landscape descriptions move her aristocratic heroes and heroines of sensibility to respond with proper aesthetic responses, “Paulo is interested in the scenery only insofar as it reminds him of home” (420 n159). If Ellena really were the low-born artisan figure that she supposes herself to be, she would be more suited to wed the servant instead of the master. However, her sensibility establishes her as an aristocratic figure for readers, even if her parentage—as initially understood—does not. Vivaldi and Paulo are not rivals for Ellena because, as I will now tentatively explore, we are meant to understand Vivaldi in conflict with the real rival for Ellena, the monk Schedoni.

Father figures are crucial in the novel’s representation of marriage because it is ultimately they who sanction the weddings. When the identity of Ellena’s father figure emerges, and Vivaldi’s father acquiesces to the social standing this revelation bestows upon her, the two fathers can grant their approval of the marriage between their children and the wedding between the two protagonists—and families—can reach a successful conclusion. Conversely, the first attempt at a wedding is interrupted by Schedoni’s arrangement to disrupt the proceedings at the Lake of Celano. But since, as I shall contend, Schedoni is a real rival but a false father, he can only stage the interruption, not a complete prevention of the couple’s attempt at marriage.

There are two reasons to align Schedoni and Vivaldi in the triangulation of desire with a woman between them. The two are clearly antagonists, with confrontations between them occurring outside the Marchesa’s chamber—when Vivaldi claims that the monk must be his

“evil genius” (48)—and inside the monastery where Schedoni resides. That scene has provocative suggestions about a possible homosocial/homosexual relationship between the two men, evidenced in Vivaldi’s rhetoric as he denounces the guilty confessor: “I will strip you of the holy hypocrisy in which you shroud yourself” (104). Johnson aligns the rhetoric of stripping with Edmund Burke’s in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* where stripping relates to “unbounded aggressivity against the weak, an activity which leads not to the dis-covery of abstract truth but rather to the generation of atrocity” (125). In *The Italian*, making threats to remove the clothing of another marks a character as a protagonist (Johnson 126). However, given the close relationship that unveiling has to sexual desire in this novel in Greenfield’s argument, Vivaldi’s verbal attack on Schedoni might be read otherwise. While the trace of a homosocial/homosexual relationship is here in Vivaldi’s threat, and there is clearly an antagonistic relationship between the two men, we can consider them rivals and thus employ Sedgwick’s triangulation of desire and transgression to understand their relationship.

Consideration of the structural arrangement of characters in the novel admits of this possibility. The first way in which these two enemies figure as rivals in the triangle is that both of them want a desirable mother. In the opening scene, Vivaldi sees his desired, using his gaze in attempting to penetrate Ellena’s veil after he hears her voice (Radcliffe 5). Ellena is thus the object of the gaze, but becomes its subject when she first hears Olivia, who turns out to be her benevolent but persecuted mother, at the convent of San Stefano. Just as Vivaldi’s hearing Ellena’s voice leads him to want to gaze on her face, so too does hearing Olivia lead Ellena to desire penetrating Olivia’s veil to see *her* face (Radcliffe 86-87; Greenfield 79). Using this parallel, Susan Wolstenholme argues that we can move Olivia into the position of the desired, making Vivaldi’s real desire for a “good” mother, to replace the “bad” one that he has (28).

Schedoni similarly desires the mother figures of the Marchesa, and the good mother Olivia (Radcliffe 339). He fulfilled his lust through a probable sexual assault on Olivia since her having to “retrieve her honour by the marriage vow” implies that she lost it through rape (Harlan 104). And Kate Ferguson Ellis argues that Schedoni is not contemptuous of domestic happiness; instead, “he is obsessed with it” because he thinks that in marrying Olivia, he will be happy (126). Consequently, it is understandable why Schedoni is the only person “capable of understanding [the Marchesa’s] pain,” that is, her “feelings of rejection by a son who is in love with another woman” (Ellis 125). Schedoni “can give her the sympathy and attention that neither her husband nor her son is willing to give her” (Ellis 125). If Schedoni desires the good mother figure, so does Vivaldi, who is in a struggle to possess a wife since, as Wolstenholme writes, “sexual desire ... for Vivaldi becomes domesticated as desire for marriage” (29). For Sedgwick, this relationship invokes Richard Klein’s summary of Freud’s assessment that a male child must pass into the adult world of sexuality by going through a stage of sexual development in opposition to his mother, creating a “powerful heterosexual identification” (*Between* 23).

The other way in which we may construe Schedoni as a rival to Vivaldi is for Ellena, the daughter; he enacts his near murder of her in rape imagery in using a phallic-shaped dagger that reveals his sexual desire for the young woman:

He searched for the dagger, and it was some time before his trembling hand could disengage it from the folds of his garment; but, having done so, he again drew near, and prepared to strike. Her dress perplexed him; it would interrupt the blow.... [D]rawing aside the lawn from her bosom, he once more raised it [i.e. his dagger] to strike.... (234)

As Elizabeth Harlan writes, “it is difficult to imagine what could be perplexing about her dress and how it could possibly interfere with a dagger” (104). Not only does this sexual desire make him a rival for Ellena, but so too does his journey with her to Naples, when he realizes that she should be protected. As he and the young woman he believes to be his daughter return to the city where she might be married, they travel across the countryside with a guide, who is “a version of Paulo; a lesser one, anonymous (suggesting his lack of identity except as a device)” (Kilgour 182). This small party is therefore structurally similar to the group of Ellena, Vivaldi, and Paulo, who traverse the landscape in the first part of the novel. Thus, Schedoni and Vivaldi seem to form part of the triangle completed first by the Marchesa and then by Ellena. Having developed the argument thus far, I now wish to demonstrate that Radcliffe shows that this triangle is not viable because Schedoni is an impostor, the wrong father, even if his rivalry creates a real threat to Ellena. The wedding can only occur once the Marchese determines that Ellena is an appropriate match for his son; he thus becomes the good father (Greenfield 83).

THE ITALIAN: THE NAMES OF THE FATHERS

A large part of what undermines Schedoni’s authority as a father figure is his unstable and shifting identity. He uses an alias, altering his name and social position by taking orders in the Catholic church, but his change is only a partial one since he retains his willingness to murder people who interfere with his plans, as well as his avarice for financial and social gain that was part of his initial motivation to assassinate his brother, inheritor of his family’s wealth (Radcliffe 360; K. F. Ellis 125). The prior activities of this monk lie at the centre of the novel’s mystery, making the question of his identity central to the several narratives in it. The uncertainty in that identity is one that Vivaldi is quick to recognize: after he suggests to Schedoni

that someone in a monk's garb torments him at night near the ruined fortress of Paluzzi, his mother's confessor feels that he is the intended object of the youth's insinuations. He says,

'I can not misunderstand that your resentment is, to some extent or other, directed against myself as the cause of it. Yet I will not suppose, Signor; I say I will not suppose,' raising his voice significantly, 'that you have dared to brand me with the ignominious titles you have just uttered; but'—

'I have applied them to the author of my injuries,' interrupted Vivaldi; 'you, father, can best inform me whether they apply to yourself.' (51)

Of this exchange, Wolstenholme asks "where similarities become identities": "[a]re Schedoni and the author of Vivaldi's injuries the same person? Is the monk of Paluzzi the same person as the mysterious visitor in Vivaldi's cell? Was the sinner who confessed to Father Ambroso the one in Paulo's story?" (27). We learn late in the book that Schedoni both is and is not the perpetrator of these injuries, since he worked in tandem with Nicola di Zampari. The two monastic villains can be easily confused by the young protagonist because "for Ann Radcliffe, the habit of the monk is a symbol of deviousness and secrecy" (Sage 34).

Through his priestly profession and its attendant use of a "false homonym" (Napier 142), as I noted for the similar relationships in *The Monk*, Schedoni is father both to the Marchesa and Ellena, although he believes that he is also Ellena's biological father. There is also a "proliferation of Schedoni-like figures" in the novel since his criminal activities confuse him with Spalatro, while his monkish habit and nightly visitations to Paluzzi confuse him with Nicola (Napier 143; 142). Furthermore, there is the striking similarity between Schedoni and the figure of the Baróne di Cambrusca, whose narrative we learn from Schedoni's guide. The Baróne is a sinister and mysterious figure, deceased since before the narrative began and slightly represented

in the novel, who bears a similarity in his misdeeds to Schedoni, although the guide's description of him presents his unspecified evils as greater in degree than Schedoni. The guide claims that although the Baróne's current whereabouts are unknown, he is suspected to be "where he deserves to be ... buried under the ruins" (262). A sinister figure with a shadowy past is a description that could characterize both the Baróne and Schedoni, and indeed, one critic notes the significance there is a "chiasmic association between *Barone di Cambrusca* and *Count di Bruno* [that] could both be enough to assimilate the two into one villain even though the Count is *not* the Barone" (Hennelly 13-14, his emphasis). The similarities resound even among minor figures in the narrative because in addition to Vivaldi's suspicions "that Schedoni's was the master-hand that directed" the arrest of himself at the wedding ceremony (Radcliffe 188), his presence is felt there metonymically through the presence of a "gigantic figure" who leads the arresting party: the confessor also has a "gigantic" stature (Radcliffe 185, 221; Napier 142-43).

As he is someone whose identity is inauthentic and questionable, it is understandable that he intrudes on the ceremony with false members of the Inquisition. Later, Vivaldi becomes captive of the Inquisition, meaning that there could have been genuine inquisitors to arrest them at the chapel with a genuine document instead of a forged one. Schedoni is someone who operates through dissimulations, sometimes not even aware of his own identity, as is the case with his assumed relationship as father to Ellena. For these reasons, Schedoni can only be the false father who does not provide an anchor for stable identities. It is for his lack of true authority that he must die by suicide, an event that seems to occur a short time after the arrival of the good mother Olivia replaces the bad mother, the Marchesa. The reconciliation of "social duty, loyalty to the family, tradition, and individual desire" that comes with the marriage of Ellena and Vivaldi "is achieved by the removal of false figures of authority, and the gradual emergence of

good models already present in the system” (Kilgour 179). Thus, the replacement of the mother figure finds a parallel with the emergence of the proper father figure, the Marchese.

Although present only in some early confrontations with his son, he is absent throughout most of the novel, but his role increases when Olivia determines to have his consent before her daughter marries into the Vivaldi family (Greenfield 83). The Marchese, however, only agrees that Ellena is an appropriate choice for his son because of the social standing conferred on her by her father. The narrator informs us that Ellena’s family’s “nobility” would have been an “allurement of rank” to the Vivaldi family, to the point, perhaps, of making the latter jealous (383). Initially,

The Marchese ... had neither her [i.e. his wife’s] terror of the future or remorse for the past, to overcome his objection to the rank of Ellena, and he resisted all her importunity, till the anguish of her last hours overcame every consideration but that of affording her relief; he then gave a solemn promise, in the presence of the Confessor, that he would no longer oppose the marriage of Vivaldi and Ellena, should the former persist in his attachment to her. (385)

In this passage, it is clear that he renounces his objections to Ellena’s social position out of compassion for his wife, rather than because he believes that social class should not be a determinant of suitable marriage partners. Social class remains an issue for him until the identity of Ellena’s father becomes clear to the Marchese, a point on which he even doubts his son and conducts his own search. The conclusion of this investigation brings relief to Vivaldi:

now that Ellena was proved to be the daughter not of the murderer Schedoni, but of a Count di Bruno, who had been no less respectable in character than in rank

... he had little doubt that his father would consent to fulfill the promise he had given to the dying Marchesa.

In this belief he was not mistaken. The Marchese, having attended to Vivaldi's account of Ellena's family, promised, that if it should appear there was no second mistake on the subject, he would not longer oppose the wishes of his son.

The Marchese immediately caused a private inquiry to be made as to the identity of Olivia, the present Countess di Bruno ... though this was not pursued without difficulty.... (410)

There are two important elements to note in this passage. First, although the Marchese earlier consented to the marriage between Vivaldi and Ellena, he seems to overlook that promise here because he does not even credit his son's account of Ellena's parentage but instead wants to conduct an independent inquiry, "though this was not pursued without difficulty." It clearly still matters to the Marchese whom his son marries and whether that person is of suitable social rank to stand as an equal. Although he eventually keeps his promise, he wants to be secure in the knowledge that Ellena's father "had been no less respectable in character than in rank." The second important aspect to derive from this excerpt is the emphasis placed on patriarchal values; although Ellena's mother Olivia still lives and has the title of Countess di Bruno, this does not seem to be sufficient for Vivaldi's father; he wants to know who it was that bestowed the title of Countess on Olivia, a title bestowed, in this case, through marriage. The result is that Ellena's father, although deceased, still carries authority enough to determine the suitability for marriage between his son and Olivia's daughter. Thus, the presence of the dead father becomes a necessary element to complete the final, and successful, marriage; and this absent presence is one

of the key points that makes it a gothic novel, for it is not the sort of obstruction that threatens the marriages in novels like Jane Austen's.

In Radcliffe's novel, the Marchese takes his place in the second, proper triangle, the original oedipal conflict between father and son over the mother. Although the Marchese's role has been minimal throughout, and he seemingly has no dramatized sexual desire, his presence and permission enable the final union between the protagonists. He can step in at the novel's conclusion to permit the marriage because, like the other adults, he speaks in a different register from the novel's two protagonists. As with the Abbess of San Stefano, Schedoni, and the Marchesa, the Marchese "cling[s] to established categories and hierarchies [and] also seem[s] to attribute a magical power to the spoken word, as referent and rhetoric, to maintain those categories" (Conger 140). Conger's point about the power of the father's word leads me to suggest that Radcliffe's drama seems to allegorize the relationships between family, power, and language for which Lacan argues. After all, the Marchese exercises more authority than other adult figures, an authority that the novel represents as legitimate since it is the living voice that permits the wedding. For this reason, I would argue that his use of language literalizes Lacan's theory that

[t]he primordial Law is therefore the Law which, in regulating marriage ties, superimposes the reign of culture over the reign of nature ... It is in the *name of the father* that we must recognize the basis of the symbolic function which, since the dawn of historical time, has identified his person with the figure of the law (65-66, Lacan's emphasis).

The Marchese has the power to determine whom his son will wed through his order.

THE ITALIAN: PROMISES AND THE MARRIAGE

As for the couple's use of language, their promise to be together offers an example of Austin's performative utterances. The statement that the heroine makes, "I am yours, Vivaldi" (182), before the couple goes, officially, before a clergyman to wed bears a strong resemblance to Austin's example of indicating one's intention to marry as a way of doing something. Although her declaration here appears very similar to Austin's instance of the speech act one performs at a wedding, in this case Ellena cannot utter it to the appropriate person because the law of the father has not recognized that person as appropriate, and thus the wedding cannot achieve what Vivaldi, at least, hopes that it will. Ellena is almost silent throughout the ceremony, only noticing the intruders before they appear in the church, suggesting that her mind is outside of the temple where the nuptials are taking place (184-85). After that, she falls insensibly to the ground, and Vivaldi speaks much for her. This interruption occludes the proper moment for the speech act, and delays the wedding until the novel's conclusion. Her statement at Lake Celano, however, does go further towards enacting the marriage within the system of the law of the father than it did in the "mock marriage" of the couple that Bianchi presides over early in the novel, where the narrator does not report direct speech (Hoeveler 108):

Bianchi, as she concluded her exhortation, gave Ellena's hand to Vivaldi, who received it with emotion such as his countenance, only, could express, and with solemn fervour raising his eyes to heaven, vowed that he never would betray the confidence thus reposed in him, but would watch over the happiness of Ellena with a care as tender, as anxious, and as unceasing as her own; that from this moment he considered himself bound by ties not less sacred than those which the

church confers, to defend her as his wife, and would do so to the latest moment of his existence. (39)

A marriage, in Lacan's theory, depends on language for its validation: "[t]his law, then, reveals itself clearly enough as identical to a language order. For without names for kinship relations, no power can institute the order of preferences and taboos that knot and braid the thread of lineage through the generations" (66). In *The Italian*, to ensure the authority of this language requires an exchange of fathers, moving from one whose identity shifts to one with the power to fix meanings and relationships. If Radcliffe is, as I am arguing, allegorizing a literal representation of what Lacan would later articulate, once the Marchese learns Ellena's social position, conferred through the revelation of her biological father's identity, the wedding between the two characters may proceed and reach the desired conclusion.

The couple is able to engage in "remarriage" in the sense that they can exchange vows of togetherness and constancy, even after they had already done so. If the couple was not legally wed before their exchange of vows at the ceremony, they would have been so under the pre-Hardwicke laws, making their legal wedding in fact a remarriage in Cavell's terms. I contend that authors of the Romantic period, living under the recent changes to the laws of England, are trying to dramatize the problem with those laws: while the Hardwicke Act may have changed the legal requirements of marriage, it could do nothing to alter the unofficial promises of constancy between a couple. By being able to speak for themselves when exchanging such pledges, individual couples still retain power over the state's injunctions of what makes private unions acceptable. This makes Radcliffe's novel, while a softening of *The Monk's* sensational qualities, much akin to it in the representation of marriage: a couple who pledges to be together through a

speech act that indicates devotion, when the obstructions to marriage are removed through the approval of the dead, is able to finally wed.

The necessity of an alliance of sorts between the Marchese and the deceased Count di Bruno raises another point of inquiry. I have argued thus far that Sedgwick's use of Girard's triangulations between characters has been a fruitful way to understand the conflicts among the characters in the novel, especially as they prevent or permit the marriage of the protagonists. These relationships can be turned to "raise the dead,"[76] which is exactly what happens in the many interrupted wedding ceremonies of Romantic-era gothic literature.

In each of my examples, death intrudes on some part of the wedding ceremony or feast, whether it is literal or figurative. Moreover, in several of these examples, two males form a homosocial bond around an already married female. In *The Italian*, the wedding cannot occur because the death of the good Count di Bruno prevents knowledge of Ellena's true parentage; when the living and the dead form a connection, as the Marchese and the deceased Count do at the novel's conclusion, the marriage can proceed, and Ellena is exchanged as part of the traffic between men.

To support my contentions for the role of the deceased in a triangle of male bonding, I turn to critics of the novel who extend the conception of an "erotics of loss" to include desire for the deceased. Writing that "Vivaldi, for his part, also seems to fantasize about Ellena's dead form more actively than her living one," Haggerty directs our attention to the following passage, which occurs, significantly, a short time after the silent marriage that occurs in the presence of Signora Bianchi that Hoeveler classifies as a "mock marriage" (108) and is recorded above:

to the affrighted fancy of Vivaldi, the dying Ellena only appeared. His fears, however probabilities might sanction, or the event justify them, were natural to

ardent affection; but they were accompanied by a presentiment as extraordinary as it was horrible; — it occurred to him more than once, that Ellena was murdered. He saw her wounded, and bleeding to death; saw her ashy countenance, and her wasting eyes, from which the spirit of life was fast departing, turned piteously on himself, as if imploring him to save her from the fate that was dragging her to the grave. (41; *Queer Gothic* 33)

In Vivaldi's imagination, he positions himself as a kind of saviour to rescue Ellena, making him both heroic and beloved. Also significant is that this instance is not an isolated one, since "it occurred to him more than once," implying that he both dreads and desires Ellena in a vulnerable state, on the verge of death. Vivaldi's desire for Ellena seems to manifest itself on more than one occasion as necrophilia. Janet Todd furthers this connection between males that invokes this taboo desire: "[Paulo] wishes, for example, to change dungeons with Vivaldi and to enter the tomb with him. 'I have dreamt an hundred times that you were dead and buried with you.' It is a fantasy of suttee in which the posture of loving servility would be forever fixed." ("Posture" 35; Radcliffe 357).[77] If the bonding between men can occur in this very novel among the living and the dead, is it not plausible that there can be such a bond between the Marchese and the deceased Count di Bruno?

THE ITALIAN: CONCLUSION

If a contract between the living and the dead, requiring the sanction of the latter, is necessary for a couple to be married in this novel, and the other narratives, then we should ask why it is that in this period there are several instances of interrupted weddings, which do not occur, so far as I know, with the same frequency in previous ages. Although this is not a

conclusion I would draw across all the narratives I have mentioned, in historicizing this motif in the Romantic period, I offer the suggestion that the contract based on the living and the dead in *The Italian* is strikingly similar to the rhetoric of Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*. In reply to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Paine writes: "I am contending for the rights of the living, and against their being willed away, and controuled and contracted for, by the manuscript assumed authority of the dead; and Mr. Burke is contending for the authority of the dead over the rights and freedoms of the living" (92). Furthermore,

The circumstances of the world are continually changing, and the opinions of men change also; and as government is for the living, and not for the dead, it is the living only that has any right in it. That which may be thought right and found convenient in one age, may be thought wrong and found inconvenient in another.

In such cases, Who is to decide, the living, or the dead? (95)

For Tom Furniss, Paine's rhetoric argues that only living people have a right to speak for themselves, and not for their heirs: "Paine envisages a kind of perpetual revolution in which history seems to be continually erased and begun anew through the (re)generative power of performative speech" (33). Furniss's invocation of performative speech returns us to what occurs at a wedding ceremony when a bride and groom utter the words that make their act of union official and legitimate. In other words, the structural relationships developed in Radcliffe's novel, together with the representation of the dead approving the marriages of Raymond and Agnes, and Vivaldi and Ellena, connects to the political debate between Burke and Paine. If the state is responsible for legally allowing marriages through the Hardwicke Marriage Act, and the state can be analogously related to the family, do the members of that family who wish to wed need to gain the approval, at least symbolically, of the generations who have preceded them but

are now deceased in order to have a legal union and a receive a possible inheritance? Such would be Burke's claim. Paine, on the other hand, would argue that the dead should have no place in the desires and rights of the living. Just as Paine's state must undergo continual renewal in order for its authority to be legitimate, so too must a marriage be a continual renewal of promises of constancy; in other words, a remarriage. While it is not possible for the entirety of a populace to meet together to determine the outcome of every political debate, in marriage the analogy between state and family breaks down, because the possibility of renewing one's pledges to a spouse is a very achievable one. And in this way, married couples can, in one sense, free themselves somewhat of the state's control over their relationship.

In Radcliffe's novel, then, the interrupted wedding ceremony demonstrates the power that the dead maintain over the living because it is Ellena's dead father and the social status that her birth brings that enables the young couple to meet the approval of the Marchese, who speaks the law of the father not, it turns out, autonomously, but in a homosocial bond with the dead, a bond that relies on the past to speak for the present. The co-presence of the living and the dead in asserting the authority of the law of the father over the desires of the young demonstrates that the past is something not so easily escaped from; that, like Paine's accusations of Burke reveal, the authority of the dead still retains its potency over the existence of the living. In contrast to William Patrick Day's argument about *The Italian's* genre, that "the past that creates fear in the Gothic fantasy is not so much the past of the ancien régime as it is the immediate past of parents and family" (32), I suggest that the members of one's immediate family are also symbolic figures of the ancien régime. *The Monk* offers further evidence that contradicts Day's point in terms of the powers that inhabit its anachronistically, or, more precisely, inaccurately portrayed institutions. The Prioress of St. Clare, who maliciously revives an old rule in order to punish

Agnes's pregnancy and prevent her impending wedding, represents both an institutional figure and a figurative "mother" to Agnes, conflating the past and present into a single person whose voice prevents a younger generation from speaking for itself.[78]

Both *The Italian* and *The Monk* are gothic novels; they are so because of a number of factors, but for my argument, chief among these is the necessary power of the dead over the living. The marriages they feature are interrupted, and cannot be concluded without approval from the dead. Robert Miles stresses "the endemically discursive nature of 'genealogy' within the Gothic, as theme and generic device, the one following from the other, and both following from the 'on edge' character of the Gothic aesthetic" (*Gothic Writing* 109), and indeed, the issue of genealogy is a fundamental element in the determination of the characters' choices of marriage partners. While *The Italian* and *The Monk* are both gothic narratives, Radcliffe's softened version of Lewis's shocker slips closer to being a domestic novel. This is not only due to the absence of supernatural powers, violence, and the virtually gleeful parade of taboo subjects one finds in the pages of *The Monk*, but is also because of its representation of marriage.

Whereas in Lewis's text, couples marry a second attachment, that is, a different person—or, in the case of Agnes and Raymond, another version of a person—Radcliffe dramatizes Cavell's formulation of remarriage by having the couple wed the same person almost twice. In doing so, they demonstrate constancy and unity and flaunt their personal affections over the state's legal enforcement of a legitimate marriage. While gothic narratives such as *The Monk* may feature remarriage through second attachments, gothic novels that strongly exhibit elements of the domestic genre, such as *The Italian*, dramatize that remarriages are, in fact, unions between the same two people. *The Italian*, however, is not a full participant in the ideology of the genre of

domestic novels because of the necessity for the dead father to grant permission for the wedding to proceed.

Conclusion

This dissertation has considered discourses of the Romantic period in England that can be located outside the domestic sphere: political, poetic—both lyric and narrative—and gothic. However, I have argued throughout that there is no “outside” the domestic sphere; concerns involving family and home, expressed in my exploration chiefly through representations of marriage, were leaving traces in texts that appeared, on the surface, to be non-domestic in character. Cultural change, prompted by, among other things, the Hardwicke Marriage Act, with its unprecedented legal requirements for marriage in England, resulted in a variety of representations of the constitution of marriage. Unlike Paine’s preferences for a theory of language wherein words have a relatively small range of meaning enacted by reiterations of them in meaningful social contexts, however, marriage and wedding are two related terms that undergo varied use by political thinkers, poets, and authors of fictional texts and have multiple meanings. I would boldly suggest that “marriage” is a term that deserves a place alongside the list of terms that Raymond Williams argues developed new cultural meanings in the Romantic period (*Culture* xiii). Necessarily, his more comprehensive book of *Keywords* is selective, for without some exclusivity, the words would cease to become “keys” to “unlocking” the ideology of Romantic-era culture. But if “family” has a place in that text as one keyword, then a “related” term that is responsible for the establishment and continuation of families deserves a place as well.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PERIOD’S DOMESTIC FICTION: THE CASE OF JANE AUSTEN

Jane Austen’s novels often close with a marriage between the protagonist and her choice of marriage partner, but they are not always removed from the kinds of concerns that feature in

the pages of gothic fiction. If Austen explicitly lampooned the excesses of gothic fiction in *Northanger Abbey*, I note that there is an unexpected trace of a gothic motif, the interrupted wedding ceremony, in the pages of *Pride and Prejudice*. The passage is slight but significant nonetheless for its dramatizing of the anxieties that Austen and her contemporaries must have had about marriage as a consequence of the legal requirements ushered in by the Hardwicke Marriage Act. The incident occurs when Lydia recounts to Elizabeth the details of her marriage to Wickham:

‘Well, and so just as the carriage came to the door, my uncle was called away upon business to that horrid man Mr. Stone. And then, you know, when once they get together, there is no end of it. Well, I was so frightened I did not know what to do, for my uncle was to give me away; and if we were beyond the hour, we could not be married all day. But, luckily, he came back again in ten minutes time, and then we all set out. However, I recollected afterwards, that if he *had* been prevented going, the wedding need not be put off, for Mr. Darcy might have done as well.’ (282)

Lydia’s wedding is not completely successful, when seen in the framework of other marriages with interruptions: her ceremony is also disturbed, however slightly, by someone before it can be successfully completed. So while Radcliffe’s novel and Austen’s are diverse in a plurality of ways, they do share this structural element, however brief it might appear in the later novel. If, as I have contended, there is no “outside” of the domestic sphere and its representation of marriage, there is fluidity between the period’s gothic and domestic fiction.[79] The passage is worth examining in closer detail. Its rhetorical features include phatic words—the expression “you know” and the repetition of “well”—suggesting Lydia’s anxiety at the time that the union drew

near. After the second “well,” no more of these words appear and the account that follows is almost entirely declarative. Another notable element in this passage is the exaggerated statement that “there is no end of” the meeting between her uncle Mr. Gardiner and his associate Mr. Stone when they are together, a statement proven false when their conference concludes in less than a quarter-hour. This clause seems to reflect Lydia’s distorted sense of the time, a consequence, likely, of her anxiety and foolishness about it. The phrase might also serve to create suspense when she relates it to her sister, but since Lydia has already been married, the entire sentence contributes virtually nothing to the narrative of the wedding. In fact, the presence of this interruption that does not prevent the marriage of Lydia and Wickham adds very little to the narrative of *Pride and Prejudice* as a whole. Mr. Gardiner goes off with “that horrid man Mr. Stone.” Mr. Stone has, perhaps, no other reason for being “horrid” but for his interruption at the wedding here. It is impossible to make any sort of judgement about his character because he does not appear anywhere else in the novel.

Why, then, does Austen include this scene in the novel? It informs Elizabeth of Darcy’s presence at the ceremony, but we might have learned that in another way. The detail is so slight, yet in conjunction with the collection of interrupted wedding ceremonies in the fiction of the period, and knowing that this motif appears in multiple genres, its appearance in Austen’s novel implies, however tenuously, a relationship between the Gothic fiction and domestic novels of the period. Not only is there an interrupted wedding ceremony in *Pride and Prejudice*, but the person responsible is called Mr. Stone, whose name implies lifelessness, linking with the dead figures that appear in texts such as *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Melmoth the Wanderer*. I might thus suggest here that a strict separation between Gothic and domestic fiction may also have its limitations.

I argued in my third chapter that a second attachment to the same person, to the exclusion to other people, is the most desirable state in which a couple can find itself, but that kind of relationship was characteristic of domestic fiction more than other kinds of discourse. *The Italian's* Vivaldi and Ellena perform actions with intentions to marry on more than one occasion, and their relationship may be counted as a remarriage, which is one of the elements that brings Radcliffe's novel closer to participation in the conventions of domestic fiction. When a couple renews this condition, they come close to defining and authorizing their marriage based on a renewal of pledges, rather than deriving its legitimacy from a legal arrangement made necessary by the state. In this way, they can avoid the state's impositions on their otherwise private affair and have the autonomy for which Paine advocates in *Rights of Man*, a renewal of the contract between parties. However, there is still a strong possibility for the couple to be dependent on those other than themselves; in gothic novels, the approval of the dead is necessary before a couple can wed.

In domestic novels, conversely, a couple is often freer from the weight of the past and freer to ignore conventions, as Anne Elliot, for instance, does, in wedding Frederick Wentworth, recently made wealthy through his captaincy in the navy. Rejecting her father's foolish admiration of the *Baronetage* and the nobility who rank in its pages, Anne and Frederick make their decision to marry despite the spectre of Anne's ancestors, who, we are led to believe by Sir Walter's general position, would have interfered with their relationship to ensure that she had a more aristocratic partner. Other characters in Austen's oeuvre are also able to decide for themselves in more or less unrestrained manner, and pursue a match with the same person to whom they were initially attached before an interruption of some kind. The example of Lydia and Wickham, above, is one such couple who does not decide to alter their intentions when given

the opportunity by the short interruption in their ceremony. In addition to a marriage between the same two people after the interrupted ceremony, part of what makes *Pride and Prejudice* a participant in domestic fiction is that they are put off neither by that trace of the dead, Mr. Stone, who threatens, however mildly, to upset their union, nor their parents. Parents can be, as in *The Italian*, a manifestation of the dead hand of the ancient regime but in this novel, neither Mr. nor Mrs. Bennett opposes their daughter's wedding to the point of preventing it. A second example from Austen is, as I suggested in Chapter One, Emma Woodhouse and George Knightley, whose second turn in the garden is symbolic of repetition and renewal, even if their final match does not follow an interrupted ceremony. Emma's "proposal of taking another turn, her renewing the conversation which she had just put an end to" (391) emphasizes the importance of second chances and repeated actions that are crucial in Austen's world of matrimony. There is the concession they make of having Mr. Knightley into Hartfield, rather than having Emma move into Donwell Abbey, to please Mr. Woodhouse, but in no other way does he traduce or occlude their marital relationship, least of all prevent it from occurring. Indeed, his passive unhappiness about the marriage is overcome in a comic moment that seems aimed at deflating parental opposition: when a rash of poultry theft hits the neighbourhood, Mr. Woodhouse's conviction that "[p]ilfering was *housebreaking*" leads him to accommodate the couple sooner than he would have otherwise (396). So while these novels exhibit some elements of remarriage that constitute other Romantic-era texts, they both participate in the genre of domestic fiction for featuring a "remarriage" between the same people and for that couple's decision to wed without the consideration of their parents or other representatives of the dead hand that was so influential in Burke's conception of the family. They are also remarriages that differ from those of

Wordsworth's serial monogamist, Peter Bell, and Byron's Beppo, whose friendship with his wife's consort challenges the idea of a married couple.

In what remains of this conclusion, I shall trace further examples from Austen's novels as some of the most characteristic and popular—then and now—works of the Romantic period's domestic fiction. The two novels that I shall focus on are the early *Sense and Sensibility* and the late *Persuasion*. Although neither of these novels features an interrupted wedding ceremony, as in the gothic narratives, there are several characters who have interrupted relationships or courtships before they are able to complete a wedding with their desired partner; in this, they are arguably similar to kind of pre-Hardwicke wedding of Agnes and Raymond in *The Monk*. That is, like Agnes and Raymond, the pairs of lovers Elinor and Edward and Anne and Frederick never attempt to wed each other in the presence of an appropriate official, but they do end up marrying after an intervening time period. First attachments become second ones, and these characters participate in a version of Cavell's remarriage.

Both novels are novels of seconds, chief among which in *Persuasion* is the second chance that Anne and Frederick have at romance and matrimony. However, *Sense and Sensibility* is a novel of seconds in a very different way.[80] It is, as Daryl Jones comments, an “outrageously doubled text,” that features

a series of narrative doublings which themselves further redouble the Elinor/Marianne, Sense/Sensibility pairings which control the novel.... Thus, *Sense and Sensibility* begins not with the Dashwood girls but with two patriarchs, the unmarried ‘old gentleman’ and ‘his nephew Mr Henry Dashwood’... who himself married *twice*, which gives us two branches of the Dashwood family. (88, 75)

Indeed, as Jones suggests, the novel's title indicates the important role the double plays in the narrative, but beyond identifying this doubling as a structuring device, it is worth considering the function of such doubled elements. In relation to my argument in this dissertation, I shall focus on the (re)attachment of Elinor and Edward. For this consideration, I take as my starting point Margaret Anne Doody's perceptive argument about the novel:

the second of a pair is regularly preferable to the first.... Firsts of sets, like first attachments, produce social duty and social conformity. *Primogeniture* is a deadening system. Second attachments are more attractive, interesting, and profitable than first attachments—even if, according to the world's standard, they signify a failure. (xxxvii)

This quotation complements very nicely the argument of my first chapter: creating a system of inheritance in which the first-born of a family profits leaves the younger members without adequate subsistence. It relies on the importance of origins that Burke stresses without taking into consideration the possibility of error and the need for reassessment, and with that, renewal, as expressed in Paine's argument. Accepting Doody's view as a general rule, which I am largely inclined to do, suggests that second attachments to different people are more productive and lead to better endings than the first ones. Marianne thrills romantically at the thought of being engaged to Willoughby, but would he have made for a good husband for her? Certainly not of the same kind as the flannel-wearing, sensible Colonel Brandon. While some critics dismiss the match between Marianne and Brandon as a quick and unsatisfying way for Austen to wrap up the novel's plot, such an outcome does support the more general preference for seconds in the novel that Doody identifies.[81]

There are, however, exceptions to Doody's general claim, where someone weds a person to whom the first attachment is crucial in helping characters determine their choice of marriage partner. It is arguable that such a claim is valid in the case of Colonel Brandon, whose pursuit of Marianne may be said to renew his courtship to his first intended paramour, Eliza Williams: "He remains true to his first love through his marriage to her double, Marianne" (Nelson 175). A more substantial and definite instance of a character's persistent attachment to a first love is Elinor's affections for Edward. We learn early in the novel that Edward "appeared to be amiable, that he loved her [i.e. Mrs. Dashwood's] daughter, and that Elinor returned the partiality" (12). Although discouraged by the revelations of Lucy Steele (98), Elinor does not pursue and eventually marry anyone other than Edward. She declares the tenacity of her feelings for and about Edward when speaking to Marianne, saying,

I have known myself to be divided from Edward for ever, without hearing one circumstance that could make me less desire the connection.—Nothing has proved him unworthy; nor has anything declared him indifferent to me.—I have had to contend against the unkindness of his sister, and the insolence of his mother; and have suffered the punishment of an attachment, without enjoying its advantages. (198)

The same cannot quite be said for Marianne; even if she does not actively pursue Colonel Brandon, they do end the narrative wed to one another. Doody's formula, then, leaves one half of the novel's heroines out, even if it satisfactorily explains the majority of other characters' second attachments: Mr. Dashwood, Marianne, and Lucy Steele are all examples of characters who end with happiness following a second attachment.

Engagements, and what constitutes them, are made much of by the characters of *Sense and Sensibility*. Whether they are made at all, constitute a binding promise when made, or can be reneged when circumstances change is, however, too large of an issue to explore here. Instead, I shall briefly consider the relationship of this novel to the arguments in my thesis. For Elinor, a reattachment that approaches a version of remarriage is what she achieves in her marriage to Edward, and both of them seem to be satisfied with each other. Unlike Elinor, Edward did make a connection to a second, different person, in his pursuit of her, after having first engaged himself to Lucy Steele before he met Elinor. But if he is to be believed when speaking to Elinor of his secret engagement to Lucy, then his reasons for becoming engaged to her were ill-considered, and he had cause to regret them: “‘It was a foolish, idle inclination on my side,’ said he, ‘the consequence of ignorance of the world—and want of employment’” (274). Having a second chance means that one does not have to live with youthful errors, as Edward would have had to; he is fortunate that Lucy throws him over when it appears that his brother will be the wealthier brother, a result of the family inheritance.

Primogeniture is a deadening system in this situation because it emphasizes the importance of one son over another. When Edward is disinherited for refusing to break his match, Robert becomes, in effect, the eldest who is set to inherit the family wealth, leaving Edward with few prospects for employment until he receives the good fortune of the living that Colonel Brandon confers on him. Yet Elinor’s marriage to her first attachment indicates that second attachments are not always preferable and that constancy to one person, manifested through words, actions, or, in Elinor’s case, devotion to an image of her beloved, can have a beneficial result for both parties.

Constancy for a much greater period of time results in the happiness that Anne Elliot and Frederick Wentworth share. Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth's wedding is the result of their unexpected reattachment through the renting of the Elliot's home, Kellynch, to the Crofts, and the novel makes much of various individuals who have the potential to be reattached, including Penelope Clay, Mrs. Smith, James Benwick, William Elliot, Walter Elliot, and Lady Russell. *Persuasion* makes such a point of reattachment that the narrator is emphatic when informing readers that the latter two "did *not* marry" (11).[82] All of these instances of attempting or avoiding a reattachment with the hope of a remarriage follow from the context in which the novel's heroine becomes reattached and wed to her own paramour.

In arguing for the significance of remarriage in *Persuasion*, I am adapting the work of Walker, whose arguments initially alerted me to the importance of Cavell's theories and the manifestations of reattachment and remarriage in the novel (Walker 49ff.). However, while identifying several important passages and making some wonderful suggestions, Walker develops an argument about writing and representation, rather than tracing the ideological work the novel performs in its depiction of second attachments. The novel emphasizes performance and change rather than stability, and we know this through its representation of those who stand for continuity, such as Walter Elliot, against those who become reattached, such as his middle daughter; however, we cannot generalize too extensively because there are a significant number of people in the novel who have potential or actual second attachments, but not all of them are admirable figures, just as there are those with long attachments who are. The Crofts appear to be socially adept, able to meet with others without being impolite in the way that Walter Elliot and Elizabeth are, and they are seen walking together "in happy independence" (159). Walker posits

that the Crofts are the novel's ideal married couple (51-52), and chiefly because they do (nearly) everything together.

In a remarkable—though perhaps not exceptional—pursuit of domestic devotion, Mrs. Croft lived with the Admiral at sea for nearly as long as he has been away and defends her existence there as being comfortable (Austen *Persuasion*, 68-70). Furthermore, while Anne finds Admiral Croft regarding a painting in a shop window alone, that is a rare instance, for to Bath “[t]hey brought with them their country habit of being almost always together.... Knowing their feelings as [Anne] did, it was a most attractive picture of happiness to her” (159). And it is not merely in the company of society in Bath that they are content, for we are informed that they also enjoy the quiet of the countryside, too: “the Admiral and Mrs. Croft were generally out of doors together, interesting themselves in their new possessions, their grass, and their sheep, and dawdling about in a way not endurable to a third person, or driving out in a gig, lately added to their establishment” (72). What is important about this passage is the fact that their companionship is so devoted that they are able to amuse themselves together without needing additional company: they are able to close off society in ways that others are not seen as being able to do. We never have an image of what private life is like for either of the Musgrove families since both the elder and younger generation live with children, and the Harvilles are only seen when caring for their visitors and guests. Driving out in their gig is a metaphor for their life together, thinks Anne as she first rides with them and then watches as they depart from view: because “they neither fell into a rut, nor ran foul of a dung-cart;... Anne [imagined] with some amusement [, th]at their style of driving ... [was] no bad representation of the general guidance of their affairs” (90; see also Walker 51-52). The couple exists in harmony, for when they are in danger of veering off course and crashing into a post, Mrs. Croft “coolly giv[es] the

reins a better direction,” a further part of the allegory of their co-operation. The metaphor of driving is an apt one for the Crofts, for so often they are seen in motion together, whether they are strolling across the grounds of Kellynch Hall or walking along to aid the Admiral’s gout (159; see also Walker 54-56). They seem to epitomize the need not simply for inseparability and partnership in marriage, but also action without hesitation.

Just before they drive Anne home in their gig, they tell her of their courtship:

‘How many days was it, my dear, between the first time of my seeing you, and our sitting down together in our lodgings at North Yarmouth?’

‘We had better not talk about it, my dear,’ replied Mrs. Croft, pleasantly; ‘for if Miss Elliot were to hear how soon we came to an understanding, she would never be persuaded that we could be happy together. I had known you by character, however, long before.’

‘Well, and I had heard of you as a very pretty girl, and what were we to wait for besides?’ (90)

This passage reveals a number of things about the Crofts and their happiness: first, for its implication that happiness in marriage is something that they expect people, or at least Anne, to believe takes a long time to form; second, for its suggestion that once one has discovered a life partner with whom one might be happy, there is no need to delay a marriage even to await the approval of family members; but third and chiefly, for its depiction of the causes of attraction and trust. Since they both claim that they knew *of* the other through flattering hearsay before they first saw each other, the exchange suggests that theirs was a form of reattachment, not attachment. Admittedly, hearing about someone and meeting that person are not exactly the same kind of relationship, but the fact that this detail is mentioned foregrounds the importance of

developing a relationship through stages and even the most ideal relationship does not come immediately but develops over time. The progress that the Crofts undergo that leads to their marriage may not be entirely dissimilar from Anne's, then: although different in temporality and spatiality because of the long delay and change of living that both Frederick and Anne go through, the structure of repetition with the same person leading to matrimony is the same.

With the evidence that they are continually in motion together, the novel's example of the Crofts implies that this is where to find the source of a happy marriage: not in the foundations, but in its continual practice. Whereas Walter Elliot believes in past authority, fixed documents, and patriarchal structures as the origins for what is permissible, this thinking will lead one to a life without a partner and a dwindling family. It is not until he alters his views of Frederick, based largely on the seaman's acquisition of a fortune through his success in the naval hierarchy, which is made possible in part by the British war effort against France during the Napoleonic Wars, that he approves of the match. At the novel's close, his heir presumptive goes off to live in London with the woman whom he and his daughter had once considered to be a good companion; his youngest daughter Mary is clearly closer to the Musgrove family than her biological one; and the narrator remarks that Anne feels "as lively pain as her mind could well be sensible of" because she has "no family to receive and estimate him [i.e. Wentworth] properly" (236), suggesting that Anne will detach herself from her father, if she has not already done so. One has to be lucky as well: the example of Mrs. Smith demonstrates that even if one does have a relatively happy marriage, death and helplessness in the face of the law and apathetic or vindictive people can render a life relatively solitary, too. Anne is also lucky, in a good rather than bad way, in being in the path of circumstances that led to her acquaintance with Mrs. Croft

and her brother, Anne's former romantic partner. Luck is also on her side when she encounters him continually, despite her disinclination to see him after they are reacquainted (72).

Anne Elliot and her marital bliss form the fitting conclusion to this thesis, for she demonstrates the importance of remarriage with the same person, rather than projecting an ideal of marrying multiple times to multiple different partners. In Anne's case, we learn that following her decision not to pursue her relationship with Frederick,

No one had ever come within the Kellynch circle, who could bear a comparison with Frederick Wentworth, as he stood in her memory. *No second attachment*, the only thoroughly natural, happy, and sufficient cure, at her time of life, had been possible to the nice tone of her mind, the fastidiousness of her taste, in the small limits of the society around them. (32, emphasis added)

In this passage, the word "second" means "different" rather than "repeated" or "next," for in one sense, Anne does repeat her attachment to him; alternatively, we might say that she never broke her original one, for the entire novel is narrated in the simple past, offering the possibility that "as he stood in her memory" is not a distant event, but something that continues with her, meaning that there would be "no second attachment" in any sense, at least in her mind.[83]

However, his unexpected re-entry into her life brings with it at first surprise and discomfort (63), followed by obstacles and misunderstandings that accompany the flowering of their relationship. The moment that Anne reads Frederick's letter reveals his feelings for her, prompting them to meet and speak clearly of their feelings for each other. And with that clarity comes an insistence on a break in time, that there has been change: when they speak together in Union-street,

the power of conversation would make the present hour a blessing indeed; and prepare for it all the immortality which the happiest recollections of their own

future lives could bestow. There they exchanged again those feelings and those promises which had once before seemed to secure every thing, but which had been followed by so many, many years of division and estrangement. There they returned again into the past, more exquisitely happy, perhaps, in their re-union, than when it had been first projected; more tender, more tried, more fixed in a knowledge of each other's character, truth, and attachment.... (226-27)

In this passage, time and memory, attachment and reattachment play significant roles. Somewhat oddly, Anne and Frederick “recollect” the future, and they return “into the past” “again.” This word’s multiple appearances provide strong evidence for Cavell’s theory of remarriage: it is something that occurs again and again, challenging the notion that even promises uttered “once before” might not be able to “secure every thing.” Instead, their re-union provides them with more security in each other’s (re)“attachment.”

Notes

[1] Cavell follows Ibsen translator Rolf Fjelde in referring to this text by this title instead of the more usual *A Doll's House* (22).

[2] For the concept that texts “participate” in genres without “belonging” to them, see Jacques Derrida (224).

[3] Hardwicke’s importance to political circles in England is indicated by, among other things, his eventual promotion to Lord Chancellor. Parker reports that, like many of his social position, he was contemptuous of the customs and rituals of the common people and the laws he introduced were motivated by what he perceived as human weakness (Parker 39; see also Hay 20).

[4] I would like to thank Professor David L. Clark of McMaster University for directing my thoughts about wedding ceremonies to the theory of performative utterances.

[5] Abbott’s study is divided into social classes, but it ranges over four centuries, so unless she clearly identifies material as belonging to a period by (a) given date(s), it is difficult to pin down her claims to a precise historical period. She does, though, alert readers to the too-familiar problem of historical interpretations, that reliance on sources that do not represent the full range of practices means one cannot generalize too widely. She writes the above quotation, however, intending it to apply to the Romantic period in England, at least, if not all of Britain.

[6] Ironically, though perhaps unsurprisingly, despite the interest of the state in officially regulating marriages through civil ceremonies, the official head of state, the royal family, need not follow the stipulations of the Act, according to its seventeenth clause (179). A draft of the

Act and the official version of the Bill appear as appendices in R. B. Outhwaite's *Clandestine Marriage in England*, pp. 169-80.

[7] See also Stone, *Uncertain Unions*, 16-17.

[8] T. C. Smout also indicates that “[c]onsent could even be *presumed* by Scots law, in the absence of actual proof of it”; marriage by habit and repute was when “a couple had to be held to have been married by their neighbours or friends who would testify that they habitually treated one another as man and wife in bearing and modes of address over several years before such proof was admitted in the courts” (207).

[9] By “no-man’s land,” outside of legal and ecclesiastical regulations, Menefee means that “[a]lthough weddings outside hours or away from the local church were illegal by the canons of 1604, these ceremonies were nonetheless considered both valid and binding” (13).

[10] The frequently cited relationship of the two people as a single one who is the husband does have some exceptions, such as where there is an “offense . . . directly against the person of the wife” where she might testify against him—although this is only “usually” the case, Blackstone writes. In addition, “there are some instances in which she [i.e. a wife] is separately considered; [though] inferior to him, and acting by his compulsion” (1.443; 444).

[11] In addition to Stone’s claim, see also Tushnet, who notes a similar trend, although possibly about American cases—she is ambiguous about the “early cases” to which she refers (2586).

[12] Note that although Lettmaier refers to nineteenth-century cases, she almost certainly includes Romantic-era women, despite the angel-in-the-house rhetoric associated with Victorian lives. The evidence for this is her reference to “an age when prescriptive writers like [Hannah]

More and [Thomas] Gisborne took pains to stress that a woman's virtue was a function of her exclusion from the public sphere and of her submission to men" (95).

[13] Constance Jordan traces the analogy through Western political thought, beginning with Aristotle, but her article focuses on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. She argues that as an analogy, it has "worked imperfectly" (308) because it bestows absolute authority upon the father-husband figure, a conclusion based on a view of women as inferior.

[14] Although he does not refer to divorce, Locke writes of a possible "separation" between husband and wife when it suits one or both parties: "there [is] no necessity in the nature of the thing [i.e. the compact between husband and wife], nor to the ends of it, that it should always be for life...." (134-35). There are many clauses and provisions that Locke includes with these statements, too lengthy to include here, that may interest readers; see sections 81 and 82 of Locke's *Second Treatise*. The separation referred to may continue indefinitely, it would appear, effectively bringing the marriage to an end. It must be noted, however, that the qualifications with which Locke loads his statements make them hypothetical situations and that conventional legal requirements have made the marriage contract binding for life.

[15] See Shanley 26.

[16] See McKeon 113-114.

[17] This is a legal "settlement of the succession of a landed estate, so that it cannot be bequeathed at pleasure by any one possessor" (*O.E.D.* n.², 1).

[18] See her introduction to *Equivocal Beings*, 3-6.

[19] Wollstonecraft also deploys the analogy between family and state, albeit for different political purposes: in response to press gangs that force young men to spend years abroad with

the navy and then return them home without any identifiable and useful skills, she complains, “A government that acts in this manner cannot be called a good parent, nor inspire natural (habitual is the proper word) affection, in the breasts of children who are thus disregarded” (*Rights of Men* 17).

[20] For instance, Steven Bruhm explores how “Burke uses the image of the body to refer to its familiar metaphorical analogue, the body politic” (125).

[21] For an extended discussion of Burke’s appeal to pathos, see Lock 110-114.

[22] For a theory of the ideological uses of genre, see Beebee.

[23] For the idea of “participating” in a genre without “belonging” to it, see Derrida, 224; for the reading of Burke’s *Reflections* as a tragedy, see especially Paulson, 76.

[24] Samet astutely remarks that Burke is not the only one to view the French Revolution as a tragedy: “In a clear example of political ideology reshaping aesthetics, Paine does not, ultimately, condemn the play; he simply replaces the royalist player with a popular understudy” and consequently, Paine’s “revolutionary plot was in its own way as tragic as Burke’s” (1315).

[25] It is also one of the aspects of his text that most angers Wollstonecraft, when she attacks the *Reflections* in the *Vindication of the Rights of Men*. “Security of property!” she exclaims, and is quick to point the faulty comparison between what Burke terms “liberal” and what is actually the possession of a relatively small number of individuals: “Behold, in a few words, the definition of English liberty....But softly—it is only the property of the rich that is secure; the man who lives by the sweat of his brow has no asylum from oppression....” (14-15).

[26] For Wollstonecraft, it seemed that her opponent merely wanted to insist “that we are to reverence the rust of antiquity,” a metaphor with a negative connotation that draws attention to

the fact that it is arbitrary to apply metaphors as a way of describing the glorious past (*Rights of Men* 10).

[27] In none of the Romantic-era gothic stories I have encountered is a baby vivisected for any purposes, experimental or otherwise. Agnes tells her listeners in *The Monk* that her infant “soon became a mass of putridity, and to every eye was a loathsome and disgusting Object” (412), and, as referred to above, “*Andreas Vesalius*” features a title character who dissects—and possibly vivisects—adults.

[28] Iain Hampsher-Monk is among the more recent critics who view the *Reflections* to be “intended as a rhetorical performance” and therefore a deliberately “unsystematic” work (198).

[29] Indeed, Burke spoke passionately in defense of the American colonies and the colonists in opposition to the rule of the British, the country which largely originated the United States. For instance, in his “Speech on American Taxation” of 19 April 1774, he points to the injustice of British tea taxes: “Could any thing be a subject of more just alarm to America, than to see you [i.e. immediately, the Speaker of the House, but more generally, British government in favour of taxation] go out of the plain high road of finance, and give up your most certain revenues and your clearest interests, merely for the sake of insulting your Colonies?” (417). However, at least part of what animates his defense of the colonists is their shared origin with the British. In a show of unity with the colonies, Burke speaks of their commonalities: “Do not think, that the whole, or even the uninfluenced majority of Englishmen in this Island, are enemies to their own blood on the American Continent. . . . a large, and we trust the largest and soundest part of this Kingdom, perseveres in the most perfect unity of sentiments, principles, and affections, with you

[i.e. the colonists]” (“Address to the Colonists,” 278). When the rift between the countries became clear, Burke “preached conciliation with America” (O’Gorman 67).

[30] Wollstonecraft makes a similar challenge, but is more dismissive of the thinking processes involved than the possibility of faithfully reconstructing a single origin. “Where was the dignity of thinking of the fourteenth century?” she asks, for in that time, “men were content to borrow their virtues, or, to speak with more propriety, their consequence, from posterity, rather than undertake the arduous task of acquiring it for themselves” (*Rights of Men* 12-13). She here contends that achieving something in one’s own lifetime with one’s own powers is more remarkable than worshipping the greatness of a supposedly great past, unless, of course, one is born to wealth and property (*Rights of Men* 10).

[31] Prominent among these problems is the question of how the voices of everyone in a nation can be heard, let alone taken into consideration. For Paine, the democracy of ancient Athens was an ideal one for being able to attain conditions that permitted the verbal exchange of a plurality of voices (229). Yet Athens did not allow everyone a vote or a voice, as women and slaves were not believed to be full citizens. Gary Kates also cautions readers who want to celebrate Paine for being a voice of liberty, especially in the first part of the *Rights of Man*: “while Paine disagrees sharply with Burke over political principles, there is no real debate over the extent to which ‘the people’ ought to participate in political affairs” (579). This attitude changes in the second part, from which the notion of Athens as an ideal community is taken; Paine is there more “radical” in comparison with his earlier thoughts (Kates 585). Thus not even Burke’s respondent can be championed for his advocacy of the principle of allowing a wide range of people to speak with equal voices in matters of the state, but Paine is closer than Burke to doing so.

[32] Divorces were, technically, possible, but Allen Horstman reports the following information: “Divorce meant adultery and adultery remained the only grounds for a divorce until the twentieth century. To obtain a divorce a man – no woman obtained a divorce before the nineteenth century – followed the procedures pioneered ... in the seventeenth century.” He continues by noting that it was a lengthy and difficult process and that “[m]any unhappy couples proceeded no further than this court [i.e. a church court] as they lacked money or were content with the results this court afforded” (4) A husband could not remarry without being successful in an application to Parliament (5). Somewhat challenging his account, Mary Abbott suggests that it was even harder than he portrays: “Until 1857 marriages could be terminated only by a complicated process involving actions in the civil and ecclesiastical courts and culminating in the passage of a private parliamentary bill. This obstacle course was expensive, and, overwhelmingly a male option. Of the 325 parliamentary divorces, only four were granted to women” (36). Susie Steinbach also reports that it was not simply financially and legally a difficult thing to do; divorce was often something that women were not inclined to pursue for fear of having their children kept from them since “fathers had all rights to the custody of their children” (251). As with marriage, however, it appears as though where informal practices were accepted to make the couple united, so too an informal procedure could undo their union. Samuel Pyeatt Menefee reports: “One form of informal divorce was associated with broomstick marriages in Wales. Such a union was sundered by the exact reversal of the form used for marriage. If divorce was desired and twelve months had not elapsed, a broom was again placed in the doorway in the presence of witnesses. The dissatisfied person then jumped backwards over the besom into the open air, making sure neither broom nor door jamb was touched in the process” (20).

[33] Wollstonecraft's formulation of this right runs as follows: "It is a well-known fact, that when *we*, the people of England, have a son whom we scarcely know what to do with—*we* make a clergyman of him" (*Rights of Men* 35).

[34] Donlan also explains part of the reason for Burke's admiration of William the Conqueror, a point that Paine was critical of, is that with the Norman invasion, England and its laws became more European, and therefore stood to benefit from the progress in law and liberty that had been made in Europe (69). Such a pan-European view must have been one of the factors that angered Burke about the sudden upheaval in France.

[35] Note that here I refer to a "fixed" meaning as one that is agreed upon by enough people to be useful, not one that retains the same signification, without alteration, through time. As D. A. Beale points out, Paine also refers to "the Bastille of a word" ("now *there* is 'the prison-house of language' with a vengeance!"), suggesting his antipathy toward the idea of having meaning fixed for all time (Paine 132; Beale 41).

[36] Somewhat related to Paine's contention, but an interesting counterpoint, is Stephanie Coontz's observation that marriage used to do "much of the work that markets and governments do today"; that is, the division of labour, the creation of interpersonal alliances, and the distribution and production of goods (9).

[37] Godwin's third edition of 1798 offers less strident views on the subject; there, for instance, he writes that eliminating marriage "appears to involve" no evils whereas he expresses it as a certainty in this first edition of 1793 (Godwin, vol. 4, p. 338, 6.218). Other statements are equally superlative, such as "[m]arriage is law, and the worst of all laws"; and "marriage is an affair of property, and the worst of all properties" (vol. 3, p. 453).

[38] Admittedly, there are many differences in our contemporary ideas about companionship and marriage since gay marriage is now legal; divorces are easier to procure, for both men and women; and forms of cohabitation, such as common-law marriage, are more frequent, but these are expansions to the definition of marriage and couplehood, rather than alterations.

[39] The earlier edition had “property” and “properties” instead of “monopoly” and “monopolies”.

[40] Later referred to as a “method” (4.337.6.188).

[41] It must be admitted that these quotations in Bloom’s essay do not tell the full story: he is just as willing as Abrams to employ metaphors of marriage when discussing the Romantic authors in general. There is, for instance, this peculiar, and subjective, analogy:

Freud’s beautiful sentence on marriage is a formula against which the Romantic Eros can be tested: ‘A man shall leave father and mother—according to the Biblical precept—and cleave to his wife; then are tenderness and sensuality united.’ By the canons of internalized romance, that translates: a poet shall leave his Great Original (Milton, for the Romantics) and nature—according to the precept of Poetic Genius—and cleave to his Muse or Imagination; then are the generous and solitary halves united. But, so translated, the formula has ceased to be Freudian and has become High Romantic (12).

This is not the only instance wherein Bloom uses nuptial terms to colour his ideas. He writes of the Imagination having a bride (17) and, in a less surprising use, describes Blake’s creation Ololon as both the character Milton’s emanation, and his bride (18). This last statement, though more expected, is still questionable, given the relationship that Ololon and Milton have throughout the poem, or even the relationship that Ololon has to being a female throughout her

many transformations in the duration of *Milton*. Bloom's quotation and this peculiar interpretation of *Milton* are departures from the way that Abrams and Wordsworth use the metaphor, but I think that this makes the argument for its importance in the mid-twentieth-century critical tradition so much the stronger because, while Abrams was unique in portraying Romantic unions with marriage imagery, he was not alone in using it as a metaphor to describe other phenomena of the Romantic period.

[42] Here are the poem's final two stanzas:

IV

Hearest thou the festival din
Of Death, and Destruction, and Sin,
And Wealth, crying *Havoc!* within?—
'Tis the Bacchanal triumph, which makes Truth dumb,
Thine Epithalamium.

V

Ay, marry thy ghastly wife!
Let Fear, and Disquiet, and Strife
Spread thy couch in the chamber of Life,
Marry Ruin, thou Tyrant! and Hell be thy guide
To the bed of the bride. (ll. 16-25)

[43] In addition to the examples I shall discuss below, consider the following quotations from Blake and Shelley: The first is Oothoon's fierce invective against matrimony in *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*: "she who burns with youth. and knows no fixed lot; is bound / In spells of

law to one she loaths: and must she drag the chain / Of life, in weary lust!" (5: 21-23, E49). The second is from Shelley's *Epipsychidion* and attacks the idea of marriage as an institution:

I never was attached to that great sect,
Whose doctrine is, that each one should select
Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
To cold oblivion, though it is in the code
Of modern morals, and the beaten road
Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread,
Who travel to their home among the dead
By the broad highway of the world, and so
With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe,
The dreariest and the longest journey go. (ll. 150-59)

Finally, from near the end of Shelley's early novel *St. Irvyne*, when Fitzeustace speaks to Eloise:

But before we go to England, before my father will see us, it is necessary that we should be married—nay, do not start, Eloise; I view it in the light that you do; I consider it an human institution, and incapable of furnishing that bond of union by which, alone can intellect be conjoined; I regard it as but a chain, which, although it keeps the body bound, still leaves the soul unfettered: it is not so with love. (249-250)

[44] Walker explains that there are only seven known copies of this volume in the world (245, fn. 75); it is the collective binding of *Thanksgiving Ode*, *Peter Bell*, *The Waggoner*, and *The River Duddon*, whose full title is *The River Duddon, a Series of Sonnets; Vaudracour and Julia*;

and Other Poems. Stephen Gill characterizes the latter book as follows: “As its title page indicates, the 1820 volume is a poetical miscellany” (“Wordsworth and the *River Duddon*,” 24).

[45] Gill provides the entries for 17 March 1802 and 8 May 1802 as examples of her intimate expression.

[46] Susan M. Levin and Nicola Healey observe that Dorothy’s journal expresses a recognition of the displacement of human identity in marriage by Nature that is similar to those found in the letters, journals, and poetry of the male authors of the period. In Dorothy’s case, however, it is William’s marriage, in particular, that provokes her anxious substitutions. Levin declares, “[t]he ways she [i.e. Dorothy] arranges descriptions and the natural objects brought into the journal define her emotional devastation at her brother’s marriage.... Describing birds, trees, flowers, stars – she describes what Mary [Hutchinson]’s presence may do to her life” (Levin 21).

Healey’s findings similarly record that “Dorothy’s identification with the configuration of the moon and stars ... shows her questioning how the marriage [between William and Mary] would displace her identity” (153).

[47] *Home at Grasmere* was not published in Wordsworth’s lifetime, and, because of its many alterations, revisions, and selected republications, offers much in the way of commentary on the text itself as well as its relationship to other poems. For a sample of such criticism, see Bushell, Butler, Modiano, and Jonathan Wordsworth. I select this version of the poem to discuss rather than the later version of it that appears as the “Prospectus” of *The Recluse* because it is both more manageable than the lengthier poem and because it offers a contrast between the lines that Abrams discusses and other representations of family and marriage.

[48] See Jonathan Bate, who calls *Home at Grasmere* “truly ecological poetry” (103) and Karl Kroeber, who writes “[b]ecause the vale as an entity permits the poet to experience the ‘unity entire’ of an ecological ‘Whole without dependence or defect,’ his imagination is liberated rather than confined by the limitedness of Grasmere” (140).

[49] Tim Fulford offers an historical account of the Wordsworth family’s financial troubles and disinheritance through the actions of the local aristocrat (especially 61-64).

[50] Lines 807-820 feature the investigation into the meanings of solitude; see lines 996-1004 for the passage describing the imagined wedding between the mind and the world.

[51] See Poetzsch 15 for a concise articulation of his theory of “the sublime within the folds of everyday reality” (14).

[52] The letters remain while the journal in which he recorded his thoughts and feelings was destroyed days after news of his death reached the friends to whom he had entrusted it (Douglass 13).

[53] Although this episode is set in Greece, Byron’s poetry is often of an international character, representing both continental and English views in a complex relationship. Here I am using his hypothetical example of an innocent maid to think through the implications of the English law.

[54] For a flavour of these remarks, consider the following: “Out of his many ‘Italian’ works, *Beppo* and *The Prophecy of Dante* contain numerous self-referential echoes which project Byron’s complex feelings of alienation from his country, as well as his ambiguous positioning within the Italian society” (Schoina para. 13); “*Beppo*’s Venice emerges as a cultural hybrid of East and West, at once synthesizing both identities and forming a distinctive identity that is neither precisely Oriental nor Occidental but a mixture of the two” (Ogden 124); and

“Repeatedly Byron turns over the themes of acculturation and transplantation, of passing from one place and culture to another, and then passing further into the interior of that culture – becoming acclimatized or going native; being translated, both in the figurative *and* in the literal sense” (Cheeke 111).

[55] Consider Guiliano’s claims that Byron’s insistence upon the poem’s anonymous publication is “effective in raising questions about authorship and ultimately about Byron’s place in the poem, since its autobiography is so thinly disguised” (154) and that the poem’s purpose is at least in part a “dart ... directed at Lady Byron” (156); or Bone’s remark that “Byron’s story had its root not only in a Venetian tale, but in a personal domestic situation” (13).

[56] For instance, “*Beppo* turns its back on the poetry of canto 4 of *Childe Harold* by drawing on and playfully inhabiting the rich rhetorical traditions that dismiss men of fashion as mere things” and “it [i.e. *Beppo*] can also be seen, I would argue, as probably the profoundest meditation on poetic value to this point in Byron’s career” (George para. 2, 24); “*Beppo*, then, is a transitional poem; it represents Byron’s first attempt to combine in some form the prophetic voice of *Childe Harold* and *Manfred* with the laughter he came more and more to see as essential to his own sanity and well-being” (Gleckner 305-06); see also Fisher’s article that explores the possibility of Dante’s influence on Byron’s composition of the poem.

[57] Elledge cleverly argues that Byron’s digressive method that repeatedly meanders away from and returns to the poem’s plot is similar to the peregrinations and return of the eponymous character himself: “what, after all, is digression but a temporary wandering from a fixed point to which one fully expects to return? Digression strays from home, so to speak, in short-term abandonment.... It permits wide-ranging, omnidirectional movement from a firmly established

base without impairment or loss of contact with it. Digression is Donne's compass drafted into rhetorical service" (40). More succinctly, and more to the point about marriage, "Byron's point is that form, like marriage, is or ought to be plastic, that its relationship to content should be variable and adaptable, that its embrace had better be huge" (42, n. 10).

[58] The poem makes much of names and naming, as Giuliano points out (153): Laura's name is apparently not her "real" one (21.166-67) while Beppo's is a nickname for Guiseppe (25.200) and the Count is not called anything but his title. Somewhat similar to the Count's relative lack of identity is the narrator's, who refers to himself as "but a nameless sort of person" (52.409), an irony on which McGann remarks: "Lord Byron [is] a person about as 'nameless' to his age or ours as Napoleon" (*Fiery Dust* 285).

[59] Perhaps one may believe that Beppo is not, for his part, devoted to his wife, depending on one's interpretation of McGann's note: "The innuendo in l. 194 [i.e. Beppo "made some voyages, too, in other seas"] suggests a reason for the quarantine" (1039 n. 322); the puns in line 205, "A better seaman never yet did man yard," suggest his sexual prowess, too.

[60] As suggested by the title of his poem *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

[61] Consider Lydia's recounting of her marriage to Wickham, as told to Elizabeth, in *Pride and Prejudice*, where "that horrid man Mr. Stone" succeeds in diverting their uncle, and Lydia is worried that their wedding will be put off (282), or the very protracted courtship, called off and then renewed, of Anne Elliot and Frederick Wentworth in *Persuasion*. I shall elaborate on both of these examples of interrupted weddings in my conclusion.

[62] Elizabeth Bennet, for instance, refuses to be cowed by the opposition of the very much alive Lady Catherine de Bourgh to her possible marriage to Mr. Darcy. She does not have to wait for the discovery of a long-hidden family secret to be uncovered, as Ellena does in *The Italian*.

[63] For instance, Christine Berthin cites both novels as evidence for the Gothic's ambiguous endings and lack of closure as ways to make meanings undecided (65); Coral Ann Howells notes that "The fashion for monkish fiction had been set by *The Monk* and *The Italian* where the main characters hide their particular forms of hypocrisy behind the mask of monasticism" (104); Edward H. Jacobs writes, "as the instance of Schedoni in *The Italian* and of Rosario-Matilda in *The Monk* perhaps best illustrate, the balance of mystery and depth in Gothic villains typically results from complex shifts between a predominant focalization on them through heroines/heroes, and tantalizing patches of focalization through them" (194); Yael Shapira comments that, "*The Italian* [is] Radcliffe's response to Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), whose scandalous treatment of the body was a challenge to her polite Gothic" (455); and Dale Townshend compares those villains' (and the authors') uses of the crypt as a place of visual obscurity (261-62).

[64] Diane Hoeveler contends that the silent exchange of Vivaldi and Ellena's hands constitutes a third ceremony (Radcliffe 38-39; Hoeveler 108). I shall discuss this point below.

[65] Robert Miles argues that Vivaldi's gaze does not focus on the physicality of Ellena in the way that Lorenzo's does of Antonia: "Vivaldi wants to see Ellena's face for the sensibility of character' indicated in the 'modulation of her tones'" (171). Miles has a point here, but his representation reduces Vivaldi's interest in "[t]he beauty of her [i.e. Ellena's] countenance [which was] haunting his imagination" (Radcliffe 7).

[66] Admittedly, it is following the death of a cousin, who leaves everything to Elvira and herself, that Leonella departs for Cordova reluctantly, and at her sister's insistence, "[t]o secure this bequest" (245). So while Leonella does not set out initially to marry, it seems probable that her delay in returning is the consequence of her courtship.

[67] If it had not been recognized by critics earlier, we can certainly locate the idea of a narrative-within-a-narrative as a gothic convention in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's thesis (3-4).

[68] It is telling, in line with my earlier arguments about the relative lack of importance of marriage in the novel, that Lewis spends some pages describing the "occult" ritual of the exorcism (170-73) but does not represent any "holy" rituals of wedding.

[69] I am referring to the narrative techniques of weaving together multiple storylines and withholding information until it suits his purposes, rather than proceeding chronologically with the events of the narrative. An instance of this chronological and narrative manipulation occurs when Ambrosio visits Elvira and Antonia, and the narrator provides the lengthy explanation for Leonella's sojourn in Cordova but withholds the conclusion to that episode until later without substantial justification: we are told that Leonella writes to her sister to announce her marriage, "But, for reasons which will be explained here-after, Elvira never answered her letter" (246). In my view, this differs from the backstories of *The Italian* that are presented out of chronological sequence, where the characters do not reveal information to others until they are pressed or compelled in some way to do so.

[70] See, for example, Robert Miles's remark that in *The Monk*, "Radcliffe's formula of the supernatural followed by rational explanation is turned on its head" (170); Yael Shapira's comment about "the supernatural, which Lewis used unapologetically, while Radcliffe explained

it away” (463); Janet Todd’s note that Radcliffe offers readers “rational explanations and final morals,” even though “[o]nly horrors could begin to fulfill the expectations [of many male readers] and Mrs Radcliffe unlike Monk Lewis will not provide these” (*Sign* 257); and Devendra P. Varma’s point that “[w]hat Walpole left inexplicable, and Reeve labored to make credible, Mrs. Radcliffe reduces to a fascinating illusion.... The supernatural continually fascinates, but in the end is proved to be a cheat” (106).

[71] As I record below, Agnes tells Ambrosio that Raymond “was on the point of becoming [her] lawful husband” (47), but it is worth debating the verity of her statement since at that point, she is pleading for her life, and furthermore, if the laws following the passage of the Hardwicke Act were in force, then Agnes does not have the authority to decide whether she was married or not.

[72] In addition to Agnes, Ambrosio is also “affianced to the Church,” points out Steven Blakemore: “although the verb ‘affianced’ cleverly suggests a pledge, a promise, a ‘marriage’ that has yet to be consummated (grounds for divorce [sic] in the Catholic Church)” (Lewis 80; Blakemore 525). Thus, Ambrosio is like Agnes: she too “violates her ‘vows of Chastity’ and hence her supposed ‘vows to heaven’ (pp. 47, 185)” (Blakemore 527).

[73] The state and its laws are complicated issues because Lewis sets the story, though commenting on Protestant Britain, in a fictional Catholic Spain of the past. Throughout my argument, my assumption is that Lewis is working with the necessities imposed by England’s Hardwicke Marriage Act for the marriages he dramatizes, rather than considering the necessities of a Catholic wedding in a distant time. His anachronisms and inaccuracies about Catholicism—such as his reference to Ambrosio as “‘Abbot of this Monastery’” (16)—make it clear that a strict verisimilitude regarding the times and places he represented was not at the foreground of

his concerns. Conversely, he need not have been following the exact prescriptions of the Hardwicke law so much as thinking through its general implications since fiction permits a hypothetical exploration of possible situations. I make the same assumption about Radcliffe's relationship to both the Catholic country that she represents and the marriage laws that were part of her reality. See also Emma McEvoy's note to pg. 16 (444-445) for a brief discussion of Lewis's inaccuracies, and James Whitlark for a reading of *The Monk* that argues for its undecideability as pro- or anti-Catholic text (esp. para. 11, 15-16).

[74] The characters are ambiguous on the point of whether Agnes was formally committed to the convent at the time of her birth: the Baroness Lindenberg says that she was "destined to the Convent from her cradle"; "Intended for the Convent" questions Lorenzo, and Raymond says that at her birth, she "was immediately destined to the service of St. Clare" (130-31). The *O.E.D.* notes that before and after *The Monk*'s publication, as a verb, "destine" can mean either "To ordain, appoint (formally or definitely)" (1) or "To fix or set apart in intention for a particular purpose" (3), making it unclear whether her parents merely intended to have Agnes committed to life as a nun, or made an explicit, formal arrangement with a convent for her to become one. The latter does seem the likeliest situation since Agnes is sent to be educated in a convent and, while there, "Donna Inesilla's fatal vow" casts a shadow on Agnes's life since "[t]he season of her taking the veil was fixed" (132).

[75] The Broadview edition of *The Monk*, edited by D.L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf, offers a selection of contemporary reactions to the novel, which are often divided among aesthetic and political lines, with their selection of critics generally admiring the former while attacking the latter. See Macdonald and Scherf, pp. 15-16 and 19-23 and related appendices in that volume.

[76] Stephanie Coontz records that there are “traditional Chinese and Sudanese ghost or spirit marriages, in which one of the partners is actually dead” in order to strengthen the bonds between families (27).

[77] A kind of necrophilia occurs in *The Monk* as well, in the cases of Antonia and Agnes. In the case of the latter, as I have argued, there are “two” Agnes’s, and Raymond’s desire for her is initially displaced onto a genuinely dead substitute for her in his relationships with the Bleeding Nun, and he continues to desire her even after she declares to him that “on this side the Grave we must never meet again!” (185). In Antonia’s case, after Ambrosio administers to Antonia “a juice extracted from certain herbs...which brings on the Person who drinks it the exact image of Death,” (329) and awaits her re-animation in the tomb, “Scarcely could He [i.e. Ambrosio] command his passions sufficiently, to restrain himself from enjoying her while yet insensible” (379).

[78] Somewhat similarly, Ambrosio is a “father” of the church to most people, but a “Monster of Hypocrisy! ... [and] a Viper” to Elvira (301) as a representative of an institution, and a “father” who destroys Lorenzo’s hopes of wedding Antonia, through his more immediate actions of rape and murder of her. However, he is also a brother and son to Antonia and Elvira, if the devil’s words can be believed (439), rather than being a literal father.

[79] In a similar line of thinking, A. A. Markley argues that the terms “Jacobin” and “anti-Jacobin” have led to some reductive readings of Romantic-era fiction (2).

[80] Too numerous to list are the studies that discuss the novel as an exploration of the contrasting ideas of “sense” and “sensibility,” but for a taste, consider Marilyn Butler, and Thomas Keymer (35).

[81] See, for instance, Barbara Benedict's declaration that the novel has "a merciless ending which awards a crushed Marianne Dashwood 'by general consent' to the flannel-waistcoated Colonel Brandon" (453); David Monaghan's observation that "Marianne's involvement with Colonel Brandon, which commences as the novel ends, is passed over in a few sentences" (44); Bonnie G. Nelson's statements that "although Marianne feels 'no sentiment superior to strong esteem and lively friendship' for Brandon, she marries him. She repudiates her former romantic opinions" and her remark that the novel's concluding marriages see that "Brandon's romantic suffering is rewarded, but Marianne's self-indulgent misery does not earn her equal consideration. This language of 'reward' seems to imply that Marianne is chattel" (174); and Barbara K. Seeber's claim that "Marianne's marriage to Colonel Brandon is not a natural occurrence. It needs some hefty assistance" (226). Shawn Lisa Maurer, however, counters these claims by writing that "rather than constituting an artistic or ideological failure, Marianne's marriage to Colonel Brandon represents instead a painful process of maturation, a developmental progression from the intense emotions and dangerous passions associated with adolescence to the duties and responsibilities of adulthood" (723).

[82] It is all the more curious that these two do not marry since they seem to think alike on matters of continuity and change: Lady Russell views Anne as a copy of her mother: "You are your mother's self in countenance and disposition" (151), which implies that she, like Walter Elliot, wants the Elliot name to carry on at Kellynch, and there to be repetition without difference in its occupancy there.

[83] For Walker's reading of second attachments in *Persuasion*, see 49-50.

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